

## Art as a Source for ESD

### The use of presentational knowing in expanding and employing sustainability competence

ESD can be understood as the process through which citizens acquire, expand and employ sustainability competence. This encompasses the skills and attitude necessary for surviving and thriving in the declining conditions of the world in ways that slow down that decline as far as possible. Examples of such competencies are the ability to: incorporate different perspectives, deal with uncertainty and complexity, be creative and think-out-of-the-box, envision the future, take responsibility and action.

ESD covers a whole range of relatively new learning strands that share collaborative, experiential, transformative, emancipatory, non-hierarchical, process-oriented attributes and a post-modern worldview. Despite the innovative character, the field is mainly dominated by propositional ways of knowing with corresponding conventional methods. Numerous examples of 'engaged artistic practice' or 'community-art' however suggest that incorporating art - or presentational knowing - could enhance learning for sustainability. Firstly, *art as such* seems to hold qualities that correspond to factors inherent to the sustainability paradigm. To name a few: seeing chaos as a virtue rather than a threat, using senses and embodied thinking, daring to start from total emptiness –the blank canvas, and being open to see the world differently. In short, if we all become more artistic, or approach issues in more artistic manner, we could be addressing current sustainability challenges more effectively. Secondly, art could be valuable as a *means or catalyst* in ESD. The concept of art-based environmental education for example, is based on the premise that art invites people to (re)connect with their environment and value it in a new and more profound manner. Certain forms of participatory theatre provide a space for embodied learning, thereby contributing to community healing.

However, till now the fields of ESD and art are largely separated, consequently the use of art-based methods in addressing sustainability competence is undervalued. My PhD research aims to bridge that gap and explore how art can contribute to the development of sustainability competence among citizens, which enables them to explore, design and bring forth sustainable ways forward.

My presentation aims to inform participants through propositional and presentational/experiential means how art relates to sustainability competence, and give a description of the art-based action research methodology that I am using in my research.

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