

UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development
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REPORT BY FINLAND

Education for Sustainable Development in the Finnish Way
Activities during 2007-08

Reported by the Finnish Co-Lead Party Team for Baltic 21 Education:
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The governmental programme on SD and it's follow-up

The Programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second Government (April 2007) continues the implementation of the National Strategy on Sustainable Development (June 2006). Public authorities and municipalities are now encouraged to produce programmes and strategies on sustainable development in their respective areas. For the implementation an action programme has been developed, which:

- Entitles ministries and their sector authorities to enhance sustainable development in their areas.
- Encourages municipalities to produce programmes and strategies on sustainable development, to integrate sustainable development in their activities and to develop local and regional networking.
- Includes follow-up and evaluation measures of the recommendations in the Government Programme.

The Ministry of Education makes a follow-up of the implementation of the programme in its performance and target negotiation with universities and other educational authorities during spring 2008. The first concluding national level follow up will be in autumn 2008.

Integration of ESD in the national educational system

As reported on earlier, Finland has ESD strategies and action plans for different educational levels. ESD has been integrated in national core curricula for basic education and in general and vocational upper secondary education. It has also been included in the Government's development plan for education and research already in 2003, and is thus part of the performance agreements concluded by the universities. Also the new development plan for education and research 2007-2010 includes sustainable development.

Respecting the autonomy of the institutions for higher education also in the field of sustainable development, the institutions are mainly supported by the provision of toolkits (i.e. literature) and financial support for networking. During the year 2007 universities and universities of applied

science have intensified their cooperation on education for sustainable development and made it more visible both to the academic community and to the public. In addition, cooperation between university networks on development policy, education and research is ongoing.

As a contribution from Finland to the Decade on ESD, the Ministry of Education produced the following book in English during 2007 :

Towards Sustainable Development in Higher Education – Reflections (Publications of the Ministry of Education 2007:6, www.minedu.fi/publications)

The first book in the series of books on higher education and sustainable development by the Ministry of Education was published in Finnish in 2006. In 2008 the Ministry of Education published another book in Finnish "Towards Higher Education. A Pedagogic Approach". These books are based on articles by representatives of the academic community and edited by academic experts.

The position of sustainable development on the Finnish education and research policy agenda is further strengthened by a Government decision, which defines sustainable development as one of four sector research areas. The so called "sector research" is in Finland undertaken by research agencies and universities for the benefit of different Finnish Ministries in their political decision making.

International cooperation on ESD and within DESD

Before the Sixth Environment for Europe ministerial conference in Belgrade conference in October 10-12, 2007, the conclusion could be drawn that Finland has fulfilled well the targets of the first stage of the UNECE strategy on ESD. The challenges for the implementation of the second stage include the effective follow up system of the national strategies.

The Ministry of Education has shared the Lead Party work with Lithuania since 2005 within the education sector in the Baltic 21 – the regional agenda 21 in the Baltic Sea Region. Finland took over this task from Sweden, who did the pioneering work regarding the Baltic 21 Education strategy during the previous years (2002-2005). The Baltic 21 Education strategy and the UNECE strategy for the Decade on Education for sustainable development are created along the same model. The Finnish Lead Party responsibility will be handled over to Norway during spring 2008, while Lithuania remains as the Co-Lead Party.

During this spring the Finnish Ministries of Environment and Foreign affairs have made a decision for Finland to withdraw from the cooperation in the framework of the Baltic 21, and to strengthen the efforts in the framework of the European Union. This does not change the Finnish participation in the UNECE work on Education for Sustainable Development. From the Finnish point of view Baltic 21 has been successful especially in its cooperation on education for sustainable development. This cooperation and networking can continue by the committed partners. The announcement is attached to the report.

Education for global responsibility

The focus on education for sustainable development has been widened during the year 2007. A project at the Ministry of Education on global education – Education for Global Responsibility - started in spring 2007. The project aims to enhance global education according to the following objective set by the General Assembly of the Council of Europe (2003): to promote global education to strengthen public awareness of sustainable development, bearing in mind that global education is essential for all citizens to acquire the knowledge and skills to understand, participate in and interact critically with our global society, as empowered global citizens. The foundation to this objective was laid by the Maastricht Global Education Declaration in 2002 :

Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all. Global Education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education, being the global dimensions of Education for Citizenship.

This all-encompassing definition of global education was felt to be a valid starting point for the Ministry's project on education for global responsibility. The definition includes five key sub-concepts (development education, human rights education, education for sustainability, education for peace and conflict prevention and intercultural education) as well as one meta-concept: global education as the global dimension of education for citizenship.¹

The project started with a conceptual clarification of the framework for 'global education' and 'global responsibility'; this analysis is included in the publication *Education for Global Responsibility – Finnish Perspectives* (Publications of the Ministry of Education 2007:31): also this entire publication in English is available at the Ministry's web-pages (www.minedu.fi/publications) as a contribution to the DESD,

The project organised a high-level seminar for invited researchers and policy-makers in October 2007 based on this publication. The outcome of this seminary will hopefully be a "merged conclusion" on what we mean by global education and include visions, strategies as well as proposals for the implementation of education for global responsibility. The Ministry will publish a summary and conclusive report of this seminar in April 2008; this publication will include articles in Finnish, Swedish and English and it will be put on the Ministry's web-pages.

Within the project Global Responsibility at least one more book will be published in Finnish in 2008. "Business, civic organizations and the media as promoters of global responsibility". Issues which have been debated publicly have been chosen as themes for this book, which will be structured as a dialogue between research and enterprises, NGO's and media in Finland. This book will be launched at a big seminar in November.

¹(http://www.coe.int/t/e/north%2Dsouth_centre/programmes/3_global_education/b_Maastricht_Declaration/Maastricht_Declaration.pdf.)