

Report: EECERA Sustainability in Early Childhood Education SIG 2022-2023

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.

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Activities undertaken by the SIG in the past year, 2022-2023

- The SIG now has 62 members 5 members of EECERA (marked green) and 57 associated members.
- Ongoing communication with EECERA about membership, the EECERA conference, and publications.
- The SIG-group Facebook page is ongoing and active with regular postings about events, research and publications (107 members).
- EECERA SIG Symposia, EECERA 2023 (eeceraconference.org)
Chairs and titles, all accepted:
 1. Sue Elliott: Internationally building momentum in ECEfS: Research, policy and practice
 2. Barbara Maria Sageidet: Places as important venues in children's meaning making about sustainability
 3. Kassahun Weldemariam: Opportunities for children's learning, participation and agency within nature and the non-human world
 4. Sule Alici: Education for sustainability in early childhood education – constructing creative ways of understanding and handling complex sustainability issues
- A Special Issue of the Australian Journal of Teacher Education on sustainability was published in late 2022. Congratulations to co-editors, Ann-Christin Furu, Sule Alici, Snowy Evans and Deb Harwood. See link: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/>
- A Sustainability SIG position statement has been drafted over the last year by a working group led by SIG Convenor Sue Elliott and presented to the EECERA Board of Trustees for ratification in June 2023.
- An EECERA book on praxis is underway and the book proposal is currently being revised following feedback from EECERA publications. SIG Convenors Sule Alici and Fabio Dovigo are the lead co-editors and the aim is to publish this book in 2024.
- An online forum was held in May 2023 to discuss leadership in ECEfS, June Sullivan (UK) shared her thoughts on leadership and her new organisational ECEfS document.

Planned SIG activity for the coming year, 2023

- Continuing to progress publications noted above and develop other collaborative research projects and bids; and,
- An online forum in November 2023, Professor Daniella Tilbury will be invited to present based on her recent report: ‘Teacher Education for the Green Transition and Sustainable Development’ funded by the European Commission’s DG for Education and Culture.

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 a face to face meeting (TND 7.1) on August 23rd 2022 at the University of Strathclyde and an online symposium (TND 7.2) with attendees from eighteen countries actualized on October 27th, 2022. TND 8 will be conducted 24th - 25th August 2023 at Mälardalen University, Västerås, Sweden. 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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