
Taking action for Sustainability

On their expedition the pupils started with an analysis of the historical case (Part 1) and discovered that today there are issues of sustainability in Greenland, too (Part 2). The melting Greenland ice sheet is also one of the signifiers for global climate impacts on other countries in the world. The pupils explored these impacts as well as the influence of social and economic structures on adaptive capacities (Part 3). After the journey the pupils should ask themselves: What have I learned about sustainability? How is that relevant to where I live? What can I do about the situation I encountered? Thereby they will discover connections between their local context and the other places globally. Finally they are considering the implications of their experiences for their own actions as well as for political action. (Part 4)

In a democratic market economy the role of the citizens is often characterised and discussed as either consumers of goods or engaged voters. As consumers, they can influence the living conditions in Greenland and elsewhere by taking into account sustainability aspects as a quality criteria besides price, aesthetics and functional aspects in every purchasing decision. As voters they can choose parties according to the desired political course in international cooperation. But the limits of individual action are clearly visible for both roles.

As consumers, we are dependent on the supply of sustainable products. A consistent focus on sustainability - avoiding unsustainable products - is very demanding. The search for information is time-consuming and social structures are designed in such a way that by avoiding such products the individual faces many disadvantages. Much discipline and creativity is required to act sustainably in the role of a consumer. Therefore, systemic solutions are required in which several levels interact. Sustainable individual consumption needs an appropriate supply of goods and the support of social and legal structures. In such a context, promising alternative approaches can develop and contribute to a transformation of the society.

As voters, individuals can only decide about the general course, not about single decisions. International co-operation is only one policy area amongst many that voters have to take into account. Therefore it is necessary to go beyond the roles as 'consumers' and 'voters'. Civil society can influence political decisions and check their implementation or directly implement co-operation projects with organisations in the partner country. In addition, the individual is also in demand in his/her professional role. In every company, employees are the ones who make the decisions and implement them and thus shape entrepreneurial behaviour. Further, everyone is part of social networks, in which information is passed on, and individual actions oriented towards sustainability can be strengthened or sanctioned. These are only a few examples of further roles for individual action.

Considering sustainable production and consumption patterns in shrimp and fish production in Greenland the relevance of the consumer is obvious. But the consumer choice needs to be supported by adequate companies' strategies as well as research, technical innovation, political regulations and their control by civil society. The stocks of Arctic Ocean prawns in East Greenland and the Northwest Atlantic have decreased and there are no signs of a recovery, while the Northeast Arctic stocks are considered to be "healthy". In the mid-70s cod in East Greenland was heavily overfished. Today, the biomass is increasing slowly, but the quantities permitted for fishing are still too high. Due to its affiliation with Denmark, Greenland was a member of the European Community. As a result, European deep-sea fleets fished intensively in the waters of Greenland. However, in a 1985 referendum, Greenland voted to leave the European Community to gain control over fishing activities in the sea surrounding Greenland. The Greenland self-rule now regulates catches through self-imposed limits. Nevertheless, these quotas regularly exceed the amount recommended by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The present partnership

fishing agreement between the EU and Greenland sets catch amounts and fees for the various types of fish. In addition, the EU makes a financial contribution, which aims to promote sustainable fishing in the partner country. Fishing is only one field of international cooperation with Greenland and the EU involved. On the more general level, the current EU strategy paper for the sustainable development of Greenland 2014-2020 focuses on sustainable economic growth. It is emphasised in the EU's Agenda for Change that inclusive and sustainable economic growth is crucial to long-term poverty reduction. In order to create sustainable and inclusive growth a larger part of the population needs to obtain educational qualifications for employment in order to contribute to, and have a share in, future growth. Therefore financial support is granted in the field of education and training. But the focus on economic growth is not the only option. Although the policy recommendations of the Inuit Circumpolar Council stress the need to strengthen the economy, too, it also stresses the need to ensure the protection of the environment, the continuance and growth of the subsistence economy for both economic and cultural reasons as well as the benefit for the respective local community. Economic coercion must not be used to compel Arctic communities to accept harmful and undesirable development projects. Multinational corporations and others involved in Arctic economic development must respect all applicable aspects of the overall Inuit Arctic Policy.

During the last decades, an increasing numbers of private and state actors as well as multinational organisations (e.g. OECD, UNDP/UNEP) are making international cooperation increasingly complex. Diverging concepts of sustainable development are typical. In addition, governments have to consider not only sustainable development in the partner countries. For the European Union, access to raw materials is considered critical for its own economic development. This may lead to contradictions between desired local environmental and social protection measures (e.g. in Greenland) with other political interests. Taking action for sustainability therefore always demands the negotiation of interests between the different actors.

Structure of the exercises

The following section contains three exercises:

	Method	Outcome	Min.
O	On the trail of Greenland fish to our table	Differentiated view on responsibilities of politics, science, producers, retailers and consumers for sustainable consumption and production patterns	120 min
P	Roleplay: EU and Greenland, working towards a common future	Reflection on the interrelation of different sustainability goals and strategies to meet these goals	150 min
Q	Summary of learning - Using concept maps as a plenary activity	Overview about the topics addressed in the expedition and their relations	50 min

These activities do not have to be used in a sequence. If they are used in a sequence, we recommend the following narrative:

- **General introduction**

As we have seen in the example of Greenland and Tuvalu, climate change in combination with other factors such as economic marginalization and cultural change threatens the livelihood of local communities around the world. What consequences can we draw from our expedition? What can we do for sustainability?

- **Introduction for exercise O**

The production of fish and shrimps is crucial for the Greenlandic economy and has a considerable impact on the environment. What does this mean for us as consumers? Who is responsible for creating sustainable structures in the fish market?

- **Introduction for exercise P**

How can the European Union/ our country support sustainable development in Greenland besides the already discussed sustainable fish production and consumption? What are the impacts of different strategies of cooperation for the people in Greenland and for us in Europe

- **Introduction for exercise Q**

Now the expedition is finished. Let's summarise our learning results.

Literature

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- Inuit Circumpolar Council (2010): "Inuit Arctic Policy"
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