LITHUANIAN REPORT ON MIGRATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Activity 1.1.1: Audit on migration, sustainability and development education

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1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and costs of travelling decrease, the number of cross-border migrants worldwide is rapidly growing. According to the UN estimates (2017), it has increased from 173 million in 2000 to 258 million in 2017, with the rate faster than the growth of the global population. In these circumstances, migration starts to play an important role in development of both origin and destination countries. Migrant diasporas abroad foster development in home communities by sending remittances; returning migrants contribute to progress through human capital, technology and valuable skills. In host countries, migrants fill critical labour gaps, pay taxes and social security contributions as well as enrich the communities by cultural and information capital (OECD, 2014). On the other hand, the relationship between migration and development is more complicated. If not managed well, migration can be a threat to sustainable progress of societies. Migrants tend to be under higher risk of poverty and social exclusion, they also, on average, have worse access to education, healthcare and social security systems. In addition to the harm on individual level, economic and social marginalisation of migrants might increase inequalities in host countries. Respectively, economic inequalities are known to induce social tensions, increase levels of crime, obstruct social cohesion and trust between community members (Hsieh and Pugh, 1993; Putnam et al. 1993; Kawachi et al., 1997; Letki, 2007).

Despite its complexity and potential, migration is often perceived as a threat to national security by the public in Member States (Lubbers and Coenders, 2017). Since globalisation and increasingly common extreme weather conditions are expected to intensify migration further, there is a strong need to challenge threat-focused public attitudes to ensure sustainability in the future at both local and global levels. It is important to raise awareness about migration as a global phenomenon with both risks and opportunities. Notions of international movement should reflect its links to other global issues such as climate change, conflicts and global inequalities. One of the main channels by which current misconceptions about migration could be challenged is through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a holistic agenda with concrete targets for global development set by the United Nations. The Goals recognise the economic benefits of human mobility to international development and, most importantly, provide a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional view towards both sustainability and migration (IOM, 2017). The discourse of the SDGs challenges the dominant negative perceptions of migration, and therefore is an important instrument in promotion of a more holistic approach towards the phenomenon.

The aim of this report is to assess the extent to which migration and sustainable development are perceived as interrelated in the national context of Lithuania. It offers an analysis of public attitudes, prevailing political discourses and attempts to address the subjects, both in terms of policies and good practices. To complement the literature review, two focus groups were conducted. The first consisted of experts in the field, whereas the second was formed of government representatives. The conclusions of the research

suggest that awareness about sustainable development in Lithuania is strongly limited, and prevalence of anti-immigration attitudes is particularly high. The public discourse regarding international movement is currently reproducing isolated, country-focused and negative images of migration. Development education, as an instrument for a more inclusive approach, is not systematically integrated in school curriculum and largely depends on initiatives of individual actors. There are no programmes on sustainable development in higher education, and areas integral to SDGs such as human rights, gender equality and integration of migrants are rather segmented. As Lithuania is likely to receive a higher number of migrants in the future, there is a strong need to raise public awareness about sustainable development in a holistic manner and redefine migration as an integral part of global processes, such as international development, global inequalities, climate change, armed conflicts and other types of humanitarian crises.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The report is a part of the project InterCap, which aims to improve critical understanding of migration within the context of sustainable development in general and the SDGs in particular. The goal of the project is to implement SDGs and link them to migration in school teachers' education, so that education actors would then further enhance public awareness about migration and its links to sustainable development. The objectives of the report are 1) identification of conceptual links between international migration and other global processes, including sustainable development at national level 2) indication of gaps within public understanding of migration as well as sustainable development 3) conceptualisation of challenges and ways by which development education could be used as an instrument to raise public awareness in national context. The analysis of national situation will be used in creation of a more localised and therefore more effective model for development education, mainly targeted at prospective school teachers. However, recommendations will also address issues beyond teacher competence, such as institutional transformations, inter-sectoral cooperation and the role of education institutions in raising public awareness.

1.3 Available data and resources

As the national sustainable strategy has never become a national priority and migration remains to be largely isolated from the agenda, linkage between SD and migration is largely unaddressed in national documents as well as research. Therefore, the data used is mainly focused on either migration or sustainable development and links between the latter and the former in the report are indirect. Another data limitation is related to governance of sustainable development policies at institutional level. The majority of government bodies responsible for national development strategy have not published any information regarding implementation of the programme; there is a lack of transparency regarding institutional framework of sustainability agenda. The main sources of information are national legislation and strategies, Eurobarometer and national surveys, government publications as well as scholarly and press publications, both local and international.

1.4 Limitations

The major limitation of this research is the lack of development in the area of migration and sustainability. As it has been barely addressed and the national sustainable development is in general weak, sustainability and migration policies are often discussed separately instead. Due to lack of progress in the cross-cutting field, an in-depth analysis of the links between the concepts was impossible. Respectively, localised recommendations largely focus on the management of sustainable development and development education, rather than on links to migration specifically.

2. Literature Review

2.1   Public opinion polls

While public opinion towards immigration from other EU states is rather supportive, Lithuanians tend to view immigration from third countries as a negative phenomenon. According to Eurobarometer survey (2016), 72% of respondents reported that immigration from the EU states triggers positive feelings, but only 26% told the same about immigration of third country nationals. Attitudes towards the latter form of migration are more negative compared to the EU average (37%), and yet have slightly improved since 2015. The shift could be explained by diminished emphasis and media coverage regarding so called 'refugee crisis', which was mainly portrayed as a threat to national security (the Institute for Ethnic Studies, further - CES, 2017). The divide in public support for migration within the EU and from outside the EU is in consensus to general pro-EU attitudes among Lithuanians and high prevalence of xenophobia and muslimophobia in the country.

Public opinion polls conducted by national bodies offer similar conclusions. 53% of residents oppose immigration of labour migrants from outside the EU, even if the country faces labour shortages caused by rapidly ageing population (CES, 2017). Attitudes are even more hostile towards migrants who come from more culturally distant backgrounds. The opposition to immigration is especially acute when it regards migrants from North Africa and Middle East, as Lithuanian respondents tend to associate these regions with a threat of terrorism. In 2017, 68% of respondents admitted being against immigration of Muslim war refugees. Both Muslim and refugee minorities tend to be among most discriminated groups with only Roma community and former prisoners reportedly facing higher levels of prejudice. However, it is important to note that both Muslim and refugee minorities are especially small in Lithuania and the absolute majority of residents have not encountered any of the Muslim or refugee immigrants in real life (CES, 2017). Therefore, as Lithuanians' personal experiences are limited, prevailing political and media discourses are arguably the most important factors in shaping public attitudes towards migration.

The anti-immigration discourse in the EU is known to be largely based on migration-security nexus. Research shows that notions of immigration from third countries as primarily a security issue is positively correlated with hostile public attitudes (BEPA, 2006; Pinyol-Jimenez, 2012). Interestingly, while anti-immigration views in Lithuania are strong, they could not be explained by high prevalence of insecurity among residents. Over the past years, the number of Lithuanians who reported feeling safe in the area they live in has rapidly increased and even exceeded the EU average. According to Eurobarometer survey (2017), 64% of Lithuanian respondents agreed that their immediate neighbourhood is a secure place to live in, and 42% of the interviewed agreed they feel secure about living in Lithuania. At EU level, these numbers were lower, reaching 57% for neighbourhood and 37% for country, respectively. However, just as other EU residents (76%), Lithuanians (76%) perceive terrorism as the most important risk for national security. The other major concerns were organised crime and the EU's external borders (Eurobarometer, 2017). Therefore, public perceptions of threats to national security are in consensus to widespread muslimophobic and anti-refugee views in Lithuania (CES, 2017). Just as the rest of the EU, Lithuanians view terrorism as the most important security issue, which, as research suggests, further induces anti-immigration attitudes.

In terms of environmental protection, Lithuanians are less concerned than an average EU citizen. According to Eurobarometer (2017), only 42% of country residents have indicated the issue as very important, which is one of the lowest percentages across all member states. The respondents were mostly concerned with waste and air pollution, whereas climate change was perceived as the least important environmental problem. In addition, Lithuanians were more likely to disagree with the statement that actions of each individual can help solving environmental dilemmas when compared to the EU average (Eurobarometer, 2017). Moreover, there was no significant change in public attitudes towards ecological issues since 2014 (Eurobarometer 2014; 2017). The findings illustrate that public awareness about ecological protection and its solutions on individual level is limited and, most importantly, remains relatively fixed. Different forms of pollution seem to be perceived as rather mutually exclusive, and climate change is not considered as a major issue at societal level.

Lack of awareness about sustainable development is in line with public attitudes regarding migration and environmental issues. Limited understanding of linkages between the subjects, as well as their global context, is also reflected in their knowledge about SDGs. According to Eurobarometer survey (2017), only 27% of Lithuanian respondents have heard about SDGs, and only 6% think they could tell what the goals are. This is one of the lowest percentage in the EU alongside Romania, Czech Republic and Cyprus. A positive shift towards more global approach can be seen in the growth of Lithuanians who think that development aid to third countries is important, but the number of nationals who consider global development as an important issue are still behind the EU average (Eurobarometer, 2017, Eurohouse, 2017).

Altogether, public attitudes towards migration, national security and environmental protection indicate lack of orientation towards global sustainable development; the scope of concerns seems to be limited to Lithuanians' surroundings. Low levels of attention towards climate change, perception of refugee flows as a national risk rather than a global issue
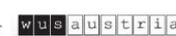
arguably reveal lack of awareness about broader context of these subjects. Even if immigration from third countries would help to solve demographic burdens of rapidly ageing local communities within the country, views towards migration are based on prevailing prejudices. The general picture then suggests that 1) awareness about climate change, Muslim and refugee minorities, benefits of migration as well as security risks is limited or distorted 2) there is no long-term strategic thinking about sustainability within and outside Lithuania; 3) global issues are perceived as distant matters that have little to do with individual responsibility and wellbeing within the country of residence.

2.2   Media response

Due to so called 'refugee crisis', national media coverage regarding immigration and asylum situation has intensified over the past years. However, as research that combined both qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis suggested, instead of providing a balanced view and encouraging a dialogue between different discourses, the media response to the issue was largely negative and arguably further strengthened anti-immigration attitudes (CES, 2017). Prevailing stereotypical, not well-grounded claims about refugees living in Lithuania outbalanced positive stories. Article headlines and visual material used often depicted shocking and fear-inducing images from refugee camps that do not represent asylum situation in Lithuania. As a result, the 'crisis' was presented as a major burden for national and EU security as well as economy; it was implicitly (and explicitly) linked to danger, crime and terrorism. Attempts to discuss cultural backgrounds of refugees were limited; when made, Islam was mainly portrayed as leading to cultural conflict and inability to integrate rather than cultural enrichment. Intentions of refugees were questioned, and attempts to imply that refugees are economic migrants were relatively common (CES, 2017). This recent study is in consensus to previous research on media coverage regarding asylum and integration. In 2013, it was concluded that asylum seekers are firstly associated with *irregularity,* and immigration of refugees is depicted as a large-scale and unmanageable flow; a threat to stability (CES and DDG, 2014). As absolute majority of Lithuanians do not encounter refugees in real life, the media plays a determinant role in shaping public attitudes (CES, 2017). Arguably, overlapping dominant media and public discourses as well as correlation between misinformative content and public misconceptions support the impact of the media.

There is no institutional body that would periodically produce media monitoring on sustainable development, and the interest in the subject has generally been limited. As a result, data on media coverage regarding sustainability or environmental issues is scarce. Yet, qualitative research conducted in 2011 concluded that appearance of sustainable development in the most popular online news portals was rather fragmented; there was no appealing or holistic approach towards sustainability (Savickas, 2011). The study indicated lack of analytical accounts that would explain and link social, economic, environmental dimensions of sustainable development. In 2011, only 41 articles that included a set of words "sustainable development" were published in all three most popular news portals (15min.lt, Delfi.lt and Lrytas.lt). The articles were mainly descriptions of separate events

and rarely covered the broader context of sustainable development agenda (Savickas, 2011).

While there is no recent data on the media coverage of sustainable development available, the lack of interest in the area is in consensus to both lack of awareness at societal level and lack of concrete measures at institutional level. Sustainable development does not seem to be among national priorities with only relative exception in the area development aid, and lack of occurrence in the media arguably illustrates absence of the dialogue. As sustainable development in the media receives little attention among researchers, it would be naïve to expect a more niche area, its links to migration, be substantially addressed. Research on the coverage of asylum in Europe further highlights that depiction of refugees as a threat to national security is prevailing. The media reproduces images of migration as an isolated, risk-inducing phenomenon and contributes to the discourse that Lithuania is not related to global issues.

2.3   Research and project production

Research that covers both migration and sustainability has been largely focused on emigration as an obstacle for demographic and economic development. As Lithuania is one of the most rapidly decreasing and ageing population in Europe, migration from the country poses major challenges for sustainable development, and SDGs in particular (Ministry of Environment, 2014; EP, 2017). Its constraints on adequate long-term pension and healthcare systems, sustainable regional development and resources for sufficient social security mechanisms have received substantial attention in both academic and public discourse.

An in-depth analysis of interlinks between emigration and sustainability can be found in the National strategy for sustainable development (2009; 2011). Migration is discussed as an integral part of the process and is given considerable attention in the assessment of opportunities and challenges for development. Depicted as both a cause and a consequence of sustainability issues, the role of emigration is addressed in relation to social, economic and regional development as well as public health. As most migrants tend to be young working-age individuals, labour shortages and the burdens on the national health care and pension systems seem to be the main concerns and obstacles that are then expected to restrain resources for implementation of sustainability policies in the future. Migration processes are also seen as accelerated by income and regional inequalities, as they sharpen existing social tensions. Emigration is expected to be reduced in the future through increase in pay and better opportunities for lifelong learning (the Ministry of Environment, 2011). Hence, the strategy depicts the relationship between emigration and (un)sustainability as a vicious cycle of development issues, with limited strategic action plan on how to break it.

While attempts to assess the role of emigration were made, it is important to note that the scope of inclusion of migration processes to the analysis was strongly limited. First, there is no discussion about the benefits of emigration. The impact of return migration or remittances is absent from the report, and there is no consideration of immigration

processes. Furthermore, the analysis shows that Lithuania's sustainability agenda in relation to migration is focused on its own internal capacity, and does address global migration. While emigration is undeniably a major demographic issue, absence of any attempts to view migration as a more complex phenomenon or see it in a broader context indicate unfulfilled integrity of the subjects. The discourse of the document suggests that among policy makers migration is prevailingly perceived as an undesirable occurrence that indicates sustainability faults in the origin country. The approach is in consensus to long-term and still relatively important view towards migration among international community which was particularly dominant in the late 20th century. Migration was and still, to an extent, is seen as a "symptom of development failure" (ECDPM and ICMPD, 2013).

Similar approach towards migration can also be found in available independent analyses. In a collective monograph of academicians on sustainable development issues and its solutions migration was only discussed in terms of threats of emigration. Movement from the country was linked to increased poverty, economic burdens and diminishing innovative and technological potential of Lithuanian society (VU and ASU, 2015). Migration is depicted as implicitly negative, and no opportunities of the phenomenon are addressed in the research.

Research that sheds a more varied light on migration processes at country level is strongly limited with only diaspora studies suggesting a more positive and balanced view. In a report on the potential of Lithuanian diasporas on sustainable development, Geciene and Matulaitis (2011) suggest that the potential of emigration has a lot to offer and yet is unrecognised. The researchers conclude that Lithuanian diaspora could and would like to contribute to the country's sustainable progress, including social, cultural, scientific and business dimensions. According to the study, the main obstacles for recognition are lack of information about possible forms of contribution available to Lithuanian diasporas and lack of attention of Lithuanian government towards diaspora potential (Geciene and Matulaitis, 2011). However, there has been a positive shift in the area since the research was published. A number of initiatives to encourage diaspora's role in national development were introduced, such as "Create Lithuania" that enables professionals abroad to contribute to the wellbeing of nationals in the origin country and "Global Lithuanian Leaders", an organisation that connects professional Lithuanian diaspora abroad. Yet, the positive outcomes of emigration remain underrepresented in the research production. Even if migration starts to be seen as a more complex and not only an exclusively negative phenomenon, international movement in research is still viewed from a standpoint of national interests, rather than is perceived as a global process.

Apart from emigration, other forms of migration (such as immigration, irregular migration, asylum, integration) do not seem to occur neither in research on sustainable development, nor in the political discourse. Furthermore, sustainable development and SDGs are also absent from national research that focuses on asylum, immigration and migrant integration. In Lithuania, sustainable development is largely perceived and conceptualised as an environmental, agricultural and industrial project, while its social dimension receives little attention. It can be illustrated by 'Sustainable Development Indicators'. Introduced by the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, they are used to monitor implementation of the national sustainable development strategy. Out of 55 indicators, only 15 are social development

indicators, and none of them monitor migration processes (Statistics Lithuania, 2016). The environment-focused nature of the national discourse was raised as an issue and largely agreed upon by experts and government representatives from focus groups, a complementary field research presented in the second part of the report (for more details, see p. 14).

2.4   Case Studies of good practices

As lack of awareness about sustainable development is especially acute in Lithuania, there is a strong need for development education: from targeted trainings and awareness raising campaigns to new ways of looking at the curriculum for universities and schools. So far, development education initiatives were limited. As there is no national framework, initiatives were usually short-term, organised by individual actors such as NGOs or a government body and, as a result, of limited accessibility by the general public. Yet, there are a few leaders in the area of information campaigns and representation of SDGs that hitherto have shaped the current public understandings about sustainability and the Agenda 2030.

A number of awareness raising initiatives are carried out by National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations' Platform (Lithuanian NGDO Platform). Between 2015 and 2017, in cooperation with Eurohouse Lithuania, it has been implementing a project called "Media 4 Development" that aims to raise awareness about global development issues among journalists. They offered participants an opportunity to travel to developing countries and publish articles about global issues they have observed in Lithuanian news portals. Another initiative is inclusion of films that address poverty, inequality and exploitation in developing world in the human rights film festival "Ad Hoc: Inconvenient Films". The NGDO Platform also plays an important role in development of non-formal development education system at national level. In 2017, it has implemented an awareness-raising campaign about SDGs that targeted youth population. Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the programme covers organisation of public discussions, national competitions, theatre performances and training initiatives (NGDO Platform, 2015; 2017). The Platform also funds projects implemented by other CSOs that aim to raise public awareness. In October 2018, a hackaton on the SDGs will be organised by a consultancy platform AfriKo, focusing on sustainable energy and human trafficking (AfriKo, 2018).

Another non-governmental organisation that contributes to development of global citizenship in Lithuania is Global Citizens' Academy. Established in 2014, it aims to develop capacities of young people to understand and engage with global issues. The main activities of the organisation includes non-formal education and awareness raising campaigns, training for youth workers and educators, research on development education and advocacy of global citizenship at national level. (GCA, 2017). Arguably, it is one of the most important actors in development of development education in Lithuania. The academy has considerably contributed to identification of knowledge gaps among the youth and has built the theoretical foundations of localised framework for development education.

Noticeably, attempts to raise awareness about sustainable development were also made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to financial support for activities implemented by the NGDO Platform, the Ministry has independently initiated a periodic radio show that aimed to improve public understanding of development assistance (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). The ministry is also responsible for development and maintenance of a website www.orangeprojects.lt. The web page effectively explains what development cooperation is, how the government of Lithuania contributes to development projects abroad and, most importantly, how it relates to sustainable development agenda, including SDGs. However, awareness raising campaigns initiated by the ministry mainly focus on development assistance separately, the area they are responsible for. While briefly linked to sustainable development in the website, information campaigns do not cover all aspects of development education (such as sustainability locally, migration, environment, etc). Apart from these initiatives of the ministry, other government bodies seem to play little role in promotion of sustainable development.

In consensus to some experts' opinion, campaigns mentioned above seem to have limited outcomes as there is no national agenda for development education and the initiatives were rather fragmented, accessible only to limited segments of the population (Eurohouse, 2018). The Government of the Republic of Lithuania has confirmed the programme for develoment education in 2007 but it was cancelled in 2011. Since then, little has changed, and due to limited instructions and funding implementation of development education at municipal level has also weakened. As a result, education on sustainable development mainly relies on non-governmental sector, irregular small-scale projects and motivation of individual municipalities as well as individual actors in education sector (ESDN, 2014; Eurohouse, 2017).

As public opinion polls demonstrate, perceptions about migration processes and their links to sustainable progress are strongly limited. In the context of lack of awareness about sustainable development and absence of a strategy to improve the latter, initiatives have so far focused on development education in general and links between migration and sustainable development remain largely unaddressed. On the other hand, as one of the government representatives suggested, it is questionable whether in the context of unawareness there is a need to focus on the concept of sustainable development or SDGs directly. As these concepts are complex and not necessarily easily understandable, emphasis on more general and holistic notions of global development and sustainability without the focus on technical aspects of the concepts could arguably be more effective.

2.5   Migration policies and sustainable development

There is no direct implementation of sustainable development goals within the national migration framework. Yet, national legislation regarding migration is, to a great extent, being shaped by more integral EU policies, and migration policies have indirect links to SDGs due to the holistic approach of the latter. Therefore, national migration policies can be assessed in terms of its compatibility with the goals. Two main trajectories of the SDGs, as instruments of evaluation, can then be distinguished. The first is promotion of regular, safe

and well-managed migration. The other is protection of migrants' rights, as they face a number of migration-induced vulnerabilities and are under higher risk of trafficking as well as other forms of exploitation.

One of the most important aspects regarding migration and sustainability in the agenda is set by goal 10.7, which encourages to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies" (UN, 2015). While migration policy framework at national level is far from effective, the government has arguably made significant improvements in migration management in 2014, when it adopted the 'Lithuanian Migration Policy Guidelines' and 'Action Plan for Implementation of the Policy for the Integration of Foreigners'. Even if triggered by so called 'refugee crisis' and political pressure of the EU, it was the first time when more explicit migration strategy containing long-term goals and priorities was implemented (Zibas, 2015). Its main objectives include continuous improvement of integration system for foreigners, periodical release of strategic planning documents, promotion of public tolerance towards immigrants and ethnic minorities, and the compliance of asylum procedures and reception conditions in relation to the EU standards (the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014).

However, a lot still has to be done in order to achieve mobility-related SDGs. Other targets of the Agenda 2030 include creation of "secure working environments for all workers, including migrants workers", protection of migrant rights and ending all forms of exploitation (UN, 2015). The major issue that hinders achieving the goals is the ineffectiveness of integration mechanism. According to MIPEX (2017) indicators, there was no significant improvement regarding integration of foreigners since 2007. Migrants face difficulties in accessing information about relevant integration and public services, education system is not prepared to accept foreigners' children, labour migrants are not eligible to any assistance in finding a job or improving their qualifications (HRMI, 2018). Furthermore, protection of migrant rights is weak, which is especially problematic considering the growing number of labour immigrants. Recent findings suggest that labour immigrants are one of the most vulnerable groups that is more likely to experience exploitation by employers and even become victims of modern slavery (HRMI, 2018).

Flawed implementation of the legislation, alongside gaps within the strategies, is the reason why asylum, migration and integration policies do not fully fulfil the second aspect of migration policy guidelines of SDGs. Lack of decent integration system determines that immigrants in Lithuania, especially refugees, are highly vulnerable social groups. The situation is even worse when refugees are considered. The financial support that should help refugees to integrate is not enough for the basic needs, language courses are not sufficient and psychologists' consultations are mostly unavailable due to language restrictions (HRMI, 2018). Alongside high prevalence of anti-immigration attitudes among Lithuanians that do not seem to be systematically tackled, the current circumstances hardly create a safe and sustainable environment for migrants. Rather than being successfully integrated, migrants, and especially refugees, are forced towards social isolation and economic deficiencies.

While national migration, asylum and integration policies have a substantial legal basis in order to meet migration guidelines of SDGs, implementation and lack of consideration of

migrants' rights do not allow to meet the standards of the Agenda 2030. Despite legal commitments to raise public tolerance towards immigrant and ethnic minorities, the government bodies remain largely inactive. When the lack of political communication is combined with ineffective integration policies, majority of refugees leave the country for other EU states, and public attitudes towards the minorities arguably worsen even further.

2.6   Migration policies and international commitments

In 2001, the EU has for the first time adopted Sustainable Development Strategy. During Gothenburg Summit (2002), as well as the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002), the sustainability agenda was introduced as one of the global priorities. Lithuania, which at the time planned to join the EU, has followed the international community. In 2003, the country adopted its own National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) that reflected priorities and objectives of the EU. However, the first document was rather vague, and in 2009 a new version of the NSDS was introduced. This time it included new items, such as a concrete plan of implementation measures with allocation of specific responsibilities to different government bodies. A list of sustainable development indicators was also developed as a measure to monitor progress. A few minors amendments of the strategy text were made in 2011, and no further legal development of the framework has occurred since then (ESDN, 2014).

Since 2006, the EU has imposed obligations for each country to develop and supervise implementation of national strategies for sustainable development, as in that way specific circumstances of each state could be better addressed. The national strategy of Lithuania was developed on paper, but arguably has never led to effective implementation. Just as experts from the field research agreed, sustainable development has never become a national priority. As they argue, the project was imposed 'from above' (the EU), and there were no qualified and motivated individuals to make the strategy an integral part of national policies.

The stagnation in implementation of the strategy illustrates the lack of political will and secondary importance of sustainable development policies. By the strategy, the government has committed to form the National Commission on Sustainable Development that would monitor the progress and regularly improve the sustainability guidelines. Since 2005, periodic evaluation reports that would track the implementation had to be prepared and published every 2 years (the Ministry of Environment, 2011). However, the release of reports was suspended in 2014, and no development of the strategy has occurred since 2011. The activity of the commission has been limited, and lack of commitment to the strategy can be seen from scarce implementation efforts at ministry level.

On the other hand, principles of sustainable development were transferred to the national strategy that outlines the vision of Lithuania's future, called "Lithuania 2030". Sustainable economy, including environment-friendly use of resources, 'green' agriculture and transport are extensively referred to in the document. Yet, sustainable development is mentioned only 5 times and only in the context of environmental protection. While some goals of social dimension of SDGs are discussed (such as the need to tackle social exclusion and the

need for open, critically thinking society), they are not linked to sustainable development or SDGs. Arguably, it again reveals the misconceptions of sustainable development in national context, and the fragmentation of different dimensions of SDGs. Migration is also mentioned in the strategy, but the focus is being drawn on inclusion of Lithuanians abroad and tackling emigration; the need to improve public policy regarding immigration is mentioned only once. (the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 2012). While the document can be assessed positively due to references to the goals of the Agenda 2030, the generic nature of the strategy, as well as its focus on economic development over social progress limits its potential. Therefore, better management of national strategy for sustainable development is still needed, as "Lithuania 2030" is not an equivalent substitute of the effective sustainable development programme. It is important to ensure that substantial attention being paid to social issues at both local and international levels, as well as development of global citizenship.

The state of development education at national level is also weak. Introduced in 2007 by the Ministry of Education and Science, the programme of development education was cancelled in 2011 (Eurohouse, 2018). While some aspects of development education are implemented in the national curriculum for school education such as respect for cultural diversity, a report assessing national programme for development education concluded that "there is still lack of a systematic approach, strategic planning and coordination of actions between different actors" in the area (Augutiene and Baltreniene, 2014:28). As researchers suggested, it is important that not only schools, but a range of education institutions and organisations (such as youth centres, non-formal education institutions) would have relevant competence to incorporate development education into their activities. Even if included in legal acts, effective implementation of development education requires improvement of higher education programmes on the subject, in order to ensure that future educators are competent to teach about global issues and sustainable development (Augutiene and Baltreniene, 2014).

However, a more positive picture regarding the role of Lithuania in tackling global issues can be seen in the area of development aid. In September 2016, National Development Cooperation Action Plan for the period 2017-2019 was approved. The document covers concrete objectives and measures to contribute to development in aid recipient countries (the Department for Development Cooperation, 2017). In response to pressures of the EU and the UN, Lithuania has implemented a number of development cooperation projects and provides humanitarian aid to the areas of conflicts and crises. In 2017, the country has provided humanitarian aid worth of 503 000 Euros. While the Eastern Partnership countries, especially Ukraine and Georgia, remains among prioritised recipients, contributions to alleviate crises outside the region were also made. Two of the most notable projects were developed to address the humanitarian crisis in Mali and overpopulation issues in Nigeria. Lithuania allocates the funds to Mali in order to secure food aid and adequate water, sanitation and hygiene conditions. It also participates in EU Peacekeeping missions by providing military and security support in the fight against the rebel groups in the north of the country (the Department for Development Cooperation, 2017). In Nigeria, development assistance aims to alleviate food shortages as well as to address the root causes of irregular migration to Europe, as Nigeria is the largest migrant-sending donor in Africa. By

developing a mentoring programme between IT specialists in Lithuania and Nigeria, the ministry seeks to improve employment of young Nigerians, as unemployment among the most mobile population group is a major push factor for emigration (The Department for Development Cooperation, 2017).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also been relatively successful in communication of their activities to the general public. In addition to maintenance of the website on development cooperation, the ministry releases annual reports that provide systematic information about development assistance projects. While it is hard to deduce whether relatively high public support for development cooperation is the result of consistent implementation measures, development assistance is arguably the most developed and evidently the most supported aspect of sustainability agenda at national level.

As a member of the EU, Lithuania has participated in the EU resettlement programme. The country has committed to accept 1105 refugees and in that way show solidarity with the EU as well as asylum seekers. However, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour has reduced integration allowances by 50% and shortened the length of integration programmes shortly after the commitment was made. According to the UNHCR ambassadors in Lithuania, current conditions for refugees in the country are not substantial for effective integration. They prompt refugees to leave for more prosperous Nordic and Western Member States that offer better living standards for individuals granted asylum (European Website on Integration, 2016). Therefore, Lithuania's response to the so called "refugee crisis" is controversial. While the country has agreed with quota system, actions of the government arguably indicate the unwillingness to integrate refugees. If interpreted in the general context, it could be said that changes in asylum policies after agreeing to the quota illustrate that political will to address global issues beyond national interests is still low and the current engagement is rather imposed 'from above'; there is a lack of awareness regarding the need of a more global approach not only at public, but also at policy level.

As the national sustainable development framework is weak and mainly focuses on environmental issues, links between sustainability and migration as well as relevant international commitments are hardly reflected in national legislation. Migration is largely absent from the sustainable development agenda. The political discourse regarding migration management depicts international movement as an isolated phenomenon with the main emphasis being drawn to national risks and benefits, with the only exception of development cooperation projects. Development assistance seems to be the only area that offers a broader, contextualised view on global issues, in which migration is perceived as interlinked to development problems.

Challenges within the institutional framework of sustainable development agenda and questions such as whether, and, if so, in what ways migration policies are (indirectly) linked to sustainability strategy still need to be addressed as data availability is limited. To fill these information gaps, the field research with representatives from NGOs, education institutions and the government was conducted.

3. Field Research

3.1   Introduction

The field research consisted of two focus groups. The first one was carried out with 4 female experts, mainly working in NGOs and education institutions. Two experts represented NGO sector and two experts were from educational sector. The sampling was chain-referral (also known as snowball sampling); a small group of experts were asked to invite colleagues whose expertise would be relevant to the research. The discussion in this group was led by an interview protocol and lasted approximately an hour and a half. The group was designed to a) explore how aware the society and Government about SDGs and sustainable development in general are; b) what are the (potential) links between sustainable development and migration at national level; c) to find out what experts propose in order to improve management of sustainable development; and d) what is needed to raise awareness about SDGs as well as migration as a global process.

The second group consisted of 8 government representatives who have some form of responsibility over sustainable development policies and/or migration. The participants represented the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Chancellery of the Government of Lithuania. The sample was collected through official invitations distributed to the government bodies asking to allocate the most qualified representatives. 3 of the participants were female, 5 of them were male. In this group, the main topics were a) responsibility distribution between government bodies; b) reflection of SDGs in different national strategies; c) challenges in integration of sustainable development within each ministry; d) the reasons for and the potential measures to tackle public unawareness about SDGs and global issues in general. The discussion was led by an interview protocol and lasted approximately 2 hours. Both focus groups were voice recorded and informed consent was obtained by all participants. Confidentiality was addressed by keeping the focus group material available only for internal use by the researchers, storing it safely and making it impossible to identify interviewees in the research reports.

3.2   Awareness about international migration and sustainable development

Both experts and government representatives agreed that there is no public discourse about SDGs at all, and there is a strong need to raise public awareness about sustainability. Yet, the issue was not yet effectively addressed. As suggested, there are only few separate projects and initiatives to raise awareness about sustainable development, but no systematic action is taking place. Even the government understands it fragmentally and superficially. As an education actor claimed, from 2000 up until 2010, a number of institutions were actively working on Sustainable Development Goals and many

efforts were put in order to develop this discourse. According to an expert, schools were developing programs, there were special training courses for teachers and universities were preparing a special interdisciplinary Masters programme. However, the lack of public consciousness about the importance of Sustainable Development and therefore absence of interest led to failure of the project.

Additionally, it seems that even within a small segment of population familiar with sustainable development, there are widespread misconceptions about the concept. The experts suggested that definitions are used interchangeably among the general public, there is a lack of understanding what Sustainable Development, Humanitarian Aid and Development Cooperation are and how they differ. In the view of government representatives, the majority of the society believe that sustainable development is limited to protection of the environment. Furthermore, as it was agreed in both focus groups, it is primarily perceived as limited to our own geographical area, the region of national interest.

A number of research participants highlighted that the society is not yet ready to comprehend the need for sustainability, especially at global level. The public is not prepared to accept migration and displacement as international issues Lithuanians should also take responsibility for, especially when the origin locations are geographically and culturally distant. The government representatives explained the widespread objection by historical circumstances: as a former state of the USSR, Lithuania was isolated from global initiatives and cooperation; the country has never been affected by large-scale migration and did not have historical links with nations outside the neighbouring region. Hence, Lithuanians' concerns about the world are limited to national interests.

3.3   (Potential) links between migration and sustainable development

Since so far there were few attempts to link SDGs and migration at national level in practice, the discussion was rather focused on the need for a more holistic approach towards sustainable development in general, rather than migration and SDGs in particular. However, some insights regarding public opinion about migration and its potential implementation within the agenda were made.

According to the government representatives, it is important to improve understanding of the risks regarding social exclusion and inequalities first if one aims for solidarity for migrants and refugees. It is naïve to expect empathy for immigrants in the context where there is little concern for social issues at national level. The claim relates to another suggestion made in the same group, that firstly SDGs should be promoted as a way of critical thinking, rather than a set of concrete goals. In that way, the linkage between separate issues will be perceived by the general public, and it will arguably affect attitudes towards migration too.

When experts from NGOs were asked about the potential links that could be implemented in development education, proposals to link migration and SDGs through emigration of Lithuanians were suggested. According to an expert, it might be effective to use personal, relevant stories or perspectives. Emigration has directly or indirectly affected the majority of Lithuanians, and therefore could effectively fill the linkage. The suggestion can be

translated to a need for a micro-macro approach (i.e. linking local to global, and personal to collective), as it is conceptualised in general guidelines for development education (Cabezudo et al., 2008). While experts demonstrated knowledge about the SDGs as a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary project, migration-development nexus did not seem to be an area of in-depth expertise.

3.4   Insecurity

While the discussion regarding insecurity was limited, two conclusions were drawn. First, both government representatives and experts agreed that empathy for migrants should not be expected in the presence of acute inequalities that hence create social tensions. Second, participants of both focus groups agreed that immigration is primarily perceived as a negative phenomenon.

The insights shared during focus groups are in consensus to conclusions of a vast body of research literature. The language used to describe migration or asylum processes in media is often associated with large quantities and elemental, uncontrollable forces such as flooding (CES, 2017). Migration and especially asylum is then understood as a form of invasion; immigration is associated "with powerlessness against the magnitude of newly arriving people and the costs or expenses of refugee services" (Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017: 1751). In the environment where the media and public discourse tend to dehumanise migrants and depict them as quantified commodities, the lack of empathy and fear-inducing implications are not surprising.

3.5   Main factors that shape public opinion and instruments to shape public discourse

The government representatives also emphasised the importance of more personal stories, arguing that "statistics and numbers" are not effective measures to increase levels of empathy. In their view, the main reason for ignorance is the lack of "personal touch" to global issues such as migration.

As experts agreed and academic findings suggest, it is important to offer positive and more human-oriented images of migration and asylum. Evidence shows that adding a human element to representation of migrants improves public engagement with the issue (ODI, 2017). The latter approach could also facilitate linkage between migration and other global processes such as climate change in public awareness campaigns, as a more humane model of migration challenges a country-focused and threat-oriented discourse towards global issues in general.

Some of the government representatives suggested that Lithuanians lack empathy for immigrants from culturally distant communities, but are relatively welcoming migrants from culturally and historically similar backgrounds, such as Ukrainians and Georgians. Arguably, the society can relate to them more, as historical circumstances and socio-

political issues are already familiar to Lithuanians. In other words, the general public feels more personally connected to migrants from these areas. A representative from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour then suggested that while empathy is easy to develop when immigrants from neighbouring countries are concerned, but a more pragmatic, benefit-focused approach could be effective in presentation of immigration from culturally distant regions.

Again, the insight relates to the concerns raised by research community. There is a risk in portraying migrants and refugees as victims only, as then they might be seen as sympathetic figures that however are not "contributing or capable", notions that many see as crucial for successful integration (ODI, 2017). As public prejudices towards immigrants are usually based on distinction of identities ('us' vs. 'them'), it is important to break the barrier and emphasise commonalities and shared values between migrants and host communities (ODI, 2017). Instead of focus on cultural differences, migrants' contribution and achievements in arts, investments, job creation and other forms of participation in creating the 'public good' should be raised. In that way, migrants will be seen as global actors that are capable and contributing, rather than unfamiliar 'invaders' that local public has no shared values with.

One focus group participant has suggested that knowledge about the SDGs is not as important as a more holistic approach towards global and national processes; development education should primarily develop skills of critical thinking rather than specific knowledge. It is important to link global and national interests, and stress the long-term consequences of unsustainability.

When asked about the organisation of awareness raising campaigns, NGO representatives told that there were some measures undertaken by the government in the field of education, but it was rather "on paper" only and not effectively implemented in practice. One of the representatives stressed that all the emphasis in information campaigns was focused on the environmental protection. According to the experts, such distortion occurs because the government body responsible for the national strategy is the Ministry of Environment, and it is not the institution that is competent enough to implement a holistic approach towards sustainability.

Noticeably, the government representatives have shifted responsibility of raising public awareness about both migration and sustainable development to the NGO sector, while experts from the latter have claimed that the government should take more actions. According to the experts, NGOs do not have instruments to develop long-term programmes; they are only capable to develop short-term, small projects as the funding as well as human resources are not sufficient for large-scale campaigns. They also argued that the accessibility of information about funding opportunities is limited. On the other hand, a representative from the Ministry of Education and Science admitted the lack of political will at the ministry level. It was suggested that there are not enough measures undertaken to promote development education within education institutions. While development education is included in the agenda on education, it is integrated to policy papers only and in practice implementation is far from effective; there is a strong need to work with teachers. The mutual scapegoating implies there is a lack of communication and
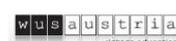
cooperation between governmental and non-governmental, as well as educational, sectors, the issue that was also addressed by the experts.

3.6   Gaps of information and instruments to fill the gaps

The most important issue related to migration and sustainable development, as touched upon in both focus groups, is the lack of awareness about global issues among the general public. Lithuanians focus on local matters and do not see the links between national interests and global processes. The society seems to lack understanding about interdependency of the world; the public does not see themselves as global citizens. Migration is perceived as a separate and predominantly negative subject and is barely linked to sustainability. It is therefore important to first strengthen public understanding of global processes (including migration) in general and sustainable development as a holistic concept in particular. The most important measure, as discussed, is a more systematic programme of development education. It should be implemented in schools, as well as improved at university level for students who are interested in the subject. As experts indicated, migration should be more effectively integrated within the broader sustainable development approach both in policy and research. There is a strong need to bring more emphasis on social dimension of sustainable development, including international movement, its opportunities and challenges.

The scope of information regarding sustainable development available to public is respectively limited, both in terms of government communication strategy and media coverage. While migration receives more attention in the media than sustainable development, it is not presented as primarily a global phenomenon, but is seen from the point of national or EU interests. The lack of information available to public that would help to develop a more holistic view towards global issues is a major problem as a vicious cycle of public unawareness is then formed. According to experts, collaboration between universities, government institutions, NGOs and the government would help to raise awareness. As there is no effective inter-sectoral collaboration but, on the contrary, misunderstanding of roles of different actors exists, more effective cooperation would help to develop long-term public awareness campaigns of larger scale.

In the context where public discourse towards sustainable development mainly focuses on environmental aspects and is largely limited, there is no data or literature regarding links between migration and sustainable development. There is also a lack of professionals with expertise in the inter-disciplinary field. Currently, areas of sustainable development (such as migration, gender equality, human rights) are highly fragmented and are not seen in the broader context of sustainable progress. As there is a lack of programmes as well as modules that would effectively address sustainable development at university level, there is a need to develop sustainable development agenda in higher education institutions. According to experts, one of the ways to fill these gaps could be preparation of optional modules on sustainable development, which could be chosen by students from any faculty.

In this way, there would be more multi-disciplinary prospective professionals that in the future could implement sustainability in different areas of expertise.

3.7   The Role of education systems

Currently, the system of development education is nearly non-existing and needs to be created from the ground up. While the national strategy for development education was introduced in 2007, it was suspended in 2011; since then there is no coordination at national level, and development education has arguably never been effectively integrated within school curriculum. Therefore, there is a need for structural, rather than fragmented transformations. Not only programmes on sustainable development at university level should be developed, but also the root causes should be addressed. In order to reach its full potential as a form of critical thinking, it has to be integrated within education of young children. Development education has to start in primary schools and even kindergartens; content material suitable for the programme such as textbooks and online courses has to be developed. Most importantly, education of teachers must ensure that educators are sufficiently competent to teach about the subjects. Ideally, measures should be undertaken to target adult population as well, by integrating development education into lifelong learning programmes and adult education institutions. However, the latter issue was not addressed by the research participants. Localised challenges and recommendations for education on sustainable development, as identified by experts and government representatives, are summarised below.

Representatives from both focus groups agreed that teachers are not well-qualified to present content related to sustainable development, especially SDGs. One of the experts stressed that not only teachers, but also social workers and psychologists working in schools should also be trained, as they could integrate development education in extra-curricular activities. However, the issue that needs to be addressed, as indicated by experts, in the changing focus of sustainable development education. As measures of sustainability keep transforming, and new challenges emerge, it is not enough to prepare teachers once. It is important that teachers' knowledge and competency is up to date. Potentially, seminars for educators could be periodically held; information about changes in the area should be made available and easily accessible to school staff.

Fragmentation of different expertise areas of sustainable development was identified as a major challenge for implementation of development education in school curriculum. According to experts, a number of NGOs with their own areas of interest (such as gender equality, environmental protection, humanitarian aid) have approached the Ministry of Education and Science, with proposals to implement their agendas into the national curriculum. Yet, due to a number of proposals being received, the ministry is not capable to process them all separately. Therefore, a more centralised and cooperative attempt is needed, in which sustainable development and SDGs could be used as a link.

Furthermore, if more courses at university offered content related to sustainable development, more professionals with inter-disciplinary thinking would be raised. One of the potential measures would be introduction of optional modules on sustainable development that students from any faculties could take. In this way, fragmentation of different areas of sustainable development at national level could be alleviated in the future. Arguably, optional courses would contribute to a more systematic approach and cooperation of experts with variation in expertise, and therefore more effective management of sustainable development agenda at country level eventually.

According to experts, the Ministry of Education and Science is more likely to adopt projects that focus on complementing existing programmes, rather than introducing new ones. While there is a strong need to-reintroduce a national strategy for development education, from a pragmatic point of view, currently more integrative rather than inventive projects are likely to result in success. Therefore, resources of relevant NGOs are focused on two potential opportunities 1) introduction of compulsory volunteering into the school curriculum 2) transformations in curriculum on citizenship. Through compulsory volunteering in public sector, NGOs might use the opportunity to raise awareness about SDGs among minors by engaging them practically, while transformed citizenship lessons in schools could include more content related to global issues as well as promote global citizenship and sustainable development more effectively.

As development education is in general largely absent from the national education system, the discussion was focused on the latter rather than addressing links between sustainable development and migration specifically. However, migration was perceived as an inherent part of global development during the discussions, and is expected to receive substantial attention in the future improvements of development education.
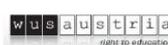
4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1   National and local level recommendations for NGOs

There is a strong need to continue raising public awareness about sustainable development and challenge public perceptions of migration as a negative, threat-associated phenomenon. Notions of sustainability, climate change and migration indicate that there is little awareness about the interdependence of the contemporary world; national interests and global welfare are perceived as mutually exclusive. Hence, it is important to develop a sense of global and responsible citizenship; the concept that should be promoted by implementation of effective awareness-raising initiatives targeting both youth and adult population. Hence, NGOs need to organise events, workshops, conferences, run awareness campaigns on the problems faced by refugees and asylum seekers and provide reports on empirical data to raise public awareness about sustainable development and contest existing perceptions of migration as harmful.

A major challenge in non-governmental sector, as the field research has revealed, is the lack of cooperation between organisations working in different areas of sustainable development. The majority of NGOs that specialise in gender equality, environmental protection, human rights, migration and other relevant fields do not realise that their areas of expertise are also domains of sustainable development and SDGs. Meanwhile, the latter concepts could become the basis of collective action when it is in their own interests. Currently, the existing fragmentation hinders effective communication of gaps and recommendations to the government bodies. Experts from different (but connected) areas offer amendments to the national education system separately, while the effort could be centralised. Arguably, a more united voice and a smaller number of individual projects being suggested would facilitate a more constructive dialogue with the government.

Finally, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding links between sustainable development, SDGs and international migration among NGOs in the field. While representatives have demonstrated expertise in sustainable development and the Agenda 2030 in a broader sense, relation between the latter concepts and migration remains unrepresented in non-governmental sector.

4.2   National and local level recommendations for governmental institutions

Another major challenge for implementation of sustainable development policies is the lack of political will. Sustainable development is not a national priority, and, to a large extent, seems to be imposed 'from above'. As experts suggested, the need for sustainable development is still not fully comprehended by policy makers. As a result, the strategy was introduced as a necessary document but is not working in practice: the monitoring of the progress in the area was suspended and attempts to implement sustainable development

at ministry level have been limited. Hence, there is a need to re-introduce monitoring process and impose more binding requirements for ministries to materialise commitments for sustainable development. It is not enough to make references to sustainable development within more generic national strategies, such as "Lithuania 2030" and use them as substitutes for the national sustainable development agenda since it risks diminution of the latter (as it can already be seen by "Lithuania 2030").

The institutional structure for implementation of the strategy also needs to be reconsidered, as currently the lack of effective cooperation between ministries reduces the potential of the agenda. Different ministries are responsible for different parts of sustainable development, and communication between the institutions seems to be flawed. As the leading body is the Ministry of Environment, the main focus of sustainable development policies is currently being drawn on environment-friendly developments, and other aspects of the strategy, including its social dimension and migration in particular, receives little consideration. As both experts and government representatives agreed, changing the leading body to the Chancellery of the Government is likely to solve these issues.

Since public awareness regarding sustainable development, migration and global issues is a major challenge, there is a strong need to re-introduce a uniform strategy for development education. Currently, national programme for development education in schools is non-existing; initiatives implemented in the past do not seem to develop adequate knowledge and skills regarding global issues among pupils, as participants of both focus groups agreed. Development education should be integrated within national school curriculum; non-formal and adult education should also be considered. In addition, it is important to take into consideration competence of teachers, as relevant content alone will not lead to desirable learning outcomes.

The field research has demonstrated that there is no clear distribution of roles between non-governmental sector and the government, especially in the area of awareness-raising campaigns. While some government representatives have suggested that enhancing public understanding and countering negative notions of immigration is the responsibility of NGOs, it is important to take into account that capacity of non-governmental sector is usually limited to short-term and small-scale projects. Therefore, in order to address the lack of awareness effectively, the government should take a more active role in promotion and communication regarding sustainable development agenda as the authority of the government is likely to have a positive effect on public attitudes. It could be done by enhancing cooperation with NGOs; it is also recommended to create channels by which information about sustainable development projects being undertaken would be easily available and comprehensible to the general public.

Finally, there is a need to integrate migration, and especially immigration, to sustainable development framework and, vice versa, sustainability should receive more consideration within the migration policies. While there are attempts to address emigration, immigration is largely absent from the strategy for sustainable progress. There is a need to challenge prevailing negative and risk-inducing perceptions of migration through effective inclusion of the topic to sustainable development agenda, development education and awareness raising campaigns. Furthermore, in order to ensure social dimension of sustainability at local level as well as protection of migrant rights, it is important to improve immigration

policies. The poor quality of integration mechanism, limited availability of public services to migrants and the lack of measures undertaken to tackle their vulnerable positions have to be addressed.

4.3   Local level recommendations for municipalities

Just as government bodies, municipalities are encouraged to engage in awareness raising campaigns, potentially in cooperation with NGOs. It is important that municipalities would make information about local sustainable development projects easily accessible to local communities, as the authority of local government is likely to facilitate changes in public perceptions.

Furthermore, youth and culture centres established by municipalities can become important mediators of development education and global citizenship, as well as advocates that would counter negative attitudes towards immigration and migrant minorities. The institutions are therefore encouraged to integrate development education within non-formal education being provided, targeting both youth and adult population.

Finally, there is a strong need for municipalities to improve their integration facilities, as the latter largely depend on local authorities. It is important to make public services more accessible to newcomers and foreigners, including provision of information about relevant services, schooling for children that do not speak local languages, health services, career and legal consultations as well as to ensure better quality of free language courses. Municipalities are encouraged to advocate for anti-discrimination and inform locals about the ways migration and immigrants can contribute to development of their communities.

4.4   National and local level recommendations for educational institutions

Higher education institutions should take a more active role in improving the state of development education. As currently future educators are not being substantially trained to teach development education in schools and through non-formal education activities, there is a need to develop programmes that would build their capacity to engage with the subject. A holistic model of development education needs to be integrated within the pedagogy courses; all dimensions of sustainable development (such as the risks of unsustainability, global dilemmas, local-global nexus and migration) need to be addressed with the focus being drawn on a more global sense of citizenship and responsibility.

Furthermore, introduction of optional modules on sustainable development available to students from across faculties and relevant undergraduate as well as postgraduate degrees would arguably raise a generation of future specialists with a more holistic, interdisciplinary approach towards the subject. Respectively, it could solve the existing fragmentation of different areas of sustainable development, which is currently a major issue for effective sustainable development management at both non-governmental and government sectors.

4.5   Recommendations for future research areas

A major issue with existing literature is the lack of consideration regarding links between sustainable development and international migration, especially immigration. Immigration is not seen as a potential contributor to sustainable growth, and the dangers of poorly managed immigration policies are not covered in the national strategy for sustainable development as well as research in general. There is no localised perspective of the role of immigration to development, the knowledge gap that must be addressed in order to achieve effective integration of the subjects at policy level. In addition, more research is needed in the area of media coverage. There are no recent studies on how sustainable development, and the SDGs in particular, are depicted in the media, not to mention its linkage to migration.

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