

Yearbook of the European Network of Observatories  
in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education (ENO)

*Series Editor:* Lígia Ferro

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# Arts, Sustainability and Education

ENO Yearbook 2



# **Yearbook of the European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education (ENO)**

**Series Editor**

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The ENO yearbooks gather, analyse, discuss and evaluate results of research on arts and cultural education produced in Europe. The book series starts from the analysis of the concept of cultural diversity as an increasingly characteristic feature of contemporary societies in Europe due mainly to postcolonial processes, changing cultural hierarchies, digitization, mass-migration, multi-ethnicity, and urban change. It is also a contested feature of present-day Europe. Diverse ways of giving sense to social relations and the world have been developed, challenging traditional ways of understanding culture. Groups with different ethnic, social or cultural backgrounds coexist, interact or merge – processes that often create tensions or conflicts, but also generate creative, hybrid cultural forms and other new cultural arrangements. The challenges of cultural diversity – its innovative potential as well as the tensions and conflicts it implies – are reflected in transnational discourses on education, culture, democracy, and citizenship. Transcultural approaches, multicultural education, and intercultural learning are key concepts of these discourses. The same challenges are also reflected in arts and cultural education practice at school and outside school, in teachers' and artists' training, in cultural and educational policies, and in research. This book series brings together analyses and reflections regarding selected aspects of arts and cultural education in the 14 European countries that are represented in the ENO network, aiming to stimulate academic and public debate.

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# Arts, Sustainability and Education

ENO Yearbook 2


 Springer

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## Series Editor's Foreword

The second Yearbook of the *European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education (ENO)*, composed by National Observatories in 14 European countries and currently observed by 4 countries, proves the vitality of this network connecting relevant actors of arts and cultural education in the academic and non-academic sectors.

This editorial project emerged from the debates held at the conference *Perspectives of arts education and sustainable development*, organized at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto, Portugal (September, 14, 2017). At this meeting, the ENO members discussed the arts and cultural education within the frame of the “Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education” by UNESCO (2010) and the declaration of the General Assembly of the United Nations “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. Sustainable development is proclaimed in both documents as the basis and framework for all United Nations activities until 2030. These manifestos are all-embracing and encompass a broad variety of aspects faced by contemporary societies.

Arts and cultural education has an important role to play in the development of the goals pointed out by the UN agenda. This was the conviction of the European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education (ENO). The topic became a priority in the ENO agenda and it was promoted a wider space for debate and exchange. Academic and non-academic experts and professionals on arts and cultural education discussed the specific contribution of the arts and cultural education to sustainable development within the context of formal, non-formal and informal education.

The work developed by actors with different disciplinary backgrounds at local, regional, national and international scales, needs specific structures and spaces for networking, such as ENO. In a world crossed by dynamics of fast transformation and big challenges, time and space are becoming scarce supplies, even in light of growing digital possibilities. Taking the proper contexts and moments, the editorial group of this second volume, led by Ernst Wagner, materialized the work done so far and gave an excellent contribution to take a new step ahead in the field of arts and cultural education.

Starting from solid scientific knowledge and evaluation of results, this book offers insightful and very relevant contributions to analyze and intervene in a world devastated by COVID-19. Arts and cultural education is a field where questions are posed and solutions are built collectively. This is a precious resource for scholars, practitioners and policy makers acting in the field of arts and cultural education.

Porto, Portugal

The ENO Yearbooks Series Editor  
Lígia Ferro

# Introduction

## Arts, Sustainability and Education

In Europe the classical humanist understanding of education is primarily considered as a domain in which people develop *freely* and *comprehensively*. Comprehensive, one of the two aspects, means that all domains offering access to the world (like languages, science, history, religion, etc.) have to be included in education. Thus, the arts cannot be missed. On the other hand, *free* development is inevitable since we never really know the results of artistic, creative processes. The artistic process eludes complete control—also in education—and thus the arts in this sense promise a *free* and *comprehensive development* in education. Lars Lindström relates this classical understanding to the concepts of *learning about*, and *learning in the arts*. (Lindström 2012)

In 2010, UNESCO developed the “The Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education.” This is a global policy paper (the only one) on arts education that has been endorsed by almost all governments in the world. Compared to the concept of a free development of a comprehensive human being derived from the classical European understanding, the Seoul Agenda takes a different approach to arts education, it focuses on *learning with* and *learning through the arts* in addition.

*Arts education has an important role to play in the constructive transformation of educational systems that are struggling to meet the needs of learners in a rapidly changing world characterized by remarkable advances in technology on the one hand and intractable social and cultural injustices on the other. [...] arts education can make a direct contribution to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing the world today. (UNESCO 2010).*

These “social and cultural challenges facing the world today” are addressed in another globally endorsed document, United Nations’ “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. This document that names and explains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was adopted by the General Assembly of the UN five years after the proclamation of the Seoul Agenda by UNESCO in 2010. In respect to today’s challenges, this manifesto reflects the most critical ones. What those needs are and how they can be best addressed, however, varies across different places and time. In this regard, the SDGs provide a time-bound political framework



for mobilizing commitment and action, while education plays a critical role in shaping people's abilities to contribute to it. The definition of **sustainability** used in this document is based on the understanding discussed in the so-called Brundtland Report which states: "Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (United Nations 1987).

For the implementation of the SDGs in education, UNESCO developed the *Global Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development* that proclaims "to create a world that is more just, peaceful and sustainable, all individuals and societies must be equipped and empowered by knowledge, skills and values." (UNESCO 2014). To do so, *Education for Sustainable Development* is based on three dimensions: environmental, social and economic. It is significant, though, that the cultural dimension is missing from these articulations. Or one could argue that, in this way, culture is implicit and thus present in the identified three dimensions. Whichever theoretical role culture plays in the obtainments of the SDGs is a question that various international networks are in the process of observing. This is done, for example, by evaluating programmes and actions at the interface of "arts education" and "education for sustainable development" and drawing conclusions from them. The "European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education" (ENO) is one of these networks and herewith presents the second volume of its yearbook series, in which, we look at the connection between arts, education and sustainability.

Doing so, we have observed significant differences in how the concepts and practices are understood in different regions and societal contexts within Europe and beyond. Respect and value of diverse viewpoints and interpretations are a fundamental principle of the ENO Network. In order to remain true to this position, the editorial team of this book has included different and, at times, even contradictory perspectives that do not align with one another. Regardless of the specific understandings used by the authors, however, they all share the common goal of understanding how arts and cultural education contribute to addressing the most pressing societal challenges that we face.

This book begins with an introduction written by Ernst Wagner, exploring and evaluating examples of good practice from around the globe with the intent of developing a theoretical framework that allows a deeper understanding of specific measures.

Chapter "[Arts Education Research, Projects and Pedagogy of Three University Programmes in Finland](#)", Anniina Suominen, Mirja Hiltunen, and Eeva Anttila discuss how teacher education programmes in dance and visual arts in Finland have generated the shift in making continuous transitions to further align their curricula and projects with the theories and research sensitive to sustainable development.

Chapter "[Artistic and Cultural Education for Sustainable Development: A Case Study from a Rural Life Museum in Spain](#)", Gemma Carbó Ribugent and Roser Servalls Munar from a museum of rural life in Espluga de Francolí, Spain, reflect on a programme focusing on the use of plastic. The study shows how a holistic approach to sustainability, combining science and art, memory and creativity, results in a better understanding of ecological challenges.

Elge Kulbok-Lattik and Ülle Raud discuss arts and hobby education in Estonia, focusing on the change of terminology in the most recent decades, within the paradigm of the modern educational system in relation to the concepts of *Bildung* and sustainable development.

Chapter “[Educational Theatre and Sustainable Development: Critical Reflections Based on Experiences from the Context of Bulgaria](#)”, Radka Vasileva and Nevelina Pachova reflect on the experiences of an educational theatre programme implemented in primary school in Bulgaria and its ability to contribute to the development of cross-cutting competences for sustainable development.

Chapter “[It’s About Time: Re-Imagining Present and Future Times in Art, Education and Sustainable Development](#)” by Raphael Vella, Censu Caruana, and Charmaine Zammit draws from socially responsible art practices and education for sustainable development and calls for a critical evaluation of the past and present practices to aid in imagining and articulating future developments for art, education and sustainable development.

Chapter “[Stories from the Sea: Working with the SDGs in a Community-Based Art Workshop](#)” by Ásthildur Jónsdóttir, Ellen Gunnarsdóttir, and Guðbjörg Lind Jónsdóttir entitled “Stories from the Sea” the authors discuss community-based art workshop carried out in rural communities in Iceland.

In Chap. “[Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) in Germany—Convergences, Divergences, Opportunities and Challenges](#)”, Susanne Keuchel explores the convergences and divergences between arts education and education for sustainable development in Germany in terms of their goals, principles and pedagogical approaches and identifies challenges and opportunities for arts education that they pose.

Chapter [A Microtopia of Arts Education: International Sustainable Development Policy Brought to Life in an Educational Project Involving Institutions in South Africa and Denmark](#) is written by an interdisciplinary group of dance and visual arts educators, researchers and stakeholders from South Africa and Denmark. Charlotte Svendler Nielsen, Gerard M. Samuel, Peter Vadim, Liesl Hartman, Fabian Hartzenberg, and Olaf Gerlach-Hansen share insights from what they call a “microtopia of arts education”. This “microtopia” involved a school class in South Africa the group was working with during the project. The authors examine in what ways their educational approach has been able to assist them in implementing SDG 4 “quality education” focusing on learning about the elements of nature and climate change.

In Chap. “[Educational Experiences Related to Architecture and Environmental Art](#)”, Riikka Mäkikoskela, Johanna Kivioja, and Jaana Räsänen discuss the experiences of a collaborative project involving four visual arts schools in Finland and aimed at strengthening the students’ knowledge and awareness of architectural and environmental education and increasing collaborative pedagogical learning through a series of experiential events

Victoria Pavlou and Chrysanthi Kadji-Beltran, focusing on visual arts education, explore literature on teachers’ competences to develop a framework for ESD-enhanced art education competences.

In Chap. “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#),” Edwin van Meerkerk, Arno Neele, and Iris van Korven present the results of a survey among arts and cultural education experts focused on exploring the perceived contribution and relation of arts and cultural education to the SDGs

Luísa Veloso, Carlota Quintão, Joana Marques, and Patrícia Santos propose a discussion of arts education and its relation with the promotion of citizenship and collaborative work based on an arts education project with four schools in Portugal targeting students from vulnerable social backgrounds called “Seven Years, Seven Schools”.

In Chap. “[Conditions and Limitations of the Role of Online Access to Cultural Heritage in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals—Evidence from Poland](#)”, Wojciech Kowalik discusses the conditions and limitations of the role of online access to cultural heritage in achieving the sustainable development goals based on evidence from the context of Poland.

Vania Baldi addresses an epistemological approach of education based on the discussion of *Homo educandus*, framing the role and aims of training systems. Alternatively, the author proposes to rescue vernacular and participatory learning processes as a new epistemological approach of education.

Timo Jokela and Glen Coutts discuss the potential of art education for sustainable development in the Northern and Arctic context, focusing on the idea of the Arctic as a “laboratory” for sustainable development through art education in theory and practice.

Agnese Karlsonē and Agnese Pašāne discuss the role played by cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education in Latvia, and how it contributes to sustainability in the context of youth’s identity, belonging and civic activity.

Ernst Wagner  
Charlotte Svendler Nielsen  
Luísa Veloso  
Anniina Suominen  
Nevelina Pachova

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# Introduction

# Arts Education and Sustainable Development. Examples from Around the Globe and What We Can Learn from Them



Ernst Wagner

**Abstract** This paper discusses examples for the development of arts education in the context of “Education for Sustainable Development” (ESD). The first part gives an introduction into the background of the discussion on arts education and ESD within the framework of UNESCO and UN. The second part presents and analyzes examples contributed by arts education stakeholders around the world. The third part attempts to systematize the lesson that can be learned from these examples. It also proposes a first, preliminary grid or framework as a base for a “sustainable arts education” to be developed in the future.

## UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is considered an important partner for all stakeholders when it comes to “Education for Sustainable Development” (ESD) as well as arts education. UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations with 195 member states at present. In order to understand UNESCO’s commitment, it is important to take the historical background of the organization into account: the first General Conference took place in 1946, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. UNESCO’s declared purpose has since then always been to contribute to peace by promoting international collaboration in education, science, and culture. NGOs like the *International Society for Education through Art* (InSEA) or the *International Society for Music Education* (ISME) were established under the auspices of UNESCO, as early as the 1950s, led by the hope that cultural exchange and international understanding through art would help to promote peace. In that sense, “education through the arts” (Lindström, 2012) has always been understood as “education for peace and fostering humanity”.

Since then, arts education has not been so much on the forefront of UNESCO’s agenda. However, coinciding with the start of the twenty-first century, UNESCO

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has intensified its efforts in arts education. After several regional conferences, two world conferences were held in Lisbon, in 2006 and in Seoul, in 2010. One result of these enduring endeavors was the publication of the “Seoul Agenda: Goals for the development of arts education” (UNESCO, 2010). The Seoul Agenda has three pillars:

- Ensure that arts education is accessible
- Assure quality in arts education
- Contribute to resolving today’s societal challenges.

In the context of this paper, we are mainly concerned with the third pillar.

## SDGs and Arts Education

In 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations, the mother of UNESCO, adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs, as the essential base for its work in the coming 15 years under the title “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (United Nations, 2015). In this policy document, we find 17 big goals, including “Quality Education”, “Sustainable Cities”, and “Responsible Consumption” (Fig. 1). This manifesto is all-embracing and encompasses a broad variety of aspects. It is based on a specific understanding of the term “sustainable”, defined in the Brundtland Report already in 1987. It says: “Sustainable



**Fig. 1** The SDGs (Screenshot UN Website: [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals))

Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (United Nations, 1987) The environmental dimension is in the focus of this definition, though it is not named. Not mentioning it explicitly means that the “needs” Brundtland speaks about, cannot be narrowed down to this aspect. A first glance at the 17 SDGs makes clear that these goals have to be related to more than one specific dimension. Different aspects such as environment, governance (the socio-political dimension), economy, culture, and education need to be considered as well.

Reading the whole UN document with the eyes of the arts education specialist (looking for goals that obviously combine the dimensions culture and education already), reveals that there are specific goals for which arts education can play a role. It also becomes clear that the SDGs match the Seoul Agenda, in particular, in its third pillar. All possible of “today’s challenges”, addressed in the Seoul Agenda, can be brought together under the headline of “sustainable development”. Bearing this in mind, we can state an ongoing relation between UN’s or UNESCO’s overarching goals on the one hand and discourses in the arts education communities on the other.

The following part suggests a theoretical framework that systematizes possible approaches of arts education to sustainable development. For *arts education* this framework distinguishes between a social, an economic, and an art-specific or cultural dimension (O’Farrell et al., 2016, 43—see Fig. 2). Two dimensions in this list represent also the broadly accepted dimensions *in education for sustainable development (ESD)*, as developed by UN or UNESCO (UNESCO, 2014, p. 33/5.a): the social and the economic dimension. The cultural dimension is missing in official ESD documents, and we find one additional dimension, the environmental. It is obvious, not only in the context of arts education, that it is necessary to include the cultural aspect in ESD. On the other hand, we need the environmental dimension within arts education when it comes to the bridge between both realms (Fig. 2).

Many of the 17 SDGs can be related to these dimensions. This means that each of the SDGs has a characteristic profile that relates to these four dimensions, e.g., sustainable consumption, production and settlements have a strong relation, especially to the *environmental dimension*. The SDGs inclusion (including social diversity), equality, and peace can be referred, in particular, to the *social dimension*. We have mainly “*cultural SDGs*”, that is, goals where culture as a dimension is directly and obviously addressed, like education, cultural diversity, heritage, and lifestyle, and last but not least, work, tourism, and innovation as most of all *economic dimensions* (Fig. 2).

## Examples

After the considerations above, it is obvious that we can find strong bridges between arts education and ESD in theory. But how does practice in this field look like? A set of examples is needed to examine the concept and to form a point of reference for the emerging discourse and the development of practice that has to come. This paper

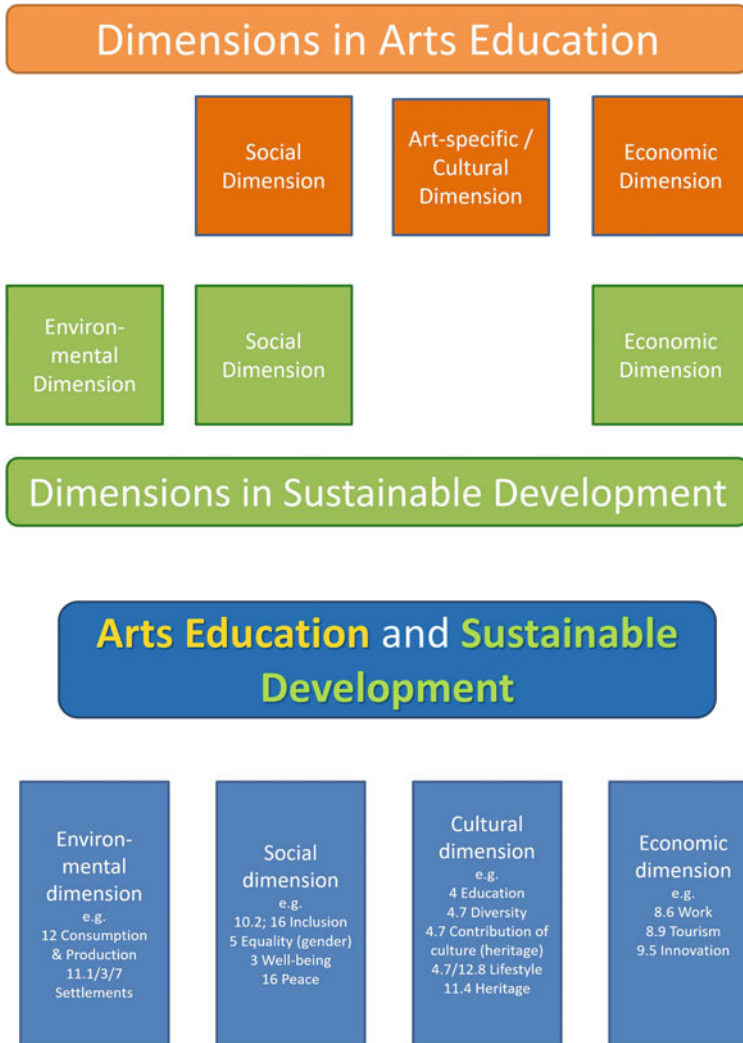


Fig. 2 Dimensions in arts education and ESD upper part; SDGs most relevant for arts education lower part

should serve as a first step into this direction. I asked stakeholders in arts education from different parts of the world and different art forms to send good practice examples that address the aspects of sustainable development in arts education. Being members of the *International Network for Research in Arts Education (INRAE)*, they were asked to describe and analyze the examples, exploring how arts education can be connected with ESD. Eleven colleagues answered. They come from different parts of the world. In the following, part I will present these examples and discuss them against the framework developed above.

## *From Contemplation to Agitation*

### **India**

Mousumi De, a visual art educator and co-founder of the Asian Society for Education through Arts and Media in New Delhi, shared the example of the work of Jinan KB, an educator based in Thrissur, Kerala, India. “Having studied in one of India’s prestigious design institutes, Jinan”, as De explains, “preferred alternate approaches to teaching and learning. [...] Jinan has facilitated several workshops on art and aesthetics (beauty) that are implemented in rural and/or natural surroundings. Children are encouraged to play and learn and/or make art in a free manner in which children take a stronger role in their learning process. Through such approaches, they are sensitized to nature by observing it, playing with it and creating art out of it. In one particular workshop, children used a variety of natural elements available in the surrounding such as flowers, leaves, stones, mud, etc.”

Jinan has published several images and videos on these workshops such as on YouTube and his website to demonstrate his ideas. One such video shows a boy standing in the rain, observing what happens in a puddle for several minutes. It is a very quiet video. The most important issue in the clip is probably, that apart from the observation of the rain, “nothing happens”. We can imagine the experiences the boy has. They are experiences of nature, nature as an aesthetic space. Additionally, we notice in this clip that there is no direct intervention or supervision by an adult. Here the main role of the teacher is to provide a free and secure space for experiencing and learning, which is necessary for the development of this kind of contemplative observation of rain and earth. The video shows how the boy is totally focused and immersed in this experience.

Jinan’s website provides many such examples, showing activities like playing with shoes, arranging colors, creating artworks from a variety of dried leaves, and so on. The core idea of these approaches, as De explains, is that these provide a learning environment that allows for the development of senses to observe, experience, interact with and immerse in nature, and hence develop a relationship with nature. This interaction with nature helps in developing a sense of respect for nature.

Trying to connect this example from India to the grid of SDGs proposed above, we can relate it mainly to the cultural dimension (see Fig. 3), as it stresses a specific way of living, a lifestyle based on a specific perception of the environment. Nature in this case is not the nature that has to be exploited; there is no domination or mastery over nature. Rather, nature opens the space for a sensory and aesthetic, embodied experience. Nature becomes a resource that is respected. The person and the environment are both interacting. The boy plays with what he finds in his natural environment, not with man-made toys. So the only way he is “exploiting” nature, without harming it, is through sensory experience. And he creates or produces in his playing nothing that will become waste. Therefore, we can also relate this example to the environmental dimension, mainly to sustainable consumption and production (see Fig. 4).



Fig. 3 Video still from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuEuSQ\\_m6o4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuEuSQ_m6o4) (2020, March 1)

## Arts Education and Sustainable Development

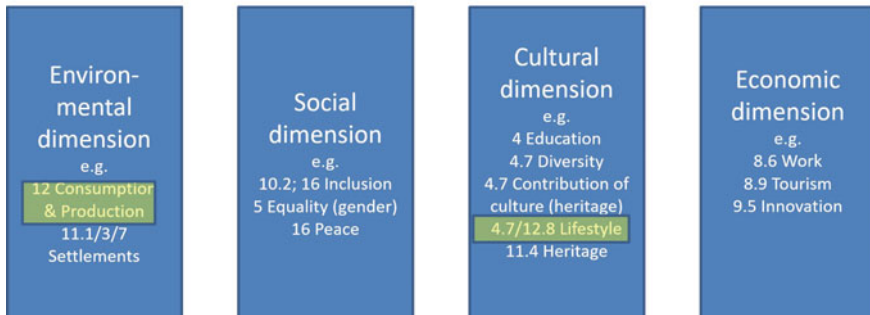


Fig. 4 Example from India

Naturally, it is important in the context of educational science whether the attitude of these children can be maintained until they are teenagers or adults, which means to an age in which they will take more and more responsibility towards the environment. The danger is that the boy shown in the film, when grown up, will find fast cars or dangerous weapons as attractive as he found raindrops in a puddle as a child, and that he will perhaps declare his former attitude towards nature as “childish”. This means that models should be developed how such an approach can be preserved and refined or enhanced in the further biography of the boy. How this could happen will be discussed below.

## New Zealand

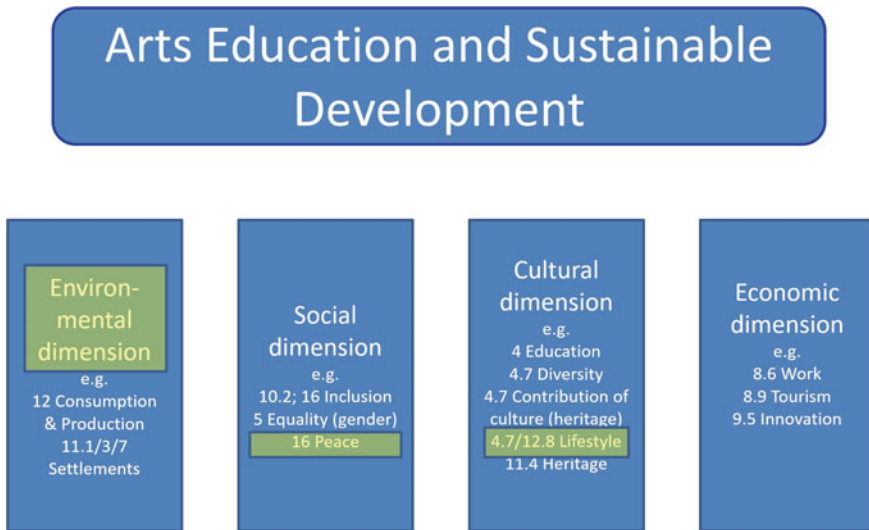
The example from India calls upon our awareness in a very indirect way. In comparison, the following example from New Zealand has a very clear, distinct, and directly addressed message. It was suggested by Ralph Buck, who works in Dance Studies at the University of Auckland. Ralph writes about this example: “Mark Harvey, a dancer, created this performance as part of the Maldives Exodus Caravan Show (The Maldives are focused in this artistic performance as climate issues are affecting the world, but mostly low lying states such as the Maldives and many countries in the Pacific Ocean). “Political Climate Wrestle”, the name of his project, was a live dance performance. The “Wrestle” was performed/presented by my colleague, the dancer Mark. He defined an area in a park and invited members of the public to wrestle with him about climate issues. Mark explained to participants that as they wrestled he would ask questions and give facts about climate change. He invited the co-wrestler to respond using his/her body and voice, to agree or disagree. Each wrestle lasted for several minutes and each wrestle attracted large audiences who would also start to voice views and opinions about climate change. Mark, a professional performer, managed the physical interchange expertly ensuring that the wrestle was about ideas not the other person.” A video of a performance presented at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013, gives a good impression of how these wrestles took place (Fig. 5).

Ralph explains the link between arts and sustainable development: “The focus was on climate change and how members of the public interact with knowledge about climate change and their own consumption, production of goods and lifestyle that influences climate change. The event took language such as “fight against climate change” literally; raising awareness of the actual combat that is required. Doing this,



**Fig. 5** The wrestle, video still from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ks9eKFgXX8o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ks9eKFgXX8o) (2020, March 1)





**Fig. 6** New Zealand

the performance addresses the question, what does peace mean in this context? The performance was very successful in raising awareness of climate issues.” (Fig. 6).

In comparison with the first example, the difference becomes quite clear: the target group shifts from children to adults, and thus the method of educational “intervention” changes as well. In the second case, the environmental dimension is addressed in a very direct way by an artist. In both cases, the audience is immersed into specific experiences, each in different shapes, nature versus art (an avant-garde art form). The latter addresses conflict, not harmony, in the “unprotected”, open space.

Actually, in both cases, the educational outcome is unclear and perhaps cannot be assessed. Mousumi and Ralph, who sent the two examples, assume or hope that these efforts will lead to a change in attitudes as an essential part of a competence model for sustainable development (see below) that form the base for a specific kind of behavior.

## ***From Individuals to Communities***

### **Israel**

The two examples above already show the broad variety of possible bridges between arts education and the SDGs. The diversity gets even richer when we look at further examples sent by the experts. Shifra Schonmann from Israel, for instance, gave an example that is focused on a single girl, Aliza, an immigrant Ethiopian girl. This girl had written a letter to her drama teacher, Ruth: *‘Dear teacher, My dream is that all*

*the white girls will treat me nicely like they treat the rest of their white friends...my dream is to have a white complexion, blonde hair and blue eyes so that all the white children will play with me... My dream is that every black Ethiopian who comes to Israel will turn white.* In Ruth’s class there were immigrant children from Ethiopia and Russia, as well as native Israelis, of various origins.

Shifra described this situation: “From Aliza’s letter arises a bitter cry asking to change the color of her skin. Deeply moved, Ruth decided to start a process of producing a school play in which the children wrote the text of the play, using *The Ugly Duckling*, a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, as a framework. The result was a rich and moving social document based on authentic pluralism. In the play, Aliza took the role of Aunt Clara, who was a dominating and manipulative figure, without much written text to speak, but with plenty of opportunity to show all the others what she thought. After the play was performed, Ruth had a talk with Aliza and asked how she felt. Aliza replied: ‘I stood in front of the mirror and looked at my reflection and then I knew that black is beautiful’.”

Shifra comments her example: “The school play is commonly considered as an effective dramatic means for a cultural encounter where social and personal issues are enacted. Israeli society is characterized by its multi-ethnicity and, as such, deals with problems of acceptance and tolerance among diverse cultural groups. Dramatic action is always a physical and concrete expression of a role. It is the conversion of thoughts and feelings into form; it is thus significant and symbolic. The “as if” situation is not merely a matter of putting yourself in someone else’s shoes. It requires avoiding stereotypes. When students act in drama, they are actively involved in learning new ways of thinking and doing things. The main potential of a school play rests on the encounter between personal needs and social needs, logic and aesthetics, and hard work and pleasure.” (Fig. 7).

Thus, the example addresses the social and the cultural dimension of the framework, using arts education to foster personal advancement and empowerment. Drama is an instrument that helps each single student to develop self-confidence, a prerequisite for an inclusive social development in groups. The learners acquire the skills

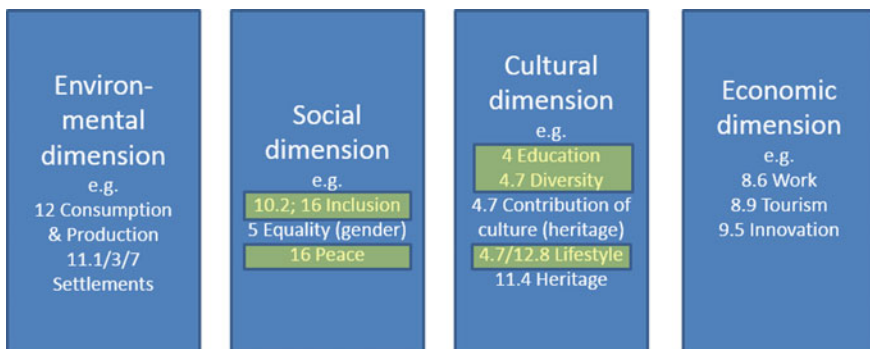


Fig. 7 Israel

needed to promote inclusion, a culture of peace and non-violence, as well as appreciation of cultural diversity.

## Korea

To shift from the empowerment of a single girl to the empowerment of a whole village, we have to take a look at the example Serin Kim Hong from Korea contributed to this collection. “Back in 2011, there was a school in a small island in Korea called Kajo-do, with a population of about 1,200. The school had only 36 students and was about to close due to the lack of student enrollment. But the community tried hard to keep the school open and applied for the government funding under the “Arts Flower Seed School Project” scheme that allows small schools in rural areas to plant arts and cultural activities. The school was selected as one of the “Arts Flower Seed Schools” and was able to hire two artists to teach flute, clarinet, saxophone, keyboard, and guitar, eventually to form a unique ensemble, the “Dream Notes Ensemble”. To add musical flavor, a hand-bell group was formed additionally and performed together. Through music lessons, practices, and patience, the students in the ensemble were able to make beautiful harmony and learn how to be a true music lover.” (Fig. 8).

New school teachers, incoming students, and parents kept supporting this music program, not only by providing financial support, but also by joining the program as participants. The “Dream Notes Ensemble” has been regularly performing at a local community center for their own community as a local favorite. They were even invited to perform at Tong Yeong Music Festival 2016, which comprised of professional musical groups’ performances. In the meantime, there were families who moved to the island to send their children to this specific Arts Flower Seed School, and the students’ number increased to 80. The island is no longer isolated, but have been raising the number of residents and visitors.



**Fig. 8** A music lesson in Kajo-do (© Serin Kim Hong)

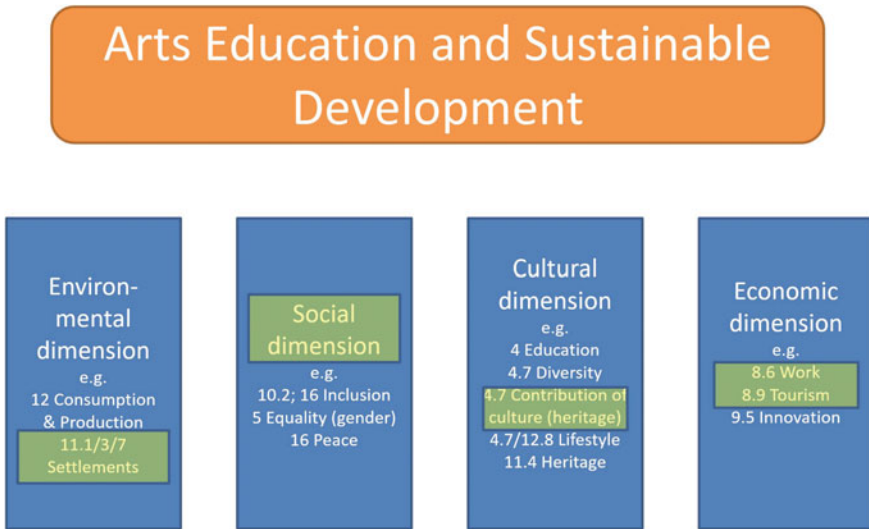


Fig. 9 Korea

Serin explains: “Inspiring the children through arts education was possible by the supports and devotion from the music teachers, administrators, and the community. Their hard work reveals resilience and sustainable development for their community. The beneficiaries of the Arts Flower Seed School Project were not only the students who were in the ensemble, but the whole community.” The exodus from the island stopped, the community gained collective confidence and an awareness of self-efficacy. Thus, all the dimensions of the framework are addressed (Fig. 9).

***From Experience via Skills and Knowledge to Attitudes, Habits, and Motivation***

**Canada**

Ben Bolden, teaching at the Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, suggested the example of the H’Art School in his city ([www.hartschool.ca](http://www.hartschool.ca)). The school was established in 1998 as a non-profit arts hub that provides opportunities for people with disabilities and those facing barriers to create and study works in the arts. Professional artist-educators work with the students to produce visual art, music, theater, and dance performances. The H’Art School program offers students a chance to build literacy skills and social skills while engaged in the practice and enjoyment of arts (Fig. 10).

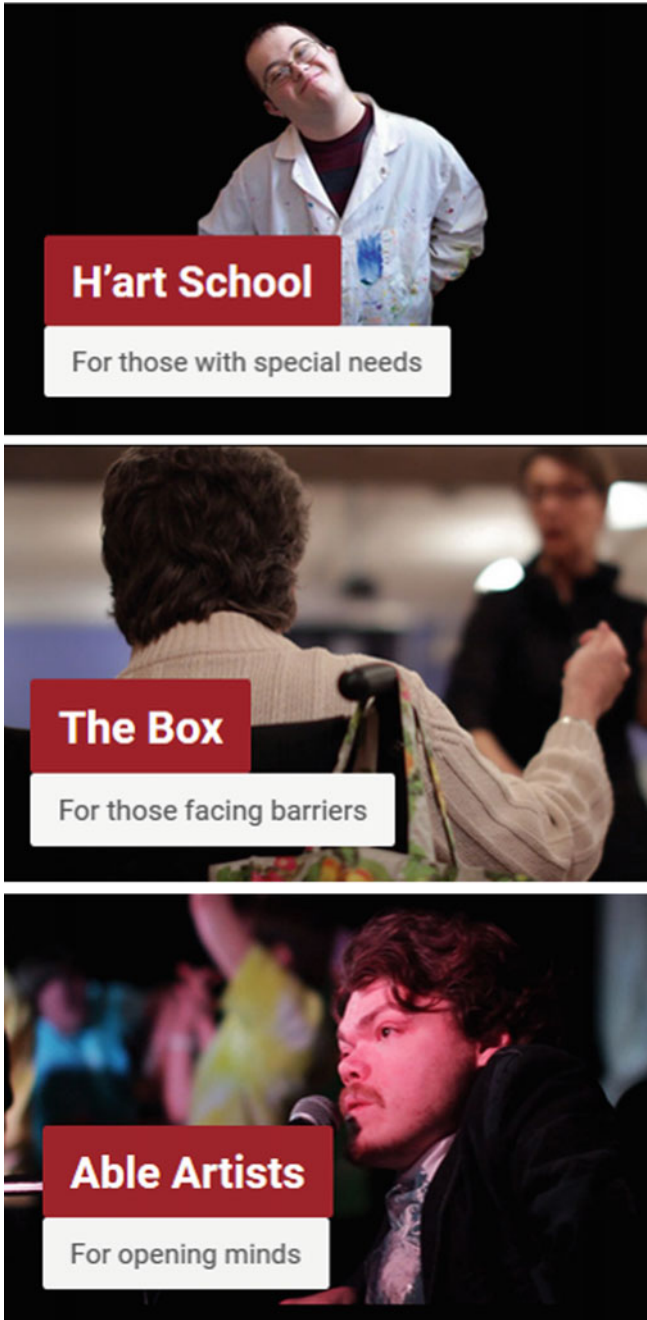


Fig. 10 Screenshots from H' Art School's website [www.hartschool.ca](http://www.hartschool.ca)

Focusing on inclusivity, public engagement and community collaboration, the H’Art Centre has introduced more than 15,000 people to the creative abilities of people with disability. The school trained over 200 volunteers, fostered over 40 community arts collaborations, and engaged more than 100 professional artists. H’Art School participants have created more than 3000 pieces of artwork, performed on stage in original musicals for thousands, improved their social skills and fitness through dance, collaborated on original music for plays, learned to use iPads and Smartboards, and have written and illustrated three children’s books.

Ben explains: “Disabled people over 18 years old have the right to express themselves, to enjoy their life, to live together, and to create together—but they have limited opportunities.” Thus, the community has provided a space where these people can develop their creative abilities and interact with all members of the community, enjoying art. All community members are able to see inclusion and diversity as richness (Fig. 11).

While school-age individuals with disabilities receive many government supports and opportunities, there is very little government support once the individuals reach the age of 18. The H’art programs give these marginalized and ignored members of society experiences that bring joy and meaning to their lives and the lives of those who work with them. Accordingly, through its service to marginalized members of society, the H’art school promotes well-being; inclusive and equitable quality education; and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

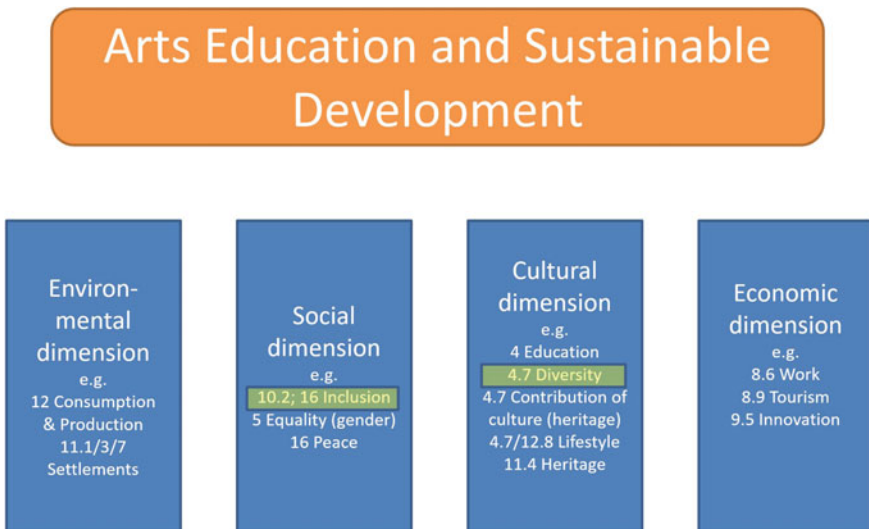


Fig. 11 Canada

## Australia

Susan Davis, Senior Lecturer at Central Queensland University, Australia, sent another project. Primary schools (students in year 3–6) worked in partnership with an art and environment program, called TreeLine. The project asked students to collect information about significant trees (see Fig. 12) in their area, e.g., local history and indigenous, post settlement or contemporary stories connected to the respective tree. On this base, they created drawings, photographs, video clips, plays, and an interactive map in the internet. Utilizing drama, visual art, and new media, the students engaged with their environment and shared their work via internet.

Susan writes: “Dealing with environmental and sustainability issues such as climate change, can seem complex or too abstract for children. So there is a growing recognition of work that encourages students to connect to a “place” as a starting point. The focus on trees in our case is a simple but effective way to do this. On the other hand, research has indicated the importance of students having interactions with the environment and opportunities for participation and action.” Susan also penned a case study on this project. She summarizes: “The focus was on encouraging students to actively engage with their local environment through sharing stories about a significant tree. The learnings they recalled were predominantly environmental or science-based learnings, but also included arts learning. Some students signaled changes in attitudes. ... What this study has reinforced, is the value of using arts-based activities to provide a purpose and frame for student engagement with the environment .... The focus on local trees, arts-based processes and outdoor experiences provided the means of committed engagement for the majority of students.” (Fig. 13).

This example raises a specific kind of awareness for phenomena in nature that are always there, and therefore, taken for granted, such as trees. The trees, in the region threatened through climate change, are explored in regard to their environmental significance, their aesthetic appearance, and their cultural function for indigenous people and today’s society. As parts of the local cultural and natural heritage, they are as well examples of cultural and natural diversity. Attracting attention to them, aims on protecting them. The creative work of the students helps them to gain this awareness and to communicate their ideas through a map that exhibits their results. Using digital media brings in an additional innovative aspect.

### *Excursus: Sustainability of Learning Outcome*

It seems to be obvious that only the chance to experience will probably not be enough to bring forth a sustainable change of attitudes. It can be a first step that needs to be followed by further steps. The two given examples from Canada and Australia above can show us how this could work, they give us a kind of blueprint.

- Both examples have in common that they are driven by a societal or environmental challenge, i.e., human rights for disabled persons or climate change. They are not

**Fig. 12** Examples (screenshots) from the website (<http://m.water-wheel.net/34/78/63/-6416378341.pdf>)





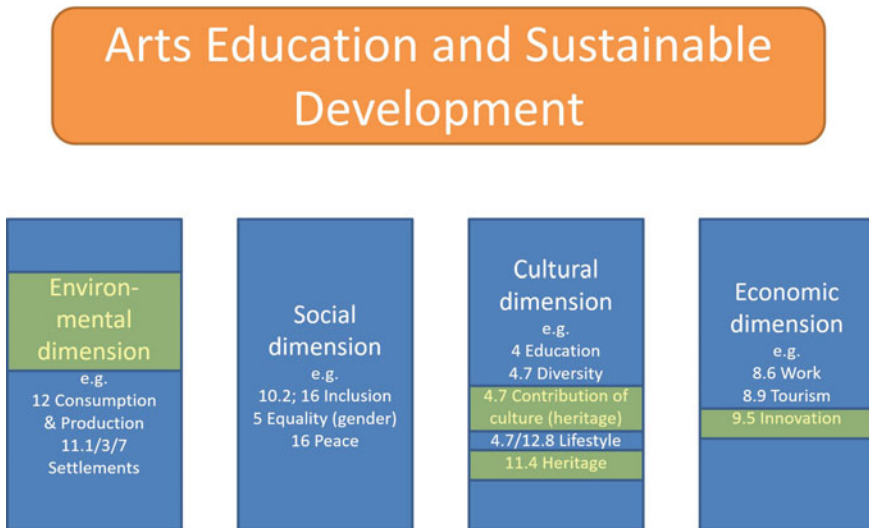


Fig. 13 Australia

driven by an art immanent concern, e.g., to enable self-expression, development of a specific form or creation of something beautiful.

- Both examples also intend to raise awareness for the respective challenges in their communities, to arouse the interest of people in order to change their way of seeing, their thinking or consciousness, their behavior and habits. They have a mission that is addressed to people who are not directly involved in the projects.

To follow this mission in a successful way, they need a clear conviction, a goal, own awareness of the challenge, knowledge about the topic, and skills to communicate their intention in an adequate way. In the light of these reflections, we can state that the pedagogical process that is required could perhaps be characterized in the following way:

- *Space for experience*: education gives space for fundamental experiences, e.g., to experience the beauty of a diverse nature, the beauty of social inclusion. Additionally, the influence of concurrent and contra-productive but often attractive experiences and the influence of negative values is reflected together with the learner.
- *Process of transformation*: in a complex process the initial and basic experience just mentioned is transformed into a value driven attitude, again by cognitive reflection. This process creates knowledge about the importance of the specific attitude, e.g., to protect nature, to be inclusive, and thus delivers a readiness or motivation to act.
- *Transfer of skills*: skills are developed, e.g., being able to contemplate, or being able to create in joint projects, to be able to communicate. Again by reflection,

an awareness of the transferability of these skills to other situations in daily life is fostered.

- *Knowledge*: knowledge about the field in which the person shall act cannot be missed as the fourth dimension in the learning process.

All these aspects shape a setting that gives the chance to make the learning process sustainable, a learning process that starts with a single experience. This will be discussed once more in the final conclusions below.

## ***From Cultural Heritage to Contemporary Art Forms***

### **Brazil**

Ailtom Gobira, a writer, mediator, and project leader from Brazil, sent the example of a network of cultural centers that are located all over the city of Belo Horizonte, often in favelas, slums. These slums are mainly populated by people from the working class or poor people without regular work or none. In the cultural centers, children and elderly people come together in a safe, non-violent space. Here they exchange and share their (cultural) knowledge in age-mixed groups (participants are between 12 and 80 years old) and also in constellations in which amateurs and professionals work together. Within this structure, the older people from the favelas hand over their knowledge, skills and attitudes, their culture or heritage to the younger, to the next generation, mainly by creating something together.

The pictures (Fig. 14) show people from one favela that was destroyed by a property boom. They are creating models of their former houses and their habitat by using the earth and clay from the same place. Doing so, they are reconstructing their lost place (and their lost way of living) not only in their individual memory, but also in joint, creative action producing tangible models that can be perceived sensually by touching and smelling the earth. We can imagine the stories exchanged by these people throughout their collaboration. It is important to mention that the participants in this project exhibited the model at a big international conference about arts education in Belo Horizonte. This presentation to the public showed their creative work and their way of dealing with their loss.

There are a lot, and very different courses in the network of cultural centers in Belo Horizonte, e.g., they are also cooperating with capoeira-teachers. Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art, which has been developed by slaves, bought from Africa. Capoeira combines elements of dance, acrobatics, and music. It was developed in Brazil mainly by West Africans, beginning in the sixteenth century and it is also popular among Brazilian youngsters today.

In both cases the activities of the participants are related to memories, memories of the group, the community (to be seen in the reconstructed model of the favela), and societal collective memories (in the case of Capoeira). In the cultural centers,



**Fig. 14** Presentation in Belo Horizonte, Brazil (© the author)

they appreciate and safeguard their memories, their cultural heritage in intergenerational projects. By doing this, they bear it into the future. In all projects, heritage is understood as hybrid, as a diverse one, going back to multiple roots (Fig. 15).

Thus, the cultural dimension is for sure the strongest but not the only dimension. To accept the diversity within the group (different generations, different levels of artistic skills, different origin), can be understood as an important contribution to sustainable settlements and social inclusion within the favelas. In addition, by creating artistic pieces of work, the participants shape stronger bonds between all members of the community, particularly as they bring their results to the public space, showing them to the audience and expressing their reflections within the community, the city.

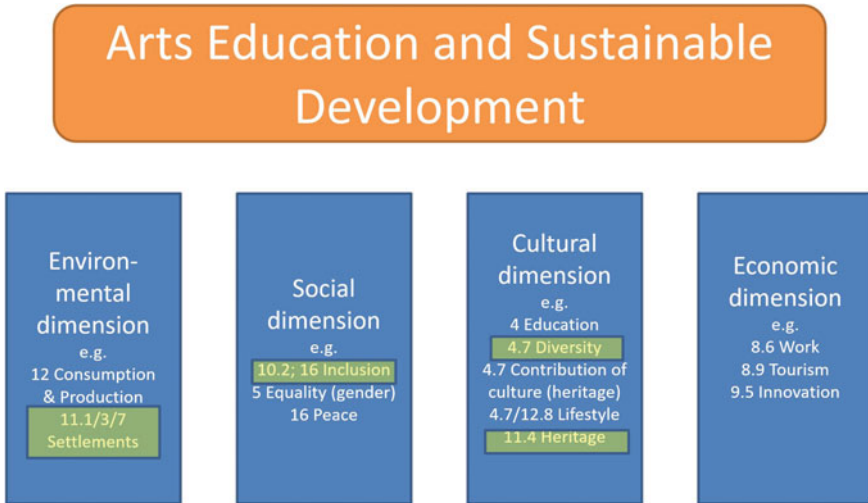


Fig. 15 Brazil

### Egypt

Samia Elsheikh, a professor for art education at Helwan University, gives us the following example of an initiative by the artist Abd Elmohsin. Four years ago, Abd Elmohsin started with the interesting idea to connect a special community in Egypt with artists from around the world. His annual project takes place at Lake Burullus, a brackish water lake in the Nile Delta in Egypt. Burullus is a fishing community with low average income. Abd Elmohsen invited artists to produce paintings in the public space of this village, on walls, doors and fishing boats. Children and women from the community were invited to paint their own houses as well. Through the art project, the children got in touch with artists from different cultures (Fig. 16).

Samia explains how important it is for the people from the community to meet artists from different backgrounds and by this to gain an understanding of art from other parts of the world in the first stage. Being open-minded they are, in the second stage, able to transfer this experience into their own creative activity. They learn how to paint, they meet to make art together. Using their skills, they transform the public space of their village into attractive, beautiful places. By their own creations, they take over responsibility for their own surrounding in joint action and this influences the style of living in their community. Doing so, they do not only shape their settlement, but they also learn to respect each other's expressions. From the perspective of an outsider, I may assume that this could also lead to economic benefits, e.g., by attracting tourist to come to this outstanding village (Fig. 17).

**Fig. 16** Women and children from Burullus painting (© Samia Elsheikh)



# Arts Education and Sustainable Development

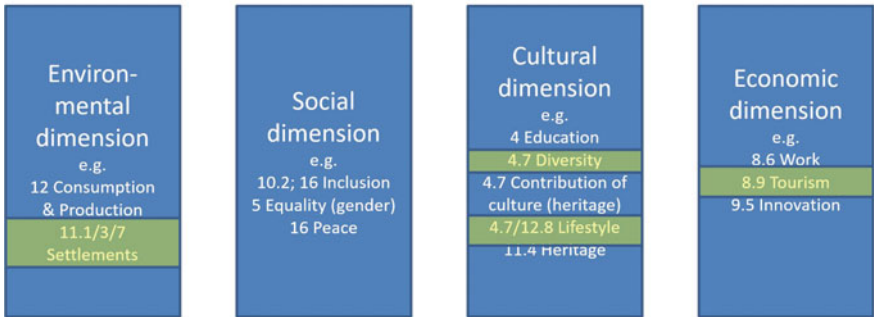


Fig. 17 Egypt

## Colombia

After the Brazilian example focusing on heritage, memory, and collective identity and after artistic interventions in the public space of a village in Egypt, we will now get acquainted with a project that focuses on contemporary avant-garde dance. Gloria P. Zapata Restrepo, a music educator at Juan N. Corpas University in Bogotá proposed “The College of the Body” (el Colegio del Cuerpo – eCdC) as a good practice example. In this school, children take part in two possible schemes *Education for dance* or *Education with dance*. *Education for dance* aims at forming professional dancers, choreographers or dance teachers. Half of the students are afro-descendants or from vulnerable populations. They receive scholarships. The other half pay for their studies, and are thus contributing to the formation of those from vulnerable populations (Fig. 18).

*Education with Dance* works in public schools with children from the most vulnerable areas of the city in a project called “*My Body - My House*”. Funded by the World Bank, 1.200 students have been educated in this program.

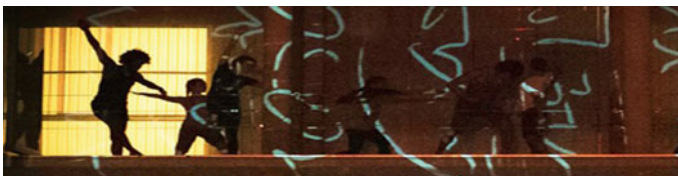


Fig. 18 Dance performance in Bogotá, Colombia (© Gloria P. Zapata Restrepo)

In the project, the education of the body is considered as a strategy for the formation of peaceful citizens, because the students are able to develop responsibility, self-reliance, self-worth, and personal discipline. “This project, eCdC, was founded in 1997 ... as a space created for children, youngsters and the general public where they find the opportunity to approach the expressive and artistic dimension of the human body, through contemporary dance. eCdC is a cultural and an educative space—plural and democratic—that offers the opportunity of the construction of a new ethics of the human body, indissolubly connected to an aesthetic and artistic search; simultaneously associated with contemporary cultural, social, political and economic issues.” (<http://elcolegiodelcuerpo.org/en/el-colegio-del-cuerpo>).

The program shows a great emphasis on the social dimension. The creation of a peaceful space for artistic experience takes place in a country that ranks in the Global Peace Index 2016 on place 147 (out of 163). That is why Gloria probably stresses the aspect “*promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence*”. Bringing students from different social backgrounds together can also be seen as an important contribution to inclusion. Besides that, the offered dance education can open options for jobs or even a professional career (comparable with the next example from Kenya). It also maintains a specific art form, contemporary dance, as part of our cultural heritage (Fig. 19).

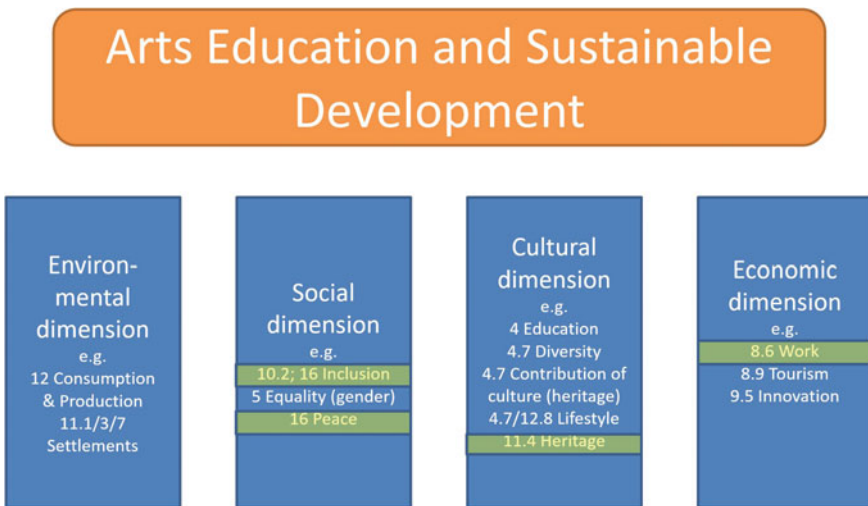


Fig. 19 Colombia

## *From Economic Empowerment to Sustainable Consumption*

### **Kenya**

A project, nominated by Emily Akuno, a music educator from the Technical University of Kenya in Nairobi, displays many similarities to the one from Colombia. She describes the example as follows: “Ghetto Classics is an initiative of an individual with a keen interest in music. It provides music instruction and musical experiences to young people. The music education training project takes place in the Koro-gocho informal settlement area of Nairobi. This settlement is a slum. The activities include teaching children and youth to play western classical music instruments, and to read and perform music of, e.g., Beethoven and Mozart. The project further includes opportunities for music performance in ensembles, leading to participation in a number of fora for an audience of diverse persons from different walks of life.” (Fig. 20).

The project leads to meaningful experiences, positive attitudes, and personal development, that opens new life-perspectives but also opportunities for the young people. They are able not only to develop responsibility, self-reliance, self-worth, and personal discipline, but also to respect gender equality and other people’s culture, in this case western classical music.

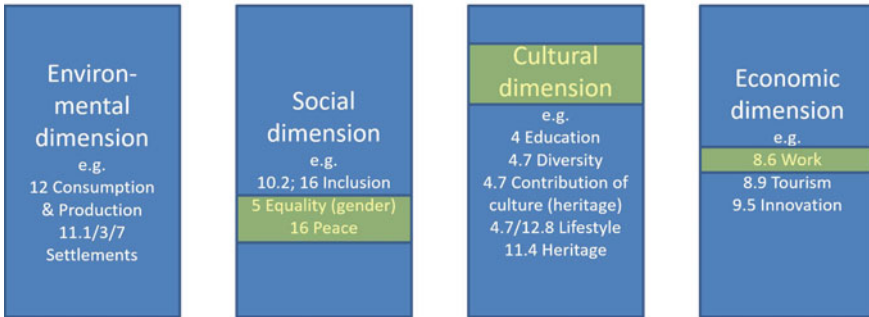
The project has a clear cultural focus. The young people are trained in music as part of a global cultural heritage that is different to their own music experience, and they are trained as musicians. The latter means that they are able to organize their life, e.g., in respect to self-discipline. Additionally, we have to take possible social side effects into account: the project fosters gender equality and non-violent, peaceful



**Fig. 20** Music lesson in Nairobi, Kenya (© Emily Akuno)



# Arts Education and Sustainable Development



**Fig. 21** Kenya

cooperation. In this combination, it develops its specific profile in the context of arts education for sustainable development (Fig. 21).

## Germany

A last example was presented by Karola Braun-Wanke, who is the coordinator and co-founder of the sustainability initiative SUSTAIN IT! and has been working at the Environmental Policy Research Centre at Freie Universität Berlin. The SUSTAIN IT! Art lab entitled “*ART TO STAY* – Have a break. Enjoy your coffee” addresses the trend in Germany (and probably not only there) to have more and more “takeaway coffee”. This trend produces a huge amount of litter, 320,000 non-returnable cups per hour in Germany. Often they are thrown away and spread in public space or nature and they are a waste of resources to produce them as well.

In a first step, the participating university students and three artists explored in 150 interviews and participatory observations, why people do this. They found a specific pattern of self-stylization of the “takeaway coffee consumers”: these users try to express that they are modern, hip, active, young, wasting no time, and that they are important. Together with three artists, the initiative decided to comment this trend and to turn it upside down by promoting habits of lingering and enjoying coffee to the full. From “takeaway coffee” to “art to stay”, that is how they called their art lab. Together with 14 students, the scientists and artists created in front of the main canteen of the university three installations, a photo studio, a museum of porcelain cups, and a monumental sculpture of disposable (misprinted) cups. Students that came by were invited to choose a porcelain cup from the cup museum, to have a

coffee in this cup at a table in the studio, and to take a picture as a real coffee-lover (Figs. 22 and 23).

In this last example, a concrete behavior of students that has negative environmental consequences is addressed without moralizing and demanding, but by inviting to an alternative experience full of relish. The expected and hoped change of lifestyle to a more ecological behavior starts from this experience.

## Conclusion

To summarize, I come back to the example from Brazil and possible question that can be asked in this context: What will happen after such a project like the reconstruction of a habitat? Is there a perspective that offers the participants the possibility to change the current conditions of their life? Are they mobilized to take action with a promising strategy? How can the memories be connected to the future of the participants and the communities? How can these memories help to construct a future that is created in a sustainable way? These questions lead us to similar reflections as the ones already discussed in the excursus above.

All the case studies presented here have been nominated by the experts, because they are good practice examples related to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Examining them in respect to their basic structure and their relation to the SDGs, can lead us to a first, more systematic and comprehensive model that will help to answer the questions. The most important and decisive aspects for such a model are (a) content and (b) desired or expected outcome.

## Content

I begin with content as an important criterion to understand (and to develop) a project. We already have a grid, used above to gain a better understanding of what we find in a specific example in reference to the SDGs. But this grid can also be applied for comparing various examples. I will use four of the examples presented in this paper, the examples from Brazil, India, Kenya, and New Zealand (Fig. 24).

The differences show that each of these projects has its own profile. The Brazilian cultural centers cover three dimensions. But a specific and focused project like the Indian one is more selective. On the other hand, complex artistic interventions like the “wrestle” from New Zealand can also address many different aspects.

It is important to see, that already in these few examples, we face in each one a combination of different dimensions. This is also due to the complexity, hybridity and a certain blurriness that is perhaps typical for *artistic* approaches—in contrast to *scientific* approaches. The second observation is that nearly all dimensions, chosen in the beginning on a merely theoretical basis, are addressed in the examples. We miss only one issue, tourism, perhaps an expected omission, characteristic for the

**Fig. 22** The photo studio, pictures of coffee-lovers, the paper-cup mountain (©Susanne Wehr, SUSTAIN IT!, Freie Universität Berlin)



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# Arts Education and Sustainable Development

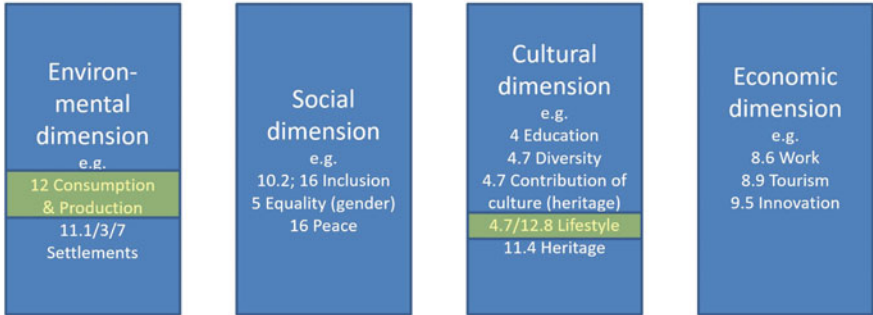


Fig. 23 Germany

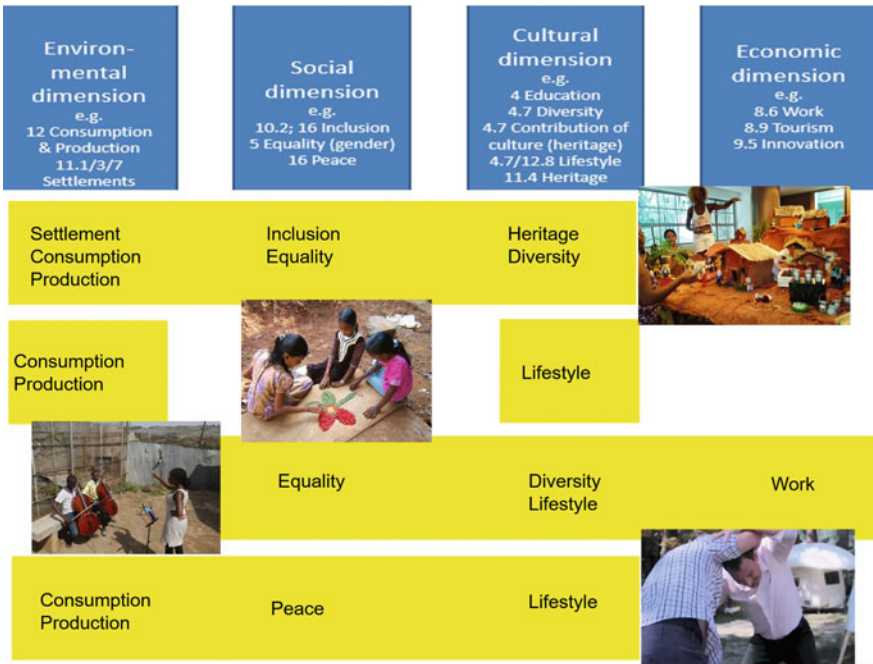


Fig. 24 Mapping examples against the systematics. Source: The Author

field of arts education. This is interesting and it is of interest as well to observe the different combinations in each project and by this the respective project profiles. As already mentioned, this kind of talking about and evaluating projects can help us to understand their special characteristics. But it can also help to clarify, to sharpen the profile and, by this, to come to conscious decisions if one plans an arts education project in the context of sustainable development.

### Outcome

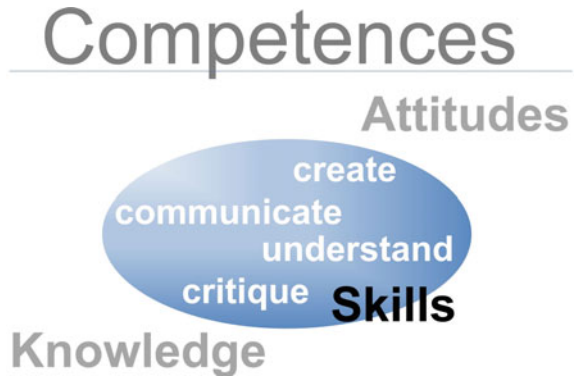
We can do a similar exercise with the second criterion, mentioned before. In every project, the people in charge have to decide what the aims are: What is the desired, expected, achieved outcome? What should the learner learn, which skills should he or she acquire? I am using a very simple model, containing four main skills. It is based on a survey providing an analysis of art curricula in more than 40 countries around the world (Wagner & Schönau, 2016). Nearly all of these curricula work with four main skills: The students should learn to **create** something, to **communicate** something, to **understand** something, and/or to **critique** something. We can now apply this simple and fundamental model to the four given examples (Fig. 25).

I suggest, that in the Brazilian project the participants learn mainly to create and to communicate, they create and communicate meaning. In a slightly different way, the example from Kenya focuses primarily on artistic creation. To the example from India, we can relate “understanding”, which means understanding external but also internal nature by observing, contemplating, exploring, and interpreting. Whereas we can locate the New Zealand example between critiquing and communicating, I have to admit that this is a very rough and preliminary procedure. There are methods to do this in a more analytical and transparent way. Then we will, of course, find



Fig. 25 Discussing the examples in reference to competence model

**Fig. 26** The competence model. Source: The Author



more overlaps and intersections. But this is an exercise for later. In the moment, it is important that we can use this model to understand the special characteristics of a project, to clarify and to sharpen its profile.

### ***Competences***

As we can call the four skills also sub-competences, it is obvious, as already discussed above, that we are approaching a real competence model, when we add knowledge and attitudes to these skills. Such a competence model could be used to develop arts education in the European, perhaps the global discourse (Fig. 26).

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# **Reflection of Local and National Practices**



# Arts Education Research, Projects and Pedagogy of Three University Programmes in Finland



Anniina Suominen, Mirja Hiltunen, and Eeva Anttila

**Abstract** In this chapter, the three authors take turns to speak on an arts education pedagogy that is firmly grounded in the inherently interdisciplinary research fields of arts education and research in the arts, as well as being constantly renegotiated in relation to the changes and demands of local and global cultures, politics and socio-economic needs. The three approaches presented as examples of research-based arts pedagogy are united in pursuing the highest possible quality education that not only resonates and aligns with the aims of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals 2030, but aims to further explore and develop ethical and sustainable ways in which to design, carry out and facilitate arts, arts education and research projects that strengthen communities and the role of the arts and cultural education in building more sustainable futures.

## Introduction

The potential of the arts in promoting more sustainable and socially just futures, especially in various partnerships with science and education incentives, has become a topic of increased interest in the field of contemporary artistic practices across Europe, and particularly in the Nordic countries (Ainalinpää, 2018; Berger et al., 2020; Nordic Culture Point, 2017; Suominen, 2016). A rapidly increasing number of artists, representing many fields of art, have addressed these topics in their work, expressing the need to act, raise consciousness and comment critically on the political

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situation that has led to the current, agonizing situation. Young people are especially concerned about the future of the planet, which is also their future. At the same time, many people experience hopelessness and apathy, which oddly enough, at times, present themselves as denial and can be observed as clear, illogical (dis)connections between thoughts and actions when confronted by the grim facts (e.g. Pihkala, 2017).

Based on our experiences, arts education has proved to be a meaningful tool and a drastically underutilized method of not only consciousness raising, but also in igniting hope and capacity for action in youth, and in people representing different generations as well as groups of people in vulnerable positions (Anttila & Suominen, 2019; Hiltunen, 2008; Hiltunen et al., 2020; Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020; Kallio-Tavin & Pullinen 2015; Suominen, 2015, 2016, 2018). Moreover, arts education offers an even deeper meaning, in that it facilitates processes for finding pathways towards sustainable futures as the potential of the arts in education stems from its capacity to address values, which are considered to be the slowest changing core beliefs that direct behaviour (e.g. Joutsenvirta & Salonen, 2020; Salonen & Joutsenvirta, 2018). Through emotional, embodied and intellectual engagements facilitated by the arts and arts education, people may find ways to dive into areas in life that bear meaning and generate understandings beyond immediate gratification, individual success and prosperity. Rather, when creating and otherwise engaging in the arts, people can handle issues that are otherwise too complex and perhaps too emotionally daunting to inquire into. Through these engagements they touch upon and may question their foundational values. These generative and inquiry oriented processes engage in a manner that is personally meaningful, and thus, by creating rather than consuming ready-made ideas or products, people may gain a sense of agency and empowerment. As we acknowledge the urgency for collective action to address the dramatic and rapidly increasing global catastrophes, and if we are aiming to reach the sustainable development goals (SDG) by 2030, we are reminded that for this change to take place, at the scale that is needed, it requires a profound rethinking of global and local politics, and a redefinement of meaningful and purposeful life. It mandates an educational reform and renegotiation of inter-people and inter-species relations. But on a more hopeful note, in the field of arts education, we have been doing this kind of work and thinking for decades.

Collectively, our work centralizes on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal #4 with its goal of providing high level education for our students and all the people who partner with us or otherwise engage in our events and projects, both directly or indirectly. In this chapter, we share, and reflect on, how the three academic programmes we represent are currently working in/through arts pedagogy and curricula which are firmly grounded on theoretical traditions and the mutually fruitful union of research and praxis to address the current local and global challenges. While centralizing our educational programmes to emphasize issues related to social justice and equality is not new to us, but rather an essential part of what we have done for decades, the magnitude and urgency of the current situation is unprecedented. Different processes are currently taking place in our institutions. For example, while the Finnish national visual art education curricula for primary and secondary schools (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2016) have, for several decades, directly

addressed environmental relations and concerns as one of its reoccurring themes, both art teacher training programmes in Finland, facilitated by Aalto University located in the Southern Finland and by the University of Lapland located in the Northern region of Finland, have begun taking a more direct stance and actions for aligning education and research strategies with the U.N. SDGs and the UNESCO Roadmap (2006). Examples of these are a public commitment to the universities sustainability accord ([www.sdgaccord.fi](http://www.sdgaccord.fi)), creating strategic goals and curricula with the midset of education for sustainability ([www.aalto.fi/en/sustainability](http://www.aalto.fi/en/sustainability); [www.ulapland.fi/EN/Units/Faculties-and-units](http://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Units/Faculties-and-units); [www.ulapland.fi/EN/Units/Faculty-of-Art-and-Design/Studies/Minor-subjects-/Community,-Art-and-Environment](http://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Units/Faculty-of-Art-and-Design/Studies/Minor-subjects-/Community,-Art-and-Environment); [www.ulapland.fi/EN/Units/Faculty-of-Art-and-Design/Studies/Masters-Degree-Programme-in-Arctic-Art-and-Design](http://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Units/Faculty-of-Art-and-Design/Studies/Masters-Degree-Programme-in-Arctic-Art-and-Design); <https://www.asadnetwork.org/>) and marking courses with SDG content and aiming to aid students in making informed decisions about their course selections (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/partners/?id=2208>).

The thoughts, ideologies and practices articulated within this chapter align with our understandings concerning arts pedagogy, the role of education and academia, and with our guiding values concerning ethical ways of participating in the networks of knowledge generation and distribution. We all firmly base our pedagogical practices and activism on research and theory. Perhaps more importantly, we consider it essential to form knowledge and pedagogical collectives based on the general ideologies of commons (Anttila & Suominen, 2019; Foster et al., 2019; Lupinacci, 2011; Martusewicz et al., 2011; Martusewicz, 2005, 2018; Quinn & Hochtritt, 2011; Shiva, 2005). The knowledge we create through our encounters and interactions and articulate in our publications, talks, art and other actions is contextual, shared, mutually beneficial and intended to have a positive and ethical impact on ourselves and others. This work ethic and ideology is also present in the formation and practices of the Finnish Observatory for Arts and Cultural Education (<https://sites.uniarts.fi/fi/web/cerada/observatory>), of which we are all active members, and that is part of the European Network of Observatories in the Fields of Art and Cultural Education (ENO) ([www.eno-net.eu](http://www.eno-net.eu)). Through the joint efforts of the Finnish Observatory, we gather and share research-based and practice-based pedagogical knowledge and experiences as mutually respected and beneficial, we encourage brave and ethical actions to be taken through arts education research, practice and policy, and we aim to take a stance in matters we believe to be important.

## **Paradoxes of Knowing and Research: Recognizing and Exploring Deep Contradictions with Hope (Insights Gathered Through Various Collaborations at Aalto University)**

Many institutional functions, practices and cultures have to be rethought during the early stages of our institution committing to the sustainable development accord. At the core of our functions and responsibilities are the research projects we choose to conduct, the pedagogy and curricula we commit to, and the societal impact our work is intended to generate or contribute to. The legacy of functions of our institutions does not readily align with the aims of SDGs and for this reason, changes need to take place at all levels, aspects and functions of institutional research and pedagogy. For example, in universities, we face an increased level of pressure to adhere to performance standards that are measured by points systems, and that are, in turn, directly linked to available resources. Although in our scholarship, pedagogies and administrative responsibilities, we are mostly guided by those ideologies that form the foundation of our ontological and epistemological orientations, we still carry out our pedagogical and research decisions aware that we are constantly monitored and measured against productivity indicators that assign a value to each of our efforts which are then assigned a monetary value. Aligned with the global trend, we feel pressured to educate students in a fluent and timely manner to become highly skilled labour for the uncertain national and international economies (Peters, 2010). However, global and local economic and political shifts occur more frequently than the edu-economic slogans that accompany each new government's educational policy profiling and in turn impact university strategic planning and resourcing. At times these two perspectives: (1) the core values and beliefs on which professionals and programmes build their respective educational programmes and curricula and (2) the global and national economics and performance-based, funding-driven educational strategy, are at clear odds with one another. This is, in a sense, a miniature version of what we are currently dealing with on a much larger scale when we are trying to negotiate some kind of a global census on how to reach the U.N. sustainability targets and goals by 2030. This example is only brought up here to remind us of the importance of critically and holistically studying the context and discourses of research and education, rather than presenting cases or aspects of our work in isolation (Fig. 1).

Another facet of rethinking and renegotiating the ideologies and values directing a novel formulation of art education research and pedagogy in relation to the SDGs occurs in relation to one's understanding of ontology and epistemology: how one perceives humans in relation to other species, environments and matter. Eco-justice educator Martusewicz (2018) states that: "Being is defined there in our dependency on all sorts of others. And who we are—the fullness or weakness of our humanity—depends precisely upon the meanings used to define ourselves in relation to those other(s)." (p. 18) and continues: "Recognizing ourselves as dependent creatures with other dependent creatures is the first step toward breaking with the myth of individualism and competition that grips our culture, feeds us lies about happiness and success



**Fig. 1** Activism, civil engagement, art course. Student group: “Black Friday 2019: Everything now 50%, climate soon + 1.5°C” (Photo: Utu-Tuuli Jussila, 2019)

as ‘self-made’ achievement, accumulation and consumerism, and violates the very communities we need to live.” (pp. 18–19). The research and pedagogical practices promoted here bring forward the perspective of inter-being or being-in-relation to all others. When understanding self as deeply intertwined with, and existing in, complex and evolving relations with everything else, one is more willing to focus not only on self, but to take responsibility for the others and through actions aim to meaningfully contribute to the various commons in which one participates and is directly or indirectly linked as it is the health and wellbeing of the whole commons that determines how well one is.

Also, promoted is the view that educators need to critically and continuously explore the broader and personal ontological, epistemological and pedagogical beliefs and practices that influence and frame all thoughts, beliefs and actions, including fear, anxiety and hopefulness that guide how we relate to perceived changes in culture and environment. This approach entails an inquiry-into-knowing founded on holistic and sensuous practice (Gershon, 2019; Suominen, 2019). Although often presented to students only as a thematic fragment which we aim to study together, this inquiry into consciously, cautiously and systematically rethinking how one perceives, articulates and practises epistemology, pedagogy and research within various discourses forms the overall approach perceived through exposing and inquiring into the great paradoxes of our thinking and consequent actions.

Regardless of one’s views on the role of institutions in contemporary society, education, at least in the context of the Finnish education system, is an essential part of becoming a part of society. Directly and indirectly, through formal and informal education, people are taught how to behave in order to become a part of the larger society and to become active members of communities and societies. It is then proposed that the members (young people and students), who promote equity and

equality through participation and democracy, are able to evaluate situations critically and respond and act responsibly, as it is the perspective communicated by the Finnish National Core Curricula. This entails learning to adhere to, or at least function within, the morals and norms of the dominating cultural groups. On the other hand, the goal is to educate people who, while taking care of the wellbeing of everyone and the planet, feel self-actualized and fulfilled within these structures one is to assimilate with. This presents the first, and perhaps the most profound paradox presented through education. By engaging with colleagues in various projects that identify and study the deep contradictions in cultures and society and how these contradictions relate to (arts) education, one is fast faced with the realization that institutionalized pedagogy has failed to facilitate this process of establishing a balance between individual and communal wellbeing while also working for more sustainable futures as is articulated in the U.N. SDGs. This becomes evident in the absence of guidance on how to teach ethical inter- and intra-species relations, how to begin to build curricula that teaches ethical and empathetic ontology and/or how to co-learn true acceptance of diverse thought and ways of being (Fig. 2).

To take responsibility for the urgent need for a shift in holistic belief systems, and in our ontological and epistemological thoughts, the aim is to continuously examine personal epistemological and pedagogical orientations and their connecting to broader educational structures and encourage others to carry out similar exercises in their chosen fashion and method. University arts-based pedagogy could be utilized to facilitate a dismantling of normative thinking and behaviours (Kumashiro, 2000, 2004, 2010) or as a way of creatively deconstructing-reconstructing the shared and personal socio-cultural consciousness that has led us into this unsustainable path. As



**Fig. 2** Art, ecology, ethics course: “Horse day”, rethinking art and education from the perspective of a horse (Photo Suominen, 2019)

fear of global turmoil, corruption and devastation has led people to feel powerless and to experience apathy and anxiety as a mode of being, art can invite and seduce people to engage with communal and personal inquiries that expose deep, complex contradictions and incongruencies in our norm-based thinking and behaviour, while also generating hope and empathy. This, in turn, leads to adaptability and more holistically caring productivity.

We have found through decades of facilitating engagements with diverse groups of people that being with/through/in art generates space for the complicated processes of questioning and undoing the challenges that we currently find difficult and even unresolvable. Engagements in art and arts education give space for the incompleteness and temporary inconsistencies in thoughts and understanding that are otherwise perceived as a weakness, and by delaying or steering away from simplistic chronological responses, art allows fruitful not-knowing (maintaining curious, questioning mode) and holistic, sensuous and empathetic knowing to gain space.

In our academic unit at the Department of Art at Aalto University in Finland, we have taken a clear stance in centralizing the contemplations of ethics and the societal impact of all our actions through pedagogical and research activities, their naming and profiling. We have made our beliefs and core values more transparent through research, education and impact strategies and aims, by articulating these in course titles and descriptions, and through our writing and public talks, and by doing this, the aim is to generate more dialogic relations with different stakeholders and sectors. Curricular planning, pedagogy and research conducted in connection to broader contexts and discourses, in communication or collaboration with partners (institutions, artists, scholars, politicians and activists) paired with a certain level of open dialogue and honesty of our guiding theories and principles, aids us in balancing the pressures of the contemporary university with personal and scholarly integrity. We no longer function as the lead authority in articulating most advanced knowledge, but by engaging in public arts-based pedagogy, we work in relation and in contact with others to jointly question normative knowledge and to facilitate broader awareness of contemporary sustainable efforts by individuals and organizations, to build potentiality towards sustainable and less cruel societies as well as to impact people's perceptions of democratic cultures (Fig. 3).

How we have learnt to perceive ourselves as human and individuals is so deeply embedded in paradoxical hoaxes that their identification, exposure, careful and curious study through art and other engagements may offer us openings and insights into how to become more attentive to the more holistic, sensuous and ethical ways of knowing and being. Many argue that separation and isolation between people, isolation within communities, lack of intimacy and separation from directly experiencing nature and animals and dependency on them has caused much of the violent, non-human and cruel behaviour and attitudes that contemporary societies tolerate (e.g. Abram, 1996, 2010; Anderson & Suominen, 2012; Hooks, 1989, 1994; Louv, 2008, 2019; Mies & Shiva, 2014/1993; Suominen, 2016). Thus, the argument is that, we need a complete reorientation of how we relate to one another and otherness in order to change our destructive pattern. This profound shift in-being or being-with others acknowledges and embraces the deeply intertwined and relational nature of all



**Fig. 3** Children's climate strike 2019 (Photo: Suominen, 2019)

people and other living species or inanimate matter but also understands how injustice, domination, and violence are not separate matters or incidents, but are deeply rooted in cultural and economic crisis and their history.

As the length of this chapter is understandably limited, I will only briefly cover those aspects of our current art education curriculum for the art education BA and two MA art education degree programmes that specifically address topics related to human–environment–species relations. This narrow selection does not describe the brevity and depth of our curriculum as it relates to the SDGs, nor does it describe the century-long history that our art teacher education programme has in addressing human–environment relations through art education, but rather it offers a limited glimpse into one segment of the current curriculum.

In our art education programme, we offer a series of three brief BA-level courses on art education and sustainable futures. The first one focuses on learner-centred memories and perceptions of various environments and the potential for art and education to work with these themes. Students are introduced to environments and facilities around campus, such as bioarts and the science-art laboratory that hosts the related activities as well as the university's workshop and counselling opportunities to address environmental anxiety and the related interdisciplinary research. They visit nature-centres, galleries and museums to view art and hear curators and artists talk about their work and philosophies related to the themes. In the consequent course they explore material relations and making (such as recycled robotics, coding and ceramics) and learn about design-based art education and sustainability. During the third course, students experience artist planned days and overnight visits to explore specific places, such as stables, landfills and artist residencies, to take their evolving ideas further by relating and creating.



The graduate level courses on speciesism, environment, education, art, activism and civil engagement are theoretically defined each year but the general guiding idea is to maintain the presence of interdisciplinarity and learning with and from one another. For example, to explore and expose the paradoxes that facilitate the continuation of speciesism as culturally dominant, the visiting researchers presenting their work share how they examine the paradoxes in historical and contemporary perceptions of human-animal relations through new or seemingly disconnected pairings, such as *critical animal studies* and *normative perceptions of death*; or *critical animal studies* and *disability studies*. In one course, students study the scholarship of someone from another field and interview the person to inquire into how we could work together to advance our mutual interests of generating more sustainable practices and futures visions. They create artwork to process what has been learnt in a way perhaps only possible in/through/with art and then generate a pedagogical plan. What is essential is the simultaneous and continuous presence of the diverse ways we can define ontology, epistemology and pedagogy. Another important element is the attentiveness to the evolving presence of the personal, shared and public in their research, artwork, and plans for public pedagogy and performances. The human centred view is reviewed as part of humanism and an inherent part of human history, and although valued as such, all included disruptive and activism-oriented events and happenings aim to create more species-diversified futures.

### **Dance and Theatre Pedagogy: Dialogue, Embodiment, and Ecology Intertwined (MA Programmes in Dance and Theatre Pedagogy at the University of the Arts Helsinki Theatre Academy)**

Unfortunately, the role of the arts in public education has gradually been reduced in many western societies (Nussbaum, 2010). In Finland, the allocation of hours for music and visual arts has been systemically reduced for several decades. Dance and theatre, or drama, have never been subjects in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for primary and secondary education ([www.oph.fi/en](http://www.oph.fi/en)), despite several efforts to change this situation. However, the University of the Arts Helsinki (referred to as Uniarts Helsinki) has sustained higher education graduate degree programmes in arts education in not only music education, but also in dance and theatre pedagogy. The Theatre Academy of Uniarts Helsinki has hosted such programmes since 1997, with over 200 graduates to date. The students enter the programme with a BA-level education in dance or theatre and study intensively for two years to gain a teacher qualification for all levels and forms of education, including teaching in state-funded schools. Within their education, students reflect on and develop the practices and pedagogy of performing arts within an open, dialogue-oriented community. They are encouraged towards critical, innovative thinking, multidisciplinary interaction and multiartistic collaborations. In these programmes “art pedagogy is seen as a

form of artistic activity where pedagogical questions are ever-present. In the context of art pedagogy, art, performance and teaching are viewed as encounters where aesthetic, ethical and political phenomena are intertwined. Art and pedagogy feed off each other, which gives rise to change in both.” (Dance pedagogy, 2020). Moreover, art pedagogy is seen as an academic discipline that investigates art pedagogy and develops its philosophical and theoretical foundations further.

The programme is characterized by an exploratory approach to learning. It emphasizes an investigative, questioning and creative attitude towards art and art pedagogical practices. The aim of the programmes is that students become aware of, and able to question, the norms and power structures affecting artistic-pedagogic activity. To achieve this broad purpose, dialogical, critical and holistic thinking and practice are core values of the programme. These values resonate with the appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development that are key elements of the U.N.’s sustainable development goal #4, quality education. This specific aim, cultural diversity, is also reflected in the efforts to attract students from all continents. Recently graduated students represent countries such as Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico and Russia. The faculty of the programme has deemed it important to invite visiting teachers and artists from the global south, including Uganda, Palestine, and Brazil, and to also encourage collaborative projects with partners outside Europe. In order to achieve the aims of critical understanding of global problems and crises, it is imperative to encounter people whose contexts are other than our economically privileged and culturally rather homogenous situation.

In this endeavour, dialogue, or dialogism, is considered both as an educational aim and as a pedagogical approach. Moreover, dialogue is understood broadly, as an embodied phenomenon (Anttila, 2003, 2017/2003). Among the key sources for this view are the works of Buber () and Freire (1972, 1996, 1998). Most recently, the philosophical and theoretical foundation for dialogical pedagogy has been widened by adjoining it with the postcolonial notion of the third space (Bhanbha, 1994) and the connection to posthumanist, new materialist philosophies (Braidotti, 2019; Fenwick et al., 2011). These current and timely philosophical standpoints support future arts educators in becoming aware of their role as environmental educators and in seeing how dialogical relationships do not refer only to human interaction. Through its embodied qualities and sensibilities, dialogism transcends human relations and connects humans with their living and non-living environment. This is how arts education can be seen as a deeply relational field of practice where visible and invisible, human and non-human entanglements and affectivities may become activated. From this viewpoint, dialogism means being open to otherness that lives within each human being, between human beings, and between humans and other living and non-living agents. Otherness is particularity, specificity, locality and temporality that can be sensed by “turning towards the other” (Buber, 1947, p. 22) and by asking what are we dealing with here, by listening and asking, what is happening, what is growing, becoming? This kind of pedagogy respects non-human life and the non-living materiality that form the background for human experience, learning and knowing. They limit the possibilities of our understanding and colour our existence as human beings. Dialogism understood in this way is then the foundation for ecological consciousness

that, in turn, may empower future arts educators towards active agency as environmentally and socially conscious educators. In this, raising critical hope is the key as it “mobilizes human beings towards guided, concrete action, and enables them to take part in social change” (Anttila 2018, p. 63). According to Freire, critical hope seeks to “unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be” (Freire, 1996, p. 9).

Ecologically aware arts educators who understand the “posthuman condition” (Braidotti, 2019) must acknowledge that human beings are not autonomous agents of their learning. Instead, they understand that learning takes place within webs of entangled human and non-human actions, and define learning as expanded possibilities for action. Sociomateriality, an emerging field of educational research that connects various theoretical and philosophical approaches, is highly relevant for arts education as it offers resources to understand and acknowledge the unpredictability of educational processes (see Fenwick et al., 2011). Sociomaterial approaches to education consider human knowledge and learning to be embedded in material action and interaction and seek to understand how knowledge, knowers and the known emerge together with/in activity. Thus, learning and knowledge emerge within dynamic structures where events and actors are mutually dependent; mutually constitutive. Human beings are fully nested within and interconnected with the elements of the systems of which they are part. Learning is understood as continuous invention and exploration, where knowledge does not wait out there to be found, but performs itself into existence (Fenwick et al., 2011, pp. 14–17) (Fig. 4).

This kind of thinking may also be seen as a starting point for investigating collaborative creativity (Pyyhtinen, 2016) and shared authorship, on which the graduate programmes in dance and theatre pedagogy at Uniarts Helsinki have put more emphasis during recent years. More specifically, a course entitled *The group as an artistic agent* aims to prepare future arts education professionals to “understand that teamwork requires the commitment of each member to participate in the creation of subject and material, but also the capacity to receive, interpret and generate meaning to material produced by others” (Dance pedagogy, 2020) and moreover, to negotiate, adapt and let go of their own ideas. This course was first arranged in 2017, the year of Finland’s 100th independence anniversary. With several discussions related to local and national history within the university, our ideas gradually turned toward practices and objects that had been forgotten or rejected. We discussed how digitalization and globalization are increasingly powerful elements in our lives and our pedagogical spaces, and how swiftly materials, objects and ideas change, become old, unwanted and thrown away. Chalkboards, do-it-yourself film cameras, C-cassettes and all kinds of trash were brought into the classroom and studio. This course, then, became a laboratory where waste, forgotten practices and materials were brought back to life through imagination and animation. The process was a co-creation with a group of preschool children, who participated by reinventing purposes for junk and by donating their toys and forgotten objects for our students to play with. Interestingly, the quality of the work process was affected in several ways with increased emphasis on waiting, listening and a heightened focus on sensory experiences.

**Fig. 4** Wastefield: children are saving a nature creature (Suvi Kajaus) that has been trapped in plastic (Photo: Aapo Juusti)



This course prepares the students for a large collaborative project, entitled an *artistic-pedagogical event*, which focuses on the evolving nature of artistic-pedagogical processes, in seeing performance as an event, that is, a living interaction between performers and participants. Students are guided to understand ways of promoting eventfulness and approaching performance in a spirit of inquiry, “asking what performance could be, pondering pedagogic and dialogic ways in which to connect with the audience.” (Dance pedagogy, 2020). In the view shared by the faculty, this kind of participatory approach to a performance event presents an opportunity for pedagogy, encounters and change. It enhances non-hierarchical, respectful encounters and caring, responsive relationships to the participants, and in so doing, may unravel power structures between artists and lay persons, performers and audience, adults and children, teachers and students. Deconstructing binaries, or dualisms, is at the core of education for sustainable futures (see, for example, Martusewicz et al., 2015, pp. 64–65).

In October 2017, this artistic-pedagogical process culminated in a participatory, immersive performance event entitled *A hundred spaces!* that lasted for ten days; ten hours each day, thus equalling 100 h, referring to Finland’s 100 years of independence. The event, however, did not present historical facts or events in a traditional (arts) educational manner, but focused on human beings’ relationship to nature, on the creative potential embedded in recycled materials, and on humans and non-humans living together. Thirty groups of children participated in four different, but



**Fig. 5** Scream ice: a bear (Maikki Palm) is worried about melting ice. Photo: Aapo Juusti

thematically connected participatory performative events prepared by four groups of students: *Hukkaniitty* (*Waste field*), *Huutojää* (*Scream ice*), *3001 Jäteseikkailu* (*3001 Waste odyssey*) and *Salaisuuksien temppeli* (*Temple of secrets*) (Fig. 5).

According to one teacher accompanying a group of children, the pupils enjoyed the possibility of moving, playing and dancing within a performance, and at the same time, reflecting on important themes related to environment and recycling (Uniarts Helsinki, 2017). Addressing environmental questions, or any questions related to social justice through embodied, aesthetic experience, seems to be a powerful way to educate without preaching, to raise consciousness without depressing, and thus to ignite hope and action within the young.

### **Art Teacher Education in the Culturally Diverse North: Arctic and Global Responsibility at the University of Lapland, Faculty of Art and Design**

At the University of Lapland's Faculty of Art and Design, activities combine a global perspective with a specific focus on the global North and its cultural heritage with the aim of capturing the artistic interaction between design and research. The faculty's research focuses on ecologically and culturally sustainable design, artistic activities and art education in Northern environments and communities. The degree programme on Art Education (<https://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Units/Faculty-of-Art-and-Design/Studies/Art-Education->) certifies art teachers and qualifies them for comprehensive schools, for high school level, and prepares them with a teacher competence for all schooling levels and diverse institutional settings within the Finnish education system and Basic Art Education. In addition, the programme gives participants

competence to act in pedagogical professional roles and professional assignments in the fields of visual art and culture, the public sector, businesses and for-profit organizations and other networks in society. The programme brings together education, arts and science, conducts research and promotes educational opportunities to examine and express culturally diverse realities through art (see, for example, Jokela et al., 2015; Hiltunen et al., 2020; Huhmarniemi, 2019; Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020). In Community, Art and Environment minor studies students can specialize in community or environmental art. Focusing on aesthetics, ethics and experiments, the studies introduce students to the process of carrying out community and environmental art projects ([www.ulapland.fi/EN/Units/Faculty-of-Art-and-Design/Studies/Minor-subjects-/Community,-Art-and-Environment](http://www.ulapland.fi/EN/Units/Faculty-of-Art-and-Design/Studies/Minor-subjects-/Community,-Art-and-Environment)).

Art education has a strong global responsibility and one of its aims is to foster education for eco-social civilisation. Art pedagogy that is based on research and socio-political awareness is culturally sensitive. The pedagogy aims to create aesthetic wellbeing, eco-social civilisation and participation and encourage engagement, innovation and initiatives in a creative connection with communities facing societal and environmental changes. Theoretical and practical knowledge is at the core of art education and knowledge, and know-how and artistic expression are interwoven into action. Exploring art, visual-material cultures and contemporary issues with respect to diversity familiarizes our students with traditions and initiates contemporary practices.

This section of the chapter focuses on exploring how to foster cultural revitalization, decolonization and ecocultural resilience in the changing Arctic and the North in situations and communities where indigenous and non-indigenous cultures have blended. In particular, the U.N. sustainable development goal number four (#4) with the aim to *ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* will be analyzed through one practical example later in this chapter. Since the mid 1990s, our art education projects have offered opportunities for increased participation in learning in the fields of education and culture in rural areas. We have been working in the broader community beyond the school world and throughout these projects, and have taken the dimensions of sustainable development and cultural diversity into account when collaborating with different stakeholders (Hiltunen, 2009; Jokela et al., 2015; Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2019, 2020). Becoming a more culturally competent educator means understanding the community values of schools and students and using those values as a base for pedagogies. Culturally responsive teaching is an essential component of reframing professional educator preparation for equality. It has particular resonance when working with indigenous communities (Keskitalo, 2018; Smith et al., 2019).

At the University of Lapland, the U.N. sustainable development goals have been taken into account explicitly each time when renewing the curriculum for art teacher education. One practical example of this emphasis in the most recent 3-year plan starting in 2020 is a course called *Art education for eco-social civilization*. The course aims to promote the student's ability to recognize paradigms, different aims and societal needs that are interwoven into education for sustainability (EfS) from the perspective of art education practice and research. Referring to the course description,

the aim is to understand the responsibility and agency that education and educational research have for environmental solutions and transformations towards sustainable ways of living and sustainable society. This will be done by applying art education for EfS in a manner that recognizes arts-based research methods that aim to enhance sustainability and through study themes that include eco-crises, eco-anxiety and hope through contemporary art and/or arts-based research. By doing so, the students are also learning the potential of art education as an important pillar in building a more sustainable future (see, for example Firth & Smith, 2017; Foster et al., 2019; Salonen, 2019; Smith, 2020).

As an example of our research projects, I will now focus on the Arctic Reformative and Exploratory Teaching Profession (ArkTOP) project (2017–2020) funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture as part of the Finnish government's Key Project on aiming to reform comprehensive school, learning environments, and teachers' competence. The project was carried out in cooperation with 18 municipalities in Finnish Lapland (<https://www.ulapland.fi/FI/Kotisivut/ArkTOP-hanke/Opettajanammatillinen-kehittymissuunnitelma>). Visual art education pilots took place in four of them: Utsjoki, Salla, Kemijärvi and Ranua (*see image xx below*).

In the Arctic area, there are specific educational challenges because of the long geographic distances, the centralization of educational institutions, and decreasing services in the sparsely populated areas. This context calls for efforts to maintain high-quality education and its availability equally to all areas. Our aim in this study is joint knowledge building on Arctic visual culture in collaboration with researchers, art education students and local schools. We have invited rural schools in Lapland, art education students and scholars from Rovaniemi and Helsinki to work together on knowledge building on Arctic visual culture and contemporary Sámi art.

The theoretical foundation for the pilots is community-based art education (Hiltunen, 2009). As a methodological choice, we use an Art-Based Action Research (ABAR) approach that aims to develop the professional methods and working approaches of the artist-teacher-researcher or artist-researcher in addition to seeking solutions to known problems and future visions in environments and communities (Jokela, 2019; Jokela et al., 2019). Inclusive co-creation is present in all stages of project planning and goal setting until its realization and the consequent implementation (Fig. 6).

The aim of the ArkTOP project is to develop Arctic pedagogy, which entails an education that respects the people and cultures of the area. Considering the educational characteristics of Finnish Lapland, there is a need for different combinations of distance and multiform teaching to diversify the local educational supplies and offer high-quality teaching despite the large geographical distances. This approach requires a need-based and goal-oriented development of teacher competence and shared expertise in a collaborative culture integrating core education and induction and in-service training of teachers (Määttä & Uusiutu, 2015).

The University of Lapland is located on the Arctic Circle in Rovaniemi, and to understand the geographical challenges characteristic to this project and region, it is worth noting that one of our collaborative schools, the *Utsjoki Sámi High School*, is located at the most Northern point of Finland, approximately 400 kms from



**Fig. 6** Working together with the pupils and teachers on knowledge building on Arctic Visual culture (Photo credits: Laura Ranta, Rovaniemi 2018)

Rovaniemi. The Sámi are the only indigenous people of the European Union and there are 10 different Sámi languages, of which we have three in Finland: Norden Sámi, Skoltt Sámi and Inari Sámi (<https://www.saamicouncil.net/en/the-saami-council>). Utsjoki is the only municipality in Finland where the Sámi are in the majority. Nowadays, an increasing number of Sámi live outside the Sámi homeland. This brings challenges to services and to the future of the Sámi culture, but also presents a clear need to consider when training future art educators.

Kemi Gjerpe (2018) has discussed the concept of “indigenous education” in Norway and Aotearoa, New Zealand. Both of these states face the same common challenges with regard to indigenous education in Finland: valuable resources are used on indigenous schools, but the majority of indigenous students attend mainstream schools. Kemi Gjerpe claims that the emphasis and investment on indigenous schools has been necessary and an important part of the indigenous political movement but, in order to achieve culturally appropriate education for all indigenous pupils, she argues that there is a need to indigenize mainstream education (Kemi Gjerpe, 2018).

Our research and development work in this project offers strategies for higher education on indigenous and social justice teaching as well as allowing conversations on contemporary Sámi art practices. As part of the pilots, we are developing a web-based learning environment for art educators to be utilized with art education students and Lappish art teachers. This learning environment facilitates conversations on Arctic visual culture and contemporary Sámi art practices and traditions, which are found to be inspirational sources for art and art teaching through the pilots we conducted in our study. The students made comments in a web environment and

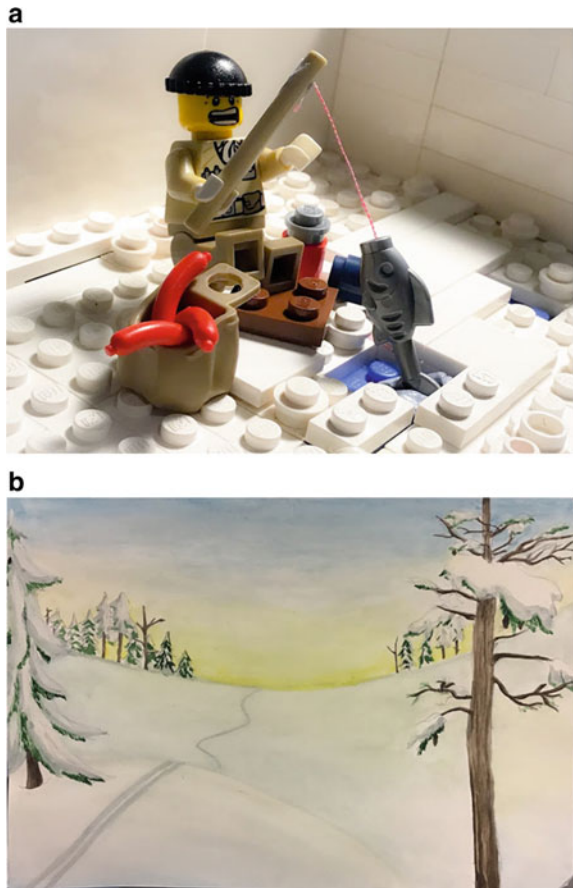


discussed their images. The process and variety of the art works, paintings, videos, games and collages the participants created show that there is a wide variety of points of view on what the Arctic is (Fig. 7).

We also collaborated with the art teacher education programme at Aalto University. During the research process, the art education students emphasized how little they knew about Sámi culture, but even though they were Finnish and had lived in Finland all their lives they had not problematized their lack of knowledge. Sámi culture has been addressed in schools in a very limited way. The aim of the pilots was to generate joint knowledge construction through art, and to avoid presenting one view of the Sámi, or any other Arctic culture, as a truth or a representative to many cultures. Art education students in the Helsinki region and in Rovaniemi explored how visual cultures shape cultural perceptions and ideologies in and through complex social interactions (Hiltunen et al., forthcoming).

The research is in progress. We are developing a web learning environment on this topic for and with art education students—art teachers, local schools and pupils and

**Fig. 7** Examples of the high school students' art works. Exploring what Arctic means to us (Photos Mirja Hiltunen)



in-service training of teachers. Two master's theses are being written from the first research circles by our art education students: one is in progress at Aalto University and at the University of Lapland, one post-doctoral research into the pupils' art works and other academic papers are forthcoming.

Earlier research has indicated that to avoid an oversimplified view of cultures, raising students' "socio-political consciousness" is important. Indigenous knowledge has been framed worldwide by Western epistemological and curricular constructs as subjugated knowledge. Because of that, educators should be interrogating and constantly questioning the ways institutions legitimate and organize knowledge. When considering the relevance of school curricula on programmes, cultural differences should not be the only focus, but should also include community and place (Keskitalo, 2018, Hiltunen, 2008, 2009, 2010; Valtonen et al., 2009).

When integrating indigenous knowledge into art education, it is important to position it as a valuable knowledge system in its own right and not as a tool for acquiring Western scientific knowledge. When developing relative activities, indigenous perspectives should be represented accurately and respectfully (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020; Canipe & Tolbert, 2016; Keskitalo, 2018). We are aiming to foster critical thinking and provide professional identities for art educators and art teachers of the future, and at the same time, expand the domain of art education into different sectors of society. The development work and research will offer strategies for higher education on indigenous and social justice teaching.

Our programme at the University of Lapland focuses on the potential of art and art education within education for sustainability (Firth & Smith, 2017) as a response to ongoing environmental crises, eco-anxiety and critical discussions towards EfS. EfS is based on principles of ecological, social, cultural and economic sustainability. Art and art education opens the possibility of entwining these aspects in the same way as culture is bound to nature in the Arctic.

## Some Concluding Thoughts

Essential to all our contributions to this chapter and our research and pedagogical way is our commitment to its dialogical and reflective possibilities. We work with one another, with our peers and students, and with other members of societies (also other than humans) with respect and anticipation of meaningful interactions. While our practices of scholarship and community-based activism are firmly grounded on theory and international webs of scholarship, we attend to the potentialities of each encounter that emerge when arts and other forms of knowledge are equally respected. At the time of co-constructing this chapter, we are all marking on our curricula (specific symbols assigned to each SDG) how each university programmatic course addresses the SDGs. One may have various opinions about such initiatives, but if we evaluate this joint governmental and university effort from the most hopeful standpoint, by doing this, we are collectively recognizing the urgency and the need to align our research and educational activities to support the obtainment

of the SDG and as a consequence, collectively contributing to the construction of more sustainable futures and societies. Although we have not listed all the U.N.'s sustainable development goals that closely relate to our research and pedagogical work throughout this chapter, we hope that the examples included within this text sufficiently illustrate our orientations and how the learning commons we participate in continuously and consciously align all our theoretical, ethical, ontological, epistemological, pedagogical and artistic beliefs and actions with respect to the presented ideologies and challenges.

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# Artistic and Cultural Education for Sustainable Development: A Case Study from a Rural Life Museum in Spain



Gemma Carbó Ribugent and Roser Servalls Munar

**Abstract** The Museum of Rural Life (MVR), led by the Carulla Foundation, was founded in 1998. Currently, cultural and artistic education for sustainable development is the core focus of the new strategic plan of the museum. From an ethnological perspective, the museum is using a cultural ecology (Steward, *Theory of culture change: the methodology of multilineal evolution*, University of Illinois Press, 1972) approach to understand how the tangible and intangible heritage provides specific educational strategies to achieve sustainability challenges. The museum's educational work with schools is one of its most important programmes. The main goal of this programme is to generate a sense of wonder and concern for the global ecosystem and encourage critical reflection on humans' dependence on natural resources through the observation of the rural way of life. This article is a study of an educational activity about the topic of plastic considered as a case. The museum's educators worked with two primary schools, a secondary school and an arts school from February to June 2019. The conclusion is that a holistic educational approach to big sustainability problems which combines science and art, memory and creativity is important for sustainability achievements and that educational activities designed from that approach are easy to relate with school pedagogical projects.

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## The Museum of Rural Life: Historical Context and Current Agenda

The Museum of Rural Life was opened in 1988 in the old ancestral house of the Carulla family in *L'Espluga de Francolí* (Spain) with the aim of preserving and disseminating the legacy of the Mediterranean rural world. Lluís Carulla i Canals, the founder of the MVR, was aware of the value of a heritage of customs and implements that were the fruit of a legacy of culture and wisdom reaching many centuries back into the past (Fig. 1).

In 2009, after a process of enlargement and modernization of the permanent exhibition, the museum extended its discourse to the present and the future of the rural world with the aim of becoming a central actor at the international level in the field of culture, rural life and sustainable development. The permanent exhibition of the Museum allows visitors to see what life was like in rural areas in the past, what it is like today and what its outlook is for tomorrow.

The museum preserves both tangible and intangible heritage: a large collection of tools and objects not only related to working the soil (olives, wine and wheat) and life in the little rural villages, but also an important archive of photography, oral history, and documents with knowledge concerning natural health, food or celebration in rural life. The collection also includes artistic works, like mural paintings and sculptures, related to agriculture, traditional jobs and trades, lifestyle, and culture in rural areas. A central axis of this project is also an ecological orchard and an ethnobotanical garden, from which different activities related to agriculture, traditional knowledge and sustainable food are born.



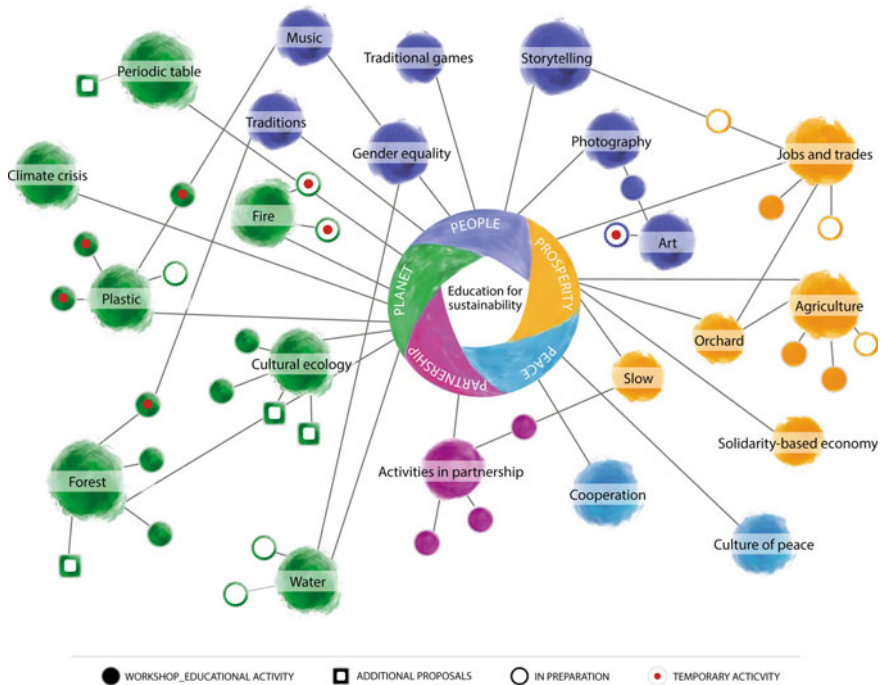
**Fig. 1** The orchard and ethnobotanical garden is a cornerstone of the educational project of the Museum (Photograph: © Museum of Rural Life)



The temporary exhibitions and the activities carried out in the museum convey key topics, such as plastic pollution, water resources management, clean energy, sustainable transport, circular economy and traditional jobs and trades, forest management or reflections on other issues related to sustainability, such as gender equality.

Life in rural areas encompasses specific capabilities of people, connected with using natural resources and organizing their communities in a circular economy. The industrial revolution and the urbanization processes meant the end of that situation. Good examples from the past, and also bad practices, as well as the effects of the transition from rural to urban realities, suppose an important amount of knowledge that seems to be necessary today if the capitalist model of development needs to be changed towards a more sustainable one.

Taking as a model the grouping that the United Nations (UN) propose for the sustainable development goals (SDG), the educational project of the museum structures the educational and cultural activities around the 5Ps (planet, people, partnership, prosperity and peace), and each of them aims to specific sustainable development goals. For example, promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development is at the core of SDG 2.a., and this specific goal is aimed in the activity conceived by the MVR educators for school groups, called “Growing Future. AgriCulture workshop” (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2** The activities of the educational project are grouped into five broad areas aiming at specific sustainable development goals (Photo: © Museum of Rural Life)



**Fig. 3** A plough used to till the soil, an example of how our ancestors connected the culture and “agriCulture”. (Photo: © Museum of Rural Life)

The museum’s team understands culture as a set of evolving patterns and processes that reflect who people are, what people think and how people act as individuals and groups, as well as the artistic universal languages that people use as a society to express it (Steward, 1972). Music, songs and crafts were an important part of rural life. Nature was at the core of it, and it is currently at the core of many contemporary artistic languages, like the visual arts, poetry, theatre, cinema, etc. As Amartya Sen stated (Sen, 1996, 13), “cultural development is a basic and inseparable component of development in general. If people are deprived of the opportunity to understand and cultivate their creativity, then that in itself is a hindrance to development”. Therefore, culture defines and concretizes the economy, the ways people socially organize their lives and relations with the environment and also, the languages and narratives they use to explain it. Following Novo (2009), science and art are like forms of knowledge that need each other, to account for all the complexity of the living world (Fig. 3).

## A Case Study Methodology

According to the ideas of sustainability explained above, the museum’s pedagogical project emphasizes the need to learn the consequences of decisions made in the past to know how to better face the future: if societies do not know where they come from, we people will not know where we should not go back to.

According to the museum’s team, the root of the current socio-cultural and environmental crisis is in the way people think, feel and act. That is why generating processes of cultural transformation are needed to get to the root of the crisis. The MVR’s educators consider, then, that if the planet, economy and societies must be

sustainable, today's culture needs to be transformed. In that sense, memory, heritage and creativity are essential to change the current paradigm towards sustainability. A cultural transformation is needed and, as socially engaged cultural institutions, museums play an important role in achieving it. That is what the museum's team tries to do through programming temporary exhibitions and related educational activities. In this article, the authors will study the case of *Plastic*, one of the latest proposals of the museum's team, fully designed following the principles of cultural education for sustainable development.

A case study is an appropriate research design in which researchers wish to gain concrete, contextual, in-depth knowledge about a specific real-world subject. It allows them to explore the key characteristics, meanings and implications of the case. The research question for this case study is: How can schools better achieve cultural education for sustainable development through museum activities?

Two primary schools, very near to the museum, have dedicated their 2019 pedagogical project to the climate emergency, and the role of artistic education. Both schools have established a permanent alliance with the museum and have been participating actively in the temporary exhibition about plastic, as well as in the educational museum activities linked to it. One secondary school collaborated with the museum to produce a temporary exhibition related to sustainability, as part of the technology curriculum. A professional art school included the creation of artistic installations with plastic materials to generate debate about its use.

The researchers have been collecting qualitative and quantitative data, using methods such as interviews, observations and analysis of primary and secondary sources, such as photographs and videos of the students and teachers. The data have been classified to articulate a construction of results and demonstrate, on the one hand, the impact in terms of participation and, on the other hand, the educational assumption of sustainable development goals as a pedagogical part of the schools' curricula.

## **The Museum as an Educational Project**

UNESCO has embraced both education for sustainability and arts education, but "the power of these frameworks when scaffolding each other has been radically under-explored" (Aprill et al., 2018). That is why the MVR is committed to educating on sustainability through culture and the arts. Doing that, its educational project connects the work of the museum to the global agendas at the European and international level: the UNESCO roadmap for art education (UNESCO, 2006) and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development educational goals (UNESCO, 2017), which supposes an opportunity to start a path for the improvement of people's lives, without excluding anyone, and respecting the planet.

According to the classic scheme of sustainable development, it is based on three interconnected pillars: the environment, the social environment and the economy. The museum's team believes that culture is the fourth pillar of sustainability (Hawkes,

2001). Ethnological museums are especially well placed to be spaces for debate and knowledge transference about all the 17 SDGs because ethnological museums are concerned with cultural diversity in human models of relation with nature through time. The idea is a derivation of the concept of eco-museum (Riviere, 1993), defined today as a dynamic way in which communities preserve, interpret and manage their heritage for sustainable development.

Museums can play an important role in sustainability work. Sacha Kagan has argued that sustainability is about reinventing worlds; it is a cultural project (Kagan, 2015, 29). The strategic plan 2019–2026 of the MVR proposes to articulate the museum as a cultural space, focused on cultural and artistic education for sustainable development goals.

Science and arts are both relevant to understand people's connection to planet Earth and humanity. Using the concept of eco-literacy (Capra, 2006), the prestigious scientist explains that nature has developed sustainable systems and suggests that humans should learn from them. From this observation, Capra proposes the need for ecological literacy, which is "to understand the principles of ecosystems organization and use them in order to create sustainable human communities" (Capra, 2006, 25). In line with this idea, Jorge Riechmann proposes the concept and practice of bio mimesis, which he defines as "imitating nature when conceiving human productive systems in order to make them compatible with the biosphere" (Riechmann, 2014, 15). The author states that "urban, industrial and agricultural metabolism must increasingly resemble the functioning of natural ecosystems" (Riechmann, 2014, 16). He believes that societies must aim to a kind of symbiosis between nature and culture, between ecosystems and human systems.

Education at the museum is also based on Salazar (Diaz-Salazar, 2016), understanding the ecological change of education as a model for the main goals of the museum's educational project. Salazar sets five major themes, extracted from the Jacques Delors' report (UNESCO 1996): learn to be part of the planet, discovering new connections; learn to live in harmony with nature and with humans, especially with the most vulnerable; learn to know science, arts and humanities and relate them to the main challenges humankind is facing, and their sustainable alternatives; learn to do through eco-social actions; and learn to know, recover and develop ecological wisdom (Fig. 4).

The aim of the pedagogical project is to provide spaces and resources to learn and reflect on sustainability from a polyhedral perspective that combines an environmental with a social, economic and cultural perspective. The museum's educators conceive learning processes as an acquisition of individual and collective skills and competencies for coexistence, resilience and the creative imagination of new scenarios in the face of climate, environmental and socio-cultural emergencies. Their allies are the educational and cultural communities of the museum's closest environment, as well as the social groups of the territory.

The UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Goals document (UNESCO, 2017) establishes the key transversal competencies for the achievement



**Fig. 4** Visitors can see how it was necessary to store and preserve food for the long winter (Photo: © Museum of Rural Life)

of the SDGs. The activities carried out in the museum focus on these key competencies, adapting the UNESCO proposal to cultural education for sustainability in the following way:

**Systems thinking competency:** Through pieces of artwork, visual arts, natural elements and the objects of the ethnological museum, participants explore the connection between culture and nature during educational activities. The museum’s educators consider that this is the first step to understand the systemic, approach and develop “the abilities to recognize and understand relationships; to analyse complex systems; to think of how systems are embedded within different domains and different scales; and to deal with uncertainty” (UNESCO, 2017, 10).

**Anticipatory competency:** In the MVR’s activities, art is used as the key resource to foster participants’ creativity and imagination so that they improve their “abilities to understand and evaluate multiple futures—possible, probable and desirable; to create one’s own visions for the future; to apply the precautionary principle; to assess the consequences of actions; and to deal with risks and changes” (UNESCO, 2017, 10).

The museum’s educators assume that the social way of understanding different situations is embedded in a specific cultural paradigm that has different levels of assumption, beginning with the personal level. Asking the right questions during educational activities, educators mediate between pieces of artwork and participants so that they develop a self-awareness competency: “the ability to reflect on one’s own role in the local community and (global) society; [...] and to deal with one’s feelings and desires.” On this basis, the MVR’s activities foster critical thinking amongst participants so that they also develop the normative competency: “the abilities to understand and reflect on the norms and values that underlie one’s actions; and to negotiate sustainability values, principles, goals, and targets, in a context

of conflicts of interests and trade-offs, uncertain knowledge and contradictions” (UNESCO, 2017, 10). In the same line, educators rely on current cultural productions and traditional culture to provoke a dialogue amongst participants so that they also develop the critical thinking competency: “the ability to question norms, practices and opinions; to reflect on one’s own values, perceptions and actions; and to take a position in the sustainability discourse.”

Strategic competency and collaboration competency: The pedagogical proposals carried out in the MVR are designed from a collective principle, and each activity includes a challenge/game that participants need to resolve collectively. To do it, collaboration and teamwork are crucial among participants, who need to apply strategic thinking for success. Thus, their “abilities to learn from others; to understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others (empathy); to understand, relate to and be sensitive to others (empathic leadership); to deal with conflicts in a group; and to facilitate collaborative and participatory problem solving” are demanded, as well as their “abilities to collectively develop and implement innovative actions that further sustainability.” In the same line, integrated problem-solving competency is also needed: “the overarching ability to apply different problem-solving frameworks to complex sustainability problems and develop viable, inclusive and equitable solution options that promote sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2017, 10).

## **Plastic Temporary Exhibition and Educational Activities: A Case Study**

In February 2019, the Museum of Rural Life presented an exhibition of its own production about the problem of plastic. The exhibition was, in essence, a proposal for reflection on plastic as the most useful material ever produced, as well as one of the main problems today in terms of sustainability. The exhibition combined science and humanistic approaches and used visual arts as the main resource. This exhibition’s aim was to make visitors reflect in order to create thought and debate about a material that has totally invaded people’s daily lives: plastic (Fig. 5).

The show involved about 20 local and international artists such as Aleksey Kondratyev, Basurama Collective, Coke Bartrina, Elsa Yranzo, Ester Partegàs, Ida-Marie Corell, Ivana Larrosa, Lucas Hope, Mandy Barker, Nick Pumphrey, Núria Val, Octavi Serra, Pepi de Boissieu, Samuel Rodriguez, Sean Lin, Sil van der Woerd, Silvia Count and Sophie Thomas (MVR, 2019). The exhibition brought together objects, photographs, videos and artistic installations around the issue of plastic that constantly addressed the visitor: “how do you see it?”.

Throughout almost a whole year, the exhibition was the axis of a series of parallel activities and a proposal for schools. Younger and older artists, scientists, architects, designers, film-makers, philosophers and education agents were involved. But above all, everyone who visited the exhibition could contribute with their own opinion

**Fig. 5** Coke Bartrina's poetic and visual work is an artistic cry about individual responsibility for problems caused by the use of plastics (Photo: © Coke Bartrina)



on the topic and therefore co-create the final narration on the subject through a poll, conceived by Domestic Data Streamers (MVR 2019), that visually allowed glimpsing the standpoint of visitors on the subject of the exhibition.

Can people remove plastic from their life? Do they want to? What viable alternatives do they have? What materials did people use before plastic? Can people use these materials again for innovation? Is it necessary to consume so many products that people really do not value? These and many other questions were present in the exhibition. These questions were not resolved, and it was not the intention of the curators of the exhibition either. What they wanted, and accomplished, was to generate a space for debate and reflection on the topic that would enable embracing and contrasting all points of view and opinions.

The educational activity for pupils and families conceived around the exhibition invited participants to think holistically about the virtues and problems of this material. Through a playful dynamic, participants needed to solve a paradox in the form of a game that would allow them to open their perception before entering the exhibition. Through observation, interaction and dialogue, they would discover what plastic is

as a material in a scientific approach. A selection of museum objects opposed to their own plastic counterparts helped participants to reflect on the value of objects and how after their use, often too ephemeral, they are considered just waste.

With help of various pieces of art, participants were engaged to ask themselves about their relationship with plastic and to reflect on it from a variety of perspectives. With the power of art to stimulate emotions, participants could search for new meanings and new creative associations with plastics and at the end of the visit, participants were invited to make one creative proposal through audio-visual media and social networks and to act as part of the solution to this challenge. To summarize, the aims of this activity were:

- To know the characteristics, properties and story of plastic.
- Discuss one of the main challenges of humanity.
- Realize that the problems people generate are complex and need to be answered in an equally complex and holistic way.
- Knowing what circular economy is and how it can apply in this case.
- Reflect through artistic works on our relationship with objects and especially with plastic ones.
- Encourage a critical spirit and cooperative work.
- To empower oneself and become an active part of the solution of the problem.

Most of these aims correspond to the specific learning objectives for sustainable development, set by UNESCO, regarding SDG 4, 8, 12, 14 and 15 (UNESCO, 2017), which are also aimed at by this activity:

“Understand the important role of culture in achieving sustainability”, “to be able to engage personally with ESD” and “to apply the acquired knowledge in everyday situations to promote sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2017, 18) are learning objectives of SDG 4 for quality education. Participating in this activity, scholars achieve these learning objectives through art materials and scientific content, reflecting on the problem of single-use plastics. Through this activity, the museum’s educators promote critical reflection on one of the main challenges of humanity and challenge visitors by asking them, at the end of their visit, to empower themselves and become an active part of the solution of the problem by using their creativity and proposing specific actions against plastic pollution which can be carried out in people’s daily lives.

Visitors are also encouraged by educators to post their actions on social media. This way, the activity also stimulates visitors to achieve other learning objectives for responsible consumption and production—SDG 12—such as “to be able to take on critically their role as an active stakeholder in the market” and “to challenge cultural and societal orientations in consumption and production” (UNESCO, 2017, 34).

“To be able to understand how one’s own consumption affects working conditions of others in the global economy” and “to be able to engage with new visions and models of a sustainable, inclusive economy” (UNESCO, 2017, 26) are learning objectives of SDG 8 for decent work and economic growth. Regarding these UNESCO learning objectives, the museum’s educators explain to visitors how the production of plastic products that people use in their daily lives is sometimes carried out in unfair



working conditions in developing countries. As a counter-example, educators show alternative organic or recycled plastic products made in the EU, which are used in textile design and the fashion industry and correspond to a circular economy model. Through these examples, and many others, visitors get to “know about strategies and practices of sustainable production and consumption” (UNESCO, 2017, 34), which is also a learning objective of SDG 12.

To be able to “understand how individual lifestyle choices influence social, economic and environmental development” and to be “able to differentiate between needs and wants, and to reflect on their own individual consumer behaviour in light of the needs of the natural world, other people, cultures and countries, and future generations” (UNESCO, 2017, 34) are learning objectives of SDG 12 for responsible consumption and production. Through open questions about the exhibits and pieces of artwork, educators invite visitors to think as individuals about their use of plastic objects and their relationship with them. For example, one of the important reflections on this topic is about the consideration of an object as waste or not; the state of the object is determined by the consumer’s decision and not by the object itself.

To “understand threats to ocean systems, such as pollution” and to be “able to show people the impact humanity is having on the oceans (biomass loss, acidification, pollution, etc.), and the value of clean healthy oceans” (UNESCO, 2017, 38) are learning objectives for SDG 14 for life below the water. The museum’s educators mediate these contents through different pieces of artwork shown at the exhibition, such as Nick Pumpherey’s *Sea trash* (2018), Sophie Tomas’ *Never turn your back on the ocean* (2015) and Mandy Barker’s *Shoal*—this last artwork focusing on plastics collected and photographed from trawls and net samples at various points between Japan and Hawaii during the Tsunami Debris Expedition in June 2012.

Finally, an important goal for visitors to achieve is in the background of this activity and corresponds to what educators at the MVR consider a very important learning objective in working for a more sustainable future: to be “able to question the dualism of human/nature and realize that we are a part of nature and not apart from nature” (UNESCO, 2017, 40).

## Results of the Study

The researchers have seen how the temporary exhibition *Plastic* and the corresponding educational activity deal with sustainable development goals through the visual arts. The educational results of this activity can be understood through many quantitative and qualitative indicators:

Number of visitors to the exhibition <i>Plastic. Genial or Perverse</i>	Number of participants in pedagogical activities conceived around the exhibition <i>Plastic. Genial or Perverse</i>
9,480	3,188 (33.6%)
The most visited temporary exhibition throughout the history of the museum	237 (7.5%) pupils from schools related to the case studies visited the exhibition and participated in at least 1 more activity; ages from 3 to 20 years

Qualitative participation can be considered with some clear indicators related to the three case studies: local school *Martí Poch* has adopted *Climate Emergency* as a transversal topic in school projects in order to raise pupils' awareness about climate change. Throughout the school year 2019–2020 they are undertaking different actions and activities related to this topic and some of them are being carried out in collaboration with the Museum. At the beginning of the school term, the students and their teachers organized a cleaning journey along the river and picked up pieces of garbage and plastic waste they found in the surroundings. After that, they brought it to the museum on 27 September 2019, a worldwide strike day for the climate. As a claim for action and with the mediation of the museum's educators, they reflected on the subject while creating different pieces of artwork with those waste materials found along the river, under the motto "There is no future without the Planet".

On the other hand, on 23 December 2019, the Museum of Rural Life opened another exhibition, in this case, the work of the pupils of the *ZER Conca de Barberà* (a network of smaller rural schools), who produced a sample based on their view of the exhibition *Plastic*. At the beginning of the school term, the management team of the *ZER Conca de Barberà* asked the director of the Museum to formalize their collaboration through a written agreement. This agreement contemplates, for example, further training on topics related to artistic and cultural education for sustainability.

Finally, the teachers of a partner secondary school located in the nearby village *El Morell* have focused on the technology projects the students are developing on sustainability. Specifically, high school students are currently working on bioplastics, after visiting the temporary exhibition *Plastic*. By the end of the school year, this one and other projects are supposed to be displayed as an exhibition in the school, but due to the COVID19 situation, this activity will be virtual and hosted on the MVR's webpage. In a larger project, the professionals of the Museum of Rural Life are advising on the process of creating this exhibition, with the narrative being focused on sustainability.

In the fourth case, a further contribution was from the students of Tarragona's *Arts and Design School*. As a training project, they developed a series of ephemeral artistic installations in the public spaces of *L'Espluga de Francolí*. Through their works, they reflected on and raised questions about the impact of plastic in people's lives and, at the same time, linked them to the flood that devastated the town in October 2019. This group of young students altered daily life in the village by appealing to its inhabitants, with very particular views about drought, the ozone layer, sea pollution, the *Francolí* river flood or people's consumption habits.

The students from these schools also participated through other activities, addressed to a broader community. *Basurama* is a collective of artists and architects dedicated to research, cultural and environmental creation and production, whose practice revolves around the reflection of trash, waste and reuse in all its formats and possible meanings. During the setting of the temporary exhibition *Plastic. Genial or Perverse*, the *Basurama Collective* was invited to the museum to create an artistic installation called *Memory Transfer Laboratory*. Pupils of local schools and members of local organizations, as well as migrant unaccompanied minors living in the nearby residence, participated and helped in the creation of this project, becoming an active part of the setting of the temporary exhibition.

Last, but not least, participation can also be considered through the non-formal activities organized within the framework of Youth Week 2019. The local youth association, *Auvènguen*, and the local administration proposed a workshop at the Museum of Rural Life, where fun and knowledge were combined around plastic, music made from recycled plastic instruments and the debate took place about the future young people will have to face. A young activist from the university was at the museum to talk with these young people about the climate emergency and social movements around the world. In consequence, a young chemistry student from the village started a radio programme related to plastics and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The assumption of the problem of plastics and its consideration at an educational schools projects level has been achieved if we look at the qualitative data collected that demonstrate the ability of the students to understand the dimension of the problem, as well as to express their critical view. Of course, this has been made possible by a great teaching team being responsible for accompanying the process, as well as the school assuming the proposal as a part of its project.

The exhibition that the *ZER Conca de Barberà* students worked at the museum, and the debate generated about it, allowed local society to catch the voice of the new generations, as well as to establish an urgent and necessary conversation about the cultural ways in which life is understood, often too detached from nature and other essentials.

Some of the children's and teacher's statements after visiting the exhibition and participating in the activity are the following ones. Teachers of primary education:

“Current and necessary [this exhibition] rises awareness [about the problematics of plastics]. [It is] very interesting to know where we come from and where we are going to, and the current needs in relation to the environment and sustainability.”  
 “[The activity] is very good, it is varied and invites to reflection. In the classroom, we will continue to delve deeper into what we have seen [at the exhibition].”

In the case of primary school students: “[The exhibition] is very cool because this is a claim against all the plastic we are throwing [into the seas and oceans].” “If we do nothing for our future, which is what will be our present, it will be smaller, with fewer places to live, because everything will be polluted.” “We have to intervene once and for all and commit ourselves”.

## Conclusions: A Holistic Approach to the Main Human Challenge

The museum's educational activities about the plastic issue have been considered a good way for schools to educate for sustainable development goals. Artistic languages are the main educational resources in the Museum of Rural Life's educational proposals, always combined with a scientific approach. If diversity within an ecosystem fosters life, diversity of experiences and diversity of languages in education must be present. Artistic languages have a special role because of their power to generate emotive and creative processes. The current state in the context of climate, social and cultural emergency requires, more than ever, finding creative solutions to global-wide problems.

Traditional educational systems frequently assume the existence of a single or a preferred right answer to a problem, inhibiting innovation processes and the generation of new ideas. This means that a creative person, or who has a different cultural background, is often considered a source of disturbance or distraction from a learning process. The crisis is rooted in the way people think, feel and act. For this reason, generating creative cultural transformation processes to tackle the root of the problem is needed. Thus, the museum's team and researchers consider that if we want the planet, society and economics to be sustainable, the current culture must be simultaneously transformed in a creative and scientific way.

Educating creatively means asking open questions with multiple possible solutions, undertaking group work in collaborative projects, using imagination to explore different possibilities, making connections between different points of view, and exploring the ambiguities and tensions between them. In this sense, creativity should not just be reduced to the arts field; it plays an essential role in all areas of knowledge and progress, which is not possible without the arts.

The Museum of Rural Life and the Carulla Foundation believe in culture and education, they invest in the museum, the school, the artists and creators, because it is understood that they are the actors of change and transformation of societies, and our society urgently needs a change today that will allow the survival of children and young people in a future that, whether we like it or not, we are putting to the test. The pedagogical project of the museum and the activities related to the *Plastic* temporary exhibition generate a first case study of the work with four nearby schools. The results, in terms of participation and educational assumption of the sustainable development challenge as a part of school projects, have been really successful (Fig. 6).



**Fig. 6** At the end of the exhibition visitors encountered the last question: “Do you think you should change your plastic consumption habits?” (Photo: © Museum of Rural Life)

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# Arts and Hobby Education Within the Shifting Paradigm of Education: The Estonian Case



Egge Kulbok-Lattik, Ülle Raud, and Anneli Saro

**Abstract** This article focuses on the *change of terminology and implementation* of arts and hobby education in Estonia during the most recent decades. Its aim is to discuss arts education within the paradigm of the modern educational system in relation to the concepts of *Bildung* and *sustainable development*.

## Introduction

The article focuses on the *change of terminology and implementation* of arts and hobby education in Estonia during the most recent decades. The aim is to discuss arts and hobby education within the paradigm of the modern educational system in relation to the concepts of *Bildung* and *sustainable development*. We use the word *paradigm* as the set of ideas, approaches that have historically shaped modern mass education—schools, the higher education system and various forms of lifelong education, including arts education. This type of paradigm of education in Europe is the outcome of *modernisation*, the *Bildung* tradition and the development of nation-states.

Historically, the *Bildung* concept and popular education have played a very important, even central role, in Estonian cultural and political emancipation. *Bildung*-based popular and arts education triggered the society and temperance movements which started in the cultural and national awakening period in the middle of the nineteenth

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century.<sup>1</sup> However, getting access to artistic self-expression and arts education was not easy for the native rural population, who had the lowest status in the society of Livonian and Estonian Provinces of the Tsarist Russian Empire. According to Karu (1985, 281), the literacy rate among rural people in Estonia was 96.2% in 1881; in addition, in 1887 there were already 15 Estonian newspapers (Jansen, 2004), but there was no public space where Estonians or rural people could gather and pursue artistic activities.

Access to arts education was created by the people of local communities themselves, by building society houses with a stage, hall, buffet, library and rooms where they could pursue artistic activities. From the end of the nineteenth century, the opera-theatrical spatial programme of cultural hubs enabled the rural population to develop new types of art and lifelong learning aspirations (*Bildung*), an opportunity to express oneself artistically—not only to do choral singing, dancing and acting in plays, paint and do sport but also to gather for parties, lectures and courses. In other words, public cultural space and institutions for arts education and lifelong learning, and a new cultural space model, were created that are still characteristic of Estonian society (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015).

On the basis of these societal activities, the network of professional cultural and art institutions was also developed in the 1918–40 Estonian Republic. In order to organise state support in the cultural field, an innovative financial instrument (Cultural Endowment) was established in 1935. The state systematically supported and developed both the professional arts as well as various fields of popular education, such as libraries, folk high schools, study circles, rural theatre and cultural networks (Laane, 1994, Kulbok-Lattik, 2015).

Estonia (like the other Baltic states) shares the experiences of Soviet state practices (1945–91) and the cultural education system of *Soviet Bildung*. The aim of the Soviet cultural education system was to raise a new person, *Homo Sovieticus*, who was supposed to be a morally and physically high-quality and cultured person. In order to increase the innovation capacity of the Soviet state (an economic objective intended to compensate for the lack of market economy-driven innovation), the state provided hobby education in the natural sciences (houses of technology and nature), sports, and artistic and popular cultural activities, as well as in-depth learning. Further, a widely accessible, standardised art and cultural education system was an important tool in creating and mediating Soviet *mass culture*. As almost all strata of society had access to the culture and arts, it can be described as “*cultural welfare*” in the closed Soviet society. The idea was expressed by the slogan “*Art belongs to the people!*” (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015). The ambivalence of the phenomenon is revealed in the fact that the massively practised, uniform and publicly-funded choral singing tradition helped the Baltic states regain their independence in 1991 through the so-called “Singing Revolution” (ibid.).

With the arrival of the market economy in 1991, in the Soviet, the broadly accessible state-funded system of arts and cultural education collapsed within a few years.

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<sup>1</sup> This has been described by many ethnologists and historians, such as Jansen (2004, 2007), Laane (1994), Karu (1985), see in Kulbok-Lattik (2015).



In response to the repressive political nature of the previous era, the meaning of the Soviet system has still not been thoroughly analysed so far, 28 years later. Thus, a modern system of arts and hobby education, which would take into account the historical experiences of Estonia, as well as the established network of cultural institutions, has still not been completely developed under the conditions of the market economy. Moreover, in light of the rhetoric of neo-liberal political views which ruled for almost 20 years until 2016 in Estonia, it was not so evident as to why it was important to support arts and hobby education, mainly seen as a personal choice with individual responsibility, and in which the state should not interfere.

The Estonian historical experience of *multiple modernities* within the different political systems is quite similar to many Eastern European nation-states: looking for a new path after the end of the bi-lateral world within the context of postcolonial processes, changing cultural hierarchies, trends towards globalisation, digitalisation, mass-migration, multi-ethnicity and urban change (Kulbok-Lattik & Čopič, 2018).

In addition, global climate change, environmental migration and green urbanisation show the increasing importance in acknowledging the connections between cultural diversity and biodiversity, as Hanski (2016) and Diaz (2015) have pointed out. Further, Hanski (2016, 78) claims that in addition to the impact of economic interests, culturally constructed normative (aesthetic) beliefs have a strong influence on global biodiversity and shape the biological ecosystem.

The above-mentioned global flows (Appadurai, 1990) of technological, social-economic and environmental change have had a huge impact upon human life as well as on the whole planetary ecosystem. They have shaped the need for an essential long-term vision of sustainable and diverse development in Europe and the world. Referring to the scholars like Jamison and Lahti (2019) et al., changes in education are required for solving the complex problems of our time, such as the climate crisis. In order to solve these, changes to lifestyle and in technology and political decision-making are required. However, as all these phenomena depend on the fundamental ways of thinking and the basic system of values, they require discussion of the modern educational system, including arts education.

Thus, here, a discussion on the paradigm shift or change of ways of thinking about education in the context of sustainable development goals and *Bildung* will be opened. The authors will discuss the role of arts education in the shifting paradigm of education focusing on the Estonian case. The main research question is “*What is the role of arts and cultural education in the changing paradigm of education?*”.

In order to answer this, we (1) provide a theoretical context for discussing the central theoretical concepts related to the *Bildung* and sustainable development, (2) discuss the role and impact of arts education on the *changing paradigm* of education and (3) discuss and reflect on the discursive changes in Estonian arts education since 1991.

The method of the article is transdisciplinary, based on sociological analysis of cultural and educational policies, unlocking the historical links between policy-making and discursive political change in society. As empirical material, we mainly use previously conducted research on education and arts education as well as the

results of a survey of Estonian arts and hobby educators produced by Kulbok-Lattik and Saro in 2021.

## Theoretical Framework and Terms

In this chapter, the transdisciplinary approach as a critical and knowledge-integrating research principle will be used, which implies the cultural, sociological and historical examination of European and Estonian experience within the context of socio-economic, political and cultural transformation. Transdisciplinarity *as a research method*, as noted by Bernstein (2015), is the most important component in modern knowledge management, as any transdisciplinary effort is implicitly a critique of the existing structure of knowledge, education or culture.<sup>2</sup>

### *Paradigm and Discourse*

In a broader sense, a paradigm is a set of norms, philosophical attitudes and scientific assumptions that unites not only a specific research community but also has a wider influence on society. In science, Hirsijärvi and Huttunen (2005, 177) define a paradigm as a dominant line of research in a field of science with corresponding recommendations and norms. They also point out that in revolutionary times there is inter-paradigm controversy. In this case, not all researchers follow the general paradigm, so new competing paradigms emerge alongside the dominant trend.<sup>3</sup>

Discourse is understood as an outcome of articulation, which is a practice of creating “a relation among elements such, that, their identity is modified ‘as a result of this’ and politics is understood as a battle for meaning” (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, 2014, 91). They propose that *meaning is not a given*, but rather dependent on clashes and balances, a continual “war of position” with episodes of movement, and also the balances of forces *frozen in institutions* in order to constitute the sides (the identities), terms and the battleground itself.

In this chapter we use the term *discourse* in the *Foucauldian* sense within the framework of social theories (Ruiz, 2009), as being linked to *power and state*, insofar as the control of *discourses* is understood as a hold on reality itself (e.g., if a state controls the official rhetoric, media, they control the “rituals of truth”). Foucault’s concept of governmentality refers in a very general way to the administrative powers

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<sup>2</sup> Bernstein (2015).

<sup>3</sup> Paradigm as a term was introduced by the historian of science, Thomas Kuhn (1962), in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. According to Kuhn’s definition, a paradigm is a specific scientific achievement recognized by all researchers in a particular field of science, which for a certain period of time is an example to the scientific community on how to raise and solve problems. As the term *paradigm* has many different meanings, many scholars prefer to use other terms: *perspective*, *tradition* or *approach* instead of paradigm.

of modernity, concentrating not only on the disciplinary regulatory apparatus of the state but also on the economy and civil society, “each of which has its power relations, disciplinary technologies, and modes of functioning” Foucault (1971 [2005]). According to Foucault’s theory of power,<sup>4</sup> in order to be able to dominate, power has to create reality through “*the rituals of truth*”. In this process, the individual obeys power not because of threats but because of discipline. Foucault (1971 [2005]) states that with the help of discipline an individual is created through supervision, control, distinguishing, hierarchisation, homogenisation and elimination—in short, through standardisation.

State interference in culture and education, with its dynamics of institutional meaning-making, creates discourses, shapes the selective tradition of culture and Foucauldian “rituals of truth” and thus has an extended impact on the social order or the structure of feelings in society. Thus, Foucault’s ideas indicate national cultural and educational policies as one of the central instruments of power of the ruling ideology, identity and memory-work in society. According to Kulbok-Lattik (2015), each political system creates a specific set of institutional tools for cultural production in society.

In this chapter, we use a historical sociological research approach, which reveals the discursive nature of cultural and education policies: the discourse is shaped by official statements and with the formal rhetoric of official policy documents the attitudes and values move into the practical world of the cultural and educational field (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015). Therefore, in studying a phenomenon or changing concept of arts education, it is important to consider not only contemporary discourse but also historical context as this helps to highlight the discursive path, dependency and interruptions.

### ***Terms for Arts and Hobby Education***

There are terminological problems related to arts, cultural and hobby education or non-formal education in Estonia, as well as in Europe more broadly. As described by Stofer (2015), there is no universally defined and direct term for marking leisure educational activities apart from school or work, which include arts, culture, sports, natural sciences, technology etc.

The terms relating to arts and hobby education have been discursive over time, specifying the time-specific objectives and those of the particular political system. For example, *free education* has been understood as the historical extra-curricular comprehensive interest-based education of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Estonia (and elsewhere in Europe), including the development of singing and theatrical performance, and later systematic educational activities in libraries,

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<sup>4</sup> Analysing the various disciplinary institutions, Foucault shows that administrative control enables a modern state to become a coordinating centre of the disciplinary power which intervenes in a societal domain, structures the social regulation and, thus, affects the social order.

lectures, courses, folk high schools and study circles (Laane, 1994, 10). During the Soviet period, informal education was a state-funded, ideologically targeted and deliberately regulated policy, named “*cultural education*”.

Today in Estonia, hobby education means long-term and curricula-based systematic and supervised engagements with one’s interest-based hobbies at one’s will outside formal education or job for the purposes of acquiring intensive knowledge and skills in the selected field.

However, *long-term* and *short-term extra-curricular activities* are two different terms: *long-term extra-curricular activities* are curriculum-based with a fixed duration and provide in-depth knowledge of a particular field (e.g., music and art schools). *Short-term extra-curricular activities* have the aim of creating diverse development opportunities for young people.<sup>5</sup>

Further, the general term *non-formal education* is used as a broad definition contrasting with formal education and refers to extra-curricular learning or recreational activities. *Informal education* has been usually understood as all activities related to personal development, collecting of information and knowledge, which people practise at home, in the family, via the Internet, or with friends, etc. Karu et al. (2018).

Official documents of the Republic of Estonia in the twenty-first century refer to hobby education as youth work and treat it as a sub-sector of this, which in fact is also informative and refers to political and/or institutional choices. In this article, we have used the terms *arts and hobby education*.

## ***The Concept of Sustainable Development***

Historically, the concept of sustainable development was based on the green movement, as Andrew Jamison has explained.<sup>6</sup> According to Jamison, the green movement evolved from the Hippie movement in the late 1970s as part of political protest. In the course of globalisation in the 2000s, the whole process of the green movement transformed into a *holistic concept of sustainable development*, which is the *harmonious development of social, economic and environmental areas*, as explained by Jamison.

By now the evolution of the *holistic concept of sustainable development* has taken the remarkable form of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015.<sup>7</sup> It provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. At its heart are the 17 sustainable

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<sup>5</sup> <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/glossary-estonia>.

<sup>6</sup> Jamison has written several books on the issue: <http://people.plan.aau.dk/~andy/Academic%20publications.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>.

development goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership.<sup>8</sup>

The concept of sustainable development is commonly divided into environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Connections to direct or indirect impacts of art education including spillover can be seen in most of the 17 sustainable development goals. Launched by UNESCO in 2015, the Culture for Sustainable Urban Development Initiative seeks to demonstrate the link between the implementation of the UNESCO Culture Conventions and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, Kangas et al. (2018), Soini and Dessein (2016) point out that while a variety of international actors have declared the importance of culture in sustainable development, jointly articulating this has been difficult. None of the SDGs referred directly to the case for integrating culture into sustainable development planning and decision-making. The role of culture and cultural policy has remained unclear (ibid.). In their book, Kangas et al. (2018) define the concept of cultural sustainability as the sustainability of cultural and artistic practices and patterns and refer to the role of cultural traits and actions in informing and composing part of the pathways towards more sustainable societies.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Estonian 18th Sustainable Development Goal: Viability of the Estonian Cultural Space***

In 2018, sustainable development *indicators* were published in Estonia in line with the 17 goals of the UN Agenda for Change: *A Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030*.<sup>10</sup> This publication provides a convenient tool with which to observe how Estonia has succeeded in moving towards both global and sustainable development. Comparison with other states of the European Union helps to view Estonian sustainable development in an international context (ibid.).

In addition to the above-mentioned 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), which are common for all countries, Estonia has since 2005 developed its own priorities for sustainable development.<sup>11</sup> The main goals set out in strategy SE21 were *the vitality of Estonian cultural space, increasing people's welfare, a socially coherent society and ecological balance*.

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<sup>8</sup> They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth—all while tackling climate change and working to preserve the oceans and forests.

<sup>9</sup> Kangas et al. (2018) create links between culture and sustainable development in ways that articulate and contemplate different roles for cultural policy.

<sup>10</sup> Publication (2018) [https://www.stat.ee/valjaanne-2018\\_saastva-arengu-naitajad](https://www.stat.ee/valjaanne-2018_saastva-arengu-naitajad).

<sup>11</sup> The National Strategy on Sustainable Development “*Sustainable Estonia 21*” (SE21) was developed by a broad consortium of experts and approved by the Estonian Parliament (Riigikogu) on September 14, 2005. [https://www.envir.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article\\_files/se21\\_eng\\_web.pdf](https://www.envir.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article_files/se21_eng_web.pdf).

The sustainability of the Estonian *nation and culture* constitutes the cornerstone of the sustainable development of Estonia also today. The development goal postulating this has a fundamental meaning, in that the persistence of *Estonianhood* is the highest priority among the development goals of Estonia. It is based on the preamble of the state constitution: “*With unwavering faith and a steadfast will to strengthen and develop the state [...] which must guarantee the preservation of the Estonian people, the Estonian language and the Estonian culture through the ages [...]*.”<sup>12</sup> It explains why “*Viability of the Estonian cultural space*” has been designated the 18th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) in Estonia until the year 2030.

The scientific notion of nation is based on the understanding that the *nation* is a cultural symbolic community constructed discursively (Hall and du Paul, 1996, 201), which relies on a common culture, a common perception of history and a common language<sup>13</sup>: “*National cultures construct identities by creating meanings of ‘the nation’, with which we can identify: these are contained in stories that are told about the nation, in memories which link its present to its past and in the perceptions of it that are constructed*” (Hall & du Paul, 1996, 201).

Preservation of a nation “*through the ages*” is conditioned first on the existence of *cultural mechanisms* that enable Estonian national identity (cultural cohesion) to persist and ensure that the values, traditions, behavioural patterns and elements of way of life intrinsic to Estonian national culture are passed from generation to generation and also accepted by new immigrants. The core of such mechanisms is *national-language education* and *cultural creation* (including research), based on the national language, and the functionality of national language communication, national cultural values and behavioural patterns in all spheres of life. The Estonian cultural space has materialised in the Estonian natural, cultural and living environment and in the Estonian sign environment.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the preservation of the cultural space is a precondition for the preservation of national identity, which in turn motivates people both to use the national language and to hold the national values in esteem in a changing and globalising world.

## ***Modern State, Nationality and Educational System***

National identity is explained as a narrative (Geertz, 1973), a *story* that people tell about themselves in order to lend meaning to their social world. National narratives

<sup>12</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/rhvv/act/521052015001/consolide>.

<sup>13</sup> Hall and du Paul (1996) claims that a national culture is a discourse, a way to construct meanings which influence and organise both our actions and our perceptions of ourselves. People are not only citizens by law they also participate in forming the idea of the nation as it is represented in their national culture.

<sup>14</sup> Estonian cultural space includes communication, language, symbols, personal and geographic names, colour preferences, building and home design practices, commonly known pieces of art and literature and historical figures, the calendar and historical anniversaries etc.

do not emerge out of nowhere and do not operate in a vacuum. They are, rather, produced, reproduced and spread by actors in concrete (*institutionalised*) contexts (Wodak, et al., 1999). Since modern statehood, national identity is a subject of cultural production, reinterpretation and circulation of symbolic meanings of culture, and is shaped by the tools of educational and cultural policy, or as Gellner suggests, “*the role of the state as the ‘organism’ is to ensure that this literate and unified culture is effectively produced, that the educational product is not shoddy and sub-standard*” (Gellner, 1994).

Here the historical role of the cultural and educational policies of the nation-state appears with a primary goal to form and develop an institutionalised context—the educational system—for arts and cultural practices.

Guibernau (2007) points out the importance of the role the *elite culture* plays in the construction of the narratives of national culture, as “*elite culture, by definition, is a high culture with an established language and a substantial body of literature and knowledge*”. Guibernau explains that “*the control of the learning process lies in the hands of scholars and institutions ready to preserve, develop and inculcate the culture upon a diverse population. Their mission is to achieve a linguistically and culturally homogeneous population able to communicate with each other and to work and live within that culture*” (Guibernau, 2007, 16–19). At the same time, Guibernau argues that “*culture-based unity’ between the elite and the masses stands at the heart of the conception of a shared national identity. A common culture legitimizes the existence of the nation and is employed as an argument in favour of social cohesion and unity among all sectors of an otherwise diverse national population*” (ibid.).

It appears that the modern educational system acts as a mediator of cultural, historical and national narratives which are discursive. Further, the concepts of creativity and art education are socially constructed and not neutral. This is the case as cultural and educational policies never exist in isolation from the major debates (ideologies) of the day, as pointed out by several scholars (Sevänen & Häyrynen, 2018; Kangas, 2018; Kulbok-Lattik et al.).<sup>15</sup>

## ***Modernity and Bildung***

The contemporary idea of mass education—schools, the higher education system and various forms of lifelong education, including arts education—is the outcome of

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<sup>15</sup> Collection “Art and the Challenge of Markets” Volume I. “National Cultural Politics and the Challenges of Marketization and Globalization”, (2018) eds: Victoria D. Alexander, Samuli Hägg, Simo Häyrynen, Erkki Sevänen, Palgrave MacMillan, gives an overview of how arts worlds have reacted to the market-based neo-liberal turn in Western societies since the 1980s.

“Antology Spectra Transformation. Arts Education Research and Cultural Dynamics” (2018) eds: Benjamin Jörissen, Lisa Unterberg, Leopold Klepacki, Julian Engel, Viktoria Flasche, Tanja Klepacki, Waxmann, Münster, New York, gathers the wide range of scientific perspectives on arts education discussed in the international winter school, “Spectra of Transformations” February 2017, at the *Friedrich Alexander Univeristät Eralngen Nürnberg* in Germany.

*modernisation*. As typically presented, modernisation refers to socio-economic (e.g., industrialisation, urbanisation), political (e.g., democratisation and mass participation) and intellectual (e.g., secularisation, a rise of mass literacy) transformations that had begun in Western Europe by the late eighteenth century, as Martinelli (2005, 19)<sup>16</sup> explains.

Modernity also implies a new cultural code, i.e., a transformed set of values, such as *rationalism, individualism/subjectivity, utilitarianism, the incessant quest for knowledge, innovation and discovery, the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject, the refusal of limits, the principles of liberty, and equality of rights and opportunities*, as Martinelli (2005) summarises. The policies or activities in the process of shaping a common economic, cultural, political space and public sphere are called *nation-building*. Nation-building is closely related to the concept of *Bildung*, which is a specific feature of the modern cultural code.

The modern cultural code is expressed in the German tradition of *Bildung* (German term for “education” and “formation”), which emerged in the eighteenth century and corresponds to the ideal of education, in the sense of that in Wilhelm von Humboldt’s works. The concept of *Bildung*<sup>17</sup> refers to the German tradition of self-cultivation, wherein philosophy and education are linked in a manner that refers to a process of both personal and cultural maturation.

In this context, the concept of education becomes a lifelong process of human development, rather than mere training in gaining certain external knowledge or skills.<sup>18</sup> *Bildung* does not consist of only manners, education or knowledge of art and science; rather it has been seen as a goal in order to become more “free” due to higher self-reflection.

The idea of *Bildung* has had a remarkable effect on the popular education work that began in nineteenth-century Europe, including Finland, and the Nordic and Baltic states.

The modernist ethos of established favourable ground for socio-economic, cultural and national emancipation went hand-in-hand with political emancipation (*Bildung and nation-building*) among the smaller oppressed European nations (Finns, Estonians, Latvians and others), as empirically researched and compared by Hroch (1996).<sup>19</sup> For these nations, the end of the First World War in 1918 and the final

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<sup>16</sup> Although the roots of modernity include the cumulative impact of key elements in earlier centuries such as the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Scientific Revolution. Martinelli, A., *Global Modernization: Rethinking the Project of Modernity*. London: Sage, 2005, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/589>.

<sup>18</sup> *Bildung* is a German term for “education” and “formation” that does not have a precise English counterpart. The concept encompasses aspects of such English terms as self-cultivation, scholarship, sophistication, civilisation, education, culture, creation and literacy. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/589>.

<sup>19</sup> According to Hroch, the modernisation of many subordinated nations in Europe happened in a similar way: cultural emancipation developed into a wider cultural public, which allowed for the formation of the political public and emergence of nation-states when empires collapsed in the twentieth century.



disintegration of empires was an opportunity to realise their aspirations for national self-determination and to establish modern nation-states (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015).

However, the concepts of modernity, as well as *Bildung*, are not static. Social scientists (Eisenstadt, 2000, 1–3; Wittrock, 2000; 66–67 et al.) are of the opinion that in view of the divergent developments and different political systems of various civilisations and regions, it is more appropriate to speak of “multiple modernities” (Kulbok-Lattik, 2015). We share that idea, thus Estonia, for example (like other Baltic states), shares different modernities or experiences of modern state practices and its discursive interventions of the state’s arts and educational policies. This includes experiences of Western and Soviet modernities with the corresponding form of the different practices of *Bildung*.

### ***Sustainable Development and Changing Concept of Bildung***

Finland’s *Bildung* narrative is also strongly linked to the narrative of Finnishness (as in the Estonian case). In his article “Gaps in our Bildung”, Lahti (2019)<sup>20</sup> discusses the changing (discursive) nature of the concept of *Bildung*, pointing out that the conception of *Bildung* is not static, and cannot be clearly defined. Instead, *Bildung* should be recognised as a dynamic, or active and living, concept. Finnish social scientists claim that this is a momentous argument that calls for the updating of the conception of *Bildung*: “in order to secure our living conditions, we must re-evaluate *Bildung*’s tight bond to human-centredness by reducing the excessive individualism of the *Bildung* concept. Therefore, an update is required so that *Bildung* could more effectively contribute to the creation of a sustainable society and holistic welfare” (Lahti, 2016).<sup>21</sup>

The promotion of *Bildung* has traditionally been a central part of the Estonian, Finnish and Nordic educational system as lifelong learning. Therefore, updating the conception of *Bildung* could provide new dimensions for lifelong learning.<sup>22</sup> The idea of *Bildung* and popular education was a major factor in the creation of the Nordic social model, as several authors claim.<sup>23</sup> In their book, *The Nordic Secret*,

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.sitra.fi/en/publications/gaps-in-our-bildung/#the-secret-behind-nordic-success>.

<sup>21</sup> The idea was discussed by Vesa-Matti Lahti in an international discussion on *New assignments of Bildung*, held at the *Sitra* foundation in Helsinki (Finland) on 27 September 2019. Lahti writes: “While in the early twentieth century *Bildung* had a nationalistic objective to build the nation state and lay the foundation of our welfare state, it could now play a major role in a novel societal transformation – the change required for solving the complex problems of our time” (Ibid.).

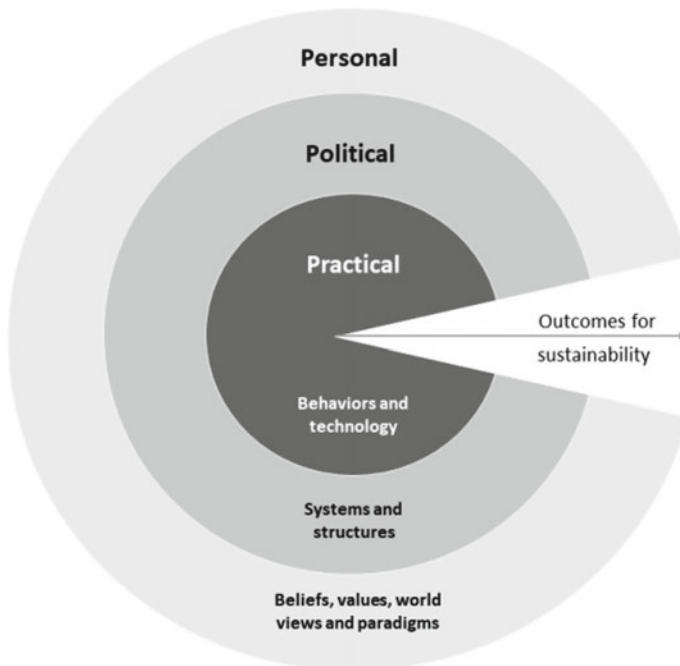
<sup>22</sup> Lahti (2019) points out the different risks that could occur when *Bildung* is used too instrumentally or in a narrow sense: as a response to the business sector’s complaints about the shortage of skilled workers; or as a new name for the continuing education of employees. In that case, the *Bildung*-related idea of criticality that improves society’s adaptability and develops our ways of thinking is easily forgotten.

<sup>23</sup> Andersen and Björkman; Ojanen et al. The earliest known printed appearance of the word *sivistys*—*Bildung*’s counterpart in the Finnish language—was in the newspaper *Turun Wiikko-Sanomat* in the 1820s. Ojanen (2006) via Lahti (2019).

Lene Andersen and Tomas Björkman, a Dane and a Swede, explain how *folk-Bildung*, that is, liberal education, is the “secret” behind the Nordic countries’ economic and social success stories.

In Estonia (and Europe), the discussion on lifelong learning is important within the context of the general transformation of work, the requirements of a business and working-life skills within the framework of technological transformation. According to Paolo Falco, OECD Future of Work expert, apart from globalisation and population ageing, the technological revolution is the most influential of the megatrends changing the world of work and expected to shape and restructure the future labour market the most (Falco, 2018). And although robots can never take over all jobs (14% is predicted), especially those that require creativity or empathy, OECD experts identify continuing education, retraining and lifelong learning practices as the key policies for population development (Falco, 2018).

This puts the importance of developing different skills and lifelong learning practices, including arts education, in a new light (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** The spheres of societal transformation. *Source* Laininen (2018), O’Brien and Sygna (2013), and Sharma (2007), cited in Lahti (2019)

## ***Bildung and Change of Paradigm of Education as the Basis of Societal Change***

There is a visionary movement in the Nordic countries, discussing the new developmental idea of *European Bildung*.<sup>24</sup> The leaders of this movement claim that in order to avoid catastrophic climate change, profound societal change is required—a transformation that cannot be achieved without changing our ways of thinking. Changes in paradigms and educational structures are of particular importance because they have extensive and profound impacts, as shown in the educational model of the “*Bildung Rose*” by Lene Andersen (2020).<sup>25</sup>

According to this conception, *Bildung* lays the foundation for human development, welfare and adaptability in a changing world. The concept’s roots can be traced back to Classical Antiquity and the Greek term *paideia*. *Bildung* refers to how education, enculturation, life experiences, and emotional and moral/ethical development cultivate responsible, reflective and autonomous citizens (selves). It also refers to the result of such processes and allows us to map the relationship between self and society in a way that orients us towards the well-being and flourishing of both (Andersen, 2020). Given the complexity of modern society, *there is an enormous challenge in fostering the development of coherent identities that are flexible, adaptive, stable, and comfortable about learning and growing throughout life*, as Andersen (2020) explains.

Therefore, it could be said that the core of modern *Bildung-based education* is not the sophistication of people, but the true ambition is to use reformed *Bildung* to provide people with the capacity to respond to the great challenges ahead. Contemporary *Bildung-based education* can no longer lean on traditional top-down instruction. Instead, it requires a purpose that reflects the modern world. After having set out the theoretical basis for our discussion, it is now time to come to our main research question: *What is the role of arts and cultural education in the new paradigm of education in Europe and Estonia?*

## **The Roles of Arts Education in the Changing Paradigm of Education**

Arts education has been discussed from many different aspects. In this chapter, some of these aspects will be introduced. To begin with education in general, Bloom and Remer (1976, 45) have pointed out ten features the arts contribute to education:

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<sup>24</sup> <https://nordicbildung.org/publication/the-bildung-rose/>.

<sup>25</sup> See: Lene Rachel Andersen, Nordic Bildung and the Club of Rome et al., (2020) <https://nordicbildung.org/publication/the-bildung-rose/> According to the *Bildung Rose* model, societies evolve, grow and become more complex across seven domains: (1) production; (2) technology; (3) knowledge/science; (4) ethics; (5) narrative; (6) aesthetics, and (7) power.

1. The arts provide a medium for personal expression.
2. The arts focus attention and energy on personal observation and self-awareness.
3. The arts are a universal phenomenon and means of communication.
4. The arts involve the elements of sound, movement, colour, energy, space, line, shape and language.
5. The arts embody and chronicle the cultural, aesthetic and social development of humankind.
6. The arts are a tangible expression of human creativity, and as such reflect humanity's perception of the world.
7. The various fields of the arts offer a wide range of career opportunities to young people.
8. The arts can contribute substantially to special education.
9. As a means of personal and creative involvement by children and teachers, the arts are a source of pleasure and mental stimulation.
10. The arts are useful tools for everyday living.

The above-mentioned roles of arts education point to the central role of artistic experience as an essential part of education as a process. Thus it is relevant to value the mechanism of the artistic experience as a phenomenon. According to Shusterman (1992), every aesthetic experience draws on the previous. Shusterman draws attention to the accumulation phenomenon of artistic experience, simultaneously directed and open, controlled and captivated, received and constructed.

In addition to the educative impacts of education as a process of thinking and extending one's own abilities, the specific impacts of the arts on human beings have been demonstrated by Konlaan in an extensive study on the arts and well-being in Sweden (Konlaan, 2001, 60). Stimulation by cultural aspects such as fine art had specific effects apart from group effects and attention effects on health determinants.

Better access to arts education as an essential part of *Bildung*, and harmonisation with the arts-related skills and knowledge (folklore, tangible and intangible heritage) of indigenous peoples, may in the future permit more smooth, deep and balanced (therefore sustainable) well-being, practices, and capacity building for all of humanity, especially in an era of climate change and a rapidly changing environment.

In the view of eco-semiotics, it has been argued that culture is connected to the environment and is at the same time dependent on it. Culture as a metalayer of descriptions surrounds the fields of all human activities, including arts education Bodin (2017). It has been stated that being active in culture means changing the environment (Maran & Kull, 2014). Apart from climate change, the importance of biodiversity has been recognised as an even greater challenge. It has been stated that *instead of discussing cultural diversity and biodiversity separately we should aim for biocultural diversity. Cultures of the future will be open to other life forms* (Farina, 2018).

Therefore, the roles of arts education within the context of the changing paradigm of education (De Souza et al. 2013) can be noticed also in public planning: in the policy document of the Nordic Contact Point in 2017, it is stated that “governments need to utilise ongoing analysis of the arts and trends within society and the economy,

*on local, regional and global levels. Sustainable cultural policies and strategies should pay much more attention to the dance and the potential it has”* (see footnote 4). A good example is also the World City Culture Report (2018), which states that the residents can present initiatives and projects to change their local cultural context, covering issues such as cultural diversity, ways of solving conflicts, social relations in and around public spaces (including parks, transport and monuments), as well as environmental sustainability (see footnote 3).

### ***Arts and Hobby Education in the Context of Human Development and as Resource for Innovation***

Policy measures that empower arts, creativity and innovation have already been implemented in the European Union since 2014, when Creative Europe 2014–2020 was launched. The action was preceded by a study commissioned by the European Commission entitled, *The Impact of Culture on Creativity* (2009). Due to its widespread influence, many European countries have also set national targets for arts education. This has been the case, for example, in Ireland, where a five-year national programme (*The Creative Ireland Programme*) was launched in 2017. Finland, the Nordic countries, Iceland and other European states also envisage arts education as playing an important role in promoting creativity as a fundamental social value.<sup>26</sup> The relationships between public health and well-functioning systems of sports, infrastructure and coaching are also well known; it has been shown that active social lives and cultural self-expression contribute to the well-being of society, increases the index of happiness and cohesion. It is also known that active participation by people in communities and civil society increases democracy (KEA..., 2009, Human Capital Project, Kulbok-Lattik & Kaevats, 2018).

Accordingly, it has been proven that creative and active citizens with a diverse education are healthier, more flexible in coping with challenges and contribute more to the economy. It has been found that broad access to hobby education in technology and nature supports the advancement of science and technology. The contribution to society's innovation systems by human development and people's talents is clear not only to social scientists and philosophers (Nussbaum, 2011) and to spokespersons of art and culture (KEA, 2009) but also economists. The World Bank (2018) has calculated that the only and most economical way to address global challenges is to contribute to human development.

The other aspects of today's global challenges are related to the global competition which has been encouraged by the soaring technological revolution, which in the near future will have an impact on the worldwide labour market. A well-targeted talent policy is a guarantee not only for the economy and well-being but also for sustainable

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<sup>26</sup> In Finland (<http://www.uniarts.fi/en/research>) as well as in other Nordic countries. In Finland, these issues are addressed by various research institutes, e.g. Helsinki University of Arts (Uniarts Finland).

national cultural identity, as the development and application of everyone's talents will enable a small nation-state, such as Estonia, to survive and develop.

## Arts and Hobby Education in Estonia Today

In the newly independent Estonia, the tasks related to arts, culture, sports, youth work<sup>27</sup> and hobby schools have been assigned to local authorities (Local Government Organisation Act, 2019). After the administrative reform in 2017, there are 79 municipalities in Estonia (15 towns and 64 rural municipalities). This has created a puzzle with various fragments, where the organisation of arts and hobby education depends on the municipal budget, political priorities and administrative capacity (Kulbok-Lattik & Saro, 2021). In parallel to municipal institutions and general education schools, private institutions also provide arts education as well as a wide range of hobby education as a service, often competing with the former for subsidies, students and teachers.

In the academic year 2019–20, there were 782 arts and hobby schools in Estonia (of which only 140 were municipal schools), including 310 sport schools, 146 music and art schools, 30 technology, nature, creative-hobby houses or centres, and 296 other institutions. The number of hobby schools has doubled within 10 years, mainly at the expense of private schools. Two-thirds of the municipal hobby schools (97 out of 140) are music and art schools (HaridusSilm).

However, the state's activities in the field of arts and hobby education have been dispersed between several ministries: the model of additional state funding for arts education was formulated by the Ministry of Culture but implemented by the Estonian Youth Work Centre, the implementing agency of the Ministry of Education and Research. Today, in Estonia, arts and hobby education are legally defined *as a field of youth policy which "provides opportunities for the comprehensive development of personality and supports young persons in their development into members of society with good coping skills"* (Standard for Hobby Education, 2007). This has been the case since Estonia's accession to the European Union in 2004 when a number of policies were harmonised, and European youth policy found its way into Estonian education policy. Therefore, the law also interprets arts and hobby education primarily in the context of creativity and talent discovery, socialisation and active lifestyle of young people between 7 and 26 years of age (Kulbok-Lattik & Saro, 2021).

Of course, youth work is very important and hobby education plays an important role in it: if people cannot learn about different areas of life when they are young, it may be more difficult to find the right career, i.e. a job that matches their natural qualities and talent, which makes them happy and offers personal fulfilment. Studies have also shown that those who have been schooled in childhood in the creative arts

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<sup>27</sup> Earlier versions of the Local Government Organisation Act mention youth work alone (§6.1), while the 2018 version refers separately to cultural, sports and youth work.

or engage in a hobby will return to this fulfilling practice later (KEA...2009, <http://www.uniarts.fi/en/research>).

Further, several institutions under the Ministry of Culture concern themselves with arts and hobby education: for example, the Folk Culture Centre and the Song and Dance Festival Foundation, where the focus is on providing access to arts education for all age groups in the field of heritage and folk culture. Additionally, the artistic associations, their sub-organisations are also involved in arts and education, providing a range of training opportunities for the people.

Arts education as non-formal education is also part of the field of activity of museums and nature, research and discovery centres (the Estonian Research Council supervises their development activities). Non-formal education and its networks are a separate world: folk schools, adult training centres and day-care centres for the elderly offer opportunities for artistic activities and all kinds of practical self-development (such as language and computer learning, social skills, horticulture, etc.).

Thus, there are many different forms of work in the field of arts and hobby education targeted at children, young people, adults and the elderly: public pre-schools and vocational training institutions, a network of music and art schools run by local authorities, private schools, studios, courses, training providers, etc. It is safe to say that arts and hobby education concerns all age groups in Estonia because of long *Bildung* and lifelong learning traditions in Estonia, no matter what these activities have officially called.

### ***Gaps in Research, Unclearity in Terminology***

It appears that the theoretical and conceptual understanding of arts education and cultural sustainability within the general frames of sustainable development remains vague. Despite the notable legal position of the Estonian cultural space as the eighteenth sustainable goal, and the importance of national cultural identity expressed in the constitution, and in various developmental strategies, the role of arts education has also been poorly operationalised in educational policies in Estonia during the past 30 years.<sup>28</sup>

The homepage of the Ministry of Culture shows that Estonian policy documents do not make a strict distinction between arts and hobby education, as well as recreational activities. The Ministry of Culture defines recreational activities on the basis of the following description by the Ministry of Education and Research submitted to the government on 5 March 2015: “*There is no precise definition of the recreational activity in Estonia. Essentially, recreational activities are the creation of opportunities for the diverse development of a young person through systematic, supervised non-formal learning. This is essentially the same as the definition of youth work and the concept of ‘arts, cultural or hobby education’*”.

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<sup>28</sup> (Kulbok-Lattik & Saro, 2021).

However, based on the wording of the coalition programme, the term “recreational activity” is used for both arts and hobby education and recreational activities in the concept (Ministry of Culture). The broad range of arts and hobby education is mapped by the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), which classifies hobbies into the following areas: (1) sports, (2) technology, (3) nature, (4) music and arts and (5) general culture, including ethnic schools (Standard for hobby education, 2007).

While official documents of the Republic of Estonia in the twenty-first century refer to arts and cultural education and hobby education as part of youth work and treat it as a sub-field of youth work, it refers to political or institutional choices. Elsewhere (Kulbok-Lattik & Saro, 2021), we have discussed the Estonian cultural and educational policies which regulate the arts and hobby educational system and pointed out the following problems:

- (1) Estonia lacks a systematic policy of arts and hobby education and recreational activities, which, on the one hand, stems from the fact that, since they are treated as a single area in the policy documents, this area falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Culture simultaneously, actually remaining in a grey area.
- (2) The organisation of arts and hobby education and recreational activities is the responsibility of local authorities and therefore its accessibility depends to a large extent on their financial and human resources. Thus, policies and organisation of hobby education have been dispersed between different institutions which hinder the development of a holistic view and systematic funding.
- (3) Problems and a value crisis arise from the fact that arts and hobby education are treated in the educational system as a sub-area of youth work and not as an independent area of lifelong learning. The lack of a comprehensive perspective is a result of political and institutional choices as well as a lack of sociological research of culture and education.
- (4) The lack of a comprehensive analysis hampers the development of the sector and reduces the role of teachers in arts education. This has led to a blurring of the status and professional identity of people working in arts and hobby education, and problems with the succession of teachers and instructors. Concessions in teachers’ qualifications, on the other hand, lead to a lower level of teaching.
- (5) The currently dispersed approach views arts and hobby education for adults as part of continuing education, linking it increasingly to the needs of the labour market. But practising fine arts, folk culture and sport is first and foremost essential in having a full and happy life.

Finally, it will have negative consequences in the long run if the terms “*arts education or hobby education*” are replaced with “*youth work*” from the perspective of sectoral as well as human development. It is necessary to stop pushing arts, sports and scientific hobby education into being a sub-area of youth work, as this deserves a well-planned independent and holistic approach and organisation involving all strata—youths, adults and elderly people.



Human development and population as a resource for talent can be nurtured via broader access to arts education. Arts and hobby education deserves more attention, conceptualisation and targeting within the context of *Bildung* ideas, overall human development and sustainable development of society, as well as regulation as a comprehensive system. It is important that both arts and hobby education are accessible as part of education, recognised as a human right, a prerequisite for happiness and well-being in society.

## Conclusion

It is important to note that whenever the arts are mentioned, arts education has to be acknowledged as well; without an art education, there would be neither arts nor education. Arts and hobby education as an essential part of education enables people to acquire skills and competencies which empower individuals and contribute to social cohesion.

The main obstacle the authors of this article would like to point out is a lack of research on arts and hobby education impacts and relevant analysis from the perspective of cultural policies on those areas of economic and societal activities which are traditionally understood as not related to arts but which should also be researched from that viewpoint.

Research on arts and hobby education as cultural participation in adaptation and capacity building is expected to be useful for the further planning of resources—not only financial but also spatial, educational and cultural. This may help greatly in avoiding problems, tensions and risks. Resources for adaptation should be planned on the basis of a holistic concept of human beings. Besides material resources, mental, spiritual and aesthetic resources will also be needed and, here, the integrative role of educational and cultural policy is the key.

In conclusion, the authors would like to stress the different roles of arts and hobby education, especially in an era of the increasing importance of sustainable and critical thinking. Critical thinking and a diverse range of skills and competencies (as well as empathy, solidarity and responsibility for the environment) will need to be inherited by future generations for survival in a coming era of social crises.

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# Educational Theatre and Sustainable Development: Critical Reflections Based on Experiences from the Context of Bulgaria



Radka Vasileva and Nevelina Pachova

**Abstract** Theatre and drama-based education have long been employed as a means of transformative teaching and learning. Whether and if so, how they can contribute to developing the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to transform societies into more sustainable ones, however, is an open question that this chapter aims to address. It does so by reflecting critically on the experiences of an educational theatre with a long history of supporting science education in the context of Bulgaria. Key competencies for sustainable development and critiques thereof are used as a basis for guiding reflection on the possibilities for harnessing the potential of theatre to contribute to it. The results highlight its promising potential and also draw attention to possible challenges that should be taken into account in the design of future drama-based education programs that aim to contribute to sustainable development.

## Introduction

Theatre and its diverse applications in the context of education have long been employed to engender holistic and experiential learning (Ball, 1993; Dawson & Lee, 2018; Jackson, 1993).<sup>1</sup> They are believed to create meaning and enhance self-expression but also understanding of the complexity of human behaviour and the viewpoints of others, thus enabling personal growth and providing a basis for societal transformation and change (Lev-Aladgem, 2018). Different schools of thought have

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, we use the terms educational theatre, theatre in education and drama-based education, among others, interchangeably to refer to the diverse use of theatre in the context of education.

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experimented with a diverse range of models and approaches, guided by alternative conceptions of what theatre and drama-based education should aim at and how those objectives could be achieved (Bolton, 2007; Lev-Aladgem, 2018). Most recently, it has been suggested that working within the dramatic context might allow children to develop skills and attitudes necessary for active citizenship and might facilitate learning for sustainability (McNaughton, 2007, 2010, 2013; O'Neill, 1995). How the potential of drama-based education could be harnessed to contribute to sustainable development, however, remains an open question, not least because of the controversial and evolving nature of the concept of education for sustainable development (ESD) itself.

Advanced by the United Nations as a concept aimed to support the implementation of Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992), ESD has been criticised for being both too open to enable meaningful change and too narrowly defined. In this regard, calls for pluralistic and emancipatory forms of education that encourage the co-creation of knowledge, multiple perspectives and critical dialogue on the very concept of sustainable development and ESD (Stables & Scott, 2002; Stevenson, 2006; Wals, 2007, 2010) have been advanced alongside with attempts to define a set of universally applicable competencies to guide educators in its application. In recognition of the importance of subjective and collectively defined interpretations of sustainable development, dominant competence frameworks have now included reflexivity and cooperation, alongside with a set of other transversal skills as critical competencies for sustainable development (Wiek et al., 2011, 2016, UNECE 2012, UNESCO, 2017). In the context of the evolving understanding of the concept of ESD away from its original focus on environmental education and under growing pressure for it to demonstrate its capacity to engender transformative learning as a basis for societal change (Huckle & Wals, 2015), the arts and art-based educational approaches have been increasingly considered as a means of stimulating deeper reflection and engagement with sustainability challenges (Keles, 2015; UNESCO, 2006, 2010; Wall et al., 2019).

Indeed, arts-based education has long been associated with a wide range of positive outcomes related to personal development, social interactions and educational achievements, among others (Deasy, 2002). Theatre and drama-based education, in particular, have been found to be associated with enhanced engagement in the learning process (Cawthon et al., 2011), reduced school drop-out rates (Barry et al., 1990; Thomas et al., 2015), improved academic achievement, self-awareness, creativity, capacities for self-expression, effective communication, social interaction and trust (Deasy, 2002; Gorgey & Delgado, 1985), as well as increased motivation for critical reflection (Villanueva & O'Sullivan, 2020). Assessments of drama-based environmental education programs have more concretely reported increased resourcefulness, deeper understanding of environmental challenges, empathy, willingness to participate in social actions, shared responsibility, commitment and sensitivity (Andrikopoulou & Koutrouba, 2019). Furthermore, theatre has been effectively used to enable representatives from marginal communities and groups to engage in and contribute to local discourses on sustainable development (Miller, 2018; Mills, 2009; Nielson & Castro, 2016; Osnes, 2014).



Theatre, however, has its limitations in bringing about societal transformation (Etherton & Prentki, 2006; Snyder-Young, 2013), and critical reflections on theatre-based educational programs, in particular, have also cast doubts on their potential to bring about a transformative change. Dalby (2010), for example, found the dichotomization of “good” and “evil” for the purpose of dramatization, and pervasive scientism, techno-centrism and aggressiveness permeating a drama-based educational project that he examined as problematic. He argues that underpinning the pedagogy used was a hegemonic neoliberal meta-narrative framing sustainable development (SD) as the “greening” of global capitalist expansion that led to a failure of the project to challenge established neoliberal configurations of relationships between humans and other living entities (Dalby, 2010). Similarly, Hallgren and Österlind (2019) found that a drama-based civil educational project that they examined failed to raise critical questions and to stimulate a critical reflection on established practices and norms.

Those studies suggest that theatre in education and drama-based education could contribute to ESD but their impacts are not automatic. In fact, some of the critiques of theatre-based educational programs resonate closely with critiques of ESD (Huckle & Wals, 2015; Kopnina, 2012). In this regard, a closer look at current ESD discourses may help to inform the design of arts and drama-based educational processes that aim to enable and support the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills to support a transition towards a more sustainable future for all. Thus, we turn next to the discussion of ESD, the competencies deemed essential to enable informed decisions and reasoned actions in support of sustainable development and some of the perceived limitations of competency-based approaches to steer transformative education and societal change. That provides the theoretical framework for the study that we then apply to reflect on a well-established science-oriented educational theatre in the context of Bulgaria.

## **ESD and Competencies for Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development, i.e. development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland, 1987), is a controversial concept. Diverse conceptions of what it means and how it can be achieved across different contexts and scales have made it hard to grasp and turn into a guiding paradigm and a practical guide for action for all. Attempts to operationalize the concept, however, have given rise to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 timebound and measurable objectives adopted by world leaders in 2015. The SDGs constitute a call for action and an attempt to mobilize concerted efforts by individuals and institutions across the globe to enable a shift towards more sustainable development (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all constitutes one of the 17 SDGs, and education for sustainable development has been recognized in Target 4.7 as a critical means for enabling citizens to make informed

decisions and take responsible actions to contribute to the achievement of the rest (UNESCO, 2015a, b, 2009).

In order to enable education to contribute more sustainably to the SDGs, UNESCO, the UN agency responsible for coordinating global efforts in the field of education for sustainable development, developed a set of learning objectives as a framework for operationalizing the concept of education for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017). The framework defined a set of cross-cutting competencies and a series of learning objectives specific to each of the SDGs. The former includes eight competencies considered essential for enabling ESD across all thematic domains. They are systemic thinking, anticipatory competency, normative competency, strategic competency, collaborative competency, critical thinking, self-awareness and integrated problem-solving. The specific learning objectives for each of the SDGs are examined in three core domains for each. They are: a) cognitive, i.e. knowledge and thinking skills necessary to better understand the SDG and the challenges in achieving it; b) socio-emotional, i.e. the social skills that enable learners to collaborate, negotiate and communicate to promote the SDGs, as well as self-reflection skills, values, attitudes and motivation that enable learners to develop themselves; and c) behavioural, i.e. referring to specific action competencies (UNESCO, 2017).

UNESCO's framework largely reflects related competence frameworks proposed in earlier academic studies (Glasser et al., 2016; Lozano et al., 2017; Rieckmann, 2012; Wiek et al., 2011, 2016). More recent research expands upon different aspects of earlier frameworks and highlights the relative importance of particular aspects, such as intra-personal and action-oriented skills, continuous learning and questioning, empathy, capacity to change perspective and care for the common good (Brundiens et al., 2020; Pacis & Wynsberghe, 2020; Trad, 2019). Overall, however, there is growing recognition that competencies need to be seen and developed as embedded in a context that includes different personal enablers and societal opportunities (Bianchi, 2020). In this regard, it is noted that different groups of people may require a diverse range of skills to contribute to sustainable development and transformative education methodologies, such as participatory action research, problem-based learning and action-learning, among others (Bianchi, 2020; Mezirow, 2000; Sipos et al., 2008), as well as a constructive alignment of the whole educational system (UNESCO, 2018; Wilhelm et al., 2019) are needed to support the uptake and enable the impact of ESD on locally meaningful goals that people have a reason to value and are able to set for themselves and their communities.

## Research Methodology

In the context of Bulgaria, the need for a revitalization of education was deemed an important priority in the mid-1990s and an educational theatre troupe developed and employed an interactive theatre-based educational model to address it (Vasileva, 2018, 2019). While its work is not directly focused on sustainable development per

se, it aims at improving educational quality through play-based education (Vasileva, 2002, 2012, 2014, 2020), and thus relates to SDG 4 on ensuring access to inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Furthermore, it is focused on science education and supports the development of capacities for forming reasoned opinions and contributing to group decision-making and debates. Thus, its work touches upon a range of both thematic and cross-cutting topics relevant to sustainable development and its experiences provide an invaluable basis for exploring the potential and challenges of theatre-based education to contribute to ESD.

In order to enable a structured reflection on the experience of the educational theatre, we consider three interconnected sets of competencies highlighted across the different competence frameworks discussed above. Those are the cognitive and analytical skills necessary for a holistic, future-oriented and critical reflection on issues of relevance to sustainable development, the socio-emotional capacities for reflection and action on critical values and norms conducive for sustainable development, including one's own position, feelings and actions in relation to it, and the behavioural capacities for strategic and collaborative decision-making and action necessary to turn ideas into action and actions into established practices and norms.

The above-mentioned competencies for sustainable development, however, are used as a guiding framework for critical reflection of the possibilities and limitations of theatre-based education to contribute to ESD rather than as an assessment tool. Furthermore, specific emphasis is placed on exploring challenges encountered on the way so as to gain a more nuanced perspective of what theatre-based education can and cannot do on its own and how it should be better integrated into the educational and social context so as to contribute to educational transformation and societal change. The study is based on personal observation and feedback received by the lead author of the article and founder of the theatre from different stakeholders involved in the work of the troupe since its establishment. The overall goal of the study is to understand and contribute to advancing the educational theatre practice examined and to inform related practices. Thus, methodologically, it constitutes a form of practice-led research (Smith & Dean, 2009).

## **The Fun Science Theatre**

The Fun Science Theatre was established and has operated since 1995 as a private theatre led by the lead author of the study and Alexander Ivanov (Sunny Suninski), a theatre director. The troupe unites a team of actors, pedagogues, directors, scenographers and musicians, who together develop a system of performances on topics of educational content for first, second and third-grade students. So far, ca. 100 artists from different fields have played in the troupe.

The Theatre is an independent troupe that does not receive state or municipal financial support, except for one project funded by the Ministry of Culture in 1998, which provided the scenography of a performance. Everything in the Theatre, such as performances, scenography and organization is produced by the owners with

financial support from private companies, non-profit organizations and foundations. The troupe has also worked on contracts for advertising various educational products for children.

The Theatre is based in Sofia and conducts its work as an organization from the informal sector that provides educational services through drama and theatre across schools in the capital with permission from the Sofia municipal administration, the National Educational Inspectorate and the Ministry of Science and Education.

### *Mission and Organization*

The main goal of the Theatre is to stimulate children to form and express their opinions on current issues on the basis of scientific ideas, which are built on different, sometimes contradictory scientific points of view. The performances organized by the Theatre provide a kind of scientific research forum for students, where they as spectators and participants in the performance become discoverers of their own vision of the problem presented in the play and offer solutions based on reasoned argumentation. The Theatre calls its student partners discoverers because at every performance they discover something that had previously been a dormant resource.

The Theatre offers educational performances and partnerships for schools for the duration of one academic year. Seven performances that include a series of interactive acting and reflection sessions are carried out throughout the course of the year. In addition, children are provided with various educational resources such as books, tests, comics, scripts and others. Through them, they receive various tasks that they can perform at will and present as solutions to the class, parents or friends. The Theatre gives this freedom to post-theatrical activities so as to enable independent work to develop along its own creative trajectory. Feedback from the teachers indicates that most of the students are actively engaged with follow-up activities after the official performance.

Every year the Fun Science Theatre works with ca. 4000–5000 students and teachers from municipal and private schools in Sofia. These are students from first to third grade in schools that accept the Theatre as an accompanying and partnering non-profit organization. The selection is carried out on the principle of supply and demand. In most cases, it is a question of the culture of the school and its head-principal, who has significant freedom and decision-making power when it comes to non-formal education in the context of Bulgaria. The priorities of the school leadership determine which organizations the school will work with as an open educational organization or as a closed one on the premises of the school.

Annually, the Theatre works with about 20–25 schools. These are usually larger municipal and private schools, where parents have an interest in their children receiving in the school itself various educational services—education through various arts (theatre, dance, fine arts, etc.), sports and other activities. The Theatre offers schools a program of 21 educational performances, seven for each of the first three grades. So, throughout the year the Theatre runs ca. 500 educational performances.

## *Contents and Structure of the Educational Performance*

In each program, there are performances on topics related to science, the development of society, nature and its conservation. Environmental issues are of particular interest and they are included in each of the programs. Some of the topics covered include protected plants in Bulgaria, the relationship between man and animals, pets, nature and its protection, orientation in the wild, water and health. The performances focused on the water are sponsored by Sofia Water that each year enables at least three classes from different schools to develop and stage a performance on the topic of water on the stage of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” as a part of a Festival of Educational Performances by Children.

Each performance aims to give students ideas for solving various problems. Performances last 40 min and set educational goals that are achieved in this timeframe, i.e. at the end of each performance students would normally have acquired certain scientific facts and will be familiar with the main arguments related to the discussion on a particular scientific problem. This provides them with the knowledge needed to form an opinion and express it in the search for possible solutions.

The key idea is to stimulate “scientific” discussion. Since scientific problems could be examined from different points of view, children are not led to share a common point of view but to form a critical attitude based on scientific evidence and personal interpretation of the information that is provided. The Theatre strives to encourage children not to be afraid to express their personal opinions, even when they contradict or are not in unison with the generally accepted opinion or the opinion of the majority. Tolerance and courage in public speaking is an important task for education that is not adequately addressed through the formal educational system in Bulgaria. Thus, the Theatre works on developing it through group discussions on various topics. Those are aimed to enable children to learn from an early age to respect different opinions, a skill that is expected to have a positive impact on the development of democratic processes in the country in the long term.

Performances entail both individual and group work. At the individual level, children are asked questions and all answers are accepted, no matter how they are expressed. Participants are also asked to resolve dilemmas and accept all opinions, no matter how strange or unacceptable they are at first glance. Children are encouraged to express their point of view and it is treated by the actors with respect. They are also asked to make suggestions on the course of the development of the performance and their ideas are included in course of the action through role play.

At the group level, consent or denial of a certain point of view is sought through discussion. Group approval is required for the continuation of the action in a certain direction. Children are also encouraged to join the performance as a group through actions that enable the progress of the performance, e.g. simulating a natural phenomenon (wind, rain, thunder and the cry of an animal) or real involvement in the action (clatter, battle cry and silence).

The performance takes place in three steps that are designed to enable a cognitive transformation of science into knowledge and of knowledge into attitude. The core steps of the performance include the following:

- 1 Presentation of science through a short educational play. It is built around a scientific concept that is presented to students through a theatrical performance. It lasts about 15 min.
- 2 Acquisition of knowledge. Students are involved in a series of individual and group-based role relationships on stage and in the audience: sketches, experiments, games, case studies, changes in events and more. The duration is about 15–20 min.
- 3 Forming an attitude. This stage constitutes a reflection at a group and individual level. Students express publicly through gestures, words, voting or inclusion in various groups their personal opinion, consent or choice of their individual point of view. This stage of taking a reasoned personal position is about 5 min.

Each component of the transformative learning process is represented by key scientific ideas and theatrical etudes that aim to rapidly ascend the cognitive stages of knowledge, understanding, analysis and evaluation. The joy of discovering many different solutions is inspiring for the students. Furthermore, students have an active role in each performance that shapes the development of events and situations that occur on stage and among the audience. This gives them invaluable experience and arguably builds up their confidence to contribute to related processes in the future.

## **The Fun Science Theatre and Education for Sustainable Development**

The Fun Science Theatre model as mentioned above was not explicitly designed to contribute to the development of the key ESD competencies but rather to meet an educational need that was considered locally meaningful at the time when the Theatre was established. That was the need for revitalizing and stimulating the transformation of an educational system in transition, where delayed reforms impacted teacher motivation, and an uncontrolled entry of private-sector educational providers affected the quality of education (Vasileva, 2016, 2019).

Many of the principles on which the model was built, however, namely, those of critical thinking, forming an informed opinion, taking a public stand on a normative issue, collaborative decision-making, integrated problem-solving and action-based learning resonate closely with the key competencies for sustainable development discussed above. Indeed, targeted studies have explored and demonstrated some of the related positive impacts of the Fun Science Theatre, namely, its contribution to the development of a creative (understood as non-standard, unusual and independent) attitude to solving problems (Vasileva, 2006), changes in the dynamics of relationships in the classroom and specifically the development of new friendships as a result of the students' participation in role-playing games during educational performances

(Nikolova, 2017), and the development of enhanced confidence in public appearances among the participating students (Roeva, 2020). All of those are valuable outcomes that demonstrate the potential of educational theatre and the specific model developed and employed by the Fun Science Theatre to contribute to the development of ESD competencies. It is also important, however, to consider some of the challenges encountered on the way as a basis for reflecting on the limitations of theatre-based education and how they can be addressed. Some examples of challenges in relation to the three main ESD competence domains are presented and discussed below.

### ***Cognitive Domain: Systems Thinking Competence***

In the Fun Science Theatre, each theatre-based educational performance can be seen as a catalyst for the consideration of different scientific ideas. It is also a constructive forum for multifaceted interpretation by students of a dramatically presented holistic picture of the world. It reproduces, in a specific way, the functioning of students as people who seek, find and enter into their roles as active citizens, thus developing an embodied understanding of the specific system examined as a whole and what it means to be a part of it. In most cases, however, the theatrical performance focuses on a particular detail that deliberately enlarges a particular object or phenomenon of the overall picture in order to create an important emphasis on the dramatic conflict, its presentation and resolution. This technique of deliberate and imaginary enlargement can disrupt the holistic view of the system.

For example, in a performance that focused on the problem of how people measure time, how they use it effectively and what it means in scientific and practical terms, the emphasis is placed on a dramaturgically developed image of the Time Merchant. Through the prism of the imaginary “Time Store” built by him, children are engaged cognitively, affectively and physically in considering, exploring and developing their own ideas on the meaning of life in time.

What is the problem?

There is a possibility that this augmentation technique may affect the capacities of students to analyse and engage with the concept at hand. Through a study of the effects of the theatrical performance on the audience, the emergence of fear and anxiety about the so-called “passing time” was observed. The strong emotional impact of the story and the associated anxiety noted above led to a reluctance by some of the children to become customers in the fictional “Time Store”. This shortcoming could be ignored theatrically because each performance aims to affect the sensitivity of the audience in some way. In an educational context, however, a group reflection supported by an educator would be important to help overcome fear and transform it into an enriching understanding, a constructive attitude and an enhanced capacity for dealing with the specific emotion and problem at hand. It could also serve as an entry point for a broader discussion on sustainability, e.g. through a consideration of planetary boundaries and life on earth in the context of time.

### ***Socio-emotional Domain: Normative Competence***

The educational performances encourage a conscious reflection on a system of norms and values by the students involved. By observing and participating in a specific performance, students form a world that is contextually constructed from multiple roles and relationships. In the process, they move from deliberately and dramaturgically constructed problems to constructs that are regulated by values, norms and rules established in society. The format of the Fun Science Theatre also drives the development of behaviours that are personally accepted for certain, albeit imaginary situations, in which students find themselves. In the process of work, the differentiated entry by students into different roles is carefully approached. Particular attention is given to those roles that contain characteristics of the so-called negative behaviours.

For example, a show called “The Two Roosters”, based on a common fable, presents two models of behaviour embodied by the protagonists. At the start of the play, the physical and verbal aggression of one rooster towards all the other characters is presented as successful, as it provides him with absolute dominance. In the following components of the performance, a dramatic turn is reached which puts the aggressor in a disadvantageous position.

What is the problem?

Some children are inspired by the so-called “inappropriate” behaviour and disregard the adverse consequences of that behaviour that are shown vividly in the play. Teachers are sometimes surprised by students who show a tendency to imitate inappropriate models and disregard the norms of good behaviour in relationships with others. Theatre seems to reinforce or shield these hidden desires to break the rules. A follow-up reflection on norms in interactions with others but also on rule-breaking in the context of established social practices and the negative environmental impacts of those could help to develop a nuanced and contextualized understanding of norms, stimulate self-reflection and offer a pathway for “rule-breaking” as a driver of transformative societal change.

### ***Behavioural Domain: Strategic Competence***

The theatre-based educational model provides a platform for the public art performances of students. Often, however, the stage attracts only the more active and artistically minded students and may leave students who feel different and shy outside. In order to engage them, group work techniques are employed in the course of deciding how to best use the stage for addressing a specific problem that is explored. Students learn to form group strategies for dealing with difficult situations and to reach the discovery of new solutions, which are explored in the course of the play, while time limitations exact efficiently in the course of strategic planning and collective interaction.



For example, in a performance of a historical event, a group performance of different mass scenes is envisaged where children can decide which of them looks more authentic than another, similar, mass scene. The children participate as a team in the reconstruction of historical events or scenes described in various historical sources. This participation and the interpretations of each participant stimulate group decision-making, as well as the formation of a group strategy for working on various issues. Historical situations are often unclear and variable due to the distance in time, thus the task stimulates the development of skills for finding group solutions to problems in contexts of uncertainty, such as many sustainability challenges in real life.

What is the problem?

The obstacles to stimulating and ensuring equitable participation in such theatre-based educational activities are similar to those experienced in other group processes. They are linked to the limited engagement of some members of the group, and focus on generally accepted opinions, and the dominance of the opinion of the active and influential members of the group. Often lack of time or careless attitude to such problems arising in group work leads to decisions and strategies that are subjectively dominated, irrelevant to the goals of the educational performance and do not reflect the views of less assertive members of the group. Facilitators should be attentive to such challenges and should offer strategies for addressing them that demonstrate the value of different points of view.

## Conclusions

Theatre and arts-based education could contribute greatly to education for sustainable development but there are limits to what it can do on its own and those should be taken into account in the design and implementation of such initiatives.

Notably, theatre-based education has a direct entry point into emotions. Thus, it constitutes a powerful tool but one that should be used with care. Unexpected emotional reactions to enacted situations should be monitored and addressed in order to avoid harmful side effects, while benefiting from the emotional engagement of the students to reflect, at an appropriate time, on the issues raised in a way that generates effective strategies and skills for managing emotions while opening up new ways of thinking, feeling and doing. Furthermore, new spaces for exploration could quickly collapse into established practices and norms if group processes are not adequately monitored and avenues and incentives for experimentation are not embedded in them from the start.

Designing and facilitating the reflection on the questions and problems that emerge in the course of a theatre-based education project is thus arguably as important as the actual performance and the planned involvement of the students in it. This, however, requires close interaction between the artists and educators involved in the preparation and follow-up as well as adequate time. Both of those are often constrained by the way arts-based educational projects are currently designed and

integrated into schools. Addressing those challenges exacts an institutional change of existing policies, incentives and norms related to the integration of arts-based education in the formal educational contexts.

Sustainability is an all-encompassing term and a wide range of different topics and competencies could be seen as contributing to it. To be locally meaningful, however, those competencies need to be linked to the specific local context and needs. An engagement of a broader range of relevant local stakeholders and community groups as partners in the arts-educational process could help to ensure that. Involving them in the definition of the problems that are explored, in the design of the actual scenarios as well as in the reflection sessions would enable the grounding of the scenarios that are being considered in local realities. It would also stimulate the engagement of students and schools with real-life sustainability challenges and initiatives that provide a basis for the application of the knowledge, skills and competencies developed through the arts-education process itself. Arguably, school leadership has an important role to play in facilitating such opportunities.

Finally, the question of access to arts-based education projects and opportunities should also be considered and addressed. Under the current model of private financing of educational theatre and other arts-based educational initiatives in Bulgaria, such education is not accessible to all. Harnessing its potential to contribute to sustainable development, thus requires an exploration of alternative financial models and approaches that closer collaboration among arts educators, policymakers and researchers within the country and with relevant international networks and communities could help to inform.

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# Theory

# It's About Time: Re-Imagining Present and Future Times in Art, Education and Sustainable Development



Raphael Vella, Censu Caruana, and Charmaine Zammit

**Abstract** This chapter argues for a model of art education informed by the sustainable development goals and education for sustainable development. It explores connections between the discourses of contemporary art, particularly socially engaged forms of art, and sustainable development through the temporal lens of present and future, arguing that any transformative outlook on our understanding of development, education and art must first engage with the social and political realities of present times, as demonstrated in the work of many artists. Transformative and reconstructionist conceptions of teaching and learning are considered, while the fourth pillar of sustainability, culture, is seen as a bridge that could reposition and broaden debates on art education within the political goals of education for sustainable development and its competencies. In particular, the activist and collaborative dimensions of contemporary art, its sense of wonder and uncertainties are seen as overlapping concerns in art education and education for sustainable development. This leads towards inquiry-based pedagogies that open the door to a sense of agency that is relevant both to art and to all those who believe in the possibility of change.

## A Matter of Time: The Eyes of All Future Generations

A connection between the concept of sustainable development (SD) and contemporary art revolves around our relationship with the future. Discourse on SD is replete with references to time, especially future time. In 1987, the Brundtland report famously characterised SD as a “development that meets the needs of the

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present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (IISD n.d.). A few years later, the 1992 Rio Summit reiterated this goal in Principle 3, which affirmed the importance of meeting “developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations” by establishing a global partnership (United Nations, 1993, p. 3).

Boycotted by the United States’ President G. W. Bush, yet attended by children who gave an introductory speech, the Johannesburg World Summit in 2002 was also unequivocal about its commitment to a future time that belonged to the world’s children, who would supposedly “inherit a world free of the indignity and indecency occasioned by poverty, environmental degradation and patterns of unsustainable development” (United Nations, 2002, 1). In 2019, however, it was palpably obvious that children had not yet inherited that future world when a 16-year-old Greta Thunberg denounced the failings of world leaders at the U.N.’s Climate Action Summit in New York City, reminding them that the “eyes of all future generations are upon you” (UN News, 2019, para. 1).

The discourse of modern and contemporary art has also focused, periodically, on articulations of the present, past and future. During the twentieth century, dreams of human progress, radical departures in history and political utopias accompanied modern artistic and cultural movements, manifestoes and exhibitions, especially in the West. More recently, the Arab Spring led many to wonder whether a radically different future could also be imagined in the Arab world. However, the troubles in that region, as well as the uncertainties of a European continent shaken by right-wing appropriations of democracy, are making many people involved in the arts ask today whether it is even plausible to imagine the world through Thunberg’s “eyes of all future generations”:

To imagine the future of freedom necessarily requires looking at the present situation. What place does the concept of freedom have in our contemporary world? Is freedom and its supposed counterpart — democracy — possible for everyone or achievable by only a select few? Or does the power of democracy or democratic power stand in the way of freedom? And what does this mean for the free or liberal arts, which are under such enormous pressure in the current political climate? (Folkerts, 2015, 13)

Only by engaging with misgivings about present cultural phenomena can people imagine future democratic reform and develop a sense of agency. This is not a reversal of the central message of the Brundtland report, which urges present generations not to be blinded by “progress” to the extent of ignoring the needs of future generations. Rather, this construction of a possible horizon on the anxieties of the present has been the strategy of many climate activists, including Thunberg, as well as artist-activists involved in political affairs in other historical periods (Fig. 1).

For example, the revolutionary nineteenth-century Realist painter Gustave Courbet, well-known for his involvement in the Paris Commune and his association with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon’s anarchism, painted the materiality of contemporary, lived experience so directly that his critics responded with hostility: “Ugliness, ugliness forever! And ugliness with no great character, ugliness without the beauty of





**Fig. 1** Gustave Courbet, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and his children in 1853* (painted in 1865), oils on canvas, CC0 Paris Musées / Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, Petit Palais

ugliness!” (Tinterow & Loyrette, 1994, 362). By discarding idealism and mythological narratives, Courbet paved the way for modern art and its depiction of cities, current ways of life and popular culture.

Art theorist Boris Groys has located the idea of the new or the avant-garde in art in the intersection between what already exists around us (the present) and what has been archived (the past). For Groys, art’s claim to political relevance lies precisely in the way it helps to give value to existing things by placing them in the realm of the valorised or protected (places like museums), which works to “sustain” these things and pushes artists to revalorise “new” values and things (Groys, 2014a, b). This is how the present finds a place in and simultaneously shakes the archives of the past, pointing towards future revaluations of cultural hierarchies.

A similar idea is expressed in Nicolas Bourriaud’s *The Exform* (2016), in which he draws parallels between Courbet’s realistic principles and a contemporary fascination with waste, which brings “those expelled by ideology, deported from symbolic power, back to the centre of life and culture” (97). This is also why the agenda in debates on SD—previously centred almost exclusively around environmental, “green” issues—has been supplemented with principles of social justice in recent decades: the future of the neglected (those who are fleeing from war and discrimination, exploited workers and women, ecosystems that are threatened by unsustainable expansion, and so on) can only be transformed if we can afford to reevaluate social hierarchies in the present.

For many, such a transformation will not be viable if it is not supported by a more critical approach to the field of education. The idea of a “transformative”

potential for teaching and learning has roots in the work of various educational theorists, such as Freire (1970), Mezirow (1991) and others, who have stressed the centrality of autonomous thinking, self-direction and ongoing revisions of internalised misconceptions and beliefs in learning environments. While different conceptions of transformative learning, particularly in the field of adult education, place varying emphases on individual transformation and social change, some theorists have pushed for more holistic understandings of transformative learning that incorporate affective modes and a planetary perspective which “recognizes the interconnectedness among universe, planet, natural environment, human community, and personal world” (Taylor, 2008, 9). An awareness of this interconnectedness shows that global partnerships are necessary in present times to ensure that the value of economic growth does not eclipse the possibility of real SD in the future.

In art education, the last few decades have seen the growth of reconstructivist approaches to the field, pushing for the use of art as a “tool for the analysis of social conditions and values” (Siegesmund, 1998, 203). A reconstructivist art education contextualises art and education in current societal needs and aspirations, contrary to expressionist approaches that focus on individual creative expression and the development of the imagination (Hickman, 2010, 41–42). This approach can also acquire a direct, political goal, as evidenced in the sociology of aesthetic education espoused by Lena Aulin-Gråhamn and Jan Thavenius and others in Nordic countries: such scholars “advocate a *radical aesthetics*, inspired by the art world, as an alternative to the *modest aesthetics*, prevailing in schools, and the *market aesthetics*, which dominate the aesthetic field” (Lindström, 2009, 72). On par with current literature about education for sustainable development (ESD), recent debates about mainstream art education and art beyond institutional frameworks, such as community-based art education and co-design practices, have recognised the role of the arts in engaging with cultural challenges, economic development and issues of social justice (Quinn et al., 2012; Bell & Desai, 2014; Harris Lawton et al., 2019). This emphasis on the situated nature of learning, ethical responsibilities, participatory design processes and a multidisciplinary expansion of the field of art education challenges established hierarchical boundaries and canons and also links up well with the collaborative goals and four pillars (social, environmental, economic and cultural) of ESD.

The real challenge for art education now is to ensure that this broadening of the field is reflected in actual classroom practices, which are still often characterised by expressionistic and individualistic methodologies. A radical approach to ESD-infused art education requires participatory teaching and learning strategies that motivate and empower students to transform their attitudes and behaviour in order to take action in the world. When learners take control of their learning and become participants in the act of teaching, education becomes more interactive and contributes to a stronger sense of responsibility.

Further connections between art education and ESD can also be studied in the work of many contemporary artists who address both a “green” agenda (related to natural ecosystems, for instance) and a “brown” agenda for sustainability (exploring hazardous waste, energy consumption, water, and so on) and other goals of SD listed by UNESCO. These connections are not stable; they exist in a state of flux,

given that current social and economic conditions are fragile and changing, while teleological aims for art remain unrealistic. Artists and collectives today register singular contact points, exchanges and tensions, reflecting the rawness of the here and now by using any material at hand. A few examples below can serve to demonstrate the vast potential of this field of study.

Engagements with ecological issues and associated effects, such as the impact of unmitigated economic growth and pollution on indigenous lives, have been addressed by many contemporary artists, and are sometimes summed up as various forms of eco-art. The materials used by artists sometimes amplify sustainability issues. Ghanaian artist El Anatsui recycles African materials like bottle caps to stitch vast tapestries that combine an undeniable beauty with tales of consumption and poverty. American artist Michael Rakowitz has constructed shelters for homeless people with materials like polyethylene and tape in his *paraSITE* series, using the warm air emitted from buildings' heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems to inflate and heat these temporary homes. In 2008, Brazilian-American artist Vik Muniz worked with "catadores" (garbage pickers) in Jardim Gramacho near Rio to make monumental portraits out of trash, a lengthy process that led to the moving documentary *Waste Land* in 2010.

Weintraub (2012) has usefully indexed many specific examples and approaches to eco-art, listing artists and collectives who have worked in fields like conservation, preservation, urban ecology, industrial ecology and SD. According to Weintraub, eco-art is innovative when it reflects changes taking place in society, when it addresses the global and ecological uncertainties of contemporary life and when it includes "utilitarian strategies" (6). Its relationship with time is often dynamic, sometimes making use of ephemeral materials that respond to their environment by melting or even dying (Fig. 2).

In 2018, the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson, together with geologist Minik Rosing, fished several large blocks of ice from a fjord in Greenland and shipped them in refrigerated containers to London, where they were installed in public spaces and left to melt. The installation, *Ice Watch*, had first been set up in Copenhagen in 2014, and the second installation had taken place in Paris in 2015. For the third time, the installation in London exposed members of the public to the fact that billions of tonnes of glacial ice are lost in Greenland every year as a result of a massive increase in carbon dioxide emissions. This is how contemporary art quotes directly from the past by revalorising and relocating ancient blocks of compressed ice to contemporary London, in an effort to raise awareness about rising global sea levels and global warming.

An installation like *Ice Watch* also points towards another feature of contemporary art—its fusion of art and life. Artistic forms mirror forms of life in order to echo and simultaneously resist them; for instance, by bridging the gap between work and audience in participatory artistic practices, reflecting civic participation in the process. Artists who work in the field of social practice do not ask whether their work can still be called art but whether it translates well into the contexts of lived experience.



**Fig. 2** *Ice Watch* by Olafur Eliasson and Minik Rosing, Supported by Bloomberg, Installation: Bankside, outside Tate Modern, 2018, Photo: Charlie Forgham-Bailey. © 2018 Olafur Eliasson

Considering the relationship between art and life in social practice, curator Nato Thompson suggests that we stop trying to establish whether this new type of work is art. Instead, he recommends that we ask this question: “If this work is *not* art, then what are the methods we can use to understand its effects, affects, and impact?” (Thompson, 2012, 26). It is a question that would be pertinent to ask when faced with the work of many socially engaged artists today. American artist Suzanne Lacy has combined artistic media like film and performance with non-conventional “media” like dialogue and civic action to explore stories of female victims of abuse and legal and institutional lacunae that work against women. Cuban artist Tania Bruguera has used pedagogical and activist methods to empower migrants and examine the abuses of power in different contexts.

The integration of art and life does not merely replicate current models of life but offers “utilitarian” counter-models that highlight the political impact that Thompson refers to as well as the urgency for action. This political dimension is also evident in the development of ESD. The following section starts with a cursory historic overview of recent global processes in the advancement of ESD. It then positions the arts and arts education in such processes and considers what can be the specificities and comparative advantage of the arts in the advancement of ESD.

## Sustainable Development and Education for Sustainable Development

Definitions of SD abound, yet the one that is most quoted is that popularised through the Brundtland Report, cited earlier in this chapter. The foundation of SD is the inherent interdependence between the environment and the economy and the search for win-win solutions where a trade-off between the two is not necessary (Emas, 2015). The acknowledgement that the long-term stability of the environment and the economy is “only achievable through the integration and acknowledgement of economic, environmental, and social concerns” (Emas, 2015, 2) led to the popularisation of the three-pillars concept of SD, arguing that SD takes place where such concerns intersect. This model, however, led to a growing unease that something fundamental was missing, with various attempts to describe the “fourth pillar” as lying within the realms of the cultural/aesthetic (Burford et al., 2013).

Hawkes (2001) specifically argued for culture to be recognised as the fourth pillar of sustainability, arguing that cultural vitality is an essential component of a healthy society. In 2010, the Executive Bureau of United Cities and Local Governments agreed on a Policy Statement acknowledging culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development, on the realisation that the three pillars “... alone cannot possibly reflect the complexity of current society ... culture ultimately shapes what we mean by development and determines how people act in the world” (UCLG, 2010, 4).

When the United Nations declared the decade between 2005 and 2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), it sought to reorient all education towards sustainability (UNESCO n.d.-a). While acknowledging that education is not the panacea to the sustainable development challenges the world is facing, it did consider that without education, a sustainable future will not be possible. Subsequently, the DESD was followed up by the Global Action Programme (GAP), which ran till 2019, and sought to “generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development”.

GAP took a two-pronged approach, namely that of both integrating sustainable development into education and vice versa (UNESCO n.d.-b). However, in spite of the efforts and progress that took place over the 15 years of DESD and GAP, UNESCO observed that: “With accelerated climate change the fragility of our planet is becoming more and more apparent. Persistent inequalities, social fragmentation, and political extremism are bringing many societies to a point of crisis” (UNESCO n.d.-c). The education imperative became even more urgent. Within this context, UNESCO initiated the *Futures of Education: Learning to Become* initiative, aiming to “catalyse a global debate on how knowledge and learning can shape the future of humanity and the planet” (UNESCO n.d.-c). The vision of this process is for education to go beyond that of responding to the changing world, but rather to claim its transformative role and to act together to create the futures that we want. This process is running in parallel to the sustainable development goals (SDGs), a series of 17 interdependent goals adopted in 2015 that aim to “address the global challenges

we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice” (UN, n.d.). Of particular note is SDG 4.7:

“By 2030 ensure all learners acquire 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.”

Here we can also appreciate the significance of the fourth pillar of sustainability within ESD, with a “strong focus on acknowledging and respecting diverse world-views, identities and local languages and promoting open dialogue and debate” (Burford et al., 2013, 3036).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the various models of how ESD can be integrated across different curricula at various levels. However, one approach that has taken steam since the early debates on ESD is not to claim a “slice of the pie” among competing curricular subjects, but rather to ensure sustainability as a strong foundational structure for all subjects. This model also seeks to go beyond the “privileged” subjects in the infusion of sustainability, such as science or geography, but rather acknowledge all subjects equally as potential vehicles for the infusion of sustainability across the curriculum. Furthermore, within such understanding, the learner’s environment, both within and outside the school, becomes a fundamental teaching resource that is locally relevant and culturally sensitive. In a “whole school approach” to infusing ESD across the curriculum, the school becomes a microcosm of the world we want to create or the future we envision. This is described by the Global Education Monitoring Report (2016) as incorporating “all aspects of a school: curriculum, extracurricular activities, teacher training, human resources, infrastructure, operations and processes”.

## Repositioning Art Within the ESD Debate

Two questions that follow logically from such a model of integrating ESD across the curriculum in a whole school approach are: (a) “How can art education position itself as a significant contributor in this urgent task of reorienting education towards sustainability?” and (b) What is specific to art education in reorienting education towards sustainability? Such questions come with their own dilemmas, in that already art education is often a subject of lesser status within various educational contexts. To answer these questions, we need to consider four points:

1. Competencies pertaining to ESD and art education
2. Art education as a vehicle to strengthen the fourth pillar of SD
3. Art education and the future of humanity
4. Art as a channel of hope.

## Competencies Pertaining to ESD and Art Education

The Arizona State University in 2011 identified the following five competencies as a reference framework for academic programme development in ESD: systems thinking competency; futures thinking (anticipatory) competence; values thinking (normative) competence; strategic competence; and interpersonal (collaboration) competence. Competencies with respect to art education are more controversial—in that some would argue that a subject that revolves around creativity cannot be prescribed by strict competencies. This has been summarised brilliantly by Atkinson (2010) who asked the question: “Do such redistributions return us to a pedagogical consideration of the importance of ‘not knowing’ and the passion of ‘wonder’ in learning? (1)”. Here, however, there is no necessary dissonance with ESD competencies, in that there are arguments that “we will not solve the environmental crisis (and reach a sustainable future) without a change in worldview to ecocentrism and a rejuvenation of humanity’s sense of wonder toward nature” (Washington, 2018, 14).

Furthermore, there have also been various attempts to enlist competencies and goals of art education. Eisner’s (2002) ten goals of art education, which are often applied in the art curricula of schools worldwide, run parallel to the ESD competencies promoted by UNESCO (2019), such as “critical thinking”, “imagining future scenarios” and “making decisions”. Some of the goals that Eisner outlines for art education are the ability to make moral judgements, rather than seeking correct answers, the embracing of multiple viewpoints, the acceptance of unforeseen possibilities in the creation of artworks, the making of small differences which eventually create large impacts and the communication of feelings and ideas that students usually find hard to express. On the other hand, the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague (2020) suggests the following competencies: creative ability; capacity for critical reflection; capacity for growth and innovation; organisational ability; communicative ability; external awareness and capacity for collaboration. Here one can notice various explicit and implicit synergies between the ESD and art education competencies, such as collaboration competencies, external awareness and critical thinking. When one then considers that domain of art as activism with its focus on social change and on the “ability of art to function as an arena and medium for political protest and social activism” (Groys, 2014a, b para. 1), then there is a very clear explicit match with ESD competencies such as systems thinking, anticipatory and strategic competencies.

## Art Education as a Vehicle to Strengthen the Fourth Pillar of SD

As outlined earlier, SD has adopted a four-pillar framework that encompasses the economic, social, environmental and cultural pillars. In practice, on a global and national level, the economic pillar often takes precedence. However, within an SD

understanding, the “privileged” economic pillar needs to shrink and allow more space for the environmental and social pillars to find their place, within a context that is sensitive to intangible aspects such as values, customs, rituals and life patterns. Here the arts are a fundamental part of the cultural pillar, which when reflected in education offers all students the opportunity to actively participate in arts practices. According to Hawkes (2001, 24), “creativity, engagement, cohesiveness, wellbeing and respect for difference will be inevitable outcomes”.

Given that an artistic approach in education could create a space for students to reflect critically on their everyday life actions, art education plays an important role in global issues concerning sustainability (Macdonald & Jónsdóttir, 2014), hence strengthening the fourth pillar of SD. The multidirectional content of art and culture promotes aesthetic sensitivity and critical thinking skills while the cultivation of values of sensitivity and empathy empowers students to protect the environment and develop respect for society (Özsoy, 2016). By developing thematic projects that embrace the cultivation of personal and social responsibilities, students become aware of national and global issues such as disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction and sustainable consumption. In turn, students’ actions, especially if displayed in physical exhibitions or virtually, help to raise awareness about the importance of working collaboratively to address global issues. The cultural pillar of SD underlines the importance of different forms of collaboration; without exchanges and disagreements, culture wouldn’t exist. Participatory practices can redefine pedagogies, understandings of subjectivity and the meanings of being together in the world, leading towards an Art Education for Sustainable Development, or AESD (Illeris, 2017).

## **Art Education and the Future of Humanity**

The multifaceted nature of collaboration leads us to another parallel between ESD and art education. It is acknowledged that ESD deals with complex issues that threaten sustainability. Here art education can be an important tool in dealing with complexity, as well as expressing the contradictions of the current dominant paradigm with its skewed focus on technological fixes. Visual art in particular has the power to transmit and express such complexity and contradictions in a way that arrives at the heart, that liberates the voice, expression and creativity of students, inviting them to reflect critically and act accordingly. This is very much in line with UNESCO’s *Futures of Education* and its invitation to open up new spaces for debate on how education needs to be “reimagined in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and precarity” (UNESCO n.d.-c., para.1).



## Art as a Channel of Hope

One characteristic of ESD (and related educations such as Global Citizenship Education and Environmental Education) is the invitation to move beyond knowledge and awareness into action. Such actions are understood both at an individual level and at an organisational level, which can be the school or the educational institution. Within such an understanding, teachers and educators are invited to structure learning experiences around the identification and resolution of sustainable development issues that equip and empower learners with problem-solving and decision-making skills. The focus is never the problem but an understanding of the problem to move towards inspired action and solutions. Here art education can play an important role.

Kumar (2010) argues that from the Renaissance onwards art was often confined to those with special talent and artists tended to work as individuals in their studio, producing mainly items of luxury and status, but this is being challenged by people with ecological and social sensibility. He contends that when “artists let go of their egos and their wish for celebrity status and personal glory, then art becomes truly boundless” (Kumar, 2010, 166). A rather bold statement, yet his argument is that art is both a force for transformation and self-realisation.

When art education embraces a sustainability-based pedagogy, standardised curriculum models get disturbed because such approaches re-envision the purpose of education. We need to consider a model of art education that works to reinforce the fourth cultural pillar of ESD by promoting students' active participation through a process of social, environmental, economic and cultural transformation, which is currently required to safeguard a sustainable present and future for all. Such a model would not simply offer a recipe curriculum with a fixed body of content knowledge, activities and themes. Instead, recognising the relations between ESD and art education described earlier, it would revolve around questions that demand students' creative approaches to unsustainable development and the application of critical and creative thinking for individual and collaborative problem-solving.

When one considers the compatibility and synergies between the competencies pertaining to ESD and those of art education and the potential of art education to reinforce the four-pillar model of ESD, art education and its transformative potential need to be better acknowledged as a crucial vehicle in the global project of reorienting education towards sustainability. As challenged by SDG 4.7 and *Futures of Education*, we require new conversations around art education to ensure critical thinking and corresponding actions to co-create the world we want and, in the words of Kumar (2010), “unlock the doors of optimism and hope” (p. 166).

In spite of this sense of optimism, though, education can become complicit in the erosion of ecology and community (Graham, 2007). Although educators can include sustainability issues by referring to contemporary artists like those referenced earlier in this chapter, in practice they often avoid referring to contemporary art and visual culture (Wilson, 2003). The problematic relationship between traditional approaches to art pedagogy and issues of gender, power, privilege, political and social change have been analysed in the field of visual culture art education (for instance, Freedman,

2003). Consequently, the exclusion of sustainability issues neglects the potential of art to educate and eventually to encourage activism that brings about ecological, social and cultural transformations (Graham, 2007). As the strategy for ESD developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) steering committee has stated on *Learning for the Future* (UNECE, 2012), a transformative pedagogy also requires a transformation of what it means to be an educator, leading to situations in which educators “present themselves as fallible human beings rather than people with all the answers” (17). Rather, such a pedagogy would necessitate an inquiry-based approach, making use of questions that may offer students a starting point to a journey of discovery using art as a visual means to engage with reflections concerning unsustainable personal, social, cultural and other settings. Below are two examples.

### ***Where Are You from?***

A common question, “Where are you from?”, can be approached through the use of map-making, a procreative learning activity that develops visual thinking and ecological literacy (Sobel, 1998). An inquiry-based approach that raises conversations ranging from physical geography to cultural boundaries and personal experiences can stimulate students’ interdisciplinary art-making. Beyond the topographic features of maps and neighbourhoods, students may investigate physical and mental borders that affect sustainable development goals related to infrastructure, industry, sanitation, communities, access to open spaces and inequalities. This focus on the social and changing aspects of art and places helps both learners and educators to conceive of curriculum as an organic, imaginative process that reflects realities in our present times as well as possible meanings of active citizenship in the “Not Yet” times often addressed by artist Jeanne van Heeswijk:

How do we train ourselves to work within a collective body towards a shared desire of how to live when we cannot identify the collective body yet? How do we preenact our learning into the future? (van Heeswijk and Rendón, 2018, 246)

### ***What Do I See?***

Traditionally, art connected drawing to the exploration of the natural world, as can be indicated by the numerous nature studies in sketchbooks of artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer. The history of landscape painting and biological illustrations are both practices of this tradition. Keeping in mind the question “what do I see?” may stimulate the students’ drawing from observation of the natural world which involves both a research and discovery practice. It connects students’ drawing processes to scientific investigation, leading them to understand and appreciate the world (Marshall, 2004) while getting familiar with local ecology (Erzen, 2005). Moreover, this question can be a starting point to cultivate students’ awareness of

different ways of seeing and link art to natural history, scientific observation and a concern with the natural environment. A keen sense of observation helps us to develop an awareness of current challenges faced by both terrestrial and aquatic forms of life.

## Conclusion

Despite its often marginalised position in an educational system that emphasises curricular standardisation and high stakes testing (Eisner, 2005), art can make its unique contribution to a more humane, sustainable society. When arts pedagogies are framed by vital questions concerning personal, environmental, community and cultural issues, they create opportunities for both teachers and students to engage in an investigation of SD issues through a socially responsive process of reflective and transformative learning. An art education that is informed by ESD explores the spaces, social and cultural hierarchies and social processes that surround us in present times in order to interpret future possibilities. This is not a simple dichotomy that separates the known from everything that is not yet known. Current realities present a measure of ambiguity that allows for multiple interpretations too. Perhaps, the quality that brings art and ESD closest to each other is agency: the ability to assess consequences or results and act in a given situation, social environment and/or space. Agency is the capacity to take action now and navigate possible futures. This “anticipatory competence” engages with change and the malleability of the future, forming new worldviews in the process.

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# Stories from the Sea: Working with the SDGs in a Community-Based Art Workshop



Ásthildur Jónsdóttir, Ellen Gunnarsdóttir, and Guðbjörg Lind Jónsdóttir

**Abstract** This paper presents a series of community-based art workshops held in the summer of 2019 in Icelandic coastal villages on the theme *Stories of the Sea*. The collaborative project was aimed at providing meaningful aesthetic experiences based on contemporary art approaches that might not otherwise be readily available in peripheral communities. It was funded by the Icelandic Children's Fund and attracted over 500 participants. Its underlying rationale was that art projects and artworks can be used to promote awareness of vices and virtues in order to open up ethical questions and criteria for practice concerning issues of sustainability. It thus focused on providing inspiring learning settings in which the transformative power of creativity might be used to raise environmental awareness, including the protection of the oceans. The pedagogical approaches used included participatory pedagogy, critical place-based learning and an emphasis on working with tacit knowledge already available in these localities. The project's methodology was based on the five key dimensions of sustainable pedagogy (content, perspectives, process, context and design) while its findings were analyzed using the approach of art-based action research.

## Introduction

The notion of participation and community involvement has been found useful in understanding aspects of human values that foster the notion of a right relationship with nature, which conditions both the attitudes toward the environment and the sense of one's own identity. People need to gain new understandings of the ecology of the planet and the world because of climate change and the dominance of unsustainable

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lifestyles (Gore, 2009). Sustainable societies need active, responsible community members that participate in the process of implementing sustainable values. The aim of this paper is to present community-based art workshops entitled *Stories of the Sea* held in rural fishing villages in Iceland. This was a collective project developed and produced by the artists who are also the authors of this chapter. The project was funded by the Icelandic Prime Minister's Children Fund<sup>1</sup> and held in collaboration with local cultural centers (Blábankinn,<sup>2</sup> Húsið,<sup>3</sup> Akranesviti,<sup>4</sup> Amtbókasafnið Stykkishólmi,<sup>5</sup> Konubókastofa,<sup>6</sup> Katla Geopark,<sup>7</sup> Byggðarsafnið Garðskaga<sup>8</sup>). More than 500 young people participated. The project that took place in the summer of 2019 focused on the transformative power of art when considering the ocean and sustainability. The methods employed were based on participatory pedagogy (Jónsdóttir, 2017; Simmons et al., 2011), including critical place-based learning (Freire, 1970; Gruenewald & Smith, 2008) and tacit knowledge (Endres et al., 2007). The planning of the workshops put the local children in the foreground. The work is based on their lived experiences and local knowledge.

The workshops aimed to provide participants with multiple tools to express their experience of and connection to the sea. As mentioned above, a diverse approach that included visual and verbal means of expression was used to create a multi-sensory experience and a sense of flow to each workshop. Before the artists' arrival in the towns, a Facebook page advertised the workshops and posters were hung up with necessary information in public areas, such as libraries, shops, museums and community centers. In each location, the artists also contacted community organizers who made use of their knowledge and experience of the locality to recruit interested participants. In the preparation and recruitment process, as well as in designing the content of the workshops, the artists made sure to include the local perspectives of the community organizers who understood the strengths and interests of each community.

Each workshop began by discussing the ocean with the participants. They explained what they knew about the ocean and what danger we are facing now. A hand-painted embroidered map of the world's seas was part of the installation and in connection to that discussion participants observed how all the oceans of the earth are connected and how what is done in Iceland can have a direct effect in other places. The importance of corals to the health of the sea was discussed and how and why they become bleached. The participants told stories about their experience of the ocean, both in Iceland and in other places they had visited. Dialogue is thus a

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rann.is/sjodir/menning-listir/barnameningarsjodur/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.blabankinn.is/?lang=en>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.husid-workshop.com>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.west.is/en/west/place/light-house-akranesviti>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.stykkisholmur.is/thjonustan/bokasafn/>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://konubokastofa.is>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.katlageopark.is/afpreying/vatnajokulsþjodgardur/>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.svgardur.is/byggðasafnið-á-garðskaga>.

way to plant seeds, to build trust. Freire (1970, 35) referred to it as a reason soaked with emotions.

In the next step, participants could choose from different workstations. They could look at the exhibition that was displayed to get inspiration, or they could go to different working stations within the space to experiment. These workstations included a desk with two typewriters where participants could brainstorm and write down their stories, a large table with woodblocks and other printmaking tools, a drawing table, a water-coloring table, and a collage table with stacks of magazines and cut-outs. Participants were encouraged either to think of a story based on their memories to start with, or to start improvising with different mediums that could spark their imagination. When organizing the workstations in the workshops, much value was placed on the process of transforming the participants' knowledge and experience into "knowledge in action" (Boyer, 1990).

The aim of the project was to explore and develop ways of increasing understanding of the ocean with the participants as well as creating awareness of what can be done to protect it. The project focused on the transformative power (Mezirow, 2009) of sustainability education and participatory pedagogy (Jónsdóttir, 2017; Simmons et al., 2011), including critical place-based learning (Freire, 1970; Gruenewald & Smith, 2008).

When working with children on arts-based units that aim to enhance our understanding of sustainability it is important to examine the interaction between the factors that influence human survival and well-being. In the workshop, discussions were held on how human activity and well-being are connected, and how they are linked to ecological issues and the environmental limits of the earth. Well-being in this context takes several different forms, including well-being as a state of mind, or as the state of our natural environment (Giddings et al., 2002; Rautio et al., 2014; Seligman, 2011).

The paper considers how art projects and artworks can be used to promote awareness of vices and virtues in order to open up ethical questions and criteria for practice concerning issues of sustainability. The value of art-based action research (ABAR) lies in how the cases represent ways in which participatory virtues can be used in art education in a community setting to further the understanding and practice of sustainability. It is considered desirable to be knowledgeable and to be right in one's opinions (Yanow, 2009). Education opens up immediate opportunities to work with values and local knowledge. Focusing on humility and a willingness to learn with an open mind gives participants the potential to figure out what values underpin well-being.

## Locations

Young people in rural settings in Iceland have much fewer possibilities to work with art and artists than those in the capital area (Bamford, 2009). Few of the participating

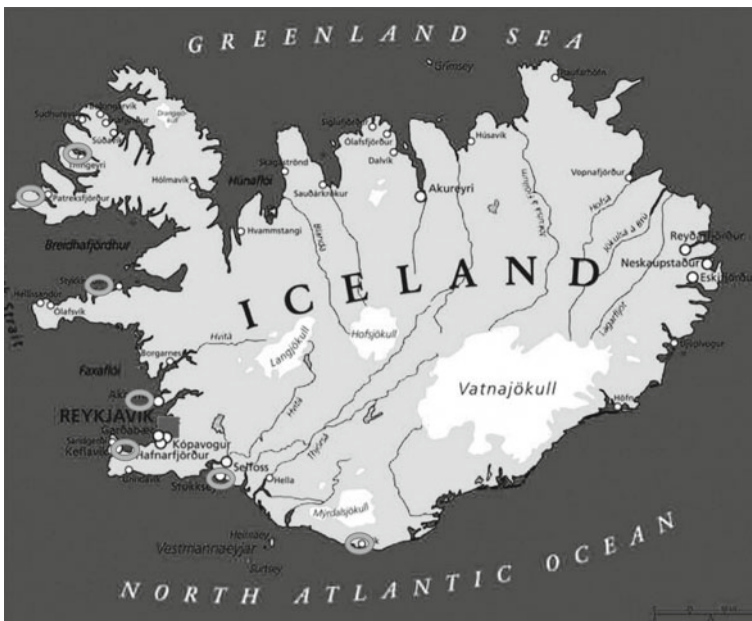


villages had either art museums or galleries and very little knowledge and know-how was to be found that related to contemporary art practices.

While it was clear that a need existed for an arts-based approach on current issues with children from peripheral areas, the ideology of giving the workshops in rural settings is to elevate participants' aspirations for sustainability through art. It was decided to work with local cultural centers such as libraries, museums and community centers in order to encourage continuity with the educational work already undertaken by these institutions. Research has shown that arts and culture can play an important role in improving the quality of life in rural areas (European Network for Rural Development, 2016). The aim of setting up workshops in rural areas was to work with participants by facilitating a project that can help the communities further develop their existing strengths. The design of the workshop was based on the experiences of other artists and scholars that have developed community-based, place-specific, socially engaged and environmental art (Coutts, 2008; Kester, 2004).

The artistic process aimed at providing artistic workshops for communities that do not offer workshops like this outside of formal school. This project's experience is in line with other Nordic projects where there is a noticeable tendency toward a positive response to participation (Härkönen et al., 2018).

Rural villages in the western and southwestern parts of Iceland were selected as seen on the map in Fig. 1. The location is selection-based; first on the already defined need to bring more arts-based approaches to community education in Iceland's



**Fig. 1** Map of Iceland identifying the seven participating fishing villages

peripheral areas. Second, it was based on the aim of helping the young inhabitants of these shoreline communities explore their connection to the sea, a constant element in their daily lives. Rising urbanization, poverty, climate change and natural hazards like floods, hurricanes and earthquakes are some of the factors affecting rural livelihoods in Iceland. Many educated people move away from the rural area into urban areas. There is less capacity to deal with the vulnerable communities that are less able to confront sustainability challenges (Ruritag, 2020). Visiting artists and workshops is a way to enhance these communities' resilience to better cope with stressful conditions.

## Designing the Workshops

One lens that is important in demonstrating the value of art is community exchange, and this can take various forms depending on the community that is in focus. An important way is through art. Community-based art education can be used to focus awareness of social issues, helping young people find the inspiration to engage with the challenges their community faces in a creative manner. In community-based arts projects, "the goal is to create a sense of community around learning about specific topics or solving specific problems around the process of art making" (Krensky & Steffen, 2009). These practices have the potential of bringing together different groups within a community, promoting healing, both individual and communal. Community-based art practices can thus serve as a "glue", bringing together artists, institutions and the public in empowering settings that focus on harnessing the knowledge and skills already existing within the community (McKnight & Block, 2012). Some of the participating cultural institutions have asked to continue the collaboration, and a grant application for continuing the project has already been made. In connection to the workshops, it was kept in mind that community-based art practices require the artists to balance their work between guiding the group and taking a step back to allow local concerns and knowledge to inspire the process (Knight & Schwarzman, 2017). The artists therefore carefully designed the settings to enable local know-how to flourish by conducting research on local needs and forming meaningful connections with the community. At the end of the process, group feedback is an invaluable step toward enabling the artists to draw new knowledge and understanding that may be shared with others, thus enriching the existing knowledge base on these practices. Interviews were therefore conducted with the supervisors of each cultural center. This is a circular process of contact, research, action, feedback and teaching (CRAFT) that informed the practitioner of socially based art and provided a simple roadmap to enriching experiences with different groups within society (Knight & Schwarzman, 2017).

## Art-Based Action Research (ABAR)

The approach of ABAR is case-specific developmental qualitative research. The research process follows the traditions of action research (Jokela et al., 2015; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018) when gathering data, resulting in findings that add to an understanding of the potential of the project and the potential consequences of the actions taken when connecting these to theories. In the process of planning, designing, organizing, developing and observing actions and concluding with evaluation, the research cycle (Fig. 2) developed at the University of Lapland was followed.

The methodology is based on the notion that the researcher is the key participant in the whole process. The experience becomes a vital part of the research topic and is intended to influence the study (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018). In this project, it focused on the transformative power of community engagement when creating artistic actions that engage with sustainability. The installations at each location aimed to provoke critical thinking and were meant to encourage the participants to take a stand on the issues discussed. By watching interactions and activities with an on-site approach, indications of emotional knowledge being generated in the discussions of morals and values in education could be captured. The methods chosen were always close to practice, continually raising and answering questions.

The work raised questions connecting to what the participants prioritize in their lives. It initiated discussions on the connection between man and nature, attitudes, values and national self-identity, challenging the participants' perspectives. Despite

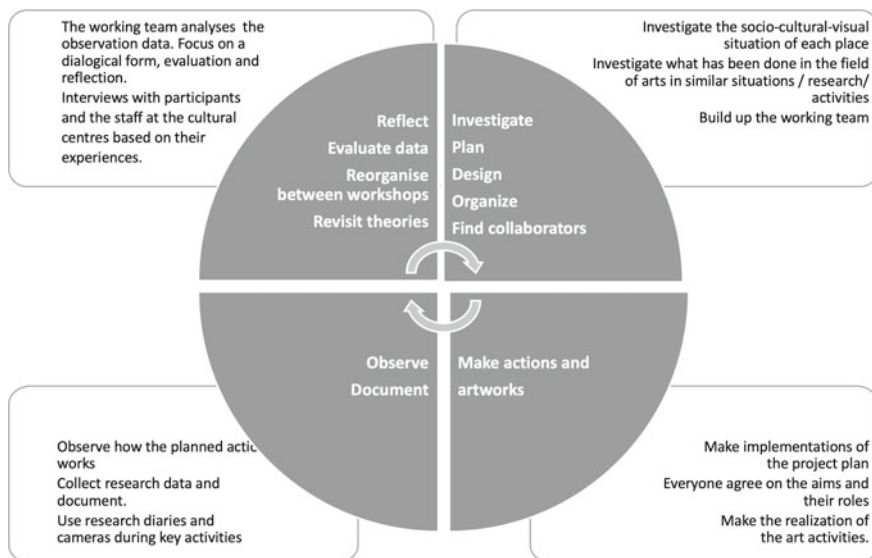


Fig. 2 Art-based action research cycles described by Timo Jokela, 2019

the complexity and personal reflection required of participants in the study, no one faced coercion or risk by participating.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The artistic actions in the community-based workshops were designed using focusing on the content, perspectives, process, context and design. This helped in creating settings that developed knowledge in regards to the ocean and its sustainability challenges. The model was a reminder of the importance of the challenge to act compassionately and collaboratively in response to those complex challenges that were discussed and discovered. The emphasis on a thematic approach fitted well with the ideas that underpin the workshops. Its design includes emphasis on diverse actions with a focus on critical questions using the Freirean approach (Freire, 1970) where an engaged creative atmosphere was highlighted, including the will to be challenged with interactions with problems and lived experience was fostered. The model also incorporates participatory pedagogy and an experiential and relational approach which we believe is crucial in sustainability education. This is in line with Freire's approach where the importance of understanding how we all gain from a holistic approach to life is kept in mind as well as the positive feeling that comes from a nurturing environment, where all the participants both give and take (Freire, 1985).

By working together there is a potential for developing collective efficacy where sustainable development becomes a noticeable hope. Focusing on the place-based approach and experiential learning theory resulting in transformational learning that emphasizes ecological understanding. It is important to remember the importance of consistency when working with sustainability issues. The challenge is to create settings for different social groups to empower themselves to take up collective action where the focus is on reversing depredation of the environment (van Dijk & van Dijk, 2012).

### ***Ecological Design: Transformative Learning***

Pedagogical processes and practical applicability are crucial in sustainability education. When developing relational learning settings, with a focus on participation, transformative learning and experiential learning, the learner builds on his prior lived experience, thus making the educational process relevant to learners' lives. To do so, the focus is placed on reflecting on solutions to real problems that people are experiencing (UNESCO, 2012).

When designing the workshops, it was important to be aware of learning settings that would encourage transformative learning experiences. In that context, it was essential to work with what each cultural center had done before and how former

activities could be incorporated into the project. By putting up an exhibition in each cultural center, the aim was to design an exhibition that had the potential to provoke transformative learning experiences as they awakened personal reflections, experiences, opinions, questions and interpretations. The participants could look at the artworks and compare them to their own experiences to get a greater sense of their own values and ideas of how to understand different aspects of the ocean in the context of sustainability and its issues. The aim was also to leave them with some questions about what they could do to take part in sustainable development.

As the participants in the workshops rethought their values, the artistic actions aim for transformative learning where the learner moves beyond awareness into incorporating real change in one's life. Transformative learning has the potential to lead to or allow for more sustainable lifestyles and values (UNESCO, 2012).

The transformation-oriented learning and capacity-building mode of sustainability education relies on participation, self-determination, free thinking and creating knowledge together. We make meaning with different dimensions of awareness and understanding. In the absence of fixed truths, and confronted with often rapid changes in circumstances, we cannot fully trust what we question, the researchers' own points of view, what they know or believe and these call for reevaluation (Mezirow, 2000).

At the beginning of each workshop, what is needed to do to protect the world's oceans was discussed, since caring for resources could be considered the foundation of a sustainable society. In such a society one's living standards are not achieved at the cost of others, nor does it reduce opportunities to improve living standards (Orr, 2003).

### ***Process: Participatory Pedagogy***

In participatory pedagogy, there is a focus on students' voices and their choices, and therefore different approaches and methods were introduced to the participants, so they should have a say in their learning opportunities, using their strengths and desires when analyzing and discussing the needs of their community. The teacher is no longer expected to transfer knowledge through a stage-by-stage approach; instead, she welcomes questions from other participants that lead to learning through creativity and explorations. Participatory pedagogy is under strong influence from the informed action that characterizes the Freirean praxis in which it is assumed that everyone has the knowledge and can participate as a learner and teacher in the skills being developed. The workshops were organized with a Freirean (1970) approach that is transdisciplinary in nature, embracing student-centered learning and a dialogic approach. Through a real-world context, one of Freire's emphases in his critical pedagogy, the transdisciplinary learning approach links both concepts and skills. The educator moves instruction beyond blending disciplines to objectives that require pupils to both find answers to questions and to form questions they might have about the content, allowing them to faithfully create and build their own ideas.

The researchers experience and reflections suggest that a workshop like this one is a good way to create a setting for a collective agency and participatory pedagogy where a group of young people is given the task of achieving shared knowledge and skills based on both the participants' resources and the interactive, coordinative and synergistic dynamics of their transactions.

By creating settings to work with participatory pedagogy, the participants got the chance to experience a structured and safe environment. A research team (Simmons et al., 2010) identified three important characteristics of participatory pedagogy which were fulfilled in the workshops. (1) Choice and flexibility in assignments and course activities: The workshops fostered a choice-based approach highlighting pupils' choice, where they could both select the concept connected to the ocean and the technique. Many experimented with multiple approaches. (2) Balance between challenge and risk: It was noted that many of the participants felt that the settings, being outside school settings, played a role in navigating experiments and challenges. (3) Contexts for critical reflection: The workshop relied on the creation of settings where a holistic interdisciplinary approach lays the foundation for welcoming diverse viewpoints and effectively develops, implements and communicates creative ideas among the participants.

Even though the workshops were based on the Freirean approach, we expanded his ideology by helping the participants to gain an awareness of their own lives, what the ocean gives them and their attitudes toward the sea.

### ***Place-Based Learning***

The place-based learning approach emphasizes the joint development of how students think, how they frame the world and what they value (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008; Lockyer & Veteto, 2013).

The teachers in the workshops were new to each place and it was kept in mind that some of the participants might not recognize themselves in the place or not connect to the cultural center as they could be new in town. It was, therefore, important to create settings that enabled different connections so that each participant could work with lived experience and interests. It is possible to develop students' awareness skills, thus helping them to learn from the place while introducing a new way of working and learning with and through art. Questions that were asked in the workshops included: What is the place made of? Do you remember if you have visited a place like this before? How do you think it would be for a bird to live in a place like this, or a mouse? This way the students can discover what the place is made of and what it can offer. A place-based approach is not a set tool; it is more like a vehicle that needs to be adjusted to each student group.

Place-based learning offers space for both local and tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is personal and different for everyone because it is closely connected with a specific person and context. Tacit knowledge is not easy to explain in a straightforward manner since it is deeply rooted in a person's actions, experience, thoughts and

values (Endres et al., 2007). In the workshops, the participants shared tacit knowledge through stories from shared events which had the greatest influence on their lives.

### *Diverse Perspectives and Critical Questions*

Multiple perspectives are needed when learning about the complex issues of sustainability. When engaging students through the context of transdisciplinary engagements they are more likely to gain a deeper understanding (Wals & Rodela, 2014).

When linking students' knowledge, skills and perspectives through artistic actions, many different possibilities for consideration of the different ways of looking at issues arise. Participants in workshops could form opinions through discussing different solutions, strategies, experiences and worldviews when clarifying their values (Kozak & Elliot, 2014).

There are opportunities that arise when different disciplinary domains are used to look at social learning. Different disciplines have different vantage points. This allows for consideration of things otherwise unnoticed. The use of different disciplines can also develop more holistic and critical perspectives. This kind of approach calls for explanations of values and assumptions that can be hidden behind expressions and concepts (Wals & Rodela, 2014).

Sustainability requires individual involvement and collective participation when questioning and changing unsustainable routines. Therefore, education for sustainability's transdisciplinary approaches is important in order to transcend a singular disciplinary viewpoint. The transdisciplinary approach allows for different perspectives and types of knowledge (Wals & Rodela, 2014).

### *Sustainability Themes and Co-creation*

In the workshops, emphasis was placed on the co-creation of knowledge connected to sustainability (Jónsdóttir, 2017). Participants were encouraged throughout the process to express their existing knowledge of the impact of climate change on the oceans, as well as relating their own experiences of living with it, such as playing on the beach, taking boat trips on the sea. In the workshops, there was a focus on learning about the sea in an abstract way, based on memories and experiences of the phenomenon. That gives the potential for transformative learning and social learning, which is becoming increasingly more complex as scholars have begun to understand the importance of diversity and intersectionality (Godfrey, 2015).

When preparing the workshop, the aim was to create a dynamic space that might be of interest to a variety of participants and that had the potential of reaching individuals

of diverse ages and diverse backgrounds in community settings, acknowledging their own knowledge and skills.

Some scholars have warned educators from using scare tactics because they are not likely to change anything (Sterling, 2008). Creating settings (Fig. 3) to work with artworks that provide aesthetic experience and are open to interpretation and encourage critical thinking was therefore designed, to be able to reflect on the problems the earth is facing in sustainable development, many of which are “wicked problems” (Macdonald & Jónsdóttir, 2014). Those ideas connect to David Orr’s ideas of the importance of awareness of the natural elements in education.



Fig. 3 Each space gave great potential and also had some challenges



We are moved to act more often, more consistently, and more profoundly by the experience of beauty in all of its forms than by intellectual arguments, abstract appeals to duty or ever by fear (Orr, 2002, 178–179).

## Designing the Space

Each location was different. The focus was on creating a relaxed and exciting atmosphere by setting up exhibitions and artifacts that would be fruitful for curiosity and imagination. The workshops were four hours long in duration, so they gave time for sharing stories and life experiences. Participants were also able to comprehend the differences between worldviews and experiences that made them distinct from one another. Through the process of making art and critical discussions, they dealt both with cultural sustainability as the role of culture in sustainability and the sustainability of cultural practices.

## The Process

The workshop was organized as a participatory-centered choice-based learning approach, by arranging facilitative methods, focusing on creating settings in which the participants related to each other, their background and their environment, and also related to us as learners when working together on creating art. The participants either worked in small groups or chose to work independently on their projects. A participant-centered atmosphere was created this way, focusing on each individual in the group. This changed the artist's/researcher's role to that of a facilitator and learner, working with the participants. This is in accord with the emphasis on a participatory-based approach where the student takes responsibility for his/her own learning and the teacher facilitates and works alongside the student. An emphasis on discovery was highlighted in the workshops when the participants selected different elements which they looked at from different perspectives (Fig. 4).

Sometimes these elements were societal phenomena or sometimes natural elements that they could be used as a starting process. Creating work settings for choice-based learning empowers educators and students as they discover conditions and settings in which they become empowered (Jónsdóttir, 2017).

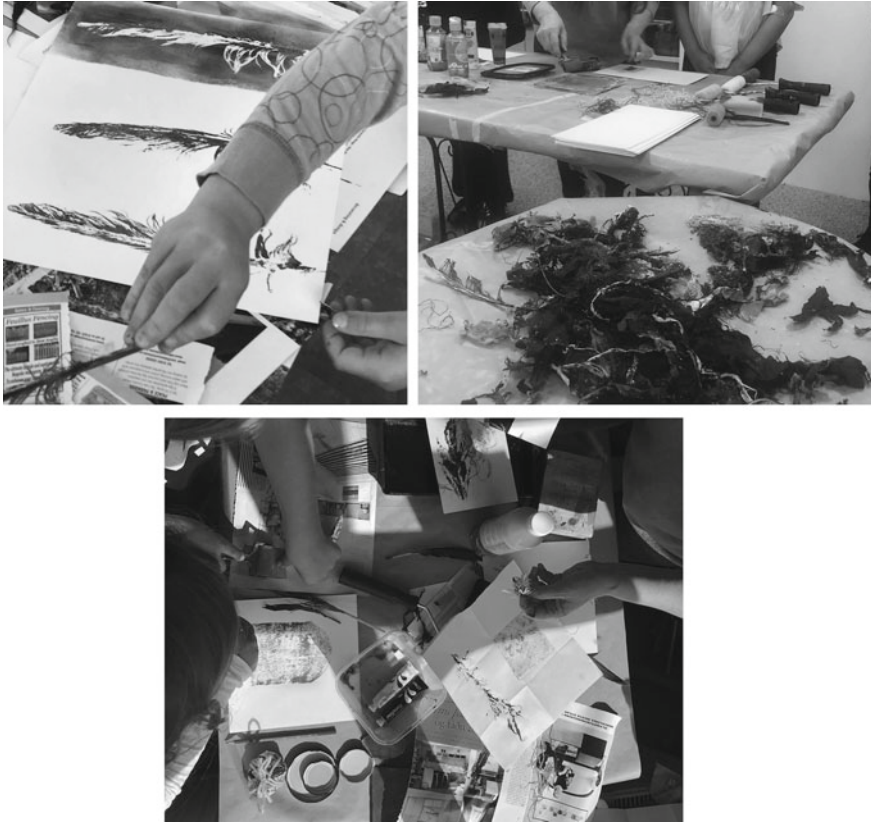
The focus of the workshops was on creating settings where the participants could do experiments. The workshops made use of aesthetic, embodied, experimental and emotional ways of creating knowledge. The participants discussed their experiments, findings and approaches, comparing their experiences to those of others. Sometimes, learning possibilities rose during the workshops like when a group of kids that had been water-coloring the ocean started to discuss the diverse colors of the sea and



**Fig. 4** Different workstations within the same cultural center, *Woman’s Book Library Eyrarbakki*

asked what was the correct color. Samples from the water that had been used to wash the brushes could be used to compare to the actual color of the sea.

The workshops focused on experiential learning that included learning with the senses, from stories, with hearts, hands and heads in order to find interests and overcome the barriers when nature is embraced with an authentic and critical engagement with co-learners. The participatory nature fostered self-reflection, kindness and compassion that supported others in their own inquiries and discoveries. Participants generously helped each other in their work. Often, they could be seen at the writing station helping fellow participants start the brainstorming process needed to bring out stories related to their experience of the sea. At the printmaking and woodblock station, they listened to each other’s ideas and made suggestions based on their experience of the process. Often, they narrated stories, either in images or words, that expressed their compassion for the creatures living in the sea and showed an understanding of the challenges and dangers these creatures face in an over-heated, polluted environment.



**Fig. 5** Participants experiment with printmaking

After analyzing the images and the stories, the main themes of the stories created are printmaking (Fig. 5), watercolor, ink, feathers, pencils, typewriters, collage, painting area and exhibition space.

### *Spending Time Together*

Many participants reflected on their memories, as they were spending time with their families or friends at the sea or the seashore. One boy who drew this picture chose a feather pen and ink instead of painting and printing. He concluded that this detailed method would better express the construction of the roar boats. The boy lives in Stykkishólmur and was inspired to create this picture by the memory of a boat trip he took with his family to one of the islands in the bay where the family spent a day playing games and having a picnic.



**Fig. 6** “Girl with long hair sails on a single rowboat”

### *Emotions*

In this story, the participant discussed that she is often lonely and that when she goes out to the sea, she becomes less lonely because she is dealing with nature (Fig. 6). The artworks show a strong connection between geography and creativity. The participants blended lived experience and their imagination by reflecting on how they live on and with the earth.

### *Dangers*

One participant reflected on the story of when her father who is a fisherman in the Western Fjords almost perished when his boat sank during a storm. He managed to haul himself out of the water and cling onto the hull of the boat until rescue arrived. The dangers inherent in making one’s living off the sea were very clear in her mind. Another participant from a village on the southern coast recalled the hidden dangers of the strong surf on its long stretch of black sand beach. He worried that tourists did not understand the power of the sea and indeed referred to the many deaths that have occurred on that stretch of sand when visitors strayed too close to the water. In the context of this theme, a workshop like this is not the right place to deal with the underlying ethical considerations needed when discussing harmful events. The in-depth conversations at the beginning of the workshop were expected to lead to a different place from which they started when discussing the ocean on general terms. At the same time, there was not enough time to spend with each individual. The participants were encouraged to discuss this with their families and classroom teachers.



Fig. 7 Story of a mermaid in the Western Fjords—Bookwork reflecting on man and nature

### *Storytelling and Imagination*

One of the participants that lived in the Western Fjords got very inspired when working on the typewriter. She invented a fairy tale (Fig. 7a) where the stage is the battle raging on the sea between good and evil, joy and sorrow. Her working process started with writing, then she used the age rings on the cube to make a wood print of the sea. She made a print with a seaweed to make the tail of the mermaid's body and then she used collage by clipping from a magazine to create her upper body and head. Another girl made a harmonica book telling stories about her family and the seaside and how they like nature (Fig. 7b).

### *Aesthetics*

The boy who painted the picture in Fig. 8a did not feel like participating in the beginning, but after a relaxed conversation, he remembered a trip to the beach with his father where they stood together and watched the angry sea. After that, he gave himself to the creative process and painted this dynamic piece of the sea, the beach plants and the sand. The boy in Fig. 8b came with his grandmother. They talked about their experience of the beautiful sunset in their fjord. He painted it when they talked about their memories from the seashore.

**Fig. 8** The Angry ocean seen from the beach—The beautiful sunset in one of the Western fjords





**Fig. 9** Drawing for a computer game

### *Adventures*

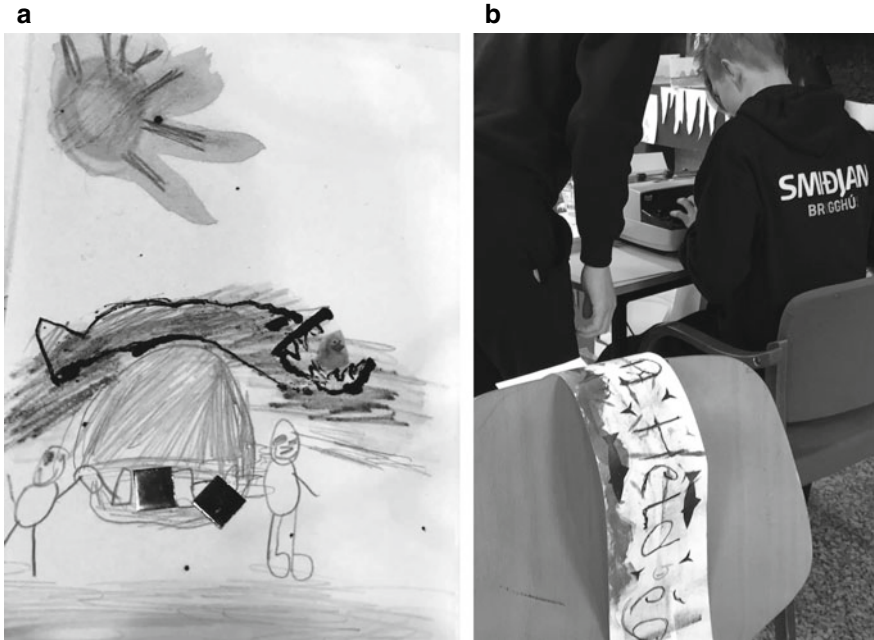
The boy in Fig. 9 designed four tables for a computer game where Super Marino brother was locked under the ocean surface. There were different animal creatures involved in the game that involved adventures in the ocean.

### *Animals*

Many of the participants made reflections about living creatures in the sea. Some wanted the shapes and forms to be accurate like the fish in Fig. 10 that was very long



**Fig. 10** Fore some the right dimensions were important an image of a ‘long’ fish



**Fig. 11** The fish in the ocean

because this kind of fish is long. As many different types of paper in different sizes were offered the boy could find the right material to work with.

Other boys decided to work together. They used their imaginations and told humorous stories of fishes that involved experimenting with different materials (Fig. 11a) showing enormous fish eating a duck with two people picking up plastic at the shore in the evening sun.

The typewriters, for many of the participants, were a very exciting tool. Some of them painted on long banners like in Fig. 11b that they would type on after using other materials.

## Results

Education is often put forward as a pathway to sustainable development. Indeed, quality education is integrated into all goals, and specifically to number four, in the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals in Agenda 2030 (UNESCO, 2015) (Fig. 12).

Overall, the workshops were well achieved in the cultural centers. We got compliments for well-managed activities that encourage the people in the community to think about issues related to the ocean and sustainability. It will take some time to





**Fig. 12** Participants doing experiments with different materials

see the practical implications of this change, but it seems likely that the cultural centers will continue with this focus and a few of them asked us to come again. Local ecological knowledge and educational practices, as part of developing values and meanings, have been proven to raise sustainable awareness (Dahl, 2016).

## ***Collective Efficacy***

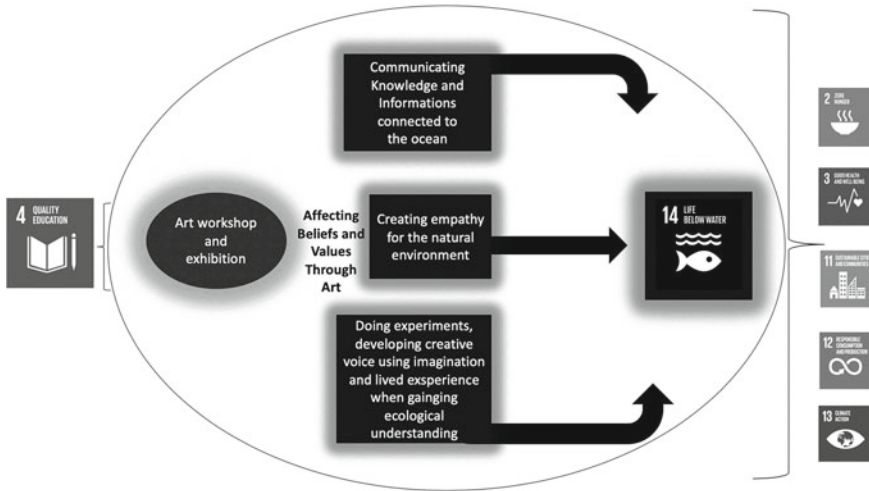
Even though beliefs of collective efficacy (Goddard et al., 2000) include emergent aspects, they serve functions similar to those of personal efficacy beliefs and operate through similar processes (Bandura, 1997). The shared beliefs among the three artists creating the workshops resulted in collective efficacy that influenced the types of future they wanted to achieve through the collective action. In being a part of a collaborative group, it was their behavior, visions and different skills that promoted its operations. Articulating to others when working together helped when shaping and clarifying the ideas; a group has more resources to call on than an individual. Working together developed self-efficacy and stimulated the reconstruction of existing beliefs and knowledge. Trust and mutual support were also important factors in the collaboration. Discussions on partly formed ideas were thrown forward with courage, as questions were asked when acknowledging lack of understanding challenging each other when searching for solutions. Teacher knowledge is often described as tacit or craft knowledge beyond verbalization (Brown & McIntyre, 1993).

For the participants, the process of developing ideas on how to make a change in their community by working collectively encouraged some of them to discuss their ideas in a safe environment. The aim was to create a learning environment that allowed young learners to find their own ideas and voices and express themselves meaningfully. This study supports the conclusion that by combining artistic approaches and connecting practice to theory, art has great potential in education for sustainability.

## **Conclusions**

The project managed to work with the content of sustainability in multiple ways, even though the focus was on the ocean (goal 14). Through the thematic approach, the participants increased their understanding of the relationship between different sustainability issues. Figure 13 shows how the workshops were organized to focus on goal 14 while also taking in goals 2, 3, 11, 12, 13 (United Nations, 2015).

The workshops were characterized by open and relaxed settings where the learners got the opportunities to think both critically and creatively about the relationship between humans and nature. When educational settings make participants question their own viewpoints, it provides them with a more dependable way of making their life meaningful. When looking at and reflecting on alternate points of view and a new way of knowing is created that may be different from their old habits. This requires the participants to become tolerant toward others' points of view (Mezirow, 2000). They thought about ecological and social issues from diverse perspectives while making links to everyday practices and power relations and wondering "who can make decisions?" and "what can I do to make a change?" The participants' ability to take civic responsibility was enhanced through the process. What the participants



**Fig. 13** The workshop processes

could do to make a change through active participation was discussed. Through experimental processes, the participants gained experience in sharing their thoughts through art making while building relationships when sharing their findings with other learners. The context was successful as the workshops gave the potential to increase the participants' understanding of and connection with the local nature as they reflected on the community in which they live. When designing the workshop, we paid attention to how the process, context, content and perspectives delivered transformative learning experiences.

There is a continued need for supporting learners and peripheral communities in Iceland to reclaim their own processes of sustainability through the arts. This can be done by providing settings for knowledge co-creation and sharing and community building. Offering workshops that are inspiring, nourishing, connecting, giving visibility to diverse ecological initiatives is one way to reach that goal. The experiences of the workshops demonstrated their efficacy in building a sense of solidarity among different groups through an arts-based, collective inquiry process. Measures have been taken to continue the project to expand this experience further and to provide a true inter-cultural dialogue within Icelandic society and contribute to new experiments in higher education. The fact that children in remote areas do not have the same possibilities as their peers in the capital area is something that needs to be continually addressed to ensure equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their location or state (Bamford, 2009). By nurturing an ecology of knowledge, engaging with radical pedagogies and creating settings for true learning commons, there is hope to provide opportunities for expanding human consciousness and cultural and ecological regeneration.

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# Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Germany—Convergences, Divergences, Opportunities and Challenges



Susanne Keuchel

**Abstract** In Germany, the arts educational structure has grown in many different ways. Recently, Germany has launched an education offensive for education for sustainable development, because it is seen as essential in realizing the so-called Sustainable Development Goals which the United Nations voted to adopt in 2015. In the first step, this article describes the cooperation and positions of both education sectors. In the second step, educational goals and quality criteria of arts education and ESD in Germany are compared under the following questions: Are there common intersections and where are the significant differences? What potential do the differences have for the respective other educational sectors? How can arts education benefit from ESD? And vice versa? And where are the boundaries for cooperation between arts education and ESD due to different goals and quality criteria? The article shows that arts education and ESD in Germany can achieve synergy effects if the special differences between the two areas of education are maintained.

## Introduction

Social change in Germany has been driven by technocracy, modernisation, economisation, globalisation and liberalisation. Today, however, society's focus is increasingly turning to sustainability.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the first international political commitment to systematically anchor the principle of sustainability within state systems in the context of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Here, sustainability is understood as defined in the UN's Brundtland Report published in 1987: "Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable—to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

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As part of its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, UNESCO has launched a Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). ESD should “empower [] people to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future” and should encourage individuals “to be responsible actors who resolve challenges, respect cultural diversity and contribute to creating a more sustainable world”.<sup>1</sup> The UNESCO’s roadmap for implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development highlights the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Culture is not allocated a central role here, though the roadmap mentions the importance of appropriately incorporating cultural diversity: “ESD... responds to local specificities and respects cultural diversity” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 33).

This poses the question: Why was culture not included as a fourth pillar? With the aid of examples, we will examine the development and positions of arts education and ESD in Germany in order to assess the significance of culture and arts education for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This examination with special regard to a German perspective is based on the following key questions: What distinguishes them in terms of educational objectives, guiding principles, didactics and content? Where are their similarities and differences? Could their differences be of use to their counterpart? How can arts education benefit from ESD? And vice versa? And where can a line be drawn between arts education and ESD due to their different educational objectives?

## The Development of Arts Education in Germany

In Germany, *Kulturelle Bildung* [arts education] became established as an extracurricular field of activity during the 1968 student protest movement, replacing the previous term *Musische Erziehung* [artistic training] (cf. Seidenfaden, 1962). This “new arts education” (Zacharias, 2001, p. 20) criticised the “old” style of teaching that focused on the classics. Arts education should no longer revolve around the culture of social elites but should “educate in culture” (Liebau & Zirfas, 2004, p. 579). Thus, the humanist-influenced principle of “self-education for the development of human potential” in the sense of “concepts of human self-determination” (Assis & Chen, 2015, p. 118) is taken as the starting point for arts education in Germany. According to Wilhelm von Humboldt, man should strive to promote “the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole” (Humboldt, 1792). This is what creates a person’s self-determination and personality. Other basic principles that can be derived from this are participation and the holistic nature of educational processes. Arts education in Germany also displays a distinct trend towards critical and emancipatory pedagogy in order to build individual maturity and expose existing cultural power relations (cf. Bourdieu, 1987). For the first time, arts education also places youth culture and lifeworld orientation at the heart of

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<sup>1</sup> [www.bne-portal.de](http://www.bne-portal.de) and [www.en.unesco.org](http://www.en.unesco.org)



the artistic debate. In the 1970s, criticism of power took the form of strong political stances, such as “democratic cultural work” (Fuchs, 1990, p. 18).

In Germany, arts education established itself in a wide range of fields over the next decades, including in the pedagogical work of traditional cultural institutions. As this field has gradually expanded and gained acceptance, it is possible to observe a retreat from political stances in favour of professionalism in arts education.

The expansion of all-day schooling in Germany 2003–2009 (cf. Klemm, 2014, p. 4) has made it necessary for arts education providers to work more closely with schools. This is because it enables them to reach more young people, including the educationally disadvantaged (cf. Keuchel & Wiesand, 2006), and also because their target group is no longer available in the afternoons as they are now in school. Another motivation is the desire to reform schools in line with the principles of arts education (cf. Fuchs & Braun, 2015).

The fact that schools are now more involved in arts education, along with different educational objectives, has sparked a heated debate about quality (cf. Bkj, 2010). This also involves questions of impact in the direction of empirical pedagogy. The focus is less on achieving primary professional goals within arts education, possibly due to the increasing marginalisation of arts subjects in the educational discourse (cf. Barth, 2014, p. 12), but rather on transfer effects with lofty goals such as improving intelligence (cf. Bastian, 2000), “the art of living” (cf. Bockhorst, 2012) or “You can change your life in a dance class” (Rhythm is it, 2004). The debate on quality transfers some of the concepts of empirical pedagogy, such as competency models, to arts education (cf. Schorn & Timmerberg, 2012). Franz E. Weinert defines competencies as “the cognitive abilities and skills that are available to, or can be learned by, individuals in order to solve specific problems, as well as the associated motivational, volitional [...] and social readiness and ability to apply these solutions successfully and responsibly in changing situations” (Weinert, 2001, p. 27f).

On the whole, however, it can be said that the basic principles of arts education have barely been questioned in practice or theory since its emergence in 1968, even if the discussion on the objectives of arts education has taken on a more technocratic tone in terms of society’s valorisation of the objectives of arts education.

## The Development of ESD in Germany

Germany has adopted the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development that was launched in 2015, by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research [Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF)]. The BMBF has set up a national platform and accompanying committees<sup>2</sup> to implement the Programme and helped to draw up a National Action Plan. The National Action Plan is designed to embed ESD into Germany’s education system at a structural level. This includes syllabuses, curricula, and pre- and in-service training of educators

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bne-portal.de/de/bundesweit/partnernetzwerke>.

and trainers in formal, non-formal and informal education. The plan also focuses on strengthening ESD networks and best practices, as well as developing local educational landscapes.

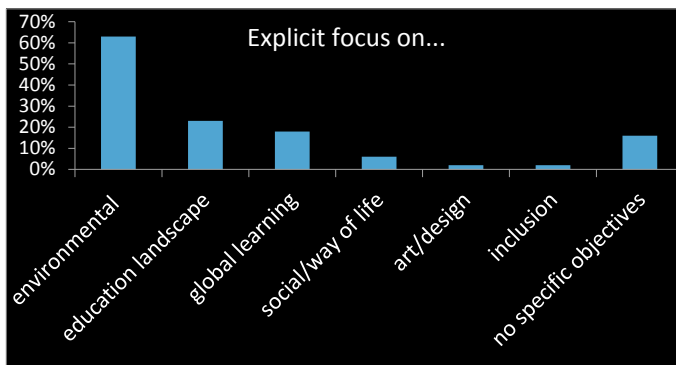
The National Action Plan is supported by a scientific advisor (Prof. de Haan) and an international advisor to UNESCO. It also involves six expert forums on different areas of education, covering early childhood education, school, vocational training, higher education, non-formal and informal learning/youth, and local authorities. In addition, 10 partner networks have been set up to work with the expert forums. These include representatives of various fields relating to education. One of these partner networks is dedicated to the field of actions of arts education and cultural policy.

Germany also holds an annual Agenda Congress where local authorities, networks and places of learning are awarded for their implementation of ESD. This runs in tandem with an expert conference.

In Germany, the main focus of ESD is on the environment, with culture and arts education playing only a marginal role. This is due to the fact that those who are responsible for the formation of cultural education landscapes and those responsible for the formation of educational landscapes for ESD are traditionally weakly linked or have no points of contact at all, due to their administrative organizational structure.

Therefore, the dominance of environmental issues in Germany's ESD discourse becomes recognizable when viewing the contents of German ESD conferences, contributions and projects. This is shown by the selected main topics of the 2016 ESD prize-winners, who were selected from 100 applications received from municipalities, platforms/networks and learning locations in Germany. 65 places of learning, networks and municipalities were surveyed, with multiple nominations possible (Fig. 1).

After the environment, education and global learning come next in order of importance. However, the prize-winning projects that made reference to intercultural or global issues tended to do so through environmental topics or questions of global justice, such as fair trade, rather than through cultural issues. It is noticeable that the



**Fig. 1** Main themes of the 2016 ESD award winners in Germany (own work based on data from Deutsche Unesco Kommission, 2017)

awards for creating educational landscapes do not generally include overall concepts for arts education within the community. This is because, within arts education, they have long pursued the goal of cooperative educational landscapes. For example, the oldest municipal “Conception of Arts Education [...]” can be found in Munich and has existed since the beginning of the 1990s (cf. Keuchel and Hill, 2012). The fact that innovative, overall municipal concepts for arts education are not considered in the ESD award for educational landscapes could be taken as a sign that there has to date been little overlap between ESD and arts education in Germany.

## **Convergences and Divergences in Objectives, Methodology, Didactics and Guiding Principles**

In Germany’s expert discourse, arts education is primarily guided by principles relating to the structure of the educational process, and hence mainly aimed at educators. Within this expert discourse, ESD is based on a competency model that focuses on the learning outcomes of learners in a goal-oriented way.

As outlined earlier, the process-orientation of arts education is guided by the objectives of “new arts education” (cf. Zacharias, 2006, p. 19) rather than classical “arts training” (cf. Liebau & Zirfas, 2004, p. 579). Instead, it pursues a learner-oriented approach (cf. Zacharias, 2012) that includes the lifeworlds of young people and is reflected in guiding principles such as self-education, personal development, learner-orientation, strengths-based orientation, different perspectives and an emancipatory approach (cf. Braun & Schorn, 2012). There is no hard and fast definition of what constitutes arts education and its content. All definitions tend to be very broad or very narrow. As a rule, however, the “arts” are understood as a central medium of arts education. Thus, Karl Ermert defines arts education in Germany as “a process of learning and coming to terms with oneself, one’s environment and society through the medium of the arts and their production” (cf. Ermert, 2009).

The emancipatory approach of arts education in Germany, involving questioning what exists rather than cementing it, corresponds to the multi-dimensionality of the arts. There are no right or wrong answers. Breaking the rules is an integral part of artistic practice, so the focus is not on the acquisition of specific previously defined skills by the learners. However, the situation is somewhat different in school arts curricula, where learning objectives are, of course, defined and where in some cases attempts have been made to define them in terms of competency models (cf. Wagner & Schönau, 2016). Extracurricular arts education in Germany rejects the kind of goal-oriented approach that focuses on acquiring specific, predefined competencies. To date, ESD has not been a specific school subject in Germany, as little as there is also no specific school subject for arts education. Rather, ESD is sought to be integrated as a method within the different school subjects, which is also demanded for arts education by some reform educationalists. So arts education and ESD in Germany are rather a cross-sectoral task of formal, non-formal and informal education. Therefore,

the aims and didactic methods of ESD will now be compared with the practice of non-formal arts education, as established in the 1970s.

It may seem surprising that ESD refers to a competency model, as these are often linked to the guiding principle of economization within Germany's education debate. This is because competency models focus on "human capital" (cf. Becker, 1993) in order to prepare society for the needs of the labour market in the best possible way. "If the concept of education referred to the neo-humanistic ideal of a person educated for life in a cultural world, then the concept of competency in the context under consideration refers to a person capable of acting according to economic standards during economic change" (cf. Vonken, 2001, p. 514). There is also talk of a "new philosophy of output control", which, as is usual in the industry, looks at the whole process of school and academic education from its endpoint, "[...] Education is a purpose-driven outcome [...]" (Hepp, 2014, p. 38).

Taking these aspects into account, at second glance it is perhaps less surprising that ESD refers to a competency model because ultimately ESD is also about social relevance and "valorisation". Because the principle of sustainability is based on the common good of society, for present and future generations, individuals have to learn to take responsibility for society. In this sense, further differences between ESD and arts education become clear, such as learner orientation versus common-good orientation, and process orientation versus goal orientation. This goal orientation on ESD is also clearly demonstrated in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

For example, the standard approach of ESD pedagogy towards assuming responsibility stands in contrast to current trends towards economization in education. In light of technocracy that accompanies economization, education—in parallel with politics—has largely become a technical, management issue (cf. Esser, 1985, p. 212ff). According to Helmut Schelsky's model, the effects of technocracy can be described as follows: "With increasing scientific knowledge and constant advances in technology... the scope for political decisions based on values or ideologies is becoming ever smaller" (cf. Weber, 1951, p. 149). This trend in pedagogy can also be seen in the fact that the marks once given on school reports for attitude and behaviour were gradually abolished in former West Germany, and former East Germany largely followed suit after reunification.

In contrast to this trend of turning away from normative educational objectives in Germany, both arts education and ESD are guided by normative principles. Within arts education, they relate to the structure of the educational process, which should be participatory, inclusive and respectful of cultural diversity. Here too, its normative approach is primarily directed at educationalists. Within ESD, the normative approach is primarily directed at learners, their behaviour and their assessment of situations. Above all, learners should take responsibility for the common good and the environment, as can be seen from the following overview of the ESD competency model (cf. de Haan et al., 2008), which contrasts it with basic principles of arts education as formulated by Braun and Schorn (2012) (Table 1).

The 12 "shaping competencies" were developed by Gerhard de Haan, who is the responsible scientific advisor to the Federal Republic of Germany for the implantation of the ESD World Programme of Action. The competency model was developed

**Table 1** ESD competencies and arts education

ESD	Arts education
<i>Subject and methodological competence</i>	
1 Creating knowledge in a spirit of openness to the world, integrating new perspectives	Lifeworld orientation: Taking individual life experiences into account. Translating different perspectives into artistic forms
2 Thinking and acting in a forward-looking manner	... involvement in the artistic process rather than achieving educational goals
3 Acquiring knowledge and acting in an interdisciplinary manner	Holistic approach: Holistic, subjective examination of reality
4 Recognising and weighing up risks, dangers and uncertainties	Experiment: The risk of failure is part of every open, artistic/aesthetic process. Failure is... a source of knowledge and experience (learning from mistakes)
<i>Social competence</i>	
5 Ability to plan and act in cooperation with others	Self-paced learning in groups: Processes must be self-determined; individual initiative
6 Ability to participate in decision-making processes	Participation and co-determination: A dialogue approach that recognises individual expertise
7 Ability to motivate oneself and others to become active	Voluntariness: Motivation and willingness to take responsibility for oneself
8 Ability to consider conflicting goals when reflecting on strategies for action	Focus on strengths: Building on existing skills. Exceeding one's perceived limitations
<i>Self-competence</i>	
9 Ability to reflect upon one's own principles and those of others	Creating a public: ...the actors experience themselves as participants in the production of cultural life; they ... receive recognition
10 Ability to plan and act autonomously	Action-oriented: The provision of spaces for aesthetic/artistic experiences
11 Ability to show empathy for and solidarity with the disadvantaged	Openness to diversity: Recognition of cultural differences... Aesthetic/artistic learning creates space to recognise, engage with and deal with differences
12 Ability to use notions of equity as a basis for decision-making and action	Self-efficacy: (...) Testing one's own potential and limits for expression... experimentation leads to problem-solving skills

Source Own work

during the World Decade Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014. In addition, in 2007, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung) and the Conference of Education Ministers (Kultusministerkonferenz KMK) issued a framework for global learning, listing the skills that children and young people need for are committed to for the global learning (BMZ, 2007). Both competency models are still used today within the current discourse on the ESD World Programme of Action in Germany

(cf. Grundmann, 2017). The aforementioned 12 shaping competencies were divided into three areas: subject and methodological competence, social competence and self-competence, but they could also be structured as follows:

- (a) Dealing with knowledge, e.g. “acquiring knowledge in an interdisciplinary manner”,
- (b) Normative rules of conduct, e.g. “thinking and acting in a forward-looking manner”,
- (c) Normative values, such as “empathy”, “solidarity” and “equity”.

A direct comparison of the “shaping competencies” with the 12 principles of arts education according to Braun and Schorn (2012) reveals further differences and similarities.

The global perspective on cultural differences is common to both fields. What is striking here, however, is the different normative setting. Whereas arts education is about openness to and recognition of diversity, ESD focuses on empathy for and solidarity with the disadvantaged. The latter could certainly also be critically evaluated, as dividing people into disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged groups also implies a one-sided evaluation of their lives and attribution of desirable conditions.

There are similarities with regard to the requirement to take a holistic view, which also includes interdisciplinary perspectives.

Both fields address how individuals handle risks, motivation and creation, and how they work within social groups. However, ESD has a stronger orientation towards the common good when dealing with these aspects, such as how to motivate others or productively integrate individuals into a social group. In contrast, arts education in these contexts tends to have a strong learner orientation. In terms of individual strengths, it is a case of exceeding one’s own limitations rather than recognising conflicts in the achievement of goals. Failure is even evaluated in arts education as “an essential source of knowledge and experience” and “part of any open, artistic/aesthetic process” (cf. Braun & Schorn, 2012). Even within social groups, it is less about group dynamics than about allowing individuals within the group to become self-effective, contribute their opinions and voice their concerns.

It should be added that ESD, in addition to the competency model, has also formulated didactic principles for how educationalists should design transfer processes, divided into specific and general, with the general being those “that also play a role in many other subject areas” (Künzli et al., n. d., p. 18). Among the subject-specific principles, an orientation towards vision, participation and networked learning are highlighted in the context of local/global, environment/economy/socio-cultural, and present/future (cf. Künzli et al., n. d., p. 18).

In conclusion, the main differences between ESD and arts education lie in goals orientation and the focus on strengths. Arts education is process- and learner-centred, while ESD focuses on goals and the common good (Table 2).

**Table 2** Differences in arts education and education for sustainable development. Source: Own work

	Arts education	ESD
Basic principles/educational objectives	Process-oriented	Goal-/results-oriented
	Learner-oriented (self-education) New perspectives and strengths	Common-good orientation Assumption of responsibility
	Normative in relation to the educational process	Normative in relation to the learner's outcome and action
	Emancipatory: Questioning the status quo (breaking the rules); breaking down boundaries	Critically reflecting on how one's actions impact others; Recognising and showing solidarity with the disadvantaged
Medium	The "arts" (no right or wrong)	(Global) knowledge about (environmental) connections
	Openness to cultural diversity	Global perspectives

## Where Do Themes and Content Overlap in Practice?

Of course, it is possible for arts education to take ESD goals, in this case the SDGs, and address them with artistic means. ESD's objective of imparting global knowledge is, as highlighted above, to some extent congruent with the aim of arts education to represent cultural diversity, thus providing another common starting point. ESD is ultimately also about visions and shaping the future, while the arts and culture are also always seen as creative drivers of social development, so this provides another specific intersection in practice.

On the structural level, of course, arts education also has to address questions of sustainability in how it organises itself.

### *Addressing Environmental or Other SDGs Through Artistic/Creative Means*

Arts education is able to address social and political topics through the medium of the arts. With regard to the arts, Article 5, Paragraph 3 of Germany's Basic Law (Grundgesetz, 1949) states: "Art and scholarship, research, and teaching shall be free." This simple sentence is a result of the country's experiences with National Socialism (cf. Jarass 2014). The arts and arts education in Germany is, therefore, both defending themselves against ideological appropriation and the targeted transmission of values. For example, some representatives of arts education refuse to cooperate with ESD because of concerns that it could be appropriated for the targeted

transmission of values. This critical stance is often inflamed by a sense of unease with certain existing ESD projects that use artistic means and forms of expression to establish normative guidelines on things like waste separation and saving water in order to make them more attractive. However, these kinds of projects, which aim to teach specific patterns of environmentally friendly behaviour, are not arts education projects in the sense of arts education because they do not follow its guiding principles, such as learner orientation, self-education and participation.

An example of an arts education project that manages this balancing act between addressing environmental aspects without laying down specific rules on “correct patterns of behaviour” is *Art to stay—Einmal wieder Genießer\*in sein* [Once again to be a connoisseur] (cf. FU Berlin online). This interactive art project draws attention to environmental and cultural issues relating to disposable coffee cups—without resorting to wagging the finger. While addressing the environmental damage caused by these cups, one artist looked at why so many people still persist in using them. She concluded that it makes people feel important by showing they are too busy to drink a coffee at home or in a cafe. She decided to create an artistic counter-narrative that focused on the aspect of enjoyment by means of a coffee cup museum, personal favourite cups, and by creating the perfect, relaxed coffee-drinking atmosphere on stage, which was then captured on film. In parallel, a college canteen displayed artistic installations featuring used disposable cups for one week—thus recording and demonstrating in an indirect, artistic way how valuable resources are being consumed.

### ***Insight into Global (Cultural) Perspectives***

As previously mentioned, the ESD aim of imparting global knowledge is only partially congruent with the aim of cultural diversity as espoused by arts education, because there is a difference in its normative implementation. Whereas arts education is about recognising diversity, ESD focuses on empathy with solidarity for the disadvantaged and global justice.

One arts education project that received an award at the ESD Federal Congress in Germany, and which not only addresses global issues but also the specific, somewhat different, perspective of arts education, is the *KinderKulturKarawane*. In this project, youth theatre ensembles from developing countries are invited to Europe to join young Germans in discussions about topics that are important for their future and use it as a springboard for creating artistic productions. Through peer-to-peer learning, the theatre groups from around the world and the young Germans who take part in the *KinderKulturKarawane* use a variety of artistic and creative forms of expression, such as dance, acrobatics, body awareness and theatre, to create independent productions that are manifestations of globalised youth culture in its most positive sense. Within this project, theatre groups from Africa, South America or India do not focus on the fact that they are disadvantaged in terms of having worse living conditions, but



instead act as young experts who can bring different perspectives, expert reports and artistic practices to young people in Germany.

### ***Space for Discussion—A Different View of Social Practice***

The “arts” as a medium of arts education have always been regarded as an essential driver of social development, as they stimulate a shift of perspective. For example, a study by the European Commission in 2009 states: “A culture-based creativity policy ...inspiring our societies.... Art and culture can make a vital contribution to the achievement of objectives that reconcile the creation of wealth with sustainability and harmonious social development” (European Commission, 2009, p. 161).

The *Welcome to the Anthropocene* (Deutsches Museum 2014–2016) exhibition at the Deutsches Museum in Munich provided, for example, a different perspective on climate change. The exhibition postulated the change from the Holocene to the Anthropocene, in which it is humans rather than the forces of nature that have permanently changed the Earth’s systems. Both artistically and scientifically, visitors were presented with displays relating to urban life, transport, evolution and nutrition and encouraged to form their own opinions. This was done through interactive displays and the deliberate use of the concept of ongoing debate and lack of knowledge about many aspects.

Another example is the UTOPIA TOOLBOX Container project (Utopia Toolbox online), a temporary “ministry for future dreams and utopias”, which aimed to “incite radical creativity” while moving around different locations. Through artistic interventions, the public were asked questions such as: What do you really want? Are we still dreaming of a better world? How will we live in the future? And: What can you do today to move a step closer to your idea?

### ***Sustainability in Arts Education***

The structural, practical level of arts education also contains many references to the SDGs.

The fact that arts education sees itself as process-oriented “self-education” means that it pursues sustainable educational processes from the outset. However, its claim to offer process-oriented “self-education” does not tie in with the current funding situation for arts education in Germany. This is because a large number of arts education work is currently financed through project funding. “Flagship projects” are viewed very critically within arts education. Here, the 2030 Agenda could provide a vital political argument in the fight for sustainable infrastructure for arts education.

Another challenge for arts education is the fact that it falls under the responsibility of different government departments. In Germany, it is mainly financed by the ministries of culture, education and youth. This interdepartmental approach is

one of the reasons why, as already mentioned, arts education in Germany has been experimenting for decades with the development of an arts education landscape in parallel with ESD demands, in this case cooperation between non-formal arts education actors, schools, kindergartens, associations, migrant-run organisations and many other institutions. For example, the *Kommunale Gesamtkonzepte Kultureller Bildung* contest was set up in 2007 in North Rhine-Westphalia (c.f. Schorn, 2013, 2012) with a specific aim of promoting arts education landscapes. To cite another example, the *Arbeitsstelle Kulturelle Bildung* was set up in North Rhine-Westphalia in 2009 to bring together three ministries—Youth, Culture and Schools—in cooperation with a civil society actor, the *Akademie der Kulturellen Bildung*, in order to work together on arts education and benefit from their synergies.

In addition, arts education actors can also ensure that the SDGs are implemented within their own structures, for example in the context of gender equality or sustainable economic budgets. Are materials purchased from local suppliers or global corporations? Is the coffee Fair Trade? And so on.

## **Conclusion: Opportunities and Challenges for Arts Education in the Context of the UN's 2030 Agenda**

The above discussion makes it clear that there are both intersections and convergences between arts education and ESD. ESD pursues concrete goals, in this case the SDGs, and focuses on the common good. Arts education is learner- and process-oriented. However, exciting synergies are evident in this diversity of educational approaches, provided that the characteristics of both educational sectors remain and are not mixed, as shown in the examples given.

There are also good arguments for arts education to address the 2030 Agenda and ESD. First, in the sense of a humanistic educational ideal, arts education aims to pursue sustainable educational processes that clearly stand out from today's, often strongly economised, output-oriented educational approaches. Therefore, the 2030 Agenda could act as a political reference paper for arts education to assert itself against an increasingly output-oriented educational system.

Secondly, the ESD perspective of global learning in the sense of a “just” society coincides with arts education's aim of promoting cultural diversity. In Germany, the issue of migration and refugees means this perspective is gaining particular importance. Recent studies show, however, that non-national and especially non-European content and arts are still rarely included in arts education projects. For example, an exploratory study that analysed almost 500 best-practice projects from two German national competitions in the years 2012–2014 showed that only 28% of the projects involved non-national artists, works of art or lifeworlds, or explicitly addressed the issue of cultural diversity (Keuchel, 2015, p. 141).

Thirdly, with its aim of promoting a “lifeworld orientation” and “participation” (cf. Zirfas, 2015) for young target groups, it is essential that arts education deals with

the topic of sustainability, which is at the heart of how young people are shaping their futures.

However, there are also good arguments for ESD to cooperate much more closely with culture and arts education.

First of all, there is a need to critically examine whether specific values such as empathy, solidarity and equity can really be conveyed within an output-oriented competency model such as ESD. Arts education, with its learner-oriented approach and enabling of different perspectives, because there is no right and wrong in the arts, maybe a better basis for developing one's own opinions, even if it cannot be steered in a specific direction.

The multi-perspective nature of the "arts" in arts education may also have further advantages for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In environmental issues, the perspective of environmental education is usually one of balance. The current status is critically reflected in the context of sustainability. This generally leads to a problem-oriented attitude, which usually demands a change in how resources are managed, often accompanied by restrictions and renunciation. Arts education, in its multi-perspective approach to how we should shape the future, is in a position to develop positive cultural narratives. Addressing sustainable visions of the future from an arts and culture standpoint would be less a restrictive way of looking at and minimising existing damage. But first of all, it would be a way of finding positive answers to the question of how we want to live in future and, based on these visions of the future, developing ways of implementing these visions, which also touch on questions of diplomacy, humanity, democracy, social cohesion and cultural exchange in addition to the issue of protecting the environment.

Thus, the particular potential of arts education for ESD lies in its openness to results and its experimental approach as a necessary corrective to the overly normative educational efforts of ESD. Artistic stimulus can be used to counteract content-related narrowness and thus enable subjective negotiation processes, which at the same time may offer an opportunity to come up with alternative solutions. The particular potential of arts education for ESD also lies in its focus on strengths. As a rule, it does not use negative narratives, such as the destruction of natural resources, but instead focuses on cultural issues and narratives that take into account the current lifeworld in order to provide positive creative spaces.

According to the Global Action Programme, ESD should enable every human being to take "informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations" (UNESCO, 2014, p. 33). So it highlights two areas: "information" and "decisions about the future". The current discourse on ESD in Germany focuses primarily on the transmission of information and values. For "sustainable future decisions", however, it would be unfortunate if the future were to be considered one-dimensionally—rather than multi-dimensionally, creatively and in a process-oriented manner in the sense of arts education.

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# A Microtopia of Arts Education: International Sustainable Development Policy Brought to Life in an Educational Project Involving Institutions in South Africa and Denmark



Charlotte Svendler Nielsen, Gerard M. Samuel, Peter Vadim, Liesl Hartman, Fabian Hartzenberg, and Olaf Gerlach-Hansen

**Abstract** Red Apples–Green Apples is a dance/visual arts project, which was started by an intercultural group of artists, teachers and researchers with 10–11-year-old children living in Cape Town and Copenhagen in 2017. The project has since focused on the school class in Cape Town with biannual project weeks ending in 2020. The activities of the project have contributed to illuminating how arts education can promote the culture–nature dimension of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and from a more philosophical viewpoint what children can learn through artistic–educational collaborations about themselves, others and their surroundings. In this article, examples drawn from videographic material and children’s experiences expressed in multi-modal formats are discussed in relation to SDG no. 4 focusing on quality education and the implementation of the new EU strategic approach to international cultural relations.

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## Introduction

An important aspect of the field of arts education internationally over the past 50–60 years has been the role of arts education in addressing social and cultural challenges of the world. This aspect was highlighted as the third goal of the UNESCO-supported Goals for the Development of Arts Education (UNESCO, 2010). Addressing the social and cultural challenges of the world becomes increasingly relevant today given the escalating challenges of sustainable development on the planet affecting people in their everyday lives, along with increasing challenges for basic, civic people-to-people relations. The urgency to address these challenges in education is reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.7. to seek mainstreaming by 2030 of, respectively, “education for sustainable development”, and “global citizenship education”.

In this chapter, we explore a case which we will define as a “microtopia” (Bourriaud, 2002) of arts education. This case is an arts-integrated educational project which we, as representatives of different institutions in South Africa and Denmark, have been leading in collaboration since 2017. Through examples from the project, we will discuss the educational value of the arts-integrated approach promoted in this microtopia. We examine in what way this project has been experienced as meaningful to assist us in implementing two current and new multilateral policies of relevance to European arts education connecting with partners outside Europe: The UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015), specifically Goal 4.7., and the EU strategic approach to international cultural relations (Council of the European Union, 2019).

### The Red Apples–Green Apples Project: A Microtopia Inspired by Relational Aesthetics

Microtopia (or micro-utopia) as an ethnographic concept (Blanes et al., 2016)<sup>1</sup> is based on relational aesthetic theory (Bourriaud, 2002), which underlines “the realm of human interaction and its social context” of artistic processes (Bourriaud, 2002, 14). We bring this concept into an educational context because we are curious to explore *what kinds of relations can be facilitated in a microtopian encounter of arts-integrated educational processes, and what significance these relations might have to the co-creation of the activities as well as to the children’s opportunities for learning in the project.* Even though the relational aesthetic theory was not developed with education in mind, we find Nicolas Bourriaud’s (2002) concern to “allow for a critical understanding of art practice within a situated, historically, and politically informed context” (Blanes et al., 2016, 9) and his viewpoint that “art is thus not a

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<sup>1</sup> An extensive account of the development of the concept of microtopia in the field of arts and its origin in the idea of utopia as “ideal society” based on political philosophy can be found in Blanes et al. (2016).



social means and end, and is not confined to artists themselves, or the objects they produce” (ibid.) most relevant also to the field of arts education.

A microtopian approach helps “to move away from the abstract and locate the concrete, political component of the micro-dimension of social life, the structures and flows of power and production that conform our everyday lives” (Blanes et al., 2016, 9) as in microtopias “the ability to imagine and create is encouraged in the local sphere, responding to concrete political questions of the present” (Blanes et al., 2016, 9). Thus, we consider the microtopian approach useful in exploring our local (school) work which overall is responding to the global political SDG 4.7., as defined by the UN. We will achieve this by describing what we and the children do and experience in a number of educational activities in order to cast light on the value of this educational work from a broader human and political perspective.

The Red Apples–Green Apples project includes professionals from dance, the visual arts and design and endeavours to cross borders of academia and arts practice to develop new strategies both for teaching the arts and for pursuing research of children’s meaning-making processes within the educational practice that integrates the art forms. The project developed out of two prior collaborations across the two countries and a wish to develop a concrete project involving professionals and school classes from the countries that would integrate the art forms, intercultural aspects and collaborative work in different ways.<sup>2</sup> One was the CICLO project,<sup>3</sup> which explored children’s re-imaginings of their communities (as sustainable) in Cape Town, Rio de Janeiro, St. Petersburg and Denmark in 2014 (Kjær Wehner, 2015). The other was a North–South network of researchers and artists from the performing arts focusing on “Knowledge production, archives and artistic research” and working together during 2016–2017. For the first school workshop which took place in Cape Town in February 2017,<sup>4</sup> we chose the topic of climate and the primary elements of nature as these topics linked with part of the curriculum for the grade 4 group with which we

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<sup>2</sup> The Red Apples–Green Apples project started in 2017 was initiated as part of the network entitled Knowledge Production, Archives and Artistic Research led by Associate Professor, Dr. Karen Vedel, the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen with funding from the International Network Program, The Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education (grant no. 5132-00138B). The project also had funding from the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces and the Municipality of Copenhagen’s Open School funds. Moreover, the project was made possible by contributions in the form of in-kind working hours and materials from the Peter Clarke Art Centre in Cape Town and the Universities of Cape Town and Copenhagen.

<sup>3</sup> CICLO was led by the Danish Cultural Institute (DCI) in cooperation with Danish key organisations in arts education and counterparts abroad, including the Peter Clarke Arts Centre in Cape Town (PCAC). DCI and PCAC and local schools in Copenhagen and Cape Town continued in the 2017 Red Apples–Green Apples project.

<sup>4</sup> Partners in the project were dance artist and landscape architect Peter Vadim (Denmark), dance artists Anu Rajala-Erkut (Finland/Denmark), Erica Maré and Jamie-Lee Jansen (South Africa), Lisa Wilson (Jamaica/South Africa), a dance artist and Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town (UCT), and Gerard M. Samuel (South Africa), a former professional ballet dancer and currently Associate Professor and Head of the Dance Section at UCT. The team also comprised Associate Professor Karen Vedel (Denmark) of the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen, Associate Professor Charlotte Svendler Nielsen (Denmark), from the same Danish institution, but its Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sport Sciences, Fabian Hartzenberg (South

would be working, but also seemed highly relevant to the onset of the severe drought period in the area at that time. The same year we carried out a similar workshop week with a school class in Copenhagen of the same age. The title of the project was chosen in 2017 in order to (in a poetic manner) illustrate differences between all those involved and between the climate and the seasons in the North and the South which was the theme of the first workshops.

The class in Copenhagen was from a school that already had participated in the CICLO project in 2014 and was thus connected to the Danish Cultural Institute. The school is situated between an area of public housing and apartments and houses which are privately owned. Children going to this school are characterised by a broad ethnic and social diversity. The class in Cape Town was from a public school in the suburb of Athlone, which provides access to education for children from the local working-class area as well as from various deprived and violence-affected areas known as townships. This school was chosen for our project because it enjoys a close relationship with the local project partner, the Peter Clarke Art Centre, a Western Cape Education Department Art Centre that offers visual arts and design classes for schools, for learners who take electives in these areas or engage in extramural activities as well as for teachers in-service.

Since 2017 during biannual project weeks (so far 6 weeks) with the school class in Cape Town, we have explored how dance and visual arts can be integrated into educational activities and how to cross border in ways of thinking and working as artists, educators and researchers from different regions of the world and from these different art forms. Through our collaboration and co-creation, ideas have been developed around how to give children tools to focus more on who they are as embodied beings and in creative ways to empower them to question, live and respond to challenges in their lives. The subsequent work from 2018 onwards has only involved the school class in Cape Town and is conducted by a smaller group of the artist-educators and researchers from the two countries who had indicated an interest in continuing the educational dimension of the project.<sup>5</sup>

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Africa), design specialist and arts educator at the Peter Clarke Art Centre (PCAC), and Liesl Hartman (South Africa), visual artist, educator and at the time of the project Principal of PCAC.

<sup>5</sup> In advance of the first project weeks informed consent had been obtained from parents/guardians through a letter informing them about the purpose of the project, how it would be carried out, their right to get insight to material involving their own child, and to withdraw their consent at any moment until publication of articles about the project. Once we came to the schools we also informed the children about the purpose of the project and said to them that they could tell us if they did not want to be part of interviews or film. With the group in Cape Town we have renewed the informed consent every year and always talk to the children about the purpose of what we will be doing.

## Methodology for Exploring Microtopias of Arts Education

The project has both an educational and a research dimension and explores how the art forms may be used to create connections between the children's experiences and expressions. The authors are all art educators coming from either the visual arts/design field or the dance field and some of us also work as researchers. However, in this project we are all part of both educational and research processes in various ways: We plan the workshops, are carrying them out while documenting the processes, reflecting on experiences and outcomes, analysing empirical material, theorising and discussing what we find.

The project is grounded in a phenomenological theory of knowledge focusing on first-person experiences and on body–mind–world connections (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Van Manen, 1990) both as the cornerstone of the educational approach of the workshops and as the principle guiding analysis and interpretation. The challenge of this approach is to get close to first-person experiences of the children, to find ways to analyse material which is not text in a traditional sense, but expressions of experiences made with different artistic means, and also to find ways to include a critical dimension of the practice that we are leading ourselves.

Dutch educator Max Van Manen's (1990) approach to hermeneutic phenomenological analysis assists in solving some of these challenges as it suggests taking the point of departure in concrete descriptions of lived-experiences as "significant moments" (Van Manen, 1990, 163). This we do by using "reflective cards" written and drawn by the children and "reflective notes" written by the artist-educators as "recall strategies" of what was significant to us all. Other methods for documenting and exploring expressions and experiences occurring during the workshops are "videographic participation" (Svendler Nielsen, 2012) and interviews based on "stimulated recall" (Vestereinen et al., 2010) in the form of photos and drawings. The way we work with hermeneutic phenomenology is thus also involving an arts-based approach (Barone & Eisner, 2006) emphasising that when the material is interpreted in discussion with theory, a critical dimension is fostered.

In the Red Apples–Green Apples project, there is also a strong element of educational "action research" (Altrichter et al., 2008) in the sense that we plan "actions" (workshops) to be carried out in the school and explore their experienced outcomes in relation to the goals we have set. It is not action research in a traditional way (Lewin, 1946) as we have not been invited by others to solve a specific issue and assess the success of the implemented actions for reaching specific goals. Our work takes place over a long time period (3 years so far) and we continue returning to the same class so that our methods and analyses allow for an increasingly deeper understanding of the experienced values of what we are developing and how it works. It would, therefore, be adequate to term the methodology that guides the project "phenomenological and arts-based educational action research."

## Significant Pedagogical Moments of the Red Apples–Green Apples Project

What is experienced in so-called “significant moments” (Van Manen, 1990, 163) can be described in words using descriptive language. However, a description, according to Van Manen (1990), is in itself not enough to understand “the action life” of people; descriptions need to be interpreted in order to uncover the embodied dimension, bearing in mind, however, that an interpretation also entails a first-person perspective (that of the researcher). When conducting research based on hermeneutic phenomenology, phenomenological philosophy is the theoretical background, but the analyses are not conducted from theoretical concepts, the focus instead is on extracting themes and generate a more detailed understanding of those themes. Once this is done the themes are interpreted in discussion with theories and other research about the same experienced phenomena (Van Manen, 1990). The descriptions below will be analysed and interpreted in order to determine *what kinds of relationships are facilitated in the workshop situations, and what significance these relationships have to the co-creation of the activities as well as to the children’s opportunities for learning in the project.* The analysis section is divided into themes found through the analyses and those themes are reflected in the sub-headlines.

### *A Heartful Space*

At the end of a workshop week in Cape Town in which we had explored the elements of nature, we had introduced an activity using a large sheet (approx. 4 m × 5 m) of plastic in which the children had created tidal waves and a great cacophony of crushing plastic sounds (Fig. 1). We decided to include this teaching material in the



**Fig. 1** Children and artist-educators resting and imagining the growing of the grass together (photo: Authors’ own collection)

Herb Garden of the Arts Center on the final presentation day of the workshop. This presentation was to be for parents and others who had gathered to watch our work. In a reflective note, Gerard writes, *“I was, and am acutely aware of the sensitivities of Gender Based Violence (GBV) which is so prevalent in many of the townships around Cape Town and which may have created an awkwardness and reserve between young, vulnerable children and their adult, ‘in charge’ teachers. Instead, I noticed that the group entered freely responding to the invitation to rest and experience the growth that springs from that combination of earth and water in Nature. The children teased and plucked out green threads knotted in the brown hessian sheet that lay underneath the plastic and pulled these through cut out slits in the plastic. Little tendrils of lime green made their way to the surface as did some wriggling arms. Amidst the giggles, prompted perhaps by the close proximity of lying next to their teachers and fellow classmates, I noticed a calm and general ease - a safety from which to explore which this project had made possible. For me, this was one of the significant pedagogic moments where embodiment and empathy collide”*.

When looking through photos and field notes, it is obvious that relationship building between children and between children and adults is a strong “bi-product” of the workshops. There are many, many situations showing caring physical contact and the heart as a symbol also plays a strong role when the children are asked to form or draw shapes. The class teacher on the last day of a workshop week in the second year of our workshops said to us that she had observed that the children were hugging us all the time, so now she also wanted to hug us as a thank you for a wonderful week. This gesture by her illustrated that the space we create with the children is a very “heartful space”. In the following, it will be explored what it is in certain exercises that open for this kind of experienced space as a possibility in the microtopia of the Red Apples–Green Apples project.

In the exercise “Cutting body shadows” (Fig. 2) with a partner, the learners were asked to make a shape using physical contact which illustrated one from a list of 10 words that connect people and spaces (we called them “relationship words” and on the list together with the children we decided to include: barrier, entrance, exit, opening, closing, frame, border, threshold, obstacle and window). The pair stood in



**Fig. 2** Children engaged in the exercise “Cutting body shadows” (photos: Authors’ own collection)

front of a large sheet of paper and a projector was lit at them in order to make a shadow of their shape. The rest of the group was asked to cut in the paper the shadow of the shapes they saw. Later they glued the figurines on a big piece of paper to create a story and the stories were used as a starting point for creating a collaborative choreographic piece.

This exercise has an indirect performance dimension/moment of appreciation when the children are in the centre of the light which creates attention on them in an “enlarged” way and they are “being seen” by all those who are focused on cutting the shapes they see unfolding. As suggested by Van Manen (2002, p. 31), the question of “seeing” is in a pedagogical sense not merely linked to sight, but also concerning other senses and the whole body when he says that “being seen” to a child or a student means “(...) being confirmed as existing, as being a unique person”. Some of the children on reflective cards highlight such moments as significant as at first they, for example, “felt scared, but then I was happy”. They feel scared having to stand in front of the class, but realise that nobody is laughing of what they do and then they start to enjoy being the centre of attention and to feel that they are important. Such experiences influence the relationships of the children as they—also literally—see each other in a new light and are surprised of what both they themselves and the others are able to do.

An exercise of the AIR day of a workshop in Copenhagen started with the artist-educators posing the question, “How can we move each other like tissue?” In pairs, one person starts with eyes closed. Holding on to just the fingertips the other moves him/her as tissue in the air (Fig. 3). In a reflective note, Gerard writes, “*As we build our heightened awareness of even the pulse that drums through both our fingers we begin to listen attentively to the subtle shifts and breath in the other. This hypersensitivity to touch can engender other states of awareness opening for empathy and compassion which are part of the so-called ‘hidden curriculum’ of projects such as this*”. Partners were changed a few times during the activity so all tried to experience working with different people including at least once with one of the adults in the group. The



**Fig. 3** The exercise “Move each other like the wind” (photo: Authors’ own collection)

playful dimension of the exercise seemed to create an opportunity for the children to express themselves more freely and engaging in creative processes in a different way than more teacher-led exercises do. The focus on creative processes changes the relationship between teachers and children. This change opens for everyone to “see” each other in a different way (Van Manen, 2002) and as expressed by children and teachers in reflective dialogues to see new sides of their classmates. For example, the teacher of the children in Denmark in an interview mentions that “*The intensive week we had, I am sure, has had a deep influence on the social relationships in the class. For example among the boys there was a hierarchy, but the fight about being the leader suddenly disappeared*”. This exercise is an example of how this change of experience of usual hierarchies can be fostered through playful and creative working together with different partners and also of how hierarchies between teachers/adults and learners are changed as all involved take turns in leading and following.

Focusing on concepts that are similar in choreographic and visual arts practice during one workshop week we worked with exercises of “copy”, “contrast” and “complement”. We started in an outdoor area of the school filled with trees of different shapes. We copied tree shapes with our bodies and made shapes that were contrasting and complementing in relation to the trees. The children then had to copy shapes that other children made with their bodies, to do the opposite (a contrasting shape) or try ways to fill positive and negative space (a complementing shape). The bodywork was then taken into drawing body shapes on big sheets of paper and painting them in contrasting colours (Fig. 4). The drawing and painting were done in groups and each group chose one child to lie down on the paper and do his/her shape while the rest



**Fig. 4** Painting body shapes on large sheets in contrasting colours (photos: Authors’ own collection)



**Fig. 5** Exercises of giving and taking weight (photos: Authors' own collection)

helped each other to draw a line around the body. Together they then had to choose a colour to fill the body shape and discuss which colour would be in contrast and paint the space around the shape using this colour (Fig. 4).

This exercise entailed negotiation within the group and practising to both be able to suggest and accept others' suggestions and realising that this was necessary in order to solve the task. As is illustrated in the picture (Fig. 4), it does not work if all just paint the colour they prefer. Then it is hard to figure out which one is the right contrasting colour and a decision had to be made of which colour of the body shape was the most dominant. Such collaborative processes are not always easy and the children sometimes get angry with each other, but if the educational space which has been created is one in which the children are "seen" the artist-educator can intervene and support each child in a bodily way as suggested by Van Manen (2002), for example, by putting a hand on a shoulder to calm the angry energy down or to show acknowledgement of a child's contribution (Fig. 4).

In dance exercises, the suggestion/acceptance can be translated to "give and take" in a physical way through contact exercises that use the weight of each person's body. When the body is the means of communicating, it becomes even clearer if there is an agreement or one is giving or taking more than the other. There is a need of being kinaesthetically aware of the partner's response in order to make the exercises work. The pedagogy that we have developed in the project has a strong focus on embodied sensitivity. As a bi-product, we could say, it seems like the teaching environment that is created through these processes is simultaneously nurturing sensitivity in the relationships among all those involved. This sensitivity creates more openness and acknowledgement of each other among the children which is important in order for all of them to feel that they belong to the group and are worthy as human beings.

### ***Being in "Another" World***

When asked to choose the activity they liked the most of the day and write and draw on a "reflective card" what it was and how it felt, many of the learners choose exercises in which they feel that they are in another kind of world. They have different



ways of describing this phenomenon. Reagan drew the “copy exercise” and wrote, “I felt happy because I was at the moon”. Liboletu chose “doing the opposite” and wrote, “When I did the opposite position of the other person I felt like I was free and in another place”. Zezethu liked the pathway exercise and wrote, “I felt like I was swimming away”. Lathitha also chose the “copy exercise” and wrote, “When I did it I felt like I was in another planet (Fig. 6)”.

The experience of being “somewhere else”, in a “different world” and so forth is central to the children’s accounts of special moments of the workshops. This phenomenon can be explored through psychologist Will W. Adams’ description of “sacred space” (Adams, 1999) as a state in which self and world are in communion. “The being, energy, life and meaning of the world “flow into” one’s self and become integrated as part of who one is; simultaneously, one’s being, consciousness, awareness, and self “flow into” the world (via perception and action) and become part of the world” (Adams, 1999, 39). It is central to Adams (ibid.) that in this state “we tend to understand ourselves and reality differently, and to be more aware and compassionate with others and the natural world”. Perhaps such intensified experience is what makes the learners choose these specific moments.

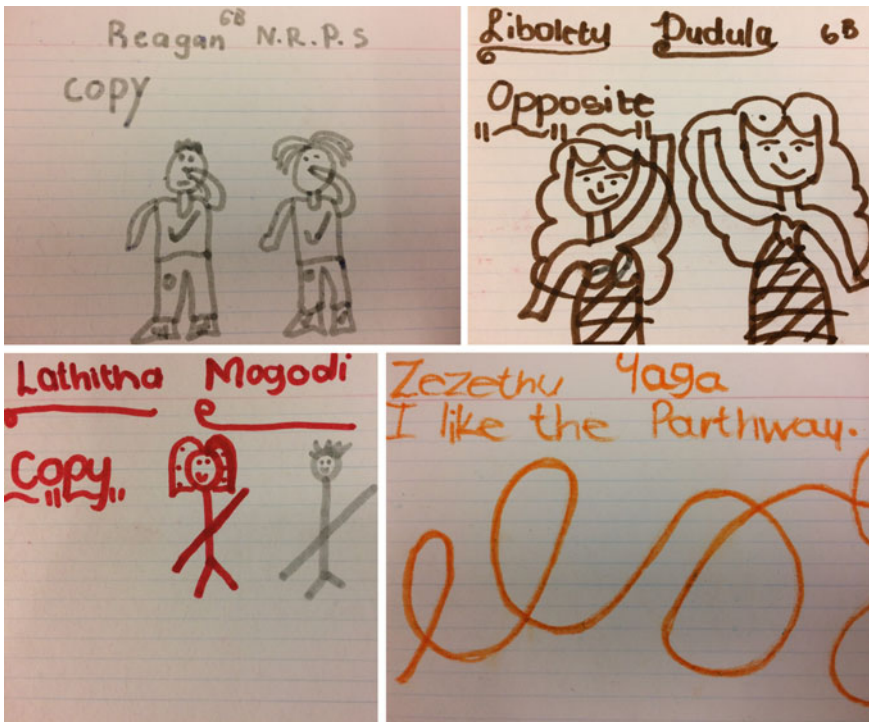


Fig. 6 Children’s drawings of exercises that were “special moments”

When it works as truly open and fostering creative processes, the artistic–educational space can be a space of vulnerability, but also of deeply involved participation and thus learning in and through personal and social dimensions. There needs to be a kind of human openness in order to feel touched, this openness might be what the learners experience when they are “on the moon”, “on a different planet”, etc. These “sacred spaces” can also be linked to what psychologist Les Todres (2007) calls the “soulful space”. According to Todres (2007, 150), the “soulful space” provides a foundation for empathic connection with others. It is “the kind of human openness in which we feel touched” (Todres, 2007, 162). To be in a vulnerable position or situation can according to Todres (2007) metaphorically be described as if a “passage” (an openness) is made to other existential possibilities, for example, in relation to opportunities for learning. This openness is what makes us vulnerable. We cannot control what will happen, are in a state of change and might be unsuccessful. But with a skillful teacher, a “soulful space” holds a spaciousness in which vulnerability is not avoided, but rather, embraced (Todres, 2007, 162). The class teacher once said, “I have never seen them touching and hugging each other like they do when you are here”. The “soulful” space becomes a “heartful” space, perhaps not something that the children are consciously aware of, but they often act in “heartful” ways and they also draw, cut and shape a lot of hearts with their bodies.

Our analyses of situations from the workshops and the children’s and teachers’ experiences show the importance that artistic processes that include the children as co-creators can have of creating a “soulful space” of education in which empathy and better relationships are nurtured. Professor of child development and education, Gadsden (2008, 35) emphasises the importance for development of empathy that arts education can have as the arts: “(...) allow individuals to place themselves in the skin of another; to experience others’ reality and culture; to sit in another space; to transport themselves across time, space, era in history, and context; and to see the world from a different vantage point”. However, it is important to stress that arts education does not automatically do this. When children are seen as co-creators in the processes and not just as learners who have to follow what the teacher does they engage in different ways, both with the material and with each other. The value of the creative practice is that the *contents* are basically unknown to all, this makes everyone feel at the same level and of the same value as all ideas count equally. These processes bring the children together and the result is that they learn to not be angry or fearful of each other.

### *Transdisciplinary Co-creation*

As artist-educators, we feel that our own creativity is stimulated in the teaching process as we are challenged to think about our own teaching methodology in new ways—pushing the boundaries of what we know will work into places that are new and uncertain for us as a teacher and where an end result cannot be pre-determined. In a reflective note, Liesl writes, “*I am always excited by work that is created in the*



**Fig. 7** Exercise “The large movement piece” (photo: Authors’ own collection)

*process of integrated teaching methods such as the large movement piece” (Fig. 7). The large movement piece that Liesl refers to here is one example of a method we call “kinaesthetic mapping.” The actual exercise was developed by Liesl and Charlotte together based on a plan Liesl had for the first session of a day in our first workshop week in Cape Town. Before the children arrived that morning Liesl was preparing the big white sheet of paper that was going to cover most of the floor of the room in which we were going to work. The piece of paper made Charlotte think of a short text she had read one day in the newspaper by a Danish author considering the different experiences feet have with surface depending on where they live as to her this piece of paper looked like a big piece of ice. Liesl took up this idea and developed it into a concrete exercise related to the EARTH theme of the day. We split the children into two groups, so that they would have enough space when walking on the different imagined surfaces and drawing their imagined sensations with different coloured crayons. One group was thus moving and drawing while the other was sitting around the piece of paper observing what the others did. Liesl further reflects on this exercise, “The work of this exercise allows both children and teachers to appreciate a different aesthetic around art production. It opens up questions of ‘what is good art or a beautiful drawing?’ When children are engaged in such an activity, I believe that they are interpreting information in sensory ways that is difficult to assess in a formal way and cannot always be explained through words. All children are able to participate and no one child’s offering is better or more important than another. In these moments I feel like I am learning alongside the children and it changes the learning environment for me. I love the moments of surprise that can result”. Referring to the “walking on ice” exercise she further describes that “this is a method that excites me as a visual art specialist. For me it is about making art through the body—getting the body to move and also creating and leaving marks that not only mapped a particular movement but became a way of communicating an idea or concept in a non-verbal way. It was about learning in a fundamentally different way. The exercise was not only an integration of visual art*

*and movement but crossed into the areas of natural science concepts. It supports the idea that learning can be enriched through the integration of disciplines or learning areas. This movement and drawing activity resulted in an incredible art piece that was visually engaging because of its scale. I was moving and drawing with the children and this moment of co-creation was a special moment”.*

The pedagogical approach that we have developed in collaboration since 2017 started with a focus on introducing creative dance and visual arts and design as ways of experiencing and expressing, but during the years that we have worked together, ideas have developed that integrate the art forms more and more. The activities of the project are now a mix of multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary arts-integration. Transdisciplinary processes happen when we are no longer only dancing or only drawing or painting. This could be the sensation of a movement being expressed visually, or the other way around. When this kind of process is really working and experienced as being meaningful to the purpose of the project it is what we have come to call “smoothie moments” with reference to the Dutch Zoë Zernitz and Eeke Wervers’ (2018) metaphorical distinction of arts-integrated work as “lasagna, salad or smoothie” describing multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary processes, respectively.

### ***Alternative Learning Spaces***

One workshop week in Cape Town focused on home and school as cultural places of the children’s lives. It was part of this workshop that we together with the children chose a list of words that can be used to describe relationships between people and places as mentioned above. When we had chosen the words (barrier, entrance, exit, opening, closing, frame, border, threshold, obstacle and window), we spoke about them and how we see these things in life. Are they just there? And how can we show what we for example are stepping into when we move through an entrance? In one exercise, we used the door that connects the school’s dance studio and the hallway to embody the different words. We observed that each child entered the space differently, some jumped, some tip-toed, some threw themselves on the floor showing that each of them interprets such a task so differently. In a reflective note, Peter writes, “*At one point I and some of the children fell through the door and the other children laughed. I think they laughed because of the surprise and comedy in the change of the roles between teacher and students, me looking stupid and not being in the typical teacher role. I guess I was showing that it is ok to look stupid. To me it opened up the exercise and more was allowed. I think that the laugh from the children indicated that they felt the same, that they did not have to do something perfect, but just play with the ‘relationship words.’ At least it released some of the tension between us at a point when we were still new to each other*”. Liesl in a reflective note writes that “*Creating alternative learning spaces by taking exercises into a corridor or outdoors or onto a stairwell immediately for the learners removes the idea of “now we are going to learn something”. Children readily enter the experience even if they are initially*

*uncertain of what is to come. There was a definite sense of play and discovery in these alternative spaces which the children enjoyed. This was evident in the way they responded and when the noise level rose”.*

Experiences of the concepts of space as “lived” (that can be felt) (Van Manen, 1990) and place as being “physical” (that can be measured) are merged in the exercises described above as we here see the artistic–educational exercises simultaneously considering the lived and contextual aspects of where we are, how being there is experienced and giving certain opportunities for ways of relating, communicating and as a consequence also for learning in alternative ways to what is usually the norm of schools. Van Manen (1990) underlines that the space in which we are, influences how we feel. If the space created during the workshops is experienced to be “heartful” as we have suggested in the beginning of the analysis, there is a possibility that the change of relationships between children and between children and adults that are facilitated in the workshops foster the children’s initiative and involvement in the co-creation of the activities. This seems to be happening, among others, because of the unusual ways that we use the space for learning, but also because the workshops are planned as open processes to education. To the children in South Africa, this approach is not so common and therefore not easy to be part of as a starting point. Their opportunities for learning among others have to do with taking part in other ways and realising that they can contribute with ideas. The purpose of such processes is to support transformative learning extending beyond the skills and knowledge base that are central in more traditional concepts of learning by fostering opportunities to simultaneously think, do, sense and create in multi-modal ways.

## **What is the Value of Creating a Microtopia of Arts Education?**

If a “microtopia” is something surreal then what is its value in the real world? A microtopia of arts education will not change the world, but as we have outlined it can give the people involved in it valuable experiences. These experiences could be considered “micro politics” as they might contribute to a bottom-up change of lives and societies. Based on what we see that the children are able to express about their experiences in our project on reflective cards, what the teachers say and what we as the artists and researchers experience to be a happening show that the project has value to the children because it gives momentary experiences of feeling happy, to be in “another world” for a while and their relationships and ways of collaborating become of a more accepting and caring character, they give each other space and also experience to be able to enjoy being the centre of the others’ attention for something positive—the hours we work with them are times when there are only a few fights and conflicts and they often express to feel important as the human beings they are and for what they are able to contribute with. These experiences influence their attitudes to school and each other in general, also when we are not there. This is part of what

their teachers think makes our project valuable and one of the reasons why they want to give us time from their other school work to come back to work with the learners again and again. Apart from these concrete and more existential outcomes for the children, the activities in the project also help widen the children's skills and knowledge of artistic practices and different cultural and life issues as well as giving multiple entry points to learning about those.

As professionals, we have focused on developing a new approach to teaching the arts as transdisciplinary arts-integrated processes and connecting it with curricula and international policies which we experience as meaningful for this purpose and we are planning to implement it at the level of teacher training of our institutions. Creating a microtopia might be necessary for such new developments to take place as there is often not time and space in a daily teaching practice to experiment and do something that turns one's usual work strongly upside down. Our microtopia is characterised by the co-creation of different professionals which we have also experienced to be of utmost importance for these new developments to happen. None of us could have made up this approach and these exercises on our own, but our next task will be to outline exercises and teaching plans for school teachers which they will be able to use and implement in their daily practise, and to find ways to empower teachers to do this with the time and resources they have at hand. As time for the arts is very limited in curricula of most countries, however, we also need to turn back to policy documents to find support to argue for the work we have developed, and how it could contribute to implementing these policies.

### ***EU Strategic Approach to International Cultural Relations***

A positive sign for the arts in educational policy which is relevant to European—Global cultural relations is the final adoption in April 2019 by the EU Council of Ministers of an “EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action” (Council of the European Union, 2019). The choice of the term “cultural relations” is significant since it breaks with a classical one-way understanding of the concept of international relations as governmental, cultural or public diplomacy where countries “showcase” to each other, e.g. art, and is replaced with a bottom-up, people-to-people approach, local empowerment, participation and co-creation.

The network of the European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC),<sup>6</sup> which manages the largest European cultural presence outside the EU, is collaborating with the EU on implementing the approach and one of the facilitating project partners—the Danish Cultural Institute—is a member of EUNIC. The Red Apples–Green Apples project is thus an example of how a national institute of culture can collaborate with local educational institutions, universities and authorities across countries on a bottom-up international collaboration within the fields of education,

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/>

arts, culture and research, and at the same time the project is a case that illustrates how the principles in this new EU strategic approach can be applied. Concretely the case explores how integrated arts education in an embodied and relational perspective can improve access to quality education, in a South African–Danish-based institutional partnership “empowering local cultural sectors as engines for inclusive and sustainable development, social and cultural progress, and fostering cultural diversity, innovation and economic resilience” (Council of the European Union 2019, point 16).

A key aim in this new EU policy (Council of the European Union, 2019) is to “foster mutual learning, cross-cultural understanding and trust between the EU and its partners in external relations, while empowering local cultural sectors as engines for inclusive and sustainable development, social and cultural progress, and fostering cultural diversity, innovation and economic resilience” (point 16). It is among other points stressed that this approach requires (point 21) “a cross-cutting approach to culture that includes culture and creative industries, arts, science, education, tourism and cultural heritage etc.”, and (point 24) “a new spirit of dialogue, mutual understanding and learning, which entails the cooperation with local stakeholders and civil society at all levels (planning, design, implementation) and on an equal footing, aiming at bottom-up and people-to-people approach, local empowerment, participation and co-creation”.

While this chapter mainly elaborates on the work done in Cape Town, it is important to note that the initial project also implied that the South African teachers and researchers with their European (Danish and one Finnish) peers worked with children in a school in Copenhagen addressing the same goals in ways that were relevant to the challenges of children and the education system in Denmark. The partnership which was built for the project undoubtedly provided the “spirit of dialogue, mutual understanding and learning (...)” (Council of the European Union, 2019, point 24) needed to work together and which helped the impact of the developed educational approach to minimise cultural bias, and create new insights regarding “*transdisciplinary co-creation*”, and “*alternative learning spaces*” (see above in the analysis section). Importantly, it also provided an opportunity to connect the learners in Cape Town and Copenhagen, which was done through an exchange of drawings and letters between the children including descriptions of activities that had made a special impression on them and for some even small three-dimensional figures of artefacts similar to those they had produced in the workshops.

### ***UN Sustainable Development Goals***

Another positive sign for the arts in educational policy is that governments globally have agreed on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a common framework for action. Arts education as it is applied in the case we have described and discussed in this chapter has relevance by contributing to reach SDG target 4.7.,

which falls under the general goal 4 of “Quality education”.<sup>7</sup> The indicator for this target is the “Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment” (United Nations, 2015, SDG4).

The project provided immediate value experienced by the young learners and was also acknowledged by the participating teachers. This included experiences of a remarkable immediate reduction of level of learner conflicts, including of violent conflicts, social hierarchy and gender dominance. The creation of a “microtopia” through various exercises, thus provided tangible benefits to learners, in particular in promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, human rights and gender equality and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Teachers in the school in Cape Town noted that those learners who often do not remember much of what they have done in their lessons were able to recall many details of what we had done in previous workshops when asked to write on reflective cards what they could remember from the last workshop (which would have happened around half a year earlier). This experience of learners remembering many details shows the value of the embodied and relational aspects of the exercises and approaches applied in this context of arts education. The learners’ memory of the various exercises indicated that the learning outcome went beyond knowledge and skills, and got closer to an actual competence to practice a culture of peace and respect of gender and diversity of cultures, and not only as long as the experience of the microtopia lasted. Such a lasting difference is a highly significant achievement in schools operating in contexts of conflicts and violence.

The experienced outcomes were achieved through exercises drawing on techniques and methods from the visual arts and dance (“Move each other like the wind”, “Paint body shapes on large sheets in contrasting colours”, “Give and take weight” and other exercises discussed in the analysis section as well as exercises not mentioned in this chapter). Exercises of giving and taking in various ways as well as making imprints of body parts both in an outdoor sandpit and on each other’s bodies—as a more metaphorical way of working with the impacts we as human beings make on each other and the environment—were included in the workshops in both countries. Through discussions and reflective exercises, it became clear to the children that these were exercises that urged them to embody an experience of their “footprint” on the environment, and was linked to reflection on the severe drought which was experienced in Cape Town during the time of the project. These exercises opened the learners’ knowledge and appreciation of the implication of sustainable ways of living in both countries and contributed to extending the value of the approach to education for sustainable development. The learners experienced this through their senses in multi-modal ways including their kinaesthetic bodily sense of being, their

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<sup>7</sup> SDG 4 reads: “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” (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>).



sense of the space or other people's touch on their bodies when, for example, leaning onto or carrying each other. The learners related to themselves, to peers, to teachers and to their surrounding space (indoor and outdoor). This was followed by reflections on the experiences in the exercises, reflections that were also nurtured using different modalities.

The arts education approach and exercises developed as part of this case, if scaled in schools, suggest a way to contribute to the mainstreaming of SDG 4.7., “(i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights” (United Nations, 2015). We have shown how building on embodied, relational aesthetic practices, can have strong and rapid impact on the life and learning of young learners in a specific “microtopia”, but the themes, perspectives and discussions we have written forth through the analysis of “significant moments” from this case would also be relevant to consider for others engaging in integrated arts education with similar goals. In order for this type of work to have a broader impact, both in the same cities, regions and countries capacity, however, needs to be developed to scale its impact. This can initially build on the partnership already created, since it is anchored in local educational institutions, universities and authorities, but it would need to involve more actors and resources.

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# Educational Experiences Related to Architecture and Environmental Art



Riikka Mäkikoskela, Johanna Kivioja, and Jaana Räsänen

**Abstract** This study examines a Salvos teaching development project that dealt with architectural and environmental education, focussing specifically on the multi-disciplinary art practice of children and young people. The examination themes are the new target areas of the Finnish core curriculum for fine arts in basic education in the arts. These include visual literacy, a relationship with the arts, inclusion, and influencing. The main goal of Salvos was to strengthen students' knowledge and awareness of architectural and environmental education, to increase pedagogic and interactive cooperation, and to promote collaborative learning. Salvos ultimately enhanced environmental awareness in addition to increasing the public's knowledge of history, the present-day situation of architecture, and the prospect of a sustainable future. In this study on the Salvos project, empirical research material conveys a series of experiential events that emerged during teaching and art-making. Architecture and environmental art as the arts of space and matter are approached from the perspective of experience research. Studying architectural and environmental teaching and art-making from the point of view of experientiality here means the operational aspect, in which embodiment, physicality, materiality, and space are emphasized. The art-based research methodology is employed to study this experiential research material.

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During the Salvos project, Jaana Räsänen worked as an expert in architectural education at Archinfo Finland.

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## Salvos—The Teaching Development Project

The Salvos project (2016–2018) involved studying the pedagogics of architectural and environmental education, educational content, and working methods in four Finnish visual art schools. The schools participating in the Salvos project include the Arts and Crafts School Emil in Valkeakoski, Lohja Art School for Children and Young People, Lappeenranta Art School and Design, and Art School Taika in Lahti. The Finnish National Agency for Education financially supported the project. Cooperation partners included the Arts Promotion Centre Finland, Archinfo Finland, and the Finnish Association of Art Schools for Children and Young People. Approximately, 1,000 children and young people were involved in the scope of the Salvos project. Eight events and exhibitions were organized during the project, attracting more than 6,000 participants.

The Salvos teaching development project examined the interfaces of architectural and environmental education by using methods of the visual arts. An examination was carried out from the starting points of the new target areas of the national core curriculum for fine arts, which were highlighted in the advanced syllabus of basic education in the arts (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2018). These starting points include visual literacy, a relationship with the arts, inclusion, and influencing. One of the project objectives was to acquire experiential knowledge of visual arts education and to use it in developing the local curricula of the participating schools (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** Pupils of the Arts and Crafts School Emil experiencing nature and changing their viewing angles. *Photo* Heikki Kivioja, the Arts and Crafts School Emil in Valkeakoski

The Salvos project comprised teacher training in the form of both local and joint seminars, peer learning, and pilot projects in teaching, as well as their documentation. Teacher training was organized into seminars on topics such as architectural education, light and architecture, the interfaces of fine arts, architecture and environmental education, town planning and sustainability, children's participation in communities, and a town as a learning environment. The pilot projects promoted collaborative learning methods—for example, social pedagogy (Hatton, 2013) and public pedagogy (Biesta, 2012)—and their themes were the new target areas of the national core curriculum for fine arts in basic education in the arts. The pilot projects were all thoroughly documented, and their outcomes were showcased in exhibitions and events. In this respect, the project was aimed at presenting children's and young people's artworks in public to enhance inclusion and the influencing of the environment, and to promote urban planning collaboration with city zoning.

Sharing experiences and know-how and networking played key roles in the Salvos teaching development project. The project's main goals were to strengthen the teachers' and students' knowledge and awareness of the various sectors of architecture and environmental education; to increase the pedagogic and interactive cooperation; and to promote collaborative learning among the teachers, pupils, and interest groups of the schools participating in the project. The purpose of the Salvos project was to enhance environmental awareness and to increase people's knowledge of the history, the present-day situation of architecture, and the prospect of a sustainable future. The project utilized the immediate surroundings as learning environments, and it supported children and young people to take a stand on environmental planning and to create works of art in public spaces. The Salvos project developed experiential and communal teaching methods that strengthened the visual observation of the environment and the formation of a personal relationship with the natural environment and built environments.

The online project publication<sup>1</sup> offers a glimpse into the architectural and environmental education work carried out in the four visual art schools of the project in both languages, in Finnish and English (Fig. 2). In addition to the seminar meetings, the participating teachers shared their experiences on pilot teaching projects through visual blogs.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.valkeakoski.fi/files/attachments/julkaisut/sike/kuvataidekoulu/salvos-hanke\\_2016-2018\\_pdf-julkaisu.pdf](http://www.valkeakoski.fi/files/attachments/julkaisut/sike/kuvataidekoulu/salvos-hanke_2016-2018_pdf-julkaisu.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the individual teaching pilots carried out in the Salvos project, you can access on the website in Finnish: [www.salvoshanke.wordpress.com](http://www.salvoshanke.wordpress.com).



# SALVOS

Arkkitehtuurikasvatusta taiteen perusopetuksen kuvataidekouluissa  
 Architectural education in youth art schools carrying out basic education in the arts

**Fig. 2** Project publication cover; layout by Valpuri Tauriainen and photograph by Miia Änäkälä. At the Social Media Tales workshop, the 12-year olds from the Arts and Crafts School Emil studied the demolition process of old houses in nearby areas and wrote fictional stories of what they saw. Based on fairy tales, the young people took photos of themselves in costumes borrowed from the local theater. The images intersect with fantasy, realism, and social media dimensions

## Proceeding with Experiential Research Material Through Arts-Based Method

Within the Salvos project, experiential and collaborative teaching methods were chosen to increase the pedagogic and interactive cooperation and to support collaborative learning among teachers, pupils, interest groups, and stakeholders. Experientiality and artistic means were also used to strengthen both the pupils' and the teachers' visual observations of the environment, as well as their formations of personal relationships with the natural environment and built environments (Fig. 3). The project workshops utilized the immediate surroundings as learning environments and supported children and young people to take a stand on environmental planning



**Fig. 3** Children who are 5–6-years old building together the roof of a castle. *Photo* Johanna Kivioja, the Arts and Crafts School Emil in Valkeakoski

and to create works of art in public spaces. For the purpose of focusing on observing and forming a personal relationship with the surroundings, the experiential approach was needed.

In the project, experience is defined as perception through the senses in relation to the outside world of the perceiver. According to the phenomenological research carried out in research in the arts, the experience opens up a single phenomenon within a specific time and place for an individual whose experience is at stake (Varto, 2008, pp. 60–61). Experience is never universal; it is inevitably individual and singular, unique, and changing (Varto, 2012). In Western contemporary philosophy, experience is often understood as meeting a shared reality and as testing one’s own perceptions in relation to it (e.g., Backman, 2018). In this case, an individual and singular experience take place within the communal context: Experiencing is the dialogue between individual prejudices and shared reality.

Studying the architectural and environmental teaching and art-making from the point of view of experientiality means focusing on the operational and creative aspect, which emphasizes physicality, embodiment, materiality, and space. To examine this empirical research material, we use the operational and conceptual methods of the arts-based research methodology (Leavy, 2009, 2017). As researchers, we examine arts-based research material from the participants’ perspective: We participate in producing the research material, analyze it in our activities and in relation to our artistic and pedagogical expertise and experience, and write about our work (see also Barrett & Bolt, 2010). By combining experiential knowledge with theoretical



study, we seek to identify more than the individual meanings of the phenomenon and the interfaces of architectural and environmental education in visual arts that we do research on. The purpose of the study is not to generalize the results but to provide a rich description of the phenomenon examined.

Project evaluation was carried out in several ways during the project. As one way of evaluating the project, a survey of participants was conducted to report the project. A questionnaire was sent to all of the teachers who participated in Salvos. The project evaluation questionnaire supported the experiential research material and the arts-based method of the study. The survey mapped teacher involvement in the project and its impact from two perspectives, from the teacher's work and from the school's point of view.

The Salvos project's pedagogical and experiential research material is analyzed within the framework of experience research (Rauhala, 1994; Scott, 1991), which seeks to highlight the essence of the experience and its potential significance, as well as to structure and explain the experience that is relevant to the context of the experience (Toikkanen & Virtanen, 2018). The experience of teaching and learning has not been examined in abundance in the discipline of art education (Kärnä-Behm, 2019), but plenty of research exists on the experience of art-making (e.g., Mäkikoskela, 2018; Siukonen, 2015). Artistic research is particularly strong in experience research (Tuovinen & Mäkikoskela, 2018).

## **The Artistic and Educational Basis of the Project**

### ***Basic Education in the Arts in the Finnish Visual Arts Schools***

The Finnish visual arts schools for children and young people offer basic education in the arts and visual art activities for leisure time. Basic education in the arts is one form of education within the Finnish educational system, and it is internationally unique. In basic education in the arts, teaching is always based on the curriculum by the Finnish National Agency for Education (2018). When all 9 art forms of basic education in the arts are taken into account, they reach approximately 15% of Finnish children and young people (see <https://artsedu.fi/etusivu/en/>). Basic education in the arts is high-quality, progressive, and goal-oriented art education. It promotes the forming of a personal relationship with the arts, continuous learning, a lifelong hobby, and a readiness for further studies. Above all, students' growth as individuals is supported by improving their creativity and thinking skills (see Heinimaa, 2016).

The Finnish National Agency for Education renewed the national core curricula for the general and advanced syllabi of basic education in the arts in 2017. Using this, the schools designed their local curricula, which entered into force in 2018. The Finnish visual arts schools provide basic education in the arts in accordance with the core curricula of fine arts, architecture, crafts, and media arts. The Salvos project explored architectural and environmental education as part of teaching according to



**Fig. 4** The architecture of the building functioning as the design for clothing. *Photo* Miia Änäkkälä, the Arts and Crafts School Emil in Valkeakoski

the curriculum for fine arts in the advanced syllabus. Its aim was to utilize experiential knowledge on arts education and to use it in developing the local curricula of the participating schools.

The success of Finnish visual arts schools and their basic education in the arts depends essentially on the experiential approach. Their arts education is renewing, experimental, and playful, so the influence of contemporary art as well as artistic and art-based research can clearly be seen in it. The atmosphere of the art schools can be, on the other hand, described as creative and experimental throughout the years (Heinimaa, 2016, p. 68). One can speak about real reflection on how to implement art education, in which pupils' own thoughts and ideas could be taken into consideration (Fig. 4). Artistic learning derives from a pupil's own motivation, and a pupil plays an active role in studying and learning. In turn, inquiring and operational learning is exploited in interactions with others. The overall objective is that a pupil sets problems, discusses and forms assumptions, and finally produces art and knowledge (Heinimaa, 2016, pp. 68–73).

### *Architecture as Educational Experiences*

Architecture is the art of space. As an everyday phenomenon, it extends from the small details of a structured environment to large entities; it is always present, and

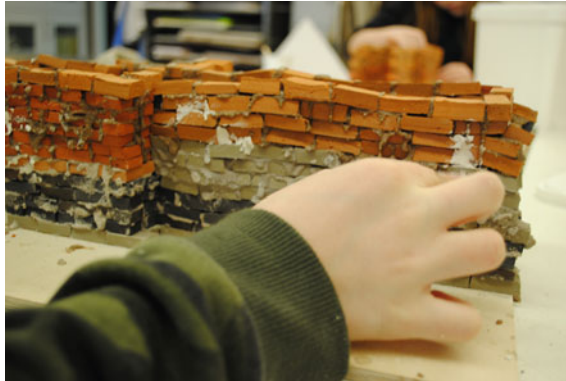
it touches us all. Architecture is in itself a multidisciplinary field, and it can be approached from many angles and studied using a variety of methods. However, its essence as the art of space can be understood only via direct encounters and multisensory interaction (Holl, 2006, p. 39).

According to architect and architectural educator Meskanen (2016, p. 96), the sense of sight together with movement plays a significant role in an architectural experience (Fig. 5). When one moves within a space, one views it from different angles and is always aware of the current location, and this creates a conception of the three-dimensionality of the space. As the movement progresses from one room to the next and from one urban space to another, the spaces and moods become integrated into an experiential series of spaces (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 40).

Of course, the sense of sight also transmits messages related to size and shape, materials, colors, light and shadows, opening and closing, purpose of use, and the users of the space. Then, other senses complete the story for their part, even if the user does not always notice this (Pallasmaa, 2005, pp. 70–71). Many messages can be registered from the surrounding reality when one temporarily blocks one's sense of sight and focuses on just listening, smelling, and feeling. We all observe our environments from our personal perspectives and interpret their messages on the basis of our previous experiences. Only when one experiences the environment as meaningful and is able to relate to it does one generate the desire to influence its future in a sustainable manner by cherishing the old elements and creating new ones (Nyman, 1998, pp. 15, 41, 159).



**Fig. 5** Pupils experimenting with the places and spaces they designed. *Photos* Elina Töyrylä and Maria Laine, the Design and Art School Taika in Lahti



**Fig. 6** A pupil building a wall of bricks that he made himself during the building heritage: constructing with bricks teaching pilot. The pilot's aim was to become acquainted with the industrial building heritage and architectural history of Pirkanmaa and Häme; to use the urban environment as a learning environment; to develop a long-term, experiential construction process as a learning experience; and to support the student's architectural understanding and expression through a brick building. *Photo* Heikki Kivioja, the Arts and Crafts School Emil in Valkeakoski

Meskanen (2016, pp. 95–97) claims that architectural education provides a means to a better and comprehensive understanding of the human way of living on Earth. Architectural education is aimed at developing a child's ability to perceive, consider, understand, conceptualize, and evaluate his or her environment (Fig. 6). It can provide endless possibilities for children and young people to create their own three-dimensional observation pools of the wonders of the built environment and enable them to become sensitive to the built environment. As a result, architectural education can lead to the demand for a better environment. In addition, architectural education supports the development of cultural identity, which helps us to belong to our surroundings and to humankind. This sense of belonging is an important factor in cultivating the will to participate and in influencing the shaping of our surroundings. Within the framework of the Salvos project, the idea of a local identity is the first step toward achieving global awareness and a sustainable future.

### *In the Environments of Visual Arts and Art Education*

The Salvos project developed architectural and environmental education in fine arts. Therefore, it also built on the methods of installation and environmental art, which are multifaceted: They share three-dimensionality and spatiality with sculpture. In addition to the picture, the sculpture is composed of the material shape and its surrounding space, writes the sculptor Morris (1967/1993, pp. 2–27). The definition of installation art is often very similar (e.g., Bishop, 2005). The specificity of the three-dimensional art is thus bound to the fact that it has a relationship with space and materiality

(Ellegood, 2009). Environmental art is also related to performance art, social art, and architecture (Naukkarinen, 2007, pp. 62–66).

The roots of environmental art are as varied as their definitions are. Some views suggest that environmental art places most emphasis on natural environments (Spaid, 2002, p. 11). Such notions tend to highlight nature as a medium so as to enhance the viewer's awareness of natural forces, processes, and phenomena. By contrast, aesthetics researcher Naukkarinen (2007, pp. 62–66) sets the starting point of environmental art at the specific location where the work of art was made. Environmental art emerges in a specific place. It becomes a part of the place and the cultural environment, which is a culturally defined location in space and sometimes also in time (Fig. 7). The place is created through human activity, such as an important event or a work of art. An environmental artwork, in turn, influences its surroundings, which can be, for example, a public or private space, or a natural or urban environment. Process-type artworks may be transient and non-permanent. Additionally, environmental art often raises questions about environmental issues.

Environmental education is also seen as multidisciplinary, and its interaction with visual arts education has formed a strong tradition in Finland. Finnish art educator Mantere (1992, 1995) introduced so-called arts-based environmental education, and its main focus is on the connection between the individual and nature. Arts-based environmental education is considered to be process oriented. Art is used as a method that is more important than the outcome of the process is (Fig. 8). Mantere (2016)



**Fig. 7** Also in the Salvos project, environmental art was created as part of a specific location and its cultural meanings. *Photo* Johanna Kivioja, the Arts and Crafts School Emil in Valkeakoski



**Fig. 8** Pupils in the process of making environmental art. *Photo* Miiä Änäkkälä, the Arts and Crafts School Emil in Valkeakoski

has also explored the relationship between art practice and environmental education. According to her, art practice as environmental research embodies experiential knowledge, which complements and challenges other disciplines. Also, Professor Suominen (2016, p. 10) points out that the sustainable works of art educators, artists, and researchers meet at the crossroads of several fields and disciplines.

Indeed, researchers such as Suominen (2015, 2016) have further developed arts-based environmental education. She brings a social dimension to environmental art education by proposing that environmental issues and education that address individual learners' or communities' relationships with their environments do not differ from education aimed at overall social justice and free or radical democracy. Suominen (2015, pp. 255–257) additionally urges art educators to establish practices that actively fulfil their role in educating pupils about the arts' important role in shaping the experiences of humanity. The Salvos project has focused on opening up participants' personal relationships with the environment through environmental art methods, and this has deepened the interaction and the understanding of the environment, in addition to reinforcing the local communities.

Of the artistic methods, installation art practice (Bishop, 2005), environmental art practice (Naukkarinen, 2007), and architectural art practice (Meskanen, 2016) were employed in the Salvos project. These methods sought, for example, to experience space and place, to learn through material ideation and experimentation, to explore the environment, to occupy space, to observe the effect of time in space and in the environment, and to observe the change in neighborhoods and in sustainable

development. The pupils' own experiences, skills, knowledge, and interests were the basis of making art. Both the natural environment and built environments were used as the starting points of children's and young people's art practices. Observation, trialling, and playing were emphasized, as is customary in Finnish basic education in the arts (Heinimaa, 2016, p. 73).

## **The Themes of Salvos**

Salvos was focused on studying the interfaces of architectural and environmental education by using the methods of visual arts aimed at laying a foundation for an ecologically, socially, and culturally sustainable future in arts education. The examination was carried out from the starting points of the new target areas of the national core curriculum for fine arts, which were highlighted in the advanced syllabus in basic education in the arts: visual literacy, a relationship with the arts, inclusion, and influencing. Next, we provide an example of each theme and the teaching pilot related to it.

### ***Visual Literacy***

The Lappeenranta Art School's pupils aged between 10 and 11 studied their local building heritage in one of their teaching pilots. The city of Lappeenranta was founded on the peninsula of an old fortress in 1649. This area, where the art school is also located, is home to the town's oldest buildings. The pupils got to know the area by walking and photographing, as well as taking note of the building details, especially the windows, of which they later created clay reliefs (Fig. 9). The pupils also made a scale model of the area as a team (Fig. 10). It was intended that the model would be used in future teaching. For example, the following workshops were designed to imagine what the fortress area could look like in 200 years and to implement a miniature plan for it. The miniature model was a great tool for presenting the area of the fortress, and at the same time, it gave scale to future workshops.

This teaching pilot of the Salvos project highlights the basis of Finnish basic education in the arts: Inquiring and operational learning are exploited in interactions with others. The staff and pupils of Lappeenranta Art School live in and use the landscape of the fortress in their daily lives. In the teaching pilot, they experienced the familiar landscape in a new way and acted in it collaboratively. By getting to know their cultural environment and by working on their experiences in it, the pupils strengthened their visual observations of the environment and the formation of personal relationships with the natural and built environments. The objectivity of architectural education was to support the development of a cultural identity, which helped the pupils to belong to their surroundings.

**Fig. 9** A group of 10-year olds studied their cultural heritage, the windows of the Lappeenranta Fortress, and turned them into clay reliefs to develop their visual literacy. *Photo Ari Nakari, the Lappeenranta Art School*



We have already referred earlier in the chapter to Nyman (1998), who states that the environment must be experienced as meaningful to generate the desire to influence its future in a sustainable manner. In the teaching pilot in question, the pupils and their teachers developed knowledge of their local building heritage and cultural environment. For example, the concept of landscape could be contextualized and understood from both a spatial and a narrative position. The pupils explored how their surroundings were presented visually and how their representations, clay reliefs, and a scale model, affected people's ways of seeing and, consequently, thinking, and acting. In this process, the sense of belonging became an important factor in cultivating the will to participate and in influencing the shaping of the surroundings. From the perspective of local identity, the pupils moved to a broader frame of reference to consider a sustainable future for humankind.





**Fig. 10** Detail of the scale model of the Lappeenranta fortress. *Photo* Ari Nakari, the Lappeenranta Art School

### *Relationship with the Arts*

The pupils aged between 14 and 18 worked in the spirit of brutalism in one of the teaching pilots of the Lohja Art School for Children and Young People. The students examined the effects of light and shadow on the surface of the artwork, as well as the shapes of the casting shadows. The material used was lightweight cement, and the technique used was casting. The pupils photographed the sculptures by placing them as part of the landscape and thus faded out their actual sizes. The photographs also took advantage of the interesting rhythm that the place created. In the photographs, the pupils utilized the color theme as well as the roughness of the industrial area and buildings surrounding their art school (Fig. 11).

Earlier in this chapter, we described how three-dimensional art has a relationship with its surroundings, space, and materiality. For example, a work of environmental art is a part of its cultural environment and influences its surroundings. Additionally, arts-based environmental education highlights humans as an integral part of the environment, and it treats their subjectivity as open, fluid, and constituted by relational practices rather than by fixed identities (Illeris, 2012, p. 85). In the teaching pilot in question, the Lohja Art School students explored art history and made artworks composed of material shapes and the space surrounding them. The way in which the artistic process proceeded when the finished sculptures were photographed as part of the industrial area surrounding the art school especially reveals the new content of the sculpture and their relationships with the continuum of art history. This method's aim was to help the pupils to experience the space and place, to occupy the space, and to observe the effect of time in the environment.

**Fig. 11** A brutal sculpture fading out its actual size when placed as part of the specific surroundings. *Photo* Maria Leman, the Lohja Art School for Children and Young People



## ***Inclusion***

One of the Arts and Crafts School Emil's teaching pilots was about influencing the urban environment through artistic methods. The pilot studied the effect of light on spatial impressions (Fig. 12). Space and light were also expanded from installations to architecture and environmental design. Through the creation of installations, spatial dimensions, and light, the meanings and moods of public and urban places, as well as the spirit of the place, were considered. Educational content also included a town event as part of the school's operational culture and environmental education. The Lux—Communal Light Art Event took place in the Itsenäisydenpuisto park in the Valkeakoski town center, bringing children's and young people's art to a public urban space. The performance was implemented in cooperation with the town's music, dance, and theater schools of basic education in the arts.

The children's and young people's art created a visually impressive entity in the Itsenäisydenpuisto park, and local people flocked to see the event. The pilot was aimed at exploiting different learning environments through experience, influencing artistically the environment and urban space, acting inclusively, and working collaboratively. The experiential emphasis was found to involve the way of learning,



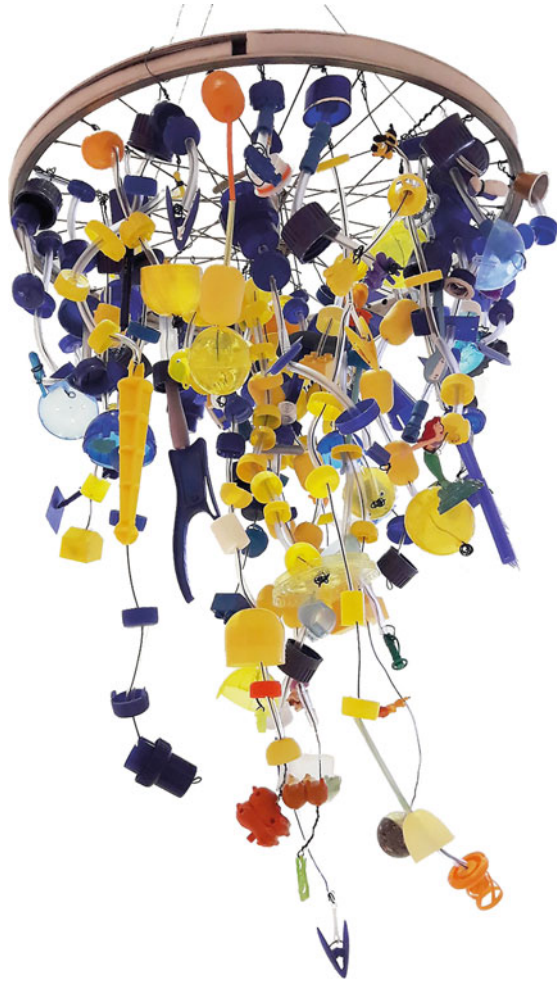
**Fig. 12** Artworks in Lux—Communal Light Art Light Event. *Photos* Heikki Kivioja, Johanna Kivioja and Petra Heikkilä-Perkiö, the Arts and Crafts School Emil in Valkeakoski

and visual arts was seen to initiate social change. The pilot reinforced social and cultural sustainability, as the Lux—Communal Light Art Event played a role in the life of townspeople by presenting children’s and young people’s art, as well as inviting townspeople to experience local culture. Especially for the children and young people as artists, the experience was empowering and inclusive. The Arts and Crafts School Emil’s pilot is a great example of arts-based environmental education which strengthened the local community.

### *Influencing*

The Design and Art School Taika in Lahti implemented a plastic waste workshop for its pupils aged between 9 and 12, as well as those over 15. In the workshop, they made chandeliers out of the plastic waste that accumulated in the pupils’ homes (Fig. 13). The purpose was to make the pupils aware of the significance of recycling and reusing, as well as to encourage them to think about the ecological viewpoint related to art-making. New skills were also learned in the construction of the works: Working with a cordless drill. In the composition, attention was paid to the choice of primary colors. This teaching pilot is an example of how the process of material thinking enables one to raise environmental awareness and change pupils’ attitudes and behaviors.

**Fig. 13** The chandeliers of recycled plastic were also on display during the International Society of Education through Art's European congress called InSEA 2018—Interventions at Aalto University, Espoo, Finland. The congress had a large art program, and one of its exhibitions consisted of art by children and young people. *Photo* Eeva Kirilin-Helenius and Eeva-Liisa Kauppila, the Design and Art School Taika in Lahti



Currently, interest is increasing in experiential knowledge in art and design studies (e.g., Kärnä-Behm, 2019). During the Design and Art School Taika's plastic waste workshop, the identification and understanding of content arose through learners' experiences in visual arts education. Art-making may be the catalyst for sustainable change as makers create personal connections with discarded materials. In the materialization of the ideation, various kinds of multisensory elements were used to deepen the learning experience, for example, by material handling, one has time to reflect in, on, and through action (Bolt, 2010). All of this led to the creation of connections between both the teachers' and the pupils' actions and their impact on the ecosphere. The teaching pilot enhanced environmental awareness and increased

the knowledge of sustainability. In addition, it took a stand on the important role of art-making in shaping human experiences.

## Conclusions

In the Finnish visual arts schools, architectural education and environmental education overlap various aspects of the fine arts. Such multidisciplinary is typical in the overall picture of the Finnish art education tradition. The Salvos teaching development project brought this tradition to the present day and updated it in relation to the new core curriculum for fine arts in basic education in the arts. The project focused on the target areas of the national core curriculum: visual literacy, a relationship with the arts, inclusion, and influencing.

While viewing photographs in this chapter and looking at the art-making and artworks of children and young people within the Salvos project, we can see that the aesthetic, ethical, and ecological issues in architecture and environmental art have guided them to reflect on what is significant and valuable in their lives. Salvos and its four target areas have influenced the participants to change how they think and act toward ecological, social, and cultural sustainability. The pupils have clearly developed the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviors needed for sustainable development. These objectives are very much in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, we can state that the Salvos project has reoriented the relationship between arts education and sustainable development: Children and young people were encouraged to be responsible actors who resolve challenges and contribute to create a more sustainable world.

As a result of the Salvos project, architectural education and practice became more prominent in the Finnish visual arts schools. The participating schools developed architecture pedagogics in their teaching. Several learning environments were used in teaching, and teaching tackled current issues in the schools' neighborhoods. Artistic methods were used to support the creation of students' personal relationships with both the natural and the built environment. Children and young people made artworks and allowed them to occupy some public spaces and environments inclusively. With this, their involvement in the neighborhood strengthened, and they were able to influence their communities. The method of experientiality was found to be an excellent foundation for understanding their relationships with the environment and their interactions with society. The experiential approach encouraged playfulness, problem-solving, self-expressive outcomes, and collaboration. The versatile and fluid learning processes brought teachers and students closer together.

To conclude the chapter, we will summarize how the Salvos project has affected the participating schools and their local curricula. Here, we emphasize the results of the survey to which all participating teachers responded. All four participating schools have offered architectural and environmental education as part of their

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<sup>3</sup> [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals).

fine arts teaching before, and extensive environmental education (including, among others, architectural education) has been written as a cross-cutting theme for all study modules. During the Salvos project, the participating schools, however, tested explicitly what architectural and environmental education can be in their contemporary arts education. We provided examples of these teaching pilots earlier in this chapter. The participating teachers agreed that incorporating environmental and architectural education into the new local curricula was not problematic due to their past experiences. Instead, its implementation into teaching turned out to be more challenging than the teachers expected. Salvos specifically supported implementation and, in addition to this, created new architectural-focused teaching groups.

Project results from the perspective of participating teachers included both expected and unpredictable issues. Obviously, the knowledge of architecture and architectural education has deepened. The participating teachers received insights into the interfaces of architecture, environmental art, and the fine arts. They were able to share their views, insights, and ideas at the project meetings and through blogs, but there was still more hope for sharing and networking. At the moment, our society indeed appears to be contradictory and divided. We certainly need thinking and reflection, pedagogical and didactic experimentation, collaboration, and projects that seek all aspects of humanity. Although the Salvos project was not able to fully meet the expectations of the participating teachers, the project proceeded with a focus on experiential learning and communality, and it contributed to developing a sustainable way of life.

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# Enhancing Arts Education with Education for Sustainable Development Competences: A Proposed Framework for Visual Arts Education Educators



Victoria Pavlou and Chrysanthi Kadji-Beltran

**Abstract** Arts can enable education to approach challenging socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues that twenty-first century humankind has to address through the use of expression as a means for action that informs and raises personal and public awareness. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is education for the twenty first century. It enhances Arts Education, supports the establishment of links with real-life issues and leads to action. The infusion of ESD into Arts Education has implications for the educators' role and the education they receive. Educators can be empowered and will become more effective if their training ensures that they develop the competences they need. In this chapter, we specifically focus on Visual Arts Education (VAE) as an example of Arts Education, and explore literature on teachers' competences on three levels: general teachers' competences, ESD competences and VAE competences. The objective is to understand what competences VAE educators (whether generalists or specialists) need to have to effectively deliver Visual Arts Education that embraces ESD. We propose a framework for ESD-enhanced VAE Competences for educators as a way forward for preparing them for the new challenges in their field. The framework aspires to trigger discussion about emerging implications of competence-based VAE for educators.

## Introduction: Education for the Twenty-First Century is Education for Real Life Issues

It is evident that education for the twenty-first century needs to be radically revisited in terms of the objectives, knowledge, skills and competences it has to transfer. Serving solely the economic growth can no longer be viewed as the ideal way of

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reconciling material progress with equity, respect for the human condition and respect for the natural resources for present and future generations. Bell (2016) questions the sustainability of the global economy and stresses that unless the twenty-first-century education is viewed through a sustainability lens, we would be missing some of the most urgent elements it should address: peace, freedom, social justice, climate crisis, environmental degradation. At the onset of the twenty-first century, the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century led by Jacques Delors acknowledged these challenges with responsibility (UNESCO, 1996), and turned to education for the appropriate tools to set the necessary momentum for addressing them. Education is based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be (UNESCO, 1996). It is an ongoing process of improving knowledge and skills closely connected to real-life issues, seeking for solutions and action through bringing about personal development and building relationships amongst individuals, groups, and nations.

The Delors Report is widely acknowledged as a key international reference for education and learning worldwide. It brings forth a humanistic vision of learning as an alternative to the dominant utilitarian approach that dominated the education and development discourse in the 1990s (Tawil & Cougoureaux, 2013). This vision was characterized by some analysts as ‘utopian’ in the sense that it is not easy to put into practice, yet it has influenced education reform and curriculum development in a range of countries worldwide. According to Tawil and Cougoureaux (2013), it is still a relevant guiding framework for developments in education in today’s world. The authors argue that a “re-reading” of the Delors Report would help ensure that current thinking on the role of education in development is truly “global” and relevant to national development efforts in all contexts in our common quest for a just, inclusive, and sustainable future.

Education for Sustainable Development is education for the twenty-first century as it seeks to prepare learners for the varied and interrelated environmental, social, and economic challenges they will meet as they confront the changing world. It emphasizes systemic and critical thinking for a better awareness of the present, along with future thinking, values, and strategic planning that will enable learners to help create and flourish in a more sustainable economy (Bell, 2016). It sets goals, addresses all twenty-first century education priority issues and offers solid means (principles, philosophy and pedagogy) for the educational transition needed to meet these goals. Foremost, it is transformative education and holds the potential for supporting our transition towards a sustainable future.

Educational systems are embracing education for the twenty-first century, in many cases, in the form of ESD. Education for Sustainable Development gets infused into the curricula and enriches their context placing emphasis on competences and skills that will help societies move towards a sustainable future. Sustainable Development also sets new goals (SDGs) and draws specific frameworks for their achievement (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) as reflected in Education (UN General Assembly, 2015). In the case of Arts Education, the integration of ESD reflects the transition into the twenty-first-century education where education through the arts gains momentum (Hutchens & Pankratz, 2000; Inwood, 2010; Kim, 2015) while, at

the same time, it poses new challenges for arts educators. A focus on the development of competences can assist in shifting education from input to output orientation (Wuttke & Seifried, 2017) and enables educators to become more effective with regards to their practice; and shows how to meaningfully connect arts with real-life issues and raise corresponding issues of awareness, values, and action in addressing the guidelines of SD. This suggests that, in addition to generic teacher competences, there is a need for reviewing discipline-specific competences within teacher education programmes, in ways that would also address ESD.

The current chapter focuses on the example of Visual Arts Education (VAE), as a discipline that embraces ESD and aims to trigger a discussion on competences for VAE educators.<sup>1</sup> While research and literature on ESD competences for educators have resulted in several models and concept papers, defining teacher competences in the area of VAE has not been comprehensively addressed. Our exploration was conducted through a competence-mapping exercise. We have reviewed literature and mapped generic teachers' competences, ESD competences and VAE competences. We have reviewed ideas, identified gaps and trends, considered how the former two can impact on the latter and discussed the implications on VAE educators' education. The chapter concludes with the suggestion of a framework for ESD-enhanced competences for VAE educators.

## **Education for Sustainable Development and Educators' Competences**

Constituting a holistic educational framework, ESD enables education to prepare and lead learners through the challenges and visions of the twenty-first century, to teach values and develop competencies for sustainable development and promote peaceful coexistence and well-being for all people (UNESCO, 2017). It empowers citizens to undertake informed and responsible decisions that influence environmental integrity, economic viability, social prosperity, and justice, in the present and for future generations. They become competent to operate in complex conditions by following sustainable practices and participating in socio-political processes that re-orient society towards sustainability (Rieckmann, 2012; UNESCO, 2017).

Education for Sustainable Development embraces the principles of transformative education where teaching leads to learning and wherein learning becomes meaningful through participation, cooperation, and a clear focus on real-life issues. It aims to empower learners to question and challenge their world-views and acquire a deeper understanding of them (Rieckmann, 2018; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). This promotes real learning, real outcomes and actual positive impact in the lives of all those engaged in the educational process.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'VAE educators' is used throughout this text to refer both to art-specialist teachers and general classroom teachers responsible for art teaching.

Competences-oriented teaching and learning is essential for effective ESD (Adomßent & Hoffmann, 2013). Acknowledging the infusion of ESD into different curriculum disciplines, research on competences development in ESD (e.g. UNECE 2012; Glasser & Hirsh, 2016; Rieckmann, 2012; Rychen & Salganik, 2003; Sleurs, 2008; Vare et al., 2019; Zachariou et al., 2019) can provide important insights into ESD competences for educators of different curriculum subjects.

The CSCT project (Sleurs, 2008) was developed as a response to the call of the UNECE in 2003 for including ESD in the curricula at all levels of formal education and adult education. It distinguishes three overall competences: teaching/communicating; reflecting/visioning; networking, and five competence domains: knowledge, systems-thinking, emotions, values and ethics, action, making the model well-founded in theory, but complicated in its implementation. Another important landmark in setting ESD competences for educators was the UNECE (2012) model *Learning for the future: Competences in Education for Sustainable Development*, which proposes thirty-nine specific competences, classified under the concept of 'the four pillars of education' (Delores, 1996). Within this model, each competence is also connected to the holistic approach to ESD, a vision for the future and aimed at achieving transformation. Even though the competences address mainly educators, the model also specifies the competences which are expected to be transferred by the educators to their students. Although the UNECE model represents the reference model to be followed and reflects thorough work on identifying and exhaustively presenting ESD competences, it is, at the same time, deemed too complex and difficult to implement, precisely because of the sheer number of competences it lists.

The RSP (A Rounder Sense of Purpose) model is another example of an ESD competences model for educators. It began as a 3-year EU-funded project which elaborated and distilled the 39 UNECE ESD competences into a more comprehensive, practical, measurable, and user-friendly model. The RSP model comprises 12 competence statements (on systems, futures, participation, attentiveness, empathy, engagement, transdisciplinarity, innovation, action, criticality, responsibility, and decisiveness), analyses each into three learning outcomes and proposes an auxiliary range of supporting activities largely reflecting a constructivist pedagogy (see <https://aroundsenseofpurpose.eu/>). The resulting RSP model is practical for use in developing training programmes for educators and flexible enough to integrate any national qualification framework (Vare, 2018; Vare et al., 2017).

## Education Through the Arts and VAE Teacher Competences

The need to connect the arts subjects taught in schools or other educational institutions (e.g. higher educational institutions) or settings (e.g. in communities) with learners' real-life issues is not new. Taking Visual Arts Education (VAE) as an example and looking at research/literature that summarizes its history, it is clear that VAE has justified its role in education within the philosophy of three streams: the expressive, the reconstructive, and the scientific (Efland, 1990). As regards the premises of the

reconstructive stream, Herbert Read (1948) argues for the need to educate children through art as he sees art as a vehicle to create an equitable society. Different movements have evolved with different names and a plethora of writings exists in the areas of education through the arts, such as socially engaged arts, community-based arts, participatory arts, dialogic arts, relational aesthetics, multicultural arts education and many others (e.g. Congdon, 2004; Frasz & Sidford, 2017). What this research has in common is that art, in this context, focuses on human interactions and its social context rather than art viewed as an independent and private symbolic space (Hall & Thomson, 2017). The stereotypical view of the artist (or the learner in the art classroom) as autonomous, self-focussed, and neutral is thus challenged (Campana, 2011). Art-making and responding to art are viewed as vehicles for identifying social issues (e.g. social inequalities) and thus serve as a means for promoting social justice, and—in some cases—for social and political activism (Anderson, 2010). The underlying research follows post-modern philosophy, which embraces more pluralistic practices in arts education, especially as related to cultural and social issues (Emery, 2002; Erickson, 2004).

In the contemporary art world, more and more artists are working towards socially engaged art or art-for-social-change and focus on contemporary real-life issues. At the same time, more and more art educators contribute to the debate, claiming that art needs to focus around big ideas (Walling, 2006), to engage children with visual culture (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004), to embrace new media (Mayo, 2007; Meyer, 2017) and provide a forum for understanding one's experiences and responding to the world around one. In other words, several art educators argue that visual arts enable children to gain access to the real world, make coherent meaning of it and order it for themselves while they are bombarded with images: they can comprehend and make out for themselves their relation towards the world around them and respond creatively by producing images and artworks that express their ideas, thoughts, viewpoint, etc. (Ewing, 2011).

The ways in which teachers understand, interpret and enact the curriculum differs from the way policy-makers intended the mandated curriculum to be implemented (Chapman, 2019) and teachers find it hard to integrate new approaches to art education including contemporary practices. Unlike other subjects that are textbook-driven, VAE content is very much in the hands of the educators who have great autonomy in their art-curriculum choices. Different studies indicate that teachers' attitudes towards art in terms of purpose and value result in curriculum misalignment and missed opportunities for achieving the full potential of the curriculum (Erickson, 2004; Kowalchuk & Stone, 2000)—this is especially true of generalist teachers who are, in many countries, responsible for teaching art in primary education. Many teachers frequently do not follow a written curriculum (Burton, 2001) and are more likely to promote modernist, rather than post-modern ideas about arts, indicating that the implementation of the VAE curricula effectively runs along two lines: (1) VAE curricula with strong reliance on post-modern ideas and (2) pre-service and in-service teachers' 'modernist' ideas about art, which continue to dominate in many public schools, especially at the primary level (Efland, 2005; Pavlou, 2013).

The question arising here is what kind of competences teachers need to hold in order to be able to respond to contemporary challenges. When referring to competences, we adopt the definition that prevails in the various European systems (Rychen & Salganik, 2003), and which states that competence includes a cluster of relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow the individual to act effectively in a given situation: ‘the cognitive skills and abilities that an individual has or can learn and that are used to solve certain problems, and the related motives, the relative will and the relative social will and the skills required to use solutions successfully and responsibly in changing situations’ (Weinert 2001, p. 27 in Rychen & Salganik, 2003). The European Commission (2013) meticulously avoids to identify overall teacher competences mostly because European countries employ different approaches in their definitions, from ‘light-touch’ to complex ones, or from outspoken to implied (e.g. they are embedded in their national educational curricula). Instead, the European Commission (2013) acknowledges that each teacher competence incorporates all three components (knowledge, skills, and attitudes/ dispositions), and identifies these three components by providing an indicative list. The following breakdown into separate areas and components serves the analytical purpose of understanding the implications and assumptions that underlie teacher competences (see Table 1).

The fact that educational systems in Europe (European Parliament, 2006) and elsewhere (Marshall, 2014) have moved towards a competence-based model for all school subjects, highlights the need for further research towards a comprehensive model for VAE-specific competences for teachers (Tomljenovic & Novakovic, 2019).

**Table 1** The analytic breakdown of teacher competences according to the European Commission (2013); some examples<sup>2</sup>

Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment
E.g. – Subject-matter knowledge – PCK – Pedagogical knowledge – Curricular knowledge – Educational sciences foundations – Aspects of educational policies – Issues of inclusion and diversity – Effective use of technologies in learning – Developmental psychology	E.g. – Planning, managing, and coordinating teaching – Using teaching materials and technologies – Managing students and groups – Monitoring, adapting, and assessing teaching/learning objectives and processes – Using research knowledge to inform practices – Collaborating with colleagues and others – Reflective, metacognitive, interpersonal skills	E.g. – Epistemological awareness – Teaching skills through content – Transferable skills – Dispositions to change, flexibility, ongoing learning – Commitment to promoting the learning of all students – Dispositions to promote students’ democratic attitudes and practices, as European citizens – Critical attitudes to one’s own teaching – Sense of self-efficacy

<sup>2</sup> For the full list, check European Commission (2013) pp.45–46.

A review of international literature can highlight which analytical aspects of teacher competences systematically appear in research and literature. For example, plenty of research is concerned with what pre-service or in-service teachers (whether generalists or specialists) need to know to teach art well. Consequently, various aspects of the ‘knowledge’ component of VAE educator competences are addressed. Traditionally, the focus has been on pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge. Much of the debate considers whether generalists (mainly, in primary education) or art-specialists should teach art and what kind of knowledge they should possess (e.g. Barrett, 2004; Pavlou, 2015). Further, there is much research on pre-service or in-service teachers’ self-efficacy/confidence related to their knowledge and artistic skills as well as on their attitudes or beliefs towards the role/status of art in education. So, some aspects of the ‘skills’ and ‘dispositions’ representing teacher competences are frequently addressed (e.g. Garvis et al., 2011; Miraglia, 2008).

There seems to be a reluctance towards adopting the term ‘competence’ when referring to teachers in VAE (e.g. Atkinson, 2011) and, whenever it is used, it is frequently associated with learning standards (e.g. College Board, 2013), teachers’ standards and qualification procedures, which do not really elaborate in-depth discussions on subject-specific teacher competences. In the past decade, research in VAE student competences dominated in the literature on VAE competences for educators. After all, it is expected that teachers should at least possess the competences that their students are expected to acquire during their schooling. International reviews of existing competence models for student development/learning in VAE (Erickson, 2004, College Board, 2013, Haanstra, 2013; Wagner & Schönau, 2016) highlight three main competence dimensions. The first relates with the productive aspect of VAE referred to as making, producing, exploring, creating, expressing, applying media/techniques/processes, etc. The second relates to the receptive aspects of VAE, referred to as understanding, appreciating, critically evaluating, apprehending, assessing characteristics of images in artworks, etc. The third is an overarching ability that encompasses the other two (the productive and receptive) and is referred to as reflection or meta-cognition (Haanstra, 2013; Tomljenovic & Novakovic, 2019). All three encompass knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In short, to be visually competent, a person needs to be able to possess certain elements—knowledge, skills, and dispositions—that allow him/her in specific situations to respond and produce images/artworks and, at the same time, reflect on what he/she is doing (Wagner & Schönau, 2016).

At the same time, being visually competent is an extremely important aspect of being competent in teaching VAE. The other important aspect is the pedagogical-didactic one (Hagenaars, 2016; Tomljenovic & Novakovic, 2019). The studies quoted here are in line with other studies that argue for content-specific pedagogical knowledge during teacher training when examining analytical aspects of teacher competences in the areas of producing/creating art and/or responding/ understanding art (Pavlou, 2015; Prentice, 2007) and/or reflecting, e.g. promoting the reflective practitioner in VAE (Klein & Miraglia, 2017). For example, the ‘responding/understanding

art' competence for teachers is not simply linked to the ability of teachers to understand images/artworks but also to have a substantial knowledge related to art criticism/art appreciation, teaching methodologies for engaging learners in discussion with/about images/artworks, knowledge of learners' characteristics, needs and developmental stages, and their possessing the ability to select appropriate images/artworks, organize and plan suitable activities and resources for learners as well as their having a positive disposition towards new experiences, appreciation of diversity and multi-culturality, critical attitudes towards their own discussing and questioning practices, etc.

Having in mind the fragmented approach and limited comprehensive studies on VAE teacher competences on the one hand, and the extensive, systematic elaboration of ESD teacher competences on the other, we propose, in the following section, a competence-related framework, suitable for VAE educators. The framework incorporates competences that will enable educators to address SD issues within VAE and successfully implement the education—through-art approach.

## Framework of ESD-Enhanced VAE Competences for Teachers

The proposed framework aspires to be a comprehensive framework that brings together concepts important for VAE educators, and one that does it in a meaningful way. The framework is not a panacea but an instrument that can be used to support teachers' professional development and to promote quality in visual arts education (see Fig. 1). It visualizes the way ESD competences (based on the RSP model), the four learning pillars of Education for the twenty-first century and the three key ESD principles can permeate and enhance the core VAE competences.

At the centre of the framework (first circle) are the three core VAE competences that make VAE unique in the way learners interact with their inner-self, with others, and the environment: it addresses their ability to respond, produce and reflect using images/artworks in a given situation. These complex processes include different sub-competences and actions and interact with each other (see CEFR\_VL in Wagner & Schönau, 2016; CEFR\_CV at envil.eu). Teachers need to be competent in all these core competences that their students need to have (College Board 2013; Wagner & Schönau, 2016; Sickler-Voigt, 2020) and, additionally, be equipped with specific pedagogical competences presented in Table 1 (viewed under the VAE educator lens).

Alongside the core VAE competences in the first circle, there exist the three key principles of ESD (2nd circle). Holistically thinking, envisioning change, and achieving transformation are intrinsic characteristics of ESD and they were thus used by UNECE as a criterion for the organization of the ESD competences in the UNECE ESD competences model. *Thinking holistically* is about seeking holistic, integrative thinking and practice; *envisioning change* is connected to the ability to learn from the past and explore alternative sustainable futures in ways that inspire engagement in



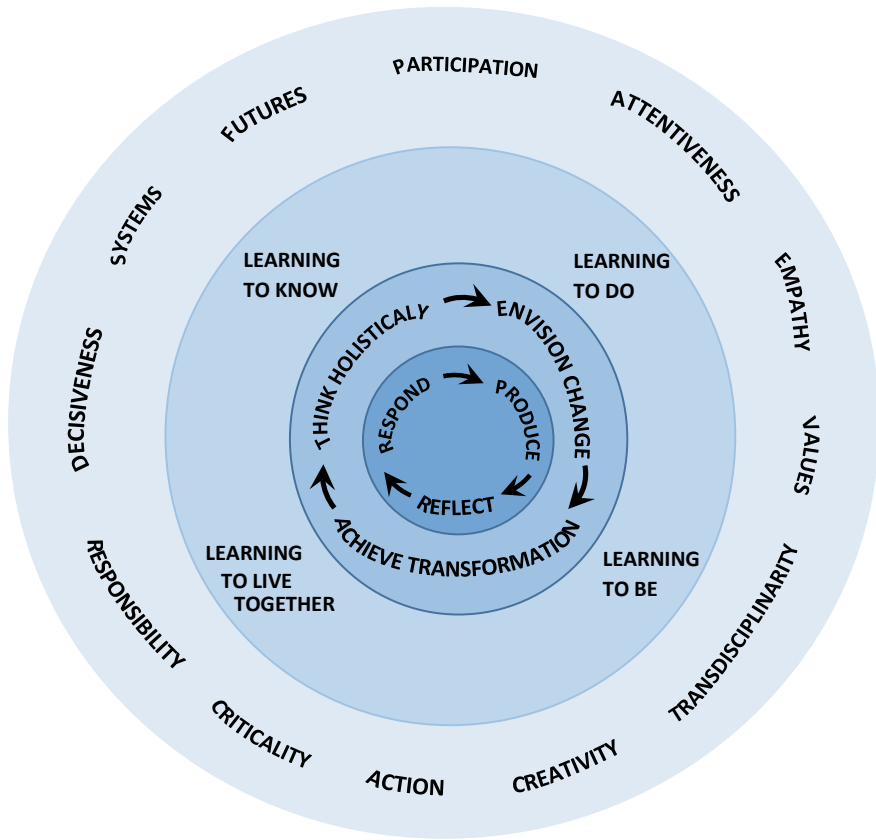


Fig. 1 Framework of ESD-enhanced VAE educator competences

the present; *achieving transformation*, is the characteristic of ESD, which serves to change the systems that support learning and the way people learn. These three characteristics are reflected in ESD competences that are presented in the outer layers of the suggested framework (third and fourth circles). The core VAE competences facilitate learning in a similar way as the key principles in ESD; they related to how teachers must encourage learners to be actively engaged in their learning, gathering information, having a voice, interacting, participating in substantial conversations and learning tasks, responding to information/messages and producing/communicating messages about global topics and life through reflection and action.

The third circle includes the four learning pillars of education for the twenty-first century as formulated by Delors (1996). These have impacted education in general, depicted the way we understand learning in VAE and also had a particular influence on organizing ESD competences (UNECE 2012). For VAE educators, *learning to know* implies the acquisition of a broad general body of knowledge and the ability for self-driven learning, including deep knowledge of the content and structure

of visual arts, principles and objectives, and the overall pedagogy (see knowledge component, Table 1). *Learning to do* concerns skills such as planning, managing and coordinating art teaching, making art skills, collaborating with colleagues and parents (see skills component, Table 1). *Learning to be* includes beliefs, values, attitudes towards VAE, and commitment, being able to act with autonomy, judgement, and personal responsibility (see disposition component, Table 1). *Learning to live together* is linked with professional identity in VAE as well as about understanding other people, appreciating pluralism and interdependence, and carrying out joint projects in a spirit of mutual respect, understanding, and peace (Delors, 1996). This pillar is connected to all three components of teachers' competences as presented in Table 1. For example, the teachers' ability to 'know' the group processes and dynamics, or their 'skills' to collaborate with colleagues, parents, social services and negotiate and their 'dispositions' to team-working, collaboration, and networking, or to promote student's democratic attitudes and practices, as European citizens are understood as competences facilitating 'living together'.

A VAE teacher who embraces education-through-visual-arts as education for sustainable development needs to acquire ESD-enhanced VAE competences. The fourth outer circle includes the 12 competence statements of the RSP Model for ESD Competences for Educators (Vare, 2018). The model was specifically designed for use in developing training programmes for educators seeking to deliver ESD through their practice (Vare, 2018; Vare et al., 2017). The 12 competences, in an alphabetical order, are the following:

- The *Action* competence is about making a difference. Such an awareness of their role is particularly important for teachers.
- *Attentiveness* refers to the ability to not only know about an issue but also becoming explicitly cognizant of it.
- *Creativity* is a major challenge and key competence for VAE. Seeking to identify solutions within the context of real-world issues, creative and innovative approaches must be sought, such as situated learning or living laboratories.
- *Criticality* is a prerequisite for achieving SD and for VAE. It is important in evaluating information, data, actions, and their possible consequences to acquire an objective understanding of an issue, its implications, and its solutions. Educators, therefore, need to be able to explore underlying assumptions, to evaluate stereotypes in images and artworks, to challenge communication of messages, to draw inferences, deduce, control, and monitor reasoning.
- *Decisiveness* is linked to ethical dilemmas and complex problems, having to think deeply about them and making rational decisions towards their solution.
- *Empathy* involves understanding and responding effectively to ones' own and others' emotions and creating positive learning environments.
- The *Futures* competence concerns the ability to reflect, consider past practices, think creatively, and envision a sustainable future.
- *Participation* in decision-making is an essential characteristic of sustainable development governance. Citizens need to be empowered and able to actively engage, discuss, and contribute towards societal transformations for SD.

- The competence of *Responsibility* implies the critical examination of one's own actions, acting transparently and responsibly. This is connected to our understanding of what kind of human beings we want to be and what kind of world we want to live in.
- The *Systems* competence entails the understanding of global challenges and the interconnectedness between them. Sustainable development issues cannot be addressed unless their causes and solutions are sought within their environmental, social, cultural, and economic context.
- *Transdisciplinarity* concerns the ability to collaborate with a diverse group of people in order to erase discipline boundaries and go beyond multidisciplinary teams. Educators need to be able to establish collaborations between peer-groups, schools, and the community.
- *Values* are about developing an awareness of how beliefs and values underpin actions and how values need to be negotiated and reconciled.

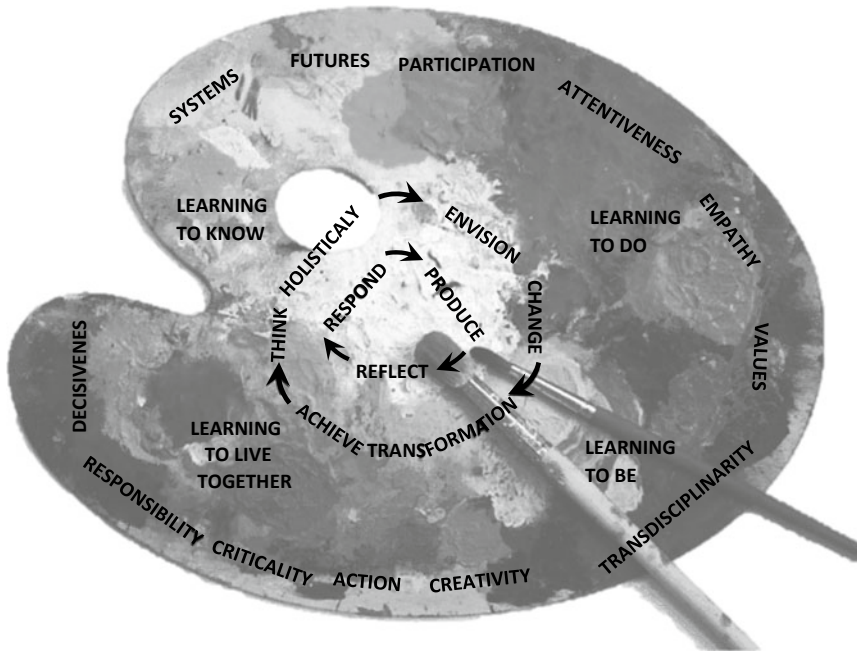
The RSP model is suitable for VAE educators as it shares VAE's values and philosophy: the need to respond to images/artworks (related to the attentiveness, systems, empathy, and value-related competences), to produce and communicate ideas through images/artworks (relating to the competences of creativity, action, transdisciplinarity, and participation) and also to reflect on what is happening (as relating to the competences of criticality, futures, responsibility, and decisiveness).

While there are art units that can potentially address all 12 competences, resources for teacher educators should opt for a selection. 'Creativity' and 'criticality', for example, are two competences that should be always addressed in art units. Figure 2 uses the image of an artist's palette as an illustrative metaphor, based on the RSP Framework (Vare, 2018; <https://arundersenseofpurpose.eu/framework/palette/>). The following representation acknowledges that competences overlap and educators will rarely need to exhibit one competence or all of them at a given time.

To exemplify how this framework may be adopted in developing resources for teacher education in VAE, a template is provided in Table 2. Since education through VAE is ESD, it is important to promote educator competences in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The template highlights how learning should be organized around the key features of the framework in Fig. 1.

The following is an example of the use of the template. The art unit under discussion is titled 'War Memorials'. By studying war memorials, which serve as symbols of remembrance, pre-/in-service teachers may study the role of tradition in honouring the loss of life, study the act of remembrance as a way of coping with the loss, study the quality that a given memorial should possess, research the background behind the memorial, the history and the consequences of the conflict/war, connect with the ideas of hope and understanding of the future, as well as plan for the future in a way that honours the past (Sickler-Voigt, 2020).

What is presented in Table 3 should be used as a springboard for imagining possibilities and developing a complete art unit. The specific learning objectives, activities, and assessment are not described. These should be developed according to the specific context where the art unit will be delivered. While all other points of



**Fig. 2** ESD-enhanced VAE competences in a palette

the template are presented, one should have in mind that these will still need to be refined depending on the specific context where it might be applied (country, region, community, learners' characteristics, duration, available resources, etc.). Therefore, at times, the description of a point might feel rather 'generic' or 'too broad'.

## Conclusions

The field of VAE research is rich and it abounds with curriculum proposals that address particular concerns and propose curriculum reforms that should be implemented by VAE educators to raise the quality of VAE. At the same time, the debate generally appears to be devoid of a sustained and critical dialogue about VAE educator competences for enacting these reforms. It is not enough to argue for education through art as a general goal that can align VAE with education for the twenty-first century. It is important to explicitly nurture ESD-enhanced VAE competences within VAE.

This chapter aspires to accelerate the discussion on a framework for developing competences for VAE educators that will explicitly enable them to plan and deliver education through art. Such a framework is also a valuable starting point for the development of competence-based VAE teacher education programmes that integrate

**Table 2** Template for developing resources for teacher training

SDGs	Identify the SDG that this art unit connects with
Big ideas	Identify the big ideas
Art unit	Give a title to the art unit based on the big ideas
Rationale	Develop a rationale that explains the value of the art unit
Core VAE competences	Identify briefly whether all or some core competences will be addressed and how. Whenever possible address all core competences as these are interrelated and overlapping
Key principles in ESD	Identify briefly whether all or some key principles will be addressed and how. Whenever possible address all key principles as these are interrelated and overlapping
Learning pillars	Identify briefly whether all or some overarching competences will be on focus and how. Whenever possible address all learning pillars as these are interrelated and overlapping
The palette	Select the competences that will be the focus of this art unit and identify why. While competences overall are interrelated, it is best to focus on some of the 12 competences of the RSP model
Learning objectives	Identify/plan learning objectives based on competences and learning pillars identified above and also incorporate pedagogical competences as the learners are student-teachers
Activities	Plan for the activities as well as the instructional resources (e.g. images/artworks, references, materials, means, techniques, etc.)
Assessment	Plan ways for achieving authentic assessments that appraise learners learning outcomes and expressive outcomes that reach beyond the classroom with real-world applications

knowledge, skills, and attitudes, within the realistic and meaningful contexts ESD provides. Competence-based curricula also need to find ways to ‘translate’ competences within their context and the approaches used for their delivery (Wasselink et al., 2017). Further exploration of how to translate the ESD-enhanced VAE teacher competences in the VAE praxis is needed.

The example presented highlights that ESD competences are applicable and adaptable in the VAE context and therefore can enhance VAE competences in view of this novel ESD orientation. The proposes systemic and structural changes in the way we train educators towards being competent to teach through visual arts. It is not enough to train an educator in separate areas (e.g. VAE and ESD) and then assume that they will be in a position to “put things together”.

There are some key implications for teacher education programmes that need to be accounted for and further explored. These are as follows:

- (1) What pedagogical methodologies, suitable for the VAE context, can be used to transfer competences to educators?
- (2) How do teachers’ needs, in terms of competence development, vary depending on their experience (student-teachers, novice teachers, experienced teachers)

**Table 3** An example—war memorials

SDGs	SDG16: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels
Big ideas	Remembrance: remembrance of loved ones, pay homage/honour to a person/event from the past, tradition to homage/honour of a person/event from the past, planning the future in a way that respects/pay homage/honour to a person/event from the past
Art unit	War memorials
Rationale	The unit aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development through VAE. It aims to strengthen understanding and relationships between learners (pre-/in-service teachers) with the aim of being able to live together in peace. Subsequently, it aims to develop their competences in promoting similar knowledge, skills, and dispositions to their pupils later on. Each war memorial is unique. Each represents a community's way of remembrance. Each links the past to present, enabling people to remember, honour, and respect people and events from the past. War memorials offer opportunities to critically evaluate memorialization as a historical artefact, understand social, political and economic factors/customs of a community, and promote active and proactive citizens. War memorials have personal and collective significance and provide opportunities to deal with emotions related to grief, loss, remembrance, respect, and honour, with knowledge of local context, personal and collective history, with skills of critically evaluating, reflecting and with dispositions related to empathy, value of human life, etc.
Core VAE competences	<p>Learners (pre-/in-service teachers) should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respond to images/artworks             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Visit and have an aesthetic experience of a war memorial and critically analyse and interpret it as well as other (images and/or videos of war memorials)</li> <li>1.2 Create questions and activities for children for responding to war memorials using different methodological models for teachers</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Create images/artworks             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Research the big ideas to create an artwork that pays homage/honour to a person/ event from the past ('war/past memorial')</li> <li>2.2 Research the big ideas to collaboratively create an artwork that shows aspirations for the future ('peace/future memorial')</li> <li>2.3 Refine ideas, demonstrate unity in their design and execute it by showing craftsmanship</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Reflect on the process of responding and producing images/artworks             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Reflect on the aesthetic experience of visiting/ understanding a war memorial and on the links between the past and the present</li> <li>3.2 Reflect on the role of tradition in honouring the loss of life</li> <li>3.3 Reflect on their creations/ artworks ('memorials')</li> <li>3.4 Transform their experiences in a plan of an art unit for children</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

(continued)

**Table 3** (continued)

SDGs	SDG16: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels
Key ESD principles	<p>Learners (pre-/in-service) should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think holistically: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Understand the interrelated facts (political, economic, social, environmental), world views, and cultural assumptions concerning the historic event of the depicted war memorial, that lead to the conflict and its systemic consequences</li> <li>1.2 Identify and actively engage appropriate groups or individuals (across generations, cultures, places and disciplines) that can share experiences and enhance learning about the specific events</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Envision change: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Envision alternative peaceful outcomes resulting from alternative responses to the conflict-event represented by the war memorial studied</li> <li>2.2 Acknowledge the urgent need for change from hostile conflict practices towards advancing quality of life, equity, solidarity, and sustainability</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Achieve transformation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Engage pupils in real-world issues connected to the ideas represented by the memorial to enhance learning outcomes and helps learners make a difference (e.g. suggest action to address refugee's issues)</li> <li>3.2 Engage with pupils in ways that build positive relationships</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Learning pillars	<p>Learning to know: knowledge of history, past events in local community, conflicts/wars, personal stories, collective stories, social, political and economic factors, knowledge of methodological approaches of engaging with images/artworks/artefacts with children, knowledge of materials, techniques and means</p> <p>Learning to do: be able to respond to a war memorial, to use materials, to experiment, to produce artworks with craftsmanship and to plan art activities for children that include all core VAE competences</p> <p>Learning to be: to honour and show respect, to value human life, to critically reflect on the learning process, to critically reflect on past assumptions and habits, to be motivated to make a positive contribution to their local social context</p> <p>Learning to live together: to actively engage with other learners, to understand others' viewpoints, to negotiate alternative futures, to collaboratively create an art work ('future memorial')</p>

(continued)

or their specialization (general teachers delivering VAE or specialized VAE teachers).

The implementation of the framework can provide valuable insights into competence development and suitable methodologies. Empowered educators can meaningfully interpret the information, interact with the curriculum and enact policies

**Table 3** (continued)

SDGs	SDG16: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels
The palette	<p>Indicative competences are given below (these depend largely on learning outcomes that are not included in this table)</p> <p>At the end of the art unit, pre-/in-service teachers should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– critically respond to war memorials (criticality competence)</li> <li>– experiment and communicate messages about honour and remembrance, war and peace (creativity competence)</li> <li>– actively participate in aesthetic experiences, in researching about local context and personal stories, in sharing ideas and experiences, in recognizing potentials for living in peace, together (participation competence)</li> <li>– exhibit images/artworks to celebrate remembrance, understanding and honour of loss (action competence)</li> <li>– understand emotions of grief, loss, respect and honour of their own and those of others, recognize needs, and connections within people (empathy competence)</li> </ul>

towards viable art education practices that integrate and embrace sustainable development issues. Such a bottom-up change can well prove to be a suitable and viable way forward.

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# Research Projects

# Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals



Edwin van Meerkerk, Arno Neele, and Iris van Korven

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) present the greatest challenges facing our society. As a central force in the upbringing of future citizens, schools have a role to play in preparing children and adolescents for the trials posed by the societal issues underlying the SDGs. Moreover, while it is debatable whether schools should be burdened with the responsibility of solving such great tasks for future generations (Biesta, 2014), the question begs answering, if only because of the worldwide environmental awareness movement started by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg.

Following up on previous questionnaires (IJdens & Lievens, 2017; IJdens & Zernitz, 2019), we have distributed a survey among respondents of the ENO network who are recognised as experts in the field of arts education and/or arts education policy. This year's theme was the value of arts education for sustainable development goals. While most of these goals do not form part of the arts education curriculum in any of the countries of our respondents, both the urgency of the SDGs and the claim made by a number of arts education policymakers and advocates that arts education ought to play a central role in the curriculum because of its societal impact, suggest at least a potential connection (Bamford, 2006; Cultural Learning Alliance, 2019; Deasy, 2002; Upitis, 2001).

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The United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals, a list of objectives to be reached by subscribing governments by 2030, have included culture alongside environmental, economic, and social goals since its first drafts (United Cities & Local Governments, 2010). Since the turn of the millennium, culture has been recognised as an important factor in achieving the sustainable development goals, both by policymakers and advocates and in academic research (Koya & Chowdhury, 2019). The United Nations Development Programme stresses, ‘The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognise that action in one area will affect outcomes in others’. (UNDP, 2019) Despite the recognition of culture as the fourth pillar of the SDGs, reference to culture—let alone the arts—is absent in the official communications of the UN.

The relationship between education and sustainable development is much more explicit. UNESCO endorses a broad and integrated view of education for sustainable development, stressing the connection between the four pillars of the SDGs, the inclusion of formal, non-formal, and informal learning, and interdisciplinarity among others. (Taylor, 2018) Despite the support by UNESCO, culture and education have played only a marginal role in the implementation of the SDGs. Vlassis (2016) suggests that a reluctant, even indifferent attitude on the part of the developed countries is the cause of the weak link between culture and education, and the other sustainable development goals (Vlassis, 2016).

## Theoretical Framework

Arts education may serve many purposes. First of all, along the lines of the goals of education as a whole, arts education aims to sustain qualification, socialisation, and subjectification (Biesta, 2010). With regards to arts education specifically, goals have been divided into education *in* the arts and education *through* the arts (Bamford, 2006)—in other words: arts education as a goal in itself and arts education as a means to an external goal. Combining the two reveals the following framework (Table 1).

When discussing the relationship between arts education and sustainability, the focus lies primarily on socialisation through the arts: to be made aware of societal debates through works of art. To articulate a social goal for arts education is to engage in a centuries-old debate on the social impact of the arts, as reconstructed by Belfiore and Bennett (2008). In their historical overview of both positive and negative assessments of effects of engagement with the arts, they found claims of

**Table 1** Theoretical framework

	Qualification	Socialisation	Subjectification
In the arts	To become an artist	To use artistic means in social interaction	To develop a personal style as an artist
Through the arts	To become a creative professional	To be made aware of societal debates through works of art	To be able to articulate personal issues after aesthetic experience

moral improvement and views on the arts as political instrument alongside pleas to reject the use of the arts as an instrument for political goals. We may, thus, expect to find opinions on the relationship between arts education and sustainability in terms of the development of awareness through arts education, as well as a refusal to use arts education for such external purposes.

In recent literature on arts education, there is a clear consensus on the value of arts education as an instrument for social awareness and social change. Roberts and Freeman-Moir (2013) for instance, present their case for arts and education as a means to create 'better worlds'. Arts education advocacy is often connected to claims of its potential impact on citizen awareness, building 'politically useful skills' (Schwarz, 2000, 67). Education has become a decisive factor in European cultural policy since the end of the Second World War (Steigerwald, 2019, 98). Climate and sustainability, however, do not feature among the societal goals of arts education. Emancipation, economic progress, and personal development have been the dominant arguments in advocating arts education (Steigerwald, 2019, 142–143). Respondents might therefore be hesitant in connecting arts education to the promotion of sustainability, or rather endorsing it as a further step in the impact of arts education. It would be interesting to ascertain whether our respondents are aware of the difference between 'traditional' use of arts education as a socio-political goal and the use of arts education as a means to promote (awareness of) sustainability.

In a volume that was intended as a manual for connecting arts education and the anthropocene, Gilbert and Cox (2019, 51) sought to develop 'place-based, regionally focused, relationally grounded, interdisciplinary programs'. The context of the Anthropocene, the affirmation of the fundamental influence of human behaviour on the long-term biological and physical development of the earth, is an important backdrop for this paper. As Gilbert and Cox' study reveals, the connection between arts education and these global developments—and the potential impact of the arts in dealing with, or even changing the course of these developments, is clearly seen. Some even claim a special role for arts education in the context of the anthropocene and the closely related concept of posthumanism. In arts education, 'new forms of life' can be developed that are necessary under the changing social and environmental circumstances of the contemporary world (Rousel & Fell, 2018). It is interesting to see to what extent this ambitious perspective on the role of arts education will be visible in the responses by the arts education experts of our survey.

Discussions on the legitimisation of arts education often rely on non-empirical arguments (Helton, 2020). The SDGs, on the other hand, are both empirically grounded and politically legitimised. It would therefore only be logical that a connection between arts education advocacy and the sustainable development goals is seen as fruitful by arts education experts. This line of reasoning runs the risk of losing view of the unique qualities of the arts, as was seen in the studies mentioned above, and ignoring the 'fundamental imperative be to promote the arts as their own, distinct entity with their own independent value to students' (Helton, 2020, 10). This dilemma runs parallel to the conclusion by Winner, Goldstein, and Vincent-Lancrin that arts education research focuses too strongly on transfer effects, ignoring the arts-specific qualities (Winner et al., 2013). Thus, while the potential of arts education to contribute

to environmental and social changes is recognised, to act on these challenges poses a threat on arts education for art's sake. Below, we will discuss to what extent this tension is shared by the respondents of our survey.

## The Survey

Research on the beliefs of experts and policymakers regarding the value and impact of arts education has become a continuous focus of research ever since the global survey by Anne Bamford in 2006. As a result, insight into the background of arts education policy has increased considerably. Bamford (2006) focused on the overarching ideas and values on the impact of arts education globally, revealing a focus on cultural, social, aesthetic, as well as personal goals. The impact of her study on arts education policy was significant, as it underscored the strong conviction of the effects of arts education both within the arts and on other fields of education. Bamford found differences between countries resulting from institutional and economic differences alongside this broad consensus.

The MONAES survey by IJdens and Lievens (2017) explored the personal and national understandings of what arts education comprises in a global survey. They found a strong global consensus on the contents of arts education, revealing the existence of 'a global community of arts education professionals sharing ideas, opinions and a body of knowledge' (IJdens & Lievens, 2017, 97). At the same time, the MONAES survey revealed great differences between national policies regarding arts education, although they were unable to draw specific conclusions on the correlation between nationality and the definitions of arts education. Overall, there is a tendency of preferring 'arts and aesthetic skills' over 'cultural and creative competencies' as goals for arts education. This could potentially hinder the active use of arts education for the SDGs. The 2019 ENO survey on the relationship between national awareness, cultural diversity, and arts education (IJdens & Zernitz, 2019) revealed a difference between North-Western European countries and Central and Southern European countries regarding the need to incorporate goals aiming at cultural diversity and inclusion in arts education. IJdens and Zernitz attributed these differences largely to the concepts and vocabulary used.

This article presents the results of a survey conducted among 220 respondents in 29 countries at the end of 2019.<sup>1</sup> 109 respondents completed the entire survey; 97 quit before completing for 25% of the survey, and 13 after completing between 29 and 86% of the questions, i.e. after completing the first three, scale-based questions, but leaving open all or part of the open questions. The survey consisted of 19 questions. The first two questions were closed-ended and asked for the actual and the potential contribution of arts education for achieving the SDGs on a five-point Likert scale.

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<sup>1</sup> The fieldwork is conducted by the research group CuDOS of the Sociology Department of Ghent University, in particular by Elke van Hevele and John Lievens.



The open-ended questions asked for a verbal assessment of the value of arts education for each of the SDGs.

For the survey, we used the same database of respondents as in the previous ENO survey (IJdens & Zernitz, 2019). The list includes respondents from European countries that are recognised experts in arts education in their respective countries. The full list contains 675 names, of whom 32.5% responded to the survey. The distribution of the countries of origin among the respondents is largely in line with that of the gross list of experts. Countries with a negative difference in response rate of one percentage point or higher are France (3.8%, -8.3), Latvia (0.6%, -1.3), Norway (3.8%, -1.8), Poland (3.2%, -2), Slovakia (0.6%, -3.7), and Sweden (1.3%, -1.8). Countries with a positive difference in response rate of one percentage point or higher are Germany (15.9%, +2.6), Spain (6.4%, +2.4), Hungary (2.5%, +1), the Netherlands (14%, +8.1), and the UK (10.2%, +2.8). The full list can be found in Appendix 1.

## Methodology

The answers to the two closed-ended questions were analysed through descriptive statistics, using SPSS. The first question asked respondents to rank the extent to which arts education as it is practised today in the respondent's country contributes to the SDGs. The second questions asked them to assess the extent to which arts education potentially could contribute to achieving the SDGs. The respondents were asked to rate this on a five-point scale for every single SDG, where 1 stands for no contribution and 5 for high contribution. For the analysis, we used the answers of the respondents who completed both questions, but did not necessarily complete the whole questionnaire. This resulted in 126 questionnaires being used. For both questions, we calculated the mean, median, and standard deviation per SDG (see Appendix 2).

The answers to the open questions were analysed by two researchers through open coding, using Atlas.ti software (version 8). The coding and the analysis of the data were performed as grounded research, aiming at retrieving emerging codes and constructing theory from the primary data (Charmaz, 2014). The codes were first generated *in vivo*; each answer was given one or more codes, based on the words used by the respondent. Next, codes were clustered on grounds of synonymity or close similarity in meaning. The codes were then correlated on their co-occurrence in an answer, resulting in an index for density, as discussed below. The two authors involved clustered the initial codes independently, resulting in a 75% intercoder agreement on the coding tree (see Appendix 3).

## Quantitative Results

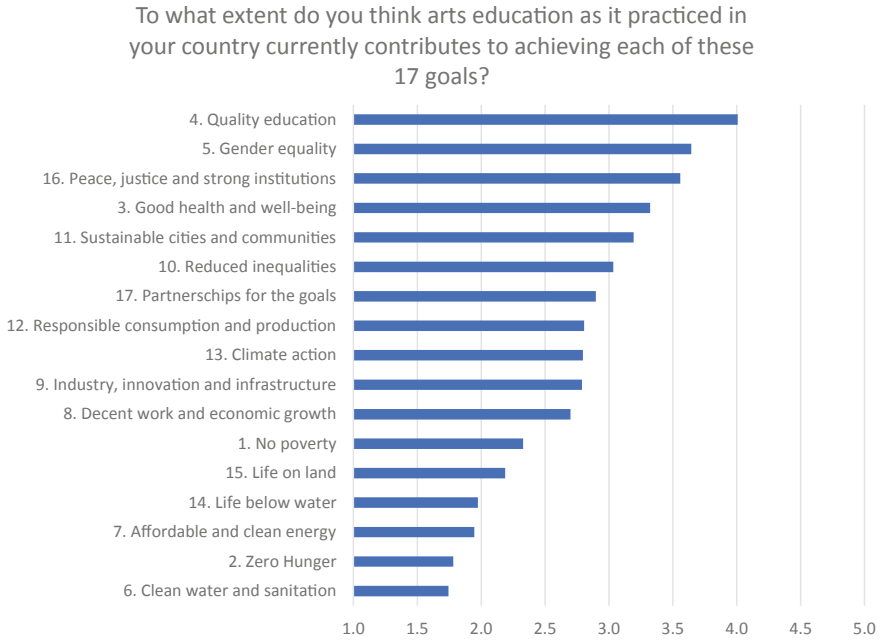
For the current contribution of arts education to the SDGs, the average mean for all SDGs together is 2.7. We do, however, find a considerable variation between the different SDGs, from a mean of 4.0 for the SDG 'Quality education' to a mean of 1.7 for 'Clean water and sanitation'. The SDGs are the successor to the Millennium Development Goals formulated by the UN. They represent a shift towards 'deeper and more complex issues of health including mental wellbeing, quality education, nutritional security, innovation, peace and justice, equality, cultural vitality, environmental and social resilience etc.' (Som & Mohanty, 2018). This shift is in line with the classic hierarchy of needs proposed by Abraham Maslow, in which he discerned basic, or physiological, needs and 'higher' needs: safety, love, esteem, and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). The higher needs, especially self-actualisation, have been associated with arts education and creative development (Cote, 2010; Pepper & Davis, 2010).

The responses to the closed-ended questions suggest that this hierarchy is still present in the minds of the arts education experts. Their answers regarding the (potential) contribution of arts education can be divided into groups, corresponding to Maslow's hierarchy. It is clear that, according to the respondents, the contribution of current arts education practice to goals that deal with basic needs is relatively low. Such goals are 'Clean water and sanitation', 'Zero hunger', 'Affordable and clean energy', 'Life below water', 'Life on land', 'No poverty', and 'Decent work and economic growth'. The SDGs that have higher scores deal with more socio-cultural challenges of societies, such as 'Quality education', 'Gender equality', and 'Peace, justice and strong institutions' (Fig. 1).

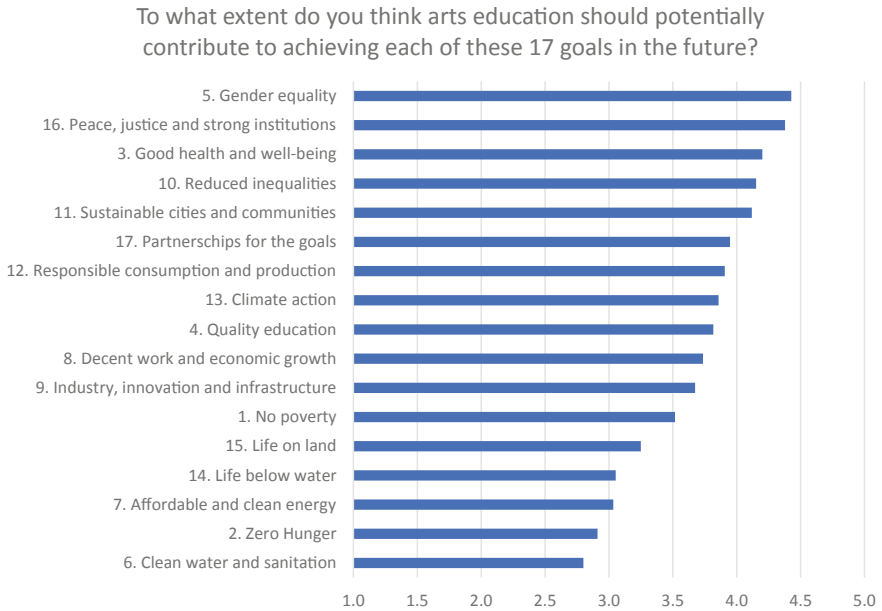
Concerning the potential contribution of arts education to the SDGs, we see more or less the same ranking. According to the respondents, arts education has most to offer to the socio-cultural SDGs, and relatively less to the basic needs (Fig. 2). Overall, the respondents see more potential in arts education than is realised for all SDGs. The average of the potential contribution to all SDGs is at 3.7 one percentage point higher than the current contribution. This accounts not only for the overall average but also for the means for every single SDG. The gap between the current and the potential contribution of arts education is between 0.8 and 1.2 for every SDG. Only for the goal 'Quality education', there is no gap. Therefore, it seems there is much to gain for arts education as well as for sustainable development. With our qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions, we hope to give more insights into what arts education has to offer to the sustainable development of our societies.

## Qualitative Results

On the responses to the open questions for each of the 17 sustainable development goals, a total of 563 different answers were given, 33.1 on average (median 34;



**Fig. 1** Current contribution of arts education to SDGs



**Fig. 2** Potential contribution of arts education to SDGs

standard deviation 14). Most answers were given to the SDGs ‘Quality education’ (63), ‘Good health and wellbeing’ (57), and ‘Gender equality’ (50). The least answers were given for ‘Life below water’ (17), ‘Affordable and clean energy’ (18), and ‘Clean Water and Sanitation’ (18). The number of words per answer also differs greatly, with ‘Quality education’ triggering respondents to the longest answers (36 words per answer) and ‘Life on Land’ the least (18.3 words per answer). SDGs topping the list on both the number of answers and the number of words per answer are ‘Good health and wellbeing’ and ‘Quality education’, while at the bottom are ‘Clean water and sanitation’, ‘Affordable and clean energy’, and ‘Life on land’ (Table 2: high scores in **bold**, low scores in *italics*). These figures present a first indication of the presumed areas of impact of arts education.

The answers were copied into Atlas.ti and coded *in vivo*, as described above. Next, the codes were expanded from the individual words to the entire answers, thus creating an overlap between codes appearing in the same answer. Redundant codes were automatically detected by the software and deleted. The ten codes that emerged as most grounded, i.e. most often attributed to an answer were, in hierarchical order (Table 3).

The ten codes that emerged as most dense, i.e. most often mentioned in the same answer as one of the other codes, were (Table 4).

Five codes—Expression and emotion, development, skills and competences, creativity, and awareness—emerge as being both strongly grounded and densely

**Table 2** Number of words per answer

	Words	Answers	Words/answers
1. No poverty	1,109	39	28.4
2. Zero hunger	623	19	32.8
3. Good health and well-being	<b>1,755</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>30.8</b>
4. Quality education	<b>2,271</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>36.0</b>
5. Gender equality	1,504	50	30.1
6. Clean water and sanitation	<i>452</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>25.1</i>
7. Affordable and clean energy	<i>433</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>24.1</i>
8. Decent work and economic growth	1,081	35	30.9
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	886	27	32.8
10. Reduced inequalities	1,187	39	30.4
11. Sustainable cities and securities	1,107	37	29.9
12. Responsible production and consumption	653	27	24.2
13. Climate action	785	34	23.1
14. Life below water	515	17	30.3
15. Life on land	<i>329</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>18.3</i>
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	1,008	38	26.5
17. Partnerships for the goals	826	27	30.6

**Table 3** Most grounded codes

Code	Grounded	Density
1. Creativity	96	27
2. Skills and competences	94	28
3. Expression and emotion	72	32
4. Awareness	64	26
5. Innovation	55	18
6. Community	46	11
7. Life	46	0
8. Development	45	28
9. Engagement	45	13
10. Critical thinking	41	14

**Table 4** Codes with the highest density

Code	Grounded	Density
1. Expression and emotion	72	32
2. Happiness and wellbeing	37	31
3. Skills and competences	94	28
4. Development	45	28
5. Creativity	96	27
6. Diversity	36	27
7. Awareness	64	26
8. Empowerment	24	22
9. Imagination	26	19
10. Innovation	55	18

connected. Each of these codes is connected to all of the other five (Table 5). These may, therefore, be seen as constituting the core of the beliefs held by the respondents regarding the relationship between arts education and the sustainable development goals. Among these five, ‘Creativity’ has the strongest connections to the other codes, mainly as a result with the high number of co-occurrences with the code ‘skills and competences’. ‘Development’ and ‘expression and emotion’ have the lowest degree of co-occurrence among these five codes. Codes directly associated with the SDGs, such as ‘Diversity’, ‘Inclusivity’, ‘Peace’, or ‘Wellbeing’, are mentioned only scarcely. This does not necessarily mean that the respondents do not see a role for arts education in achieving the goals; the relationship between arts education and the SDGs can be more indirect.

In the answers, words mentioned in connection with these five codes (to be, to have, connectors, and quantifiers excluded) show that after ‘art(s)’ and ‘education’, ‘development/developing’, ‘life’, ‘creativity’, and ‘skill(s)’ occur most, as shown in Table 6. Of these, ‘skill(s)’ is only strongly associated with the code of that name, while being practically absent in phrases coded as ‘development’ or ‘expression and

**Table 5** Co-occurrence of the strongest codes

	Awareness	Creativity	Development	Expression and emotion	Skills and competences
Awareness	–	15	9	14	5
Creativity	15	–	17	15	43
Development	9	17	–	12	10
Expression and emotion	14	15	12	–	11
Skills and competences	5	43	10	11	–
Total	43	75	39	38	64

**Table 6** Words associated with strong codes

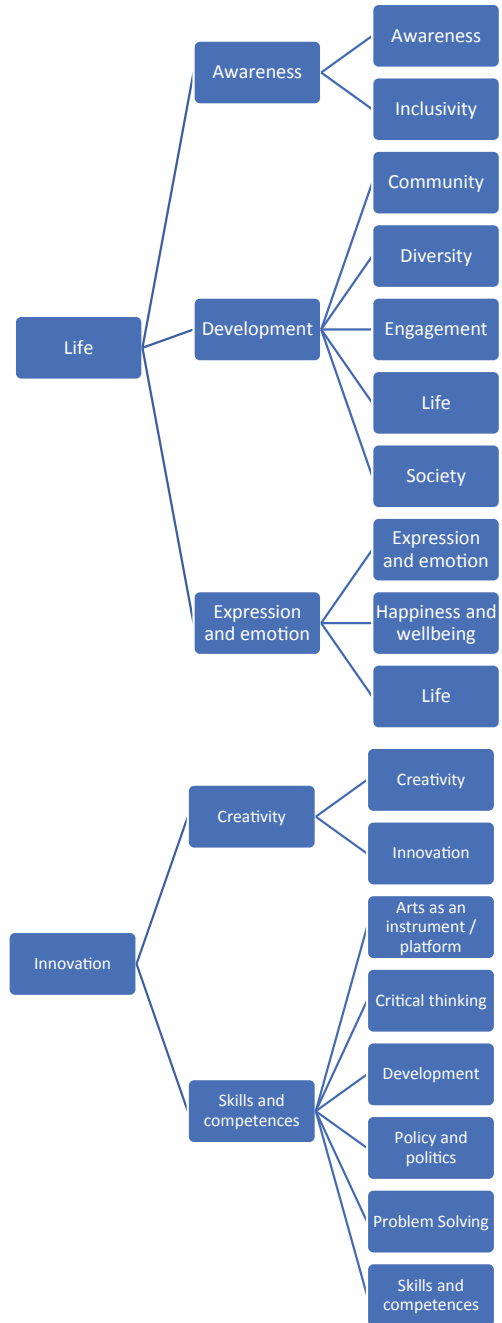
Word	Awareness	Creativity	Development	Expression and emotion	Skills and competences	Total
Art(s)	46	62	42	60	61	271
Education	34	54	52	61	46	247
Developing, development	10	22	57	12	19	120
Life	29*	7	21*	42*	8	107
Creativity	1	50	7	2	26	86
Skills	2	11	1	6	63	83
Social	3	6	19	25	12	65
Awareness	35	3	9	10	1	58
Innovation	0	28*	5	0	21*	54
Cultural	2	7	19	3	15	46

\* High scores for main codes innovation and life

emotion’. The latter codes, by contrast, are associated with the word ‘life’. The word ‘creativity’ is obviously strongly associated with the code of the same name, but also with ‘innovation’. The words that rank highest under each code after ‘arts’, ‘education’, and the words directly related to the code itself are marked with an asterisk. Here we find ‘life’ and ‘innovation’ as the top-ranking words. In short, the four core codes reveal a close connection between ‘Creativity’ and ‘Skills’—which is corroborated by the presence of the word ‘innovation’—on one hand, and between ‘Awareness’, ‘Development’, and ‘Expression and emotion’—which receives further perspective from the association with ‘life’. This analysis has led to a redesign of the coding tree, starting from the two main categories: ‘Innovation’ and ‘Life’, with the five strongest codes as sub-categories (see Appendix 3).

The resulting coding tree is shown in Fig. 3, with only codes with a groundedness of 30 or above included. This shows that of the sub-codes, ‘Development’ and

Fig. 3 Coding tree



'Skills and competences' are the strongly connected to the underlying codes. Of these latter codes, 'Creativity', 'Development', 'Skills and competences', 'Awareness', 'Diversity', and 'Expression and emotion' are the most dense.

## Conclusions

Our analysis of the experts' assessment of the (potential) impact of arts education on achieving the sustainable development goals was divided into two parts. In two closed-ended questions, respondents were asked to rate the actual and the potential contribution to arts education. In 17 open-ended questions, they were asked to express their opinion on the potential impact of arts education on each of the SDGs.

Based on the number of responses and their length, a hypothesis could already be formulated that the respondents' view on the relationship between arts education and the sustainable development goals lies in wellbeing, education, and equality. The quantitative analysis of the closed-ended questions revealed a division between SDGs reflecting basic needs on one hand, and socio-cultural needs on the other. The respondents see the latter category as an area in which arts education already has a strong impact, and might have an even greater impact. This conclusion was supported by the analysis of the answers to the open questions in our survey. The analysis of the coded answers revealed the overarching category of 'Life', which encompasses the codes 'Awareness', 'Development', and 'Expression and emotion', which can be seen as confirming the initial hypothesis. In addition, the coding pointed to the category 'Innovation', covering the sub-codes 'Creativity' and 'Development', as the other main category.

The open questions thus revealed a bias toward personal aspects on one hand and socio-economic aspects on the other, rather than socio-political themes such as gender equality and inclusivity, although the latter categories were also clearly present in the answers. This is slightly different from the answers to the first two questions, in which socio-cultural aspects, among which gender equality, emerged as the dominant theme. Moreover, while fundamental needs, including economic needs, were valued less in the answers to the closed-ended questions, the importance of arts education for economic development re-emerged from the analysis of the open questions, as part of the domain of innovation, creativity, and skills and competences.

Issues related to other aspects of the sustainable development goals, especially climate-related topics, are not seen as fields in which arts education may have a significant impact. The quantitative analysis showed that, according to the experts, arts education neither has nor is likely to have, a significant impact in these areas. In the open questions, respondents generally resorted to suggestions of using arts education as a means of staging or otherwise presenting these issues. This is clearly visible in the high groundedness and density of the code 'awareness' in the analysis of the open question.

There were significant differences neither between the countries of origin of the respondents and their answers nor between groups of countries. This strong overall



consensus does suggest a broad agreement on the (potential) contribution of arts education to achieving the SDGs. The previous survey (IJdens & Zernitz, 2019) did reveal a difference between the responses from North-Western Europe and Central and Southern Europe. This was attributed to the politicised nature of the themes of that survey, which focused on cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and national identity. The authors suggested using less polarised concepts in future research. The SDGs are in fact formulated in relatively neutral terms, which could explain the absence of a significant difference between the respondents' nationalities, although the low number of respondents from some countries may also have affected the non-significance of the outcomes in this respect.

## Discussion

It remains an open question what the results of this survey represent. As was the case for the previous surveys (IJdens & Lievens, 2017; IJdens & Zernitz, 2019), the answers reflect the personal and professional views of the respondents. These answers may indirectly reveal the values underlying the national policies regarding arts education or a national consensus on the issues presented in the survey. They do not, however, tell us anything about the everyday practice of arts education. While we are aware of these restrictions to this research, we feel the need to stress the fact that the respondents were suggested as recognised experts on arts education in their countries of origin. This implies that their views are a trustworthy reflection of the reality in their home country, as well as a well-founded assessment of the potential contribution of arts education in achieving the sustainable development goals.

In our theoretical section, we hypothesised that a tension is to be expected between the potential of arts education to contribute to issues related to the SDGs and the perceived need to focus on content and approaches that are specific to the arts. The conclusions from our survey show that such a dilemma does not play an important role, however. On the contrary, arts education experts express a strong sense of connection between arts education, the development of awareness, and creative, arts-related skills. This position is in line with recent literature on the role of arts education in the context of the anthropocene (Gilbert & Cox, 2019; Helton, 2020; Roberts & Freeman-Moir, 2008; Rousell & Fell, 2018; Schwarz, 2000; Steigerwald, 2019). This potential use of arts education in achieving the sustainable development goals, therefore, seems a promising path for further exploration in both arts education practice and research.

## Appendix 1: List of Respondent's Countries

Country	Respondents*	% Of respondents	% Of gross list
Austria	8	5.1%	4.2%
Belgium	11	7.0%	6.2%
Bulgaria	1	0.6%	1.2%
Cyprus	2	1.3%	1.3%
Czech Republic	1	0.6%	1.0%
Germany	25	15.9%	13.3%
Denmark	2	1.3%	1.5%
Spain	10	6.4%	4.0%
Estonia	2	1.3%	1.3%
Finland	10	6.4%	5.5%
France	6	3.8%	12.1%
Greece	2	1.3%	1.0%
Hungary	4	2.5%	1.5%
Iceland	1	0.6%	0.4%
Ireland	4	2.5%	2.2%
Latvia	1	0.6%	1.9%
Lithuania	1	0.6%	1.6%
Luxemburg	1	0.6%	0.4%
Netherlands	22	14.0%	5.9%
Norway	6	3.8%	5.6%
Poland	5	3.2%	5.2%
Portugal	4	2.5%	1.9%
Romania	1	0.6%	1.3%
Slovenia	1	0.6%	1.2%
Slovakia	1	0.6%	4.3%
Serbia	1	0.6%	0.6%
Sweden	2	1.3%	3.1%
Switzerland	6	3.8%	4.3%
United Kingdom	16	10.2%	7.4%

\*Respondents that gave their name and country of origin

## Appendix 2: Quantitative Results

1. To what extent do you think arts education as it practised in your country currently contributes to achieving each of these 17 goals?

(1 = no contribution, 5 = high contribution)

SDGs	Mean	Median	SD	N
1. No poverty	2.3276	2.0000	1.26,337	116
2. Zero Hunger	1.7826	1.0000	1.10,646	115
3. Good health and well-being	3.3223	3.0000	1.36,757	121
4. Quality education	4.0083	5.0000	1.22,811	121
5. Gender equality	3.6441	4.0000	1.25,081	118
6. Clean water and sanitation	1.7434	1.0000	1.20,103	113
7. Affordable and clean energy	1.9474	2.0000	1.19,617	114
8. Decent work and economic growth	2.7000	2.0000	1.22,714	120
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	2.7881	3.0000	1.32,595	118
10. Reduced inequalities	3.0345	3.0000	1.37,006	116
11. Sustainable cities and communities	3.1933	3.0000	1.27,078	119
12. Responsible consumption and production	2.8051	3.0000	1.30,258	118
13. Climate action	2.7966	3.0000	1.23,038	118
14. Life below water	1.9739	2.0000	1.17,325	115
15. Life on land	2.1880	2.0000	1.21,010	117
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	3.5593	4.0000	1.31,749	118
17. Partnerships for the goals	2.8974	3.0000	1.32,863	117

2. To what extent do you think arts education should potentially contribute to achieving each of these 17 goals in the future?

(1 = no contribution, 5 = high contribution)

SDGs	Mean	Median	SD	N
1. No poverty	3.5172	4.0000	1.51,217	116
2. Zero Hunger	2.9115	3.0000	1.51,515	113
3. Good health and well-being	4.2017	5.0000	1.20,437	119
4. Quality education	3.8175	4.0000	0.76,316	126
5. Gender equality	4.4274	5.0000	1.00,272	117
6. Clean water and sanitation	2.8000	3.0000	1.50,555	115
7. Affordable and clean energy	3.0345	3.0000	1.44,422	116
8. Decent work and economic growth	3.7373	4.0000	1.29,052	118
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	3.6750	4.0000	1.36,069	120
10. Reduced inequalities	4.1525	5.0000	1.20,275	118

(continued)

(continued)

2. To what extent do you think arts education should potentially contribute to achieving each of these 17 goals in the future?  
(1 = no contribution, 5 = high contribution)

SDGs	Mean	Median	SD	N
11. Sustainable cities and communities	4.1176	5.0000	1.12,879	119
12. Responsible consumption and production	3.9068	4.0000	1.28,760	118
13. Climate action	3.8583	4.0000	1.33,029	120
14. Life below water	3.0522	3.0000	1.54,377	115
15. Life on land	3.2500	3.0000	1.47,368	116
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	4.3782	5.0000	1.00,837	119
17. Partnerships for the goals	3.9487	4.0000	1.26,523	117

### Appendix 3: Qualitative Results

#### Original coding tree

Code group	Code	Grounded	Density
Collaboration	Community*	46	11
	Collaboration	23	12
	Finding solutions*	13	11
	Communication	12	17
	Relationships*	12	14
	Sharing solutions*	6	0
	Sharing*	4	4
	Exchange	2	2
	Networks	2	2
	Sharing ideas	1	4
	Sharing feelings	1	2
	Participation*	1	1
Solutions*	1	1	
Diversity	Awareness*	64	27
	Community*	46	11
	Engagement*	45	13
	Diversity*	36	27
	Inclusivity*	33	15
	Equality*	28	14

(continued)

(continued)

Code group	Code	Grounded	Density
	Ethics—value—morals*	28	0
	Empathy*	27	19
	Empowerment	24	22
	Social change*	19	4
	Relationships*	12	14
	Accessibility*	10	6
	To sensitise*	6	11
	Connection*	5	4
	Sharing*	4	4
	Unification*	2	2
	Sensitise*	1	4
	Participation*	1	1
	Social cohesion*	1	1
	Socialisation*	1	1
	Self-esteem*	1	1
Economic aspects	Skills and competences*	94	28
	Innovation*	55	18
	Development*	45	28
	Economy	28	0
	Employment	6	6
	Growth	1	6
	Prosperity	1	1
	Success and career	1	1
Empathy	Awareness*	64	27
	Engagement*	45	13
	Diversity*	36	27
	Inclusivity*	33	15
	Equality*	28	14
	Ethics—value—morals*	28	0
	Empath*	27	19
	Understanding	22	17
	Peace	14	0
	Feelings	6	15
	To sensitise*	6	11
	Sensitise*	1	4
	Deepen feelings for human values	1	2
Identity	Expression and emotion	72	32

(continued)

(continued)

Code group	Code	Grounded	Density
	Imagination	26	19
	Identity	17	13
	Embodiment	11	0
	Self-confidence	8	10
	Inspiration	3	4
	Confidence	3	3
	Self-esteem*	1	1
Participation and society	Community*	46	11
	Development*	45	28
	Diversity*	36	27
	Inclusivity*	33	15
	Society	32	0
	Equality*	28	14
	Social change*	19	4
	Interaction	16	1
	Relationships*	12	14
	Change	10	6
	Accessibility*	10	6
	Lifelong learning*	10	0
	Connection*	5	4
	Unification*	2	2
	Participation*	1	1
	Social cohesion*	1	1
	Socialisation*	1	1
Transform societies	1	0	
Skills	Creativity	96	27
	Skills and competences*	94	28
	Innovation*	55	18
	Critical thinking	40	14
	Problem-solving	32	16
	Reflection	21	13
	Finding solutions*	13	11
	Lifelong learning*	10	0
	Thinking outside the box	6	4
	Sharing solutions*	6	0
	Re-thinking	3	4
Become more critical and reflexive	1	3	

(continued)

(continued)

Code group	Code	Grounded	Density
	Making decisions	1	3
	Solutions*	1	1
	Learning	1	0
Well-being	Happiness and well-being	37	31
	Good health	16	11
	Better life	7	9
	To sensitise*	6	11
	Pleasure	1	5
	Sensitise*	1	4
	To experience beauty	1	3
	Feeling good	1	2
	Meaningful life	1	2
	To be moved	1	2
	Good life	1	1
	Satisfying life	1	1
	Self-esteem*	1	1
Uncategorised	Life	46	0
	Arts as an instrument/platform	33	0
	non-formal and informal education	31	0
	Policy and politics	31	0
	No expert, not relevant, BUT...	21	0
	Well-rounded education	8	0
	Aesthetic	5	1
	Enjoyment	4	10
	Knowledge	3	6
	Boundlessness	3	3
	Curiosity	2	5
	Transformation	2	2
	Emergency	1	2

### New coding tree

Main category	Central codes	Codes	Grounded	Density
Innovation	Creativity	Aesthetic	5	1
		Change	10	6
		Creativity	96	27
		Curiosity	2	5

(continued)

(continued)

Main category	Central codes	Codes	Grounded	Density
		Emergency	1	2
		Finding solutions	13	11
		Imagination	26	19
		Innovation	55	18
		Inspiration	3	4
		Knowledge	3	6
		Learning	1	0
		Lifelong learning	10	0
		Re-thinking	3	4
		Reflection	21	13
		Sharing	4	4
		Sharing ideas	1	4
		Thinking outside the box	6	4
		Transformation	2	2
		Unification	2	2
Skills and competences		Well-rounded education	8	0
		Arts as an instrument/platform	33	0
		Collaboration	23	12
		Communication	12	17
		Connection	5	4
		Critical thinking	41	14
		Development	45	28
		Economy	28	0
		Employment	6	6
		Exchange	2	2
		Growth	1	6
		Making decisions	1	3
		Networks	2	2
		Policy and politics	31	0
		Problem solving	32	16
		Prosperity	1	1
		Sharing solutions	6	0
		Skills and competences	94	28
		Solutions	1	1
		Success and career	1	1
Transform societies	1	0		

(continued)



(continued)

Main category	Central codes	Codes	Grounded	Density
Life	Awareness	Aesthetic	5	1
		Awareness	64	26
		Better life	7	9
		Boundlessness	3	3
		Confidence	3	3
		Connection	5	4
		Deepen feelings for human values	1	2
		Embodiment	11	0
		Emergency	1	2
		Ethics—value—morals	28	0
		Identity	17	13
		Inclusivity	33	15
		Reflection	21	13
		Satisfying life	1	1
		Self-confidence	8	10
		Sensitise	7	11
		To be moved	1	2
		To experience beauty	1	3
		Understanding	22	17
			Development	Accessibility
Collaboration	23			12
Communication	12			17
Community	46			11
Diversity	36			27
Empowerment	24			22
Engagement	45			13
Equality	28			14
Interaction	16			1
Life	46			0
Meaningful life	1			2
Participation	1			1
Peace	14			0
Relationships	12			14
Self-esteem	1			1
Sharing	4			4
Social change	19			4

(continued)

(continued)

Main category	Central codes	Codes	Grounded	Density
		Social cohesion	1	1
		Socialisation	1	1
		Society	32	0
		Transformation	2	2
		Unification	2	2
		Well-rounded education	8	0
	Expression and emotion	Empathy	27	17
		Enjoyment	4	10
		Expression and emotion	72	32
		Feeling good	1	2
		Feelings	6	15
		Good health	16	11
		Good life	1	1
		Happiness and wellbeing	37	31
		Life	46	0
		Pleasure	1	5
		Sharing feelings	1	2

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# Arts Education and Sustainability: Promoting Citizenship and Collaborative Work



Luísa Veloso, Carlota Quintão, Joana Marques, and Patrícia Santos

**Abstract** Culture has been highlighted as an enabler and driver of sustainable development, in its three dimensions—economic, social and environmental (UN in Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2017—A/RES/72/229, 2018ç)—though the potential of arts education to contribute to sustainable development remains an under-explored topic. Artists have engaged in arts education programmes both as a tool for human and sustainable development and as a resource for the sustainability of their work. Our approach is based on an ongoing arts education project with four schools in Portugal targeting students from vulnerable social backgrounds called “Seven Years, Seven Schools”, which is based on the “Seven Years, Seven Plays” artistic project by Portuguese performing artist Cláudia Dias. The education project is promoted by Alkantara Association and receives funding from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation’s sustainable development programme PARTIS. The research, which is currently in progress, adopts a participatory evaluation approach in evaluation, based on a methodology that includes: document analysis; meetings and workshops with the participating artists, the teachers and the team from the promoter; interviews with the artists and the teachers; workshops with the students; direct and participant observation of workshops with both the artists and the students including the public performance of the plays, and the public presentation of the students’ work.

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## Introduction

The evaluation study of the project “Seven Years, Seven Schools” highlights the extent to which artistic work, as a precarious, flexible and uncertain form of labour and an unstable form of organisation—a statement underlying the project—can be developed in such a way as to promote not only education but most of all—and as the artist Cláudia Dias herself advocates—citizenship and social emancipation. We discuss how far an artistic education project, like this one, can contribute to the promotion of the sustainable development goals<sup>1</sup> (SDGs), specifically “Quality Education”, in this case of deprived young students, by combining artistic work with the development of skills oriented not only towards academic disciplines but also towards citizenship. This is particularly aligned with target 4.7 that touches on the social, humanistic and transformative role of education needed to promote sustainable development (see Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2016).

The project aims to attain its goals by combining various forms of alternative collaborative organisation (Barin Cruz et al., 2017), which reflect, on one hand, the precarious and uncertain position of artists in the labour market, and on the other hand, the institutionalised and structured forms of organisation that provide the project with financial support for the promotion of programmes with a limited time horizon and directed to the sustainability of 3-year projects. The project is undertaken on the basis of a collaborative approach that is oriented towards sustainable development and integrates a complex matrix of—collective and individual—social actors: institutions, flexible organisations, teachers, students, artists, researchers.

## Empirical Object

Our approach is based on the first year of an ongoing artistic education project in Portugal, which is promoted by the Alcantara Association and is centred around the work of the performing artist Cláudia Dias, in partnership with the Teatro de Ferro<sup>2</sup> in Porto, comprising a team of four artists, and with monitoring by the A3S a non-profit association that engages in research and development (R&D) designed to promote third-sector sustainability.<sup>3</sup>

The name “Seven Years, Seven Schools” was derived from the title of Cláudia Dias’s artistic project “Seven Years, Seven Plays”. The latter is a political statement in response to the 2008 economic crisis which the artist, Cláudia Dias decided to

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>. Accessed 30 March 2020.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.teatrodeferro.com/tdf/sobre.html>. Accessed 23 April 2020.

<sup>3</sup> A3S “devotes itself to the promotion of knowledge about every collective form of organising civil society and to the empowerment of persons and organisations, with the ultimate goal of helping to construct fairer and more participatory and inclusive alternatives.” <https://a3s.webnode.pt/sobre-nos/>. Accessed 8 December 2019.

undertake as a long-term project over 7 years, in contrast, and opposition to the norm of intermittent artistic work.

Cláudia started the “Seven Years, Seven Schools” project in schools with economically deprived students from a social environment that includes vulnerable social backgrounds such as situations of poverty, marginalisation and drug use.<sup>4</sup> Although the project had started previously, this phase, with the financial support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, contains three cycles, each of which lasts one school year. In each cycle, students from four schools in two Portuguese cities—Porto and Almada—create a work derived from the thematic content of one of Cláudia’s plays in the “Seven Years, Seven Plays” project, such as gender discrimination, or social inequalities. The students from one of the two schools in each city create a play, while those from the other school create a multimedia work and visually record the working process throughout the various activities. Each year culminates in the presentation of the plays, installations, films created by the students.

This artistic education project receives financial support from the Gulbenkian Foundation programme named PARTIS—Artistic Practices for Social Inclusion which “looks for new languages for communication between groups/communities that usually do not meet, and seeks to generate points of common interest that help reduce social inequalities and bring about a greater autonomy on the part of more disadvantaged persons and communities”,<sup>5</sup> to support activities such as the transport of the students and teachers in various activities or to promote the project’s dissemination.

Acknowledgement that it would be useful to incorporate an evaluation from the social inclusion perspective throughout the project led to the participation of A3S, who performs the project-monitoring and evaluation role and seeks to promote critical reflection and the co-construction of the project by all the social actors involved. From the application onwards, the project has been especially concerned with the promotion of social inclusion through artistic practices.

The present analysis looks into the students’ learning process that created performance-type works from January to July 2019. The participating class from the city of Almada belonged to a state school that teaches years 5–9. This class, from year 9, follows a special programme of educational curricula that are designed to offer new opportunities to young people whose school paths include repetition and dropping out. The class numbered around 12 young persons between the ages of 15 and 18. In terms of territory of origin, one major factor was the presence of students from a variety of nationalities. This posed questions linked to migratory movements and complex cultural integration processes.

The class from the Porto Vocational Trade School, a private-sector school, was taking a 3-year Technical Marketing Course—a well-established and recognised area within the school. The class was made up of around 25 young people between the

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://alkantara.pt/en/sete-anos-sete-pecas/sete-anos-sete-escolas/>. Accessed 8th December 2019.

<sup>5</sup> <https://gulbenkian.pt/programas/programa-gulbenkian-coesao-e-integracao-social/inovacao-e-investimento-social/partis/>. Accessed 18 March 2020.

ages of 15 and 19. The great majority of the students lived in the city of Porto and the neighbouring areas and was quite homogenous in sociocultural terms. Some of them had school paths that included repeated years and dropping out.

Although the students presented a differentiated range of paths and sociocultural conditions, most of them came from vulnerable family, socioeconomic and cultural contexts.<sup>6</sup>

## Theoretical Framework

### *Vulnerability and Social Exclusion*

The social exclusion of persons and groups is a multidimensional phenomenon (Room, 2000), which is related to both material and symbolic processes and resources (Xiberras, 1996). Despite this, economic resources are an important dimension of social exclusion, inasmuch as they tend to have negative effects on other types of resources (Almeida, 1993).

It is the social categories with less economic, cultural, academic, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) that concentrate a multiplicity of social disadvantages, and this, in turn, conditions the range of individual opportunities and choices available to them.

Associated as it is with paths of social exclusion, social vulnerability gives rise to processes of “habituation” in relation to stigmatisation and inferiorisation (Almeida, 1993). Goffman (1963) defines stigma as a depreciatory mark that is used to exclude an individual or set of people with certain characteristics from a dominant group, thereby making it difficult or impossible for them to achieve full social acceptance in both the milieu they live in and their participation in a variety of areas of society.

Situations of social vulnerability can tend towards situations of stigmatisation that, in turn, tend to interfere with individual representations and behaviours, and in some cases to have effects in terms of both conformism and the confirmation of negative stereotypes.

Conditions of social exclusion and vulnerability are also constructed and reproduced in spaces like school (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and influence the meaning that children and young persons construct with regard to school.

Some authors, such as Bourdieu (1991), consider that the meaning young people attach to school is constructed outside school itself. According to this model, what happens at school essentially depends on the students’ cultural capital and *habitus*—i.e. on the set of systems of durable, transposable dispositions that have been socially structured and serve as a basis for individual representations and practices. In this sense, children and young persons’ integration and (lack of) success in schools is

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<sup>6</sup> Besides these two schools, on each city another school participated with small groups of students that created a multimedia work and visually record the working process throughout the various activities.



based on their social context, in that the specificity of scholastic activities requires certain relationships with others, with oneself and with written and spoken language, and those relationships are not constructed in every family (Charlot, 2009).

Uniform teaching processes also lead to students being treated like a single homogenous mass and little attention being paid to the complexity and diversity of the scholastic audience and its life experiences (Alves & Canário, 2004). This in turn leads to a certain “disenchantment” with school among young people (Grácio, 1997).

This framework invites us to rethink the role of education in general and artistic education in particular, from the micro level of individual aspirations and interpersonal relations to the macro level of social structures, via the meso levels of strategies in schools.

Our analysis reflects on the way in which the intersection between education and the artistic world can help attenuate or even counteract the cycle of exclusion, promoting both the “capacity to act differently in the future” and “reversibility” (Almeida, 1993: 831), based on the transformation of the students’ *habitus* and access to and the construction of new cultural and social resources (Charlot, 2009).

### ***Arts Education and Social Practice***

Arts in their many forms are recognised to be a useful tool for education (Gadsden, 2008; Roege & Kim, 2013) and for fostering citizenship (Enslin & Ramírez-Hurtado, 2013; Kuttner, 2015). Arts education in particular is a process that entails more than transmitting the skills and knowledge needed to create artistic works; it is about developing cultural citizens (Kuttner, 2015), opening up opportunities to take part in the social, political and/or cultural spheres.

Drawing on Kuttner’s work (2015), it is worth noting that different frameworks of arts education promote different types of (cultural) citizenship, regardless of whether such visions are explicit or not. Some approaches focus on the development of “informed cultural citizens” who have “the capacity to understand, appreciate, and critique works of art within a larger social, political, artistic, or cultural context”, partly in the sense of broadening access to artistic experiences and spaces to encompass marginalised groups. Other programmes entail the development of “participatory cultural citizens” who actively take part in the arts, both as a means of individual expression and as “a way to connect with and understand the broader communities”. Yet other approaches envision the development of “justice-oriented cultural citizens”, who are able to “critically analyse the ways that the arts are implicated in processes of oppression and resistance” and to use art to “directly confront injustice” (Kuttner, 2015: 75–77).

Our research takes Kuttner’s argument a step further, in the sense that many approaches to arts education are not strictly centred on the development of cultural citizens, but on the development of social citizens with the ability to have a voice and participate meaningfully in all spheres of society that affect their lives, entailing

a broader notion of social and political justice (Wright, 2010). On the other hand, as Bishop (2012) has shown with reference to the UK context, we cannot neglect the instrumentalisation of art (and art education) as a form of “soft social engineering”, whereby arts are used to reinforce policies of social inclusion within the framework of a neoliberal agenda.

In any framework, the relationship between art, education and social change is often troubled, a contradictory process, and always difficult to anticipate. “Only when we look back on personal, community, and social histories does the pattern of cultural and political transformations emerge” (Schwarzman 1993: 162–163).

Jacques Rancière, a key author in the contemporary debates about aesthetics and politics—overlapping elements in what he calls *le partage du sensible* [*the sharing of the sensitive*] (Rancière, 2000)—analyses the way in which the artistic act of the subordinate classes is a form of emancipation. To Rancière, the theatrical spectacle in the broad sense of the term (including every form of performance that places bodies in action in front of an audience—drama, dance, performance, and others)—can be seen as a form of mediation that seeks to “teach” its spectators the means to stop being passive and become active agents of a collective practice—i.e. “a mediation oriented towards its own suppression” (Rancière, 2008: 13). In addition to this, art can question the very structure of positions and the distribution of roles, in the sense of subverting the “distribution of the sensitive”, blurring the dividing line between those who act and those who watch. Emancipation thus “begins when one questions the opposition between watching and acting, when one understands that evidences which thus structure the relations of saying, seeing and doing belong to the structure of domination. It begins when one understands that looking is also an action which confirms or transforms that distribution of positions.” (Rancière, 2008: 17).

The aesthetic experimentation provided by artistic education projects can be a starting point for emancipatory processes, as Rancière recounts in his work *La nuit des prolétaires*, on the intellectual and artistic activities of nineteenth century artisans and workers, subverting their exclusion from the ability to engage in those activities, as well as the very order of time imposed by the hegemonic system (Rancière, 1981).

### ***Artistic Work and Precariousness***

Arts education is framed by a context in which artists’ work is profoundly marked by flexibility, intermittency and insecurity, hence precariousness, whereby the economic sustainability of arts education projects and of artists themselves is often at risk.

Menger (2003) argues that the artist’s work is a precursor to forms of labour hyper-flexibility, “as if art was a fermenting principle of capitalism”. The various atypical forms of performing artistic work (such as project work) reveal a discontinuity of working relations, an alternation between work, unemployment, searching and networking activities, and the frequent accumulation of multiple jobs that may be related or unrelated to the arts.

As Bishop argues with reference to participatory art, arts education and social intervention through arts are not “a privileged political medium, nor a ready-made solution to a society of the spectacle”, they are “as uncertain and precarious as democracy itself; neither are legitimated in advance but need continually to be performed and tested in every specific context” (Bishop, 2012: 284).

Our analysis thus seeks to invoke these three lines of thought, with the project seen as triply structured by the relationships between art and education, artistic education and social vulnerabilities, and between art, research and precariousness.

## Methodology

The research, conducted by a team of sociologists from A3S, takes a participatory evaluation approach. It is a combination of methodological procedures derived from the work A3S has done over a number of years, which has enabled its teams to experiment with and test a variety of paths. It takes a research-action line that is simultaneously oriented towards capturing the meanings and significances constructed by the people who experience the project and integrating the moments of reflection and evaluation as significant learning moments. As such, the evaluation moments form an integral part of the project intervention, seeking to create spaces for joint reflection, increasing awareness and consolidating the experience-based learning. The adoption of this methodological approach, which required to mobilise the various social actors to reflect on their own practices, is a mechanism for promoting sustainable development, in its social and transformative facet, inasmuch as this methodological path means that those actors have to think about the ways in which the project should be structured and how it can be made more emancipatory. As such, the methodology is also a path to social transformation.

The procedures adopted in the first year of the project were: analysis of documents linked to the project (regarding the proposal, site, etc.); meetings with the team from Alkantara association, beginning with developing the application and then continuing throughout the project; one focus group with the artists, the teachers and the Alkantara association team at the end of the first year of the project, based on a structured script (July 2019); two semi-directive interviews with the artists who implemented the project on each of the two schools (January 2019); two semi-directive interviews with the teachers who were responsible for the conditions in which the project took place on each of the schools (January 2019); two workshops with the students, at two different moments in time: an initial one in March 2019, and a final one after the project had concluded “its first year” with the final presentations of the plays created by the groups, in June 2019; direct and participatory observation of arts education workshops with the artists and the students (January–May 2019); direct and participatory observation of the public presentation of the students’ plays and the other activities that take place during the 2 days of presentation (June 2019).

## Empirical Results

The discussion of the empirical results is structured into two major domains addressing the project's contribution to sustainable development: the project itself, in terms of its structure, its agents, the way it went, and its results; and the students, considering how they have been impacted by the project and the role it is playing in the emancipation of the individuals and social groups concerned.

### *The Project and Its Agents*

The roots of the arts education project lie in “Seven Years, Seven Plays”—“a long-term project consisting in the creation of seven performances in seven years and that counteracts the idea of an absent or precarious future, painfully laid out year after year”.<sup>7</sup> Living first-hand in a situation that is always precarious and dependent on the various forms of public support for the arts, the artist Cláudia Dias transposes her political struggle and her concept of social development into her work, broadening it to include the work with young people. Within a context of artistic work that she undertakes in articulation with schools, she has striven to develop civic awareness in young persons, beginning with a politically engaged reflection of her own, creating “Seven Years, Seven Schools”, “an arts and inclusion project that aims to develop interpersonal skills and interest in the arts among secondary school students”.<sup>8</sup>

In an interview, Cláudia said that her artistic creation process constitutes:

...a political gesture, because this project was thought up at a time of a national discourse of non-future and in which the ability to have a one-year project was already a big privilege. (...) My political gesture is ‘I don’t accept this discourse’, ‘I don’t accept this narrative’, this political vision of time, of the future, of people’s lives, and so I make a gesture in which I say that ‘I am going to do a project with the possibility of having seven years ahead of me’. (...) It’s a political gesture that goes against the flow, against the dominant discourse, but in essence is a creative project which is based on the idea of the meeting with the other, who has different ways of working, different processes, different languages, and in that meeting we go on to produce a reflection on the world, an object.

In the year under analysis—2019—the starting point for the young people’s plays was one of Cláudia’s. As one of her partner artists said, her play was about “the succession of historical events that outlined the rise of neoliberalism on a world scale”. From that initial base, “each student chose a set of historical events between the year 2000 (the year in which the oldest student was born) and 2019, and another twenty important dates from their own life (...), in such a way as to constitute a single narrative in which the collective would recognise itself. This task, which essentially implied capacities for dialogue, persuasion and negotiation, for the sake of the collective, proved to be the most difficult phase and even gave rise to situations

<sup>7</sup> <https://alkantara.pt/en/sete-anos-sete-pecas/sete-anos-sete-pecas/>. Accessed 18 march 2020.

<sup>8</sup> <https://alkantara.pt/en/encontro-sete-anos-sete-escolas-2/>. Accessed 18 march 2020.

of great verbal violence.” Moreover, when the artists saw how hard it was for the students to work with the body, they sought to reinforce that aspect: “we realised how much these students were disconnected from the use of their own body. As if their life paths—many of them lived in close contact with marginality—which abounded in obstacles and rejections, had denied them the idea that the body is a tool with which to achieve their objectives. Despite some early injuries and a generalised indolence, we imposed increased bodily awareness (by means of very unpopular ‘warm-ups’) as a way to at least minimally regain the importance of the tool-body.”

In addition, the project made use of two fundamental domains within the overall range of formal disciplines. As the artist in charge says, there is a very direct relationship with both Portuguese and History, because the students write a text and because the work adopts a “historical gaze” by discussing the events that are part of their chronology and, at the same time, of the world’s history in the last two decades, in particular. In this sense, we promoted an articulation with the Portuguese and History teachers, so that they would continue to work with the students when the artists were not there—working on spelling mistakes and tenses, finding the poetry in the text, and historically framing each of the identified events.

There is a consensus among the project partners that expanding these young people’s universe of references is one of the main ways to empower them. Over and above the meeting between the arts and the school pathway, the emphasis is on the crossing of cultures, geographies and artistic languages (films, photography, performing arts, writing). The great majority of these young people does not possess regular practices of artistic consumption or enjoyment and have little or no contact with artistic creation. The partners also highlight the indispensable value to be gained from including activities that allow a space for learning and exchanges between teachers, schools and artists.

As the original project proposal says, “the artistic proposal is indissociable from the project’s social, cultural and political aims. In an integrated and dialectic vision, the key idea is that there is no separation between those who create and those who enjoy, that there is a right to the transformative experience of creating. The proposal thus consists of learning to create a play by creating it. (...) We propose to appropriate its formal and significant contents and to incorporate and treat them, and to transmit tools linked to contemporary performance practices. (...) We propose to promote an aesthetic and ethical sense among the participants in an autonomous, responsible and collective manner.”

The analysed information shows that, at the beginning, the diverse perspectives of the artists, the teachers and the promoter resulted in various expectations in terms of the development of attitudes, skills and knowledge. The following were seen as being of particular interest:

- (a) **Self-awareness:** in terms of the development of both the students’ self-esteem and their familiarity with their own body. In the words of some of the teachers: a “new way for them to look at their own body”; “there is a really big demotivation, even [in] their posture, and their approach”; “they’re able to develop

- their ‘I’, the ‘person’, a lot more”; “self-awareness that will enable them to develop skills they themselves don’t know they have”.
- (b) **Development of the relationship with the other:** taking concrete form in the need to work together and develop interaction dynamics. To quote the teachers again: “the relationship with the other, how to be at school”; “I think they will gain a degree of maturity during this process, I think they will acquire some skills at the level of how to be, to communicate... a certain disinhibition that is particularly present in dance and drama”.
  - (c) **Cognitive capacities, namely the ability to concentrate, with ensuing impacts on behaviours:** the teachers were very clearly concerned about the cognitive aspects that this kind of project can change: “The question of behaviour, sometimes. The mobile phone, distraction ... talking, not being focused on work, not paying attention to just one thing, wandering attention”.
  - (d) **Knowledge about contemporary forms of artistic expression:** allowing the students to open up new horizons and simultaneously **come to know other realities** that are different from those they live on a daily basis. These young people do not have the tools needed to undertake a creative artistic project, or any references in terms of contemporary artistic creation projects. As the teachers said: “Many of them, for example,... had never entered a theatre. They had never had any contact with this form of culture. (...) The question of the trips [to see the play from Cláudia Dias in another city], going to another city, of the geography of the space. (...)”.
  - (e) **Acquisition of civic and critical awareness of the world around them:** this is a key assumption, as the artist in charge of the project says, who emphasises the importance of “gaining political awareness”, inasmuch as “having precarious lives is exactly what they are expected to do. (...) If they want to be rebels, they have to do the opposite of that. Not to do what they’re expected to do”; “get these kids to look at the social and political issues all around them”.
  - (f) **Future prospects:** one key element of this project is rooted in the possibility for young people to construct a broader vision of their lives. As Cláudia says: “I hope the students will be able to create a future” (...) “for us to be able to help in that passage from the caterpillar to the butterfly”.

The arts education workshops and the preparation of the performances in Almada and Porto cities ran until May 2019. The moments at which the students’ work was presented in the two cities were central to their public recognition. They were particularly important given that students are groups of young persons who live situations of economic and social fragility first-hand—a factor that can be associated with situations of academic failure and dropping out in some cases. Moreover, the teachers verbalised this situation as an evident reality and an inevitability, referring to the young people who took part in the project as the ones who are at the end of their formal school paths and would not have any possibility of pursuing their studies in the future. Given that these were young persons with “alternative” school paths associated with life experiences of time spent in young offenders’ institutions, drug use and destructured family contexts, one of the base elements of the projects that

were developed and implemented with them was the provision of tools that would foster their integration into the labour market.

These perceptions can be seen among teachers and students alike. Teachers used expressions such as: “No one else can do anything with them, we’re talking about the last resort in educational terms, either they do these or they won’t manage to do absolutely anything else”; [this is] “a class at the end of the line”; “They’re kids who wouldn’t be at school if they hadn’t taken this path”; “We can’t lose these kids”; [It’s important] “that they understand that there’s more beyond their daily lives, beyond the very often difficult family, cultural and economic context in which they live, and so perhaps there’s a guiding line here which can help them think that what they’re going to be tomorrow, as persons and citizens of this world, is very important”. Students said things like: “Teacher, I can’t do it, this isn’t for me”; “We’re not normal”.

In some of their educational contexts, these perceptions go hand-in-hand with practices that entail the creation of specific contexts for these groups of young people, both physically (permanent occupation of classroom for their use), and in terms of their activities (projects that are specifically oriented towards them), which can isolate them from the broader school context. In this project, the young people are physically transported to the artistic environment and although this means taking them out of the school context and requires a number of logistical adjustments, our analysis shows that it can have the advantage of allowing them to know artists’ working contexts and make it easier to come closer to the artistic world, with which they are unfamiliar.

In the second moment, the perceptions reported by the teachers and artists after the presentations of the students’ work and the finalisation of the project cycle allow to identify a number of changes in both their representations and the young students themselves. The range of changes was evident in the focus group and the analysis of the resulting data emphasised the following aspects:

- (a) **Acquisition of knowledge:** the students acquired knowledge associated with contemporary history (chronology/historical timelines, etc.); they learnt a different way of interpreting historical events, bringing them closer to the students’ own diachronies and trajectories; they learnt the language (as Cláudia Dias says, “they understand that appropriating language is a tool for life, and for them not to feel belittled”).
- (b) **Modification of the young persons’ behaviours:** several of the social actors highlighted a “reduction in drug use” and a “greater punctuality and assiduity”.
- (c) **Acquisition of skills linked to expression, interaction and being part of a collective:** this was enhanced by the fact that the students met young people from other schools and other territories characterised by different social realities, which in turn gave them the perception that they formed part of a larger group.
- (d) **Sharing individual life experiences:** this enhances a broader vision of the heterogeneity and complexity of each person’s life.
- (e) **Development of civic awareness and a thoughtful attitude:** visible in the acquisition of skills needed to discuss and think about contemporary events.

**Fig. 1** The students constructing a representation of the project (photo taken by the researchers)



- (f) **Educational achievement:** the project has contributed to the completion of their Basic Education (years 1–9 in Portugal) by some of the young students, as well as to an increase in the value they attach to the school context, given that “the significance they give to school [now] is different”.
- (g) **Knowledge about contemporary forms of artistic expression:** reflected in a transformation of the participants’ perceptions about what drama and/or dance are.
- (h) **Acquisition of tools:** by observing the artists’ work, the teachers acquired new tools that they could then apply in learning contexts.

The fact that the young people manifested this set of changes reveals some important impacts among them. We will now look at the students’ perspectives.

### *The Students*

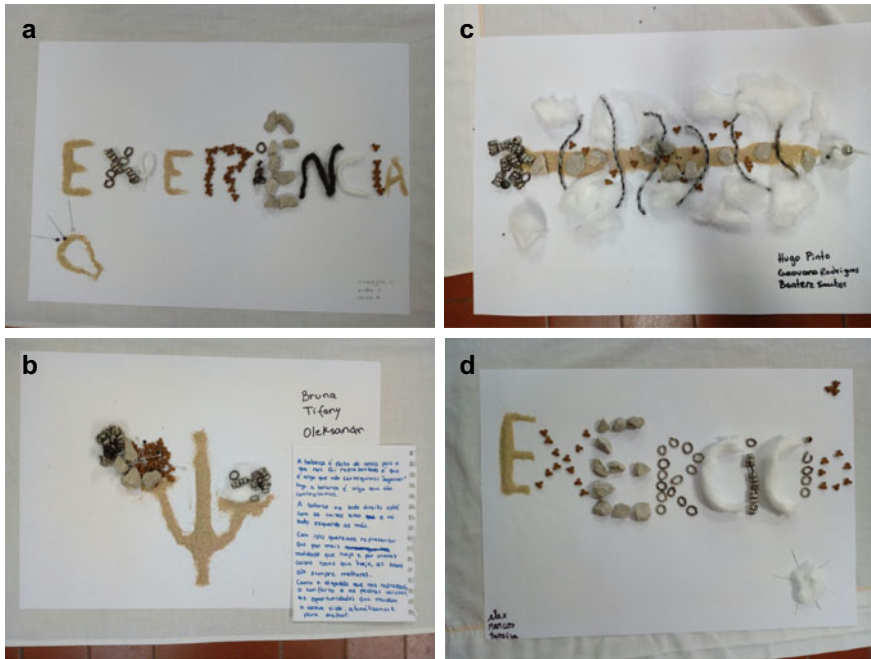
In March 2019, A3S held two workshops with the students who created the plays, one in Almada and one in Porto. The workshops employed the SymfoS method,<sup>9</sup> and each group of students was asked to represent what the “Seven Years, Seven Schools” project meant for them (Fig. 1).

The young people represented the projects in the following ways (Fig. 2):

- Two groups used the idea of a path with both good and bad things;

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.symfos.eu/>. Accessed 17 April 2020. The SymfoS method was initially developed by Wilfried Schneider (<https://www.psychologische-symbolarbeit.de/>) in a psychotherapeutic context and over several decades. Since 2016, Schneider’s practice has been adapted for use in the counselling context and is being piloted and tested with young people as part of the Erasmus + , Key Action 2 Project (see <https://www.symfos-youth.eu/>). Our approach to the SymfoS method was based on the inner images set, which proposes using physical materials (sand, stones, cotton wool, gold, “poo” [cat food], wool, pins) and a white sheet of paper. The goal of this set is to facilitate





**Fig. 2** The students’ work: representations of the “Seven Years, Seven Schools” project (photos taken by the researchers)

- One group employed the idea of a graph showing good and bad emotions over the course of a path;
- One group used the idea of a weighing scale on which the good things weigh more than the bad ones;
- One group represented the project as an experience or learning;
- One group represented it as a window of opportunities, an opening up of new horizons;
- Two groups represented the project as a specific artistic workshop, where an unfamiliar collective physical exercise (building a human tower) captivated them;
- One group represented one of the artists;
- One group represented the physical exercise associated with the obligation to do physical exercise at the beginning of each morning.

The students’ expectations in relation to the project were almost all positive. In anonymous individual assessments of the project, they were asked to give it a mark of between 1 (very bad) and 10 (very good). The overall average rating at the beginning of the project was 7.3 in Almada and 7.1 in Porto. In a new assessment at the end of the project, this average had risen among the Almada students (to 8.5) and fallen

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the expression of inner images and, thus, to facilitate the expression and increased awareness of subconscious or unconscious aspects.

**Table 1** “I learned...”, “I also learned...” (number of answers = 71)

Personal skills ( $N = 38, 53.5\%$ )	“To stop being shy when I speak” “To be more responsible” “To evolve” “To be more intelligent and more autonomous”
Relational skills ( $N = 14, 20\%$ )	“To respect other peoples’ differences and to know how to listen” “To respect my classmates’ opinion” “That we can manage to put some things to one side in order to be able to do something nice” “That we need to be united in order to gain strength”
Skills associated with artistic literacy ( $N = 14, 20\%$ )	“More about the theatre” “To be on a stage” “What acting is”

Note: multiple answer question

slightly for the students from the Porto school (to 6.9). This slight diminish might be related to the difficulties that the students found in concluding the final public presentation of the work that it took place.

Focusing on the moment immediately after the conclusion of the project work and the public presentation of the plays, it is possible to draw a number of relevant conclusions. The young persons were asked to complete the following sentences about the project: “I learned...”, “I also learned...”, “What surprised me most...”. All the young people from the cities of Almada and Porto (33) recognised that there had been a development of personal and relational skills and skills related to artistic literacy and, specifically, drama.

Let’s look at the results, with a few examples of responses (Table 1)<sup>10</sup>:

The responses give prominence to the development of personal skills focused on developmental attitudes, which go beyond the universe of possibilities that had existed up until then. We should also emphasise the relational skills, which were oriented towards learning to live together and to assume and accept differences, along with those associated with artistic literacy in general and contemporary culture in particular (Table 2).

Particularly worth noting is again the importance given to the public presentation of the work, which demonstrates the importance of recognition (Caillé, 2007). There is general agreement that the project plays an important part in the development of mechanisms whereby these young persons are recognised at school, in their family and by themselves. The fact that they perform a role in the project allows them to feel that they are “protagonists”, because they were chosen. The feelings of having overcome something generated by the fact that the classes managed to take the project all the way to that culmination in the final public presentation were repeatedly mentioned by the students in the rounds of conversation that took place after each of

<sup>10</sup> The number of answers varies, because to some of them part of the students did not answer.

**Table 2** “What surprised me most ...” (number of answers = 33)

Putting on the final play and the class's performance ( $N = 18, 54.5\%$ )	“To have managed to do the play successfully” “It was the final version of our show” “The way in which some people committed and engaged themselves” “Everyone's courage”
Personal performance ( $N = 4, 12\%$ )	“It was my capacity to have managed to have done this theatre, to have acted, because I was up in front of so many people” “It was surprising myself, by myself” “My strength of will for drama”
Trips and getting to know the other class ( $N = 3, 9\%$ )	“Making friendships with [the people] from Lisbon” “The trips” “The incredible people from there”
Specific aspects of the experience ( $N = 2, 6\%$ )	“The politics” “It was the work that X [artist] and Y [artist] did with the class”
External recognition of the play ( $N = 2, 6\%$ )	“It was so many positive opinions after the play” “The theatre was a success”
Nothing ( $N = 2, 6\%$ )	“Nothing special”
Other classmates ( $N = 2, 6\%$ )	“It was a classmate”

the plays in Almada and Porto, as was the importance of having relatives, classmates and friends on the stage.

Inasmuch, as the intention is that this type of project should contain an idea of continuity in the students' lives, they were also asked about the future, with the sentences: “After Seven Years, Seven Schools...”, “Never again...”, “I now...” (Table 3).

The project caused changes in the young persons, and they suggested that they acquired some future prospects. However, that did not stop some of them from displaying a few attitudes of rejection of the project (see Table 4), which indicates that it is important to reflect on this type of initiative, particularly in terms of the need to ensure its continuity, as we can see from Table 5.

Even though the responses are more diverse, the prevailing ones are still about personal skills, some of which are associated with formal learning practices, once again along with the importance of self-presentation (Goffman, 1971), both in daily life and in exceptional situations, such as the public presentation of the performance.

## Discussion

This project makes it possible to highlight both the potential for social transformation offered by artistic work in a learning context and its contribution to the promotion of

**Table 3** “After Seven Years, Seven Schools ...” (number of answers = 28)

Satisfaction, gratification ( <i>N</i> = 5, 17.8%)	“I feel grateful for having had this opportunity” “I was happy the play went better than I had thought” “Proud and happy about the class’s journey”
Personal change ( <i>N</i> = 5, 17.8%)	“I’m more self-confident than I was” “I learned a lot that I know I’ll need some day in the future; I don’t know when, but I’ll need it” “I’m learning to concentrate”
Literal answers ( <i>N</i> = 5, 17.8%)	“I went home” “We went to the coffeeshop”
Relief the project is over ( <i>N</i> = 4, 14.2%)	“I was relieved” “Although some good expectations were achieved, I think it’s better to stop here, because it was confused”
Nothing ( <i>N</i> = 3, 10.7%)	“Nothing”
Planning the future ( <i>N</i> = 3, 10.7%)	“My next objective is to finish the Managerial Assistant course” “I want to do Drama”
<i>Saudade</i> ( <i>N</i> = 2, 7.1%)	“I’m going to miss it”
Other ( <i>N</i> = 1, 3.5%)	“The jigsaw puzzle is done”

**Table 4** “Never again...” (number of answers = 30)

Rejection of the project (6, 20%)	“I want to take part in the project (next year)” “I’m doing drama again, because it’s not my area” “I’m going to be an actor”
Self-confidence/self-esteem (5, 16.6%)	“I’ll be scared” “I’ll doubt my abilities” “I’ll say I can’t do anything”
Behavioural/personal change (5, 16.6%)	“I’ll arrive late” “I’ll be distracted” “I’m going to say I don’t like the project” “I’ll be the same”
The project as a memorable experience (4, 13.3%)	“I’ll have another opportunity of the same sort, like the one they gave us” “I’ll see the theatre in the same way” “I will forget this unforgettable experience of the play”
Willingness/openness to the experiment (3, 10%)	“I’ll say no at first and then think better before answering” “I’ll say no to an experiment” “I’ll judging a thing without knowing the end”
Other (7, 23.3%)	“The holidays are coming” “I’m going to let X drink” “I thought the theatre would be boring”

**Table 5** “Now...” (number of answers = 33)

Changes in personal skills (11, 33.3%)	“I’m not as ashamed to speak in public” “I will be a more confident person” “I’m a person with less fear of facing obstacles; with the project, I learnt not to say ‘I can’t’” “I’m going to be more cooperative”
Desire for repetition (3, 9%)	“I’d do it all over again” “I wouldn’t mind repeating the experience”
Continuity of activities associated with the theatre (3, 9%)	“I want to do more plays” “I’m going to watch more theatrical plays” “I know more about the theatre”
Continuity of project activities (3, 9%)	“I want more trips” “I want to spend more time with the guys from Almada”
Rejection of the project (7, 21.2%)	“I want to be away from the theatre” “I didn’t learn anything from the project” “I don’t intend to take part in a project like this”
Project the future (2, 6%)	“I’m going to go on with my life and be happy” “Complete Year 10”
Other (4, 12%)	“I just want to go on holiday, because I have a lot of work ahead of me next year” “I’m going home”

citizenship. Although it is not possible to concretely measure the long-term impacts in reducing the social vulnerability experienced by the young persons, the analysis does allow to show how initiatives like this one can contribute to sustainable development. Looking particularly at the “Quality Education” goal (SDG4), this project clearly contributes to the promotion of personal skills linked to reflection, understanding the world, development of social relationships and of a critical spirit, which are essential to the emancipation of young people who are deprived of tools. It specifically links to target 4.7, contributing to “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”.

In contexts of social vulnerability in which young people experience a significant probability of dropping out and not completing the desirable levels of literacy, the promotion of “Quality Education” will certainly be boosted by projects that permit its development with other tools complementary to formal curricula.

It is also important to listen to the project’s promoters and authors—i.e. the promoter Alcantara, and the artists. Subject to a logic whereby the work they do depends on project financing, within the framework of a “project society” (Lundin et al., 2015), they undertake this type of activity on the basis of a belief in art’s role in education and in the promotion of citizenship and social emancipation. Artistic work

is developed and done in working conditions that are precarious and unstable—i.e. deprived of continuity. Though not the main focus of this paper, the research results also allow a reflection on SDG8—“Decent Work and Economic Growth” and how to make it a reality both for the artists and for the students, especially in terms of their integration into the labour market.

A3S, which monitored and evaluated the project’s social component, also organised its activities and allocated resources according to the funding it secures and has done so in a succession of projects over the years.

As such, in precarious and unstable conditions, artists, teachers and both production and monitoring bodies are collectively constructing projects that lead to the promotion of young people’s citizenship and emancipation by articulating artistic work and education. In this articulation, the students develop formal competences and abstract/formal skills associated, for example, not only with reading and knowledge of history but also systemic and transversal skills, such as working in groups, presenting themselves, discussing ideas, taking stances in relation to the events that happen around them, making public presentations, and getting to know realities lived by classmates. It is also important to note that the project provides tools that decrease some of the effects associated with situations of social vulnerability, fostering reflection in the young persons about their particular situations.

Following Kuttner (2015), the research results show that different social actors express different views of artistic education, even within a single project. On the one hand, teachers tend to focus mainly on the project’s importance to the development of different personal, cognitive and relational types of skill, and to the provision of access to artistic experiences and spaces to students. Their emphasis lies somewhere between the perspectives of the development of informed (cultural) citizens and the development of participatory (cultural) citizens, as a way to integrate deprived students into society. On the other hand, artists envision their work beyond this perspective of cultural citizens, in the sense of developing active and reflective social citizens who are able to critically analyse the society they live in and to actively have a voice, confront injustice and participate meaningfully in different spheres of society. Albeit aware of the limitations of their work, given their own precarious situations and the limited timeframes available to such projects, artists’ aspirations go beyond the *social inclusion* agenda towards a *social emancipation* agenda (Rancière, 2008), as a mediation oriented towards its own suppression and the subversion of the distribution of positions. The topics worked on during the workshops, the focus on the collective construction process, and the work on the life experiences and stigmas of marginality and exclusion highlight these objectives.

Finally, in a process that is often troubled, the young persons’ perspectives are very variable, ranging from the experience of discomfort, the feeling of overcoming obstacles and personal protagonism, the recognition of behavioural changes and the domain of the mastery of new linguistic devices, to the acquisition of civic, critical and political awareness of the world around them, and the capacity to act and to perceive the prospect of another future. Artistic education’s potentially transformative and emancipatory role is thus also variable in the face of the complexity and

multidimensionality of the phenomena of vulnerability, stigmatisation and social exclusion that continue to occur and reproduce every day.

## Conclusion

Arts education is a key tool for learning, citizenship and social emancipation. As the current project shows, it often provides an opportunity for deprived students, helping break the cycle of social exclusion and opening up opportunities that allow them to participate in the cultural, social and political spheres. However, it is framed by a context in which, dependent as it is on intermittent public funding, the work of artists, promoters and monitoring bodies is profoundly marked by precariousness.

It is not possible to consider the role artistic education can play in human and sustainable development without linking it to the educational strategies, labour market configurations and social structures, which operate in each specific context and which are, in turn, permeated by a global agenda of growing commodification and precarisation.

The social emancipation agenda pursued by artists, which encompasses a struggle for better working conditions and a specific framework of arts education focused on the development of citizenship, is part of the sustainable development agenda.

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# Conditions and Limitations of the Role of Online Access to Cultural Heritage in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals—Evidence from Poland



Wojciech Kowalik

**Abstract** Digitisation of cultural goods is not only a way of preserving the heritage, it is also important from economic and social points of view. As Internet usage increases among members of society, it provides an opportunity to make cultural goods more accessible and allows cultural participation in societies to increase. Availability of cultural resources and cultural competence leverages the development of a society. However, the real influence of digitised heritage on social and economic development depends on how much government programmes affect the social and cultural practices of the poles. This paper will try to answer the question of how the heritage digitisation implemented in Poland contributes to increased cultural participation and social inclusion as well as how it increases possibilities of cultural expression and arts education, thus supporting the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## Introduction: Culture, Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development

Digitisation of cultural heritage has many benefits, the vast majority of which can be related directly or indirectly to the goals set out in numerous international documents and strategies prepared by the European Union or the United Nations.

The above assumptions are based on a broader concept that assumes a close interconnection between culture and sustainable development. This matter has long been addressed in the scientific discourse. We can mention, for example, the works of Weber (1930), Bell (1976), Hofstede et al. (1991), Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1993) or Landes (1998) who over the past two centuries analysed interconnections between culture and development of selected areas of society from various perspectives. The growing interest in the role of culture in modernisation processes

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has been visible for several decades in analyses of public policies and strategic documents of international organisations and individual countries, including Poland (cf. Kowalik, 2017). “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” adopted in 1948 in Paris should be mentioned because the culture was formally recognised as one of the basic human rights for the first time in this document, setting out in Article 22 that every member of society is entitled to exercise their economic, social and cultural rights that are important for dignity and personal development. Moreover, Article 27 of the Declaration states that everyone has the right to participate in culture and enjoy its benefits (cf. United Nations, 1948).

At the same time, UNESCO was created with its initial objective to preserve cultural heritage, support the development of art, local traditions and address copyright-related issues. However, this UN agency created foundations for the idea described today as the broadly defined cultural policy that also includes the issues of social development and modernisation.

For the first time, the combination of issues related to culture and development became the subject of discussion at the World Conference on Cultural Policies held in 1982 in Mexico (Arizpe, 2004, p. 174). The Conference translated into further UN actions, two of which seem to be particularly important.

One of the results of the meeting in Mexico City was the declaration by UN the years 1988–1997 as the “World Decade for Cultural Development”, and the adopted action plan included a number of guidelines on how to focus on cultural conditions of development and raise the level of creative competence and participation in cultural life (cf. UNESCO, 1987).

Another important event that resulted from the 1982 Conference was the creation of the World Commission on Culture and Development a decade later, operating under the auspices of UNESCO. With regard to the subject matter of this paper, four UN and UNESCO initiatives expressed in the agreements and documents adopted during the last 15 years are of key importance. They focus on key issues related to the nature and purpose of the cultural heritage digitisation process, as well as its potential for increasing social inclusion and cultural participation, as well as cultural and arts education.

Chronologically speaking, it is therefore first of all “The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions” (UNESCO, 2005a), which strongly emphasised the key importance of preserving and promoting cultural diversity and forms of cultural expression for sustainable development. The Convention also expressed the importance of the widest possible and fair access to culture and providing space for dialogue and interaction between cultures, thus supporting mutual understanding and respect for the diversity of cultures and societies. Interconnection between culture and sustainable development was even strongly expressed in the Hangzhou Declaration adopted by UNESCO at the international congress “Culture: Key to Sustainable Development” in May 2013 (UNESCO, 2013).

Following the aforementioned documents, 22 fundamental Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS) (UNESCO, 2014) were adopted, grouped under seven key dimensions, two of which are particularly interesting in relation to the subject matter of this paper: education (including arts education), social participation (especially

participation in culture, cultural practices and tolerance as well as openness to other cultures), communication (where the importance of universal and equal access to the Internet was emphasised), and heritage (its protection and inclusion in various circuits of cultural consumption).

The latest initiative, based on similar assumptions and values as those discussed above, is The United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030 adopted by the United Nations in September 2015, assuming the implementation of 17 key sustainable development goals (United Nations, 2015). This document also clearly refers to the importance of culture, including cultural diversity and creativity, in addressing the challenges of sustainable development, supporting economic development and social inclusion (UNESCO, 2015, p. V). It is most clearly expressed by the following quote from the introduction to the Policy on the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention: “Heritage was long absent from the mainstream sustainable development debate despite its crucial importance to societies and the wide acknowledgement of its great potential to contribute to social, economic and environmental goals. Based on a strong appeal from national and local stakeholders, the 2030 Agenda adopted by the UN General Assembly integrates, for the first time, the role of culture, through cultural heritage and creativity, as an enabler of sustainable development across the Sustainable Development Goals” (UNESCO, 2020).

The reference to the role of cultural heritage in the context of the 2030 Agenda can be found in two SDG targets. SDG 8.9 emphasises the need to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products. SDG 9.8 focuses mainly on increasing the availability of information and communication technologies, while SDG 11.4 emphasises the requirement to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage. The European Union also presents a broad view on the role of heritage in sustainable development, indicating that “cultural heritage cuts across several public policies beyond the cultural, such as those related to regional development, social cohesion, agriculture, maritime affairs, environment, tourism, education, the digital agenda, research and innovation. These policies have a direct or indirect impact on cultural heritage and at the same time, cultural heritage offers a strong potential for the achievement of their objectives. Therefore, this potential should be fully recognised and developed” (Council of the European Union, 2014).

Although none of the aforementioned conventions, declarations or strategic documents explicitly refers to the process of digitisation in relation to heritage and sustainable development, the assumptions for the process of creating digital physical copies of cultural material perfectly fit into the objectives and defined directions outlined in the discussed initiatives, and can constitute an important tool in addressing many development challenges identified above. The benefits of digitisation can be perceived from many perspectives and levels. It is worthwhile to examine some of the benefits, especially those related to the assumptions of sustainable development.

## **Benefits of Culture Digitisation in Light of Key Sustainable Development Goals—Analysis of Public Policies in the European Union and in Poland**

Digitisation of cultural goods is not only a way of preserving the heritage but is also important from economic and social points of view. As Internet usage increases among members of society, it provides an opportunity to make cultural goods more accessible and allows to increase cultural participation in societies. Taylor and Gibson also point out, that “the democratisation of heritage through digital access is a well-documented aspiration. It has included innovative ways to manage interpretation, express heritage values, and create experiences through “decoding” of heritage. This decoding of heritage becomes democratised, more polyvocal than didactic exhibitions, and less dependent on experts” (Taylor & Gibson, 2017, p. 412).

Free access to cultural resources (including cultural heritage) and the development of cultural and artistic competencies stimulate social development. Digitisation of cultural resources certainly supports this process, and the economic benefits of the value generated by cultural heritage exceed the standard areas related to cultural participation and practices or tourism. In this context, Wen Xiao et al. raised a very important topic in their article, pointing out that the digitisation of cultural resources directly supports the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). On one hand, sharing digital images of physical cultural material can help promote the culture of developing countries with access to their territories limited for various reasons (e.g. due to wars). On the other hand, the availability of virtual models and images can significantly reduce the time of visits to the most culturally attractive places, which shall have a positive effect on protecting heritage against excessive use or overtourism. It also constitutes inestimable support for conservation and scientific works (Xiao et al., 2018, p. 396).

It is also pertinent to mention that, in culturally disadvantaged regions, digitised heritage available through Internet might be a substitute for physical cultural institutions. “Digitisation turns Europe’s cultural resources into an important pillar of the digital economy. Moreover, it gives Europe’s rich cultural heritage a clear profile on the Internet, promotes regions, protects cultural diversity and contributes to better quality of life. Digital technologies provide huge opportunities for improving public access to different forms of cultural assets and its reuse” (Interreg, 2018, p. 2).

We must not ignore the significant impact of digitisation processes implemented within various cultural institutions on their innovation through increasing the coverage and broadening the offer’s audience, creating new value for digital collections, as well as creating new forms of communication and education by utilising cultural and heritage resources (cf. Borowiecki & Navarrete, 2016, p. 228). Therefore, a relation to arts and cultural education as important matters can also be observed here. In a broader context, the positive effects of using ICT in education have been discussed for at least several years. New methods and tools using digital technologies in the educational process are also being developed. One can mention UNESCO publications (see UNESCO, 2002a, b, 2005b), or numerous examples of

reviews and reports from research in this field (i.e. Di Blas & Poggi, 2006; Ott & Pozzi, 2011; Lajbenšperger et al., 2013; Kalamatianou & Hatzigianni, 2018). ICT and cultural artefacts in their digital form, if properly and suitably used, can contribute to innovation and improvement of the educational process. Considering arts and cultural education, wide selection of tools and methods is becoming available by ICT. A number of new approaches to education are possible thanks to diminishing such limitations as time, space or other barriers (Ott & Pozzi, 2008). Merryn Dunmill and Azra Arslanagic rightly point out, that “arts education in today’s world needs to embrace new technologies and pedagogies that suit active, exploratory, inquiry-based learning to stimulate creativity and creative thinking—key features of arts practices—in rich, connective contexts” (2006, p. 38).

The aforementioned selected benefits of digitisation translated into a number of actions taken at the international level and in Poland. As early as the 90s, the European Commission financed a number of projects aimed to include heritage in the digital circulation and make it widely available, and from the beginning of the twenty-first century, the digitisation of cultural artefacts has become one of the pillars of the digital economy and knowledge economy development strategy reflected in numerous analyses, strategic documents, resolutions and directives (cf. Commission of the European Communities, 2007; European Commission, 2011, 2014a).

The report “Cultural Heritage: Digitisation, Online Accessibility and Digital Preservation” shows that there has been increased interest in heritage digitisation processes, which translates into the increasing number of digitisation projects and resulting supranational partnerships, or creating specific international centres and aggregators for digital content (European Commission, 2014b, 2016). It has been estimated that in 2014, approximately 17% of the cultural heritage resources in the collections of European institutions have been digitised (Stroeker & Vogels, 2014).

Poland actively joined the digitisation process. The first planned budget for the digitisation was approved in 2007 by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage under the Cultural Heritage Ministerial Programme. The year 2009 turned out to be a big turning point, which was related to the organisation of the Congress of Polish Culture and the publication of the Digitisation Programme 2009–2020. Since then, a significant increase of funds for culture, including digitisation, has been noticed in the entire cultural sector. Also, the first Multi-annual Government Programme Culture+ was launched in 2011. It is the largest digitisation project so far. In 2007–2013, a total of approximately PLN 400 million of public funds was allocated to the digitisation of cultural goods in Poland, while between 2007 and 2015, the amount of public funds invested in the digitisation of culture increased almost 20 times.

Looking into the number of programmes, amounts, as well as quantitative indicators describing the progress in the digitisation process, it is safe to say that this area has been taken seriously. Thus, in terms of quantity, it can be deemed a success. Digitisation contributes to achieving goals of archiving and preservation—part of works or artworks can survive only in their digital form. However, with regard to digitisation, it is also important to what extent and how the digitised resources are then made available to the recipients—mainly on the Internet. Today, the Internet

plays one of the key roles in the entire distribution chain of digital cultural heritage collections, and in a broader context is also an important space for cultural activity and the circulation of various cultural contents, also in Poland (Filiciak et al., 2012). A strong emphasis on the issue of sharing can be found, among others, in the document entitled Programme for Digitisation of Cultural Goods, and Collection, Storage and Provision of Digital Objects in Poland 2009–2020, where the introduction already indicates that: “The goal of digitising collections of cultural institutions in Poland is not only to protect them as high-quality digital copies, but also to provide users the widest possible access to the entirety of Polish national heritage by creating archives, libraries, museums, audio-visual archives and digital repositories accessible via the Internet” (Ministry of Culture & National Heritage, 2009, pp. 6–7). Achieving positive economic and social results of digitisation, including issues related to cohesion and social inclusion, arts education and the level of cultural participation depend on: (a) the widest possible access and high-quality digital collections and (b) the real impact of how the digitised cultural heritage resources affect social and cultural practices.

The first context is related to digital exclusion defined as “*inequality in access to the Internet, intensity of its use, knowledge of how to search for information, quality of connection and social support in using the Internet, as well as differences in the ability to evaluate information quality, and diversity of using the web.*” (Batorski, 2005, pp. 113–114). It is noteworthy that digital exclusion is correlated with other forms of social exclusion (Kowalik, 2009; Kowalik & Pawlina, 2015), which is important in the context of the discussed topic.

The second context refers to the quality of digital resources, as well as the form and scope of their availability. An analysis of whether to what extent and how the digitised content is then made available on the Internet seems to be one of the most important elements of the whole process of creating digital images of cultural goods.

## Research Design, Methodology and Data Sources

Both outlined contexts will be discussed based on data obtained from research carried out as part of the project “Digital Culture for Citizens”, implemented in 2013–2016 with support from the EEA and Norway Grant. The main goal was to investigate the process of digitisation of cultural heritage founded by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, primarily the effectiveness and quality of main public culture digitisation programmes. The main focus of the research was on quantitative (timeliness and efficiency) as well as qualitative (availability, universality and functionality) aspects of the digitisation process.

The presentation uses the results of nationwide research on a sample of 1000 Polish Internet users over 15 years of age. The sample is representative of the population of Internet users in Poland in terms of gender, age, education and size of the place of residence. The data were collected based on the Computer-Assisted Web

Interview (CAWI) supported by Real-Time Sampling (RTS) technique, with emission of invitation on most popular websites in Poland. The RTS method ensured representativeness and random selection of respondents for the research. The aim of the survey was to examine awareness and knowledge of activities undertaken towards digitisation of cultural heritage in Poland, as well as ways of utilising digital heritage in cultural practices.

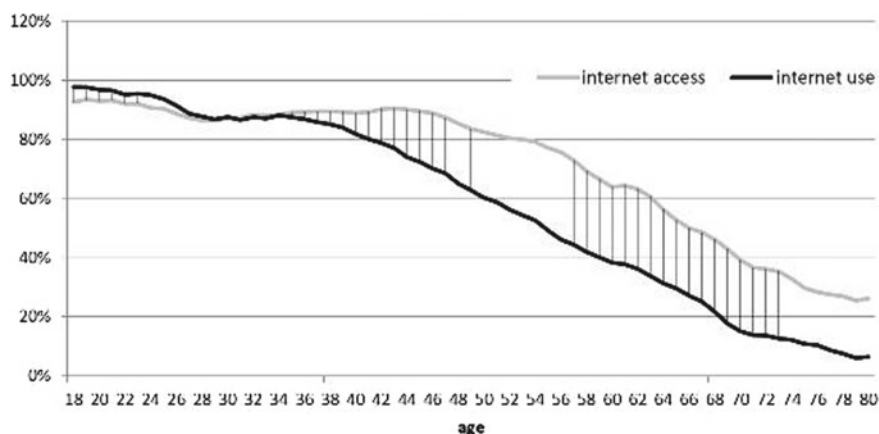
In addition, the presentation will discuss selected audit results of all available repositories of digitised resources, which were financed from one of the two programmes of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The analysis of the repositories was based on several dozens of quantitative and qualitative indicators, which covered a total of five main analytical areas: information architecture; search engine optimisation; accessibility and usability; possible interactions with the content; openness of the resources. The indicators were created on the basis of standards regarding functionality, availability or openness, in accordance with the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (e.g. WCAG 2.0) and based on Jakob Nielsen's heuristics (1994). The research included a total of 132 entities, which, in 2013–2014, were beneficiaries of the Multiannual Programme Culture+ , Priority: Digitisation, and Cultural Heritage Programme, Priority: Protection and Digitisation of National Heritage.

## **Digital Resources of Cultural Heritage Versus Digital Exclusion**

The Internet is a natural environment for promoting cultural activities. To justify this opinion, it should be said that Polish society is dynamically undergoing the process of computerisation. According to EUROSTAT research, 72% of Polish households had permanent access to the Internet in the year of the survey (82% in 2018). As already mentioned, access to digital cultural resources is also a huge opportunity for social integration and cultural education of people at risk of exclusion, living in small towns, having special needs (for example people with disabilities), as well as the elderly. Meanwhile, people, particularly at risk of social exclusion, are at the same time a group exposed to the greatest extent to digital exclusion. While the indicators regarding physical access to digital technologies improve in Poland, which is important in preventing the first-level exclusion (related to access), the second-level digital exclusion (related to skills and motivation to use technology) still constitute a major problem, as illustrated by the data on the use of the Internet by different age groups (Fig. 1).

Disparities related to age can also be noticed in the way of using the Internet, to the extent to which it is used to fulfil cultural needs. Eurostat data show that 44% of Europeans aged 15–24 declare to use the Internet to fulfil cultural needs at least once a week—77% of people in this age group do so in general. It is only 32% in the 55+ group (Table 1).





**Fig. 1** Internet access and use for different ages. *Source* Batorski (2013, p. 345)

**Table 1** Frequency of Internet usage for cultural purposes

How often do you use the Internet for cultural purposes?					
	At least once a week (%)	1–3 times a month (%)	Less frequently (%)	Never (%)	I have no access to the Internet (%)
15–24 age group	44	14	19	20	2
25–39 age group	39	13	21	22	4
40–54 age group	32	12	19	29	8
55+ age group	17	6	9	36	31
The percentage using the Internet for cultural purposes in general (including respondents with no access to the Internet)					
	Yes (%)			No (%)	
15–24 age group	77			22	
25–39 age group	72			26	
40–54 age group	63			48	
55+ age group	32			67	

*Source* Special Eurobarometer 399 (2014)

The influence of factors that determine social exclusion the most is also visible in the field of knowledge and practices related to digital heritage. Only 31.5% of the Internet users in Poland are aware that actions to make cultural heritage resources available on the Internet are taken in Poland. Moreover, as many as 43.2% of people declared that they did not have knowledge about such actions, and every fourth definitely claimed that such actions are not taken. Looking into these numbers, it should be concluded that information about digitisation and its products still reaches a narrow group of people.

Knowledge about the implementation of digital initiatives is correlated with such socio-demographic variables as age, size of the place of residence or financial situation of households of respondents. Younger people in a better financial situation and living in large cities much more often declare that they are aware that actions to make cultural heritage available on the Internet are taken in Poland. These differences are particularly visible with regard to the size of the place of residence and the financial situation. Among people living in rural areas, less than 28% are aware of such initiatives, while in large cities (over 500,000) almost 41%. Of the 25.5% of those stating that they live in poor or modest conditions, only one in four answered yes to the question. 43.6% of people with very good household situation provided the same answer (Table 2).

Another fact confirms that digitisation actions are mostly known to young people. Among the various categories defining the professional situation of the respondents, 42.1% of learners declared that they were aware of the initiatives aimed at providing access to digital copies of cultural collections on the Internet. This percentage is thus much higher than the average of all respondents, where almost every third one (31.5%) is aware of any digitisation actions taken in order to make digitised heritage available on the Internet. Another important factor, though also strongly correlated with age, is the frequency of using the web. Among people using the web at least once a week, every third respondent declares that the digitisation actions discussed here are taken. This percentage drops significantly among respondents using the Internet less frequently than once a week (Table 3).

Based on the above data, it can be concluded that digitisation actions are not widely known to Internet users in Poland. Only 3 out of 10 respondents have heard about such programmes. At the moment, mainly young people who easily use the Internet and reach for this medium as part of their everyday practices and activities have a huge opportunity to take advantage of digitisation programmes in Poland.

The reproduction of cultural disparities can also be noticed in the use of digital cultural resources. Younger people, in a better financial situation and living in larger cities, know more websites that provide digital resources, use more of them and more digital forms and content. The results of offline and online cultural practices also seem to be extremely important. The research shows that the more diverse and frequent cultural activity of offline respondents is the more often and more digital resources they use.

**Table 2** Awareness of digitisation programmes launched in Poland

		Do you think that actions to provide access to cultural heritage resources on the Internet are taken in Poland?		
		Yes (%)	No (%)	I do not know/it is difficult to say (%)
Age	15–18 years	37.3	34.4	28.3
	19–24 years	34.8	29.8	35.4
	25–34 years	29.8	29.5	40.8
	35–49 years	29.6	18.4	52.0
	50 years and over	30.6	14.5	54.9
Size of the place of residence	Village	27.7	23.6	48.8
	Town up to 100 thousand population	33.4	24.7	41.9
	100–500 thousand population	28.3	26.7	45.0
	Over 500 thousand population	40.9	23.8	35.3
Financial situation of households	Our situation is very poor—we cannot effort basic needs	25.5	27.7	46.9
	Our situation is modest—we have to save all the time	25.4	28.8	45.8
	Our situation is average—we have enough for everyday living, but have to save for more expensive items	36.1	23.0	41.0
	Our situation is good—we can effort a lot without special savings	36.3	26.1	37.6
	Our situation is very good—we can afford some luxury	43.6	28.4	28.0
	It is difficult to say/no answer given	17.4	18.5	64.1

Source Own study based on the survey (CAWI)

## Availability and Utility of Digital Resources—The Key to Fully Benefit from the Potential of Digital Heritage

The second aspect of the analysis of the potential of digital heritage in building social cohesion, counteracting exclusion and promoting cultural participation refers to the

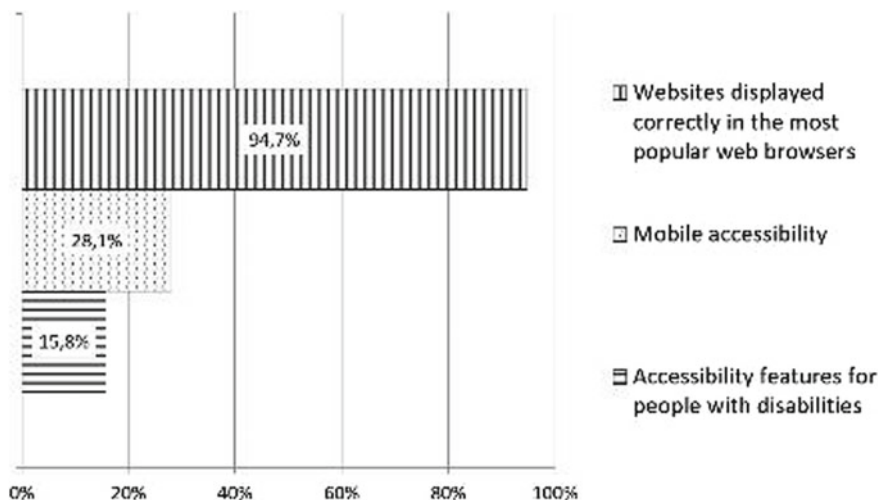
**Table 3** Relationship between the frequency of Internet use and awareness of digitisation programmes conducted in Poland

		Do you think that actions to provide access to cultural heritage resources on the Internet are taken in Poland?		
		Yes (%)	No (%)	I do not know/it is difficult to say (%)
Frequency of using the Internet	Every day or almost every day	32.6*	24.7	42.7
	Few times a week	34.6	21.1	44.3
	Once a week	28.6	14.3	57.1
	Few times a month	6.5	66.2	27.3
	Once a month	0.0	100.0	0.0
	Less than once a month	13.1	18.6	68.3

\* Percentage in rows

Source Own study based on the survey (CAWI)

way of how content is provided. Accessibility, as defined in general, is the ability to use websites easily by anyone, regardless of special needs resulting from disability or devices and software used. When analysing this issue, three dimensions were considered: (a) repositories displayed correctly in the most popular web browsers; (b) mobile accessibility of websites and (c) accessibility features for people with disabilities (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2** Accessibility of websites with digital heritage resources (N = 114). Source Internal study based on analyses of digital heritage repositories in Poland

The vast majority of tested websites (94.7%) are displayed correctly in popular search engines.<sup>1</sup> Only less than 3 out of 10 websites (28.1%) can be easily viewed and all their features used on mobile devices. The adaptation of the beneficiaries' websites to the specific needs of users proves to be the most problematic. Less than 16% of websites have any accessibility features for people with various disabilities, of which 11.4% have only one such feature, and only 4.4% have two. The most common, found in nearly 75% of websites with any accessibility features, is the option to change the text size. The second option allows to change the contrast—slightly more than half of the 16% provides such option. One of the analysed websites had the option to enable a description in sign language when viewing video files. None of the analysed websites provided access to audio description.

These results clearly show how little attention is paid to the accessibility of websites. It is surprising as the digitisation of resources made available by the surveyed entities was financed from public funds. Consequently, these websites should in the first place take care to the greatest extent possible not to exclude any of the groups of potential users. Most of the beneficiaries included in the research are public entities, thus the results are surprising because as of 1 June 2015, all public institutions' websites must be accessible to people with disabilities (Journal of Laws 2012, item 526).

Another dimension of accessibility to be discussed concerns the ways of making digitised cultural collections available on the beneficiaries' websites. It relates not only to additional requirements for software or registration on websites but also to the possibility of re-using shared works, which is important from the point of view of incorporating digital heritage into new distribution channels.

Digitised resources in full are provided by 82.5% of repositories. 35.1% of repositories provide the option to download works to a local hard drive and 2.6% charge for downloading digital copies of works (Fig. 3).

On every third of beneficiaries' websites, it was necessary to take additional actions in order to fully use the digital repository. In more than 67.5% of them, it is necessary to install special plugins for the web browser. Without them, the digitised works cannot be displayed (Fig. 4).

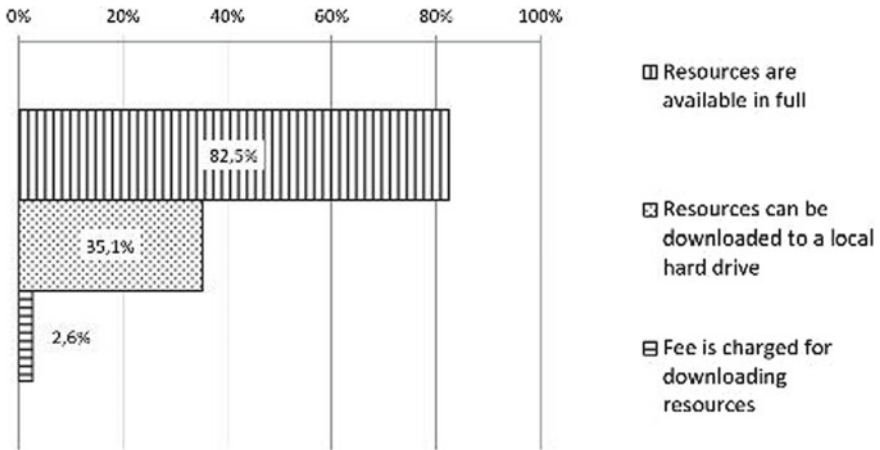
On less than 20% of websites that require additional actions, users need to install additional software required to browse digital resources. The least frequently required action is to sign up and log in on the website in order to access collections.

## Discussion

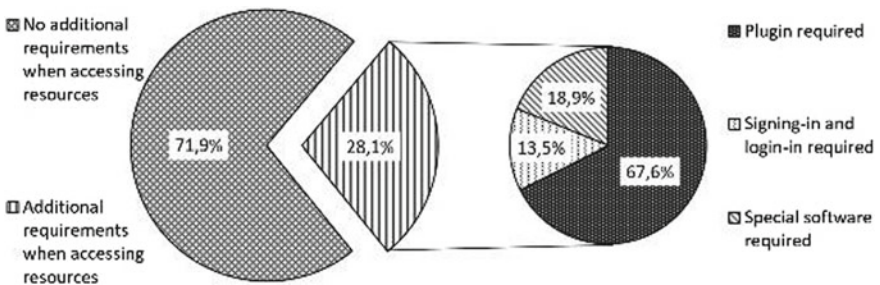
The analysis presented in this article has shown that digitisation of culture can make a significant contribution to increasing accessibility and promotion of cultural participation, education (including art and cultural education) and finally protecting both

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<sup>1</sup> The following web browsers have been tested: Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Opera.



**Fig. 3** How digitised works are provided on the beneficiaries' websites (*N* = 114). *Source* Internal study based on analyses of digital heritage repositories in Poland



**Fig. 4** Additional actions required to access digital resources (*N* = 114). *Source* Internal study based on analyses of digital heritage repositories in Poland

the existing heritage and preserving the memory of those artefacts whose physical representations cease to exist. In this context, it is worth supporting and promoting the digitisation of heritage as widely as possible. It should be borne in mind that the extent of the use of digital cultural resources is not only determined by the number of digitised artefacts but depends on several additional factors.

The possibilities of using available repositories are determined by the digital competence of individuals and their motivation to use such sources, as well as by the availability of digital technologies, including, above all, appropriate devices and the Internet. Thus, one of the main barriers to the potential of digitisation is not only the digital exclusion but also the resources of cultural capital. Therefore, in order to fully exploit the potential of digitised cultural heritage, it is necessary to implement public policies of social inclusion on several different levels at the same time.

The attractiveness of digital content also depends on the standards of digitisation applied. Studies show that the way in which digital forms of cultural works are made available, disseminated and integrated into new social and cultural circuits leaves much to be desired. The most common mistakes are the lack of solutions increasing both the accessibility of websites with a digitised heritage for people with special needs and the accessibility of the digital resources themselves.

A final issue worth noting when discussing the potential of cultural heritage digitisation in supporting SDGs are ethical issues. Speaking about digitisation, SDGs, social cohesion and inclusion of marginalised groups, an important issue to be addressed concerns the neutrality of cultural heritage, and thus the neutrality of the digitisation process. A very important and interesting analysis on this subject was developed by Zinaida Manžuch, pointing to such aspects as lack of neutrality in the selection of individual sites as important parts of the cultural heritage of a given community, the “western” perspective on the interpretation and description of digital artefacts or lack of consideration of the voice of representatives of a given culture in the process of digitisation (also in terms of consent to digitisation and making available artefacts belonging to the sacred sphere in a given culture) (2017). Hannah Turner also showed, among other things, how decisions made at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries regarding the documentation and cataloguing of heritage collections influence how current knowledge about heritage is shaped, favouring specific types of discourse. For this reason, the contemporary process of digitisation of collected and identified resources and their subsequent use cannot be seen as independent from relations of power or domination and detached from the context of exclusion and inequality existing in the past (Pickover, 2014; Turner, 2015). These are certain issues that require special attention and sensitivity, especially in the context of the use of cultural heritage repositories for cultural and artistic education. One of the solutions would certainly be to launch positive and effective participatory processes (Kowalik, 2017) in the area of heritage digitisation, as well as to give a voice to underprivileged groups and include social archives in digitisation programmes.

In spite of the limitations and additional challenges indicated above, which stand in the way of making the fullest possible use of digital cultural resources as a support for the implementation of SDGs, the opportunities and benefits indicated in the text make it worth making an effort and using this potential.

## Summary

Culture is becoming much more important on the Internet. For many groups, this medium becomes the first point of contact with the offer of cultural institutions (it applies specifically to excluded groups and people with difficult access to cultural goods due to geographical location, but to a certain extent this issue affects all social groups). This entails numerous challenges that today’s service providers face in the field of culture. It seems necessary to care more about Internet communication

channels and extend their options. Publicly funded programmes for the digitisation of cultural goods, which have been conducted in Poland for several years, may help in this regard. Thanks to the programmes, many digitisations of works of art or historically important artefacts are being created. These resources are created in a technically correct manner and constitute a valuable resource for development. However, their potential is limited if the goods are not properly disseminated.

It is also important to consider the phenomenon of reproduction of social disparities that significantly prevent or limit achieving fundamental social and cultural goals of the digitisation process. It should be remembered that the widest possible access to cultural heritage has a number of benefits.

As it can be observed, the problem of social inclusion and promoting cultural participation through the provision of digital heritage resources is multidimensional (like social exclusion) and requires a comprehensive approach. This is one of the most important aspects in the context of using digital resources in the arts education process. The possibilities offered by wide and unlimited access to the heritage of various cultures at any time and place require the removal of many economic, technological and cultural barriers. In this sense, some kind of feedback or synergy can be observed here, as achieving the key sustainable development goals (also expressed by CDIS indicators) increases the potential for deploying digitisation and the range of its benefits, while the widest possible heritage digitisation supports the achievement of many SDGs.

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# Policy

# Vernacular Epistemology and Participatory Practices as Alternatives to the Institutionalisation of *Homo Educandus*



Vania Baldi

**Abstract** The article starts by analysing the origin and institutionalisation of the first education systems, based on the figure of the *Homo educandus*, a historical and cultural construct that conceives individuals as needy beings, unable to autonomously understand and learn about the things they need and how to address them. A figure that emerged in Europe five centuries ago, the *Homo educandus* is the cradle of the current normative and performative structure that frames the role and aims of training systems. Conceived as places where to transmit operational skills and notions that are profitable for the labour market and entrepreneurship, the pedagogical approaches that sustain and feed these systems are based on curricula that offer a cultural *ethos* based on competition, the standardised assessment of performances, the meritocratic ideology and the reduction of knowledge to something functional and suited to the training of specialised obedients. In contrast to these government devices present in the sphere of training, research that has encouraged diverse ways of interpreting, sharing and producing knowledge in different social and geopolitical contexts is presented. Exploring those knowledges and cultural practices based on rescuing vernacular and participatory learning processes, a new epistemological approach is highlighted, a (self-)reflexive and heterodox one in relation to the dominant approach, and welcomes new pedagogical experiences and sensitivities.

## Introduction

Studies on the educational challenges for the twenty-first century usually converge, in the scientific literature guiding and supporting institutional reforms in the field of education, on the use of a language and taxonomy that promote the transmission of logical and operational skills, the development of computer and technology skills for solving problems, the definition of aims and suitable methodologies to achieve

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them, and an assessment system based on the numerical ranking of the different performances.

Training programmes and their pedagogies of reference conceive learning contexts as fields where to forge agonistic spirits and encourage competition with the aim of building effective CVs for a future career in close dependence with market demands. The ethics underlying this approach are honestly presented (i.e. firmly presented) as those that can offer promising paths towards excellence and meritocracy. If it is useful for the market, then knowledge has a value and, in this sense, all students are workers *in pectore*.

An emblematic example of governments' diversion of the education system is the normative framework of the European programme Erasmus+, which fosters research and intervention activities in the area of training programmes. In fact, in its latest version (for 2013–2020), all programmes linked to formal and informal education were standardised under the same label, summarised by the keyword “employability”. Paradoxically, whoever wished to research the ideological distortion of the concept of education as an end in itself had to apply for funding from the same Erasmus + programme.<sup>1</sup> This framework, in turn, mirrors an economics-based idolatry that unintentionally came through in the European Commission document signed by Jacques Delors in 1995, *Livre blanc sur l'éducation et la formation. Enseigner et Apprendre. Vers la Société Cognitive*. In this document, the notion of *human capital* marked the idea of education proposed to be successful in life and be able to compete with the other continents.

Therefore, we can ask ourselves: can there be a contemporary pedagogy that is not based on a teaching and assessment system of the normative type? Can pedagogy be emancipatory if it promotes a measuring logic as a criterion to assess training and knowledge processes? Are there learning experiences not rooted in disciplinary and monocultural education models? Before continuing to analyse the implications of this educational landscape, it is important to explore some of its historical and cultural roots and to check whether this educational context radicalises a previously outlined epistemological path that has always operated within Western societies.

### ***The Origin and Institutionalisation of Homo Educandus***

If we take a close look at the logic through which the education system is conceived as a battery of codified instruments to equip students with the necessary skills for adult and working life, we see at its core an institutional device that has existed in Western culture for a long time. It was the scholar Ivan Illich, a precursor to research on the vernacular epistemologies implicit in the everyday practices of marginal cultures (inside and outside the West), who recovered the institutionalisation of those education practices through the figure of the *homo educandus*, a psychological, historical

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/anniversary\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/anniversary_en).

and cultural entity made up in sixteenth-century Europe, according to which all individuals would need to be educated by pedagogical protocols that institutions had previously agreed on. According to this Christian-derived conception, all human beings always have been and always will be *homo educandus*, with needs and wants that only education professionals know and can meet and correct.

For Illich, these needs were initially created by ecclesiastical institutions, so that they could consolidate and legitimate their own status as soul administrators and regulators of assistance services, determining the needs and lacks of *homo educandus* as if these were “anthropological universals”, i.e. men were naturally unable to autonomously understand and learn about the things they needed and how to address them.<sup>2</sup>

Pedagogy based on individual defectiveness, on the scarcity of cognitive and social resources, is, according to Illich, an ideological construction whose historicity was never researched. This reinforces its indisputability, as if it had never started in a specific context but were instead a precondition, an a priori of all human practices and experiences. Do children actually need education systems to learn how to walk, talk, socialise? Did young people learn at school how to be nomads, how to farm the land, raise cattle, make and handle tools, build and inhabit places or manage resources to deal with the everyday dimension of their context of reference? In the different texts gathered in *La perte des sens* (2004), Illich explains how pedagogical concepts cannot be applied when learning how to use vernacular skills. For him, to think that man is *educandus* by nature, that his well-being—in fact, his entire existence—depends on education systems, is a huge misconception. Therefore, for Illich, the sphere of education is an ideological artifice that fuelled the belief that human beings were invariably subjected to formal learning practices, socially conceived within a set of peculiar institutions whose prototype would be the *Alma Mater Ecclesia*. Hence, the education system inherits and emulates catechism, with its disciplinary practices based on truths contained in the—religious or school—book, which allowed (the Christian or *educandus*) to attain salvation.

The verb *to educate*, whose Latin etymology refers to the mother’s role of feeding and breastfeeding the *in-fant*, i.e. the one who does not know how to speak (*educat nutrix*, the feeder educates), dates back to the Judeo-Christian teleological fable that permeates the Western culture, where everything that represents the past is seen as ignorance, absence, injustice; what represents the present is seen as a remedy that mends through research, progress and revolution; and what represents the future is perceived as that which redeems and saves for good.

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<sup>2</sup> Illich’s first texts on education were published in 1971 in his book *Deschooling Society*, at a time when the social effects of mass schooling and compulsory education, triggered by a number of government institutions from the world’s North and South, were starting to be felt. Since this publication, Illich has returned to the subject of education on very many occasions. His key purpose was not to attack schools or the potentially enriching opportunities resulting from teacher–pupil relationships, but rather to target the institutionalisation of teaching and pedagogical programmes, which he deemed to be the cradle of a new systemic process employing discrimination and guilt in relation to diverse experiences and diverse fields of knowledge.

This pedagogical and institutional system, besides inducing the depreciation of all vernacular learning processes, is historically based on the passivity and opacity encouraged and exhorted in learning individuals, since their needs are exclusively defined and fulfilled by education professionals. Educational institutions, Illich recalls, would then be responsible not only for defining the weaknesses and shortages of men's educational resources, but also, by turning them into problems, finding solutions to them in curriculum formats.

However, the social history of *Homo educandus* is not the same as the history of education. The first refers directly to the *educational paradigm* that made it possible to justify the social construct of education. The second is based on research into the relationships between the sphere of education and the broader ideology of a given society, together with the historical analysis of those relationships, through which it may be possible to understand a hitherto unknown aspect of the history of *Homo oeconomicus*.

In fact, this profile was also constructed around the ideology of the shortage of material resources. In Illich's view, education as an institution assumes that each human being is born as an isolated individual into a contractual society that should be understood before it can be directly lived and experienced. In another collection of studies dedicated to the historical and cultural roots of the myths of modernity, *In the Mirror of the Past. Lectures and Addresses, 1978–1990*, Illich (1992) calls for pedagogists to conduct comparative studies between the history of education and the history of economics and mentalities, challenging education scholars to explore the pre-existing and contemporary alternatives to the educational paradigm of *Homo educandus*, just as Elie Halévy and Karl Polanyi did in the context of economic history and anthropology.

These studies would allow to re-examine educational aims and methods and would rescue non-formal, participatory teaching–learning practices, situated in context, and focussed on valuing prior knowledge and experiences, as well as mentorship in the exploration of new training projects. To follow up on the challenges pointed out by Illich, who anticipated and innovated the way of analysing the various political and epistemological devices making up Western modernity, we should start by questioning the symbolic and performative nature of the institutional discourses that sustain the definitions of what is important to learn and know in a given historical context, recovering their relationships and implications with those other public discourses that feed common sense.

### ***The Sociolinguistic and Utilitarian Context of Educational Standardisation***

As mentioned in the beginning of this article, the renewal of contemporary training institutions follows the pace of companies starting up, rather than research into cognitive, affective and socio-environmental processes associated with learning. The logic



that frames training as an “incubator” of flexible minds and labour for (rigidly precarious) jobs to suit companies and start-ups seems to increasingly take root in different teaching–learning programmes. The algorithmic governance of management and administrative processes, the “targeting” and “matching” systems provided by *algoracry*, have gradually been colonising the realm of pedagogy with their categorisation systems (in the ranking, admission, appreciation and evaluation processes) subtly transformed into prescriptive models. This interference in and conditioning of the sphere of education issue from a public discourse determined by a set of rhetorics and beliefs in the progressive value of education, understood as a meritocratic workshop whose pillars of reference would be (as will be seen in what follows) *human capital*, the *teaching of competencies* and the *standardised evaluation of performances*, with employability and/or entrepreneurship as their collectively recognised goal. An emblematic proof of this ideological frame of reference is found in a 1997 OECD report on education, *The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies*, where relational skills (*The ability to relate well to others*) are considered key to economic success:

This first key competency allows individuals to initiate, maintain and manage personal relationships with, for example, personal acquaintances, colleagues and customers. Relating well is not only a requirement for social cohesion but, increasingly, for economic success (p. 12).

If, for example, systems to evaluate learning (in fact, it is the “learning contexts”, which make these systems possible, that should be evaluated) were not based on a quantitative assessment, we could start to evaluate qualitative processes such as the capacity for reflection and self-reflection, the thought-through correction of one’s own mistakes, the cooperation in solving issues discussed, the research of different strategies to approach problems or the dimension of questioning knowledge and learning (Morin, 2003).

However, replacing quantitative assessment leads us back to the competitive mercantile strategy, where efficiency in *problem-solving* is awarded to the detriment of training activities focussing on the psychosocial performance of *learning to learn*. While the purpose of reflexive education is to critically understand reality, in order to understand its limits and change it, the approach coupled to the development of skills that are profitable in the market assumes that the existing reality is a fact to which one must adapt. By praising the values inscribed in the acquisition of operational skills, the ideology of merit suggests that only those who accept the world as it is—and therefore have to modify themselves, since changing the context is not an option—are truly worthy of recognition. Whereas social conflict feeds on collective action, meritocracy is sustained by individual initiative. The first pursues common aims that can encompass society as a whole, while the logic of merit conceives social progress as a natural effect of the sum of individual cases of success.

As mentioned, the practice of assessment at (secondary and higher) education institutions is based on systems of verification presented as being effective and objective, since they result in exact numbers that summarise and mirror the merit of students in knowing the correct answers in exams (many of which consist of tests). Knowing

the answers, in the utilitarian sense of getting the top grade, is more important than raising questions. As the physicist and philosopher Heinz von Foerster mentioned in his *Observing Systems*, published in (1984), students are challenged to be banal and predictable, and are encouraged to reject hermeneutic stimuli, since, to be successful, they should match to the prerequisites. Tests as final exams are not attacked here, but rather their standardisation as a shortcut to reduce the complexity of any evaluation process, thus avoiding other possible systems. Furthermore, tests are often the best solution to respond to a pedagogical system conceived in favour of competition and where the programmes taught pile up and overlap in short periods of time, boiling down to a list of notions. Finally, the paradox that undermines the assumptions of the pedagogical strategies in question: the same education institutions are externally assessed and one of the performance criteria is the number of students assessed per year (and, whenever possible, their integration in the labour market and their success in working life).

There is a common thread between choices, institutional definitions and social discourses that shape interests and sensitivities. The social and economic values proposed or proscribed by government bodies end up permeating a large part of the discursive *ethos* of contemporary society and vice versa. In fact, the hierarchy of social classifications is a result of the representations and public rhetorics that justify it in a tautological way. The power to represent (whether legitimate or illegitimate) is the power to shape and control the reality of what is represented. As Pierre Bourdieu explained, the power of authorised language comes through in the implicit collective recognition of this permission to officially—and, therefore, legitimately—speak and represent. For Bourdieu, the “mystery of the ministry” symbolises this magic and performative power of language, when it is institutionally authorised, but socially permitted (Bourdieu, 1997).

The broad consensus on the social role that education should play is based on that set of institutionally legitimated and shared obvious facts that make up common sense. While for Ivan Illich, these facts (dating back to the sixteenth century) revolved around the idea that human beings were necessarily defective (to redeem the original sin), current European training programmes emphasise the challenges of meritocratic excellence, summed up in the competition for employability (to invest in the fair future, that of the global market).

### ***Rescuing Vernacular Epistemology***

Scholars such as Ludwig Wittgenstein (1969) and Bruno Latour (1999), at very different moments in time, never ceased to point out that epistemological discussions about classification methods and systems should not overlook the fact that every instrument of knowledge also takes on functions that are not of pure knowledge. Conventional ways of presenting and producing knowledge, the ways of expressing its aims and methodologies, are always anchored in the social conditions of its production and reproduction; in this sense, as Bourdieu analysed, taxonomic

practices, instruments of knowledge and communication that are the conditions to form meaning and reach a consensus on meaning, do not exercise their *structuring* effectiveness unless they are also *structured* (Bourdieu, 1981).

With an education system where institutions and pedagogy do not seem permeable to that “inexhaustible epistemological difference of the world” (Santos & Meneses, 2009) that characterises vernacular cultures and non-formal knowledges emerging through participatory practices (an impermeability caused by subjection to the dominant normative standards), it is necessary to recover analytical perspectives that value useful epistemological alternatives to frame different ways of knowing. In this sense, vernacular experiences strictly connected with the process of transmitting and sharing *knowledge practices* are considered relevant. Although they appear to refer to an archaic context, in fact, they are always present in every corner of the world and are able to be revitalised and reshaped according to the contexts in which they take place and the instances of (re)signification.

So, unlike what modern science and government technocracy encourage, those forms of knowledge attentive to *situated* and *impure* knowledges are considered fertile ground, just as those respecting the countless ways of *making* and *conceiving* reality. They create space for alternative pedagogies and move away from standardised approaches, such as those inherited from the institution of *Homo educandus* and consolidated by the meritocratic ideology.

Continuing on the path of linguistic uses, the importance of valuing and studying the vernacular is again being discussed as an essential epistemological practice to understand and rescue communities—both peripheral and indigenous communities and subcultural communities of large global cities (“vernacular cosmopolitanism”). As pointed out by the philosopher Dismas Masolo in relation to indigenous philosophy and knowledges in African contexts:

It is quite reasonable that each community has its own language, through which it expresses and conveys its values to its members. In fact, whoever engages in reflecting about the marvellous complexity of the language they call their own, or any others they know well, will quickly notice that its use is, in itself, a value, an art in which the performance of people is measured, admired and rewarded in several ways (Masolo, 2009, p. 523).

Highlighting the postcolonial dimension of the changing relations between global knowledges and powers, Masolo emphasises the epistemological dimension of the vernacular as a powerful instrument of cultural difference and its dignity, but also as a lever to open it up to the syncretic fusion with other linguistic uses.

Although it seems quite obvious that the language of a community reflects the structure of its world, i.e. how it understands, defines and creates a taxonomy of its own ideas about itself, its relations, hierarchies and ecosystem, along with its values and dangers, only recently, with colonised peoples and cultures seeking liberation from colonial rule, has this reality received due attention (*ibidem*).

In this sense, the groundbreaking lecture by the Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire (1979) is appropriately recalled. In it, Freire states that the goal of education is to help people (namely, those who were oppressed and marginalised) read their reality and write their own history, through the appropriation of linguistic and expressive

tools that are closer to them and more easily available, so that they can become actors of knowledge, rather than its objects. The epistemological legacy derived from vernacular knowledges—namely, when these are interwoven with “knowledges based on defending and promoting the life and dignity of the oppressed” (Nunes, 2009, p. 227)—is one of the theoretical and practical aspects sustaining the “epistemology of the South” (Santos & Meneses, 2009). In fact, for the ethical and political purpose that comes with the analytical dimension of this epistemological approach:

The assessment criterion for a given knowledge depends on the way it affects the condition of the oppressed. A pragmatic epistemology is, therefore, inseparable from recognising the constitutive character of normativity in the production and assessment of knowledge (Nunes, *cit.*).

Based on the recognition of diverse forms of knowing (interpreting, sharing and producing knowledge), epistemological sensitivity through vernacular knowledges redefines the conditions in which each of those forms emerges, develops and is validated:

The criteria that can determine the validity of those different knowledges stop referring to a single standard – scientific knowledge – and become inseparable from assessing the consequences of those different knowledges in their relationship with the situations in which they are produced, appropriated or mobilised (Nunes, p. 233).

Current epistemological challenges make us value the *learned ignorances* (“docta ignorantia”) that every experience and knowledge carry at their core: citing Nicholas of Cusa, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2009) highlights how the diversity of human experience refers to “diverse knowledges about the human experience” (p. 466). Learned ignorance suited to our time would endow us with the (self-)awareness that “The less a given knowledge knows the limits of what it knows about other knowledges, the less it knows its own limits and possibilities” (p. 468). Vernacular knowledge and learned ignorance share the awareness of the incompleteness, precariousness and partiality of world views, potentially applying their adaptive versatility to other everyday contexts, where action and reflection coexist.

Going back to the technocratic impasse that subdues a large part of formal education systems, held hostage to competitive logics and their various ranking devices, we can re-examine the consequences of those logics in the fields of training and reconsider the possibility of other pedagogical processes inspired in “making the different world views and forms of knowledge symmetrical” (Nunes, p. 222), including those definitions of operational skills that become the object of situated assessment. If until now *homo educandus* and meritocratic ideology reflected a system projected as the *cradle of the obedient*, the epistemology of the South and reflexive pedagogy triggered a re-examination of the assessment of hierarchies between competencies, making way for pedagogical processes based on self-assessment. A strategy that would allow not to separate the learning context from its teaching practices and the behaviour of students, which would be useful if carried out under certain conditions, is a real autonomy of educational institutions, which decide how and what to assess, during which periods and with which purposes, previously ensuring a lived

and shared knowledge of the conditions of schools themselves and the social environment where they are located and with which they interact. This assessment would of course differ from school to school, since the analysis of the context of departure could not avoid determining the quality and quantity of resources being used for the purpose: it would be a useful assessment to challenge learning processes, leaving aside the top-down ministerial rankings between good and bad schools (Veiga & Fonseca, 2001).

### ***Learning by Doing Attitude: Following a Practical Flow***

The West has also valued educational experiences where there is a subjective re-appropriation of the use of expressive techniques and of forms of producing and self-assessing doing itself. In fact, it has promoted educational contexts that offer non-formal teaching–learning processes, based on the *in fieri* appreciation of skills that are gradually acquired and discovered.

As Henry Jenkins, Mizuko Ito and danah boyd recall in their book on *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era*, (2016), educators had believed for centuries that learning and cognition happen *in the head* of individuals and that education should be about getting information into those individuals' heads so they can carry knowledge around and apply it in different settings.

In spite of this established pedagogical perspective, since the past century, the education system has witnessed, in various fields, people debate and forge a new paradigm for theorising and supporting learning in a participatory, non-formal manner. Researchers demonstrated through empirical study that learning is inseparable from the cultural identities, practices and material settings of everyday life. They argued that the education agenda should focus not on getting things into kids' heads but on supporting contexts where kids can belong, participate and contribute to their own learning.

*Situated learning* theory, in turn, not only took aim at the foundations of cognitive theory but challenged the core assumptions of our educational practice. Why should we be sitting kids down in rows to learn maths or philosophy in the abstract when it is both more engaging and effective to learn it in the real world or through meaningful social activity? Real-world and real-frame promote concrete comparisons in everyday problem-solving for a meaningful purpose (of learning).

Therefore, we can understand how important it is to emphasise the effectiveness of non-formal teaching methodologies in contexts that intend to develop complementary skills to those taught at traditional schools. Through one-to-one teaching and group facilitation, people all over the world have used non-formal education methods to pass on traditional knowledge and ensure that each new generation learns from the old.

A “culture of making” can be a good example of a non-formal approach to training and improving knowledge; it is, in fact, increasingly emerging as a focus of society at large. For example, there is a growing re-appreciation of practical skills in formal

educational contexts, reflected in learning by doing approaches or the inclusion of arts and crafts schools at the higher education level.

We wonder whether these approaches point to a new appreciation of “*bodily skills*” and can be the first signs of doing away with the classic separation between body and mind in educational contexts.

*Making*, in the end, is correctly perceived as being far more than just skilled manual labour. The work process must do something that sounds distasteful to the tidy, clear mind, which is to dwell temporarily in messy or wrong moves, false starts, dead ends.

Indeed, in technology, as in art, the probing craftsman does more than encounter mess; he or she creates it as a means of understanding and shaping working procedures. Making is about understanding in practice and is inextricably tangled with an active engagement with the material world and culture. Still, it is important to realise that the notion of making has evolved in ways that differ from traditional craftsmanship.

We can also say that the making of culture is inherently participatory. Young people can be apprenticed to local blacksmiths, carpenters, seamstresses and tailors to learn a trade through first-hand experience or on-the-job training.

However, the working philosophy of makers has attracted the interest of professionals, educators, practitioners and the academic community, in view of its informal, open, networked, peer-led and shared learning, its potential to create new pathways into knowledge development and its experimentation with new skills.

Returning to Sennet, the sense of craft skills propels us towards much broader prospects for those who are used to thinking:

“Craftsmanship” may suggest a way of life that waned with the advent of industrial society, but this is misleading. Craftsmanship names an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake. Craftsmanship cuts a far wider swath than skilled manual labor (Sennet, 2009, p. 15).

In other studies on non-formal and participatory education practices, directed by Henry Jenkins, some techniques are considered propitious for such as building mutual trust to trigger participation and learning.

The philosophy behind a participatory education process is to encourage learners to express their learning desire and, not less important, challenge the group of trainees to represent and communicate the way they see the world and express something about their daily lives. To reach these goals, it is necessary to build up mutual trust and curiosity.

For example, using the opportunities offered by new communication technologies, in particular when working with youth groups, different techniques can be used, such as sessions with arts and crafts, drawing, theatre, reading and commenting on newspapers and websites, “photovoice” sessions, playing sport and musical instruments or having informal conversations to share personal histories and interests.

The group facilitator works “in partnership and cooperation” with the youth, giving a “voice” and visibility to their reality, making them not only the “objects” of representation but the authors of it.

As Henry Jenkins points out (2007), a participatory culture embraces the values of diversity through every aspect of people's interactions with each other—it assumes we can make decisions, both individually and as a group, and that we should be able to express ourselves through a wide range of different forms and practices.

A participatory culture has relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, a strong support for creative work and sharing this work, and some type of informal mentorship, whereby what is known by the more experienced is passed on to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which all participants, no matter what their role, believe their contributions matter and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least, they care what other people think about what they have created).

## Conclusions

Contemporary culture must bring to the centre of contemporary debates the type of citizenship it wishes to invest in. Paraphrasing Hannah Arendt, the type of *heritage intended for the future* must become a central part of the public discourse agenda; political communities that care about what *past to leave for the future* (Arendt, 1968) ought to be considered valuable. Through philosophy, we know that each individual can develop and realise their abilities to the extent that they value the common heritage received through their community, which they can continue if they are able to contribute in innovative ways. In this view, *heritage* and *heresy* coexist; there can be no political community without this double bond between a historical legacy and its vital transformation. The training system is in a strategic place to meet this challenge if it detaches from the orthodoxy it reproduces epistemologically, with ethical consequences for individual and collective life. Training experiences are culturally promising when all subjects involved in them develop an allergy to the monoculture and standardisation of skills and goals. Education, to conclude with Arendt, should become a testing ground for the “common world”, for that diverse reality in which we are all concretely involved. A common world is understood as a stage where differences and *learned ignorances* coexist.

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# Art and Design Education for Sustainability in the North and the Arctic



Timo Jokela and Glen Coutts

**Abstract** Sustainable development in all its forms is a key global challenge in the early years of the twenty-first century. What contribution can art and design education make? How can contemporary art and design methods and innovative approaches to art education meld to promote education for sustainable development? What kind of theoretical foundations might such an approach be built on and what might such approaches look like in practice? These are just some of the questions that we hope to address in sharing our experiences. In the chapter, we outline our thinking about art, art education and their potential for sustainable development in the Northern and Arctic context. We do this by presenting the chapter in three broad sections; first, we discuss the rapid changes taking place in the region and the idea of the Arctic as a ‘laboratory’ for sustainable development through art education. Second, we report on our theoretical frameworks of art education for sustainable development. Third, we present an example of a project, an example of joint course undertaken by Arctic Sustainable Art and Design network (ASAD) partners and an overview of a degree programme that foregrounds art education for sustainability. We conclude with a reflection on progress to date and offer some thoughts for future research in the areas of art education for sustainable development.

## Introduction

In this chapter, we report on some of the research and development work that has been undertaken in art education by members of the *Arctic Sustainable Art and Design* (ASAD) thematic network, part of the University of Arctic. The network membership currently includes 26 art and design universities across the circumpolar Arctic. The network aims to identify and share contemporary and innovative practices in teaching, learning, research and knowledge exchange in the fields of arts, design and visual culture education (ASAD, 2020). When the ASAD network was established in 2012,

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it was clear that studying traditional studio and workshop-centred techniques and expression was not the most appropriate way in which to deal with the complex issues of sustainability in art and design education in the North and the Arctic. Indeed, today it has been argued by many researchers, that a radical re-think on the *what* and *how* of art education is required (Atkinson, 2019; Eisner, 2015; Kim, 2019; Mamur et al., 2019). Others have proposed more culturally sensitive approaches in art education (Kim, 2019; Manifold et al., 2015) all in accord with education for sustainable development as guided by UNESCO (Wagner, 2019).

Since its establishment in 2012, and even before the publication of UN's Sustainability Development Goals (UN, 2015), ASAD has been engaged with the challenges and changes taking place in the North and Arctic (ASAD, 2020; Jokela & Coutts, 2018; Uarctic, 2020). One of ASAD's principal aims is to raise the profile of sustainable art and design education not only in schools and universities but at the level of decision-makers, for example, the Arctic Council and national culture and education ministries (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020). In order to achieve this aim, we have been developing the concept of *Arctic Arts and Design* (AAD) to clarify the connections between art and sustainability.

The concept of AAD is central to addressing Northern and Arctic themes and it should be understood to include art, design, craft and indigenous making and promote a dynamic relationship across traditional 'boundaries' of disciplines and processes. AAD promotes the best of contemporary art practices and design thinking as they may be applied to contemporary socio-cultural problems and contexts. AAD offers an alternative way of seeing art, design and crafts; as mutually beneficial and integrated—instead of following the dualistic Western culture of separating art, design and crafts into disciplines of their own (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020; Jokela, 2017). The AAD approach is also informed by indigenous scholarship in the Arctic, for example, the Sámi artist and researcher Gunvor Guttorm (2015). The central aim of AAD is to seek appropriate ways of sensitively addressing environmental and sociocultural issues using art and art education methodologies whilst promoting sustainable development and recognising cultural diversity of the North and the Arctic (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020; Jokela et al., 2019).

AAD is operating in the context of global sociocultural change and art education must adapt (Coutts & Eça, 2019; Coutts & Jokela, 2016). Concurrent with the rapid changes taking place in the North and Arctic regions, a paradigm shift has taken place in contemporary art practice, from the artist's self-expression and individualism to a more community-focused and dialogical approach. We argue that when adopting the models of relational and dialogical contemporary art (Bourriaud, 2002; Kester, 2004; Lacy, 1995; Lippard, 1997) art education has moved away from the modernist assumption that art education conveys the same worldwide cultural values and that the best methods for implementing education are the same everywhere. Bringing the methods and processes of contemporary art into northern contexts and merging them with the aims of sustainable education require a re-think of art education and art teacher training (Coutts, 2013; Jokela, 2013).

## The Changing Arctic: A Laboratory for Sustainable Development?

The Arctic is changing rapidly and studies conducted by the Nordic Council of Ministers (2011) identify nine ‘megatrends’ that are taking place (not only) in the Arctic and Northern regions. However, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to address all of them and so we focus on those that have had the most direct impact on our work to date; climate change, globalisation, urbanisation, demographic challenges and the exploitation of natural resources.

In the Arctic, the pace of global warming is faster than in any other place on the planet, and its acceleration has numerous impacts on the natural *ecosystems* in the North and the Arctic. Ecosystems directly affect the type of social relations that can be established in particular communities; the climate crisis has brought changes in the ecosystems and has had effects on socio-economic and political realities, which impacts on the cultures and self-understanding of Arctic communities (Stephen, 2018).

The ‘megatrends’ combine to present serious socio-cultural challenges to Arctic communities and their cultures. Urbanisation, for example, is closely linked with globalisation as communities increasingly migrate from rural environments to urban settings. This drift leads to a concentration of the population in larger towns and cities. A complex set of factors are at play concerning not just where people live, but also issues of cultural identity: who they are and how they live in terms of economic well-being and socio-political dimensions (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011).

Demographic challenges are also identified by the Nordic Council of Ministers (p.10); an ageing population; declining birth rates; more women than men leaving; young people leaving to seek educational opportunities all combine to create a challenging picture of life in the Arctic. In addition, research has pointed to health and well-being issues related to a loss of cultural identity (Ahonen et al., 2008; Corbett, 2007; Karlsdóttir & Junsberg, 2015). Given these challenges, we argue that the case for high-quality educational and cultural opportunity is self-evident.

Our question, embedded in the title of this section is, could the Arctic be seen as a laboratory for art education for sustainable development? That question is fundamental to our work on *Arctic Art and Design*. The ‘megatrends’ encapsulate the key issues that our colleagues and students have been grappling with through a combination of art, craft and design practices with and for communities in the Arctic. An important issue is how we think of sustainability in our research context in the Arctic, because the notion of sustainable development can be problematic politically in the Arctic region in culture and politics.

The ‘sustainable development of the Arctic’ and ‘Arctic sustainability’ are defined in many different ways and for different purposes in the research (Fondahl & Wilson, 2017; Gad et al., 2019; Tennberg et al., 2019). Three well-known and commonly accepted dimensions are ecological, social and economic sustainability. In the Arctic, discussions about sustainability are often associated with natural resources and ecological and economic dimensions. We argue that there is an important fourth

dimension that we discuss further in the next section, cultural sustainability, which may also be thought of as sustainable development or as an aspect integrated with the ecological, social and economic approaches (Soini & Birkeland, 2014).

## **Theoretical Frameworks of Art and Art Education for Sustainable Development**

Turning now to our theoretical frameworks of art and art education for sustainable development in the Arctic, the key theoretical concepts we use to explain the principles of art education in AAD are cultural sustainability (Auclair & Fairclough, 2015; Soini & Birkeland, 2014), indigenous knowledge systems (Keskitalo, 2010; Kuokkanen, 2000; Smith, 1999) and decolonization (Smith, 1999). The theoretical and practical strategies guiding the art education activities include a place-based approach and cultural revitalization (Auclair & Fairclough, 2015; Matahaere-Atariki, 2017). These theoretical frames of reference underpin the concept of AAD. Fundamentally, we are asking what should art and design education look like given the challenges facing Northern and Arctic communities and issues of sustainability, at the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century?

## **Cultural Sustainability and Heritage**

As one of the goals of education for sustainability includes the survival of regional cultures combined with the inhabitants' self-determination of their own culture while securing social and economic stability for all communities culturally sensitive approaches are crucial in art education (Manifold, Willis, & Zimmerman, 2015; Richards & Willis, 2018). We argue that cultural sustainability is an important, and sometimes overlooked, dimension of Arctic sustainability and it should be considered alongside ecological, economic and social sustainability. Inextricably linked with all other aspects of sustainability, culture is both an enabler and a driver of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Auclair and Fairclough (2015) define cultural heritage, one of the key elements of cultural sustainability, as a continual process of remaking that is rooted in social construction. According to the researchers, cultural heritage is vital and dynamic rather than static and charged with protecting the past. The Council of Europe (2005), discussing the value of cultural heritage urged local communities to assume the key role in determining their heritage values. We argue that such an approach is more likely to increase community commitment towards a culturally sustainable future.

Research carried out by Soini and Birkeland (2014) analysed aspects of cultural sustainability more deeply and grouped related discourses in seven categories: heritage, vitality, economic viability, diversity, locality, ecocultural resilience and

ecocultural civilisation. According to Huhmarniemi and Jokela (2020), these discourses are all relevant in the changing Arctic and in debates about art, culture, livelihoods and education, but highlight ecocultural civilisation, which refers to an ecological shift in the values and behaviours of people, rooted in the climate crisis and social justice agendas. We argue that art and cultural activities can promote ecocultural civilisation in addition to formal and informal education, and therefore has immense potential in achieving the overall aims of sustainability. Further, we would argue that ecocultural civilisation can support cultural resilience. Helping develop an ecocultural civilisation is one of the aims of both ASAD and AAD; Arctic artists need to inform, educate and transform their global audiences. Artistic and cultural productions, as Wagner has argued (2019), have the potential to promote sustainable development in several of the areas identified in the UN SDGs, for example, numbers 3, 4, 8, 10, and 16.

## Decolonization and Northern Knowledge Systems

In art education based on AAD, we follow Chartier's (2018) notion of the Arctic as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual region. Across the Arctic and around the world, the voices of indigenous peoples are increasingly being heard and, more importantly, listened to. Kuokkanen (2000) suggested the idea of an 'indigenous paradigm', that would refocus, or 're-centre' research on concerns and worldviews and cultural practices from an indigenous perspective. Calling for the 'decolonization' of methods of indigenous research, Smith (1999) questioned the western ways of 'knowing' and research. Many scholars have argued that in the indigenous knowledge system ecocultural knowledge has an important role. Research of *duodji* [Sámi craft], which sees Sámi art, handcrafts and design of everyday objects as the fusion of creation, making, communication and a lifestyle exceed the western way of seeing art as an institution separated from everydayness (see Guttorm, 2014, 2015). The dualistic Western culture has separated art, design and crafts into distinct disciplines while the concepts of Arctic arts underline how art, design and crafts as interwoven together as well as integrated into situated knowing of eco-culture. Arctic has found its way into Western art institutions as well. It has emerged that indigenous and non-indigenous contemporary artists in Arctic use and transform their own ecocultural knowledge and traditions with help of digital technologies and show their works in international art exhibitions.

In addition, working towards cultural sustainability, scholars of the northern cultures have stressed the need for ecocultural understanding, decolonization and revitalization among other multi-ethnic communities, for example, Lähteenmäki (2005) in mixed Sámi-Finnish societies in Lapland, Finland and Corbett (2007), in Nova Scotia coastal fishery communities in Canada and overall discussion to the AAD (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020).

To avoid the political meanings indigenous knowledge system carry when focusing on ethnicity and land-relations pointed by Sami researcher Valkonen and

Valkonen (2018), the term ‘northern knowledge system’ is used to refer to interwoven ecological and cultural. Shared eco-culture, sensitive collaboration with northern ecosystems and the use of materials from nature have been some of the key principles of art education among ASAD members (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020; Jokela, 2018).

According to Huhmarniemi and Jokela (Forthcoming), northern knowledge system is not an automatic legacy from generations, but based on personal and social situated learning with nature. It can be learnt by participating in eco-cultures, thus northern knowledge can be shared with indigenous and non-indigenous people as well as with newcomers and guests. Using the concept of the northern knowledge system in art education, they highlight that the knowledge is not always conceptualised verbally (orally nor in written form) but also in visual signs, symbols, patterns, colour-codes and choice of material. In the Arctic and the North, language of crafts, which is often used in contemporary art too, has importance to the continuation of cultures and even the sharing of world views (see e.g. Joy, 2019; Kramvig & Flemmen, 2019; Minnakhmetova et al., 2019).

By the concept of northern knowledge system, we also refer to the situated knowing with nature, as it is discussed in new-materialistic and post-humanistic research paradigms (Ulmer, 2017). The idea of situated learning and northern knowledge system also challenge art education. What kind of traditions we should aim to pass to new generations through art education and what should artists and art educators learn in art universities in the Arctic.

## Place-Based Approaches

From the establishment of the ASAD network, a key strand of research amongst the network was how to foster and promote cultural life in remote regions in the Arctic. A further aim has been to work sensitively with multi-ethnic communities to strengthen vitality and regional development through art, culture and art education. According to Dessein et al., (2015), eco-culture can be related to social learning by using place-conscious and place-responsive teaching to aim for sustainable ways of living for the future. Sustainability lies in community-based thinking where culture represents both problem and possibility, form and process.

Place-based strategies and AAD methods have been the foundations upon which much of our research and development work has been built (Beer, 2014; Burnett, 2017; Hiltunen & Zemtsova, 2014; Jokela & Coutts, 2018; Usenyuk-Kravchuck et al., 2018; Vaughan, 2018). Among ASAD partners, the art and design activities in northern locations and communities are closely connected to place-based strategy, which is also known as place-making and can also be understood as an economic development strategy (Jokela, 2013). It is the practice of using places and a community’s capacity to make economic progress (Milone & Ventura, 2010; Vodden et al., 2015). Building on existing strengths, this approach focuses on culture and the unique features of particular places to boost existing businesses and attract or

create new ones. According to Daniels et al. (2015), a place-based strategy is a reaction to conventional top-down, single-sector, national-stage development projects. Connecting art education, especially environmental art and community art, with EU-funded regional development projects has led to new collaborations between schools, public and business sectors in remote places.

## Revitalization and Resilience

In order to restore and renew the values of traditions and northern knowledge systems in the contemporary socio-cultural context, decolonisation and place-making revitalisation have become a key process amongst ASAD members. This often means merging methods of traditional and sustainable ways of making and contemporary art. As a concept, 'revitalisation' exists at the intersection of tradition and innovation. Auclair and Fairclough (2015) described revitalisation as a practice that renews and remakes cultural traditions that are part of the social construction.

Revitalisation does not mean returning to historical culture and identity that would be authentic or unmixed. Revitalisation is always based on an interpretation of history that changes according to our sources of historical knowledge, as well as personal and communal perceptions, judgements and values. According to Huhmarniemi and Jokela (2020), the discussed needs for decolonisation and revitalisation show that similar processes should also be implemented in AAD activities in multi-ethnic communities and non-indigenous communities. Revitalisation conducted by means of AAD does not refer only to cultural practices but also to places, villages and whole regions based on their local, regional identity and potential vitality.

Revitalisation as it is understood in art education by members of ASAD is an approach to achieving cultural sustainability. Its power is in the creation of cultural continuation, the reconstruction of elders and ancestors' skills and support of local cultural identities. Revitalisations can be intergenerational and intercultural, with the aim of transmitting traditional knowledge, artistry and cultural practices to new generations and new community members. Forgotten symbols, rituals and crafts can also be studied, and new meanings can be created for them as the traditional and the modern are constantly reformed in contemporary art (Härkönen et al., 2018; Jokela, 2018; Stöckell, 2018), community-based art education (Gårdvik et al., 2014; Hiltunen, 2009, 2010; Hiltunen & Zemtsova, 2014) and even in the context of arts-based creative tourism (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2019). In fact, today's contemporary art, as well as cultural practices, whether created through education or as cultural services (such as creative tourism), may eventually become traditions.

## Examples From the ASAD Network

### *Arctic Childhood, Well-Being and Cultural Sustainability*

In the University of Lapland and among ASAD partners, art education for sustainability in Northern socio-cultural settings has been conceived as an art-based action research method (Jokela, 2019; Jokela et al., 2015a). Several research and art projects have examined the application of art education with other disciplines, for example, Social Sciences, Social Work, Education, Health, Humanities, Sami Research and Cold Climate Engineering in the landscapes, communities and schools in Northern parts of Finland, Sweden, Norway and North-West Russia (Jokela et al., 2015b).

A successful example of early art education initiatives towards sustainability in schools is the *ArctiChildren* project (2006–2008), a cross-border research and training program for promoting schoolchildren's psychosocial well-being through school education in the North (Ahonen et al., 2008). The project took place in three multi-ethnic villages in Jokkmokk Sweden, Sevettijärvi Finland and Lovozero Russia—places where Sámi culture meets other nationalities, merged together in many ways and where the 'megatrends' identified by Nordic Council on Ministers were all visible. In this project, the aim of art education was to develop environmental and community-art activities that support sustainability by fostering Sámi cultural identity and well-being in schools (Jokela, 2008).

The place-based activities aimed at revitalization and decolonization while preserving cultural diversity. Northern forms of culture and cultural identities have emerged and grown in close relationship with nature. Many teachers and researchers stated that Sámi young people learn best by doing practical work in natural surroundings outside the school building (Keskitalo, 2010). In the *ArctiChildren* project, place, community-specific environmental and winter art (Jokela, 2007), served as tools to encourage schools, teachers, pupils and their parents to get involved in community-based modes of operation. At each school, an autumnal environmental art workshop took place using readily available material (willow), and a snow sculpture workshop made the best of the winter conditions. Parents were actively involved as facilitators in the workshops. Even though the methods used in the workshops were those of contemporary art, participants understood them as their own since the natural materials were used in a way familiar to traditions of local eco-culture. Located in schoolyards, at its best, this kind of activity helped participants to look at the space from a new perspective, a space for experiencing the annual cycle of northern nature.

A shared feature of the villages and schools of Sevettijärvi, Jokkmokk and Lovozero is the multi-ethnic background of the pupils and their close relationship with reindeer husbandry, either through their parents, grandparents or the wider village community. The workshop content was found in village traditions and approached through folk belief stories relating to the cultural sustainably. It is exactly the richness and depth of these ecocultural stories that is a typical feature of the Sami culture. Besides reindeer husbandry, a special selection of animal myths



and beliefs were chosen as inspiration for the workshops because children easily identify with those kinds of stories, thus bringing their own meanings into the work.

During the project, each schoolyard was transformed into a showcase for the school's principles of learning and community spirit, a meeting place for the school, parents and the whole village community, as a forum for symbols that build up cultural identity. The basis for the activity was the empowering impact of art on communities combined in a way that respected the northern knowledge system and worked as revitalization and decolonization, fostering cultural sustainability.

The cooperation with the Sámi and other multi-ethnic communities also clarified how northern eco-cultures, and aims of cultural sustainability could merge in art education in schools. Working outdoors proved successful, the artistic methods used could be seen to be in harmony with the northern knowledge systems of the communities, but at the same time as an example of dialogical and sharing art of art education.

The ArctiChildren was funded by the EU. At the University of Lapland, the art education curriculum was already developing towards flexible project-based learning (Jokela et al., 2015a; b). The curriculum allowed art teacher students to study community-based projects and art-based master thesis in international research projects like ArctiChildren. Even though the ArctiChildren project was international and multidisciplinary, the students from other partner universities and disciplines couldn't take part in this project because of their curriculums' inflexibility. Experiences of the international collaboration during the ArctiChildren project led to the establishment of the ASAD network later.

### ***Living in the Landscape: An International and Multidisciplinary Summer School for Sustainability***

As a second example, we introduce the project *Living in the Landscape: Environmental Humanities, Arts and Education for Sustainability in the North Summer School* (LiLa) which took place in 2017. It was an initiative amongst ASAD partner universities to develop pedagogical methods for education for sustainability in the North. The partners in the LiLa project included the Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Lapland; Syktyvkar State University, Russia; Arctic University of Norway; Uppsala University Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Sweden and National Library of the Komi Republic in Russia.

During the LiLa project, researchers, master and doctoral students surveyed and analysed the landscapes and people's everyday lives through multidisciplinary methods and theoretical approaches of natural science, anthropology and art. The focus was the encounters between traditions and modern times: traditional forms of culture and contemporary practices in the North, academic knowledge and northern knowledge systems. In the centre of multidisciplinary perception and interpretation of the Komi landscape were questions of the sustainable development and the role of

Komi culture as part of it in the post-colonial and post-Soviet situation in the Russian North.

The first LiLa summer school took place in the Komi villages of Kozlovka, Onezhia and Ota in Russia late May 2018. The villages are located on the banks of River Vym and surrounded by agricultural fields and forests. The traditional log houses in the villages originate from the end of the nineteenth century. The interiors and objects reflected the time of the beginning of the past century, but remnants from the Soviet era and its dissolution remained.

During field trips in villages, we understood that only local inhabitants—insiders—can identify ecocultural meanings of the peripheral northern landscape they are living. That's why the locals should be included as tutors of courses aiming at education for sustainability. Yet the researchers and artists—outsiders—view is equally valid, because only through comprising reflections can we really examine the landscape's significance as a catalyst for new ideas, its speciality of place and the uniqueness of its extremes.

The insider/outsider-dichotomy makes sense in other ways too. As researchers and artists, we often view the landscapes through the theories and the methods we learn to use as insiders in our academic fields. Collaboration with other disciplines opens up new, outsider perspectives and methods, and offers a stimulating forum to increase understanding of the essence of northern peripheral landscapes and places in which we were working. This kind of dialogical knowledge is needed when initiating new place-based methods for revitalization and decolonization toward supporting sustainable development in the North.

Lila was a multidisciplinary course, but principally realized using art-based methods. The main result was an exhibition in Komi National Library and Gallery of Syktyvkar State University, part of the exhibition was shown in the University of Arctic Congress. The exhibition was built and the catalogue designed embracing the different perspectives, research results and art-based methods. The exhibition aimed to present personal and social experiences and raise understanding of the Komi landscapes, but also the developing multidisciplinary collaboration that took place during the course. The aim of the summer school was not only the multidisciplinary study of villages and the life there, but also to develop art-based educational models and methods that could sensitively address the socio-cultural situations of the northern and arctic regions in the future. Härkönen and Stöckell (2019) discuss in their study how dialogue and cultural heritage appear in the artistic processes, artworks and final exhibition of the LiLa course.

In the exhibition and the catalogue, for local people, the Komi landscape appears in writings, photo essays, drawings, paintings, photographs, videos and as a medium for environmental art and installations (Jokela et al., 2018). For many, it became more the "environment" or "social situation" rather than the traditional presentation of the landscape. Instead of creating views, many were trying to come as close as possible to the direct bodily and sensory experience of the place or analyse the landscape's cultural aspects. In this project, the landscape becomes the place where value judgments are social and even ethical, rather than pure aesthetic all questions at the core of education for sustainability.

If we are to address the role that art and design education might play in the sustainability agenda, the notion of cultural sustainability is important. In the LiLa course, cultural sustainability is examined through cultural continuation, reconstruction and locality in the context of the North and the Arctic and these aspects are linked to others we have mentioned; strengthening cultural identity, revitalization and decolonization of the small northern communities through place-based and art-based approaches.

### ***Arctic Art and Design: An Approach that Foregrounds Sustainability***

Closely related to the ASAD network is the *Arctic Art and Design* (AAD) master's level programme that has been in place for 10 years and was developed as a response to questions in our minds like those raised at the introduction to this chapter. Questions concerning the relationship between art and design education and education for sustainability and sustainable development in a more general sense.

These questions and a concern about how appropriate some of the training in art and design education is to the challenges facing graduates in the twenty-first century led us to develop some innovative approaches to art education. Designed specifically to address challenges facing northern and Arctic regions and that embrace the participatory and dialogical methods of contemporary art and design, the AAD programme was developed at the University of Lapland. Rigorous training in art and design skills at the university coupled with the requirement to design, deliver and evaluate art-based projects with partners in the business or tourism sectors is a hallmark of the model we have been developing and testing. This aspect of student training, known as 'project studies' (Härkönen & Vuontisjärvi, 2018), merges the two, normally separate, disciplines of art and design and seeks to train graduates that can work identify and use the most appropriate and sustainable techniques for a particular business enterprise, or socio-cultural issue. Typical examples of projects include students working with healthcare professionals, social workers or small-scale tourist enterprises with the aim of developing and testing innovative, and sustainable art-based techniques. To work effectively in this manner, students need to nurture their own skills as artists and designers, but also develop new skills as socially engaged, creative entrepreneurs; facilitators who can work almost anywhere with almost anyone. It is important to understand that, because of the location of the institution and our network of partners the challenges and particular problems of northern places and peoples are foregrounded in the project studies and in our lectures and seminars. It is interesting to note the extent to which our focus on these issues is echoed in the SDGs and the Council of Ministers' 'megatrends'. Typically, for example, we highlight climate change, pollution, long distances between places, isolated communities, ageing populations, the lingering after effects of colonialization, unemployment and population drift (usually of youth moving from north to south). Of course, other countries and regions face many of these problems too, but in Lapland, we have a

concentration of these factors, that present a rich array of challenges. We would argue that the circumstances also make for a challenging, but comprehensive professional development context for twenty-first-century artists and designers.

We developed the AAD programme from modest beginnings, elective study classes such as ‘art, community and environment’ or ‘time, space and place’. Feedback and evaluations of elective classes indicated, not only that the classes were popular, but also that classes were viewed as important by the students as they linked the ‘inside’ world of the academy with the outside world of the environment, business and ‘real’ projects. Further findings from the evaluations included that students wanted more time for them and liked the idea that design and art students were working together on ‘real world’ tasks. After refining these short courses, we set ourselves the challenge of designing a complete programme. It has taken more than 10 years to refine our strategies of community and place-based sustainable art and design into the AAD programme. The studies meld the disciplines of art, design and education in an innovative fusion to address some of the issues and concerns facing northern and Arctic communities using art-based strategies. It has been, in many respects, a reaction against the traditional model of the fine art training in many art schools in a lot of countries (at least in Europe) that has not changed much since the industrial revolution and this at a period of massive social, environmental, political and technological change.

Our ASAD research and development network (ASAD, 2020), our work with communities, local businesses and students, all work together to tackle many of the issues identified in the SDGs.

## Conclusion

Through the University of Lapland’s and ASAD network’s research, symposia, exhibitions and publications (ASAD, 2020), we know that many researchers are addressing the question of what art and design education for sustainability might look like (Gårdvik et al., 2014; Guttorm, 2015; MacDonald & Jonsdottir, 2014). Our students have also been very closely involved in the organisation of many of the events, often hosting workshops on issues related to the theme of the symposium, information about the events is made public through our web pages (ASAD, 2020).

We believe that a powerful combination of place-based education and art-based action research (Jokela, 2019; Jokela et al., 2015a) has led to the development of above-described models of socially engaged and sustainable art practices that in schools, higher education joint courses and full-size degree programs are firmly located in time and place. Using the concept of decolonisation, revitalisation and northern knowledge systems, we have combined the development of art education for sustainability in the wider multidisciplinary and politically actual discussion of the sustainable future of the Arctic and the North.

The United Nations SDGs are in very sharp focus across the circumpolar north. The challenges facing Northern and Arctic communities, particularly climate change,

globalisation, urbanisation, unemployment and shifting demographics demand sustainable solutions and a step change in the way that art and design education is conducted in order to meet such challenges. Our initiative in *Arctic Art and Design* is just one response to those challenges. Our research in the North and the Arctic suggests that the environments and socio-cultural settings of the region can work as a ‘laboratory’ for innovative research in art and design education. We believe that the special circumstances of the region are ideal to continue to develop and test context-sensitive and sustainable methods in contemporary art and art education. Further, methods that have been developed and tested in the North may be of interest to a wider constituency, for example, researchers that share similar concerns.

We are encouraged by the developments that have taken place and the tenacity and creativity of our colleagues and students, but we do not underestimate the extent of the challenges facing Northern and Arctic communities. We will continue to work with our academic and community partners to harness the power of art, design and art education to address the wide spectrum of sustainability issues. In that respect, the publication of UN’s SDGs in 2015 has been both a sad reflection on global circumstances and at the same time a welcome focus, shining as they do, a welcome spotlight on issues with which we are all too familiar. We suggest that the developments taking place at the University of Lapland and with our partners in the ASAD network may amount to a new genre of sustainable art and design education worthy of further research, development and testing in the field.

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# Cultural Heritage in Formal and Non-formal Education in Latvia—What Contributions to Sustainability?



Agnese Karlsonē and Agnese Pašāne

**Abstract** Both education and cultural component have a role to play in transformation to a more sustainable society and achieving sustainable development goals (UN (2015). Sustainable Development Goals. Quality Education. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>. Accessed 3 Feb 2020; Hawkes Jon (2001). The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability. Culture’s Essential Role in Public Planning. Illinois: Common Ground Publishing; UNESCO. (2011). International standard classification of education. Retrieved February 3, 2020, from <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-iscsed-2011-en.pdf>). Seoul Agenda briefly touches upon the potential of arts education to develop and conserve identity as well as to promote diversity and dialogue among cultures (UNESCO 2010. The Seoul Agenda. [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Seoul\\_Agenda\\_EN.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Seoul_Agenda_EN.pdf). Accessed 3 Feb 2020). Quality education is one of UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 and in this chapter, the content of education will be discussed. We explore what role does cultural heritage play in formal and non-formal education in Latvia and how it contributes to sustainability in the context of youth’s identity, belonging and civic activity. The main focus in the chapter is on the formal general education and its content at the moment and its changes (initiative “Latvian School Bag”—aimed to make professional culture experiences more accessible and incorporating more cultural heritage practices into formal education—and the reform on competence-based general education where culture and arts is one of the education tools), as well as non-formal education and the after-school activities of the youth. The correlation is sought between incorporating cultural heritage in education, building youth’s identity and sense of belonging and achieving sustainability.

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## Introduction

Both education and culture have a role to play in transformation to a more sustainable society and achieving sustainable development goals. UNESCO is convinced that no development can be sustainable without a strong cultural component (UNESCO, 2019). As it is highlighted in the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, active engagement of youth in sustainable development efforts is central to achieving sustainability. Seoul Agenda briefly touches upon the relationship between arts and culture education, referring to their potential of this education in the context of identity building and promoting diversity and dialogue among cultures (UNESCO, 2010). Cultural education, of course, also includes topics regarding heritage. UN states quality education as one of the sustainable development goals for 2030, and “European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage” was worked out in alignment with UN “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals”—here under the pillar *cultural heritage for an inclusive Europe* as one of the main actions is stated “engaging school children and empowering young people”, saying that this can be achieved by activities in schools and other initiatives (European Commission, 2019, p. 11).

The arts education as well as the cultural heritage practices in Latvia are offered to young people through different institutional channels—general (formal) education, vocational arts education, non-formal education and informal educational activities organised by cultural/arts NGOs and institutions. The state’s initiative “Latvian School Bag” since 2018 is one of the main initiatives that aims to make professional arts experiences accessible to all schoolchildren in Latvia, at the same time with this initiative incorporating more cultural heritage practices into formal education. In addition, in 2016 a reform was started on competence-based general education in Latvia that focuses on the role of culture and arts as one of the competence-based education tools. Also offer of non-formal education is well developed. From youth in Latvia, that is involved in non-formal education, approximately half spends 10 or more hours after-school/ extracurricular activities (Latvian Academy of Culture, 2018). It illustrates that after-school activities play a big role in Latvia’s youth’s everyday life and is an important channel for arts education.

This is why we are interested to research this topic in depth thus the research question in this chapter is what role does cultural heritage play in formal and non-formal education in Latvia and how it contributes to sustainability in the context of youth’s identity building, belonging and civic activity.

The empirical research is based on secondary data and surveys carried out by the Latvian Academy of Culture (further on—LAC): Latvian resident’s attitude towards cultural heritage (2019), School children activities in their free time (2018), survey in Baltic countries about the Song and Dance Celebration (2017).

## Conceptual Framework

Even though there are many definitions and interpretations, in this chapter we look at the cultural heritage in its most holistic way—that is (as stated in the “Strategy for protection of cultural monuments 2014–2020” in Latvia) “cultural heritage is a testimony of humanity’s intellectual activity in tangible or intangible form, it consists of a whole of accumulated resources inherited from the past that regardless of their affiliation are considered as representing and expressing values, beliefs, knowledge, traditions, in the perception of individuals and society” (Valsts pieminekļu aizsardzības inspekcija, 2014, p. 1). The viewpoint in Latvia is consequent to the one expressed amongst the global cultural heritage community—e.g. in the recently published “Outline of Climate Change and Cultural Heritage” by ICOMOS it is stressed that the idea of heritage should be understood in its broadest sense ((1) movable heritage; (2) archaeological resources; (3) buildings and structures; (4) Cultural landscapes; (5) associated and traditional communities, (6) intangible heritage) including its connection to culture, place, community, history, beliefs, nature and sustainability (International Council on Monuments & Sites, 2019; pp. 6–7).

In short (based on a 1987 report “Our Common Future”), sustainability or sustainable development can be defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (United Nations, 1987). This definition is also transferred and incorporated into policy documents in Latvia. The concept of sustainability is characterised by three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social (Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija, n.d.). Sustainability is connected with concepts of improvement and progress in the context of quality (Ministru kabinets, 2002).

Since also culture was added as the fourth pillar of sustainability by Jon Hawkes (Hawkes, 2001), we can connect all of the aspects of sustainability to cultural heritage and education as incorporating cultural heritage topics and practices into the education and engaging youth at a young age widens their perspectives, educates them, strengthens their identity, sense of belonging, tolerance, awareness, etc. This then affects (for example) the way a person views nature and climate change, cares for their environment and community, how socially and politically active they are, how tolerant and attentive they are towards other cultures and communities and how they make decisions, based on cultural assumptions.

So it is no happenstance that UN amongst no poverty, gender equality, economic growth, climate action, cities and communities and others includes (quality) education as one of the 17 goals for sustainable development (United Nations, 2015a). It is stressed that education is the basis for solving many problems and achieving other sustainable development goals. In addition to many aspects named as significant for the fourth goal *Quality education* (such as equality, accessibility, literacy skills, condition of schools, teacher training and others) (United Nations, 2015b), we consider the qualitative content of the education as a significant factor. In the chapter, we discuss the current content of education focussing on culture and cultural heritage

aspects as a determinant factor that promotes sustainability as a whole and its linked concepts.

Even though most typically sustainability is thought of in terms of environment and nature, mainly in this chapter sustainability will be viewed in the prism of social and cultural well-being aspects in accordance with the “Seoul Agenda”, where this is one of the actions regarding arts education. This includes also recognising and encouraging “the potential of arts education to develop and conserve identity and heritage as well as to promote diversity and dialogue among cultures” (UNESCO, 2010, p. 9). Also, UNESCO in the context of sustainable development talks about the power of culture to transform societies, especially pointing out cultural heritage and its connection to creativity—“heritage constitutes a source of identity and cohesion for communities disrupted by bewildering change and economic instability. Creativity contributes to building open, inclusive and pluralistic societies. Both heritage and creativity lay the foundations for vibrant, innovative and prosperous knowledge societies” (UNESCO, 2019). Convinced that culture and heritage should play a more significant role in the development equation UNESCO endorses stronger advocacy for this aspect and implements new approaches. This then not only propels achieving sustainable development but at the same time helps to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage (UNESCO, 2019).

The same ideas are expressed in “European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage”, where sustainability, society and heritage go hand in hand. This document looks at “cultural heritage as a resource for the future, to be safeguarded, enhanced, and promoted, also by encouraging synergies with contemporary creation. It puts people at its heart, stimulating access and engagement and promoting audience development, with a focus on local communities, children and young people, as well as people with disabilities, thereby fostering social inclusion and integration” (European Commission, 2018, p. 8). Under the pillar *cultural heritage for an inclusive Europe* as one of the main actions is stated “engaging school children and empowering young people” (including activities in schools and other initiatives) thus heritage then becomes a tool for education, youth development and their active citizenship. This framework points out that overall currently stimulating participation in cultural heritage activities remains a challenge—as researched in “Special Eurobarometer 466” survey, even though most Europeans believe that cultural heritage is important, almost half say that they are not involved with cultural heritage. In the context of our paper, relevant are data that show—88% of respondents agreed that schools should teach Europe’s cultural heritage because it tells us about our history and culture, with almost half (47%) saying they totally agree (European Commission, 2017, p. 68). Interestingly enough, Latvia places fifth amongst those who agree—96% respondents in Greece agree, 94% in Sweden, 93% in both Germany and Portugal, and 91% in Latvia (European Commission, 2017, p. 69).

In the recommendations for “European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, it is pointed out that in order to manage and promote the heritage successfully a recognition and identifying process needs to take place. Participatory governance is closely connected to the awareness about the local environment and thus the sense of belonging: “For citizens, involvement in these participatory schemes

is a source of personal fulfilment; it also draws attention to the immediate environment, which then has wider repercussions. The sense of belonging to a region and awareness of the importance of a quality living environment are heightened; and this stimulates a sense of collective responsibility for the heritage” (Committee of Ministers, 2017, p. 11). In order to raise the awareness, one of the recommendations is to activate the youth and incorporate heritage effectively in school curricula: “It is essential to teach young people from a very early age about heritage, as part of the traditional artistic and cultural education syllabus. This must be based on a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach to all the various aspects of heritage. It should seek to develop relevant skills (identifying, analysing, etc.) and provide young people with an introduction to art appreciation. It also fosters an understanding of professions and crafts, their practice and their history. In this way, heritage education helps us develop a better understanding of our living environment and, more broadly, the world around us. It leads to a better understanding of ourselves and others; it prompts mutual respect and respect for our living environment and helps nurture responsible citizens. It can be implemented as part of an official school curriculum or as an extracurricular activity. Not only pupils and teachers, but also parents, associations and the heritage sector itself can become involved in this education” (Committee of Ministers, 2017, p. 20).

Accordingly, with the documents previously described, we in this paper connect cultural heritage with sustainability through education of the youth which we define as 16–19-year-olds (typically—students in high school). We’ve chosen this age group for several reasons: (a) they are in the stage of their lives when they are becoming young adults with responsibilities; (b) they start to make their own conscious decisions and are able to impact other groups and younger generations; (c) they are able to reflect on their experiences.

## Methodology

Survey “Latvian resident’s attitude towards cultural heritage” (2019) was a commission of LAC carried out by research company “Kantar”. The survey was part of the research project “Community Participation in Cultural Heritage Governance: Practices, Developments and Challenges” funded by the Latvian Council of Science (2018–2020). The research goal was to find out residents of Latvia’s comprehension of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and their attitude towards it. The sample size is 1027 respondents (population—1 755 589 permanent residents of Latvia age 16 and up). Method—AD HOC with Computer Assisted Telephone Interview. Sample gathered with a random stratified tiered method. The survey was held in two languages, it consisted of 17 questions about knowledge and experience regarding cultural heritage in general and knowledge and experience regarding (intangible) cultural heritage in Latvia.

Survey “School children activities on their free time” (2018) was carried out by researchers and students of LAC. The survey was part of the international research

project “CoHERE”<sup>1</sup>, financially supported by the European programme for research and innovation “Horizon 2020”. The research goal was to find out youth’s understanding of cultural heritage and what role does non-formal education play in shaping it. The sample size is 1240 respondents—students in grades 10–12 in high schools or courses 1–3 in vocational education institutions, age 16–19 (population—53 385 pupils from 341 schools in Latvia). The method was a survey where respondents fill the questionnaire in each of the selected schools. Sample gathering was based on the principles of random stratified cluster or nest-based sampling, where stratification features where the number of pupils in different types of schools, schools with different locations and schools with different languages of instruction. Random stratified tiered method. The survey was carried out in one class from each grade (10., 11., 12) or course (1., 2., 3.), three in total in each school that got into the sample. The survey included questions about free-time activities of the youth, their participation in non-formal education, participation in Song and Dance Celebration tradition, their local, national and European identity and their comprehension of cultural heritage.

The survey “Baltic countries about the Song and Dance Celebration” (2017) was carried out by LAC within the framework of the state research programme “Habitus”<sup>2</sup> and the research project “CoHere”. The data was collected by the research company “Kantar”. The aim of the research was to identify the extent of involvement of Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian inhabitants in the movement of the Song and Dance Celebration, as well as the extent of their participation in various interest-related education groups, creative and amateur art groups. The target group of the research consists of permanent residents of the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), age 15–74. The total inhabitants in each state are as follows: 1 611 326 Latvian inhabitants, 2 150 968 Lithuanian inhabitants, 980 821 Estonian inhabitants. The research method is a tailored survey conducted across Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia based on the Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI). The survey sample is drawn by applying a random multistage stratification method and taking into account the socio-demographic parameters of the target group of the survey: The size of the survey sample is 1010 for each country (3030 for all the Baltic States in total).

## Education System in Latvia and Cultural Heritage

In “European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, it is supported that cultural heritage should be in the official school curriculum and/ or as an extracurricular activity. This is why we will unveil the education system in Latvia in the context of cultural heritage considering three main types of education in Latvia according to “International Standard Classification of Education”—formal, non-formal and informal. The understanding of formal education in Latvia is in line with the definition of UNESCO (see book’s introduction). The formal education system includes

<sup>1</sup> Critical Heritages: Performing and Representing Identities in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> Sustainability of Latvian Cultural Traditions in an Innovative Environment.

basic education, secondary education and higher education levels (part of curricula in schools). Part of formal education is vocational education, in which a significant category in Latvia is vocational orientation education which is “acquisition of systematised knowledge and skills, as well as the formation of values orientation in art, culture or sport that takes place concurrently with the formal education, which provides a possibility to prepare for the acquisition of a professional education in the selected direction and the acquisition of the programme of which is certified by document recognised by the State” (Saeima, 1999). These are, for example, art or music schools where the curriculum and the goal of this education is based on culture. We will not, however, discuss this type in detail in this chapter.

Of course, there is also non-formal education that includes all the educational activities organised outside formal education. “It is an addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of lifelong learning of individuals. It is often provided in order to guarantee the right of access to education for all. It caters to people of all ages but does not necessarily apply a continuous pathway structure; it may be short in duration and/or low-intensity; and it is typically provided in the form of short courses, workshops or seminars. Non-formal education mostly leads to qualifications that are not recognised as formal or equivalent to formal qualifications” (UNESCO, 2011, p. 11). This education can be carried out in learning centres, educational institutions, by private tutors, youth centres and others. Non-formal education is closely related to the after-school activities of the youth about which we will talk about in this paper later on.

In addition, there is informal learning (or sometimes referred to as self-education)—this is education or knowledge gained outside educational institutions or organisation, for example, in family (UNESCO, 2011, p. 12). This we would also like to touch upon in this chapter. Certainly, there is also further education and adult education, but that does not fit in the framework of this paper. In detail further on we will talk about the formal initial education and non-formal education (regarding youth) in Latvia. Before doing so, we provide a short summary (Table 1).

## *Formal Education*

We will start with formal education since it is the broadest and it currently faces great changes. We keep in mind that aspects of incorporating cultural heritage in **formal education** can be viewed in different ways. One can say that, if taken in its broadest sense (heritage as a result of human intellectual activity) heritage is intertwined in all the subjects in school.<sup>3</sup> However, in this chapter, we want to focus on those aspects where we can be sure heritage is communicated in particular. The cultural

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<sup>3</sup> If pupils are listening to Mozart in their music lessons, discussing Nicolaus Copernicus discoveries in physics, in history class watching a feature film about Queen Elisabeth I or reading folk songs in Latvian literature class—they are always dealing with heritage, however, we cannot be sure that they reflect about these practices as heritage related.



**Table 1** Description of education system in Latvia

Type (according to ISCED)	Target group	Main actors (in Latvia)	Description	Cultural (cultural heritage or arts) component in the content	Role in this article
Formal education: pre-school education	Children up to the age of 7	Kindergartens Ministry of Education and Science National Centre for Education	Prepares children for entering formal education	Amongst other basic skills a comprehension of culture and self-expression in art is promoted; arts and crafts, performing, music and others are incorporated in the learning process, as well as visits to museums, theatres, etc. New competences and transversal skills (see picture no. 1) are developed	Will not be discussed in detail

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Type (according to ISCED)	Target group	Main actors (in Latvia)	Description	Cultural (cultural heritage or arts) component in the content	Role in this article
Formal education: initial education	Basic: grades 1–9 (age 7–15) Secondary: grades 10–12 (age 16–19)	Educational institutions (primary and secondary) Ministry of Education and Science National Centre for Education Ministry of Culture	Takes place before entering labour market Divided into two levels: -basic -(general) secondary Separate category is special needs education Currently facing reform regarding competence-based learning and a new initiative “Latvian School Bag” has started (in detail discussed in further in the article)	Cultural components can be clearly found in such school subjects as music, literature or visual arts Learning process is accompanied with field trips and excursions, in many cases to heritage places or cultural events Also non-formal activities organised by schools (such as celebrations, contests or extracurricular activities) have to be mentioned	Will be discussed in detail in the article

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Type (according to ISCED)	Target group	Main actors (in Latvia)	Description	Cultural (cultural heritage or arts) component in the content	Role in this article
Formal education: initial (vocational) education	Age 16–20	Educational institutions Ministry of Education and Science Ministry of Culture Latvian National Centre for Culture	A parallel option to general secondary education Either vocational education or vocational orientation education (such as art or music schools)	Cultural aspect is included in basic curricula (e.g. literature lessons) or in professional orientation education it is the main aspect of studying (e.g. in music school bigger part of subjects is about music theory and practice)	Will not be discussed in detail

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Type (according to ISCED)	Target group	Main actors (in Latvia)	Description	Cultural (cultural heritage or arts) component in the content	Role in this article
Formal education: higher education	Adults (mainly young adults)	Educational institutions Ministry of Education and Science Ministry of Culture Academic Information Centre Council of Higher Education	Part of adult education, prepares an individual for the labour market/ specific profession	Either universities and colleges prepare specialists for the field (art historians, restorers, musicians, actors, culture theoreticians, librarians and others) or a separate subject regarding heritage is included in programs that prepare other specialists Universities also help schools, e.g. organising events, conferences and other activities regarding culture	Will not be discussed in detail, except for “Cultural Canon Competition”

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Type (according to ISCED)	Target group	Main actors (in Latvia)	Description	Cultural (cultural heritage or arts) component in the content	Role in this article
Further education	Adults	Educational institutions Ministry of Education and Science Ministry of Culture State Education Quality Service Professional organizations and associations	Provides a professional development opportunities for adults	Similar to universities either prepare specialists and give qualification in the field (programs "Library sciences" or "Basics of Museum Work") or have separate subject regarding heritage included in programs that prepare other specialists	Will not be discussed in the article
Non-formal education	All ages	Ministry of Education and Science NGOs Cultural centres Youth centres Private education facilities Also schools provide after-school activities	Education gained in addition to formal education. Includes courses, tutoring, extracurricular activities, etc. In Latvia closely connected to amateur arts movement	In any non-formal education activity where performing arts, crafts, arts, needle-work, traditional practices, languages, etc. are incorporated	Will be discussed in regards of after-school activities of youth and Song and dance celebration
Informal/ incidental education	All ages	Family Friends Colleagues Peers	All skills and knowledge gained outside educational institution or organisation	Included when learning crafts, practices and traditions	Will be touched upon in the article

component (including topics related to cultural heritage) in the formal education system can be clearly found in certain school subjects—music, visual arts, literature, cultural history, home economics (which includes also crafts) lessons. But data of school youth survey shows (see Table 2) that formal education plays an important role in its broad spectrum in shaping youth's understanding of cultural heritage. Youth learns about cultural heritage not only directly from what is discussed in school lessons (65%), but also in class excursions, trips (50%). Also, non-formal activities that happen in schools such as celebrations, contests and other events are important—46% of youth in Latvia mentioned it as a place where they talk about cultural heritage (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmijas Zinātniskās pētniecības centrs 2018, p. 85). When asked to rate aspects that develop comprehension about cultural heritage (see Table 3) youth rated knowledge that is gained in school as the main aspect—3.8 (where 5—really develops and 1—does not develop at all) (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmijas Zinātniskās pētniecības centrs 2018, p. 87).

**Table 2** How cultural heritage is discussed in schools (%)

How cultural heritage is discussed in schools (%)	
Cultural heritage is discussed in school lessons	65
Cultural heritage is discussed in class excursions, school trips	50
Cultural heritage is discussed in non-formal activities in school (celebrations, contests and other events)	46
Cultural heritage is discussed when visiting local libraries, museums, culture centres, etc. (as part of school lessons)	40
Cultural heritage is discussed in after-school activities (theatre, choir, drawing classes, etc.)	10
Cultural heritage is not discussed at school	7
Hard to say	16

n = 1226

\*Question with multiple answers, total percentage is higher than 100%

\*14 respondents did not answer this question

Source survey about School children activities in their free time (2018)

**Table 3** Aspects that develop comprehension about cultural heritage (average)

Aspects that develop comprehension about cultural heritage (where 5—really develops and 1—does not develop at all)	
Knowledge that is gained in school	3.8
Knowledge and experiences that are gained in family	3.7
After-school activities	3.2
Self-gained knowledge	3.5

n = 1240

Source survey about School children activities in their free time (2018)

Even though there are some positive tendencies, the importance of changing the formal education system and learning/ teaching process has been recognised during recent years in Latvia which has led to educational reform. The reform includes a competence-based approach in learning and higher involvement in cultural processes with the help of project (state's initiative) "Latvian School Bag".

Project "Competence-based approach in learning content" (Valsts Izglītības satura centrs, 2017) mainly focuses on two aspects—student-centred approach and competences, not study subjects. Competence is an individual's ability to use their knowledge, skills and to express their attitudes in a complex way in order to solve problems in the changing real-life situations (Valsts izglītības satura centrs, 2016). These competences shape a proficient student who is able to learn all of his/her life and is able to create innovations, adapt to various situations, conquer challenges and embody great qualities. Such a student becomes an accountable adult who is a part of a society and democratic state.

So the success of this new way of learning is not just for students to gain a great amount of knowledge, but to be able to use and adapt them to different situations. In order to achieve it a new learning and teaching process needs to be introduced—student-centred, facilitating the learning process, three-phase approach for a lesson, formative evaluation, deep learning and transversal skills or competencies. So (as seen in Table 4) the vision "School 2030" in Latvia has three pillars: basic competences, transversal skills and values/ virtues. All the subjects taught in school and their teachers together are responsible for developing these skills and competences.

Even though culture also could be amongst the transversal skills, in the vision "School 2030" it is included in basic competencies. So we can see that understanding about and being interested in culture (and consequently—cultural heritage) is seen as a basis for quality education and skilful student, and later—citizen and a member of the society. Such a way of thinking can already be seen in practical examples,

**Table 4** Three pillars in the new education model

Values/virtues	Basic competences	Transversal competences
Responsibility Diligence	Languages	Critical thinking and problem solving
Courage Honesty	Social and civic	Creativity, self-initiative and entrepreneurship
Wisdom Kindness	Cultural awareness and arts	Digital and media
Compassion Moderation	Math and computer science	Introspection, self-facilitation and learning to learn
Composure Solidarity	Natural science and engineering	Cooperation
Fairness Tolerance	Health and physical activity	Participation

one of which we would like to highlight here—how cultural heritage is advised to be used in civic education.<sup>4</sup>

In 2018 the National Centre for Education drafted methodical material (Valsts izglītības satura centrs, 2018) that helps to promote civil participation. This was created during the project “Civic Participation and Good Works Marathon” where the goal was to advance the belonging of the youth to their school, local community and country and to promote civic participation, independence, responsibility. This then increases principles of democracy, rules of law, tolerance, etc. The results of civic education are revealed in the attitudes of the students towards themselves, others, society and country. For results to be achieved, basic skills such as critical thinking, literacy, planning, digital skills, communication skills need to be acquired (Valsts izglītības satura centrs, 2018, p. 11), also capacity to research, ask questions, present, and such attitudes and values as equality, self-respect, freedom, caring need to be formed. As described in the book’s introduction, fact that civic education is an important part of formal education is also stated in the 4th of Sustainable Development Goal’s (target 4.7).

To help teachers promote all of the qualities mentioned the methodological material talks about the structural model of civic education which consists of six modules, one of which is *tangible and intangible cultural heritage* (Fig. 1). This module helps students to discover their personal identity as a part of national identity; possibilities and ways to find out, nurture and transmit to future generations values of each person, family, kin, community and connected common values of Latvia; history of different nations that have lived in Latvia (Valsts izglītības satura centrs, 2018, p. 18). The main task of this module is to give understanding and personal experience regarding national identity, traditions, path of history in the local community, Latvia, Europe and the world (Valsts izglītības satura centrs, 2018, p. 18).

“Heritage learning is a process where student takes part starting from getting to know the history of their family and kin and concluding with knowing and safeguarding internationally known tangible and intangible values in Latvia” (Valsts izglītības satura centrs, 2018).

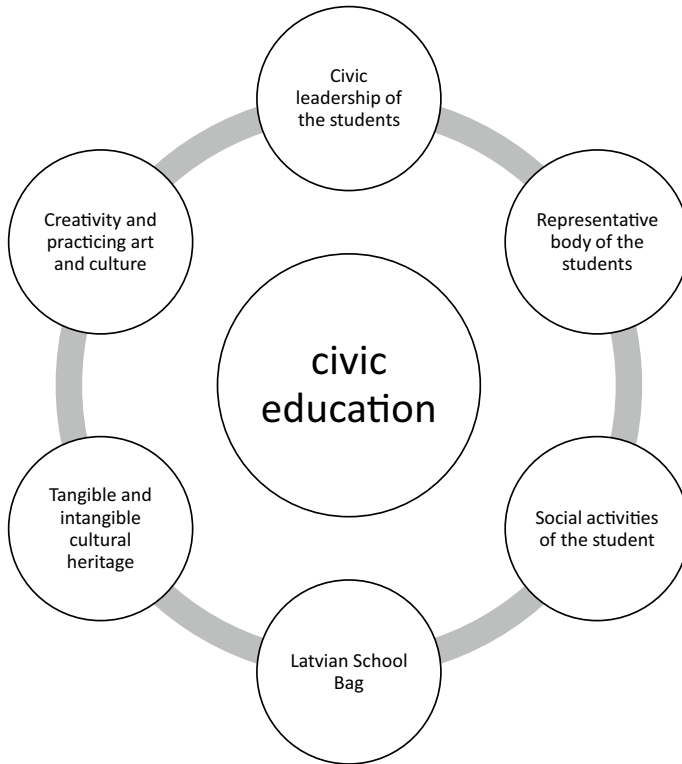
The content of this module is defined by education standards, as well as cultural and historical values included in the Cultural Canon of Latvia<sup>5</sup>, and internationally and on state-level recognised values. It is also advisable to strengthen cooperation with memory institutions and heritage sites—so the new initiative “Latvian School Bag” is an additional instrument that offers an opportunity to get acquainted with cultural heritage directly.

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<sup>4</sup> Since civic competence is defined as one the basic skills.

<sup>5</sup> The Latvian Culture Canon is a gateway to Latvia’s cultural world through 99 different treasures. These diverse elements and aspects of Latvian culture embrace different cultural spheres, go far beyond eras and centuries, are both mutually associated and stand out as polar opposites (Latvijas Kultūras kanons, n.d.).





**Fig. 1** Structural model for civic education in Latvia

This initiative is being implemented as a complementary element in formal education starting from autumn 2018. The aim of this project “is to provide an opportunity for all school-age children and youth (1st to 12th grades including vocational programs) to experience Latvia, to explore its values, culture and relationships through dynamic and meaningful activities thus strengthening the sense of belonging and civic identity” (Latvija100, 2018). The newly developed system will provide the opportunity for pupils to experience a variety of activities and events of heritage, art and culture within the educational framework while access to them will be guaranteed by the state.<sup>6</sup> “Conceptual framework of the project is based on four pillars: (1) promoting citizenship, sense of belonging to the state and national identity, (2) improving quality of education in the sense of the twenty-first century, (3) raise cultural awareness and expression competence and (4) decreasing the social inequalities” (Latvija100, 2018). It can be seen that here cultural awareness (much like

<sup>6</sup> The access is mainly provided by guaranteeing financial support to schools and their pupils (for entrance tickets, transportation, etc.), but also encouraging cultural institutions to diversify and multiply their offer.

discussed previously) is closely connected to a healthy and tolerant society, national identity, citizenship, belonging and education.

The project provides students with the opportunity to explore and experience four content areas; one of which is defined as values of cultural heritage and contemporary expressions, however, all the others are also deeply connected with experiencing cultural heritage (such as content area *evidence of the development and preservation of the Latvian statehood*). One of the main benefits of the project is that it will strengthen cooperation between schools and heritage sites and memory institutions. It is also intended that the project will not only give wider access but will also raise awareness and interest in culture in general, but also specifically cultural heritage. We, however, would like to point out that even though in this project, in theory, cultural heritage is viewed as a wide concept, in practise (as will be shown in data below) it currently is quite narrow—mostly it is a museum visitation. So we see a possibility for improvement here.

In 2016 (pre-project testing phase), Ministry of Culture commissioned a research project to ascertain the current situation in schools in Latvia of implementing principles of the “Latvian School Bag” project. If we look at the answers in the question of how often specific types of events pupils of surveyed schools have attended in the last school year, there are slight differences throughout the class groups. For grades 1–4 performing arts takes the first place. However, second place is the cultural heritage and third—museums/their educational programs. On the contrary for grades 5 and up museums take the first place (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2016, p. 33).

In 2018, Ministry of Culture commissioned research towards monitoring activities and the process of the first phase of this project in order to make changes if needed. Research had several parts, one of which was a survey of coordinators.<sup>7</sup> They were asked what types of cultural events educational institutions of their municipality had attended in the period of September–November 2018 and the second most popular answer (80%) was events regarding cultural heritage (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2016, p. 19). Unfortunately, the research does not explicit what exactly these events have been so it restricts the interpretation. Only 2% said that there had been difficulties to attend events or other activities regarding cultural heritage because of the lack of tickets or events not being available on certain dates (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2016, p. 21). These are good results if compared with results regarding performing arts—they were the most attended events (92%) however also with the most difficulties to attend them (18%).

Consequently, data also showed that 71% of schools and their municipalities in order to be informed about their potential offer and cultural experience possibilities choose to establish cooperation with museums and cultural heritage organisations in regions (outside Riga)—and this was the most popular answer. Also, 54% said that they establish cooperation with museums and cultural heritage organisations in Riga (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2016, p. 37). And in most cases, it is the school that initiates—79% said that they have started a conversation and cooperation with heritage organisations, whereas only around in 27% of time museums and heritage

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<sup>7</sup> Professionals working in municipalities with the task to help schools implement this new initiative.

organisations are the ones to send their offer first (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2016, p. 38). So we can see that schools themselves quite actively try to engage their pupils in cultural heritage activities. Based on this data, we could presume that youth in the age group we are interested in already have quite frequent interaction with cultural heritage in formal education.

### *Non-formal Education*

As mentioned before, besides formal education there is **non-formal education** that are educational activities in conformity with interests and demand organised outside of formal education (Saeima, 1999). Non-formal education for young people usually means being involved in after-school or extracurricular activities—this can happen either in school, in learning centres, in courses and other forms. In the context of Latvia, it is important to talk about non-formal activities (see Table 5) as 21% of youth spend till 4 h a week in after-school activities, 24% spend 5–9 h a week, 16% gives 10–14 to that, for 9% it takes 15–19 h, but for 14% more than 20 h a week (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2018, p. 29). Amongst the most popular after-school activities for youth in Latvia are participating in team sports (74%), singing in choir (60%), participating in modern dances (48%), taking part in art classes (47%) and folk dancing (47%), singing in pop groups (41%), learning crafts (36%) (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmijas Zinātniskās pētniecības centrs, 2018, p. 15). It illustrates that after-school activities play a big role in Latvia's youth's everyday life and can be seen as a potential channel for gaining different knowledge, including the understanding of cultural heritage related topics as part of the most popular after-school activities are related to culture. Also, after-school activities are rated as an important source of developing an understanding of cultural heritage—youth-rated this aspect as 3,2 (from 5, where 5—really develops and 1—does not develop at all) (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmijas Zinātniskās pētniecības centrs, 2018, p. 87).

**Table 5** Time (hours per week) spent in after-school activities (%)

Time (hours per week) spent in after-school activities (%)	
Up to 4 h	21
5–9 h	24
10–14 h	16
15–19 h	9
20 h and more	14
Hard to say	16
n = 1025	

*Source* survey about School children activities in their free time (2018)

In Latvia, there is a strong connection between after-school activities of youth, non-formal education and cultural heritage regarding involvement in Song and Dance Celebration (further on—Celebration) tradition<sup>8</sup> through different forms of extracurricular activities (music and art school, choirs, instrument playing, folk ensembles, theatre troupes, dance groups, crafts, etc.). This tradition—Baltic Song and dance celebrations—was inscribed in UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008 (UNESCO, n.d.). As concluded in the Latvian resident survey—87% of residents of Latvia have been involved in the tradition in some form during their lifetime (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2017, p. 10). As for youth, 42% have actively participated in Celebration at some point during their lifetime. Of those that have never participated in this tradition, 10% admitted wanting to take part in the Celebration as participants at some point in the future (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2018, p. 33). It is important to note that the Celebration happens only once every five years, and is based on regular work and training such as dance, choir rehearsals in the time between Celebrations.

As the main benefits from participating in the Celebration youth said strong emotions that they would not be able to get in a different way (53%), strengthening the sense of national belonging and the sense of patriotism (37%) and participating in maintaining Latvian tradition (22%) (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2018, p. 51). The Celebration as an example illustrates the role of non-formal education activities in understanding and maintaining cultural heritage.

### *Informal Education*

We also want to mention **informal education**—there are initiatives in Latvia that are not directly part of formal education, but include both school children and teaching staff. One of them is the “Culture Canon Competition” that has been organised since 2012. New tasks and challenges are set for the competition each year, encouraging high schoolers (in groups, together with their teacher) to study current events in Latvian culture and art from different perspectives, and creatively reflect on them in relation to the Latvian Culture Canon and contemporary cultural treasures. The “Culture Canon Competition” contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage, makes its features relevant, and draws attention to the diversity of public cultural processes and differences in value systems, as well as promoting schoolchildren’s creativity and their civic participation in the creation of Latvia’s cultural space. The tasks set in the competition are related to the treasures of the Latvian Culture Canon and encourage their identification, further study, and communication. While the competition was originally intended as a cultural-science education Olympiad, it has now acquired

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<sup>8</sup> To know more about the tradition, read the Multinational Candidature File of “Tradition and Symbolism of the Song and Dance Celebration Process in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania”: Retrieved February 8, 2020, from [http://www.unesco.lv/files/Tradition\\_and\\_Symbolism\\_of\\_the\\_Song\\_and\\_Dance\\_Celebration\\_Process\\_in\\_Estonia\\_Latvia\\_and\\_Lithuania\\_e9aa0010.pdf](http://www.unesco.lv/files/Tradition_and_Symbolism_of_the_Song_and_Dance_Celebration_Process_in_Estonia_Latvia_and_Lithuania_e9aa0010.pdf).

a deeper meaning in developing schoolchildren's awareness of culture and their creativity, and has become an annual tradition in Latvia's cultural education (Latvijas Kultūras kanons, n.d.). Initiatives like these also support competence-based approach in learning, as they emphasise the importance of some of the competences—critical thinking, creativity, participation, self-initiative.

There is also larger scale initiative such as PEPT (Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku) which is a programme that promotes the acquisition and inheritance of traditional culture and intangible heritage. Also, in this case, the innovative is strongly connected with the school system, as the teachers are involved in helping youth understand the traditions and elements of the heritage as well as preparing the performances for the competitions. The programme holds five folklore-based competitions for children and youth—contests for storytelling “Teci, teci, valodiņa” and “Anekdošu virpulis”, singing “Dziesmu dziedu, kāda bija”, folk dancing “Vedam danci” and folk music “Klāberjakte” (Pulkā eimu, pulkā teku, n.d.). In this case, heritage and traditions are maintained by active participation.

Two mentioned above are initiatives carried out by organizations in partnership with the state. Competition “Heritage Makers” is a case where Latvia takes part in an international movement. The international initiative—European Heritage Makers Week—was inspired by the concept implemented in Finland since 2013. The concept encourages children and the young to observe, explore and analyse their immediate surroundings and, through this, to also participate and influence its development and cultural renewal (European Heritage days, n.d.). In the context of sustainability, it is important to have a wide knowledge and awareness of events not only in closer surroundings, but on a bigger scale too. Contests like this one give youth the possibility to look at heritage examples that are relevant to people their age all over Europe. What is also important, it encourages to continue the learning process—the winner receives an invitation to visit Strasbourg (as a symbolic capital at the crossroads of Europe and the seat of several major European institutions) to learn more about the cultural heritage of Europe. The cultural experience will also provide an opportunity to learn more about the home countries of their fellow storytellers and the values shared among them (European Heritage days, n.d.).

Family can also be seen as an informal education agency and data shows that this is true in the context of cultural heritage too. Youth have admitted that knowledge and experiences gained in the family are almost as important (3.7) as the knowledge that is gained in school (3.8) in the context of aspects that encourage them to understand cultural heritage (see Table 3) (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2018, p. 87). As mentioned before, Celebration is one of the examples in Latvia regarding maintaining and inheriting cultural traditions and data shows that 40% of youth that have participated in the celebration have someone in their family that have participated in the celebration too. On the contrary, only 20% of youth that have not participated in the Celebration have someone in their family that has been a participant in the Celebration (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2018, p. 46).

Knowledge and experience that is obtained in the family also greatly contributes to the sense of belonging to Latvia—youth rated it with 3.8 (where 5—contributes to the sense of belonging to Latvia, 1—doesn't contribute to the sense of belonging to

Latvia at all), but personal interest and self-mastered knowledge was rated with 3.7 (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2018, p. 72). As it was discussed earlier in the chapter, a sense of belonging is important in strengthening citizenship and civic action, and consequently prioritizing sustainability as an essential part of youth's life. Youth in Latvia doesn't have a strong sense of belonging to one particular place—asked to measure a sense of belonging, ratings were from 3.1 to 3.8 (5 being the strongest sense of belonging, 1—doesn't feel belonging at all). Youth feels the strongest sense of belonging to the city/ village they live in (3.8) and to Latvia (3.7). At the same time, they feel quite a strong sense of belonging to Europe too—rating it with 3.5 (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2018, p. 69).

Even though experience gained in a family mostly influences sense of belonging it is also important to acknowledge that also formal education and/ or formal education activities contribute to the sense of belonging (3.4), as well as after-school activities (3.3) (Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija, 2018, p. 69). It illustrates that formal and non-formal activities contribute to the sense of belonging which is an important aspect when talking about sustainability—it makes youth acknowledge their surroundings and feel responsibility for them.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we described how cultural heritage is incorporated and talked about in the education system in Latvia. We primarily focussed on youth in the age group 16–19 since they can be considered young adults with a greater ability of reflection on their experiences, identity and interests. First, through analysing policy making and other documents, we concluded that the role of cultural heritage in education and in obtaining sustainability is recognised both globally, regionally (European Union) and nationally. We concluded that based on the Eurobarometer survey, 88% of Latvian citizens agree that cultural heritage should be talked about more in schools so the opinion in whole towards incorporating cultural heritage in education in Latvia is positive.

Thus cultural heritage is already used as a teaching tool or one of the topics in formal education (both in curricula and other activities), but it is planned to be incorporated more with the education reform and new initiative “Latvian School Bag”. This initiative already has strengthened the cooperation between schools, museums, and other heritage places. Not only subjects and curricula but the formal education system as a whole is important in raising awareness in cultural heritage—in the school youth survey 65% admitted that heritage is discussed in school lessons, but 50% also mentioned school trips and excursions, whereas 46% mentioned different activities, such as contests and celebrations in the school as important in enhancing understanding about cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage is also an important part of non-formal education and after-school activities of the youth—37% spend up to 14 h for these activities, but for another 23%, it can be from 15 to more than 20 h. This means that after-school

activities play a big role and is an important resource to incorporate heritage in youth's everyday life. The connection between cultural heritage practices and non-formal education is strengthened by youth involvement in the song and dance celebration tradition—42% have at any point of their lifetime been a part of this movement. We pointed out the importance of initiatives from other institutions and NGOs as well in cooperation with educational institutions in raising awareness for cultural heritage.

Youth has quite a strong sense of belonging to a place and admit that it is greatly influenced by knowledge about cultural heritage gained in families thus informal education is important as well. It is also strengthened by non-formal education as 37% of youth admitted that a benefit from participating in Song and dance celebration is strengthening the sense of national belonging and the sense of patriotism.

So in the chapter, we saw cultural heritage, education and youth in the context of sustainability in such a way that in order to achieve the goals of UN “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” a creative, motivated and active citizen is needed. For a person to be dynamic and take action there needs to be a motivation and care, and this mainly could come from a strong sense of belonging to a place or culture (whether it is a local community or European Union). If an individual feels a strong sense of belonging or strongly identifies with something or some place, she/he would want to protect it and make it better thus sustainable.

This paper shows that identity and sense of belonging can be strengthened by art, culture and cultural heritage. This broadens one's viewpoint, raises awareness, promotes tolerance, develops creativity and helps to build a more meaningful connection. Simply put, when people identify with something, they want to protect it and safeguard it, make it better, and this means caring about sustainability. However, in order for this to be true people need to get acquainted with heritage early on in their life, so a big role is played by education. So, in conclusion, we see a direct link between incorporating cultural heritage in education and achieving sustainable development goals.

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# Conclusion

# The Role of Arts and Cultural Education in the Context of Sustainable Development—Concluding Remarks



Ernst Wagner, Nevelina Pachova, Anniina Suominen,  
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This chapter aims to reflect on how the relation between arts or cultural education and sustainable development, specifically the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] (United Nations, 2015), is addressed in this book, drawing conclusions and directions for future research and for the work of the *European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education (ENO)*.

The contributions to this book allow to have a view not only from different countries, mainly European, but also from different disciplines, having in common the premise that it is our shared responsibility to advance the agenda and objectives identified in the “Brundtland Report” (UNESCO 1987), the “Seoul Agenda” by UNESCO (2010), and the United Nations “Agenda for Sustainable Development” (2015). Carbó and Servalls in chapter “[Artistic and Cultural Education for Sustainable Development: A Case Study from a Rural Life Museum in Spain](#)” refer to how the Jacques Delors report (UNESCO, 1996) calls us to:

*“learn to be part of the planet, discovering new connections; learn to live in harmony with nature and with humans, especially with the most vulnerable; learn to know science, arts and humanities and relate them to the main challenges humankind is facing, and their*

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*sustainable alternatives; learn to do through eco-social actions; learn to know, recover and develop ecological wisdom.”*

On this basis, all authors present their perspectives on the relationships between different people, between people and the environment, between arts education and general education with the broader aims of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in mind. Looking more closely at the various approaches to the SDGs in the chapters, an interesting profile emerges.

## **Relation Between Arts or Cultural Education and the SDGs: The Profile of This Book**

As we could expect, SDG 4 (“Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”) plays the most prominent role in all contributions to this book, especially since the importance of culture is explicitly mentioned in target 4.7, where also specific cultural topics such as lifestyle are addressed.

*“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.”* (United Nations, 2015)

What is interesting, however, is whether, and if so, how the authors engage with and address the other 16 goals. In order to identify trends, we cluster the SDGs according to four dimensions<sup>1</sup>:

1. Elementary survival conditions (SDGs 1 and 2): No Poverty, Zero Hunger.
2. Economic dimension (SDGs 8 and 9): Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.
3. Social dimension (SDGs 3, 4, 5, 10, 16, 17): Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Reducing Inequality, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, Partnerships for the Goals.
4. Ecological dimension (SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15): Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land.

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<sup>1</sup> We are aware that this approach is problematic as the respective numbers of SDGs per category (survival, economic, social, ecological) are not equal, so the ecological dimension, which entails seven SDGs and is statistically more likely to get more mentions than the others, e.g. the economic dimension, which is represented by two SDGs. This can lead to biased results. The problem will be discussed later in this chapter when we come back to the results of chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)” that show a divergent picture.

All chapters address the fourth dimension, stating that ecological challenges are, obviously, seen as the most urgent problem with 14 chapters referring to it. Among them, SDG 13 (Climate Action) plays a prominent role, four chapters tackle it directly, followed by SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 14 (Life Below Water). With nine mentions, the social dimension is in the second place, with two goals, SDG 10 (Reducing Inequality) and SDG 16 (Peace and Justice) at the top. Whereas the economic dimension is considered as not as relevant (six mentions, with SDG 8 [Decent Work and Economic Growth] reaching the same number as 13 [Climate Action]). None of the chapters deals with the “elementary survival conditions” (No Poverty, Zero Hunger).<sup>2</sup>

These results also confirm one of the findings of the empirical investigation in chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)”: “It is clear that, according to the respondents, the contribution of current arts education practice to goals that deal with basic needs is relatively low. The SDGs that have higher scores deal with more socio-cultural challenges of societies.” On the other hand, the results in this expert survey regarding the ecological dimension differ. Here we find them in the midfield (see chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)”, Fig. 2). The authors state that “[...] climate-related topics are not seen as fields in which arts education may have a significant impact. The quantitative analysis showed that, according to the experts, arts education neither has, nor is likely to have, a significant impact in these areas.” (chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)”, paragraph “Conclusions”). This might be explained by two aspects: first the difference in the questions pursued by the survey, on one hand, and the call for contributions to this book, on the other hand; second by the fact that the authors of this book are specialists in the field of sustainable development, while the survey was addressed to the sample of the last ENO survey that dealt with the topic of cultural diversity. Accordingly, “the respondents see the latter [socio-cultural] category as an area in which arts education already has a strong impact” (chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)”, paragraph “Conclusions”).

The priorities reflected in this book have to be seen against the background of social movements within the group of young Europeans such as “Fridays for Future”. However, they also reflect the community’s (pragmatic) assessment of the priority needs in their local context, as well as an assessment of what their own domain is appropriate for and able to contribute to. This is reflected in the fact that the first two SDGs (No Poverty, Zero Hunger) are not addressed at all in chapters focusing on arts and cultural education in Europe. In the context of Europe, this is not surprising. It may, however, also reflect a latent agreement within the community that other policy fields rather than arts educations are required to address those goals.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that this is arguably a finding that reflects the context of Europe, rather than as a generic statement about the relevance of arts and cultural education in relation to the SDGs.

However, the dominance of the ecological over the social dimension could be seen as surprising. After all, there are far fewer concepts and experiences available for addressing ecological issues in arts or cultural education than social ones, where the actual, specific strength of the field is or has been so far. The first aspect, urgency, is certainly decisive for this. The centrality of ecological issues in the context of sustainable development is probably an important factor as well. But the creative impulse that emanates from new demands, like the ecological challenge, could also play a role. This is perhaps not only the profile of this book but also a general tendency. What we can observe in any case is a reorientation of arts or cultural education, which might even result in a paradigm shift in the long term.

## **The Relation Between Arts or Cultural Education and Sustainable Development**

When the concept of sustainable development is considered more broadly, as it is by various of the authors' contributions to this book, the focus falls strongly on how to integrate the different dimensions of development (a question that is not adequately addressed in the SDGs). Obviously, the ecological dimension is the new aspect that needs to be integrated, through a cross-disciplinary and ecology-oriented focus of the contributions, which is what makes them interesting and brings forth the need for new concepts and approaches to address such transdisciplinary issues. Many authors highlight the need for understanding and addressing better the linkages among the SDGs and the different dimensions of sustainable development.

In regard to the relation between arts or cultural education and sustainable development, it is also interesting that in most contributions, only the benefits of arts or cultural education for the SDGs are seen and reflected upon, but there are almost no approaches for the opposite direction, except chapter "[Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) in Germany—Convergences, Divergences, Opportunities and Challenges](#)". Here, Susanne Keuchel discusses briefly why it makes sense for arts educators to engage with Agenda 2030. The question of what such a powerful policy paper as the SDGs means for arts education, what potential it has, e.g. for the development of concepts and theory, not only for research but also for the advocacy work of stakeholders is not adequately addressed. This is a desideratum that needs to be tackled by future research. Another observation, which is important especially in the context of advocacy, has to be mentioned here, the criticism of the absence of the "cultural dimension" in UNESCO's concepts and justifications on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). To date, UNESCO has argued exclusively with the ecological, economic and social dimensions of the SDGs—despite vehement criticism, such as that articulated here in the book (chapter "[It's About Time: Re-imagining Present and Future Times in Art, Education and Sustainable Development](#)").

This absence of an explicit “cultural dimension” is one of the reasons why many chapters of this book ask what the specific, irreplaceable or distinctive characteristics of arts or cultural education are that simply cannot be missing from ESD’s holistic approach. To the question of which “arts-integrated educational processes” (chapters “[Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) in Germany—Convergences, Divergences, Opportunities and Challenges](#)” and 9) are relevant here, there are many answers in this book, and they show a clear tendency. Competencies are named that can more easily be acquired through arts or cultural education than through other disciplines, such as coexistence, resilience, creative imagination (chapter “[Artistic and Cultural Education for Sustainable Development: A Case Study from a Rural Life Museum in Spain](#)”), emotional and embodied ways of knowing and relating to others (chapters “[Educational Theatre and Sustainable Development: Critical Reflections Based on Experiences from the Context of Bulgaria](#)” and “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)”), appreciation and openness to multiple perspectives and capacity to develop positive cultural narratives (chapter “[Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) in Germany—Convergences, Divergences, Opportunities and Challenges](#)”). These are very specific self-, social-, and methodological competencies. These include, above all, specific systems thinking competencies in complex scenarios that need not only creativity and imagination but also empathy and awareness (chapters “[Stories from the Sea: Working with the SDGs in a Community-Based Art Workshop](#)” and “[Educational Experiences Related to Architecture and Environmental Art](#)”). All these competencies are anchored in experiential (chapter “[Educational Experiences Related to Architecture and Environmental Art](#)”) and experimental (chapter “[Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) in Germany—Convergences, Divergences, Opportunities and Challenges](#)”) learning facilitated by arts education. In this way, arts or cultural education becomes an enabler and driver of sustainable development (chapter “[Arts Education and Sustainability: Promoting Citizenship and Collaborative Work](#)”). This understanding underlies the book in general. It is not yet a model but could become one.

## **Goals of Arts or Cultural Education in the Twenty-First Century: The Political Dimension**

In many chapters, the SDGs are perceived as having changed the focus and aim for arts or cultural education. The overall aim of uniting all presented research and pedagogical projects is to facilitate experiences of a meaningful life in connection to others (people, other species and environments) and to improve the quality of life also for the generations to come. More specifically, arts or cultural education aims *to improve life* (resiliency, positive futures thinking, sense of connectivity and hope), *to empower people* through increasing awareness by participatory and collaborative

engagements and by creative actions (inclusivity, sense of agency, activism), and, finally, *to promote social justice*. This very general consensus is confirmed by the findings of the empirical investigation in chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)”: “There were no significant differences between the countries of origin of the respondents and their answers, nor between groups of countries. This strong overall consensus does suggest a broad agreement on the (potential) contribution of arts education to achieving the SDGs.” (chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)”, paragraph “Conclusions”).

But the chapters do not only converge on the aim to promote high-quality education in respect to these goals and give guidance or frameworks (chapters “[Arts Education and Sustainable Development. Examples from Around the Globe and What We Can Learn from Them](#)”, “[Arts Education Research, Projects and Pedagogy of Three University Programmes in Finland](#)”, “[Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) in Germany—Convergences, Divergences, Opportunities and Challenges](#)”). Rather, there is a clear awareness that the pedagogical concern is a deeply political one at the same time. Thus, better quality education (chapter “[Educational Theatre and Sustainable Development: Critical Reflections Based on Experiences from the Context of Bulgaria](#)”) also means changing institutions (chapters “[Arts Education Research, Projects and Pedagogy of Three University Programmes in Finland](#)”, “[Artistic and Cultural Education for Sustainable Development: A Case Study from a Rural Life Museum in Spain](#)”, “[Educational Theatre and Sustainable Development: Critical Reflections Based on Experiences from the Context of Bulgaria](#)”) and contributing to a fundamental change in society first of all at the micro-level (chapters “[It’s About Time: Re-imagining Present and Future Times in Art, Education and Sustainable Development](#)”, “[A Microtopia of Arts Education: International Sustainable Development Policy Brought to Life in an Educational Project Involving Institutions in South Africa and Denmark](#)”, “[Enhancing Arts Education with Education for Sustainable Development Competences: A Proposed Framework for Visual Arts Education Educators](#)”, “[Arts Education and Sustainability: Promoting Citizenship and Collaborative Work](#)”). For this, people’s empowerment through arts or cultural education, which is promoted through the dialogue with artists, educators and researchers—especially in an international context (Chapter 9)—is at the core of most chapters.

A quote from chapter “[It’s About Time: Re-imagining Present and Future Times in Art, Education and Sustainable Development](#)” brings these different aspects together: “This emphasis on the situated nature of learning, ethical responsibilities, participatory design processes and a multidisciplinary expansion of the field of art education challenges established hierarchical boundaries and canons and also links up well with the collaborative goals and four pillars (social, environmental, economic and cultural) of ESD.” Whether located in community centres, libraries, cultural institutions or schools, contributions do not only cover the usual formal and non-formal educational settings but many are situated at the cross-sections of the two.



In chapter “[Art and Design Education for Sustainability in the North and the Arctic](#)”, we can find an attempt at going beyond traditional thinking. Promoting a local region (the Arctic region) as a laboratory with an alternative epistemology is an interesting attempt to integrate educational practice, development of new knowledge systems and policies in one concept that focuses on the local situation—often in rural areas. Accordingly, only a few of the studies deal with collaborations across national borders, but all have a specific local or—in the case of crossing national borders—regional focus. A quote from chapter “[A Microtopia of Arts Education: International Sustainable Development Policy Brought to Life in an Educational Project Involving Institutions in South Africa and Denmark](#)” sheds special light on the relation between the local and the political: “A microtopia of arts education will not change the world, but [...] it can give the people involved in it valuable experiences. These experiences could be considered ‘micro politics’ as they might contribute to bottom-up change of lives and societies.” Thus, also cultural heritage (chapters “[Conditions and Limitations of the Role of Online Access to Cultural Heritage in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals—Evidence from Poland](#)”, “[Cultural Heritage in Formal and Non-formal Education in Latvia—What Contributions to Sustainability?](#)”) and how it is activated in formal and non-formal education practices to stimulate reflection, build a sense of belonging and create motivation for action, plays a pivotal role.

## **Towards a New Arts or Cultural Education?**

In respect to this political dimension, we can raise the question of whether some art forms are more apt to engaging with questions of sustainability than others. Reading the book, an interesting observation can be made in this context. The visual arts have a rather atypical, predominant position in this book—in comparison with other, internationally oriented publications on arts education. The visual arts are explicitly referred to in eight chapters, followed by five chapters on theatre, three on dance and only two on music. Literature does not appear. One reason for this special role of the visual arts is for sure the fact that design, architecture etc. are art disciplines that deal directly with our environment, i.e. the ecological dimension of ESD is explicitly addressed. The other art disciplines lack this aspect of directly engagement with and shaping the environment.

Finally, this observation of the atypical distribution of art forms in the book is matched by the phenomenon that very different, unusual art forms take centre stage in many contributions. Considering the need to rethink arts education, the classical canon of the arts is obviously being overcome. New art forms are emerging that supersede both, the autonomy of the arts (a concept of Western modernism) and the differentiation into the disciplines. The new approaches that emerge are, for example, environmental art (chapter “[Educational Experiences Related to Architecture and Environmental Art](#)”), gardening (chapter “[Artistic and Cultural Education for Sustainable Development: A Case Study from a Rural Life Museum in Spain](#)”), story-telling and dialogue (chapters “[It’s About Time: Re-imagining Present and](#)

Future Times in Art, Education and Sustainable Development ” and “Stories from the Sea: Working with the SDGs in a Community-Based Art Workshop”), socially engaged art and arts activism (chapters “Arts Education Research, Projects and Pedagogy of Three University Programmes in Finland ” and “It’s about Time: Re-imagining Present and Future Times in Art, Education and Sustainable Development ”), community-based arts (chapters “Arts Education Research, Projects and Pedagogy of Three University Programmes in Finland” and “It’s About Time: Re-imagining Present and Future Times in Art, Education and Sustainable Development ”), to name but a few. Many of those are also different combinations of multi-sensory arts forms, allowing a direct participant engagement in experiencing and making sense of the world through art. Finally, some authors do not focus on a particular art-form, but discuss arts and cultural education in general, particularly when touching public policy or the epistemological turn needed to consider arts and culture in education practices.

It looks as if the classical canon of the arts cannot any more meet the demands on contemporary arts and cultural education to contribute to addressing critical societal challenges. This brings new forms into view that also breaks down the usual categorising boundaries between art and education, between research and practice, between political and aesthetic education. Chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)” gives an answer to what the demands of arts education might be: “The analysis of the coded answers revealed the overarching category of ‘Life’, which encompasses the codes ‘Awareness’, ‘Development’, and ‘Expression and emotion’ [...] In addition, the coding pointed to the category ‘Innovation’, covering the sub-codes ‘Creativity’ and ‘Development’, as the other main category.” (chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)”, paragraph “Conclusions”) The coding tree (chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)”, Fig. 3) gives a good impression of how a visionary combination of programmatic terms for a “new arts education” could look like.

## Methodological Approaches and Relationships Between Theory, Praxis and Research

The authors’ methodological approaches compiled in this book are mostly qualitative in their nature. Most commonly present are case studies, discourse analyses, document analyses, and action research. Overall, we can say that there are three general methodological approaches:

1. *A deductive/theory-driven* approach in which the authors have adopted a theoretical framework and apply it, mainly, through document analysis and discourse analysis, focusing, in most cases, on the analysis of policies;

2. An *inductive/theory-developing* approach in which, e.g. pedagogical practices are studied to shape models to further develop understandings of arts education;
3. An *abductive*, which involves a theoretical interpretation of a data-driven study.

Chapter “[Inclusion, Life, and Innovation. The Relative Uses of Arts Education in Relation to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)” could be considered as a very special example of the latter, by providing quantitative access to the field from a meta-level and thus allowing to review the theses of the other chapters. It is an analysis of experts’ assessment of the potential impact of arts education on achieving the SDGs, resulting from a survey conducted among 220 respondents in 29 European countries, the same database of respondents as in the previous ENO survey (Ferro et al. 2019).

As already mentioned, we can also find new attempts, being an educational project and a research project at the same time (e.g. chapters “[A Microtopia of Arts Education: International Sustainable Development Policy Brought to Life in an Educational Project Involving Institutions in South Africa and Denmark](#)” and “[Arts Education and Sustainability: Promoting Citizenship and Collaborative Work](#)”). It raises the question of whether the field of arts or culture education and sustainability needs a specific, non-traditional way of research approach including the participatory aspect.

It is a future challenge for ENO to looking for cross-sectional, inter, and trans-disciplinary approaches that meet the expectations of the field in the same way as scientific standards.

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# **Correction to: Artistic and Cultural Education for Sustainable Envelopment: A Case Study from a Rural Life Museum in Spain**



**Gemma Carbó Ribugent and Roser Servalls Munar**

**Correction to:**  
**Chapter “Artistic and Cultural Education for Sustainable Development: A Case Study from a Rural Life Museum in Spain” in: E. Wagner et al. (eds.),**  
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In chapter 3 “Artistic and Cultural Education for Sustainable Development: A Case Study from a Rural Life Museum in Spain”, affiliation of authors has been corrected. Affiliation of author Gemma Carbó Ribugent has been corrected to “Museum of Rural Life, Espluga de Francolí, Spain” and affiliation of author Roser Servalls Munar has been corrected to “Educational Department, Museum of Rural Life, Espluga de Francolí, Spain”. Also, authors full name “Gemma Carbó Ribugent” and “Roser Servalls Munar” is used under chapter title instead of “G. Carbó” and “R. Servalls”. This correction is also updated in the frontmatter.

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The updated version of this chapter can be found at  
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