

Abstracts

Introduction

Education for sustainable development: internationalisation and local effects p. 51
Angela Barthes and Jean-Marc Lange

Local education guidelines are supposed to take on board global societal issues and they evolve in line with international policy recommendations. In this interplay of reciprocal influences, the curricula, aims and values of education for sustainable development (ESD) differ according to the geopolitical positioning of countries, and can be disrupted by local political, social and environmental crises. Climate emergencies and the erosion of biodiversity have led to social demands for justice in many countries, and to a desire for a transformation of our models of development. These aspirations critically challenge the way education for sustainable development is designed and implemented in education systems. This comparative dossier presents nine case studies revealing discrepancies, or at least tensions, between local contexts and international recommendations, and highlights specific settings and practices on four continents.

Indian engagement with education for sustainable development and the primary school curriculum p. 61
Anita Rampal, Radhika Menon and Nadia Lousselet

In India, curriculum experts have long grappled with issues of social justice, equity, and ecological justice. This article considers how, from 2005, education for sustainable development has been integrated in the curriculum and textbooks, drawing on the legacy of Gandhian pedagogy. It looks at the themes and approaches used in primary environmental studies and mathematics, and shows how it echoes in teacher education. The article concludes with an update on the current situation, with a new curriculum rowing back on these developments. A discussion follows on the contemporary challenges faced when implementing education for sustainable development in India today, and how critical perspectives, responsive to different sociocultural contexts, help interrogate and enrich the international discourse.

Towards an ecological civilisation to train eco-citizens of the earth in South Korea p. 73
Jaeyoung Lee and Hyeongyeong Kim

In South Korea, since “the environment” was institutionalised as an academic subject as part of the 1992 reform of the national curriculum, environmental education has followed a dual approach, both disciplinary and cross-disciplinary. In 2021, this education was strengthened at legislative, practical and academic levels to encompass education both inside and outside schools. From now on, the State commits to guaranteeing the right to environmental education for all, and to introducing education for ecological transition. In addition, in 2022 the government published a national reference framework of environmental education skills that can easily be adapted for any educational context. Although these new measures come up against the inertia of a school system dominated by a disciplinary and competitive logic, initiatives led by local education authorities and schools are creating a positive dynamic.

Education for sustainable development in Burkina Faso: directions and constraints p. 81
Evariste Magloire Yogo

The need to build a more responsible world is increasingly grabbing the attention of the international community, and Burkina Faso is no exception. This Sahel-Saharan country is striving to bring the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into its education and training systems. The recommendations of the international community and guidelines specific to Burkina Faso’s geo-climatic situation are endorsed by different players and co-exist side by side. The momentum generated in recent years suggests that a more formal curriculum for ESD could be co-constructed, despite a context where a security and humanitarian crisis is affecting education.

The Green School programme at the heart of education for sustainable development in Slovakia p. 91
Zuzana Gallayová and Klaudia Trochanová

In Slovakian teaching practice, the term environmental education is preferred to education for sustainable development and features in the curriculum as a cross-curricular theme. This approach is an invitation to study the complexity of environmental problems and seek solutions from different perspectives. This is beneficial for pupils, but demanding for teachers in terms of knowledge, skills and methodological practices.

The objectives of Green Schools are defined as follows: «we practice what we teach», «we teach differently» and «we lead change together». This article outlines the principles of the Green School programme in Slovakia, and provides examples of good teaching practice.

Education for sustainable development through the prism of religion: the Iranian case p. 101
Saeed Paivandi

The Iranian curriculum has undergone a gradual ecological shift since the 2000s. Environmental themes have been introduced into social studies and experimental science textbooks. In the 11th grade, in high school, all pupils take a subject entitled «Humans and the Environment». This paper provides a framework for analysing the environmental themes covered in 2023-2024 textbooks. In a country facing an acute ecological crisis, the data collected reveals a rather reductive vision of environmental discussion in Iranian schools. The curriculum seeks to promote a kind of eco-citizenship that emphasizes individual responsibility. It focuses on technical management of the environment and eco-efficiency, but ignores social and economic issues. This curricular orientation is to be understood and analysed in the context of an 'Islamised' education system, which imposes religious indoctrination on pupils.

Education for sustainable development in a progressive oil-dependent society: the case of Norway p. 111
David-Alexandre Wagner

Education for sustainable development presents an interesting case in Norway, as the country seeks to be an environmental pioneer despite being a major producer of oil and gas. ESD has been thoroughly integrated into all levels of the curriculum, and promoted as a cross-curricular theme across all subjects. The aim is to develop in pupils both a deep understanding of environmental issues and the practical skills to take action. However, a high degree of autonomy and responsibility given to teachers, strong emphasis on individual responsibility and focus on environmental and social issues, rather than economic ones, may also present challenges, now and in the future.

Tensions and transformations in France's agricultural education system p. 121
Nina Asloun

Climate change, food security, biodiversity and natural resource management have become global concerns. Agricultural education, which is rooted in the economic, social and environmental context to which it must constantly adapt, has been an essential component of the agricultural innovation system since the 1960s. It is seen as a key player in an evolving professional model and the transition to new rural professions. To meet these challenges, training content is regularly updated. This article explores the evolution of curricula through a qualitative analysis of how the agricultural higher technician diploma (brevet de technicien supérieur agricole) and the technical and vocational baccalaureate (baccalauréat technique et professionnel) take into account environmental issues.

Creating an ecological curriculum in a state school in Brazil p. 133
Inês Barbosa de Oliveira

Although education for sustainable development is supposed to have been on the agenda in Brazil for over a decade, it is actually limited in the statutory curriculum to a few predefined skills and aptitudes which are integrated into traditional subjects, but without any genuine education for the environment. However, there are schools and teachers who, on a daily basis, weave together curricula based on ecological values, in order to bring up pupils who are aware of their environmental responsibilities and committed to building a more sustainable society. This article describes an ecological education project implemented in a state school in Rio de Janeiro. Initial results provide an insight into the challenges faced and the strategies used.

The challenges and realities of education for sustainable development in French-speaking Switzerland p. 141
Nadia Lausset, Alain Pache and Philippe Hertig

The overarching guidelines for compulsory schooling in French-speaking Switzerland are set out in the Plan d'études romand (PER). It includes education for sustainable development (ESD) as one of its central aims, stating that it «underpins the whole education landscape». As Switzerland is a federalist state, there is considerable cantonal leeway in the implementation of the PER, which means that curricula for ESD vary considerably from one canton to another. This article begins by examining the aims and curricular forms prescribed for ESD. It then focuses on research findings into ESD practices at primary and secondary level, and surveys conducted among trainees, practising teachers and education leaders. It finishes by examining training arrangements in the canton of Vaud and discussing issues relating to teacher training.