

Creating Cultures of Sustainability

A contribution to defining
Education for Sustainability
in the Norwegian kindergarten context.

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Abstract

The Kindergarten Act and the Framework Plan establish that care, upbringing and learning in kindergartens shall promote an understanding of sustainable development. A weakness in this is that ESD has not been defined for the Norwegian kindergarten context, and it seems that few kindergartens are actively engaging with the concept. There may be confusion about the difference between environmental education and Education for Sustainability. This research is a contribution to the discussion about what Education for Sustainability may be in the Norwegian kindergarten context. The concept builds on a view of learning as being life-long, life-wide and where children are seen as competent agents in their own lives. Education for Sustainability places the notion of citizenship among its primary objectives, and should support children in contextualizing the concept of sustainability to their local communities. I argue that practising philosophy with children should be part of the approach to EfS in the Norwegian kindergarten context, to promote critical reflection and empower people to do their own analysis.

Samandrag

Barnehagelova og rammeplanen slår fast at omsorg, oppdragelse og læring i barnehagen skal fremme forståing for berekraftig utvikling. Begrepet utdanning for berekraft har ikkje vorte definert for barnehage-konteksten i Noreg, og det verkar som om få barnehagar aktivt arbeider med begrepet. Det kan vere at ein er usikker på skilnaden mellom utdanning for berekraft og miljøretta opplæring. Dette arbeidet er eit bidrag til diskusjonen om kva utdanning for berekraft kan vere i den norske barnehagekonteksten. Begrepet bygger på eit læringssyn der barn er sedde som kompetente aktørar i eige liv, og der læring er forstått som livslang og livsvid. Utdanning for berekraft set ideen om medborgarskap i høgsetet, og skal støtte barn i å setje begrepet berekraft inn i relevante, lokale samanhengar. Eg argumenterer for at å praktisere filosofi med barn bør vere ein del av tilnærminga til utdanning for berekraft i den norske barnehagekonteksten, for å fremje kritisk refleksjon og sette folk i stand til sjølv å vurdere samanhengar og heilskapar.

'The enthusiasm for the gigantic rescue attempts under way, is worth little as long as one does not realize that the industrial countries must prepare themselves for a change of the standards of living, a change that will annoy and irritate.

Not necessarily a *lowering* of the standards, but a clear shift, away from large, costly and resource wasting material goods.

If pleasure is still found in nature and the environment, and such is still freely and uncensoredly expressed, this shift will lead to us becoming richer, not poorer.

For wealth is measured by what good things in life we have access to, whether they have a price tag or not.¹ (Næss, 1976:317)

‘...sustainable development is a perspective or a vision rather than a definition and provides room for many different starting points...’

(Bergsten, as cited in *The contribution of early childhood education to a sustainable society*, 2008:10)

¹ My translation. Original quote: ”Begeistring for de gigantiske redningsforsøk som nå er under oppseiling, er lite verd så lenge man ikke innser at industrilandene må belage seg på en endring av levestandarden, en endring som vil ergre og irritere. Ikke nødvendigvis en *senkning* av standarden, men en skarp dreining, bort fra store, dyre og ressursødende materielle goder. Hvis naturglede og miljøglede generelt fortsatt mobiliseres og fortsatt kommer fritt og usensurert til uttrykk, vil dreiningen resultere i at vi blir rikere, ikke fattigere. For rikdom måles etter hva vi disponerer av opplevbare goder, enten de har prislapp eller ei.”

1.0 Introduction

1.1 *Backgrounds for choice of topic and focus*

In kindergartens in Norway an 'understanding of sustainable development shall be promoted in everyday life' ("Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006:7).

I first encountered the concept of 'Education for Sustainable Development' (ESD) during my studies for the European Masters of Early Childhood Education and Care (EMEC)². I could not recall having to relate to the term Education for Sustainable Development in any of my former kindergarten practice or pre-school teacher education³. I became interested in finding out more about what Education for Sustainable Development meant, and what it might mean for my to-be-continuing practice as a pre-school teacher in kindergartens in Norway, as

'[c]are, upbringing and learning in kindergartens shall promote human dignity, equality, intellectual freedom, tolerance, health and an appreciation of sustainable development' ("Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to Kindergartens ", 2005:1).

Research on kindergartens has been limited⁴ (Gulbrandsen, Johansson & Nilsen, 2002, as cited in J. E. Johansson, 2006), and I did not find empirical confirmation of my initial observations and conversations with practitioners⁵, but it seemed that many felt the term 'sustainable development' to be vague and complicated. For those who had noticed the wording in the Kindergarten Act and the Framework

² A joint masters' degree in Early Childhood Education and Care co-ordinated by the University of Malta. The pilot project took place over the years 2007-2009. Other participating institutions were Martin Luther University, Germany; Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland; Oslo University College, Norway; University of Strathclyde, Scotland and Göteborg University, Sweden.

³ I graduated from Oslo University College in 2005 with a Bachelor in Pre-School Teacher Education. I had at the start of my Master's courses four years of experience working full-time in kindergartens in Oslo, two of which I had worked as a Pedagogical Leader.

⁴ Johansson (2006) maintains that there is little systematic research in kindergarten pedagogy as the main state investment has been in reforms and implementation.

⁵ I am here referring to informal and unstructured personal conversations with various kindergarten practitioners and students (who are or have been kindergarten practitioners) at different Masters' programmes at the Faculty of Education and International Studies at Oslo University College.

Plan, there seemed to be an understanding that promoting ‘appreciation of sustainable development’ ("Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to Kindergartens ", 2005:1) revolved around environmental protection and -certifications. A common understanding of the concept seemed to be that young children in kindergartens should be learning technical skills of waste management (reducing, reusing and recycling), as well as learning natural sciences from an early age – e.g. to be able to deal with the climate crisis⁶. I didn’t find this interpretation adequate (Norhagen, 2009). To extend the mentioned slogan, I wondered what Norwegian kindergarten practitioners do when it comes to 'rethinking', 'restructuring' or 'redistributing' (Our common future, 1987, as cited in Engdahl, 2009; *Our common future*, 1987). How do young children learn to be critical towards self, others and the structures of society that we are part of? During a seminar on ‘Philosophy with children’ ("Små barn av regnbuen - og en frodig jord? Om barn og miljø, forbruk og rettferdighet," 2009), I realized that my knowledge of philosophy in general was very limited. I find it likely that other pre-school teachers may have the same lack of experience with and knowledge of philosophy⁷.

It was found by the Office of the Auditor General that *Ethics, religion and philosophy* was the learning area⁸ that kindergartens in Norway focus the least on (Riksrevisjonen, 2009). From my own experience I have an impression that kindergartens do engage with the religions represented among children and staff, but that ethics and philosophy are less familiar themes in kindergarten. Perhaps it is easier for us to deal with practical approaches⁹ than to continually deal with complex questions that we *have to* take a stand to. It may seem that *doing philosophy*¹⁰ (Olsholt, 2008) is somewhat unfamiliar to most kindergarten practitioners. Perhaps in our society - and thus in our kindergartens - there is also a

⁶ During the course of my work on this thesis, the ongoing climate changes have received a lot of attention in all types of media. It is likely to think that the massive public attention to this topic has affected the interest in Sustainable Development and in defining and developing ESD.

⁷ The education of Pre-School Teachers has taken place in university colleges, that is, outside of the university tradition in Norway of *examen philosophicum*.

⁸ The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of kindergartens describes seven learning areas: Communication, language and text; Body, movement and health; Art, culture and creativity; Nature, environment and technology; Ethics, religion and philosophy; Local community and society and Numbers, spaces and shapes.

⁹ Such as presentations of customs and traditions that people live with; visiting buildings; looking for similarities and differences in ways of living etc.

¹⁰ By 'doing philosophy' I refer to the practice of philosophical conversation. Olsholt, Lahaise and Schjelderup do not use the exact term 'doing philosophy'.

reluctance to taking the role as a guardian of morals. In a sense, this research has turned towards a focus on the role of ethics and morals in early childhood education.

When embarking on this journey, a hope was that Education for Sustainable Development might prove meaningful in providing a common, global language for us in our caring for and educating ourselves, our children and our societies.

1.2 Theoretical perspective of the research

1.2.1 Perspectives on contemporary children and childhoods

My work endorses the view of young children that emerges in the Gothenburg Recommendations on Education for Sustainable Development, a notion that

'children are competent, active agents in their own lives. They are affected by, and capable of, engaging with complex environmental and social issues. They steer away from romanticized notions of childhood as an arena of innocent play that positions all children as leading exclusively sheltered, safe and happy lives untouched by events around them' (Ottosson, 2008:25).

Such a view of young children is concurrent with the view of young children in various documents on Education for Sustainable Development (*Baltic 21E*, 2002; *UN DESD (2005-2014): International Implementation Scheme*, 2005; *UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development*, 2005; *UNESCO Strategy for the Second Half of the UN DESD*, 2010).

1.2.2 A shift in paradigms

An 'ideologically strong paradigm when it comes to children and childhood' has evolved over the last decades, within which 'questions regarding children's rights, democracy, the ethics of care and learning processes within pedagogical institutions' are emphasized (*Forskning i små barns hverdagsliv i barnehagen*, 2007). An example of how such questions are represented within contemporary kindergarten discourse, could be the focus on children's participation or democracy in the Framework Plan ("Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006). Children's positions in society have shifted, and as a result kindergarten practice is being challenged (*Forskning i små barns hverdagsliv i barnehagen*, 2007).

Globalization and individualization are in a strange way complementary, and this growing complexity leads to a need for self-reflexivity (Jans, 2004). Professional development is and should be a continuous, life-long process of learning and de-learning (Sommer, 1998), just as all traditional institutions (school, family, science, work, state) are increasingly the subject for this systematic reflection and continuous change (Jans, 2004). Concepts such as Sustainable Development must be reflected upon and made relevant by kindergarten practitioners in their local context as well as globally.

Children's rights have been debated in Norwegian policymaking for 40 years. Berit Bae (associate professor, Oslo University College, Norway) raised a question in her keynote speech at the 18th EECERA¹¹ conference in Stavanger, Norway. Bae wondered if there is today in Norwegian kindergartens too great a focus on individuals and their rights, and too little focus on responsibilities and the community. This links to a debate about the ethics of rights and the ethics of care, and the strengths and weaknesses of their application to the early childhood context. One might ask if the concept of Sustainable Development is the ultimate combination of these two, with its focus on equality and rights as well as relationships and dependencies.

1.2.3 Ethics of Rights and Ethics of Care

The UN Conventions on Human Rights¹² and Rights of the Child¹³ have become important tools for addressing human misery worldwide. However, problems identified within the rights-based discourse are

‘that it adheres to a universalism; that it fails to apply ethics to context; that it is adversarial; that it conceptualizes persons as autonomous rather than relational; that judgments in search of objectivity and rationality elide aspects of experience; and finally, that these concepts are premised upon a disembodied rationalism’ (Curtin (1991), as cited in Cockburn, 2005:73).

Conventional universalist arguments have assumed a particular perspective that is white, male, western and middle class - thereby projecting an image of the "self"

¹¹ European Early Childhood Education Research Association, information available at <http://www.eecera.org/>

¹² See <http://www.un.org/rights/>

¹³ See <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

and the world where women's and children's experiences have been privatized or excluded. That lack of recognition of difference can be seen as a major form of oppression (Taylor, 1992, as cited in Cockburn, 2005). Some important contributions to feminist philosophical and theoretical production of a distinctly feminist ethic include the critique of the 'isolated individual' advocated by male enlightenment theorists:

'(1) An ethics of care involves different moral concepts: emphasizing responsibilities and relationships rather than rules and rights. (2) It is bound to concrete situations rather than being abstract and informal. Morality is adjoined to social practices and customs, and to people's feelings and opinions, and this is how good judgment can be realized. (3) The ethics of care can be described as a moral activity, the activity of caring, rather than a set of principles which can be followed.' (Tronto (1993), as cited in Cockburn, 2005:72)

An 'ethics of care' assumes that others are understood and treated as being different, and interpreted as part of the specific contexts in which they participate. Such a contextualism will focus on children's life-worlds here and now, whereas much of the rights-based discourse sees children mainly in terms of their potentiality (Cockburn, 2005). An implication of this contextualism would be a greater focus on the quality of children's relationships and friendships, as described by Greve (2005). It is likely that these qualities link to children's abilities to 'appreciate' sustainable development ("Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to Kindergartens ", 2005:1).

1.2.4 Perspectives on learning

The view of learning in my research concurs with the view of learning represented by the UN and UNESCO and in documents on ESD: learning is seen as a life-long and life-wide project (*Baltic 21E*, 2002; *Bonn Declaration*, 2009; Perrot-Lanaud, 2005; *UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development*, 2005). This will be elaborated on in chapter 2 on Education for Sustainable Development.

ESD must not be the pretence for adult citizens to lean back and wait for someone else to solve important problems. Even if children are seen as active agents with participation rights, children should not feel that they are left responsible for

finding solutions to the world's problems. ESD must be about the 'here-and-now' lives of children *and* adults, rather than some distant future.

1.3 Aim of the thesis research

1.3.1 What is Education for Sustainable Development?

My first aim for the thesis research is to get an understanding of the concept of Sustainable Development and overview how this concept has developed in the history of the UN. Furthermore, Education for Sustainable Development is explored in documents originating in the UN as well as on regional and national level. Although it is necessary to understand Sustainable Development and ESD in a global perspective, they do not *happen* without a focus on the local community as well as the global community. There is *no one right answer* to what ESD should be. Education for Sustainable Development, and each kindergarten's role in its local environment, will be different in differing societies. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine and compare ESD projects from other countries. I do, however, recognize the importance of international networking and therefore I refer to a few frameworks that facilitate such networking.

1.3.2 Philosophical perspectives and ESD

I argue that ethics and philosophy are significant elements of an education - or 'care, upbringing and learning'¹⁴ ("Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to Kindergartens ", 2005:1) promoting an appreciation of sustainable development. Practicing philosophy with children is an part of creating a culture of Sustainability in kindergartens. However, a reorientation of teacher education and the provision of continuous professional development should inspire practitioners in their efforts to transform practice in such a direction. Such inspiration might come from practical experiences with philosophy, but also from engaging with ideas and understandings stemming from various places and times in human history, and contemporary ideas and understandings founded on the former.

¹⁴ The particular quote from which these terms are cut out, is in the Norwegian law text formulated in the following words: 'Omsorg, oppdragelse og læring i barnehagen skal fremme menneskelig likeverd, likestilling, åndsfrihet, toleranse, helse og forståelse for bærekraftig utvikling.' (*Lov om barnehager*, 2005)

My second aim for the thesis research is therefore to find and present relevant theory from contemporary philosophers in Norway. Such theory may contribute to building up practitioners' understandings of what ESD in kindergartens in Norway might be. I have chosen to start from relevant contemporary readings in Norwegian - readings that are easily available to kindergarten practitioners, and clearly build on and comment on classic philosophy.

1.3.3 What could ESD be in the Norwegian kindergarten context?

Laws and regulations for kindergartens in Norway clearly state that:

'It is important to instil a sense of responsibility for managing the natural and cultural heritage, and of responsibility for people's lives and health, in kindergartens. An understanding of sustainable development shall be promoted in everyday life. Respect for life is fundamental.' (Framework for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, "Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006:7)

There are diverse approaches to how kindergartens may promote 'appreciation of sustainable development' ("Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to Kindergartens ", 2005:1). One question is whether emphasis is given to the environmental aspects of ESD, at the cost of the aspects of redistribution and poverty alleviation. I aim to comment on a few ongoing projects addressing aspects of ESD in Norway, including projects on philosophy with children. Finally, challenges in the forming of an Education for Sustainable Development in kindergartens in Norway are discussed.

1.4 Choice of methods

This research project is a conceptual analysis of the concept of Education for Sustainable Development in the Norwegian kindergarten context. This is done through analysing UN documents defining ESD, as well as documents supplementing or commenting on these. Together with selected extracts of contemporary publications in Norwegian within the field of philosophy, ongoing projects in the Norwegian kindergarten context have been discussed with reference to my emerging understanding of ESD. The strategies of inquiry are clarified further in section 2.0.

1.5 Important concepts

A few concepts are defined here, to clarify their meaning in the text to follow, as well as point out their importance for our understanding of life and world.

Ecology¹⁵ has been defined as the branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical (abiotic) surroundings ("Oxford Dictionary of English,"). It is also a term for the political movement concerned with protection of the environment. The concept of 'ecology' focuses on relations and connectedness in the (physical) world.

Nature is described as 'the phenomena of the physical world collectively, including plants, animals, the landscape, and other features and products of the earth, *as opposed to*¹⁶ humans or human creations' ("Oxford Dictionary of English,"). Nature is the physical force regarded as causing and regulating the phenomena of the world, and is represented in idioms such as 'Mother Nature' or 'laws of nature'. In this thesis nature refers to the outdoors in a wide perspective, where an important characteristic is an element of unpredictability¹⁷, being somewhat uncontrollable. The term does not, then, refer to 'untouched' or 'wild' areas of nature only, but the physical world *including* human creations where such continue to 'lead a life of their own'.

Nature serves as a contrast to **culture**, which may in short be said to describe human activity. The meaning of 'culture' has originally referred to cultivation of the soil, but later came to mean cultivation of the mind: the arts and other manifestations of 'human intellectual achievement regarded collectively', and the 'attitudes and behaviour characteristic' of a particular social group or society ("Oxford Dictionary of English,"). It may seem that our distinguishing between 'culture' and 'nature' might be a result of a need to see ourselves as something other than what and who surrounds us.

¹⁵ The concept was launched by the German philosopher Ernst Haeckel in 1869 and is put together from the Greek 'oikos' – meaning house or household – and 'logos' – meaning study (Fimreite, 1997).

¹⁶ I have italicized 'as opposed to' in this quote in order to draw attention to these words.

¹⁷ Leif Hernes brought this definition up in a seminar for master students at Oslo University College, May 2008.

When discussing the relation between **man**¹⁸ and nature, 'man' is used in the meaning *meneske* - and refers to males and females as human beings all in one.

Early childhood is understood in this thesis as the first eight years of a child's life, but with particular reference to the years before starting compulsory schooling (in Norway you start school in the year you turn six years old).

Early Childhood Education and Care is a common international term for a wide variety of early childhood settings, including day care centers, child care centers, creches, kindergartens and in some countries compulsory schooling. These range on scales from public to private, from formal schooling to mere supervision of children during working hours.

Kindergarten refers in this thesis to the particular early childhood settings, in Norway, that are subject to the Kindergarten Act ("Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to Kindergartens ", 2005) and the Framework Plan ("Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006). The education of young children in kindergartens should integrate care, upbringing and learning. **Care** is 'the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something' ("Oxford Dictionary of English,"), **upbringing** is 'the treatment and instruction received by a child from its parents throughout its childhood' ("Oxford Dictionary of English,"). In this thesis the term also refers to the treatment and instruction received by a child from its caregivers throughout its time in kindergarten. **Learning** is 'the acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience, or being taught' ("Oxford Dictionary of English,"), see also section 1.2.4.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)¹⁹ refers to certain education principles as defined by UN organisations, see section 3.2. I choose to see 'care, upbringing and learning' ("Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to Kindergartens ", 2005:1) all as part of a particular understanding of *education* in this instance. Using the term 'sustainability' rather than 'sustainable development' may be a good

¹⁸ I have chosen to only use the male possessive determiner ('his') in the text, in order to simplify the language for the sake of fluent reading, not to express an androcentric view. (I might as well have chosen the female one, but then not in order to express a gynocentric view.)

¹⁹ Other terms used interchangeably in this text are Education for Sustainability (EfS) and Early Childhood Education for Sustainability (ECEfS).

choice, as 'development' may be a term too closely connected with the cultures and worldviews that the concept is attempting to confront. The term 'sustainable development' might also give an impression that the process of pursuing sustainability is one, and so vast that the engagement of individuals is only a drop in the ocean. Rather, 'sustainability' might suggest that each of us should aim to promote our own and the planet's 'sustain-abilities'...

I tend to employ several terms interchangeably, depending on the textual context, and I believe that is representative of the diversity inherent in my understanding of the project of ESD. However, if I were to choose, Early Childhood Education for Sustainability (Ottosson, 2008) represents the most accurate conceptualization in relation to this piece of research.

Kindergarten practitioners refers in this thesis to all staff in kindergartens in Norway, whether they be supervisors, pedagogical leaders, pre-school teachers, assistants without formal qualifications or skilled workers. Where emphasis is put on the role of the educated **pre-school teachers** in kindergarten, they are referred to as such.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

In section 2.0 this research project's strategies of inquiry are further clarified.

In section 3.0 a conceptual analysis of the concept of ESD is based on extracts from UN – and other – documents, and random samples of existing approaches and resources to ESD are discussed.

In section 4.0 it is argued that ethics and philosophy play an important part in implementing ESD. Theory from contemporary Norwegian philosophers is presented and discussed, suggesting that their ideas might inspire our work and contribute to our understandings of what ESD could be in kindergartens. Lastly, experiences from projects involving children and philosophy are presented.

In section 5.0 challenges in creating cultures for sustainability are discussed. Possible approaches to ESD in the Norwegian kindergarten context are discussed, and possible further studies are suggested.

2.0 Strategies of inquiry

2.1 Interpretive research - Hermeneutics

Rather than research methodologies I choose to describe the research design as my ‘strategies of inquiry’ (Creswell, 2009:11). Some theoretical perspectives that this research is grounded on, are touched upon in section 1.2. In this section I will explain the reasoning – or world view - behind my choice of strategies of inquiry.

The aims of this research are clearly influenced by who I am, are clearly normative and therefore embedded in modernity. I wish, however, to emphasize the importance, for ESD, of incorporating a diversity of research approaches and worldviews that might complement each other in challenging our ideas of education and the role of education in our societies. The main aim of this research was – and is - to contribute to the available theory for practitioners engaging in defining what ESD could or should be in the Norwegian kindergarten context²⁰. A weakness is that the research is conducted in English rather than Norwegian. This choice was made to anchor the research in the context of its origins – the EMEC master program. Further work based on insights from this, may then be conducted in Norwegian so as to be more accessible to kindergarten practitioners.

The intention with this research is not to generate any ‘true’ knowledge about what ESD *is*, or *to what extent* kindergartens in Norway *are or are not engaging with ESD*. As this research emphasizes that there is no ‘real truth, but that phenomena may be interpreted on several levels [and] build[s] on the principle that meaning can only be understood in the context of what we are studying²¹,’ (Thagaard, 2009:39), it is interpretive research, based on a hermeneutic approach. In hermeneutics we understand the parts in light of the entirety (Alvesson, 2008; Thagaard, 2009) and find ourselves somewhere in the landscape between ‘finding’ and ‘creating’ (Kjørup, 1997). This means that ‘the subjective understanding of subjects is significant’ (Rhedding-Jones, 2005:53-54).

²⁰ See section 1.3.

²¹ My translation. Original quote: ‘(det ikke finnes en) egentlig sannhet, men at fenomener kan tolkes på flere nivåer[,] bygger [den] på prinsippet om at mening bare kan forstås i lys av den sammenheng det vi studerer er en del av’.

At the start of my research project, I found practically nothing published in Norwegian on the topic of ESD in kindergartens in Norway. According to Thagaard (2009:12), qualitative strategies of inquiry are suitable for studies on topics there is little research on, and where openness and flexibility therefore is demanded, as the qualitative research process is characterized by systematics as well as spontaneity. However, my strategies of inquiry were influenced by the difficulties of finding relevant research to build on, which I fear may have led to spontaneity overshadowing the systematics of the approach. As this research generates ‘knowledge which is dependent on the process of its discovery’ (Rhedding-Jones, 2005:55), I will attempt to give an overview of my strategies of inquiry in the following sections.

2.2 Conceptual analysis – a case study?

Doing empirical research to investigate to what extent kindergartens in Norway are or aren’t seeing themselves as part of an Education for Sustainable Development did not seem useful at this point of time. The reason for this was that I found the concept of ESD had not been adequately defined or problematised for the Norwegian kindergarten context²². Nor did observing or investigating how practitioners are dealing with a topic they might have very little knowledge, experiences or interest of - seem appropriate, as ‘interviews and questionnaires are language, and language speaks from and to discourses and cultures’ (Rhedding-Jones, 2005:62). I feared that my investigations would be understood as focusing on the deficits of kindergarten practitioners rather than supporting them in their role as early childhood educators. I felt on my own behalf that a ‘textual investigation’ (Rhedding-Jones, 2005:57) into the concept itself – a conceptual analysis - was needed, to help provide theory that might support myself and other kindergarten practitioners in defining for ourselves and our practices what ESD could or should be.

Such a conceptual analysis ‘only by analyzing official documents or reading historical texts (Rhedding-Jones, 2003d), [...] is not empirical, as I have not been focusing on bodily practices, actual events and places, and language as people speak it. I see this just a document analysis, document critique or document

²² See section 3.3.1 and 3.5.1.

deconstruction, as a particular study of a particular case' (2005:57). Following this, this project might be considered a qualitative case study of the concept of ESD - problematising the concept when applied to the Norwegian kindergarten context. A case study could be described as a 'strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (...) bound by time and activity (...) using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time' (Stake, 1995, as cited in Creswell, 2009:13). My inquiry is directed at international processes of defining ESD over the last twenty-some years, narrowing it down to the defining and application of the concept to the Norwegian context. My selection of data consists of UN documents, national and regional strategies, readings by contemporary Norwegian philosophers as well as random samples of projects in or relating to kindergarten settings in Norway. These random samples are meant only to illustrate possibilities and challenges in creating cultures for sustainability (Ottosson, 2008). The width of the scope of this research is its weakness, but also its strength. To obtain a broad understanding of the concept it was necessary to look at the international as well as national context for its application.

I wish to underline once again that the intent of this qualitative inquiry is not to generalize findings to individuals, sites, or places outside of those under study. I agree with Creswell in that 'the value of qualitative research lies in the particular description and themes developed *in context* of a specific site' (2009:192-193), the Norwegian kindergarten context, and in its particularity rather than generalizability.

2.3 Document analysis

I find that Education for Sustainable Development consists of such processes and meaning that 'can not be measured in quantity or frequencies'²³ (Thagaard, 2009:17) and therefore are 'interpreted in light of the context they enter into'²⁴ (ibid:17). The first part of my research project has been analyzing various UN

²³ My translation. Original quote: "ikke kan måles i kvantitet eller frekvenser". I might add that I find that certain elements of, knowledge(s) of and understandings of ESD might be 'measured' in a sense. However, the concept must then be defined for the context it will be 'measured' in – if one finds such 'measuring' necessary.

²⁴ My translation. Original quote: "tolkes i lys av den kontekst de inngår i".

documents on Sustainable Development and Education for Sustainable Development, to find clues to what ESD could or should be. Furthermore, documents from Non-Governmental Organisations or international networks contributing to the definition of ESD have been analysed, to complement or challenge my understanding of the concept. Thagaard states that 'public documents that are tied to work in organizations or institutions (...) represent relevant sources to social science analysis'²⁵ (Thagaard, 2009:13). This research may be seen as a synthesis of the social sciences and the humanities, as I have chosen to depart from public policy documents as well as philosophical works in my conceptual analysis. My research data foundation is extracts of the relevant documents conferring 'meaning, which is seen as more important than fact or logic' (Rhedding-Jones, 2005:54) in order to understand what the concepts of SD and ESD might be.

Selected readings from contemporary philosophers serve as illustrations of how practicing philosophy could – and why it should - be an integral part of ESD. One of my main aims for this research project has been to contribute to the resources available for kindergarten practitioners. I have wanted to point to contemporary practicing philosophers²⁶, and to promote the understanding that philosophy is relevant and necessary for us in our lives and in our work today. If kindergarten practitioners have an understanding of philosophy as something irrelevant for daily life, but rather an elitist activity taking place in the dusty corners of universities, they might have problems seeing the relevance of practising philosophy in kindergartens.

I therefore point to practising philosophers who are actively engaging in defining what societies should be and do, and how we as human beings are responsible for each other and the world in which we live. Both of the following have at different times been professors of philosophy at the University of Oslo, but also engaging in various contemporary political matters. I have chosen readings from Arne Johan Vetlesen, as he is an example of such a practising philosopher in contemporary Norwegian society and engages with questions relevant to the topic of this

²⁵ My translation. Original quote: "offentlige dokumenter som er knyttet til virksomheten i organisasjoner eller institusjoner (...) representerer relevante kilder for samfunnsvitenskapelige analyser".

²⁶ This is my own term, and does not refer to what Fastvold calls a 'philosophical practitioner', which he refers to as a certain professional qualification, a 'professional conversation partner and a leader of philosophical group conversations' (Fastvold, 2009:6). My translation, original quote is: "profesjonell samtalepartner og en leder av filosofiske gruppesamtaler".

research. This approach to defining ESD in such a broad manner, has benefited from Vetlesen's overview of historical views of man and nature²⁷ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008), as well as his defining of the role of ethics (A. J. Vetlesen, 2007) and morals (Vetlesen & Henriksen, 2003) in our society today.

I have also chosen readings from Arne Dekke Eide Næss, as he is also still remembered as practicing philosopher. Næss played an important role in the development of deep ecology, a worldwide branch of ecological philosophy. His personal 'Ecosophy T' (Næss, 1976) might serve as an example of alternative worldviews in the Norwegian context, when questioning our own mindsets and habits. Rather than identifying with one particular view of nature, I want to illustrate that particular understandings of self and nature are influential of how we may approach ESD. I have chosen to let the voice of the original texts come through in direct citations to a greater extent than I have paraphrased their writings. I have translated the citations from Norwegian texts to English to facilitate for fluent reading. However, the original quotes in Norwegian are kept in footnotes, for the reader to be able to challenge my readings of the original texts.

2.4 Searching for relevant material

As part of this research project I have searched UN websites and governmental web pages for information on how ESD is provided for in Norway. I have used Google and Google Scholar to search for random samples of projects relevant to ESD in the Norwegian kindergarten context - presented on web pages and in documents available online. A main challenge in searching the web is that it is difficult to search systematically and validation of the findings becomes problematic. Also, the authenticity of material gathered (or not found) may have weaknesses. In my search for random samples, however, the lack of existing networks within this field made searching the web seem the best alternative.

Published research relating to early childhood education and Education for Sustainable Development has been searched for in international computerized databases. At the start of my research very little was found. This impression was

²⁷ It is worth noticing that I have focused on such views originating from our western or European societies.

later supported by Davis' survey of available literature (2009). I might have searched for research on environmental education, as they are related – environmental education forming part of the content of ESD. However, as my research was particularly engaged with differentiating *the concept of* education for sustainable development from environmental education, I chose not to do so. My focus on the *Norwegian* kindergarten setting narrowed down the search similarly.

2.5 An educational philosophy – or the ethics and morals of education?

Philosophy is considered 'the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline' ("Oxford Dictionary of English, "). It is a traditionally 'male' discipline, and rooted in European practices of higher education stemming from the Greek philosophers. One might ask if conflicts might arise in the merging of such traditions and kindergarten traditions, or if philosophy in itself supports the values of ESD. I find that philosophy, ethics and morals should be seen as a whole. Ethics are 'moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity' or treated as a singular, an ethic is 'the branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles', while morals are 'standards of behaviour; principles of right and wrong' ("Oxford Dictionary of English, "). Ethics can only make sense in, and viewed in the light of, a particular society at a particular time (A. J. Vetlesen, 2007). Therefore, it is imperative that traditional philosophical, ethical or moral perspectives should not be studied in order to be adopted, but as a base for personal and practical skills in developing contemporary philosophies, ethics and morals.

Seeing *Education for Sustainability* as an *educational philosophy - or the ethics or morals of education* – I find that the main objective for education itself is to critically engage with current definitions of self-and-world; philosophy, ethics and morals, not necessarily as traditional disciplines but in the forms that are experienced as relevant to each child, each practitioner, each setting.

3.0 What is Education for Sustainable Development?

3.1 *The UN defines Sustainable Development*

3.1.1 *Our Common Future*

The Norwegian Government's website refers to Sustainable Development ("Sustainable development,") as this concept is defined in a UN report (*Our common future, 1987*). Investigating the concept could hardly start from anywhere but the complex UN organisation, as it serves as the supplier of terms and conditions globally. This is a superficial overview of the history of the concept.

The report *Our Common Future* was launched after a four-year period of 'open, visible and participatory' processes lead by The World Commission on Environment and Development²⁸ (*Our common future, 1987:358*). The Commission held open Public Hearings which demonstrated that the issues addressed were of global concern and transcended cultural and national borders, and engaged 'experts, research institutes and academic centres of excellence from around the globe' (*Our common future, 1987:361*) to prepare studies and reports. At the end of its final meeting the Commission issued the Tokyo Declaration:

'we remain convinced that it is possible to build a future that is prosperous, just and secure.

But realizing this possibility depends on all countries adopting the objective of sustainable development as the overriding goal and test of national policy and international co-operation. Such development can be defined simply as an approach to progress that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (*Our common future, 1987:363*).

²⁸ The WCED was informally known as the Brundtland Commission, and held its meetings in all regions of the world, to get a first-hand impression of environment and development issues in each region.

What distinguished the Brundtland report from former publications with a similar content and scope²⁹ were two aspects: that the Brundtland report pointed out the strong link between poverty and environmental problems, and that it considered economic growth possible and necessary (Court, 1990). However,

‘Criticism by environmental, Third World and peace organizations is directed mainly at the form of development advocated by the Commission. Anupam Mishra, an Indian environmentalist, stated that: ‘The report has been unable to avoid the contradictions inherent in the concept of “development”. It has followed all governments and UN documents in highlighting poverty and the population explosion as the biggest obstacles to environmental conservation.’ (...)

People using [a] Western scale of ‘standard of living’ fail to understand, Anupam Mishra argues³⁰, that the real cause of environmental destruction, increasing poverty and a growing world population lies in their own prescription of a Western standard of living for everybody, and not vice versa.’ (Court, 1990:13-15)

In a generation or two, a people’s comprehension of what one needs to lead a good life may change dramatically. Factors defining ‘standard of living’ might be supplemented by factors defining ‘quality of living’ if the goal is to measure and achieve a sort of relative, global equality. As much as there is a realization that reduction in the standard of living in countries such as Norway is necessary, there does not seem to be much discussion about this in electoral political debates. Perhaps one does not think it possible that public opinion would be in favour of such changes? Political constraints and guidelines must be the driving force for needed change, says Arild Hermstad, leader of the movement *The Future in Our Hands*³¹ (Storrønningen, 2009). A reduction of the standard of living would not necessarily reduce the quality of life for most people in our part of the world. But economic thinking is the ground we stand upon, it is how we are raised to think.

²⁹ Former publications with similar content and scope were *The Limits to Growth*, *The Brandt Report* and *Global 2000*, according to Court (1990).

³⁰ Anupam Mishra quotes Mahatma Gandhi on this topic: *‘the great advocate of an independent, free India. When asked by a British colonial whether he hoped to approximate Britain’s standard of living after India achieved independence, he replied: ‘It took Britain half the resources of the planet to achieve this prosperity; how many planets will a country like India require?’* (Court, 1990:15)

³¹ See <http://www.framtiden.no/om-oss/in-english/>

Our choices are often made with reference to what is financially the best choice: '[s]ustainable development (if one wishes to use the term) therefore means solving a conflict which is rooted deep in our images of the world and the organization of our society' (Court, 1990:135). The Brundtland report was critiqued as its authors were part of the elite being criticized and as it 'could not identify its own position in this context' (Court, 1990:135). Rather than challenging existing power structures and consumerist perspectives, rather than demonstrating responsiveness towards a genuinely ecological perspective, Vetlesen also finds that the understanding dominating in the Brundtland report reveals continuity rather than breach with the mechanistic view on the world (2008).

However, the message of the Earth Summit a couple of years later reflected 'that poverty as well as excessive consumption by affluent populations place damaging stress on the environment' ("Earth Summit," 1997). The next section gives an overview of the UN processes of working towards a common understanding of Sustainable Development.

3.1.2 Continuing UN focus on Sustainable Development

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development³² led to the adoption of Agenda 21³³ and the Rio Declaration³⁴. Agenda 21 called for global, national and local initiatives and participation³⁵. The shorter version *Agenda for change* gave people a useful tool to hold their political leaders responsible, as 'promises made at Rio can only be fulfilled in time to secure our future if governments are inspired and pressured by their citizens - by people willing to support difficult decisions and to demand change' (Brundtland, 1993, as cited in "ProSus Guide til Agenda 21 i Norge," 2003). People need to be well informed in order to become engaged. Agenda 21 stated that education can give people the environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour needed for sustainable development: 'To do this, education needs to explain not

³² The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This was the greatest UN Conference ever held, with representatives from 178 nations ("FNs konferanser om miljø og utvikling," 2005). It is known as the Earth Summit or the Rio Summit.

³³ Agenda 21 was 'a comprehensive programme of action for global action in all areas of sustainable development' ("Earth Summit," 1997).

³⁴ The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was 'a series of principles defining the rights and responsibilities of States' ("*Earth Summit*," 1997).

³⁵ Short easy-to-read versions of the document were published on the web ("Agenda 21 - kortversjon på norsk; Agenda for change,").

only the physical and biological environment, but the socio-economic environment and human development' ("Agenda for change," chapter 36).

The five-year-review³⁶ of Earth Summit progress ("Earth Summit +5," 1997; FNs konferanser om miljø og utvikling," 2005) led to that for the first time in the history of the UN, the General Assembly heard addresses and viewpoints from representatives of major groups, as was the intention of Agenda 21 ("FNs konferanser om miljø og utvikling," 2005). A Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (*Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21*, 1997) was a result, but no great breakthroughs were made³⁷. The World Summit on Sustainable Development³⁸ in 2002 ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation," 2002; *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*) resulted in few, but concrete obligations³⁹ and discussed difficult themes⁴⁰ that had been avoided earlier. It called for the development of a 10-year framework of programmes⁴¹ in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards Sustainable Consumption and Production⁴². The objective of the Marrakech Task Forces⁴³ is to assist and encourage countries, corporations and consumers in their attempts to change their production and consumption patterns. The Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption (ESC) is focusing on the collection of good practices, supporting the implementation of demonstration

³⁶ The five year review of the Earth Summit is known as the *Earth Summit +5* or the UNGASS 1997. It was clear that work on Sustainable Development had not met the intentions from the Earth Summit, and the UNGASS aimed to identify the reasons for this, as well as make priorities for a renewed commitment to work on Sustainable Development ("FNs konferanser om miljø og utvikling," 2005).

³⁷ This was partly because of disagreement between North and South member countries, as well as within the G77 and between the industrialized countries ("FNs konferanser om miljø og utvikling," 2005).

³⁸ Even though there existed a broad consensus between the member countries of the UN that the contents of Agenda 21 were not to be renegotiated, and that focus remained on poverty, development and environment, the Johannesburg Summit was not considered a great success ("FNs konferanser om miljø og utvikling," 2005).

³⁹ The measurable and timed goals in several areas represent significant progress compared to the UNGASS ("FNs konferanser om miljø og utvikling," 2005).

⁴⁰ such as globalization, agricultural subsidies and the relation between trade and environment.

⁴¹ The development of such is known as the Marrakech Process, see <http://esa.un.org/marrakechprocess/about.shtml>. At the 19th CSD session in May 2010, a decision clarifying the 'objectives and functions of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on SCP (10YFP) was adopted (M. P. S. U. a. UNEP, 2009:6).

⁴² Sustainable production and consumption patterns will promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems. A Declaration on Sustainable Consumption and Production could be finalized at the fall 2010 4th International Expert Meeting of the Marrakech Process.

⁴³ The Task Forces are voluntary initiatives led by governments focusing on specific themes of Sustainable Consumption and Production (UNEP).

projects as well as the advancement of ESD in formal curricula ("The Marrakech Process. Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption," 2008).

3.1.3 Sustainable Production and Consumption

More than twenty years after the publication of the Brundtland report, the UN seems to be turning towards a re-phrasing and concretisation of the concept of sustainable development: working for *sustainable production and consumption*.

Developing common understandings of what problems we are facing and the sharing of information is an ever-ongoing process, for it takes time to allow for democratic processes on different levels and in every region. It is however necessary that the UN processes are thorough and founded on a high level on consensus, as it may seem there is no real alternative to improving the UN for international cooperation and governance. Solutions launched from different angles or viewpoints must be seen as equally constructive and important contributions, particularly as such unveil global inequalities in the distribution of wealth and power – as well as within the UN. The UN Norwegian General Secretary Kari Solholm claims that the fact that ‘all’ member countries in the UN must agree makes the organisation hard to row, but that it may create good sustainable solutions in the long term (Solholm, 2009).

In relation to a debate about UN leadership in Norwegian media, Solholm commented that ‘the debate about the UN in Norway has generally been very positive or absent, as it was revealed on Dagsrevyen⁴⁴ yesterday. The UN agrees to this, and those of us who wish for a strong UN must also be able to criticize the organisation and point out things that can be improved⁴⁵’ (Solholm, 2009). It is crucial that the role of the UN in international relations and cooperation is debated constructively. The UN has had a strong position in the Norwegian public awareness. A positive understanding of the role of the UN may well have influenced my decision to start from their definitions when addressing a topic such as Sustainable Development.

⁴⁴ Dagsrevyen is the 18:45 news on the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (See <http://www.nrk.no/about/>).

⁴⁵ My translation, original quote as follows: “Debatten om FN i Norge har stort sett vært veldig positiv, eller fraværende, som det kom frem på Dagsrevyen i går. Det er FN-sambandet enig i, og vi som ønsker et sterkt FN må også kunne kritisere verdensorganisasjonen og påpeke ting som kan bli bedre.”

3.2 UN definitions of ESD

3.2.1 Educating for a Sustainable Future is educating for Citizenship

The international UNESCO conference *Educating for a Sustainable Future* in 1997 stated that a curriculum reoriented towards sustainability

‘would place the notion of citizenship among the primary objectives. The traditional primacy of nature study needs to be balanced by the study of social sciences and humanities. Learning about the interactions of ecological processes would then be associated with market forces, cultural values, equitable decision-making, government action and the environmental impact of human activities in a holistic interdependent manner.’ (*Baltic 21E*, 2002:9)

Consequentially, Education for Sustainable development must support young children in practicing critical reflection on their place in the world, and in contextualising the concept of sustainability to their local communities. Such contextualising should involve 'envisioning alternative ways of development and living, evaluating alternative visions, learning how to negotiate and justify choices between visions, and making plans for achieving these, as well as participating in community life to bring such visions into effect' (*Baltic 21E*, 2002:10).

3.2.2 UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development⁴⁶ aims to organize for networking and sharing of experiences between the stakeholders in ESD. The DESD aims at ‘changing the approach to education’ so that it integrates the principles⁴⁷, values and practices of sustainable development ("UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development,"). A key challenge identified in the European region is a ‘lack of competences in ESD, in particular in the education

⁴⁶ The decade from 2005 to 2014 is the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, according to UNESCO’s web site: <http://www.unesco.org/en/esd/decade-of-esd/>. The UN DESD web page states that the founding value of the DESD is respect – respect for other people as well as for the planet and its resources. A midway evaluation of the UN DESD was held in Bonn (*Bonn Declaration*, 2009; *UNESCO Strategy for the Second Half of the UN DESD*, 2010).

⁴⁷ Learning principles promoted by the DESD are interdisciplinary, holistic and values-based learning promoting critical thinking, as well as multi-method approaches and participatory decision-making based on locally relevant information ("UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development,").

sector, to address the interdisciplinary and holistic nature of ESD' (*UNESCO Strategy for the Second Half of the UN DESD*, 2010:6), as well as

'the absence of a consensus on a common understanding of ESD, confusion about understanding the difference between environmental education and ESD, institutional, legislative and policy frameworks requiring adaptation to the needs of ESD, the lack of appropriate ESD teaching tools and research, as well as the need to strengthen the involvement of civil society in governance at multiple levels (e.g., school, community, region, country).' (*UNESCO Strategy for the Second Half of the UN DESD*, 2010:7)

This underlines the need for kindergarten practitioners to engage with the topic so as to start establishing a common understanding of the concept. Furthermore, pre-school teacher education institutions should aim to integrate ESD perspectives in their overall curricula. Relevant experiences from a similar project⁴⁸, integrating multicultural and critical perspectives in teacher education at Oslo University College, are available (*Vi vet hvor vi har vært, og vi vet hva vi har lært*, 2005). Multicultural and critical perspectives may just be part of what ESD should be, as the next section will touch upon.

3.2.3 UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

The UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development argues for the importance of lifelong⁴⁹ and *lifewide*⁵⁰ learning: 'Formal ESD should be permeated by experience of life and work beyond the classroom' (*UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development*, 2005:5). ESD is here seen as an opportunity for education to overcome its isolation vis-à-vis society. Furthermore, addressing the 'ethical dimension, including issues of equity, solidarity and interdependence in the present generation and between generations, as well as relationships between humans and nature and between rich and poor' is considered an important principle (*UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development*, 2005:5). In a short UNESCO presentational video on ESD, produced by Ashok Mewada, it is suggested that 'values education seeking to convey certain

⁴⁸ It is appropriate to mention that I was a student participating in the project and may therefore be disqualified of commenting on its outcome, other than pointing to the published report.

⁴⁹ This is done with particular reference to the importance of education for young children.

⁵⁰ See also section 3.3.3.

values destroys the values of values' (Mewada). Rather ESD should be empowering and enabling people to do their own analysis. Learners at all levels should be encouraged to use 'systemic, critical and creative thinking and reflection in both local and global contexts; these are prerequisites for action for sustainable development' (*UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development*, 2005:4).

If teachers are to contribute to young children growing critical and reflective, the same teachers must also be critical and reflective of their own roles and environment. This means that 'appropriate initial training and re-training of educators and opportunities for them to share experiences are extremely important for the success of ESD. With heightened awareness and knowledge on sustainable development and, in particular, SD aspects in the areas where they work, educators can be more effective and lead by example' (*UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development*, 2005:6). The importance of kindergarten practitioners as role models will be discussed further in section 4.3.7. But for information on how ESD is dealt with in Norway today, we'll move to the next section.

3.3 ESD in Norway

3.3.1 The implementation of ESD in Norway

The responsibility for coordinating Norway's work on Sustainable Development lies with the Ministry of Finance⁵¹ - while the Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for Early Childhood Education and Care⁵² as well as all other levels of education. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training⁵³ is responsible for implementation of Education for Sustainable Development⁵⁴ in Norway. According to its web page, the Directorate is responsible only for 'the development of primary and secondary school'. Consequentially, ESD in Norway is dealt with through structures that traditionally have few connections to kindergartens, and that might well be the reason that kindergartens are marginalized in this context.

⁵¹ See <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/fin/Selected-topics/Sustainable-development.html?id=1333>.

However, the Ministry for Education and Research⁵¹ is responsible for Early Childhood Education and Care.

⁵² Early Childhood Education and Care is in this text referred to as ECEC.

⁵³ See <http://www.utdanningsdirektoratet.no/>

⁵⁴ Education for Sustainable Development is in this text referred to as ESD.

Many of the initiatives aiming to define and engage with ESD for young children stem from voluntary organisations and religious groups ("OMEP Norge avholdt landets første konferanse om bærekraftig utvikling i barnehagen," 2009; Skal - skal ikke; Små barn av regnbuen - og en frodig jord? Om barn og miljø, forbruk og rettferdighet," 2009). It seems almost like a continuation of tradition, that kindergartens now are seen as part of the public education system - of lifelong learning, how come the government's approach to ESD leaves the kindergartens out? Integrating ESD into the curriculum (Davis, 2009; Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006) is not enough if no effort is made to define the concept and integrate it into pre-school teacher education or other professional development.

3.3.2 Curriculum

In this section, the curricula of formal education is commented on only, as the Norwegian kindergarten context will be elaborated on in section 3.5.1. In the general part of the Knowledge Promotion curriculum for primary and lower secondary, we can read that basic education should accustom students to 'take responsibility – to consider the impact on others of one's actions and to judge these actions with ethical awareness'⁵⁵ and to 'develop a sense of belonging with other people on human kind's shared environment, so that our country becomes a constructive member of the international community' (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2005a:2). Further, the curriculum states that through reflection, critique and dialogue, new models for social conditions and human contact may be created (*Kunnskapsløftet. Den generelle delen av læreplanen.*, 2005). This is in line with the strategies of ESD referred to in sections 3.2 and 3.3.3.

⁵⁵ My translation, original quotes are 'venje [elevane] til å ta ansvar – til å vurdere verknadene for andre av egne handlingar og å dømme om dei med etisk medvit', and 'utvikle samhør med andre folk om menneska sitt felles livsmiljø, slik at vårt land blir eit skapande medlem av verdssamfunnet'.

3.3.3 Strategies

Baltic 21E

Education for Sustainable Development has also been addressed in strategy plans on national and regional levels. The *Baltic 21E* proposed that sustainable development should become '(...) one of the main goals of the whole education system, both formal and non-formal, from preschool to higher education and adult education. As such it should be included in all curricula or equivalent instruments corresponding to the level of education, and be seen as part of lifelong and lifewide learning' (*Baltic 21E*, 2002:10). The term 'lifewide learning' recognises that important learning takes place outside formal education: at work, in the family, in organisational work, during leisure time activities etc. It also points to the complementarity of formal, informal and non-formal learning. This is an important point. There are perhaps elements of ESD that cannot be conveyed in public, institutional settings such as kindergartens. Societies need to find ways to support families and organisations in being good learning environments for their members. Kindergartens might play an important role in supporting families of young children in learning for sustainability, but such a mandate of community work ought to be made more explicit on system level.

Utdanning for Bærekraftig Utvikling

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for the implementation of ESD in Norway. In 2006 a document⁵⁶ directed at 'politicians, different levels of educational administration, school owners and school leaders' as well as 'partners with an interest in education for sustainable development' was published (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006:2)⁵⁷. This document discusses the challenges in ESD in Norway, based on research of former ESD projects in the Norwegian education sector, as well as internationally. Clarifying what the content of ESD should be, elucidating the links between ESD and other areas of commitment, and promoting the will and ability to work interdisciplinary and to cooperate with external participants are some of the needs stated. Also, it seemed that schools often returned to former practices even after the ending of a successful

⁵⁶ One may wonder why teachers themselves were not included in the target group for such a document. It seems the main aim for the document was clarifying roles and responsibilities on national, regional and local levels for the period of 2006-2010. To my knowledge there is no follow-up document available yet.

⁵⁷ My translations. Original quotes are 'skolepolitikere, skoleadministrasjonen på ulike nivåer, skoleeiere og skoleledere' and 'samarbeidsparter med interesse for opplæring for bærekraftig utvikling'.

project, and that external support was needed for them to keep working with ESD issues. However, cooperation between schools and research institutions seemed to be mutually advantageous, and promoting the students' learning.

3.3.4 Resources

Such cooperation, and continuous support for teachers and students is now provided for through the web resource www.miljolare.no (as well as the international version www.sustain.no). This is an online networking website where 5428 schools and 11176 private citizens have registered⁵⁸ - to take part in projects and then enter the data collected to the shared database. As the site is not intended for kindergartens, not all activities and campaigns may be suitable for work with the youngest children, but quite a few are. A site such as this one might well prove useful in raising the ESD competences of pre-school teachers. Behind the website is The Norwegian Centre for Science Education⁵⁹, a national resource centre for science education on every level ("The Norwegian Centre for Science Education,"). This centre also edits the web site for a pilot project aiming to raise curiosity, knowledge and awareness of and commitment to the environment: 'Den naturlige skolesekken'⁶⁰ ("Den naturlige skolesekken,"). There also exists a web resource, Globalis⁶¹, which is the largest UN statistics database in Norwegian ("Globalis," 2010).

3.3.5 Networks

Teaching consumer citizenship aims at promoting knowledge of and insight in the consequences of each consumer's personal attitudes and habits (Thoresen, 2006). 'A consumer citizen is an individual who makes choices based on ethical, social, economic and ecological considerations. The consumer citizen actively contributes to the maintenance of just and sustainable development by caring and acting responsibly on family, national and global levels' (The Consumer Citizenship

⁵⁸ Information accessed on 30 April, 2010. On the English language site sustain.no there are 2420 participants from 83 countries registered. Around 90 kindergartens from all over the country have also registered on miljolare.no. Anyone registered may access the results entered from other participants in the network, and it seems that not all registered have actually contributed yet.

⁵⁹ A main objective for the centre is 'to enable pupils and teachers to consolidate competence and motivate interest in natural science', according to their web site.

⁶⁰ The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and The Directorate for Nature Management work together on this pilot ("Den naturlige skolesekken,"), which encourages methods that allow students and teachers to use their local environment regularly as an area for learning.

⁶¹ Globalis is developed by the UN in cooperation with Hedmark University College and GRID-Arendal.

Education Guidelines Vol.1, 2005, as cited in Thoresen, 2006:8). *The Consumer Citizenship Network* has been an Erasmus interdisciplinary network of educators from higher education, developing interdisciplinary approaches to issues dealing with 'the balance between material and non-material wellbeing, and how one can translate ethical values into everyday practice through conscientious participation in the market' ("Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN)"). The publication *Forbruker og medmenneske* is an example of one of their initiatives that support the professional development of teachers in issues relevant to ESD. Unfortunately, there is only one page (of the 265-page-book) specifically targeting kindergartens. The main suggestion focuses on conversing and reflecting together with children on their experiences with topics such as economic relations, work, production and responsibilities within the family. Being one of very few publications available in Norway on topics relevant to ESD, it could prove most useful for teachers who would like to engage with concepts such as 'citizenship', 'responsibility' and 'consumption', seen in relation to the individual 'consumer'.

3.4 Contributions from Non-Governmental Organisations

3.4.1 The Gothenburg Recommendations

Over the years 2004-2008, the Gothenburg Centre for Environment and Sustainability initiated four international workshops on learning for sustainable development, of which three resulted in published reports by UNESCO. The report from the 'first international workshop on education for sustainable development with specific reference to young children' (*The contribution of early childhood education to a sustainable society*, 2008:10) in May 2007, documented that 'most of the participants were not familiar with the concept [sustainable development], and rarely had the opportunity to discuss early childhood education and young children's lives in relation to sustainable development' (*The contribution of early childhood education to a sustainable society*, 2008:11). The report stresses that Early Childhood Education for Sustainability 'cannot be dealt with only in abstraction - it needs to be rooted in the local concrete reality of young children if it is to have real meaning and impact' (*The contribution of early childhood education to a sustainable society*, 2008:12). This UNESCO publication's articles presents approaches to ECEfS from several corners of the world, and ought to be of interest for practitioners and teacher students.

The fifth, and final, workshop 'Visions and Preparations for a Common Blueprint on Education for Sustainable Development' aimed to generate The Gothenburg Recommendations on Education for Sustainable Development (Ottosson, 2008). The Gothenburg Recommendations consist of eight general recommendations and in addition specific recommendations for Early Childhood Education for Sustainability, Schools and Teacher Education Institutions, Higher Education and Informal and Non-formal Education. The recommendations for ECEfS build on ECE's 'strong traditions of curriculum integration, engagement with the lived environment and child participation' (Ottosson, 2008:27) to further develop existing approaches leaning on the 'experiences that children bring from their everyday lives and where problem-solving and solution seeking are relevant to sustainable living' (Ottosson, 2008:28). The recommendations are grounded on the notion of children as competent and active agents, capable of engaging with complex environmental and social issues, and suggests that curriculum should be reoriented in this perspective to educate citizens of sustainability. Other action points identified include ECE access for all, critically engaging with gender issues in ECE, developing global networks, professional development in Education for Sustainability, supporting the development of 'cultures of sustainability' within settings, and promoting participatory, action-centered research by ECEfS practitioners (Ottosson, 2008).

3.4.2 OMEP

The Nordic Committees of the *World Organization for Early Childhood Education* (OMEP) published an edited book⁶², whose articles collected focused questions about the child's right to live in and learn about an ecologically sustainable world (Samuelsson, 1998). The intention of the publication was to 'contribute both to teachers knowledge base and also give some inspiration for new approaches' (Samuelsson, 1998:5) through theoretical chapters as well as examples of work done by teachers and children in the five Nordic countries. Some of the articles make references to the Rio Summit, one addresses issues of production, trade and

⁶² The book was published on the occasion of the 22nd World Congress in Copenhagen, Denmark and in connection with OMEP's 50th anniversary. It is worth noticing that the editor, Ingrid Pramling-Samuelsson, has later been involved in the process of developing the Gothenburg Recommendations on Education for Sustainable Development (*The contribution of early childhood education to a sustainable society*, 2008; Ottosson, 2008), and is now the World President of OMEP.

global relations, but the main focus of most articles is the child's learning in and with the local natural environment.

Twelve years after the publication of *Our World?*, OMEP's 26th World Congress takes place in Gothenburg, Sweden in August 2010. Education for Sustainable Development is one of three strands for presentations at the Congress, to which half of the abstracts submitted are on ESD⁶³. In fact, OMEP has appointed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as the major project for the next coming years ("OMEP World Project on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)," 2009). The OMEP World Project on ESD will be presented at the Congress. This research project aims at raising OMEP members' awareness on ESD as they are informally interviewing children about their understandings and thoughts about the Congress' logo, as well as collecting, comparing and sharing the 'worldwide' results.

OMEP's international web site offers information on the organization's projects relevant to ESD, divided in categories of 'economic sustainability', 'social sustainability' and 'environmental sustainability'. There is also a link to a Connotea publications database ("OMEP's Connotea publications database on ESD," 2008) to support early childhood practitioners, curriculum developers and researchers. It seems, however, that the database has not been extended with new tags (articles) after 2008. It remains to be seen if this will change in connection with the World Congress focusing so heavily on the theme.

3.4.3 The Earth Charter

Following the Rio Declaration⁶⁴, an initiative was launched in 1994 by Maurice Strong (Secretary-General of the Rio Summit) and Mikhail Gorbachev (former President of the Soviet Union). The two were working through organizations they each founded⁶⁵ when they launched an initiative⁶⁶ to develop an Earth Charter as a civil society initiative ("The Earth Charter Initiative,"). After a world wide consultation process⁶⁷ the Earth Charter was formally launched in 2000 and has

⁶³ According to the OMEP 26th World Congress' web site: <http://www.omep2010.org/?type=news&id=34>

⁶⁴ The Rio Declaration was described as the statement of the 'achievable consensus at that time' ("The Earth Charter Initiative,").

⁶⁵ Strong and Gorbachev were working through Earth Council and Green Cross International respectively.

⁶⁶ The initiative was launched with the support from the Dutch Government.

⁶⁷ The consultation process included the presentation of two Benchmark Drafts.

since attracted over 4600 organizational endorsements ("A Short History of the Earth Charter Initiative," p. 4), as well as from individuals and institutions such as UNESCO⁶⁸.

The Earth Charter is a civil society initiative, but initiated and led by high-profiled politicians' organisations. It takes surplus energy and time to work on an initiative as large as this, and it may seem that the links between the UN organisation and the organisations initiating work on the charter is not a coincidence. But even if the Earth Charter is not a 'grass root initiative', it has been supported by a vast amount of people, and serves perhaps as a coordination of grass root initiatives and civil society as well as public organisations. I have chosen to mention the Earth Charter in this context because it is important to acknowledge the function that such organisations serve - in bringing together and bridging different initiatives across the lands. It may inspire and support us in thinking globally while acting locally.

A 'Little Earth Charter' has been developed as an aid for teachers and is being translated into different languages by volunteers ("The Little Earth Charter,"). The content of the Earth Charter has been condensed into eight fundamental principles, all of which have been animated into short films aiming at children between four and eight years of age. The films and the suggested activities aim at familiarizing children with the values of the Earth Charter. Also, the Earth Charter U.S. has an Earth Scout Program⁶⁹ aiming to empower children, which offers resources online.

3.5 Existing projects relevant to ESD in the Norwegian kindergarten context

3.5.1 The Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care context

In Norway in the year 2008, 87 per cent of all children between 1 and 5 years old had a place in a kindergarten, according to Statistics Norway (2009:316). Of the children attending kindergarten, nine out of 10 children attended full-time places. Kindertgartens have been increasingly seen as the first part of the public

⁶⁸ According to the web site, '*[e]fforts to have the Earth Charter formally recognized at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 2002, came very close to success, resulting in numerous public statements of support from world leaders and heads of state. The Earth Charter is now increasingly recognized as a global consensus statement on the meaning of sustainability, the challenge and vision of sustainable development, and the principles by which sustainable development is to be achieved.*' ("The Earth Charter Initiative,").

⁶⁹ For more information, see <http://earthcharterus.org/earth-scouts>.

educational system in Norway (Korsvold, 2005). This was officially recognized in 2006 when the responsibility for kindergartens was taken over by the Ministry of Education and Research⁷⁰. As of 1 January 2009, children in Norway also have an individual legal right to a place in kindergarten after they have turned one year old ("Ot.prp.52 (2007-2008). Om lov om endringer i barnehageloven (rett til plass i barnehage).", 2008). The Norwegian kindergarten tradition builds on a slow merging of privately and publicly run institutions⁷¹ – their work motivated by either social or pedagogical purposes (Korsvold, 2005; *Rammeplan for barnehagen*, 1995). The term *barnehage* - kindergarten - was chosen when the first Kindergarten Act was passed in 1975, probably to signal that the fundamental view on pedagogy⁷² in kindergartens were to differ from that in formal schooling, stressing the intrinsic value of childhood (Korsvold, 2005). Johansson asks if the maternal pedagogy of kindergarten as well as the relative autonomy of the sector is now endangered, a shift towards introducing components from formal schooling being one of the indications (J. E. Johansson, 2006).

The Kindergarten Act and the Framework Plan

In the first Framework Plan (Barne&familiedepartementet, 1995) ‘sustainable development’ was not mentioned, although values concurrent with the concept emerged in section 5.2.4 *Natur, miljø og teknikk*, and section 5.2.1 *Samfunn, religion og etikk*⁷³. Furthermore, chapter 6 on Sami language and culture, describes what kindergarten’s role as a cultural institution and meeting place in the local community – across the generational divide - might be.

The concept of Sustainable Development entered the new Framework Plan ("Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006) after the proposition (*Revidert rammeplan for barnehagen. Forslag fra en arbeidsgruppe nedsatt av Barne- og Familiedepartementet*, 2005) had been revised by the Ministry. This could be interpreted as a political move on part of the current government, but also as following up international agreements that the state of Norway has ratified (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006). One may say with justification

⁷⁰ According to <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/kd/press-contacts/Press-releases/2006/ny-barnehagelov-og-makspris-fra-1-januar.html?id=103761>.

⁷¹ *Barneasyl, daghjem, folkebarnehager, førskoler and barnehager* .

⁷² The term *barnehage* is a direct translation of Fröbel's 'kindergarten' (J. E. Johansson, 2006; Korsvold, 2005).

⁷³ The values inherent in the concept of ESD were best represented in these parts of the text.

that section 1.3 in the Framework Plan ("Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006) contains many of the values inherent in ESD (see appendice 7.0). However, the concept has not been defined for or problematised in connection with kindergartens, risking that it becomes an empty phrase and not taken seriously. As vast and unmanageable as this concept may seem, some kind of concretization is in its place, e.g. thematic guidelines on how kindergartens could promote 'understanding of sustainable development' (Kunnskapsdepartementet).

A series of such guidelines has been developed in cooperation with professionals in the field. In the issue of the guidelines concerning 'Nature and the Environment' knowledge about ecology is emphasized in order to 'be able to meet challenges on environmental protection and sustainable development'⁷⁴ (Lysklett, 2006:25). But apart from the statement that 'we have for way too long considered nature an article of consumption'⁷⁵ (Lysklett, 2006:25) there is little focus on the relationships between environment, consumption and distribution of resources. I suggest that a topic so vast as Education for Sustainable Development, ought to be challenged by itself in a single publication in the series of guidelines.

3.5.2 Kindergartens' direct engagement with ESD

Making a survey of kindergartens that in their present work are addressing topics relevant to Education for Sustainable Development is not included as part of this thesis, as the research would be too extensive. When googling '*barnehage*' in combination with '*bærekraftig utvikling*' it seems that the most relevant hits are kindergarten's yearly plans published on the web. It seems that most of these yearly plans appear because they have a direct citation of the Kindergarten Act's Section 2 and no further elaboration as to what ESD is, or how they will work with it. Those who do claim to focus on '*bærekraftig utvikling*' in their work seem to engage themselves with environmental certifications or outdoor life.

A kindergarten that has expressed a clear commitment to values concurrent with Education for Sustainable Development, is Randineborg barnehage at Tjøme ("Randineborg barnehage AS, "). In a symposium at the EECERA conference in Stavanger, practitioners together with a lecturer from Telemark University College presented their pedagogical platform and vision (Lund-Kristensen, 2008). The

⁷⁴ My translation. Original quote: "kunne møte utfordringer innen miljøvern og bærekraftig utvikling".

⁷⁵ My translation. Original quote "vi i alt for lang tid har betraktet naturen som forbruksvare"

kindergarten is part of an R&D-project at Telemark University College, "*Barnehagen som arena for kreativ dannelse av 'Det Økologiske Selvet'*", lasting until the end of 2011 (*Strategi for kompetanseutvikling i barnehagesektoren Tjøme kommune 2007-2010*, 2007). The project focuses on an ecosophical approach to pedagogy, didactics, play and aesthetics, on the interpersonal and intrapersonal (within). From the presentation it seemed to me that their didactic model was rather complicated, which is only a bad thing if it turns people away from what seems to be a commendable commitment to ECEC. However, working with approaches similar to ESD in kindergartens today, is bound to bear evidence of 'alternative' philosophies of life. It will be interesting to read the report once the R&D-project is evaluated, Randineborg being one of the first kindergartens in Norway to engage with (what I choose to call ESD) a wider sense of environmental education.

Kreative barnehager planned to open a kindergarten in Tvedestrand with a foundation on deep ecology, but the plans had to be abandoned when the chief administrative mayor of Tvedestrand recommended that the local politicians not to grant their application ("*Barnehage med en dypere mening*," 2009; *Vil ikke ha dypøkologisk barnehage*," 2010). It seems the local community would rather go for building a public (municipal) kindergarten, but there are not many sources of information. Public control over 'services' such as kindergartens, reduces the risk that private investors make a profit at the public expense. However, one of the dilemmas of promoting public over private expansion is that entrepreneurs often are enthusiasts with unusual knowledge, competences and commitment, and could have offered something new to the field. Public or municipal services are subject to more external control and therefore less likely to be able to contribute extraordinary innovative services.

3.5.3 *Stiftelsen Miljøfyrtårn*

Many kindergartens are certified as 'environmental lighthouses'⁷⁶ by a charitable institution founded in 2003 ("*Stiftelsen Miljøfyrtårn*," 2010). The name illustrates each individual certified undertaking's position as a shining example for its employees as well as other enterprises. This institution has been financially self-supporting since 2007, but was supported by the Ministry of the Environment the first years after its formation. *Stiftelsen Miljøfyrtårn* offers certifications that are to

76 My translation. For more information, see <http://www.miljofyrtarn.no/>.

'help private and public undertakings to operate profitably and environmentally friendly.'⁷⁷ Furtherly, the measures taken should be 'profitable', 'concrete', 'relevant' and 'simple', and competitive advantages seem to be emphasized in the available information. The organisation can therefore be said to be using a market-oriented language in its attempts to attract its target groups. It is not to be concealed, however, that this charitable institution has played a consequential part in raising environmental awareness in kindergartens throughout Norway.

3.5.4 Foundation for Environmental Education

FEE⁷⁸ (Foundation for Environmental Education) is a foundation that - among other environmental certifications - works with Green Flag certifications of kindergartens in Norway. Green Flag is part of the international Eco-Schools organisation, and cooperates with the Ministry of Education and Research, *Nettverk for miljølære i skolen* and the Ministry of the Environment ("Foundation for Environmental Education Norway,"). According to their website, about 700 schools and kindergartens participate. Kindergartens apply to be in the programme by choosing a particular environmental topic and documenting a plan of action. The FEE website offers an online resource bank where available resources are related to energy, recycling and observation of the accessibility of the coastline. There is also an 'Eco-Schools Linking and Itinerary System' that can help to set up partner schools in different countries, and *Lære med skogen*⁷⁹ is a teaching programme aiming at kindergartens, schools as well as teacher education programmes. All in all, FEE seems to offer useful programmes addressing parts of what ESD should be, with networking possibilities and the initiated resource bank as the most interesting.

3.5.5 Church commitment to ESD

Skal – skal ikke ('Should I or shouldn't I?') is a network for development and values, owned and run by the Christian Educational Forum⁸⁰. Their vision is particularly striking in Norwegian language: *Vi vil bidra til å gi barn og unge værekraft og lærekraft med bærekraft!* In English: 'We want to give children and

⁷⁷ My translation. Original quote from their website: "hjelper private og offentlige virksomheter til å drive lønnsomt og miljøvennlig."

⁷⁸ For more information, see <http://www.fee.no/main.asp>.

⁷⁹ Learning About Forests (LeAF) is the international organisation run by FEE that this programme is tied to.

⁸⁰ My translation of *Kristent Pedagogisk Forum*, for more information see <http://www.kpf.no/>.

young people strength to be and strength to learn sustainably!" ("Skal - skal ikke,"). The network offers mentors and professionals to support local projects in schools and kindergartens, and particularly targets municipalities that want to concentrate on interdisciplinary cooperation to improve local environments for children growing up. The network has also arranged conferences for the participants in the network.

Another example of church commitment to sustainability and ESD, is the one day conference for kindergarten staff and church co-workers held by Bjørgvin diocese in February 2009: 'Children of the rainbow - and a fertile earth? On children and environment, consumption and justice.' ("Små barn av regnbuen - og en frodig jord? Om barn og miljø, forbruk og rettferdighet,"). This conference addressed the concept of sustainability through parallel sessions where practitioners presented, as well as speeches from a child psychologist and counsellors for environment and consumption from the Church of Norway. When OMEP Norway the following fall claimed to be arranging the first conference in the country relating to kindergartens and sustainable development, this was not quite the case ("OMEP Norge avholdt landets første konferanse om bærekraftig utvikling i barnehagen," 2009).

I have not encountered any other religious groups engaging with the concept of ESD in relation to young children's lives, but I absolutely do not rule out the possibility that such engagement exists.

3.5.6 Available Norwegian publications aimed at kindergartens

Tholin's book *Yrkesetikk for førskolelærere* (2008) is one of a few textbooks aimed at pre-school teacher students that actually addresses the role of kindergartens in Education for Sustainable Development. However, the topic is dealt with briefly, and focusing on the responsibility of stewardship rather than an integrated approach to consumption, distribution and environment.

In 2009, the periodical *Barnehagefolk* published an entire issue on Sustainable Development ("Bærekraftig utvikling," 2009). *Barnehagefolk* has been a widely read and contributed-to magazine for practitioners in kindergartens in Norway for 25 years. Pre-school teachers, students and lecturers at the university colleges, researchers and professors contribute to the various topical issues. The content

ranges from examples of good practice, to articles based on new research or debates about current issues in policy and politics.

3.6 Summary

UN definitions of Sustainable Development have been criticized for contending that economic growth is a necessary element of a sustainable development. However, the UN seems to be turning in the direction of re-phrasing and concretizing the concept to Sustainable Production and Consumption.

Education for Sustainable Development places the notion of citizenship among the primary objectives, and should support children in contextualizing the concept of sustainability to their local communities. ESD should promote critical reflection and empower people to do their own analysis. Learning is seen as life-long and life-wide, taking place in all arenas of life. Key challenges identified in the European region are a lack of competences in ESD, the absence of a common understanding of ESD, as well as confusion about the difference between environmental education and ESD.

In Norway ESD is dealt with through structures that traditionally have no connections to kindergartens. State investments in kindergartens have traditionally come in the form of regulation and reform rather than policy investment (J. E. Johansson, 2006). NGOs and religious groups have started to engage with defining the concept of Education for Sustainable Development in the kindergarten context. Important initiatives internationally have been UNESCO's workshops leading to the Gothenburg Recommendations (Ottosson, 2008), OMEP's focus on creating research networks ("OMEP World Project on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)," 2009; OMEP's Connotea publications database on ESD," 2008) and The Earth Charter Initiative ("The Earth Charter Initiative,").

Norway provides as good as full access to kindergartens regulated to promote an understanding of sustainable development ("Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006). A weakness in this is that ESD has not been defined for the Norwegian kindergarten context, and it seems that few kindergartens are actively engaging with the concept.

4.0 Philosophical perspectives

4.1 Contributions from contemporary Norwegian philosophers

4.1.1 Acknowledging our challenges

Vetlesen (2008) gives an overview of various historical views of and relationships to nature, as an introduction to an edited book of essays on the climate crisis.

Vetlesen refers to the crisis as a societal and cultural crisis:

‘It is a certain type of society, a certain culture and the form of life supported by the dominant ethical principles of this culture - rendered possible by advanced technology, that have caused and every day with full strength reinforces the multifaceted crisis in question. This means that the debate about the environment needs to become critical towards culture and society, and critic of society needs an update from the natural sciences.’⁸¹
(A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:9-10)

To what extent are practitioners in kindergartens critical towards culture and society, one may ask. Norwegian kindergartens are meeting places for a variety of children from a variety of families, and practitioners’ main focus is cooperating with the families for the best of each child. Discussing and challenging notions about diversity to promote inclusion has been a major focus of my education as well as professional life in the Oslo kindergarten context. Inclusion and appreciation of diversity should not, however, lead to a sort of value-neutrality when it comes to lifestyles and challenging moral choices that businesses, public services such as kindergartens, practitioners, children or families make. What might make our taking a stand on moral issues difficult?

If we acknowledge that it is patterns in our ways of living our lives that result in worsened conditions for living creatures across the globe, it is a question of

⁸¹ My translation. Original quote: “Klima- og miljøkrisen vi har fått, er samtidig en samfunns- og kulturkrise, der teknologien for sin del ikke er uskyldig eller representerer løsningen med stor L. Det er en viss type samfunn, en bestemt kultur og den livsform kulturens dominerende verdisyn støtter opp om, muliggjort ved avansert teknologi, som har frembrakt og hver dag med full styrke forsterker den mangefasetterte krisen det handler om. Det betyr at miljødebatten trenger å bli kultur- og samfunnskritisk, og samfunnskritikken naturfaglig oppdatert.”

motivation or rather belief in our abilities to change these patterns. It is timely that citizens of the industrialized countries take to heart that the individual's personal involvement and commitment is necessary. In whichever situation one of us makes any choice, or chooses to delegate responsibility of choice to others, power is exercised. Such personal power should not be underestimated, nor should it be overestimated to the point of unrealism. Even in rights-based societies individuals may feel powerless, in the sense that personal involvement is ridiculed, or considered bothersome, by others. Herein lies one of our cultural challenges:

'When morality's chances (...) in our opinion are threatened, it is not due to immoral behavior among the ordinary man and woman. No, what undermines morality's chances, is rather that ordinary people, with the considerable moral commitment they (we) often have, are met with the message that such moral involvement is not wanted.⁸² (A. J. H. Vetlesen, J-O, 2003:12-13)

A somewhat realistic understanding of the power of groups and individuals in our society needs to be combined with a belief in man, and in man's ability to do good, to cooperate, to learn from and share experiences with others. Sharing examples of good practice instead of focusing on problems that amplify hopelessness might be another cultural challenge. A third may be that many of us think we *deserve* to be owning and using as much as we are. The value of moderation is considered a historical, pietistic or puritanical quality, whose function may not be acknowledged to a great extent in our society. Why shouldn't we get whatever we can afford? Why should we not be able to afford what we want?

Bjørkdahl refers to the 'State of the World'-report from Worldwatch Institute, which claims that the ideology of our time is consumerism - that our entire societies are suffering from the Imelda Marcos syndrome⁸³ (Bjørkdahl, 2010). He also points out that cultures do not uphold themselves, and that we must learn to see our own consumption in 'the same light' as we see Imelda Marcos's. Vetlesen

⁸² My translation. Original quote: "Når moralens sjanser (...) etter vårt syn er truet, skyldes det ikke umoralsk atferd blant folk flest. Nei, det som svekker moralens sjanser, er snarere at vanlige mennesker, med det betydelige moralske engasjement de (vi) ofte har, blir møtt med beskjeden om at slikt moralsk engasjement ikke er ønsket."

⁸³ The 'Imelda Marcos Syndrome' refers to the former first lady of the Philippines and her collection of thousands of shoes, and names a pathological desire to acquire new things in lieu of old things.

points to the fact that we 'to this day have not had a single mass demonstration against continued economic growth, against increased private consumption or - more specifically - against new shopping centers or planned expansions of airports⁸⁴ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:47). The lack of such mass engagement may well be an indication that the average citizen is unable to see his personal consumption as part of the problem, or at least has difficulties in making out the alternatives. Where local authorities facilitate for environmentally friendly behaviour, e.g. recycling, it is likely that many citizens will follow up. But:

'We cannot [recycle] our way to the preservation of an ecologically intact globe for our descendants. Our habits and values, actions and preferences, are to a great extent controlled by forces pulling us, as a collective, in the wrong direction (...). The direction is the crisis, the crisis is the direction.'⁸⁵ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:10)

It is imperative that we discuss and address our challenges as a collective, but what arenas are there for such discussion? Kindergartens might well serve as local meeting places where families are allowed the space to share ideas and experiences with others in a similar situation. Raising children may actualize an engagement with moral norms that suddenly feel very relevant: what is the difference between wanting and needing something? How is it possible *not* to take what is accessible? How does one differentiate between subsistence, consumption and excess in young children's everyday lives? Has man always struggled with these questions? To find and re-examine possible answers to questions that arise, the practice of philosophy and some knowledge of philosophical history may be of help. In this section, examples of such questions are given and related to a contemporary kindergarten context.

⁸⁴ My translation. Original quote: "til denne dag ikke har hatt *en eneste* massedemonstrasjon mot fortsatt økonomisk vekst, mot økt privat forbruk eller - mer konkret - mot nye storsentra eller mot planlagt utvidede flyplasser."

⁸⁵ My translation. Original quote: "Vi kan ikke kildesortere oss til bevaring av en økologisk intakt klode for våre etterkommere. Våre vaner og verdier, handlinger og preferanser, er i stor grad styrt av krefter som trekker oss, som kollektiv, i gal retning: I nøyaktig den retningen artsdød og temperaturøkning er to eksempler på, les: konsekvenser av. Retningen er krisen, krisen er retningen."

4.1.2 Nature's value

'The question of what value nature may be said to have, actualizes the more fundamental philosophical question whether value is contained in something which is, and as a way of being, or if all value forms by virtue of human consciousness: only man has the capabilities needed to ascribe value, that is, to decide that something is to be ascribed value; value is, then, an ascription from *someone* to something (someone).⁸⁶ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:51)

We may say that a view of nature concurrent with the first view referred to in this quote, a view that nature has inherent value in its way of being, is representative of biocentric views. Considering nature to have value only in relation to human life is representative of anthropocentric views (Sarromaa & Hausstätter, 2009). The concept of sustainable development is founded on an anthropocentric view of the world, as human development and the future of human generations are in focus, see section 3.1.1. However, in order to approach sustainability we must engage with our view of the world, our taken-for-granted understandings of what we as humans are, and what nature is. In modern philosophy's mechanistic, scientific view of nature, we need not

'presume that there exists a remainder in the non-human nature that does not work out in quantitative measurements and considerations, that is not mathematical; that is an inside which is not fully quantifiable, but rather moves in a sphere of qualities. (...) Nature is not admitted any inner life, no existence of qualitative character, no purpose. Consequently it lies wide open for human intentions: a giant *tabula rasa*⁸⁷ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:36)

Nature is seen as *surroundings* to man, passively and unresistingly waiting for what man will do to it. Quantity is superior to quality. The Cartesian statement that what is not quantifiable has no real existence, is however a dogma, it has nothing

⁸⁶ My translation. Original quote: "Spørsmålet om hva slags verdi naturen kan sies å ha, aktualiserer det mer grunnleggende filosofiske spørsmålet om verdi er inneholdt i noe som er, og som en måte det er på, eller om all verdi oppstår i kraft av den menneskelige bevissthet: kun mennesket har de bevissthetsevner som skal til for å foreskrive verdi, altså bestemme at noe skal tilskrives verdi; verdi er da en tilordning fra *noen* til noe(n)."

⁸⁷ My translation. Original quote: "anta at det eksisterer en rest i den ikke-menneskelige naturen som ikke går opp kvantitative målinger og beregninger, som ikke er matematiserbar; altså en innside som ikke er fullt ut kvantifiserbar, men som i stedet beveger seg i en sfære av kvaliteter. (...) Naturen innrømmes intet indre liv, ingen egen væren av kvalitativ karakter, ingen målrettethet. Dermed ligger den vidåpen for menneskelige hensikter: en gedigen *tabula rasa*"

to do with experience. With it, knowledge becomes abstracted from its origin and context, according to Vetlesen:

'Knowledge is thereby cut off from experience in the sense of a certain - and always 'tuned' (Heidegger) - subject's meeting here and now with something in the world it takes an interest in, or is touched by, by virtue of the distinctive character of the object and owing to the subject's *touch-able-ness* as a physical-sensing-perceiving being.⁸⁸' (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:37)

But a nature 'wide open for human intentions', is that what outdoor life in kindergarten is about? How do children act in nature, relate to nature, see nature?

From my experience, what catches young children's attention when playing outdoors is *other forms of life*. Insects! Earthworms! Butterflies! 'What is that butterfly doing just now', and 'do they really live *underground*'? What is the intention of the ant, dragging that pine needle towards the ant hill? Being unable to access other minds, I would still say that many young children experience a respect for other forms of life that they encounter. Such respect may be combined with curiosity, anxiety, compassion or envy, but very seldom have I seen young children *indifferent* when facing natural phenomena. They are intrigued by the possibility that such weird forms of life exist, so different from man, but striving for life as we are. Let's move back to the question of what value nature may have.

Striving for life is not an option, but fundamental for life's form of existence (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008). Jonas claims that

'(...) all metabolism [is] an expression of existence. Every single living being must continuously, again and again, verify one's existence, as what is living is exposed to the threat of no longer being. Consequently being is verified in constant relation to non-being; life in the possibility of death. Everything living exists only, and subsists only, through a continuous metabolism with the world. (...) As everything living in this sense is teleologically made, that

⁸⁸ My translation. Original quote: "Viten framkøbles dermed erfaring i betydningen av et bestemt - og alltid "stemt" (Heidegger) - subjekts møte her og nå med noe i verden det fatter interesse for, eller blir berørt av, i kraft av objektets egenart og takket være subjektets *berørbarhet* som kroppslig-sansende-følende vesen."

is: in its very essence striving for [a] goal, this conveys that nature has value.⁸⁹ (Jonas, 1984, in A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:52)

I wonder if young children's fascination with other forms of life is a sensation of this striving in other living creatures. Then, if children are denied spending time outdoors, if that is not the learning we wish to offer them in ECEC, then how may they even begin to see themselves in a relation to other creatures? 'That life exists and that no value has meaning without (a) life to link them to and associate them with, is the meta-condition of moral: the prerequisite above all other prerequisites'⁹⁰ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:53). That other lives exist, and that the value of nature is linked to these lives, is perhaps a meta-condition for environmental awareness and the morals (and morale) following from such awareness.

Consequently, acknowledging the importance of outdoor learning in the early years is fundamental in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability - to prevent future environmental stakeholders from developing a 'nature deficit disorder' (Louv, 2005, as cited in Davis, 2009). Outdoor learning for young children should be valued not solely for the measurable learning effects that some studies present (Borradaile, 2006; Barratt Hacking, Barratt & Scott, 2007, as cited in Davis, 2009), but as a value in itself and perhaps as a sort of moral precondition. In the next section, man's (moral) relation to nature will be discussed.

4.1.3 Man's relation to nature

'Within mythical images of the world the acceptable reason to intervene in the everlasting circulation of nature is that it in every case is done for the sake of necessary subsistence: of pure necessity, to serve human needs that cannot be met in other ways. Hegge maintains that 'this human moral attitude towards nature involved an intuitive ecological conduct, that it

⁸⁹ My translation. Original quote: "(...) alt stoffskifte [er] et uttrykk for eksistens. Hvert eneste levende vesen må hele tiden, på ny og på ny, stadfeste sin eksistens, ettersom det som levende er utsatt for trusselen om ikke lenger å være. Væren stadfestes altså i konstant relasjon til ikke-væren; liv i muligheten for død. Alt levende finnes bare, og opprettholder seg bare, gjennom en kontinuerlig stoffutveksling med verden. (...) Siden alt levende i denne forstand er teleologisk innrettet, det vil si: i selve sitt vesen streber etter mål, er dette et uttrykk for at naturen har verdi."

⁹⁰ My translation. Original quote: "At liv er og at ingen verdier har mening uten (et) liv å knytte dem til og forbinde dem med, er moralens metaforutsetning: forutsetningen overordnet alle andre forutsetninger."

functioned as a guarantee against exploitation and thus towards bringing nature out of ecological balance'.⁹¹ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:30)

Following this line of thought, what was realized was that taking - or intervening - had to be accepted as a necessary evil. Man could not live without taking or intervening, and had to accept his role as an evildoer - but therefore a sort of moral responsibility was to settle for a minimum. If you stand in a continuous, direct relation to what or who you are taking from, you cannot withdraw yourself from (responsibility for) your actions. It might seem that our societies' lack of moderation may stand in connection with our distance to the direct action of 'taking' or 'intervening'. When Aftenposten-journalist Simmi Kaur refuses to eat the fish she has just 'looked in the eyes' (Kaur, 2010), many of us might recognize the feeling. We are unable to accept the brutality, the necessary evil doing, and our role as evildoers. By refusing to participate in or watch the 'intervention' in nature we may consume with less - if any - remorse. It is not unlikely that this distance from production, 'taking' or 'intervening', affects our view of what is 'necessary' or 'enough', of what we 'need'.

Familiarising ourselves and children with terms and conditions for production, might help all reconnect with the value of moderation. I once watched a documentary (Fricke, 1992) spanning 'the geographical, cultural and social diversity of our changing planet' in long takes of cities, villages and landscapes across the globe. At one point there was a sequence from a modern hatchery, accompanied by calm music as the soundtrack. Tiny yellow chickens by the hundreds were sailing along a production line, swirling down a large funnel and onto the next production line, very clean, very organised and very efficient. At one point the chickens were lifted by their wings, assessed and sorted by being thrown into new funnels leading to new production lines, at another ink was dripped on their bodies to mark them. At the last workstation we could see their eyes squeezing together as the tip of their beaks were pressed towards a scorching surface. It was at this point that I noticed how tears were rolling down the cheeks

⁹¹ My translation. Original quote: "Innen mytiske verdensbilder er den godtakbare grunnen til å gripe inn i naturens evige kretslop at det i hvert tilfelle gjøres for den nødtørftige livbergingsens skyld: av pur nødvendighet, for å dekke menneskelige behov som ikke kan dekkes på andre måter. Hegge framholder at "denne menneskelig-moralske holdningen til naturen innebar en intuitiv økologisk handlemåte, ja den fungerte som en garanti mot rovdrift og dermed mot at naturen ble bragt ut av en økologisk likevekt"."

of all watching. Silently we sat there, taken by surprise by how this undramatic presentation built up a similar instinctive reaction in all of us. That experience led to a long conversation afterwards. Some think that children should be spared similar experiences, facing what we find inconvenient realities. As much as I do not wish to contribute to fear and guilt among young children, I think it would be wise to allow children certain information that is relevant to their own lives, supporting them in their moral growth. Anything less would be to deny how children are 'affected by, and capable of, engaging with complex environmental and social issues' (Ottosson, 2008), such as the see section 1.2.1.

Is this a new problem for discussion, then, as most of earlier generations were closer to production, and may have more easily reconciled themselves to their part in 'intervention'? Returning to Vetlesen's overview of historical views of nature, when he refers to other comprehensive works on the subject and asks:

'if there ever were cultures without dominion in social relations, a non-identifying and non-classifying rationality and (...) a non-controlling relationship to nature, [Horkheimer and Adorno's] answer is no. They are not nostalgists who wish to go back to archaic times.'⁹² (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:41)

A common critique of environmentalists are that they romanticize over past cultures' closeness to nature (Næss, 1976). If it is possible to agree with Horkheimer and Adorno, while at the same time acknowledging Hegge's point⁹³, if we are not discouraged by the claim that our societies will always face such challenges - within ourselves, then ESD has a function. Also the eco-philosopher Næss found that what characterized the industrialized states was their *ability* of destruction rather than an exceptional *attitude* towards nature: 'But the number of people and their ability to destroy has been relatively limited.'⁹⁴ (Næss, 1976:294)

⁹² My translation. Original quote: "om det noen gang fantes kulturer med herredømmefrie sosiale relasjoner, en ikke-identifiserende og -klassifiserende rasjonalitet og (...) et ikke-kontrollerende forhold til naturen, så er [Horkheimer og Adornos] svar nei. De er ikke nostalgikere som ønsker seg tilbake til en arkaisk tid."

⁹³ Hegge's point that 'this human moral attitude towards nature involved an intuitive ecological conduct, that it functioned as a guarantee against exploitation and thus towards bringing nature out of ecological balance' (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:30) comes through in the first quote in this section (4.3.3).

⁹⁴ My translation. Original quote: "Men antall mennesker og evnen til å ødelegge har vært forholdsvis begrenset."

Næss pointed, in the seventies, to population growth as one of the reasons that the marginalized value of moderation is as important today as ever before. There is a continuously growing number of people who are to share the space and resources on the planet. In many societies, due to the availability of better medical care and better nutrition our existence may be more stable and predictable than ever. At the same time this increased security must have influenced our relation to life and death, to what we take for granted and what we care to appreciate. For years cost-benefit-analyses have been a prerequisite for public procurement. Economic calculations seem to be the winning arguments in most debates about public spending - how to raise our young, how to support those who cannot support themselves, how to care for our old. It seems that continuing economical growth is the main political goal for most serious political parties and even leading intellectuals⁹⁵, explicitly or implicitly, as in the case of Clemet (2010).

'Our society's obsession with growth, whatever the cost for nature and our descendants in the shape of a continuously more injured, continuously more impoverished planet, may in my opinion be seen [...] as a denial of and nerving oneself for the warning signals from nature, from others, from oneself; as an irrational insisting that death is not real, that natural, given limits for human omnipotence do not exist and as such need not be respected; as if our and nature's vulnerability will never catch up with us and force us to stop in our quest for more, always more.'⁹⁶ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:43)

The word that comes to mind is hubris. It may seem that the only arguments capable of slowing down the exponential growth that our society is aiming for, are arguments that our actions will backfire on us, on the human race. It may seem that to man, nature has no value in itself, no part in a relation to man. Nature is seen as surroundings, resources, property. As many societies have increasingly become

⁹⁵ 'Intellectual' is here understood as a person engaging in public debate, 'the debate on values and attitudes' (Moi, 2010).

⁹⁶ My translation. Original quote: "Vårt samfunns besatthet av vekst, koste hva den koste vil for naturen og for våre etterkommere i form av en stadig mer såret, stadig mer utarmet klode, kan etter mitt syn ses i samme perspektiv: som en benekting av og herding overfor faresignalene fra naturen, fra andre, fra en selv; som en irrasjonell insistering på at døden ikke er reell, at naturgitte grenser for menneskelig allmakt ikke finnes og således ikke trenger å respekteres; som om vår egen og naturens sårbarhet aldri vil innhente oss og tvinge oss til å stanse i jaget etter mer, alltid mer."

sedentary and regulated, it is difficult to imagine life without ownership rights – to land, buildings, things or animals. However, the standards for what or how much one needs in order to lead a good life changes from one generation to the other, in relation to population growth, economic trends and urbanization.

In one of the parallel sessions at the EECERA conference in Stavanger (2008), Eva Johansson asked whether preschool⁹⁷ institutions in everyday situations are promoting individual rights of ownership while neglecting collective rights, and values such as solidarity and courage. Her examples and discussions of complex everyday situations in preschool where the rights and responsibilities of individuals are confronted with the rights and responsibilities of groups (E. Johansson, 2002) have served as thought-provoking reading for nearly a decade in Norway.

However, to my experience, questions like these are seldom taken up in motivational seminars and professional development courses held by kindergarten owners such as the local authorities. A study on how kindergarten practitioners position themselves in relation to such topics as are commented on in this section (4.3), might prove an interesting starting point for action research projects. A closer relationship between the pre-school teacher educating institutions and kindergartens. e.g. in the form of networks, might be supportive of such projects⁹⁸.

Næss reacted strongly to how an environmentally conscious (I presume) scientist expressed himself:

‘In connection with a warning against ‘unconsciously’ plunging into the technocratic future society, one of our leading scientists declares: ‘We own nature together with our neighbour.’ But the ideology of ownership has no place in a philosophically based ecology. The population of Norway or the Norwegian state does not own Norway. The resources of the world are not only man’s resources. Legally we may ‘own’ a forest, but if we ruin [the

⁹⁷ "Förskola" (preschool) is the term for early childhood education and care institutions in Sweden, Johansson's native country.

⁹⁸ ARENA originating from the Pre-School Teacher Education of the Faculty of Education and International Studies at Oslo University College might serve as an example of such networks ("ARENA for flerkulturell kompetanse," 2010).

conditions] for life in the forest, we break norms for equality.’⁹⁹ (Næss, 1976:279)

Næss's ecosophy's notion of equality between all forms of life is however on collision course with dominant understandings of man and nature in our society. For hundreds of years Christianity was the dominant religion in the western, industrialized world. Within Christian traditional exegesis humans have had an elevated position in comparison with the rest of nature. Modern science and industrialization was founded on the inherent secularization of the Christian religion: that nature had become desacralized (White, 1967, in Løland, 2008). According to Vetlesen,

'The Christian 'idea of stewardship' does not ascribe nature itself immanent value or rights that man has duties in relation to, but only one duty - a responsibility to answer for his usage - to the God that has given man the task of stewardship. Nature itself is not part, is not a participant with a voice of its own, in this idea. The morals of stewardship, its duties and rights are solely a matter between God and man.¹⁰⁰ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:29-30)

And when later God becomes a pale image, there is only man. A shift from teocentrism to anthropocentrism gives man a lonely yet omnipotent position. After the Cartesian breach with Aristotelian and Thomistic teleology, value was only due to the creature that set oneself personal aims, with the ability to give reason for and critically assess these aims' moral character - consequently human subjectivity (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008).

'The self-declared moral eminence of man, well - precedence, heralds simultaneously man's self-imposed metaphysical solitude: His existence and character is not connected to any other creatures or beings in this world but

⁹⁹ My translation. Original quote: ”I sammenheng med en advarsel mot å stupe ”bevisstløs” inn i det teknokratiske fremtidssamfunn, uttaler en av våre fremste vitenskapsmenn: ”Vi eier naturen sammen med vår neste.” Men eiendomsideologien har ingen plass i en filosofisk underbygget økologi. Norges befolkning eller den norske stat eier ikke Norge. Verdens ressurser er ikke bare menneskets ressurser. Juridisk kan vi ”eie” en skog, men ødelegger vi for livet i skogen, bryter vi normer for likestilling.”

¹⁰⁰ My translation. Original quote: "Den kristne "forvaltertanken" tilskriver ikke naturen selv iboende verdi eller rettigheter som menneskene har plikter i forhold til, men kun en plikt - et ansvar for å svare for sin bruk - overfor den Gud som har gitt menneskene forvalteroppdraget. Naturen selv er ikke part, er ikke deltaker med en egen stemme, i denne tanken. Forvaltningens moral, dens plikter og rettigheter, er utelukkende et anliggende mellom Gud og menneskene."

himself; and to his fellow human beings only per analogy and extension (alter ego) of the abilities he means to find in himself as an isolated subject.¹⁰¹ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:37-38)

Following this, where does the rest of the physical world stand in relation to man? Vetlesen claims that seeing nature as in deep ecology, is today rather common as an *individual preference*, pursued in the individual's free time as a hobby or part of a philosophical mentality, and tolerated by the greater society. However,

'[t]he greater society with all its economic activities (...) is to this day grounded on a view of nature that emerges as *scientific* where the mentioned counts as being subjective or individual. The *serious* interaction with nature and nature's resources is the exploiting one, as science, technology and economy adapts for optimal exploitation of these resources for human purposes¹⁰². (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:46)

In the common sense exploiting interaction with nature, animals; plants; water and the mountains are not ends in themselves, but rather means for human motives: the securing of our needs and our subsistence. But is this self-evident? In the next section, an other kind of - or element of - interaction with nature is discussed.

4.1.4 Identification and Solidarity

Vetlesen describes how his three-year-old son often behaves when they are out walking in the woods. He greets a tree as not just *a* tree, and he will tell *the* tree goodbye when he leaves. This behavior reminds us of a cultural understanding of nature where humans perceive the world as fundamentally related to themselves, an understanding often referred to as 'mythical' and that the western world sees as historical and immature. Consequently

'the culture within which he is growing up will un-teach him this greeting of the trees, plants, birds and animals, and to the water, the puddles and brooks,

¹⁰¹ My translation. Original quote: "Menneskets egenerklærte moralske forrang, ja, særrang, innvarsler samtidig dets selvpåførte metafysiske ensomhet: Det er ikke værens- og vesensmessig forbundet med noen andre vesener eller værender i verden enn seg selv; og med sine medmennesker kun per analogi og ekstensjon (alter ego) av de evner det mener å finne i seg selv som frittstående subjekt."

¹⁰² My translation. Original quote: "[s]torsamfunnet med alle dets økonomiske aktiviteter (...) er til denne dag tuftet på et natursyn som fremstår som *vitenskapelig* der det nettopp nevnte gjelder som subjektivt eller individuelt. Den *seriøse* omgangen med naturen og ressursene i den er den utbytende, slik naturvitenskap, teknologi og økonomi tilrettelegger for optimal utnyttelse av disse ressursene for menneskelige formål"

that he is practicing while roaming in the woods. (...) Also my three-year-old will before long take the step from an understanding of nature that the culture we are members of considers inferior, to one that is superior; from an irrational one to a rational one. Once you have understood what nature is, you stop greeting it when you come and saying 'good bye' when you leave.¹⁰³ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:23)

The shift that our culture's collective view has taken is comparable to the shift that we expect our children to go through while growing up, according to Vetlesen (2008). In the more 'mature' view, in scientific or mechanistic understandings of nature, where nature is mathematised, it is no longer possible for man to perceive himself 'as of the same essence as is nature. The identity, the organic interdependence, is broken'¹⁰⁴ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:26). As consciousness is confronted with extensive matter, there is no culturally approved and in that respect rational foundation for man to identify with nature's species and what is being done to them. However, our mind may again 'reside in nature, empathise with it, perceive it in another way than what has ever been done before, not from a mythical comprehension of its divinity, not from the thinking self's projections, but starting from a lived interaction and relation to it through man's own consciousness'¹⁰⁵ (Kolstad, 2007, in A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:49). Such lived interaction is elaborated on in the next section (4.3.5), and involves seeing oneself in a wider perspective. Widening one's perspective is a requisite for the growth conditions of ecologically responsible politics, according to Næss: 'We are not belittled by being seen in a Milky Way perspective as long as we have an appreciation of *being part of something great*.'¹⁰⁶ (Næss, 1976:296) The identification with life (or lives) in the forest relies on an awareness of one's

¹⁰³ My translation. Original quote: "Kulturen han vokser opp i vil avlære ham denne hilsingen til trærne, plantene, fuglene og dyrene, og til vannet, sølepyttene og bekkene, som han praktiserer når han ferdes i skogen. (...) Også min treåring vil om kort tid ta skrittet fra en naturforståelse som kulturen vi er medlemmer av betrakter som underlegen, til en som er overlegen; fra en som er irrasjonell, til en som er rasjonell. Når du har forstått hva naturen er, slutter du å hilse på den når du kommer og si "ha det" når du går."

¹⁰⁴ My translation. Original quote: ""[vår bevissthet] kan ta bolig på nytt i naturen, leve seg inn i den, sympatisere med den, erkjenne den på en annen måte enn hva som noensinne er blitt gjort tidligere, ikke ut fra en mytisk oppfatning om det guddommelige i den, ikke ut fra det tenkende jegets projeksjoner, men ut fra en levd interaksjon og sammenheng med den gjennom menneskets egen bevissthet.""

¹⁰⁶ My translation. Original quote: "Vi blir ikke mindre av å ses i melkeveiperspektiv så lenge vi har sans for *delaktighet i noe stort*."

relation to life (or lives) in the forest. We may draw a parallell here, to what might promote identification leading to *human solidarity*.

Næss writes about identification¹⁰⁷ with other beings as a prerequisite of solidarity: 'That A identifies with B, involves that A in a substantial regard sees the same (latin: idem) in B as in him- or herself. The essential community is immediately apprehended and leads to that A's self realization depends on B's.'¹⁰⁸ (Næss, 1976:276) Such solidarity may also happen based on abstract ideas of justice and with a minimum of identification, but according to Næss that solidarity can not be expected to endure great and long lasting strain. However: 'When solidarity and loyalty are deeply rooted through identification, they are not understood as moral requirements, but as obvious'¹⁰⁹ (Næss, 1976:276). How could kindergartens support the individual's ability to identify with other people or beings? It seems that children have this ability at a very early age, if we are to judge by observable pro-social behaviour. Cultural de-learning might be a problem, as described by Vetlesen at the beginning of this section. But kindergartens also aim at promoting solidarity among young children.

(Bakken & Børhaug, 2009) discuss ready-made solidarity projects taking place in schools and kindergartens in Norway, projects designed to promote 'global literacy' (Gardner, 2000, as cited in Bakken & Børhaug, 2009). They maintain that as much as these projects aim to avoid it, their images of the 'others' as in need are characterised by orientalism (Said, 1995; Tvedt, 1990, as cited in Bakken & Børhaug, 2009). Approaches to solidarity should justify themselves by focusing on principles of rights and justice, and on the causes and contexts of need, rather than the giver's role as 'generous' or 'benevolent' (Bakken & Børhaug, 2009). Young children's *identification* with children from 'other' societies - the prerequisite for genuine solidarity, according to Næss - is promoted through establishing reciprocal relations between groups of children and critical perspectives on diversity (Bakken & Børhaug, 2009). As children should not be responsible for necessary changes in the global situation, perhaps promoting *identification* ought to be the main

¹⁰⁷ Identification is an important element of Næss's 'ecosophy T' - a branch of deep ecology.

¹⁰⁸ My translation. Original quote: "At A identifiserer seg med B, innebærer at A i en vesentlig henseende ser det samme (latin: idem) i B som i seg selv. Det vesentlige fellesskap oppfattes umiddelbart og fører til at A's selvrealisering blir avhengig av B's."

¹⁰⁹ My translation. Original quote: "Når solidaritet og lojalitet er solid forankret ved identifisering, oppfattes de ikke som moralske krav, men gir seg selv."

intention of such projects, and then initiatives of solidarity might come later. Returning to man's relation to nature, the next section discusses the relation of aesthetics to education and ESD in particular.

4.1.5 Aesthetics and education

Næss claims that our understanding of aesthetics¹¹⁰ has shifted from the actively perceptible, to the passively enjoyable. The ideal of objectivity has been misunderstood when it is argued that we must recognise the value of nature aesthetically and for recreational purposes, as 'the core of the matter is being able to live in and with nature. Not just viewing it from the outside – aesthetically in the regular sense – or utilising it for rest and recuperation.'¹¹¹ (Næss, 1976:297) Such utilization renders nature lifeless, according to Næss.

To my experience perception - or sensation - is still understood as something active and exploratory in kindergartens. Most of us feel that the sensation of walking barefoot in the summer, of changing from wet clothes to dry after playing in the rain, or of touching and playing with materials of varying textures are important experiences for young children. Others experiences we may be more reserved towards are tasting earth and stones, holding insects or earthworms and studying excrements. Cultural understandings are bound to influence what aesthetic experiences we encourage, and practitioners must be reflective of our personal perceptions of self and surroundings when supporting children's exploring. What kind of learning do we promote, when we talk to children or experience the elements together with them? Is scientific learning valued over sensory experiences in kindergartens?

In philosophy after Descartes, what has real, objective, beyond all doubt, existence, is only what can be measured, counted or estimated. What can be described in numbers is considered complete and total. Properties such as smell, taste and color are denied all reality, they are considered 'secondary sensory qualities'¹¹² (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:32). Næss raises objections to this view: 'We do not *live* in a scientific universe where things are devoid of colour. The universe in which we

¹¹⁰ 'Aisthesis' originally meant sensation or perception, according to Næss (1976).

¹¹¹ My translation. Original quote: "det saken dreier seg om er å kunne leve i og med naturen. Ikke bare å se den utenfra – estetisk i vanlig forstand – eller å bruke den til hvile og rekonvalesens."

¹¹² My translation. Original quote: "sekundære sansekvalliteter".

live is filled with symbols, with expression. If we notice little of it, then we have confined ourselves to only functioning.¹¹³ (Næss, 1976:296) In this view, our sensory experiences of nature witness that nature *is* what we perceive it to be: 'For nature appears precisely not as something outside man that he, consciously and determined (...) attributes (ascribes) qualities of the sort power, dignity and melancholy (...), [but that such qualities] are apprehended (perceived, interpreted, considered) as immediately and inseparably present (inherent) in nature with all its species and occurrences.¹¹⁴ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:24-25) If such immediate experiences, perceptions or sensations of nature, are not supported or valued, could our *abilities* of experiencing nature be de-learned?

Næss describes *gestalts* as a sort of experiential knowledge created in our immediate sensations of nature, which are not to be measured or accounted for. This ability to 'experience knowledge' might be lessened by scientific observational habits, according to Næss, linking the matter to environmental education:

'Gestalts tie self and non-self together to a whole. Joy is not just my joy, but something joyful that has the self and something else as dependent fragments, which cannot be isolated. 'The birch tree laughed / with all birch trees' light and gentle laughter...' This gestalt is a creature which only incompletely may be split up in a self which is projecting and a birch tree.

The glorification of sober, matter-of-fact, 'scientific' thinking leads to ridiculing of such creatures. It tears apart the *gestalts* of the immediately experienced world and the worlds of the cultures.¹¹⁵ (Næss, 1976:300)

¹¹³ My translation. Original quote: "Vi lever ikke i et vitenskapelig univers hvor tingene mangler farge. Det univers vi lever i er fylt av symboler, av uttrykk. Merker vi lite til det, har vi innskrenket oss til bare å funksjonere."

¹¹⁴ My translation. Original quote: "For naturen framstår nettopp ikke som noe utenfor mennesket som det, bevisst og målrettet (...) *tillegger* (tilskriver) egenskaper av typen mektighet, opphøyethet og vemod. (...) [men at slike kvaliteter] oppfattes (senses, tolkes, behandles) som umiddelbart og useparerbart *til stede* (iboende) i naturen med alle dens arter og hendelser."

¹¹⁵ My translation. Original quote: "*Gestaltene binder jeg og ikke-jeg sammen til et hele. Glede blir ikke min glede, men noe gledelig som har jeg'et og noe annet som uselvstendige, uisolerbare fragmenter. 'Birken lo / med alle birkers lyse lette latter...' Denne gestalt er en skapning som bare ufullstendig kan splittes i et jeg som projiserer og et bjørketre.*

Forherligelsen av nøktern, snusfornuftig, "vitenskapelig" tenkning fører til latterliggjørelse av slike skapninger. Den river i stykker gestaltene i den umiddelbart erfarte verden og kulturenes verdener."

Næss finds that the ability to experience nature with all one's senses, without objective distance, without observing and recording, is fundamental for ESD. It is fundamental because in such experiencing of nature, we are one with nature, there is no distance between *us* and what is *with us*, as Løgstrup puts it, we are:

'completely powerless face to face with the universe. The manifestation of and the unlimited rule of the universe in our perception, we have not the very least possibility to reserve ourselves towards or adjust. In perception, the perceiver is at the universe's disposal, completely. We are so absorbed in the universe in our perception that nothing is left in us, that is not universe. Perceiving, we exist in the most complete loss of independence towards the universe.'¹¹⁶ (Løgstrup, 1995:15)

We are oneness, but without the mythical dimension of former understandings of nature, as was Kolstad's point in section 4.3.4. Næss claims that such experiencing of the environment happens through living and acting in it: 'Spinoza leads the way here by understanding knowledge as 'knowing actions'.'¹¹⁷ (Næss, 1976:303) Knowledge seen as knowing actions is far from the passively enjoying behaviour mentioned at the start of this section, and the 'unrelenting demand for objectivity, that not a single remainder of subjectivity (colouring) must remain in the human knowledge under any circumstances, [which] results in a liquidation of all knowledge that is truly relevant to the object, in the sense that it originates from it, is obtained and received from it.'¹¹⁸ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:32-33) What is truly relevant is also what Heidegger is concerned with. He perceived the learning that is only possible through perception of or physical interaction with what we can touch as threatened. A moral implication of stressing the importance of what's near, is that direct contact instils responsibility - it allows us to see vulnerability. But his

¹¹⁶ My translation. Original quote: "i sansningen er totalt afmægtige overfor universet. Universets udslag og uinskrænkede regimente i vor sansning har vi ikke den bitterste mulighed for at reservere os overfor eller korrigerer. I sansningen forfølger universet over den sansende, totalt. Så opslugte er vi af universet i sansningen, at der ikke er ladet noget tilbage i os, der ikke er univers. Sansende eksisterer vi i det mest fuldkomne tab av sælvstændighed overfor universet."

¹¹⁷ My translation. Original quote: "Spinoza viser her veien ved å oppfatte kunnskap som 'kjennende handlinger'."

¹¹⁸ My translation. Original quote: "ubønhørlige kravet om objektivitet, om at det for all del ikke må bestå en eneste rest av subjektivitet (fargelegging) i erkjennelsen, [som] medfører en likvidering av all kunnskap som virkelig angår objektet, i betydningen stammer fra det, innhentes og mottas fra det."

It is environmentalists who must remind science and the authorities that natural diversity will prove useful for things such as curing diseases, it remains to be seen

'if a less compromise-oriented, less constrained language will one day be possible - a language for other rights and other interests, in short, for other worlds than the human-economic self-interest's [world].¹¹⁹ (Harrison, 1992, in A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:50)

Næss finds it likely that 'the greatly increasing prestige of the sciences within higher administration makes it expedient [for researchers] to underline scientific motives [to preserve species]. But if you know the researchers' prioritisation of values, it is clear that it is also a personal loss, a defeat in their life and work, when a species go towards extinction. This brings us to an area seldom mentioned: the function of scientific circles (circles of scholars/ circles of scientists) as centre for joy and rich experiences tied to diversity.¹²⁰ (Næss, 1976:317) Næss describes how it is characteristic for circles of scholars, that unimportant details (to others) facilitate strong thrills among researchers:

'A small wing of a fly becomes a sculptural work of art, intensively meaningful and source of the most differentiated gestalt experiences. The metaphysical ideas of microcosm (the little worlds) reflecting the macrocosm (the great cosmos) come from this.¹²¹ (Næss, 1976:318)

If such interest in natural diversity rubs off through personal contact, that gives researchers - as well as kindergarten practitioners - a great responsibility, because if 'the appreciation of biodiversity [has] awakened in a person, he or she will support radical ecological measures, even if they threaten the material living

¹¹⁹ My translation. Original quote: ""Det gjenstår å se om et mindre kompromissorientert, mindre tvungent språk en dag vil bli mulig - et språk for andre rettigheter og andre interesser, kort sagt, for andre verdener enn den menneskelige-økonomiske egennyttens.""

¹²⁰ My translation. Original quote: "Vitenskapens sterkt økende prestisje innen den høyere administrasjon gjør det hensiktsmessig [for forskere] å understreke vitenskapelige motiver [for å bevare arter]. Men kjenner man forskernes verdiprioriteringer, er det klart at det også er personlig tap, et nederlag i deres liv og gjerning, når en art går mot utryddelsen. Dette bringer oss inn på et sjelden omtalt felt: forskermiljøenes funksjon som sentrum for glede og opplevelsesrikdom knyttet til mangfold."

¹²¹ My translation. Original quote: "En liten fluevinge blir til et skulpturelt kunstverk, intensivt meningsfull og kilde til de mest ulikeartede gestaltopplevelser. Herav de metafysiske tanker om mikrokosmos (de små verdener) som gjenspeiler makrokosmos (det store kosmos)."

standards.¹²²(Næss, 1976:318) The mentality of the researcher is required to promote ecologically responsible politics, as researchers' 'intense interest and concern distribute across the entire natural diversity. (...) Strictly speaking it is the conservation of the diverse net of relations that conserve the species. (...) Responsible ecopolitics depend on in-depth and comprehensive studies, consequently also on sustaining the pleasures or satisfactions of natural history research¹²³ (Næss, 1976:318-319). I find that Næss' view is supported by my experience. It seems that engagement for EfS among Norwegian pre-school teacher educators in some cases originate from the departments of natural science at the Faculty of Education and International Studies ("Erfaringsseminar: Barnehage + miljø = sant," 2009; Hilmo, 2004, 2008).

Næss speaks of symbols in nature, that any natural thing is charged with symbols and meaning if it has been in one's surroundings. He argues that frequently moving at an early age involves a loss of an essential part of one's self: 'of the gestalts that encompass 'one's own', 'my surroundings', 'our surroundings'' and new gestalts must be built on the new place. Næss meant that the most fundamental gestalts and symbols cannot be re-formed, and moving thereby could lead to a loss of personal identity. This is supported by Heidegger and his

'insight that loss of land entails loss of identity; that love to an experienced and local place is a springboard for consideration for the entire globe, so that it is through restoring the belonging to a place that we can hope to mobilise for a sense of responsibility for the endangered state of the earth.¹²⁴ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:68)

Heidegger's insight is not weakened by the fact that such emotions may be (mis-) used by self-centered, nationalistic and excluding politics¹²⁵, claims Vetlesen (2008). A task for kindergartens is that the promotion of 'love to an experienced

¹²² My translation. Original quote: "først sansen for naturmangfoldet [er] våknet hos en person, vil han eller hun støtte radikale økologiske tiltak, selv om de truer den materielle levestandard."

¹²³ My translation. Original quote: "intens interesse og bekymring fordeler seg over hele naturmangfoldet. Økologisk ansvarlig politikk fordrer nettopp en slik allmenn innstilling. (...) Strengt tatt er det bevaring av det mangfoldige relasjonsnett som bevarer artene. (...) Ansvarlig økopolitikk avhenger av dyptgående og omfattende studier, altså også av bevaring av den naturhistoriske forskergleden."

¹²⁴ My translation. Original quote: "innsikt i at tap av land innebærer tap av identitet; at kjærlighet til et erfart og lokalt sted er springbrett for omtanke for hele kloden, slik at det er ved å gjenreise tilhørigheten til et sted at vi kan håpe å mobilisere til ansvarsfølelse for jordens truede tilstand."

¹²⁵ Martin Heidegger's involvement with/ support to Nazism might be seen as undermining this philosophy.

and local place' is combined with critically engaging with topics such as diversity and history as we are taught to see it.

4.1.6 Morals – reflection, practice and communication

Morals are to many a concept with negative connotations. It gives us associations, perhaps, to those who want to control others' actions through rules and limitations. Most of us engage, however, in personal 'projects' linked to freedom, justice, dignity and love, central elements of life that morals are meant to promote and support (Vetlesen & Henriksen, 2003). Vetlesen

our ability to engage morally is

'The call from all living, the appeal from the new-born, *obliger* man to a *response*, in the form of *respons[e]-[a]bility*: Man is unique among all living by being susceptible to the call/ appeal in its actual range. Man has the ability to understand that [his] care may mean *the difference between life and death*; and this difference emerges *to* the susceptible man *from* the living self as precisely not value-free, neutral.¹²⁶ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:54)

However, there is a growing gap between our psychologically-experienced *Merkwelt* and the *Wirkwelt* of our modern practices (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008). Our choices extend much farther than we are able to be aware of. Vetlesen sees this gap as catastrophic where morals are concerned. Just as Næss maintained in section 4.3.5, the entire habitats of endangered species need protection in order to sustain the endangered lives in question. If a certain life or species' habitat is situated on the other side of the globe, it becomes difficult for us to make decisions whether our lives and choices are affecting what environmental challenges it may be experiencing. When discussing relations between man and nature, it is important to not just focus on man *in general* and nature *in general*, but point to the actual, concrete relationships that each of us are part of in our local communities. This may be seen as an argument for buying locally produced groceries and products. In

¹²⁶ My translation. Original quote: "Ropet fra alt levende, appellen fra den nyfødte, *forplikter* mennesket til et *svar*, i form av *an-svar*: Mennesket er unikt ved blant alt levende ved å være mottakelig for ropet/appellen i dets faktiske rekkevidde. Mennesket har evnen til å forstå at dets ivaretagelse kan bety *forskjellen mellom liv og død*; og denne forskjellen fremstår *for* det mottakelige mennesket *fra* det levende selv som nettopp ikke verdifri, nøytral."

a local context one has better chances of assessing the conditions under which food or clothes have been produced and what consequences there are. Vetlesen & Henriksen find that in order to lay the groundwork for moral communication, one must also reveal the structures and organisations that affect moral's chances, where greed and materialism are goals (2003). In our society, there exists

'a superior principle, above all others: the principle that all citizens in the country[, even the children,] are regarded as consumers, and that consumers shall be reached by sales requests everywhere and at all times, unless the requests have directly offensive or illegal content or form. To oppose this, to want to be exempted from it, e.g. in the name of environmental considerations, demands an active action from the individual consumer - but even then one may not necessarily be heard.¹²⁷ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:13)

It is therefore important that kindergartens engage with consumerism, as personal as this topic may seem to touch upon. In a one-day seminar at OUC - discussing the experiences and ideas of kindergarten staff in regard to ESD ("Erfaringsseminar: Barnehage + miljø = sant," 2009) – consumption seemed to be one of the most difficult topics to engage with. The close ties between consumption and identity mean that attempts to criticize or debate lifestyles could be experienced as an attack on individuals instead of society (A. J. H. Vetlesen, J-O, 2003). Movements such as 'slow parenting' might be interesting for kindergarten practitioners (and parents) to investigate critically, as they may pose interesting perspectives on elements of young children's everyday lives. Are children allowed time to themselves in kindergarten? Are they encouraged to dwell in their aesthetic experiences, or to extort other kinds of knowledge from their interactions with the environment? Rather than moralising about the subject, kindergarten practitioners should consider themselves - and the institution in itself - a role model. Syse maintains that moderation - as a way of living and a virtue - is what will 'save' our future (2009:124). The next section discusses the importance of role models in ESD.

¹²⁷ My translation. Original quote: "(...) et superprinsipp, overordnet alle andre: prinsippet om at alle borgere i landet[, selv barna,] er å anse som konsumenter, og at konsumentene skal nås av salgsoppfordringer overalt og til alle tider, med mindre oppfordringen har direkte støtende eller ulovlig innhold eller form. Å motsette seg dette, å ville fritas fra det, for eksempel i miljøhensynets navn, krever en aktiv handling fra den enkelte forbruker – men selv da vil en ikke nødvendigvis bli hørt."

4.1.7 Persons as role models – becoming a role model for others

Moral ideals may be said to articulate condensed experience (Vetlesen & Henriksen, 2003). The power of a good example - or *examples of good practice*, as they are often called in the ECEC context - is that it contributes to reducing the gap between people's knowledge and people's actions. Such examples should not be forced on others - as is what we often associate with the term *moralism* - they should not be seen as blueprints for action. Rather each one of us may take another's idea to the next level, adapt it to our own lives, or even just *delight in good things that are happening*. Being attentive to - and complimenting - other people's actions that may serve as examples of good practice is vital. To *be seen* is important for most of us, particularly when it comes to strengthening our staying power. Personal interest, agency and commitment must be the driving force for developing one's virtue. Vetlesen & Henriksen describe our generation(s) as the Options Generation

'It is through practise, through improving skills, insight, determination and ability to look at a matter from all perspectives, that virtue is developed. (...) not (...) by itself, but in and through meetings with others'¹²⁸ (Vetlesen & Henriksen, 2003:170). Such meetings take place with our nearest and dearest, in networking and organisational activity as well as in chance encounters, and all these 'meetings with others' are important. How is it that 'alternative political or 'aesthetic' preferences have not formed any [sort of] politically effective corrective confronted with the technology and economy's declared scientific views of nature[? These views have] ideologically (...) appeared in the service of progress and prosperity and therefore been difficult to oppose politically, that is, collectively, not just individually.¹²⁹ (A. J. Vetlesen, 2008:47) A necessary strategy to promote collective engagement, however, is political communication.

Næss argues that an important part of ecosophy should be non-violent *political communication*, attaching great importance to 'the norm 'straight-to-the-point'

¹²⁸ My translation. Original quote: "Det er ved å øve seg, ved å utvikle ferdigheter, innsikt, viljestyrke og evne til å se en sak fra flere sider, at dyd utvikles. (...) ikke (...) av seg selv, men i og gjennom møtet med andre"

¹²⁹ My translation. Original quote: "alternative politiske eller "estetiske" preferanser har ikke utgjort noe politisk effektivt korrektiv overfor teknologiens og økonomiens erklært vitenskapelige natursyn[? Disse syn har] ideologisk (...) fremstått i fremskrittets og velstandens tjeneste og derfor vært vanskelig å opponere mot rent politisk, altså kollektivt, ikke blott individuelt."

instead of 'straight-to-the-person', and a certain openness to the eco-political viewpoints of party-political opponents[,] (...) [not interpreting the opponents'] utterances unfriendly, and one's own party's statements excessively obligingly¹³⁰, (Næss, 1976:308)¹³¹. This links to Olsholt's point in a seminar on children and philosophy ("Små barn av regnbuen - og en frodig jord? Om barn og miljø, forbruk og rettferdighet," 2009), that true recognition¹³² (Bae, 1996) of children should include challenging them to develop clear arguments as well as an ability to deal with critique. According to Olsholt, practising philosophy with children is one way to promote such communication skills. In the next section I will present research on experiences from philosophizing with children.

4.2 Experiences from philosophizing with children

4.2.1 Socratic dialogues

Socrates (470-399 B.C.) considered himself 'ignorant' and tried to investigate other people's thinking through asking questions. He conversed with the young, and his aim was to get his conversation partner to work on understanding more of his own thinking. Socrates asked naive, but fundamental questions without consideration for his conversation partner's need for protecting himself from the exposing of his ignorance. In the end Socrates' bothersome questions and his influential role towards the young led to his death sentence. (Olsholt, 2008) Socrates has become an ideal for those who engage children and young people in philosophical practice.

Socratic methods in various contexts describe a set of methodological steps to attain similar objectives. An opening question is answered by all participants and followed by cooperative, critical analysis ("Press release: Socrates in the classroom

¹³⁰ My translation. Original quote: "normen 'rett på sak' i stedet for 'rett på person', og en viss åpenhet for partipolitiske motstanderes økopolitiske synspunkter[,] (...) [ikke tolker motstandernes] uttalelser uvennlig, og eget partis formuleringer overdrevent vennlig'.

¹³¹ In addition to an underlining of impartiality in communication, the non-violence element of ecosophy includes civil disobedience as a strategy, when facing sabotage of collective decisions regarding the global situation: 'must be considered a serious breach of interpersonal loyalty. In the struggles to come I believe that we – besides utilising all established institutions of decisions – must resort to direct actions (...) hold[ing] high standards not only where ecological knowledge is concerned, but also when it comes to the means of struggle. To me this means that the radicalism of direct action must be proportionate with the level of non-violence.' (Næss, 1976:308) My translation. Original quote: 'I de kamper som forestår tror jeg at vi foruten å bruke alle etablerte avgjørelsesinstitusjoner, også må ty til direkte aksjoner (...) [som] holder en høy standard ikke bare med hensyn til økologiske kunnskaper, men også med hensyn til kampmåte. Dette vil for meg si at radikalitet i direktaksjoner må være proporsjonal med ikke-volds-nivået.'

¹³² My translation of the Norwegian term *anerkjennelse*.

develops students' thinking and changes the distribution of power," 2008). Socrates compared his work to that of a midwife's: 'We do not *have* insight, but we carry insight within, just like a pregnant woman does not *have* a child, but is expecting. Both our insight and the child must be delivered, they must be brought up, out and forward.¹³³' (Olsholt, 2008:21) Insight cannot be transferred, but the good and the true is hidden within each one of us. From there it follows that Socratic methods of conversation are also known as *maieutikk* - greek for *midwifery*.

In the next sections I will present findings from research projects on implementing Socratic methods with children.

4.2.2 Socrates in the classroom - rationales and effects of philosophizing with children

The democratic potential in 'philosophizing with children' is described in this way in a doctorate's dissertation from Stockholm University:

‘The rationales [in the literature studied on goals and effects of Socratic dialogues] are that learning to think by cooperating and using language in this specific practice will result in intellectual and ethical growth. This growth is assumed to lead to a more democratic society where individuals will have the ability to live a good life by personal *bildning*¹³⁴. The complexity of real life makes it necessary to foster the ability to access “practical wisdom”: finding ways to act when confronted with a multiplicity of ideas and incongruent values.’ (Pihlgren, 2008:231)

Bildning, or *dannelse*, is a concept that has gained new interest in debates about education in the last few years. Exploring the concept of *danning* in education is beyond the scope of this research, but it may link very well to the values and ethics of ESD. I take the liberty to refer to the description of a speech given by Inga Bostad at the House of Literature in Oslo in February 2009:

¹³³ My translation. Original quote: "Vi *har* ikke innsikt, men vi går svangre med den, akkurat slik en gravid kvinne ikke ennå *har* barn, men er svanger med barn. Både innsikten og barnet må altså forløses, de må bringes opp, ut og frem."

¹³⁴ The equivalent term in Norwegian would be *danning* or *dannelse*. In English there is no direct translation, but the concept might be understood as integrating elements of education, refinement and culture ("Stor engelsk ordbok," 2010).

'Bostad asserts that *dannelse* appears in the ability to ask qualified questions regarding society and human life. Any society needs arenas leaving room for problematizing concepts, understandings, norms and values. And the challenge of *dannelse* is reflective: it must be arranged for, that the coming generation of citizens are able to participate in, and re-examine, existing understandings of our society.¹³⁵ ("Hva er *dannelse*?," 2009)

Such an arena may be a kindergarten setting, or philosophical conversations in particular. Pihlgren found in her dissertation that when students had the opportunity to participate in "Socratic seminars" on a regular basis, a different classroom culture evolved. Findings were that the students collaborated more, and more voices were heard, as the students developed their thinking skills in a cooperative and investigative atmosphere. 'It seems as if this ritualized structure and the nurturing culture of the seminar provide a safe circle, helping the participants to try new, bold ideas that they might otherwise not have tested,' Pihlgren said ("Press release: Socrates in the classroom develops students' thinking and changes the distribution of power," 2008). This 'practical wisdom' gained, is expressed by that:

'Individuals who have constructed their own characters proactively are capable of resisting the power of corrupt taught values in such a way that they not only know the difference between right and wrong; they also have the self-discipline and courage to act on that knowledge.' (Terry Roberts, in Pihlgren, 2008:231)

In contemporary society, where few norms are considered general, static, or predictable, and where natural fundamental values are hard to define, an ability to assess different alternatives, critically examine them, make choices and act on these is fundamental. Pihlgren contends that the Socratic seminar offers a methodology to teach not only strategies of critical thinking, but important interactive skills to children as well as to adults.

¹³⁵ My translation. Original quote: "Bostad hevder at *dannelse* viser seg gjennom evnen til å stille kvalifiserte spørsmål ved samfunnet og menneskelivet. Et hvert samfunn trenger arenaer hvor det er rom for å problematisere begreper, oppfatninger, normer og verdier. Og *dannelses*utfordringen [sic] er refleksiv: Det må legges til rette for at kommende generasjon borgere skal kunne delta i, og overprøve, nåværende forståelser av vårt samfunn."

'It has the potential power to change the distribution of power in the classroom, without threatening the discipline. Teachers and students have no role models when learning this different game. The training takes time, but the effects ought to make it worthwhile.' (Pihlgren, 2008:236)

4.2.3 '*Philosophy for children*' - an action research project

Hovlund's master's thesis from 2004 discusses an action research project of implementing philosophy with children in a kindergarten:

'Several groups worked with particular philosophical topics. They read folk tales in order to discuss certain concepts chosen in advance. This philosophical method (inspired by Lipman) has proved difficult for most of the groups. They introduce a topic for conversation, but are neither able to stick to the topic nor develop the conversation any further. Frustrations were present in the group of staff. Many came with the response that they did not succeed with capturing the children's attention, nor were the conversations successful - neither spontaneous ones or based on folk tales.¹³⁶ (Hovlund, 2004:51)

This indicated that it was difficult to engage the children in philosophic conversations on predetermined topics. Hovlund and the practitioners then decided to emphasise wonderment and conversation in the 'Socratic manner'. Gradually, the staff felt that they mastered supporting the conversations:

'When the children brought up wondering questions, they immediately got an adult wondering with them. Other adults joined in, which led to the fact that more children became curious of what was going on. This developed into philosophical conversations with enthusiastic adults and children as participants of the dialogue.¹³⁷ (Hovlund, 2004:52)

¹³⁶ My translation. Original quote: "Flere grupper jobbet med bestemte filosofiske tema. De leste eventyr for siden å skulle diskutere på forhånd bestemte begrep. Denne filosofiske metoden (Lipman-inspirert) har også vist seg vanskelig for de fleste gruppene. De innfører et samtaletema, men klarer verken å holde tema eller utvikle samtalen videre. Frustrasjonene var til stede i personalgruppen. Mange kom med tilbakemeldinger på at de verken lyktes med å fange opp barnas undring eller fikk til samtalen – verken spontant eller på bakgrunn av eventyr."

¹³⁷ My translation. Original quote: "Når barna kom med undrende spørsmål, fikk de straks en voksen medundrer. Andre voksne kom også til, noe som førte til at flere barn ble nysgjerrige på om det skjedde noe. Dette utviklet seg til filosofiske samtaler med ivrige voksne og barn som deltakere i dialogen."

One of the important findings in this piece of research was that great effort was required, as the implementation of philosophy with children was very demanding. However, this was considered worthwhile as 'it brings about theoretical insight, it brings about a change in attitude, it brings about new methodology.'¹³⁸ (Hovlund, 2004:53) Hovlund sees his research as an important contribution 'to those who want a new pedagogical practice in their kindergarten, with insight and self-awareness as the pedagogical goal'¹³⁹ (Hovlund, 2004:90). He describes the changes taking place during his action research as 'a change in conversational practice at system level'¹⁴⁰ (Hovlund, 2004:86).

4.2.4 Ethics and philosophy for young children

Philosophy provides opportunities for human beings to think in a group, as a group. Through stating the reasons for, defending and/or reconsidering one's own ideas and choices, a person develops greater awareness of her personal knowledge and experiences. What could we possibly know about? Do we 'know' the same today, as we 'knew' yesterday? Philosophy has no agenda, but asking good and undermining questions – leading to new realization. Through philosophical conversations, personal understandings of nature, man, and the role of humans in ecology or within our own communities might be explored. Working with storytelling could serve as a gateway to questions concerning (e.g.) ownership and property: Who is a thief? Could anything be stolen? What can be owned and by whom?

Working with philosophy touches the core of our communicative relationship with children. Do we understand each other when we speak? What are we talking about? Where there is tolerance to the point that criticism does not exist, communication is undermined. Attempts to understand could easily be mistaken for attacks. Philosophical support, however, consists in being critical – this is how children's expressions are truly recognized (Olsholt, 2008; Små barn av regnbuen - og en frodig jord? Om barn og miljø, forbruk og rettferdighet," 2009). There is a

¹³⁸ My translation. Original quote: "Det medfører teoretisk innsikt, det medfører en holdningsendring, det medfører ny metodikk."

¹³⁹ My translation. Original quote: "til de som ønsker en ny pedagogisk praksis i sin barnehage, med innsikt og selverkjennelse som pedagogisk målsetting."

¹⁴⁰ My translation. Original quote: "en endring av samtalepraksis på systemnivå"

democratic potential in philosophy, in its emphasis on each individual's common sense and ability of arriving at something true, something good (Børresen, 2008).

4.2.5 What about the very youngest children?

I have not been able to find research reports from working with philosophy with children under the age of three years old. There is no doubt that the youngest are included in kindergartens' various aims, as these are described in the Framework Plan ("Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006). This applies to any approaches to ESD or philosophy with children as well.

Philosophy starts with wonderment, with questioning life. Børresen & Malmhøster find that working with the youngest children in kindergarten, the main intention should be to support the development of a philosophical attitude. One way to do this is showing the youngest children that the world is safe, but still full of possibilities and alternative actions, attitudes and ways of thinking. Constructively provoking children's trains of thought and 'taken-for-granted's through introducing something which is not what it seems, something that appears where it was not expected or that disappears again, might provide experiences that stimulate wonderment and dialogue within the group. Familiarizing the children with asking questions and speaking in front of the group is an important prerequisite for later engagement with philosophy. Practitioners should be conscious of being role models and employ language that supports the development of philosophical dialogue. (Børresen, 2008)

4.3 Reorienting teacher education to address sustainability

If one finds that the qualifications of practitioners are the most significant factor for defining quality in early childhood education, then this may also be the direction in which approaches to implementation of Education for Sustainability firstly should be directed. Existing pre-school teacher education needs to take up the perspectives of Education for Sustainability¹⁴¹ and professional development or in-service training should be available at the university colleges. A survey of what

¹⁴¹ It seems to me from discussions and presentations ("Erfaringsseminar: Barnehage + miljø = sant," 2009) that pre-school educators in the Norwegian context are beginning to take up the perspectives of EfS, though the extent to which this is happening has been beyond the scope of this research.

kindergarten practitioners or pre-school teacher students know about ESD, and where their knowledges stem from¹⁴², might help in the planning of such undertakings. In my opinion, such professional development in a Norwegian kindergarten context, ought to include¹⁴³ personal experiences with practicing philosophy, but also philosophical theory linked to philosophies of education – or the morals and ethics of education. I have chosen not to discuss the aspect of reorienting teacher education towards Education for Sustainability any further at this point, but find this to be an important subject for further studies.

4.4 Summary

Critically engaging with historical views of the relationships that man and nature are part of, may serve as a base for kindergarten practitioners when defining for themselves and their practices what Education for Sustainability might be. It may seem that there is a cultural de-learning of the immediate human identification with other forms of life. Practitioners' understandings of the role of aesthetics in education links to whether kindergartens strengthen or counter such cultural de-learning. Næss argues that identification is a prerequisite for genuine solidarity. When identification exists, solidarity appears as self-evident.

Kindergartens should serve as meeting places in the local community, providing the space to share ideas and experiences across generations. Kindergarten practitioners should consider themselves role models and discussion partners for each other, the children and their families. A reorientation of teacher education and professional development arenas to address sustainability, is needed.

Experiences from philosophizing with children are that students develop their thinking skills in a cooperative and investigative atmosphere. It has potential to change the distribution of power without threatening the discipline (Pihlgren, 2008). When working with young children, promoting an atmosphere of wonderment and dialogue supports the development of a philosophical attitude (Børresen & Malmhester, 2008). There is a democratic potential in philosophy.

¹⁴² As has been presented by Haktanir et al at the OMEP World Congress 2010.

¹⁴³ I have briefly mentioned here what is mostly relevant in the context of this thesis, as how to reorient teacher education towards EfS must be thoroughly discussed in the context of another paper.

5.0 Possible approaches to EfS

5.1 Challenges in creating a culture of Sustainability

5.1.1 How is the concept of sustainability relevant to life in kindergartens?

Working towards sustainability will be relevant to kindergarten to the extent that it is relevant to society as a whole. I once heard a college rector refer to young people in an auditorium as ‘these students are the ones who will solve the problems with climate, economy (etc)’. Her wording made me reconsider the reasoning behind emphasizing the importance of Education for Sustainability for the early years. Do we imply that with age it becomes ‘too late’ for us to change our ways, our habits, our societies, while we expect younger generations to moderate and adapt their lifestyles towards more sustainable ways? If so, this is not compatible with the view of learning in Education for Sustainability. The view of children that this research is grounded on, see children as competent and capable (Ottosson, 2008), but they should never be ascribed responsibility for the state of the world.

The concept of EfS implies a holistic approach to dealing with poverty and environmental problems. What do kindergarten practitioners think will promote an understanding of sustainable development? Research on this is needed. Some feel that the concept is unclear, not well enough defined for kindergartens (this is supported by Davis, 2009), and that they lack the necessary knowledge and tools. Environmental education seems to be a common approach, it seems not so many address topics such as the relationship between consumption and identity, alternative thinking about ‘resources’ and ‘capital’, private choices versus public good and government, responsibilities for self and responsibilities for others. One might expect that kindergarten offers plenty of possible angles to embark on such topics – concrete situations in everyday life that link to situations in the outer society that the kindergarten is part of.

Particular methods or programs can never be the one solution to what ESD should be, as ESD will differ with the local context, but tools¹⁴⁴ may provide essential support in the learning processes of children and staff. Fear of contributing to extremism, anxiety and moralization may repress attempts to engage in discussion, but should not refrain kindergarten practitioners from entering structured as well as spontaneous conversations on goals and approaches in kindergarten. Topics of such discussion might be the kindergarten's goals for the childrens' experiences in and of nature, their learning of ecology, raising awareness of one's own consumption, learning about local experience and tradition. Involving families in a research project about themes - such as outdoor life or consumption – might engage, but should be done in a reflexive manner, so as not to be experienced as an encroachment in their privacy. This links to critically engaging with the diversity represented in the group of children, as they learn from each other and the contextuality of each family's values.

5.1.2 Think globally – act locally!

A proverb states that 'you need a whole village to raise a child', and it is said that developing sustainable local communities will lead to a sustainable world. What does kindergarten staff know about local initiatives such as Lokal Agenda 21? Working for social justice and local democracy are as important as working for the environment. Kindergarten - as an organization and a meeting place - should be promoting such dialogue and discussion between families and within the community as well as within the group of children. Different generations have varying experiences, competences and abilities to contribute in their local community that kindergartens should make use of. Accessing available knowledge from relevant 'locals', institutions and media adds to the learning processes and serves as a starting point for discussions about personal and societal values and attitudes.

The concept of *solidarity* may be as relevant in a local context as it is globally. Solidarity in the form of project work should be critically engaged with, in order to prevent an imparting of Orientalism (Bakken & Børhaug, 2009). Bakken & Børhaug suggest that projects should promote *identification* rather than expect or

¹⁴⁴ The networks of miljolare.no (see section 3.3.4), Thoresen's book on ESC (see section 3.3.5) and the environmental certifications (see section 3.5.3) are hereby named as examples of useful tools, which cannot alone constitute a kindergarten's engagement with ECEfS.

demand young children's acts on solidarity (2009). Are there better - more respectful - approaches to solidarity than 'giving to the poor'? What child would like to be defined – or define him self - as being poor? I think most of us want to succeed and manage 'on our own'. But is that what being a human being is like? Philosophizing with children is a way to support young children (and kindergarten practitioners, I might add) in 'thinking as a group' as well as promoting their communication skills and critical thinking (Børresen, 2008; Fastvold, 2009; Olsholt, 2008; Pihlgren, 2008). An attitude of wonderment and dialogue is the foundation for developing philosophical attitudes among the youngest children. Kindergarten practitioners should see themselves as role models.

5.1.3 The educative nature of care

It is imperative that kindergartens engage in 'whole of settings'-approaches to creating cultures of sustainability (Ottosson, 2008). Education for Sustainability is dependent on a positive learning environment where EfS is the basis of all 'kindergarten life' (*Baltic 21E*, 2002). Such a culture promotes a sense of community, responsibility, solidarity and of critically engaging with diversity and existing structures. Awareness of ethics, values, views on man, as well as ability of critically reconsidering one's own actions and their consequences, are competencies as important as any pre-defined knowledge or methods of operations. The democratic potential in practising philosophy with children is realised only if it is contextualised in the ethics and morals of our local and global community.

Isn't good care for young children, characterized by equality and respect, an important part of bringing children up to 'understanding of sustainable development' ("Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006:7)? A focus on the quality of children's relationships and friendships, as described by Greve (2005) links to children's abilities to 'appreciate' sustainable development ("Act no. 64 of June 2005 relating to Kindergartens ", 2005:1; Alm, 2009). When returning to section 1.3 in the Framework Plan, it is impossible not to notice that the explicit values are concurrent with the concept of Education for Sustainability. However, for kindergarten practitioners to see that such a link exists, more research and more theory is needed to contribute to the debate on what Education for Sustainability means in the Norwegian kindergarten context.

5.2 Suggested further studies

An extended action research promoting philosophical conversation and wonderment as part of the approach to Education for Sustainability, might be an appropriate follow-up to this study. Charting the evolving knowledge and understandings of practitioners and children in kindergartens engaging in the development of 'whole of settings' approaches to EfS, where the goal is to create a culture of Sustainability (Ottoosson, 2008), might help in the further defining of the concept for the Norwegian kindergarten context.

Another focus for further conceptual analysis of Education for Sustainability, might be studying theory concerning the Ethics of Rights and the Ethics of Care, with a focus on the concept of Sustainable Development and its focus on equality and rights as well as relationships and dependencies. Critical perspectives on Education for Sustainability are necessary.

6.0 Literature

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7.0 Appendice

1.3 The fundamental values of kindergartens

Care, upbringing and learning in kindergartens shall promote human dignity, equality, intellectual freedom, tolerance, health and an appreciation of sustainable development.

(Kindergarten Act, Section 2, Content of kindergartens)

Kindergartens shall promote fundamental values such as a sense of community, care for others and joint responsibility, and shall represent an environment that supports respect for human worth and the right to be different. Human equality, equal opportunity, intellectual freedom and tolerance are important social values that shall provide foundations for the care, upbringing, play and learning in kindergartens.

The equality of the genders shall be reflected in the education provided by kindergartens. Kindergartens shall bring up children to relate to and create an equal society. Kindergartens shall base their activities on the principle of equality of the sexes. Boys and girls shall have the same opportunities to be seen and heard, and shall be encouraged to participate jointly in all activities at kindergartens. Staff must reflect on their own attitudes towards, and on society's expectations of, boys and girls.

It is important to instil a sense of responsibility for managing the natural and cultural heritage, and of responsibility for people's lives and health, in kindergartens. An understanding of sustainable development shall be promoted in everyday life. Respect for life is fundamental.

Charity and solidarity are cornerstones of our culture. Tolerance and respect shall be fundamental values for kindergartens. It is very important that children experience warmth and love at kindergartens. By interacting with their peer group, they can develop solidarity with other children. Putting themselves in other people's situations will help them to develop empathy, solidarity and tolerance. In a global perspective, it is very important that children develop attitudes of charity and solidarity.

Kindergartens shall lay the foundations for lifelong learning and active participation in a democratic society in close understanding and collaboration with the homes of the children. The ethical instruction provided by kindergartens must take into account the age of children and each child's cultural, religious and ideological background. It is crucial to work in a way that allows a common understanding of what is happening at the kindergarten. The integrity of individual children and parents shall be respected.

As role models, staff have a particular responsibility for ensuring that the values of the kindergarten are adhered to in practice. Reflections on their own values and actions should be included in the pedagogical discussions of staff. Kindergartens must systematically assess whether their own practice and culture helps to promote the values that are supposed to form the basis for their activities.

("Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens," 2006:6-7).

1.3 Verdigrunnlaget til barnehagen

Omsorg, oppdragelse og læring i barnehagen skal fremme menneskelig likeverd, likestilling, åndsfrihet, toleranse, helse og forståelse for bærekraftig utvikling.

(Barnehagelova § 2 Barnehagens innhold)

Barnehagen skal formidle grunnleggjande verdiar som fellesskap, omsorg og medansvar og representere eit miljø som byggjer opp om respekt for menneskeverd og retten til å vere ulike. Menneskeleg likeverd, likestilling, åndsfridom og toleranse er sentrale samfunnsverdiar som skal leggjast til grunn for omsorg, oppseding, leik og læring i barnehagen.

Barnehagepedagogikken skal vitne om likestilling mellom kjønna. Barnehagen skal oppdra barn til å møte og skape eit likestilt samfunn. Barnehagen skal byggje verksemda si på prinsippet om likestilling mellom dei to kjønna. Både gutar og jenter skal bli sedde og høyrde, og dei skal bli oppmuntra til i fellesskap å delta i alle aktivitetar i barnehagen.

Personalet må reflektere over sine eigne haldningar og kva samfunnet ventar av gutar og jenter.

Det er viktig å fremje forvaltaransvaret for natur og kultur og ansvaret for livet og helsa til andre menneske allereie i barnehagen. Forståinga for ei berekraftig utvikling skal fremjast i dagleglivet. Respekten for liv er grunnleggjande.

Nestekjærleik og solidaritet er grunnsteinar i kulturen vår. Toleranse og respekt skal vere grunnleggjande verdiar i barnehagen. Det er veldig viktig at barna opplever varme og kjærleik i barnehagen. I barnegruppa kan dei utvikle solidaritet med andre barn. Innleving i situasjonen til andre menneske er med på å skape nestekjærleik, solidaritet og toleranse. I eit globalt perspektiv er det svært viktig at barn utviklar nestekjærleik og solidariske haldningar.

Barnehagen skal leggje grunnlaget for livslang læring og aktiv deltaking i eit demokratisk samfunn i nær forståing og tett samarbeid med heimen til barna. Den etiske rettleiinga barnehagen gir, må ta omsyn til kor gammalt barnet er og den kulturelle, religiøse og verdimesseige tilknytninga til heimen. Det er avgjerande å leggje arbeidet til rette for ei felles forståing for det som skjer i barnehagen. Integriteten til kvart enkelt barn og dei enkelte foreldra skal respekterast.

Personalet er rollemodellar og har dermed eit særleg ansvar for at verdigrunnlaget til barnehagen blir etterlevd i praksis. Refleksjonar over eigne verdiar og handlingar bør inngå i dei pedagogiske drøftingane til personalet. Barnehagen må systematisk vurdere om eigen praksis og barnehagekulturen bidreg til å fremje verdiane som skal ligge til grunn for barnehageverksemda. ("Rammeplan for innhaldet i og oppgåvene til barnehagen," 2006:10-12)