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## **Pedagogy for the Sustainability**

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### *Introduction*

In 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, at the World Conference on Environment and Development<sup>1</sup> has been drafted the action plan "Agenda 21", which shaped also for education policy decision-makers the principles of sustainable development.

After this the UN Commission for Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup> has been established, which has made the task of UNESCO the coordination of implementation of "Agenda 21" at the international level. Ten years later in Johannesburg the World Summit on Sustainable Development<sup>3</sup> has been organized, where the role of education in the development of sustainability has become in the forefront. The United Nations declared the period between 2005 and 2014 as "International Decade of Education in the service of Sustainable Development"<sup>4</sup>, the most determinant goal of which was in addition to the promotion of international cooperation, integration of the concept of sustainable development in all existing levels of educational system. *"Within the framework of formal education the society-, economy- and environment-related studies usually belongs to different branches of science, and little emphasis is placed on the development of skills of practical implementation of sustainability"* - you can read in introduction of an UNESCO study, which also states that "For restructuring of education in favour of sustainable development there is a need for forming a new educational approach" (Unesco, 2003).

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<sup>1</sup> UN Conference on Environment and Development - UNCED

<sup>2</sup> Commission on Sustainable Development - CSD

<sup>3</sup> World Summit on Sustainable Development - WSSD

<sup>4</sup> Decade of Education for Sustainable Development - DESD

## *With education for the sustainability*

Czippán's statement (2009) strengthens the above wording, when he writes: "The concept of environmental education became so broad for the past thirty years in the professional circles that it contains almost everything that shapes the idea of sustainability." Then he continues so: "Therefore transformation of number of existing education policy, program and method is needed, as well as continuous dialogue assisting it." (Czippán, 2009)

Based on principles laid down in the Great Charter of European Universities - to which the Eszterházy Károly College has joined - and in other similar university agreements, as well as based on the recommendations of the Rio Conference on environmental education ("action principles"), in accordance with these, Kerekes's study (2003) describes requirements set out towards the universities. According to this, the task of the University is, inter alia, is

- to represent in academic circles actual commitment to the principle and practice of protection of the environment and the sustainable development;
- to allow by training for all academic employees to work in responsible for the environment manner;
- to make enable their teachers by variety of programs to teach environmental literacy;
- to create based on cooperation between teachers, researchers and students, independently from research areas, environmental education programmes taking into account the environmental and the global challenges;
- to encourage cooperation between the disciplines of sciences in related to sustainable development trainings and research works, as well as to make efforts for cessation of among the different disciplines and departments "existing competing habitudes";
- to promote with their own tools (presentations, conferences, training programs) supplementation of the literary shortcomings;
- to create environmental education programs for different target groups;
- to develop training programs usable in education, based on innovative techniques, containing different levels of managerial methods.

*According to a document issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization" at all education levels, but particularly in the university training of decision makers and teachers, great emphasis must appear on creation of the sustainable development and the environmentally conscious attitudes, skills and behaviour patterns, as well as of the ethical responsibility. The education in the fullest sense of the word must become environmentally conscious education."* (Unesco, 2003)

Vásárhelyi (2003) formulated in the analysis part of their study of the situation of teacher training of Environmental Education Strategy, the

undergraduate training of environmental expert pedagogues from 1992 is considered as solved, however, they make a stand that the teachers still do not benefit from the subject-specific environmental training, there are mostly environment and environment protection specific teacher training, students practically do not benefit from non-traditional training forms of education, such as, for example, with respect to forest school, Zoo-pedagogy and various cooperative learning techniques.

Unfortunately, this situation has not improved in several years later. " There was no mandatory environmental education in the general teacher training-college, it never was, nor is it to be expected: teachers graduating the higher education and teacher training-college without special preparation are working in the field of environmental education in the same way, as they commonly do their educational work." (Albert et al., 2005). Similarly, formulates *Kárász* (2010), in addition to the foregoing even notes that "So in most of the schools there is no condition for the teachers to integrate their environmental knowledge into the store of learning of their own subject.", and confirms the findings of previous years, according to which "despite of the European accession the environmental education barely exists in the methodologies of subjects." Hereinafter the author - following the practice of previously established strategic publications, conceives concrete proposals for the training of pedagogues, which can be summarized as follow:

- in the context of teacher training more attention shall be paid to the methodology of environmental education, and forming of their views;
- all young graduate teacher should have environmental education;
- the teacher students (independently from their specialisation) in course of their study should obtain most important knowledge necessary for forming their environment responsible conduct, right attitude and capability for action;
- it is necessary to organize in the teacher training a cross-curricular methodology training;
- the precondition for the accreditation of all teacher training courses shall be existence of the subject (s) of environmental training in the curriculum, which ensure the environmental knowledge, acquirement of pedagogical principles of sustainability;
- in the subjects of teacher training courses (psychology, pedagogy, scholastics, school subject methodologies, etc.) shall be given place for the environmental education goals and contents.

These recommendations are harmonizing with statements outlined in the summary report of UNESCO, according to which the goal is the sustainability itself, however for reaching this, commitment of all the members of the community is needed. This, however, can be created only as a result of the adequate education. "Every student of teacher training should be given opportunity to acquaint oneself with the theory of sustainability and related

processes, and those professional roles and skills that will make the teaching serving the sustainable future." (Unesco, 2003)

## *Sustainability – ecological aspect – environmental education*

The fundamental condition to reach sustainability, as a desirable objective is the development of the environmental thinking and behaviour of individuals. For which environmental education is not only the most important, but it is the only way to achieve this goal. *Szlávik and Csáfor* (2015) also share this view, according to which the effective environmental education makes the members of the society more sensitive to and more engaged to the environmental and social problems. If we think about it more deeply, environmental education has at least as much social aspect as scientific (*Horváth*, 2006). Despite this, the final conclusions of the research carried out by *Varga* and his colleagues (2004) are not so positive. According to the research, "The current educational background and the realized pedagogical practice is inadequate in the field of environmental education". One of the most significant conclusion of the research is that, although the environmental education is a curricular obligation stipulated by legal provisions, but there are institutes, where students did not receive this kind of education at all. The main cause of this is the missing knowledge of the teachers, i.e. they do not know the legal provisions or not interpreting properly the definitions of environmental education or simply they do not feel any need to provide environmental education as an obligation. Based on the results of a non-representative questionnaire (*Farkas-Ökrös*, 2013) 12% of the teachers do not provide any kind of environmental education at all and 28% of the teachers are not familiarized with the parts of the National Core Curriculum (NAT) and the framework curriculum related to the environmental education. Environmental education means an additional load for 24% of the answerers. Besides that, these indicators reinforce the previous observations, they are querying the quality of environmental education provided in the schools and obviously the provided preparation activities in teacher training programmes from this aspect.

## *National Core Curriculum (NAT) in brief*

The current content regulatory system has been developed based on the recent educational policy efforts. The National Core Curriculum is the highest declared element of this system. Content of public education, improvement- and competency areas are divided up in this curriculum into subjects and

modules based on the type of education and school years. Definitions (connection points) related to the different subjects are defined in the Framework Curriculum, which are the distinctive elements of this curriculum and constitute the basis of implementation of the integrated approach (external subject concentration) as well as they provide a solid base for the environmental education across the different subjects. This interdisciplinary characteristic also has been emphasized in the publication of the Unesco, (2012). *“Education for sustainable development does not mean a newer form of complementary disciplines, which is getting lost in the fight to include it in the primary- and secondary education curricula. Education for sustainable development is a cross-disciplinary paradigm, which controls and restructure the core-, secondary- and complementary disciplines in order to create a more sustainable future by the contribution of all these disciplines.”* (Unesco, 2012)

Beside others the teacher training programmes constitute the base of the education for sustainable development. „Survival“ is important for everybody, it is the interest and responsibility of all of us therefore the pedagogy of sustainability, which should be much more „the pedagogy ensuring sustainability“ and should be our responsibility. It cannot be squeezed into a single subject or a field of education and it cannot be excluded from any of them.

The 2012 year National Core Curriculum (NAT-2012) has a strong focus on sustainability, environmental education, but it does not provide additional time-frame for its practical implementation and there is no methodological support available for the teachers. There is no doubt that this makes it difficult to design and execute the teaching activity.

## *Aims and tasks*

In view of the above our aim is to develop a course (with the relevant textbook) for the teacher training programme, which successful completion provides the following benefits for the teacher graduates:

- They will be familiarized with the relevant elements of the content regulatory documents;
- They will acquire those competencies, which are required to identify the environmentally responsible contents of their subjects, their connection points with the existing knowledge of other subjects related to the nature and environment protection.
- They will be able to integrate these environmentally responsible contents into the local curriculums, syllabuses and lecture plans at the design stage of educational activities;
- They will acquire such modern and didactic knowledge, which ensures the successful implementation of their environmental education tasks

in their everyday teaching practice, specialized teaching and form master tasks.

Environmental awareness has its place and possibility in every subject and it constitutes the foundation of sustainability. Pedagogy ensuring sustainability shall be made a general purpose and objective of the teacher training programmes and teachers and teacher trainees shall apply it in their approach and they shall be provided with the knowledge and skills, which are required to convert this approach into applicable knowledge in their teaching practice at all times. Because Havas (2001) writes the following: „*If the training programme required for environmental education and sustainability is not getting enough attention, then the opportunity to include these elements into the knowledge base, professional skills and methodology culture of the teachers will be lost. Education of sustainable development can be achieved only by the recognition of the fact that there is a strong connection between the content and methods of teacher training programmes and the environmental knowledge and environmental behaviour of the students.*”

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