

SUSTAINABILITY, DILEMMAS AND EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

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DANISH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

13 MAY 2019

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SUSTAINABILITY

A hurrah word!



A cameleon...



An essentially contested concept



➤ *Don't drop it but use it with care*

THIS PRESENTATION

1. The concept of sustainability: Key issues – universal and in our current times
2. Educational approaches
3. Questions about the role(s) and challenges of adult education



ABSTRACT-UNIVERSAL DEFINITION

“Sustainability means that something is able to stay stable”

“A sustainable development is a development that does not undermine itself”

Examples: A company, An organisation, a local community, or an adult education institution

Implies three key issues that we need to understand and handle





THREE KEY ISSUES

Sustain versus Develop



Regeneration



Whole-part relationship



THE GREAT ACCELERATION

SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS



EARTH SYSTEM TRENDS



REFERENCE: Steffen, W., W. Broadgate, L. Deutsch, O. Gaffney and C. Ludwig (2015), The Trajectory of the Anthropocene: the Great Acceleration, Submitted to *The Anthropocene Review*.

MAP & DESIGN: Félix Pharand-Deschênes / Globaia

SUSTAINABILITY AS A HISTORICAL-CONTEXTUAL CONCEPT

” *Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*“ (‘Brundtland’ report 1987)



THE GLOBAL GOALS

For Sustainable Development



#GLOBALGOALS



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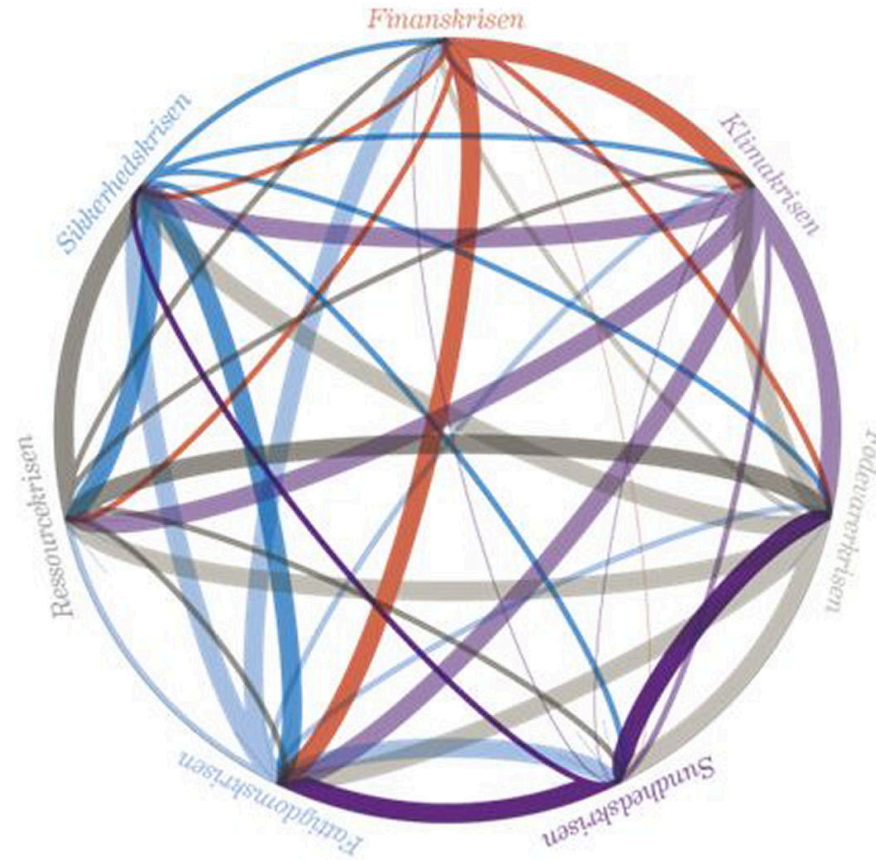
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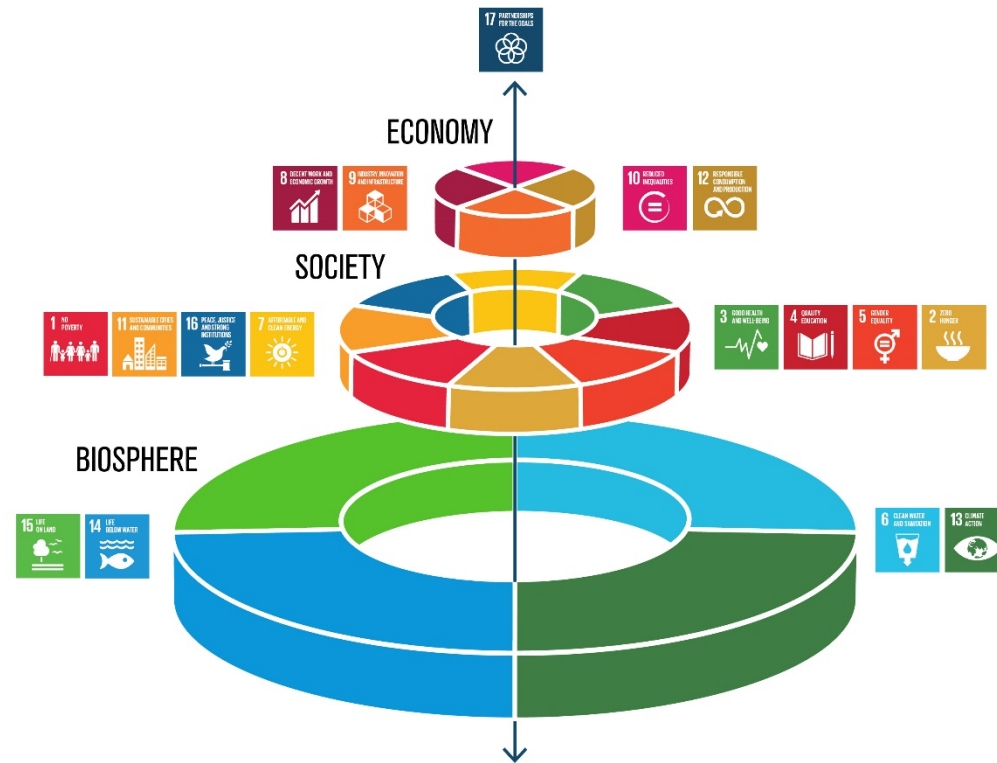
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THE INTERCONNECTED CRISES



THE SDG'S IN THREE LEVELS



Graphics by Jonker Lukens/Lukens





DILEMMAS AND CONTROVERSIES

- Self-interests vs Common good (extension of the general social tension): What is good for me, here and now – vs consequences for others, at another place and generations forward
- While the general definition can be used about your own sustainability, the UN-definition is on the contrary concerned with the effects on others sustainability:
 - Present vs Future
 - Local vs Global
 - Rich vs Poor
- Politics: The relationships between economic, ecological and socio-cultural development
- Rationalities: Techno-Science vs values and situated knowledge
- Kontroversial issues: No right answers
 - What kind of sustainable development?
 - Ideological disagreements: Growth, freedom, community, equality
 - Disagreements on risks: Is it risky? Do we need to act? Who? What? How much? How fast?





THREE EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

Fact-based



Normative



Democratic
empowerment



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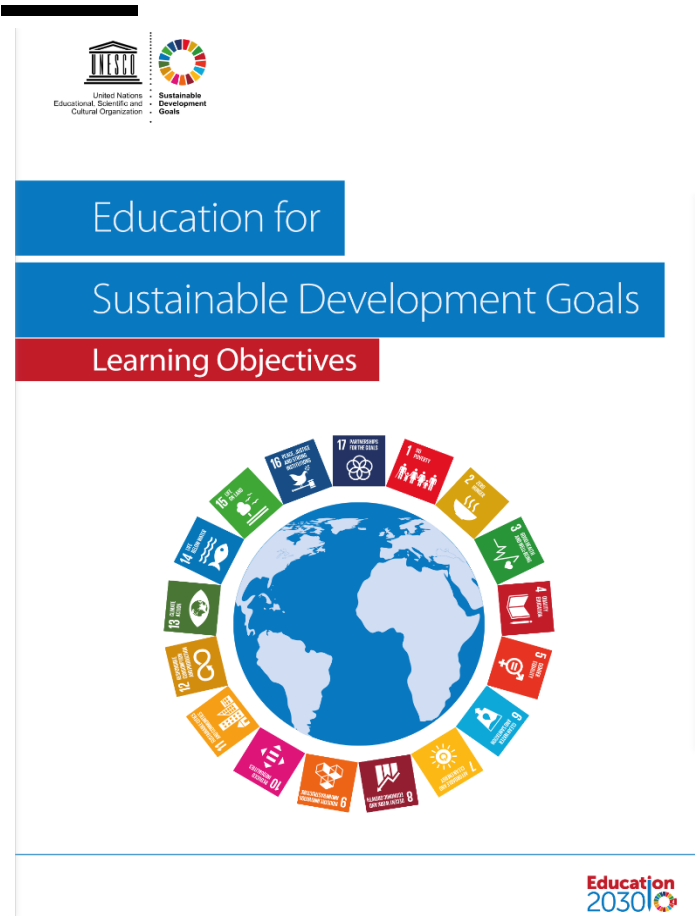
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UNESCO: ESDG-LEARNING OBJECTIVES



A synthesising approach

Three types of learning objectives:

1. Cognitive
2. Socio-emotional
3. Behavioral

KEY COMPETENCIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- **System thinking competency:** connections, multi-factoral dynamics
- **Anticipatory competency:** Utopian visionings and critical reflections
- **Normative competency:** reflect own norms and values and negotiate them
- **Strategic competency:** identify obstacles and opportunities, navigate and plan
- **Collaboration competency:** empathy and participatory skills
- **Critical thinking competency:** Reflect on own and others thinking and actions
- **Self-awareness competency:** Reflect on own role and learn from evaluations
- **Integrated problem-solving competency:** Holistic problem solving



SOME DIDACTICAL APPROACHES



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THE EXEMPLARY PRINCIPLE



- Explore the general in concrete cases
- Point of departure in concrete products, practices etc.
- Reveal, explain, discuss their drivers, structures, cultural patterns.

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

Space for narratives and reflections on own life as well as others life, potential futures, societal visions, risks and ways to navigate and develop practices.

- Bildung
- Folk high schools
- School subject in Iceland and South Africa.



Knud Ileris: 5 levels of sustainability

DILEMMA PEDAGOGY



Put the dilemmas on the table rather than teaching already made solutions.

Scaffold joint critical-creative explorations

Integrating knowledge, value reflections and political bildung



EDUCATION *FROM* SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Nordic in-service training course
for adult teachers:

- Visits to promising examples
- Dialogues with engaged people
Concrete/sensuous
- Reflections/Knowledge sharing
- Addresses need for hope and identity



ESD AND ADULT EDUCATION



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QUESTIONS:

- Why do we educate adults? What is the aim of adult education? UNESCO suggested back in the 90'ties a general change from 'education for development' to 'education for *sustainable* development' (ESD). What if we follow them and put ESD as the aim of adult education?
- What kind of education do adults need today? If LLL is considered from the adult learners point of view: is it then in accordance or conflict with ESD?
- Green skills and tool oriented training are needed but is it all that industrial companies requests? Or is there an increasing demand for general competencies in line with the key competencies in ESD?
- Wouldn't be a better way forward to differentiate between different types of adult education, when we talk about adult ESD?
 - ESD fit well with non-formal social learning in communities, with folk high schools, with in-service training of teachers and other types of learning agents, including managers and mid-level managers.
 - ESD is challenging when it comes to in-service training targeted (re)qualification of ground level employees

