

Eco friendly expectations and limitations in daycare

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This presentation elaborates on expectations and limitations of eco-friendly pedagogical responses to the sustainability crisis. The pedagogical perspectives on eco-friendly responses originates from an action research project involving pedagogues in day care centers and teachers at a University College in Denmark. As part of the project they were asked to explore, elaborate and develop new pedagogical actions and perspectives related to future relationships between human beings and our common nature

The critical point of departure highlighted societal and pedagogical shortcomings when facing the challenges that arise from the sustainability crisis and the declining ability of society to renew its natural and societal living conditions (Sachs 1999, Shiva 2005). Pedagogues from five daycare centers participated in a two-year long open-ended experiment on how to develop pedagogics of emergent sustainability. This implied local experiments that extended or developed existing nature activities to meet regulated nature and to reach out for sustainability issues.

The experiments proved to favor Eco-friendly innovations aimed to enhance children's eco-friendly behavior. For example, the children were taught how to recycle and separate waste, to make drawings on both sides of the paper, to turn off the light and only flush the toilet once, and to reuse water when watering the garden. Supporting children's eco-friendly behaviour was, by pedagogues as well as teachers at UC, argued to create a second-nature awareness about sustainability. However, Eco-friendly innovations of nature-oriented activities proved to raise (at least) three new pedagogical challenges, that will be elaborated in the presentation;

61607; The rather intimate and local responses to environmental issues did not succeed to bridge to global perspectives on sustainability; the connections (if any) between local recycling and environmental crisis proved to be a difficult pedagogical endeavor.

61607; Eco-friendly behaviour placed responsibility for sustainability on the pedagogues, the children and their parents, and not so much on decision-makers, companies and political regulations.

61607; Eco-friendly behavior does not, in and by itself, seem to stimulate investigative thinking on how to respond to sustainability problems when there are no easy solutions.

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