UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE MAY 2019
Strategic Priorities

EMBEDDING ESD INTO EDUCATION
QUALITY AND STANDARDS

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What?

This strand seeks the embedding of ESD into national quality frameworks and practices in early, formal, further and higher education.

This means that ESD will be in the criteria and processes of pre-school, school and college inspectors as well as HE quality assessors/reviewers.

It will also be in the guidelines, benchmarks and examples of good practice these authorities generate.

Why?

There is evidence to suggest that changes in education for sustainability are not taking place at a pace or in ways that support change for sustainable development.

Educational quality processes, and supporting measures, provide effective pathways for changing our learning systems.
Who?

The proposal is to work with education quality professionals. There are qualified professionals that oversee this agenda in education and who work in pre-schools, schools, colleges and universities, government authorities or national agencies. They are trained to recognise good practice, support learning and change as well as ensure equal opportunities across the educational systems they are responsible for.

This group is yet to engage with ESD or SDG agendas but are committed to improving learning and teaching experiences more broadly in education. This stakeholder group of is core interest to the proposed strand of work. They have significant responsibilities and are key agents in the system with the ability to change education policy and practice across the UNECE region.
What do Quality Professionals Do?

In most countries, they review or inspect as required by law providing independent assessment of standards of education and checks of the quality of the learning.

**External and independent assessments are undertaken periodically by authorities, at preschools, schools and colleges, to ensure standards are met and maintained.**

These inspections also provide information to parents, to promote improvement and sometimes hold schools to account for the public money they receive and share reports publicly.
Changes to the Inspection/Review Systems

In recent years, inspectorates of education across Europe have developed new inspection methods and modalities that fit a more decentralized education system.

In such systems, schools and other service providers, operate in networks to provide develop and implement more localized school-to-school improvement models that align with peer learning rather than expert visits.

The intention would be to embed ESD into these both peer learning and expert visits associated with quality assurance and enhancement.
HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

HE also has independent national bodies that assess standards and quality in Universities and Colleges.

It conducts quality assessment reviews, develops reference points or subject benchmarks and guidance with professional bodies, and conducts or commissions research on relevant issues.

Its system of quality also relies on peer review but has a more complex internal and external quality system as well as national quality codes which govern programme development, graduate attributes and learning outcomes and relationships with external quality bodies.

Reviewers check that expectations set out in national quality codes or frameworks which are agreed and recognised by the higher education sector and relevant authorities.

Reviews in some countries are tied to degree awarding powers or the right to be called a university. Reports also include recommendations, citations of good practice, and affirmations of actions taken since last visit.
This strand of work would seek the following outcomes:

- The engagement of education quality professionals, systems and authorities in ESD dialogues (ENQA; INQAAHE).
- Strengthening the presence of Ministries of Education at the UNECE SC ‘table’
- Carving a unique and impactful ESD pathway that will assist the SC regaining its voice in ESD international dialogues.
- The embedding of ESD into education quality systems including inspection visits; peer review assessments; guidelines documentation; graduate attributes and learner competences.
What could we generate to deliver the goals?:

- A virtual network of quality professionals engaged in ESD
- Quality criteria frameworks for embedding ESD into each educational level - early childhood, schools, colleges (VET) and universities
- A benchmarking tool to assess practice;
- Learner competences or graduate attributes that are subject or discipline based and that are accompanied by guidelines for integrating ESD into learning experiences.
- An ESD/SDG professional development programme for education quality professionals, authorities and agencies;
HOW? PARTNERSHIPS

At the Hague, agreed that the UNECE, UNEP and UNESCO in partnership to promote this strand of work and test the appetite of the European Commission for collaboration.

Also of interest are international agencies with responsibility for educational quality e.g. European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies (INAQAAHE) are pertinent.

Both organisations bring together national agencies that are engaged in political decision making processes associated with quality education.