During the last decades we have been witnessed increasing international interest towards involving sustainability in education in order to build future generation that can deal sustainable development.

One of the main strategic targets of sustainability is the future generation's life and future nature quality. Therefore, creating a society that can understands, accepts and applied requirements of the sustainability will require educating the young generation in a way that they can take a leading role to continue the sustainability strategy. Applying Education for sustainable development needs a clear local strategy and be part of the global network which helps in achieving its goal. Many countries in the world have integrated sustainability in their education systems. There are large numbers of experiences that can be learned from these efforts in order to improve the education's possibility to create a young generation who is ready to build a high sustainability knowledge capacity and support the local sustainability culture. Many international and national organizations are actively working to achieve and support this strategy. Among these organizations is Foundation for Environmental Education FEE where Norway is one of its members. This article is discussing Norway's efforts in to use education for sustainable development and what are the accumulated learnings.

Norway

Norway is one of the Scandinavian countries has 4.5 million population. Norway is one of the World’s known counties that heavily invest in sustainable development. The sustainability and green nature are largely accepted and applied by all sectors of the society. Based on this large involvement of the authority and the society in sustainability issues, many parties and organizations have been created in Norway with clear programs to defend or apply sustainability issues, One of the Norwegian government’s strategies towards achieving sustainability in the country is education. The Norwegian Ministry of Finance has published in 2008 Norway’s strategy for Sustainable Development where education had been described as one of its basic strategies1.

In this strategy, the school is a key element to achieve sustainable development. Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Education and Research have developed annual Sustainable Development strategy which outlines goals and tools. This is Norway’s follow –up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014 is based on the UN Resolution 57/254 and designated UNESCO to promote of this Decade.

Beside the Norwegian schools’ participation in local and international projects such as Education Decade, the Norwegian authority applies a set of methods to promote sustainability in Norwegian education. It includes children and youth, school management, school education and school activities.

There are different methods that are applied in order to bring students attention and interest in the sustainability issue. Among these are establishing interactive website for the Norwegian Environmental Education Network (www.sustain.no), a network for facilitating cooperation between schools, environmental authorities, research institutions and NGOs.

The Schools efforts are integrated and coordinated with the Norwegian universities and colleges in order to achieve the continuity and a progressive process. These strategies and tools are based on continuous research and follow-up by all involved actors.

Why Sustainability is Important in Education?

The main goal of bringing the sustainability into education is to secure the continuity of the sustainable development in the country from its roots with a progressive process. Following up strategy is a key issue in this process. Sustainability in education plays an important role to raise awareness of the need for sustainable development and mobilize the young generation to achieve this goal.

UNESCO has published successful international projects about practices in different countries that are trying to find new alternatives for education for sustainability\(^2\). Among these practices is one had been done in Norway and aimed to apply Norwegian Environmental Education as a tool for Sustainable Development. The project had targeted schools at all levels in Norway and focused on Education/Learning, Educators, Corporate Responsibility, Environment, Water, Climate Change, Biodiversity, Sustainable Consumption, Citizenship.

This Norwegian pilot project had based on developing several research projects that schools could share. The school had access to updated and quality-assured information.

The project got the school support and they led to interdisciplinary and active learning processes in the schools. The pupils considered the tasks to be meaningful and they were proud to be part of a larger movement. The schools could be a credible partner and contribute concretely to work for sustainable development. Yet the study had also showed that few schools, students or teachers hadn’t interest to participate actively. The main reason wasn’t lack of will but lack of information and access to what the other schools were doing. The project had concluded that continuous information exchange has an important role in promoting the students participation in sustainability projects. The project also had showed the need for updated and interesting ways in bringing sustainability knowledge to the students is a key issue for their understanding and promoting their knowledge build up.

---

Students’ Knowledge and Behavior

Students’ behavior in everyday life with issues related to sustainability shows a strong relationship with what they have learned at the school and how this knowledge is applied by the society. All sectors of the society including children’s family, neighborhood, and authorities such as municipality services are transportation based on strong arrangements to support clean air and green nature. The students find the city a real site where their learned knowledge is applied. This helps the students to trust the knowledge and test what they gain. It also provides the students with a clear understanding of what is their role in the society in order to adjust their behavior and achieve the sustainable development.

This creative interaction of Education and society’s involvement in everyday life about sustainability gives the issue a continuous learning chain that helps the student to trust it and develop different types of researches and achievements.

As part of the Norwegian Schools effort to maintain the high performance in relationship the international efforts there are different efforts and activities are applying among these is the Green Flag activities as part of the international activities of Foundation for Environmental Education FEE. Green Flag is aiming to strengthen the sustainable development option through environmental education. The schools work with different activities, projects that are developed by FEE. http://fee.no/?pageslug=hvaer-gront-flagg-4399.

See also https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8QVs3XmVXw
How to Learn from the Norwegian Effort?

Norwegian learning can be a useful source to support the sustainable development by education. This will include students’ involvement by developing education method and materials. The education needs local community involvement and, media involvement with active knowledge exchange by involved schools. Therefore, home-school involvement in building up student’s capacity to understand and realize sustainability’s importance can give the student the needed trust and strength. The local authority has an important role in this process through its involvements, regulations, follow up and financial support.

The learning emphasizes that existing of all these factors same time is an important factor to make education succeed in building sustainability knowledge in the future leading generation. Existing contradicted plans and efforts have negative consequence on how education for sustainable development can achieve its goals. Therefore, updated knowledge, continuity, coordination, collaboration and integration are important factors in building a successful local strategy in any country aiming a successful integration of sustainability in the education system.