Guide for sustainability plans for educational organisations

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List of acronyms

Acronym	Description
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
GP	Green Paper
MSA	Multi-stakeholder Approach
MSI	Multi-stakeholder Initiative
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OC	Online consultations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
T	Tas
WIA	Whole-institution Approach
WSA	Whole-school Approach

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1. Introduction

AELIA – Advancing Education for a Sustainable and Inclusive Green Transition

The AELIA project responds to the call for a more sustainable world, highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic effects. Aligned with the Sustainable Growth Strategy 2021 and the European Green Deal, AELIA aims to equip citizens with the skills and competences for a sustainable and inclusive green transition through innovative education. This comprehensive initiative brings together formal and non-formal education stakeholders, local enterprises, civil society, and the public sector.

AELIA is an EU-funded project that adopts a multi-stakeholder and a whole-institutional approach to promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) as key concepts for a transformative education "that transforms people who can transform societies and build a better future" (as promoted by UNESCO).

The project aims to support education and training institutions and their staff in enhancing their skills and competences in the field of Sustainable Development. The primary goal of AELIA is to mainstream the concept of ESD and GCED and their practical applications within educational institutions in Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, and Serbia. This is achieved through the implementation of a whole-institutional approach (WIA) and a multi-stakeholder approach (MSA), which ensures the participation of different stakeholders inside and outside the institutions and promotes co-operation between them to promote sustainable development in education.

The results of the project's previous activities such as a series of online consultations to educational stakeholders in the partner countries, a tacking stock study and a green paper on developing sustainability plans for educational institutions have been incorporated into this "Guide for sustainability plans for educational organisations", forming its basic framework.

As a first step, the "taking stock study" aimed to disentangle the key concepts and to map the landscape on what is the state of the art on education for sustainable development in Greece, Cyprus, Serbia, Romania and Austria along five ESD Priority Areas. It presents a review of what has been done at a theoretical and empirical level in terms of the education for sustainability and best practices that can be used as examples. Secondly, the "Green paper on developing sustainability plans for educational institutions" presents the main recommendations for each ESD Priority Area (PA) highlighted by the partner organisations of the AELIA project. The AELIA Online Consultations (OC) were designed to put these recommendations up for discussion with different educational stakeholders in the partner countries. The main objective was to provide the input needed for the 'Guide to Sustainability Plans for Educational Organisations', starting from the consolidated reports on the OC results in each country.

Structure and aim of this guide

This guide intends to be useful to pedagogical and administrative staff of both formal and non-formal educational institutions. Similarly, civil society stakeholders and policymakers are also considered, in a broader manner, within the target groups that ought to be involved in the process to bring many people into contact with ESD. The whole-institution approach is considered an important factor in order to address all possible areas of a sustainable and inclusive green transition in the institutions.

In this context, the primary aim of this guide is to assist educational organisations in fostering sustainability practices that address social justice and economic resilience in addition to environmental impact, guided by the three dimensions of Sustainable Development (environmental, social and economic dimension), while embracing a whole-institution and multi-stakeholder approach. By adopting sustainable initiatives and by engaging all stakeholders across the institution and beyond, educational institutions can enhance a culture of sustainability that permeates every aspect of their operations and contributes to positive societal transformation.

This guide utilises a multifaceted approach that draws upon best practices, case studies, and stakeholder engagement to facilitate the development of tailored sustainability plans. It starts from elucidating the key educational concepts employed throughout its contents: Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education, and outlines the key underlying components of ESD and GCED in order to create a common understanding of the main objectives among readers.

In the next sections, the guide outlines strategies for implementing ESD and GCED within organisational settings, utilising a framework based on eight quality areas. These quality areas are designed to provide thematic direction in implementing ESD within an educational institution, and also provide a comprehensive overview of the multidimensional topic of sustainability. This specific approach facilitates the initial phase of implementing actions and initiatives, which is particularly beneficial for organisations already active in the field. The ESD Plan provides practical support for the realisation of actions, while the self-assessment tool enables stakeholders to identify potential challenges, as described in Chapter 6.

As already stated, the current guide attempts to provide a comprehensive roadmap for planning sustainability measures in educational institutions, based on ESD and GCED principles, embracing a whole-institution and multi-stakeholder approach; nonetheless, it is essential to recognise certain limitations in terms of resources and culture:

Resource related constraints:

Educational institutions frequently face budgetary constraints, limited staff capacity, and competing priorities, which can hinder the implementation of ambitious sustainability initiatives requiring broad stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

Institutional culture related constraints:

In some circumstances, educational institutions demonstrate resistance to change, as well as a lack of institutional support for whole-institution and multi-stakeholder approaches to sustainability. This may present considerable hurdles, necessitating leadership commitment and incentives for the reform of institutional culture.

Despite these limitations, this guide seeks to provide an initial support to educational institutions to embrace sustainability as a core value and as a pedagogical approach; to inspire a future where ecological integrity, social equity, and global citizenship are foundational pillars of education, achieved through a whole-institution and multi-stakeholder approach.

2. Educational approaches to address sustainability

Education is key for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

The new action plan adopted by the United Nations in 2015 named **"Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"** with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become key for a renewed understanding of the need for an Education for Sustainable Development. It considers education as a key enabler for the global effort to achieve these goals which can be considered as the key challenge of humanity. Its educational goal SDG 4.7 explicitly emphasises the need for the introduction and implementation of an Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship and calls on the UN member states to:

The Sustainable Development Goals are represented by vibrant colors that reinforce our faith in humanity. © CS Media.

> By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development"
>
> **(UNESCO, 2023)**

To achieve global sustainable development, sustainability must be embedded in education systems and society as a whole. This is a task for both national governments and their educational institutions. Looking into the topics of the 2030 Agenda, they clearly hold the potential to serve as focal points for education, given their real-world relevance and problem-oriented nature. Many of the SDG-related topics are already well integrated in the curricula or can easily be incorporated into the teaching practice. However, for many educational institutions the main challenge remains how to effectively fulfil these tasks in a way that does not overwhelm the available resources.

Mission 4.7 Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

SDG 4.7. mentions several pedagogical approaches to foster the competences needed: among them ESD and GCED - the two educational approaches UNESCO recommends tackling the global challenges:

- **Education for sustainable development** (ESD) is UNESCO's "education sector response to the urgent and dramatic challenges the planet faces." (UNESCO, 2024)

- **Global Citizenship Education (GCED)** is advanced by UNESCO "to provide learners across subjects and in all spheres of life with knowledge, skills and attitudes that cultivate tolerance, respect, and a shared sense of belonging to one global community, with the ultimate goal of ensuring human rights and peace." (UNESCO, 2024)

Both ESD and GCED offer conceptual frameworks and a wide range of resources and good practices to answer this demand for strengthening the knowledge and skills of learners to promote sustainable development and support the "transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path"

(see **2030 Agenda Preamble**)

This chapter focuses on exploring ESD as the educational concept that provides the main structure for the AELIA guide. GCED is explored in Chapter 3, as it provides additional content and perspectives for a whole-institution and multi-stakeholder approach on sustainability, with an emphasis on understanding the interconnectedness of global issues and promoting values such as empathy, cooperation, and cultural understanding.

Education for Sustainable Development

ESD emphasises the **interdependence of global issues**. It enhances skills and competences while influencing education policies. ESD is essential to enable people to cope with a rapidly changing world and to develop a sense of responsibility for the earth and its inhabitants.

> "Education for sustainable development (ESD) gives learners of all ages the knowledge, skills, values and agency to address interconnected global challenges including climate change, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable use of resources, and inequality. It empowers learners of all ages to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action to change society and care for the planet. ESD is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education. It enhances the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself."
>
> (UNESCO, 2024)

A model for sustainable development

Without a committed, participating and learning civil society, politics will not be able to create the framework for sustainable development. The role of ESD is therefore to create **a framework that fosters everyone's attitude and willingness to act**. In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the international community as a basis for all spheres of life (United Nations, n.d.).

Traditionally, the fields of action have been reduced to the **economic, social and environmental spheres** (the sustainability triangle or three dimensions of sustainability). However, in order to do justice to a holistic concept of development, the areas of culture and politics (good governance) must not be left out of a sustainability model.

In the Framework for Global Development Education, published in 2016 by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) together with the organisation Engagement Global, the triangle of sustainability or the three dimensions of sustainability are supplemented by a further dimension: that of **'politics'**: "Calls to integrate culture and politics (good governance) into a model of sustainable development are justified in view of the growing criticism of a dominant growth paradigm and the risks of the financial markets. However, terrorism and new forms of warfare, failing states and a growing need for security and citizen participation also call for the integration of these dimensions into common models of sustainable development."
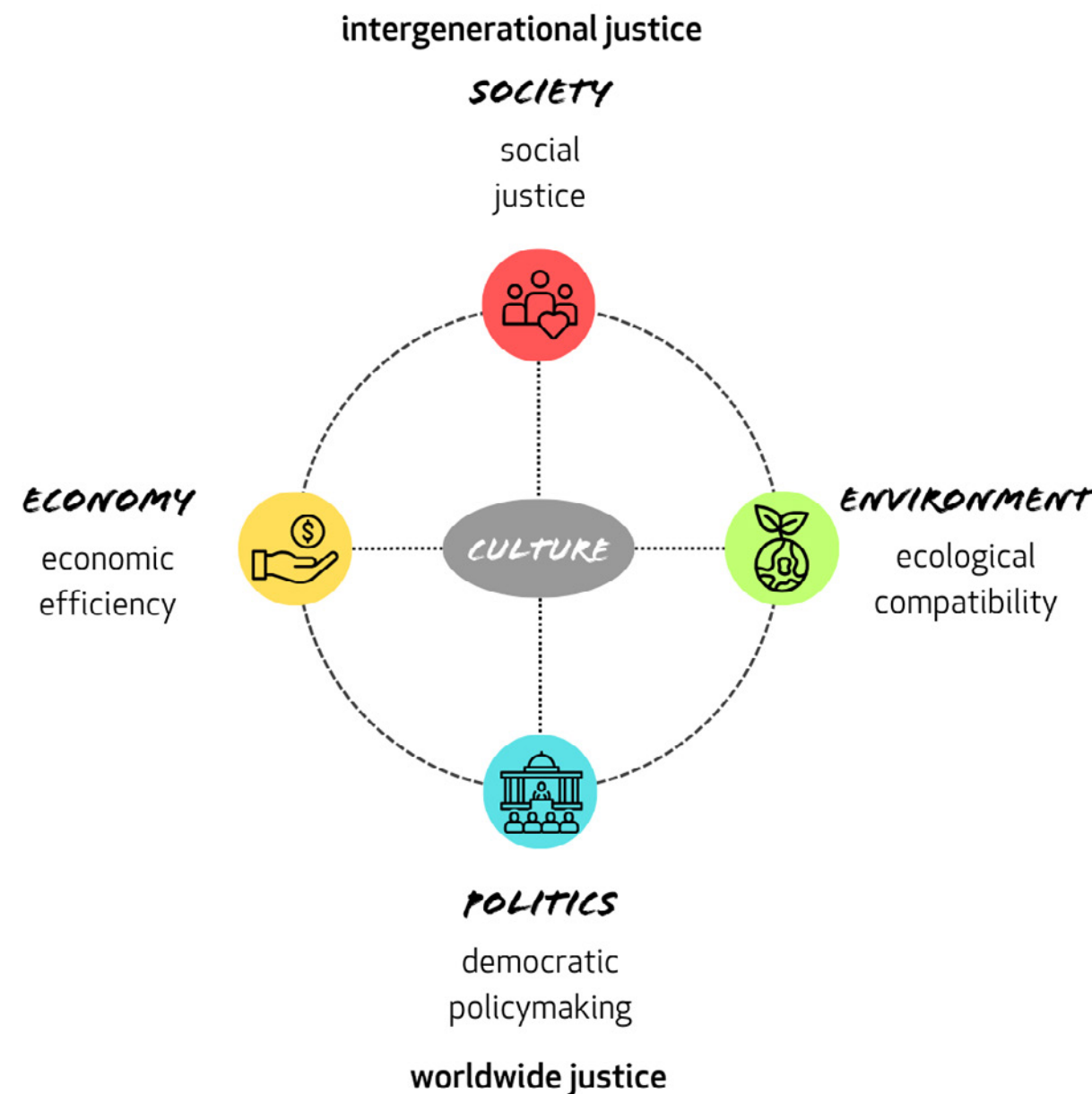
The different dimensions of development often conflict with each other and frequently correspond to divergent interests. However, in the case of Sustainable Development, they should complement each other to pave the way for a better future. This requires a shift in thinking: from a one-dimensional approach (e.g., in the economic sector) to **a multi-perspective approach that considers all dimensions and creates synergies**.

Given the complexity and open-ended nature of sustainable development, the educational objectives of ESD should ensure that:

● Learning processes enable learners to **think critically**, make informed judgments, and align their actions with the principles of sustainable development.

● Students are empowered to make **informed and knowledgeable decisions** and act responsibly to protect the environment, shape a sustainable economy, and foster a just, diverse, and inclusive society for present and future generations, considering all dimensions of development.

● The **diversity** of students is considered when selecting learning content: personal affinities, interests, and abilities play a crucial role in connecting global challenges to local and individual needs and experiences. For intrinsic motivation, it is essential that learning projects are linked to real and current challenges and cover as many dimensions of development as possible.

intergenerational justice
SOCIETY
social justice

ECONOMY
economic efficiency

CULTURE

ENVIRONMENT
ecological compatibility

POLITICS
democratic policymaking

worldwide justice

Source: Orientierungsrahmen für den Lernbereich Globale Entwicklung, pg. 89

3. Another perspective: Global Citizenship Education

As previously stated, ESD and GCED teaching approaches share many similarities and are frequently used interchangeably. They share a commitment to sustainability and a vision for an empowering education that fosters learners' agency to influence their environments and participate actively in the "great transformation" envisioned in the 2030 Agenda. In educational practice (as well as in the usage of international organisations such as UNESCO), ESD frequently focuses on the current environmental problem, but GCED is frequently related with the dimensions of social justice, human rights, peace, and diversity.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that, the Preamble of the 2030 Agenda clearly states:

> "The interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized." [...] The SDGs "are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental"
>
> **(UN, 2030 Agenda, 2015)**

Therefore, a purposeful plan for sustainability in educational institutions needs to reflect this **balance of dimensions, topics and interests** and GCED is able to broaden the perspective.

This Chapter explains why GCED is important in the context of this guide and how it can contribute to the implementation of sustainability in a whole-institution and multi-stakeholder approach.

There are several definitions for the GCED educational framework. UNESCO, for example, defines **the goal of GCED as a framework which aims**:

> "To empower learners to engage and assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world. Global citizenship education has three conceptual dimensions. The cognitive dimension concerns the learners' acquisition of knowledge, understanding and critical thinking. The socio-emotional dimension relates to the learners' sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity. The behavioural dimension expects the learners to act responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world"
>
> **(UNESCO, The ABCs of Global Citizenship Education, 2017)**

The Global Education Network of Europe, on the other hand, produced a new definition in 2022 in an intense multi-stakeholder process that adds relevant notions and updates to the prior explanation; defining GCED as:

> "An education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future. Global Education encompasses a broad range of educational provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide. We consider it essential to the transformative power of, and the transformation of, education"
>
> **(GENE, The European Declaration on Global Education to 2050, 2022)**

GCED is thus an important complement of Education for Sustainable Development. According to UNESCO, both education concepts are necessary for the implementation of SDG 4.7:

> "UNESCO leads and advocates globally on ESD and provides guidance and standards. It also provides data on the status of ESD and monitors progress on SDG Indicator 4.7.1, on the extent to which Global Citizenship Education and ESD are mainstreamed in national education policies, curricula, teacher education and student assessment"
>
> **(UNESCO, 2023)**

In this context, GCED along with ESD empower students by equipping learners with the skills and competences they need to actively participate in shaping a sustainable future. They learn how to **analyse problems, develop solutions** and **take concrete action to bring about positive change**. Overall, the integration of GCED in par with ESD at educational institutions is essential to prepare the next generation for the challenges of a globalised world and to empower them as active citizens in shaping a sustainable future.

4. A whole-institutional and multi-stakeholder approach

This section explores the definitions of key terms like "**whole-institutional approach**" and "**stakeholders**" in ESD. It highlights the importance of mainstreaming ESD as a mind-set and how a WIA supports educators, integrates essential ESD details, and connects curriculum integration with student and staff engagement, professional development, and community partnerships.

Governance, whole-institutional and multi-stakeholder approach

Both notions that are being examined in the current section can be considered part of the broader field of governance and more specifically **governance in the educational institutions**. Governance has several definitions, nonetheless, in general it can be defined as **the framework for stakeholder involvement which shapes how decisions are made; it needs to be considered as more than just the governing structure, it's an actor's whole culture of public interaction** (Kjaer, 2023). In this, a subfield of this broader notion is the governance in educational systems. This term, is defined by OECD in the following manner:

"Governance refers to how decision making happens in education systems. It refers to the institutions and dynamics through which education systems allocate roles and responsibilities, determine priorities and designs, and carry out education policies and programmes"

(OECD, 2019**)**

Decision-making processes and culture in educational institutions are highly influenced by two very significant notions which are further defined in the rest of the sub-sections: whole-institutional-approach and multi-stakeholder-approach.

How is whole-institutional-approach defined?

UNESCO-UNEVOC's TVETipedia glossary, concisely defines the notion of whole institutional approach as **an approach integrating sustainable development in the curriculum**, the management and also the governance practices. More specifically, the definition notes:

"In practice, a whole-institution approach suggests the incorporation of sustainable development not only through the aspects of the curriculum, but also through an integrated management and governance of the institution, the application of a sustainability ethos, engagement of community and stakeholders, long-term planning, and sustainability monitoring and evaluation"

(UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2017**)**

Academic studies showcase that a whole-institutional approach supports ESD by integrating practices across various dimensions, fostering ownership through communication and feedback, leveraging moral capital, ensuring institutional support and funding and that it also improves students' development of action competence for sustainability (Torsdtottir et al., 2024; Gericke & Torbjörnsson, 2022; Caeiro et al., 2020; Mogren et al., 2018). The whole-institutional-approach as a sub-component of effective ESD implementation is complemented by multi-stakeholder cooperation.

How is multi-stakeholder-approach defined?

In order to effectively define multi-stakeholder, it is considered helpful to initially understand the sub-notion involved in the term. In this, the key ingredient is connected with the word "stakeholder"; what is a stakeholder in general and who can it be for the educational field?

In a very broad definition a general understanding of who can be a stakeholder is specified as "anyone who wants to be" (Chandler, 2022). However, this broad definition is not practical in day-to-day functions. For a more operational definition Chandler suggests the following one:

"An individual or organisation that is affected by the firm (either voluntarily or involuntarily) and possesses the capacity and intent to affect the firm" (Ibid.). To transfer this definition in the educational field, a stakeholder is any group and/or individual that has a stake, the capacity and also the intent to promote the actor's interests. The main aspects of this perspective are also touched within the following definition from the UNESCO-UNEVOC glossary: a stakeholder can be considered "any person or organisation that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by the decision and/or activity of an actor"

(UNESCO-UNEVOC, n.d.)

Stakeholders can be distinguished into internal and external (UNEVOC-UNESCO, 2020).

Internal stakeholders

can be categorised in four groups:

Senior management
Administrative staff
Teaching staff
Students

In the same context,

external stakeholder

can be (indicative list):

Private sector and business entities;
Community organisations;
Territorial bodies
(regional/local governance);
Informal sector;
Research facilities;
Development bodies

It becomes evident that the above-mentioned stakeholders may belong to various fields and levels. Thus, their horizontal and vertical categorisation can vary. It is in this framework that the whole-institutional and multi-stakeholder approach matter.

Matrix SEQ Matrix * ARABIC 1 Stakeholder engagement rate

High

	High
High / Low	**High / High**
Low / Low	**Low / High**

External Stakeholder Engagement

Internal Stakeholder Engagement

High
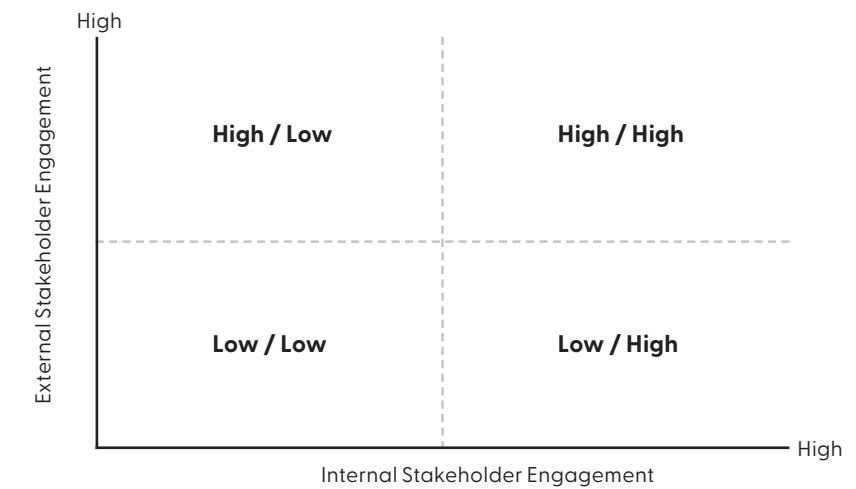
Based on Matrix 1, WIA can be connected to the vertical line of the chart, by promoting cooperation and engagement of internal stakeholders, while MSI can be connected to the engagement of external stakeholders. It should be noted that this is **an indicative way of presenting the two approaches**, which aims mainly to facilitate the understanding of the concepts, and not in providing a rigorous understanding of the notions.

To sum up, multi-stakeholder involvement ensures **diverse representation** in ESD decision-making and action implementation. This increases the legitimacy and relevance of policies and initiatives, creating broader and more sustainable support for sustainable development. Engaging multiple stakeholders, helps create a strong and sustainable framework for mainstreaming ESD in various contexts. On the other hand, a whole-institution approach to ESD ensures that sustainability principles are deeply embedded in all aspects of an educational institution. By better understanding the internal and external stakeholders engaged in both concepts it becomes possible to promote the cooperation with all components of an institution, the collaboration with businesses, the engagement with public agents and CSOs, and the integration of sustainability into the curriculum; thus leading the institutions towards the creation of a robust framework for promoting sustainable development. This approach not only **prepares students to address global sustainability challenges** but also **ensures that the institution itself operates sustainably**, setting an example for the broader community.

INFOBOX I
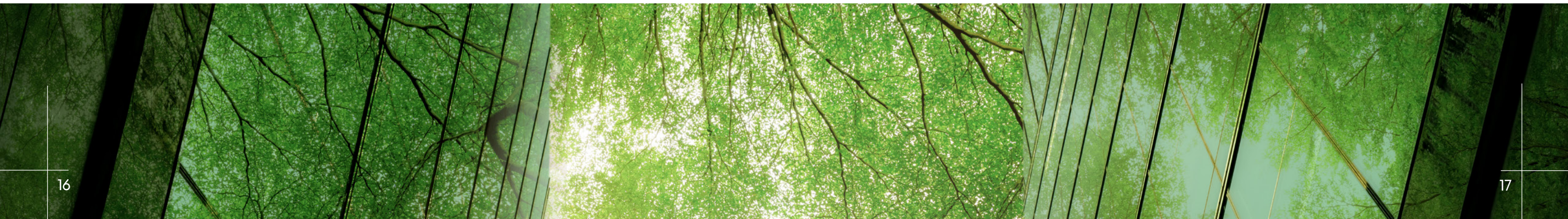
Integration of ESD in schools and universities as a whole-institution approach (CPIP)

"Education for Sustainable Development is addressed transversally in the formal curriculum of pre-university education in Romania, but also in extra-curricular activities (especially within the national program called Şcoala Altfel available in all Romanian schools). In terms of higher education, universities have started to collaborate with different volunteers, experts in ESD and NGOs to introduce elements of sustainable development, new subjects in the compulsory or optional curriculum, depending on the study programs within more than 240 bachelor's and master's study programs."

Educaţie pentru Dezvoltare Durabilă | Ministerul Educaţiei. (n.d.). Www.edu.ro. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from www.edu.ro/educatie-pentru-dezvoltare-durabila

Workshop: Education for sustainable development in schools. Challenges and opportunities

"In January 2023, the National Education Strategy for the Environment and Climate Change 2023-2030 was adopted, being the first time when Romania adopted a national strategy dedicated to education for the environment and climate change. The strategic document established clear actions to increase the level of education and awareness, among children and young people, regarding sustainable development and responsibility towards the environment. The event was addressed to teachers and specialists involved in the field of education and sustainable development as a multi-institutional collaboration."

Links - References:

Atelier: Educaţia pentru dezvoltare durabilă în şcoli. Provocări şi oportunităţi. (n.d.). Timisoara2023.Eu. https://timisoara2023.eu/ro/evenimente/atelier-educatia-pentru-dezvoltare-durabila-in-scoli-provocari-si-oportunitati/

INFOBOX II

School of Cosmopolitanism (Südwind)

About: The School of Cosmopolitanism is a dynamic educational initiative dedicated to fostering global citizenship and promoting sustainable development through innovative classroom practices. Emphasising Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the school integrates principles of environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic viability into its curriculum.

Mission: To cultivate a sense of cosmopolitanism among students, encouraging them to embrace diversity, think critically about global issues, and take action to create positive change in their communities and the world.

- **WSA**: The School of Cosmopolitanism adopts a whole-school approach, ensuring that principles of Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development are integrated into all aspects of school life, including curriculum, policies, and practices.

- **Experiential Learning:** Engaging classroom activities and projects provide hands-on experiences that deepen students' understanding of Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development.

- **Diverse Examples:** The School of Cosmopolitanism offers a rich array of examples highlighting various implementations of global citizenship education and ESD, illustrating how different cultures and contexts approach the concept of cosmopolitanism while addressing sustainability challenges.

- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Integrating elements from various disciplines, including social studies, environmental science, and cultural studies, the school encourages holistic learning that addresses the interconnected nature of global issues.

Impact: By empowering students with the knowledge, skills, and values of global citizenship and sustainable development, the School of Cosmopolitanism aims to foster a generation of change-makers who are equipped to address the complex challenges facing our world.

Links - References:

UNESCO. (2019). GCED: A School of Cosmopolitanism. Retrieved from https://www.unesco.at/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/Publikations-Dokumente/2019_GCED-A-school-of-cosmopolitanism.pdf

INFOBOX III

A toy library (WEBIN)

In a primary school in Čajetina, a small town in western Serbia, representatives of the municipality, citizens' associations from Čajetina, employees from the Art school from Užice, a nearby city, and primary school students collaborated in educational and creative workshops to produce didactic tools from natural materials (clothes). The created didactic tools are used in the teaching process, primarily in working with children who have learning difficulties. By obtaining sewing machines and organising an action to collect knitwear and old clothes the participants gathered to sew eco-toys for a toy library, which has been formed at school.

OKC. (2020). Održivi razvoj u obrazovanju (p. 29).

Retrieved from https://okc.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Odr%C5%BEivi-razvoj-u-obrazovanju.pdf

5. Implementing ESD in educational institutions

Integrating ESD into educational institutions is essential for fostering a culture of sustainability and social justice. More recently awareness of the need for greater sustainability and social justice in education and society has been raised in many areas, the focus is increasingly on integrating these issues into everyday life and therefore into educational institutions, as highlighted in the report **"Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education"** by UNESCO (2021).

How can Sustainable Development be applied in schools?

ESD is much more than just another subject to be integrated, it is an overarching approach that also has **an impact on teaching and learning methods**. **Differentiated learning, interdisciplinary** and **interlinked approaches, systemic approaches,** and **student participation** - these are all characteristics of learning processes that promote the development of organisational competencies.

When the school is also included as a setting for action, the whole-institution approach describes a concept that involves the entire school in educational activities *(see Chapter 4)*. Schools can implement ESD at various levels, as outlined in the eight quality areas. This includes embedding ESD in the school profile and integrating it as a key aspect of school and quality development. Additionally, sustainability aspects can be considered in the **management of operations** and **staff**, r**esource** and **energy consumption, waste disposal, and school catering**.

Opening up schools even more to the surrounding environment promotes the concept of ESD. Cooperation with **local out-of-school institutions** and **networks related to sustainability** can build bridges to the out-of-school world. At the same time, such collaborations provide **new learning opportunities and enrich classroom learning**.

Source: BNE als Aufgabe der ganzen Schule, pg. 1

The mind map shows the many levels at which ESD can be integrated and implemented in an educational institution. A detailed and precise list of these areas can be found in the following chapters.

5.1 What is an ESD/sustainability plan?

In today's rapidly changing world, there is an urgent need to address critical global issues and challenges. Both formal and non-formal education serve as the central pillars providing quality education (SDG 4), which in turn equips learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values, and agency needed to tackle interconnected global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, unsustainable resource use, and inequality (UNESCO, 2024). Schools and educational institutions are encouraged to adopt the WSA and WIA towards sustainability, thereby enhancing their efforts to effectively find solutions to these sustainability challenges.

Effective actions and successful changes begin with a well-thought-out plan. To actively engage with sustainability challenges, an ESD plan is essential. An ESD plan serves as **a roadmap for the sustainability transformation of schools and institutions.** It must clearly outline a guide for integrating necessary ESD knowledge, competences, and values into all sectors of school life and detail the procedures for designing, implementing, and monitoring sustainability actions. Additionally, an ESD plan is crucial for focusing on the sustainability competences that students and trainees need to recognize, investigate, plan, and act for sustainability. These competences are specifically described in the **"European Sustainability Framework Competence"** (European Council, 2022) and include:

1. **Embodying sustainability values**
   a. Valuing sustainability
   b. Supporting fairness
   c. Promoting nature

2. **Embracing complexity in sustainability**
   a. System thinking
   b. Critical thinking
   c. Problem framing

3. **Envisioning sustainable futures**
   a. Futures literacy
   b. Adaptability
   c. Exploratory thinking

4. **Acting for sustainability**
   a. Political agency
   b. Collective action
   c. Individual initiative

To sum up, an ESD plan must present and describe how to:

- **form** a vision and decide which sustainability issues must be confronted,

- **engage** everyone in the process (students, teaching and administrative stuff, local stakeholders etc.),

- **be effectively trained** to acquire and promote relevant competences,

- **use** a cross thematic and multidisciplinary ways of teaching and learning – curriculum integration to achieve specific learning outcomes,

- **design**, **implement** and **monitor** actions,

- **evaluate** and **undertake** appropriate decisions.

To elaborate more about the structure that an ESD plan may have and what it stands for, "Sustainable Environmental Educational Policy", designed and implemented at schools in Cyprus and currently serving as an exemplary global paradigm, is presented below. Proposed steps for forming an ESD plan integrating a whole school/institution approach:

1. **Whole school/institution investigates current sustainability challenges** present at school or local communities. It is crucial to involve everyone in this process to increase commitment and use different techniques (surveys, investigation at place, interviewing etc.).

2. **Students and teachers/trainers come together** to decide which sustainability issue they want to deal with to improve quality of life. In this step, it is crucial to hear what every stakeholder has to say.

3. **Teachers/trainers decide and describe** which **learning outcomes** should be fostered to enable students to deal effectively with the chosen sustainability issue.

4. **Teachers/trainers prepare a list with proposed changes** on pedagogical, technical and social context, having in mind the change their institution wants to achieve.

5. **Teachers/trainers focus on curriculum integration**, trying to implement a cross-thematic and multidisciplinary approach by naming specific areas of each subject that could be used for the learning procedure. Stakeholder's networks are fostered at this step.

6. **Each class/group decides its course and specific actions** based on the ESD plan. Then the whole school/institution starts implementing the ESD plan.

7. **Each class/group and at a later point, the whole school/institution self-evaluates** and monitors actions in place.

Forming an ESD plan is crucial towards promoting changes for sustainability. It also embraces the idea of preparing students to be active citizens and have the skills to be leaders who will effectively address local and global challenges. Besides these, through ESD plans, students will understand how they must work and promote sustainable practices, build resilient communities and include every possible stakeholder in this effort. Concluding, **an ESD plan is a crucial tool towards preparing students to deal with the semantic sustainability challenges that our planet faces**.

1st Step
Investigating sustainabilitty issues

2nd Step
Choosing the issue

3rd Step
Student learning outcomes

4th Step
Deciding changes to take place, at school and community

5th Step
Curriculum integration

6th Step
Designing a plan for each class

5th Step
Self evauation

INFOBOX IV

Transforming our schools towards sustainability (CPI)

The enactment of the Sustainable Environmental Education Policy (SEEP) in pre-primary and primary education in Cyprus aims to integrate WSA in every school. This policy stands as an exemplary practice worldwide. The following example is described in (Mathie & Wals, 2022): **Through SEEP our school (Geroskipou A ´Primary School)** investigates the biodiversity in Cyprus in relation with our culture. Our school pursues certain changes based on the specific objectives and actions that are identified in the SEEP assessment. This is done by all the participants (school and community) as pre-requisites for creating a school and community culture for protecting the biodiversity of our land. The following changes were made: Establishment of a material recycling system, stationery reuse, clothing recycling and a vegetable garden, that students take care of, with support of their parents. The vegetables produced are sold to the municipal market by the students. The money collected is used for replanting as well as for other school activities related to sustainability and the greening of our schools. Our school incorporates innovative teaching approaches that are also promoted by the national ESD curriculum to enhance and facilitate indoor and outdoor learning such as brainstorming on relevant concepts with biodiversity. In addition, field studies, problem solving role-play, project-based learning activities, case studies and surveys are used. Our school works together with the parents' association, the local community and non- profit organisations (like Akti Project and Research Centre) in order to fulfil the school plan for moving towards sustainability.

Links - References:

Mathie, R. G., & Wals, A. E. J. (2022). Whole school approaches to sustainability: Exemplary practices from around the world. Wageningen University. https://doi.org/10.18174/572267

5.2 Eight quality areas

 The eight quality areas provide a **comprehensive framework** for educational institutions to implement ESD effectively. Quality criteria can serve as a starting point also for educational institutions wishing to implement other approaches like GCED. The set of quality criteria serve as a tool summarising a sustainable development philosophy. It is based on the quality criteria for ESD certification of the **ESD-Agency in Nordrhein-Westfalen** ("Qual-itätskriterien", 2021). The quality areas affect the whole institution (WIA).

 First, institutions need to set goals and use tools to evaluate their progress. Another key step is self-reflection. By documenting their ESD work, they can critically assess their programs, structures, and processes. These steps are detailed in the following chapters.

Here is a brief overview of the eight quality areas:

01

For any educational institution, the **mission statement** is an important document for internal and external communication: it contains relevant statements about the organisation's profile, the value orientation of its work and important target groups. It also makes clear the organisation's objectives in the context of Education for Sustainable Development.

02

The people who work in an **educational institution** have a decisive influence on the quality of the work. Therefore, it is not only necessary to clarify what qualifications they have continuous participation in ESD-related education and training is important.

03

The **pedagogical concept** is an essential basis for the pedagogical work of an institution: it defines the pedagogical self-image of the institution and specifies the work regarding Sustainable Development. ESD and GCED provision should also be clearly identifiable in the institution's overall educational programme. In a written educational programme, the institution gives examples of how it implements the understanding of Sustainable Development set out in the educational concept.

04

Public relations – the 'business card' for addressing (potential) participants - is another important instrument for the quality development of an educational institution. The way ESD programmes and commitment to sustainability are presented, the quality of information for customers and references to commitment to the environment and accessibility play an important role.

05

The **organisational structure** of an educational institution is a fundamental "framework" for joint work. Although the nature of organisational processes depends on the size and diversity of responsibilities, all educational institutions need to organise tasks, process and evaluate information, and make decisions.

06

Infrastructure - premises, outdoor space, technology, etc. – is crucial for educational work. This involves managing sustainability in operations and procurement, providing support services for people with special needs (mobility, vision, hearing, mental development), and offering environmentally friendly travel options to and from the centre.

07

To ensure the long-term sustainability of educational work, **solid funding** is essential. This requires clear rules on the institution's financial structure, competences, and responsibilities. Evaluating the financial structure provides important insights into strengths and weaknesses and shows if a sustainable funding concept exists or needs development.

08

Ensuring quality work over time, or continuity, is a challenge for any educational institution. This requires regular critical reflection on actions, evaluation of work, and a willingness to constructively accept internal and external feedback for continuous improvement.

INFOBOX V

Platform "Mission 4.7" (Südwind)

Mission 4.7 brings together leaders from government, academia, civil society, and business to accelerate the implementation of Transformative Education around the world.

The platform can help to leverage the role to promote sustainable development solutions through implementation of transformative education: "Transformative Education is how we get there, by equipping learners of all ages and levels with the knowledge, competencies, values, skills, and agency necessary for current and future generations to achieve the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement."

Selecting a role that best suits you will personalise the page or display information and further links based on your interests and needs: Policymaker, educator, concerned young person and researcher. This differentiated access to further and interest-related information and links enables a wider audience to be reached, which also has a positive effect on the whole-institutional and multi-stakeholder approach.

Links - References:

Mission 4.7. (n.d.). Transformative education in pursuit of sustainable development and equality.

Retrieved from https://sites.google.com/view/mission47.

5.2.1 Vision, mission statement

Vision and mission statements are crucial for guiding educational institutions toward sustainability, as they are **a key part of an educational organisation's identity**. Various definitions highlight different aspects of these statements. Core values and strategies are also linked to the vision and mission of an educational institution. For this document, the following definitions apply:

A vision statement expresses an educational institution's aspirations (Gabriel et al., 2009). A mission statement is a brief and concise description of how an organisation will achieve a specific state, answering what the organisation will do, who the target group is, and how it will be achieved (Martin et al., 2018). Gabriel et al. describe the vision as a school's main goal: **"Where does the school see itself in the future?"** while the mission **"provides an overview of the steps planned to achieve that future."**

Incorporating sustainable development into an educational institution's vision and mission is not just about addressing environmental concerns or sustainable practices; it also involves fostering a sense of global citizenship among students. Global citizenship emphasises developing the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to contribute positively to a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

By integrating ESD, educational institutions can provide students with a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing global challenges. This approach acknowledges the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental issues and empowers students to become active, responsible global citizens.

Table 1 Vision and mission adapted from Gabriel et al., 2009

Vision	Mission
A school's goal related to ESD	Overview of the steps planned to achieve the ESD related goal in the future
Concise and easy to recall	Lengthier and more explanatory
Provides a common direction for growth	Provides "touch points" to determine whether what should happen, is happening

Several benefits relate to the incorporation of sustainable development into the vision and mission statement of an educational institution, some indicative examples relate to the:

- Provision of a guiding framework for the school's approach towards ESD, with a clear direction and purpose;
- Alignment with global and local goals and commitments;
- Support towards holistic education;
- Possible enhancement of institutional identity, reputation and visibility.

Although incorporating ESD into the vision and mission statement of an educational organisation may seem simple, it actually requires more effort than expected to do it meaningfully. To support and facilitate this process within educational institutions, two worksheets are provided below, adapted from existing versions of developing vision and mission statements.

Table 2 Vision development worksheet for ESD

Duration	Participants	Purpose
Possibly more than one meeting. The process should not be rushed.	Vision oversight committee with representatives from all groups within the educational institution (e.g. teachers, students, administrative employees, and other staff).	Development of a collectively created vision statement, incorporating ESD.

Steps
a. Identify and assemble the vision oversight committee.
b. Discuss the expected outcome; provide clear guidelines, timelines, the school's current vision statement, examples of other vision statements; a briefing note summarising information related to ESD and educational institutions (e.g., definition of terms, priority areas and some good practices); other relevant resources and lastly a briefing note with key statistical data concerning the educational institution itself (school demographics, student attendance rates, assessment results, student test results, rate of disciplinary incidents etc.)
c. Let the committee members review the material and reflect on the following questions: 1. *What is the need for a new vision that incorporates ESD?*   2. *Will I be able to live with this new vision?*   3. *Will I be able to support this new vision?*   4. *What will the new vision expect of me?*   5. *How will my world change as a result?*   6. *Will I be able to continue doing what I have always done? Why or why not?*   7. *Do I believe in this new vision?*   8. *Do I believe in my school's ability to achieve this vision?*   9. *Do I believe I can help make the vision happen?*

d. Afterwards the committee leads a discussion (small groups 6-8 members) by utilising the following questions: 1. What kind of school are we not?   2. What kind of school do we hope to be?   3. What do you think should be reflected in our vision statement?   4. What do we need to do differently to achieve this vision?   5. How are we different from other schools?
e. After this small-group discussion phase, provide participants with the following questions and sticky notes.   1. What would you like to see your school become?   2. What reputation should it have?   3. What kinds of learning experiences would it provide to entail ESD?   4. What contributions would it make in terms of ESD?   5. What do the school and its teacher's value?   6 What do the school and teachers believe?   7. How would people work together?   8. How would people handle easy and difficult parts together?
f. Afterwards, place eight sheets of A3 paper with each question on top of the sheet, and ask participants to write down their answers on the sticky notes and place them on the corresponding A3 papers. After this phase finishes provide some time to ensure that all committee members reflect on the responses for each question.
g. Next, open a discussion by reading each sticky-note per question and finding a consensus of which of those are necessary and which are less critical. The former should be moved on top of the A3 paper, the latter on the bottom.
h. The necessary ones are then gathered to formulate the first draft of the vision of the educational institution.
i. Once the first draft of the vision is prepared, it should be shared with the entire staff for feedback.
j. After being finalised, the vision statement should be posted publicly in visible places (including the website). School functions that do not align with the vision should be reconsidered (e.g., waste management).

Source: Adapted from Gabriel et al., 2009.

Table 3 Mission statement development worksheet for ESD

| **Duration**	**Participants**	**Purpose**
Possibly more than one meeting. The process should not be rushed.	Mission oversight committee with representatives from all groups within the educational institution (e.g. teachers, students, administrative employees, and other staff).	Development of a mission statement that supports the vision of incorporating ESD.

Steps:
a. Identify and assemble the mission oversight committee.
b. Discuss the expected outcome; provide clear guidelines, timelines, the school's new vision statement, a briefing note summarising information related to ESD and educational institutions (e.g., definition of terms, priority areas and some good practices); other relevant resources and lastly a briefing note with key statistical data concerning the educational institution itself (school demographics, student attendance rates, assessment results, student test results, rate of disciplinary incidents etc.).
c. Let the committee members review the material and reflect on the following questions, and then hold a small group discussion session:
a. How do you envision the school becoming an institution integrating ESD effectively?
b. What are the relevant processes to be conducted?
c. How would people work together towards that direction and what would they do when they gather?
d. What are the necessary steps you need to take?
d. After this small-group discussion phase, provide each participant with four sticky notes.

e. Afterwards, place four sheets of A3 paper with each of the discussed questions on top of the sheet, and ask participants to write down their answers on the sticky notes and place them on the corresponding A3 papers. After this phase finishes provide some time to ensure that all committee members reflect on the responses for each question.

f. Next, open a discussion by reading each sticky-note per question and finding a consensus of which of those are necessary and which are less critical. The former should be moved on top of the A3 paper, the latter on the bottom.

g. The necessary ones are then gathered to formulate the first draft of the mission statement of the educational institution.

h. Once the first draft of the mission statement is prepared, it should be shared with the entire staff for feedback.

i. After being finalised both the vision and the mission statement should be posted publicly in visible places (including the website). School functions that do not align with those should be reconsidered (e.g., waste management, group activities, and decision-making procedures).

Source: Adapted from Gabriel et al., 2009.

Checklist: Points to consider for establishing vision and mission statement
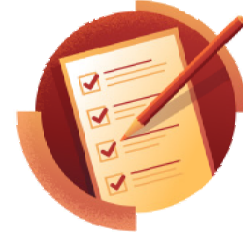
Vision Statement Evaluation:

☐ **Long-term sustainability vision:** does the vision articulate a long-term commitment to sustainability, preparing students to envision and work towards a sustainable future?

☐ **Cultural and environmental context:** Does the vision reflect an understanding of the institution's social, cultural and environmental context, acknowledging local sustainability issues, needs and knowledge?

Mission Statement Evaluation:

☐ **Action-oriented language:** Is the mission statement phrased in an action-oriented manner that emphasises active participation in sustainability?

☐ **Educational strategies:** Does it specify educational strategies or approaches to achieve sustainability goals (e.g., interdisciplinary learning, project-based learning)?

☐ **Stakeholder engagement:** Is there a cooperation with a range of stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, community members, and partners) in sustainability efforts?

☐ **Professional development:** Identify the following: is there a commitment to continuous professional development for educators in the field of ESD?

☐ **Curriculum integration:** Is the integration of ESD principles across curricula and extracurricular activities explicitly mentioned in the mission?

☐ **Student empowerment:** Does the educational institution empower its students to take action for sustainability? Is this component clearly defined in the mission?

☐ **Resource allocation:** Is the statement realistic in terms of resource management? Does it recognise and consider the allocation of resources (time, funding, and facilities) towards ESD?

☐ **Monitoring and evaluation:** Is there a commitment to monitoring and evaluating the progress and impact of ESD initiatives?

☐ **Inclusivity and accessibility:** Does it ensure that ESD initiatives are inclusive and accessible to all students regardless of their background and situation?

☐ **Local and global level:** Is there a balance between addressing local sustainability issues and contributing to global sustainability goals?

General Considerations:

☐ **Maintain clarity and conciseness:** Are the vision and mission statements clear, concise, and easily understood by all stakeholders?

☐ **Ensure clear alignment:** Do the vision and mission statements align with each other, reinforcing the commitment to ESD?

☐ **Promote effective visibility:** Are these statements prominently displayed and communicated to all stakeholders (e.g., on the institution's website and within the institution)?

☐ **Plan update policy:** Is there an envisaged process and date to renew the vision and mission statement?

5.2.2 Trainers and staff and how they can take part

Trainers and staff play a crucial role in integrating sustainable development into their activities and programs. They should effectively and responsibly implement ESD programs. Trainers and staff need to use innovative teaching methods, encourage discussion and critical reflection, and provide support and guidance to participants. Feedback from Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, and Serbia highlights the importance of trainers and staff in collecting relevant data, evaluating ESD programs, and identifying opportunities for improvement. Key points from country reports include:

Including ESD in Teacher Training:	It is important to include ESD in teacher training at universities and pedagogical colleges. Headmasters should facilitate ongoing professional development for teachers, with training sessions providing information on Sustainable Development concepts and practices.
Outdoor Topics and Experiential Learning:	Trainers and staff should incorporate outdoor topics into their programs and develop relevant materials. Experiential learning programs focusing on environmental and sustainability issues, such as exploring nature, recycling projects, or small-scale environmental projects, are recommended. Extra-curricular time for teacher training and incentives for collaborative projects with non-formal learning groups are essential.
Involvement of NGOs:	Trainers and staff from NGOs can enrich outdoor educational experiences. Integrating regular environmental protection volunteering opportunities is important for fostering active student participation. Strategic partnerships with ESD-focused organisations enhance educational impact.
Development of Educational Materials:	Trainers and staff should help develop and adapt educational materials to support ESD integration. Their involvement and commitment can increase the impact and effectiveness of educational programs and promote a culture of sustainability.
Informational and Training Sessions:	Before amending curricula and transitioning to active learning methods, informational and training sessions should be organized for teaching and non-teaching staff. These sessions aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of sustainability and increase motivation for active participation in ESD initiatives. Trainers and staff can help incorporate sustainability practices into all subjects, ensure hands-on experience, integrate digital platforms, and promote ESD-focused study programs.

How trainers can help implement ESD in educational institutions:

Identifying Objectives:	Trainers and staff can help set goals, choose content, and develop teaching methods that promote understanding and practices of Sustainable Development.
Raising Awareness:	Trainers can educate participants about sustainable development issues, introduce relevant concepts, and encourage discussion and critical reflection on the impact of human actions on the environment and society.
Encouraging Action:	Trainers can motivate participants to act for sustainable development in their communities by providing information and resources on solving environmental, social, and economic problems, encouraging them to become agents of change.
Developing Skills:	Trainers and staff can develop the skills and competencies of participants in Sustainable Development using innovative and participatory teaching methods that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and informed decision-making on sustainability issues.
Institutional Transformation:	Trainers and staff can promote ESD within their organisations, share their knowledge and experience with colleagues, and encourage the integration of ESD into organisational programs and policies.
Modelling Sustainable Behaviours:	Staff can demonstrate sustainable behaviours and practices within their organisation by implementing policies and procedures that support the use of sustainable resources.
Community Engagement:	Staff can engage with the local community and collaborate with stakeholders to promote Sustainable Development by organizing community awareness events, engaging volunteers, and working with local organisations.

By integrating ESD into their activities and programs, trainers and staff can help create a culture of sustainability within their organisation and train responsible, active citizens to work towards a more sustainable future.

**INFOBOX
VI**

Community of trained multipliers (CPIP)

''We seek to support the integration of ESD in schools and inform the local public on the global priorities set through the new global agenda. In order to do so, we created a community of trained multipliers – civil society members and media professionals – who can contribute with their skills and knowledge to larger target audiences, promoting a broader understanding of what Sustainable Development is and how we can actively contribute to it. Our trainers and multipliers are contributing with their experience to reach a larger public and inform an increasing number of actors on the urgency of committing to a more sustainable set of social, economic and environmental practices.''

Sabou, A. (2015, October 25). Education for Sustainable Development. Romanian International Development Review. https://arcadiareview.ro/education-for-sustainable-development/

Transforming the world we live in by integrating ESD and engaging trainers, staff and other stakeholders

''ESD trainers can work with school staff to develop training programmes tailored to the specific needs of teachers and support staff. These programmes may include information about ESD concepts and methods, as well as practical strategies for integrating them into the curriculum and extracurricular activities.''

Links - References:

Transformarea lumii în care trăim. (n.d.). Retrieved February 29, 2024, from https://arcadiareview.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Infografic_de-la-MDGs-la-SDGs.pdf

5.2.3 Educational programme and how it can be adjusted

The educational programme is a structured approach to embedding the **principles**, **values**, and **methods** of sustainable development in all areas of education. Its goal is to cultivate understanding, skills, attitudes, and actions that promote an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable world.

Key Aspects:

- **Innovative Teaching Methods:** Use creative teaching and learning methods.
- **Curriculum Integration:** Include Sustainable Development concepts and issues in all subjects.
- **Community Collaboration:** Work with local communities and NGOs to provide practical experience and address community issues sustainably.
- **Evaluation and Monitoring:** Develop mechanisms to measure progress.

Adapting the programme involves revising the curriculum to include ESD materials and activities, providing additional training for teachers to understand and integrate ESD concepts, and supporting experiential learning projects to better grasp ESD concepts. This adaptation helps teachers and students **understand the impact of their actions, becoming informed and responsible citizens,** and **promoting sustainable practices and behaviours within the school community**.

Suggestions from the AELIA Project:

- **Ensure** easy access to ESD-related information and resources.
- **Use** external monitoring to assess the implementation and effectiveness of ESD programs.
- **Collaborate** with textbook publishers for long-term alignment of educational materials with revised curricula.
- **Integrate** sustainability into all levels of education, from preschool to tertiary education, ensuring curricular coherence.
- **Organise** annual exhibitions to highlight good practices and recognise both students and teachers.
- **Establish** transparent quality evaluation mechanisms to assess and communicate schools' progress in ESD.
- **Develop** digital resources and platforms to provide accessible information, educational videos, and materials on sustainability issues.
- **Create** experiential learning programs focused on environmental and sustainability issues, including activities like exploring local nature and participating in recycling projects.
- **Partner** with NGOs to gain access to trained volunteers and additional resources.
- **Expand** training offerings to include courses on ESD and establish strategic partnerships with ESD-focused organisations.
- **Develop** comprehensive guides for practical, experiential learning in outdoor sustainability education.

Preparing for Curriculum Changes

Before implementing curriculum changes, it is essential to **organise information and training sessions** for teaching and non-teaching staff. Including sustainability in all subjects ensures a more practical learning experience. Integrating digital platforms for teaching ESD and promoting study programs focused on ESD is also important.

Common Themes and Designing a Sustainability Plan

Integrating sustainable development into curricula at all levels is a common theme. Creating new ESD-related subjects and modifying existing curricula for coherence is necessary. Awards, recognition, or school labels can incentivise and recognise outstanding ESD efforts. Providing adequate training and professional development opportunities for teachers in ESD, including specialised training, resources, and support, is crucial.

Designing a sustainability plan involves including statements on **education, principles, competence development, topics,** and **methods in the context of ESD**. Differentiating ESD from other educational programs and distinguishing between short-term, half-day, full-day, and longer-term ESD programs are important steps. The plan should define the topic, target group, location, duration, and format, and outline the event's course, linking content, methods, media, and intended skill development or learning outcomes.

By incorporating these elements, educational institutions can develop a comprehensive sustainability plan that effectively implements ESD.

5.2.4 Public relations and dissemination - How to share information

Promoting sustainable development is crucial for raising awareness and inspiring action toward sustainable practices. Educational institutions need to integrate sustainability into their curricula and effectively disseminate knowledge and initiatives through various channels, including social and traditional media. These platforms provide opportunities to **amplify messages, engage stakeholders, and drive meaningful change**. By leveraging digital connectivity and strategic communication, educational institutions can increase visibility, inspire action, and foster collaboration across diverse communities.

Roles of Media and Dissemination Strategies:

Social and traditional media can act as catalysts for dialogue, innovation, and collective action, promoting ESD within educational institutions. Effective communication and outreach not only raise awareness but also mobilise individuals and institutions to embrace sustainability as a core aspect of education and societal progress. Through these efforts, educational institutions can inspire global citizenship and cultivate informed change makers committed to building a sustainable world.

Developing a Communication Plan:

 To effectively promote and disseminate an institution's sustainability efforts, a comprehensive communication plan is essential. This plan should **outline goals, target audiences, key messages, communication channels**, and the **desired impact** of the ESD strategy. Key elements include:

1. **Communication Channels**:

   - Institutional website with a dedicated ESD section.

   - Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

   - E-newsletters and e-campaigns to keep stakeholders informed.

   - Press releases to media outlets.

   - Events, workshops, webinars, and seminars on ESD topics.

2. **Identifying Target Audiences**:

   - Consider relevance and demographics when selecting audiences.

   - Include students, faculty, parents, local community members, environmental organisations, businesses, and policymakers.

3. **Identifying Potential Partners**:

   - Seek organisations, institutions, or individuals aligned with sustainability objectives.

   - Partners with substantial audiences can amplify the message.

   - Choose credible partners with expertise in education and sustainability.

4. **Suggested Educational Resources**:

   - Share materials, toolkits, and online resources to support learning about sustainable practices.

   - Offer training and webinars based on these resources.

5. **Success Stories and Desired Impact**:

   - Highlight successful stories, good practices, and testimonials.

   - Showcase achievements and recognition received for sustainability efforts.

6. **Monitoring and Evaluating Communication Efforts**:

   - Set clear, measurable objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs).

   - Use monitoring tools to review data and report findings.

   - Continuously improve communication practices.

Creating a Compelling Narrative:

 Educational institutions should develop a narrative that emphasises their dedication to **sustainability and ESD**. This narrative should highlight the institution's values, goals, and concrete actions toward sustainability. It should also emphasise the positive impact on the community, environment, and students' education. The narrative should be engaging and easy to read, capturing the audience's attention and encouraging them to share the message further.

 By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can effectively promote sustainability and engage a wider audience in their ESD initiatives.

5.2.5 Organisation and cooperation - finding synergies:
How to organise networks

Sustainability in Schools: Collaborations and Practices

Sustainability in schools involves various aspects such as curriculum and teaching methods, governance, sustainable consumption, community connections, collaborations with other stakeholders, and infrastructure (Mathie & Walls 2022). Collaborations can occur within the organisation (among staff, administration, and students) or between organisations (schools, local communities, authorities, NGOs, companies, youth organisations, etc.).

Internal Collaborations:

Collaborations within the organisation are generally straightforward because they involve stakeholders directly related to the school and its operations. These stakeholders can identify needs and challenges for achieving sustainability through their daily activities. The school's governance structures can then implement practices to promote coordinated actions towards sustainability and address any resistance to change. By focusing on specific sustainability, aspects that need improvement, the organisation can efficiently work towards a sustainable transformation.

External Collaborations:

Collaborations with stakeholders outside the organisation are more complex. Schools need to establish a clear vision and mission to guide these collaborations. **Early identification of potential collaborators** and **clear communication of the benefits of the collaboration are crucial**. Each stakeholder's role should be well defined to ensure effective collaboration. The results of these collaborations should be showcased to maximise outreach and benefits. Sustained collaborations over time can enhance the sustainability of school actions and the overall school vision.

By fostering both internal and external collaborations, schools can effectively promote sustainability and ensure long-term success in their sustainability initiatives. Figure 1 presents the steps for establishing successful networks:
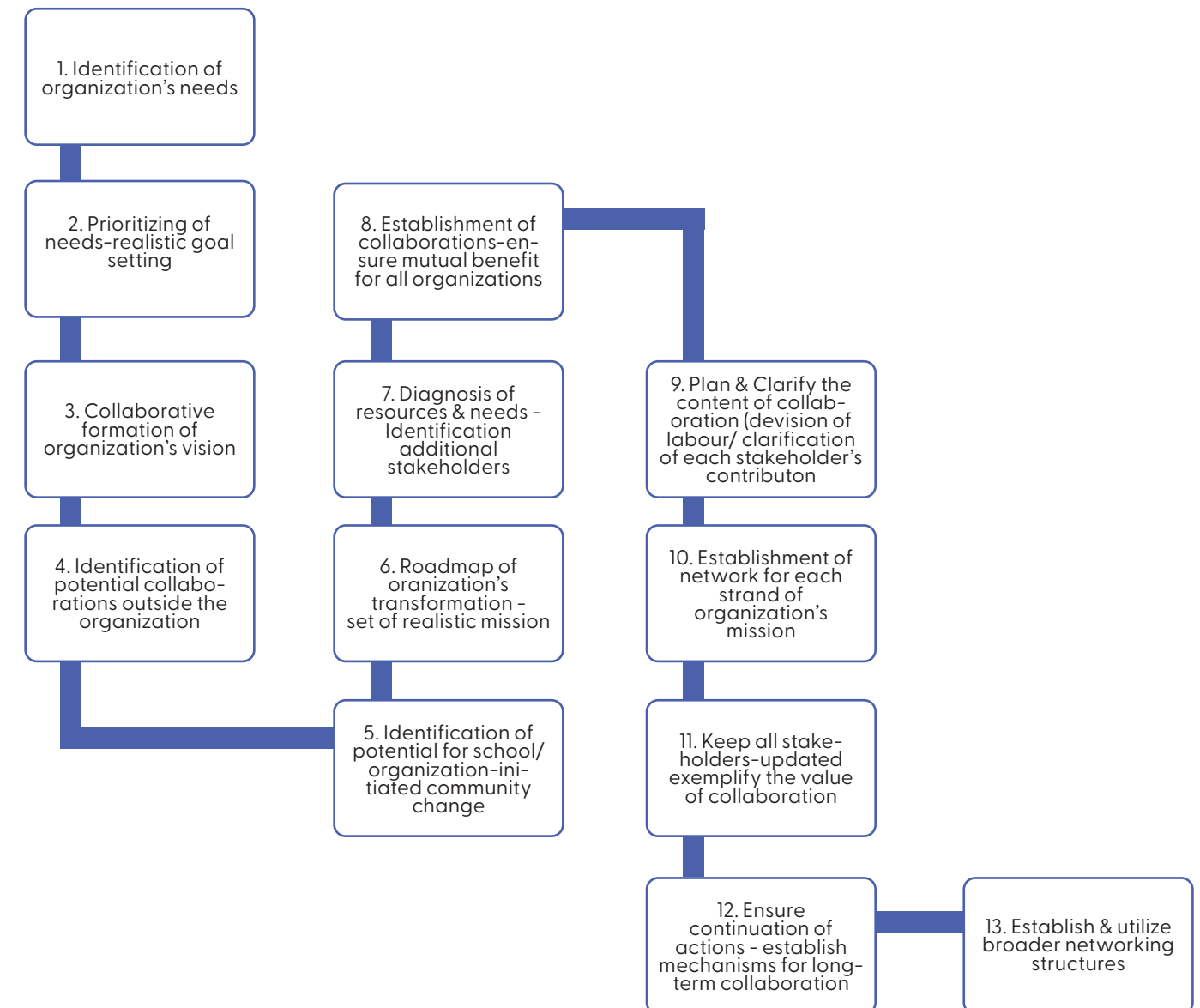
Analysis of steps in forming effective multi-stakeholder collaborations for ESD-related WIA:

1. **Map Strengths and Weaknesses:** Consult with all stakeholders to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's current sustainability practices. Gather input on challenges faced by students, teachers, and administration, such as resistance to change, funding issues, infrastructure, and curriculum constraints.

2. **Prioritise Weak Points:** Engage in dialogue to prioritise the weak points that can be realistically addressed by the school's stakeholders and through collaboration with external partners. Create a list of short-term and long-term changes needed.

3. **Formulate School Vision:** Develop a sustainability vision for the school with input from all internal stakeholders. Identify how they envision the school's future in sustainability and how to improve their quality of life within the organisation.

4. **Identify External Needs and Collaborators:** Identify needs and potential collaborators outside the school. Use knowledge and expertise from networking to manage resources efficiently and enhance the quality of education for sustainable development.

5. **Target Community Change:** Aim for school-initiated community changes toward sustainability. Collaborate with external stakeholders to implement policies, programs, and projects that facilitate outreach and action in the community. Education-driven community changes improve well-being and empower learners.

6. **Create a Roadmap:** Develop a roadmap to transform the school into a sustainable organisation. Set pedagogical, organisational, and social goals and list stakeholders for each stage.

7. **Assess Resources and Needs:** Diagnose available resources and needs to achieve the mission. Re-examine potential external collaborations and define their roles.

8. **Inform External Stakeholders:** Inform external stakeholders about their potential contributions to the mission and ensure they benefit from their engagement.

9. **Engage Stakeholders in Stages:** Identify stages of the mission where stakeholders can be engaged and define the nature of their engagement. Involve them in decision-making.

10. **Establish Collaboration Networks:** Create networks of collaboration for each mission strand. Keep stakeholders updated on the results of their involvement.

11. **Organise Outreach Activities:** Highlight how collaboration has promoted the school vision and how each stakeholder contributed. Highlight the value of collaboration for sustainability-related change. Connect the school to the labour market when possible.

12. **Ensure Continuation:** Sustain actions through long-term capacity building of personnel and ongoing collaborations. Networking helps build capacity through the exchange of knowledge and expertise on ESD and sustainable development.

13. **Broader Networking Structures:** Facilitate efforts to implement WIA/WSA through broader structures specialised in networking, such as councils, networks between networks, and platforms.

By following these steps, schools can effectively form multi-stakeholder collaborations to promote ESD and achieve their sustainability goals.

INFOBOX VII

1. Mega-networks for ESD, ESenRed – Spain (CPI)

ESenRED is comprised of 16 networks of 15 Autonomous Communities in Spain; 4,225 non-university educational centers; more than 1,500,000 students and 100,000 teachers. Furthermore, the network has a close collaboration with National Center for Educational Innovation and Research (CNIIE), and the National Center for Environmental Education (CENEAM), under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the Ministry of Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, respectively. Its mission is to empower students in environmental education to take responsibility for the ecological and social crisis affecting the life of the planet. The methodology of ESenRED is built upon five key principles: 1) Shared leadership: Decision-making is a collaborative and democratic process involving the technical staff of the ESenRED network. They assume the responsibilities outlined in the Action Plan and evaluate its outcomes at the end of the course. 2) ESD and global citizenship: ESenRED projects are closely aligned with the SDGs, while also contributing to the 2030 Agenda and promoting respect for human rights. 3) Responsibility: ESenRED processes foster student participation and a commitment to the planet. Students take individual or collective responsibility for their actions to enhance sustainability and improve quality of life. 4) Prioritising the active engagement of students. Teachers serve as facilitators, guiding educational processes to develop students' skills, motivation, and social and ecological awareness. 5) Transformative action: ESenRED emphasises education for action. Because of the processes, students propose and implement transformative actions in their local contexts that contribute to sustainable changes on both local and global scales.

Links – References:

Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional. (n.d.). Buenas Prácticas de Educación para el Desarrollo Sostenible. Retrieved from https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mc/sgctie/educacion-para-sostenibilidad/rec-edu-desarrollo/public-desarollo/buenas-practicas/castellano.html

ESenRED red de escuelas sostenibles [@esenred21]. (n.d.). Web log. Retrieved from https://esenred.blogspot.com/ .

INFOBOX VIII

2. Creating a roadmap for stakeholder collaboration. Green Free School – Denmark (CPI)

The Green Free School is a school that extends beyond the school context and into the lives of all those who are affiliated with the school. The school builds a community among parents and families, which aims to fulfil the school's vision, also for the adults. This community consists of a parental network, which creates and maintains the school's physical framework, social activities for children and adults with a focus on community, and parenting academy- engaging the school's adults in a common learning and development process with a focus on green transition, linked with innovation projects. The school puts sustainable living at the heart of its curriculum. It implements project-based innovation courses and students are facilitated to unlock their potential through active participation and an innovative pedagogical framework, including mix-aged communities of students. Project-based innovation courses have authentic recipients, which become the school's stakeholders, such as local businesses, the local community, researchers, parents, students, staff and every individual who can contribute to the project. The results of the school projects are communicated at the end of the innovation projects at the school and at the local level, and are disseminated in the community.

Links:

Den Grønne Friskole. (n.d.). Facebook page. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/DenGronneFriskole/?locale=da_DK

INFOBOX IX

3. Networks of associate organisations for promoting SD. Learning for Tomorrow- The Netherlands (CPI)

In the Netherlands, the Cooperatie Leren voor Morgen (Learning for Tomorrow) consists of a network of associate organisations with the goal of promoting learning for sustainable development. The cooperative seeks to incorporate sustainability into the DNA of education by employing a WSA. The activities of the network relate to the SDGs, specifically SDG 4 (Quality Education). Such activities include actions and curricula on various sustainable development-related topics, highlighting both best practices and inspiration sources within the field of ESD. Indicatively, schools have established sustainable business practices that structurally support learning for Sustainable Development. Schools such as Stanislas Pro Rijswijk and Helen Parkhurst Almere, which have implemented sustainability initiatives involving students, instructors, artists, local businesses, and municipalities, are cited as examples of best practices. These initiatives concentrate on topics such as sustainable entrepreneurship, biology, physics, chemistry, and geography. In addition to highlighting best practices, the network emphasises the significance of preparing students to meet the challenges of establishing a sustainable planet for future generations. It recognises education as a potent instrument for transforming students into global citizens who are aware of and able to contribute to the world's sustainability.

Links:

Ferreira, G. R., Silva, M. C., & Dalcastagnê, A. (2020). Sustainable development goals and ecodesign: A research review. Sustainability, 12(3), 861. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12030861

5.2.6 Infrastructure

The Role of Infrastructure in Sustainable Education

Infrastructure is essential for quality, accessible, and sustainable education. As educational paradigms evolve to emphasise sustainability, the importance of infrastructure becomes even more critical. This section explores how infrastructure **promotes quality education** and **integrates sustainability principles** in educational institutions.

Key Points:

Quality education relies on curriculum content, educator expertise, and physical and technological infrastructure. Infrastructure includes classrooms, laboratories, libraries, IT systems, and recreational spaces, all of which contribute to a conducive learning environment.

Sustainable education expands the notion of infrastructure to include support for experiential learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and real-world application. It requires spaces that inspire inclusiveness, creativity, critical thinking, and environmental stewardship.

Characteristics of Adequate Infrastructure for Sustainable Development:

1. **Sustainable Design:** Infrastructure should be designed using sustainable practices that minimise environmental impact, optimise resource efficiency, and promote resilience to climate change. This includes energy efficiency, waste reduction, renewable materials, and green building standards.

2. **Multifunctional Learning Spaces:** Infrastructure should support diverse learning modes, including group work, hands-on experiments, outdoor exploration, and digital engagement. Flexible spaces promote active participation and deeper learning experiences.

3. **Technological Accessibility and Innovation**: Infrastructure should provide access to advanced technologies and digital resources to enhance teaching, learning, and research in sustainability. This includes robust IT infrastructure, high-speed internet, digital learning platforms, and multimedia resources.

4. **Community Engagement and Partnership:** Infrastructure should serve as a hub for community engagement, fostering partnerships with local organisations, businesses, and government agencies to address sustainability challenges. Collaborative spaces facilitate knowledge exchange and joint problem solving.

Types of Infrastructure for Sustainability:

1. **Physical Infrastructure:**

    a. Energy-efficient buildings with renewable energy sources like solar panels.

    b. Recycling programs, composting facilities and sustainable procurement practices.

    c. Green spaces on campus to enhance aesthetics and promote biodiversity.

2. **Technological Infrastructure:**

    a. Online platforms and learning management systems for delivering sustainability-focused curriculum.

    b. Data analytics tools to track and analyse sustainability metrics for informed decision-making.

3. **Curricular Infrastructure:**

    a. Development of sustainability-focused curricula across disciplines and grade levels.

    b. Professional development opportunities for educators to enhance sustainability education skills.

4. **Administrative Infrastructure**:

    a. Development of sustainability policies, goals, and strategies.

    b. Engaging all stakeholders in sustainability initiatives to foster collective responsibility.

Impact of Infrastructure:

Adequate infrastructure significantly affects the speed, quality, and sustainability of introducing sustainability education. A well-developed infrastructure streamlines processes, reduces barriers, and provides necessary resources and technology for high-quality sustainability education. It also fosters a culture of sustainability for long-term implementation and continuous improvement.

Educational institutions can adapt these suggestions to their specific contexts. Building the necessary infrastructure systematically with community involvement demonstrates a sustainable mind-set.

By incorporating these elements, educational institutions can effectively integrate sustainability principles into their operations and promote quality education for sustainable development.

INFOBOX X

Promoting Energy efficiency & Developing Innovative Approaches in schools – Cyprus (CPI)

The PEDIA project (Promoting Energy efficiency & Developing Innovative Approaches in schools) is the first project that approaches comprehensively the needs of school buildings in Cyprus to be transformed into Almost Zero Energy Consumption Buildings, while seeking to address chronic and long-standing problems such as heating, air conditioning, lighting and ventilation. The PEDIA project, funded by the EU and coordinated by the Cyprus Energy Agency in collaboration with the Unit of Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, undertakes a wide range of actions aimed at improving energy efficiency and comfort conditions of at least 55 public school buildings in Cyprus, thus contributing to the achievement of the National and European goals of Cyprus for energy and climate. The PEDIA project activates €22 million public and private investment and develops a long-term energy renovation strategy for all public school buildings, introducing a process framework for energy upgrades based on environmental, energy and socio-economic criteria.

Link: Cyprus Energy Agency. (n.d.). CEA Pedagogical Toolkit. Retrieved from https://www.cea.org.cy/en/pedia/

5.2.7 Finances

Effective financial management is essential for quality education (Yunas, 2014). However, many schools and headmasters struggle with financial skills, leading to problems like insufficient funds and poor monitoring (Amos, 2021; Upadhyaya, 2016). Studies highlight the importance of strong financial management skills and strategies in schools (Ajaegbo, 2020; Vicente et al., 2023). Recommendations from the literature emphasise the effectiveness of financial planning and control in school-based management, advocating for decentralised budget planning and teacher participation (Yau, 2011).

A systematic review in Southeast Asia (Vicente, 2023) highlights key aspects of effective financial management, including increased accountability and financial literacy, efficient resource allocation, transparency in procurement, and sustainability and asset management.

School Financial Management Definition:

School financial management involves the management actions related to the financial aspects of schools to achieve effective education, performed by an authority figure (Coleman & Anderson, 2009).

Key Concepts:
- Financial Resources: Time, money, materials, and human resources that help schools achieve their goals.
- Cost-Effectiveness: Achieving more or better results with the same or less cost.

Importance of Sound Financial Management:

Good financial management promotes transparency, builds internal financial knowledge, and identifies funding gaps. It also supports advocating for additional funding through structured mechanisms. The first step is to have a clear, well-informed budget. A worksheet in the Annex section can help schools identify their expenses. This worksheet is a supplementary resource and should not replace official guidelines and practices.

After clarifying the budget, schools should set specific goals for change. An adapted version of UNICEF's budget brief impact action plan can guide schools in advocating for change.

Action Plan Template:

The action plan template in Table 4 helps schools visualise, organise, and track specific aims. It includes:

- **Aim:** Should be specific and measurable.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Indicators to measure the degree of aim implementation.
- **Potential Partners:** List of partners to support the school in achieving its aim.
- **Steps and Actions:** Specific steps and actions towards implementing the outcomes to achieve the aim.

Table 4 Action plan template (adapted from UNESCO's Budget Brief Impact Action Plan)

Aim	Expected outcome	Possible partners	Specific actions	Progress
Ex.1 Commence a process to enhance educational institution's network	**Ex.1** 10 meetings with relevant stakeholders 1 participation as an observer to a national or international network At least 1 meeting with the municipality and At least 2 meetings with local business owners	**Ex.1** School administration, Parent's association, Municipality (specific department for education), Local/regional businesses […]	**Ex.1** Prepare a list of relevant stakeholders to communicate with, Send emails/make phone calls, Schedule meetings, Prepare a draft agenda of what will be discussed, Conduct meetings	**Ex. 1** Prepared list of stakeholders (15/03/2024) Currently working on communications, which are to be finalised by the end of the month […]

Using the **SMART goals methodology** can be very helpful throughout this process. By focusing on these aspects, schools can improve their financial management and ensure the provision of quality education. In brief, the initials of SMART goals refer to the following (University of California, 2016):

SPECIFIC
What will be accomplished?
What actions will be taken?

MEASURABLE
What data will measure the goal?
(How much? How well?)

ACHIEVABLE
Is the goal doable?
Do the necessary skills and resources exist?

RELEVANT
How does the goal align with broader goals?
Why is the result important?

TIME-BOUND
What is the period for accomplishing the goal?

5.2.8 Continuity and development

While ESD is essential for societal transformation (UNESCO, 2020), creating a strong Sustainability Plan requires two additional elements: Development and Continuity (Lepilin S.V., 2019). This section explains the key quality indicators that connect all the previous elements discussed.

Development:

Development refers to the **deliberate growth and evolution** of ESD over time. It involves mechanisms and arrangements that allow for continuous improvement of an institution's educational, social, and organisational practices.

Continuity:

Continuity means the **sustained effort to embed sustainability principles in an educational system or institution**. It ensures that ESD is integrated seamlessly across different educational levels and contexts, fostering lifelong attitudes and behaviours that extend beyond the educational setting.

Key Points:

- Development: Focuses on progress and adaptation to changing needs.
- Continuity: Emphasises persistence and interconnectedness of ESD principles over the long term.

Development ensures that ESD evolves and responds to new challenges, while Continuity ensures that sustainability principles remain a core part of the education system. Both are crucial for effective sustainability plans, ensuring ESD stays relevant and impactful on individuals and communities.

Figure 1, distinguishes between the traits and characteristics of both of these elements.

Development

Nature
The intentional **growth** and **evolution** of ESD in a given educational institution over time.

Process
Ongoing **enhancement** and **optimisation** of pedagogical, social and organisational interactions.

Focus
Focuses on **progress** and **adaptation**.

Scope
Evolving and **responding** to changing needs.

Principle Characteristics

Continuity

Nature
The **sustained** and **ongoing** efforts to embed sustainability principles in a given educational institution.

Process
Seamless **integration** of sustainability principles and practices across **levels** of education and learning **contexts**.

Focus
Focuses for **longevity**, **persistence** and **interconnectedness**

Scope
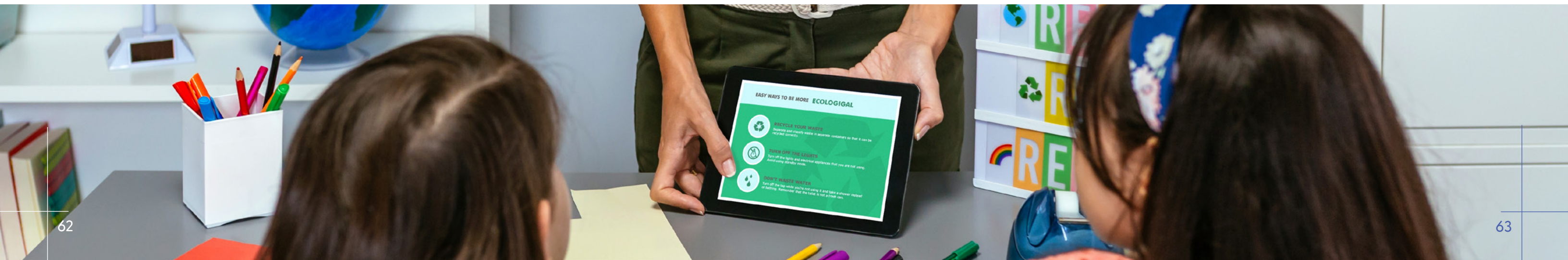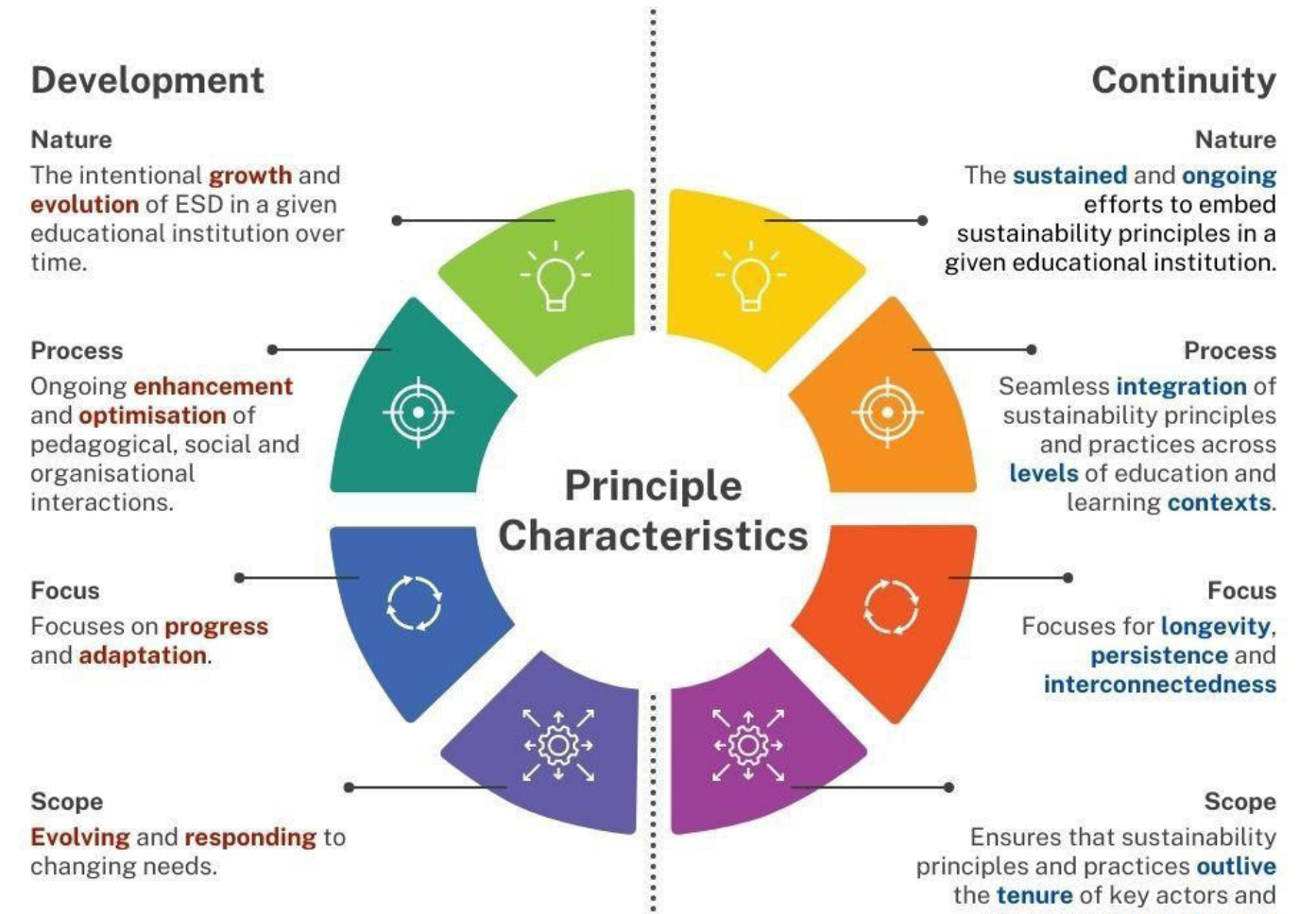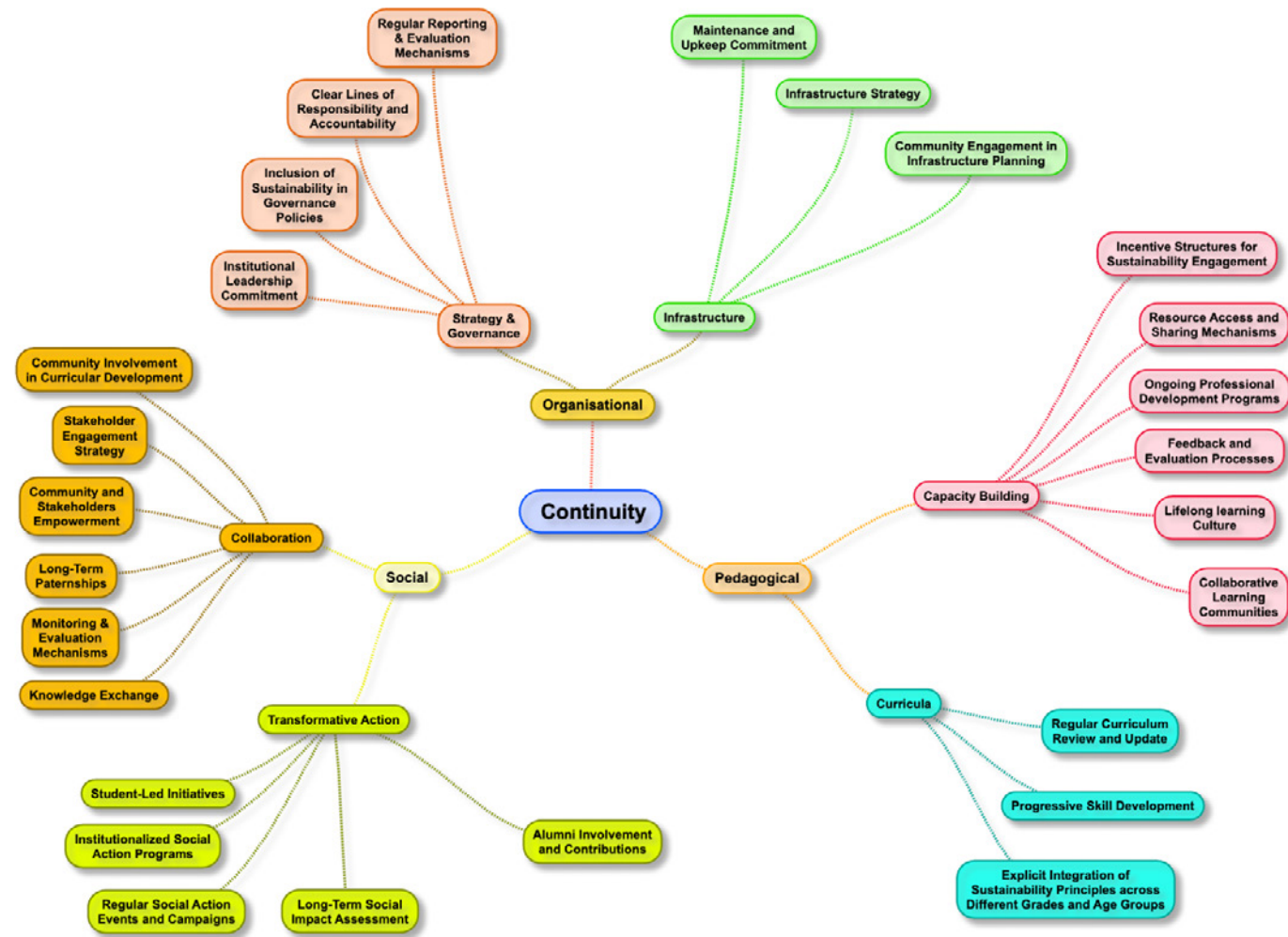Ensures that sustainability principles and practices **outlive** the **tenure** of key actors and

Table 5 provides brief descriptions of various components that can help achieve both Continuity and Development in different areas. These components are based on AELIA's research, fieldwork results (AELIA, 2023), and an extensive literature review on systemic frameworks for whole-institution approaches (SUSE-DI, 2023; MOEC, 2012; OMEP, 2019; Tilbury, 2022; UNESCO, 2012).

Although the table is not a guaranteed formula for success, it offers practical examples to guide users in considering development and continuity when creating a sustainability plan. Figures 2 and 3 highlight the key themes covered in Table 5.

Figure 2. - Quality Components of the state of Continuity

Figure 3. - Quality Components of the state of Development
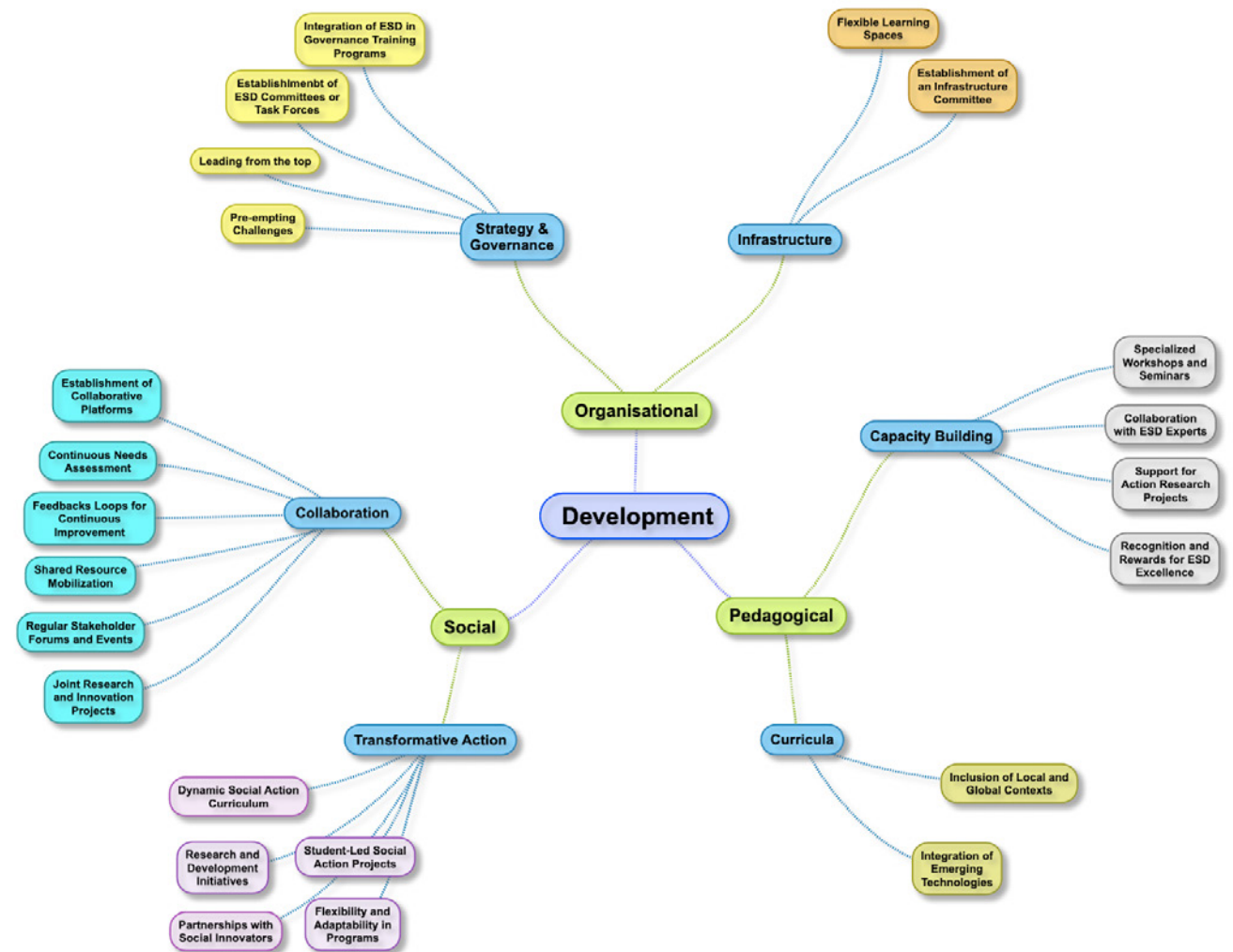
Domain of Consideration: **Organisational**

Area of Consideration	Continuation Component	Rationale	Development Component	Rationale
Strategy & Governance (5.2.7 & (5.2.1))	**Institutional Leadership Commitment** The institution's leadership, including governing bodies and administrators, demonstrates a sustained commitment to ESD.	Leadership commitment sets the tone for continuity, ensuring that sustainability remains a priority across changes in leadership and institutional shifts.	**Integration of ESD in Governance Training Programs** Governance training programs include modules on ESD, providing members with the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions.	Integrating ESD in training programs enhances the capacity of governance members, supporting ongoing development in sustainable governance practices.
	Inclusion of Sustainability in Governance Policies Governance policies explicitly include commitments to sustainability, reflecting a long-term vision.	Governance policies explicitly include commitments to sustainability, reflecting a long-term vision.	**Establishment of ESD Committees or Task Forces** Specialised committees or task forces focused on ESD are established within the governance structure, ensuring dedicated attention to sustainability initiatives.	Dedicated committees facilitate focused efforts, contributing to the ongoing development and effective implementation of ESD initiatives.
	Clear Lines of Responsibility and Accountability Clear lines of responsibility and accountability for ESD are established within the governance framework.	Well-defined roles and responsibilities ensure that sustainability efforts are consistently addressed and monitored, fostering continuity.	**Leading from the top** School leaders have a key role to play in raising awareness, motivating and involving all staff as well as parents and students in a school self-evaluation process.	Supporting broad stakeholder engagement in this quality improvement process is crucial; it can promote transparency, trust, shared responsibility and ongoing reflection on how to make progress.
	Regular Reporting and Evaluation Mechanisms Regular reporting and evaluation of sustainability initiatives are integrated into governance practices.	Continuous monitoring allows for adjustments and improvements and demonstrates the institution's commitment to sustained progress in ESD.	**Pre-empting Challenges** Schools face challenges when implementing SSE within the context of learning for sustainability. These challenges may result from a lack of time and capacity from staff to take on SSE, a lack of professional development or support or poor engagement from external stakeholders.	Identifying these challenges from the start and devising a plan to address them can increase the success of SSE initiatives.
Infrastructure (5.2.6)	**Infrastructure Strategy** Securing a long-term and well-defined infrastructure strategy	A clearly defined infrastructure strategy ensures that future funds and investments are thoughtfully directed and allocated regardless of changing circumstances and outgoing school leadership.	**Flexible Learning Spaces** Infrastructure design includes flexible learning spaces that facilitate various teaching methods, collaborative activities, and interactive learning.	Ongoing adjustments to learning spaces support the evolving needs of educational practices and promote a dynamic learning environment.
	Community Engagement in Infrastructure Planning Local communities and stakeholders are involved in the planning and decision-making processes related to the institution's infrastructure development.	Community involvement ensures that infrastructure projects align with local needs, fostering community support and ensuring the sustainability of initiatives.	**Establishment of an Infrastructure Committee** Establishing a dedicated team of educators and administrators exploring development pathways related to the infrastructure of a given institution.	A thematic group of faculty members researching and exploring pathways secures the gradual implementation of a preconceived and well-informed development plan.
	Maintenance and Upkeep Commitment The institution demonstrates a commitment to ongoing maintenance and upkeep of sustainable infrastructure.	Regular maintenance ensures the longevity of sustainable features, contributing to the continuity of their positive impact on the environment.		

Area of Consideration	Continuation Component	Rationale	Development Component	Rationale
Capacity Building (5.2.2)	**Ongoing professional development programmes** The institution offers ongoing, comprehensive professional development programs for educators focusing on sustainability education.	Regular training, as opposed to one-offs, ensures that educators stay abreast of evolving sustainability concepts and methodologies, contributing to the continuity of their capacity building.	**Specialised Workshops and Seminars** Specialised workshops and seminars are organised to provide in-depth knowledge and V skill development opportunities for educators in specific areas of ESD.	Specialised sessions allow educators to focus on particular aspects of sustainability, fostering expertise and contributing to continuous development.
	Collaborative Learning Communities Educators participate in collaborative learning communities focused on sustainability education.	Creating communities of practice fosters a supportive environment for continuous learning, sharing best practices, and sustaining educators' commitment to ESD.	**Collaboration with ESD Experts** Educational institutions collaborate with ESD experts to provide mentorship and guidance to educators in capacity-building initiatives.	Expert collaboration enhances the quality of capacity-building programs; ensuring educators receive guidance from experienced professionals in the field.
	Resource Access and Sharing Mechanisms Mechanisms are in place for educators to access and share sustainability education resources - resources that are continually updated and revised.	Ensuring easy access to resources promotes continuous learning, encourages resource sharing, and contributes to the longevity of educators' capacity building.	**Support for Action Research Projects** Educators are encouraged and supported in conducting action research projects focused on the integration of ESD in their teaching practices.	Action research projects allow educators to experiment with and reflect on sustainable teaching methods, contributing to their ongoing development.
	Incentive Structures for Sustainability Engagement The institution establishes incentives for educators actively engaging in sustainability education.	Recognizing and rewarding educators for their commitment incentivises ongoing involvement in ESD, enhancing continuity.	**Recognition and Rewards for ESD Excellence** Recognition and rewards are provided to educators who demonstrate excellence in integrating ESD into their teaching, creating motivation and acknowledgement for continuous development.	Recognition fosters a culture of excellence, encouraging educators to invest in ongoing development and innovation in ESD.
	Lifelong Learning Culture The institution cultivates a culture of lifelong learning among educators, emphasising the continuous pursuit of knowledge and skills related to sustainability.	Promoting a culture of lifelong learning instils a commitment to ongoing development, ensuring educators stay engaged with sustainability principles throughout their careers.		
	Feedback and Evaluation Processes The institution provides support systems such as mentorship, coaching, and peer support for educators involved in sustainability education.	Support systems contribute to the resilience and continuity of educators' capacity-building efforts by providing guidance and encouragement.		
Curricula (5.2.3)	**Explicit Integration of Sustainability Principles across Different Grades and Age Groups** The curriculum explicitly integrates sustainability principles across various subjects and grade levels.	Clear integration ensures that sustainability is not an isolated module but a consistent thread woven throughout the educational experience, contributing to the continuity of sustainability education.	**Inclusion of Local and Global Contexts** The curriculum includes content that addresses local and global sustainability challenges, connecting students to real-world issues.	Connecting the curriculum to local and global contexts enhances its relevance and ensures ongoing development in response to diverse sustainability concerns.
	Progressive Skill Development The curriculum focuses on progressively developing sustainability-related skills, from basic awareness to critical thinking and problem solving.	Sequential skill development ensures a continuous and structured learning trajectory, contributing to the long-term impact of sustainability education.	**Integration of Emerging Technologies** The curriculum integrates emerging technologies and tools related to sustainability, keeping students abreast of technological advancements in the field.	Technological integration contributes to the development of cutting-edge practices, ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant and up-to-date.
	Regular Curriculum Review and Update There are established processes for regular review and updating of the curriculum to reflect emerging sustainability issues.	Continuous review ensures the curriculum remains relevant, responsive, and aligned with evolving sustainability challenges, supporting long-term continuity.	**Collaboration with Industry and Research Partners in formulating curricular content** Collaborative initiatives with industry partners and research institutions are integrated into the curriculum, providing students with exposure to real-world sustainability applications.	Industry collaboration contributes to developing practical skills and fosters continuous improvement by aligning educational content with industry needs.

Area of Consideration	Continuation Component	Rationale	Development Component	Rationale
Collaboration (5.2.4)	**Stakeholder Engagement Strategy** Securing a long-term and well-defined strategy of collaboration with social stakeholders in the development and implementation of a Sustainability Plan.	A clear and inclusive strategy ensures that the collaboration with social stakeholders is intentional, well coordinated, and aligned with the institution's sustainability goals.	**Establishment of Collaborative Platforms** Educational institutions actively establish collaborative platforms or forums that facilitate ongoing engagement with social stakeholders.	Collaborative platforms provide a space for continuous dialogue, idea exchange, and joint initiatives, fostering the development of sustainable practices.
	Community Involvement in Curricular Development Local communities actively participate in the design and evolution of sustainability-focused curricula.	Involving communities in curriculum development ensures educational content is relevant to local contexts and fosters a sense of ownership and commitment.	**Continuous Needs Assessment** Educational institutions regularly conduct needs assessments in collaboration with social stakeholders to identify evolving challenges and opportunities.	Continuous needs assessment informs the development of responsive and relevant ESD strategies, contributing to ongoing improvement.
	Long-Term Partnerships The institution establishes and maintains long-term partnerships with social stakeholders.	Building enduring relationships with stakeholders contributes to the sustainability of initiatives, allowing for continuous collaboration and support.	**Feedback Loops for Continuous Improvement** Robust feedback mechanisms are in place to gather input from social stakeholders, informing continuous improvement in ESD initiatives.	Feedback loops contribute to the ongoing refinement and adaptation of programs, ensuring their development in response to changing needs.
	Knowledge Exchange The institution facilitates knowledge exchange programs between educators, students, and social stakeholders.	Promoting mutual learning and understanding enhances the continuity of sustainable development efforts and strengthens collaboration between the institution and stakeholders.	**Shared Resource Mobilisation** Educational institutions and social stakeholders engage in shared resource mobilisation efforts for the implementation of collaborative projects.	Shared resource mobilisation ensures the sustainability of initiatives, promoting ongoing financial and non-financial support.
	Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanisms Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to assess the impact of collaborative sustainability initiatives.	Regular assessment allows for adjustments and improvements, contributing to the sustainability and success of collaborative efforts.	**Regular Stakeholder Forums and Events** Regular forums and events are organised to bring together educational institutions and social stakeholders for dialogue and knowledge exchange.	Regular interaction fosters relationship building, enhancing the development of collaborative initiatives and ensuring sustained engagement.
	Community and Stakeholder Empowerment The institution initiates programs that empower local communities to take an active role in sustainability initiatives	Empowering communities creates a sense of responsibility and ownership, contributing to the sustainability of collaborative efforts beyond the educational setting.	**Joint Research and Innovation Projects** Educational institutions collaborate with social stakeholders on joint research and innovation projects related to sustainable development.	Joint projects contribute to the development of innovative solutions, creating a dynamic and evolving approach to ESD.
Transformative Action (5.2.4)	**Institutionalised Social Action Programs** Educational institutions have institutionalised programs that promote transformative social action aligned with sustainability principles.	Institutionalised programs ensure that transformative social action is an integral and ongoing part of the institution's identity, contributing to continuity.	**Dynamic Social Action Curriculum** The educational institution has a curriculum that evolves to incorporate new and emerging themes in transformative social action.	A dynamic curriculum ensures ongoing development, adapting to changing societal needs and fostering a progressive approach to social action.
	Student-Led Initiatives There is a presence of student-led initiatives focusing on sustainability and social action.	Student involvement ensures a generational commitment to transformative social action, contributing to the continuity of sustainability efforts.	**Research and Development Initiatives** The institution supports research initiatives focused on enhancing transformative social action strategies and outcomes.	Research and development contribute to the continuous improvement and evolution of social action practices within the educational context.
	Long-Term Social Impact Assessment Educational institutions regularly assess the long-term social impact of their transformative initiatives.	Continuous impact assessment informs future actions and ensures that social action efforts remain relevant and effective over time.	**Partnerships with Social Innovators** Educational institutions establish partnerships with social innovators and organisations at the forefront of transformative social action.	Collaborating with social innovators provides exposure to cutting-edge practices, contributing to developing more effective social action initiatives.
	Alumni Involvement and Contributions Alumni continue to be engaged in transformative social action initiatives and contribute to ongoing sustainability efforts.	Alumni involvement highlights a lasting impact on individuals and their continued commitment to social action beyond their educational tenure.	**Student-Led Social Action Projects** Students are encouraged to lead and initiate their transformative social action projects, fostering a culture of empowerment and innovation.	Student-led projects contribute to developing new perspectives and approaches in social action, promoting a continuous cycle of growth.
	Regular Social Action Events and Campaigns Educational institutions organise regular events and campaigns focused on transformative social action.	Regular activities maintain momentum and visibility, reinforcing the institution's commitment to ongoing social action.	**Flexibility and Adaptability in Programs** Educational programs exhibit flexibility and adaptability to accommodate evolving societal needs and trends in transformative social action.	The ability to adapt ensures that educational offerings remain relevant and contribute to the ongoing development of transformative social action practices.

6. ESD-action planning and self-evaluation tool

Integrating ESD in educational institutions is crucial for preparing students to tackle complex environmental, economic, and social challenges. ESD helps students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, enabling them to make informed decisions and adopt sustainable lifestyles. This approach promotes responsible actions for the well-being of the environment and society.

Benefits of ESD Integration:

- **Enhanced Learning Experience:** ESD enriches education by linking different fields of knowledge and encourages active participation in shaping a sustainable future.

- **Citizenship and Community Involvement:** ESD promotes citizenship and community involvement, developing informed, skilled, and motivated individuals who can drive positive changes toward sustainability.

- **Prepared Graduates:** ESD produces environmentally aware, socially responsible, and economically equipped graduates ready for the challenges of a sustainable future.

Commitment through ESD Plans:

Educational institutions can show their commitment to sustainability by creating specific ESD plans aligned with their goals and needs. An ESD plan offers several benefits, including providing guidance, a clear roadmap, and a mechanism for accountability and monitoring progress.

This section outlines:

1. **Overview of an ESD Plan:** A guide for educational institutions to prepare an effective ESD plan.

2. **ESD Plan Tool:** A tool to help institutions develop their ESD plans.

3. **Self-Evaluation Tool:** A checklist to ensure all necessary components are included in the ESD plan.

By following these steps, educational institutions can effectively integrate ESD and contribute to a sustainable future.

6.1 Notes on the ESD-plan

Having an ESD plan is crucial for educational institutions for several reasons:

1. **Structured and Strategic Approach:** An ESD plan provides a systematic way to integrate sustainability into all aspects of education, including curriculum design, teaching methods, policies, and operations. This ensures sustainability is a core part of education, not treated as a separate issue.

2. **Comprehensive Understanding and Commitment:** By incorporating sustainability into all areas, an ESD plan fosters a broad understanding and commitment to sustainable practices among students, faculty, and staff.

3. **Roadmap for Change:** An ESD plan serves as a roadmap for institutional change, helping institutions align their practices with global sustainability goals, particularly the SDGs.

4. **Collaboration and Engagement:** It supports collaboration within the educational community and with external stakeholders, encouraging the sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices.

5. **Accountability and Continuous Improvement:** By setting measurable targets, an ESD plan ensures accountability and helps monitor progress. This allows institutions to assess the effectiveness of their initiatives, identify areas for improvement, and adapt strategies to meet evolving sustainability challenges.

Key Areas for an ESD Plan:

The current guide follows eight quality criteria areas, but other approaches are also relevant. One effective direction is adapting the ESD 2030 roadmap's priority areas:

1. Advancing Policy

2. Transforming Learning Environments

3. Building Capacities of Educators

4. Empowering and Mobilising Youth

5. Accelerating Local Level Actions

By focusing on these areas, educational institutions can cover most important aspects of ESD. Additionally, it is advised to include considerations related to:

- Resource Management
- Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation (see Chapter 4)
- Whole-School Approach (see Chapter 4)

These considerations are vital for successfully integrating ESD within an educational organisation.

By developing an ESD plan, educational institutions can ensure a structured, collaborative, and accountable approach to sustainability, making a significant impact on their educational practices and contributing to a sustainable future.

An adapted version of an ESD plan would tailor the following components:

1. Advancing policy

    a. Vision, mission and objectives

    b. Collective decision-making procedures

2. Transforming learning environments

    a. Educational organisation's operation and management

      i. School infrastructure, energy, water conservation, waste management, sustainable procurement, sustainable transportation, recycling, increase of green spaces

      ii. Healthy school culture (meals, extracurricular activities)

      iii. ESD integration to curriculum (in STEAM and social sciences)

3. Building capacities of educators

    a. Professional development and capacity-building opportunities for teachers

4. Empowering and mobilising youth

    a. Promoting an inclusive approach of decision-making, identification of students' needs

5. Accelerating local-level actions

    a. Enhance local partnerships

6. Review processes

    a. Monitoring and evaluation procedures

The current guide utilises the following breakdown for an ESD-plan.

1. ESD incorporation to vision and mission of educational institution

2. Trainer and staff ESD related capacity building

    a. Professional development and capacity-building opportunities for teachers

3. ESD integration to curriculum

    a. ESD integration to curriculum (in STEAM and social sciences)

4. Public relations and dissemination

5. How to find synergies

    a. Enhance local partnerships

6. Infrastructure

    a. Educational organisation's operation and management: school infrastructure, energy, water conservation, waste management, sustainable procurement, sustainable transportation, recycling, increase of green spaces

7. Improving finances and finding sustainable solutions

8. Continuity and development

    a. Review processes

    b. Monitoring and evaluation procedures

6.2 ESD-plan

Creating an ESD plan through structured activities is crucial for integrating sustainability into an institution's ethos and practices. Involving various stakeholders—teachers, students, administrators, and community partners—in the planning process ensures diverse perspectives and expertise, fostering ownership and commitment to the set goals. Inclusive participation enriches the plan with diverse insights and promotes a unified vision for sustainability, **aligning the institution's goals with the global sustainability agenda**. This collaborative process can transform the culture within an educational organisation.

Key Activities for Developing an ESD Plan:

1. **Workshops and Training Sessions:** These sessions form the foundation for developing a comprehensive sustainability approach. They are essential for embedding sustainability principles across all areas of the institution, from curriculum to campus management.

2. **Capacity Building:** Workshops and training enhance staff understanding of sustainability issues and equip them with the skills needed to implement the ESD plan effectively.

3. **Establishing Clear Metrics:** Structured activities help set clear metrics and feedback mechanisms to monitor progress and refine the plan over time for continuous improvement.

By engaging in these activities, educational institutions can create a strategic and inclusive ESD plan that promotes sustainability across all aspects of their operations.

Suggested Activity for Preparing an ESD Plan:

In this section, we present a suggested activity for preparing an ESD plan within an educational institution. This activity aims to involve all stakeholders, build capacity, and establish a clear roadmap for integrating sustainability principles into the institution's practices.

Table 6 ESD plan preparation activity

Duration	Participants	Purpose
Approximately 8 hours with 2–3 meetings.	ESD plan preparation team with representatives from all groups within the educational institution (e.g. teachers, students, administrative employees, and other staff).	Development of a collectively created ESD plan. created vision statement, incorporating ESD.

Steps:
a. **Identify** and assemble the ESD plan preparation team.
b. **Discuss the expected outcome; provide clear guidelines, timelines, the school's current actions related to ESD, examples of other ESD plans; a briefing note summarising information related to ESD and educational institutions (e.g., definition of terms, priority areas and some good practices – such as UNESCO, 2012); other relevant resources and lastly a briefing note with key statistical data concerning the educational institution itself (school demographics, student attendance rates, assessment results, student test results, rate of disciplinary incidents etc.)**
c. **Provide some time (approx. 15') for the members to review the provided material and then hold a discussion concerning the need for an EDF plan at the educational institution (what is the need for an ESD plan?)**

d. Co-creation process:

1. Divide the team into smaller groups (3-4 members)

2. Provide each team with four (4) pieces of paper and request them to cut them in half so that each team has eight (8) smaller pieces

3. Request each team to write the following titles on top of the smaller pieces of paper:

   i. ESD incorporation to mission and vision (utilise previous activity to finalise this)
   ii. Staff capacity-building in terms of ESD
   iii. ESD integration to curriculum
   iv. Public relation and dissemination
   v. Finding synergies with the community
   vi. Improving infrastructure
   vii. Improving finances and finding sustainable solutions
   viii. Continuity and development

e. After this phase, each team has 1 hour to write their suggestions on how to improve each aspect of the educational institution

f. After this session, prepare a matrix with the horizontal axis representing "importance" as a variable and the vertical one representing "degree of difficulty". This matrix should be projected onto a screen (virtually) or written down on a blackboard.

g. Next, open a discussion by going through each category and positioning every initiative onto the matrix.

h. The important ones are then classified based on the degree of their difficulty with easier initiatives being first in the list. Those suggestions are utilised to formulate the first draft of the educational institution's ESD plan.

i. Once the first draft of the vision is prepared, it should be shared with the entire staff for feedback.

j. After being finalised, the ESD plan should be posted publicly in visible places (including the website). School functions that do not align with the vision should be reconsidered.

6.3 Self-evaluation tool

Self-evaluation tools help institutions ensure that all necessary components are included in their ESD plan and that progress is monitored adequately. For effective self-assessment concerning the level of ESD implementation in schools, WWF in cooperation with SIDA have provided a comprehensive table with assessment criteria based on the following topics (WWF, 2012: 136-140):

1. **School culture & ethos**

   a. Whole-school approach

   b. Pupil's participation and empowerment

2. **Teaching and learning (formal, curricula and co-curricula)**

   a. Quality teaching

   b. Diversity

   c. Values and attitudes

   d. Professional development of teachers in ESD

3. **Community**

   a. Links with parents and governors and school boards

   b. Links with the community

   c. School-Community level of integration

4. **The school estate**

   a. School resources management

   b. Waste management

   c. School compound

   d. School build and restoration

   e. School grounds

5. **Monitoring and evaluation**

   a. Action learning

These assessment criteria have been adapted below at Table 7, to provide a more recent approach for educational institution is attempting to estimate their positioning based on specific metrics and criteria. Table 7 provides a comprehensive framework for assessing the level of ESD implementation in schools. It helps educational institutions evaluate their progress and identify areas for improvement.

Table 7: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA OF THE LEVEL OF ESD IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS

Theme: **Advancing ESD-related policy in the educational institution**

ESD INDICATOR	A GRADE	B GRADE	C GRADE	D GRADE
Mission, vision and objectives	The educational institution has incorporated ESD-related matters in its mission, vision and specific objectives. In addition, all students, teachers and non-teaching staff are aware.	The educational institution is in the process of incorporating ESD-related matters in its mission, vision and specific objectives and raising awareness to all students, teachers and non-teaching staff.	The educational institution has not incorporated and is not in the process of incorporating ESD-related matters in its mission, vision and specific objectives. However, there is staff who is interested and advocates towards this direction.	The educational institution has not incorporated and is not in the process of incorporating ESD-related matters in its mission, vision and specific objectives, and there is no staff who is interested and advocates towards this direction.
Whole school approach	All the students, teachers and non-teaching staff and the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) are involved in decision-making.	All the students, teachers and non-teaching staff are in the process of putting in place systems that will facilitate an inclusive participatory approach to learning for sustainability.	A few teachers are aware of the inclusive, participatory approach to learning for sustainability, and they are interested in its implementation in the school.	Not aware and/or do not understand the concept of ESD. No sign of participatory approach to SDG incorporation and decision-making is done at the educational institution's Board level.
	The educational institution has a management policy that has incorporated learning for SGDs.	The educational institution is developing a management policy that is incorporating learning for SDGs	The educational institution has an idea of having a policy that incorporates learning for SDGs	The educational institution does not have a management policy and has no idea of having learning for SDGs in a school policy

Theme: **Transforming learning environments**

ESD INDICATOR	A GRADE	B GRADE	C GRADE	D GRADE
Quality teaching	The systems of teaching and learning are learner centred.	There are indications that the teaching and learning systems consider the learners.	There is a general agreement that the learner should be the focus in both teaching and learning	No idea on how teaching and learning could be made learner centred
	There is emphasis on growth of both body and mind for holistic education of the learners (not just examination-oriented education).	There is a strong indication of holistic education.	The educational institution encourages learners' participation in activities that involve both mental and physical growth.	The educational institution emphasises completion of syllabus, utilises all the school hours for academic work and measures the schools success by the numbers of students who pass the national examinations.
	Guidance and counselling is part of the curriculum.	There is evidence that guidance and counselling takes place.	There are plans to introduce guidance and counselling.	The educational institution does not consider guidance and counselling as having anything to do with the curriculum.
Diversity	There are strong indications that the educational institution respects and values diversity (staff gender balance, physically challenged learners, religious differences, ethnic differences) and this is apparent to the students.	There is some evidence that the educational institution respects and values diversity.	The educational institution recognises that diversity should be accommodated but there are no signs of implementation.	The educational institution does not demonstrate any sign of acknowledging diversity and has no idea on how to consider it in the school.
	Stimulating learning resources and variety in methods of learning and teaching (diverse pedagogical methods) are available to enable the students have more time and space to maximise their potential.	The educational institution has incorporated a variety of teaching and learning methods.	Some teachers have attempted to use a variety of teaching and learning methods.	The teaching and learning methods used in the educational institution are the traditional instruction methods.
Values and attitudes	Curriculum teaching inspires the learners and links learning with values and attitudes that advance sustainability.	There is a recognisable level of linkages between learning with values and attitudes that advance sustainability.	A group of teachers do attempt to integrate the concept of sustainability as they teach the curriculum.	Curriculum teaching utilises the up-down method and strictly limits coverage to the syllabus as directed by the Ministry of Education guidelines.

ESD INDICATOR	A GRADE	B GRADE	C GRADE	D GRADE
Educational institution's infrastructure	The educational institution has sound structures that are well maintained and safe to be in with evidence of optimum use of school build.	The educational institution's structures are well maintained. There is little evidence of optimum use of the school build to promote sustainability principles	The educational institution's structures are in a good state.	The educational institution's structures are old and broken down and need serious renovation.
Resource and waste management	Sustainability guides the choice and use of resources such as water and energy. There is a well-established waste management system (recycling etc.).	There is evidence that sustainability influences the choice and use of resources such as water and energy. There is evidence that some care has been taken in dealing with waste.	There is general knowledge about wise use of natural resources for sustainability. Evidence of waste is not visible but there is no indication that this has been done in relation to the principles of good waste management.	Choice and use of resources such as water and energy are guided by other considerations. Waste is not considered a big issue; there are other priorities e.g. pupils are passing in their exams.
Educational institution areas	The educational institution's compound is generally clean and free of plastic and waste paper.	There is evidence that effort is made towards keeping the educational institution's compound rubbish free.	The compound is generally clean apart from some used plastic here and there.	There is no sign that any effort is ever made to clear the educational institution compound of rubbish.
Educational institution's culture	The educational institution's compound qualifies to be called a "talking compound" (i.e. has conservation demonstrations, information, eco-codes (e.g. "water is life-save it", have you switched off the light?"), trees are labelled, tree planting projects, composting pits, bird feeding tables etc.).	The educational institution's compound has some eco-codes and signs of conscious environment conservation projects/activities.	The science department has labelled some trees and it is believed that "a talking compound" would enhance the image of the educational organisation as an institution of learning.	There is very little or no evidence that any effort has been made towards creating "a talking compound".
	The teachers use the educational institution's grounds to teach most of the school curriculum.	The teachers use action learning only with specific topics with no interlinked continuous activities on the school grounds.	Action learning is used in a class once a term on a practical session or field trip.	There is no action learning and an end of term field trip is considered as sufficient to complement the classroom teaching and learning for the whole educational institution's term.

Theme: **Building capacities of educators**

ESD INDICATOR	A GRADE	B GRADE	C GRADE	D GRADE
Professional development of teachers in ESD	All teachers in the educational institution have undergone an in-service training on ESD. There are several opportunities to continue training.	Most teachers in the educational institution have undergone an in – service training on ESD. There are some opportunities to continue training.	A few teachers have undergone in-service training on ESD. There is a limited number of opportunities for teachers to follow ESD-relevant training.	No teacher in the educational institution has ever attended an ESD workshop. There are not any opportunities for teachers to follow ESD-relevant training.

Theme: **Empowering and mobilising youth**

ESD INDICATOR	A GRADE	B GRADE	C GRADE	D GRADE
Student participation & empowerment	Students are engaged in meaningful decisions – making their issues and running the school.	Only school prefects, and/or representatives are involved in meaningful decision-making about student issues and running of the educational institution.	Students are consulted about their issues and the running of the educational institution but their suggestions are never considered.	Students are never consulted in any decisions made on their issues and running of the educational institution.
	Students actively participate in the preparation and implementation of initiatives covering their local community needs.	Students actively participate in the implementation of initiatives covering their local community needs, but do not have much input in the preparation phase.	Students discuss within class about initiatives covering their local community needs.	Students neither implement nor discuss initiatives covering their local community needs.

Theme: **Accelerating local-level actions**

ESD INDICATOR	A GRADE	B GRADE	C GRADE	D GRADE
Links with parents, governors & school boards	The educational institution has recognised links with parents, governors, local leaders and the Parents Teachers Association (PTA).	There is evidence that the educational institution has functional links with the community.	The educational institution has issued specific links with the community.	There is no formal link with the community but sometimes the community is invited when there is need.
Links with the community	The educational institution values contributions of parents, neighbouring community, sponsoring institution (e.g. church) and staff members.	There are indications that contributions from the community are welcome and valued.	The educational institution respects contributions from the community.	The educational institution assumes independence and has all required mechanisms; therefore do not consider input from the community as being of any value.
School – community integration	The educational institution is viewed as part of the community and the community is viewed as part of the school.	The educational institution considers the community part of it.	There is consensus that the community is part of the educational institution because the community is its source of students.	The educational institution considers itself independent of the community and the community does not identify with the educational organisation.
School-community initiatives	The educational institution has also collaborated with the community on sustainability (social, economic, environmental and cultural) initiatives and income generating activities.	The educational institution is in the process of engaging with the community on sustainability (social, economic, environmental and cultural) initiatives and income generating activities.	The educational institution has made contacts with the community on collaborating on sustainability (social, economic, environmental and cultural) initiatives and income generating activities.	The educational institution has not involved the community in its sustainability (social, economic, environmental and cultural) initiatives and income generating activities.

Theme: **Monitoring and evaluation**

ESD INDICATOR	A GRADE	B GRADE	C GRADE	D GRADE
Whole-school-monitoring	There is participatory monitoring and evaluation in the school whereby the learners develop good practice by continuously managing and monitoring sustainability initiatives on the educational institution's ground.	A few students are involved in monitoring and managing the sustainability initiatives in the educational institution's grounds.	The educational institution's environmental club or wildlife club is assigned the task of monitoring and managing the organisation's sustainability initiatives.	There is no proper assigned responsibility on managing the educational institution's sustainability initiatives.
Monitoring mechanism	There is an ESD-task force monitoring the ESD-plan of the school.	There is evidence of an ESD-task force and an ESD-plan, but it does not function adequately.	There is an ESD-plan but no functioning (or dysfunctional) related ESD-task force.	There is no ESD-plan to monitor improvement and no ESD-task force.

7. Conclusions

The guide for sustainability plans for educational organisations provides **a comprehensive roadmap for integrating the WIA into any educational institution**. This guide serves as a vital tool for aligning entire institutions with the imperative of the **Green Transition**. It not only addresses a critical need but also offers structured and relevant assistance to institutions seeking to uphold sustainability principles and practices while promoting the values of social justice both within and beyond their premises.

Despite variations in data among partner countries and findings from previous AELIA project activities, certain commonalities emerge from research and online consultations. Implementing a successful sustainability plan demands various factors, as highlighted by all AELIA researchers, including motivated leaders and educators, robust infrastructure, and sufficient financial resources.

Nevertheless, the guide, with its eight quality criteria, presents a cohesive, pragmatic, and scientifically robust framework for educational institutions. This framework ensures that sustainable development is systematically integrated into all aspects of education, fostering a holistic approach that benefits students, teachers, and the broader community. The inclusion of info-boxes facilitates in-depth exploration of different aspects while maintaining the guide's brevity.

An essential outcome of online consultations and research within partner countries for the guide is the standardisation of terms within the framework of ESD. While educational institutions already engage with ESD content and methods, they often do not employ international terms or SDG's due to various reasons. This lack of standardisation complicates networking, outreach, and other critical aspects essential for successful ESD implementation across all areas, as outlined in this guide.

Central to implementing sustainable development in educational institutions is the development of an ESD plan. Achieving this requires preparatory work, which this guide aims to facilitate. It outlines eight quality criteria that are fundamental cornerstones for developing a forward-looking and comprehensive plan aligned with WIA and MSA principles. Notably, involving young people and students from the outset is crucial, aiming to prepare them as active global citizens equipped to address local and global challenges with care.

The overarching goal is **to equip young people with the skills and mind-set to become global citizens and leaders capable of addressing present and future societal challenges on a global scale.** Through engagement in the ESD planning process, young individuals will learn how to foster strong communities and engage potential stakeholders effectively, both locally and globally. In conclusion, an ESD plan stands as a pivotal tool in preparing young people to navigate the complex challenges facing our planet while promoting the ideals of global citizenship and sustainability.

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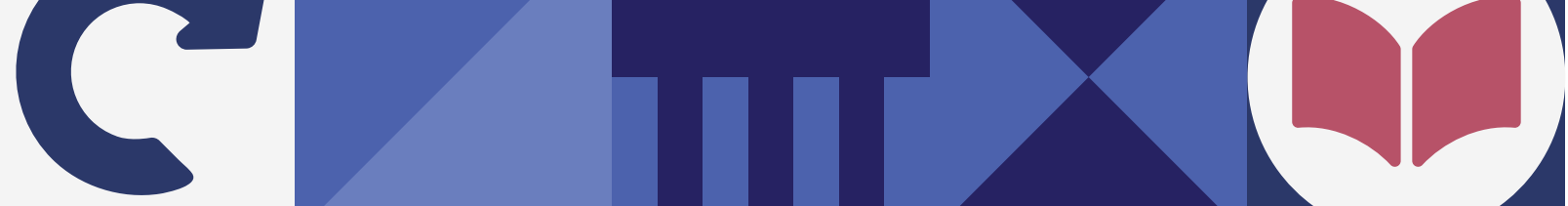Education for sustainable development: a roadmap - UNESCO Digital Library.

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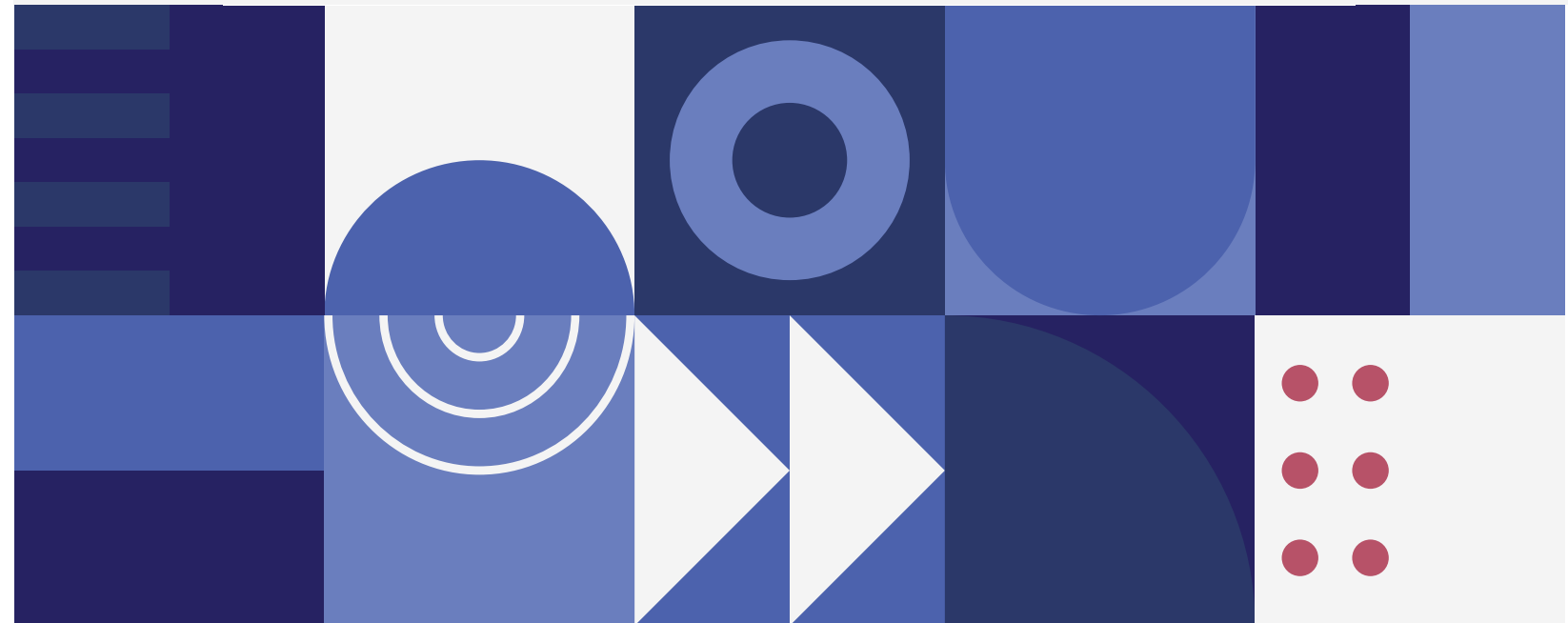
9. Annexes

Budget worksheet available here:

Source: Adapted from free template: https://thegoodocs.com/budget-templates/school-budget.php

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Guide for sustainability plans for educational organisations