

Snapshot: Mapping the Efforts and Actors on SDG4, Target 4.7

By Thomas Kamp Damgård

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Purpose of Mapping

The purpose of this mapping is to give civil society organisations, teachers and other actors within global citizenship education insights into the current efforts made on target 4.7, as an inspiration and as a tool for future projects on global citizenship education. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can initially seem like 17 separate goals, but by closer inspection they are all interconnected. The hope is therefore that the World Society will work towards all of the goals and not just a selected few. In this regard, knowledge and understanding of the goals are essential.

In the study, we examined the level of attention given to the SDGs in Denmark and furthermore looked into what trends characterises the work on sustainability and global citizenship education.

Target 4.7

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

In Denmark we use the term 'World Goals' instead of SDGs. There is, however, still a tendency to perceive of the goals as exclusively concerning humanitarian interventions towards e.g. poverty reduction in developing countries. As a result, some people might assume that it has nothing to do with them, as they do not work internationally, and since Denmark is already making an effort through its development aid. For this reason, global citizenship education is essential, not only to ensure that the people of Denmark know why the SDGs are relevant to them, but also in order for them to see the purpose of the goals in the broader context of the Danish society and in relation to the challenges that Denmark will face. Furthermore, the Danish people must be able to connect their knowledge to a global context and understand the actual level of interconnectedness.

Starting point and approach

In the beginning of 2019, a baseline for SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and societies¹ - was compiled in Denmark. However, a proper mapping of the actors in the field of sustainability education or the SDGs in general does not yet exist. This study seeks to provide a snapshot of the current situation based on conversations with organizations, educational institutions and companies, as well as through online material in the form of reports, action plans, strategies etc. The mapping was carried out in September 2019. Further investigations are underway, as Danmarks Statistik (Statistics Denmark) is developing an overall Danish baseline for the SDGs in the second half of 2019 and the beginning of 2020. This tool will be useful for assessing the future progress in Denmark in relation to the SDGs, as well as for highlighting areas in which Denmark must be



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¹ Published in January 2019 by Danish Architecture Center and Rambøll Management Consulting, See: <u>https://www.kl.dk/media/18028/baseline-for-verdensmaalene_publikation_januar2019.pdf</u>.



more ambitious. Additionally, in the fall of 2019, DPU (Danish Pedagogical University) will be launching a national mapping of target 4.7² as part of a larger Nordic investigation. It will be exciting to see what these investigations will uncover.

Challenges

Global Citizenship Education is as of yet an under-explored field, and not many actors working on initiatives in relation to Global Citizenship Education are actually aware that they are active on target 4.7. It is therefore very likely that this investigation has overlooked relevant actors. Furthermore, the extent of the mapping has been limited by the timeframe, and the fact that the circumstances are constantly developing means that this mapping is merely a snapshot of the current situation.

Organisations

In Denmark, many of the initiatives on education and information about the SDGs are initiated at the local level and by civil society organisations. This section describes some of these organisations and the projects they are working on. As most of the attention on SDG 4 is targeted at primary schools, it is not surprising that the majority of efforts in relation to SDG 4.7 are also focused on this target group.

The term 'sustainability' has been, and to some extent still is, associated with nature and the environment. It follows that education on sustainability has traditionally entailed a focus on environmental sciences. Astra (the national environmental education center) ran the project "Green Generation"³ from 2013 to 2017, where several municipalities participated in promoting 'Education for Sustainable Development'. The goal of the project was to develop competences for action, knowledge and commitment amongst children and thereby promote critical thinking and cooperation. As a result, the SDGs are incorporated as a natural element of Astra's education material from first grade in primary school and all the way to STX⁴. Today, the idea of "Green Generation" is carried on by e.g. Friluftsrådet (the Danish Outdoor Council). Through the initiative "Green flag – green school", Friluftsrådet encourages schools to conduct educational courses on sustainable development with nature and environment as a central theme⁵. The purpose of such education is to transform the pupils into active citizens. When the schools have completed the course, they are awarded with a green flag in order for them to display their green profile. The "Green flag" is thus a kind of certification for schools that have completed an educational course. Given the profile of Friluftsrådet as an organisation focused on outdoor life and recreational activities in nature, it is hardly surprising that sustainability is placed within the framework of nature and environment.

However, the narrow focus on nature and environment cannot encompass the broad field of Global Citizenship Education, which is why public information campaigns by different civil society organisations are crucial. Chora 2030, a foundation working across sectors to promote sustainability, also deploys SDG certifications. It gives schools the opportunity to sign up for a program, thereby committing themselves to



² MESIN project = Mapping of education supporting UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 lead by the Icelandic Ministry of Science and Education (2019 to 2020) launched by Nordic Counsel with participation from all the Nordic countries.

³ astra.dk/grøngeneration

⁴ astra.dk/fns-verdensmål-i-undervisningen

⁵ groentflag.dk

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implementing a broad range of initiatives for sustainability at the schools⁶. The goal is not the certification itself, but the process leading up to it - a process supported by Chora 2030. In order to maintain its certification, the school must continue to work with the SDGs and share its experiences. In this way, the schools provide the students with a solid and broad knowledge, which they themselves can then use to support a sustainable development.

Another crucial step towards a more sustainable world is the development of networks and partnerships something Action Aid Denmark seeks to support through the concept "Verdensklasse" (World Class)⁷. Through 'Verdensklasse", the schools are given advice on how to focus their education on global matters, and how to establish partnerships with schools around the world. It is, however, important to stress that Global Citizenship Education does not depend solely on ambitious partnership projects or educational courses. Global Citizenship Education can take place with just one or a few classes, where individual teachers want to bring sustainability and the SDGs into their teachings.

The organisation, MUNDU, supports teachers in these endeavours, as it develops teaching materials on Global Citizenship Education. The organisation additionally offers workshops, cultural meetings and an array of courses and lectures on Global Citizenship Education and SDG 4.7 to both individual classes and schools, as well as to educators from non-formal sectors⁸.

Other examples of organisations working with Global Citizenship Education are KlimaZirkus and 'I Love Global Goals', who organise workshops and invites students to reflect on what the SDGs mean to them⁹. Both organisations reach out to individual schools. Amongst other things KlimaZirkus seek to strengthen the understanding of innovation through practical cooperation with local businesses.

Evidently, teachers have many opportunities to include the SDGs in their teachingn and more options are becoming available¹⁰. The challenge, however, is to make the teachers aware of these options and enable them to include the SDGs in the curriculum.

Conventional/traditional education is an obvious, but not isolated, way to teach sustainability. ART2030 for example uses art in order to spread the messages of sustainability. In cooperation with artists, the organisation carries out art projects inspired by the SDGs in order to expand the human imagination and encourage a healthy and sustainable future¹¹. As a form of communication, art can be placed in the public sphere as well as in exhibitions and therefore has a potential to reach a broad audience and make a great impact. Using the public sphere for education and communication is a rising trend. Sustainability festivals have been held in the municipalities of Vallensbæk, Sønderborg and Frederiksberg and in 2019 'Danmark for Målene' (Denmark for the Goals) organised events in 47 different Danish cities¹². These events focused on six specific SDGs and in each city one event is held for each of the six SDGs. The idea was to make the goals more accessible to the citizens by relating them to the local environments and the citizens' everyday lives.



⁶ chora2030.dk/verdensmaalescertificering-af-skoler

⁷ ms.dk/arbejde/verdensklasse

⁸ mundu.dk

⁹ Iloveglobalgoals.org and klimazirkus.com

¹⁰ Verdenstimen.dk is a platform for education material on the SDGs produced by NGO's.

¹¹ Art2030.org

¹² danmarkformaalene.dk



The SDGs were launched in 2015 with great fanfare, but they were only really noticed to a limited extent by the general public. The limited public knowledge of the goals was a great challenge for a few years. Public information was, and still is, critical for the prevalence and perseverance of the goals. Accordingly, "Verdens Bedste Nyheder" (The World's Best News) set out to diversify methods of reaching the public and adopted an overall message of "even though we face great challenges, everything is not as bad as it may look and progress is taking place¹³. Verdens Bedste Nyheder is an independent media outlet that aims to strengthen our belief in our own ability to make a difference - a belief which is crucial for our willingness to support sustainable development.

Verdensmaal.org supports this effort by offering a portal where curious citizens and companies with limited knowledge about the SDGs can find further information on the SDGs and inspiration for ways to contribute to them. A recent cooperation between Verdens Bedste Nyheder and Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd (the Danish Youth Council) has founded a global goals academy, where young enthusiasts can be trained as ambassadors for the SDGs. By teaching and doing presentations across the country, these young people are set to spread the knowledge of the SDGs even further. Verdens Bedste Nyheder have also partnered with several private companies that have shown interest in the SDGs. In return for promoting Verdens Bedste Nyheder to their employees, customers and partners of the companies get the opportunity to display their commitment to society.

Even though the level of public knowledge and interest for the SDGs has increased a lot in the last couple of years, civil society organisations still have a challenge in raising attention to their work. So even though knowledge about the SDGs exists, the organisations have to find ways to reach the citizens with their information and education material.

Think tanks

Target 4.7 is focused on educating people, but there is no reason to limit education to children and young people. Whether we call it information, education or guidance, the adult population is also a target group. The think tanks described in the following, contributes to education of children, young people and adults. The aforementioned Astra was successful in engaging several municipalities in its project "Green Generation". Some of the municipalities continue to take part in similar actions like "Den Grønne Rygrad" (The Green Spine) created by the climate embassy of Concito, which educates climate ambassadors¹⁴. The main task of these ambassadors is to spread information and recommendations at schools through workshops and presentations. Additionally, Concito developed the junior climate-ambassador project in 2010 in cooperation with the municipality of Copenhagen. Through this education program, primary school students become equipped to create a more sustainable society¹⁵. In addition to its work with schools, Concito also created the PARCK network: "Partnerskab for Cirkulære Kommuner" (Partnership of Circular Municipalities) which aims to strengthen the circular economy of the municipalities by making them more energy efficient¹⁶.



¹³ verdensbedstenyheder.dk

¹⁴ concito.dk/klimaambassaden

¹⁵ concito.dk/klimaambassaden/junior-klimaambassador-uddannelsen

¹⁶ concito.dk/projekter/parck-partnerskab-cirkulaere-kommuner

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The think tank Sustainia works with companies, organisations and municipalities offering information on the SDGs. They help their partners to come to a better understanding of which specific goals they are contributing to, as well as options they have to contribute to other goals¹⁷.

It is clear that in recent years, the SDGs have also developed into a business model. In order to include private companies – especially the small and medium sized companies – the UNPD has established the SDG Accelerator project, which aims to assist the participating companies with "business models addressing the challenges described by the SDGs"¹⁸. Additionally companies can get concrete guidance on how to communicate with its employees about the SDGs and engage them through employee campaigns and activities.

Together with CSR Forum, the think tank Mandag Morgen (Monday Morning) has developed the initiative 'SDGLeadership', where leaders from the private, public and civil society sector can meet and discuss new methods for working with the SDGs¹⁹. In their own way, each one of these think tanks are spreading the knowledge of the SDGs, and through their work they are educating people on the goals.

Education and Museums

Current work with SDGs in education is still challenged by the fact that the SDGs are generally perceived as separate goals and are therefore related to single school subjects. The SDGs should rather be implemented across school curriculums similar to e.g. the development of technology understanding. Here, schools aim to increase students' knowledge of technology by allowing students to engage with technology on a daily basis and across subjects. The rationale behind this strategy is that people obtain knowledge through dedicated education where learning is multidisciplinary. Simply having access to a computer or a smartphone does not make the student an expert in using it.

This is not a new method of teaching in Denmark. In the late 1990s, the MUVIN²⁰ project aimed to spread environmental education across school curriculum and thereby give students competences and insights into how future societal challenges could be solved²¹. Spreading education across the curriculum is therefore not a new idea, but nevertheless a beneficial approach to Global Citizenship Education²².

Primary schools

Global Citizenship Education is not mandatory in Danish primary schools. This allows the individual school to decide how and to what extent they want to incorporate sustainability and global conditions in their teaching²³. For the teachers, the challenge is to find time in their already packed schedules to introduce a



¹⁷ sustaniaworld.com/services

¹⁸ sdg-accelerator.org

¹⁹ taenketanken.mm.dk/sdg-leadership

²⁰ Miljøundervisning i Norden (Environmental education in the North).

²¹ muvin.net/handlekompetence-muvin.html

²² Apropos the old debate of installing global conditions in "Folkeskolelovens Formålsparagraf" (The mission statement in the Law of the Primary School)

²³ The international counselors demonstrated how it can be done under the current "Fælles Faglige Mål" (Shared Educational Goals)



new course, which they do not necessarily know much about. They might also not know who to reach out to in order to get materials and assistance.

In the fall of 2019, REC Denmark put out a call to the politicians, encouraging them to open the debate for a national strategy on sustainable education. Supported by several other civil society organisations, REC Denmark urged the politicians to make Global Citizenship Education a mandatory part of the primary school curriculum²⁴. Global Citizenship Education in primary schools should not only deal with facts and numbers, but must also, as the invitation points out, address "understanding systemic and dynamic connections, ethical and political conditions and navigating and acting critically and competently in a rapidly changing world." Until this call gains the needed political support, it is up to the teachers to decide whether or not Global Citizenship Education will become a part of the curriculum.

Teachers express a need for a better overview of the opportunities available within the field of Global Citizenship Education. A possible solution could be to establish cooperation between organisations with knowledge in the field and local politicians with a passion for Global Citizenship Education. They could work together to develop local curriculums with a focus on Global Citizenship Education. Global Citizenship Education does not thereby become mandatory, but the schools of the municipality would have much easier access to Global Citizenship Education materials, and it would be easier for teachers to get in contact with relevant organisations²⁵. The challenge of such a teacher-municipality-organisation network is its dependence on personal contacts and passionate people, plus the lack of funding.

The natural suggestion would be to bring Danmarks Lærerforening (Danish Union of Teachers) into the network. However, Danmarks Lærerforening has not previously been very active in the field of the SDGs. It does not have a strategy on how to work with the SDGs, and it is not used to working in partnerships. Nonetheless, the union has been open to discussing changes in the way they relate to the SDGs, and they do see opportunities for making the SDGs an integrated part of teaching. As Danmarks Lærerforening is not the most active actor, the civil society organisations will have to take the lead in making partnerships a reality. Openings has already occurred as Anders Bondo Christensen from Danmarks Lærerforening and Claus Hjortdal, the chairman of skolelederforeningen²⁶, encouraged teachers to use the event "Break for Climate" to apply focus on climate and sustainability²⁷.

For some teachers, these measures are not enough and they are therefore actively working on their own to bring sustainability into their teaching. A group of teachers is actively using Facebook for their initiative "Teachers for Future" where teachers and other people in the school system have the opportunity to share ideas and materials.

Other Educational Institutions

A new movement is emerging in technical schools and adult educations centers - a movement that focuses on sustainability and the implementation of the SDGs in education. Half of the technical schools have decided to work strategically with the SDGs or are planning to do so in the near future. In half of these schools, the principals have also involved students directly in the strategic work. Simultaneously, four out of



²⁴ rce-denmark.dk/node/77

²⁵ This type of actions has become more frequent following the introduction of "Åben Skole" (Open School) since 2017.

²⁶ School association for top- and midlevel leaders within the educational system.

²⁷ folkeskolen.dk/879273/dlf-laerer-maa-ikke-tage-en-klima-pause



five school leaders state that working with the SDGs adds a focus on the formation rather than just the education of students.

In support of this development, 'Danske erhvervsskoler og Gymnasier' (Danish technical Schools and STX) have published materials and information on its webpage from the UNESCO report "(Ud)-dannet til bæredygtighed – en ny fortælling om erhvervsuddannelse" (Educated for sustainability – a new tale of the technical educations) in order promote the schools' ability to "work with the SDGs with a strategic or pedagogical didactic focus."²⁸

One of the challenges that the technical schools are facing is the amount of value the SDGs are given in companies that the students are working with. At the moment, students at the technical schools only have the first year of study to familiarise themselves with the SDGs. There is a huge potential in expanding cooperation between technical schools and companies in order to further implement the SDGs in the education. Another potential lies in communicating how and why the technical schools are working with sustainability to local society, primary schools and companies. However, it can be difficult for an apprentice to make suggestions to companies about what new areas of business the company should engage itself with.

In support of incorporating the SDGs in teaching, 'Danske Erhvervsskoler og Gymnasier' are working on creating a network between schools and their passionate teachers, in order to help them with their work on the SDGs and to spread the message of the SDGs to the labour market. Another initiative is Erhvervsskolernes Videnscentre (Technical Schools' Knowledge centers)²⁹, which will help the schools/educations prepare for the technological development and make sure that the students are given the competences required by the labour market.

A similar network is being developed for HF and VUC (Higher Preparatory Examination and Adult Education Center) for those of their teachers and schools that see opportunities in working with the SDGs. It is quite a development, as sustainability up until now has not been given much attention by school leaders. In the spring of 2019, the SDGs and the implementation of the SDGs in education were brought up at a conference by Danish HF and VUC and a lot has happened since then. The school leaders were surprised by how much their teachers already use the SDGs in their teaching e.g. in courses focused on sustainability. The bigger schools are taking the lead in this regard, but Danish HF and VUC have a feeling that commitment and interest is generally increasing. Therefore, they are developing an online portal with inspirational materials for teachers who want to work more with the SDGs.

Furthermore, VUC Fyn has established a two-year HF education based on the SDGs, with the objective to provide the students with knowledge and competences to succeed in a globalised and sustainable world. Unfortunately, not enough students signed up for the class this year. However, the school succeeded in implementing SDGs in their general education, and it has not been considered to cancel the program altogether. Danish HF and VUC are experiencing an interesting development as awareness of the SDGs and interest in including the SDGs in teaching is steadily increasing.

Higher Education

The increased general attention to the SDGs is also reflected in the institutions of higher education. It is, however not the traditional universities which are the most ambitious in this field. Although the universities



²⁸ deg.dk/aktuelt/fokus/fns-verdensmaal-paa-erhvervsskolerne-/#panelc11270

²⁹ videnscenterportalen.dk



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of Copenhagen and Aarhus state that they are working with the SDGs, it has been difficult to identify any deeper integration of the SDGs at these universities.

In an announcement from May 2019, the management of Aalborg University declared its decision to integrate the SDGs in their new strategy "Viden for Verden" (Knowledge for the World). The University of Southern Denmark took a step further and declared that the university plans to implement the SDGs in the entire organisation including research, education, administration and external partnerships. We are still awaiting the results, but the ambitious plan puts pressure on other universities to increase their engagement with the SDGs.

One place for the universities to look for inspiration is KADK (the Danish Royal Art academy's school for Architecture, Design and Conservation) and another one is VIA University College. They both place great emphasis on integrating the SDGs as a natural part of their educations. KADK embraced the SDGs already in 2016, introducing a three-year experimental period, where students were introduced to the SDGs through workshops and activities. Furthermore, the students of architecture and design were asked to relate their graduation projects to the SDGs³⁰. In the summer of 2019, one of these projects could be seen at Holmen in Copenhagen. Here, visitors could be inspired by innovative ideas of bioplastic fashion, flood protection and green package transport. These were the students own concrete suggestions for ways to work with the SDGs in Denmark. KAKD thereby succeeds in bringing the ideas of its students out to a wider audience and may potentially reach people who otherwise would not have known about the work of the students or the solutions they have created through their work. Using the public sphere is not unknown to KADK, who during the spring and summer of 2019 also had an exhibition in Rigsdagsgården (the courtyard of the Parliament), where citizens and politicians could come and experience their work. Additionally, in the fall of 2019 KADK will be exhibiting ideas for climate solutions by researchers and students under the title "Climate – Change for a sustainable future."

At the end of 2018, the three-year experimental period at KADK was extended and the institution is now planning for the strategy to continue until 2030. They will look into how the SDGs can continue to be part of the educations of the institution. The strategy will also affect the way KADK will hire researchers in the future.

The principal of KADK, Lene Dammand Lund, has a long term perspective on research and education. Through a creative and holistic approach, the school aims to disrupt the existing pattern of research and education. They believe it is necessary to introduce new success criteria as well as ways for sustainable science to contribute to ambitious education and research based on interdisciplinary values and partnerships.

KADK's implementation of the SDGs has also inspired international action. In order to influence the architect profession, researchers from KADK have written a SDG manifest, the "Dhaka Declaration"³¹, which has been signed by the International Union of Architects.

Via University College's engagement with the SDGs initially evolved from a group of students whose activities at the school and in affiliated student growth houses inspired VIA University College to include sustainability in their strategic work. The students had the opportunity to contribute through a network-group which, in cooperation with the management, made suggestions for the new strategy. The teachers simultaneously had begun to incorporate sustainability in their teaching, on their own initiative. Now, with the new strategy,

³⁰ kadk.dk/fns-verdensmål-2017

³¹ https://kadk.dk/nyheder/kadks-arbejde-med-verdensmaalene-inspirerer-internationalt



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employees can enrol in competence development programs in order for them to get a better understanding of the SDGs and ways to use them directly in their teaching.

Furthermore, VIA University College is planning to implement the SDGs in academic regulations, and make sustainability a key word for the future development of the organisation. In order to do so, VIA University College started out by mapping already existing SDG activities taking place in the organisation. The goal is to further integrate the SDGs into the structure of VIA University College and thereby prospectively attract students with an interest in sustainability. The transition is not to be limited to teaching, but will be carried out throughout the entire organisation. The direct implementation of the SDGs in the teaching is, however, still to be handled at the local level due to the different focus of the 42 educations of Via University College. VIA University College predicts the SDGs to play an increasingly bigger role in their student education. The efforts made by VIA University College have been recognised by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation which has named VIA University College as a "Pioneer University."

Museums

As mentioned earlier, exhibitions are a unique opportunity to increase general awareness of the SDGs. Museums create a sphere where knowledge is shared through both creative exhibitions as well as through more traditional activities for students at the museums. KADK's own exhibitions are good examples of how the work of students and researchers can be extended to the general public.

A similar approach was used by Designmuseet (Danish Museum of Art and Design) for an exhibition in 2017, where the museum displayed posters from 17 different designers, who each had been given the task to create a poster for a specific SDG. The project was named 17FOR17 and was exhibited in the Haag from November 2018³².

The impact that sustainability and the SDGs have had on museums was further evident in a special exhibition by ARoS in the summer of 2019. The exhibition was named "Tomorrow is the Question" and had the SDGs at its center. Another example is by Danmarks Tekniske Museum (the Danish Museum of Science and Technology), which in the beginning of the same year invited students from Vallekilde folk high school and Textilskolen to exhibit their reinterpretations of the museum's old inventions within a sustainable agenda. Thereby, the inventions served as inspiration for new designs and interpretations of the SDGs³³.

A more direct application of such exhibitions is also possible, as when Museet Holmen (Holmen Museum) in Løgumkloster developed teaching materials to accompany their exhibition "Hans Thyrrestrup: The global Goals." The exhibition consisted of paintings depicting the goals and ran in the fall of 2019. A grant from Kulturelt Forum (Cultural Forum) made it possible for the museum to offer all 7th to 10th grade students in Tønder municipality entrance to the exhibition. From this, the students then continued to work with the SDGs in their schools, assisted by the teaching materials³⁴. This allowed for the exhibition to be actively used for education on the SDGs.

Since far from all children frequent art museums, Museet Holmen provides a creative and visual contribution to education on SDGs. While using the SDGs as an educational framework is by no means groundbreaking, this is an example of how it can be shaped and adapted to the means and purposes of the sender.



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³² chora2030.dk/17for17-i-haag/

³³ Teknikmuseeum.dk/design-elever-fortolker-fns-verdensmaal-paa-danmarks-tekniske-museum/

³⁴ Museetholme.dk/index.php/udstillinger/147-hans-tyrrestrup-the-global-goals-de-17-verdensmal



This final point is particularly evident in relation to Statens Naturhistoriske Museum (the Natural History Museum). They have a list of SDGs which they promote through different courses offered for educational institutions. They do so within the frameworks of nature, natural history and natural sciences, and from the conviction that these areas are essential for education in our modern society³⁵.

Municipalities

The growing interest in climate and sustainability is clearly evident in the municipalities, where the commitment to the SDGs – or at least the desire to show commitment – is increasing. With the reports "Kommuner kan skabe lokal udvikling med FN's verdensmål" (Municipalities can create local development though the UN's SDGs) and "Fra globale mål til lokal udvikling" (From global goals to local development), the firm Deloitte was able to show that while only one in ten municipalities in 2017 had a plan of action on implementing the SDGs, by 2018 the number had increased to three out of four. While it is positive that the municipalities are more aware of the SDGs, the question remains of how they incorporate the goals into their work. In the case of some municipalities, their interest appears superficial and as primarily a means of attracting new citizens by displaying a commitment to the SDGs. However, a positive side effect of this may be that more municipalities to identify aspects of already existing projects, which they then reinterpret and repackage in SDG-terminology. In this way, already established projects are written into a municipality's official SDG-strategy as achievements in this area. They do so primarily with projects concerning nature, environment or business, which are areas more easily repackaged as SDG-initiatives.

The following sections present six examples of how municipalities are actively working with the SDGs. These municipalities are: Copenhagen, Aarhus, Sønderborg, Vallensbæk, Frederiksberg and Gladsaxe.

In its action plan, Copenhagen municipality covers all of the SDGs and proposes individual efforts for each goal. It further emphasises target 4.7 as a city-relevant target. Copenhagen additionally has a series of municipal efforts aimed at increasing the general knowledge of the SDGs. One such effort is the Global Goal School under the Department of Sustainable Development. The school provides a variety of teaching plans and materials revolving around the SDGs, and is available and adapted to all grade levels³⁶. The declared goal of the Global Goal School is to link local community awareness with a global understanding of the world. Another municipal effort is the previously mentioned junior climate-ambassador education, which is derived from Concito's climate embassy. This initiative targets the higher grade levels and is a course on citizen involvement. During the course, the students are expected to work on a concrete case, from which they will gain knowledge on sustainable solutions as well as a greater awareness of citizen involvement in local communities³⁷.

In Aarhus, the municipal library, Dokk1, has started engaging with the SDGs. Compared to museums, libraries are perhaps even more accessible to the general public, and are therefore a natural channel through which to reach citizens. However, an associated challenge is that citizens rarely visit the library with the main



³⁵ Snm.ku.dk/skoletjeneste/om-skoletjenesten/fns-verdensmaal/

³⁶ groen.kk.dk/da/alt-om-os/verdensmaalsskolen

³⁷ groen.kk.dk/KBU/ALT%20om%20os/Hoert%20Ungdom/ambassador

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purpose of learning about the SDGs, from which follows that the knowledge dissemination happens passively. In other words, an effort must be made to catch and hold the attention of visitors. For this reason, Dokk1 has created a special SDG-room, with the purpose of relaying knowledge about the 17 SDGs to citizens, businesses, students and tourists³⁸. The room relays the historical development of Aarhus and contemplates Aarhus' future prospects, thereby encouraging discussions and reflections on the role of the SDGs for Aarhus, and conversely, how Aarhus can take action and contribute to the goals.

In addition, Aarhus is attempting to engage local businesses in the SDGs on a municipal level. One way in which they do so is through the project "Go Green With Aarhus." Here, they invite local businesses to become "climate partners" and participate in a network where members can share knowledge and ideas for green projects. The project's stated objective is to set the course for "Den grønne omstilling" - The Danish term for initiatives aimed at preventing or limiting global warming. Directly translated it means 'green conversion', and the meaning resembles that of the English term 'climate change mitigation.' One of Aarhus' focal points is local involvement, which suggests that the municipality is conscious of the necessity to raise general awareness of grøn omstilling and sustainability – thereby creating a sense of ownership amongst its citizens.

Frederiksberg, Sønderborg and Vallensbæk have all organised sustainability festivals in collaboration with Sustainable Now. Otherwise, their methods and the degree to which they work on implementing the SDGs in education vary.

In Sønderborg, "Vidensby Sønderborg" (Knowledge city Sønderborg) is aimed at the development and education of children and youths in the municipality's public schools. The project consists of 'knowledge houses' with different themes³⁹, and to each house is attached a teacher from the municipality's schools. In addition, "Vidensby Sønderborg" has developed teaching materials for a theme week on the SDGs, where the students are to learn about active citizenship and sustainability. Alongside this, Sønderborg is attempting to raise awareness of energy consumption and sustainable energy through "ProjectZero". Through this project, the municipality aims to reduce CO2 emissions in the area by sharing information and changing the attitudes of its citizens and businesses⁴⁰. The intention is to reach all citizens, regardless of age, by utilising a variety of platforms and action plans. The municipality's goal is to be CO2 neutral by 2029.

In a similar way, Vallensbæk municipality has added the topic of sustainability to its public schools, with a particular focus on three areas: local sustainability challenges, innovation and technology, and courses on knowledge dissemination and debates on sustainability. For this purpose the municipality involves different partners, as with the Hackathon project, where students develop ideas and solutions for community challenges, while being advised by participating partner companies. The final ideas are then presented to the companies, which then select the best ones. This allows for the students to work with actual companies and on actual challenges to society.

Frederiksberg is not quite on the same level, but they do exhibit an increasing interest in sustainability, and the municipality is in the process of developing a plan of action regarding the SDGs. Accordingly, in September 2019, the municipality together with Copenhagen Business School hosted Sustainable Now's



³⁸ verdensrum.aarhus.dk

³⁹ vidensby.com

⁴⁰ projectzero.dk



sustainability festival⁴¹. Frederiksberg is thus an example of a municipality with the desire to let the SDGs play a more significant role, but which is still figuring out how to do so. Schools from Vallensbæk and Frederiksberg are also part of the project "Aktion Verdensmål" (Operation Global Goals) from &LEARNING, which aims to strengthen the cooperation between teachers and to develop competences through interdisciplinary projects with the students⁴². The project uses the term pedagogical sustainability to highlight the importance of documenting experiences, which can then be passed on to other teachers, reused and further developed on.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, we find Gladsaxe municipality, which was the first municipality to incorporate the SDGs into its municipal strategy⁴³. As is the case with many other actors, Gladsaxe has selected specific goals to focus on, but with the possibility of incorporating more in the future and with the ambition to reassess the municipality's actions in relation to the SDGs. One of the municipality's current initiatives is the SDG house, which is a temporary citizen-driven space for workshops and meetings centered on the SDGs. The idea is to create a space for new ideas to emerge in an unstructured and unrestricted way. Additionally, the municipality is striving to establish partnerships with companies and organisations, through which ideas on sustainability can be shared. This naturally involves the risk of green washing, whereby companies agree to participate primarily in order to benefit from a good image. This is, however, an acceptable risk to Gladsaxe municipality.

Through their report "Kommunernes fælles indsats for verdensmålene" (The mutual effort by the municipalities for the SDGs), Kommunernes Landsforening (Local Government Denmark) recently investigated how the municipalities work with the SDGs. Since Deloitte's report from 2017 showed that the municipalities lacked knowledge about the SDGs, Local Government Denmark in 2018 conducted its own survey on how the municipalities are working on the SDGs. The report provides solid insights into the work of the municipalities, but also found that there is a need for more comprehensive knowledge on how to translate the SDGs into a Danish context. Consequently, the Local Government Denmark has entered into a collaboration with Roskilde University Center as well as the municipalities Gladsaxe, Vejle and Guldborgsund on a Ph.D project concerning "Samskabelse af FNs verdensmål i danske kommuner" (Co-creation of UN's global goals in Danish municipalities)⁴⁴. The purpose is to provide the municipalities with knowledge on how to translate the SDGs and apply them to a local, strategic framework.

The State

On several occasions, national politicians have declared that Denmark is the world's second best country in regards to fulfilling the SDGs – only just superseded by Sweden. However, Denmark has had a privileged starting point. Rather than comparing Denmark to countries facing different challenges, the goals should be viewed in relation to where the Danish society can do more. Instead of regarding the SDGs as a form of 'final checklist', the goals should rather be seen as guidance towards sustainable development extending beyond



⁴¹ sustainablenow.org

⁴² aktionverdensmaal.net

⁴³ gladsaxe.dk/gladsaxestrategien

⁴⁴ kl.dk/kommunale-opgaver/teknik-og-miljoe/verdensmaal-i-kl/



2030. It was the desire for increased political action which prompted RCE Denmark and its partners to submit a call for a Danish national strategy on Global Citizenship Education.

While awaiting any political action in response to this call, we can expect the government's follow-up plan of action for the SDGs, as well as Statistics Denmark's national baseline for the SDGs which is being developed on request from the 2030-panel⁴⁵ under the 2030-network⁴⁶. This network consists of members from the Danish parliament, and its purpose is to create a platform for collaboration between civil society and businesses. The 2030-panel consists of prominent actors in society and individuals with specialist knowledge on the implementation of the SDGs. The panel receives secretariat support from Globalt Fokus (Global Focus), whereby the panel – and thereby the 2030-network – is made more accessible to civil society organisations.

The baseline produced by Statistics Denmark has the potential to become an important indicator in the debate on whether Denmark is doing enough to comply with the SDGs⁴⁷ - and perhaps even more importantly, on whether Denmark ought to be more ambitious.

Companies

Companies do not take up much space in this mapping of Global Citizenship Education, but since their employees can potentially gain knowledge on the SDGs through company activities, we are going to briefly touch upon it. This is also due to the fact that some companies are part of drawing attention to the SDGs, thereby applying pressure on politicians. In February 2019, Dansk Erhverv (The Danish Chamber of Commerce) published the report "Alle ombord? Status på virksomhedernes arbejde med CSR og FNs verdensmål" (Everyone on board? Status on businesses' work with CSR and the UN's world goals). The report describes a tendency of large companies adopting the SDGs, and of how interest and commitment to the SDGs often is rooted in management. Most of these companies work only with specific goals, and fail to see – or simply ignores – the interconnectedness of the SDGs.

By singling out individual goals, it becomes easier for companies to signal what they are working on, while still retaining a focus on consumption, production and jobs; that is, the factors relevant to a company's financial bottom-line. In their report "Ni ud af ti virksomheder gør bæredygtig forretning" (Nine out of ten companies do sustainable business). Dansk Industri (Danish Industry) similarly indicates that the number of companies with knowledge of the SDGs is on the rise. The depth and nature of this knowledge is unstated. However, the general impression is that it is difficult to engage the small and medium sized companies, especially those with a national focus. It is necessary to bring to the attention of these companies that the SDGs are not just for international companies but has the potential to make a difference at the local level, e.g. by opening up potential for new business models. It gives rise to some criticism that it is only certain types of companies that take the lead on incorporating the SDGs. Due to the nature of their business; the transition towards the SDGs may have been more natural for these companies. However, this transition may



⁴⁵ The 2030-panel supports the 2030-network's political work through analysis, sparring, knowledge sharing and meet-ups regarding independent topics.

⁴⁶ 2030 netvaerket.dk

⁴⁷ Verdenstimen (Worldhour) had an audience with the Committee for Children and Education on the 26th of September, 2019. This resulted in a question to the Minister of Education: does the minister want to comment on the material from the Worldhour audition that Denmark is not fulfilling target 4.7 of the UN Global Goals concerning a county's responsibility to educate children and young people on the SDGs, sustainable development and global citizenship.





be seen as a mostly a self-glorifying exercise by those companies which have had more difficulties in incorporating the SDGs into their business models.

Still, an increasing number of companies are becoming aware of the SDGs, although their financial bottomline appears to consistently take prevalence over the SDGs. There is a lack of information and education on the deeper meaning of the SDGs. Companies remain unconvinced about the importance of working with three rather than just one bottom line - that is, with a financial, a social and an environmental bottom line- in order to genuinely contribute to the SDGs. For this reason, Global Citizenship Education is as relevant for companies as it is for students.

The work force of the future will comprise of people who have received Global Citizenship Education and who are knowledgeable about sustainability. This group will enter the labour market with expectations and demands to companies of a workplace which reflects their own values of sustainability. Thereby, the premise on which the companies will compete with each other over the most skilled workforce could end up being the company's level of sustainability. For the younger generations it is not a question of whether there is a sustainable alternative. It is an expectation. As these expectations come into effect, as held by an emerging workforce as well as by consumers, it will lead to a new market standard of climate friendly production. A possible way for the companies to adapt could be by entering into partnerships with organisations or institutions with expert knowledge of the SDGs, where the companies partake in educational courses. In this way the companies may learn about the ideas held by future employees and consumers, and about the values which could become important in the future.

Consultants

In line with the think tanks, the consultant houses have largely adopted the SDGs. Where consultancies like Deloitte and Rambøll have established specialised departments to advice companies, others like Milestonepro have opted to organise workshops on how companies may gain strategic benefits by engaging with the SDGs. What they all have in common, however, is a simplified view of the SDGs as seen in relation to the company bottom-line. The companies do have a point in arguing that business must pay off financially, but if the companies do not adapt, they risk getting left behind.

With consultants like Groconsult, the focus is not on the financial bottom-line, but rather on how companies can create growth on both the social and the environmental bottom-lines. In other words, the companies must have a genuine intention of changing their ways of doing business. This must come from a desire to adapt their company to a future where the importance of the SDGs will only increase, as well as a desire to contribute to this development. That is to say they must prepare for a future where the terms of business are changing, by acknowledging that the global goals are also business goals.





Conclusions

The SDGs have only just gained momentum in Denmark, and even though they are often talked about, we still see a lack of political leadership and concrete action at the national level. Instead, we are witnessing widespread initiative from both civil society and larger companies.

On their own initiative, teachers are bringing sustainability into their class rooms and are getting inspiration from teaching materials on Global Citizenship Education, which they get from various suppliers. Depending on these passionate people's level of determination, the interest for Global Citizenship Education is passed on to the administrative level of schools, from which can be initiated more extensive efforts at the school. However, these changes rarely travel beyond the boundaries of the individual school. Further progress depends on whether Global Citizenship Education is incorporated into school curriculums on a formal level, and thus it depends on the local political environment and the interest in sustainability shown by municipal politicians. This being said, there is a widespread interest in Global Citizenship Education amongst teachers, but they lack the knowledge and guidance on how to use it in their teachings. For this reason, the absence of national leadership and initiative is highly restrictive, and the need for a national strategy on how educational institutions should work with the SDGs is greatly needed.

Public interest in sustainability has led an increasing number of municipalities to engage with the SDGs, but it is evident that the necessary knowledge – which comes from Global Citizenship Education – is lacking behind. Several municipalities single out SDGs to match the efforts they are already engaged in, thereby missing the purpose of the SDGs; namely to inspire new and ambitious actions and strategies. A similar development can be observed in regards to youth- and higher educational institutions, where Global Citizenship Education is initially introduced by passionate teachers and is only then picked up by management. It is thus interesting to see how Global Citizenship Education is created at the local level, often by passionate individuals, but as support becomes visible, the drive for including sustainability moves into the managerial level. In some educational institutions this happens quickly, whereas classical universities are slower in adapting. In contrast to this, within the business sector, it is the larger, international companies which have initiated a stance on the SDGs and this change is driven by the managerial level.

Knowledge and understanding of the SDGs is not reserved for children and young people. Adults also need the guidance and knowledge which Global Citizenship Education can provide. To the workforce of the future, it will not be a question about "whether there should be sustainable alternatives" – it will be an expectation. They have grown up with a strong focus on sustainability, and they will want to see their values represented in their work life: as employees, consumers and citizens. The current challenge is that political changes can be difficult to detect and that progress goes unnoticed and unrecognised in the constant demands for further action.



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