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EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGE AND LIMITATIONS.  
PROSPECTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE THIRD MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY

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## Leadership for sustainability as a reflection of students' professional responsibility

### Introduction

Education in the world is currently undergoing major changes in almost every part of the system, from the buildings and grounds, the curriculum and assessment, to the sustainable and meaningful relationship between educational institutions and their local communities. Since leadership is often linked to school improvement, sustainability leadership can provide a framework for integrating these agendas, enabling a more strategic approach to addressing them.

Although the notion of sustainability is commonly associated with the environment and focuses on the need to sustain diversity and conserve our resources, lately many scholars emphasize its significant role in changing the educational paradigm and bringing up responsible leaders who are capable of working collaboratively to address complex sustainability challenges.

Hence, leadership has become a key component of an organization, management and administration of educational organizations and systems, and this development is reflected in both academic and educational policy statements throughout the world. Leadership for sustainability denotes a new and expanded understanding of leadership that signifies taking action based on common values, leading from a living processes paradigm, and creating a collaborative, responsible and reflective leadership process.

### Literature review

Noteworthy are the studies on the essence of interactive learning principles that have been developed by such scholars as A. Verbitskiy, I. Alekseyev, P. Galperin, J. Athman, A. Hargreaves, D. Fink, M. Fullan, L. Stoll. The scientists consider a key function of sustainable education to help in bringing up skillful, reflexive and responsible leaders.

Among the variety of definitions of the term "sustainable leadership" suggested by different scholars, this paper reviews the widespread ones. According to the definitions suggested by D. Fink and A. Hargreaves (2006) sustainable educational leadership and improvement preserves and develops deep learning for all that spreads and lasts, in ways that do no harm to and indeed create positive benefit for others around us, now and in the future (Hargreaves, Fink, 2006). According to

L. Jackson, sustainable leadership goes beyond temporary gains in achievement scores to create lasting improvements in learning (Jackson, 2008). This is consistent with M. Fullan who views sustainability as the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement that is consistent with deep values of human purpose (Fullan, 2005).

Considering the above mentioned facts, it is reasonable to study general analysis of leadership development in sustainability educational environment.

### **The aim and methods of the work**

The objective of this work is analyzing and weaving together literature on leadership, leadership development, and sustainability education to suggest better practices in professional responsibility development.

The methods, used in the work, included a problem-solving, logical and systematic, as well as structural and functional analysis of resources.

### **Results and discussion**

It is generally acknowledged that fostering leadership involves helping students to come to see themselves as leaders. Seeing oneself as a leader, with the capacity to introduce change and positively influence the world with others, can be a transformational process. To act effectively, it is necessary to constantly analyze and improve the activity performance, according to our research it is leadership. B. Davies considers that leadership development, based on sustainability education, will involve shifting to systemic, connective and ecological ways of thinking and learning and will be focused on transformational rather than transmissive learning processes (Davies, 2009).

Considering the above-mentioned, it is possible to highlight that transformational learning is essential to sustainability education and to fostering leadership because it signifies, as S. Lambert underlines, "a deep cultural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling that action ... dramatically and permanently alters our being in the world". This shift can alter our understanding of ourselves, our relationships with the earth, our power relationships, our vision, sense of possibilities for social justice, different ways of living, and personal joy (Lambert, 2011).

According to S. Lambert, the following pedagogical strategies for leadership development with the core elements of transformational learning include: experience, critical reflection, dialogue, an integral, global orientation, awareness of context, and authentic relationships.

Having reviewed relevant concepts, we consider the following pedagogical strategies aim to cultivate: 1) a sustainable way of being through observation, self-awareness and reflection; 2) a living processes paradigm through the inclusion of ecological and diverse perspectives; and 3) all-embracing collaborative leaders through experiential learning in community.

We do believe that strengthening students' sense of community and deepening their sense of belonging to a region is needed for developing effective leaders who are all-embracing and collaborative. Moreover, we should remember about the fact

that human beings are a part of the global environment and we need to understand our interconnectedness and interdependency.

In the light of the idea that strengthening students' sense of community and deepening their sense of connectedness, this will facilitate the development of collaboration. Furthermore, effective leaders bring people together to collaboratively create a shared vision and strategies for change. We agree with J. Cook's suggestion that to develop leadership skills, students need opportunities to create environments of collaboration instead of competition (Cook, 2014).

First and foremost, building an authentic, trusting, learning community is one of the ways to strengthen their sense of belonging and encourage collaboration. This learning community should provide learners with the opportunity to express their values and beliefs. Building relationships within a learning community also requires individuals to reflect on how they relate to other individuals and the community as a whole. According to L. Jackson (2008), by engaging in collaborative projects, learners have the opportunity to make new relationships, to relate to and appreciate those different from themselves, and to practice communication and professional skills. Therefore, creating supportive and connected communities is crucial for developing students' ability to explore their own responsibilities. By practicing leadership in a meaningful context, learners have the opportunity to support others while also experiencing personal growth.

Secondly, working with students to identify topics they are passionate about or where they see themselves having opportunities to work for change can help them to take ownership of their experiences and ultimately connect more deeply with the idea of themselves as responsible leaders. Experiential leadership development can also strengthen students' connection to place. By participating in experiential learning, students have the opportunity to explore and interact meaningfully with local communities and ecosystems (Davies, 2009). Based upon this approach it is very important to organize special training courses for students on how to operate in a local community by engaging in problem solving and project work.

In the frame of our research we gave a questionnaire for the students of S. Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics that included questions concerning leadership development in sustainable educational environment. More than 250 student questionnaires were observed. The findings are such as: only 25% of the students preferred more competitiveness in comparison with collaboration approach, 10% were neutral. It signifies that 65% are ready to perform as effective leaders in a changeable cooperative environment. Other results of the survey showed that new approaches to training interdisciplinary course design with involving community needs are in high demand among students.

## **Conclusion**

Sustainable education has led to a new paradigm in education and evolution of new concepts in learning content development and introduction of a number of innovative teaching methods. The introduction of the above-discussed interactive learning environment has the potential to dramatically influence the culture of modern education.

In this regard educators who are eager to incorporate sustainable education into their institutions to foster leadership and responsibility are recommended to teach from a variety of disciplines and use hands-on interdisciplinary techniques. Thus, modern sustainable tendencies in education substantiate the need to create a pedagogical environment that would enhance leadership and responsibility of future professionals. It would be logical to continue this research in this direction and reflect upon practical tools and techniques that will help educate responsible leaders able to respond to the interplay of economic, ecological and cultural systems in their regions.

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## Leadership for sustainability as a reflection of students' professional responsibility

### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze and weave together literature on leadership, leadership development and sustainability education to suggest better practices in professional responsibility development. The main questions addressed in the paper are: to analyze the relevant core terms, revealed in the article, and highlight the impact of sustainable leadership upon formation of professional responsibility. It also touches principles of sustainable leadership, as well as conditions for promoting sustainable leadership.

**Keywords:** sustainable leadership, professional responsibility, sustainability education

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