ADULT EDUCATION POLICIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND AND PORTUGAL: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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Abstract: Education for sustainable development is presently a relevant topic in the policies of international organisations (such as UN/UNESCO and the European Union) and in national contexts such as Poland and Portugal. Within the policies implemented, civil society organisations and social movements undertake (adult) education for sustainable development projects and activities that have an important impact by raising awareness and promoting changes in the behaviour and attitudes of both countries' populations. However, several challenges can be pointed out regarding the implementation of these initiatives. These challenges will be highlighted in this article, which focuses on the comparison of policies and practices implemented in Poland and Portugal.

1. On (education for) sustainable development: Some introductory thoughts

Sustainable development emerged as a relevant topic mainly after the 1970s owing to critical statements made by several authors, politicians, and environmental activists concerning a development approach based on economic growth and the wide-ranging destruction of natural resources to foster mass production and consumption. Within this frame, UNESCO had a relevant role when in 1972 it organised the Stockholm Conference, where participants discussed the environmental risks of what Escobar (1995) refers to as a liberal understanding of development. After this conference, the idea that the planet was not owned by one single country or a small number of countries, such as the developed ones, was stressed at several events, emphasising the fact that ecological problems do not stop at national borders (Sachs, 1999).

By then the aim was raised that an alternative (different from the capitalist approach) understanding of development could be possible in terms of ways of living, producing, and thinking about life. According to this aim, the need for a stronger connection between humans and nature was stressed. Following these developments, in 1987, UNESCO formed a

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commission in charge of what was called the Brundtland report[1], *Our Common Future*[2]. This document was the first to use the expression *sustainable development* (Sachs, 1999:26). This report emphasised the idea that people in general, and politicians in particular, should think about sustainable development when considering both economic growth and social development. Additionally, life on earth would have to be based on the necessary harmony between the present and the future. Therefore, economic growth would have to be socially and ecologically sustainable. In this report, it was stressed that all countries would need to agree on a common strategy, keeping in mind, however, the different stages of development that countries were in (WCED, 1987:39).

Jacobi (2003) argued that this report revealed a different approach to the prevailing understanding of development. This approach reinforced the links between the economy, technology, society, and policy. At the same time, it stressed the need for ethical behaviour and attitudes concerning the preservation of nature. According to Sachs, the idea was to establish a «marriage between development and environment» (Sachs, 1999:26). Since then, it has become clear for researchers, politicians, and people in general that development can neither be achieved without sustainability, nor sustainability without development (Tilbury *et al.*, 2002).

Since the 1990s, the UN and UNESCO have developed a wide range of initiatives in order to promote sustainable development and to raise awareness concerning environmental issues. These initiatives have somehow changed the meaning of sustainable development, enlarging its meaning, and have established a clear link with (adult) education and lifelong learning. The 1990s were declared the Decade of Sustainable Development, and the first conference on this topic took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In 2002, at the World Summit, the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2004–2015) was declared, putting the focus on education, specifically on what was referred to as the impact of school education on awareness raising and changes in behaviour and ecological attitudes (Jacobi, 2003). Later, the relevance of lifelong learning was stressed in Agenda 2030, with Objective 4 stating the need for quality education for sustainable development promotion. Complementarily, the implementation of a wide range of lifelong learning initiatives allowing people in general, no matter their age, to be more sensitive to environment problems and solutions was clearly emphasised, as well as the various domains of influence: economic, political, cultural, civic,

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[1] This report was named after Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former Minister of environment and Prime Minister of Norway, who was in charge of the commission that produced it.

[2] Data accessed in <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>.

educational, and ecological. Even if results up until today seem to lack consistency, it is a fact that international organisations (such as UN and UNESCO) have had a strong influence not only on the definition and discussion of the concept (Barros & Guimarães, 2019) but also on education for sustainable development national policies, for instance in Poland and Portugal. These developments have followed different paths but also show some similarities, owing to types of civil society organisations and social movements found in each country under analysis, as we will stress in further sections of this article.

2. On the role of civil society organisations and social movements in (adult) education for sustainable development

In several countries such as Poland and Portugal, non–governmental organisations have had a significant role in raising awareness among broad social sectors in what concerns sustainable development issues. The concept of education for sustainable development encompasses a quite diverse range of organisations and initiatives, with some activities closely related to school education curricula and others more directed at the general population.

Concerning the role of civil society organisations in adult education, in this case education for sustainable development, Lima argues that three types may be found. The first type relates to organisations that are sites for multicultural and educational production oriented towards democratic citizenship, social change, and justice (Lima, 2011:154). These organisations are characterised by self–governance and active participation of those joining the programmes. At these institutions, education is directed at promoting political education projects and aimed at changing ways of thinking, living, and producing in local, national, and international arenas.

The second type includes organisations that can be considered bureaucratic extensions of local services of the government and public administration. These institutions are relevant partners of public departments in educational provision (Lima, 2011:154). Applying for public funding, these organisations are strongly dependent upon state programmes and guidelines. Therefore, the projects and activities implemented favour mainly people's functional adaptation to the aims of existing public policies. In these organisations, education activities tend to have as their main outcome state control and regulation as well as educational modernisation.

The third type is linked to organisations that can be seen as quasi–market units, corporate institutions oriented towards the learning market and its customers (Lima, 2011:155). These organisations can be seen

as enterprises operating along profit–making guidelines and for this rea-
son are considered by the government to be more efficient in the devel-
opment of public provision. Activities promoted are aimed at fostering
learning by individuals in order to have more autonomous citizens, able
to make rational choices and taking more responsibility in their deci-
sions. Adults involved in these projects and activities are very motivat-
ed to learn, because they believe learning will allow people to be more
competitive in social arenas and in the labour market.

The role of civil society organisations and social movements has been
recognised as crucial in learning processes understood as exchanging
knowledge and skills between activists to negotiate with decision mak-
ers. The specific construction of social movement learning could be one
of the most important factors describing the adult education processes
in activism. Knowledge and skills learnt in this process are the outcome
of structural power issues, fostering the understanding of these social
movements' place in the world, in interpersonal communication and
group skills as well as in general learning in social action (Underhill,
2016:160–161; Foley, 1999).

Based on development education at the European Union (EU) level,
the question about the future of global issues such as sustainability has
been raised by Troll and Krause (2016). These authors highlight the sys-
temic approach of sustainability in a range of areas of global economic,
political, and ecological spheres. Considering the potential of both civ-
il society organisations and social movements towards global systemic
change, a typology of a global citizens movement has been presented.
The three conceptual types of a global citizens movements include:
(type A) connecting local power struggles; (type B) global thinking &
global regime change; (type C) radical new humanity. Under type A,
connecting local power struggles is rooted in local activism, grassroots
movements, and niche struggle with a strong bottom–up approach to the
decision making level (both national and global). Under type B, global
thinking & global regime change are established on the local level, but
the movements' contribution to changes on a global policy level (in the
areas of culture, language, discourse, and views) and their visibility in
the worldwide movement are significant. Under type C, radical new
humanity is the most radical proposal for rejecting policy work, focus-
ing issues beyond the political power relations struggle and constructing
alternative global narratives. Troll and Krause argue that global educa-
tion stakeholders (especially non–governmental organisations and their
activists) have experience both in global thinking and in identifying in-
terlinkages between global issues and local realities, as well as in raising
critical reflection on them but also in developing skills and resources to
offer support in the transformative learning and exchange process of a
global movement (Troll & Krause, 2016:148–152).

3. Methodological options taken

In this article, we discuss education for sustainable development in Poland and Portugal. The main purpose is to compare some recent developments in both countries concerning policies and practices implemented by non-governmental organisations. The following question guides this discussion: How can similarities and differences between education for sustainable development policies and practices be interpreted in countries such as Poland and Portugal?

These two countries were selected because they are different in terms of the total number of inhabitants (38 million in Poland and around 10 million in Portugal) but similar in economic terms, with tourism and service sectors as a growing influence. Additionally, Poland is a central European country, under neoliberal globalisation influences since the 1990s, which in the last two decades has seen growing interventions by non-governmental organisations in various areas of work, like social care, education, democracy participation, policy work (like watchdog organisations), and sustainable development (such as the work achieved by Grupa Zagranica, the national platform of non-governmental organisations working on development cooperation, humanitarian aid, democratic transformation, and global education). Portugal became a democracy in the 1970s after almost 50 years of authoritarian rule. Non-governmental organisations committed to environmental awareness have a long tradition, with a couple of these organisations, such as QUERCUS[3] and ZERO[4], being quite influential in terms of policy and social media agendas.

The discussion presented in this article is based on document analysis (Bowen, 2009) of Polish and Portuguese secondary sources of a wide range of policy and research texts (e.g. official documents, national research and articles on education for sustainable development).

The next sections of this article are devoted to comparison. Egetenmeyer (2012:80) stresses four steps for developing comparisons. *Descriptive juxtaposition* includes the collection of data of these countries' education for sustainable development policies and practices. The second step includes *analytical juxtaposition*. The main task is based on searching for common features in both countries' policies and practices. Additionally, *descriptive comparison* involves identifying common and different features within each country. Finally, *analytical comparison* is intended at interpreting differences and common characteristics in selected countries.

[3] Data accessed at <https://www.quercus.pt/> (07/2020).
[4] Data accessed at <https://zero.ong/> (07/2020).

4. Education for sustainable development in Poland: Fragile political context, civil society-driven practice

Both sustainable development and global education in Poland have been recognised as part of national policy: commitment to these ideas was considered one of the country's obligations when joining the EU in 2004 and is an outcome of the implementation of EU policies (Kuleta-Hulboj & Gontarska, 2015:5-9). Education for sustainable development is defined as a synonym of global education in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)[5] signed on 26 May 2011 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and Grupa Zagranica. The MoU is an outcome of a multi-stakeholder process on global education between ministries, education institutions, non-governmental organisations, local governmental institutions, teachers, and academic experts. To foster global education, all sides declared their will: to keep up the multi-stakeholder dialogue on global education; to amplify joint activities and to promote activities on global education both in the area of formal and informal education; to establish a common definition of global education; and to create the catalogue of good practices on global education. In spite of the relevance of the aims established, Jasikowska argued that the memorandum is a relatively weak policy commitment, marking optional additions to the existing development policy programmes. Still, the process was relevant in developing cooperation between civil society and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jasikowska, 2018).

Education for sustainable development is also a part of the Ministry of the Environment's programme on ecological education. Therefore, we can consider two possible interpretations of the term. Based on the understanding of development and its relations with globalisation, sustainable development relates to global education which is a part of the development cooperation defined by the bill dated 16 September 2011 (amended on 10 November 2013)[6]. Additionally, global education is understood «as part of civic learning and education that broadens perspectives and raises awareness of existing global phenomena and interdependencies. The main goal of global education is to prepare receivers for facing the challenges related to worldwide humanity» (Official definition of global education, 2011[7]). The target groups are identified broadly in an annual

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[5] Memorandum of Understanding on supporting the development of global education of 26 May 2011: <https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Porozumienie,w,sprawie,wspierania,rozwoju,edukacji,globalnej,1165.html> (07/2020).

[6] Bill on development cooperation: <https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Ustawa,o,wspolpracy,rozwojowej,1128.html> (07/2020).

[7] Official definition of global education, 2011: <https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Edukacja,globalna,1603.html> (07/2020).

plan of development cooperation, which reads: «The activities on global education will be targeted at the broad public, children, young people and adults in the frame of formal, informal, and non-formal education» (Annual plan of development cooperation in 2019, 2018:13). The policy framework is not specifically targeted at adults; however, the implementation of the policy is targeted at people involved in a wide range of educational activities. It is also important to add that people considered adults are mostly in-service teachers, although students, academics, and business representatives are also mentioned as target groups in the main call for proposals announced every year by the ministry (Call for proposals, Global education, 2018[8]).

Polish non-governmental organisations implement and conduct various projects based on different strategies, scale, and objectives on education for sustainable development/global education rooted in EU policies of development cooperation primarily understood as awareness raising in partner countries (located outside the EU). It has been quite challenging to implement development policies in Poland – a country with a post-soviet history, described as semi-peripheral, and not having a colonial past (Starnawski, 2015). After 2015, education for sustainable development/global education became clearly related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, Sustainable Development Goals, 2015) referring to education, climate change, and gender equality. The top-down approach of the EU is strongly recognised. Likewise, EU funding, especially from the Development Education & Awareness Raising Programme and Erasmus+, together with a lack of interest in global challenges by formal education organisations in Poland, opened up a lot of space for non-formal and informal education activities led by civil society organisations (Rudnicki, 2015). Therefore, Rudnicki argues that this topic has been unheard and marginalised for decades in formal education. Education conducted at the margins of formal education is considered the pedagogy of small activities, without relevant influence in mainstream discussion. Non-governmental organisations were important in raising this issue and have been quite effective in promoting resistance, reflection, and changes in discourse and learning (Rudnicki, 2015). The role of these organisations has been a good strategy to try to build a bridge between formal and informal education in Poland, and many of these institutions actively promote education rooted in critical education.

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[8] Call for proposals, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018: <https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Konkurs,%E2%80%9EEdukacja,globalna,2018%E2%80%9D,2758.html> (07/2020).

5. Education for sustainable development in Portugal: Emergent policies, puzzling practices

Since the Democratic Revolution in 1974, Portugal has established the Ministry of Environment/Secretary of State of Environment and Natural Resources and approved corresponding legislation. In parallel, the Global Education Network Europe (2014) argues that Portugal in present times has a public development education strategy on global education, which includes the subject of education for sustainable development. This strategy involves some main government departments such as the Ministry of Education and Instituto Camões[9], as well as non-governmental organisations such as CIDAC[10] included in a platform for non-governmental development organisations.

In spite of these developments, when it comes to education for sustainable development, Portugal does not have a formal strategy specifically for this issue; it has largely been following EU leadership. According to Schmidt (2012), several phases can be identified: In the first phase, from 2005 to 2007, the guidelines for this leadership were defined, and each member state had to elaborate a national plan of intervention, methods and indicators for evaluation, which was achieved in Portugal. The second phase, from 2008 to 2010, was aimed at implementing, assessing, and eventually reformulating the main guidelines of intervention. The third phase, from 2011 to 2014, was dedicated to disseminating the existing intervention plan. However, several delays were identified, and today it is not possible to find a national Education for Sustainable Development Plan apart from several ministries' activities referring to this matter, such as the those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[11], specifically the report titled *UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development: Contribution for its Promotion*[12] and initiatives such as the commemoration of international years, conferences, continuing education programmes, exhibitions, and the publication of scientific books and articles. It should also be mentioned that the Ministry of Education has included the topic of sustainable development in regular school curricula, namely in compulsory education. Moreover, several publications such as *Education for*

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[9] Data accessed at <https://www.instituto-camoes.pt/> (07/2020).

[10] Data accessed at <https://www.cidac.pt> (07/2020).

[11] Data accessed at <https://www.oei.es/historico/decada/contibutos-03-07-2006.pdf> (07/2020).

[12] Data accessed at <https://www.unescoportugal.mne.pt/pt/temas/um-planeta-um-oceano/educacao-para-o-desenvolvimento-sustentavel> (07/2020) (in Portuguese, *Década das Nações Unidas da Educação para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável - Contributos para a sua Dinamização em Portugal*).

Citizenship: A Guide for Education for Sustainability. The Earth Chart were published and have been used in schools[13].

The public administration has not created a specific official structure for this purpose up until now, although this topic is part of the development and territory cohesion policies of different ministries such as the Ministry of Environment. Therefore, Schmidt (2012) claims that there was not a significant effort to establish a public administration entity. The main outcome was a lack of information concerning this issue in civil society. Recent surveys show that public opinion does not have enough data for holding a consistent opinion on environmental issues, energy production, consumption, scientific progress, not even on existing legislation, funding programmes, or EU institutions in charge of such subject. Therefore, there is a gap between public administration mechanisms and structures of decision and civil society; complementarily, official documents are considered well-written but useless when it comes to making effective changes (Schmidt, 2012:60).

In Portugal, there is a platform of non-governmental organisations devoted to development education[14], including institutions such as CIDAC, and several partnerships of non-governmental organisations involved in education for sustainable development[15], such as QUERCUS and ZERO. These organisations implement different education for sustainable development projects in line with UNESCO and EU goals directed at adults, young people, and children and involving mainly non-formal and informal education activities. Additionally, these organisations cooperate with regular schools in the implementation of several projects aimed at raising awareness concerning environmental issues, such as the diversity of fauna and flora, the preservation of natural resources, recycling practices, and climate change (Schmidt, 2012). These projects have involved in-service teachers' training, educators and activists of non-governmental organisations, as well as people in general willing to develop knowledge and skills on a wide range of topics such as bird watching and natural resources preservation.

6. Ambiguity between policy discourses and practices: Comparing and interpreting education for sustainable development in both countries

In terms of similarities, in both cases the non-governmental sector is dominated by organisations of two types, according to Lima's typol-

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[13] Data accessed at <http://www.rcc.gov.pt/SiteCollectionDocuments/ECTG-EducCidadania-2006.pdf> (07/2020) (in Portuguese, *Educação para a Cidadania. Guião para a Educação para a Sustentabilidade - Carta da Terra).*

[14] Data accessed at <http://en.plataformaongd.pt/> (07/2020).

[15] Data accessed at <https://apambiente.pt/index.php?ref=16&subref=142&sub2ref=181> (07/2020).

ogy (2011): those with a more critical approach towards education and a focus on social change and transformative learning and those that act as local service providers (funded in the majority of cases by national or EU programmes) due to the lack of specific local and national governmental institutions. Organisations with a critical and transformative approach (such as the Institute of Global Responsibility in Poland) don't have a major influence on the general public. However, many interesting and innovative activities have been conducted to promote critical and global citizenship education and participatory methods of education and facilitation (such as the philosophy for children and communities in Poland) scaled up to EU or even global level. The non-governmental organisations with a systemic approach to education – the second type according to Lima's typology (2011) – such as the Centre for Citizenship Education in Poland, disseminate the offerings of national policies, work closely with the governmental institutions in analysing the teacher training curriculum, and prepare educational materials according to the curriculum. This type of organisation has a significant offer complementing formal education activities that fill gaps and answer to several institutions' and beneficiaries' demands. This situation is clear also in Portugal (Schmidt & Guerra, 2013).

From the perspective and typology of Troll and Krause (2016), organisations implementing education for sustainable development in both countries have strong local connections, working under the existing system/regime and trying to influence global thinking by transforming existing processes and mechanisms according to characteristics of the type B – global thinking & global regime organisations (Troll & Krause, 2016). Their main contribution is to introduce sustainable development and global issues in the educational discourse and to contribute to global change by implementing changes in the formal education system at national and local levels. The changes are much more significant due to the good cooperation with governmental institutions and policy makers, especially extending the governmental services and EU guidelines.

The most consistent projects to be found in both countries are the ones that are linked to formal education and based on the cooperation with schools, targeting mainly in-service teachers and students. These organisations play a leading role in implementing projects and campaigns but don't have a major impact on general awareness in society. In fact, non-governmental organisations are largely dependent on grants from local/national departments and EU funding programmes, following practices close to the local services providers' type of civil society organisations (Lima, 2011), which don't ensure a stable, long-term cooperation between partners (Schmidt & Guerra, 2013).

A division between the education approach (with activities such as conferences, trainings, workshops, publications, lectures, and movie

screenings) and the campaigning approach (with activities such as petition signing, social media activities, and building the network of activists) is evident. In general, projects are targeted at adults also and are related to learning and awareness raising processes (Troll & Krause, 2016:144). Projects with an education approach have a strong focus on the multiplication of the results of cooperation with in-service teachers, teachers' trainers, educators from non-governmental organisations, and other training institutions. Activities specifically targeting in-service teachers both online and face-to-face include conferences and seminars, offline trainings, online webinars, mentoring, lessons scenarios and other educational materials, and joint activities at schools/local communities. Projects are focused on adult education understood as professional development in the area of teaching practice focused on sustainable development and global education issues.

There is also a focus on informal education and adults' engagement in online and offline activities among the projects with a campaigning approach in Poland and in Portugal. Activities targeted at adults are mostly events like movie screenings, debates, taking part in cultural and music festivals, and online activities such as signing petitions, short education clips, and social media awareness raising campaigns. In parallel with these projects, some others have been implemented in cooperation with mass media, such as those fostering information dissemination concerning domestic practices of recycling and the reduction of energy consumption (e.g. the TV show 'Green minute' on a Portuguese television channel[16]). Public departments and international organisations such as UNESCO have also organised several conferences and debates, as well as online activities and social media initiatives and campaigns directed at awareness raising.

In terms of differences, it is clear in both countries that different approaches influenced the implementation of strategies by civil society organisations, especially when it comes to networking and synergies between different stakeholders. Polish non-governmental organisations are gathered around the national Concord platform, in which the working group coordinates the exchange of information and advocacy work with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Portuguese civil society seems much more fragmented and focused on local initiatives, even if a few non-governmental organisations such as QUERCUS and ZERO are influential in policy-decision processes on environmental issues.

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[16] In Portuguese, *Minuto Verde*, a one-minute TV show that airs every working day of the week, presenting daily activities relevant to education for sustainable development. This show has aired on the TV channel RPT1 since 2006. For more information, please see <https://www.quercus.pt/as-nossas-rubricas-de-comunicacao> (07/2020).

Complementarily, it is worth mentioning that the comparison on education for sustainable development in Portugal and Poland was challenging due to a main difference linked to the understanding of sustainable development. In Poland, researchers have traced the idea to global development, based on the ecological and climate change approach as one of the key factors. The idea incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030). In Portugal, sustainable development has been much more linked to biodiversity, an ecological and local approach to development. That said, both ideas could be identified by Pashby (Pashby, 2012) as part of global (citizenship) education, contributing to the promotion of social justice on a global level and working with a critical understanding of the history of global relations.

7. *Several challenges faced: final thoughts*

This article includes comparisons of education for sustainable development policies and practices in Poland and Portugal. In Poland, discourses on education for sustainable development and global education are the outcome of a fragile recent political process in which practices are found to be largely driven by civil society organisations. Following a similar path, the existing policies in Portugal reveal puzzling practices – more coherent practices are those related to projects and activities implemented in formal education institutions, like regular primary and secondary schools. Additionally, in both countries, civil society organisations involved in education for sustainable development (and global education) have been acting largely as extensions of government departments (Lima, 2001) and EU guidelines and funding programmes; however, if fragmented projects and activities are to be found in these institutions, several of these practices foster critical education and promote global thinking on the global regime (Troll & Krause, 2016).

Therefore, civil society organisations and social movements involved in education for sustainable development currently face several challenges in both countries under analysis. The first challenge relates to changes in the political arena towards more moderate or conservative parties (as well as nationalistic in Poland) that influence policies and practices. In the past, adult education had a relatively strong status, even if this was clearer in some specific periods; today, however, it is not recognised as politically driven and holding a controversial agenda (Rudnicki, 2015). Within this line of reasoning, only some ideas on sustainable development and global issues (linked for instance to pollution, water pollution, etc. – mainly the topics that are part of EU indicators to be achieved by each member state) are present in the school curricula of both countries.

The second challenge is the scale of the projects and activities conducted by non-governmental organisations, which is still limited in both countries, specifically those that are not school related. Most of the organisations are project-funded, meaning no major awareness raising campaigns and scaled-up online and offline activities are possible to design and fund. The disease of grant-dependence (Rudnicki, 2016; Schmidt & Guerra, 2013) has been argued by several authors to result in short-term projects as a main outcome. This situation counteracts the sustainability of such initiatives and the long-lasting effects they should have.

The third challenge is linked to the local character of practices in both countries, as most projects and initiatives relate to matters that affect places where participants actually live. From this point of view, it is difficult to find projects and activities that go beyond local areas, which shows that from the point of view of those planning initiatives, education for sustainable development issues are still very localised, hiding the importance sustainable development may have as a global topic (Schmidt & Guerra, 2013:209).

These challenges have to be linked to two other ideas, which, however, would need further data collection using different techniques to be fully interpreted. The first idea refers to the lack of synergies and strategic co-operation between governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors supporting the idea of education for sustainable development. The lack of strong partnerships that can be found between civil society organisations and government departments when implementing projects and activities might be a relevant challenge faced by civil society organisations involved in education for sustainable development when it comes to the development of practices that are effective in terms of changing the behaviour and attitudes of the general population. The second idea relates to the fragility of institutions and social movements involved in education for sustainable development, which anticipates the weakness of learning in social action (Foley, 1999) within this filed. In fact, even if civil society organisations in both countries are well known for delivering services at low costs and at the margins of public service providers, they have limited human resources and expertise, which seems to restrict the impact they may have in policy discourses and the practices implemented.

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