

# What training do we need for greening the economy?

Keynote held at

„Opportunities and chances for green economy in Estonia”

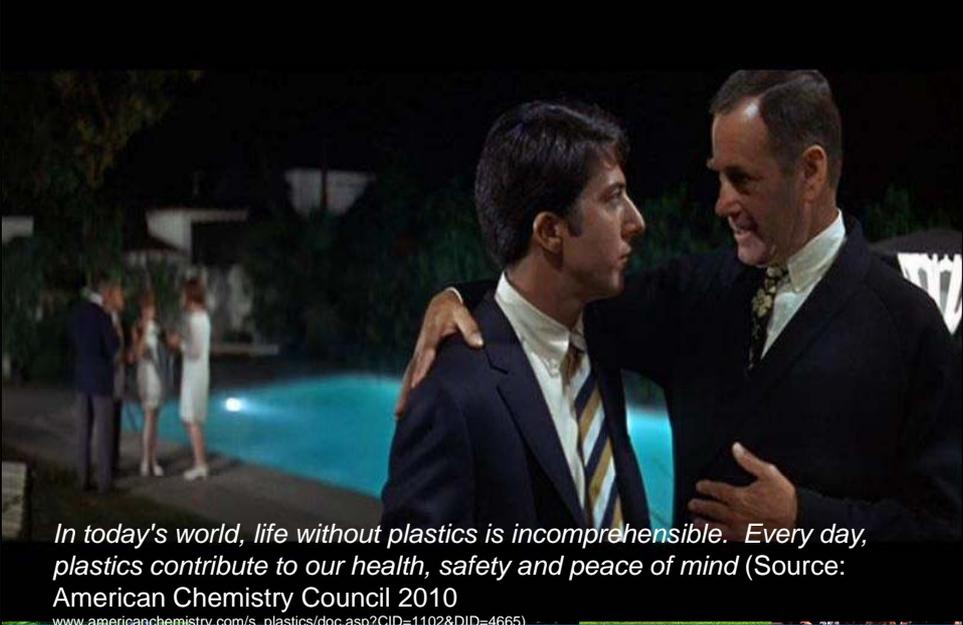
Arjen E.J. Wals



## Outline

1. Unsustainability, change & confusion
2. Green economy, green jobs, green skills?
3. The role of training, education and learning
4. Key points





*In today's world, life without plastics is incomprehensible. Every day, plastics contribute to our health, safety and peace of mind* (Source: American Chemistry Council 2010  
[www.americanchemistry.com/s\\_plastics/doc.asp?CID=1102&DID=4665](http://www.americanchemistry.com/s_plastics/doc.asp?CID=1102&DID=4665))



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60.000/5sec      2.000.000/5min [www.chrisjordan.com](http://www.chrisjordan.com)



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**plantbottle™**  
up to **30%** plant-based  
**100%** recyclable bottle  
redesigned plastic,  
recyclable as ever.

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The advertisement features a green recycling symbol with a plant growing inside it. To the right, a Coca-Cola bottle and a Dasani water bottle are shown side-by-side. The Coca-Cola bottle is red and the Dasani bottle is blue. The text on the left describes the 'plantbottle' as being up to 30% plant-based and 100% recyclable, and notes that it is redesigned plastic that is recyclable as ever. The Wageningen University logo is at the bottom left.

## GREEN Economy?

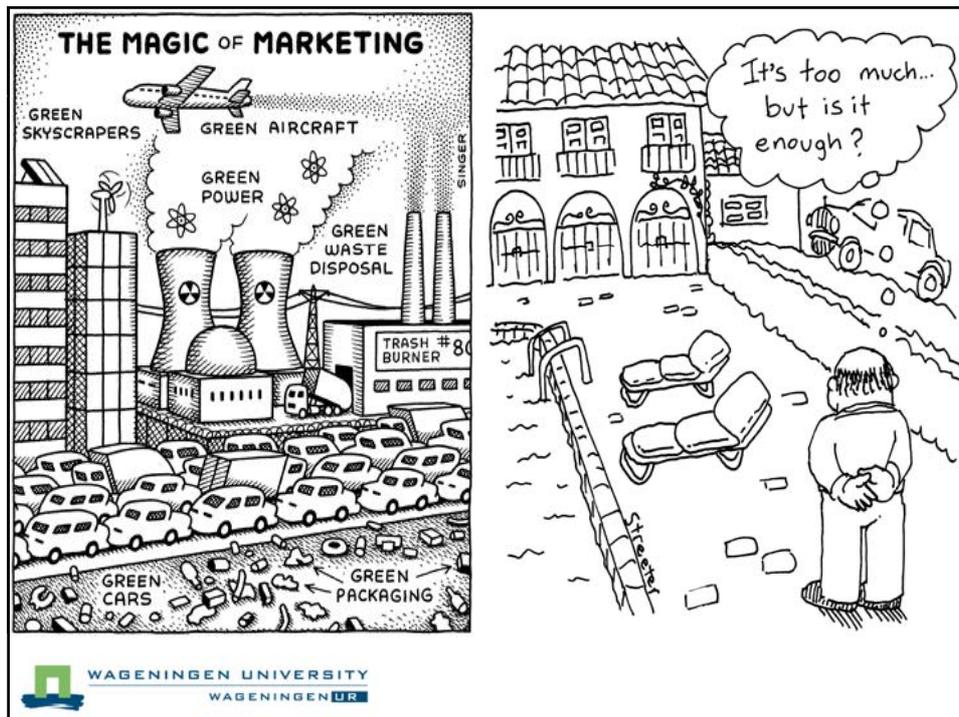


**I'M READY for a GREEN ECONOMY**

**WOMEN REJECT 'GREEN ECONOMY'!**  
Freedom from Debt Coalition - Women's Committee

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The image is titled 'GREEN Economy?'. It contains two photographs. The left photo shows a woman with glasses smiling and holding a sign that says 'I'M READY for a GREEN ECONOMY'. The right photo shows a woman wearing a pink flower crown and holding a sign that says 'WOMEN REJECT 'GREEN ECONOMY!''. Below her sign, it says 'Freedom from Debt Coalition - Women's Committee'. In the background of the right photo, there are other signs, including one that says 'Project Mother Earth REJECT 'Green' Economy!' and another that says 'Freedom from Debt Coalition'. The Wageningen University logo is at the bottom left.



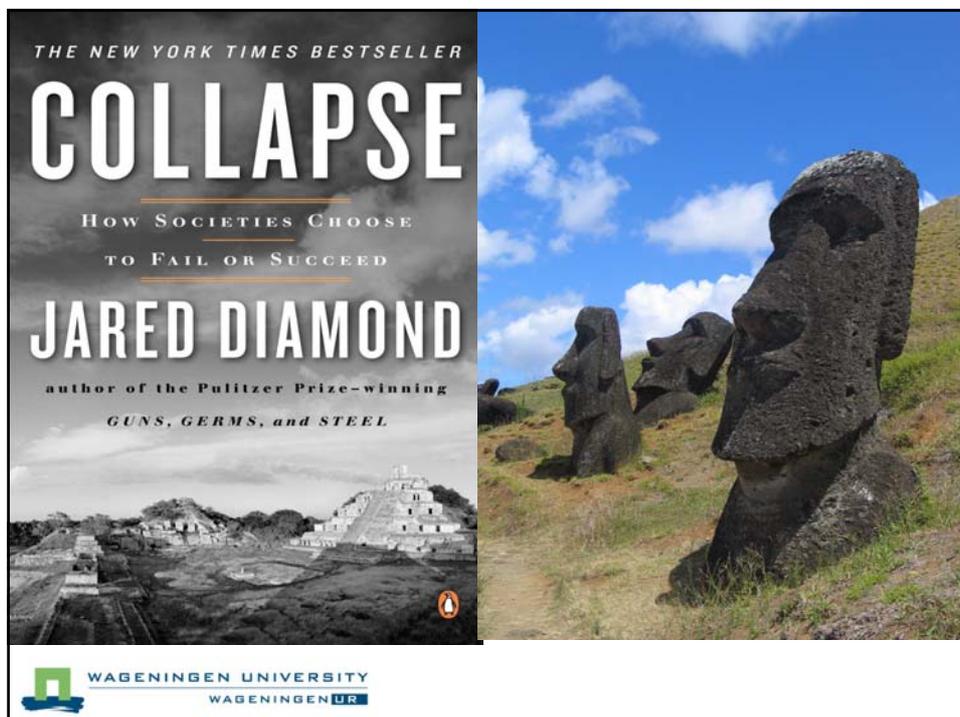
## Erosion of trust in science?

- Runaway (?) climate change
- Calcium supplements for women
- Should men >50 be tested for prostate cancer?
- Is organic sustainable and locally grown better?
- Are vegetables grown in cities healthy?

- .... **‘ We are drowning in information while starving for wisdom ’** E.O. Wilson, 1998, p. 300)

## We live in 'unusual times'

- Complexity
- Uncertainty
- Contestation and controversy – extinction of 'truth' & erosion of 'trust" (fact free science, fact free politics, science as opinion)
- Shallowness and hyper-connectivity – erosion of meaning



“The conventional wisdom holds that all education [and research] is good, and the more of it one has, the better.... The truth is that without significant precautions, [it] can equip people merely to be more effective vandals of the Earth”  
(D. Orr).



The Hong Kong Institute of Education  
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Hong Kong, China

## Forum on Skills Development for Green Jobs in Hong Kong

12 June 2012, The Hong Kong Institute of Education

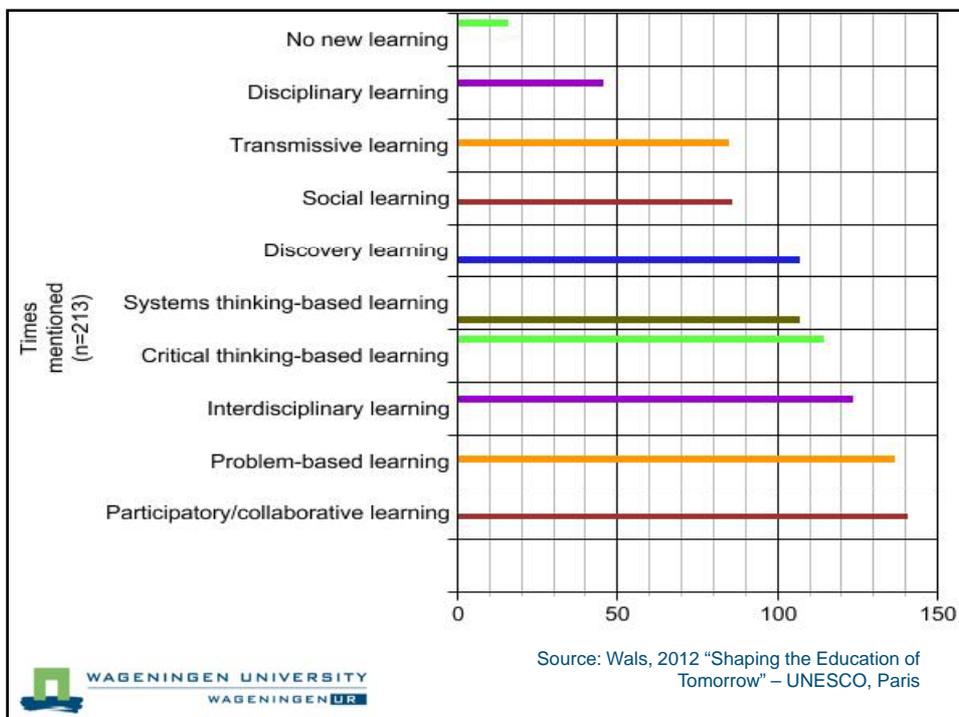
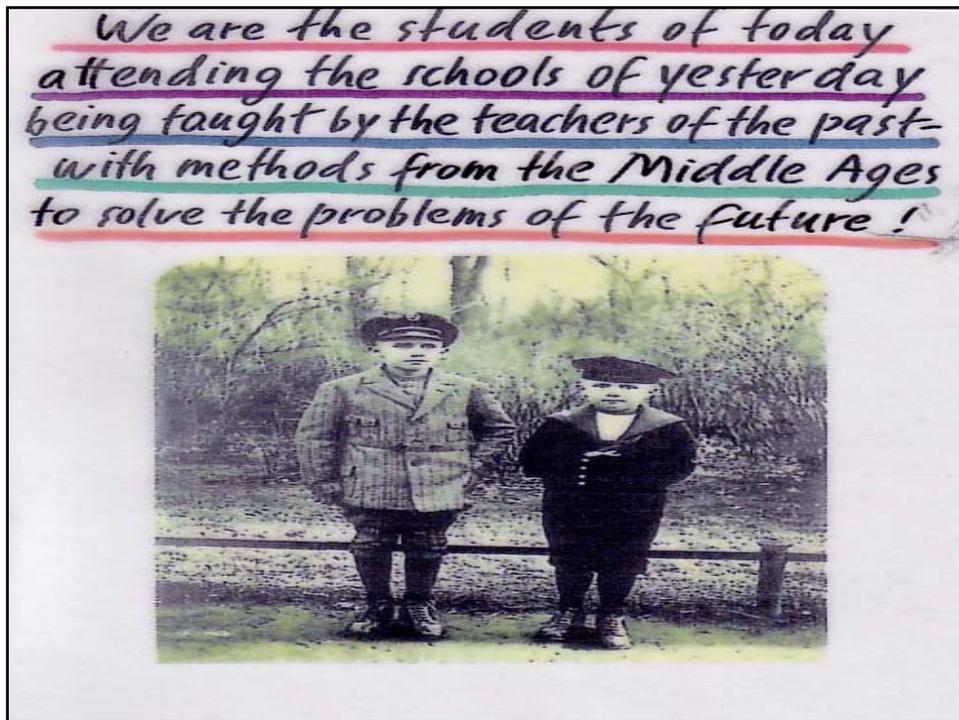
- Session 1**  
Changes in Skills Requirements in a Greening Economy – Government and NGO Perspectives
- Session 2**  
Changes in Skills Requirements in a Greening Economy – Employers' Perspectives
- Session 3**  
Changes in Skills Requirements in a Greening Economy – Training Providers' Perspectives
- Session 4**  
Changes in Skills Requirements in a Greening Economy – Ways Forward

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Registration & Enquiries  
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[www.ied.edu.hk/greenskills/](http://www.ied.edu.hk/greenskills/)

The poster features a central graphic of a globe surrounded by green leaves, a house, and a recycling symbol, all set against a background of green and white curved lines.

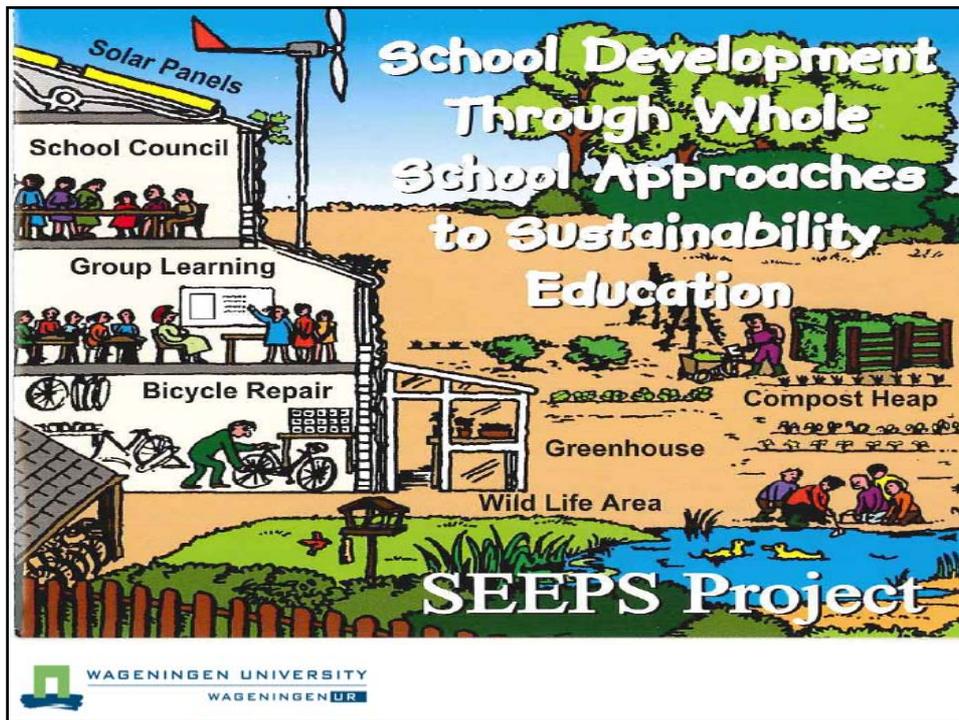


## An ESD Lens → beyond training

- **Integrative** – not only the ecological and the environmental, not only the present, not only the local, not only the human world
- **Critical** - questioning continuous economic growth and consumerism and associated lifestyles
- **Transformative** – exploration of alternative lifestyles (e.g. 'voluntary simplicity'), values and systems that break from existing ones that are inherently unsustainable

## Sustainability Competence

- |   |   |                     |
|---|---|---------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understanding sustainable development</li> <li>■ Systems thinking</li> <li>■ Adopting an integral view</li> </ul>  | } | Dynamics of SD      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Personal leadership and entrepreneurship</li> <li>■ Unlocking creativity, utilizing diversity</li> <li>■ Appreciating chaos &amp; complexity</li> <li>■ Fostering collective change</li> </ul> | } | Change & Innovation |



## Concluding remarks

- Integrating sustainability and 'green' is just as much about *how* we teach and learn as it about *what* we teach and learn.
- Sustainability requires more space in curricula for systems thinking, integrative design and multiple ways of knowing.
- Sustainability and a green *society* require new competencies, also on the part of the teaching staff.
- Blurring the boundaries between institutional, community-based and workplace learning is essential (blended learning)
- Critical thinking (e.g. interrogating taken-for-granted values, behaviours and systems), diversity and deep democracy are essential components of sustainability-oriented education for a green *society* of which the green economy is only a part.

