

Report: EECERA Sustainability in Early Childhood Education SIG 2021-2022

The aim of the EECERA Sustainability in Early Childhood Education SIG

The aim of this SIG group is to develop a space for networking and to encourage cross-national research and perspectives in the field of early childhood education for sustainability. The research agenda focuses on ways of understanding how young children are recognized as, and learn to be, active citizens for sustainability. A key aspect of consolidating this research field is to broaden the theoretical and methodological perspectives shared and incorporate multiple international socio-cultural lenses. Sustainability refers here to the interlinked social, economic, natural, and political dimensions defined by UNESCO (2010), and these must underpin all decision-making for equitable global futures. Aligned international policies with import for early childhood education and education for sustainability are *The UN Global Action Programme (GAP)* and the *2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* (UNESCO, 2017). These policies are integrated with the dimensions of sustainability and offer a global action plan for developing a sustainable world. The SDGs, in particular, are far reaching and highlight that global sustainability is not to be achieved by an environmental or human poverty focus alone. The GAP and SDGs are integral to a globally transformative agenda, and the SIG collaborative research and publication initiatives will strongly support this agenda. The aims of the SIG are to:

- create a space for collaborative research about sustainability in Early Childhood Education,
- develop synergies between participants from a wide range of professional and scientific contexts,
- provide an academic and rigorous forum at European and international levels to develop and disseminate high quality research on sustainability in Early Childhood Education.

Names and emails of convenors

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Prof. Fabio Dovigo, Aarhus University, Denmark
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Activities undertaken by the SIG in the past year, 2021-2022

- The SIG has 53 members: 7 members of EECERA (marked green) and 46 associated members;
- Ongoing communication with EECERA about membership, conference, and publications;
- The SIG-group Facebook page is ongoing with postings about events, research, and publications (75 members);
- Special Issue of the Australian Journal of Teacher Education (AJTE) around ECEfS, SIG Convenors Sule Alici, Ann-Christin Furu as co-editors with Snowy Evans and Deb Harwood to be published August/September 2022;
- Special Issue of the International Journal of Early Childhood (IJEC) around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), previous SIG Convenor Ann-Christin Furu as editor, was published in March 2022;
- A Special Issue of the International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education (IJECEE) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was published in December 2021, edited by Victora Carr, Eva Arlemalm-Hagser, and Sue Elliott; and,
- Liaising with the World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC) was held in Prague in March 2022, Eva Arlemalm-Hagsér and Sue Elliott were the WEEC EC theme co-chairs with Katerina Jancarikova, Charles University, Prague.

Planned SIG activity for the coming year, 2022

- A Sustainability SIG position statement is being drafted by a SIG working group led by Sue Elliott and will be shared with SIG members in Glasgow, EECERA 2022;
- Conducting three self-organized symposia (9 abstracts in total) for the EECERA 2022 Conference;
- Continuing to progress Special Issues noted above and develop other collaborative research projects and bids;
- A call for chapters sent for an EECERA book on praxis and work underway on the book proposal, SIG Convenors Sule Alici and Fabio Dovigo as editors to be published in 2023;
- EU project with parents and preschool, Irish EC contact, and Fabio has now submitted ERASMUS short project with family day care.

The links and networks established with other institutions and organisations

Each member of the SIG has a network within their own country and area of work. The collaboration within the SIG between members means that the SIG is informally associated with a wide variety of local, regional, national, and international networks and organisations. For example, this includes the Transnational Dialogues Early Childhood Education for Sustainability Research Network (TND), which held an online symposium in September 2021 with attendees from eighteen countries and will again do so in October 2022. There are significant synergies across the SIG and TND to be explored.

How the SIG Sustainability in Early Childhood Education activities fit with the aims and ethos of EECERA

The activities in the SIG encourage and support cross-national collaborations with multi-disciplinary research and critically reflective approaches to early childhood education and early childhood education for sustainability. The collaboration between the researchers in the SIG group also aligns with outdoor education/nature play and applications to policy and practice as related to global sustainability.

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