

Hand-Print CARE: Towards ethics-led action learning for ESD in school subject disciplines – Starting points for the use of ESD materials in primary schools in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia

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In 2019, the Hand-Print CARE Group developed a number of topic related materials/modules designed to help teachers to better align their subject teaching with central objectives of Education for Sustainable Development by using the pedagogical approach of Hand-Print CARE: The Hand-Print concept emerged as a proposition for learner-led action learning in the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE), Ahmedabad, India. “CARE” emerges as an acronym reflecting an ethic of inclusive respect through **C**oncern for others or about something, being **A**ttentive to needs, showing **R**espect for each other and being **E**ngaged in learning actions for the common good. Hand-Print CARE was thus activated as a co-engaged mediation processes towards ‘Learning to look after others to best care for ourselves and the surroundings we all share’. The Hand-Print CARE approach can be used in different school types and levels; in 2019, the Hand-Print CARE Group focused its work on primary schools. Central objectives of this ethics-led action learning for ESD including links with various theoretical approaches can be found in a joint publication.¹

One goal of the cooperative work was that the partners from the four countries should each submit (at least) two thematic materials by the end of January 2020. I have developed two draft materials for primary schools (grade 3 to 4) with topics that are highly compatible with national and international discussions and challenges – one on **“Looking after Bees – Relationships between wild bees, nature and humans**, the other on **plastics products** that have become an indispensable part of our everyday lives and make a lot of things easier, but also endanger our health and flood our planet with garbage.

It is important to note that all materials/modules of the Hand-Print CARE group were developed for the hands of teachers – they are not materials that can be used directly for teaching with pupils. This decision is based on two facts:

- The materials are designed to work out how an ethics-led action-oriented ESD approach can be integrated relatively easily and without deep difficulties into subject teaching (or interdisciplinary activities).
- The development of teaching materials and the adaptation of individual topics/questions to specific class requirements, the respective core curriculum as well as

¹ O’Donoghue, Rob / Henze, Christa / Shimray, Chong / Sarabhai, Kartikeya & Sandoval Rivera, Juan Carlos. A (2019): Hand-Print CARE: Towards ethics-led action learning for ESD in school subject disciplines. (in review procedure)

local/regional characteristics and requirements are part of the professional expertise of teachers.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, the examination of topics and issues of sustainable development is clearly promoted by the “Guideline on Education for Sustainable Development” published in 2019². The guideline is also to be understood as a contribution of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the implementation of the National Action Plan Education for Sustainable Development.³ The guideline aims to systematically integrate ESD in all schools in North Rhine-Westphalia into subject-related teaching, interdisciplinary learning, projects and everyday school life in general. That’s the reason why ESD should not be understood as an addition, but as an integral part of a comprehensive school education. ESD should contribute to a professionally sound and at the same time life-world-oriented and motivating education (p. 6). The Guideline addresses the core of the school curriculum – subject teaching – and identifies guiding ideas, characteristics and objectives of ESD learning processes as well as potentials for various ESD-related subjects.

ESD learning processes aim at the professional and interdisciplinary development of knowledge and skills that enable pupils to reflect on their possible role in a world of complex challenges, to make responsible decisions, to recognise their own scope for action for social, economic and political change and, despite contradictions, uncertainties and conflicting goals, to participate actively and creatively in negotiation and design processes for sustainable development. School makes an important contribution to building knowledge and developing skills (p. 6).

The two developed materials mentioned above also show clear references to the “Consumer education framework”⁴ for schools in North Rhine-Westphalia. Consumer education as a school task aims at the development and promotion of reflected consumer competence. This is understood as conscious and sovereign behaviour in consumer-related everyday and life situations, which takes into account the principles of solidarity, justice and reciprocity (p. 8).

As a special characteristic (not mentioned as a goal in the project proposal) the two developed **materials/modules include global perspectives** and cover international concerns: During the intensive work on the topics and internationally oriented research, however, I came across interesting contributions that are well suited for using in the classroom in primary schools. So, for example, the adaptive development and expansion of the draft module on pollinators is centred on main concerns in North

² Ministerium für Schule und Bildung Nordrhein-Westfalen (Hrsg.) (2019): Leitlinie Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung. 1. Aufl., Düsseldorf

³ Nationale Plattform Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung (Hrsg.) (2017): Nationaler Aktionsplan Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung – Der deutsche Beitrag zum UNESCO-Weltaktionsprogramm. Frankfurt am Main

⁴ Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (Hrsg.) (2017): Rahmenvorgabe Verbraucherbildung in Schule in der Primarstufe und Sekundarstufe I in Nordrhein-Westfalen. Düsseldorf

Rhine-Westphalia/Germany and includes case stories from India, Mexico and South Africa to explore how teachers can open global ESD concerns and international exchanges between schools using Hand-Print materials.

Before the materials developed by me can be tested in a small pilot in North Rhine-Westphalia or other federal states, at least two steps are indispensable from my perspective:

- At the moment the modules are “skeletons”: With a few exceptions, there is no right of use for used images and photos. Unfortunately, I can only hand out to Engagement Global these “skeletons” at the end of the project term – with a lack of quality and visual depth. Surely a part of the necessary visual material could be photographed next year. However, this is associated with time and financial resources. Another possibility would be the purchase of professional photos; this also requires money and time resources.
- In addition, a paper in German language would have to be developed that outlines the Hand-Print CARE approach and at the same time points out concrete possibilities for connecting it to the core curriculum for teaching subjects in North Rhine-Westphalia at primary schools (or even beyond that for several federal states). A translation of the publication produced jointly by the working group (O'Donoghue et al. 2019) is unlikely sufficient, as the paper which also aims to reach scientific colleagues is partly on an abstract level. For the German context an adaptation is necessary. Such a paper should also put the “conventional ‘Teach-Task-Test’ classroom routine” mentioned in the joint publication under a certain heading, since the primary school as the common school for all children (with diverse individual talents, with children with and without disabilities of different social or ethnic origins, different cultural orientations and religious convictions) has the task of understanding this diversity as an opportunity for a comprehensive and differentiated educational work for the common learning of the children. Education, teaching, and individual support are considered to be interlinked parts of the central pedagogical idea in order to provide children with a better quality of education and equal opportunities.⁵

In addition to the development of thematic Hand-Print CARE modules, a further issue arose in the course of 2019, which is also not addressed in the original project application. This focuses on framings for ESD and/or the **social and sociological contextualisation of ESD** in the participating countries:

- In India, more than sixty years after his death, Mahatma Gandhi's theses still appear timeless and powerful. They are based on three pillars: non-violence (ahimsa), persistent adherence to truth (satyagraha) and individual and political self-determination (swaraj).

⁵ Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (Hrsg.) (2008): Richtlinien für die Grundschule in Nordrhein-Westfalen. Düsseldorf, p. 12

- Empowerment and the liberation pedagogy of the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire, who died in 1997, are of great importance for Mexico. The initiation of consciousness processes among the oppressed is central for Freire in order to understand social, political and economic contradictions and to take measures against the oppressive conditions of reality.

I was asked to elaborate the **“resonance-theoretical reconstruction of modernity”**⁶ of the German sociologist Hartmut ROSA and to present important elements during the workshop in Essen (June 2019).

ROSA's analysis raises questions that are not insignificant for ESD, e.g.:

- Is ESD already sufficiently paying attention to essential features of modern societies? What is a modern society according to ROSA? ROSA: A society is modern if its mode of stabilisation is dynamic, that is, if it needs progressive growth, acceleration and innovation just to reproduce its social structure and to maintain its status quo. We see this most easily with respect to the need for economic growth – which inevitably is connected to acceleration and innovation.
- How does ESD position itself in relation to ROSA, who talks of the great crisis of modern society? ROSA: The great crisis of modern society – the ecological crisis, the crisis of democracy, the psychological crisis – can also be understood and analyzed in terms of our broken relationship to the world around us.
- In the context of sustainable development, the quality of people's lives plays a central role. But how can the quality of human life be measured? ROSA: The quality of human life cannot be measured simply in terms of resources, options, and moments of happiness; instead, we must consider our relationship to, or resonance with, the world.

If the Hand-Print Care Group 2020 were to realise opportunities for further cooperation and a project application to be approved, a possible outcome could be a joint publication highlighting the social setting of ESD in at least three of the cooperating countries. Such a publication can raise awareness of the need for in-depth reflection on contemporary analyses and pedagogical frameworks. ESD educators will then have to decide how to expand or adapt their educational concept accordingly.

⁶ Rosa, Hartmut (2019): Resonance – A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World. Polity, Cambridge