

LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY : A CASE FOR DIVERSITY- an inter-generational approach

Dr Katerina Nicolopoulou
Associate Member DECERE, UEA
Visiting Fellow, Kingston University

Contact email: knicolopoulou@hotmail.com

Sustainability has been the overarching framework for CSR in theoretical as well as and managerial debates. In the heart of sustainability lies the notion of longevity and continuity, particularly from the point of view of inheriting from past generations as well as bequeathing to future generations. As the green tenet has it 'we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children'. Sustainability does not only refer to environmental concerns, but to all those capitals (social, economic, manufactured, aesthetic) that envelop social and business activity.

The present track is interested in unraveling aspects of sustainability that address diversity from the point of view of different generations: what can be learned from the past, what can be predicted on the basis of the future and the extent to which these are addressing issues of diversity. Key actors in these activities would be human agents of different generations, such as the elderly and the young as two ends in a continuum of generational options. Debates around inclusion of the aging baby boomers, the maturing generation X and the up and coming generation Y are relevant to this topic. From within a cross-cultural perspective, the dialogue between indigenous and organized (scientific) knowledge are also relevant, as such schemas constitute vectors for knowledge transfer that are embedded within socio-political and economic structures in a way that propagates the above. Finally, relevant debates would include the extent to which such different voices use different tools, debates, discourses and frameworks to situate sustainability in their thinking, practice and action.

Relevant questions would include:

- How can inter-generational differences best be conceptualized within the diversity debates?
- How can diversity be best conceptualized as a tool for a learning approach to sustainability and the creation of relevant mechanisms to propagate sustainability as a concept and practice?
- What are the most effective managerial interventions and the most useful theoretical frameworks in order to conceptualise sustainability from within an inter-generational learning perspective?
- What are best practices and most critical debates that can be showcased and analysed as a knowledge transfer tool/framework for the above?

Keywords: sustainability, learning, intergenerational, knowledge transfer, diversity