

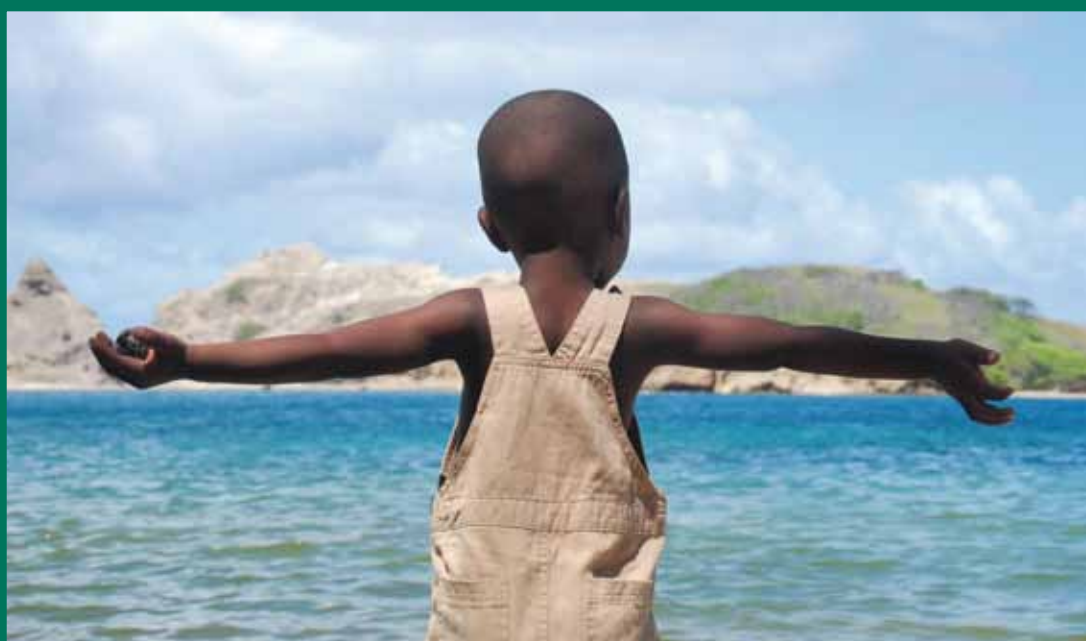


MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE  
E DELLA TUTELA DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE

# HERE AND NOW! EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

*Recommendations and Guidelines*

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UN Decade of Education for  
Sustainable Development

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# HERE and NOW

## Education for Sustainable Consumption

Recommendations and Guidelines



A publication from the United Nations Environment Programme and the Marrakech Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption led by Italy

in collaboration with the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development and the Hedmark University College in Norway







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Victoria Thoresen, Associate Professor at Hedmark University College and Project Manager of the Consumer Citizenship Network, wrote **Here and Now!** in close consultation with international experts on education and sustainable consumption. The work was coordinated by Isabella Marras, and Adriana Zacarias, Programme Officers at UNEP DTIE, with the support of Fabienne Pierre, Associate Programme Officer at UNEP DTIE. Special thanks to Arab Hoballah, Chief of Sustainable Consumption and Production Branch, and to all involved staff of UNEP DTIE, for their participation in the project. Our warm thanks go to the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea for supporting the realization of this document, especially to Paolo Soprano, Head of Division, Andrea Innamorati, Antonella Arduini and Francesca De Lucia, Advisers, Directorate General for Development and Environmental Research.

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# Foreword

*There is no freedom and no responsibility without education. As citizens, it is through education that we learn how to make choices for our daily life.*

Our consumption choices are powerful decisions that we make in our everyday life, but we might not see their consequences and force. Our consumption choices shape markets and production patterns. They have tremendous impacts on our natural resources and ecosystems as well as on our global community – contributing to issues such as climate change and human rights. It is through our purchasing choices that we vote in the market, that we support or reject certain corporate practices. Through them we also send messages to decision-makers in governments, industries and companies.

On the other hand, education is one of the most powerful tools to support us in making the right and more responsible choices while meeting our needs and aspirations. Education can reconcile consumption with freedom and responsibility. Education for Sustainable Consumption (ESC) is essential to empower individuals and social groups with appropriate information on the impacts of their daily choices as consumers, as well as for workable solutions and alternatives.

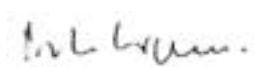
This publication *Here and Now! Recommendations and Guidelines on ESC* aims to inspire and bring concrete tools that will help address ESC challenges and find new opportunities in the formal education sector. These guidelines are a contribution to the Marrakech Process, a global effort to promote sustainable consumption and production. It represents the concrete outcomes of the International Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption led by the Italian Government, and the harvest of the task force's joint effort with UNEP and various experts on ESC. *Here and Now!* is also a valuable contribution to the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) that is led by UNESCO with the objective of helping people to learn how to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions.

This publication contains a first section addressed to policy-makers, to enable them to understand better how ESC can be integrated into existing strategies for sustainable development and support major policy goals such as environmental protection. A second section provides teachers and educators with the tools and instruments that will allow them to include ESC in curricula. Electronic Annexes of *Here and Now! Recommendations and Guidelines on ESC* also provide more resources on ESC (research, initiatives, teaching materials, information sources, websites, etc.) and are available online.

Integrating ESC into formal education, from primary school to higher education programmes, is fundamental. Children and youth, who are at the same time among the most vulnerable and influential consumers, are eager to receive better tools that will help them to shape tomorrow's world into a more sustainable one and become not only consumers but responsible citizens.



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# Introduction

Despite increased awareness of the human impact on the environment and a greater focus on personal as well as global consequences of individual lifestyle choices, sustainable development and sustainable consumption are still not central topics in educational systems today. **Here and Now! Education for Sustainable Consumption** provides recommendations and guidelines organized into two main chapters:

(I) **Addressing the challenges:** is meant for policymakers and contains rationale for education for sustainable consumption, including suggestions for action plans;

(II) **Optimizing opportunities:** is aimed at educational authorities, teacher trainers, teachers and educators. This chapter contains core curriculum suggestions;

Annexes to **Here and Now!** have been developed to present an overview of Relevant Resources and teaching materials providing references to theoretical research and practical materials, as well as web links. These annexes are available online at [www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/taskforces/education.htm](http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/taskforces/education.htm) education as a separate document.

The purpose of **Here and Now!** is:

1. to provide policymakers with an instrument to understand the importance of education for sustainable consumption in supporting other policy goals such as citizenship and democratic participation, environmental protection or energy and climate policies.
2. to give policymakers guidance on how to integrate ESC into existing educational and sustainable development strategies
3. to provide educators with tools and instruments in order to include ESC in curricula.

**Here and Now!** focuses on education within the context of formal education and although life-long learning and professional training are fundamental aspects of education for sustainable consumption they are not specifically addressed here.

Overall, we hope **Here and Now!** will contribute to increase:

- ✓ ethical reflection
- ✓ curriculum commitment
- ✓ interdisciplinary cooperation
- ✓ active student-related learning
- ✓ change in attitudes and behaviour.

The two main chapters of this publication have a common goal but it is expected that they will also be used separately. Some repetitions in the definition of ESC and other key concepts are therefore intentional and meant to allow each chapter to stand on its own.

Education for sustainable consumption is an important part of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

**Here and Now!** has been prepared at the request of UNEP with the support of the Marrakech Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption<sup>1</sup>, led by the Italian Government, and of UNEP in order to realize concrete actions towards fulfilling the recommendations of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation related to the development of a 10-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production.

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1. The Marrakech Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption was launched during the 14th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD14 - New York, May 2006). Education is considered an essential tool to ease the shift towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production and the Task Force focuses on introducing sustainable consumption and production issues into formal curricula. The thematic scope of the Task Force is to identify formal education tools and strategies, and accompanying measures to ensure the effectiveness of national/regional policies. The areas of action for the Task Force are: policy, regulatory and operational frameworks: support the introduction of education for sustainable consumption into formal curricula and into thematic/sectoral policies (as, for example: energy, waste, transport, agriculture, etc.) The Task Force focuses also on the creation of competences and skills on sustainable consumption at all levels within the sector of decision making, education and training processes, and capacity building by planning educational actions on specific thematic issues. Education for sustainable consumption is considered by the Task Force to be a broad issue involving different subjects, with the perspective of the life-long learning process, and considering the role of corporate, social and environmental responsibility.

The content of *Here and Now!* was drafted in close collaboration with and tapping into the extensive expertise and work of the Consumer Citizenship Network<sup>2</sup> and other educators from around the globe<sup>3</sup>.

**Here and Now!** recognizes that sustainable consumption requires rethinking definitions of human needs and desires. Sustainable consumption encompasses the principles of moderation and sufficiency as means of curbing social, economic and environmental imbalances and of stimulating responsible citizenship. Sustainable consumption is founded on the principle of the oneness of humanity and the right of all to have their basic needs met. It is also evident that incorporating the concept of responsible consumption into daily actions is a process and must be developed and modified over time.

Education for sustainable consumption consists of the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for functioning in today's society. It is responsibility learning, which aims to contribute to the individual's ability to manage his or her own life while also participating in the stewardship of the global society's collective life. Although the contexts and methodology used in education for sustainable consumption may vary, there are many common learning outcomes and competencies. Identifying competencies and outcomes is an ongoing process which needs to move with changes in society.

**Victoria W. Thoresen**

2. The Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN): between 2003 and 2009, the Consumer Citizenship Network ([www.hihm.no/concit](http://www.hihm.no/concit)), an interdisciplinary network of educators, researchers and civil society organizations, developed interdisciplinary approaches to central issues dealing with the balance between material and non-material well-being and with how one can translate ethical values into everyday practice through conscientious participation in the market. CCN also brought together expertise in the fields of citizenship-, environmental- and consumer education to further develop research and good practice for teaching and accessing consumer citizenship education. The Network consisted of 136 institutions in 37 countries. The project targeted lecturers, researchers and teacher trainers in higher education; students, professionals working with children and young people, public authorities, and associations dealing with citizenship training, sustainable development and consumer issues. By focusing on social responsibility, the CCN addressed the growing international concern for implementation of norms and behaviour which support sustainable development and cooperation.

3. This includes participants of the Workshop on education for sustainable consumption held at the 4th International Conference on Environmental Education in Ahmedabad, Nov.2007



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