



Learning, teaching and practicing sustainable development

Henri Janne meeting room 15th floor, Sociology Institute, ULB Solbosch Campus, Ave Jeanne 44, 1050 Brussels.

Brussels, 2 and 3 March 2012

Prospectus

Background

We are living in times of change in the life-support system of our planet and in our societies. Within the lifetime of today's young people we need to accommodate up to an estimated 9 billion fellow-humans, compared to our current population of an estimated seven billion citizens, predominantly living in urban areas. We need to ask ourselves what type of education, knowledge and skills young people need to live peacefully and sustainably with one another.

This also begs the question how we may all want to revisit the way we live, exercise our respective professions and relate to nature, the seas, and to our global neighbours of all ages, beliefs, races and gender. The sciences produced assessments of the state of our ecosystems, the climate and the oceans which are extremely worrying. They also give us a better handle on how we might cope drawing on the knowledge that is already available in the public domain, even create new opportunities for lifting more people out of poverty and live dignified lives.

But clearly, our ability to make our societies more equitable and able to cope through harnessing collective intelligence and capacity to act does not only depend on scientific or technical knowledge. It critically depends on interpreting and using such knowledge in a humanistic framework and hone social responsibilities and cooperative skills, which have been neglected in some of the 'Western' societies in recent decades. Rethinking education and sustainable living will also have to lead to the emergence of governance frameworks able to enable much required cooperation from local to global levels well beyond the practice within the UN system.

Objective

Against this backdrop, and taking into account research and exploratory practice in several scientific fields, in the arts and in education, the **objective of the workshop** is to reflect and co-create new insights about the need of accompanying young people on the road to shaping their adult lives in sustainable ways. It is about how to enable alternative practices inside and outside formal educational situations. Such practices need to be based on robust pedagogical concepts centered on the whole person in the context of the local community and social group, yet also conscious of interdependence of other local and global developments. This is to enable young people to meet their global peers on our crowded planet and to learn how to cooperate for better futures. The joint reflection adds to on-going efforts under the UNESCO Decade for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability and other efforts.

How are we addressing the objective?

To this effect, the workshop will bring together experienced professionals and practitioners with diverse backgrounds in education, the sciences and the arts to cross-fertilise their knowledge and experience.

It is also expected that some action lines will emerge from the conversations and cross-wiring that offer participants the opportunity to follow-up on the results. This could entail cooperation on specific projects after the workshop, some of which may be already ongoing by Mundus maris and/or driven by participants. We also offer the possibility to establish a community of practice for

continued joint learning through the practice of participatory methods of teaching and living to help sustainable living to emerge.

The workshop will be convened using participatory working methods and thus not be built primarily around presentation of research papers and a formal setting, though impulse presentations of selected speakers have their place. The main thrust is focused on enabling a real conversation between participants around these issues allowing them to weave their combined expertise and experience into a better shared understanding.

Participants are invited to prepare by bringing case material from their own experience about good practices in teaching and practicing acquisition and sharing of knowledge and social skills along the lines which may be useful or necessary in the future.

You can find some background reflections about underlying approaches in [aesthetic formation](#) as developed in the context of the Mare Nostrum Project, particularly by Carla Zickfeld. Further material can be found in the presentations at the *Mundus maris* panel about [rethinking \(sustainable\) development](#) at the EADI conference in York, September 2011, titled 'Rethinking Development in an Age of Scarcity and Uncertainty'.

Selected lead questions / themes for consideration at the workshop are:

- Which scientific and technical knowledge do young people need to live sustainably with another 7-9 billion humans and respect the seas and their ecosystems as essential components of the One-Earth system?
- What social skills and cultural competencies do young people need to meet - and co-exist peacefully with - their global peers?
- How to teach those competencies in a changing world with young people in mind, but also conceptualising learning as a life-long opportunity?
- How to keep track whether educational efforts are successful and develop adaptation capabilities for content and process?
- Which formal or informal education is needed to accompany the youth in their discoveries?
- Design of a step-by-step Plan to implement the results of the workshop.

Practicalities

The workshop is organised by *Mundus maris* asbl in collaboration with SEDIF asbl in the context of the 2012 edition of Campus Plein Sud at the Free University of Brussels (ULB), coordinated by SEDIF / ULB. It is by invitation, but persons interested, but not invited are encouraged to contact us.

It will last 1 ½ days from 2 to 3 March 2012 (Friday all day, 9h to 17h45, and Saturday morning from 9h to 14h, including lunch). The venue is the Henri Janne meeting room, 15th floor of the Sociology Institute of the Free University of Brussels (ULB), Solbosch Campus, Ave. Jeanne 44, 1050 Brussels.

The workshop will be convened in **English**. Depending on the language abilities of participants, whispering arrangements could be made to enable other language speakers to participate more fully (French, German, Spanish, Italian, if need be); however, some English language knowledge is indispensable for meaningful participation.

We do **not charge participants any workshop fees**, but expect them to pay for their own travel and accommodation costs. Special cases requiring financial support should be raised with *Mundus maris* asbl management committee (info@mundusmaris.org).

Your critical reaction and proposals are most welcome. If you want to propose some background reading for the benefit of interested participants as an additional opportunity, not as a requirement, please indicate such reading at any time.

An experienced hosting team will cater for conducive working conditions.

A publication is planned to synthesise our joint learning to be able to share it with others as well. Other more academic output may also be envisaged.

Please confirm your participation using the workshop registration form by 27 January 2012 to info@mundusmaris.org.

You will then receive confirmation and additional logistical and other information in preparation of the workshop.

For questions and further information, please contact Julia Malaise of SEDIF [jmalaise@ulb.ac.be].