

ESD-based education

Citation for published version (APA):

Eussen, J. F. G. (2022). *ESD-based education: Fulfilling the transformative promise of education for sustainable development*. [Doctoral Thesis, Maastricht University]. ProefschriftMaken. <https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20220201je>

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2022

DOI:

[10.26481/dis.20220201je](https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20220201je)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Please check the document version of this publication:

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8 Volarisation and Impact

Since this study was not conducted in academic seclusion but amidst and by ways of a cooperation of people and organisations in practice supported by scientists, volarisation and impact are underpinned and accounted for.

A range of hypotheses and proposals have been worked out in concrete activities and instruments, applied and evaluated, volarisation following participatory research.

Having started out from zero, the OPEDUCA-project validated the underlying concept, put the proposed re-conceptualisation of ESD to the test and saw it continuously questioned by a variety of leading experts and practitioners in different circumstances and from multiple perspectives. Proof of concept has been delivered as numerous demonstrations in principle supported its feasibility.

OPEDUCA was welcomed by an array of denominations, found a wide-spread participation of practitioners in schools and beyond as well as from academics. Therewith numerous applications in daily practice could be realised, each instrument passing extensive testing, providing proof of concept and offering further insights as to how and under what conditions ESD-based Education can be further developed in synergy with school development and contemporary policy priorities.

It was demonstrated in an impactful way the OPEDUCA-concept gives reason for a multi-disciplinary partnership to further explore and expand the concept and execute the instruments jointly. Of the 40 Dutch schools that took part during the research period 80% found reason and argument to executive the envisioned learning in their daily practice while 44% of these sought structural embedment, 25% entering a transition process while such was initially not planned for. It can be regarded an achievement of school leaders and teachers ideas were brought to action, doing so from their own conviction, not commanded by any authority, not originating from within the system, not on instigation of any governmental program, but for the sake of improving education on the grounds and in the way described in this study.

Validation was established as schools got in motion and industry, governmental organisations and others provided actual, material and financial support.

During the study, the OPEDUCA-concept found acknowledgement and support of three Dutch inter-departmental programs (Learning for Sustainable Development, Education & Entrepreneurship and Environmental Education), 6 EU-funded projects, 80 companies and dozens of (semi-)governmental organisations. 'The OPEDUCA Project Europe 2014-2016', that involved 19 partner organisations from 8 European countries, over 60 teachers, ESD-experts and scholars, was awarded good to excellent by third-party evaluation.

As the process and contents of this study proved relevant in the various realms it brings together, public as well as private stakeholders invested by ways of capacity, facilities as well as financially. The outcomes of the research obviously served all those persons and organisations mentioned, primarily schools, policy developers, politicians, managers in industry, NGO's active in ESD, parents and students.

The study was presented at various occasions, mostly as keynote in conference setting, amongst others for the City of Grand Rapids, the Oxford Academy, the Government of Morocco, the UNESCO Ambassadors Meeting in Paris, the City of Madrid and the Province of Istanbul, the latter two consequently seeking implementation of the concept by written invitation based on formal governmental decision. The concept stood model for a global Conference on ESD in cooperation with United Nations University, welcoming over 140 academics from 42 countries, resulting in intermediate peer reviews of the concept and instruments.

Experts in ESD took example of and built further on this study's propositions and findings, the research being brought to service of the academic community as well as policy developers on the regional, national and international level.

The study generated coverage in traditional and traffic on social media, including the manifestation of a network of over 450 scholars and government officials from 24 countries, members of a virtual OPEDUCA-community of over 20.000 persons in more than 110 countries. Still today, years after the completion of the last operations underlying this study, the daily number of unique visitors on the dedicated website exceeds 1.100 .

While we are grateful the OPEDUCA-project and -concept added value to the existing body of science and knowledge in Education and Sustainable Development, we see realistic potential for its continuation and expansion following the publication of this study as of 2022, hopefully for years to come in the interest of the young.

Jos Eussen

June 1st , 2021

*The one time I took a lie-detector test,
the machine confessed everything it knew.*

