United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

16th meeting, 10 and 11 May 2021

Information Paper 1

Proposed topics for reporting on progress in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda:
Implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education
for Sustainable Development: Progress in implementing the Strategy

Prepared by the Secretariat

Note for your attention: This questionnaire is not a formal reporting, but an intermediate informal reporting exercise to report on the current situation in your country at the beginning of the period 2021-2030, particularly regarding new policy developments with regard to progress on SDGs and impact of COVID-19.

Some questions follow the updated format for reporting which is currently in progress of finalising and the four strands of work which were discussed during the recent meetings of the ECE Steering Committee on ESD. A formal format for reporting will be finalised as soon as the new concept note for strategic planning 2021-2030 is approved and the questionnaire/format for reporting is brought further in line with the UNESCO scheme for reporting.

1.   National reporting on the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development offers a valuable opportunity for countries to learn from each other and to share newly produced resources and materials within and beyond the ECE region.

2.   In preparation for the sixteenth meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development, countries are requested to fill in the questionnaire below, informing on progress made and challenges encountered in working on priority action areas after the fourth mandatory reporting cycle carried out in 2018 and since the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 2 and 3 May 2019).

4.   Countries are kindly requested to submit this information in writing to the secretariat via e-mail (nona.iliukhina@un.org and esd@unece.org) by **20 April 2021.**

5.   The secretariat will review the information submitted and deliver a brief synthesis presentation at the Steering Committee's sixteenth meeting. The presentation will be followed by an interactive discussion.

6.   In the below questionnaire, particular attention is be paid to: (a) the priority action areas of the proposed newly drafted concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework (quality education and ESD; whole institution approach and ESD; digital education, information and communications technology and ESD; entrepreneurship, employability, innovation and ESD); (b) the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on ESD implementation.

7.   Countries will be invited to complement the secretariat's presentation with interventions on outstanding activities and initiatives implemented since the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 2 and 3 May 2019), in particular with regard to how the implementation of national strategies for ESD contributes to the new developments and challenges for ESD in the region. Given the limited time available, countries will only have up to three minutes each for interventions from the floor.

Questionnaire for 2021 informal country[1] reporting on the implementation of the priority action areas of the newly drafted concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework[2]

National focal points responsible for submitting the report:
- **Imbi Henno,** chief expert of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research

Full name of the institution: Estonian Ministry of Education and Research
Postal address: Munga 18, 50088 TARTU
Telephone: +372 7350284
E-mail: imbi.henno@hm.ee
Website: www.hm.ee

- **Liisa Puusepp** Advisor of Environmental Awareness, national focal point nominated by Estonian Ministry of the Environment http://www.envir.ee/ E-mail: liisa.puusepp@envir.ee

Date: 15th April 2021

Advances made and challenges encountered since the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting in May 2019

I.   *Priority action area (a)*

Encouraging countries to embed ESD into quality standards, frameworks and resources associated with formal quality assessments and institutional reviews

1.   Are there currently any national or subnational quality assessment/enhancement systems that address ESD in your country?

Yes **X**

- The quality system and criteria were developed for teaching programs of environmental education and nature education centres 2019-2020. "Thoughtful Program" (in Estonian „Muraka märgis") label shows that the teaching program supports the implementation of Estonian National curricula, the achievement of learning outcomes of Estonian National curricula, the achievement of learning outcomes.
- The cross-curricular topic "Environment and sustainable development" is presented in the National Curriculum already from 2002.
- The Estonian Environmental Education Society (https://www.ekhyhing.ee/et) is responsible for evaluation the quality of the environmental education and nature education centres' programs. We have more than 100 active environmental education centres in Estonia and more than 1000 different programs about the variety of topics (climate, biodiversity, soil, forests, water etc). Today, more than 500 programs have the label "Thoughtful Program". The evaluation is ongoing process and has not stopped during the Covid-19 period. The Ministry of the Environment is financing it.
- The Environmental Paw (in Estonian "Keskonnakäpp") contest https://keskkonnatunnustused.ee/et/keskkonnakapp is a recognition of environmentally and SD friendly educational activities. The best environmentally friendly educational activities are recognized with the environmental paw label. There are nominations in five application groups: kindergartens, student groups/classes, teachers, schools and an organizations providing environmental education. There are awarded in 5 categories:

Good Actor, Smart Consumer, Happy Learning, Community Involvement and Eager Innovator. The special award is for activities that have found innovative / inventive solutions to environmental issues. This recognition highlights all those who have made a positive mark on an environmentally conscious initiative or contributed to the promotion of environmentally friendly and SD educational activities.

- New initiative is the label of Environmental Friendly Local Government. For applying the local government should also show activities and contribution to the ESD. It is organized by the Ministry of Environment.
- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*
  Herein we would like to stress this topic on our presentation.

2.   Do quality frameworks exist in your country, for integrating ESD/SDGs in teachers' professional development?

Yes ☐ No **X**   •   *Please specify*

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

II.   *Priority action area (b)*

Promoting the whole institution approach (WIA) in every institution of formal, non-formal and informal education

1.   Has there been any significant advancement made in your country for promoting WIA in formal education?

Yes **X**

- There is a sustainable dimension within the national policies, as the state-owned VET-schools use energy labels, environmentally friendly waste management and in many schools, renewable energy is used for central heating, etc.
- Universities are putting more and more effort to rise the ESD awareness through different projects and their own curricula. The new Estonian Research, Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (RDIE) Development Plan 2021–2035 describes the contribution of the development plan to the fulfillment of the UN SDGs.
- Estonian University of Life Sciences (EULS) is the university in Estonia who declares that priority in academic and research is the sustainable development.
- Tallinn University (TU) has made the principles of sustainable development a part of everyday life. TU has joined the Green Academic Footprint initiative of the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe. In January 2021 TU has added to Statue of Study Programme the following point: to achieve the learning outcomes and the aims of the university, the study programme subject-specific courses shall contain the acquisition of sustainability principles and implementation in everyday life as well as research and creativity activities. Vision of the TU is to develop of health promoting and green university.
- The University of Tartu (UT) researchers contribute to achieving the goals of sustainable development and the roadmap of the European Green Deal. UT promotes the attitude supporting the global sustainable development goals among students and provide the knowledge and skills required for that develops the creativity, enterprising spirit, critical thinking as well as the cooperation and

learning, self-management, digital and other future skills of students through instruction.

- Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech) is planning to become the first climate-neutral university in Estonia.

  • *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

2.   Has there been any incentives in your country for integrating WIA in formal education?

Yes **X**

- All Estonian schools (primary, lower and upper-secondary education schools) have to prepare the school curriculum on the basis of the National curriculum (NC). The **cross-curricular topic "Environment and sustainable development"** is presented in the NC already from 2002. The school curricula must specify how to implement the cross-curricular topic "Environment and SD", integrate the principles of sustainable development in everyday practices and lessons. At the school level ESD education may be implemented through the structure of the learning environment, subject study and collaboration with regional institutions and enterprises, other educational and cultural institutions, and civic associations.
  The Estonian NC of Basic Schools (grade 1-9) and the Estonian National Curriculum of Upper- Secondary Schools (grade 10-11) (2011) reflect the broad educational aims- values which are important to society. The teachers are expected to embed such values as environmental sustainability, responsibility in their everyday subject teaching.

  • *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

3.   Has there been any initiatives in your country for integrating WIA in non-formal and in-formal education?

Yes **X** No ☐

- According to the *The action plan for developing environmental education and awareness 2019-2022* **(**in Estonian: https://www.envir.ee/et/eesmargid-tegevused/keskkonnateadlikkus/keskkonnahariduse-ja-teadlikkuse-tegevuskava-2019-2022**)** there is the aim to create, implement and analyse a non-formal environmental education WIA quality system. We have started form the quality system and criteria of teaching programs, the next step (will start in 2021) will be the quality system for educators who are working in environmental education centres and the final step will be the WIA of environmental education and nature education centres (2022).

  • *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

  Herein we would like to stress this topic on our presentation.

III.   *Priority action area (c)*

Supporting ESD within ICT and digital education

1. Did COVID-19 importantly change ICT and digital education used for teaching and learning on ESD in your country?

Yes **X**

- During the Covid19 pandemic the use of digital learning materials increased 10 times in Estonia. All Estonian general education schools had accounts and were connected to the different environments. Now we saw that Covid19 pandemic activated schools and students and parents.
- During the Covid19 pandemic 73% of students in grades 4-6 used every week digital textbooks (there are about 45,000 students in Estonia in the grades 4-6 and there were over 33,000 digital textbooks users). 80% of 7-9 grade students used digital textbooks. Conclusions: the use of digital tools was appropriate for Estonian students in grades 4-9. Competences necessary for independent learning, eg digital and learning competencies, have been acquired at the necessary level.
- Additionally, environmental education and nature centres also created digital learning materials for in- and outdoor activities.

☐ Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

2. In your country, do there exist any programs that support educational actors (teachers, mentors, inspectors etc) to integrate ICT and digital education in ESD?

Yes **X** No ☐

- The Ministry of Education and Research has put a lot of systematic effort into promoting the digital competence for all students on all education levels.
- The government has modernized a digital infrastructure for learning and tried to ensure the best infrastructure for students, modernizing local area networks of all schools from 1996, procured equipment for all schools and created standards for the digital infrastructure of the schools.
- Fast internet speed is ensured within school premises. It is also currently being modernized to increase the speed, security level and quality of internet. During the last years' school have been equipped with new digital devices – during COVID period the schools lent the devices to families in case of need.
- Essential e-services necessary for managing and organising school work (e-diaries) as well as learning and teaching (moodle, e-koolikott, eis (assessment bank) are available for all schools. Majority of them are free for schools. All of them are free for students.
- Approximately 98% of schools use e-diary – A transparent online diary provides an easy way for parents, teachers, and children to collaborate and organize all the information necessary for teaching and learning. The majority of study materials have been or will be digitized and are available through an online e-schoolbag.
- The fastest way to get feedback is e-assessment. In Estonia, there is e-testing (national test, national e-exams) since 2015, available e-tools and e-items for teachers; since 2017 testing digital competeces.
- The Examination Information System (EIS https://eis.ekk.edu.ee/eis/) is an electronic environment for the preparation of tasks and conducting tests, including examinations. EIS allow to carry out and administer tests (both paper and electronic), to evaluate the tests electronically, to provide feedback on performance, and display evaluated tests for teachers/pupils, to compile and store electronic tasks, for teachers and pupils to use tasks stored in the electronic bank. EIS can be used by students, teachers, parents, examination centre specialists and task writers.

- The state budget and ESF funds has used to support the developing of the digital materials and making existing material better available through a state-held portal. The goal has been to make digital learning resources and digital diagnostic assessment tools available in all subjects and to make digital learning resources available for free (limited offer).
- Digital learning materials or e-learning materials are study materials published in digital format in Estonia. These include e-textbooks, e-workbooks, educational videos, e-tests, etc. Digital learning materials are aimed at teachers and students. Since 2015 a publisher of educational literature are obliged to make educational literature compliant with the national curriculum also available digitally in a portal run by the Ministry of Education and Research on the conditions and in accordance with the procedure agreed between the Ministry of Education and Research and the publisher.
- Since 2016 e-Koolikott (E-School Bag) https://e-koolikott.ee/ is an interactive web environment for publishing and using of digital study materials as well as for creating of e-materials collections. In the environment you will find and disseminate preschool, basic, general and vocational education study materials, with open access for everybody to use. Experts monitor the quality of the study materials
- Study materials also available through the OPIQ platform https://www.opiq.ee/ and schools will have access to all materials starting from study year 2018/2019. Study materials found in Opiq are created by professionals, whether they are scientists, editors or teachers. The authors of the study materials can confirm the content is in accordance with the national curriculum.
- There are also opportunities for the modern technologies as early as in pre-school.
- An online tool for self- and peer-assessment of school's digital maturity „Digital Mirror" was developed in 2018. The digital mirror provides an opportunity to map school maturity and drive digital innovation through goal setting.
- Additionally, universities (for example the Centre for Innovation in Education at Tallinn University) are supporting and giving courses for teachers how to integrate ICT and digital education in ESD.

☐ Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

3. Is any assistance provided on national level for embedding ICT and digital education on ESD/SDGs?

Yes **X** No ☐

- The implementation of the National Curricula for Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools is ensured that the ICT basic skills, **digital competence** as a key competence and cross- curriculum topics "**Environment and sustainable development" and "Technology and Innovation"** for all pupils will be developed.
- Through National Curricula is ensured ICT basic skills for all pupils, developed digital competence as a key competence in curriculum and provided ICT related subjects (coding, robotics 3D design and 3D printing) available for all pupils.

☐ Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

---

IV. Priority action area (d)

Enhancing entrepreneurship and employment within ESD

1. Do you have in your country ESD programs that support students/youth entrepreneurship?

Yes **X** No ☐

- Estonia has entrepreneurship program, which is related to sustainability. The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research has launched an entrepreneurship education programme for all levels of formal education in 2015 to encourage the enterprising spirit of Estonian students, and to ensure that the creativity, initiative and entrepreneurial competencies would be developed at the all levels of education. "*The systematic development of entrepreneurial spirit and entrepreneurship education at all levels of education,", or in short – Edu ja Tegu (Deed of Success).* https://ettevotlusope.edu.ee/eng-rus/ The aim was achieved that all the general, vocational, higher education students have an opportunity to complete activity-based entrepreneurship training. Under this program we encouraged and train teachers, school leaders and businesspeople too. The programme has been prepared for the implementation of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy. The total programme budget for the years 2016−2023 is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the Government of Estonia.

☐ Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

2. Are there any mechanisms on national level that strengthen students/youth entrepreneurship competences related to ESD?

Yes **X** No ☐

- Under the Estonian entrepreneurship education program were compiled the entrepreneurship competence model and pedagogical materials, teaching tools and modules. https://ettevotlusope.edu.ee/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/kujundus-ET-ENG.jpg
- This competency model links value-creating thinking and finding solutions to entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurial competence is defined as a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the implementation of value-creating ideas, the development of learner entrepreneurship and sustainable coping at work and in everyday life. Entrepreneurial competence is applicable in all fields and areas of life and is aimed at the individual's personal development, active participation in society and the labor market.

- Entrepreneurial competence model (in Estonian) is shown: https://xn--ettevtluspe-jfbe.ee/ettevotluspadevuse-mudel/

☐ Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

3. Are there any incentives for ESD on national level which prepare students/youth for the sustainable entrepreneurship and green jobs?

Yes **X** No ☐

- Environmental Investment Centre (kik.ee) is organising a green ideas competition Negavatt for young people aged 18-30 (https://www.negavatt.ee/). Participants will take part in courses instructed by professionals (for example people from cleantech area), best teams receive 1000 euros to develop their idea further and after the development and several pitching three best teams get 10 000 euros for starting their green business. The competition is more and more popular, in 2020 more than 60 green business ideas were sent. Additionally, there is MiniNegavatt for elementary schools to strengthen younger kids entrepreneurship competences.

☐ Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

V. COVID-19 and ESD

1. Has COVID-19 impacted the implementation of UNECE Strategy for ESD in your country?

Yes ☐ No **X** ☐ Please specify

☐ Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

2. Does your country face specific challenges for integrating ESD on the national level during COVID-19?

Yes **X** No

- Since March 2020 schools were closed (distance learning) several times, public institutions were closed (including non-formal educational centres). The most of our environmental education and nature schools out of 100 are small private organisations and their income is coming from educational programs for school kids. Therefore they lost their main income. In 2020 (150 000 euros) and 2021 (175 000 euros) the Government decided to support them from the state supplementary budget that was meant to survive the crisis. The Ministry of Environment organised the supporting system. Through that the state supports continuous ESD and

☐ Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

Herein we would like to stress this topic on our presentation.

3. What are the lessons learnt in your country from COVID-19, which, to your opinion, would strengthen the role of ESD in the national context as a vehicle for empowering youth and citizens to be more resilient in future emergencies?

Yes ☐ No **X**   ☐ Please specify

☐ Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic