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HOW INFORMATION IN EDUCATION OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULARITY CAN BE A DRIVING FORCE IN SOCIETY

Panel Discussion

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Abstract

The world is changing at an unprecedented scale and speed. People are slowly becoming increasingly aware of the need to move towards sustainability in every possible way. As part of this journey, we explore the concept of EcoJustice, which defines values to which we should aspire. However, we can only talk about ecological justice if values and resources are fairly distributed and equally accessible to all living beings. To achieve this equilibrium, we must go far and work hard with a long-term perspective. That is why, in this discussion paper, we focus on how we can lead the way for future generations towards EcoJustice and teach them to be resilient and make better decisions for a better world - learning from and for our natural environment. Education plays a crucial role. We must focus on new knowledge and information that are neither sufficiently available nor sufficiently studied currently. We also present the EU Erasmus project called 'Lead for EcoJustice', which works on restructuring school culture that is mainly based on traditional societal insights and should introduce education on sustainability and circularity as driving forces. Our paper aims to provide insights into the development of knowledge and information to support this crucial development in education.

Keywords: Information, Education, Sustainability, EcoJustice

1 Introduction

The human-centred social and economic growth of the recent centuries has failed to consider its long-term impacts on the environment, largely because of a well-established narrative that humans are not part of the nature and nature is only valued until it serves the needs of humans. This distinction led to a mindset that disregarded natural values and formed unsustainable practices (Washington et al., 2018). It is only in recent decades that a growing number of voices have drawn attention to the carrying capacity of nature and the limitation of its resources. Today, it becomes clear that most of the natural resources on which the current societal and economic system is built, are not renewing themselves at the rate and scale at which we are using them. In general, the growth of our social and economic systems has reached its limits.

Human activities are polluting the air, freshwater and oceans and destroying ecosystems at a rate that pose significant risks to human health and safety, especially for the wellbeing of future generations. Social and economic developments have made life much easier and more comfortable for people, but the rate of growth and progress are clearly not sustainable. More and more people are realising that we should only use natural resources sensibly, in harmony with people and nature, within the limitation of the framework of the planetary boundaries. Nature and wildlife sustain the ecosystems that are elementary for human species to exist on Earth, and we must therefore build the future of humankind and its developments on the principles of sustainability.

Human rationality needs to be put back into the development planning process, which clearly means a new start in terms of our relation to environment, rebuilding harmony with nature. Perhaps this could start with a mindset change and the understanding that nature sustains our lives and that human's existence essentially depends on the environment, and that by ignoring this precondition we only jeopardise the achievements of our current civilisation and the wellbeing of future generations.

We live in times when children and youth receive overwhelming information that is hard to process. Most of the information they gather reaches them without guidance, not directly from their schools, teachers or parents. The information also mainly represents the view on contemporary society from a past sense perspective. The educational system follows a centralised curriculum that is based on views on the reality of the past, which usually rarely or not sufficiently touch important, environmental-related issues of today, including the understanding of the impact of humankind on the natural environment.

While children should be learning more about how ecosystems sustain our lives and our responsibilities to future generations in terms of preserving the biosphere and that humans must live in harmony with nature, current curriculum focus mainly on the ever-accelerating societal and economic growth that humanity achieved in the past. Continuing this experience throughout history also enforces the urge for growth and profit-making in humankind. As children derive their knowledge, behaviour and sense of responsibility from their parents, schools, peers and from various other sources of the information revolution like social media platforms, this view of the world, now and in the future, is difficult to change. This is a signal that prompts us to take a different view of what is needed for sustainable social development and to adapt the sources of information that our children receive accordingly.

In this discussion paper we go through some relevant ideas of this topic to initiate a possible solution to the challenges mentioned above. In relation with that we will identify what impact is had on the information that we should use as base for our educational programmes.

2 Sustainability

Sustainable human development means living in harmony with nature, preserving planet Earth for present and future generations while improving the wellbeing of all. In the era of increased environmental challenges (e.g. degradation of biodiversity, climate change, species extinction, depletion of resources), we must find the way to ensure that human prosperity does not compromise the environment and our social heritage.

The three pillars of sustainability (environmental, economic and social) are intertwined therefore sustainable development shall be carried out concerning all of these pillars which requires a holistic approach. It also reflects the concept of the circularity, that all life and activity is interconnected, that living in harmony with nature is a cycle, where our actions and behaviours result in inputs, from nature into nature, which is the basis of life. Information and education are essential for deepening this understanding.

In this opinion paper, we focus on one of the key aspects of the redefinition of human development to emphasise the driving principles of the interconnected environmental and social pillars of sustainability. We realise the need to respect and be fair to nature and other living beings, to reconnect our lives to nature, to live in balance, cooperation and harmony, as we have done for centuries in early human history. Striking the right balance between ancient knowledge, modern science and technology is essential to ensure sustainable human development. The description of this balance should form a substantial basis for the information provided to younger generations.

To restore harmony and connection between humans and nature, knowledge and information on this topic must be improved and education on environmental subjects increased. The goal is to boost awareness of all pillars of sustainability amongst decision-makers, researchers, and educators at national and international levels. At any point of decision-making, based on improved knowledge and information, we must focus on considering our individual interests (Me) or the interests of the communities we belong to (We), but foremost, we must find a balance with our environment, respecting the interests of all living things (All) (Abcouwer et al., 2022).

Neither humans nor any living beings should be the victims of human development. We tend to forget that human existence on Earth is only possible with the support of biosphere and its elements.

Unfortunately, with our current behaviour, we not only neglect other living creatures, but there are still people who believe that they can discriminate against others in their rights, even though human development should benefit everyone, regardless of race, gender, or social situation.

Sustainability and circularity are again becoming a driving force for both the individuals (Me) and the organisations (We) for and in society (All). But how do we enter it into our everyday practice? And what kind of information should be added to make that possible? How to raise awareness?

3 Values

Values, the core principles that guide our lives and shape us internally, must receive more attention. In current practice, we often see ownership and greediness rule our lives. It translates itself into information focus on money and profit making. Our values should be our moral compass and our outlook on family, community, religion, and politics, and they inevitably define our relationship to nature too. Values are imparted to individuals through direct parental and educational guidance and indirect influences received from the outside world (Schwartz, 2012). They are continued throughout generations through culture and tradition, and they also change as society evolves. This complex interplay of personal and societal values needs to be balanced in a way that no living thing is disadvantaged, and all elements of the natural environment are appreciated. Our personal attitudes and how we behave in an organisational or societal setting clearly show that we need to learn to pay attention to each other and our surroundings. By focussing only on information on financial and economic realities fell short of understanding this crucial societal development towards a more collective view of a developing future.

From the perspective of current environmental and social challenges, we shall observe the impact of human values and how these values have been shaping the connection between nature and people. The relationship between humans and the environment can be described as anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. While anthropocentrism is a way of thinking in which the value of goods is determined solely by their utility for humanity (Washington et al., 2018), ecocentrism is the idea that all assets (living and non-living) have intrinsic value, which is not determined by their utility (Washington et al., 2018). This ecocentric worldview is the principle of EcoJustice.

Already in 2000, the United Nations General Assembly declared in the Millennium Declaration that it has highlighted the individual and collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity to lead to a more peaceful, prosperous and just world (United Nations, 2000). It aimed to restrengthen values and principles respecting social establishments (like territorial integrity and political independence), individuals (like human rights, respect for the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion) and international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character. Fundamental values were essential to international relations in the twenty-first century, such as

- *Freedom*: Men and women have the right to live and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and the fear of violence, oppression, or injustice.
- *Equality*: No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development and equal rights and opportunities for women and men.
- *Solidarity*: fairness, equity, and social justice.
- *Tolerance*: respecting each other, with all their diversity of belief, culture, and language. Differences within and between societies should be cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted.
- *Respect for nature*: Prudence of all living species and natural resources, following the precepts of sustainable development, preserving nature and passing on to our descendants.
- *Shared responsibility*: to manage worldwide economic and social development and the threats to international peace and security.

Correcting the paths of anthropocentrism requires a fundamental change that will manifest EcoJustice and bring balance through a holistic approach. To understand this, a completely different representation of knowledge and information is required.

4 EcoJustice

EcoJustice is the understanding that ecosystems are vital for all life forms, with a general set of attitudes considering social values and environmental protection. It reconsiders actual thinking assumptions that are damaging nature and its systems. EcoJustice fosters stable and diverse self-sustaining ecosystems, harmony and balance in and with nature and competitive biological systems, and sustainable human development. It is based on the recognition that we must restore our social, cultural, and environmental narratives for a sustainable future. EcoJustice is against cruelty to all living beings, including the biosphere. It considers non-human life forms independently from their usefulness for human purposes. EcoJustice links environmental concerns with social justice issues, especially where economic systems result in groups of people, mainly in less developed areas, bearing the consequences of human developments with environmental, health and societal degradation. The representation of this new reality in knowledge and information must be reconsidered. If not, humans are not facilitated to bear the responsibility to the inherent value of nature whenever they are affected by human actions, ensuring ethics, morals and justice to the natural environment.

Ecological responsibility linked with social and economic justice can recreate healthy communities via advocacy and action. EcoJustice envisions and values ecology and justice since there is no environmental health without socio-economic justice and vice versa. It is also about building resilience in the lives of all living things.

Nature itself retrieves information that supports its evolution and resilience.

5 Resilience

The concept of resilience attracts more and more attention in our rapidly changing world (Gunderson & Holling, 2001; Holling, 2001). Westley (2002) categorises the current developments by the level of diversity, continuous change, learning and the complex interactions that make them unpredictable. Holling and Gunderson (2002) and Gunderson et al. (2010) differentiate two faces of resilience:

- *Engineering resilience* concentrates on stability near an equilibrium: a steady state where resistance to disturbances and speed of returning to the equilibrium measure the property.
- *Ecological resilience* emphasises conditions far from any equilibrium or steady state, where instabilities can flip a system (switch) into another regime of behaviour – to another stability domain.

The measure of ecological resilience is the magnitude of disturbances that the system can absorb before it changes its structure by changing the variables and processes that control behaviour. In ecology, the outcome of the change is not a central issue to be studied. A new balance will naturally arise. The need for reaching a new equilibrium state from the disturbance is a natural development. But, in a social economic setting, we do not expect that a fair new equilibrium will evolve out of the disruption. We are searching for a way to develop a new state for which to strive. This means that new forms of resilience are needed in that setting.

In such a development towards a new social-economical setting, resilience has two different roles:

- *Social Resilience* introduced by Ensor (2011) influences the ability to find a new state of equilibrium.
- *Strategic resilience* is aware of the long-term flow of changes, while Engineering, Ecological and Social resilience focus on relatively short-term change processes. This fourth type pays attention to the capacity to adapt and respond continually to an organisation's ongoing difficulties. It demonstrates the ability to deal with a series of disruptive developments consistently (Takács & Abcouwer, 2021).

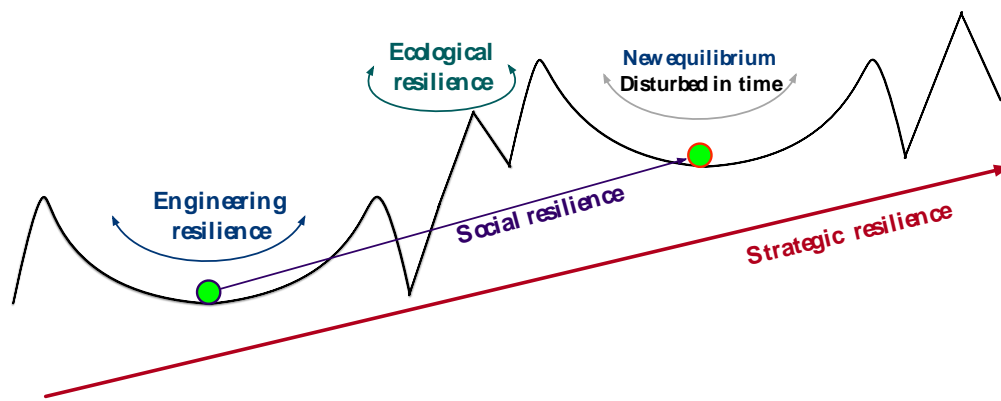


Figure 1: The types of resilience

Understanding the different types of resilience helps us define the concept of resilience, which is the ability of systems (individual, organisation, or society) to withstand, recover from or adjust to misfortunes or changes in their environment and keep functioning (Hepfer & Lawrence, 2022).

It is therefore crucial for our existence to build knowledge and skills to make decisions and respect all involved (meaning any persons and including our environment) in dealing with challenges. Knowledge development is crucial for handling the disturbances that form the starting point for actual challenges. It means we must gather a completely different set of information sources from which new knowledge may emerge. Understanding change can also help in handling it. Such a model is the Adaptive Cycle of Resilience. It helps make decisions and act consciously, according to the phase of change we face.

6 The Adaptive Cycle of Resilience

Human development is an ongoing process, as described in the Adaptive Cycle of Resilience (ACoR) model (Takács & Abcouwer, 2020; Takács et al., 2019). Human developments are initiated by change and the dilemma of what we want, must, and can do in a given situation (Heene, 2002). The sign of eternity illustrates the ongoing change process starting with an equilibrium, which we all wish to have: a situation when we are certain about what we can want and must do. Every development brings challenges, and we must find new combinations to operationalise to reach a new equilibrium. This new equilibrium is different from the one we had before the developments. Change does not stop but evolves. Adaptivity to new situations and resilience when facing challenges are necessary for sustaining during the change process.



Figure 2: Developments and the Adaptive Cycle of Resilience (Takács & Abcouwer, 2021)

Adaptability and sustainability are crucial challenges for all of us in the rapidly changing world. We need to deal with the ever-changing societal challenges and besides adaptivity with specific skills, knowledge and attitudes in the different stages of change. We also need to be aware of the different perspectives of experiencing acting in change and the effects on the individuals (Me), communities or organisations (We) and society and the environment (All) (Abcouwer et al., 2022).

Regarding the information needs in the cycle's different phases, on the left side, registering, reporting and controlling are concepts that lead us towards the ability to govern the developments. 'Going concern' and 'optimise operations' are the leading principles. But when we are in a state of uncertainty about what we want or must do, let alone the question of whether we can do it, the role of information is to facilitate the search for new opportunities, stimulate creativity and show responsibility for the future and future generations in a physically limited world. Leadership and stewardship have to be developed to guide us in that direction.

7 The 'Me-We-All' approach

The 'Me-We-All' approach encourages making decisions regarding the different perspectives and needs of the persons (Me), the communities, companies, organisations (We) and the environment (All). Balancing between the different needs can contribute to a more just and fairer future for every living creature.

This approach, like EcoJustice, searches for natural solutions to ensure inclusion, diversity, equity, and opportunities for all people and their surroundings in our societies.

It balances the needs of the identified fields in sustainable development, which means that simultaneously meeting environmental, economic, and social needs is becoming increasingly challenging.

Combining the different theories and approaches, we see that the crucial elements play a role in educating sustainability and circularity, have a driving force in society, and balance social health and justice, fair economic vitality, and environmental stewardship (Hawken & Cox, 1993). The current knowledge and information used in education is hardly able to facilitate the integration of these insights.

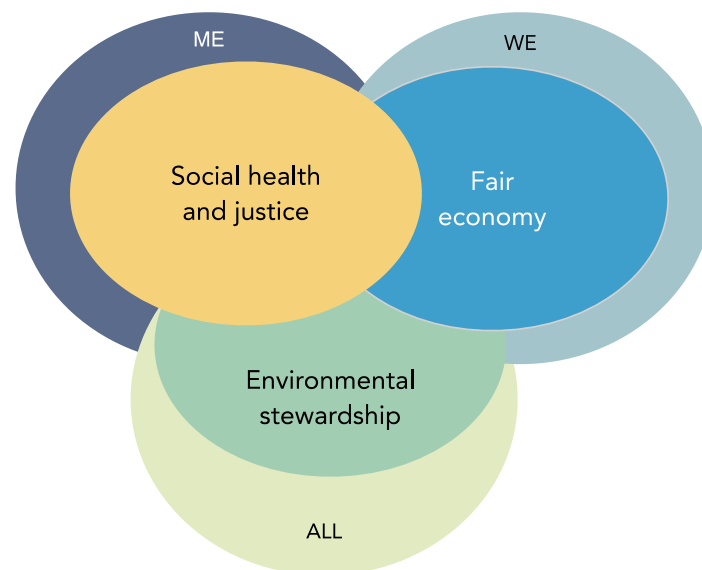


Figure 3: The art of balancing

Me

At the level of the individual (Me), health and justice are decisive for the global well-being of people. A range of fundamental human needs can be mentioned to enhance the individual and societal well-being of persons, such as social health and justice, which contribute to sustainable social and personal development. For social health and justice, every individual needs to have access to:

- Education is one of the most critical social needs, enabling everyone to develop their skills and increase economic and social opportunities.
- Healthcare, to receive awareness, prevention, and medical treatments to improve individual health and ensure security.
- Housing, to have a safe place to live.

- Social Protection, to assist people in vulnerable economic or social situations.
- Community Participation, social needs promote community participation and involvement in decisions and activities that affect community life. This participation fosters a sense of belonging and social interaction.
- Human Rights and Social Justice to ensure the right to equality, equity, and justice.

To prepare individuals (Me) to function in modern society, we need more information that focuses explicitly on the requirements for individuals to access the above-mentioned assets. In practice we see that the provision of information doesn't focus on these individual requirements but mainly on the level of organisations individuals participate in. Individuals are often seen only as resources that contribute to the interests of the shareholders.

We

At the level of communities and organisations (We), economic vitality is the most important. It means that we recognise that commerce is both a consumer of and dependent upon natural systems and has the power to limit, mitigate and reserve those impacts. Economic needs should regard sustainable ways and ensure the well-being and quality of life. Needs at the community level consist of:

- Financially secured lives with jobs, incomes and living standards for a Sustainable Economy;
- Public utilities and industrial infrastructure (electricity, water, roads, etc). Healthcare and education to invest in individuals to improve their well-being, knowledge and skills;
- Legal establishments that are needed to foster justice, fairness, and sustainable economic functioning;
- Economic Diversification of different sectors (agriculture, industry, and services);
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation to enhance economic well-being.

With this focus on economic functioning, the 'We' level mainly focuses on the well-being of the organisation's shareholders. Society is mainly seen as a supporter of the organisation to facilitate effective functioning. In most cases, fulfilling objectives leads to the well-being of a very limited number of individuals who are mainly interested in their own interests. This leads quickly to the greediness of the few and growing divides between economic classes in society. It is one of the explicit reasons why the neoliberal focus on individualism reaches the end of its societal impact. There is a clear need for more focus on social values and environmental protection. This profoundly impacts the knowledge and information on which education should be based.

All

For the benefit of all living things (All), environmental stewardship is emphasised, which means activities and priorities necessary to restore and preserve the natural environment and maintain its sustainability, protect natural resources and ecosystems and mitigate the effect of anthropogenic climate change. To enhance this stewardship, 'All' needs action for

- natural environment conservation and protection of vital resources (air, water, minerals, etc.);
- restoring and maintaining environment quality and health;
- minimize human impacts on the environment and take measures to stop harmful activities;
- create and maintain sustainability throughout all aspects of human existence for current and future generations.

When we look at the information presented in newspapers and (scientific) journals, every independent viewer will recognise that knowledge and information within society need to pay more attention to this side of contemporary developments. The growing attention on EcoJustice partially fills in this shortcoming.

8 Interconnection between environmental and social degradation

When we observe current societal challenges and try to find where balance can be achieved within this above approach, we notice a significant shift towards needs related to the 'Me' and to the 'We', which

leaves the 'All' without having sufficient care and so that environmental degradation occurs. While mainstream mindsets desire progress, consumption, and development (Morrison, 2018), the consequences of such fast-paced development are only seen when we face the degradation of natural habitats and the distraction of traditional cultures and knowledge (Washington et al., 2018). As we understand that there is a cultural and ecological crisis (we have scientific evidence of the sixth extinction caused by anthropogenic climate change (Washington et al., 2018)), societal actors shall seek solutions for change. An improved focus on the required knowledge, and information is apparent here.

The deprived and damaged state of the environment not only holds risk in the long-term aspect, but because of its degradation, it can lead to a state of incapacity of providing sufficient conditions to human existence. The impacts of environmental degradation on the 'Me' and the 'We' manifest in growing unrest, societal upsets and tension, leading to crises of social and cultural narratives and values even in short and mid-long terms. This phenomenon also has a backslash effect on the All, as socio-cultural values influence how people use natural resources or how willing they are to behave sustainably (Park et al., 2012; Ringov & Zollo, 2007). Therefore, we must understand the strong interconnection between cultural and environmental degradation and the risk of these on society and create equity in a sustainable societal system that acknowledges and protects the environment and its resources.

To take action, we need to reconsider the fundamentals of the decision-making process (and the need for knowledge and information) and apply a reprioritised value system as a leading principle in our everyday decisions. Ecological justice (EcoJustice), the idea that humanity lives within natural limits about all creation, includes social justice participation in the decision-making regarding the sustainable use of natural resources (Martusewicz et al., 2014). Therefore, our decisions should lay on understanding the interconnection between change, resilience, cultural and environmental degradation, and the risk of these on society. We should also create equity in a sustainable societal system and then acknowledge and protect the environment and its resources.

9 Resilience and Decision making

Avoiding decisions that can have unexpected and unwanted effects requires people to be aware of the change's character, respect the involved parties, and be resilient.

In particular, in predictable cases, most of us can manage change and deal with challenges using traditional problem-solving methods. The ability to deal with predictable problems is called engineering resilience. When we face an unforeseen setting, we need to improve our abilities to form and structure the unknown situation. This setting fits well with the concept of social resilience. In contemporary times, this ability to shape the unknown future is crucial to surviving in the dynamics of change. To recognise the moment, one must decide about the current problem-solving approaches that no longer suffice and are often underdeveloped. In the ACoR model, the change between the traditional way of working (left side of the model) to facing challenges (right side), is a separate aspect of organisational change. Unfortunately, this switch often occurs in the so-called 'gestalt switch'. This sudden flip suggests that we cannot prepare ourselves to change easily.

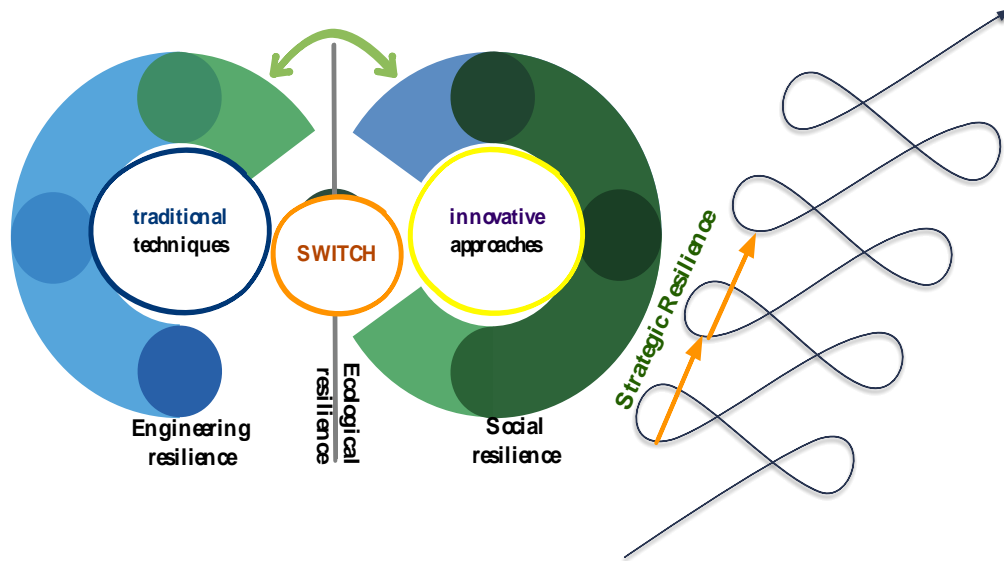


Figure 4: Decision-making and resilience

There is a strong need to invest in recognising the critical signals to understand better that change will come from ‘yes, we can’ to ‘no, we cannot deal with it’. We called the ability to recognise this change ecological resilience, a process of determining the moment of that switch. Again, this shows the need for a broader base of knowledge and information, emphasising an explicit focus on unknown future(s). Is management, leadership or stewardship needed to handle the specific challenges successfully?

10 Management-Leadership-Stewardship

We recognise that under the conditions of certainty, managers can optimise operations, but when uncertainty arises, creative leaders are better able to support the adaptation to the new circumstances with their new ideas to be operationalised by managers to reach certainty again. Stewardship has a different role. It considers beyond the business activities, the effects organisations have on the world by looking at values, ethics, and morals. Stewardship guards all resources (time, money, goods and services) with human responsibility to care for and manage the natural world. Ownership, responsibility, accountability, and reward describe managers and leaders with stewardship. They search for solutions to transform ownership, governance, and finance by reconsidering the so-called “truths” accepted by society and redesigning the organisations’ operations. They work on adapting to change and sustaining new futures while considering all stakeholders: ‘Me’ – the individuals, ‘We’ – the organisations or the groups of individuals, and ‘All’ – the world. Stewardship changes the focus from ‘solving one thing here and now’ to a broader and longer perspective thinking, which results in a sustainable present and future for the people (Me), the organisations (We), and our environment (All).



Figure 5: Management-Leadership-Stewardship

At any point of decision-making, besides considering our interests (Me) or the interests of the communities we belong to (We), we must find a balance with our environment, respecting the interests of all living things (All).

Change is part of our lives. We must learn to adapt to the different settings. We need resilience to adapt. Within the concept of EcoJustice, resilience needs to be based on a well-developed information position combined with the necessary knowledge to base our decision-making. This new information position and knowledge will help us fulfilling our responsibilities by making sustainable decisions that cause no harm to anyone or anything. Our attitudes and awareness are very important to sustain. Education, for this reason, has an ever-important role and responsibility.

11 Education

Education, science, and technology are the foundations of human progress. Education is essential for human development, as it increases social productivity. The importance of environmental education for sustainable development is now a necessity, as societies, since the Industrial Revolution, have lost the ancient knowledge that over the centuries, ensured rational choices in everyday life and prevented the over exploitation of natural resources. Environmental education is a tool to improve awareness and increase participation in environmental protection, promote environmental knowledge and skills and thus help to achieve sustainable development. Education is the key to restore, recover and reapply values that have long been missing from human relation to nature and natural existence. Education is also an essential way to disseminate and apply the progressive results of science and technology widely and effectively. Through education, the legacy and innovation of science and technology can be realised, continuously developed and enhanced, and can effectively contribute to human development without harming the environment.

12 The Lead for EcoJustice program

EcoJustice education is shaped by an understanding that local and global ecosystems are essential to all life and recognising the need to restore the cultural and environmental commons (Encyclopedia.com, n.d.). As discussed in the previous paragraphs, we need to pay extra attention to the knowledge and information needed to structure the sustainability aspect in contemporary education. In the open, complex, dynamic, and interconnected challenges we face, the exact requirements for information and knowledge are unclear. Therefore, in several places, new initiatives are taking place to develop insights on the way how to bridge this information and knowledge gap and to restructure education.

To balance the different needs of 'Me-We-All' and build a better future for the environment, the economy, and society, we must focus on sustainability and circularity education as a driving force in society. Therefore, we need to initiate change in school cultures and target school leaders. In this section, we present an education program initiated in the EU.

Education and awareness raising on sustainability has a great potential to encourage behavioural change and facilitate the necessary change in social and economic settings, help to restore and preserve biodiversity, economic sustainability, and promote social justice. The 'Lead for EcoJustice' program is an excellent example of this approach, that achieves sustainable development through mutual learning and expand competencies needed to lead the development of school culture for EcoJustice. The professional development program for school leadership to 'Lead for EcoJustice' develops a school culture with described outcomes, activities, and necessary resources for participants. Supporting school implementing their specific EcoJustice plans to create a school culture that promotes environmental and social justice and educate children on crucial environmental issues. School leadership will develop and monitor the plan's implementation to create a school culture based on EcoJustice. Regularly assessing the impacts of the self-assessment tool for school readiness helps review school culture, identify successes and problems, and allow for practice adjustments.

'Lead for EcoJustice' is an educational effort in local communities that targets collaborative learning. It uses the information to experience the "beauty" of our world, making everyone more responsible in their activities. Results are achieved through collaboration between science and education and partnerships between governments, organizations, and civil society that guide efforts toward achieving

a balance between environmental, economic, and social dimensions. The program will work out national plans for Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, and Slovenia to implement the Professional Development program 'Lead for EcoJustice', which school leadership teams will attend to be educated. The 'Lead for EcoJustice' practices will facilitate social and environmental justice, health and wealth for all, sustainable development, community safety and new economics through education.

This Erasmus project considers the public interest by involving individuals, organizations, and governments to think together about EcoJustice, and not only about personal or economic interests. This way, it enhances to make strategic choices that consider the impacts of the decisions on the environment, economy, and society. National EcoJustice education events and a final international conference will be organized with professionals, school leaders, education policymakers, researchers.

Practicing equity, democracy, and empowerment of individuals and communities, articles, videos, webinars, EcoJustice School Narratives, and the school self-assessment tool will be available online for learning and acting according to EcoJustice. The 'Lead for EcoJustice' program stimulates better knowledge development and information availability to spread ideas for improving society as a whole.

Thus, Erasmus 'Lead for the EcoJustice' project is important in initiating this mindset change to balance ancient knowledge and modern science and technology to ensure sustainable human development.

13 Conclusion

Industrial revolution speeded up human developments for a better life quality but forgot to consider the environment and its limits. Wealth and ownership have been goals for generations, leaving behind the well-being of all. Ideas like Aldo Leopold's Land ethic or Martin Heidegger's injunction to 'Let beings be' were steps towards the question of equitable and fairer life for all living beings (Heidegger, 1943; The Aldo Leopold Foundation, 2023).

Health is a basic human right. Health for All embraces principles that raise attention on social topics, like sustainable development, the safety of all or changing economics where environmental, economic and educational measures support equity, equality, and empowerment of individuals and communities. Health, environment and economic sustainability partnerships improve local health and quality of life. Local educational actions with regional coverages promote health, environmental and social justice, leading to conscious decisions for a more promising future.

School leaders play a crucial role in making the appropriate knowledge and information available, and this establishes a school culture which supports the reshaping of the new generations towards respect for all living creatures and re-establishing ethical and moral systems. It requires knowledge of sustainability values and attitudes for EcoJustice, resilience, and awareness of the change and Me-We-All's needs. Once society understands the interconnections between environmental and social degradation and how nature sustains life, then we can learn to live in harmony with nature and redefine human development in a way that respects and is fair to nature and other living beings, reconnects human lives to nature, to live in balance, cooperation, and harmony.

Information can educate and shape resilient decision-making, attitude and management, leadership, and stewardship styles of responses.

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