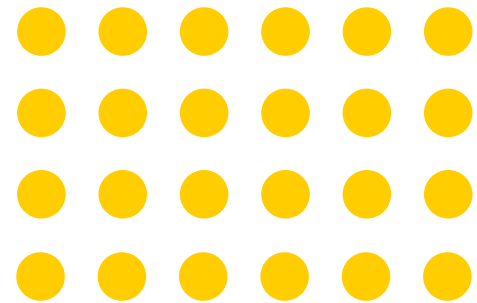


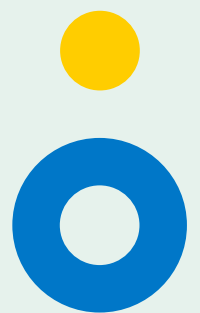
# Sustainability is (also) about solidarity

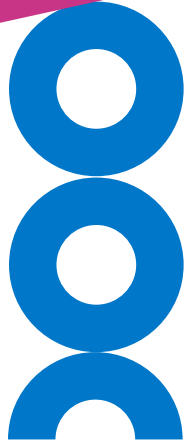


**A holistic approach towards  
sustainable practices within  
European Solidarity Corps  
projects.**



SUSTAINABILITY • SOLIDARITY • PEOPLE •  
SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY • PRACTICES •  
PLANET • PROSPERITY





## Marzena Ples

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Sociologist, consultant, researcher, educator, facilitator, non-formal learning enthusiast, RPG and board games fan. She has been implementing projects for and with young people and youth workers mainly in the EU countries, Eastern European and Caucasus and Central Asia regions since 2011. She was involved in the development of various educational tools. Her main areas of interest are intercultural education, quality in youth work, youth participation, learning mobility, volunteering, conflicts transformation and mediation.



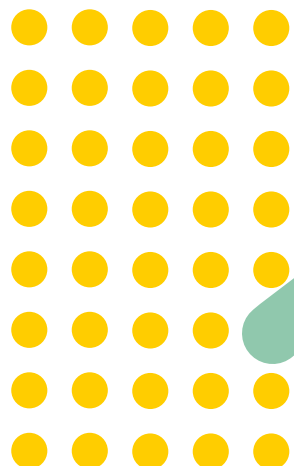
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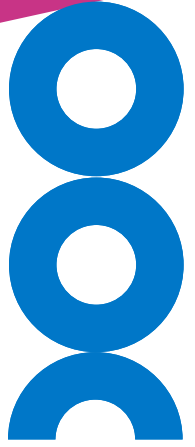
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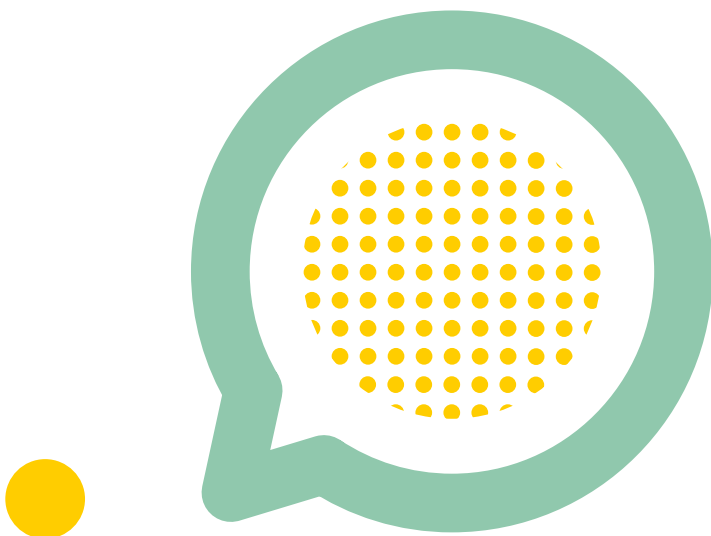


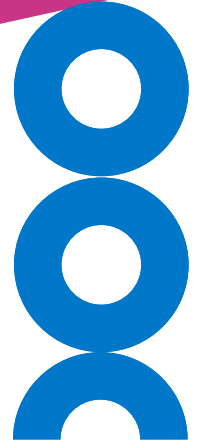
## ABSTRACT

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The article aims to illustrate links between sustainability and solidarity concepts in the context of the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) Programme. Primarily it describes a holistic approach towards sustainability by explaining a brief history of the term and presenting its three main dimensions: environmental, social and economic. Secondly, it argues that ESC is based on a social sustainability concept. It also studies how ESC beneficiaries interpret and understand sustainability, mainly focusing on environmental aspects and the lasting effect of their projects. This article makes the case that more attention should be given to the social aspect of sustainability of ESC projects, which is directly linked with the concept of solidarity.

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## 1. Introduction

Sustainability and the climate crisis are urgent topics these days. They are crucial for young people, who often address it on every possible occasion as they are the ones who will feel their effects in future. There are more and more youth movements and organisations tackling these issues and organising activities to raise awareness in society.

The research report “Youth Stand for the future of Europe” shows that 79% of young people who filled in the survey pointed to Climate change and the environment as a top priority for the European Union, and this is the highest-rated priority in a recent study (Magapoulou and Panagiotidou 2021).

At the policy level, as a result of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, the eleven European Youth Goals were created. Among them is a Sustainable Green Europe.

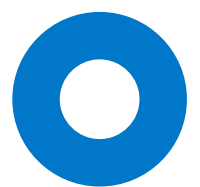
Introducing a new priority Environmental protection, sustainable development and climate action in the European Solidarity Corps programme reflected unease among practitioners regarding their practices. Among them are the following questions: Are our projects sustainable? What does it mean to run sustainable activities/projects/organisations? Are we really such great polluters? What impact do our projects have on the environment? As a small organisation can we be sustainable? How could we contribute towards sustainability?

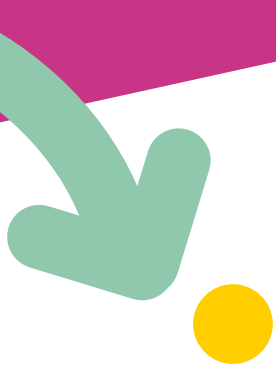
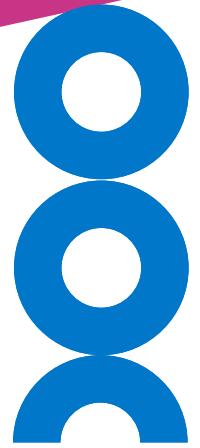
To understand it, organisations started developing guidelines, checklists and tools to help implement more green and sustainable activities. “T-Kit 13. Sustainability and Youth Work” (Keen 2018), “Greening the youth sector: Sustainability checklist for youth organisations” (Tuménaitė 2021) and “Greening Youth Information Services” (Firth et al. 2020) provide a series of recommendations, examples and practical hints on implementing sustainable practices in a learning mobility context.

This paper aims to reflect on the link between solidarity and sustainability in the European Solidarity Corps programme context. It also illustrates how ESC beneficiaries interpret sustainability.

## 2. Understanding sustainability: Three pillars. Hotch-potch of definitions.

Even today, after decades of discussions, sustainability is still a contestable term. The debates around it started in the 1960s; however, defining sustainability is still tricky. In various contexts, it is understood differently. Definitions are not coherent, and the meaning shifts from one policy or research document to the next (Bárta and Ples 2021). Moreover, there are issues with translations and the meaning of this term in various languages. There are languages where sustainability does not





have an exact translation and only the term “sustainable development” is used (for example, in Polish “zrównoważony rozwój” means sustainable development, however it also translates as sustainability as there is no direct equivalent for this). In some languages and theories, sustainability and sustainable development are synonyms, whereas some scientists debate their differences. Sustainability is commonly understood as the existence of humankind and the natural world in harmony, whereas sustainable development is a process moving towards sustainability (Keen 2018). Much criticism has arisen around those terms, however, as a debate about them is not the purpose of this article, both of them will be treated equally in this article.

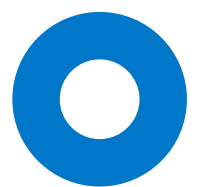
The most known explanation of it comes from the “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future” (widely known as The Brundtland report) which defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”(UN General Assembly 1987). This definition is not specific and somewhat vague, yet still cited in most publications tackling this topic.

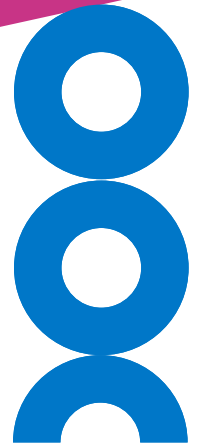
At the same time, the same report declared that “what is needed now is a new era of economic growth - growth that is forceful and at the same time socially and environmentally sustainable” (Ibidem). In other words, sustainability requires a



sound environment, a just society and a healthy economy. The Brundtland report exposed for the first time the three dimensions of sustainability. Which was later utilised as a base for the so-called Triple Bottom Line concept (Elkington 1999). According to this theory, all three dimensions should be balanced to have sustainable development: environmental, social and economic. All three are essential to a sustainable society and transition towards such a society.

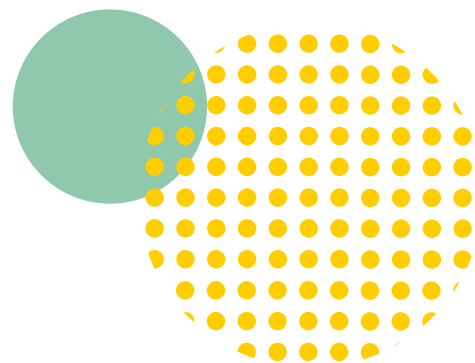
The Triple Bottom Line concept was created in the 1990s; however, it is still surprisingly up to date. New approaches towards sustainability are based on economic, social, and environmental dimensions (e.g. people, planet, profit). Over time





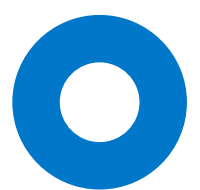
researchers added other “Ps” like power, participation, and prosperity; however it was debated whether those dimensions are included in already existing ones.

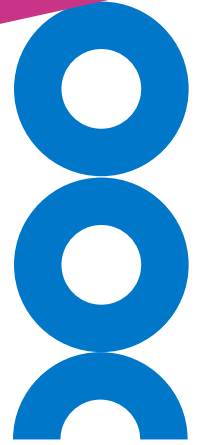
Some scientists were underlining the priority of one or another dimension. And indeed, the triple bottom line of sustainability causes several challenges as all three dimensions, in reality, are not equal. Most of the power and ability to influence the other two is consolidated in the economic sphere. On the other hand, if the environmental pillar stops existing (which environmental activists often foresee if we do not take appropriate actions in the face of the climate crisis), the other two will also disappear. But at the same time, what is happening in the environmental pillar is a consequence of the other two. To impact the environment, changes in society and the economy are necessary. None of these dimensions exists in a vacuum. They are connected and influence each other. In fact, there are a few overriding mechanisms of destruction of the environmental and social system, which symptoms we can observe (e.g. climate change, poverty, erosion of trust, inequalities and many others), which are all rooted in unsustainable practices. “Although some problems are noted and recognised, they may not be seen as sustainability problems, but rather as ‘ordinary’ environmental and societal problems that can be dealt with later or even accepted as a ‘cost’ that is outweighed by the ‘benefit’ gained from the ongoing practices” (Robert 2017 p.5).



Despite each of the dimensions focusing on a different aspect of sustainability, implementing any measures within one cannot be done without influencing the other two. Without taking all of them into consideration, it is tough to practise sustainability in any context. While many discussions in the youth field focus on the necessary and crucial environmental aspect of sustainability, it is essential to be aware of all three: environment, society and economy and how they interlink and influence each other. In the international youth field, sustainability should also be understood holistically by reflecting on causes.

From the perspective of the third sector and youth work, Disendorf’s definition is especially interesting. He stated that “sustainable development comprises types of economic and social development that protect and enhance the natural environment and social equity” (Disendorf 2000). This broad definition admits three aspects of sustainability; however ecological and social are





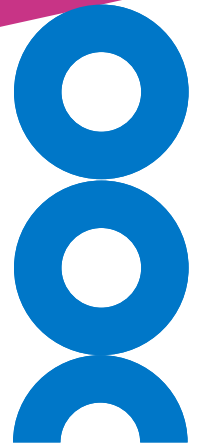
primary. Development is understood as improvements and doesn't require economic growth. It is a definition that corresponds to the meaning of solidarity and fits into the practice of international youth work. It can be utilised mainly in the European Solidarity Corps programme, which "brings together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal and humanitarian challenges. It offers an inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop and provides a single entry point for such solidarity activities throughout the Union and beyond" (European Solidarity Corps Programme guide 2022 pp.6).

Currently, rather than define sustainability, scientists try to propose frameworks, guiding structures, "principled sustainability boundaries", or conditions for this term to show a continuum that can be adjusted to the expectations and needs of particular groups or places. One of the examples is a Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD), which "was designed to promote a thorough understanding of both the full scope of the sustainability challenge and the related opportunities" (Broman and Robèrt 2017 pp.6). This approach encourages groups, organisations, and communities to practise sustainability in a participatory way tailored to their contexts within these boundaries. It would be particularly beneficial for ESC organisations, whose activities impact local communities.

### 3. Social sustainability

As mentioned before, sustainability is not only about addressing environmental issues. Still, undoubtedly, this aspect is critical. Although the concept of sustainability originally included the human element, it was neglected for decades. Focusing on environmental issues and "economic growth" failed to generate a positive change and led to renewed interest in the social pillar (Dixon, Perkins and Vallance 2011). A human aspect is necessary to maintain environmental sustainability. It is based on the collective knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of people who directly impact the environment. "Social capital relates to human resources and the importance of each person in the big picture of sustainability" (Bačlija Knoch, Gonçalves and Nicodemi 2022 pp. 74). It's the people who make the decisions. Through everyday life, they decide about themselves, their families, local communities and their contribution to a sustainable society. All individuals and groups are connected through various interrelationships and form social structures. These unique systems are complex, constantly changing and adapting. Solidarity is a key to any collective organisation, especially social structure. Researchers identified five aspects that help these systems sustain: trust, common meaning, diversity, capacity for learning and capacity for self-organisation (Broman, Missimer and Robèrt 2017a). The social pillar of sustainability, also named social sustainability or socially equitable development (Disendorf 2020)

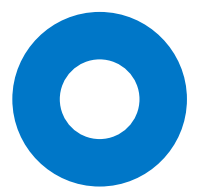
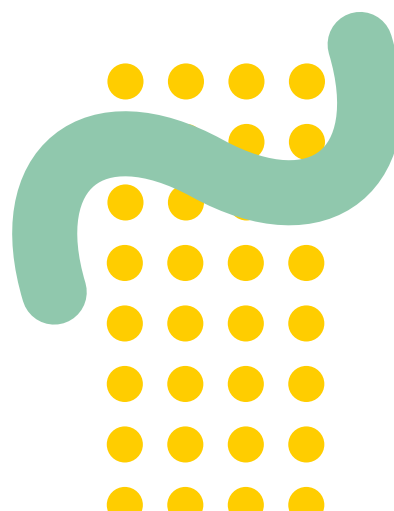




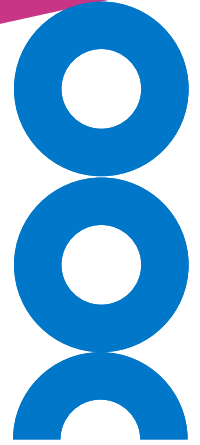
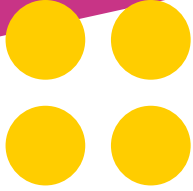
brings a human dimension. It spans many topics, from basic human needs and quality of life to the political organisation of communities and societies. It underlines a range of human rights: social, economic, civil, political, cultural, and environmental. Social sustainability could be understood as “the measure of human welfare” (Mohsen, Mohamed, Paleologos 2021). In a socially sustainable society, people are not subject to structural obstacles to health, influence, competence, impartiality and meaning-making. (Broman, Missimer and Robert 2017b, Robert 2015). Social sustainability is about sustaining social systems (Missimer 2015).

A threefold scheme was developed to illustrate social sustainability. It comprises the following components: “development sustainability”, which addresses basic needs, equity and social justice, “bridge sustainability”, which focuses on changing the behaviours that lead towards achieving the environmental goals once these basic needs are met and “maintenance sustainability” - keeping and preserving socio-cultural patterns and practices in the context of social and economic changes (Dixon, Perkins and Vallance 2011). This theory presupposes the participatory approach towards changes while simultaneously keeping standards and characteristics based on groups' and social systems' needs under principled boundary conditions of sustainability. This model can be utilised in European Solidarity Corps projects and organisations can decide whether they cover one component,

two or all three. Dealing with just one suffices for social sustainability purposes, however adding the other brings further benefits. Development sustainability refers to the needs that a project addresses. Social sustainability in this context is often linked with social capital, social cohesion and social exclusion; it addresses and challenges poverty and inequalities (Ibidem.) The majority of ESC projects tackle these issues to some extent. Bridge sustainability includes all practices in the field regarding greening the youth sector and promoting ‘eco-friendly’ behaviours. Raising awareness about the climate crisis and environmental issues among all members of society is a task that more and more ESC projects undertake. In contrast, maintenance sustainability is about continuation, a legacy of the practices and long-lasting impact but, at the same time, the preservation of the important features and traditions. It is about heritage and keeping the balance between new and old. Maintenance sustainability is connected with community work, however is affected by global changes like migration or technology transitions.







It is important to remember that all these three components of social sustainability are about people, their values, attitudes and choices. The European Solidarity Corps programme is based on social sustainability, perhaps primarily so; it is in its roots and design. ESC projects, as well as social sustainability, tackle equality, democracy, social justice, community resilience, and adaptation to environmental challenges. It is about community work, participation, social, and equality; however, often, organisations do not connect these practices with sustainability concepts. Thus, a broader understanding of this term is needed.

## 4. Solidarity and Sustainability

Solidarity is one of six principles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, however the concept of it is not well defined. It is understood differently depending on the countries and contexts. Solidarity is a social principle and in common understanding means a “support by one person or group of people for another because they share feelings, opinions, aims, etc.” (Oxford Dictionary). However, it goes beyond just support and leads towards unitedness in a society.

The concept of solidarity was introduced by one of the fathers of sociology, Émile Durkheim in 1893, who pointed out that organic solidarity (the one present in modern societies) requires the interdependence of people and their complementary in a

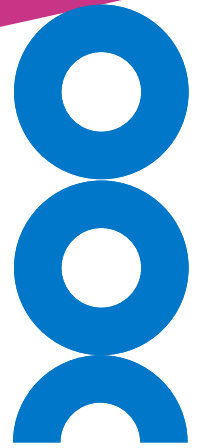
society. Solidarity, according to him, is based on the reliance of group members on their performance in each of their tasks, which is a condition for societal development (Durkheim 1964). Or, in modern terms, it is a way to make societies sustainable.

Since then sociology has not paid much attention to this concept, even though in the twenty-first century this word has been used frequently in various discourses. One of the explanations of this could be that it is difficult to define and measure solidarity. “In essence, solidarity is the feeling of reciprocal sympathy and responsibility amongst members of a group which promotes mutual support. As such it has subjective and emotional elements, and this helps to explain its conceptual neglect” (Wilde 2007).

Solidarity requires a recognition that the group interests need commitment from everybody. And sometimes, they go beyond individual interests, which might be compromised. One may be tempted to assume that solidarity is a prerequisite for sustainability. Working towards sustainability is a collective effort towards a sound environment, a just society, and a healthy economy, and solidarity is necessary to maintain this process.

The study “4Thought for Solidarity” (Bačlija Knoch and Nicodemi 2020), which became a reference point for understanding solidarity recently in the context of the ESC programme, proposed a framework analysing this term. There are four main





concepts related to solidarity: human rights, empathy, active citizenship and inclusion; and they are all reflected in the social sustainability context as well. Furthermore, social sustainability relates to seven supporting ideas of solidarity: support, active participation, equalities of opportunities, strengthening communities, social justice, volunteering and responsibility.

Sustainability itself was not a part of the initial mapping of the concept of solidarity, however the authors of "Thought for Solidarity" underline that it emerged strongly during data collection. They put forward a thesis that "it really requires thinking on the humanitarian level (level of all humankind) and possibly even beyond. 'Beyond' includes other living beings and the planet as a whole. 'Beyond' in looking towards the future and understanding what acts of solidarity we need to do now in order to influence the future. 'Beyond' in seeing solidarity not just with the people of today but with the people of the future" (Nicodemi p.108). The authors emphasise the necessity of solidarity with future generations, which supports preventing crises and acting before something happens. It requires focusing not on the effect but the cause. And this depends upon an understanding of global and structural changes in all sustainability dimensions and a holistic approach. "Whatever positive change has been provoked, it must also be maintained and preserved in the future." (Nicodemi p. 111). Sustainability is a moral consideration, as is

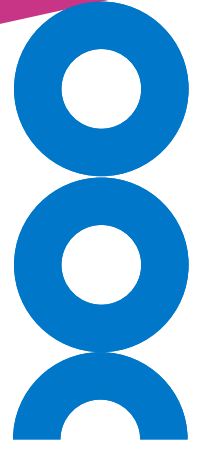
solidarity, and it aims at a peaceful and just world. As mentioned, sustainability can be understood as solidarity with present and future generations.

## 5. Sustainability and European Solidarity Corps Programme

The priority "Environmental protection, sustainable development and climate action" for the European Solidarity Corps Programme was introduced within a new financial framework in 2021 to contribute towards the global response to climate crises.

Since then, it has become one of the most widely promoted of the main priorities. Unfortunately, up until now, it was not explained in detail. At the moment the focus of the Programme is put on environmental aspects rather than on sustainability as a whole. Beneficiaries might read in the Programme Guide that "The European Solidarity Corps can make a meaningful contribution to the Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges. To contribute to the European Green Deal, the Programme aims at integrating green practices into all projects and activities as well as promoting environmentally sustainable and responsible behaviour among participants and participating organisations". (European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide pp.9). But what is their understanding of this priority?





*"Sustainability is the responsible management of the project and stabilisation. It is also about the environment."*

Anonymous ESC project coordinator



Around 80 ESC coordinators and project team members met at SoliDare event<sup>1</sup>, held in Timisoara, Romania in September 2022, to discuss burning topics around the programme. Sustainability was one of the topics widely discussed and called out as one of the more difficult challenges. It raised a lively discussion that divided participants into two arguing with each other. The first group was purely focused on the environment, whereas the second one was on sustainable (long-lasting) practices and funding.

The ten interviews I conducted during the SoliDare event with ESC project coordinators seem to confirm the thesis that the social part of sustainability is not widely acknowledged or recognised among ESC organisations. None of the ESC coordinators I spoke to directly mentioned the people's dimension concerning sustainability. Only one of them linked sustainability with inclusion after a couple of leading questions. This brief exercise shows that,

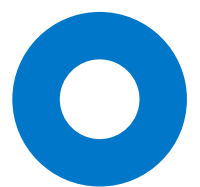
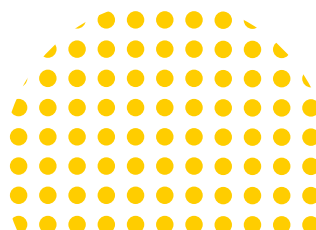
*"Sustainability can't be divided from the environment. Preparing environmentally sensible projects it is a way to make them sustainable."*

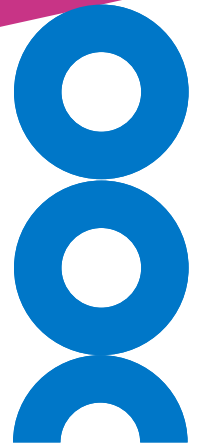
Anonymous ESC project coordinator

sadly, there is no acknowledgement of social sustainability among ESC beneficiaries, even though most of them, and even I would risk the thesis that all of them, practise social sustainability in their ESC projects daily.

Another interesting conclusion from this short research is that there appear to be two main trends in understanding sustainability in the ESC context.

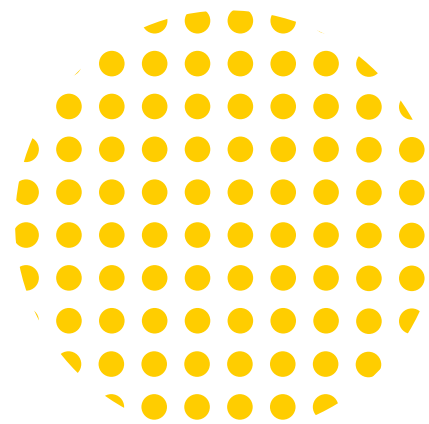
<sup>1</sup> SoliDARE is a European meeting platform for organisations implementing projects in the Solidarity Corps Programme frame. It gathers coordinators, educators, mentors, coaches and project team members involved in volunteering and solidarity projects to create a community of stakeholders and to discuss urgent issues related to the Programme. In 2022 SoliDare was hosted by the Romanian National Agency.





*"At the political level they [EC] had to do something as there are EU commitments towards international institutions so they had to include that dimension in everything they do. Which is fair, however at our level we need to think how to apply this in our work, as after all we are not an environmental organisation. We help young people to find their path through volunteering activities. But in order to cope with this we include small steps, activities to show this green dimension like recycling, advocacy etc."*

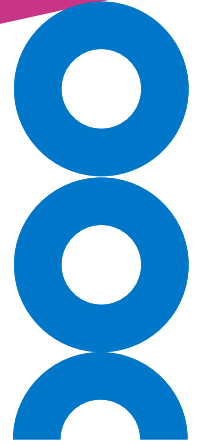
Anonymous ESC project coordinator



The first one is purely based on climate change and environmental protection (environmental sustainability). Organisations have different attitudes towards it. Some of them have already introduced extensive measures to make their project greener. Some of them struggle and are confused. They acknowledge the importance of it and raise some standards. Still, at the same time, they feel they have insufficient knowledge and practical skills in greening their projects, are not empowered enough to do so and experience political pressure and uncertainty regarding this priority. For some, it is yet another thing to "tick" in the application form.

The second understanding concerns the reflection on sustainable practices and how to ensure their duration, especially now when organisations struggle with funding due to inflation and economic crisis and the budget for ESC projects has suddenly become inadequate in many countries. The funding has become a significant obstacle to the sustainability of the ESC organisations and their projects. They are concerned that the quality of the projects has to be compromised to "pay the bills" and are preparing yet another petition to the European Commission to increase the unit rates for organisational costs and individual support in the programme, which have been at the same level for many years. This understanding of sustainability could be linked with the economic pillar.





Coordinators complained that in the past they must have developed new activities and ideas every time they apply for funding instead of using previous successful practices. It is a significant obstacle to making those practices sustainable and this approach is time and energy-draining. This problem was expected to be solved by the Quality Label system. Once awarded with the Quality Label, organisations were supposed to have funding guaranteed. However, applying for the Quality Label requires strategic thinking about the development of the organisations for many years ahead. Often especially small organisations don't have capacity to do so. Furthermore, practice showed that obtaining the Quality Label doesn't guarantee sufficient funding and many organisations across



*"Sustainability is having quality activities with a long lasting impact, activities that can be continued."*

Anonymous ESC  
project coordinator

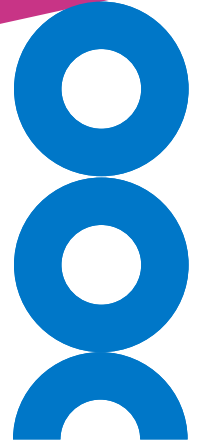


*"I understand sustainability as a parameter that we have to include in everything that we do and plan in order to make it sustainable, which means long-lasting."*

Anonymous ESC  
project coordinator

Europe received significantly smaller grants than in previous years when it depended on the quality of submitted applications. This has created even more uncertainty. At the same time, the constant introduction of new IT tools supporting the programme requires that coordinators continuously check, learn and adjust. The tools that worked well (e.g. Mobility Tool) were replaced with ones with significant bugs or simply didn't function (e.g. Beneficiary Tool). In these circumstances, it is difficult to implement sustainable projects in general.



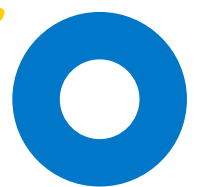
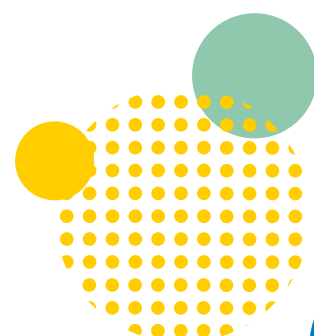


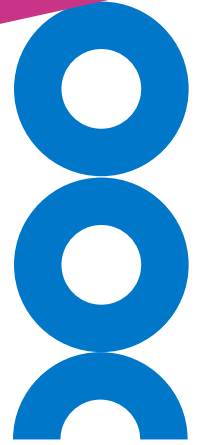
## 6. Risks of understanding sustainability in a narrow way

Although, as shown in this article, the environmental dimension of sustainability is crucial, the other two can not be omitted. In the case of focusing only on one of the aspects, there is a risk in dealing with the effects rather than the underlying causes. A holistic approach to sustainable development is needed to take full advantage of the ESC programme's potential. Organisations should reflect not only on environmental sustainability in their practice but also on social and economic ones.

Returning to our threefold scheme introduced earlier, we can try to identify all three components of social sustainability in the way representatives of ESC organisations think about them. “Bridge sustainability” is connected with all new green and environmentally-friendly measurements and practices introduced by organisations, whereas “maintenance sustainability” links with sustainable projects, sustainable funding and long-lasting activities. However, ironically the “development sustainability” is missing in this discourse. And yet this is at the core of ESC and the main sphere of activities of most ESC projects. For the record, “development sustainability” is about fulfilling needs, social justice, and combating inequalities and is strongly linked with solidarity. Yet it is not included in the understanding of sustainability among practitioners focussing on bridge sustainability and maintenance sustainability.

Neglecting sustainability's social and economic aspects in the European Youth Programmes like European Solidarity Corps or Erasmus+ might lead to negative effects. It may cause an underestimation of the efforts of the beneficiary organisations, especially in the social sustainability sphere and undermine the results of some of the projects, which are not aimed at tackling environmental issues. It may simply make green practices the “next thing on your to-do list” without sufficient reflection. In discussions with ESC project coordinators, some have already admitted that they feel





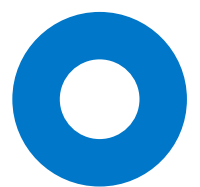
overwhelmed with various greening requirements. Some feel guilty that volunteers travelled by plane to participate in a project. And of course, it would be beneficial if everyone could travel by train and - indeed - participants should be encouraged to do it, however reality doesn't allow it in many cases. Sustainable practices are wider and more complex than green travel, which has widespread support in the youth sector. Focusing only on the environmental aspect of sustainability might compromise the concept of solidarity in the programme. As mentioned before, solidarity is strongly connected with the "people" aspect of sustainability, inclusion and support towards others. Without taking into consideration this dimension, a positive impact on the environment won't be full. It is people who make decisions, including those related to the environment and without awareness of all aspects of sustainability, these decisions won't be beneficial for the planet. They would focus on the effect, not the cause.

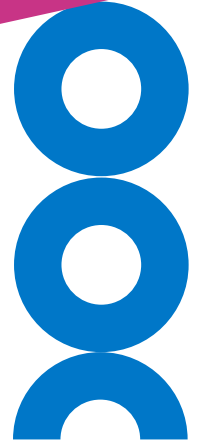
Practitioners should make conscious decisions regarding their sustainable practices based on knowledge and context. Small steps based on various checklists would help organisations gradually make and keep their practices sustainable. However, it doesn't mean that they should immediately implement all of these measures. It should be a process very much dependent on the local situation and circumstances with keeping in mind "maintenance sustainability", which is also about preserving important traditions important for the social systems and smaller groups.

However, at the same time, the social sustainability and impact on local communities should be underlined and exposed. There are already plenty of tools helping prepare more environmentally friendly projects, and organisations have started using them; however, a holistic approach is missing.

## 7. Towards sustainability in ESC. Conclusions

Sustainability tackles a fundamental question concerning human condition in general. It aims at maintaining healthy societies and preserving the environment for current and future generations. The framework of the ESC programme gives organisations and local communities a unique opportunity to practise sustainability in all its aspects. Each ESC project can be seen as a "sustainable ecosystem", where all pillars of sustainability should be considered. Public funding is spent on projects that impact local communities by addressing their needs and practising solidarity and sustainability. Some of the projects will directly tackle the environmental crisis, raise awareness about green practices or even lobby for change in this field. Some of them will focus on social sustainability while introducing step-by-step some green processes within the organisation. ESC projects devoted to climate protection and environmental topics would contribute towards sustainability as well as human rights, inclusion equality and social concerns. Sustainable approaches are a part of





conscious choices. All youth work practices link to sustainability, as decisions are connected to and impact all three dimensions. All these practices are very valuable for volunteers, participants, organisations and local communities.

At the same time it is challenging to define a common understanding of sustainability in the ESC context. With Ondrej Barta we attempted to define sustainability and learning mobility in an exploratory study (Bárta and Ples 2021). Our understanding of it can be utilised in the relation to ESC. “Sustainability in ESC projects means aligning operations of a given organisation on the procedural level with environmental, social, and economic sustainability principles. In other words, sustainable organisations need to ensure that processes within the organisation, including implementation of ESC projects, are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable”.<sup>2</sup> (Ibidem) With this simple definition we encourage organisations to reflect on all three pillars of sustainability in relation to their projects and, from there, to introduce solutions and measures to make them more sustainable. Procedural alignment is the first step in how ESC organisations can practise sustainability and, in many cases, it would be sufficient.

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<sup>2</sup> Initially this definition was used in the context of learning mobility, however it perfectly fits into the foundation of the European Solidarity Corps Programme. Volunteering projects are learning mobility projects, whereas Solidarity projects, although are not based on mobility, give an opportunity to practice sustainability with young people at all levels.

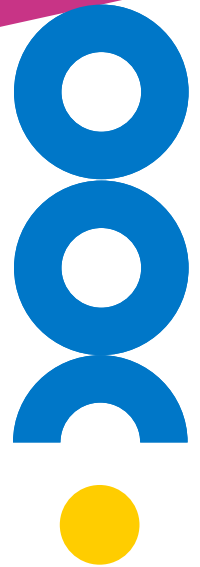
Some organisations introduce activities focused on sustainability principles and some even become activists. All these approaches are good examples. However, further research and sharing of good practices are needed.

The article showed the importance of seeing sustainability as a broad concept. A holistic approach that includes environmental, social and economic aspects, opens up possibilities for actions, prompts reflection on the causes and effects of current issues, and enables us to focus more on the particular contexts of our projects. Concerning ESC, recognition and appreciation of the social sustainability aspect are needed. This human factor makes the ESC programme a distinctive one, affecting local communities, tackling the needs of young people and changing their lives, influencing future generations. Thus sustainability is about solidarity.

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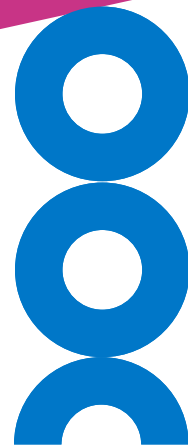
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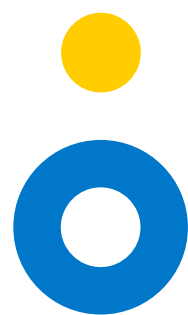
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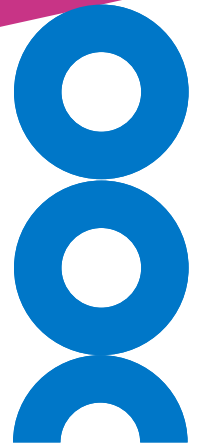
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SALTO ESC supports National Agencies and organisations in the youth field and beyond with the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps programme. The mission is to explore the potential of solidarity as a core value in European societies and to promote the use of the European Solidarity Corps as a tool for understanding and living solidarity. SALTO ESC coordinates networking activities, training, seminars and events that will support the quality implementation of the programme and maximise its impact. By doing this, SALTO ESC contributes to building a European Solidarity Corps community of organisations.

SALTO ESC is hosted by OeAD. The OeAD is the national agency for the implementation of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps in Austria. SALTO ESC is part of a European network of SALTO Resource Centres with the mission to improve the quality and impact of the EU youth programmes as well as to support and develop European youth work.

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## EUROPE TALKS SOLIDARITY

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This article is part of “Europe talks Solidarity” – a series of events and publications that offers a platform for the exploration of the concept of Solidarity, initiated by SALTO ESC. The discussion on Solidarity benefits from inputs from a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. However, the opinions and views expressed in the articles in this series do not necessarily reflect those of SALTO ESC.

2022 was the European Year of Youth. Therefore with this third round of articles SALTO ESC was looking for perspectives on Solidarity and Youth.

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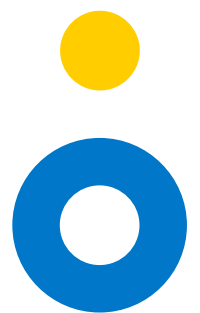
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