What training do we need for greening the economy?

Keynote held at „Opportunities and chances for green economy in Estonia”

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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)
The animation shows how trash (orange dots) entering the sea from land along the Pacific coast is caught by the gyre. On its way the trash is concentrated, and eventually ends up in one of the two shown vortices. As a consequence, in these areas, the surface water contains six times more plastic than plankton biomass (dry weight).

Source: Charles Moore
GREEN Economy?
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).
We are the students of today attending the schools of yesterday being taught by the teachers of the past—using methods from the Middle Ages to solve the problems of the future!
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

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Sustainability Competence

- Understanding sustainable development
  - Systems thinking
  - Adopting an integral view

- Personal leadership and entrepreneurship
  - Unlocking creativity, utilizing diversity
  - Appreciating chaos & complexity
  - Fostering collective change

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Dynamics of SD

- Change & Innovation
A Framework for Facilitating Sustainability
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.

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*Learning for sustainability in times of accelerating change*

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