



UNIVERSITY OF
EASTERN FINLAND

Introduction to the concepts of adult education and sustainable development

Adult education promoting sustainable development - Module 1



UEF// University of Eastern Finland



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Content:

1. Defining Key Concepts – Sustainability
2. Ecological/Environmental Sustainability
3. Economic Sustainability
4. Social Sustainability
5. Cultural Sustainability
6. The Importance of Culture For Sustainability (video)
7. Key Principles of Sustainable Development
8. Defining Key Concepts – Adult Education
9. Adult Education & Sustainability
10. Key Points of Module 1
11. References 1&2





Defining Key Concepts - Sustainability

- **Sustainability** = “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations (UN) 1987, 24)
- In other words, sustainability is:
 - Considering not only present needs but also future needs when using resources, making investments, developing technologies and institutions (UN1987, 25)
 - Acting in order to maintain and improve the well-being of the people, the nature and the environment now and in the future (Portney 2015, 54)
- **The four “pillars” of sustainability** (Dessein, Soini, Fairclough & Horlings 2015, 8)
 - Ecological / environmental sustainability
 - Economic sustainability
 - Social sustainability
 - Cultural sustainability



Ecological / Environmental Sustainability

- **Ecological sustainability** refers to Earth's ecosystems and their use including the elements:
 - **Air** (e.g., the quality of air, climate systems)
 - **Land** (e.g., land use, invasive species)
 - **Water** (e.g., pollutants, groundwater levels)
 - **Biodiversity**
- Goods and services must be produced in a sustainable way = nature should be able to regenerate the utilized resources
(KTH Royal Institute of Technology, 2021)





Economic sustainability

1. **Economic sustainability** = economic development that doesn't endanger the well-being of the people and the environment
2. Instead of using the concept of economic sustainability, **economy can be seen as a tool**
 - > structures and institutions either promote or prevent sustainable development

(KTH Royal Institute of Technology, 2020)





Social Sustainability

Conceptual Framework of Social Sustainability (Eizenberg & Jabareen 2017)

- **Equity:** preventing unequal policies and promoting public involvement -> a sense of community
- **Safety:** The right to be safe & different forms of security that prevent future casualties and physical harm
- **Eco-prosumption (production + consumption):** consuming & producing goods in socially and environmentally responsible way
- **Sustainable urban forms:** physical forms (e.g, physical environment, city planning) should promote a sense of community, safety, health etc.





Cultural Sustainability

- **Cultural sustainability** = retaining and passing on the cultural heritage to different generations (The Association of Cultural Heritage Education in Finland 2012, 3). Considering culturally sustainable education, it is important to promote internationality, culturally sustainable environments, creativity, multiculturalism and diversity, locality, intergenerationality and the culture of customs.
(Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022)
- In the scientific discourse on cultural sustainability, seven storylines have been identified: heritage, vitality, economic viability, diversity, locality, ecocultural resilience, and eco-cultural civilization (Soini & Birkeland 2014)





The Importance Of Culture For Sustainability (video)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhPvrdshQI4>



Key Principles of Sustainable Development

- **Normativity principle** = sustainable development is always based on the current development paradigm and is constructed in a certain time
- **Equity principle** = intergenerational and intragenerational, geographical, procedural, and interspecies equity -> the same possibilities and quality of life should be guaranteed for the future generations
- **Integration principle** = all of the fields of sustainable development should be integrated together –social, cultural, ecological and economic sustainability
- **Dynamism principle** = sustainability is a phenomenon that is always changing and developing -> this demands preparation for rapid changes and risk-calculation

(Waas, Hugé, Verbruggen & Wright 2011, 1645 – 1647)



Defining Key Concepts - Adult Education

- **Adult education & adult learning can be...** (Eurydice 2018)
 - vocational training
 - general education
 - formal, non-formal or informal
 - self-motivated education and learning
 - staff training or labour market training
- **Characteristics of adult learners**
 - Adult learner can be a student at all levels from primary to tertiary education. (Eurydice 2018)
 - Someone who is 25 or older is typically considered to be an adult learner (Eurydice 2018)
 - Adult learners may have a full-time job and/or a family to take care of (Koivisto 2019, 14)
- **Motivations of adult learners**
 - Enhancing employment and/or updating skills for working life
 - Just for fun and/or own interest
 - Self-development
 - Contributing to one's own community



Adult Education & Sustainability

- **Adult learning and education...**(Schreiber-Barsch & Mauch 2019, 532)
 - Helps to manage with new global, environmental, social & economic challenges
 - Enhances social transformation through critical reflection -> (social) sustainability
- **Ecopedagogy** (Misiaszek 2016, 587, 604)
 - Focuses on increasing social and environmental justice
 - Recognises & analyses diverse social, political and economic systems and their impact on sustainability
- **Adult education and learning as sustainability** (Schreiber-Barsch & Mauch 2019, 532)
 - Adult education enables dialogue between all active actors who realise or produce sustainability or sustainable development -> chances to increase sustainable policies



Key Points of Module 1

- **Sustainability** = considering the present and the future needs when making governmental decisions & using natural resources
- **The four dimensions of sustainability**
 - Ecological or environmental sustainability (Earth's ecosystems)
 - Economic sustainability (economic development that doesn't endanger natural resources)
 - Social sustainability (e.g., equity, safety, a sense of community)
 - Cultural sustainability (retaining and passing on the cultural heritage to different generations)
- **Adult learning or education (ALE)**
 - Has many different forms (for example formal, informal & non-formal)
 - Reasons & motivations: for leisure or working life
- **ALE & sustainability**
 - Ecopedagogy -> critical thinking -> policy making
 - ALE helps address (global) social & environmental challenges



References (1/2)

- Dessein J., Soini, K., Fairclough, G. and Horlings, L. (eds) 2015. Culture in, for and as sustainable development. Conclusions from the COST action IS1007 investigating cultural sustainability. Finland: University of Jyväskylä. (Open access)
- Eizenberg, E., & Jabareen, Y. 2017. Social sustainability: a new conceptual framework. Sustainability 9 (1), 68 - 84. (Open access)
- Eurydice – an official website of European Union 2018. Adult education and training. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/adult-education-and-training-25_en (Open access) [accessed 5.5.2021]
- Hedlund de Witt, A. 2014. Rethinking sustainable development: considering how different worldviews envision “development” and “quality of life”. Sustainability 6 (11), 8310 - 8328. (Open access)
- Soini, K & Birkeland, I. 2014. Exploring the scientific discourse on cultural sustainability. Geoforum, Volume 51, 213-223. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.12.001>.
- Koivisto, M. 2019. Work, family and school – balanced postgraduate programs for full-time workers in Finland. International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning 12 (3), 14 - 23.
- KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Toolbox – learning for sustainable development. 2021. <https://www.kth.se/en/om/miljo-hallbar-utveckling/utbildning-miljo-hallbar-utveckling/verktygslada/sustainable-development/ekologisk-hallbarhet-1.432074> [Open access, accessed 18.5.2021]
- KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Toolbox – learning for sustainable development. 2020. <https://www.kth.se/en/om/miljo-hallbar-utveckling/utbildning-miljo-hallbar-utveckling/verktygslada/sustainable-development/ekonomisk-hallbarhet-1.431976> [Open access, accessed 18.5.2021]



References (2/2)

- Laine, M. 2016. Culture in sustainability - defining cultural sustainability in education. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education* 7 (2), 52 - 67. (Open access)
- Misiaszek, G. W. 2016. Ecopedagogy as an element of citizenship education: The dialectic of global/local spheres of citizenship and critical environmental pedagogies. *International Review of Education* 62 (5), 587 - 607.
- Finnish National Agency for Education, 2022. Mitä on kulttuurisesti kestävä kasvatus? Web Article. Accessed & Cited on 8.12.2022. <https://www.oph.fi/fi/opettajat-ja-kasvattajat/mita-kulttuurisesti-kestava-kasvatus>
- Portney, K.E. 2015. *Sustainability*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Schreiber-Barsch, S. & Mauch, W. 2019. Adult learning and education as a response to global challenges: fostering agents of social transformation and sustainability. *International Review of Education* 65 (4), 515–536.
- The association of cultural heritage education in Finland. 2012. Kulttuurisesti kestävä kehityksen käsitteiden koonti: The progress report of the project "Kulttuurisesti kestävä kehitys". Suomen Kulttuuriperintökasvatuksen julkaisuja 2. <https://www.kulttuuriperintokasvatus.fi/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/KULTTUURISESTI-KESTIV-KEHITYS-KSITTEIDEN-KOONTI.pdf> [Open access, accessed 6.5.2021]
- United Nations. 1987. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our common future <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/139811> (Open access)
- Waas, T., Verbruggen, A., Hugé, J. & Wright, T. 2011. Sustainable Development: a bird's eye view. *Sustainability* 3 (10), 1637-1661. (Open access)

Photos:

- Slide 2: Photo by [SevenStorm JUHASZIMRUS](#) from [Pexels](#) [accessed 21.5.2021]
- Slide 4: Photo by [Baurzhan Kadylzhanov](#) from [Pexels](#) [accessed 19.5.2021]
- Slide 5: Photo by [cottonbro](#) from [Pexels](#) [accessed 19.5.2021]
- Slide 6: Photo by Photo by [Andrea Piacquadio](#) from [Pexels](#) [accessed 24.5.2021]
- Slide 7: Photo by [Min An](#) from [Pexels](#) [accessed 6.5.2021]