# Solidarity – An aim of education?
## Reflections on a vital topic of education for sustainable development (ESD) from the perspective of a responsive pedagogy

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**THEMATIC ARTICLE**

**ABSTRACT**

The demand for solidarity is made today by different social actors, e.g., from politics, religion or philosophy. Especially in the context of climate change and its social and ecological consequences, the demand for solidarity plays a major role. It is often referred to as the climate justice crisis. Therefore, solidarity can also be understood as a goal of education for sustainable development (ESD). In this context, ESD, which also sees itself as a concept of transformational education, prefers above all elements of a disruptive pedagogy through which students are to be led to new perspectives - for example, to solidarity with the victims of the consequences of climate change. The article takes up this concern of ESD, but would like to look at the educational goal of solidarity from the perspective of a responsive pedagogy. The starting point for this would not be the goals of ESD in the first place, but the needs of children and young people, as Ehrenhard Skiera has highlighted them in the context of his responsive pedagogy. Against this background, the article asks about the possibilities and preconditions for learning processes based on solidarity.

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## INTRODUCTION

Solidarity is booming. The demand of solidarity – expressed by politicians, philosophers, representatives of churches or other religious communities, pedagogists or teachers and scientists of different disciplines – as a missed as well as an obvious value, that would be necessary for the functioning of postmodern societies, marks the public discussion.[1] The context of these postulations are the various crisis in the recent past: Banking crisis, refugee movements, climate change with his varied consequences, Corona, war in Ukraine, inflation, resource constraint and the future of democracy are determining societies agenda. The climate change with his ecological, social and economic consequences is in particular one of the most important items of this current agenda. It looks that way, that our world never calms down and that anxiety is increasing.[2]

Solidarity as a main topic in the discussion of societies and the scientific discourse is emerging especially in two directions. On one hand it is demanded and discussed as a new value-grounding for democratic societies which are confronted with new forms of fundamentalism e.g., in political way or as a result of individualisation. In this regard, solidarity as a personal virtue as well as an aim of social planning, is understood as a real factor to ensure freedom in a society that is characterized by heterogeneity. In short: Solidarity serves as a basis of individual freedom (Amlinger & Nachtwey, 2023, 116–117). On the other hand, solidarity is discussed as a consequence of the way of life, that is practised in the developed countries especially in the so-called 'global north', but also in those countries, which tried to participate at the economic development. This way of life is called 'externalised lifestyle' – a term shaped by Stephan Lessenich. 'Externalised lifestyle' means a system of economy and society, that is based on the depletion of resources (Lessenich, 2017). The outsourcing of the consequences of such an exploitive behaviour is characteristic for this lifestyle: "For our lifestyle, i.e., the way we live, consume and do business, other people - primarily in the global South, future generations – and the environment often bear the costs" (Spahn-Skrotzki, 2022, 15).[3] For both directions of re-thinking about Solidarity, Education is posed to be the favored agent to create more social awareness and at least a society that shows more solidarity. In the educational science, this phenomenon is known as 'educationalization' ('Pädagogisierung'). It means, that social problems are transformed into educational challenges and delegated to the education system. This strategy is very often connected with a massive stretching or even an over-tension of the educational field (Boser, De Vincenti, Grube, & Hofmann, 2018, 306–307).

This phenomenon of 'educationalisation' is particularly evident in the context of the ecological question, which in recent years has focused primarily on climate change and

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[1] Examples for it are: Pope Francis (2020) or Rainer Forst (2021, 98–116).

[2] Anxiety on ground of the consequences of climate change and eco-anxiety are increased within the last years (Jones & Whitehouse, 2021, 94). This also shows the latest survey of Elizabeth Hickmann et al. (2021). According to the survey, 60 percent of young people between 16 and 24 are very concerned about climate change. Furthermore, more than 45 percent of young people stated that climate change had a negative impact on their feelings in everyday life. Addressing the consequences of climate change in school lessons also often leads to heavy feelings like anxiety but also anger among pupils (Jones & Whitehouse, 2021, 96 a. 105).

[3] Quotations in German have been translated into English by the author to enable a better understanding in an international context.

its consequences. Here, there are calls for a societal transformation to a sustainable way of life, which, among other things, would also have to be characterized by justice and solidarity. Education and instruction are seen as drivers of this transformation process, which is evident in the establishment of the concept of 'education for sustainable development' (ESD). The ecological crisis and the climate crisis are thus identified as global social problems and referred to the education system for their treatment and solution. In the meantime, 'education for sustainable development' has become increasingly established in the education system. This applies to the level of curricula, which have often taken up sustainability as a cross-cutting issue, but also to the teaching methodology of school subjects with a particular affinity to ecology, such as science education at the primary level, natural science subjects at the secondary level, but also religion. These subjects have integrated this issue and developed concepts of sustainable learning. Today, sustainability also plays an important role in adult education, so that in principle all people should be addressed or covered (Schweizer, 2021).

Characteristic for these new concepts of sustainable education and instruction is, besides the creation of a problem awareness for the endangerment of the ecological balance - pointed to the climate crisis - the winning of the learners as whole persons for this educational goal. The focus is thus on the motivational and volitional levels of education, which are also part of a competence-oriented education (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2003, 72). Here, Solidarity plays a crucial role, insofar as it forms a motivational basis for sustainable action. Players of ESD note, that solidarity with people who are directly affected by the consequences of climate change or the 'externalising way of life' of the 'global north' can be a central factor in turning your knowledge of the relevance of a sustainable way of life into corresponding action. This action in the sense of sustainability would then also enable the transformation of the world society.

However, the focus of the concept of 'education for sustainable development' on motivation will raise legitimate critical questions. In doing so, the goal level is perhaps less problematic than the didactic and methodological level, i.e., the ways in which the educational goals are operationalised by the teaching methodology sciences. Even if one can critically question whether solidarity can be a goal of education and teaching at state schools and whether it can be achieved at all, solidarity still remains a desirable attitude. The problem emerges at the didactic level, because solidarity or other attitudes, which could form the motivational and volitional basis of the desired transformation, are to be built up above all by an affectively oriented didactics and methodology. It is about more than imparting knowledge. On ground of this, ESD is characterized by affective components, because they should lead to transformative thinking and environmentally responsible behaviour. An example for this, is the 'didactic of interruptive experiences', that is preferred by trend (Steiner, 2022, 29). Even if learning often aims at 'relearning' (Schwarzer & Buchwald, 2014), through which previous familiarities or self-evident facts are critically questioned by pupils, a 'disruptive pedagogy'[4] can also lead to the overwhelming of children and young people. Changes in their own way of life would then be the result of fears or didactically generated emotions rather than a process of constant opinion-forming and free decision-making. In general, ESD can be characterized by a high normative

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[4]This is reminiscent of Bollnow's motive of an 'unsteady' education, which is characterised by erratic and often crisis-ridden learning processes. Such an education would have its origins in pietism (Bollnow, 1959, 42–52).

orientation and it is not always clear, how this concept can ensure the individual freedom of pupils, although it affirms self-government as a substantial aim. In this respect, Annette Scheunpflug also warns against approaches to education for sustainable development that could catch pupils off guard. She states: "The autonomy of the learner and their ability to form their own opinions in the context of socially controversial issues must be kept in mind if Education for Sustainable Development is not to be misunderstood as marketing or advertising for climate issues." (Scheunpflug, 2022, 13) However, according to Scheunpflug, this cannot mean that education and teaching have nothing to do with positionality. This is particularly important with regard to the protection of human rights and the related goal of global social justice. However, it must be introduced into the school context in such a way that it opens up possibilities for the development of individual judgement along the needs of the learners (Scheunpflug, 2022, 13). This is precisely the concern of a responsive pedagogy as called for and envisaged by Ehrenhard Skiera (Skiera, 2022a).

Solidarity seems to be an important educational goal - not only in the context of ESD - but in general. It is often thought to be as central to the personal development of the individual as it is to democratic society (Gebauer, 2012, 58). However, solidarity is not to be normatively asserted and didactically implemented as a continuation of a mythological-dogmatic education of conformity as a pedagogical goal, but rather to be developed from the needs of young people. This is also intended to make a critical-constructive contribution to education for sustainable development. Although this is certainly based on the students' lifeworld, due to its strong normative orientation towards the goal of the 'great transformation' as well as its apocalyptic character, it tends at the same time to repeatedly skip over the element of individual freedom that is central to the development of solidarity.

In the following, the emergence of the concept of ESD will first be outlined and then its preference for a 'disruptive pedagogy' and for its normative orientation will be shown. In doing so, it will be highlighted, that solidarity plays a key role in the thinking of ESD. In a next step, this focus on a normative and 'disruptive' pedagogy will be questioned in a critical way on the basis of some central motives of a responsive pedagogy. After that, it should be legitimised, that - under certain conditions - solidarity could be understood as a goal in the context of ESD. Finally, perspectives of learning solidarity in the horizon of responsive pedagogy should be explored. The focus in the educational science discussion conducted here, is on the German-language discourse.

## EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - ESTABLISHING A GLOBAL PEDAGOGICAL PROGRAMME

According to its central idea, ESD has its origins in the early 1970s. In the face of accelerated technological development and an increasingly critical awareness of human intervention in the ecology, the UN Conference in Stockholm in 1972 adopted a declaration that fundamentally addressed the issue of environmental protection and the related questions of human and societal well-being. The final document of the conference referred to the differentiated role of human action, which could range in its possibilities between the improvement of living conditions and the disturbance of the ecological balance, which was described as undesirable and serious. In this regard, the statement said: "Man has constantly to sum up experience and go on discovering,

inventing, creating and advancing. In our time, man's capability to transform his surroundings, if used wisely, can bring to all peoples the benefits of development and the opportunity to enhance the quality of life. Wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same power can do incalculable harm to human beings and the human environment. We see around us growing evidence of man-made harm in many regions of the earth: dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; major and undesirable disturbances to the ecological balance of the biosphere; destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources; and gross deficiencies, harmful to the physical, mental and social health of man, in the man-made environment, particularly in the living and working environment." (United Nations, 1972, 1) Also in 1972, in response to the conference, the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP, was founded - a United Nations agency based in Nairobi, Kenya, that deals exclusively with environmental issues.[5]

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development, WCED, published the report Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report (Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future). The understanding of sustainability formulated there, according to which sustainability is a form of development that "satisfies the needs of the present without risking that future generations will not be able to satisfy their own needs" (Holzbauer, 2020, 51), continues to shape the term today. Accordingly, sustainability is not to be understood as a 'static aim', but as a 'long-term goal' (Holzbauer, 2020, 52–53) and process that has future generations in particular in mind. The Brundtland Report met with international recognition and a willingness to act in the 1980s in the course of an increased social awareness of environmental policy issues (Greiner, 2002, 15).

Against this backdrop, since the 1990s politicians have made great efforts at both international and national level to sensitise business and society to sustainability. The first step was the international summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which adopted a series of important declarations on ecological and social issues and committed the participating countries to orienting their respective national policies towards enabling humane living conditions and protecting the environment (Wulfmeyer, 2021, 7). The Rio Conference must also be counted among the initiators of the concept of 'Education for Sustainable Development' (ESD), which was subsequently able to establish it, to which other international conferences and initiatives contributed significantly (Schelp, 2022, 18). These include the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development between 2005 and 2014, the second Rio Conference in 2012, and Agenda 2030, which was adopted by the United Nations in 2015 and named 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which - as the resolution entitled 'Transforming our World' states - are "urgently needed (…) to put the world on the path to sustainability and resilience." (United Nations, 2015, 1; Holzbauer, 2020, 82–83)

The 2030 Agenda goes beyond its predecessor, formulating more comprehensive goals and showing a resolute conviction to tackle the transformation towards a just, sustainable and peaceful global society (United Nations, 2015, 3). Education is addressed in the fourth goal. It is seen as the engine of transformation. Here, the aim was to ensure that learners are competent to contribute to sustainable development till 2023 (Holzbauer, 2020, 101). Another milestone in the establishment of ESD is the UNESCO Roadmap for the implementation of

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[5]Further information at: Bundesministerium für Umwelt (2019), available online: https://www.bmuv.de/themen/europa-internationales/internationales/das-umweltprogramm-der-vereinten-nationen.

the World Programme of Action on ESD, whose measures include, for example, the mobilisation of young people with a view to sustainable development (Unesco, 2014, 22) or the reorientation towards innovative and participatory learning methods to motivate learners to actively engage in sustainability (Unesco, 2014, 33).

In the school context, education for sustainable development is now well established and gaining more and more importance. Building on older resolutions on the topics of environmental protection and 'One World' or 'Third World' from the 1980s, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the German federal states adopted an orientation framework for the learning area 'Global Development' in 2007, which was revised in 2015. In addition to recognizing and dealing with cultural diversity or dealing with the process of globalization, the orientation framework places a clear focus on the area of sustainable development. Sustainability is a central criterion for analysing and evaluating actions, which pupils should be able to do by the end of primary school (Schreiber & Siege, 2016, 117–118). In this context, the educational goal of solidarity also plays a central role, both at the level of evaluation and at the level of action of the core competencies (Schreiber & Siege, 2016, 95). From the point of view of the orientation framework, solidarity as well as empathy play a key role in the realization of the goals of education for sustainable development. Thus, it states that "above all, thinking and acting in solidarity and the defence of fundamental values are necessary to overcome development crises, human rights violations, terrorism, ecological disasters and other global challenges." (Schreiber & Siege, 2016, 78) All types of schools and subject groups of schools are in view, although 'Sachunterricht'[6] at primary school and religious education have a special affinity to the educational goal of solidarity (Mauermann, 2011, 65–66). Therefore, these two subjects will be the focus of the following remarks. Especially for the area of (denominational) religious education, the religious pedagogical concept of a 'religious education for sustainable development' has been established in recent years, which – according to the representatives of the concept – wants to connect the leitmotiv of sustainability e.g., with the biblical theology of creation or the Christian responsibility for the world and to discover a new relevance of Christian attitudes in it (Bederna, 2019).

Insofar as climate change and the associated ecological and social consequences represent the crisis-like background foil of education for sustainable development and social movements have formed with 'Fridays for Futures' or the 'Last Generation', in which sustainability definitely takes on the status of a belief system from which the climate crisis is to be evaluated in an active and performative way, the biblical motive of apocalyptic has recently also gained new topicality (Maier, 2022; Pemsel-Maier, 2021; Wulf, 2021).[7]

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[6]This primary school subject, which is common in Germany, covers aspects of social and cultural sciences, history and natural sciences.

[7]The social movements in the context of the climate crisis can be seen as a secular apocalyptic phenomenon, insofar as they are essentially characterised by the fear of the end of the world, which can perhaps still be prevented by a consentaneous effort on the part of all people. The classical apocalypticism of the Judeo-Christian mould is a model for this on the one hand, because here too the motif of repentance is particularly important. On the other hand, secular apocalyptic thinking lacks the hope of God's saving intervention. From an educational point of view, secular apocalypticism is problematic because it primarily emphasises fear and negates the limitations of human beings in its call for transformational self-education.

In Germany, discussions are underway to declare sustainability as a state aim in the constitution (Grundgesetz/GG) - in addition to environmental protection and animal welfare (Art 20a GG). In Switzerland, too, ESD is an important element of education and teaching in schools and can even refer to the Swiss Federal Constitution (Constitutional Article 73), which gave constitutional priority to the goal of sustainable development as early as 1999 (Neidhard, 2012). Similarly, Austria has also committed itself to sustainability in a federal constitutional law and has declared this to be a central concern of the Austrian education system.[8]

## TRANSFORMATION TROUGH A NORMATIVE AND 'DISRUPTIVE PEDAGOGY'?

Education for Sustainable Development aims at a transformation of the world society, specifically at a change from a non-sustainable and externalizing way of life to a sustainable lifestyle. Characteristic for ESD is the connection of ecological problems with social and economic challenges. This is also illustrated by the term 'climate justice crisis', which has been introduced in the meantime. ESD aims above all at the development or promotion of a 'creative power competence' ('Gestaltungskompetenz'), through which children, young people and adults are enabled to engage in a sustainable way for a future-proofed world and society. Most recently, there is more frequent talk of a great (ecological) transformation or transformative education. In this context, education should enable people to recognise problems, learn to think systemically and act responsibly in terms of the big transformation. It is also about developing an understanding of problem-solving strategies (Ködelpeter, Loewenfeld, Schlehufer, & Kreuzinger, 2022, 24). As noted above, solidarity is classified as an important educational goal in this regard - for example, with people who are already confronted with the consequences of the 'climate justice crisis'. However, this is not only about empathy, but also about the willingness to make personal sacrifices (Spahn-Skrotzki, 2022, 178–179) in the sense of correct sustainable behaviour (Wulfmeyer, 2021, 7).

Because ESD is not only about imparting knowledge, but also about enabling practice, the motivation level plays a central role here. In this respect, ESD promotes a "shift towards ecological and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviours" (Wulfmeyer, 2021, 14). Even if in the meantime within ESD it is more reflected that education requires a self-determined engagement by the students, it becomes clear that for instance knowing the reasons for a transformation from an unsustainable to a sustainable way of life is not sufficient for it. Rather, the change must be secured pedagogically-normatively, which, for example, Katrin Bederna urges (Bederna, 2023; Wulfmeyer, 2021, 14 a. 27). In the following, the aspects of 'disruptive pedagogy' as well as the normativity of the approach will be discussed.

(1) ESD favours a 'disruptive pedagogy' that shall help to shake up and change a previous, unsustainable and exploitation-based worldview. For example, a study on transformative ecological learning in context by researchers at Freie Universität Berlin, following Heila Lotz-Sisitka, states: "These relationships and structures should be scrutinised and changed

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[8]Further information on: https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/ba/bine.html [Last access: 27.07.2023]. In Austria, federal constitutional laws are acts at a federal level with constitutional status.

as part of transformative learning processes. So-called 'transgressive learning' is also discussed here, which disrupts and permanently transcends unsustainable and colonially characterised structures." (Umweltbundesamt, 2022, 31) In more methodological terms, Regina Steiner adds: "It therefore requires 'disruptive' experiences, disorientating dilemmas and an emotional confrontation with one's own perspectives on meaning. (…) In the protected space of an appreciative group and a dialogue free of domination, learners can come to terms with previously hidden perspectives of meaning and reflect on, test and consolidate new views of the world and themselves. Perhaps this will enable them to visualise a just society and an appreciative approach to nature and the environment in a completely new way and thus gain the desire and courage to change the world in the interests of sustainable development." (Steiner, 2022, 29) Transformative learning goes beyond mere knowledge - for example about the problems of an externalizing lifestyle and about possibilities of sustainable behaviour - and wants to involve learners in transformative processes actively, so that they can also experience the effectiveness of an alternative way of life in themselves. For example, consciously shopping regional and organic products or reconditioning technical devices or bicycles in repair cafés becomes an expression of transformative learning, which can also stabilize and intensify it. It is characteristic that teachers act as provocateurs, for example, and that extracurricular places of learning, such as ecological or sustainability-focused initiatives, should also be included ('service learning'). Thus, explicitly also committed persons of the sustainability movement become extracurricular educational agents.

Transformational education is a working term to describe the current development of ESD, which focuses on the causes of externalizing lifestyles and the activation of pupils for sustainable engagement as well as a stronger reflection of their own behaviour. Guiding here is the approach of Jack Mezirow, who has been dealing with transformational education - originally in the context of adult education - since the 1970s and which explicitly includes 'disruptive' and irritating moments as well as a 'self-examination' of the person, which especially includes feelings of guilt and shame – in the context of ESD e.g., about unsustainable behaviour (for example, to travel by plane). Transformational learning aims at changing meaning structures or perspectives e.g., acquired through socialization from which individuals judge situations or phenomena. According to Mezirow, this is especially possible when these structures reach their limits, which is what a 'disruptive' pedagogy explicitly aims to achieve: "Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings." (Mezirow, 1991, 161) Transformational education thus explicitly aims to transgress previous mental concepts as a basis for behavioural change (Mezirow, J. & Associates, 2000, 22). The focus of ESD is on entire communities or adults, but especially on children and young people, because attitudes and behaviours that young people learn today will have a major impact on their consumption in the future (Kreuzinger & Schlehufer, 2022, 137). One of the reasons given for this, is, that the younger generation is primarily affected by climate change and its consequences. Therefore, they should be allowed to contribute their creativity to the transformation of society and should also be politically involved (Kreuzinger & Schlehufer, 2022, 137).

(2) Marco Rieckmann rightly pointed out that ESD is in tension between 'Bildung' and education (in the sense of upbringing) - insofar as education is primarily intentional and aims to achieve certain pedagogical goals among children and young people. In contrast, he said, 'Bildung' focuses more on students' own activity and autonomy. While in terms of sustainability he would like to make the idea of 'Bildung' especially strong with adolescents, he advocates using educational concepts with children as well, first and foremost (Rieckmann, 2021, 6–8). Maturity and emancipation are understood here primarily in such a way that they would open up new possibilities of acting and shaping for the pupils. Education is thus to be understood first and foremost as problem solving and coping with the world (Maier, 2022, 20), with sustainability constantly included as a fundamental perspective. Whereas education for sustainable development aims at changing the behaviour of pupils, e.g., separating waste, 'Bildung' for sustainable development focuses more on processes of reflection, which can then independently lead to changed practices. Therefore, a critical examination of the goals, ideas and implementation possibilities of ESD should be explicitly considered in the lessons (Rieckmann, 2021, 7–8). Following Gerhard de Haan, Marco Rieckmann states that sustainable education processes should enable learners to act sustainably if they wish to do so. However, this is contradicted by the fact that, for example, the state goal of environmental and animal protection or sustainability is not up for discussion and students could well be 'expected' to choose normative social or state options. According to this logic, the young generation is not allowed to discuss already fixed goals of society, although it is their own future that is at stake. At the same time, it becomes clear that a critical and open discourse on values - although this is often mentioned as a characteristic of ESD - is not sufficient for her representatives. However, this could compete with the goal of transformation. Since knowledge about the importance of a sustainable lifestyle does not yet lead to transformation for sure, a 'conceptual change' as well as the right motivation are necessary (Bederna, 2023, 183–186; Rieckmann, 2021, 11). This requires appropriate learning settings -and environments, teachers and learning facilitators who act as 'change agents' (Nationale Plattform Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung, 2017, 75) and ensure that the learners' reflection processes run in the desired direction as well as evoking feelings of fear (Wehrmann, 2021), guilt or shame (Bederna, 2020, 230). This is apparently intended to ensure that it does not just remain a matter of insights - for example, that a young person's desire for a moped is egocentric - but rather that the young person then refrains from realizing his or her desire.[9] Possible scenarios of climate change consequences such as droughts, floods, wars over resources or the confrontation with Greta Thunberg's rhetoric have the potential to arouse fears in children (Tacke, 2020, 125).

In general, the bad conscience seems to be a didactically popular way to initiate a transformation process in children - e.g., from a consumer attitude to a sustainable attitude. As an example, we refer to Hans-Martin Haase, who states: "The majority of children and young people in the 'rich' countries currently learn about unsustainable lifestyles directly from their parents and perceive them as a given and completely 'normal'. (…) This justifies dealing with

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[9]Such a climate ethics thought experiment Bederna makes (Bederna, 2023, 185–186).

this topic as early as in 'Sachunterricht' lessons in order to provide pupils with tools to situate themselves in the consumer society and to pave the way for a sustainable lifestyle in the sense of a creative power competence ('Gestaltungskompetenz'). This creative power competence in-cludes the awareness that they ('our' pupils), with their habitual lifestyle, are already involved in exceeding the ecological carrying capacity of our planet and that their consumer prosperity is not available to most children in the world (social dimension of sustainability)." (Haase, 2021, 132) Here the impression arises that by the comparison with children in countries of the 'global south' a 'bad conscience' is to be produced in pupils, from which the author hopes the awak-ening of a solidary attitude with the children. At the same time, the latter are presented as 'victims' of their consumption-oriented parents, so that they have to be saved by the school. ESD is thus - despite all the rhetoric that the educational process is open-ended - always with one foot in moralization. According to Alexandra Krug, for example, this can be seen in the strong "normative setting" of ESD, which wants to "externally subjectivize" a self-determined educational process. In addition, according to Krug, pedagogical-didactic practices of instru-mentalization and actionism would also be symptomatic (Krug, 2022, 196).

In view of the problematic consequences of an externalizing way of life, as it is still practiced especially in the countries of the 'global north', the basic concern of a sustainable development to force a good future for all humans, animals and nature as a whole is a goal that can only be agreed with. Insofar as education is trusted to enable an awareness of the problems of this lifestyle, the development of alternative ideas of a world society and the exploration of appropriate options for action, the establishment of an education for sustainable development is comprehensible. Justice and solidarity play a central role in ESD. In this context, ESD relies on concepts of transformational education, which can be described in the broadest sense with the theological concept of 'conversion'. I.e., it is not only about knowledge about the conse-quences of an externalizing lifestyle, e.g., for the climate and thus for the environment and the living conditions of people, but it is above all about changing attitudes, which should then also lead to behaviour in the sense of sustainability. Not least, pedagogical strategies of disruptive-ness and moralization are chosen that operate, for example, with feelings of fear or guilt and involve learners as whole persons in the sustainability discourse. Daniel Tröhler therefore believes, not without good reason, that ESD is ultimately not only aimed at solving the problems associated with climate change, but at salvation (Tröhler, 2019). Here, pedagogy shows itself to be the heir to traditional religious education, which was intended to prepare people for conversion. In doing so, there is a risk that pupils will be emotionally overwhelmed and influenced. Not least in the context of the educational goal of solidarity, which is so important for ESD, this would be fatal, as it is a sentiment or practice that must be an independent decision of the individual. Even if this autonomy is emphasized again and again by ESD, resistant positionings are mostly taken as an occasion to increase the pedagogical persuasion or serve as a foil of a pedagogical critique of society (Krahn & Schimmel, 2021).[10]

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[10]Bederna notes, however, that she is certainly interested in a controversial discussion in (religion) classes: "Only what is scientifically controversial (i.e., not anthropogenic climate change) needs to be controversial in class, but the space of reasons that learners have, can and should be exhausted and reflected upon without taboo: There are very well reasons for humans to emit a lot of CO2." (Bederna, 2021, 66) Perhaps she needs to say this on here also because her essay relates to the approach of philosophizing with children. A one-sided approach would hardly do justice to a philosophy didactic approach.

Whether this is helpful to the educational goal of sustainability and in particular to the desired prosocial attitudes and willingness and - even more important - whether this takes the students seriously as subjects of their own biography and their own educational process, must therefore be questioned.

In the following, against the background of a responsive pedagogy, it will be asked how solidarity can be learned as an independent readiness and action competence. This is also intended as a contribution to education for sustainable development, which, however, starts from the learners and not from the utopia of ESD (Hamborg, 2023, 157–158). To this end, it must first be considered to what extent solidarity can be the subject of learning processes. Then, central characteristics of a responsive pedagogy should be outlined. Finally, the pedagogical conditions for the learning of solidarity should be identified.

## SOLIDARITY AS AN OBJECT OF LEARNING PROCESSES

Steffen Hamborg identifies the 'too much of a good thing' that ESD in his opinion strives for as its central point of criticism. By this he means both an excessive optimism regarding the possibilities of pedagogical action in relation to the addressees and the fact that ESD feels responsible for almost all problems and challenges that stand in the way of a humane, just, sustainable or inclusive society (Hamborg, 2023, 154–155). Nothing else expresses the talk of the 'great transformation' (Rieckmann, 2021, 14). Perhaps the claim to want to create the good human being is the normative stumbling block of ESD? In any case, for learning processes towards solidarity, especially in the context of state school, this claim is problematic and misleading (Osterwalder, 2000, 31). This does not mean, however, that ethical learning, which includes solidarity, is irrelevant. On the contrary: Processes of secularization and individualization in society have led to the evaporation of virtues associated with certain value systems, such as Christianity. However, in the context of education, a restorative pedagogy or a (re)moralization of the school, as it very often seems in relation to ESD, is not the answer (Mauermann, 2011, 68). Theodor W. Adorno already pointed out that solidarity and charity turn into their opposite when they are normatively demanded: "The encouragement to love - possibly in the imperative form that one should - is itself a component of the ideology that perpetuates the coldness. It is characterised by a compulsive, oppressive quality that counteracts the ability to love" (Adorno, 1967, 121–122). Particularly in the context of the state school, it is not possible to dictate the moral good to the individual, but must be discovered or seen by himself or herself (Mauermann, 2011, 68).

Furthermore, with regard to the state school, it must be considered to what mode solidarity learning processes are even conceivable. To this end, two common misunderstandings about learning solidarity must be cleared up. On the one hand, solidarity is often understood as the good par excellence that must be learned - but solidarity remains mostly undefined here. Rather, the demand for solidarity must be based on concrete reasons, as Lisa Dillinger states following Simon Derpmann. According to this, there need to be comprehensible reasons to which individuals can refer in order to be in solidarity. The common reference to these reasons also creates a connection between these individuals. Solidarity is thus always embedded in relationships that are based on voluntariness (Dillinger, 2021, 2). Although it might be desirable, solidarity is not simply based on shared humanity - this would be the second misunderstanding.

In this respect, solidarity would always be partial and contextual.[11] Referring to Derpmann, Dillinger states: "Moral identifications are value judgements that have an action-guiding and identity-forming effect on the individual. In solidarity, such identifications, when shared with others, become their common cause. This gives both the identification and the relationship to those who share it a new significance. Understanding, then, that solidarity is not moral by itself, but is built on shared identifications that can be morally judged, suggests the relevance of determining the content of different solidarities." (Dillinger, 2021, 2) The moral identifications that make a group act in solidarity can then also be concretely criticized if their content seems problematic or their target group too limited (Dillinger, 2021, 2). From here, it is then also possible to make solidarity fruitful for educational processes. Pedagogical goals would then be, first, the ability to deal with ethical issues and to discover their relevance, second, to develop a personal point of view that can guide action and to communicate it with others in order to reach a consensus, if necessary. On this basis, thirdly, it can be a matter of developing possibilities for a common practice of solidarity (Dillinger, 2021, 3).

A problematic aspect of solidarity is, that it is often demanded by politicians or groups of social players. As has been shown, this is also essential for ESD. However, in the context of state schools, it is important that learning in solidarity does not overwhelm pupils by one-sided content and methodology. This does not mean that one has to refrain from addressing solidarity in school - it is just that children and young people must not be existentially committed to predetermined forms of solidarity (Dillinger, 2021, 3). The pedagogically intended goal of the lesson cannot therefore be that all learners show solidarity with the victims of the consequences of climate change and act sustainably as a fixed result, but that they are able to orientate themselves with regard to the problem that is discussed. The basis for this is the search for reasons and their discursive examination. Reasons that are not politically or by ESD predetermined are also permitted (Brosow, 2020, 67 a. 79). This strengthens the autonomy of learners and prevents lessons from becoming propaganda. However, this does not rule out the possibility that some pupils will adopt an attitude of solidarity and want to act sustainably. It is therefore about enabling solidarity. If the teacher realises that learners adopt this attitude, they can be pleased about it. However, teachers must be satisfied with the fact that pupils are able to recognise and describe a problem area like 'externalised lifestyle' and his consequences and deal with it cognitively. An existential positioning is ultimately left to the learners themselves (Maier, 2022, 95–96). This is exactly in line with the concern of a responsive pedagogy.

## ELEMENTS OF A RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Responsiveness is considered an important quality of parents and people in pedagogical professions. It means attentiveness to children's verbal or non-verbal signals, empathy and 'Answerability' ('Antwortlichkeit') in the sense of listening and going along with pupils or responding sensitively to others' expressions. It characterizes an education that places value

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[11]Apart from this, the Christian tradition, for example, with the phenomenon of martyrdom, knows a solidarity that no longer looks at the preservation of one's own person. However, this cannot be the goal of religious education, but results from an individual faith dynamic. This can, of course, be stimulated by learning processes based on solidarity (Maier, 2011, 282–284).

on interpersonal relationships, whereas authoritarian education, for example, is characterized by a lack or complete absence of responsiveness (Nowak, 2016, 116–117; Vollmer, 2016, 144).

In this sense, responsive pedagogy, as envisioned by Ehrenhard Skiera, focuses its attention in a particular way on pupils. However, it is not only about the lifeworld of children and adolescents, to which teachers should connect in the classroom as well as in educational contexts in general, for example, in order to draw attention to the relevance of topics. Rather, the point is that people in educational professions need to be aware that children, too, have a will of their own and that education needs to acknowledge this. Skiera emphasizes, "If free will is recognized as a basic condition of the human being and as a central aspect of its dignity, educational actions that pursue the goal of unquestioning or blind conformity to regulations or even the implementation of a 'good' will to replace the 'bad' will of the child must be renounced." (Skiera, 2022b, 465) It is revealing for his understanding of responsivity that Skiera rejects a traditional normative charging of both the educator and the to-be-educated, for neither is the educator representative of the good and 'redeemer' of people (Skiera, 2022b, 460), nor - as for instance Montessori has thougt - the child (Brinkmann, 2013, 210). In this respect, a responsive pedagogy is not interested in hypostatizing the child, but about recognizing free will as an anthropological fact, a human right, and - against this background - the only meaningful starting point for an education aiming at maturity. The educandus is taken seriously as the subject of his own education and learning process (Skiera, 2022b, 460 u. 464).

The pedagogical concept of 'Bildsamkeit' can be understood not only as the educational potential of the child, but also, with Norbert Ricken, as its referentiality to other people in connection with its own educational process. Education here is on the one hand open, on the other hand relationally conceived. If the educator does not have to awaken any substance hidden in the child, education is not necessary to ensure the child's subjectivity, but it can be very useful for the child (Ricken, 2012, 330, 347 and 398). Thus, even a responsive pedagogy will not dispense with impulses that it addresses to students. Moreover, social interconnectedness also exists in the other direction, because, practically speaking, people are not solipsistic. This is not a matter of adapting to society, but of being able to find one's own place in and to assume responsibility for it. In didactic terms, Wolfgang Klafki has laid an important, albeit ambivalent, track in this direction with his motif of 'epoch-typical key problems'. According to Klafki, dealing with key problems[12] in the classroom - including the ecological crisis - makes the world accessible to the learners and open them to it.[13] However, as the criticism of Klafki shows, lessons focused on key problems can also lead to neglect other aspects of teaching and to the cognition that the world must only being seen as a problem. It is also questionable whether the key problems presented to the students by the pedagogy are actually the questions and problems of the learners (Kiel, 2017, 111–112; Klafki, 2007, 56)

For Skiera, solidarity comes into view here as a guiding perspective - in two ways. Firstly, it could constitute the ethos of the pedagogical actor, which shapes his actions, and secondly, it could arrive at the 'educandus' as a plausible leitmotiv for his life. Admittedly, this remains a

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[12]Klafki means problems or challenges which are shaping the present or maybe the future of a society (Klafki, 2007, 56).

[13]The problem is, that for him, solidarity and empathy are important prerequisites for dealing with the so-called key problems. In the perspective of a responsive pedagogy, it would be better to speak about curiosity, because, as Skiera has worked out, the need for new experiences is quite characteristic of children (Skiera, 2022a, 2022b, 467).

fragile undertaking, because solidarity cannot be formulated as an abstract and generally binding norm of education, and even if this were possible, it is far from certain that it will be received by the children (Skiera, 2022b, 466). The self-willed child ultimately represents the limit of such pedagogical efforts - and that is a good thing, because it preserves the right of the individual, wherein at least lies the chance for the development of strong and responsible human beings. It sounds likeable, when recently solidarity and social planning of society are invoked to secure freedom and democracy (Amlinger & Nachtwey, 2023, 354). But this call unfortunately has forgotten Adorno's warning, reminded above. Here, a responsive pedagogy will have to be more modest and understand solidarity rather as a joint search movement of educators and pupils in the context of concrete reasons. For this search process, it seems helpful to consider above all basic psychological needs of people, which Skiera identified (Skiera, 2022b, 468–469).

## CONCLUSION: LEARNING SOLIDARITY? POSSIBILITIES AND PREREQUISITES

In conclusion, the possibilities and prerequisites of learning solidarity from a responsive perspective will now be outlined. Solidarity as an educational goal - especially in the context of educational institutions - can be pursued in the following directions that complement each other.

First of all, it is a matter of dealing with solidarity in the context of various teaching topics (among which the problem of 'externalised lifestyle' can certainly be counted) or other learning occasions (e.g., bullying at school, deportation of a child or young person, etc.). This includes a professional discussion, but also the ability to recognize the relevance of solidarity in the respective contexts. Both belong to the area of reasons. In addition to cognitive aspects, affective aspects will also play a role. Here, a broadening of horizons is very much aimed at, which, however, is not brought about 'disruptively' by crises, but gently starts with the curiosity or interest of children in their fellow world (Skiera, 2022b, 466), in which the teacher introduces case situations, problem situations or experiences of people. It is then a matter of searching for reasons and information or knowledge and looking at them from a multi-perspective for oneself and with others, in which scientific findings, normative concepts (e.g., from religion or ethics) or ways of argumentation who are at a higher level of moral judgement than the learning group can be taken into account (Mauermann, 2011, 64). This can lead to consensus building as well as to a change in one's own views (Schwarzer & Buchwald, 2014, 220). Klafki's key problems could also play a role in this context - especially if one considers the assumption of responsibility as a human need (Skiera, 2022a, b, 467). However, talking about 'problems' in a school context already leads to 'educationalisation', which usually makes it difficult to have an open-ended discussion. Perhaps it would therefore be better to talk about key issues, such as how we want to live as individuals and as a global community in the future.

If students discursively agree on common reasons for solidarity in this way, e.g., with people in the 'global south' who are affected by negative consequences of climate change, this can become identifications that guide action. Building on this, learning processes can be initiated that demonstrate how the newly gained identifications can be articulated and lived in practice, and how collaboration with those who share the same identifications can be possible (Dillinger, 2021, 3). This can result in an attempt to increasingly cultivate a sustainable lifestyle, to engage

in relevant initiatives, or to protest together for a good life for all people and the entire co-environment.

The possibilities contemplated here would definitely be in the spirit of ESD - even if on the whole they are more modestly conceived. But from the point of view of a responsive pedagogy, such learning opportunities are bound to certain preconditions. The first would be to abandon a missionary grip on pupils that threatens to overwhelm the self-will of children through a moral and normative charge of solidarity and 'disruptive' methods (Skiera, 2022b, 471–472). This also addresses a central basic need of people mentioned by Skiera: their recognition as counterparts with their own reasons (Skiera, 2022b, 467). Related to this is the need for self-efficacy, which plays a major role in the semantics of ESD, but primarily in relation to pupils' commitment to sustainability. However, self-efficacy should start even before that, because it does not only show itself in a skilful practice, but first in one's own decision for something. Only through this can it be self-determined practice (Rekus, 2005, 81). Self-efficacy - also as self-determination - and recognition of the children with their own reasons and needs are central elements of a responsive pedagogy. This therefore begins precisely not with abstract social values, but with concrete attention to children and their support in developing an interest in themselves. According to Karl Gebauer, above all the authorship of the child and the resonance of its environment are the decisive factors of learning - especially with regard to solidarity and empathy. This learning process ultimately begins - and this may be striking - with the ability to be in relationship with oneself (Gebauer, 2012, 48–49). The prerequisite for this is an ability on the part of the educator to be responsive. In concrete terms, this means responding sensitively to needs, e.g., for authorship and resonance, and thus conveying basic trust and a positive attitude toward life. This is the basis for learning processes based on solidarity, because, as Ottmar Fuchs, said: Only the giftees can give something to others. The abundance of being loved alone prevents the feeling of always falling short towards others (Fuchs, 2006, 331). Thus, responsivity, though not as a causal principle or an imperative but as an 'unsecured hope', can guide and encourage educators in their actions (Skiera, 2022b, 466). Such an attitude, which consciously renounces the continuation of a mythical educational programme and instead relies on communication between not fail-safe human beings, would be to be wished for ESD and its protagonists in terms of children and young people, as in terms of a world worth living in for all living beings.

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