
OMEP:s
världsprojekt:
Lärande för
hållbar
utveckling
(ESD)

**Part 3 Intergenerational
dialogues for ESD**

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Omep:s världsprojekt: Lärande för hållbar utveckling (ESD)

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Våren 2013 startar tredje delen av OMEP:s världsprojekt för Lärande för hållbar utveckling (ESD), vars syfte är att bredda perspektiven utanför förskolan och skolan. ”Utgångspunkten i del 3 är dialoger med andra, där barnen inledningsvis vänder sig till äldre människor, med sina tankar och frågor. Det kan exempelvis vara deras grannar eller mor- och farföräldrar.” Syftet med att uppmuntra till dialog mellan generationer är att vidga barnens kunskap både i tid och i rum. Idén med projektet är vidare att samla upp barnens erfarenheter och idéer från dialogerna som i nästa steg får bilda utgångspunkt för projekt och temarbeten (<http://www.omep.org.se/>).

Barn och pedagoger inbjuds att starta dialoger över generationsgränserna kring tre utpekade mål:

1. Minska användningen av plastflaskor och plastpåsar i förskola, skola och hem
2. Var kommer maten ifrån? Starta en trädgård i närmiljön och börja producera mat
3. Vad leker du med andra barn och med vilka leksaker? Bygg ett nätverk med barn om lekar och lektraditioner i en annan förskola/skola någonstans i världen. Börja med att byta lekar med varandra

Målen för Del 3 är valda mot bakgrund av att dessa typer av aktiviteter ses som inkluderande av de tre dimensionerna i hållbarhet (socio-kulturell-, miljö- och ekonomidimension) samtidigt som det finns en förhoppning om att målen skall leda till en ”ökad handlingskompetens för alla deltagare” (<http://www.omep.org.se/>).

OMEP arbetar för ett hållbart lärande/ Hållbar utveckling

OMEP är en världsorganisation med verksamhet och medlemmar i 65 länder. OMEP är en förkortning av det franska Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Préscolaire. Organisationen bildades 1948 i Europa, arbetet inriktas mot stöd för förskolebarns rätt till lek, utbildning och bästa möjliga uppväxtvillkor. OMEP är en frivilligorganisation med rådgivande status i UNESCO; UNICEF och Europarådet. ”Sedan 2007 arbetar OMEP med frågor som rör Lärande för hållbar utveckling. Svenska OMEP har varit drivande i detta arbete och initierat flera internationella projekt” (<http://www.omep.org.se/>).

1992 hölls en världskonferens om natur och miljö i Rio. Konferensen resulterade i att man i Sverige antagit *Agenda 21*, ett handlingsprogram vars syfte är att skapa hållbar utveckling, utrota fattigdom och undanröja hot mot miljön. Utbildningssektorn utgör en av de samhällsinstitutioner som fått ett särskilt ansvar för dokumentets uppföljning. Då svensk förskola fick sin första läroplan 1998 fick också miljöfrågorna en framskjuten plats (Utbildningsdepartementet, 1998). I det betänkande som föregick läroplanen betonas

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betydelsen av att barn i förskolan involveras i kunskapsprocesser som rör ekologiska samspel och människans och naturens beroende (SOU 1997: 157). Medvetenheten om människans livsstil beskrivs i dokumentet som ett hot för miljön och på sikt för den egna existensen och blir motivet för att barn redan i förskolan ska utveckla kunskap om samspel i naturen och en tro på att saker och ting är positivt påverkbara (ibid.). Förskolans lärare tillskrivs en viktig roll som positiva förebilder för barnen i detta arbete. År 2010 reviderades förskolans läroplan och en ny trädde i kraft den första juli 2011 (Skolverket, 2010). I bakgrundsmaterialet till de förändringar som gjordes beskrivs och motiveras de målområden som tillkommit vid revideringen. Ett av de områdena tillskrivs en särskild angelägenhetsgrad ur perspektivet lärande för hållbar utveckling (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2010). I texten poängteras förskolans betydelse för grundläggande av barns intresse, värderingar, insikt och förhållningssätt.

”Lärande för hållbar utveckling handlar idag om att integrera miljöfrågor samt sociala och ekonomiska frågor i en helhet. Omsorg om miljön och återuppbyggnad, naturresurser, hållbart användande, hållbar produktion, livsstilsfrågor, som handlar om såväl konsumtion som om mat, hälsa samt skapandet av ett fredligt samhälle är exempel på principer som ingår i begreppet lärande för hållbar utveckling. Förskolan har stora möjligheter att grundlägga barns intresse för hållbar utveckling eftersom det finns en tradition att arbeta med olika verklighetsnära frågor. Utmaningen för förskolan är att fånga upp det som upptar barnens tankar och nyfikenhet och att koppla det till miljöfrågor och livsstil”. (ibid. s. 15).

Hållbar utveckling i ett förskoleperspektiv

OMEP har under åren haft en aktiv roll i att initiera, stödja och medverka till utveckling av arbete för en hållbar utveckling i förskolan. OMEP har också tillsammans med UNICEF utarbetat en rad riktlinjer för vad Hållbar utveckling kan betyda och ges för innebörd i ett förskoleperspektiv. En mängd insatser har genomförts på olika nivåer. I maj 2007 hölls en workshop i Göteborg med 35 deltagare från 16 olika nationer. Tre olika utgångspunkter låg som grund för de samtal och seminarier som genomfördes. (1) Dels framhålls ett samhällsperspektiv där nya former för utbildning prövas som främjar fostran av omhändertagande och ansvarsfulla medborgare som bidrar till en rättvis och fredlig värld. (2) För det andra måste dessa nya former av utbildning vara möjlig och tillgänglig för alla – inte bara en handfull människor – och kunna äga rum i varierande miljöer, i familjer och samhällen. (3) Den tredje utgångspunkten poängterar betydelsen av att detta arbete påbörjas i förskolan. De värden, attityder och sätt att vara som grundläggs under förskoleåren har konsekvenser för det som sker senare i livet (Pramling Samuelsson & Kaga, 2008, fritt översatt).

Betänkandet som föregick förskolans läroplan 1998 framhöll värdet av de vuxnas betydelse som förebilder för barnen (SOU, 1997:157). I bakgrunden kan tanken om socialisationens betydelse anas. Genom att få se, höra och göra som andra så kan det enskilda barnet skolas in

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i en rådande kultur/ett kulturmönster. Jämförelser kan göras med vad Schoultz (2002) en svensk forskare, menar gäller för om ett barn skall lära sig ett nytt kunskapsområde som naturvetenskap. Det handlar om att bli insocialiserad i en tradition/en diskurs. Att få tillträde till ett visst språk, redskap, handlingar, mönster och så vidare.

Likande resonemang förs av Frank Smith (en läsforskare) som menar att om barn skall bli medlemmar i läs- och skrivklubben så måste vi som redan är det visa på hur bra det är i den klubben. Vi måste framhålla poängen, värdet och själva nyttan med att bli en läsande och skrivande människa (Smith, 2000). Det behövs inga inträdesprov eller medlemsavgifter till den klubben. Medlemmarna är helt enkelt genuint intresserade av och angelägna om varandras intresse och framgång. Det viktiga är att en medvetenhet om vad medlemskapet går ut på och en känsla av tillhörighet grundläggs. Barn föds med en nyfikenhet och en vilja att begripa världen. De vill vara delaktiga och förstå sitt sammanhang och sin omvärld. Om barn skall förstå meningen med hållbar utveckling - om de skall uppleva värdet av ett medlemskap i **den** klubben - behöver de med alla sinnen erfara, leva, vara och verka i en miljö som präglas av den andan. De behöver möta vuxna som inser värdet med fler medlemmar i "klubben". Vuxna som förmår, "bygga kulturer av hållbarhet" i det att organisation, arbetssätt och innehåll stödjer en strävan mot ett hållbart samhälle och en hållbar framtid (jfr. Ärlemalm-Hagsér, 2013, s. 111).

Education for Sustainable Development - Dialogues between generations

Following section presents a summary based of a preschool's work with *Part 3 Intergenerational dialogues for ESD*. The current preschool is located in Salem, west of Stockholm, in an area with high-rise buildings and townhouses. The socio-economic and cultural status of this area is perceived as relatively homogeneous. The actual children are between 4-6 years. The team consists of four employees; Cecilia Press, Helen Lindqvist, Marie Grahn and Yvonne Hagman. During the spring of 2013 they decided to work with sustainable development based on the project's target area three: What are you playing with other children and with what the toys? Build a network of children about games and play-traditions in another preschool / school anywhere in the world. Begin to change games with one another. The team presents its work in a report - *Building Bridges in time and space - a playful dialogue between generations and geographic locations - a report from Salem about dialogues across generations* (Press, Lindqvist, Grahn, & Hagman, 2013, editors translation).

The work of this preschool serves as an example of how building a culture of sustainability can have its' beginning in preschool and for how preschool teachers can open up doors for children's "membership" in an education for sustainable development. 15 children and 4 adults start their work after being inspired by questions from the OMEP's World project, Education for Sustainable Development. The adults presented the ideas behind the project and the children were then allowed to make their choice by voting for the issues that interested them mostly. Their common ground was around issues of what they play with other children and about the toys they play with. The project evolved to include children's thoughts about

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how it was in grandparents' childhood, and as long ago as when people lived in caves. The latter was inspired by a project about time that the children worked with contributing to exciting questions and a natural continuation of the projects. When talking about how it was to play in former days the idea came up to build their own toys. In addition, contacts were made to get experiences with preschools in other countries. In summary, one can say that there were several purpose of the project as a whole: to meet other generations and other parts of the world; to discover similarities and differences in society, economy and culture; through mutual learning show and spread the children's experiences of history that exist in their neighborhood; create a sense of a global community perspective as the basis for sustainable development.

Part 3 Intergenerational dialogues for ESD in Sweden, as it has been worked out of this preschool, are here summarized in association with four headings specifying the content of the work: *This we play!*, *The meeting with an older generation and their games and toys*, *Toy Construction of ecologically sustainable materials*, and *Social construction of local and global networks*. Under each heading there will be introduced a short conclusion from the preschool report made by us as editors. Reflections those can be found in the following are in one part formulated by the preschool teachers and the children involved in the project (named: Reflections from preschool) and in another part by us, as editors of this report, where we try to make some connections to the Swedish curriculum for preschool and to actual research (named: Reflections from editors). ☒

This we play!

Characters that inspired the children and often appeared in their games are downloaded from media and are partly fictional characters from various TV shows, and artists mostly from the Swedish song contest sent on TV. The children also say that they dress up and play princesses, pirates and agents. They dance a lot when they play and have several young male idols. The games are similar to some other indoor- and outdoor games but differ with regard to toys and technology use. The children tells that there are some TV watching, video games, Ipads and computers indoors but also play with Lego, cars, dolls and also some toys under the name of Beyblades. Outdoor games are characterized by more movement with running, jumping and cycling but with much the same type of activities as indoors. Children's stories are about both play at home and play at preschool. Taking inspiration from both the previous time-project and the newly started OMEP- project they started to have group-oriented games of yesteryear. It was such games as the adults in preschool played as a child, such as "Bro, bro, breja", "Hide key" and "Under the wings of the hawk".

Reflections from preschool

"The force of the childrens play are discussed in the teacher group and we theorize about that children today tend to be divided into smaller constellations more and more, and even toys and IT usage encourages this. We often in preschool talk about letting children participate in smaller contexts, and although we see many benefits to this we must not forget the power of

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group games and how this can create joy and commitment". (Press et al., 2013, p.4, editors translation).

The preschool should provide children with a secure environment at the same time as it challenges them and encourages play and activity. It should inspire children to explore the surrounding world. (National School Agency, 2010, p 5).

Play as a part of preschool activity is fairly uncontroversial as both as a content and a method of teaching (Jonsson, 2011). In the example from the preschool of Syslagården we can see that they with the help of voting decided to work with play as content by associating /discussing with the children to find out what they like to play with others and what kind of toys they then use. With this application being made, the content becomes a part of the purpose of working with education for sustainable development. Recent research on sustainability in preschool (Ärlemalm-Hagsér, 2013) points out how children like in this example are made actors where their contributions are considered as essential knowledge content. It also shows children's rights to influence and participate in decisions that concern them in preschool (Pramling Samuelsson & Sheridan, 2003). We can therefore see the preschool's activity as an important contribution to the social dimension of sustainability because it chose to focus what they as children play with other children – instead of as an individual child. From a gender perspective (Hellman, 2010; Odenbring, 2010), it seems useful to consider how traditional gender patterns may be challenged and discussed in the context of children's play. Taken for granted ways of looking at girls and boys different interests, needs and conditions can develop by being visible and by given different pictures /of contrasts.

Children should have the opportunity of developing their ability to observe and reflect. The preschool should be a living social and cultural environment that stimulates children into taking initiative and developing their social and communicative competence. Children should also have the opportunity to explore on their own an issue in greater depth and to search for their own answers and solutions. (National School Agency, 2010, p 5).

Reflections from preschool

"In order to capture the children's thoughts before the meeting with the elderly they get to draw/paint how they think games and toys looked like in the past. They also made pictures of what they think children in other countries are playing. We in the teacher group discuss our reflections over the drawings and we can clearly see that children's drawings reflect what they themselves do and that there are many toys in the pictures. We theorize/think that this is probably because children in Sweden today are surrounded by many toys and that they rarely get to feel the feeling of longing for something or to really wish for something to come true later on". (Press et al. , 2013, p. 4-5, editors translation).

The meeting with an older generation and their games and toys

To get answers to children's questions about how it was at the time when their grandparents were children, they contacted older people in the area. Children and adults together wrote letters of invitation to some of the older generation in a retirement home. They were then invited to a meeting to answer children's questions about games and toys and were asked to

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bring a toy from the time when they were children. Prior to the meeting with the elderly they on preschool wrote down questions and the children also made pictures of how they thought the toys and games appeared at that time. The questions were: "Did you play with Lego? What television programs did you watch? Did you play the Taurus and Bolt? Did you have any idols? Did you play princess? If so, what was the name of your princesses? Did you play treasure hunt? What you played when there was snow outside? We usually play "Who's Afraid of the Shark" at the slide, did you used to play it? We usually play and play Super Mario, did you do it too? What toys did you have? What games did you used to play? Did you play "dog and bone"? Did you go to preschool? What were you doing out there? Did you play "Bro, bro breja", "Hide key" and "Under the wings of the hawk"? Did you play "Rock-Paper-Scissors"? ". (Press et al., 2013, p.4, editors translation)

Then meeting the elderly the children firstly were a little bit shy but then started asking questions and listening to the elderly peoples' stories. Some of the elderly had their childhood in the countryside with farming and other chores and some in the city and had attended preschool. Common was that everyone had few or maybe just one toy that they were very concerned about and that it was often made of natural material such as straw, rice, pine cones and sticks. Those who were children in urban areas also played with footballs or with Meccano toys and had to save money for a long time to buy a toy. One lady had a doll that she bought when she was 11 years for the money she saved up. Similarities between the older and the pre-school children were such games as when they dressed up as different characters, played Hide and Seek-games and "Bro, bro breja". The children were fascinated by a kind of finger-play with simple strings which also the older knew. Similarities between young and old were also some toys which were not bought but made at home, such as doll's bed, doll houses and things made of materials from the forest.

One difference between generations playing experiences where the inspiration from various characters or people in television because the elderly were children before the time of the TV. Their characters in play were often Indians and cowboys, something that the children said they recognize but that was not as widespread in their games.

Reflections from preschool

"A few days after the meeting, we let them (the children) draw again to catch sight of their processes. They are now designing different and we can see that they picked up a lot from the conversations with the elderly. It is no longer multiple toys at the drawings and several children make drawings of toys made of sticks. In the pictures made at the first occasion, many mentions toy stores and this does not exist on the second occasion. Nor can we see that it is their own interests that have guided the choice of subject. We reflect together with the children about their different images and the children comment on the difference in that there were so many toys before. They had no toy store that they went to, but sometimes they made their own toys". (Press et al., 2013, p. 6-7, editors translation).

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Reflections from editors

To create an understanding of an abstract historical "before" for children in a contemporary, more concrete "now" picture is likely to put expectations of both empathy and creativity and engaged curiosity. The preschool of Syslagården took this challenge by inviting to a dialogue between generations as a way to get closer to concretion consisted of toys from the past and present. Research about play (Berg, 1992) has coined the term the playing man which in short can be said to stand for the playful, social commonalities we as human carry with us. The playfulness here becomes a common topic of conversation between generations which can be seen as an opening for the preschools' historical perspective (Tallberg Broman, 1995). Such an opening for further exploration also lies in that some of the older generations also have been preschool children. Research on adult play memories shows that the location where the game took place is connected with the memories they carry with them (Sandberg, 2002)

Although the concept of sustainable development isn't used in the preschool curriculum (National Agency for Education, 2010) there are wordings that can be given interpretations linked to the different dimensions of this field. In connection with a social dimension's values there are formulations that include the importance of an empathetic and open approach to all people of the world, with entails in terms of social and cultural meetings. In the children's encounter with the older generation opportunities are given to talk about what concerns them about the games and toys which in the next step can provide understanding and contrasting images to their own experiences.

Reflections from preschool

"We decide shortly after the meeting with the older generation to go to Stockholm and visit the Toy Museum. There are a plethora of toys from the past and this we hope should give the children more experiences about differences and similarities between then and now. The visit is very successful and we photograph the toys that children show particular interest for. Back in the pre-school the children get as homework to photograph their favorite toy so that we then will be able to make a comparison between the toys from the past and present. We can again see in the children's pictures that they find it difficult to choose one toy and instead photograph several of their toys. This confirms our theories that toys today are more throwaway and that they often lack the value that toys had before. We're wondering if the toys available today will end up in a museum? Do they have a collectible for someone or do they end up in landfills when the children are done playing?" (Press et al., 2013, p.7, editors translation).

The preschool should encourage and strengthen the child's compassion and empathy for the situations of others. (National School Agency, 2010, p. 3).

Toy construction of ecologically sustainable materials

The decision to build their own toys were taken from preschool earlier positions on toys, which meant no bought toys in preschool but all are made of materials recycled and unfinished, founded in the idea of gender neutrality. Recycled materials such as plastic

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bottles, glass block, tile and spools of thread along with pine cones, sticks, bark and stones from the forest starts plans and imagination. The children's creativity is showing starting points in their own experiences, but also how they have been influenced by the encounter of a different generation, the stories and the answers they received. New technology meets old in the toy building that eventually form the content for inclusion in a public exhibition where they get the opportunity to show others what they have learned and worked out, but not least show the link to the district of the town as it was long time ago.

Reflections from preschool

"The longer the work progresses, the more we see that children create worlds that are similar to their own. We see that they put a huge value in their figure or thing and that it have had a significance beyond what we've seen around their own toys. We can also see that children connects their world with what they been told, they mix the past with the present, creating new knowledge and new worlds/experiences. They use techniques which without meeting with the elderly might never have reached their world."(Press et al., 2013, p.8, editors translation).

...designing, and using various materials and technologies. Multimedia and information technology can be used in the preschool, both in the development and application of creative processes. (National School Agency, 2010, p 7).

Reflections from editors

The contrasts between the preschool position on toys and children talking about what toys they use when playing with others, indicates experiences from two different worlds. First, from what seems to be quite frequent technique at-home-worlds and secondly from the preschool-world that seems to be characterized by environmental awareness and restraint. With knowledgeable and conscious teachers this voltage field can give rise to fruitful discussions and creative processes that combines these skills.

The preschool should put great emphasis on issues concerning the environment and nature conservation. An ecological approach and a positive belief in the future should typify the preschool's activities. (National School Agency, 2010, p 7).

The above quotation makes visible the ecological dimension of education for sustainable development where preschool as a factor of change and hope for the future is entered (Dahlbeck, 2012). English research (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010) concerning sustainable development in preschool; "early childhood education" points to a certain smugness that under Siraj Blatchford can characterize as attitudes, policies and activities. Preschool tradition of working with communication issues close to sustainability issues is generally quite strong even in Sweden, but can be said to have further expectations by being made explicit in the curriculum.

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Social construction of local and global networks

In parallel with the above work the preschool attempts going on through the Ministry of Education network ASPNet (Associated Schools Project Network) to come into contact with other preschools to share experiences with. While waiting for answers the staff on the preschool used their contacts in the U.S. and with a preschool in Iceland.

The exchange with the United States started by sending each other pictures of toys, preschool yard and preschool indoor environment. The pictures along with communication in the group made the children aware of similarities and differences that may exist and what it may be due to. The toys that were photographed showed several similarities, as well as the activities that take place indoors. On both sides of the world, you draw, write, dress-up and play with similar toys. Differences that were visualized were for example in the outdoor environment where the perceived image of the U.S. external environment seemed to be more sanitized with smaller shrubs and grasses compared with their own lush, hilly farm. In the preschool in U.S there is no sandbox neither as pointed out by the children.

A network construction with the Icelandic contacts are to take place, including digital meetings to teach each other new games but also hoping to catch sight of the similarities and differences that enrich children's learning about being a child of our times. It is also planned experiences as visits by the Icelandic educators. The social contacts established with the older generation in the immediate area is planned to continue to make the elderly feel useful and important by the contact with the children.

Reflections from preschool

"The passed part of this project has in every way offered us a learning journey. We have been reflecting on our own living, we've got to see and hear how toys have changed over time and also through this caught sight of a huge social change. "... We also see that the children got an idea about that all children, regardless of time and room are in need of play and toys. We see that they now have a knowledge that not everyone has or has had the same opportunity as they pick and choose among the toys, and that today they will hopefully feel a little more respect for the value of things ... The children say that you probably like to do roughly the same things even though they live in different countries." (Press et al., 2013, p.9, editors translation).

Increasing mobility across national borders creates cultural diversity in the preschool, which provides children with the opportunity to show respect and consideration for each individual irrespective of background. (National School Agency, 2010, p. 4)

The mobility across national boundaries mentioned above is made possible not only by purely physical movements, but by digital technology, where human meetings take place even if a whole world lies between geographically. You can say that it is a globalization where community is no longer linked to physical locations (Olson, 2008). While it opens up more social, economic, environmental conscious actions can potentially limits lie within the same dimensions. Social media is on the one hand more accessible to all but also limited by inequalities in economic conditions and the risk of depletion of the environment. Vallberg

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Roth (2001) in her research rise the concept of *the situated world child's curriculum*, which can be said to aim for the effect of globalization of the view of children's skills, learning, and living conditions in a consuming network society. Here a competent child is described, an actor with the right to have control over their own lifelong learning in preschool.

The internationalisation of Swedish society imposes high demands on the ability of people to live with and understand values inherent in cultural diversity. The preschool is a social and cultural meeting place, which can reinforce this and prepare children for life in an increasingly internationalised community. Awareness of their own cultural heritage and participating in the culture of others should contribute to children's ability to understand and empathise with the circumstances and values of others. (National School Agency, 2010, p. 5).

The curriculum emphasizes here the empathy related to other people's lives, something that in the group of children may be perceived as actions of empathy as well as a more abstract phenomenon that can be stimulated by various social connections and via different types of verbal, media and digital communications. The experiences that they have had at Sysslagården provide opportunities for a broader knowledge about other people's social and economic conditions which are dimensions included in education for sustainable development.

Finally

The work at the preschool of Sysslagården show how different dimensions of sustainable development can be understood in a preschool perspective. Through cross cultural meetings, over generations and nations, taken for granted ideas about people's ways of living have been challenged. Different voices have been heard and experiences have been problematized. This project has contributed to establish values of respect for human beings as well as for material things.

Part 3 Intergenerational dialogues for ESD in Sweden has given sustainable development a meaning and connections to these children's everyday life. A sense of belonging and possibility thinking for both children and teachers. Children have experienced with all senses, they have lived and worked in an creative environment with teachers willing to build cultures of sustainability (jfr. Ärlemalm Hagsér, 2013).

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