



WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

**CONFERENCE
MARCH 30TH 2022**

LUNTEREN, NETHERLANDS

COLOPHON

ORGANISED BY UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON ESD

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WELCOME BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS, UNESCO AND UNECE

video

BY DR. ANNY DE VEER [MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, NATURE AND FOOD QUALITY]



Anny de Veer (Director Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation) mentions the importance of ESD for her Ministry. The latest reports of the IPPC on climate change and of the IPBES on biodiversity underline the need to see challenges for health, food, climate change and biodiversity together. These global challenges are interconnected. Challenges for sustainable food production demand changes in our agriculture. Good educational systems are the fuel for this transition. We need long term investments and involvement of governments, businesses, NGOs and schools to invest in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Her ministry has been doing that for many years now. She hopes that this conference will contribute to the Steering Committee of UNECE on ESD and the ESD strategy for 2022-2030.

video

BY GERBERT KUNST [MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SCIENCE]

Gerbert Kunst (Director International Policy at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) refers to the UNESCO conference on ESD in 2021 with the Berlin Declaration. This agreement matches the voices of citizens and youth asking for action, starting civic initiatives. The world is facing multiple challenges. Climate change is radically impacting our perspectives: the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the vulnerabilities of our societies and the global system; and fundamental rights and freedoms are violated at the European border by the war against Ukraine. These are challenges we could not imagine a few years ago. The need to address the SDGs in an integrated, holistic way is evident. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the implementation of SDG 4 in the Netherlands. Quality education for all is a key enabler for the other SDGs and, as such, vital in achieving Agenda 2030. The Whole School Approach (WSA) is an important tool that can contribute to further development of an integrated approach of sustainability in our educational systems. We cannot do this alone. Therefore we are glad to see that the three ministries involved are working closely together on ESD and WSA in our education. This conference underlines the importance of all forces of UNECE, UNESCO, governments, NGOs and educational institutions joining forces to find concrete solutions and recommendations to further harvest the transitional power of education.



BY DR. ALEXANDER LEICHT [UNESCO: CHIEF OF THE SECTION OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT]

Alexander sees the WSA as an important instrument within the ESD framework. The framework mentions that stronger action for sustainability is needed and that education itself needs to change so that education can become transformative. Within that, we need all the SDGs and use the interlinking between them in our education at schools and in society. The beauty of the WSA concept is that you can start small and it will grow into something more fundamental. The WSA is one of the areas in the ESD framework. Why is the WSA important?

1. WSA makes education content relevant
2. WSA innovates adequacy, related to what is going on in society with all people concerned
3. WSA allows learners to live what they learn
4. WSA changes how education is designed (co-creation and participatory process)
5. WSA opens up the school, learning in/with the community (where formal, non-formal and informal learning come together)
6. WSA revitalises the purpose of education for learners (more coherent, less compartmentalised)

video



BY NONA ILIUKHINA [SECRETARIAT UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON ESD] AND DR. ARAVELLA ZACHARIOU [CHAIR UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON ESD]



Nona gives us all a warm welcome and she places this conference in the context of the WSA Framework in the Strategy on ESD 2021-2030. This conference is the first step in implementation. She thanks the Dutch Government for this kind investment.

Aravella underlines the long term commitment of the Dutch government and the work Roel van Raaij has done for ESD and the Steering Committee since 2005. The fact that three ministries are working together is a good showcase for other countries.

Within the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD, 56 countries are working together. As Steering Committee, we want to support and facilitate countries in implementing WSA/WIA based on the ESD strategy (see figure), strengthen the cooperation within ECE regions and other international policies to establish WSA/WIA at school level. Tools and guidelines for schools are needed which fit within the national educational culture.

At the Ministerial Conference in October 2022 in Cyprus, the new framework will be adopted. The framework is made by experts present at this conference, such as Roel van Raaij, Michael Scoullas and Paul Pace. The framework is not a recipe, but progressive and flexible. Beside implementing the WSA concept, we are facing the challenge to go for the whole institution approach, where every organisation, formal and non-formal, will implement the elements of WSA/WIA.

video

slides



OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE



BY INDY VAN DE SANDE [MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND WATER MANAGEMENT]

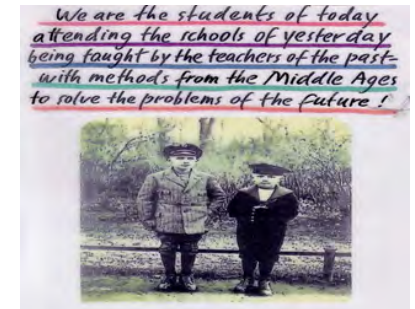
After we present and agree on the state of the art of the WSA, we are able to share best practices, examples and ideas, so that we can inspire and learn from each other: learn, connect and get inspired. Based on the state of the art we will discuss the way forward for the WSA. All information will be shared so that participants and others can use it in the implementation of the WSA in the different countries, for the benefit of sustainability and the learning of youth worldwide.

"you are never too young to lead and never too old to learn"

- Kofi Annan

video

slides



THE WSA FLOWER

BY ROEL VAN RAAIJ [MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, NATURE AND FOOD QUALITY]

The WSA is not completely new. We are building on the shoulders of historic documents, like the tools and quality criteria on ESD, the Eco-Schools programme, and even the publication of Whole School Approaches to Sustainability developed by the Australian government in 2004 (Henderson and Tilbury). And also the UNESCO document Education for Sustainable Development Goals - Learning Objectives must be mentioned as an important and useful document.

Each school can give shape to the WSA in its own way. The WSA framework offers questions to start thinking and acting sustainably according to the ambition of the school. In this framework, we discuss the six learning processes that influence education as a set of questions that can initiate the conversation among all stakeholders.

- Why; to what end do we learn?
- What do we teach?
- How do we learn?
- Who do we learn from?
- Where do we learn?
- Who do we learn with?

video



EXEMPLARY CHALLENGES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

BY PROFESSOR ARJEN WALS [WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY AND RESEARCH] AND
ROSALIE GWEN MATHIE [NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES]

Arjen Wals starts with the flower Rosalie and he developed in 2022. In this flower some words are used we should not forget (see next page), like “vision” in the heart of the flower also stands for “ethos”. And when we look at building management and operations, this also means walking the talk and experimenting. For institutional practices, Arjen suggests that by interrogating, rethinking, and redesigning these practices, the ‘hidden curriculum of unsustainability’ that is often present can also be exposed and addressed.

Rosalie and Arjen collected and analysed exemplary WSA practices from around the world. At the conference, they present their publication with ten examples from Japan, the Netherlands, South Africa, USA, Cyprus, United Kingdom, India, Norway, Hong Kong China and Finland. These examples and others from Mongolia, Uruguay, Kazakhstan, Canada, Turkey and Nepal are available at: www.wur.nl/wholeschoolapproach.

Each example contains a description for a complete understanding, accompanied by an analysis for the six interrelated elements of the WSA. The strengths and challenges are shown as part of the learning process of the reader.



video

slides

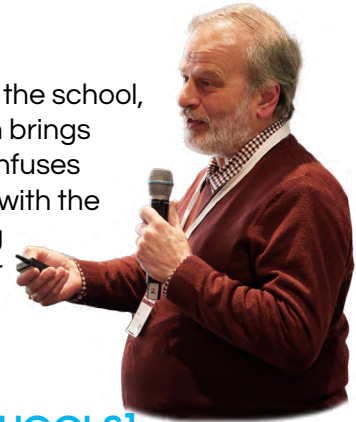




(MORE) EXAMPLES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

BY PROFESSOR PAUL PACE [UNIVERSITY OF MALTA. ECO-SCHOOLS PROGRAMME]

Paul shows us that WSA is a journey and not a destination. This journey systemically anchors sustainability values in all areas of the school, leading towards a collective acceptance of these values that is an integral part of quality education. The Eco-Schools approach brings together the school community, particularly students, to review school practices and lifestyles and develop an action plan that infuses sustainability into school management, the curriculum, and the interaction with society. Through Eco-Schools students interact with the media, politicians, companies and so on, so that they gain practical insights on the issues related to sustainability. Implementing a WSA will always meet barriers and change is never linear. Its success is dependent on finding shared values and adapting our approaches to fit particular niches in the variety of educational realities.



video

slides

BY LINDA VAN MEERSCHE [BELGIUM PROGRAMME MOS SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL. SMART SCHOOLS]

Linda tells us that sustainable schools are smart schools. MOS supports schools (both teachers and school leaders) to create a sustainable learning and living environment in and around their school. We want a society that is socially fair within the limits of the planet's carrying capacity, so people must be equipped with the competences to make conscious choices. MOS and the WSA are a framework, and schools are offered coaches to use this framework. In a small movie a participating school shows how they made an action plan for the municipality with 50 actions to make their village better. The students not only ask for changes, but offer to take part in the realisation.



video

slides

BY DANIEL BARRIE [KEEP SCOTLAND BEAUTIFUL]

Daniel starts by changing the Whole School Approach to the Whole Nation Approach. The framework Learning for Sustainability must be evidenced by teachers across all five professional standards. Within Learning for Sustainability, different programmes are available (Eco Schools; Climate Ready Classrooms; Youth Climate film project; Young Reporters for the Environment; One Planet Picnic; Pocket Garden; Upstream Battle; Climate Action Week; Continued Professional Learning) where sustainability, food, biodiversity, climate change, litter & pollution come together with the voice of the youth and the development of skills we needed for a socially-just, sustainable and equitable society.



video

slides

BY JEANINE RUEHLE AND MARCEL KUPFER [YOUTH PANEL (YOU PAN) GERMANY]



Jeanine and Marcel tell us about the ESD action plan and the ESD implementation structure in Germany. The Youth panel (youpan) and six expert forums advise the national platform ESD. In a multi-stakeholder process they work on the realisation of 130 objectives and 349 measures to build a Whole Institution Approach for ESD. Based on the SDGs and ESD, Youpan is working to improve youth participation, reducing discrimination in educational institutes and demanding that 10% of the GDP will be spent on education. Outstanding practical examples of ESD are awarded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the German UNESCO commission for inspiring other stakeholders. Therefore, WSA/WIA is a strong instrument, but the implementation is a long term process, especially for the education of prospective teachers, and often depends on the engagement of individuals. Enormous progress is made in youth participation and awards, based on the ESD framework.



video

slides

BY SHINETSETSEG ERDENEBAYAR [MONGOLIA, WSA IN MONGOLIA]

Education II is a collaborative initiative and partnership for ESD. With support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation there are now 30 pilot WSA schools. ESD is integrated in the curriculum of all secondary schools. National and local capacities on ESD have been built and awareness on ESD has been increased among adults, parents, communities, private & public organisations. There are five themes (Governance; Human capacity development; Teaching, learning and curriculum; School ground; and Partnership), with each five sub-themes and a monitoring system which forms a good instrument to follow the development of the schools. Conclusion is that this self-assessment provides evidence based information for participating schools to navigate their path to sustainability. Challenges are deepening the holistic approach on ESD among stakeholders through multistakeholder engagement, dissemination, empowering and supporting teachers and communication.

video

slides





THE DUTCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND CURRICULUM

BY SANNE TROMP [DIRECTOR KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION AT SLO, THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT]

Sanne shows that 50% of the Netherlands is in danger of flooding due to climate change. We have to address this in education. The curriculum is not only what works, but also what matters.

The educational system in the Netherlands is based on the principle of freedom of education: 'All persons shall be free to provide education, without prejudice of the authorities'. We have many different types of schools, but the demands in the final exams are the same and the Inspection of Education reviews the school results. At the national level we have 41 core objectives for primary education divided over six learning areas. A similar system is in place for lower secondary education and after that, there are exam programs. The functions and purpose of education are qualification, socialisation and personal development. We have to separate national curriculum and local curriculum. Teachers cry for freedom and call for specification. Text books fill in the gaps.

As a subject, physics has great potential for education about climate change. Previously, students learned the formulas and Einstein, but not about sustainability. This was a reason to review the curriculum, starting in 2014. If we present these curriculum changes as a major change, there will be resistance. Therefore we propose diversification in the exam programmes instead. Teachers and experts work on global themes for the curriculum: sustainability, globalisation, health and technology with learning areas: human & society; human & nature, citizenship. In each learning area, there is a lot of attention for sustainability. There are opposing views of what the focus of the curriculum should be, because the time at school is limited. Therefore we propose an integral, thematic approach instead of a subject-by-subject approach.

video

slides



THE DUTCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND CURRICULUM

To what extent do we want to change society by education? As adults, we are not only responsible for education but also for our planet. When asked what students should learn, the audience says they should learn about climate change, inequality, extreme wealth, solidarity, biodiversity. Furthermore, students should develop skills to live with uncertainties, take action, show solidarity, be agents of change, respect each other. Finally, the question is flipped: not only students have to learn the above, but all of us.

Some elements out of the debate

- In lower secondary education there is a lot of space in the curriculum. In the last years of secondary education there is less space because of the pressure of the exams. Teachers should view the free space as 100%, rather than 30%. They must be supported in getting confidence to do so. Working in learning areas as citizenship can help.
- Curriculum is always political and should not be decided by experts. On the other hand it must be a long-term process so that political winds do not change it.
- The hidden curriculum refers to the image that we educate students in a neo-liberal, capitalist way which assumes students will work and consume in an economic system.
- We can measure qualification in the goals of education. Measuring socialisation and personal development is far more difficult. This is also why we have the system as it is.
- Teachers are not perfect, we cannot project our schemes on them.
- The disciplinary forces of exam programmes, schoolboards and education councils are strong. We focus on maths, reading, writing and the rest. How do we deal with that? A teacher French wants more lessons French, so the curriculum must not be the property of teachers but the property of society.



D U R Z A M E
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LESSONS LEARNED

BY DR. PAUL VARE [UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE UK. EXPERT IN ESD STEERING COMMITTEE ON ESD]



When I got asked to talk about this flower: are there the right petals- and does it matter? It went from: Curriculum- Campus – Community -> Culture -> Communication. I wanted to add another framework in: Professional development. In name of the ENECE, we have a competence framework. In the framework there are three columns: Thinking Holistically, Envision Change and Achieving Transformation. There were 49 competences in this framework but we managed and developed, so we came up with an another framework with twelve competences. Rather than putting them in boxes, we put them on a palette.

Sustainability-related issues have many dimensions. The wicked problems are not necessarily solvable. And it will take a lot of different disciplines to look at them. There will always be a need for discipline-based expertise. We need people who can link the different subjects to work on one sustainable issue. Is it in our teachers' job descriptions to facilitate inter-disciplinary working? Trans-disciplinary boundary-crossing brings in more voices. People outside of the academy, outside of the university, members of the community; they have a lot to offer and bringing them in is also another task we should be thinking about as a role for any institution. This brings us to the

School environment: the wider community. As they say: teachers don't have time for all this, but others will love to help you so it's about bringing the community in again and encouraging young people to be part of finding who might come in. This comes back to not being an autocratic school, but actually a school with a democratic habit of mind and processes in place.

video

slides

Looking at the curriculum, you should pick a theme and pose three questions for investigation:

- Why is this an issue?
- What are the impacts (now and projected)?
- What can 'we' do about it

The question of vision – and purpose – is critical... not just for an educational institution but for the 'institution' of education itself. So maybe rather than the flower, we should be thinking about a flowerbed, maybe a whole forest of these flowers. It is undemocratic to just change the vision of education. Maybe in a democracy it is the wrong thing to do. Schools could be choosing and selecting. But if every school is choosing sustainability and making sure this flower is there, you are actually changing something in the system.

Shifting to the purpose of education – in an non-authoritarian manner – is the hardest thing to achieve and yet perhaps the most impactful change we can make to the system. Don't stop with your school or schools in your area. Why not make it a national habit? You're not alone, we're doing it bit by bit. Our ambitions are endless, keep going.

LESSONS LEARNED

BY DANIELLA TILBURY [UK GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON ESD]

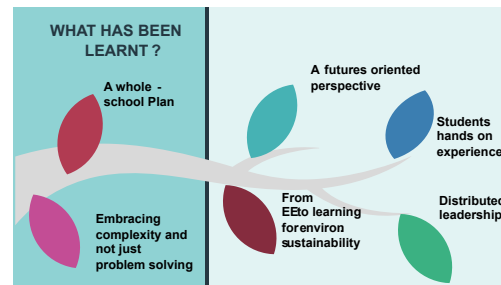


20 years of Whole School Approach: what have we learned?

When we speak of WSA, we are referring to establishing a culture of sustainability in the school:

“This approach to education is not simply about connecting the various aspects of the school (or teachers efforts), it is also about redesigning the student experiences so that it can meaningfully develop mindsets and competences that enable them to contribute to sustainability.”

“We must help students shape a rapidly changing landscape rather than simply learn how to analyse or understand it as it is changing..... We need to accelerate and mainstream learning for sustainability and connect policy and practices so that students can be real influences and not just observers concerned about our future.”



video

slides

In summary, when a school adopts a whole school approach to environmental sustainability, it questions:

- What is taught (curriculum; hidden curriculum)?
- Where does learning take place (classroom; school buildings; campus; community)?
- Who do we learn from (teachers; school staff parents; partnerships)?
- How is learning taking place (action learning; participatory learning; critical reflective learning; values clarification)?
- Is there a culture of sustainability? (can staff, students and wider community see the alignment between the what, where, who and how?)

Complexity

Active learning experiences are critical. Through these we need to embrace complexity and not just problem solving to help our students carve new pathways for a sustainable future. The OECD learning compass is helpful: students learn to navigate themselves through unfamiliar context and reposition their learning so they have a better well-being by 2030.

Snakes and Ladders

We need to identify those 'ladders' or opportunities so we can improve the impact of our work. We also need to be mindful of those 'snakes'; these are not people, they are agendas and obstacles that can challenge or stop our efforts. Many people say that COVID-19 was one of those 'snakes', it took us back in terms of implementation. I have seen COVID-19 also being a ladder: it helped connect and bring the community together and it advanced new ways of learning for sustainability. We learned that these issues cannot be solved by a person alone; it required a coordinated response within which we could all play our part. It got us much closer to experiencing what a Whole School or Whole-Society Approach to sustainability can look like. concerned about our future."

Questions for further consideration:

- What policy drivers support WSA?
- What impact could school inspection or self-evaluation policies on sustainability have on a Whole School Approach?
- Are there differences between policy and implementation at primary and secondary level?
- What other strategies and initiatives have been adopted to advance the goal of living sustainably in school?

Policy context (Tilbury and Henderson 2006):

Relevant	- to school's mission; national priorities; community needs; regional environmental priorities
Responsive	- adaptable; changing nature of sustainability challenges; rejected a one-size-fits-all approach of sustainability
Resourced	- with expertise; physical resources technologies to make the transition; medium-term finance to execute plans
Reformative	- agenda is not simply one of adding on environmental or SDG themes to the curriculum but that of reframing the educational experience
Reflective	- skilled in critical reflection and evaluation; critical thinking competences; saving to become a learning organization



WORKSHOPS

BY SANDRA PELLEGRAM [NATIONAL COORDINATOR SDGS] AND GIUSEPPE VAN DER HELM [COOPERATION LEARNING FOR TOMORROW, COORDINATOR SDG4]

video

Sandra Pellegrom and Giuseppe van der Helm's session focuses on the importance of connection, which is linked to Sustainable Development Goal 4. SDG 4 focuses on the quality of education, which is strongly related to poverty and gender equality. A basis from certain SDGs is needed to succeed in other 'higher' SDGs like education quality. Schools frequently claim to provide high-quality education, however their approach to evaluate quality differs from the WSA's perspective. When it comes to WSA ideals, schools are often behind. The main goal of education is to prepare children for the future. The issue in the Netherlands is that the extra time spent on teacher professionalisation is used to ensure that students obtain higher grades. Our educational system puts a focus on grades, but knowledge is only meaningful if you know how to put it to use. The holistic view is hardly used. The following sentence exemplifies this point: 'Daddy, I don't learn anything about life in school.' Other points that came out of the group session are cooperation between municipalities and schools is needed, making connections is important, and there are sufficient great examples available already so we have to use and learn from these examples.



KARIANNE DJOYADHININGRAT-HOL (SLO, THE NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT) AND MONIEK WARMER



Karianne Hol and Moniek Warmer of the SLO organise an interactive workshop. Participants are invited to pick a photo and write down three keywords that reflect their vision of sustainability education. Using the 'curricular spider web', it is explained that by placing the vision in the centre of the spider web, you can see that it consists of multiple aspects. For example the aspects: 'With which materials do they learn?', 'With whom do they learn?' and 'How do they learn?'. You can improve sustainability education by approaching each of these components separately for your vision, and by considering where the points for improvement lie. A few important lessons that emerged from the workshop are the importance of involvement of the school with society, but also vice versa. We must listen to each other; also to the people outside your own bubble. Everyone can devise and take concrete steps - large or small - to get a little closer to your ideal society.

WORKSHOPS

HELEENTJE SWART [REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FRIESLAND]



Heleentje Swart discusses in her workshop the shift from a linear society to a circular society. This shift is harder than schools think it is. In a rapidly changing society, it is quite logical to think in a circular way in a school structure. Two videos are shown during the workshop. The first one is about Aeres MBO Life Science, working together with Bakery Sweets to solve the problem of food waste. This example shows that real societal problems can come into education. Not just learning the knowledge, but applying it to real situations. The misconception is that you have to learn first, before going into society. The second video is about bridging the gap between primary and secondary school ambition. It is critical to consider not merely a business strategy. We're bringing in more and more people. Systemic anchoring is the direction we want to go. We can make sustainable development a reality by consistently applying design principles. It is up to us to assist and modify the way our children are educated. You and I are the ones who create organisations. To achieve the improvements we seek, we need scientists and a practical mindset.

slides

ANDRE DE HAMER [DUURZAME PABO, FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY, TEACHERS COLLEGE FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION]

During André de Hamer's workshop, the participants look into how we learn. This is done with the support of twelve competences, such as integration, connection, responsibility and reflection, to name a few. To work with the SDGs, these twelve competences are required. During the session, participants are asked to create a lesson plan for pupils that relates to one of the competences. For example, one exercise proposed by one of the participants is having kids design their own garden. This activity relates to the competence of 'creativity,' as well as 'learning by doing'. The art of teaching is that we have to give examples and extend these examples in different directions. This may inspire other educators to be more innovative. The main takeaway from this workshop is that competences can be linked to the SDGs, allowing you to work on the SDG with a lesson. There is thus a connection between the competences and the SDGs, as well as the educator/ student/ content.

slides



WORKSHOPS

GERBEN DE VRIES [DUURZAME PABO, FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY, TEACHERS COLLEGE FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION]



Gerben de Vries begins by playing the guitar and singing the “Garden Song” to illustrate the competence model he will address during his workshop. His session is centred around the question, “Who do we learn from?” And it focuses on the professional development part from the WSA flower, which is strongly linked to the pedagogy and didactics part. Competence models can help teachers to determine the competences they need to teach in order to provide education for sustainable development. Gerben himself actually prefers to use the word learning instead of education, because learning involves two-way communication while the word education refers to the level of learning in the educational system. Gerben explains that the old competence models had to be translated for practical use because PABO students found the models too hard due to their scientific writing. As a result, all of the previous competence models have been combined into a single table. In the table, twelve competences are mentioned such as involvement, practice and empathy. During the workshop the participants are asked which competence they identify with, and it is interesting to hear that everyone identifies with a different competence.

slides

ANTHONY DIXON [METANOIA]

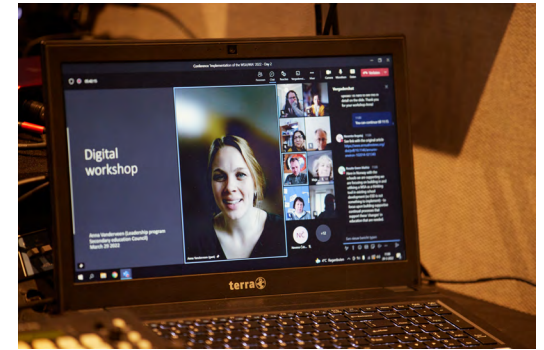
Anthony Dixon, founder and CEO of Metanoia, talks about a self-assessment tool for measuring sustainability in schools. The goal is to use an assessment tool to help schools become more sustainable communities and come up with recommendations and a long-term plan regarding sustainability. Schools are active in the area of sustainability and need direction on what to do next and how to bring everything together. The assessment tool tries to capture the essence of the sustainability at school in just 25 questions. The initial data analysis from the first 30 responses is presented at the workshop. It is interesting what the data shows us about where schools stand in terms of sustainability, since there is no other data set available. “Sustainability is not something we should be grading, but it is important to monitor progress,” Dixon says. “What is not measured can’t be managed.” Several examples of how the participating schools are doing at various aspects of sustainability are shared throughout the workshop. For instance, the stakeholder involvement and the extent to which the school engages all of its stakeholders. “Only 7% of the schools is doing a decent job with that,” Dixon says, “while stakeholder involvement is necessary to become effectively sustainable. Otherwise implemented measures do not take root.” With this tool, data on sustainability may be collected, allowing other schools to compare themselves on where they are on their sustainability journey.

video



ANNA VANDERVEEN [LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME, SECONDARY EDUCATION COUNCIL]

Anna Vanderveen talks about the implementation of the Whole School Approach (WSA) during her workshop and what is needed to enable this transition process. WSA is about providing high-quality education, not the label WSA. We must ask ourselves, 'What kind of initiator of what kind of changes are you facilitating?' as Anna describes it. In order to achieve education with a focus on sustainability, our current system's values must be questioned. During an engaging discussion between workshop participants, the focus is on remanifesting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). ESD is positioned as an educational development, but it should be at the core of education. Students can adapt to these changes, but as one participant states during the discussion, "We are all standing in the way of progress. With our current failings, we should not educate students for modern-day society. Because then ESD is hopeless." Furthermore, participants agree there is a lot of willingness and opportunity, but that the current approach does not use the full potential.



video

100 MONTHS TO CHANGE (FILM)

BY CHARLOTTE EXCERCATTE

A teacher can make the difference. Perhaps you also had a teacher in primary or secondary school who contributed to what you are doing today. Teachers are essential to your development. Charlotte also had a teacher, which she refers to. She owns the company 100 Months to Change and with this company she owns the film rights of the film from Interface: an inspiring film about a floor covering company that has started operating completely sustainably. In her session she shows fragments from this film.

Do you want to see the whole film? Please email Charlotte (charlotte@Transform4C.com) and she will send you the film.

slides





WISE CONFERENCE

March 28-30, 2022

for teachers (and others)

what do we teach?

curriculum

vision

why and to what end
do we learn?

who do we learn with?

environment:
school

professional
development

EXCURSIONS

AERES HOGE SCHOOL FLORIAD

Almere, where Aeres University of Applied Sciences is located, is the destination of one of the excursions. They are still preparing the Floriade Exhibition, which they are allowed to organise this year. The Floriade is an horticultural exposition held every ten years. With an outer wall full of plants, an interior full of greenery, and a roof terrace with a vegetable garden, it is immediately clear that this is a suitable location for the Floriade. Sustainability is a top priority throughout the school. Rainwater is collected, for example, to water the plants, and it is connected to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year the school introduced the Floriade Educational Programme (EPF). Students will work on a real-world organisational issue relating to one of the following themes: making the city more green, well fed, healthy, or energetic. Students will arrive at a solution to a problem based on supporting teaching material. In the end, a winner will be chosen within each theme.



NATURE AS LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



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AOC ZONE.COLLEGE DOETINCHEM

Zone.college is a vocational school for 'green' education. In Doetinchem we are received by three students, a teacher from the Eco Team, sustainability-coordinator Vivian Siebering and the head of the location. First, they give a presentation about their plans to re-use sewage water: a project inspired by water reusage during space expeditions. Afterwards, the participants get a tour of the new school building and the school grounds, showing all the sustainable aspects of the school. A short impression: a wadi for rainwater storage, an animal enclosure with solar panels, a green roof and inside the school we see a green wall and a lot of plants. Zone.college Doetinchem is a 'zero-natural gas' school, aiming to become energy neutral in the future. They recycle waste, have alternative options available in the canteen for vegetarian students and provide tap water to refill water bottles. And last but not least, they communicate about their sustainable actions via the image of a cool frog and the slogan 'make earth cool again'!



WAY FORWARD

video



PROFESSOR MICHAEL SCOULLOS [CHAIRMAN MIO-ECSDE, MEMBER OF UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON ESD]

Professor Michael Scoulllos says that sustainability is everywhere, for every school. Sustainability is not something for the elite. In education we should use the local opportunities in a modest way. At the same time we have internationally different variants of the WSA concept. They are all complementary. We must feel comfortable with what we have. UNECE, UNESCO, EU must bring these together instead of raising more questions about identities.

BERNARD COMBES [EDUCATION ESD SESSION, UNESCO HEADQUARTERS]

In the ESD Framework we have five priorities (policy, learning environment, capacity building, youth and accelerate solutions at local level). WSA should be in it and can help realising these topics. We are facing multiple crises (environmental, health, political and others). And education should be in phase with the outside world, if it is in the curriculum or not. We have to think and work together outside the school walls. We might even talk about a whole society approach. UNESCO survey shows that many teachers do not feel confident to teach about climate and that climate is in no more than 50% of the curricula. Ministers of Environment and Education must work closely together.



DR. ARAVELLA ZACHARIOU [CHAIR OF THE UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON ESD]

What is the New Strategy Framework UNECE region 2022-2030? The strategy has six aims (Strengthening the position of ESD; Identifying realistic and measurable targets; Supporting education systems, educational community and institutions; Assessing national and regional progress on ESD; Strengthening people to reconsider their lifestyles; Establishing collaborations) and four main strands (Quality Education; Whole institution Approach; ICT and ESD; Entrepreneurship, Employment and Innovation), with Youth being the key task force for all four main strands. The new strategy takes into account the previous and present frameworks of UNECE, the EU Green Deal, the UN global agenda for SD and SDGs and the UNESCO framework for 2030 on ESD. The new strategy is based on an analysis in 56 ECE countries. In the report that will be published in May 2022 you see the match of seven issues out of the Strategy for ESD and the questions we raise with the WSA flower. For every issue there is a match (see slides).



slides

The six main questions for WSA/WIA strategy are:

1. Can (and how) a universal framework of indicators be formed in order to practically address WIA in ESD in all education levels?
2. What other policies, tools, processes are needed to facilitate systematic implementation of WIA in ESD across the ECE region?
3. In which ways should school facilities and infrastructure be improved to essentially function alongside all other aspects of WIA on ESD?
4. How can educational institutions be supported to integrate WSA/WIA long-term and systematically?
5. How can we assess and what type of system of indicators is there for WIA in ESD support countries to assess the quality of its implementation for sustainability?
6. How can the systematic and long term implementation of WIA in ESD be supported beyond school education?

For 2022-2025 the focus is: (1) Create and promote a Whole Institution Framework ; (2) Develop a set of quality criteria for institutions seeking to adopt, and (3) Tool box with ideas/examples

Conclusion:

After the presentations and debate we conclude that

- WSA is the base for restructuring and transforming schools to learning communities of ESD. For integrating ESD there are many different models and frameworks. In various regions there are many examples of good practices regarding WSA implementation. We have different
- WSA based on flexibility and enables alternatives solutions for the same problem. WSA take in to account the particular school and local context and the specific cultural, social and environmental problems.
- It is very important at international level to work together and develop a common language. We need to move further with common goals and different realities instead of discussing about it. 'We have the same bosses and the same clients and we share the same ideas'. We can see what joined activities can be organised to facilitate organisation in countries better.
- Strategies, Frameworks and the WSA concept is not what is implemented in the classroom. It is the every day school life. It's the essence of school culture. There is an urgency on implementing ESD and WSA even though that there are questions here and there. We do need frameworks and concepts, not as a «recipe», but as "vehicle" that will help countries, school communities, teachers and students to understand ESD as something meaningful that can contribute significantly to the improvement of the quality of life.
- WSA, its' action and solutions should include formal, non and informal education.



WRAP UP AND DEBATE

BY PROFESSOR ARJEN WALS [WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY AND RESEARCH]

video

Arjen Wals reflects:

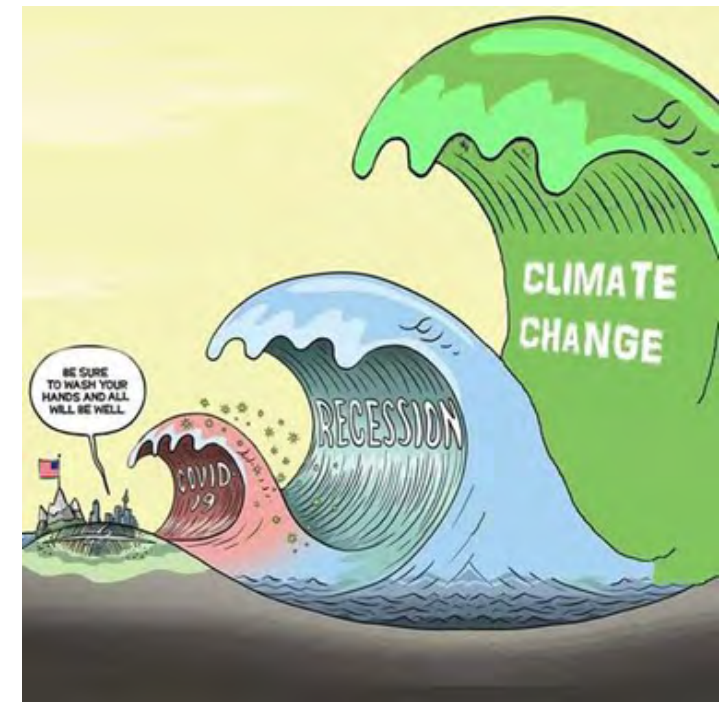
- Twenty years ago at Rio, when ESD and WSA started, there was a small group of people from environmental education. Nowadays we see a wider community from different sectors and ministries. We all see it's time for transition in education. Looking at a school in the neighbourhood, you see aspects like democracy, local food, empowering, place based education and so on. The WSA model helps to connect these issues.
- You see the whole, where the connections are more important than separate parts. It's no longer the right and left part of the brain for social and cognitive development, the whole brain is more than the sum of parts. This also counts for the whole child, whole community, whole school and whole earth. We have to look at it in a more systemic, holistic way. Formal, non-formal, informal or intergenerational learning are all part of learning.
- In this development teachers become brokers, who are able to make connections between knowledge and real life.
- At this conference we can discuss the words and concepts we use. Some say environmental sustainability is the focus, others would say it is a contradiction. For teachers it does not matter. When we look at the project in Norway, where schools have their own WSA coordinator, you see that they are involved in a long term process, but they are gaining traction. They map what they already do and what questions they have, they build capacity and organise trainings.
- The drivers can be different people, sometimes a school leader but also teachers, parents, students, janitors can be important. Look at the points of intervention where you can make the biggest impact. Solutions we see are not always evidence based, a visible change can be of more importance.
- We have to (de)institutionalise schools. By seeing a school as an institute, you push students in a frame. Do we want to pacify children or do we activate them? Children have a lot of wisdom, they have a natural way of system thinking. In schools as institutes they lose this ability. We should give them space instead of 'learning for the test'. If the system is based on testing, we will organise education for testing. As Maslow said: "Not everything that counts can be measured and not everything that can be measured counts". Of course we need some disciplinary knowledge, but education should be driven by passion and curiosity.
- ESD is not negative. It should address questions regarding realising a healthy, liveable, safe, peaceful, friendly earth. In de flower presented earlier you see a ring around the flower with political choices.

Kees Both, an educational expert who passed away last year, was worried about the "measurement culture" and that educational inspectors make their reports based on scorecards. Kees said the he can do without it. He just looks around. In the school's playground you see if parents stay, if children come by bike and if the playground is inviting for multiple usages. Inside the school you see if doors are closed or open with the sound of the school, on the walls you see if work of students is from last week or from last year. By looking around you know more than enough.



DEBATE


- A **WSA coordinator at school is one of the solutions but a critical one**. In Norway they have developed coordinating teams. At 25% participation there is a tipping point: then the team gains traction. This works also for teachers and staff. It is a challenge to create time for teachers and make the job more appealing with more status.
- There is **no active link between schools and research institutes**. We do not have long term data. Teachers in Finland can use some time for research in their classroom. Learning organisations is normal in companies, but ironically schools are not learning organisations.
- Paul Vare showed how the WSA flower spread all over the world, but in **each country and each school in its own way**. In Norway you see the peer-learning by participating schools: school leaders, teachers and students visit each other and they can feel the difference.
- Symbiose between school en society? The main thing is that **education should always be driven by the teachers and students**, not by companies, NGOs or local governments. A bike repair shop at school seems bad for business, but it is the other way around: parents will buy their bikes at the shops that support schools. When you look at solar panels at school, different ministries, provinces, municipalities, NGOs an private companies want to support. In the Norway example, the **school coordinator is responsible for the inside and outside coordination**. Imagine when schools have space to make this an educational project, so that students can apply for subsidy, ask back VAT, do the math for the costs and benefits and the CO2 reduction. Wouldn't that be challenging education?
- We are now in the situation that the walls has been torn down, learning occurs not only in school, it happens everywhere. **In connection with suppliers, students learn a lot that is not examinable**. For kids it is one reality. Children should have the privilege to explore multiple realities, you do this by going outside. Learning to know, learning to do, learning to care, peer to peer, intergenerational learning, formal, nonformal and informal learning is all mixed. It is about wisdom, which can't be measured.
- Some say that young people learn more about climate change outside school than inside. **Youth participation and empowering of young people is critical in education**. If young people are not part, we are missing the whole point. You see that schools reacted differently at the nationwide climate strikes (not allowed, accept, promote or facilitate). We must upgrade this informal learning outside school.
- **Teachers are bonding and bridging**. In higher education you often see transdisciplinary teams of students. Schools are living labs. We need to combine subjects like nature and science, setting those double timeslots aside for learning outside the school, so that students can go out and reflect back at school. It's **a different way of organising and accessing**. Students can learn in a learning ecosystem.



- **Investing in capacity building** should make us think of people and places in society that can help. It is also capacity building to find people you would not think of at first. Do not start with lectures and sharing expertise. Talk about vulnerabilities and questions. If you do so, you immediately have a connection.
- There are many kinds of teachers. Some want integrated education, these teachers will use opportunities in their own classroom or in society. Others love their subject like physics or math. Both is good. One hopes that a school has both kinds of teachers.
- 174 Eco-Schools in the Netherlands 59.000 worldwide. Do we make it visible enough to inspire each other, to reach the tipping point in society? **There is a perfect storm brewing. You cannot avoid sustainability.** Now see everybody is talking about sustainability from different angles. Also parents are calling to ask what their children are learning about the future, including #metoo, solidarity, peace. These are waves, we're now on top of the sustainability wave.



THANKS FROM UNECE AND THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT



On behalf of UNECE Nona Iliukhina expresses their gratitude to the Dutch Government for organising this conference. At this beautiful venue we are all inspired by each other and by all the best practices that were shared at the conference. Roel van Raaij speaks on behalf of the three ministries. He looks back on a fruitful conference which can not only help all participants in person and online, but also new countries and new parties that will start with the WSA approach. Each country has its own culture, educational system and challenges and therefore learning together and learning with each other is more satisfying than trying to invent the wheel over and over again.

A special word of thanks is directed at Hak van Nispen and the team of SME for the excellent organisation and the flexibility shown during the conference.