

Chapter 3

Education Dimension of Sustainable Development

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Education Dimension of Sustainable Development

Our Common Future report offered the classic definition of sustainable development: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need” (WCED, 1987:43). The term sustainability is broadly used. The three-pillar conception of sustainability (social, economic, and environmental) commonly represented by three intersecting circles with overall sustainability at the centre. Figure 3.1 illustrates the typical representation, alternative depictions: literal pillars and a concentric circles approach (Purvis, Mao & Robinson, 2019: 682).

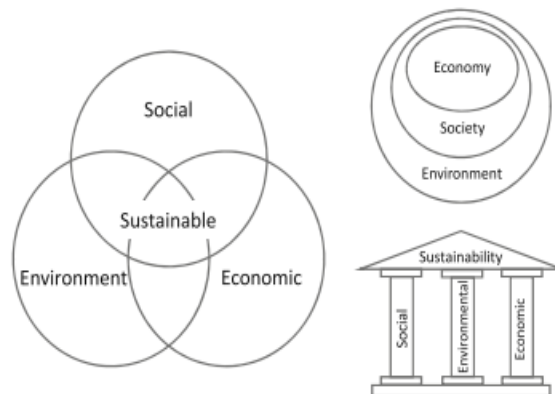


Figure 3. 1. Representations of Sustainability

As shown in Figure 3.1, three dimensions or pillars of sustainability are: Environment, society and economy. Economy refers to production and consumption of goods, environmental dimension is related to water sources, forests, ecology etc., society is related to living together. There are also other pillars fundamental to sustainability: The human and social factors. Human dimension, which is related to health, education, skills, knowledge, leadership, and access to services, aims to maintain and improve the human capital in society (Purvis et al., 2019; Goodland, 1995).

The Origins of Sustainability and Sustainable Development

The term *sustainability* has a history. Especially after the 1970s the relationship between economic development and environment became more explicit (Meadows et al., 1972) and environmental problems were increased due to industrialization, population growth

and migration. In addition, some international conferences were organized and reports were presented such as:

- *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment* in Stockholm (United Nations, 1972)
- *Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education* organized by Unesco in co-operation with UNEP in Tbilisi (Unesco, 1977)
- *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future* presented to the UN General Assembly (WCED, 1987)
- *Brundtland Report- Our Common Future-the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (United Nations, 1992)
- *World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)- Johannesburg Summit* in South America (United Nations, 2002),
- *United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015-UNCED, Earth Summit* in New York (UNCED, 2015).

In addition to these, new agenda was planned such as “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” which is a plan of action people, planet and prosperity (United Nations, 2015). These international conferences are all directly or not directly related to sustainability and sustainable development. Due to this reason, they will be explained in detail.

Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment

Stockholm, 5-6 June 1972

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment having met at Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972 and it was a guide for the preservation and enhancement of environment. Stockholm declaration contains 26 principles. Principle 1 stated that:

“Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of equality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations. In this respect, policies promoting or perpetuating apartheid, racial segregation, discrimination, colonial and other forms of oppression and foreign domination stand condemned and must be eliminated” (United Nations, 1972: 4).

Principle 2 stated that: “*The natural resources of the earth, including the air, water, land, flora and fauna and especially representative samples of natural ecosystems, must be safeguarded for the benefit of present and future generations through careful planning or management, as appropriate.*” Principle 3 stated that “*The capacity of the earth to produce vital renewable resources must be maintained and, wherever practicable, restored or improved*” (United Nations, 1972: 4). The framework of the action plan is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

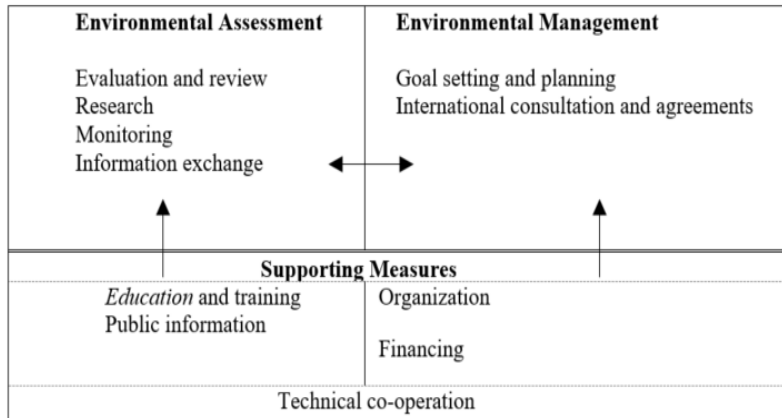


Figure 3. 2. The framework of the Action Plan

As illustrated in Figure 3.2, action plan includes environmental assessment, environmental management and supporting measures. “Education and training” were located under the heading “Supporting Measures” (United Nations, 1972).

Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education

Tbilisi, 14-26 October 1977

The conference was organized by Unesco in co-operation with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Totally 265 delegates and 65 representatives and observers participated in the conference. The Tbilisi Declaration focused on major environmental problems in contemporary society, role of education. The role of education in the face of environmental problems is crucial. The goals of environmental education are to increase the awareness about economic, social, political, and ecological interdependence in urban and rural areas, to provide every person with opportunities to protect and improve the environment as well as to create new patterns of behavior towards the environment. The categories of environmental education *objectives* are awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills and participation. Moreover, guiding principles were explained in the report. For instances, environmental education should consider the environment in its totality, be a continuous lifelong process, be interdisciplinary in its approach, examine major environmental issues, focus on current and potential environmental situations, promote the value, consider plans for development and growth (Unesco, 1977).

Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future

October 1987

The term *sustainable development* was popularized in *Our Common Future* in 1987. Also known as the Brundtland report since the publication was in recognition of Gro Harlem Brundtland's, former Norwegian Prime Minister, role as Chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). *Our Common Future* included the "classic" definition of sustainable development: "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (WCED, 1987: 16). It contains two key concepts: needs and future generations (WCED, 1987).

The World Commission on Environment and Development suggested these:

1. *"Re-examine the critical issues of environment and development and to formulate innovative, concrete, and realistic action proposals to deal with them;*
2. *strengthen international cooperation on environment and development and to assess and propose new forms of cooperation that can break out of existing patterns and influence policies and events in the direction of needed change; and*
3. *raise the level of understanding and commitment to action on the part of individuals, voluntary organizations, businesses, institutes, and governments"* (WCED, 1987: 347).

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 -14 June 1992

Acceptance of the report by the United Nations General Assembly gave the term political salience; and in 1992 leaders set out the principles of sustainable development at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. After two decades from Stockholm declaration- Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, The Rio Declaration or UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) or Earth Summit. Agenda 21, which was a dynamic programme and a special product of the Earth Summit, addressed the problems and aimed to prepare the world for the challenges of the 21st century. It was adopted by 178 countries. A set of principles is center of UNCED. The declaration included 27 principles for sustainable development. The first principle stated that "Human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature", *Principle 3* stated that "The right to

development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations”, *Principle 4* stated that “In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it”. *Principle 5* is also important that “All states and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people of the world” (UN Documentation Centre, 1992: 1-5).

World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

Johannesburg, South America 26 August – 4 September 2002

Between Rio and Johannesburg, the world nations organized different conferences such as International Conference on Financing for Development, Doha Ministerial Conference. The United Nations convened WSSD (World Summit on Sustainable Development) after ten years The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, on 26 August–4 September 2002. Declaration recommended to endorse the Johannesburg Declaration. The general assembly recognized that poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development (United Nations, 2002). “The UNDP Report on Human Development 2001 confirms a growing gap between the North and The South/East: The richest 1/5 of the World population earns 73 times more income than the poorest 1/5 does, which means a further increase since the 1990 ratio of 60:1” (Göll & LaFond, 2002: 318).

United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015

New York 25-27 September 2015

The United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda was held from 25 to 27 September 2015 in New York. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development* is an action plan for humanity, planet and prosperity. According to new agenda United Nations General Assembly determines eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge for sustainable development. United Nations also determined to protect the planet from degradation, to ensure that all of the human beings should be able to live economically, socially and technologically well in harmony with nature, foster peaceful society (United Nations, 2015a).

Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and their related 169 targets were

announced. They are related to three dimensions of sustainable development which are economic, social and environmental. SDGs are goals set by the United Nations for advancements in sustainability by 2030. The 17 SDGs are illustrated in Figure 3.3 (United Nations, 2015b).



Figure 3. 3. The Sustainable Development Goals

As seen in Figure 3.3 *Quality Education* (Goal 4) is one of the sustainable development goals (United Nations, 2015c). Education and training are key drivers for sustainable development since they help to improve employability, productivity, innovation and competitiveness. Also, education is pre-condition for many other SDGs (Eurostat, 2021e; Tekbiyik & Celik, 2019; Kurtuluş & Tatar, 2021; İcoz, 2015).

Indicators for Sustainable Development Goals

For more detailed information about SDG 4’s targets and indicators, see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>. The assessment of indicator trends is visualised in the form of arrows. Table 3.1 illustrates the meaning of arrows (Eurostat, 2021a).

Table 3.1. Assessment Categories and Associated Symbols

Symbol	With quantitative target	Without quantitative target
↑	Significant progress towards the EU target	Significant progress towards SD objectives
↗	Moderate progress towards the EU target	Moderate progress towards SD objectives
↘	Insufficient progress towards the EU target	Moderate movement away from SD objectives
↓	Movement away from the EU target	Significant movement away from SD objectives
⋮	Calculation of trend not possible (i.e time series too short)	

Indicator trends are assessed over two periods: long term and short term. Long-term trend is based on over the past 15-year period. Short-term period is based on over the past five period. Figure 3.4 illustrates the trends for quality education.

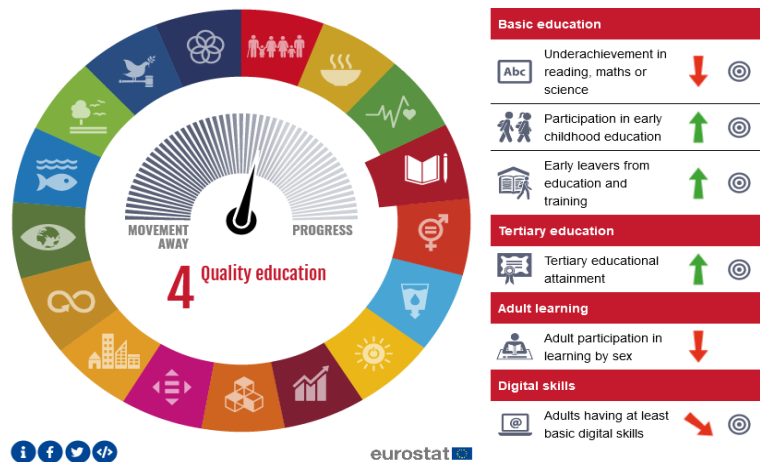


Figure 3. 4. Trends for Quality Education

As seen in Figure 3.4 for basic education, underachievement in reading, maths or science moves away from the EU target, participation in early childhood education and early leavers from education and training have significant process toward the EU target. Tertiary education attainment has significant process toward the EU target. For adult learning adult participation in learning by sex moves away from EU target. For digital skills adults having at least basic skills has insufficient progress towards the EU target (Eurostat, 2021b). Table 3.2 illustrates target and policy reference for only SDG 4.

Table 3. 2. EU Policy Targets Considered for Assessing Indicator Trends for SDG 4

Indicator	Target	Policy reference
Underachievement in reading, maths and science (SDG 4)	The share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15 % by 2030	European Education Area
Participation in early childhood education (SDG 4)	At least 96% of children between 3 years old and the starting age for compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education and care by 2030	European Education Area
Early leavers from education and training (SDG 4)	The share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 9 % by 2030	European Education Area
Tertiary educational attainment (SDG 4, SDG 9)	The share of 25–34-year-olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 45 % by 2030	European Education Area
Share of adults with at least basic digital skills (SDG 4)	By 2025, 230 million adults should have at least basic digital skills, which covers 70 % of the adult population in the EU	European Agenda Skills

Statistics Related to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education)

At this point for statistics related to sustainable development goals, Eurostat (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>) should be checked. As mentioned, there are different indicators for each sustainable development goals. For example, for SDG 4; underachievement in reading, maths or science; participation in early childhood education, early leavers from education and training, tertiary educational attainment; adults having at least basic digital skills, adult participation in learning. In this part of the chapter, graphs country scores related to SDG 4 will be given related to these indicators



Figure 3. 5. Sustainable Development Goals- Quality Education (Goal 4)

According to Figure 3. 5 United Nations (2021a) indicates that “617 million children and adolescents lack minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics. Figure 3.6 indicates the graph related to reading, maths or science.

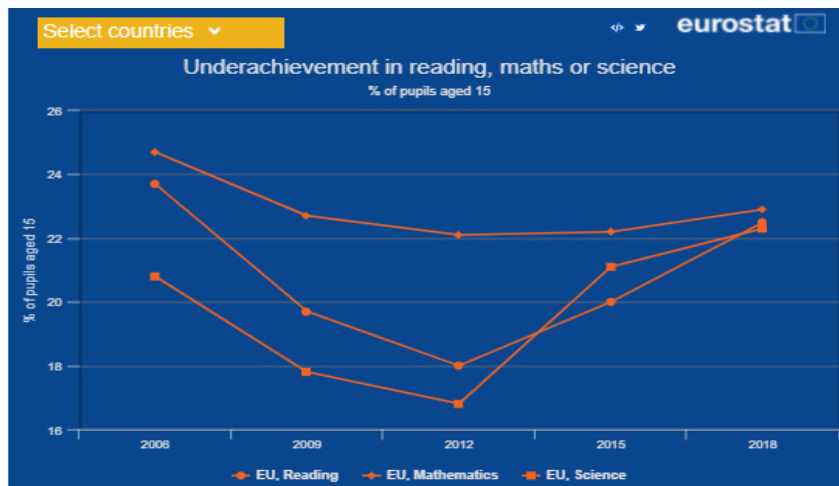


Figure 3. 6. Underachievement in Reading, Maths or science

Table 3.3 indicates the scores for maths (first line), reading (second line) and science (third line) (EU).

Years	Maths	Reading	Science
2006	24.7	23.7	20.8
2009	22.7	19.7	17.8
2012	22.1	18	16.8
2015	22.2	21.1	20
2018	22.9	22.5	22.3

Table 3. 3. Scores for maths, reading and science

The data were obtained from OECD (PISA). The indicator measures the share of 15-year-old students failing to reach level 2 (‘basic skills level’) on the PISA scale for the three core school subjects of reading, mathematics and science (Eurostat, 2021b). Figure 3. 7 indicates the graph for participation in early childhood education (Eurostat, 2021c).

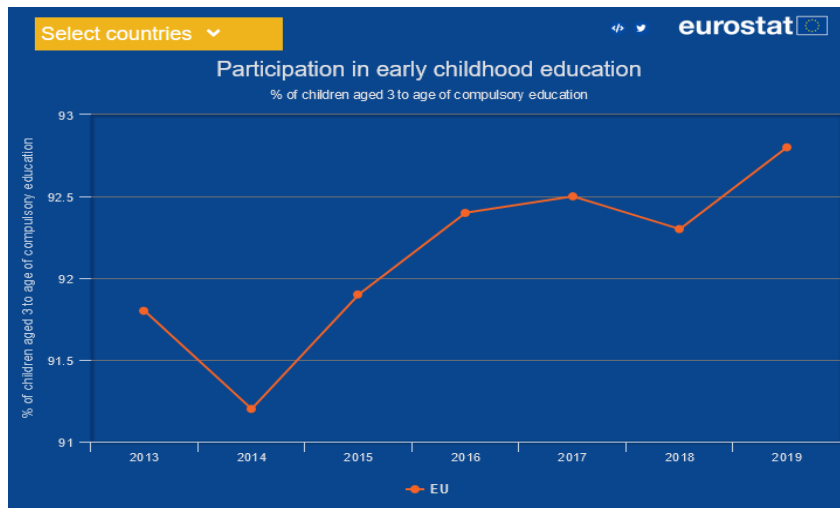


Figure 3. 7. Participation in Early Childhood Education

Data source for Figure 3.7 is European Statistical System (ESS). The indicator measures the share of the children between the age of three and the starting age of compulsory primary education who participated in early childhood education (Eurostat, 2021f). Figure 3.8 illustrates trend for early leavers from education and training (Eurostat, 2021c).

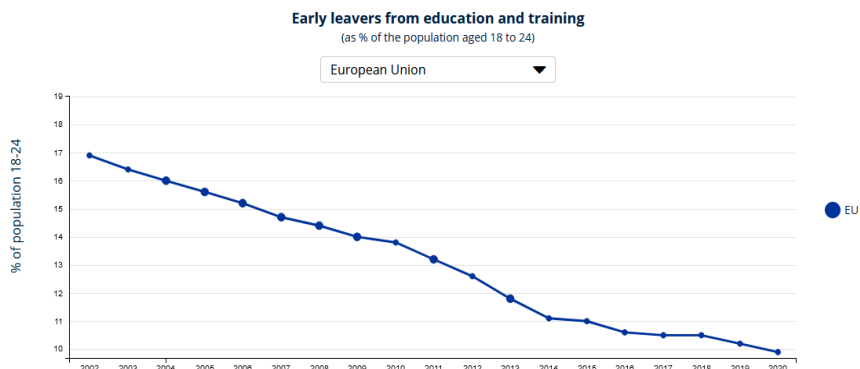


Figure 3. 8. Early Leavers from Education and Training

Early school leaving may lead to unemployment, social exclusion, and poverty. SDG 4 aims to increase quality education through all stages of life and the number of youth and adults having skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. According to Figure 3.8 it may be interpreted those early leavers from education and training decreases for European Union (Eurostat, 2021d: 124). Figure 3.9 illustrates that people with tertiary educational attainment (Eurostat, 2021d: 122).

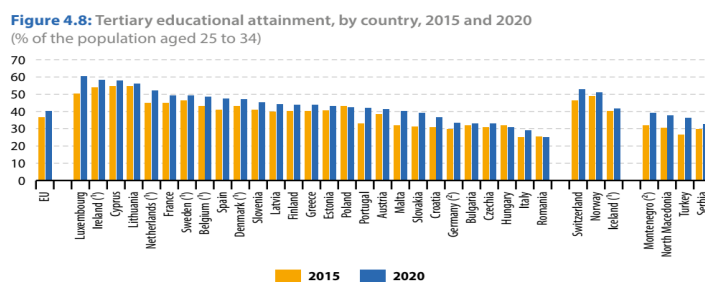


Figure 3. 9. Tertiary Educational Attainment (2015-2020)

Figure 3.9 illustrates the share of people aged 25-34 who have successfully completed tertiary studies such as university, higher technical institution. The data depends on the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) (Eurostat, 2021e: 122). Figure 3.10 illustrates the adults having at least basic digital skills (Eurostat, 2021e: 124).

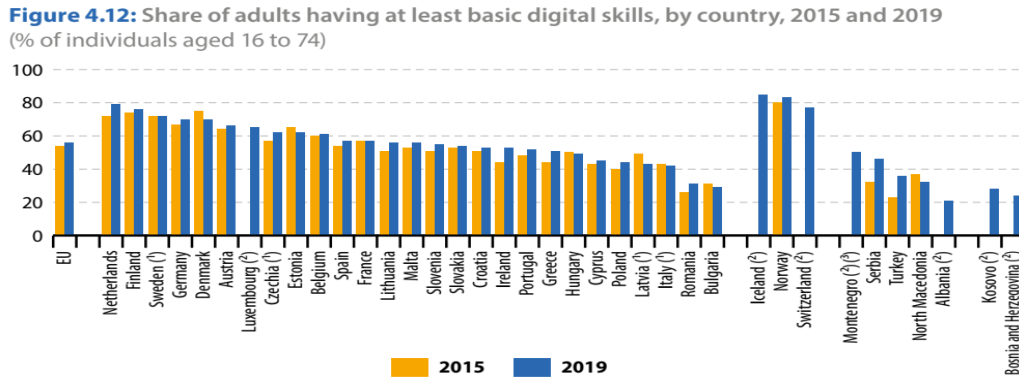


Figure 3. 10. Share of Adults Having at Least Basic Digital Skills (2015-2019)

Figure 3.10 illustrates % of individuals aged 16 to 24. Digital skills include four specific areas: information, communication, problem solving and software skills. The data were obtained from EU survey on the ICT (information and communication technologies) (Eurostat, 2021e: 124). Figure 3.11 illustrates the adults participating in learning (Eurostat, 2021e: 123).

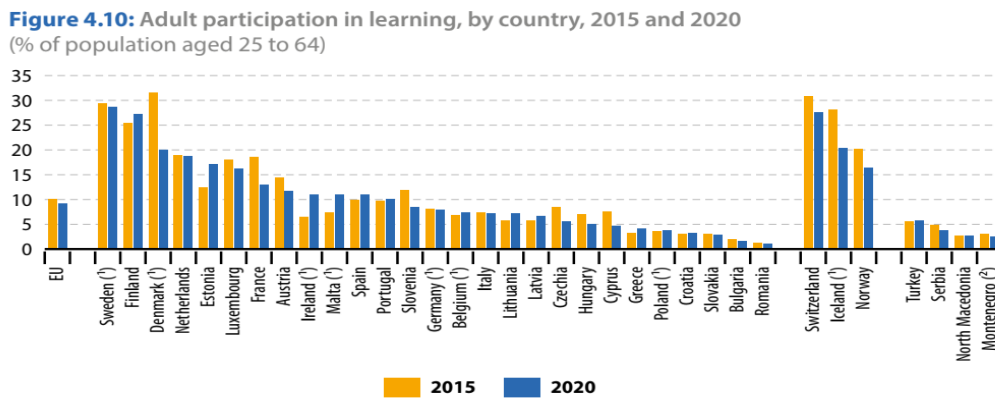


Figure 3. 11. Adult Participation in Learning (2015-2020)

Figure 3.11 illustrates the share of people aged 25 to 64. Adult learning includes both general and vocational formal and non-formal learning activities. Data were obtained from the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) (Eurostat, 2021e: 123). It may be also compared the sustainable development goals country scores for Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, and Greece etc. Figures 3.12-3.38 illustrate the sustainable development goal for *Quality Education (Goal 4) country scores* (Eurostat, 2021f)

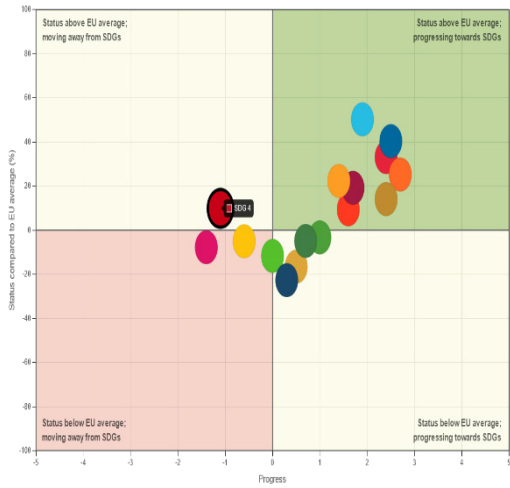


Figure 3. 12. SDG4 Country Scores (Austria)

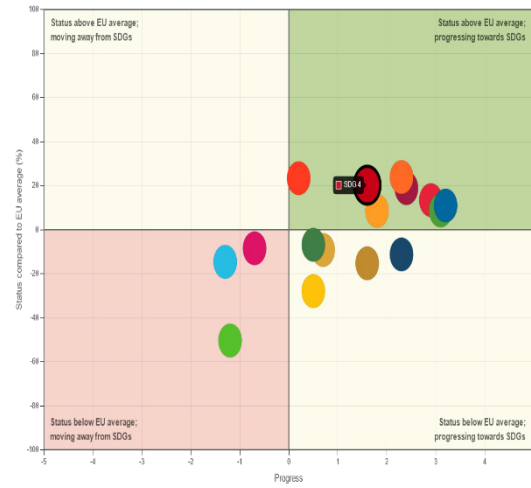


Figure 3. 13 SDG4 Country Scores (Belgium)

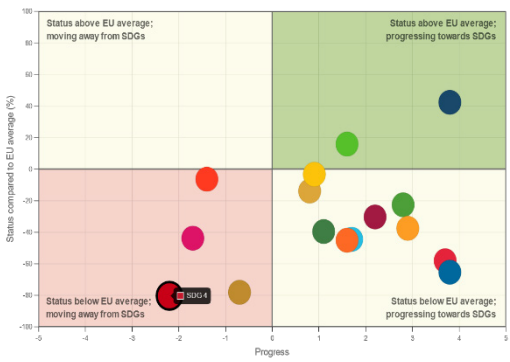


Figure 3. 14 SDG4 Country Scores (Bulgaria)

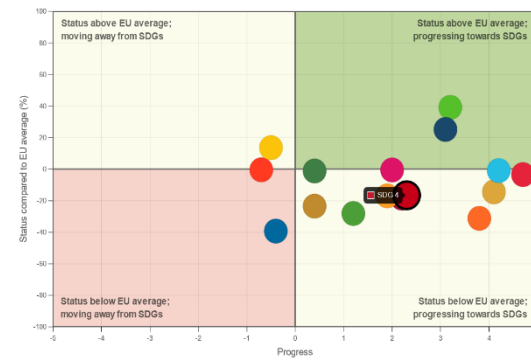


Figure 3. 15. SDG4 Country Scores (Croatia)

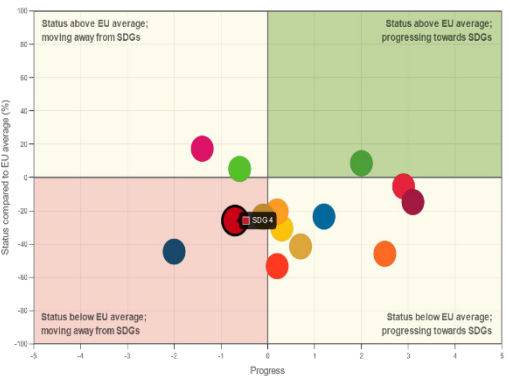


Figure 3. 16. SDG4 Country Scores (Cyprus)

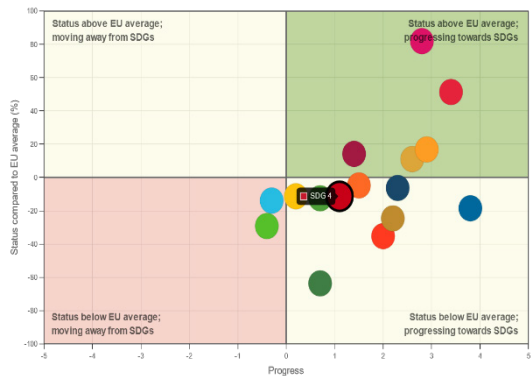


Figure 3 SDG4 Country Scores (Czechia)

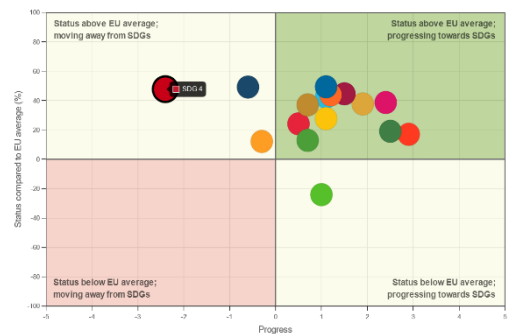


Figure 3. 18. SDG4 Country Scores (Denmark)

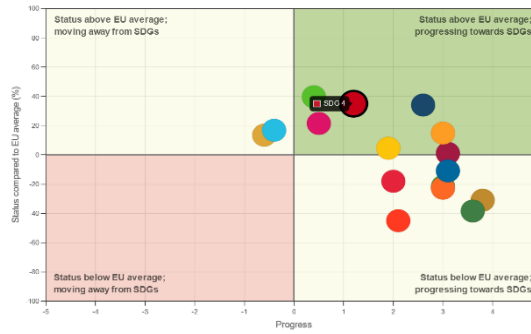


Figure 3. 19. SDG4 Country Scores (Estonai)

Different Perceptions of Environmental Education

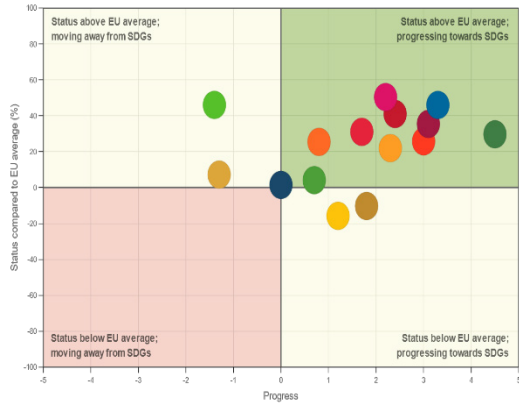


Figure 3. 20. SDG4 Country Scores (Finland)

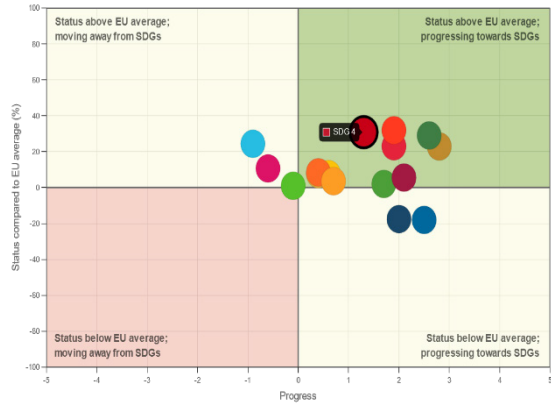


Figure 3. 21. SDG4 Country Scores (France)

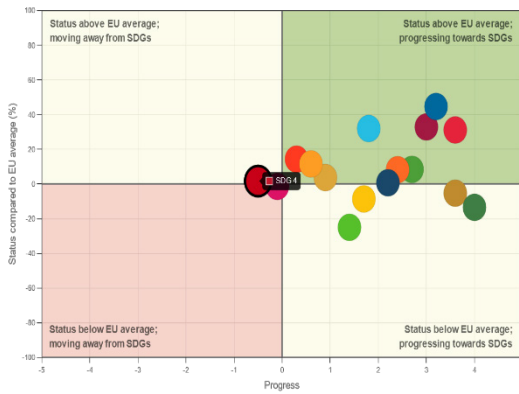


Figure 3. 22. SDG4 Country Scores (Germany)

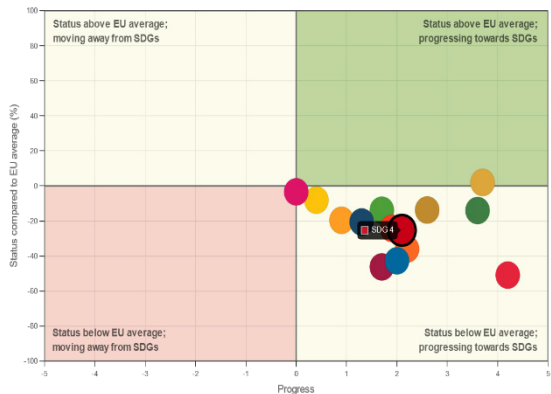


Figure 3. 23. SDG4 Country Scores (Greece)

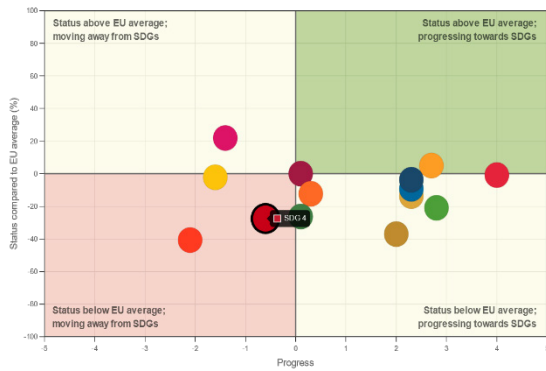


Figure 3.24. SDG4 Country Scores (Hungary)

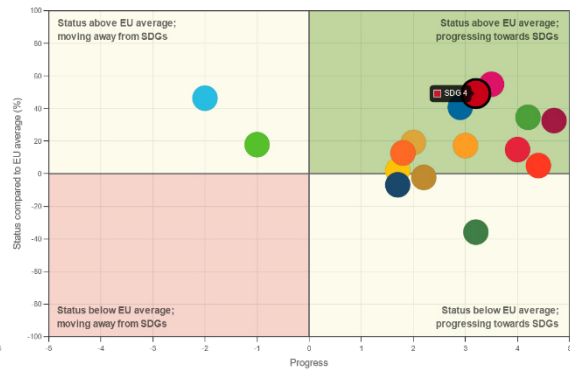


Figure 3.25. SDG4 Country Scores (Ireland)

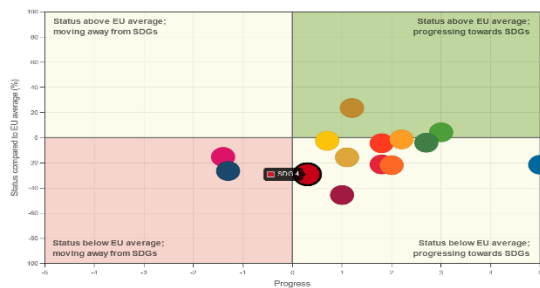


Figure 3. 26. SDG4 Country Scores (Italy)

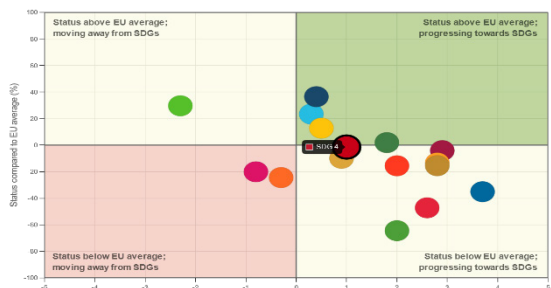


Figure 3.27. SDG4 Country Scores (Latvia)

Different Perceptions of Environmental Education

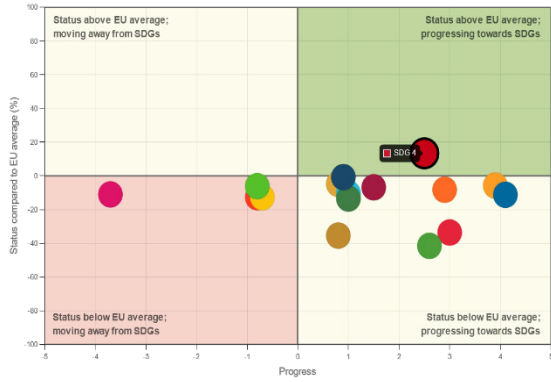


Figure 3.28. SDG4 Country Scores (Lithuania)

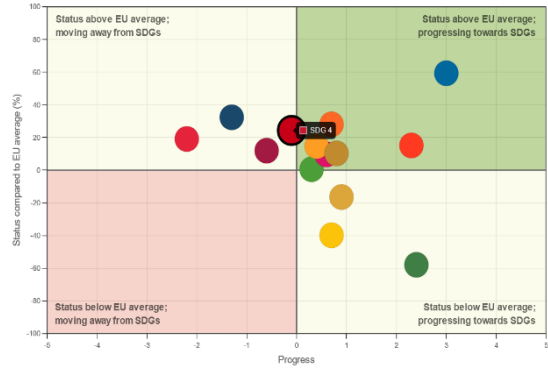


Figure 3.29. SDG4 Country Scores (Luxembourg)

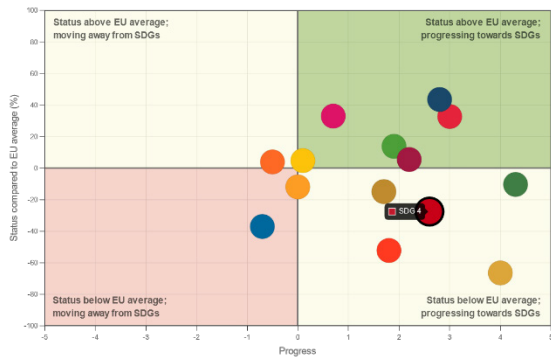


Figure 3.30. SDG4 Country Scores (Malta)

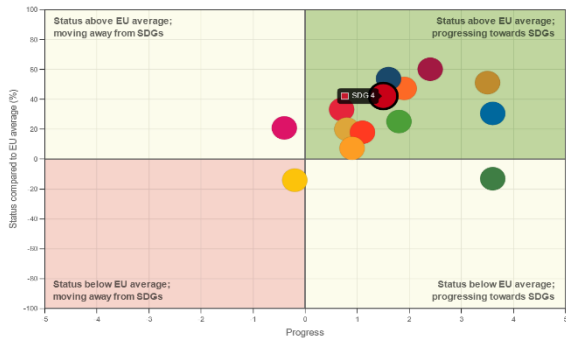


Figure 3.31. SDG4 Country Scores (Netherlands)

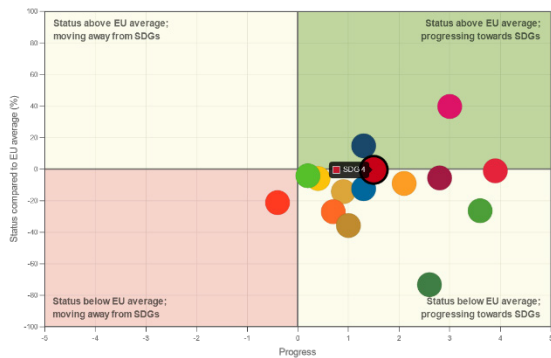


Figure 3.32. SDG4 Country Scores (Poland)

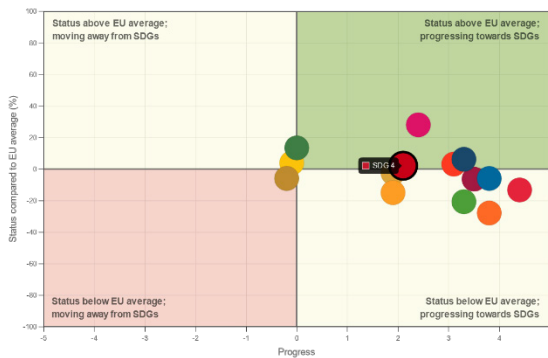


Figure 3.33. SDG4 Country Scores (Portugal)

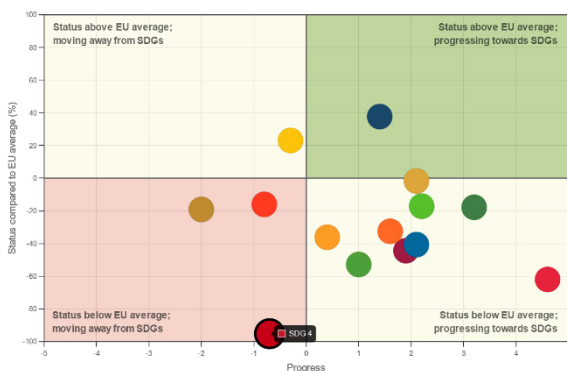


Figure 3.34. SDG4 Country Scores (Romania)

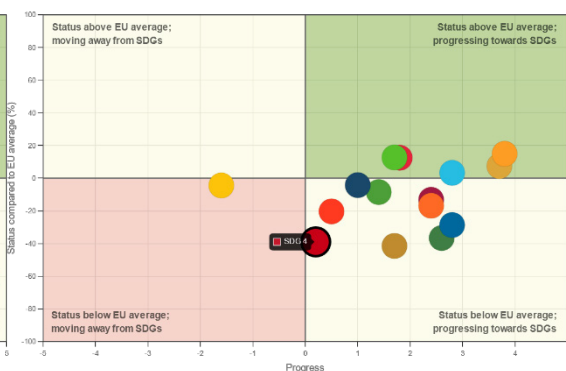


Figure 3.35. SDG4 Country Scores (Slovakia)

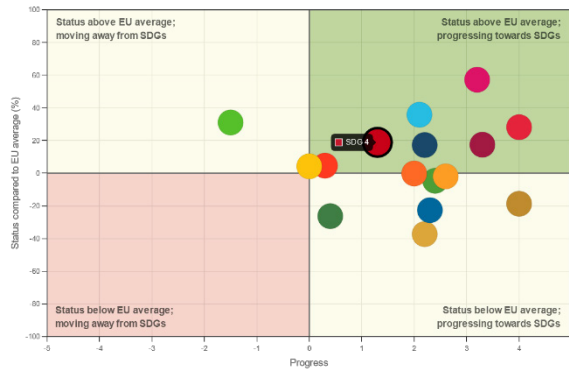


Figure 3.36. SDG4 Country Scores (Slovenia)

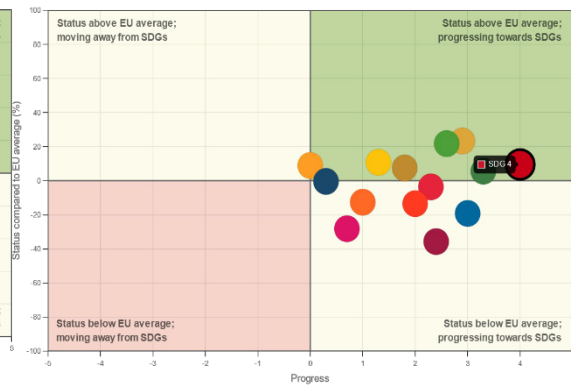


Figure 3.37. SDG4 Country Scores (Spain)

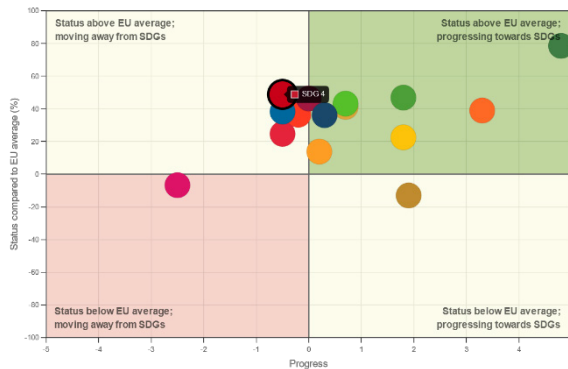


Figure 3.38. SDG4 Country Scores (Sweden)

Country scores related to sustainable development goals may be compared to the EU average easily over the last five years. Green quadrant shows the status above EU average, yellow quadrant upper one shows the status above EU average however the country moves away from sustainable development goals. Red quadrant means that status below EU average and the country moves away from sustainable development goals. Yellow quadrant lower one shows the status below EU average but the country progresses towards sustainable development goals. Table 3.4 illustrates more detailed information about the scores for SDG 4 (Eurostat, 2021f).

Table 3.4. Country scores for SDG 4

Country	Score (Quality Education)	Progress
Austria	9.87	-1.1
Belgium	20.23	1.6
Bulgaria	-80.38	-2.2
Croatia	-16.65	2.3
Cyprus	-25.89	-0.7
Czechia	-11.32	1.1
Denmark	47.76	-2.4
Estonia	34.96	1.2
Finland	41.03	2.4
France	7.53	0.4
Germany	1.69	-0.5

Greece	-25.35	2.1
Hungary	-27.51	-0.6
Ireland	49.16	3.2
Italy	-29.09	0.3
Latvia	-1.43	1.0
Lithuania	13.33	2.5
Luxembourg	24.31	-0.1
Malta	-27.60	2.6
Netherlands	42.21	1.5
Poland	-0.51	1.5
Portugal	2.09	2.1
Romania	-95.21	-0.7
Slovakia	-38.99	0.2
Slovenia	18.87	1.3
Spain	9.52	4.0
Sweden	48.83	-0.5

Aim of the SDG 4 is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and for all people promote lifelong learning opportunities” (United Nations, 2021b). According to Table 3.3 Sweden has the highest scores (48.83) and Romania has the lowest scores (-95.21). It should be investigated situation of countries (Eurostat, 2021f). To conclude this chapter, the history of sustainable development; SDGs in deed SDG 4 ‘Quality Education” were discussed; statistics related SDG 4 were explained in this chapter. For more detailed information and statistics related to scores and graphs or other statistics for 17 SDGs, one should look for the websites which were given in reference list.

Eco-Friendly Person Activities

Seed’s Journey

Aim: It is aimed to realize that the fruits they consume are seeds

Materials: Apple, cotton, transparent bag

Method:

- Augmented reality apps
- Experimental applications
- E-learning applications
- Observation
- Computational science applications
- Activities those content is brought through games
- Activities whose content is gained through artistic activities

- Collaborative group work
- Mobil apps
- Game-based apps
- Measurement and evaluation activities
- Field work
- Sporting events
- Other methods and techniques

Plan: Students are given one apple and after the apples are eaten, how do you think these apples formed? What is the function of beans in the apple? Then the apple kernels are carefully separated and the outer shells are peeled and kept in a transparent bag between wet cotton. It is observed during the project.

Drawing My Future

Aim: It is aimed to reveal the mental images of the environment based on the students' readiness levels.

Materials: A4 paper, dry paints.

Method:

- Augmented reality apps
- Experimental applications
- E-learning applications
- Observation
- Computational science applications
- Activities those content is brought through games
- Activities those content is gained through artistic activities
- Collaborative group work
- Mobile apps
- Game-based apps
- Measurement and evaluation activities
- Field work
- Sporting events
- Other methods and techniques

Plan:

Questions are asked to students, such as

- When you think of environment and nature, may you say a sentence related to them?
- Can you say about the things which are in environment?
- Can you imagine the environment and nature for the future?

Time is given for thinking these questions. Meanwhile, A4 paper and dry paints are distributed to students. At the end of the period, students are asked to draw the environment and nature they dream. Students are asked to finish their pictures within the specified period.

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