

Social representations of 'education for sustainable development for 2030' of teachers at secondary public schools in Cameroon
Rappresentazioni sociali dell'educazione allo sviluppo sostenibile per il 2030' degli insegnanti delle scuole secondarie pubbliche di Yaoundé (Camerun)

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ABSTRACT

This study shows that education for sustainable development in public establishments in the city of Yaoundé/Cameroon remains strongly weakened by the lack of structured knowledge of teachers on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, education for sustainable development for the period 2020-2030 can only be of obvious interest if it is socially recognized and promoted in schools by the competent authorities.

Questo studio mostra che l'educazione allo sviluppo sostenibile nelle scuole secondarie pubbliche della città di Yaoundé/Camerun rimane fortemente indebolita dalla mancanza di una conoscenza strutturata degli insegnanti sugli obiettivi dello sviluppo sostenibile. In questo contesto, l'educazione allo sviluppo sostenibile per il periodo 2020-2030 non può che essere di evidente interesse se socialmente riconosciuta e promossa nelle scuole dalle autorità competenti.

KEYWORDS

Education for sustainable development (ESD), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Social representations (SR), Teachers, Secondary education, Yaoundé
Sviluppo sostenibile, Educazione allo sviluppo sostenibile (ESD), Obiettivi di sviluppo sostenibile (SDG), Rappresentazioni sociali (RS), Insegnanti, Istruzione secondaria, Yaoundé

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1. Introduction

The planetary context is nowadays confronted with urgent and dramatic challenges that are the result of the modifications and intense transformations brought to ecosystems by the lifestyle of human beings. The current situation of our planet is leading to permanent global warming if nothing is done to prevent it from reaching catastrophic levels. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) under the leadership of UNESCO can be the educational answer to forge awareness and behavioral change for a responsible lifestyle. Indeed, achieving the objectives of sustainable development throughout the world is only possible if individuals and societies change their way of thinking and acting. Education is essential to bring about this transformation of mindsets and to help citizens find solutions to the challenges of neoliberal development. Esoh Elamé and David (2008) propose intercultural education for sustainable development as a didactic approach to transform the current state of educational practices. However, it is clear that African schools are struggling to implement policies for the profound transformation of didactic and pedagogical practices and good school governance. There is a lack of a holistic approach within an intercultural perspective, the aim of which is to contribute to the individual and collective transformation of each African citizen so that he or she opts for a lifestyle that is sober, respectful of the environment and sensitive to the dialogue between civilizations and cultures.

Achieving the objectives of sustainable development in African countries begins first and foremost with education. Education is the key to forging minds and attitudes that are sensitive to the environment and a prerequisite for dialogue between African cultures. Any holistic approach to sustainable development relies on a committed education, capable of transforming mentalities and positively impacting on environmental and intercultural transitions. Developing African countries requires a strong dynamic of change in mentalities which, beyond ideas, requires an education that is more rooted in Black African thought (Esoh Elamé, 2017). This requires moving away from instinctual schooling, which tends to prefer stability and the status quo, to a Pan-African school that drives in-depth reform of values, curricula, and specific learning objectives. To fully achieve MDGs 1 and 2 in sub-Saharan countries requires a Pan-Africanized, hard-working youth who have a mastery of technical trades to better exploit endogenous knowledge and make it the epicenter of local development.

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals requires judicious investment in education for sustainable development. The urgency of transforming the lives of individuals and national economies for sustainable development concerns all countries and challenges all educators without exception. To this end, it is more urgent for African countries, which will be home to 2.5 billion people by 2050 according to UN population projections, to begin to address in depth the link between education and sustainable development. The rapid doubling of the African population by 2050 cannot be ignored in education. It poses enormous problems of urbanization and urban planning now (Esoh Elamé, 2022). Rightly, anarchic urbanization

and sustainable urbanism deserve to be studied in depth in African schools, for example in the framework of education for sustainable development. It is the African school that is supposed to change the mindsets of young people so that they are bearers of new and convincing perspectives on urban planning, urbanization, intercultural sustainable cities (Esoh Elamé, 2016, p. 1). It is the responsibility of the African school to change and advance certain 'established and valid norms of society' in the field of urban development.

More than ever, African teachers deserve to be made aware of the challenges of sustainable development in both urban and rural contexts. They are called upon to build their learners' awareness of global problems on the basis of a local, contextualized analysis of daily life. African teachers are the main actors in making education a tool to promote respect for the environment, dialogue between civilizations for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, provided that school programs are oriented in this direction. While there is increasing evidence that education saves lives and transforms lives, it is important to note that initial and in-service teacher training in African countries is slow to follow this logic. The multiple mechanisms for improving education in African countries each have their own roadmap and timeframe. The operational teams of the different African education systems are dysfunctional due to power games, rigid compartmentalization of education services and the absence of a common vision.

Any society that aspires to make education for sustainable development the foundation of its education should invest in its teachers. They will be able to train informed and active citizens of the world, enlightened decision-makers of tomorrow, if they themselves have been well trained to pass on the «knowledge to be taught» in the fields of climate change and the promotion of living together. This is a key investment for a cleaner and friendlier planet that our states are struggling to put in place. We agree with Lange (2008, p. 123) that «knowing how teachers appropriate, reject or implement the Education for Sustainable Development imperative, presented as an educational priority, is a necessary prerequisite for developing a curriculum on this issue». Education for sustainable development is only legitimate if teachers, who are called upon to transmit «knowledge to be taught» in this field, are fully aware of their mission. The problem is more acute in African countries, which are struggling to make a name for themselves in favor of an education resolutely geared towards sustainable development. It is also worth noting that in sub-Saharan countries there is ambiguity and semantic confusion about education for sustainable development, to the point where it can be likened to environmental education.

To this end, if «ESD is above all a change of mindset, a different way of apprehending, seeing, understanding the world and projecting oneself into the future» (Pellaud., 2011, p. 68), there is no doubt that it is above all a matter for teachers. It is therefore obvious that it is necessary to be aware that «teachers' beliefs, their pedagogical theory, the ideological context of the school in which they work, could influence the process of didactic development» (Lange, 2008). Edu-

cation for sustainable development (ESD), as an educational approach strongly steered by UNESCO, focuses on teaching that can be disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary depending on the case, on the major development issues of our society. It enables us to understand the planet in its complexity, taking into account the existing interactions between the environment, society, the economy and the systems of thought of contemporary civilizations.

This article aims to characterize the social representations of teachers in the city of Yaounde/Cameroon on the subject of education for sustainable development. The aim is to understand whether the major societal issues of the last three decades have produced an awareness of what education for sustainable development can be among teachers in public schools in Yaoundé.

2. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2030

Education for Sustainable Development or ESD is positioned as education that accompanies the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is referred to as ESD 2030, which is the global framework for the implementation of «Education for Sustainable Development for the period 2020 – 2030». It should be recalled here that ESD 2030 builds on the lessons learned from the Global Action Program for ESD (2015 – 2019) (UNESCO, 2020, p. 14). The focus is on using ESD to promote the contribution of relevant educational content to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals for human survival and prosperity. «ESD for 2030 aims to build a more just and sustainable world by strengthening ESD and contributing to the achievement of the 17 SDGs» (UNESCO, 2017, p. 14). It is worth recalling that «ESD is an integral part of the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals, especially target 7 of SDG 4». It builds on the vision of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 2014) and the Global Action Program for ESD (2015 – 2019) (UNESCO, 2020, p. 11). In 2019, ESD 2030 was endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference at its 40th session and recognized by the UN General Assembly at its 74th session as a means of following up the Global Action Program on Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2020, p 11).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)...

«...aims to develop the skills that enable people to reflect on their own actions, taking into account their present and future social, cultural, economic and environmental consequences, at local and global levels, to act sustainably in complex situations, which can lead them to engage in new directions, and to participate in socio-political processes to move their societies towards sustainable development» (UNESCO,2017, p. 7).

The news of the last few years is a constant reminder that we need to move quickly towards a more conscientious and committed education for sustainable development in the light of the challenges the world is facing today. According to UNESCO, «ESD is

characterized by systematic and transformative education that requires rethinking the content and outcomes of learning, pedagogy and the learning context. It is not simply about integrating content such as climate change, poverty or sustainable consumption into the curriculum; it generates interactive, learner-centered teaching methods and learning environments. It involves a shift from teaching to learning» (UNESCO,2017, p. 7). Education for sustainable development aims first and foremost at the formation of the responsible citizen, who has the competence to think, understand and analyze complexity with an alert critical mind.

«It requires a pedagogy that is action-oriented and transformative, which can be characterised by aspects such as self-guided learning, participation and collaboration, problem-solving, interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity and the link between formal and informal learning. Only such pedagogical approaches allow for the acquisition of the skills needed to promote sustainable development» (UNESCO,2017, p. 7).

3. Contextual and methodological framework

The study area identified is the city of Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon with a population of over 3,200,000 (Communauté Urbaine de Yaoundé, 2019, p. 3). Our study targeted mainly secondary school teachers in public schools in the city of Yaoundé. Due to the characteristics of our target population, we opted for an empirical quota sample. Quota sampling is similar to stratified (probability) sampling since both involve grouping similar units. A total of 210 teachers were interviewed. Women represented 57% of the sample. Data collection was carried out between March 2020 and February 2021 from teachers in public schools in Yaoundé. The data were processed and analysed using Google Sheets (which is a Microsoft Excel-like software but works on the basis of an internet connection) and the office suite software (Microsoft Excel). The questionnaire consisted of items, divided into sections. The first section dealt with the teachers' perception of sustainable development. The second section dealt with the teachers' perception of the objectives of sustainable development. The third section dealt with teachers' representations of education for sustainable development.

4. Results

The concept of sustainable development, in its UN version, underwent a phase of uncertainty at the start in the 1990s, which was subsequently accompanied by an enthusiasm that has continued to grow, making it an essential concept in development policies. The concept of sustainable development is now undoubtedly facing a new challenge, which concerns the tools, means, techniques and methods to make it an operational concept for the much desired change. Sustainable development has given rise to education for sustainable development, which is cross-cutting and supposed to be carried by all school disciplines. But

what do teachers in Yaoundé public secondary schools know about education for sustainable development?

4.1 The perception of sustainable development by teachers in public secondary schools in Yaoundé

Education for sustainable development (ESD) cannot be better understood without a good grasp of the concept of sustainable development. In fact, it is the debate on sustainable development that triggers awareness of education for sustainable development. Teachers will be able to mobilise pupils and get them to act and engage in sustainable development projects if they themselves are fully aware of the issue. When asked what sustainable development is, we received several definitions from the teachers interviewed, which have been classified into five clearly identifiable categories in *Figure 1*.

- a. Definitions that are primarily related to environmental issues. In these definitions, sustainable development is equated with the environment. They represent a quarter (25%) of the definitions of sustainable development given by the secondary school teachers in Yaoundé public schools interviewed. For example, «Sustainable development is the improvement of the living conditions of populations through the rational exploitation of natural resources; sustainable development is the conservation of nature, the protection of biodiversity and natural resources; sustainable development is the conservation of natural resources; sustainable development is better management of the environment and waste; sustainable development refers to the protection of the environment; sustainable development means the transformation of the environment without destroying it; sustainable development is a development policy based on the respect and protection of the environment; sustainable development raises awareness about the protection of the environment and the equitable use of resources; sustainable development educates about the environment and its resources».
- b. Definitions that refer to the satisfaction of social needs. These represent 10% of the definitions given by the teachers interviewed. As an example, here are some of them: «Sustainable development is the improvement of the social conditions of populations; Sustainable development consists in fighting against hunger and poverty; Sustainable development is a process of social fulfilment of a population; Sustainable development is a process where man is socially fulfilled through the improvement of his living conditions; Sustainable development is the set of social actions contributing to the collective well-being of a given population; Sustainable development consists in the improvement of the social conditions of a population; It is a development which ensures the social fulfilment of populations on a daily basis».
- c. Definitions that relate to the economy. In this category, sustainable development is equated with economic prosperity. Almost 2% of the definitions of sustainable development given by the teachers interviewed are linked to economics. For example: «sustainable development is capitalist development; sustainable development is economic development that is beneficial to people in the long term; sustainable development is having an economy based on growth for well-being».
- d. Definitions that correspond to the one proposed in the Brundtland report. Nearly 23% of the teachers interviewed proposed, with one detail, the definition according to which sustainable development is «a mode of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs». These definitions include the following: «It is development that benefits both present and future generations; Development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; The use of resources for the improvement of the living environment with due regard for future generations; Development that takes into account future generations without forgetting the present; It is that type of development that cares for the present without forgetting the future (especially future generations); Sustainable development is, in my view, the optimal and reasonable use of available resources in order to benefit ourselves and our offspring».
- e. Definitions that are vague, inconsistent, imprecise and difficult to categorise. These definitions are the most numerous and show, in a way, the unpreparedness of the teachers interviewed regarding the notion of sustainable development. These definitions represent 41% of the responses. These answers, which show the unpreparedness of the teachers on the issue, are even more problematic: «I don't know, what is it? what do we develop? in a sustainable way how». Most of the images and opinions of the 41% of teachers questioned converge on the following considerations: «sustainable development is development that lasts, sustainable development I don't know what it is; sustainable development is to develop what?; what is sustainable development?; I don't understand; development of the future».

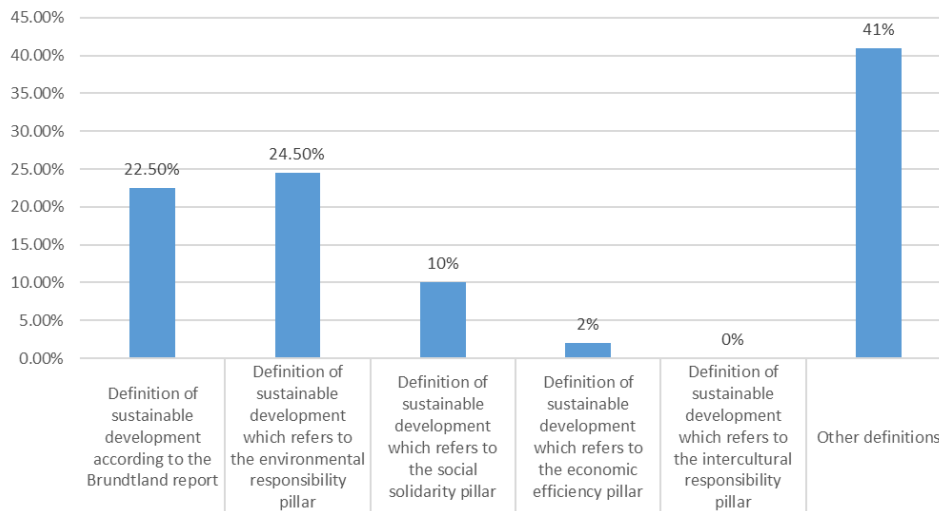


Figure 1. Ranking of definitions of sustainable development from surveys of secondary school teachers in public schools in Yaoundé (Source: Authors, field survey data, 2021).

On the basis of the definition categories obtained, it can therefore be concluded that approximately 77% of the secondary school teachers in the public schools surveyed do not know what sustainable development is. This lack of awareness on the part of the teachers interviewed obviously poses a problem of initial and in-service training. It also shows that the Cameroonian educational context lacks a consolidated, cross-cutting, well-constructed and very coherent approach to education for sustainable development. The various very approximate responses from the teachers show that the content of the school curricula is well outside the scope of education for sustainable development.

4.2 The perception of the SDGs by secondary school teachers in public schools in Yaoundé

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted at the United Nations in a context where global governance is also increasingly being questioned. The SDGs set out the path for the world to follow to build a more just and prosperous world by 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a roadmap to a better and more sustainable future for all. They respond to the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice. The goals are interconnected and, to ensure that no one is left behind, it is important to achieve each of them, and each of their targets, by 2030. Such a challenge requires that teachers themselves be made aware of the 17 SDGs. Our research shows that about 55.24% of the teachers interviewed in this research do not know what the SDGs are (Figure 2).

UNESCO (2017) reminds us that

«a key aspect of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is its universal and indivisible character. It is addressed to all countries of the world - North and South. All countries that sign up to the 2030 Agenda must align their own development efforts with the goal

of promoting prosperity while protecting the planet so that sustainable development becomes a reality. With regard to the SDGs, all countries can therefore be considered as developing countries and all must act urgently» (UNESCO, 2017, p. 6).

This means that all countries, including Cameroon, are called upon to jointly address the world's urgent challenges. However, the 2030 development agenda cannot be achieved without a fundamental change in the area of education, particularly in the sensitisation of young people to responsible citizenship. «Education can, and must, contribute to a new vision of sustainable development in the world» (UNESCO, 2017) provided that teachers are prepared to meet the challenges and aspirations of the 21st century. Those in the city of Yaoundé who work in public schools are not yet so. The sample of those we interviewed shows that 70% of the 45% of teachers in public schools in Yaoundé who know what the SDGs are do not know their exact number (Figure 2). In other words, only 30% of the 45% of our sample know that there are seventeen (17) SDGs which, it should be noted, form the keystone of the 2030 Agenda. The current global context is strongly regulated by the Agenda 2030 with its societal issues that challenge the education system. The teachers interviewed do not therefore have the knowledge to impart the relevant values to pupils in favour of sustainable, inclusive growth likely to promote peaceful cohabitation between humans. Here again, as with ESD, the content of Cameroonian school curricula only provides concrete input on the SDGs. There are certainly some teachers who make occasional interventions on the SDGs, but this is not part of an overall trend, in a regulatory framework that allows for well-developed didactic activities on the SDGs to be carried out both within and outside the compulsory timetable. These occasional and sporadic interventions affect a very limited number of students. The absence of educational actions on the SDGs derives from the fact that the Ministry of Secondary Education in Cameroon does not really prioritise them in its educational ac-

tions. This ministry does not have an ambitious policy on sustainable development and even less on the SDGs. Over the last three decades, it has not put in place clear actions to accompany the didactic and pedagogical changes of secondary schools on sustain-

able development. The objectives of sustainable development are not included in the secondary school curriculum. The latter is struggling to ensure access to quality education for all.

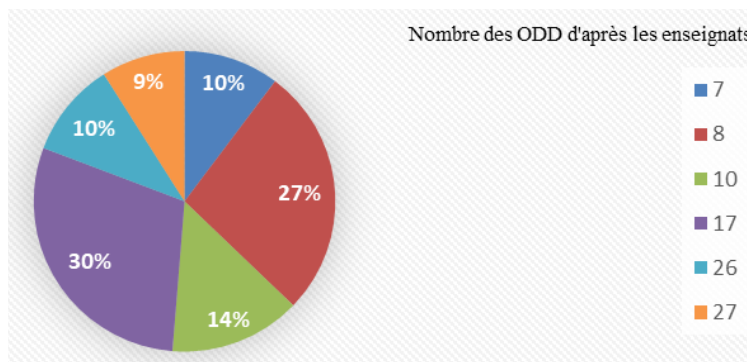


Figure 2. The number of SDGs according to public secondary school teachers interviewed in Yaoundé (Source: Authors, field survey data, 2021).

4.3 Social representations of education for sustainable development by teachers in Yaoundé public secondary schools

The current global realities dominated by the climate issues of the last two decades have made education for sustainable development a priority. This is an education for sustainable development institutionally promoted by UNESCO where the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are strongly integrated and inseparable. Based on values of solidarity, tolerance, autonomy and responsibility, ESD has an ambition based on global citizenship. It is necessary to educate young people about the environment while respecting the dialogue between cultures for a respectful and united society. This requires teachers who are aware of the importance of ESD in disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching.

In our research context, the teachers interviewed were asked to choose, in order of importance, from a sample of 30 words, the terms that they felt were directly related to sustainable development (they could choose between 5 and 10 words in order of importance):

«Culture; Cultural diversity; Dialogue between cultures; Anti-discrimination; Circular economy; Green economy; Food waste; Natural resources; Economic growth; Solar energy; Environmental degradation; Risk and natural disaster; Biodiversity Loss/Desertification; Climate Change; Ecology; Pollution; Waste; Poaching; Present Generations; Future Generations; Needs; Poverty; Famine; Injustice; Peace; Gender Equality; Human Rights; Solidarity; Living together; Unemployment; Welfare» (Source: Authors, field survey data, 2021).

The words that accumulated a percentage greater than or equal to 5% were considered as part of the central core (see Table 1). It should be remembered that the latter is made up of the non-negotiable elements that are commonly shared by the teachers interviewed, whereas the peripheral elements are the set of negotiable words/concepts that protect the central core.

Components of the central core	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3	Choice 4	Choice 5	Choice 6	Choice 7	Choice 8	Choice 9	Choice 10	Tot	%
Biodiversity Loss & Desertification	6	29	11	9	11	5	5	4	3	2	85	11,0%
Environmental degradation	53	4	6	2	2	4	1	1	1	2	76	10,0%
Climate change	9	13	17	12	4	1	5	1	2	2	66	8,5%
Future generations	10	8	11	6	3	5	3	2	1	2	51	6,5%
Pollution	5	11	8	8	10	3		2	2	2	51	6,5%
Natural resources	4	3	2	6	6	5	3	6	7		42	5,5%
Ecology	7	1	6	5	3	4		3	3	3	35	5,0%
Green economy	2	3	6	4	4	6	6	3	2	1	37	5,0%
Solar energy	1	1	3	3	4	2	4	5	4	9	36	5,0%
Living together	1	7	6	5	6	3	4	6	4	2	44	5,0%
Waste	4	8	2	4	4	4	2	2	4	2	36	5,0%
Total	102	88	78	64	57	42	33	35	33	27	559	73,0%

Table 1. Identification of the core elements of the social representations of ESD of the teachers in our sample.

It can be seen that nine of the eleven items that make up the central core refer to the environment. Almost 61.5% of the components of the central core of the social representation of ESD refer to the environment. These are, in order of importance, loss of biodiversity and desertification (11%), environmental degradation (10%), climate change (almost 9%), pollution (6.5%), natural resources (5.5%), solar energy (5%), ecology (5%), green economy (5%), waste (5%). The item «*future generations*» which corresponds to 6.5% of the social representation of ESD, represents the social solidarity pillar of sustainable development. The item «*living together*» which corresponds to 5% of the social representation of ESD, represents the intercultural responsibility pillar (Esoh Elamé, 2004) of sustainable development. The presence of these two items in the core constitutes a connection with the world to come and embodies the importance to be given to intercultural dialogue in any sustainable de-

velopment process. It is important to realize that ESD can only come from a recognition of our obligations to future generations. Thinking about future generations is a moral issue, a global challenge to mobilize ourselves for future generations. In almost all countries and peoples of the world, ESD should enable us to act together in intercultural dialogue to protect our planet. Today's global challenges require the mobilization of both present and future generations. The central core, which represents 73% of the social representation, does not include any items that refer to the economic efficiency pillar of sustainable development.

The peripheral elements represent 27% of the social representations of the teachers interviewed on education for sustainable development (Table 2). However, compared to the central core, they concern all four pillars of sustainable development (Esoh Elamé, 2004).

Components of peripheral elements	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3	Choice 4	Choice 5	Choice 6	Choice 7	Choice 8	Choice 9	Choice 10	Total choices	%
Risk and natural disaster	4	10	4	2	1	1	3	2	1		28	4%
Economic growth		1	2	3	4	3	2	2	3	4	24	3%
Good health and well-being		1	4	2	8	3	4	1	2	2	27	3,5%
Present generations	3	3	2	4	3	2	4	3		1	25	3,2%
Poaching		2	1	4	1	1	1	2	1	3	16	2%
Poverty		1		5	4	2		3			15	2%
Solidarity	2		2	2	3		2				11	1,5%
Needs		3	3	2	2		1				11	1,5%
Famine			1		2	2	2	1	2		10	1,3%
Cultural diversity	1	1		2		3	1				8	1%
Human rights	2		2		1		1	1		1	8	1%
Food waste	1		1		1		1	1	1	1	7	1%
Equality between men and women		1	1	4							6	1%
Injustice			1	2		1					4	0,5%
Unemployment				1		1	1				3	0,5%
Total	13	23	34	33	30	19	23	16	10	12	203	27%

Table 2. Identification of peripheral elements of the social representations of ESD of teachers in our sample (Source: Authors, field survey data, 2021).

5. Discussion

Education for sustainable development, which is the subject of this study, has its roots in the 36th chapter of Agenda 21, which emphasizes the importance of promoting education, public awareness and training as a driver for sustainable development. UNESCO's international texts are sufficiently exhaustive on this issue.

We believe that the approximate mastery of teachers in Yaoundé's public secondary schools on sustainable development and the SDGs can be attributed to the fact that the texts governing education for sustain-

able development in the Cameroonian school system are absent. There is an absence of normative, prescriptive texts on ESD in Cameroon. ESD therefore does not yet have a certain social or institutional legitimacy in this country. For the moment, no national experimentation on ESD likely to lead to its generalization has been noted.

The main actor on this issue, which is the Ministry of Secondary Education, does not yet have a public policy on education for sustainable development. ESD is absent from school curricula in Cameroon. The pedagogical and didactic projects that are built in schools on ESD are rare, and constitute individual ex-

periences without any consolidated institutional legitimacy. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary educational approaches to education for sustainable development are rare, punctual, disparate, and can be counted at the tip of one's fingers. Teachers who embark on a kind of individual experimentation with education for sustainable development are in fact doing environmental education. As can be seen, educational practices on sustainable development are rare, isolated, not very formalized, and do not lead to any social recognition that would allow the new skills acquired to be highlighted.

The Cameroonian school system is characterized by a lack of initial and in-service teacher training on education for sustainable development. Our study shows that 47% of the teachers interviewed had been made aware of the SDGs and sustainable development through the media: television, radio and the press (Figure 3). This consolidates the thesis that there is no formal framework for sensitizing secondary school teachers in Yaoundé public schools on sustainable development.

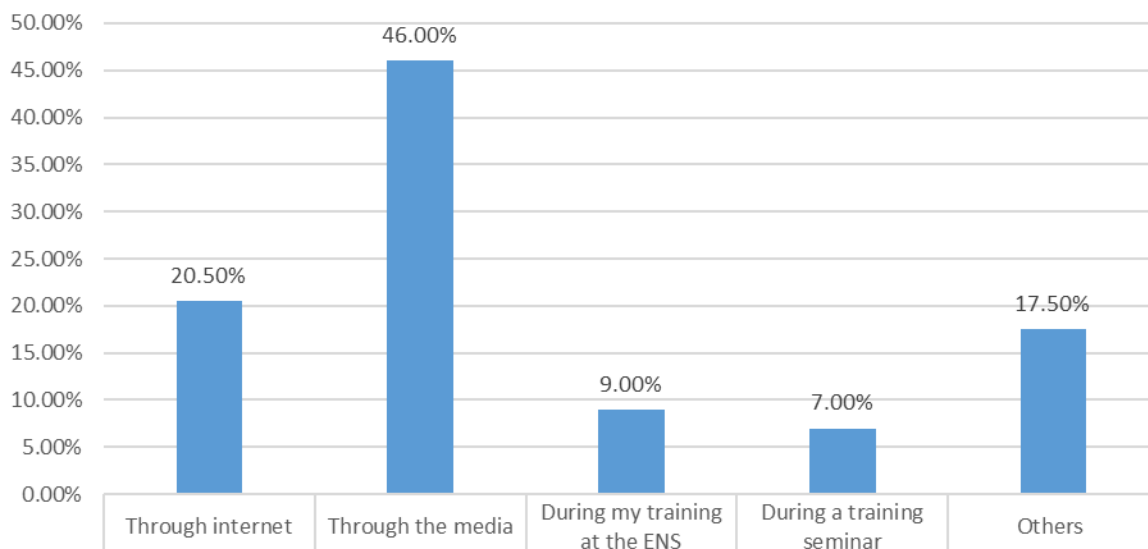


Table 3. The main ways in which teachers raise awareness on sustainable development (Source: Authors, field survey data, 2021).

For a considerable period of three decades now since sustainable development explicitly emerged in the institutional discourse, the Cameroonian school system has not implemented pilot actions of education for sustainable development, whether disciplinary, multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary. There are still no ESD actions in the Cameroonian school system that stem from local itineraries of discovery of the territory, let alone the promotion of ESD didactic paths stemming from experiences of partnership between the school and the territory.

The Cameroonian secondary school system has not yet begun its transition to education for sustainable development. Everything must therefore be done so that the Ministry of Secondary Education, a key player in the sustainable transition of Cameroonian schools, can ensure the education of all students in sustainable development. Cameroonian schools are far from being exemplary in terms of sustainable development. Since there is no formal framework that structures, guides, programs and plans ESD, it becomes difficult for activities that are in line with this logic to emerge in the school environment. This study was born out of the challenge posed by MDG 4 concerning quality education and therefore the contribution of the education sector to the achievement of the MDGs. The seventh indicator of the MDG4 states that

development, including through education for sustainable development and lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development» (UN, 2015, p. 19).

This seventh indicator rhymes with «the cultural and intercultural adjustment of sustainable development» (Esoh Elamé, 2009, p. 195). In other words, it is a question of realizing that «an intercultural approach to sustainable development carries a vision of a plural world where differences are affirmed, protected and promoted as an explicit substrate for achieving individual and collective human well-being» (Esoh Elamé, 2009, p. 195). Sustainable development can only be achieved by building just and welcoming societies. The ecological and biological sensitivities expected in our societies for sustainable development cannot thrive without social equity and intercultural justice. The awareness of cultural and biological diversity in any sustainable development process is a remarkable step forward that must be consolidated.

6. Conclusion

In the current context, it is not possible to say that education for sustainable development is taught in

«By 2030, ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable

Yaoundé's public secondary schools. The commitment of Cameroonian public secondary education to sustainable development will require a profound transformation in the current way of thinking about education and acting. «In order to create a more sustainable world and address the sustainable development challenges outlined in the SDGs, each individual must become an actor for sustainability-driven change» (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7). This requires teachers who have the knowledge, didactic and pedagogical skills, values and attitudes to educate for sustainable development. Initial and in-service teacher training on education for sustainable development is therefore essential and deserves to be specified and defined by circulars and new school programs. The absence of such training, as is currently the case, is a hindrance to the widespread use of education for sustainable development. The support and training of Cameroonian teachers on education for sustainable development currently remains a major challenge for both teachers and students. However, as Esoh Elamé (2008) notes, the process of education for sustainable development in Cameroon cannot be dissociated from intercultural education, given the strong cultural diversity of this country, which is in great need of promoting the values of peace, non-violence and intercultural dialogue among its youth. It is important to realize that without well-trained teachers on sustainable development, the Agenda 2030, education in Cameroon will be reduced to promoting, as is currently the case, a development based on neo-liberal economic growth. The latter will in turn encourage unsustainable consumption patterns that result in rapid and anarchic urbanization, the informal economy, waste of resources, pollution, etc.

«The now firmly established approach to education for sustainable development (ESD) empowers citizens to make informed decisions and take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic sustainability and a just society, for present and future generations» (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7).

Provided that initial and in-service teacher training is commensurate with the challenges to be overcome. In any case, we must be aware that the reform of secondary education taking into account ESD is an absolute priority for Cameroon. The aim of this reform is to include education for sustainable development in each school subject with new curricula that take into account the 17 SDGs. In the light of this analysis, it will be necessary to accelerate the mobilization and training of teachers in Yaoundé's public schools on sustainable development.

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