

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

ON PROGRESS MADE IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNECE STRATEGY FOR ESD & ON ADDRESSING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION THROUGH ESD¹

Annex (Slovenia)

Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development from Preschool to Pre-university Education

“Education for sustainable development is a life-wide lifelong endeavour which challenges individuals, institutions and societies to view tomorrow as a day that belongs to all of us – or it will not belong to anyone.”

From the declaration of the United Nations,

A Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005—2014

I INTRODUCTION

The strategy of development for Slovenia is founded on sustainable development (SD) as the central perspective, which includes economic vitality, justice, social cohesion, protection of the environment and sustainable management of natural resources. In order to implement sustainable development, Slovenia will ensure the physical, social, cultural and economic well-being of its citizens, and at the same time take into consideration its responsibility to future generations and their natural and social environment.

Slovenia understands sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Bruntland Commission, 1987).²

Education for sustainable development (ESD) includes interrelated environmental, economic and social issues.

Key themes of sustainable development encompass a wide range of issues, among others citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility in a local and global context, democracy and governance, justice, security, human rights, alleviation of poverty, health care, gender equity, cultural diversity, rural and urban development, economy, sustainable production and consumption patterns, corporate responsibility, environmental protection, natural resource management, and biological and landscape diversity.³ Addressing such diverse themes of ESD requires a holistic approach.

Education for sustainable development does not represent just another supplement to the current general education, nor is its goal solely the protection of nature. It is also:

- a comprehensive, holistic, harmonious pedagogical process which takes into account the relationship between human and nature, as well as relationships among human beings;
- a process which enables an understanding of the universal connection between the economic, social and political systems and of the co-dependence of human beings living in different parts of the world; and
- an active endeavour to solve humanity’s current and future environmental and social problems.

In Slovenia, the ESD priorities include:

- respect for general human values,

¹ The document has not been formally edited.

² “Our common future”, World Commission on Environment and Development (Bruntland Commission), 1987.

³ UNECE strategy of education for sustainable development, adopted at the high-level meeting of ministers for education and environment, Vilnius, March 2005.

- active citizenship and participation,
- intercultural dialogue and linguistic diversity,
- preservation of nature and the environment (ecological consciousness and responsibility),
- encouraging quality education – stimulating working and learning environments,
- quality interpersonal relations, development of social competences (non-violence, tolerance, cooperation, respect, etc.),
- encouraging a healthy lifestyle (physical and mental health),
- building up healthy self-confidence and self-image of the individual,
- quality use of leisure time,
- development of entrepreneurship as a contribution to the development of society and the environment, and
- learning about different areas of culture and encouragement of creativity and activity.

Education for Sustainable Development occupies a central position in the development of education in the Republic of Slovenia.

II GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The main purpose of the guidelines for education for sustainable development in preschool and pre-university education is to emphasize the importance of education for sustainable development and to show opportunities for the implementation of sustainable development in formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Goals which will enable the implementation of education for sustainable development are:

- (a) to ensure normative foundations which support ESD,
- (b) to train educators for ESD,
- (c) to ensure suitable didactic and other materials for implementation of ESD,
- (d) to promote research on and development of ESD, and
- (e) to strengthen stakeholders' cooperation on ESD at all levels (state, regional and community).

In achieving these goals, we consider the following principles:

1. Responsible behaviour toward self, and the social and natural environments: ESD demands a responsible attitude of the individual towards self, fellow human beings and nature.
2. Addressing the ethical dimension, SD should include issues of equity, solidarity and interdependence among members of the same generation and between different generations.
3. Respecting human rights: a crucial principle of sustainable development. ESD is tightly connected with human rights education, which considers the development and understanding of the responsibilities and implementation of these rights in every community and society as its goal. In this sense, it contributes to long-term prevention of violation of human rights and violent conflicts, and encourages equality and sustainable development, while strengthening the participation of people through the decision-making process within a democratic system.
4. Integration of all elements of ESD (encompassing interrelated environmental, economic and social issues): ESD broadens the concept of environmental education, which has increasingly addressed a wide range of developmental subjects and other targeted forms of education. Therefore, environmental education should be elaborated and complemented with other fields of education in an integrative approach towards education for sustainable development.
5. A holistic approach to ESD: the key themes of sustainable development are very diverse, and therefore a holistic approach is necessary to address such themes.
6. Intercultural dialogue: open, respectful and equal exchange of views and opinions among individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds, which is to subsequently contribute towards a better understanding of different views, values and ways of thinking. Thus, different cultures can peacefully and creatively coexist, develop a sense of community and commitment, and cultivate mutual respect and understanding of each other.

7. Systemic critical and creative thinking in regard to SD: as a basic condition for SD measures, children or pupils on all levels should be encouraged toward systemic critical and creative thinking in the local, national and global framework.
8. Raising awareness of SD: modern social and economic development and environmental issues demand from society as whole the promotion of knowledge and conduct, with respect of SD principles.
9. Lifelong learning of the entire population for SD: ESD represents a lifelong process, ranging from early childhood to the adult years, which goes beyond the framework of formal education.
10. Partnership on a local, regional, national and international level: ESD should take into consideration diverse local, regional, national and international circumstances as well as the global context, and strive to seek a balance between different interests;
11. Social partnership: it is essential for ESD to develop a multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnership between partners, such as professionals in education, children/pupils, and national and local governments, as well as representatives of civil society. Above all, representatives of economy and science should be involved in ESD, which will enable economic well-being in accordance with scientific findings.

III IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDELINES

We will strive to achieve the goals of education for sustainable development within preschool education, and also in further education on various levels.

On the level of nursery school/school, the guidelines are implemented through:

- cross-curricular cooperation or integration of activities and subject matter, as well as through problem- and project-based learning;
- encouraging holistic, systemic, independent, objective, realistic critical thinking of children/pupils;
- developing democratic values and methods of influencing social and economic development;
- motivating and encouraging children/pupils for active citizenship, and encouraging the belief that our personal decisions and small steps in the right direction can contribute to sustainable development;
- school educational plan (managing pupils' behaviour) as an obligatory part of the annual work plan, whose goals are, among others, a positive attitude of children/pupils and preparation for life in the local community;
- creating and nurturing a pleasant, creative and cooperative climate in nursery school or school;
- quality communication between professionals in education and children/pupils, including a respectful relationship between them;
- exertion of influence on the formation of attitudes, values and life habits of children/pupils, which enable sustainable development;
- introduction of approaches which enable insight into the short- and long-term local and global, ecological, social, cultural and political consequences of conflicts of interest between individuals or groups, as well as of their decisions and conduct;
- learning about the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of one's own nation and humankind as a whole, by promoting intercultural dialogue;
- provision of inservice training to create an efficient learning environment and implementation of learning methods which will foster the principles and goals of sustainable development;
- cooperation of all actors within the pedagogical process – children/pupils, teachers and other school staff – in implementing the goals for sustainable development;

- cooperating with the local community, governmental institutions, companies and non-governmental organizations and associations, and also establishing connections with pre-existing initiatives from the field of environmental education;
- cooperation of nursery schools and schools on a national as well as international level;
- performing curricular and extracurricular activities and initiatives focusing upon implementation of sustainable development; and
- consistent self-evaluation to check realization of the goals set for education for sustainable development.

The Ministry of Education and Sport will strive to implement the guidelines through:

- providing normative foundations supporting ESD;
- incorporating elements of sustainable development into curricular documents (for instance syllabi);
- incorporating elements of SD in knowledge assessment;
- providing suitable programmes of inservice teacher training;
- encouraging research and development activities in the field of ESD;
- incorporating ESD as a quality indicator on the national level;
- cooperating with various governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations; and
- encouraging cooperation with social partners.

Public institutions from the field of education will strive to implement the guidelines through:

- offering consultations and professional support for implementation of the tasks assigned to nursery schools and schools;
- developing suitable instruction materials;
- developing and implementing programmes for the realization of ESD;
- monitoring realization of the goals assigned to ESD and reporting about their progress to councils of experts and the Minister of Education and Sport; and
- proposing measures for the improvement of ESD.

Non-governmental organizations will strive to implement guidelines through:

- cooperating with nursery schools, schools, public institutions, local communities and government offices in planning and implementing projects, teacher training and the provision of materials; and
- cooperating in the process of raising public awareness on ESD.

Local communities will strive to implement the guidelines through:

- cooperating with nursery schools, schools, government offices, public institutions, and local non-governmental organizations in planning and implementing projects; and
- cooperating in the process of raising public awareness on ESD.

IV PROPOSED MEASURES

NURSERY SCHOOL OR SCHOOL:

1. PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ANNUAL SCHOOL ACTION PLAN, INCLUDING AN EDUCATIONAL PLAN OF THE SCHOOL

With the preparation and implementation of the educational plan of the school, responsibility and care for implementation of the goals for sustainable development should increase. Planning must be carried out, especially for activities which enhance the social inclusion of pupils (for instance, in the framework of the extended programme of school, and for compulsory optional subjects), and with activities which increase pupils' responsibility towards nature, the environment and their own physical and mental health. With such activities, we would like to enhance peer solidarity in school and enable pupils to recognize their strengths and opportunities for mutual cooperation. We must be especially sensitive to the development of solidarity, when, for instance, a school within a programme of voluntary work encourages and enables help to classmates, elderly citizens and other people in need (such as refugees or foreigners).

2. PLANNING AND PROVISION OF INSERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

All professionals in education must have access to training from the field of SD or ESD.

3. SELF-EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TARGET GOALS FOR EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In quality assurance, the emphasis should be placed on the spiritual climate, and within that on interpersonal relationships and eventual violence as it is, for instance, perceived by pupils, teachers and parents. It must be connected also with other fields of self-evaluation, such as planning and executing instructions, learning attainments and conditions, and school safety, among others. The field of interpersonal relationships must occupy an important place in the framework of self-evaluation, which holds true for the level of assessment as well as the development of quality.

4. PERMANENT MONITORING OF THE REALIZATION OF ESD GOALS IN IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULUM

To develop various pedagogical and didactic approaches, and through them offer more possibilities for the incorporation of children/pupils in school activities, to overcome uniformity and consequently motivate and attract an individual child/pupil or children/pupils.

5. INCORPORATING PARENTS IN NURSERY SCHOOLS OR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The point is to achieve the cooperation of parents or family members in planning and implementing preventive programmes or in developing the child's/pupil's social competences (especially through extracurricular activities).

6. INCORPORATING PUPILS INTO SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

The cooperation of pupils is necessary in organizing school life, which enables them learning to participate in decision-making.

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORT:

1. MODERNIZING CURRICULAR DOCUMENTS BY INCORPORATING ESD

Elements of sustainable development should be incorporated into curricular documents (for instance syllabi).

2. DEVELOPING QUALITY ASSURANCE TOOLS ON A NATIONAL LEVEL AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS IN SCHOOL

The Ministry of Education should, in cooperation with experts, develop tools for quality assurance on a national level and pursue self-evaluation in schools.

3. PROVISION OF THE ANNUAL CALL FOR TENDERS FOR PROGRAMMES OF INSERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

The Ministry of Education and Sport should, on a yearly basis, publish a call for tenders for programmes of inservice teacher training, addressing topics of sustainable development.

4. PROVISION OF A CALL FOR TENDERS FOR THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH PROJECTS AND TENDERS FOR EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS RESOURCES

The Ministry of Education and Sport should publish a call for tenders on ESD topics (for instance, for targeted research programmes, European Structural Funds, etc.) and incorporate findings from the field of ESD.

5. PARTICIPATION IN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Slovenia will keep on taking an active part in important international projects and initiatives from the field of SD and ESD in the future, partly also by participating in the provision of programmes and activities from the field of ESD which are carried out by the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS:

1. MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULAR DOCUMENTS (syllabi and other documents) in regard to the realization of goals and activities, this will contribute to the development of pupils' social competences and, if necessary, enhance their identity through various subjects and activities.

2. SYSTEMATIC PRODUCTION OF INFORMATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, such as handbooks or computer and video materials for different target groups: children/pupils, teachers, parents.

3. PROVISION OF THE QUALITY CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN SCHOOL, in the framework of inservice teacher training.

4. CREATION OF A CENTRAL WEBSITE FOR EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The address of such a website should, for instance, be www.vitr.si or www.vzgojainizobrazevanjezatrajnostnirazvoj.si. Matters generally concerning ESD would be published (basic documents, strategies, guidelines, tenders, programmes, projects, didactic materials, etc.).

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS:

1. COOPERATION WITH NURSERY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLS

Non-governmental organizations should offer various programmes or projects to ascertain the better incorporation of children/pupils into activities in different areas (such as a children's parliament or participation in leisure-time activities of children/pupils, for instance on school playgrounds in the afternoon).

2. PROPOSALS FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROJECTS, MATERIALS AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR ESD IN NURSERY SCHOOLS/SCHOOLS

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

1. COOPERATION WITH NURSERY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLS IN IMPLEMENTING THE GOALS OF ESD

2. ESTABLISHING CONDITIONS FOR THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS IN NURSERY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLS

V QUALITY CRITERIA

Schools which educate for sustainable development have accepted it as a key element of their mission and school curriculum. For them, sustainable development represents the main principle taken into account in planning everyday work, as well as in long-term development.

The criteria by which school quality is assessed are gathered in the publication **Criteria for the quality of schools which educate for sustainable development**, and are accessible at http://www.zrss.si/pdf/_Kakovostni%20kriteriji%20%C5%A1ol.pdf.

VI INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

The most important documents on which Slovenia builds its determination and commitment to introduce education for sustainable development into the school system are:

- UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (adopted at the high-level meeting in Vilnius, 17–18 March 2005).
- Resolution 57/254 of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014), 2002.
- Draft international implementation scheme for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014), UNESCO, 2005.
- World Programme for Human Rights Education, United Nations, 2004.
- “Our Common Future”, World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundland Commission), 1987.