

What in a word: Education for Sustainable Development



Over the past few months, under Adela's coordination, the **Education for Sustainable Development Group** has been working at creating a network of Multipliers on Sustainable Development information, in the framework of **2015 - European Year for Development**. This endeavour was developed as part of the **Multiplied information, greater impact** project implemented by **ARCADIA** with the support of the UNDP's regional office for Europe and Central Asia and the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We are currently interested in developing ARCADIA's activity as a relevant actor in the field of Development Education. We strive to do so by promoting projects and educational initiatives which support mass-media, civil society organizations and any other interested parties to expand their understanding of sustainable development. Using participatory education methodologies, we wish to engage such social actors in advancing their practice towards a broader, more inclusive approach to development, both locally and internationally, she told us.

Adela Militaru is the coordinator of the **Education for Sustainable Development Group (ESD Group)** within ARCADIA - the Romanian Association for International Development and Cooperation.

The Group was established in March 2015, with the aim of shaping a community of practitioners and researchers working towards a more informed approach of promoting Sustainable Development by means of Education and training. Its main focus is to provide expertise and engage stakeholders in constructive dialogue, building on evidence-based perspectives on the dimensions of Sustainable Development.

Alexandra: Education for sustainable development (ESD) was included in 3 targets in the proposed post-2015 sustainable development global agenda (Goal 4, 12 and 13) showing its importance in contributing to the achievement of different development objectives (i.e. education, sustainable consumption and climate change). In this context, the Education for Sustainable Development Group (ESDG) that you recently organized in Romania seems to follow the global trend and grow accordingly very fast. What were your incentives to coagulate such a global-like group in Romania?



Adela: At a close scrutiny of the post-2015 Agenda, the value of Education in promoting Sustainable Development seems to be of crucial importance for the next 15 years. Surely, it transcends the scope and mandate of Goal 4, that of ensuring equitable and quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. I would agree that education plays a big part in contributing to the success of most of the other goals: eradicating extreme poverty and ending hunger, as well as achieving gender equality, ensuring sustainable consumption patterns, raising awareness

on climate change, and ensuring productive employment through better qualified workforce.

In my view, our work as ESDG is valuable precisely in the light of the recently adopted Sustainable

Development global Agenda. Our purpose was to provide expertise and training to build the capacity of public institutions and the private sector, as well as civil society organizations and mass-media, to understand and develop more sustainable practices in applying the principles of sustainable development. We see this as a precondition to the success of the 2030 global agenda, and in this light, as a community of research and practice, we seek to encourage Romanian stakeholders to join the global partnership as a reliable actor in promoting sustainable development.

Alexandra: ESD, as a concept, has the tremendous fluidity and capacity to enable different development actors to collaborate and address global issues and local priorities. How does ARCADIA's ESDG contribute to the advancement of this concept?

Adela: Our activity reflects the well-known principle *Think globally, act locally*, in whichever setting we are active. As all ARCADIA members, ESD Group members are contributing their expertise and specialized input to reach larger audiences in countries where they work, informing about sustainable development by means of education and training.

Using the experience of our latest project, we elaborated accessible informative materials on sustainable development, and delivered three training courses dedicated to civil society and mass-media from 3 regions of Romania. The participatory methodologies we use during our trainings and interactions with target audiences facilitated collaboration, and aimed precisely at addressing interconnected global issues with relevance for participants' own local contexts. The ESD methodology encouraged them to reflect on their experience and advance ideas on how they could tackle their local challenges in line with global priorities.

Alexandra: What are the main priorities of the first project you are working on now with the Education for Sustainable Development Group?



Adela: First of all, we seek to inform the local public on the global priorities set through the new global agenda (for example see our [Infographic - from MDGs to SDGs \(RO\)](#)). In order to do so, we created a community of trained multipliers - civil society members and media professionals - who can contribute with their skills and knowledge to larger target audiences, promoting a broader understanding of what sustainable development is and how we can actively contribute to it.

Our trainers and multipliers are contributing with their experience to reach a larger public and inform an increasing number of actors on the urgency of committing to a more sustainable set of social, economic and environmental practices.

Alexandra: The ESD Group has the dynamics of a learning organization skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge. How do you see it growing in the near future? In which direction do you aim to orient your activities?

Adela: After addressing the target audience of civil society members and mass-media, we will transfer this knowledge to other stakeholders who promote sustainable development through their activities. Our focus for the near future relies on developing more informative material, working methods and applied research tools, adapted to local and international audiences. By this effort, we wish to encourage more effective ESD practices and evaluate their impact and alignment with the priorities to the new global agenda. For instance, at the moment we are working with a group of researchers on elaborating an Observatory of Romanian Resources for Sustainable Development Education, which will be used to monitor the impact of ESD activities implemented locally.

Looking beyond this, the future will probably challenge us to perform more and more capacity building for public institutions and private organizations, as well as provide training and consultancy to NGOs and other actors. There is huge potential of this field, and our expertise may well be of increasing interest for a wide range of actors interested in expanding their understanding of sustainable development and realigning their organizational practices with a more global,

sustainable dimension.

Alexandra: What message would you like to pass on to development workers interested in working with the concept of education for sustainable development or in other words, working with the Education for Sustainable Development Group?



Adela: Development is happening as we speak and it is our collective responsibility to shape the direction it is growing into. A growing community of professionals believes that **education lies at the core of sustainable development** and if we are willing to join forces, our voice can become strong enough to make a difference.

Working with the Education for Sustainable Development Group will challenge all those interested to join forces in redesigning our world based on the principles of people, planet, peace, prosperity and partnership. For sure, it cannot be an easy task, but it is definitely worth our effort.

If you wish to get more information on the activity of ARCADIA's ESG, you can join our network on http://arcadianetwork.ning.com/group/development_education, or write an email to adela.militaru@arcadianetwork.org

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Adela Militaru holds a BA degree in Psychology from the University of Bucharest and she specialized in Counselling and Educational Psychology at MA level at Babeş-Bolyai University. Throughout her studies, she pursued her passion for education and training and was actively involved as trainer and mentor within several NGOs, at European and local level, including AEGEE-European Students' Forum and PATRIR.

Curious about the world, in 2013 Adela joined an MA programme in International Development at the Faculty of Political Science of Babeş-Bolyai University, which she recently graduated from. Her passion for Education and Development led her to undertake a field research in Ahmedabad, India, that became her MA dissertation. Contributing to the capacity building of an Indian grassroots organization to increase the quality of community-based educational programs, she returned from India motivated to follow-up on this experience, and deliver the best practices she had found to other parts of the world. This experience had a tremendous influence in her decision to coagulate the Education for Sustainable Development Group.

She believes that education can change our approach towards development for the better, by fostering more inclusive, responsible, just and cohesive communities around the world.