

# Conference Summary Report

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**Second Baltic Conference on Education for Sustainable Development  
Working and Learning together**

*Provided by the moderator of the conference Edgars Ivanovs*

DECEMBER, 2014

RIGA

## CONFERENCE SUMMARY

This summary captures a three-day programme of presentations, panel discussions and interactive dialogue at the second Baltic conference on Education for Sustainable Development, which took place from 12-14 December 2014 in Jurmala and was organized by the Development Bulb (Latvia), the Swedish Embassy in Latvia, the Institute of Sustainable Education at Daugavpils University (Latvia), Green Dossier (Ukraine), the Centre for Sustainable Education at Tallinn University (Estonia), the Youth International Education Club Newline (Belarus), the Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development (SWEDESD) at Uppsala University (Sweden) and the Baltic University Programme (BUP). The Conference Secretariat was handled by Development Bulb and the Swedish Embassy (Latvia).

The conference continued what was started during the ESD conferences in Visby (2012) and Riga (2013). The conference took place under the auspices of the Baltic Sea Region Network on ESD (BSRESDN), which had been started in 2012. The previous conference gathered participants from education sector. For the first time a wider spectrum of stakeholders were invited in order to learn together and create new synergies for joint actions.

This conference focused on the practice of education for sustainable development (ESD) emphasizing that education is connected with society, culture and nature in an undivided unity. The event brought together 126 participants from educational institutions, businesses, the arts, civil society organizations and other sectors and fields from 12 countries to step outside the usual borders of educational institutions, and focus on ESD in a broader sense while keeping education and learning central. It also provided a valuable networking opportunity and set the stage for further cooperation among stakeholders in Baltic region and beyond, including countries at different stages of development.

The conference was largely workshop-based. The first day was devoted to the evolution of ESD and a paradigm shift in thinking about sustainable development. The second day addressed issues of diversity and partnership building: how can we work together for strong ESD? The third day was the harvest day: participants developed project ideas and action plans for joint work in the future.

*The conference was made possible thanks to main funding from Nordplus Horizontal and Baltic University Programme, BUP and Swedish International center of Education for Sustainable Development, SWEDESD.*

## WORKSHOPS: “FOCUS: ESD”

The agenda of all workshop sessions was to identify the challenges under particular topic as well as actions which should be taken to address the challenges. The first workshop session was focused on Education for Sustainable Development. Topics and outcomes of the first workshop session are provided below:

### EDUCATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*Dr.paed. Ilga Salite DU UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair on Interplay of Tradition and Innovation in ESD Chairholder, BBCC President, and asoc.prof. Dzintra Ilisko, PhD, Institute of Sustainable Education, Daugavpils University, Latvia*

#### **Challenges:**

- How to organize educational action research?

#### **Actions:**

- To talk to students in friendly, open atmosphere in order to find issues they face during the study process and come up with solutions.
- To organize international projects involving students with different backgrounds.
- To find new effective education methods.
- To involve students in education process and to let them try themselves in a teacher’s role.

### ECHOES FROM NAGOYA

*Frans Lenglet, Swedish international Centre of Education for Sustainable Development (SWEDESD), Uppsala University, Sweden*

#### **Challenges:**

- Capacities of educators, develop tools and incentives.
- Empowering and mobilizing youth through education.
- Sustainable solution at a local level.
- Advancing policy for ESD.
- Integrating SL across all sectors.

#### **Actions:**

- Bringing educators from formal and informal education together in order to develop inquiry and project-based methods.
- Create opportunity for Baltic youth representatives from different social categories to get together in order to share experiences and develop initiatives for sustainability.
- Explore different ways of facilitating vibrant, resilient communities by bringing together representatives from different social groups (urban, rural, cross-generational, multi stakeholder partnerships) around a relevant issue; for example: innovative food production.

## ESD AS A METHOD FOR LEARNING FOR ALL

*Sofia Savelava, "Earth Charter Initiative" affiliate and "Education for Sustainable Development" Association expert, Belarus*

### **Challenges:**

- How can an individual react to local, projecting and paradigmatic (standard norms) changes more effectively?
- How could interactions within different educational and social practices (in families, at schools, at universities, in organizations, etc.) in terms of ESD be encouraged?
- How to fight the conservativeness and narrowness in attitude among countries, which come from too much focusing on economic leadership, and find a room for cooperation in terms of ESD?
- How to shift the focus from sustainability development within institutions to the broader perspective and search for ways to collaborate among them in terms of sustainability development?
- How to make a person take the ownership over the changes in the community?

### **Actions:**

- Teachers can give certain tasks for children, which would require collaboration with parents thus reaching mutual learning.
- An open online discussion platform for ESD professionals (advisable in different languages)

## SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES IN AGENDA OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### **Challenges:**

- Programs in universities are already overcrowded therefore we need to find a way how to implement sustainability in subjects already existing.
- Find a way to implement daily changes in conservative universities societies.
- Sometimes there are not enough relevant examples to present to students.
- ESD materials are outdated.

### **Actions:**

- Create a full time working group responsible for developing a platform of ESD materials.
- Create a professional, easily accessible network for people specializing on ESD.

## DESIGNING A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT: GAME TECHNOLOGIES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

*Solovyeva Elena - asoc. Prof. SPSUACE, PhD, Iuliia Lobanova - asoc. professor SPSUACE, PhD, Saint-Petersburg, Russia*

### **Challenges:**

- Lack of comfortable environment for gaming activities at schools and universities.
- Lack of team work and interactive business games at schools and universities.
- Lack of systematization when making studying process creative and interactive at all levels of education.
- Lack of interdisciplinary knowledge students get at universities (knowledge from spheres related to their specialization).

### **Actions:**

- Create studios with inspiring surroundings for project work and learning by using game methods.
- Making extra courses at schools and universities which will consist of business games and creative tasks (not mandatory but with bonuses for those attending).
- Systematization when introducing game activities into studying process (doing it at all stages: kindergarten, school, university).

## REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

*Charles E. Roberts, OSAO Educational facilitator and trainer, Finland*

### **Challenges:**

- Must come from the roots of society because politicians cannot be trusted to deliver.
- Need a glass roots that see the system nature of the problem.
- This is prevented by 1) MSM of which 70% is owned by 7 individuals or organizations; 2) education system that exchanges compares and fits people out for their place in the machine.
- Needs future generations to think critically. Before that they need the ability to deconstruct and reconstruct.

### **Actions:**

- Need to identify the systematic nature of the problem.
- Message cannot be too strong as it may alienate people.
- Increase awareness of issues which with the right methods can lead to interest > desire for change > action to change.

## **WORKSHOPS: “FOCUS: DIVERSITY”**

The second workshop session was focused on Diversity. Topics and outcomes of the second workshop session are provided below:

### EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - IT'S EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

*Dace Helmane, Head of InCSR Sustainability Index, Latvia*

#### **Challenges:**

- Lack of understanding about sustainable development, its role on government, municipal and community level.
- The business leaders perceive volunteering in education as a cost, not an investment.
- No active cooperation between schools and businesses in order to develop common programs and to share knowledge.
- No specific courses about sustainable development in the most of universities, even for the business students.
- Hard to work with local authorities.

#### **Actions:**

- The policy on ESD should be developed on a national level based on research and taking into account international good practice examples as well as explaining different dimensions of this concept.
- Emphasis of the governments should be made on the education of businesses and society, using media and supporting awareness-raising campaigns.

### BRING THE POLITICIANS IN!

*Tamara Malkova, ICO “Green Dossier”, Ukraine*

#### **Challenges:**

- Lacking of motivation of politicians upon their actions.
- Thinking on the long-term scale.
- Bad understanding of the importance of ESD for higher quality of life.
- Agreement on values between people and actions (even design elections).
- Short-term priorities are mainly economical.

#### **Actions:**

- Grow new generation of politicians through life long education and good practices examples.
- Civil society should lobby and control politicians and government.
- Legitimization of civil society initiatives.

## DEEP ECOLOGY- PATHWAY TO TEACHER SUSTAINABLE SELF

*Rea Raus, Head of the Centre for Sustainability, Tallinn University, Estonia*

### **Challenges:**

- Formality and inflexibility of measuring ESD process.
- How to spread a deep ecology not only to students who we teach but the people who surround us?
- We have different hierarchic levels (politicians, educational institutions, organizations and student communities) which are dependent on each other. To make an impact we have to bring a change into all levels of the system.
- How to promote initiatives which occur after powerful discussions that would not remain just words?

### **Actions:**

- Promoting active participation of students in individual learning process.
- Initiating discussions on broad level, especially teachers.
- Collaboration with NGOs, enterprises and politicians.

## A PATHWAY TO ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

*Dīāna Pauna, Pro-Rector, Associate Professor, Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, Latvia*

### **Challenges:**

- Lack of motivation and engagement of all stakeholders.
- Lack and mismanagement of resources (people, money).
- No general concept of entrepreneurial education in universities, including teacher education.
- Inefficient in-class way of teaching entrepreneurship in Europe.
- Being used to working in isolation, not integrating with other communities.

### **Actions:**

- Let both students and teachers get out of the class and think out of the box.
- Involve more engagement of students, teachers, parents, partner organizations and agencies into the process of studying.
- Make people of different views and professions collaborate more.
- Improve educational standards for entrepreneurship education.

## EKOLIBRIA: A STUDENT-LED ORGANIZATION FOR EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*Sachiko Ishihara, Tuya Bold and Jesse Schrage, Ekolibria, Sweden*

### **Challenges:**

- Politic and economic context.
- Lack of students' interest in SD.
- Not enough subjects relevant to ESD.
- Boring and ordinary academic approach.
- Lack of students' involvement in ESD.

### **Actions:**

- Let's create a play together (use of arts)!
  - Social advertisement through videos and flyers.
  - Creation of the play through discussion and debates.
  - Bring ideas in high schools through ecologic workshops.
  - Transform the play to a movie with ESD topic.
- Create a curriculum based on 50% theory and 50% practice (to increase interest of students by turning theory in practice).
  - Involve stakeholders (companies, NGOs and national bodies) for funding.
  - Create a school plan with teachers, students' body and principals.
  - Coaching of teachers.
  - Creation of awards and honors for useful projects.



## **WORKSHOPS: “FOCUS: PARTNERSHIPS”**

The third workshop session was focused on Partnerships. Topics and outcomes of the third workshop session are provided below:

### CSR EDUCATION FOR COMPANY EXECUTIVES: SPILL OVER OPTIONS?

*Agnese Alksne, CEO of Corporate Social Responsibility, Latvia*

#### **Challenges:**

- You should not have a special skill but you need understanding. Whatever skills you have you should apply for the sustainability?
- Sustainable business is profitable business: education of entrepreneurship is crucial in any level of education!
- Connect sustainability starting from primary to university – in sense of content + professions connected with sustainability.
- How teachers can catch-up: new methods – problem based, experience, gaming, in a field, case studies, business cases, negative vs. positive – social context (how to stay positive?).
- Students should have an agenda of CSR and sustainability (university takes them into account).

#### **Actions:**

- Develop values in the actions to educate and live by education entity -> teachers -> students -> consumers.
- Understand our importance to influence the CSR and Sustainability.
- Walk the talk –demonstrate the values and role models.

### ESD MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS AND (OTHER) LEARNERS

*Paula Lindroos and Sinikka Suomalainen, Baltic University Programme, Finland*

#### **Challenges:**

- Materials are mainly available in English.
- No clear idea on how to teach students ESD in relevant way.
- Courses for all type of teachers not only those who teach technical subjects.
- Young people are not interested in becoming teachers.
- Students are not familiar with ESD terminology.

#### **Actions:**

- Create materials in native languages.
- Continuous teachers’ education.
- Integrate sustainability in all possible aspects.

## HOW THE CULTURAL HISTORICAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE IMPACTS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLACE?

*Agita Līviņa, PhD, Director of Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities Research, Associate professor, Māra Maurīte, Master Student, Faculty of Social Sciences, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Latvia*

### **Challenges:**

- Entrepreneurs care mostly about profits and they do not see the return of investment of cultural historical and natural heritage therefore they are not investing.
- To increase trust of local government so that impact from government would be considered as fair.
- NGOs have to find out the needs of the local community and then decide upon renovation or retention.
- Experts might express wrong priority while measuring the value of cultural heritage (it might not match with local values and needs).

### **Actions:**

- Communication (face-to-face discussions) among NGOs, owners of cultural heritage and municipalities.
- State must have strict regulations to control renovation, retention or reinvestment of cultural heritage.
- Experts must increase their historical knowledge a specific cultural heritage.

## LOCALIZING GLOBAL ISSUES: ENVISIONING HOPEFUL FUTURES OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

*Inga Belousa, PhD, Association of Education for Sustainable Development, Latvia*

### **Challenges:**

- Difficulties in connecting global issues with local questions.
- Social systems' failure to involve people directly affected by political decisions in decision-making process.
- Underestimated the impact of every person's actions and private events on the whole society.
- People's unwillingness or fear to change something in local issues (mental challenge).

### **Actions:**

- Advance inter-connection of global issues and local community everyday life.
- Empower local community activists to be actively involved in creating their own preferred future scenarios.
- Envision hopeful future, even if it seems utopian.

## PROJECT FUNDING FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

*Adi Musabasic and Ann Häger, Swedish Institute, Baltic Sea Unit, Department for International Relations, Sweden*

### **Challenges:**

- Difficulties with finding the relevant funds and partners.
- Formulation of the clear and achievable objectives.
- Development of networking, structure of working takes a lot of time.
- Plan the project in a way it can be implemented and sustainable, breaking it down to very specific points.

### **Actions:**

- Cooperate in order to share relevant and cross-sectional experience and to extend the expertise on the international level.
- Research already existing strategies and programs, develop the network.

## MEASURING AND EVALUATING SUCCESS IN ESD?

*Marylin Mehlmann, Head of development and training Global Action Plan (GAP) International, Sweden*

### **Challenges:**

- Absence of efficient instruments to assess the efficiency of ESD courses.
- Hard to identify whether survey participants apply the knowledge acquired in practice or just answer what they are expected to answer.
- Hard to assess the effect of ESD courses on kindergarteners.
- Increasing the competence of people working with SD and SR to learn from the experience and accelerate progress.
- Enabling engaged people to understand their own motivation for action.

### **Actions:**

- Comparative research of different ESD programs with the same tool.
- Incorporate L4C as a part of voluntary programs.
- Evaluate whether Service and Action as part of school curriculum leads to learning.
- Train students as facilitators of change processes.
- Create online workshops for change facilitators.
- Offer change competence to hackathons and social enterprises.

## PROJECT IDEAS DEVELOPMENT

Based on the outcome of workshop sessions, the participants of the conference were invited to work in groups and collaborate during the joint workshop “Ideas on the table”, led by Dmitry Savelav. Throughout this workshop the groups generated initial project ideas. The next day participants of the conference started with a Carrousel Session. During the Carrousel Session each participant was able to find out more about all project ideas and decide which group to join.

After the Carrousel Session there were 10 project ideas identified and project groups were created. Each group further continued to develop these project ideas defining the following: challenges, vision, project content, indicators of success, actors, target group, budget/funding, duration, additional comments and contact person.

The following project ideas were developed:

1. ENGAGING PEOPLE OF COLOUR AND MINORITIES IN SUSTAINABILITY (*group contact person Charles E. Roberts*)
2. “Eco-cluster” for healthy community and development of sustainability (group contact person Tamara Malkova)
3. Local community based education for sustainable development (group contact persons Olga Madison and Svetlana Marchuk)
4. I’m an agent of changes (group contact person Svetlana Yakubovskaya)
5. Media’s power to make a change (group contact person Ea Maria Blomqvist)
6. How to Involve Students into SD? (group contact person Zuzanna Naruszewicz)
7. Reaching social cohesion by networking with local governments and enterprises (group contact person Rea Raus)
8. Individuals for Sustainable Development (group contact person Sofia Savelava)
9. Envisioning a sustainable community based future (group contact person Marilyn Mehlman)
10. Family as the first step to sustainability (group contact person Ostap Stasiv, Nadezhda Kuleshova, Svetlana Biran, Natalja Demjanenko)

The project ideas were presented to the coaching and mentoring panel which was represented by Guntis Stirna, Zane Oliņa and Ieva Morica. This was a chance for the project teams to receive an instant feedback as well as supportive comments and suggestions from the panelists.

Detailed information about project ideas can be found here:

<https://prezi.com/axhq34qobt5k/projects-developed-during-the-second-baltic-conference-on-esd/>