

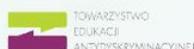


# INTERCAP ANNUAL PC(S)D POLICY PAPER

January 2021



## PARTNERS



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2020 was the third year of the project entitled “Developing capacities together: European CSO-university networks for global learning on migration, security and sustainable development in an interdependent world”. With the ultimate aim to address the shifting public perception towards (in)security, risk and migration and to increase understanding of the interconnectedness between migration, development and education, the project set a number of targets and activities, which were to be implemented within a three-year period. One of the activities of InterCap involved the establishment of a national policy coherence for (sustainable) development (PC(S)D) network.

Activities in the third and last year of the project have been impacted by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Adjustments had to be made in several countries, such as moving to virtual instead of face-to-face interactions. More importantly, a shift of priorities towards fighting the pandemic occurred, making the already marginalised topic of PC(S)D even less relevant. Consequently, expenses for the health sector increased, but in most cases, little attention has been paid to ensuring a holistic approach. More than ever, the Corona crises has exposed the need for policy coherence for sustainable development, not only not to leave anybody behind, but also to maximise effective use of national budgets.

## Introduction

2020 was the final year of the three-year project entitled “Developing capacities together: European CSO-university networks for global learning on migration, security and sustainable development in an interdependent world”. Its aim was to address the shifting public perceptions of (in) security and risk, and their influence on perceptions about migration, sustainable development, roles, responsibilities and lifestyles of EU citizens in an interdependent world. One of the activities of the project was the establishment of policy coherence for development (PCD) network at the national level.

Despite the clear legal basis on PCD for members of the European Union (EU), as adopted in the Lisbon Treaty, stating that “the Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries”, the first two years of the project revealed that only a very small minority of countries, in which InterCap partners functioned, were actively pursuing PCD. In 2020, efforts were thus planned at bringing the PC(S)D agenda closer to the forefront of decision-makers. The Covid-19 pandemic presented a large obstacle in this regard, as Governments redirected most of their attention to the health crises, followed by the economic downturn throughout Europe. Making PC(S)D as a precondition for all adopted policies would have allowed for a holistic approach to solving numerous other issues, which Covid-19 blatantly exposed; among them rising inequalities, including gender inequality, racial and ethnic discrimination, the dissolving nature of the social welfare state with poor public social services and inappropriate social security networks, and the state of idleness regarding our ageing societies.



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## Developments on PC(S)D in InterCap Partner Countries

### Common Challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic presented by far the largest challenge to all of the partner organisations in 2020. During the second year, most partners either established fully functional national PC(S)D platforms or joined already existing networks, and in both cases had ambitious plans for the last year of the project. Due to the lockdowns and other limitations relating to the health crises, most face-to-face meetings, trainings or large events had to be cancelled and rescheduled in an adjusted format using online tools. This allowed for the continuation of activities related to furthering the PC(S)D agenda, but often met a second barrier, the decrease of interest in coherent policies on the side of decision-makers.

### National PC(S)D Networks

Five partner countries, Greece, Italy, Malta, Poland and Slovenia, saw the continuation of activities through their respective national PC(S)D networks.

In March 2020, the Greek government temporarily closed all educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence, activities of the second year were not conducted as planned. During the third year of the project, Social Action and Innovation Centre (KMOP) devoted its attention to the analysis of the best practices carried out in **Greece** in order to raise awareness about sustainable development goals focussing on Quality Education (SDG 4), Reduced Inequalities (SDG10) and their targets. The PCD Network invited 4 young people from the educational sector to participate in an internship research and analyse the best practices that have been used in Universities, schools, national authorities and CSOs in order to promote both SDGs (4 and 10). Together with its associate partner, the Regional Directorate of



Primary and Secondary Education of Central Macedonia, they adopted a grassroots approach, taking advantage of all opportunities that arose; empowering members of the educational community and civil society organisations (CSOs) working on migration, security and development, in order for them to provide feedback and ideas, and to participate in roundtables and relevant events that will increase the chance of gaining interest and support from official bodies implementing PCD.

The second part of KMOP's activities regarding the aforementioned programme was the assessment of the results of the research. In particular, 30 programmes promoting SDGs 4 and 10 were examined covering CSOs, 1 national authority, 3 universities and 4 schools consisting of a great variety of different subjects such as, diversity, social exclusion, equal opportunities, racism, xenophobia, human rights, interculturalism, refugees, migrants, movements of populations for environmental and social reasons, as well as cultural diversity. The aim was to identify best practices and present them, in order to engage even more actors from education, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the public sector in the future. In addition, the aim was also to strengthen the understanding on the necessity of PCD in Greece, placing particular emphasis on the topics of education and migration as well as raising citizens' awareness and increasing the society's receptiveness for policies conducive to sustainable development.





In **Italy**, Istituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria Onlus (ICU) and Oxfam Italia Intercultura (OII) joined forces with Federazione degli Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario (FOCSIV) and their project entitled Faces of Migration, to organise the annual network meeting, which was implemented in November 2020. Due to health restrictions, it was organised online. More than 70 experts from the private, governmental and non-governmental sectors joined. The participants were representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Interior, Universities and CSOs such as FOCSIV, CONCORD Europe and GCAP Italia. The purpose of this third annual meeting was to discuss with

institutional representatives, academics and CSO representatives about the need for coherence between development cooperation policy, migration policy and foreign trade policy, a topic, identified in the OECD Peer Review on Italian development cooperation.

The meeting touched upon numerous topics, relevant for Italy and the current pandemic-driven world, as well as and in light of the recent OECD Peer Review on Italian development cooperation. The importance of PC(S)D was defined as of great importance, especially in Covid-19 times, to which the need of improving transparency and accountability should be added. Special attention was devoted to the topics of PCD and migration and coherence between development cooperation and foreign trade policy. The meeting revealed that migration is still a challenging matter for policy coherence. Italy's 2018 Strategy for global citizenship education could be a tool for increasing the support of the public and political parties for a more coherent and holistic approach to migration.

Due to Covid-19, the Italian PC(S)D network had to change its previous plans regarding the activities of the final project year. This meeting allowed to strengthen the Italian Network on PCSD and to create a virtual space for the exchange of knowledge and experiences related to the PCSD among appropriate stakeholders at national level. The Italian national network for policy coherence for (sustainable) development will continue its engagement after the end of the project,



Due to Covid-19, all meetings in **Malta** in 2020 took place in the virtual form. Involving an external expert researcher to build upon the work carried out in the first two years of the project, supported also the review of the establishment of mechanisms put in place at the national level to measure policy impact on SDG targets, as well as policy coherence from the government's end, coming up with an advocacy tool including recommendations for the way forward. The report, titled *Policy Coherence and Impact Measurement for Sustainable Development*,<sup>1</sup> confirms that although a robust system of mainstreaming the SDGs Agenda in all

<sup>1</sup> Kopin, Dr L. Bezzina, Policy Coherence and Impact Measurement for Sustainable Development, September 2020



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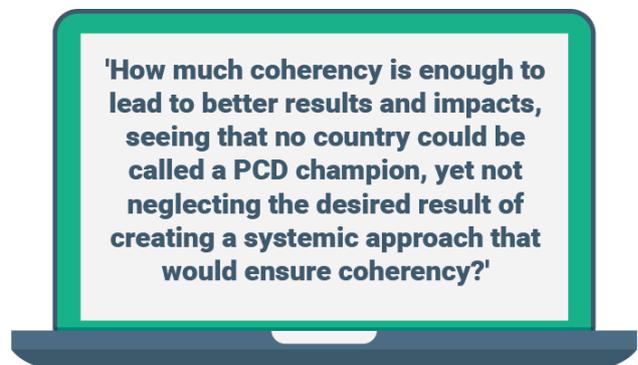
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Maltese policies exist; practices lag somewhat behind, also due to the lack of dedicated resources to those public bodies and agencies- first and foremost responsible for the promotion and inclusion of Sustainable Development at all levels. While the National Audit Office is currently auditing the implementation of SDG 1 (No poverty), there is an overall lack of systemic impact measurement of Maltese policies vis-à-vis the SDGs. In addition, the involvement of CSOs in consultations related to SDGs, as well as their participation in ad hoc bodies, is often limited to environmental NGOs, often excluding those focusing their work on social issues.

The findings from the above-mentioned report are also going to be used for advocacy purposes for Malta's Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan -which is going to be based on the already adopted Sustainable Development Vision 2050- with the new Maltese Government, which took office at the beginning of 2020. The aim of advocacy efforts is to promote concrete impact measurements of policies, as well as regular consultations carried out with a broad range of actors.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, agreed plans on activities for the third year of the project had to be modified in **Slovenia**. The planned training of civil servants and awareness-raising event for decision-makers on the topic of PCD by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) had to be postponed. Instead, a shorter online training by ECDPM for members of the PC(S)D network was held in May, whereas the extended training will take place as soon as the health conditions allow for it. During the online event, the participants focused on the question 'how much coherency is enough to lead to better results and



impacts, seeing that no country could be called a PCD champion, yet not neglecting the desired result of creating a systemic approach that would ensure coherency'. Examples of existing successful mechanisms were discussed, serving as the starting point for discussions on the most optimal next steps to further PC(S)D in Slovenia. The second face-to-face meeting took place in July in cooperation with the expert group on global education, with the focus of aligning the concepts of PC(S)D and global education. The aim was to develop common substance and principles, which will be used for advocating the inclusion of global education and PCSD into education processes and development cooperation policies. This activity, although initially planned to have been finished by the end of 2020, will continue its workings after the end of the InterCap project.

Slovenia presented its second *Voluntary National Review* (VNR) on the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) at the UN High Level Political Forum in July 2020. The Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, which is the Governmental coordinator for SDGs, initially envisaged a relatively inclusive and participatory process that would have allowed for a broad exchange of views among various actors at the regional and national levels. Due to the Coronavirus and the change of the Government, numerous consultations were cancelled, and recommendations of the civil society were often not included in the final report<sup>2</sup>. PCD is not mentioned in the document, while one paragraph is devoted to

<sup>2</sup> Government of the Republic of Slovenia . Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Second Voluntary National Review, SLOVENIA 2020. (2020).[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26450VNR\\_2020\\_Slovenia\\_Report.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26450VNR_2020_Slovenia_Report.pdf)



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PCSD, reiterating the continued commitment of Slovenia to the concept. The shadow report<sup>3</sup> on the progress of achieving SDGs, prepared by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), calls for strengthening PCSD, as Slovenia ranks 31<sup>st</sup> among 148 countries according to the PCSD index. To achieve this goal, NGOs called on the Government to create an open, inclusive and participatory mechanism to regularly assess policy coherence. The report among others notes the importance of PCSD for the survival of bees, the inclusion of global education into the curriculum as a tool for ensuring PCSD, and the role of PCSD for fiscal justice. NGOs believe there is not enough cross-sectorial cooperation and recommend capacity building of non-traditional actors for a better understanding of PCD and PCSD.

**Polish** PC(S)D actors were focused on policy and advocacy work related to the Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2021-2030. In cooperation with the Polish platform of CONCORD - Grupa Zagranica<sup>4</sup>, NGOs working in the field of global education and education for sustainable development prepared in this regard the shadow report on development cooperation for 2020. The Antidiscrimination Education Association (TEA) made a short video on the role of global education in development cooperation, which was successful in raising awareness about the marginalised role of education in policy coherence for sustainable development with its old-fashioned neo-colonial paradigm of promoting aid assistance and volunteer tourism, as well as the low levels of Polish ODA. TEA was also involved in the oversight of e-textbooks on global issues.



The last face-to-face meeting on PC(S)D took place in December 2020 in Warsaw, and gathered 27 experts, among them academics, in-service teachers, global education, antidiscrimination and migration professionals. The potential of networking between antidiscrimination, climate, global and migration experts was ranked highly, as usually the topics are not linked together, which opened the possibility to discuss numerous issues that are not found in the mainstream. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the last online meeting, which will focus on stock taking and plans for the future, will take place by the end of the project. CSOs working within Grupa Zagranica, together with TEA, will in the framework of other DEAR projects push forward the PCSD agenda in education and beyond. Newly engaged participants of awareness raising activities are committed to the topic and started to take part in public debates, showing ownership and the sustainability of the project outcomes after 2020.



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The remaining six partner countries continued with the promotion of PC(S)D outside the PC(S)D national network. As already in the first or second year of the project, Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Lithuania and the United Kingdom remained active in already existing structures addressing PC(S)D in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and to create synergies between the respective network(s), their activities and the goals of the InterCap project. In the cases of Bulgaria and Croatia, due to the extremely low levels of interest about PC(S)D,

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sloga-platform.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SLOGA-Poro%C4%8Dilo-NVO-Za-trajnostni-razvoj-ki-nikogar-ne-pusti-ob-strani-2020-WEB.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://zagranica.org.pl/aktualnosci/polska-wspolpraca-rozwojowa-2020-raport-grupy-zagranica>

no network has been created, and partners focused on raising awareness about the issue without the support of a formal structure.

WUS **Austria** continued with its active role in the national network SDG Watch Austria in 2020. In April WUS Austria participated together with more than 30 professionals from different NGOs in the online bi-annual platform meeting of SDG Watch. The VNR process in Austria and ways forward to promote a multi-stakeholder dialogue in the interest of policy coherence also beyond the draft of the VNR was discussed in detail, among others the need to strengthen institutional structures at the ministerial level and to ensure a broad promotion and presentation of the results of the VNR process. In May, WUS Austria attended the SDG online event “Die Agenda 2030 als Kompass aus der COVID-19-Krise” (The Agenda 2030 as compass for the COVID crisis”) where different stakeholders from politics and academia presented their visions and views on the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and challenges posed by the COVID epidemic. In June, two meetings took place at SDG Watch, the first one a thematic initiative on education, while during the second one, the intention of WUS Austria to hold a post- VNR national meeting was mentioned. In November, the second bi-annual platform meeting of SDG Watch took place.



In October 2020, WUS Austria together with Fair Styria/the Land Steiermark organised an online event as part of the InterCap project targeting the VNR. The online event provided an excellent opportunity for a stakeholder dialogue among representatives from the education sector, political decision makers, civil society, academia, students and public institutions from the national, regional and local level. Altogether, more than 40 persons participated in the event. The first part of the event focused on the VNR report and the participatory process it involved with presentations from the Austrian Federal Chancellery, the Federal

Ministry for European and International Affairs and SDG Watch Austria. InterCap was included in the Austrian report as one of the good practice examples for SDG implementation (SDG 4) in Austria. The second part of the event focused on additional good practice examples from the fields of education and migration, coming in particular from the Land Steiermark and Fair Styria. Stakeholders concluded that additional efforts and strategies will be needed to foster SDG implementation in Austria - building on and strengthening already existing partnerships and dialogue between government institutions, civil society and academia. It was also highlighted that SDGs need to be strongly anchored also on the local level and that good practice examples from the local level should be replicated and upscaled to the extent possible.

The approach of linking to an existing PCSD Network in Austria has proven as highly effective and successful. It has allowed the project to use synergies and networking opportunities and also substantially contributes to the sustainability of efforts made in the field of PCSD. WUS Austria will continue to be part and to contribute to the SDG Watch Austria network also beyond the lifetime of the InterCap project.

Over the course of the third year of the project, Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology (CARDET) participated in four face to face meetings and three online meetings on Global Education (GE) and PC(S)D in **Cyprus**. Additionally, the Centre had an online meeting with representatives of the CONCORD network, with the contribution of the NGO Support Centre to explore the possibility and options available to restore Cyprus' presence in the workings of the network that came to a



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WUS austria right to education



LOWARĘSTWO EDUKACJI ANTYDYSKRYMINACYJNE

ICU Institut für Europäische Universität Doha Free market 1998

kmop KNOWLEDGETEAM WORLD

WUS World University Service

Euro training



halt following the seizing of operations of CYINDEP (Cyprus platform of organisations working in the field of Global Education and Sustainable Development) in 2016.

Through the research and contacts carried out during this year, the lack of legal basis on PCD and the political commitment on PCD/PCSD became evident. As a result, it was clear that the level of awareness on PCD/PCSD in Cyprus is relatively low. Thus, CARDET strategically approached this activity, as an opportunity to participate in the workings of GE and contribute through its expertise and organisational experience in the field in highlighting and raising awareness on the importance of PCD. Numerous activities were undertaken to strengthen global education in Cyprus, to ensure the active participation of civil society and ministries in broader European initiatives and organisations, as well as to strengthen the funding opportunities to execute development projects and programmes. In that way, the civil society will be better equipped and informed in order to develop further actions on promoting the importance of PCD in Cyprus and supporting the public sector on this effort with more activities in relation to GE, SDGs, etc.



In order to prepare for the national online InterCap PC(S)D event, two more meetings were held online between CARDET and the two national experts; Ms. Kerstin Witting Ferguson and Ms. Sophia Arnaouti on the 14th of December 2020 and 7th of January 2021.

The InterCap PC(S)D Event in Cyprus took place on the 19th of January 2021, online (Zoom platform) with the support of the two local experts in the field of PCD. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the national measures taken to contain the outbreak, the face to face event planned in November 2020 had to be cancelled.

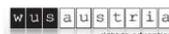
20 participants attended the online discussion and workshop coming from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth (MoECSY) in Cyprus, CSOs, Universities, the Philippine Community in Cyprus and other organisations.

The online open discussion and workshop focused on presenting ways that stakeholders, practitioners and policy-makers can approach Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) in Cyprus and promote and/or shape policies at a local, national and international level. The workings of the event commenced with an introductory presentation of the InterCap project and the PCD Initiative. The presentation was given by our project partner, the 'Institute for Global Learning and Projects Development (Slovenia)', who is also leading the PCD activity in the InterCap project. Afterwards, the event continued with an overview of the PCD-PC(S)D theme and the state of affairs in Cyprus. The national policy paper produced in the second year of the InterCap project was also presented to the participants. The event concluded with a short workshop on implementing PCD.

During the last year of the InterCap project, **Germany's** efforts to strengthen policy coherence for development encompassed mechanisms of co-ordination between the Federal Government, Länder (Federal states), local authorities and relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations. Civil society and private sector were involved in discussion on PCD-related issues through different networks and platforms, usually organised around thematic fields rather than "labelled" as "PCD networks". One prominent example of such networks was the annual meetings of the coordinators of EWIK (*Koordinationstreffens der Eine Welt Internet Konferenz*), which operates as a forum for discussions of regional and federal policies in connection to the global education/learning and ESD as well as works on providing teaching and learning materials on ESD topics (Education for Sustainable Development). The 2019 face-to-face annual conference took place in late



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November 2019 in Bonn and was attended by 22 actors, including governmental officials/policymakers, representatives of CSOs and academics.

In order to stay up-to-date on current developments concerning PC(S)D in the international setting, a representative of WUS Germany participated in the high-level interregional online dialogue, organized by the OECD, Institute for Global Environmental Studies, and other partners and co-hosted by the governments of Mongolia and Romania, which took place on 15th July 2020 online. The meeting brought together governmental representatives, policy makers, researchers and civil society activists from many different countries all over the globe. The aim of the dialogue was to discuss the role of governance and policy coherence for achieving the SDGs in the post-COVID-19 era. All participants agreed on the need for more commitment of the governments all over the world to build more inclusive institutions and ensure that the SDGs are a priority in all policy-making processes. The sustainability of PC(S)D efforts in Germany will be assured through the operation of the already established networks. Specifically, through InterCap, WUS Germany managed to join 2 networks and has through them enhanced the visibility of the project and its' PC(S)D-related activities. After the end of the project, further meetings of the networks will take place, and the topics of migration and sustainable development will be put on the agenda of those meetings.

Despite the successful consolidation of attempts to promote Lithuanian PCD through turning the former Lithuanian SDG Forum initiative into a formal Network of Sustainable Development Experts in 2019, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has had major consequences for the planned activities in the third year of the project. Three online meetings took place in **Lithuania** in 2020. The first meeting took place in April, 2020, gathering 19 experts from the fields of sustainable development, migration, gender equality, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, equal opportunities, social entrepreneurship, mental health, and legal assistance, covering the academia and both non-governmental and private sectors. The second meeting, attended by 12 participants, took place in June 2020, and involved experts from all of the above-mentioned areas and the global education sector. In addition, the representation of governmental institutions was also ensured during the second meeting. The third and final meeting, attended by 9 participants, was held in July 2020. Covering both governmental and non-governmental sectors, the participants exchanged their expertise in most of the previously mentioned areas focusing on the party system policies in relation to the Parliamentary elections.

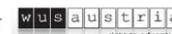
The Lithuanian Parliamentary election was the most important point of discussion for the Lithuania's Sustainable Development Experts' Network during year 3. In the last meeting in July, a unanimous interest among members of the Lithuania's Sustainable Development Experts' Network became apparent for the active involvement in the discussions of the European Green Deal. Some members delivered the party programme analysis through the axis of their compliance to the Deal. This was carried out by voicing the comments through joining the initiative "I know who I elect" ("Žinau, ką renku"), which held some of the most viewed debates with the Parliamentary candidates and their respective parties. In December 2020, the Lithuania's Sustainable Development Experts' Network organised an international experts' meeting that attended by similar networks' representatives in Latvia and Estonia. The aim of the event was to share examples of good practices and up-to-date solutions to formalising and adjusting the agendas that serve the purpose of both national and small-scale regional policy coherence development.



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The **United Kingdom** continued to face challenging times in relation to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and PCSD in the last year of the project. The lack of coordinated and joint approach in achieving progress due to the fact that the four regions (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) develop their own policies, and that England actually does not have a devolved Government, leaving the UK Government to legislate on devolved matters of the region, has already been discussed in previous annual reports. 2020 brought about additional challenges, unfortunately. In addition to the pandemic, SDGs and PC(S)D lost an important advocate as the Department for International Development (DfID) has closed down and was joined with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Furthermore, the focus of the Government has been on the UK leaving the EU (Brexit).

Despite the numerous setbacks, progress has been achieved in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland through mapping exercises undertaken to highlight nations' progress towards achieving the SDGs. In the latter, there is support for and articulation of PC(S)D at the highest level. Most important, there is realisation of the national Government that "securing greater policy coherence at local and regional level to help embed the (SDG) agenda into practice."<sup>5</sup> ESD has been an entitlement for all pupils in Scotland since 2014, which has been further developed in the Learning for Sustainability Action Plan in 2019<sup>6</sup>. Wales has also recognised that policy makers need to make sustainable development an organising principle, rather than perceiving it as something extra that might be set aside when crises happens. Despite the suspension of the devolved Northern Ireland Assembly until early 2020, mapping nevertheless occurred, but it was driven by CSOs. In England, despite no visible progress made at the national level, the Local Government Association and UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD) produced a Guide for Local Councils<sup>7</sup> to promote awareness of the SDGs, which offers hope for future actions.

In the last year of the project, Liverpool World Centre (LWC) continued with its active participation and awareness raising in numerous existing networks promoting SDGs and ESD:

- Ongoing participation in *Our Shared World*, a national network of educators and CSOs aiming to influence UK policy on SDG 4.7., also in the form of co-chairing a Global Citizenship Education working group.
- Organisation of national online meeting on PC(S)D in September, which was attended by 8 participants: academics, CSOs and local Government representatives. The meeting inspired one local Government representative to table a motion<sup>8</sup> to her local Government council to adopt, publicise, audit and monitor the SDGs within all Council activities.
- Collaboration with *SustainNET*, a regional network oriented towards sustainable development, which has led to transformative work on sustainability themed research, knowledge-exchange, local community impact and curriculum development. In addition, LWC has delivered a webinar presentation on PCSD and

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-sustainable-development-goals-national-review-drive-action/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/vision-2030-report-concluding-report-of-the-learningfor-sustainability-national-implementation-group/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/un-sustainable-development-goals-guide-councils;>

The Report: [https://30312f94-9adb-4918-80dd-708c590bada3.usfiles.com/ugd/30312f\\_79b08331d11e44bc888e1ee08c05474e.pdf](https://30312f94-9adb-4918-80dd-708c590bada3.usfiles.com/ugd/30312f_79b08331d11e44bc888e1ee08c05474e.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://moderngov.sthelens.gov.uk/documents/s108371/Submitted%20by%20Councillor%20Hattersley.pdf>



the Sustainable Development Goals at the Edge Hill University in November, bringing together 16 academics, students, CSOs and local Government representatives.

As PCD is still not recognised as an important, relevant or even existent issue in **Bulgaria**, a national network has not been established during the last year of the project. No references to PCD are made in public statements, let alone in policy or legal acts, or through a PCD strategy. PCD coordination mechanisms are considered not transparent enough to allow external stakeholders to both provide input or monitor and assess their effectiveness properly. Even when external stakeholders such as CSO representatives can participate, this does not mean that these mechanisms are fully transparent. In order to bring PCD to the forefront, two face-to-face meetings were organised in 2020, which were attended by more than 30 pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, directors of schools, local authorities, CSO representatives, university academic staff and citizens. In addition, more than 150 persons attended various workshops and trainings, all intended at raising awareness about PC(S)D and SDGs in the local community.

Whereas a similar lack of political and professional understanding of the importance of PC(S)D can be reported in **Croatia**, two large events took place in the country in the last year of the project. For the first time, University of Split participated in the European Week of Sustainable Development (EWS) and thus joined the initiative in which 24 European countries participated this year with more than 4,000 activities. The goal of ESDW is to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by promoting the activities of organizations that



use a bottom-up approach to encourage and better visibility of activities, projects and events that promote sustainable development. Due to Covid-19, the event was held in October 8 instead of September 20, in a predominantly online form. A total of 7 activities were held at the University of Split, which were actively carried out by 26 experts and scientists from various organisations like faculties, associations, trade unions, state public bodies and institutes.

Croatia during 2020, held the EU Presidency, focusing on a democratic Europe, which has the potential to expand and stabilise the Western Balkans, with a strong commitment to SDGs and peace building. The IDevelopment cooperation Platform *CROSOL* commented that given the challenging Covid-19 times, during which Croatia took over the presidency, “Which significantly affected social, economic and political processes around the world, we believe that during the Croatian Presidency there was still room for stronger and more persistent work on most of these priorities.”<sup>9</sup> Croatia should do much more effort to have a sustainable society and to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable development goals for the future of Croatia. An important role for this aim have NGOs and educational systems whose synergies can have a great impact on citizens' lifestyles.

<sup>9</sup> <https://crosol.hr/eupresidency/en/an-overview-of-the-croatian-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-eu-from-the-perspective-of-civil-society/>



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## Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic with its consequences and adjoining policies has belittled the development issues and narrowed them down to the national and/ or local context of fighting against global consequences of the pandemic. Before the outbreak, a slight increase in non-inflated official development assistance (ODA) was noted, but a drop in financing is expected to arise. In light of the expected drop, PC(D) is of utmost importance to maximise aid effectiveness and long run sustainability. During the first wave of the pandemic, redirecting of resources to health-related activities was very common, but unfortunately holistic approaches, addressing the broader consequences of the crisis, were lacking.

It is difficult to foresee the role of PC(S)D in coming years and its place in policy agendas. Covid-19 has emphasised the importance of understanding interdependencies on the global level. It has also shown why coherent policies on local, national and European levels are important for sustainability and decent human life. Today, more than ever, coherent policies are of utmost importance if we are to surpass the numerous negative effects that Covid-19 has brutally exposed and deepened at local, national and global levels. Unfortunately, during the first year of the new reality, numerous social issues seem to have been forgotten, broadening the already existing inequalities nationally and globally.

Due to the new focus, it is possible to state that the road to strengthening the relevance of PC(S)D in the eyes of decision-makers has gained new turns and side-tracks. On the other hand, the crises could be used as an opportunity to rebuild national system in a way that would promote PC(S)D. The PC(S)D networks, established through InterCap, as well as the already existing platforms, offer an opportunity to influence a strengthened national setup. Research about the consequences of the pandemic could offer valuable insight about the importance of PC(S)D in times of crises, as a tool for advocacy efforts in the coming years. Leadership is vital to progress. Continued pressure on political leaders is important to ensure that they do not overlook sustainability issues. In addition, the concept of PC(S)D can be promoted through education for sustainable development in schools and universities, which will ensure a broader understanding of the need for holistic and cohesive approaches at the national and international levels.

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