
The role of education in saving people and planet

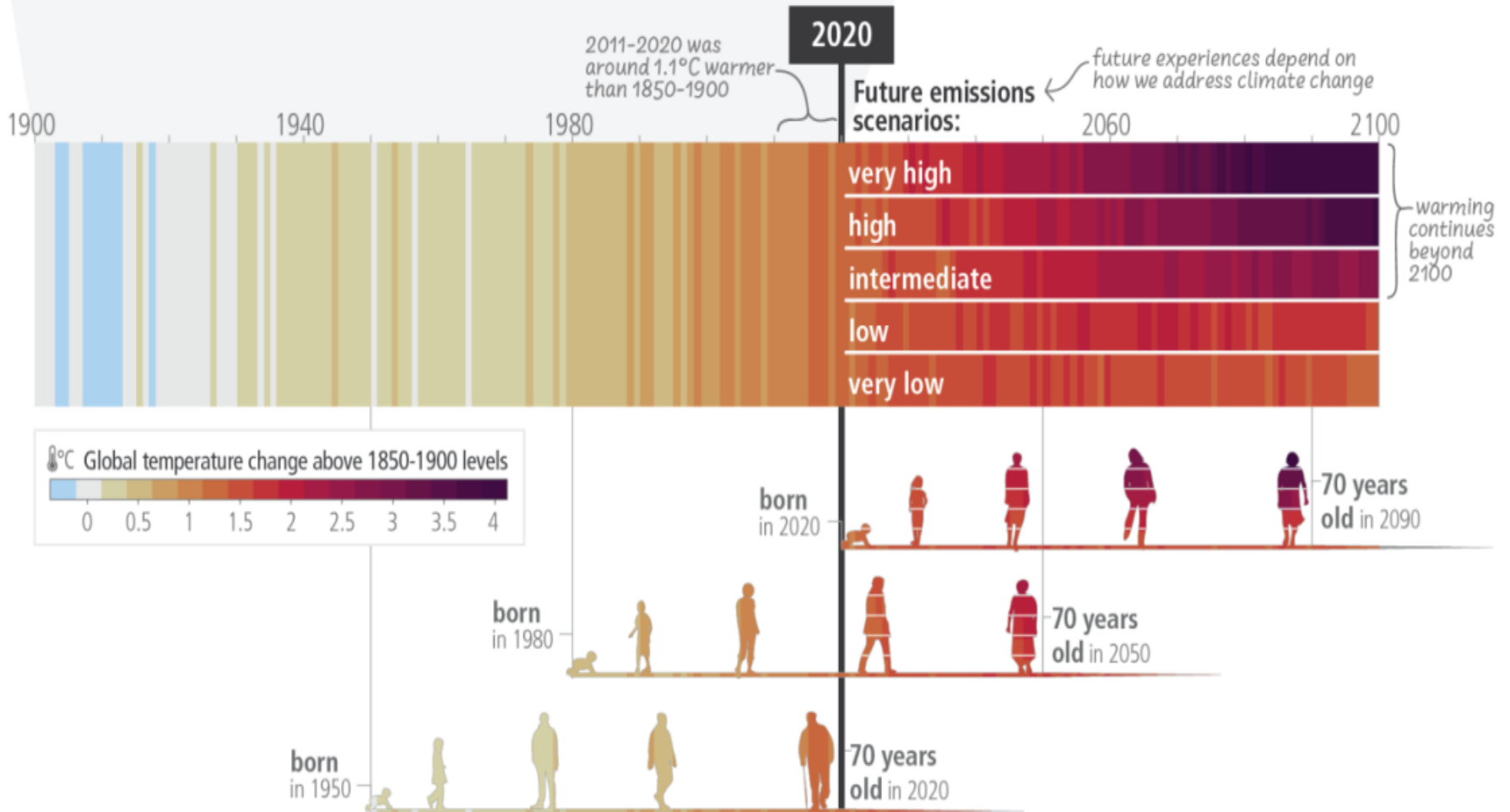
(Keynote 8th ESD Forum, Dublin, December 1, 2023)

Arjen Wals

Professor of Transformative Learning for Socio-Ecological Sustainability



c) The extent to which current and future generations will experience a hotter and different world depends on choices now and in the near-term



Big Tech Is Co-Parenting Our Children. Yes, Be Afraid.

In "Who's Raising the Kids?" Susan Linn's searing indictment of corporate greed, tech companies targeting children are rivaled only by the lawmakers who let them get away with it.

Give this article 14



How children are being targeted with hidden ads on social media

Published: November 3, 2021 1.24pm CET

Stealth advertising is cropping up in children's social media feeds. BearFotos

Have you ever accidentally clicked on an advert while scrolling on social media because you didn't realise that's what it was? This is what advertisers call "content marketing".

Using funny memes, insider-driven stories or inspirational



Organic food is also sustainable food – agree or disagree?



<https://www.sustainability-times.com/>



<https://www.naturespath.com/en-us/>

Organic farming isn't all that sustainable, a new study says

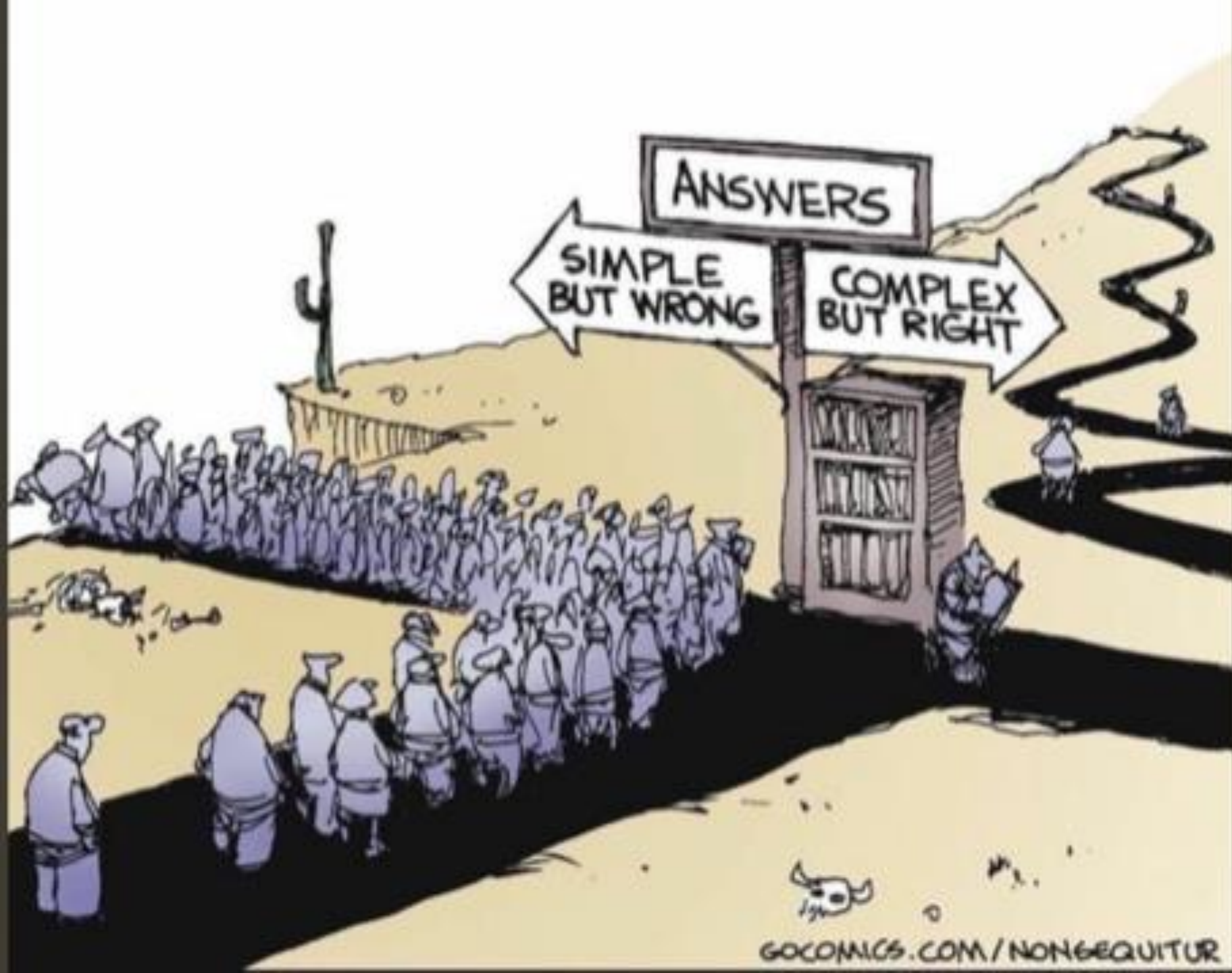
By Daniel T Cross on December 17, 2018

WHY ORGANIC FOOD IS MORE SUSTAINABLE

Posted under [Organic News & Environment](#) by [Mary Wales](#) on May 1, 2018



TEACH
UP
2030





Polyp.org.uk

'STEADY AS SHE GOES'

Anxiety about the future can lead to despair, depression and apathy

vårtland

ALLE REPORTASJER | MIN TRO | KULTUR | EKSISTENS | HOVEDSAK



Klimakrisa gjev unge psykisk lidingar

Danske Isabella Seedorff (19) vart djupt klimadepimert. Ho er ikkje den einaste. No melder forskarar om at psykiatrien treng nye omgrep for å forklare kva som skjer med oss i klimakrisa.

AV DAVID SVILAND

Vietnam's children and the fear of climate change

By David Shukman
BBC Science editor, Can Tho Province, Vietnam

🕒 4 October 2018



The threat of climate change exercises the minds of even the youngest in Vietnam





THE CLIMATE IS CHANGING
WHY AREN'T WE?

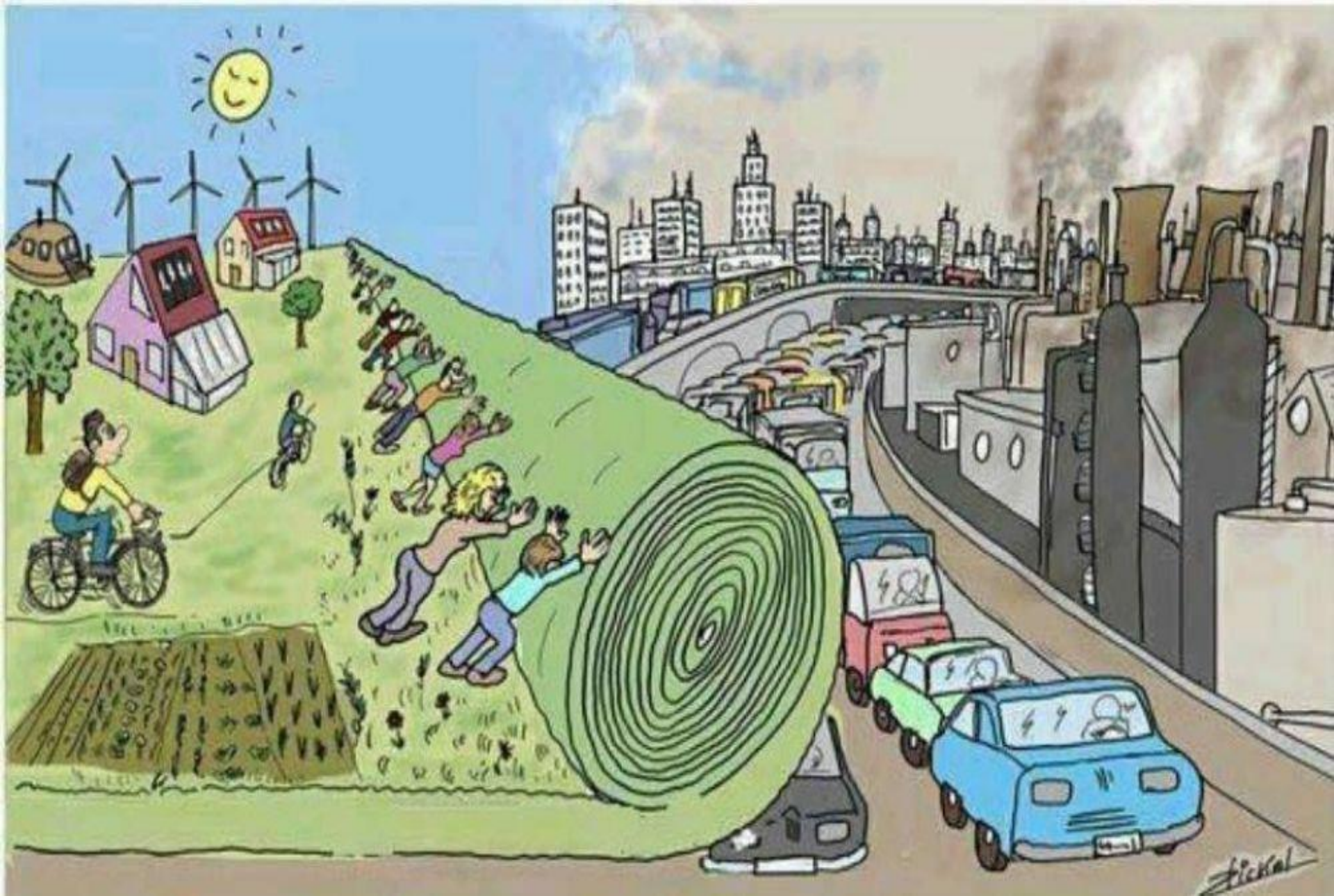
IF THERE IS NO PLANET, WE

WE WANT TO LIVE

IF YOU WANNA
BE MY LOVER
YOU GOTTA FIGHT
CLIMATE CHANGE

A DIPLOMA
-BUT-
NO FUTURE

PROXIMELY
BETTER LIFE



WAGENINGEN UR
For quality of life

EDUCATION HAS THE POTENTIAL TO TRANSFORM THE PLANET, BUT FIRST WE MUST TRANSFORM OUR EDUCATION SYSTEMS



bit.ly/sdg4all

#SDG4ALL

OECD and Pisa tests are damaging education worldwide - academics

In this letter to Dr Andreas Schleicher, director of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment, academics from around the world express deep concern about the impact of Pisa tests and call for a halt to the next round of testing





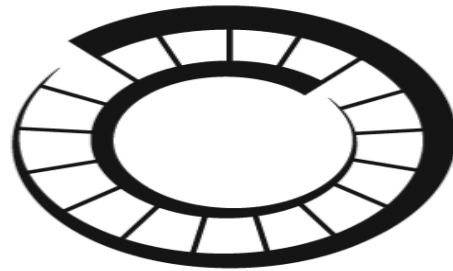
For quality of life

United Nations



The Doughnut of social foundations and planetary boundaries (Raworth 2017)

SDGs & IDGs

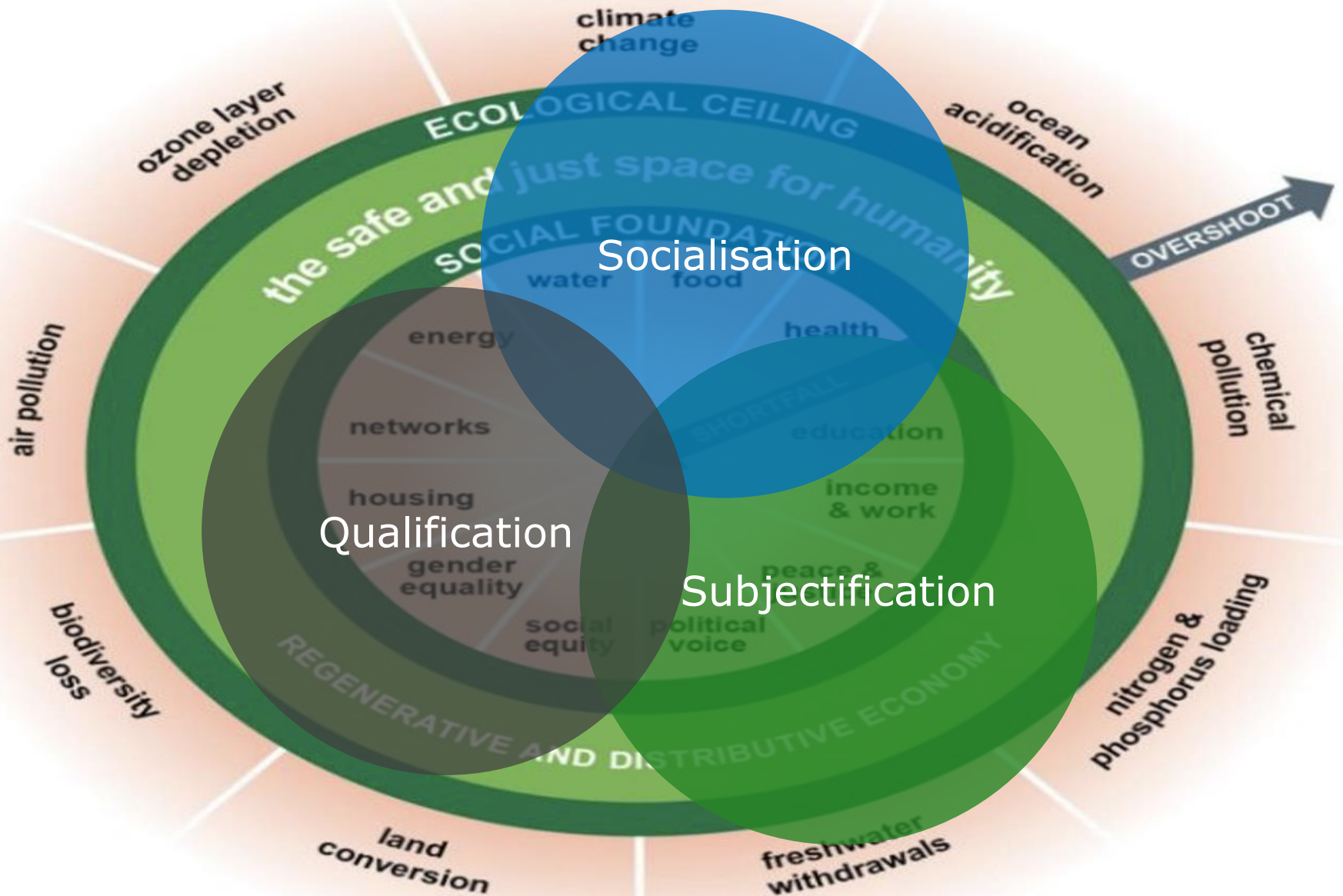


INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Transformational Skills for Sustainable Development

- 1 Being — Relationship to Self
- 2 Thinking — Cognitive Skills
- 3 Relating — Caring for Others and the World
- 4 Collaborating — Social Skills
- 5 Acting — Driving Change

What is education for? (modified after Biesta, 2012)



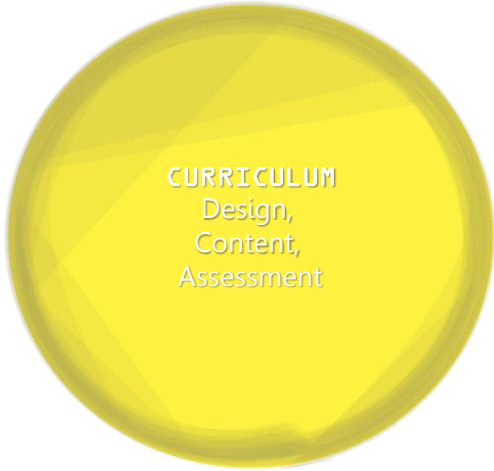


Whole School Approach (WSA)



Source: Wals & Mathie, 2022

Curriculum



CURRICULUM
Design,
Content,
Assessment

- As a complicated conversation (Pinar)
- Localized/place-based
- Responsive/Adaptive: Emergent – Event/situation based
- Balanced (eco)socialisation, qualification and subjectification (Biesta)

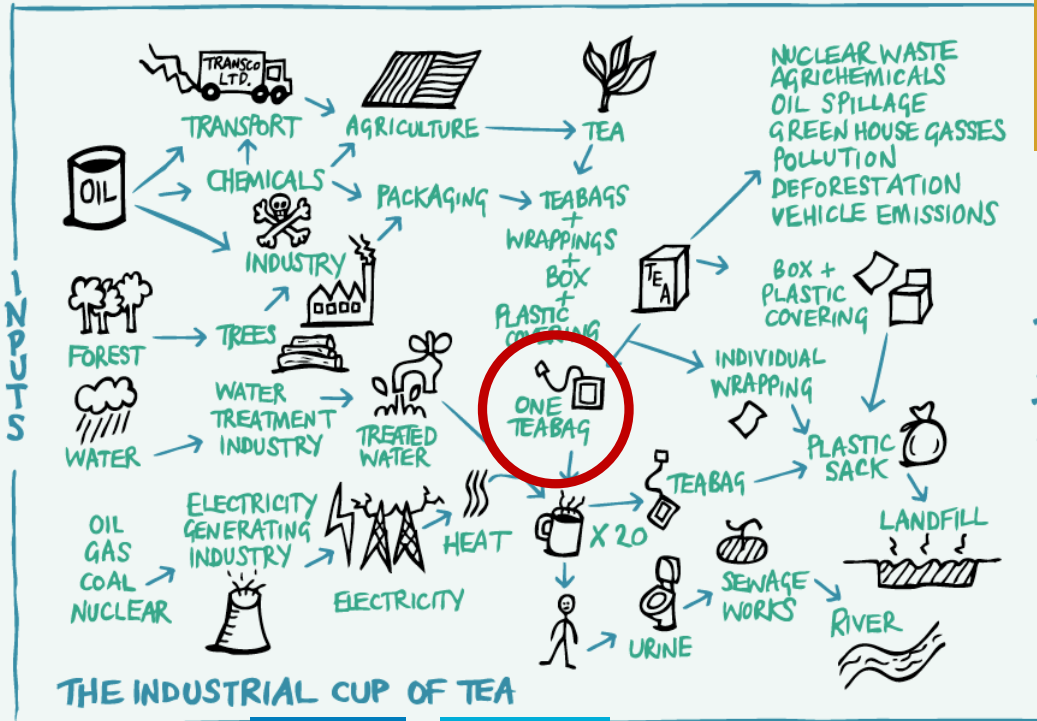


Local Sustainability Investigations



Kayamandi River Partnership
Water Quality Monitoring and MiniSASS Training – Kayamandi River Partnership

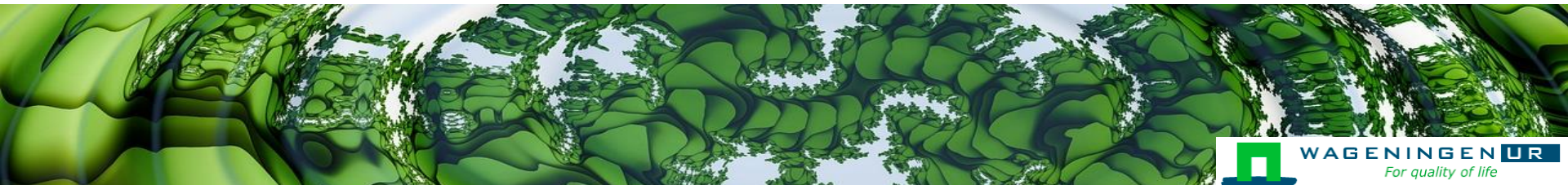
CURRICULUM
Design,
Content,
Assessment



Pedagogy & Learning

PEDAGOGY &
LEARNING
New/alternative
learning processes
and learning
environments

- Inquiry-curiosity based
- Values-based – pedagogy of care (Noddings)
- Place-based immersive situated learning
'pedagogy of entanglement' (Wessels, 2022;
Weldemariam, 2020)
- Embodied learning
- Transgressive learning
-



Kids won't remember their best day of YouTube

We believe that nature makes kids healthier, happier and smarter



GRANDFATHER: Jack aged eight in 1950. Able to walk about one mile on his own to the woods.

More green, less screen

We believe that nature makes kids healthier, happier and smarter

Resistance Pedagogy – going against the grain

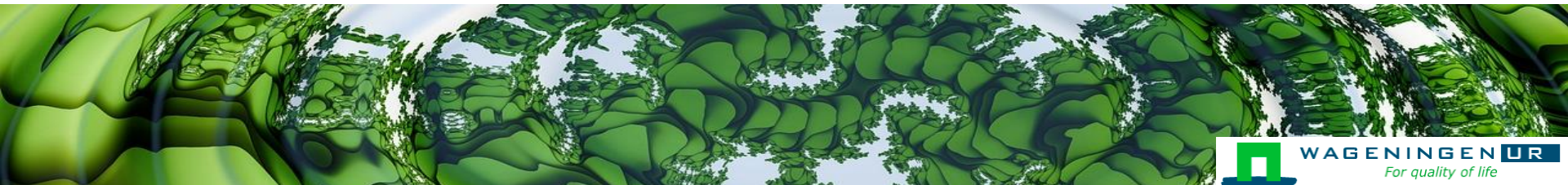




Institutional

INSTITUTIONAL
PRACTICES
Walking the talk:
experimenting with and learning
from creating sustainability
on location

- Enacting a sustainable, equitable, healthy and democratic centre/school for real!
- All staff and children can provide input and are heard
- 'walking the talk' and 'we make the road by walking'







Gezondste schoolkantine van Nederland staat in Noord

Een gezonde schoolkantine runnen is nog niet zo simpel, maar het Clusius College in Amsterdam-Noord kreeg het in anderhalf jaar voor elkaar. Het is nu de gezondste van Nederland, met tomaten uit eigen tuin.

Lorianne van Gelder 22 juni 2016, 14:17



Het Clusius College heeft vier groentebedden, een kippenhok, geitenstal en grote kassen. BEELD JEAN-PIERRE JANS

FOOD | NEWS

More vegan meals to be added to Brighton school canteen menus



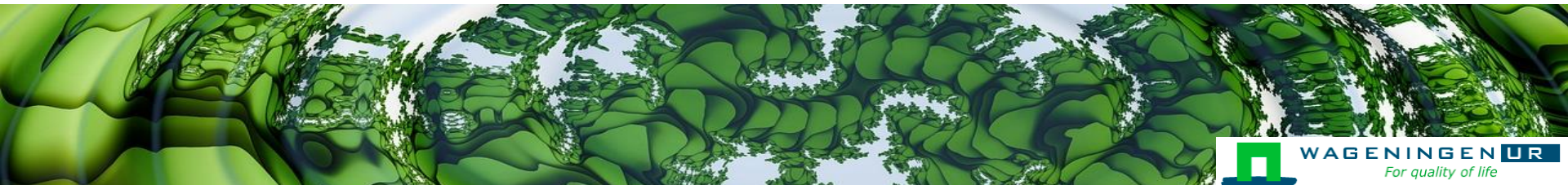
Image: Monkey Business Images on Shutterstock



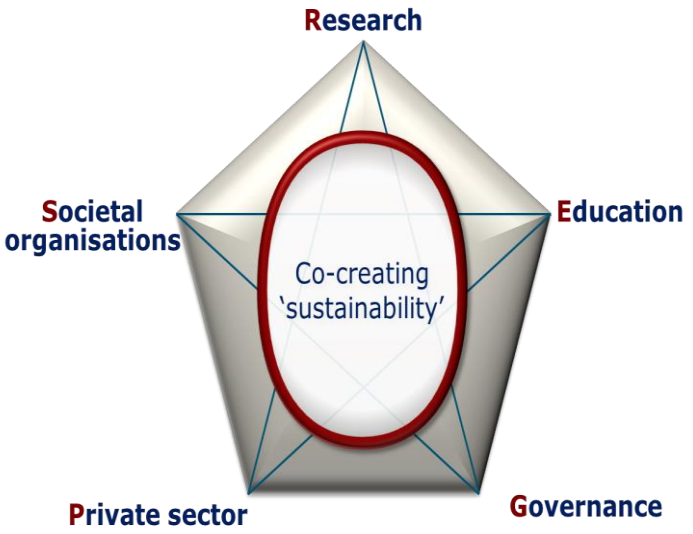
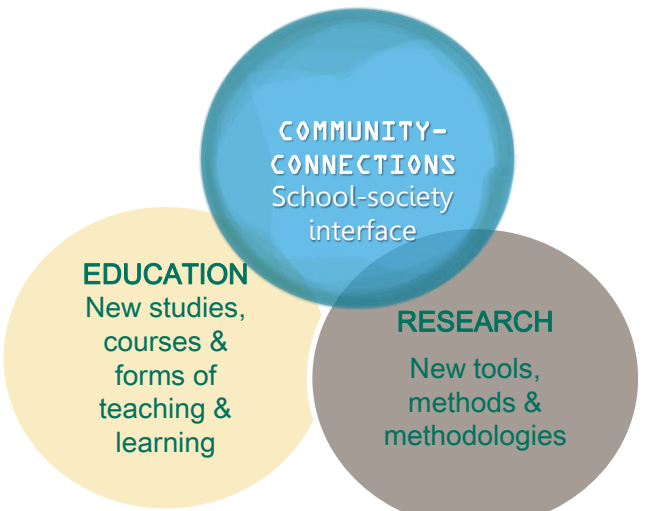
Community Connections



- Involving/including local actors (parents, NGO's, circular enterprises, etc.)
- Brokering and nurturing good relationships
- How can the centre's surroundings become a living resources for unfolding everyone's sustainability potential?



Example Living Labs & Citizen Science



STEM Learning in Citizen Science Projects and Programs

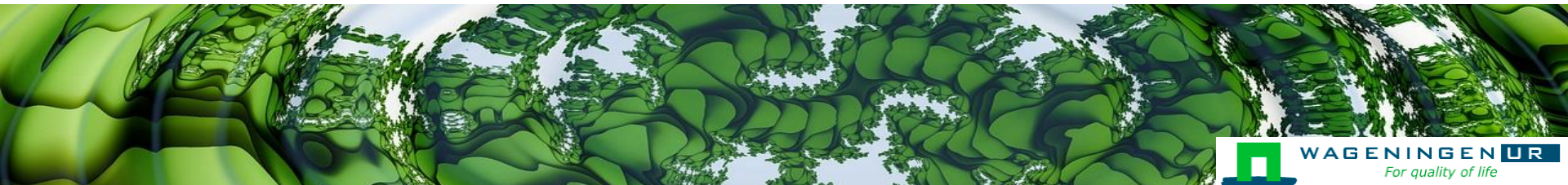
In citizen science (also known as Public Participation in Scientific Research, or PPSR) projects, non-scientists participate in the process of scientific research. They can develop new technologies for monitoring environmental quality, discover new galaxies, or analyze data to understand the impacts of climate change on birds in their neighborhood. This page provides a brief overview of resources about the intersection between citizen science and STEM learning that can be found on InformalScience.org, as well as links to other relevant resources and communities.





Capacity-Building

- What competencies & qualities are needed?
- Where/how/when are they developed?
- What is the role of teacher education?
- What is your centre/school doing in this regard?

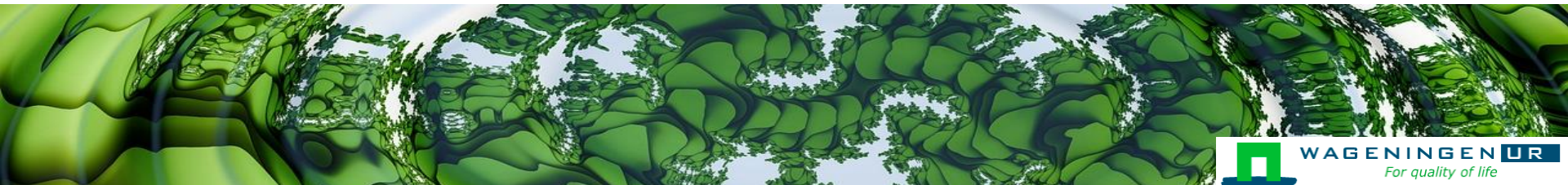




Vision, Ethos and Leadership

VISION, ETHOS,
LEADERSHIP &
COORDINATION

- What is the purpose of our education?
- What might we be strengthening in our children/students/citizens and the world, what might we be weakening, ignoring or silencing?
- What kind of leadership is needed?
- What is the role of children, youth, students, citizens in leadership (space for co-creation)?



ESD to 2030: First Report on Progress

November 2023

Priority Action Areas

Priority Action Area 1 – Advancing Policy

Priority Action Area 2 – Transforming Learning Environments

Priority Action Area 3 – Capacity Building of Educators

Priority Action Area 4 – Empowering and Mobilising Youth



Sustainability is not just something to learn, it's something to live!

STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN ABOUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN

SCHOOL GARDEN PROGRAMMES CAN TEACH HEALTHY EATING AND HELP BUILD AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

EDUCATION IS THE BEST TOOL FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS

SCHOOLS SHOULD BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY ISSUES

STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND THE COMMUNITY SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN SCHOOL DECISIONS.

THE WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY BRINGS TOGETHER WHAT IS TAUGHT, HOW IT'S TAUGHT, EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, TEACHER TRAINING, DECISION MAKING PROCESSES, THE PHYSICAL BUILDINGS, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS SHOULD BE SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE, CONSERVING WATER AND ENERGY AND REDUCING WASTE

THE WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH ADDRESSES THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS

1 NO POVERTY

2 ZERO HUNGER

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

5 GENDER EQUALITY

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

13 CLIMATE ACTION

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

15 LIFE ON LAND

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

SOLAR PANELS

ENERGY SAVING LIGHTBULBS

RENEWABLE MATERIALS

HUMAN RIGHTS

DISCRIMINATION

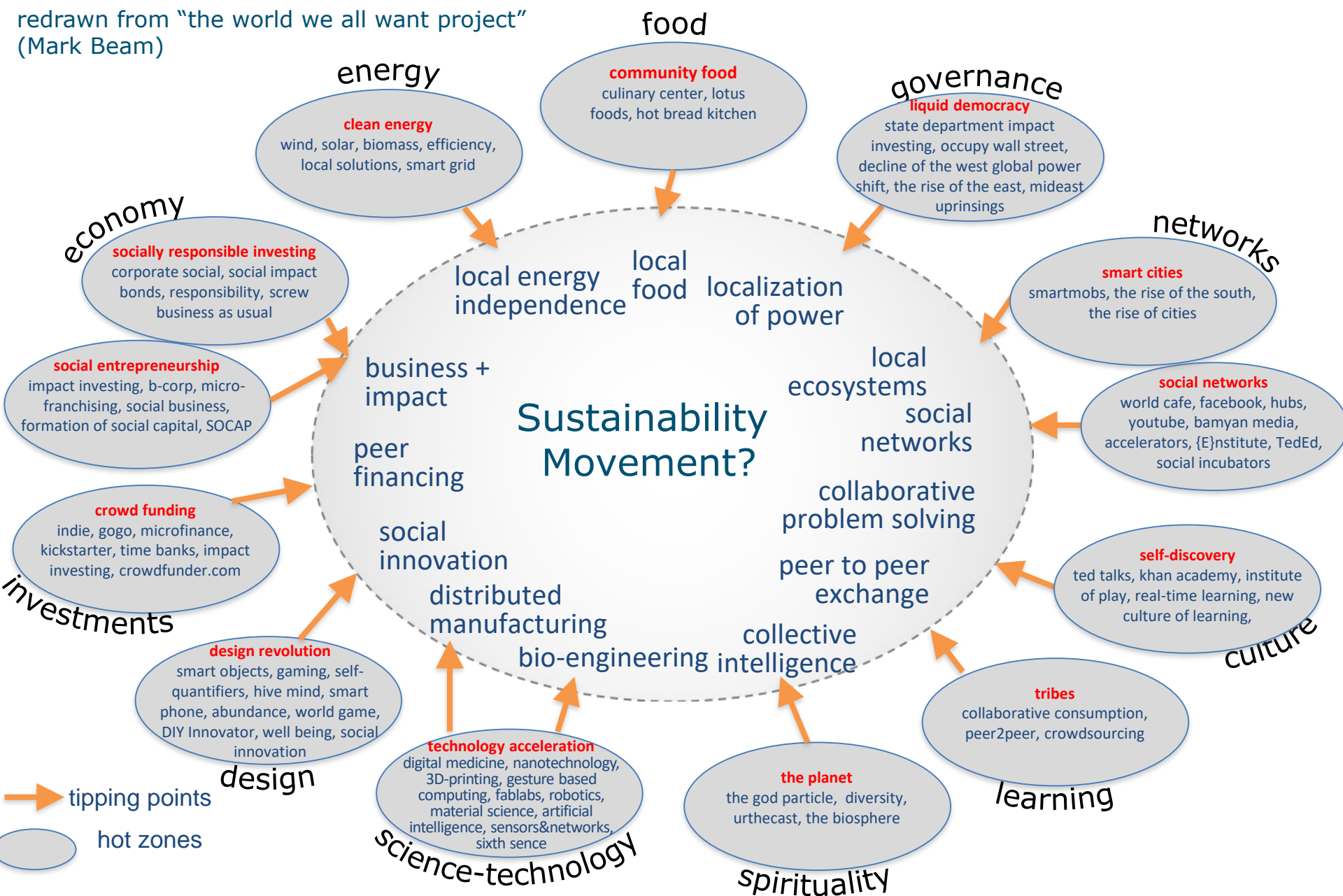
GENDER EQUALITY

BULLYING

SCHOOL HALL

Source: UNESCO, 2016 /GEM2016 Report

redrawn from "the world we all want project" (Mark Beam)



Some guideposts

- Create spaces where learners can experientially investigate existential issues rooted in their life-world and local environment while being mindful of the bigger picture
- Promote and support a systems approach – e.g. by linking with SDGs – also as a subject-matter teacher – ‘whole subject approach’
- Rethink teaching in light of the competencies and qualities that matter in light of the global challenges at hand
- Utilize diversity and multiple perspectives – looking for synergy but also for contestation and conflict – ‘the difficult middle.’
- Replace a culture of fear and powerlessness with a pedagogy of hope, space for action and an ethic of care

Thank you!



Twitter: @arjenwals

Email: arjen.wals@wur.nl

Blog: www.transformativelearning.nl

Source: Banksy