

S.A.M.E. World Recommendations on the inclusion of Environmental/Climate Justice topics in school curricula

Sintra, October 2017

This document is the result of the international exchanges among teachers, professors, students and NGOs realized over the three years of the SAME World project, in Milan (21st-22nd of October 2015), Tartu (26th-27th October 2016) and Sintra (25th - 27th October 2017). These meetings aimed at improving the exchange of experiences between educational institutions (schools and universities) and relevant authorities. They also aimed at promoting policies on the introduction of ECJ topics in school curricula, in the belief that these are among the crucial challenges of our time.*

PREAMBLE

*For many years now, there is a wide consensus on the causality connection between **human activities, lifestyles and climate change**. The latter is not only a serious threat to human well-being and the survival of many ecosystems, it is also an issue of profound **injustice**: the people around the world who have contributed the least to creating the problem are being disproportionately affected by the impacts, often in terms of exposure to extreme climate events. The present migration flows are today also widely recognized also as a consequence of climate change and its effects on increasing parts of the globe.*

The importance of a strong action against climate change and its effects has been recognized also by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 13-climate action).

This action should also take into consideration the high price paid to the economic model based on growth and consumption by those territories where high impact industries and extractive activities are more often concentrated: mining, dams, deforestation, nuclear plants, industrial plants and waste disposal areas tend to be located in areas where inhabitants have less bargaining power and are often not involved in the decision-making process. Due to historical reasons mainly connected to the legacy of Colonialism, those territories are often, though not exclusively, located in the Countries of the so-called Global South.

***Environmental Justice, or EJ**, generally refers to the **right of all citizens and communities to live in a safe and healthy environment**, according to their needs and cultures. It is today even more connected to **Climate Justice (CJ)**, the movement which claims **for a serious reduction of gas emissions responsible for climate change**, also in recognition of the higher price paid by those territories where people have less contributed to these emissions in the past.*

Knowing the global dynamics that are the basis of poverty, social injustice and migration and that make all of us equally responsible for the social, environmental, and cultural challenges of our time, can allow us to find solutions and come back to imagine and build the future.

*We deeply believe that we cannot solve these challenges unless we start from **education, and in particular from the approach of a Global Citizenship Education.***

Poverty, climate change, relations between Global North and Global South, migrations, are hardly ever included in school curricula or often treated each as a separate topic. Addressing these topics in the framework of Global Citizenship Education may allow pupils to understand the relationship between these issues, and their complexity.

*Therefore, **these Recommendations calls on governments, civil society and all those people connected with education to a practical and effective commitment in including the topics of Environmental/Climate Justice (ECJ) in school curricula, thus as an integral part of educational programs.***

In the light of the above, having regard to:

- The 2030 Agenda for a Sustainable World (United Nations).
- The Paris Agreements of December 2015 with special regard for Art.12
- The Global Education Guidelines of 2008, updated in 2010 and 2012, (Council of Europe)
- The UNESCO Global Action Program on Education for Sustainable Development, 2014

the partnership of the SAME World project strongly states the following

PRINCIPLES

1. Everybody must act in respect to the quality of life of every living being. It should be considered an ethical and social responsibility of all and should be an ongoing process throughout life.

2. Environmental/Climate Justice topics, in the framework of Global Citizenship Education, are strongly connected with Human Rights, with the principles of Sustainability and the opportunity and the obligation that everybody has to act according to them.

3. Educational Institutions should foster the development of social and environmental justice values, to promote a society whose Citizens are more committed, more critical and more concerned about environmental and social issues.

4. The school curricula should foster the capacity building of everyone for the observation, interpretation and understanding of global processes, in particular of Environmental Justice, Climate Change and Environmental migrations, for monitoring and reporting our changing

environment, and for finding shared solutions to be developed and implemented locally and globally.

5. The acknowledgement among educators (parents, teachers, tutors) of Environmental/Climate Justice topics and their relevance can only be achieved if there is a clear commitment of all political levels, and in particular of educational Institutions, to adopt specific Guidelines and Recommendations.

6. Policies and related implementation measures should be developed in cooperation with all educational stakeholders by supporting efficient networks at all levels (local, national, international).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The topics of Environmental/Climate Justice in the framework of human rights and Sustainability Education should be introduced as a cross-cutting issue into all disciplines, as lenses to read and understand other subjects (i.e. society, ecology, economy, etc.) and all educational materials and textbooks should promote these values.

2. Bottom-top-bottom guidelines for the introduction in school curricula of environmental/Climate Justice topics should be shared and adopted at national level and within an international framework.

3. A continuum for teaching and learning environmental/climate justice topics between all orders and degrees (from primary to university) should be guaranteed.

4. In order to equip teachers and educators with the necessary knowledge and tools to deal with the global challenges of environmental migrations, climate change and environmental and social justice, an adequate initial, in service and continuous training, between all orders and degrees (from primary to university) is strongly recommended.

5. Appropriate spaces for debating the topics of ECJ with the whole Educational community should be created, and Youth organizations and projects should be recognized as active subjects to be involved.

6. States should adopt appropriate legislation which would allow more flexibility to implement the ECJ topics within curricula of Education Institutions.

7. Plans, legislation, curricula and training policies for Global Citizenship Education should be inspired by the principle of “Act now, thinking globally” in setting up action, considering that the threat of climate change is urgent and must be given the highest priority, also in education.

8. The creation of a circular exchange of knowledge and skills among the different Educational Institutions, both formal and non-formal, should be guaranteed.

9. Raising awareness on the ECJ topics within the framework of the European key Lifelong Learning Competences

10. Government support to the inclusion of Environmental/Climate Justice topics in school curricula and to the related networks should be guaranteed: dedicated funds (allocation of adequate resources), policies, Human Resources, operative and cooperative platforms and the setting-up of coordination mechanisms in order to ensure coherence and accountability together with monitoring and assessment actions.

ANNEX 1 – ACTION POINTS

Action points

Educational Institutions, Schools and University, in accordance with the aforementioned policies, should consider the following actions for each specific area:

Teaching and learning processes area (issues and tools)

- ✓ *Adopting an holistic approach to teaching and learning, that permits to deal with Human Rights and Sustainability.*
- ✓ *Facilitating a steady education outside the school and sustain experimental learning.*
- ✓ *Considering the introduction of specific courses and programmes—in particular, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary full year environmental sustainability oriented programmes— school curricula.*
- ✓ *Promoting the implementation of innovative actions such as the use of new technologies as well as Open classes in order to share content among different disciplines. These courses and programmes should focus on the following main topics: climate change, migrations, relationship between Global North and Global South, disparities, natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity, food issues.*
- ✓ *Including in each school internal policy and/or subject promoting the dialogue and knowledge exchange with local community about ECJ topics.*
- ✓ *Considering that all practices and methodologies adopted should be inspired by democratic and participatory principles and approaches and should be action oriented: translating contents into actions and focus more on the Emotional Quotient (EQ) instead of the Intelligence Quotient (IQ), in order to better connect school with reality and with the social abilities and the motivation of the students.*
- ✓ *Promoting peer to peer cooperation between school and university students.*
- ✓ *Considering the inclusion of socially and environmentally useful activities to complete curriculum (e.g. Voluntary Jobs in NGOs).*

Research area

Developing new knowledge and advance critical reflection in the area of Global Citizenship Education to include ECJ topics;

Supporting a process in which new knowledge can inform policies and practices in Global Citizenship Education;

Orienting the research towards the identification and dissemination of good practices as well as on the development of innovative methodologies and tools based on those practices, through comparative studies;

Helping research to define the assessment of existing experiences, lesson-learning and evaluation exercises;

Supporting research through human mobility, scholarships and fellowships aimed at fostering Environmental/Climate Justice topics;

Establishing a link between Research and Governance, policies and definition of a common framework.

Supporting a process in which new knowledge can inform policies and practices in Global Citizenship Education;

Capacity building and training area

All personnel in Educational Institutions should be able to transmit and promote ECJ topics. To enable them to do so, the additional educational and training needs should be addressed through different strategies:

- ✓ *Additional education and professional development on ECJ issues;*
- ✓ *Lifelong learning for all personnel of Educational Institutions. Creating networks that keep up with new environmental needs;*
- ✓ *Promoting training and exchange of methods and tools among Educational Institutions in cooperation with relevant Research Institutions and NGOs;*
- ✓ *Innovating the initial teaching training in order to focus on skills and competences to prepare them to create cross-curricula lesson.*