Towards sustainability audits in Finnish schools

Development of criteria for social and cultural sustainability

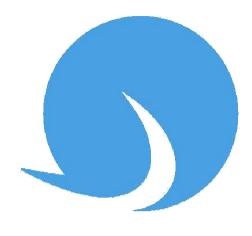


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The OKKA Foundation

 Is a foundation for training, teaching and personal development supporting the educational sector.



ΟΚΚΑ

- Is founded by the Trade Union of Education in Finland OAJ and associations of teachers in vocational education.
- Is responsible for the Environmental Certification of Educational Establishments.



Sustainable development in Finnish schools

- Focus has been on environmental education, development of school environmental programmes and implementation of environmental projects
- Cultural sustainability: local and national cultural heritage, cultural diversity emerging due to increasing number of immigrants
- Social sustainability: e.g., wellbeing of students, stop for mental and physical violence, health education, occupational health and safety
- National core curricula (first and secondary level of education): value basis, school operational culture, sustainable development as a subject crossing theme



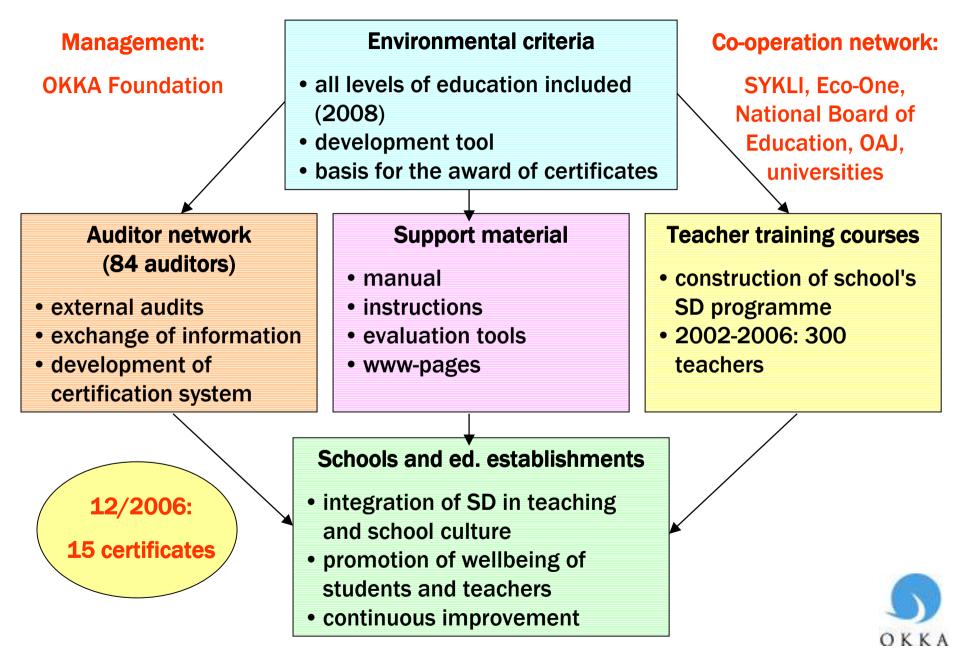
Development tools

National strategy of Education for Sustainable Development:

- All schools and educational establishments have sustainability programmes by 2010
- Development of SD criteria for schools and educational establishments including ecological, social, cultural and economic sustainability -> tools for evaluation and development
- 15% of schools and educational establishments have environmental certificate by 2014
- Support: Environmental Certification of Educational Establishments, Eco-Schools programme



Environmental Certification of Educational establishments



Parts of the environmental criteria



2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

3. MAINTENENCE ACTIVITIES



CRITERIA PART 1: Management of SD



CRITERIA PART 2: Environmental Education

ÉDUCATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

Basic knowledge of ecology, environment, society, environmental problems, etc.

Systems thinking

Critical thinking

Sustainable lifestyle

Sustainable development in one's own occupational field

EDUCATION IN OR FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

Sensitivity and personal relationship to nature and the environment

Nature, constructed environment and society as learning environments

Observation and interpretation of natural / environmental phenomena

> Practice and procedures of SD in working life

THE ENVIRONMENT

EDUCATION FOR

Practising SD in everyday school life

Participation in school development and decision making processes

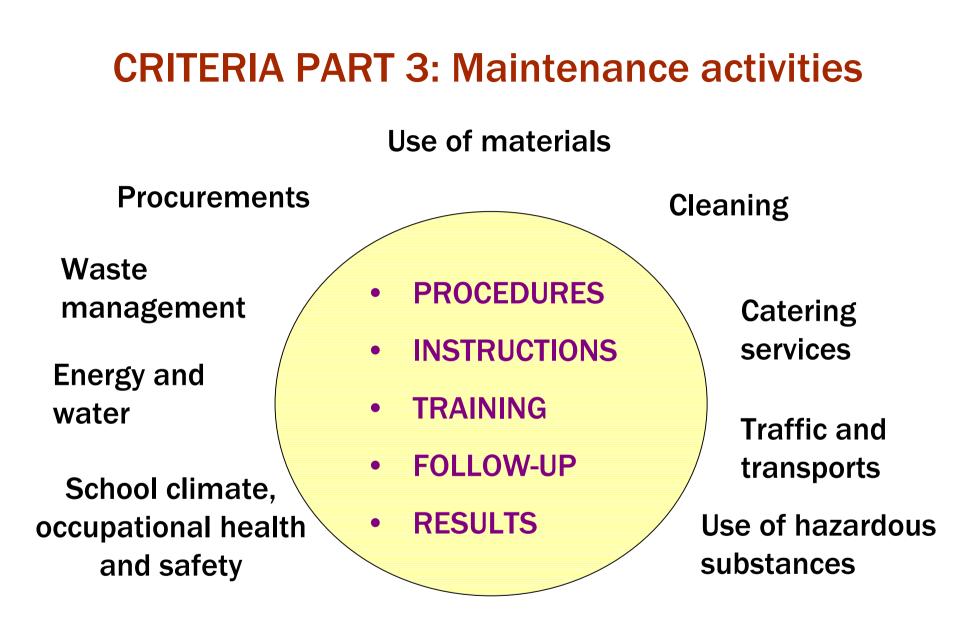
Participative projects with the local community

Global influencing

Learning at work place

Knowledge and skills





Cooperation and communication with external service providers and maintaining organisation!



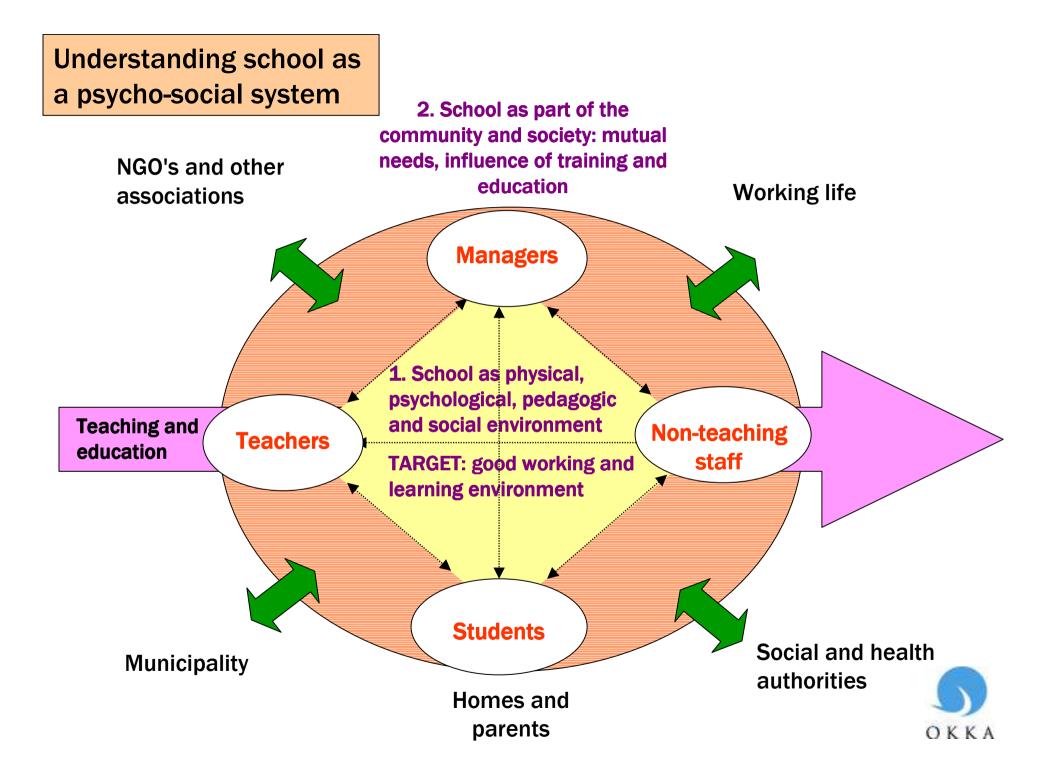
Development of criteria for social and cultural sustainability 2007-2008



Challenges for schools

- Holistic view to sustainable development in education:
 - definition and integration of ecological, social, cultural and economic sustainability in teaching and learning, and school operational culture
 - understanding school as a social system
- Continuity of development work in schools
 - from projects to processes
 - participation and commitment of the whole school community
 - integration of sustainable development as part of school management
- Creating active contacts and new forms of cooperation with the society





Values and elements of sustainable development in the school culture.

The picture shows the central values on which sustainable school culture is based on, and examples of practice by which the different elements of sustainability manifest themselves in everyday school life.

(Laininen, Manninen, Tenhunen: "Perspectives to sustainable development in schools, 2006)

Economic sustainability

- Economy, eco-efficiency and lifecycle of products, e.g.,
 - procurements
 - saving materials and energy
 - re-use, sharing, renting and borrowing of products
 - sorting and recycling of waste
- Use of Fare trade products
- Real estate maintenance
- Optimization of transports
- Multi-use premises

Ecological sustainability

- Environmentally friendly procurements
- Saving materials, energy and water
- Re-use, recycling and sorting of waste
- Green transport
- Safe use of hazardous substances

School values

- Respect of life and nature
- Moderation and economy
- Mental and physical health
- Global justice, rights of generations to come
- Equality and mutual respect
- Diversity of values and culture
- Democracy

Cultural sustainability

- Local cultural traditions and customs
- Conservation of cultural environment
- Cultural diversity as part of everyday school life

Social sustainability

- Occupational health and safety, ambience of premises
- Wellbeing and equality of staff and students
- Access for disabled people
- Ethical, safe and healthy procurements
- Prevention of exclusion, racism, and mental and physical violence
- Openness, cooperation and possibilities of participation
- Creating contacts to local community

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Challenges of teaching and learning

Current teaching tradition has a strong knowledge-based approach:

- Do we educate children and young people to adopt one given image of the world which is not sustainable one?
- With this prior assumption, how can we support critical thinking and finding new innovative and sustainable solutions?
- Is it more important to concentrate on learning separate facts than understanding relationships between different things and seeing the "big picture"?
- Do we miss values and ethical education in our current teaching tradition?
- How can we support students' ABILITY and WILL to act for sustainable future?



Viewpoints to elements of education for sustainable development

Erkka Laininen

1. Knowledge

• knowledge of ecological, social, cultural and economic environment in which we live in

2. Thinking

- search, evaluation, selection and interpretation of information
- understanding of entities and ecological, technical and social systems
- critical thinking, future scenarios
- understanding of one's own possibilities of influencing, and societal power relations
- construction of one's own values, commitment to sustainable lifestyle

3. Action and experiences

- creation of personal relationship to nature and the environment
- interaction with other people and cultures
- solving of real-life problems
- practicing of sustainable lifestyle
- participation and influencing in school or work community, and in society
- practicing skills of democracy

Active citizenship = ABILITY and WILL to participate and act for sustainable future



