



Workshop 3

Advancing sustainable lifestyles and responsible consumption through ESD

Time: 31 March: 15.00 - 18.00h (first part), 1 April: 11.00 - 13.00h (second part)

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Consumption has become the socio-economic driving force and the core value of an increasing number of societies worldwide. In both developing and developed countries, unsustainable patterns of consumption also have serious impacts on people and the environment. For this reason, and given its cross-cutting dimension, responsible consumption, otherwise called sustainable consumption, is certainly at the core of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Education for Sustainable Consumption (ESC) plays a key role in the main social and environmental challenges addressed in this conference. Through the parameters of equity and sustainability, ESC contributes to turn consumption into a bearer of well-being, peace and human development.

1. Objectives of the workshop

This workshop will focus on Education for Sustainable Consumption (ESC) in formal, non-formal and informal education as an integral part of ESD, building on the values upon which ESD is founded: the training of responsible citizens and consumers, aware of their fundamental rights and freedoms, informed to participate in the public debate and oriented towards a critical participation in the market. This definition needs to be deepened and strengthened by a clear understanding of each context to which it applies, as well as of its North-South dimension. Finally, the workshop will also aim at highlighting the value of education and responsible consumption in the context of the economic and financial crisis the whole world is currently facing.

Through creative and interactive discussions, the workshop will provide participants with the opportunity to share experiences, gain insights and consult on ways forward for the next five years of the UN Decade on ESD on how to formulate, stimulate, carry out and evaluate education for sustainable consumption. In this framework, it will consider how the recent guidelines presented in **Here and Now! Education for Sustainable Consumption**, jointly developed by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Marrakech Task Force on ESC led by Italy¹ and the Hedmark University College, stands as a tool to assist policymakers, teachers and parents in implementation ESC. →

¹ The Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) is a global multistakeholder process to promote SCP and to elaborate a 10-Year Framework of Programmes to support regional and national implementation of SCP. The Marrakech Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption was launched during the 14th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD14 - New York, May 2006) as a tangible contribution of Italy to the Marrakech Process. For more information: <http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/taskforces/education.htm>

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Here and Now! Education for Sustainable Consumption. Recommendations and Guidelines

Here and Now! is aimed at policy makers, educational institutions and actors, and mostly focuses on formal education. The document contains three sections (I-Addressing the challenges; II-Optimizing opportunities; III-Relevant resources), and stands as an instrument for policy-making and integration of ESC into education and sustainable development strategies.

Here and Now! is also aimed at providing educators and trainers with pedagogical information and tools. The guidelines have been developed in order to help fulfill the recommendations of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation with regards the elaboration of a 10-year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production (Marrakech Process).

Here and Now! have notably been drafted in close collaboration with the Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN), an interdisciplinary network of educators, researchers and civil society organizations representing 136 institutions in 37 countries that was created in 2003 to work on education for sustainable consumption and global solidarity (for further information: <http://www.hihm.no/concit/>).

Here and Now! can be downloaded at <http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/taskforces/education.htm> and will be available in the virtual library of the Conference.

2. Responsible consumption for sustainable societies

Why advancing sustainable lifestyles and responsible consumption should be considered as one of the core objectives of ESD? The project of developing sustainable lifestyles aims at providing individuals with the means to build their identity and socialize through practices and choices enabling them to meet their needs and aspirations with a sense of responsibility. Not only as economic actors but also as citizens, individuals are encouraged to take into account the social and environmental impacts of these practices and choices. This requires the setting of a new groundwork to rethink the way everyday life is organized as well as our visions for the future. Responsible consumption patterns stands for a crucial component of this process. On the one hand, responsible consumption deals with all aspects of everyday life and in this sense needs to be approached as a crosscutting issue encapsulating lifestyles as a whole (attitudes, relation to nature and to the others, responsibility towards one's community, behaviors as an economic actor, etc.). On the other hand, the development of more responsible patterns of consumption, notably based on a better understanding of life-cycles, will positively impact on the environment, societies and communities, the achievement of the UN Millennium Goals and the advancement of human rights.

3. Education for Sustainable Consumption: a definition

In the framework of ESD, ESC has the potential to become a new educational paradigm aimed at raising education levels without creating an ever-growing demand for resources and consumer goods, and at fostering responsible individual and collective choices towards the environment and society. From formal education to awareness-raising, the ambition of ESC is to empower people so that they are able to responsibly manage their social and environmental impacts, but also to participate in and stimulate the public debate about values, quality of life, responsibility and accountability. ESC finally consists of nothing less than the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes



and skills necessary for functioning in today's society, with three complementary objectives at a collective level: a rational utilization of natural resources necessary to human life, an equitable economic and social development, a better quality of life for all.

This is the reason why it has been widely recognized that, provided its holistic dimension, ESC should be designed as a transversal approach requiring multi-stakeholder cooperation, more specifically at the local level, and the involvement of all actors: public authorities, educational institutions and actors, youth networks, civil society, businesses, development and cooperation actors. One of the objectives is the promotion of cultural diversity and traditional knowledge. Indeed, local environments and cultures need to be taken into account to integrate the culture of sustainable consumption into people's habits and attitudes, based on a sense of citizenship towards their environment and community.

4. Agenda for discussions

This background information sets the context for specific themes to be discussed by the participants, together with resource persons who are expected to actively and significantly contribute to the debate by bringing their expertise to the workshop. Resource persons will animate the discussions and assist in drawing the conclusions of the workshop on each discussion themes.

a. Engaging policy-makers and providing resources for ESC

One of the conditions required to develop and mainstream ESC in all education fields – from formal education to public communication - is to raise awareness of public and private decision-makers towards responsible investments in sustainable consumption and production patterns. Involving relevant ministries, in particular economics and finance, in providing financial support to ESC practices and research in the framework of ESD also stands as a priority. In this perspective, the workshop will discuss and highlight the opportunities offered by ESC with

regards to national and regional strategies for sustainable development.

b. Integrating ESC into formal education

From primary schools to universities, formal education is one of the main drivers of development and plays a key role in advancing sustainable lifestyles and consumption. In this framework, ESC first needs to be given coherence and consistency as an interdisciplinary topic in **programmes and curricula**. Despite increased awareness of the human impact on the environment and a greater focus on the consequences of individual lifestyle choices, sustainable consumption is still not always seen as a central topic in educational systems and policies. For ESC to be successfully integrated into educational curricula, teachers and trainers also need to understand its relevance in education patterns as well as in their own disciplines. This notably implies a reorientation of **teacher training**, allowing access to educational resources and building networks on teaching/learning processes. Furthermore, ESC relies on the ongoing and coherent development of **pedagogical approaches and tools**, notably to enable a common understanding of ESC among teaching and pedagogical staff, facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation and mainstream ESC in established subjects. The fact that didactic resources are numerous but also fragmented and difficult to use in an interdisciplinary perspective stands as an issue in this regards. **Educational institutions and schools** also need to be encouraged to integrate sustainable consumption into their management systems (sustainable procurement, equipment, building management, public administration and services, participation of staff and students in school events on sustainable consumption, etc). As part of the objectives of School Agenda 21, this fully contributes to the promotion of sustainable consumption as a concrete and legitimate issue among teachers and students. →

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c. ESC as a life-long process: talking to citizens, changing behaviors

ESC is a life-long process and is not restricted to formal or non-formal education aimed at children and young people. For society to evolve towards sustainable consumption and production patterns, communication and public information, **awareness-raising** initiatives are necessary. Those actions participate in building new values and in motivating the adoption of new behaviors. Communication campaigns on sustainable consumption, at the international, national and local levels, led by public institutions as well as by NGOs and businesses, have been multiplying to inform, sensitize, influence citizens' perceptions and behaviors and support public policies. However, the gap between people's recognition of and commitment to sustainability issues and their actual consumption habits remains a real challenge in terms of communication, primarily for public institutions but also for non-governmental actors involved in the sensitization of citizens.

d. Measurement and evaluation

Efficient ESC implementation rests on a good understanding of contexts and populations. In this regards, research and reporting have a core role to play. Evaluating ESC also means assessing the impacts of policies and actions. Therefore, every project, from formal to non-formal education and life-long learning, should include clear targets and evaluation objectives that can be used for future developments and shared among ESC actors. Indicators of different kinds can be used: such as a number of partners involved in the project, population reached, impact in the media, life-length of the project, economic benefits including social and environmental criteria, impacts on representations and behaviors (through surveys, market research with the contribution of businesses, etc.). But most importantly, sharing tools and good practices as well as developing quality indicators stand as key perspectives for ESC assessment.

For each of the workshop themes, the discussions will focus on three simple questions:

- I) **What are the lessons learnt?**
- II) **What is the vision?**
- III) **How can we achieve it?**

The multi-stakeholder dimension of ESC should be considered as a transversal issue and highlighted throughout the discussions. In addition, more specific questions will be provided to the participants in the workshop in preparation of the Conference.