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EDUCATION AS A CONSTRUCTOR OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



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Defining the concepts

Responsible Consumption and Production is the 12th of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This SDG is to ensure that economic growth and development is coupled with responsible consumption and production patterns. This goal aims to reduce the environmental footprint of economic activities and to promote sustainable use of natural resources, while also ensuring that economic development is inclusive and benefits all sectors of society.

The targets of SDG 12 are:

1. Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
2. Halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses
3. Double the rate of improvement in resource efficiency in order to achieve a sustainable flow of natural resources
4. Achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment
5. Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
6. Ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature
7. Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle
8. Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities



Sustainable consumption is the use of services and related products which respond to basic needs and which bring a better quality of life to people. This type of consumption minimizes the use of natural resources and toxic materials and reduces polluting emissions of waste over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.

Sustainable production is the creation of goods and services using processes and systems that are non-polluting, that conserve and preserve energy and natural resources, that are economically viable, safe and healthy for workers and consumers, and that are socially and creatively rewarding.

SDG 12 and social exclusion

The current status of SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) varies by country and region, but overall progress has been slow.

According to the United Nations, the world is not on track to achieve the targets of SDG 12 by 2030. While some progress has been made in areas such as increasing the use of renewable energy and reducing the use of ozone-depleting substances, there has been little progress in areas such as reducing food waste and increasing the use of sustainable public procurement.

In relation to adults at risk of exclusion, they may face additional challenges in accessing sustainable products and services, and in participating in sustainable consumption and production patterns. Some of the main challenges for adults at risk of exclusion include the following:

- **Limited access to information and education** on sustainable products and services, and on how to make sustainable choices. This can make it difficult for them to understand the benefits of sustainable consumption and production and to make informed decisions about the products and services they use.
- **Limited resources to invest in sustainable products and services**, making it difficult for adults at risk to afford sustainable products and services. They may also have limited access to credit or other financial services, which can make it difficult for them to invest in sustainable products and services.
- **More likely to work in jobs associated with unsustainable consumption and production.** Adults at risk of exclusion may be more likely to work in jobs that are associated with unsustainable consumption and production, such as in the extractive industries or in informal sectors with poor working conditions. These jobs may expose them to environmental hazards and may not provide them with the resources and support necessary to make sustainable choices.
- **Limited access to sustainable products and services** because of their location or other factors, making it more difficult for them to participate in sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- **Limited political representation:** Adults at risk of exclusion may have limited political representation, which can make it difficult for them to advocate for sustainable policies and practices.
- **Limited access to social services** such as healthcare and education, which can make it difficult for them to participate in sustainable consumption and production patterns.

It is important to take into consideration the specific needs and barriers of adults at risk of exclusion when addressing SDG 12 and implementing sustainable consumption and production patterns. This can be done by providing them with the resources and education necessary to make sustainable choices and to advocate for sustainable policies and practices.



The role of NGOs in adult education for sustainable consumption and production

Education plays a critical role in promoting sustainable consumption and production among adult learners at risk of exclusion. It can help to empower adult learners to make informed decisions about the products and services they use and to advocate for sustainable policies and practices. Education can also help adult learners to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in sustainable consumption and production patterns.



There are several ways that education can promote sustainable consumption and production among adult learners at risk of exclusion:

- **Providing information and awareness** to help adult learners to understand the benefits of sustainable consumption and production and to make informed decisions about the products and services they use. This can include providing information about the environmental and social impacts of different products and services, as well as information about sustainable alternatives.
- **Developing skills and knowledge** necessary to participate in sustainable consumption and production patterns. This can include providing training on energy efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable sourcing, as well as providing education on sustainable lifestyles and sustainable development.
- **Promoting active participation:** Education can help adult learners to become active participants in sustainable consumption and production patterns. This can include providing opportunities for adult learners to engage in community projects and to advocate for sustainable policies and practices.
- **Encouraging critical thinking** which can help adult learners to evaluate the environmental and social impacts of different products and services and to make informed decisions about the products and services they use.
- **Building capacity** necessary to participate in sustainable consumption and production patterns. This can include providing education and training on financial literacy, as well as providing education and training on sustainable business practices.



Learning objectives

According to UNESCO, when teaching (adult) learners about the SDG 12, our role as educators is to make sure that the learning process is designed in a way that helps the learners achieve the following objectives:

Cognitive learning objectives



- Understanding how individual lifestyle choices influence social, economic, and environmental development.
- Understanding production and consumption patterns and value chains and the interrelatedness of production and consumption (supply and demand, toxics, CO2 emissions, waste generation, health, working conditions, poverty, etc.).
- Knowing roles, rights and duties of different actors in production and consumption (media and advertising, enterprises, municipalities, legislation, consumers, etc.).
- Knowing about strategies and practices of sustainable production and consumption.
- Understanding dilemmas/trade-offs related to and system changes necessary for achieving sustainable consumption and production.



Socio-emotional learning objectives

- Being able to communicate the need for sustainable practices in production and consumption.
- Being able to encourage others to engage in sustainable practices in consumption and production.
- Being able to differentiate between needs and wants and to reflect on their own individual consumer behavior in light of the needs of the natural world, other people, cultures and countries, and future generations.
- Being able to envision sustainable lifestyles.
- Being able to feel responsible for the environmental and social impacts of their own individual behavior as a producer or consumer.



Behavioral learning objectives

- Being able to plan, implement and evaluate consumption-related activities using existing sustainability criteria.
- Being able to evaluate, participate in and influence decision-making processes about acquisitions in the public sector.
- Being able to promote sustainable production patterns.
- Being able to take on critically on their role as an active stakeholder in the market.
- Being able to challenge cultural and societal orientations in consumption and production.

TASK 1

Reflection on Personal Consumption and Production Patterns

This task is to help you realize how your regular behaviors are related to the consumption and production. Understanding this will help you implement changes in your life style and become more aware, thus you will be more able to give examples as for how to live more sustainably to your adult learners at risk.

For this task, please use the reflection journal we asked you to create in the beginning of this course.

Step by step instructions:

- 1. For one week, use the journal** to write down everything you consume and produce. This can include food, clothing, household items, transportation, and other goods and services.
- 2. For each item, record the following information:**
 - The item itself
 - The source (e.g. where you bought it, who you received it from)
 - The reason for the consumption or production (e.g. for personal use, for work, as a gift, etc.)
 - Any thoughts or feelings you had about the consumption or production of the item.
- 3. After one week, review your journal** and reflect on your consumption and production patterns. Consider the following questions:
 - What were your main sources of consumption and production?
 - How did your consumption and production patterns change throughout the week?
 - Were there any items that you consumed or produced that you felt guilty or concerned about?
 - Were there any items that you consumed or produced that you felt good about?
 - Are there any changes that you would like to make to your consumption and production patterns in the future?
 - Are there any challenges that you face in trying to make these changes?
- 4. Share your reflections** in a group discussion and brainstorm ways to reduce the negative impact of your consumption and production patterns

TASK 2

Reflecting on the Connection between SDG 12, Education, and Social Inclusion

This exercise can help you to reflect on how your teaching practices align with SDG 12 and how you can promote social inclusion among adult learners at risk of exclusion.

Step by step instructions:

- 1. Review the targets and indicators of SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production. Take note of the ways in which sustainable consumption and production can promote social inclusion.
- 2. Reflect on your current teaching practices** and materials. Consider the following questions:
 - How do your teaching practices and materials promote sustainable consumption and production among adult learners at risk of exclusion?
 - How do your teaching practices and materials promote social inclusion among adult learners at risk of exclusion?
 - Are there any areas where your teaching practices and materials could be improved to better align with SDG 12 and promote social inclusion?
- 3. Identify one or two specific actions you can take** to align your teaching practices and materials with SDG 12 and promote social inclusion among adult learners at risk of exclusion. For example, you can research and incorporate sustainable alternatives for goods and services used in the during your workshops or provide training and education on sustainable consumption and production.
- 4. Create a plan** to implement these actions and set a timeline for completion.
- 5. Reflect on the impact of these actions** on your teaching practices and the learning experience of adult learners at risk of exclusion.

TASK 3

Analyzing a TED Talk on Sustainable Consumption and Production

This exercise allows you to gain a deeper understanding of the topic of sustainable consumption and production by analyzing the insights of a specific TED talk. It should help you to reflect on how the topic relates to social inclusion among adults at risk of exclusion, and to identify potential implications for your teaching practice.

Step by step instructions:

1. **Choose a TED talk** that relates to sustainable consumption and production, for example:

[The Wardrobe To Die For](#)
[You Are What You Wear](#)
[The High Cost of Cheap Fashion](#)

2. **Watch the TED talk** and take notes on the main points and key takeaways.
3. **Analyze the talk**, focusing on the following questions:
 - What are the main arguments and evidence presented in the talk?
 - How does the talk relate to sustainable consumption and production?
 - How does the talk relate to social inclusion among adults at risk of exclusion?
 - What challenges does the speaker identify in relation to sustainable consumption and production?
 - What solutions or recommendations does the speaker propose?
 - What are the potential implications of the talk for educators working with adults at risk of exclusion?
4. **Write a brief report** summarizing your findings and include any insights or recommendations that you have.
5. **Share your report** with a colleague or mentor, and seek feedback and suggestions for improvement.