



**Report on the LEARN Meeting in Budapest,  
by Monika Reti**

Ideas and plans for a new project were outlined at LEARN meeting on 26-27 March in Budapest. Hosted by the Hungarian Institute of Educational Research and Development, participants at this preliminary meeting were searching for possibilities to raise questions and make meaningful inquiries about future-leading learning environments.

After an insight to former projects and research conducted by participants concerning various aspects of learning environments and sustainability and a critical approach to international efforts made to describe innovative learning environments (with special emphasis on OECD ILE) a vivid discussion emerged about some general issues (mainly about sustainability and education and also the systemic processes within (public) education such as innovation, success criteria, change management, networking itself and knowledge governance) and specific areas (such as linking educational processes with nature and field education, using ICT and knowledge management tools). Despite the small number of participants there was a fruitful exchange of ideas and a progressive and promising planning phase.

Based on these discussions the focal points of the project emerged: by collecting existing good practices and exemplar cases for future-leading learning environments we are going to make inquiries about the innovation processes in education that could be empowered and supported by setting up learning networks.

We strongly hope that our inquiries about learning will contribute to establishing and empowering initiatives both on local and on systemic level that could lead to a successful and enjoyable form of learning for sustainability.

## **Main points of the meeting**

### **Developing a future-leading base for teaching and learning ESD – in context of local and global dimensions.**

Our base ought to include own digital platform (consisting of data, examples) for collaborative knowledge building and existing examples like Nature Gate should also be included (UN international year of biodiversity 2010 and learning sustainable use of local and global biodiversity). We should encourage the creativity of students as it is a future-leading force.

To achieve this:

- we should have a self-corrective attitude as real science is
- we should concentrate of being in harmony with nature
- we should challenge the definition and theory of sustainability (ESD)

### **Create a theoretical based open framework for supporting future-leading teaching and learning (inquiry based learning, collaborative knowledge, lifelong learning) with a value-based background**

We will develop concept maps covering the theory of SD, ESD, LE and educational innovation and the connection about them, and then map cultural differences in approaches to global dimension of ESD based on these to aid analysing examples.

To achieve this:

- we include modern approaches including: (a) socio-cultural approach: collaborative knowledge building, continual testing, cumulative, self-corrective, self-reflective; (b) constructivism, socio-constructivism; (c) neuroscience findings and biological perspectives;

(d) infrastructural, local and gender-related aspects; (e) individual expectations and means of parents and students

- identify indicators for the process
  - theoretical base should use on-line form like wiki
- nominate our values

### **Searching and inquiring principles of pedagogical assessment suitable for examining already existing practices.**

We should concentrate on multiple levels (students, teachers, schools, society, and mankind) and use web-based tools for that keeping in mind the flexibility of learning and teaching.

To achieve this:

- we promote piloting teachers' portfolios to learn more about the role of teachers' ESD competencies
- we use quality criteria for ESD
- we keep an eye on diversity of personal goals of children
- we search for innovative school assessment methods

### **School' quality includes also participating and collaborating in networks. LEARN creates an own digital network.**

This network is aware of security concerns and ethical views, will be extended to stakeholders, companies from economics sectors and develop a close connection between public and higher education (with special regard on teacher training and educators). Networking is important on personal level too.

To achieve this:

- we establish a platform of our own
- we use web2 solutions force
- teach schools to use this digital network and create their own network (which becomes a quality indicator)
- evaluate the quality improvement of working with digital networks

### **Encouraging making inquiries about innovation and empowering them to establish permanent development towards sustainability, learning from other sectors in society.**

To achieve this:

- provide guidelines for educational innovators (possibly portfolio for school level)
- promoting scientific way of thinking (including critical asking and dealing with open questions and testing everything, even assumptions)
- foster successful lessons, confident critics and self-confidential individuals
- analyse exemplar cases of successful and sustainable school innovations supporting sustainability and make a comparative study to outline similarities with and differences from other sectors in society in the process of innovation

We invite researchers and various stakeholders to take part in our project: besides the core team we have already established a reference group that could serve as a reflective body to our findings and ideas and are eager to start networking with anyone interested in sharing practices, ideas and joining this promising adventure.