



Integration Through Sustainable Development Project

Overall summary report

Introduction

The wide implementation of the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the context of language acquisition across EU countries can help to promote the process of integration of migrants within society. The aim of this project is to develop and produce materials for the inclusion of key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning curricula and syllabi in order that potential learners can be socially, culturally and economically included in society.

Research

Across 4 partner countries in the project, Scotland, Germany, France and Italy, we surveyed approximately 400 learners and 100 teachers to find out what they already knew about sustainable development topics to explore to what extent ESD was already included in language classes. We also looked at national curricula and syllabi in order to ascertain whether ESD was part of a national education programme in any of the partner countries.

The learner survey, with 8 sections, examined a variety of the main topics of sustainability. Teachers were asked about how they include the topic of sustainability into language classes and what support they would need to make this more widespread in the language curriculum.

Findings

Although some teaching and other activities in the area of sustainability take place in language classes, there is a general lack of statutory requirement for this to be included in national curricula and there are few guidelines or recommendations on teaching topics related to sustainability at national levels. The development of ESD in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes within institutions appears not to have a high priority or focus.

The teaching of sustainability as an integrated part of language courses is largely dependent on individual teachers. The results from the teachers' survey showed that there is a need for CPD to enable teachers to better understand the ideas and expand their knowledge on the topics contained within sustainability. Teachers show a keen interest in the subject of sustainability and confirm that they think their students should know about this.



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There are a variety of resources on websites and text books for teaching sustainability but they tend to be around the topics of recycling and the environment. Teachers are keen to include ESD into their syllabi and asked that this project produce dedicated teaching materials, teaching packs, a bank of materials, including interactive e-materials as the best means of support for them to teach sustainability. The materials should not only develop knowledge about sustainability in its many topics but also develop the key competencies such as communication in foreign languages, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship as well as cultural awareness and expression. The inclusion of resources to develop competences like imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way will enable learners to use these skills in their daily lives.

Almost all learners identified the topic of Recycling and Re-using as the one they had most knowledge of and most learners considered their behaviour as sustainable in terms of energy saving at home and waste management. The project has the potential to have a significant impact topic of sustainable consumption by focussing on the importance of this behaviour to make a contribution to a more sustainable society. Many of the reasons given for learners not having sustainable behaviour were economic or because they were restricted in their ability to change things, e.g. in insulating their homes or buying certain products.

The survey showed that approximately 80% of learners have no involvement in any projects or activities in the area of sustainability but general feedback suggested that learners were interested in finding out more about sustainable activities. The materials produced in the toolkit of the project should offer practical ideas, advice and solutions to enable learners to become active and engage in a variety of sustainable activities to suit different kinds of learners.

To maximise the inclusion of migrants and asylum seekers into society and develop their key competencies, ESD should be included in language courses to enable learners to fully participate in all aspects of life in their new countries.