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Laïque



Erasmus+

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**How does Peer-Mentoring  
contribute to Education  
for Sustainable Development  
in schools?**

**STUDY & ANALYSIS  
FRANCE**



Solidarité Laïque federates **50 organizations** across different sectors: **public teaching, popular education, social and solidarity economy**. Solidarité Laïque believes that education is not only a fundamental right, but also the key to individual empowerment, as well as social, cultural, and economic development. Its efforts contribute to build a culture of peace and respect for differences.

The organisation operates in around twenty countries besides France to fight against inequalities and educate towards citizenship. Solidarité Laïque produces educational materials and tools and leads various initiatives to **educate on citizenship and solidarity**.

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Solidarité Laïque is a public benefit non-profit organisation approved by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Youth and Popular Education. It is an ambassador for the French citizen reserve and has been approved by the Comité de la charte du don en confiance (Give with Confidence Charter Committee).



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*Liberté  
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This document was issued in 2020 as part of the PEERMENT project (Peer mentoring for teachers “*Change - Builders*”) by Solidarité Laïque, the French partner of the project. It reports the findings of an action research project on peer mentoring in education for sustainable development supported by ERASMUS+ (“*Strategic partnerships*”).

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**SD:**  
sustainable development

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**ESD:**  
education for sustainable development

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**EE:**  
environmental education

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**MoE:**  
Ministry of Education

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**UN:**  
United Nations

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**SDGs:**  
sustainable development goals

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**Peermentoring:**  
(name of the European project) contraction of peer-mentoring (“*mentoring*” between “*peers*”) used for cooperation between peers

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**PESI:**  
educational partnership for international solidarity, initiative supported by Solidarité Laïque Cf. p 13

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**3ED:** label given by the Ministry of National Education to “*Schools/Establishments in the process of sustainable development*”: ▶ [Cf p13](#)

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## PEERMENT: AN EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION PROJECT AT EUROPEAN LEVEL



*Solidarité Laïque*, a humanitarian organization promoting education for citizenship and solidarity, is a partner in an Erasmus+ project (2018-2020) aiming to foster educational cooperation and strengthen teachers' capabilities in education for sustainable development: the PEERMENT project. Six partners are involved in this project, from 5 different countries: Malta, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, and France. These organizations are associations, NGOs, or professional institutes. The University of Malta is the lead partner..

The PEERMENT project is both a pedagogical project – providing interactive tools that help students play an active role in their learning process – and an educational and horizontal “*mentoring*” project, hence its name deriving from “*peer-mentoring*” (exchanges between peers/ mutual support and assistance).

This project is an opportunity for us to put our heads together and contribute to education for sustainable development by:

- Developing a common definition of peer-mentoring and guidelines to help teachers implement peer-mentoring
- Developing and “*labelling*” peer-mentoring
- Promoting peer-mentoring in education for sustainable development (creating “*web-quests*” and educational content, encouraging exchanges between peers)

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## THE STUDY: OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This document reports the findings of a study surveying French teachers about practices in education for sustainable development within France's formal education system, and the development of educational approaches to peer-mentoring.

This work was conducted using a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, as well as a collaborative reporting & analysis workshop.

**Preliminary notes:** The answers to this questionnaire are voluntary, and therefore reflect teachers' motivation to discuss about ESD as well as their interest in this topic. Most respondents work in middle and high schools and teach history and geography. Focus groups were held with teachers in this same subject: we must therefore pay attention to this bias in ESD.

# PART 1

## QUESTIONNAIRE AND ANALYSIS ON ESD IN FRANCE



### EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SEEN BY TEACHERS



- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) consists, as a teacher, in helping students understand the world we live in and become aware of inequalities (socially, economically, environmentally ...), as well as the various ways to reduce them.
- ESD also consists in debating with secondary school students about the challenges of SD; and understanding how SD goals can be achieved in developed and developing countries.
- ESD is about helping students understand the concept of SD and how to put it into practice, through an action-oriented approach.
- As a geographer, I teach students to think about the impact of their behaviour on the landscape and to live in harmony with the environment.
- ESD enables people to change their way of thinking, building a better and more sustainable future.
- Education for sustainable development can be defined as teaching the transition that our social and economic model should make to combat global warming and help the next generation address these issues.
- A long-term vision of resource management, a daily fight against waste, an attitude of solidarity.
- A new priority in our society and education.
- The concept of sustainable development is central to geography, and is taught across many aspects of the curriculum: environment, tourism, transport, urban areas...
- The objective is to help students understand how we went from economic growth oriented development (victory of capitalism and liberalism in the 19th century), which favoured social inequalities and led to increasing environmental pressure; to the concept of sustainable development that emanated from the Brundtland report published in 1987. Sustainable development as defined in this report must link economic, environmental, and social issues.
- This concept, which is defined in a global framework, involves a multitude of stakeholders (politicians, NGOs, actors, locals ...) who act at the local level. This multiscale approach is the preferred approach for students, as it allows teachers to highlight the multitude of challenges that the different stakeholders must deal with, which can lead to power relations. Case studies are explored in class.
- Learning to manage today's resources by inventing tomorrow's world

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## A CONSTANT FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, REFLECTING TEACHERS' WISH TO BE CONCRETE FOR THEIR STUDENTS



The definitions provided by respondents, which often related to their teaching subjects, demonstrated good (if not excellent) understanding of the concept. Geography teachers know quite well the key terms and concepts (*"multiscale approach"*; Brundtland report; the 3 pillars of Sustainable Development - SD).

**Which pillar of SD can you teach most easily?** Teachers' answers are reassuring: they illustrate a transversal approach and the willingness to ensure all three economic, social and environmental pillars are addressed consistently in education: *"All three pillars are linked"*; *"They require a transversal approach"*; *"Why separate them?"*; *"All three at the same level"*.

There is, however, a constant focus on the environmental pillar of sustainable development (*"The 3 R's: Reduce, Recycle, Reuse"*; *"Resource management"*): is this a representation, a reality, or a prism implemented by teachers? All respondents defined SD combining social and environmental issues (the economic pillar of SD is less often mentioned in their answers to the questionnaire and in discussions).

Many confirmed that the environmental pillar is more obvious because it is concrete and relatable to student's daily lives. *"The fight against waste is a real, tangible issue for students. They seem to be particularly interested in the matter"*. Teachers also said that the environmental pillar remains the first point of entry to bring up other SD issues. Many respondents mentioned the importance they give to social issues, mostly inequalities. Some of them consider the social pillar as obvious because it is associated with a feeling of injustice and inequality experienced by some students. This issue also questions the territorial and socio-economic scope of education.



This analysis was confirmed by Marie, a high school teacher in Guyana: Sustainable development is special in Guyana, it is quite different from metropolitan France. Students face specific social and local challenges such as pollution, insanitary housing conditions for some of them, limited access to water. They also face strong climate issues (delayed long-season rains, deforestation experienced by many students coming from Brazil) and social issues in their daily lives. As a result, sustainable development must be considered more widely – *«zooming out»* of Guyana, comparing what is done elsewhere and exploring other contexts and cases, with a focus on the Caribbean.

Respondents also mentioned the active and participatory dimension of ESD, with evolving mentalities and behaviours (*"civic habits"*, *"against waste"*, verbs: fight, act, build ...).

The *"cultural"* pillar added by NGOs was not mentioned by teachers.

► Cf. Appendix 1: What is ESD? History of the concept: from environmental education to the SDGs

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## A GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF ESD DESPITE HETEROGENEOUS TRAININGS AND TOOLS



When asked **“On a scale of 0 to 5, how would you rate your level of knowledge of this topic (0 being null, 5 being perfect)?”**, teachers’ rates were globally close to 4 out of 5. The low variability of answers does not seem to be related to their level of education.

In comparison, when asked **“How would you rate your level of training on this topic?”**, teachers globally gave themselves a 2.9 out of 5, which is more or less the average rate, apart from a few “geographers” who gave very high rates to their levels of interest, knowledge and training: some of them also received training at university *“Trained in sustainable development during my geography studies”*; *“At the faculty of geography, and self-training”*.

This average level of training was not only achieved through initial or on-going training programs as part of respondents’ teaching activities. Respondents also highlighted a personal interest in the matter: *“Out of personal interest”*; *“personal training”*; *“reading articles”*.

These answers also pointed out disparities in teachers’ training processes and their (non) certification in EDD training programs (*“Currently engaged in an on-going training program. One- or two-day training courses on specific topics such as water, energy ... or trained within specific structures”*; *“I carried out several Erasmus mobility programs in London within companies, and in Stockholm as part of an individual training course in a school”*).

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**Answers to the question “Do you consider that you have the right tools?” were much the same as for the previous question**, i.e. they were mixed: one half of teachers felt poorly equipped, and the other half felt well equipped. Here are the reasons mentioned:

- Tools are not readily available, neither “turnkey”
- Many resources are available outside of National Education materials, especially on the Web
- This means dedicating extra time out of class, that teachers have little or none *“... there is a lot [of data] to sort through on the Web”*, *“I don’t take the time to review them”*
- The Web (search engines) was not often selected, which shows that teachers know where to go and where to access resources. They generally prefer specialized literature and books relating to their subject.

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**If your answer is yes, which tools do you use most often?**

In descending order of selection

1. References, specialized literature on the topic
2. School books
3. ESD associations and NGOs’ Web sites
4. Discussions with colleague teachers, educational Web sites and social networks
5. Institutional Web sites (Ministry of National Education, Ministry for Ecological Transition, United Nations, etc.)
6. The Web

# ESD IN SCHOOL CURRICULA LACKS CLARITY – WITHOUT IT BEING AN OBSTACLE



While all respondents highlighted the obvious link between ESD and their school programs, when asked to go into details, they underlined the complexity of programs, the over-segmentation of each topic, a lack of consistency, and the difficulty to clearly identify all 17 SDGs.

### Here are the problems that were mentioned most often:

- “The lack of time dedicated to the program; and the lack of time to launch initiatives”
- “The complexity of programs”
- “The lack of consistency”: a holistic and transversal approach, as advocated in the definition of SD or in the 2030 Agenda, versus a “silo” approach consisting in addressing topics, pillars, and SDG separately. Here is a quoted example: «There is a study on climate change and its consequences, but it is not related to sustainable development»; Teachers lack transversal elements that would allow them to integrate all issues raised by ESD, because of an overall tendency to compartmentalize and/or fly over these questions.

Answering indirectly to the question on school programs (therefore regarding the Institution), some respondents also added that they needed stronger support from upper management and also called for more consistency between words and actions within schools (e.g.: Teaching SD while wasting a lot of paper).

**Similarly, teachers do not clearly understand the overall vision of the 2030 Agenda and do not address all SDGs in their courses.**

### To what extent do you feel capable of addressing the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in your teaching program?

(Rank them from easiest to hardest)



- GOAL 1: No Poverty
- GOAL 2: Zero Hunger
- GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being
- GOAL 4: Quality Education
- GOAL 5: Gender Equality
- GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality
- GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- GOAL 13: Climate Action
- GOAL 14: Life Below Water
- GOAL 15: Life on Land
- GOAL 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal



Teachers have ranked the SDGs **from the easiest to the hardest:**

1. **GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality**
2. **GOAL 4: Quality education**
3. **GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**

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**Decreasing rank order: from the most to the least mentioned SDGs (within the top 5 rank list)**

**GOAL 10:** Reduced Inequality

**GOAL 4:** Quality Education

**GOAL 1:** No Poverty

**GOAL 5:** Gender Equality

**GOAL 2:** Zero Hunger

**GOAL 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production

**GOAL 7:** Affordable and Clean Energy

**GOAL 3:** Good Health and Well-being

**GOAL 13:** Climate Action

**GOAL 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities

**GOAL 16:** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

**GOAL 6:** Clean Water and Sanitation

**GOAL 15:** Life on Land

**The following SDGs were never selected in the top 5 choices:**

**GOAL 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth

**GOAL 9:** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

**GOAL 14:** Life Below Water

**GOAL 17:** Partnerships to achieve the Goal

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The SDGs that were not selected refer to economic stakes (except for responsible consumption), or they are very specific goals, like Goal 14: Life Below Water which relates more to science education, and Goal 17, which is the overall goal and therefore the most difficult one to understand and explain.

The most mentioned SDGs are clearly identified, and relate to social issues (inequalities, equality, education) or “*basic*” human rights (education, food sovereignty).

SD seems to be evolving toward a more social approach. Is this change due to the new SDG framework?



When analysing teachers' answers against the "5P's<sup>1</sup>" of the SDGs (answers to the question on the 2030 Agenda were based on its five dimensions: planet, people, prosperity, peace and partnerships), **we could see that respondents focus more on Populations (or People).** Interviews with teachers showed that they want to relate ESD to today's context and concerns, as well as the realities of students.

## MATTER OF DEBATE

**Does the "new" SDG framework help clarify the ESD approach? Is it a relevant entry point for teachers?**



*"Sustainable development was more explicit in the previous versions of high school curricula, which revolved around the three pillars of SD. The 17 SDGs are not clearly defined in the new programs, concepts are vague, we study them separately"* (Jerome). *"We are now talking about transitions, where SDGs are implicitly mentioned. It's obvious for those who know the topic well, but not for the others..."* (Marie). Cyrille, a 10th grade teacher, addresses the notion of "transitions" on a territory-by-territory basis, with ecological, eco and social transitions. *"The easiest way for me is to choose a global topic or territory as an entry point to address the SDGs or SD; instead of starting directly with a course on SD."* (Marie).

One of the main challenges for teachers is to relate ESD to their school curricula. Respondent are concerned about introducing content and lessons that are not part of their educational specifications. The SDG approach can help overcome these concerns, by linking all teaching topics to the SDGs. There is consistency and legitimacy in approaching school curricula through the prism of the 17 SDGs.

<sup>1</sup> Source [www.academyedtech.com/unit/objectifs-de-developpement-durable-5p/?id=2834](http://www.academyedtech.com/unit/objectifs-de-developpement-durable-5p/?id=2834)

# PART 2

## 10 SUGGESTIONS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT SCHOOL

### HOW TO TEACH OR FOSTER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT SCHOOL?



All respondents agreed that ESD is not something you teach or learn, but rather something you experience and practice. “*We experience it in our everyday lives*” (Jerome), “*In all subjects*” (Claire).

#### ESD objectives: What matters most to you as a teacher?

- Instilling sustainability principles in your teaching
- Taking a global approach to address sustainable development within your institution
- Collaborating with/get support from civil society organizations and/or associations to address sustainable development issues in the community with your students
- Collaborating with other teachers or getting their support to discuss sustainability issues with your students

**As a top priority and first choice, more than 80% of respondents wish to instil the principles of sustainability in their teaching.** Secondly, more than half of respondents expressed interest in peer-mentoring, choosing the last answer: “*Collaborating with other teachers or getting their support to discuss sustainability issues with your students*”.

The other half chose “*Taking a global approach to address sustainable development within your institution*”.



For Cyrille, ESD also aims at improving and developing institutions in a common effort to find solutions: teachers in technology, biology, sports and history-geography have decided to work closer and are also cooperating with a middle school from the same municipality, which allows students and teachers to share ideas between both institutions.

#### Thinking outside the classroom box

Some teachers highlighted the fact that although students develop a good knowledge of sustainable development at school (“*Model students who develop good habits, eco-friendly behaviours, and want to value this*”), they do not necessarily put what they have learned into practice. They know the theory, but do not always apply it – whether at school or at home (practicing sustainable living at home also depends on families’ abilities).

# 1

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Sustainable development thus becomes a school skill rather than a social skill. However, students appreciate taking part in activities that relate to this topic. To remedy this theory vs. practice issue, teachers try to work in project mode and avoid claiming “SD” in their teaching program: *“Silence is sometimes the best way to communicate...”*

## Suggestion #1: Working in project mode

Working in project mode has proven to be quite efficient to gain a better understanding and insight into sustainable development within a class of students – or even between classes of the same school – and helps all participants think outside the classroom box: *“We bring up issues experienced at school and work together to find solutions (mainly regarding waste and resource management)”* Claire. Working in project mode and involving different disciplines is even more impactful. This method allows to explore certain notions of the teaching program through research work, dynamic investigation, presenting information and analysing results, with exhibitions, digital reporting, newspapers... Their disciplinary input gets more concrete for students as they become actors of their learning process. They learn from collective efforts while gaining autonomy.

Ultimately, working in project mode is an efficient way to develop a peer-mentoring approach in a class or a group of students (Cf. [Appendix 2](#)) as it favours peer-to-peer knowledge sharing/training.

# 2

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## Suggestion #2: Teaching with passion

*“Life is the trade I would teach him”* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emile.

Teaching or sharing ESD also relies on self-motivation. *“ESD is also more interesting for students when teachers are motivated”* (Marie). Teachers insisted upon the importance of educational freedom, being able to work outside of school programs, even though they all deplored the lack of means to act and set up projects.

# 3

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## Suggestion #3: Providing a more hands-on approach to teaching, adapted to students’ realities



- Embedding ESD in everyday learning
- Helping students understand the need to slow down the pace of life and bring significant changes to our consumption and travel habits
- Working on the basis of students’ lifestyle is challenging
- Addressing concretely the issues of sustainable development is challenging
- We need to hear the actors of SD share their experiences
- We need (time to) build projects and get students to act, make them actors: *“Too much description or even prescription”*; *“Students need to create something in a common: a game, a poster campaign, an association ... Their goal must be clearly identified, bold, and recognized by an institution (Town Hall, administrative region, etc.). These projects must lead to collective recognition”*

# 4

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## **Suggestion #4: Considering the realities of students for inclusive education**

The word “*daily*” (in a very concrete meaning) came up in many answers: learning on a daily basis, using our everyday lives as an entry point, while taking into account the different realities of each student: acting within the school setting “*to avoid being intrusive to their daily lives*” and prescriptions. Teachers also need to consider social inequalities and unequal access to education, which show in students’ attitudes or in the “*individual*” or “*family’s*” commitment to sustainable living, as well as their interest in sustainable development.

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## **INTERDISCIPLINARITY: A HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE OF PEER-MENTORING**

# 5

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## **Suggestion #5: Investing in peer-mentoring**

**How can collaboration between students, teachers and peers be an efficient way to teach and even implement ESD, and help carry out projects for sustainable development?**

**The concept of peer-mentoring as it is used and conceptualized in the context of this PEERMENT project emphasizes the balanced and almost horizontal relationship** between the “*mentor*” and the “*mentee*”. It does not only refer to the relationship between student and teacher: in the context of this project, peer-mentoring also refers to peer relationships between teachers, known or unknown “*colleagues*”, performing the same or different functions.

**Peer-mentoring could rather be defined as peer-to-peer collaboration; equity and reciprocity; or “*peer-to-peer cooperation*”.**

► Cf. Appendix 2: [The concept of peer-mentoring in France](#)

# 6

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## **Suggestion #6: Fostering interdisciplinary within working practices**

Respondents refer to “*peer-mentoring*” when sharing their experiences and feedback, even though they do not use this specific term. Teacher rather mention projects that they co-developed and co-built with colleagues from the same school/institution, external colleagues, or as part of external partnerships.



### Why work with peers?

- Share our insights, content, and new pedagogies
- A framework for creating new ideas: “*cross-fertilization*”
- Share documentation, knowledge, experiences
- Build together, get “*the benefits of building together*”; an opportunity to make the most of everyone’ strengths and share good practices
- Share our issues and limits: “*Are we on the right track?*”
- “*Feel less alone*”, be more motivated; mutually beneficial support; building relationships
- Take a fresh look and a step back
- “*Exchange our students to break away from usual topics and learnings*”
- The opportunity to work with highly motivated colleagues teaching different subjects, and from other schools (where applicable)
- Work within an interdisciplinary framework and therefore demonstrate the consistency of our lessons

*“As it is challenging to teach what you do not necessarily apply yourself, such a peer-to-peer experience project obviously influences students, their parents, and colleagues through its shared activities. The wide range of topics addressed and the open-mindedness resulting from these interactions allowed us to integrate sustainable development issues in both our professional and personal daily lives.”*

Feedback from a PESI project (International Solidarity Education Partnership - Partenariat Educatif à la Solidarité Internationale, supported by Solidarité Laïque) within primary schools in Togo.

► Find more information on the PESI initiative here:

[www.solidarite-laique.org/pro/actualite/financez-vos-projets-solidaires](http://www.solidarite-laique.org/pro/actualite/financez-vos-projets-solidaires)

# 7

## Suggestion #7: Providing good conditions for peer-mentoring

- Just like ESD, peer-mentoring only works if it is driven by self-motivation.
- It also requires a strong emulation between colleagues and therefore mutual understanding/ trust. Peer-mentoring relies on “*an affinity system*” (Cyrille) (“*It only works with colleagues we trust*”).
- The composition of the team (as well as its members’ teaching subject and personal interests) has an impact on the topics addressed and inputs provided by its members.
- Face-to-face meetings are essential; working remotely is challenging
- Everyone’s work habits are quite different, even more when working remotely (time management, professional/personal pace of life); and depend on digital fluency as well
- Interdisciplinarity and peer-to-peer interactions take time: getting to know each other, preparing the project, agreeing on pedagogy (“*coordinating*”), carrying out the project, evaluating and reviewing it.
- Today’s student mobility is more connected, easier, and encouraged with teacher mobility. Volunteer students are therefore more actively involved, which provides teachers with a great source of motivation.

# 8

## Suggestion #8: Valuing and capitalizing on the professional experience of peermentoring



Claire is a middle school teacher: “SD is almost an “excuse”: a global topic that allows us to work together with colleagues and students, and to avoid compartmentalizing; it gives a broader perspective”. Teachers meet, each of them bringing their own skills: plastic arts teachers help create posters, communications; French teachers help on contents; Foreign language teachers deal with newspaper articles, text analyses; Technology teachers handle digital means and research.

The middle school where Jerome works aims to get the E3D<sup>2</sup> label: “We need to move forward step by step if we want to get this label. We have chosen to address environmental issues first because they are more obvious and relatable for students: we created a club environment gathering students and teachers in geography, biology, technology and English.”

# 9

## Suggestion #9: Fostering openness to the world



Marie, a teacher in Guyana, experienced trilingual exchanges with an English and history-geography teacher and a geography teacher in a high school of Barcelona. The three teachers worked together on several issues such as SDGs, the Caribbean and student exchange programs. “External openness was interesting for us as teachers: decentralizing, exploring each other’s teaching methods ... Although students did not experience it with as much acuteness as we did.”

# 10

## Suggestion #10: Going beyond the national framework?

→ Fostering partnerships and interdisciplinary work between colleagues at European level (such as Erasmus+ projects)



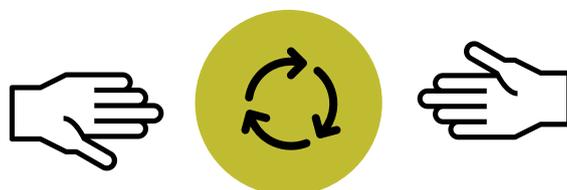
Cyrille has taken part in several European projects and confirms the benefits of this kind of experience. “The approach to SD and history/geography teaching programs vary a lot across countries – and so does the concept of ESD. For example, I noticed that cartography is specific to the French education system.”

<sup>2</sup> E3D: label given by the Ministry of National Education to “Schools/Institutions with a sustainable development approach”, that are engaged in a sustainable development project founded on the following 4 pillars altogether: Teaching; School life; Management and maintenance of the structure; Openness to the outside world through partnership. This label fosters interdisciplinarity and a global approach to SD, along with schools’ openness to the outside world. [www.eduscol.education.fr/cid79021/qu-est-ce-que-l-education-au-developpement-durable.html](http://www.eduscol.education.fr/cid79021/qu-est-ce-que-l-education-au-developpement-durable.html)

# APPENDIX 1

## WHAT IS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

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**Education for sustainable development (ESD) aims to better understand the complexity of our modern world, considering the existing interactions between the environment, society, economy, and culture. ESD has a strong holistic dimension today and provides a way to address the global challenges of society.**

**Far from being linear, its history is at the crossroads of education, environment, and development issues. Let us go back to the origins of ESD before defining the concept that brings us together today.**

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### **From the environment and then development to sustainable development**

In the 1960s, several countries, including European countries, set up programs allowing children to take part in the protection of their natural environment by putting into practice the principles of eco-citizenship. The Stockholm Conference in 1972 was a decisive turning point: the human right to a healthy environment became a substantive right and was imposed as one of the fundamental duties on every citizen. The issue of environmental education appeared for the first time in the conclusions. The world's first intergovernmental conference on environmental education was organized by the UNESCO in Tbilisi in 1977. The conference gathered high-level political leaders from around the world. One of its main takeaways is

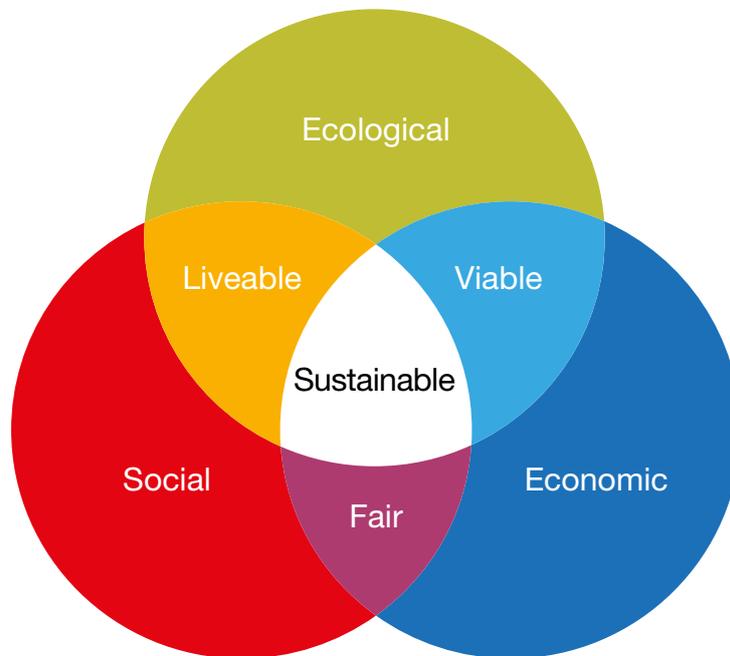
that “*Environmental education should be addressed holistically, taking into account the ecological, social, cultural and diverse other aspects of each issue.*” The question of going further than the narrow concept of environment was raised.

In the 1980s, “*environmentalists*” (environmental associations) and “*developmentalists*” (international solidarity NGOs, popular education associations, etc.) started sharing a common focus on the concept of human development. Mankind came back to the centre of socio-economic issues and international development. A human dimension was added to the definition of environment (each one respectively going beyond the “*naturalist*” approach

and the “*charitable*” approach), until globalization in the 90s.

The transition from EE to ESD took place in the 1987 Brundtland Report (named after the Chairperson of the World Commission on Environment and Development at the United Nations) and at the Rio Conference in 1992, popularly known as the “*Earth Summit*”.

The report ([Our Common Future](#)) used the expression “*sustainable development*” for the first time and defined it as follows: “***Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.***”



Sustainable development is often said to be based on “**three pillars**”:

- Economically viable (meeting the needs of the current generation);
- Socially acceptable (solidarity between societies);
- Environmentally sound;
- Some add a fourth pillar, which is culture.

This concept requires to consider three transversal perspectives:

- Spatial and temporal scales
- Scientific analysis
- Citizenship

Education towards/for sustainable development is expanding and now covers interdependent environmental, economic, social, and even cross-cultural issues, broadening the conceptualization of environmental education and targeting other forms of education. Participation and democracy are both key tools for SD and consequently for ESD, beyond investigating findings and causes, learning and seeking solutions, as well as implementing more participatory and emancipatory forms of education.

**Education for sustainable development is defined by its purpose: “help people to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions.”**

**The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)** sought to mobilize the educational resources of the world to help create a more sustainable

future. It is led globally by UNESCO, in charge of developing an operational strategy for all forms of teaching and learning.

**Sustainable development goals:  
a paradigm shift for ESD?**

2015 saw the adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations General Assembly and the Paris Agreement on climate

change. Two agendas merged the same year, namely the Earth Summit agenda and the development agendas, leading to the 2030 Agenda. This new Agenda sets a clear and universal roadmap until 2030 for sustainable, inclusive development. It is universal,

which means it applies to all countries, all of them being described as “*in the process of sustainable development*”.



- GOAL 1:** No Poverty
- GOAL 2:** Zero Hunger
- GOAL 3:** Good Health and Well-being
- GOAL 4:** Quality Education
- GOAL 5:** Gender Equality
- GOAL 6:** Clean Water and Sanitation
- GOAL 7:** Affordable and Clean Energy
- GOAL 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth
- GOAL 9:** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- GOAL 10:** Reduced Inequality
- GOAL 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities
- GOAL 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production
- GOAL 13:** Climate Action
- GOAL 14:** Life Below Water
- GOAL 15:** Life on Land
- GOAL 16:** Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
- GOAL 17:** Partnerships to achieve the Goal

Education therefore plays a catalytic role, providing the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the other 16 objectives and helping achieve the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, there will be no lasting effect nor awareness of the need to change to achieve the “*zero poverty, zero carbon, zero exclusion*” unless citizens are trained, informed, and empowered. The concept of education for sustainable development has been revised based on the SDGs: for the

first time, education has a central role in SD, aiming to train “*citizens of the world*”. SD is in the middle of many educational concepts that further broaden the vision of education for change and for a common and sustainable future: human rights, culture, peace...



**SDG 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.

The UN and UNESCO have recently intensified their action program: the 40th UNESCO General Conference (end November 2019) adopted the new global framework on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD for 2030) for the period of 2020-2030.

► [www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370215\\_fre](http://www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370215_fre)

The ESD for 2030 framework was also presented to the 74th session of the UN General Assembly: ESD “*is an integral element of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development*”.

More recently, school strikes for the climate and the mass mobilisation of young people around the world have emphasized:

- the importance of training pupils, young students but also adults in empowerment and citizen mobilization, as well as local level action.
- the importance of learning environments and capacity-building (regarding educational policies).



“Climate Action !”

An educational campaign by Solidarité Laïque to raise awareness about Children’s Rights and the issue of climate change.

► [www.solidarite-laique.org/pro/documents-pedagogiques/agir-pour-le-climat-cest-respecter-mes-droits/](http://www.solidarite-laique.org/pro/documents-pedagogiques/agir-pour-le-climat-cest-respecter-mes-droits/)

# APPENDIX 2

## HOW IS PEER-MENTORING DEFINED IN FRANCE?



### Study carried out in 2018 for the PEERMENT - Erasmus+ project Study on the French context

**The concept of peer-mentoring is difficult to translate into French, linguistically but also “culturally”.**

There is no single translation but various expressions referring to differentiated concepts, namely monitoring, tutoring, sponsorship, cooperation, and even

in some cases to “*coaching*” (French term for “*mentoring*” in the field of business), peer mediation or third party mediation.

In France, the most widely used concept, far beyond the education and school system, is “**peer education**”

(*éducation par les pairs*). But it is mainly used in cooperative and popular educational frameworks throughout life, with connotations of cultural and inter-generational transmission.

**Peer education** refers to the education of children, young people, or adults by other people of the same age, sharing the same history, the same culture, or having the same social status, including people from disadvantaged groups. The approach can vary, but in many cases, it involves providing academic support, building communication and people skills, or providing advice. In other cases, it may involve awareness raising or advocacy. The peer education approach assumes that people, especially young people, are more likely to listen and respond to awareness when raised by their peers. Peer education builds participants’ abilities to act and be part of community development solutions, rather than being in the passive and submissive position of the recipient – where they are often found.



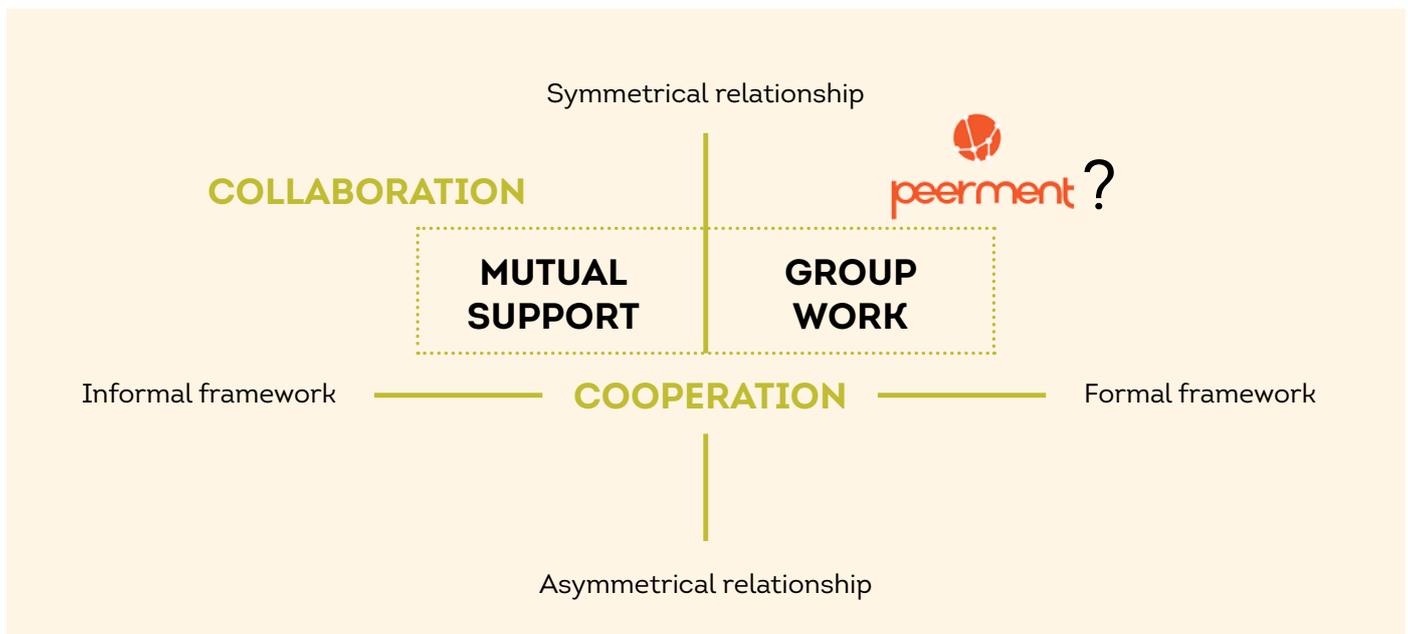
**The PEERMENT educational model** is inspired by Etienne Wenger's "theory of communities of practice". It is based on a constructivist view of learning, the idea of shared expertise and the model of integrative pedagogy, where teachers are trusted, and their professional autonomy respected (Kirsi, T., 2014). Indeed, "Peer mentoring is about strengthening supportive relationships between two people, sharing knowledge and experiences and providing an opportunity to learn from different perspectives."

Through this project, peer-mentoring focuses on the balanced, horizontal relationship between peers/all expert and learning "mentors". It is not only defined as a student-teacher relationship: in the context of this project, peer-mentoring also refers to peer relationships between teachers, known or unknown "colleagues", performing the same or different functions.

**Peer-mentoring could rather be defined as peer-to-peer collaboration; equity and reciprocity; or "peer-to-peer cooperation".**

Please find below a chart created by Sylvain CONNAC, a Professor of Educational Research at the University of Montpellier (France) and Cooperative Education Specialist. His work focuses on "cooperation between students, towards everyday fraternity". The chart below aims to understand "how cooperative actions translate in classrooms". Sylvain CONNAC addresses "cooperation between students" and "collaboration between mutually supportive adults". (based on our own translation).

**We have questioned the place of "peer-mentoring" in this chart:**



► [www.cndp.fr/crdp-nancy-metz/fileadmin/Stockage2/supports\\_formation/conferences/2015-2016/L\\_innovation\\_par\\_la\\_cooperation\\_entre\\_paires\\_-Canope\\_Nancy.pdf](http://www.cndp.fr/crdp-nancy-metz/fileadmin/Stockage2/supports_formation/conferences/2015-2016/L_innovation_par_la_cooperation_entre_paires_-Canope_Nancy.pdf)

The Y-axis considers the quality of relationship between students, which can be transferred more widely between mentees, or between the mentee and the mentor: from an asymmetrical (dominated) relationship towards a symmetrical, reciprocal relationship.

Peer relationships are obviously symmetrical, as stated earlier about peer-to-peer approaches.

The X-axis considers the environment and context of the relationship: is the relationship formalized by a framework

or rules, in a formal environment (the classroom), or is it totally informal, even free? In this case, mutual support, invisible and informal relations of cooperation are placed on the left side of the abscissa.

## Where should we place PEERMENTORING on this chart?

*A priori*, peer-mentoring should be defined as a symmetrical relationship in a formal environment, since the PEERMENT project wants to provide a framework for educators to build a peer-to-peer relationship on common foundations, from the start of the project.

Our definition of peer-mentoring in this project therefore combines:

- a peer-mentoring approach (all peers being both experts and co-learners)
- a group dynamic (2 or more) where the expert(s) pass on their knowledge when necessary,
- circle dynamics, where co-learners share their knowledge.
- a way to transform schools into “learning communities”.

This combines the best of a top-down and bottom-up approaches, which tallies with the requirements of an Education for Sustainable Development approach.



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## Peer-mentoring is little valued within the French system of formal education and teaching

Collaborative or cooperative practices, such as observing the classroom work of other teachers or teaching a course as a team, are still rare. The Talis survey (“*Teaching and learning international survey*”) initiated in 2013 by the OECD found that teaching is seen as a rather “*solitary profession*” in France. French teachers (among a broad sample of respondents at the middle-school level) expressed a strong feeling of professional efficiency, even more when practicing «active» teaching methods. That said, they tend to operate mostly individually, following rather traditional methods. Compared with other countries, they rely less on small group working (37% vs 47% on average), projects (24% vs 37%) and digital technology (22% vs 27%).

More than three-quarters of teachers in France (78%) said that they never observe the classroom work of other teachers, vs 45% on average in other OECD countries. Moreover, the distribution of working time provided by teachers confirmed the **image of a solitary profession in France, mainly focused on the class** (teaching, preparing lessons and correcting papers). The survey also confirmed that French teachers have a rather individual approach to their students’ evaluation process.

**Peer-mentoring** offers teachers the opportunity to break out of isolation, bringing a collective dimension to their educational constructions and thereby enriching them. This collective

approach enables shared reflection, new and decentralized views, and a valuable, co-constructive contribution that can be described as “*cross-fertilization of ideas*”.

**The PEERMENT project aims to produce guidelines for a new educational model for ESD:** namely a reciprocal holistic process of teachers supporting each other in a trusting environment, in which one shares knowledge and skills that contribute not only to the teacher’s personal and professional growth, but to the process of effectively becoming active “*visionaries*” and agents of a sustainable future.

# 10 SUGGESTIONS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT SCHOOL

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1. Working in project mode
2. Teaching with passion
3. Providing a more hands-on approach to teaching, adapted to students' realities
4. Considering the realities of students for inclusive education

## INTERDISCIPLINARITY: A HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE OF PEER-MENTORING

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5. Investing in peer-mentoring
6. Fostering interdisciplinarity within working practices
7. Providing good conditions for peer-mentoring
8. Valuing and capitalizing on the professional experience of peermentoring
9. Fostering openness to the world
10. Going beyond the national framework?



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