

**1st International Scientific Conference**  
***A Decade of Sustainable Development Goals***  
**(2015-2025):**  
***Reflections and Future Perspectives***  
**September 25 to 27, 2025**  
**Split, Croatia**

# Book of Abstracts



Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split /  
We support the Sustainable Development Goals



Centre for Transdisciplinary Promotion of Sustainable Development, OdRaST

Centre for Human Rights Research and Education



1st International Scientific Conference:  
**A Decade of Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2025):  
Reflections and Future Perspectives**  
Split, Croatia, September 25th - 27th, 2025

**Organizers:**

Centre for Transdisciplinary Promotion of Sustainable Development, OdRaST, Faculty of  
Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split, Croatia



Centre for Human Rights Research and Education, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
University of Split, Croatia



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## WELCOME NOTE

Dear colleagues,

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the 1st International Scientific Conference *A Decade of Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2025): Reflections and Future Perspectives*, taking place in Split, Croatia, from September 25 to 27, 2025.

This event marks a significant milestone—the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—and brings together a diverse international community committed to advancing sustainable development.

Over the past decade, the SDGs have served as a global call to action for addressing some of the most pressing challenges of our time: social inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, economic instability, and threats to biodiversity. This conference provides a timely space for critical reflection on the progress made so far, the lessons learned, and the obstacles that remain.

More importantly, it aims to create a vibrant platform for exchange, collaboration, and inspiration. By bringing together academics, researchers, practitioners, institutions, and community actors from various disciplines and sectors, the conference encourages dialogue across boundaries—disciplinary, institutional, and national. Through this interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary lens, we hope to deepen our understanding of sustainable development and strengthen the collective capacity to act.

The discussions, presentations, and networking opportunities offered during the conference are expected to contribute meaningfully to the global discourse on sustainability. Participants will explore innovative solutions, share successful practices, and co-develop strategies that can accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in the years ahead.

We are confident that your presence and contributions will enrich this gathering and help us shape a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future for all.

Thank you for being part of this important journey.

Welcome to Split, and welcome to the conference!

On behalf of the Organizing Committee and Scientific Committee

PhD, Ivana Restović, Assoc. Prof.

PhD, Marita Brčić Kuljiš, Full Prof.



# **Conference Programme**

<b>Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2025</b>	
<b>8.15 – 9.00</b>	Participants Registration
<b>9.00</b>	Opening ceremony Welcoming Speech: Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Full Professor Ina Reić Ercegovac, PhD
<b>9.30 – 10.30</b>	<b>Plenary Lecture</b> <b>Igor Jerković:</b> Contribution of the University of Split to UN Sustainable Development Goals
<b>10.30 -10.45</b>	Coffee break
<b>10.45 – 11.45</b>	<i>Moderator: Ivana Jadrić</i>  1. <b>Ivana Weber, Tamara Rom, Josipa Šćurla, Vita Tičinović:</b> RaSTEM – Project for the Future: Education and Science Everywhere and for Everyone  2. <b>Marija Krstanoska and Elena Rizova:</b> Professional Development of Teaching and Training Staff: Identifying Educational Needs for Sustainable Development  3. <b>Fatma Kirmizi, Tatiana Bejan, Fisun Bozkurt Ourila, Ibrahim Halil Yurdakal, Ksenija Žarković, Nil Duban and Tuğba Selanik Ay:</b> Teacher Training Modules in The Ecological Education Project
<b>11.45 – 12.00</b>	Coffee break
<b>12.00 – 13.15</b>	<i>Moderator: Tonča Jukić</i>  1. <b>Nermin Palić, Mirzo Selimić, Henrik Hassel, Oltion Marko, Elona Pojani, Vittoria Ridolfi, Amer Smailbegović, Edisa Nukić:</b> Comparative Analysis of Climate and Sustainability Practices in

	<p>Education: Bridging Gaps Between EU and Western Balkan Countries</p> <p>2. <b>Liljana Lazova, Elena Rizova and Sadudin Sadiki:</b> Adult Learners and the SDGs: Perceptions of Skills Gained Through Non-Formal Education for the Labour Market</p> <p>3. <b>Damian Spiteri:</b> Digitally Empowered: The Role of University Students in Advancing the SDGs in Malta.</p> <p>4. <b>Marija Čarija Agoli and Ana Kodrić Ivelić:</b> Sustainability from the Elementary School Perspective</p>
<b>13.30 - 14.30</b>	Lunch
<b>14.30 – 15.45</b>	<p><i>Moderator: Ivana Visković</i></p> <p>1. <b>Elena Rizova:</b> Fostering Sustainable Mindsets in Secondary Education – Best Practices from the SysMind Project</p> <p>2. <b>Ivana Restović, Iva Delija and Petra Majtan:</b> Teacher Education Students' Misconceptions on Sustainable Development and Nowadays Ecological Problems</p> <p>3. <b>Mila Bulić:</b> Learning Outcomes Related to Environmental Protection in Curriculum Documents</p> <p>4. <b>Sandra Erić:</b> Research of Stress Sources and Coping Strategy in Teachers: Obstacles and Opportunities for Sustainable Education</p>
<b>15.45 – 16. 00</b>	Coffee break
<b>16.00 – 17.15</b>	<i>Moderator: Marija Čarija Agoli</i>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Tonća Jukić and Iskra Tomić Kaselj:</b> Development of Preschool Teachers' Competencies for Education for Sustainable Development: An Action Research Design</li> <li>2. <b>Kamal Prasad Acharya:</b> From Policy to Practice: Education for Sustainable Development in Norwegian Early Childhood Education</li> <li>3. <b>Sandra Jovišić:</b> Fostering Social Sustainability in Early Childhood Education and Care: A Case Study</li> <li>4. <b>Andriana Marušić and Ivana Visković:</b> The Main Challenges for Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood Education and Care Institutions in Croatia</li> </ol>
<b>Friday, 26th of September 2025</b>	
<b>8.30 – 9.00</b>	Participants Registration
<b>9.00 – 10.00</b>	<b>Plenary Lecture</b> <b>Irena Ateljević:</b> The Regeneration Renaissance: A Transmodern Leap Toward a Truly Sustainable Future
<b>10.00 – 10.15</b>	Coffee break
<b>10.15 – 11.30</b>	<i>Moderator: Ivana Dizdar</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Lenka Naldoniová:</b> Vladimir Vernadsky as a Pioneer of Planetary Sustainability Thought</li> <li>2. <b>Marko Šundov:</b> Prudent Economy – an Intermediate Phase in the Implementation of Sustainable Development</li> <li>3. <b>Mirela Šarac and Andrija Crnković:</b> Cyborg Liberation: Ecocentrism, Devotion, And the Planetary Ethics of Responsibility for Life on Earth</li> </ol>

	<p>4. <b>Amer Smailbegovic, Nermin Palic and Mirzo Selimic:</b> Climate Change and Environmental Risks to the Sustainable Resource Base: Forecasting, Education, and Preparedness</p>
<b>11.30 – 11.45</b>	Coffee break
<b>11.45 – 12.45</b>	<p><i>Moderator: Mila Bulić</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Jakub Potulski:</b> "Greening the State" - Sustainable Development and the Evolution of the Modern State</li> <li>2. <b>Aaron Strong and Luke Perry:</b> U.S. Presidential Campaigns and Climate Policy</li> <li>3. <b>Badrinath Rao:</b> Promising or Perfunctory? Assessing India's Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals</li> </ol>
<b>12.45– 13.00</b>	Coffee break
<b>13.00 – 14.00</b>	<p><i>Moderator: Ivana Restović</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Marita Brčić Kuljiš:</b> The 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals and The Rights of Climate Refugees/Migrants</li> <li>2. <b>Elżbieta Czapka:</b> Migrants' Health and The Sustainable Development Goals</li> <li>3. <b>Marian Lopata:</b> The Hungarian National Minority in Ukraine: Hungary's Foreign Policy, Bilateral Tensions, and Challenges (2014 to the Present)</li> </ol>
<b>14.00 – 15.00</b>	Lunch
<b>15.00 – 16.00</b>	<p><i>Moderator: Toni Popović</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Ivana Carev, Nediljka Vukojević Medvidović, Maša Buljac, Antonija Čelan, Mila Bulić, Miranda Šimac, Margita Radman:</b> Navigating STEM Waters – education and SDG implementation through community engagement</li> </ol>

	<p>2. <b>Natalija Dunić, Suzana Antunović, Marijana Balić, Maja Karlović, Marina Kranjac, Marko Mlinar, Krešimir Ruić, Jadranka Šepić, Marin Vojković:</b> Oceanographers on the Island: Bringing Ocean and Climate Literacy to Coastal Communities</p> <p>3. <b>Morena Galešić Divić and Ružica Rumenović:</b> Bridging Outer and Inner Sustainability: Integrating SDG and IDG Perspectives in Engineering Education and Environmental Practice</p>
<b>16.00 – 16.15</b>	Coffee break
<b>16.15 – 17.30</b>	<p><i>Moderator: Marita Brčić Kuljiš</i></p> <p>1. <b>Daniela Angelina Jelinčić and Marko Raić:</b> (Green) Sustainability of Cultural Heritage: Towards a New Concept</p> <p>2. <b>Toni Popović:</b> The Potential of Traditional Holiday Homes in Promoting Cultural Authenticity and Sustainable Development</p> <p>3. <b>Ivana Jadrić, Đurđica Miletić and Ana Ćosić:</b> Fostering Belonging: Addressing the Challenges of Social Inclusion Among International Students</p> <p>4. <b>Lucija Gugić, Nikola Marangunić, Gordan Radobolja, Vinka Ružić:</b> The Peer Support Project at the Faculty of Science in Split</p>
<b>17.30 – 17.45</b>	Closing remarks
<b>Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2025.</b>	
<b>10.00 - 12.00</b>	Sightseeing in the city of Split



# PLENARY LECTURE

**Igor Jerković**

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## **Contribution of the University of Split to the UN Sustainable Development Goals**

The University of Split (UNIST) has refined its approach to integrating UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) into its institutional framework, considering THE Impact Ranking as a structured, globally comparable method for measuring higher education institution SDG performance and as an opportunity for HEIs from small countries to promote their higher education internationally. Initially, UNIST showed signs of low institutional commitment, focusing mainly on compliance with SDG-related metrics. Over time, UNIST developed a deeper institutional commitment by incorporating sustainability into strategic planning, governance, and teaching. UNIST policies now reflect a systematic approach to aligning institutional practices with SDG principles. Additionally, active engagement of academic and administrative staff in SDG-related teams indicates a shift towards fostering collaboration and innovation [1].

The vital role of UNIST in promoting the SDGs through teaching (study programs), research (multidisciplinary research topics in six key areas [2], where UNIST addresses promoting well-being, organizing sustainable cities, managing natural resources, enhancing digital technologies, developing innovative energy solutions, and protecting cultural heritage), and institutional management has resulted in an overall position of 201-300 at THE Impact Ranking, making it the leading Croatian university. The best UNIST ranking is in SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth (66th position), with positions 101-200 achieved for SDG 14 Life Below Water, SDG 15 Life on Land, and SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

### Literature:

[1] Škokić, V., Jelić, P., Jerković, I., World, 2025, 6, 22.

[2] Jerković, I., Jelić, P., Marušić, A., ST-OPEN, 2024, 5, e2024.2419.17.



# PLENARY LECTURE

**Irena Ateljević**

Aspira College of Applied Sciences, Split

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## **The Regeneration Renaissance: A Transmodern Leap Toward a Truly Sustainable Future**

A decade into the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, we find ourselves at a critical inflection point where the promise of transformation faces the reality of systemic inertia. Despite progress in several domains, the acceleration of ecological collapse, widening social inequalities, and the continued dominance of unsustainable economic models signal the limits of the current development paradigm.

In this keynote, I argue that we now need to move beyond sustainability toward a paradigm of regeneration, one that is grounded not in mitigation and adaptation but in healing, reciprocity, and planetary responsibility. Drawing from the philosophical notion of transmodernity and decades of academic, policy, and field experience across multiple sectors, I propose that what we are witnessing is not just a crisis of implementation but a deeper epistemological and ontological crisis.

I introduce the concept of the Regeneration Renaissance as a necessary leap of consciousness, a shift from modernist separation and postmodern fragmentation to a holistic worldview rooted in interbeing and care. Highlighting examples from my work in regenerative tourism, food systems innovation, and community-based resilience in Croatia and beyond, I explore how transdisciplinary alliances and place-based approaches can animate a truly transformative agenda. This perspective repositions the SDGs not as fixed targets but as evolving tools within a larger cultural metamorphosis. The path forward demands we talk the walk as well as walk the talk by embodying new systems of value, collective leadership, and regenerative economics.

## ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**Ivana Weber, Tamara Rom, Josipa Šćurla, Vita Tičinović**

Faculty of Science, University of Split, Croatia, e-mail: [ivana@pmfst.hr](mailto:ivana@pmfst.hr)

### **RaSTEM – Project for the Future Education and Science Everywhere and for Everyone**

Promoting STEM education as a tool for long-term social inclusion and sustainable development is the focus of this project, which is part of a broader initiative to systematically popularize science and education across all age groups. Aimed at children and young people from preschool to university, as well as educators, parents, healthcare professionals, and wider communities, the project addresses key challenges related to promoting equity, scientific literacy, and community resilience.

Six core activities—RaSTEM in Kindergarten, RaSTEM in Primary Education, RaSTEM in Secondary Education, RaSTEM and Healing, RaSTEM Among the Stars, and RaSTEM on the Road—are implemented in collaboration with public institutions such as schools, the Clinical Hospital Centre Split, and the Faculty of Science at the University of Split. The project emphasizes inclusion and specifically targets gifted children, children who are temporarily hospitalized, and young people living on islands.

Physics Society - Split volunteers and physics students contribute to building a culture of civic engagement and intergenerational learning through workshops, lectures, and public science events.

By bridging formal and non-formal education and fostering partnerships between scientists and educators at all levels, the project directly supports several sustainable development goals, particularly Quality Education and Reducing Inequalities. In this way, it demonstrates how interdisciplinary collaboration and grassroots initiatives can contribute to the creation of more inclusive, well-informed, and sustainable communities.

**Keywords:** education, inclusion, science, community, equality

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## **Professional Development of Teaching and Training Staff: Identifying Educational Needs for Sustainable Development**

The professional development of teachers and trainers working with youngsters and adults represents a strategic priority for ensuring quality education and for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the context of ongoing socio-economic transformations and ecological challenges, the teaching workforce needs to possess advanced andragogical competencies and the capacity to integrate sustainability principles into educational practice.

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The sample included 330 participants—teachers and trainers from secondary schools, workers' universities, and institutions for adult basic education across the Republic of North Macedonia. The aim was to map their educational needs, experiences, and motivations regarding professional development in the context of education for sustainable development. The findings indicate that although many educators are engaged in informal professional activities (such as webinars and peer learning communities), only about one-third have participated in structured, formal training focused on andragogical aspects of sustainable development. Nevertheless, 57% expressed a strong interest in future professional development opportunities, reflecting significant potential for capacity-building in this area.

The study highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive, institutionally supported model of continuous professional development based on interdisciplinarity, accessibility, and international cooperation. Recommendations include the development of national standards for andragogical competences, increased access to relevant professional literature, and enhanced mobility and exchange of best practices through European education programs. Such an approach would strengthen the systemic capacity for adult education and contribute to the achievement of global sustainable development goals by transforming the role of teachers into key agents of change.

**Keywords:** adult education, professional development, andragogical competences, sustainable development, educational policy.

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## **Teacher Training Modules in The Ecological Education Project**

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the staff training application (C1) held in Denizli, Turkey, in March 2025, as part of the Erasmus project supported by the European Union, titled Ecological Education and Out-of-School Learning Activities (ECOL), and to introduce the modules used in this training.

The study was designed with a qualitative approach to examine the opinions of participants regarding the training activities and overall experience. The project involved 25 personnel: 7 who delivered the training and 18 teachers who received it. Modules such as digital learning environments, ecological empathy, drama in ecological education, ecological citizenship, and out-of-school learning environments were discussed during the training. The sample consisted of 18 teachers from different countries and disciplines. Data were collected through the “questionnaire on teacher training” created by the trainers and were voluntarily submitted via Google Forms.

Content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Findings indicated that teachers gained positive and transformative experiences from drama, digital environments, and ecological empathy training. Drama training enhanced student-centered teaching methods by boosting teachers' creative thinking and pedagogical flexibility.

Digital environment training improved teachers' digital pedagogical skills and helped them incorporate Web 2.0 tools into classroom practice. Ecological empathy training raised awareness about forming emotional bonds with the environment and developing responsible environmental behaviors. Overall, these trainings enabled teachers to achieve multidimensional growth in their professional development.

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## **Comparative Analysis of Climate and Sustainability Practices in Education: Bridging Gaps Between EU and Western Balkan Countries**

This paper investigates the differences in climate and sustainability practices between higher education institutions (HEIs) in the European Union (EU) and the Western Balkans (WBC) within the Erasmus+ 1FUTURE project. Using a comprehensive gap analysis, it examines legal frameworks, institutional structures, curricula, research, and sustainability-related services.

The study draws on environmental implementation reviews and national reports from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and North Macedonia, as well as EU member states Sweden, Germany, and Italy. Findings reveal key disparities in policy implementation, curriculum integration, and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While EU HEIs adopt more structured and holistic approaches, WBC HEIs face challenges related to institutional capacity, resource allocation, and cross-sector coordination.

Additionally, the report outlines variations in the adoption of circular economy practices, biodiversity protection, climate action, and environmental governance. The paper concludes with actionable recommendations to strengthen collaboration, enhance educational innovation, and position WBC HEIs as vital contributors to regional and global sustainability agendas. The findings support the broader goals of the 1FUTURE project, aiming to foster sustainable development and climate awareness through capacity building and systemic reform in higher education.

**Keywords:** sustainability, higher education, Western Balkans, climate action, 1FUTURE.

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## **Adult Learners and the SDGs: Perceptions of Skills Gained Through Non-Formal Education for the Labour Market**

The education system, particularly VET and AE, is facing a tremendous challenge because of the rapidly changing demand for new skills and competencies in the job market due to technological advancement. Non-formal education and training are becoming increasingly important in European and global economies to address gaps in formal education and adapt to changing vocations and lifestyles.

This paper explores the role of non-formal adult education in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Quality Education and Decent Work and Economic Growth.

It presents research findings from a study involving adult participants in various non-formal education programs, focusing on their perceptions of the skills acquired during training. According to the Cedefop European Skills and Jobs Survey (2023), around 85% of jobs in the EU require basic digital skills, 70% of jobs in the EU require at least a moderate level of information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and 14% require advanced ICT skills. The aim was to assess whether these skills are relevant to the labour market and whether digital competencies were developed.

Using a mixed-method approach, the research gathered both quantitative data and qualitative insights from participants across several training initiatives. Findings indicate that most adults perceived the acquired skills—such as communication, teamwork, and especially basic digital literacy—as directly applicable to current job market demands. However, challenges remain, including limited recognition of non-formal learning outcomes and unequal access to digital tools.

The paper argues that non-formal adult education plays a vital role in building inclusive and adaptable skill sets, particularly in times of rapid technological change. To fully harness its potential, policies must better integrate adult learning into national development strategies, promote validation of non-formal learning, and expand access to digital education.

**Keywords:** adults, non-formal education, labour market, skills, training

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## **Digitally Empowered: The Role of University Students in Advancing the SDGs in Malta**

This paper explores the dynamic role of university students in Malta as active contributors to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) over the past decade, with an emphasis on the influence of digital transformation. While much existing research focuses on government and institutional initiatives, this study shifts attention to the critical impact of student-led actions, digital advocacy, and innovation in promoting sustainability.

By examining examples from Maltese higher education institutions, the paper highlights how students engage with the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainable development through various digitally driven activities. These include the use of online platforms for awareness campaigns, participation in curriculum development, climate activism, and collaboration with local communities. The research reveals that digital tools have significantly enhanced students' ability to mobilize, advocate, and influence institutional policies and local sustainability practices.

As Malta progresses with its digital transformation agenda, the paper emphasizes the need to foster inclusive, interdisciplinary, and technology-enabled student participation. Such engagement is essential for addressing the complex and interconnected challenges presented by the SDGs and for building resilient, sustainable societies.

**Keywords:** digital transformation, Sustainable Development Goals, students, higher education

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**Sustainability from the Elementary School Perspective**

The paper will give insight into how sustainability is practically taught and fostered among children at the elementary school level. One of the four goals of our institution's development is sustainability. That is why, over the past ten years, it has been the topic of school Erasmus, eTwinning, Blue School, and cross-curricular projects. The aim was to raise awareness among students about environmental protection and social inclusion.

The first part of the paper presents a practitioner's perspective on implementing teaching methods, such as project-based learning (PBL), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), and ICT, in the context of sustainability. The paper will present best practices, including creating e-books, projects aimed at reducing waste, upcycling, recycling, promoting healthy food, incorporating ethical components in fair trade, and addressing greenwashing in the fashion industry. Additionally, it will be demonstrated how the school has achieved sustainable goals structurally, both by design and through the installation of solar panels.

The second part of the paper will elaborate on projects and lesson plans aimed directly at strengthening students' empathy towards each other and all beings, and raising awareness of wellbeing and mental health. Finally, examples will be provided of cross-curricular activities designed to promote the social inclusion of students from diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds, as well as those with different abilities.

**Keywords:** sustainable school, project-based learning, social inclusion, elementary level

**Links to the activities:**

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAF4wlryTJA/shGlQZqYnVy1izEqtkOZPg/edit?utm\\_content=DAF4wlryTJA&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAF4wlryTJA/shGlQZqYnVy1izEqtkOZPg/edit?utm_content=DAF4wlryTJA&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGdAoFw5uw/4aDOv0ECoLho6vDo0cvmw/edit?utm\\_content=DAGdAoFw5uw&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGdAoFw5uw/4aDOv0ECoLho6vDo0cvmw/edit?utm_content=DAGdAoFw5uw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAF8NF02Mo8/jnzSdB5GgTJMyGCBpf6fUg/edit?utm\\_content=DAF8NF02Mo8&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAF8NF02Mo8/jnzSdB5GgTJMyGCBpf6fUg/edit?utm_content=DAF8NF02Mo8&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)



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## **Fostering Sustainable Mindsets in Secondary Education – Best Practices from the SysMind Project**

As we mark a decade since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, fostering a sustainable mindset in the next generation has become a critical focus for educational systems worldwide, with an emphasis on education for sustainable development (ESD). This paper presents best practices from the Erasmus+ “Developing a Sustainable Mind-Set” (SysMind) project, which integrates sustainability content and competencies into secondary school curricula to cultivate environmental and social responsibility among students. This multi-country initiative (spanning Austria, Turkey, North Macedonia, Latvia, Spain, and Ukraine) embeds sustainability topics across different subject areas, thereby weaving these themes and competencies into everyday learning and demonstrating a model for holistic curriculum integration.

Key outputs include a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for vocational education and training (VET) teachers, which facilitates the exchange of sustainability-focused lesson plans and pedagogical strategies. Additionally, the project developed a general curriculum framework comprising three modules to guide educators in incorporating sustainability concepts into teaching practice. Preliminary evaluation indicates that students exposed to this integrated curriculum exhibit increased awareness of sustainability issues and an improved understanding of how their behaviors impact the wider community. These findings underscore that empowering teachers with resources and training to infuse sustainability into regular teaching can effectively foster sustainable mindsets in youth. The SysMind project’s best practices offer a valuable pathway for educational systems seeking to advance SDG 4.7 and related targets beyond this first decade (2015–2025) of efforts.

**Keywords:** sustainable mindset, SDG goals, cross-curricular competencies, professional development, lifelong learning.

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## **Teacher Education Students' Misconceptions on Sustainable Development and Nowadays Ecological Problems**

The world's political leadership has adopted sustainable development as the leading model of social development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched in 2015 to eradicate poverty and pave the way for a better world of peace, prosperity, and opportunity for every person on the planet. Different forms of action are proposed for each area, including policy making, sectoral strategies, and the implementation of plans and projects. The proposed measures align with specific objectives, making their implementation measurable. Education for Sustainable Development enables students of all age groups to acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to address these interconnected global challenges. In modern society, characterized by rapid changes, environmental problems are becoming an increasingly serious challenge. Fast fashion, mass tourism, and sea pollution stand out as key factors with a negative impact on the environment. Fast fashion, with its emphasis on mass production and rapid consumption of clothes, significantly contributes to environmental pollution. Meanwhile, sea pollution, particularly microplastics, poses a serious threat to marine ecosystems. Although it brings economic benefits, tourism also often leads to the depletion of natural resources and the disruption of the ecological balance. Considering these challenges, educational institutions play a key role in shaping the attitudes and behaviour of young people, especially future teachers, who will continue to impart knowledge to new generations.

Teacher Education students in Split (generation 2020/2021-2023/2024) participated in a quantitative research study that employed the survey method. The primary objective of the study was to identify students' misconceptions about sustainable development, with a special emphasis on their environmental awareness and understanding of the impacts of fast fashion, tourism, and marine pollution on the environment. The results showed that students have misconceptions about the concept of sustainable development. A statement highlighting the importance of ensuring inclusion and quality education, as well as promoting lifelong learning, as a key goal of sustainable development reveals a divided opinion among students, which poses a significant challenge requiring ongoing efforts to deliver high-quality lifelong education. Furthermore, students in junior and senior years of study, as well as those who attended Comprehensive and Vocational high schools, showed no difference in their knowledge of sustainable development. However, Teacher Education students are very aware of environmental issues, but their attitudes and thoughts are not consistent with their behaviour. To foster a deeper understanding of sustainable lifestyles and more informed environmental issues, additional educational reforms and curriculum enhancements are necessary to ensure comprehensive education within the context of primary and secondary schools, as well as for future teachers.

**Keywords:** sustainable development, Education for Sustainability, environmental issues, students, misconceptions

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## **Learning Outcomes Related to Environmental Protection in Curriculum Documents**

With the adoption of new curricula in 2019, educational policy introduced a significant shift toward learning outcomes and the development of student competencies. Today, various curriculum documents are implemented in primary education, all of which aim to develop key competences for lifelong learning. Learning outcomes encompass not only knowledge and skills but also attitudes, creativity, critical thinking, responsibility, and relationships with oneself, others, and the environment.

The subject *Nature and Society* in early primary education represents the first structured course through which students develop key competencies for living in a sustainable society. Environmental protection, as one of the three fundamental pillars of sustainable development – alongside social equity and economic growth – is directly linked to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). Moreover, *Nature and Society* provides a conceptual and content-based foundation for progression into subjects such as Science, Geography, History, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Technical Education. This paper presents the results of a qualitative analysis of the presence of learning outcomes related to environmental protection in the curriculum documents of the Republic of Croatia for primary education: the *Nature and Society* curriculum, the cross-curricular theme *Sustainable Development*, and the *Experimental Science Curriculum* for primary schools.

The findings can serve as a valuable resource for teachers when designing learning scenarios, for authors of educational materials when developing textbooks and workbooks, and for educational policymakers in planning future curriculum reforms and strategic guidelines for education focused on sustainability.

**Keywords:** cross-curricular theme, curriculum, learning outcomes, *Nature and Society*

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## **Research on Stress Sources and Coping Strategy in Teachers: Obstacles and Opportunities for Sustainable Education**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the most common sources of stress among teachers in several primary schools in Zagreb and to observe the coping strategies they use. The sample consisted of 46 primary school teachers. The questionnaire was the main instrument, and the data were analyzed using the JASP program with descriptive statistics, independent t-test, one-factor ANOVA, Pearson correlations, and multiple linear regression. The study is based on the assumption that certain characteristics and individual factors influence the level of perceived stress as well as the choice of coping strategies. The data collected provides insight into the causes of stress in the education system to identify the strongest stressors.

The results showed that higher expectations and less administrative support were significantly associated with increased stress levels. Teaching experience was found to be beneficial, with more experienced teachers reporting less stress. In addition, female teachers reported significantly higher levels of stress than their male counterparts.

These findings highlight the importance of further research into this problem and the evaluation of the effectiveness of stress coping strategies.

By identifying sources of stress in the education system and proposing improvements in institutional support, this study contributes to promoting a sustainable education system and preserving the mental health of teachers as key stakeholders in education.

**Keywords:** SDG, teacher stress, sustainable development, public education, workplace well-being, human capital

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## **Development of Preschool Teachers’ Competencies for Education for Sustainable Development: An Action Research Design**

Sustainability is a relevant topic in today’s educational system, with the growing consensus that education for sustainability should begin in early childhood. However, research indicates that sustainable development is not emphasized enough in early childhood education and care (ECEC), and that preschool teachers do not feel competent enough to implement sustainable development practice in kindergarten. This paper, therefore, presents action research as a suitable approach for developing preschool teachers' competencies in implementing education for sustainable development. It outlines the specific features of action research and relates them to the core principles of education for sustainable development, highlighting their interconnections. Finally, the paper proposes a potential action research design aimed at developing the preschool teachers’ competences in implementing education for sustainable development. The aim is to contribute to motivating and empowering educators for lifelong learning and responsible, reflective professional development.

**Keywords:** collaborative learning, early childhood education and care, lifelong learning, professional development, reflection in practice

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**From Policy to Practice: Education for Sustainable Development in  
Norwegian Early Childhood Education**

Norway has long prioritized sustainable development (SD) in education, beginning with its response to Our Common Future (St. Meld. 46 (1888-89), environment and development), National strategy entitled "Knowledge for a Common Future" (Meld. St. 24 (2012-2013)), and the 2017 National Framework Plan for Kindergarten, which made SD a core kindergarten value. The 2021 amendment to the Universities and Colleges of Higher Education Act further mandated integrating sustainability into higher education. Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) aligns with these goals through its 2023–2026 action plan, promoting SD in education, research, and operations.

Despite strong policy frameworks, SD implementation in kindergartens remains uneven, highlighting the need for standardized strategies. For the objectives of the SDGs to be realized in practice, kindergarten teachers must possess relevant competencies. This includes knowledge about sustainability, the ability to critically reflect on their own consumption choices, serving as role models for children in attitudes and practices, and being aware of how individuals can contribute to fostering engagement for actions that lead to a sustainable future. Initiatives like "Sustainability Week" in teacher education enable future kindergarten teachers to think critically and design practical, hands-on activities, thereby bridging theory and practice.

This study examines Norway's policy-to-practice journey, highlighting the role of higher education institutions in preparing teachers as SDG change agents. It calls for deeper collaboration between policymakers, universities, and kindergartens to ensure that the SDGs translate into visible outcomes for young learners, thereby fostering a generation equipped to address global challenges.

**Keywords:** sustainable development, sustainable development in education, sustainability in higher education

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## **Fostering Social Sustainability in Early Childhood Education and Care: A Case Study**

This paper explores social sustainability as a foundational element necessary for achieving the other two dimensions of sustainable development: economic and environmental sustainability. While the importance of social sustainability is increasingly acknowledged, scholarly definitions vary. One widely accepted perspective views it as the capacity to build inclusive, equitable, and cohesive communities that promote individual and collective well-being, active participation, and social justice. Nevertheless, academic discourse on the concept remains diverse and evolving.

Presented here is a case study of the international eTwinning project "Let's Come Together in Sweet Harmony", which brought together partner kindergartens from 11 European countries. The project aimed to nurture a wide range of competencies through different shared activities appropriate to young children, with particular emphasis on fostering social and civic competencies.

Through play, creativity, and meaningful interaction, children develop essential life skills for functioning in modern society. The project also strengthened collaboration between early childhood institutions across Europe. Most importantly, it empowered children to become young ambassadors of culture, tolerance, and friendship, thus contributing to the advancement of social sustainability.

**Keywords:** collaboration, competencies, eTwinning

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## **The Main Challenges for Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood Education and Care Institutions in Croatia**

One of the priorities for a sustainable world is to educate early and preschool children how to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to become effective agents of change, committed problem-solvers, and system-thinkers (Huggins & Evans, 2017). Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) requires strategic planning, which involves incorporating sustainability principles into curricula and daily practice, as well as securing political and cultural commitment for increased investment. This approach also addresses professional preschool education staff shortages and their goal-oriented development.

The achievement of Goal 4 / quality education closely corresponds to other ESD goals. For example, poverty and the risk of poverty (Goal 1) undermine the quality of education (both the system and the individual). Migration and the emergence of social inequality and (in)justice that limit children's living achievements and mental health can also be linked to this. Achieving quality education for all encompasses civic education, gender equality and social equality, biological literacy, and high-quality pedagogical support for children and parents within the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system. These are the challenges of ESD in Croatia, which are currently, although declaratively stated as goals, being implemented through partial solutions, unsystematic monitoring, and non-strategic approaches. Research and discussion on these issues are necessary for progress.

**Keywords:** education for all; preschool children; sustainability.



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## **Vladimir Vernadsky as a Pioneer of Planetary Sustainability Thought**

In contemporary debates on sustainable development, the historical and philosophical roots of planetary thinking are often overlooked. One of the early and visionary contributors to this discourse was Vladimir Vernadsky (1863–1945), whose concepts of the biosphere and noosphere offer an approach to the Earth that integrates scientific insight with ethical responsibility. Although Earth system science did not yet exist in his time, Vernadsky's concepts of the biosphere and noosphere anticipated a systemic understanding of the Earth as shaped by both natural processes and human thought. His idea of the noosphere—the realm of reason and scientific activity—presents a model of global transformation grounded in knowledge, responsibility, and the evolving relationship between humanity and the planet.

This paper explores the relevance of Vernadsky's thought to the contemporary sustainability agenda and the broader challenges framed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Special attention is given to his late work, *Scientific Thought as a Planetary Phenomenon*, in which Vernadsky articulates a vision of science as an integral part of planetary evolution. The paper reflects on the historical and philosophical dimensions of his work and opens a space for further critical engagement with the intersections between science, ethics, and global futures. Revisiting Vernadsky allows us to question how science is situated in current policy frameworks and to recover alternative visions of sustainability that emphasize long-term planetary responsibility.

**Keywords:** Vernadsky, noosphere, planetary thinking, science and ethics, sustainability

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## **Prudent Economy – an Intermediate Phase in the Implementation of Sustainable Development**

In light of increasingly noticeable climate changes that significantly affect individual lives, the concept of sustainable development and sustainability is attracting the interest of a wider range of social stakeholders.

Although warnings about the unsustainability of the current neoliberal economic model were issued as early as 1972, through a commissioned study by the Club of Rome—whose findings were published in the well-known work *The Limits to Growth*—no significant radical measures were taken to change the consumer-oriented lifestyle. Long-term and generational exposure of populations in developed economies (as well as the promotion of consumer culture in developing countries) to consumption and the accumulation of material goods has led to the development of habits focused on achieving personal comfort and pleasure at any cost. In such circumstances, implementing the idea of sustainability, which requires a departure from these ingrained habits, falls on barren ground and fails to yield the desired results.

Therefore, it is necessary to introduce an intermediate phase in economic practice aimed at building a new social platform, referred to as the prudent economy. This type of economy would serve as a transitional phase towards an economy based on a sustainable foundation, which we define as the economy of meaning.

**Keywords:** climate change, consumer culture, sustainability, prudent economy, economy of meaning

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## **Cyborg Liberation: Ecocentrism, Devotion, And the Planetary Ethics of Responsibility for Life on Earth**

The brutal expansion of humanity's passion for conquest and accumulation (under the guise of undifferentiated economic growth) has drawn the world into a climatic cataclysm, into social anomie, and the darkness of spiritual impoverishment. A world strongly marked by technocratic policies is increasingly losing direct face-to-face contact. The once very frequent and intimate relationships between man and nature and man and man are now becoming increasingly superficial and abstract, *ad majorem hominis degradationem*. Planet Earth, our home and "the third pebble from the Sun," is a living organism, supporting intrinsically valuable biological and cultural diversity - and by no means a storehouse of necessities for unbridled consumption and exploitation.

The concept of sustainable development extends moral and ethical imperatives into the near and foreseeable future, through intergenerational solidarity. This concept of distinctly anthropocentric provenance seeks to establish and maintain a dynamic balance between economic efficiency, social cohesion, and ecological stability. Therefore, the basic mandate of ecological modernization is: Do not limit economic growth, but make it sustainable.

In contrast, the ecocentric philosophy of nature thinks in moral, spiritual, and metaphysical categories. Ecocentrists are concerned with the integrity of future ecosystems. Ecocentrism strongly opposes market fundamentalism because it recognizes it as the main culprit for the reification of nature and its endangerment. Of course, the question is not only how to solve the physical problem of environmental degradation, but also how to suppress the spiritual crisis (caused by the merciless march of technical civilization on the living world) - so that the free man would continue to live in nature, and that the boisterous nature would remain in man. The first and most important effort is to reawaken the repressed man's natural respect for the beauty of life. Philosophers such as Alfred North Whitehead, Rudolf Steiner, Arne Naess, Stuart Hampshire, Peter Singer, and many others provided the philosophical framework for building an ecocentric environmental ethic.

Since technological power has become self-governing (it is now in a position to transform being into nothingness), the need for the formation of a planetary ethic of responsibility for life on Earth has been emphasized. As a free and thinking being, man must choose his destiny, not accept it.

We are not just spectators but also co-players in the drama of life. We have a responsibility, complementary to our freedom, to preserve life on Earth. In the essential conditions of its survival, humanity is as indivisible as the biosphere.

**Keywords:** sustainable development, ecocentrism, climate cataclysm, ethics of responsibility

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## **Climate Change and Environmental Risks to the Sustainable Resource Base: Forecasting, Education, and Preparedness**

Recent models indicate that the central and western portion of the Balkan Peninsula will be most affected in the ongoing climate flux, manifested primarily in weather extremes and atmospheric phenomena not previously encountered. The region of central Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a raw material resource base for over two millennia, with timber, water, energy, and minerals; it is currently under renewed interest for exploration and supply of critical raw materials (CRM).

Current exploration, infrastructure, and extraction operations may be profusely affected by the effects of climate change, resulting in potentially catastrophic damage, loss of life, and environmental hazards. There is an ongoing grassroots effort to leverage interdisciplinary, international collaborative programs and platforms to address specific education, training, prediction, and awareness goals.

The idea is to blend the elements of environmental awareness, engineering solutions, compliance matrices, and predictive modeling to effect sustainable and more resilient development in the region. Lessons learned from the previously encountered “atmospheric river” phenomena can be used to create training scenarios, exercises, and models to improve responsible resource extraction, but also risk management strategies.

**Keywords:** Climate change, Resource development, CRM, Interdisciplinary education

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## **"Greening the State" Sustainable Development and the Evolution of the Modern State**

Political systems evolve by adapting their institutional structures to respond to external challenges. The modern state's organization has evolved over time, and these changes are closely tied to societal dynamics. Today, institutional transformation is underway, driven by the need to implement new socio-economic policies in response to the IT revolution, globalization, environmental crises, and the diminishing capacity of the current political and economic systems.

Consequently, new forms of organizing political institutions are being developed to operate effectively under these new conditions. The proposed new model of state organization aims to establish the institutional framework necessary for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Keywords:** institutional transformation, new socio-economic policies, sustainable development goals

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**U.S. Presidential Campaigns and Climate Policy**

U.S. presidential campaigns over the past decade have been fluid moments for climate policy, consisting of both challenges and opportunities. This paper examines U.S. public opinion toward climate policy, how presidential campaigns have addressed this issue over the past decade, and the implications for the American pursuit of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals. The paper focuses on the interplay of U.S. public opinion, campaign messaging and appeals, and the institutional dynamics of federal policymaking in relation to environmental protection, economic growth, and social inclusion.

**Keywords:** U.S. government, climate policy, presidential campaigns, United Nations, sustainable development

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## **Promising or Perfunctory? Assessing India's Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals**

A recent report of the NITI Aayog, an economic advisory body of the Government of India, states that India's composite score for achieving SDGs has improved from 57 in 2018 to 71 in 2023-24. It applauds the 'significant progress' in reducing poverty, promoting decent work, economic growth, and climate action. Besides, the report highlights 'substantial progress' in other areas such as providing clean water, sanitation, and good health and well-being. A slew of welfare schemes unveiled by the Indian government seems to lend credence to these claims. The dismal ground realities, however, tell a different story. Dispassionate studies from Harvard University and other institutions have debunked India's assertion that it is on target to meet the SDGs by 2030. A detailed analysis of the 17 SDG metrics in India's 707 districts reveals gaping lacunae, half-hearted implementation of government schemes, rampant corruption, and spotty success stories. More than 75 percent of districts lag in crucial SDG indices like poverty, child marriage, domestic violence, and so on. Thus, bureaucratic exaggerations and statistical manipulations aside, India's achievements are overshadowed by staggering levels of inequality, unemployment, the emergence of precarious gig work, and limited access to decent education and healthcare. Hyper nationalistic overtones in education and social discourse, the wilful economic disenfranchisement of minorities, and the immiseration of the agrarian sector further discredit the government's hyperbolic optimism.

Based on a detailed, critical examination of India's achievements and aberrations regarding SDGs, I posit that these goals will remain illusory if India pursues precarious forms of development and ignores fostering human capabilities. A genuine political agenda committed to realizing the SDGs must prioritize dismantling the debilitating ideological framework legitimizing elitist development that makes no difference in the lives of a billion Indians. Concomitantly, it must pursue inclusive growth, invigorate the rule of law, and target the empowerment of marginalized groups.

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## **The 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals and The Rights of Climate Refugees/Migrants**

The 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals, also known as Agenda 2030, is the first United Nations document to include migration as a vital part of achieving its goals. As outlined in the agenda's introductory sections, it is based on the principles of universality and inclusivity, most notably highlighted in the pledge to “leave no one behind.” From this perspective, migration is seen as a key element of sustainable development. Today, it is impossible to consider sustainable development without also considering migration.

Within this context, the issue of climate refugees and climate migrants is especially significant. While climate migrants are anyone who moves due to climate change, climate refugees are those forced to leave their homes (either within or across borders) because of the social, economic, and political effects of climate change.

Even though many scientific studies suggest that by 2050, the number of people forced to relocate mainly because of climate change could be between 200 million and 1 billion, the current international legal system neither recognizes nor defines the status of climate refugees or climate migrants.

In this presentation, I will explore how the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals address the challenges faced by climate refugees and migrants, focusing on their ongoing legal uncertainty and reviewing any legal progress made between 2015 and 2025.

**Keywords:** climate change, climate migrants, climate refugees, human rights, legal limbo, migration, SDGs



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## **Migrants' Health and The Sustainable Development Goals**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognizes the contribution of migration to sustainable development and emphasizes the principle of "leaving no one behind," which includes migrants. To achieve the goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, particularly Universal Health Coverage, governments and health organizations must prioritize the health of migrants and mobile populations. Several SDGs are directly or indirectly related to migration and health.

Ensuring migrants' access to quality healthcare requires collaborative efforts across different sectors and the creation of healthcare systems that are specifically designed to meet the needs of these groups, ensuring that everyone is included and no one is left without care. It is a matter of human rights and a public health imperative. Ignoring the health needs of migrants can have negative consequences for public health in host communities. Ensuring migrants have access to preventive care and treatment is essential for controlling infectious diseases and promoting overall community well-being. Recognizing and addressing the health needs of migrants is also crucial for achieving the broader goals of sustainable and inclusive development. The paper will focus on the present situation and the challenges associated with ensuring migrants' full access to healthcare.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals, migrants, migrants' health, preventive healthcare

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**The Hungarian National Minority in Ukraine: Hungary's Foreign Policy, Bilateral Tensions, and Challenges (2014 to the Present)**

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Hungary has been the only country in the European Union and NATO that consistently blocks aid to Ukraine and sanctions against Russia, which is aggressive. This is led by Prime Minister Viktor Orban, the ruling Fidesz party, and the Christian Democratic Party of Hungary, which has won four consecutive parliamentary elections since 2010. However, one of the main reasons Orban and the Russian leadership support Russia in this war of extermination is not only economic and geopolitical interests but also their policy of staying in power by mobilizing Hungarian society around historical narratives and maintaining a significant Hungarian diaspora abroad, mainly in neighboring countries, including Ukraine. The issue of the Hungarian national minority in Zakarpattia remains a primary source of interstate tensions between Ukraine and Hungary and requires greater attention.

Already in the era of glasnost in late 1980 and the democratization of the USSR (early 1989), the Hungarian intelligentsia of the Transcarpathian region organized within the Society of Hungarian Culture of Transcarpathia (Hungarian: Kárpátaljai Magyar Kulturális Szövetség; KMKSZ; hereinafter - KMKSZ). Over time, the organization politicized its activities. In the early 1990s, there was talk of creating a Hungarian autonomous territorial district within Berehove district. By the early 2000s, this had evolved into a project for the Prytysyansky district as an association of settlements with a dense Hungarian population in the Zakarpattia region.

The most influential historical narrative promoted by Fidesz since 2010 is the "Trianon trauma," which highlights the collective grief and sense of injustice in Hungary caused by the Treaty of Trianon (1920). This treaty drastically reduced Hungary's territory and population after World War I. As a result, Hungary lost two-thirds of its land, leaving about 3 million ethnic Hungarians living outside the new borders in countries such as Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, and Ukraine. The Hungarian government, especially under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party, has actively used the Trianon trauma as a political tool both domestically and internationally. They depict Trianon as a historic injustice, fostering a sense of victimhood among Hungarians. This narrative fosters national unity and patriotic sentiments, making it easier for the government to garner support.

Hungary has also implemented policies to integrate ethnic Hungarians beyond its borders into its cultural, economic, and political spheres. According to official documents, called nemzetpolitika (nation-politics), the aim is to protect Hungarians outside Hungary from neighboring countries' nationalization efforts and to preserve Hungarian culture and language within these cross-border communities. Since 2010, the Fidesz government has granted Hungarian citizenship and voting rights to ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine and other neighboring nations.

**Keywords:** Hungarian national minority, Transcarpathian region of Ukraine, “Trianon trauma”, foreign policy of Hungary, national policy of Hungary.

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## **Navigating STEM Waters – Education and SDG Implementation Through Community Engagement**

Despite the urgent need for green and digital transformation, the European Union (EU) continues to face a persistent skills gap and a lack of human resources trained in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Low enrolment rates in STEM study programs result in a pressing challenge of the EU's lack of skilled professionals necessary for economic growth, according to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project “Navigating STEM Waters – a Map for 2030”, funded by the European Social Fund, addresses this challenge by promoting STEM education as a catalyst for achieving multiple SDGs, especially SDG 4 - quality education, SDG 13- climate action, and SDG 14 - life below water. This initiative strengthens the impact and collaboration of the Faculty of Chemistry and Technology and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science of the University of Split (UNIST) with the local community in human resources development, with a focus on STEM fields. The projects build up the capacity of three non-governmental organizations (NGO) and foster collaboration with two faculties of the UNIST and two primary schools in Dalmatia. It aims to transfer the STEM knowledge from academia to society via training of the volunteers of NGO's and educators in the schools, who will educate children in school and raise awareness about the importance of protecting marine and freshwater ecosystems, while simultaneously equipping the next generation of scientists and environmentally aware citizens. This project is offering a model of integrated action in addressing the EU's STEM skills gap by promoting STEM education as a key driver for sustainable development.

**Keywords:** community engagement, education, ESF, STEM, sustainable development goals (SDGs)

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## **Oceanographers on the Island: Bringing Ocean and Climate Literacy to Coastal Communities**

*Oceanographers on the Island* is a scientific outreach initiative launched in 2021 by Croatian ECOPs (Early Career Ocean Professionals) to bring ocean and climate literacy to children, youth, and adults living on remote islands and in coastal communities across Croatia. Based on the idea that complex science should be accessible, inclusive, and locally relevant, the initiative combines citizen science with hands-on learning. The goal is to foster a deeper connection with the sea and raise awareness of the ocean-related challenges in the changing climate of the Adriatic region.

Over the past three years, more than 40 educational events have been organized in 20+ locations, reaching over 1,000 participants - from preschoolers to high schoolers and curious adults. Activities include interactive workshops, ocean-themed board games, open-air science cafés (*“The Adriatic in a Café”*), pub quizzes, and school visits - all designed to make science accessible, inspiring, and fun. Children are encouraged to become “little oceanographers”, or at least little ocean caretakers. They build coastal protection models, release paper boats to explore currents, simulate thermohaline circulation using household materials, and discuss the importance of sea protection. In 2024, the initiative was presented at the European Commission’s *Science is Wonderful!* fair in Brussels, and was selected as a finalist for the ERC Public Engagement with Research Award.

The presentation highlights how the initiative bridges formal and informal education, integrates interdisciplinary content (oceanography, climate science, physics, chemistry, ecology), and strengthens knowledge and awareness in remote communities.

**Keywords:** ocean literacy; science communication; education in the community

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## **Bridging Outer and Inner Sustainability: Integrating SDG and IDG Perspectives in Engineering Education and Environmental Practice**

Sustainable development efforts increasingly emphasize not only technical and policy solutions but also the role of inner transformation in supporting long-term societal change. This contribution explores the intersections between Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Inner Development Goals (IDGs) through practical experience in civil engineering education, research, and project work.

Based on engagement in interdisciplinary initiatives—such as environmental monitoring, beach resilience studies, and water quality modelling—this work reflects on the potential of engineering education and institutional collaboration to support broader sustainability awareness. It highlights experiences in embedding SDG-related content in teaching, promoting student engagement, and co-developing projects that link environmental and societal needs.

The presentation also considers the relevance of IDG principles—such as self-awareness, connectedness, and openness—as complementary tools to support sustainable implementation within technical domains. Rather than offering theoretical IDG research, this work shares practice-based insights from a process of integrating inner development with professional responsibilities across research, education, and fostering transdisciplinary dialogue.

The aim is to contribute to a more holistic view of sustainability that embraces both technical expertise and the human capacities required for lasting transformation.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals, Inner Development Goals, practical experience, civil engineering education

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## **(Green) Sustainability of Cultural Heritage: Towards a New Concept**

The sustainability of cultural heritage is an extremely complex issue, as it encompasses the three pillars of sustainability (economic, environmental, and social), with a pronounced focus on cultural sustainability. The tangible and intangible character of cultural heritage makes the issue even more complex. The importance of heritage is hardly recognized by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, but the necessity for sustainable management of cultural heritage is crucially seen in practice. Heritage interventions have been abundantly funded from different EU sources (Jelinčić and Tišma, 2020), but often fail to prove their sustainability, leading to the usual practice of “when the project is over, everything is over” (Steckiewicz, 2017: 34). The current EU focus on environmental sustainability is shyly applied to cultural heritage. While the existing literature on the topic mainly addresses green interventions on tangible heritage, this conceptual paper proposes new holistic models and perspectives on cultural heritage greening reflecting a two-way process: 1. sustainable preservation of cultural heritage as a response to the negative impacts of climate change (reactive), and 2. contribution of cultural heritage to preventing or reducing the consequences of climate change (proactive), accompanied by illustrative examples.

**Keywords:** sustainability, cultural heritage, cultural sustainability

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## **The Potential of Traditional Holiday Homes in Promoting Cultural Authenticity and Sustainable Development**

Traditional holiday homes represent a recognizable form of rural tourism in Croatia. Such an offer is based on renovated or newly built structures that incorporate elements of vernacular architecture dating from the 18th to the mid-20th century. Within this tourism segment, tradition is not approached as a fixed legacy, but as a flexible and evolving element of social life that actively shapes contemporary experiences and local development.

This study explores the presence of traditional elements in the offer of holiday homes across rural areas of Split-Dalmatia County. Conducted in 2023, the research combines a content analysis of 328 online accommodation listings with structured interviews involving 16 property owners. Findings show that traditional holiday homes are relatively evenly distributed across island, coastal, and inland areas, highlighting their potential for balanced regional development. However, the use of traditional features is often pragmatic rather than systematic. While the elements used are generally traditional, they tend to be those that are easier to source, build, or maintain – often at the expense of complete historical authenticity.

Design choices are largely based on collective memory, which has become fragmented over time, particularly under the influence of socialist modernisation that historically opposed traditional rural lifestyles. The research also reveals limited engagement of local actors with professional literature on vernacular heritage and rural tourism, as well as a weak integration of rural practices, such as agriculture, craftsmanship, hunting, fishing, and local festivities, into the tourist offer. This disconnect undermines cultural authenticity, which remains a crucial foundation for rural tourism and a vital asset in the face of growing destination competition. Ironically, high occupancy rates and excellent guest reviews may obscure this loss of identity, delaying its recognition.

**Keywords:** tradition, holiday homes, authenticity, development, Split-Dalmatia County



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## **Fostering Belonging: Addressing the Challenges of Social Inclusion Among International Students**

Social inclusion during studies plays a key role in the academic success and personal development of students. This dimension is particularly important in the context of international students who, in addition to academic decisions, also face a number of additional demands related to preparing for and adapting to life in a new country. Studying abroad involves a number of complex processes, including finding accommodation, learning the language, adapting to cultural specificities, and building social networks. These challenges often cause stress and can lead to feelings of isolation, especially at the beginning of their studies. This research aimed to gain a deeper understanding of what prevents the social inclusion of international students through a systematic review of scientific literature indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database over the past decade. After applying the PRISMA method and eliminating papers that did not fully align with the topic, a total of 46 scientific papers published in peer-reviewed journals and proceedings were selected from the initial corpus of 1,781 papers. The analysis identified key research trends related to the social inclusion of international students, including: curricular approaches to acclimatization, the role of social networks in the socialization process, the main social barriers, and the importance of developing intercultural competences.

**Keywords:** social inclusion, international students, systematic literature review

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## **The Peer Support Project at the Faculty of Science in Split**

The Peer Support Project at the Faculty of Science was established during the spring semester of 2023/2024 to provide structured support to students with disabilities, chronic illnesses, or mental health issues. This group of students often faces numerous barriers to academic continuity, particularly due to frequent absences and a lack of institutional support. The project is based on the concept of peer assistance, wherein senior students voluntarily and without any form of compensation provide academic support to their peers. This includes help with understanding course material, exam preparation, and navigating academic procedures. The participating students approached their roles with a high level of empathy, understanding, and commitment, thereby enriching the project with strong emotional support as well. Beneficiaries have shown humongous progress in general. But the impact of the project extends beyond academic success – bonds of trust were formed, fostering a sense of belonging and social inclusion. Activities are conducted outside the framework of formal personal assistance, emphasizing academic solidarity and inclusiveness. The first implementation cycle demonstrated a positive impact on the academic performance and motivation of the beneficiaries, while also raising awareness of the importance of equal educational opportunities. In the following academic year, the number of participants increased significantly, further confirming the project's value and impact.

**Keywords:** peer support, inclusion in higher education, students with disabilities, academic accessibility

## POSTER SESSION

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### **Sustainable Development Goals in Higher Education - Thematic Analysis of Study Programs at the University of Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences<sup>1</sup>**

For years, the University of Split has been highlighting plans to improve its teaching and study programs in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 in its strategic documents. In particular, the current Strategy 2021-2025, under Goal 5 (Development of Teaching and Study Programs), highlights task 1.2, which refers to improving the quality of education in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, our research aimed to analyze all 12 study programs at the Faculty of Philosophy (Art History, Croatian Language and Literature, Early Preschool Education, English Language and Literature, German Language and Literature, History, Italian Language and Literature, Pedagogy, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, and Teacher Education). To determine the level of reflection of content related to the goals of Agenda 2030, a qualitative method of reflexive thematic content analysis was employed. The results obtained were also analyzed concerning the status of each course (compulsory or elective) and the dimensions of sustainable development. In addition to the fact that, and under the mission and structure of the study programs of this Faculty, it is expected that courses are most closely related to the Goal 4 and its subgoals of Agenda 2030 (Education), the research findings show that the most significant presence in the objectives and content of the courses is found in Teacher Education and Sociology study programs. On the other hand, there is less presence in learning outcomes. Elective subjects are also more than mandatory courses focused on SD goals and subgoals; the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are also emphasized.

**Keywords:** Agenda 2030, study programs, study courses, Sustainable Development Goals, thematic analysis

<sup>1</sup> Research on the thematic analysis of reflection of the goals of sustainable development of Agenda 2030 in study programs was implemented in the summer semester of the 2024-2025 academic year, course Cultural Research and Methods, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split

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## **What Do We Know? A Sociological Survey of Students' Information and Attitudes About the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda<sup>1</sup>**

As part of the global effort to achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), higher education plays a pivotal role in fostering sustainable awareness and promoting informed action. Accordingly, a pilot study was conducted using an online questionnaire to assess the awareness and attitudes of students at the Faculty of Philosophy in Split toward the SDGs. The research adhered to the Faculty's Code of Ethics and received approval from its Ethics Committee. The questionnaire was distributed via e-mail and Facebook groups targeting Split-based students, resulting in 85 respondents (approximately 4% of the student population). The primary objective was to evaluate the level of awareness and attitudes concerning the SDGs, while specific objectives included: gauging familiarity with SDG concepts; exploring attitudes toward social, economic, and ecological aspects of sustainability; determining how frequently these topics appeared in their academic curriculum; and identifying any differences in awareness across study programs and levels. Additionally, students were asked to share their immediate associations with “sustainable development” and their views on its purpose. Research findings show that 63.5% of students were unfamiliar with Agenda 2030, yet 71.8% encountered sustainability-related content during their studies. All SDG-related topics appeared in the curriculum to some extent. Moreover, 96.5% of respondents deemed the implementation of SDGs at the local level important, at least to some degree. Students' associations with “sustainable development” fell into seven categories: ecology and environment; future generations and long-term perspective; society and community; economy and economics; politics and systems; energy systems and technology; and education and actors. Regarding its purpose, five themes emerged: ecological/environmental sustainability; intergenerational solidarity; social sustainability/stability; economic sustainability/responsible development; and innovation/technological progress.

**Keywords:** Agenda 2030, sustainable development, sustainable development goals (SDGs), survey, online questionnaire

<sup>1</sup> A survey of the attitudes and awareness of students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Split about the goals of sustainable development as part of Agenda 2030 was conducted in the summer semester of the academic year 2024-2025, course Quantitative Analysis in Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split.