

Social Sustainable Development and Social Work

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1.	<p>The purpose of my lecture is to explore the relation between Social Work and a process of Sustainable Development.</p>
2.	<p>Following questions are at stake: Why is Sustainable Development an issue for Social Work? How can we connect it with the mission of SW? Which concept of Sustainable Development would be appropriate? And how can we conceptualize the relation between a process of Sustainable Development and the practice of SW?</p>
3.	<p>I have developed some answers to these questions during a research project: 'Orientation of Social Work toward Sustainable Development'.</p> <p>A basic assumption was, that an appropriate interpretation of Sustainable Development for Social Work has to meet two main conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First: it should account for the current analysis of the ecological crisis; - Second: it has to be recognizable within the mission and the tradition of SW. <p>The elaboration of this point of departure led us in two directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greening of Social Work - and strengthening the social dimension of Sustainable Development <p>What I will be presenting here, is the outcome of this research.</p>
4	<p>(Contents)</p> <p>Since it concerns a conceptual framework, my talk will address the mentioned issues on a rather general level. Yet, the intention is to indicate which choices have to be made for a conceptually consistent connection between Social Work and Sustainable Development.</p> <p>Now, I will first briefly state to what challenges for our society Sustainable Development has to be an answer.</p>
5	<p>Therefore we could look at the alarming figures in many scientific reports about the ecological situation of our planet. And to this we could also add facts and figures of the social and economic crisis.</p> <p>I suppose we are all familiar with that kind of problems. So I will take another pathway.</p>

	<p>To make a clear statement about the relation between SW and Sustainable Development, we do need a point of departure that connects the ecological crisis with social problems. To this end, we use the pedagogy of the ecological footprint.</p> <p>So it becomes clear that what we are facing concerns no less than a transition into a different society. Transition starts from the insight that in the global ecological crisis two major concerns come together: ecological problems and problems of justice. So we'd like to speak of a 'social-ecological crisis'.</p>
6	<p>The first issue is that of the ecological 'Overshoot'. Mankind has an all too large footprint. We use more than the ecosystem earth can produce in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>According to the 'Living Planet Report', in 2007 we needed already one and a half times planet earth.</p>
7	<p>Moreover, this use of resources – including the burden of environmental pollution – is very unequally distributed, between continents and countries, as illustrated by this map.</p> <p>But also within countries the use of resources is very unequal. I think we are all aware of the growing gap between the rich and the poor.</p>
8	<p>Without much more explanation, a single slide makes the two-fold problem clear.</p>
9	<p>To tackle the problem only from the side of redistribution, with our business continuing as usual, is not a good answer. Or, in a situation of ecological overshoot, the problem of the unequal distribution of resources can not be tackled within a model of further growth. We then risk a collapse of the ecosystem, as you can see in this slide.</p> <p>This issue has also been named 'the problem of scarcity'.</p>
10	<p>The Belgian philosopher Etienne Vermeersch formulated this problem as follows:</p> <p>"As long as the present-day world system is maintained, there is no other possibility than to navigate between two rocks. The larger the part of the world population that lives in prosperity, the more the ecosystem is in danger; the more the ecosystem is safeguarded, the more it is allied with unlimited misery."</p>

	<p>The reference to the current world system is crucial here. In other words, actual scarcity is not independent of the social system.</p>
11.	<p>So, we could say that our social system is in a situation of impasse or dead end. The current social system has no way out! As a central problem, we could mention the economy of growth, but important are also the related cultural norms and expectations.</p> <p>It has all got to do with our fundamental ways of thinking and of framing problems and answers. It concerns what one calls the 'paradigm' of our society.</p>
12.	<p>Then, this is the challenge: the satisfaction of needs and the creation of well-being for every world-citizen while maintaining the 'natural capital'.</p> <p>This requires: a decrease in the use of ecological resources or a dematerialization of the economy, combined with a just distribution of welfare.</p> <p>Yet, in my opinion that is not possible without a new view on well-being, which is a crucial issue for Social Work. It is decisive for a way out of the social impasse, because it has got to do with the everyday expectations of people that drive society.</p> <p>We have to search for alternatives for the idea that well-being follows from high prosperity in material terms. I think we have to look for these alternatives in the direction of enhancing the quality of our human relations, on all levels of society.</p> <p>Taken together, all this means that we have to go for a different society,</p>
13	<p>which is presented in this slide. The picture gives attention to the four main objectives of Sustainable Development.</p> <p>The question is: How to arrive there?</p>
14	<p>Sustainable development should be the answer.</p>
15	<p>To see what Sustainable Development means today, we depart from the challenge mentioned.</p> <p>When 'business as usual' becomes impossible, then Sustainable Development has to be a process of a fundamental social transition. Not one domain of society will be left untouched.</p>

	<p>Thus, also Social Work cannot say: "Sustainable Development is not our case".</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>For clarity's sake, some words about the concept of 'transition'.</p> <p>A transition is a thoroughgoing process of social change within several generations. It is not a simple process, but a complex multi-layered change of society. It arises from the interaction between developments in the different dimensions of society: ecological, technological, economic, social, institutional ... Regarding the question of well-being, I will emphasize the importance of cultural developments.</p> <p>What we need then, is a sustainability transition. This contains a combination of parallel changes in the most important subsystems of society (for instance: energy system, mobility pattern and system, food model, organisation of labour and care, etc.).</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>Since the social-ecological crisis indicates that the current social system has no way out, we can assume that there will surely be a transition. The question is: for better or for worse?</p> <p>Sustainable Development means that we want to go for better. And since a transition is a complex process, Sustainable Development has to be a varied action consisting of complementary strategies. One has to act on different crucial levels at the same time.</p> <p>Today there is often a strong emphasis on efficiency, and so on new technologies for production. It is the hype of the 'green economy'. But that's only a part of a sustainability transition of society. We also have to take into account the social and cultural conditions for such a transition.</p> <p>Strategies for the redistribution of welfare are not only important in view of a just society. There is also a strong relation between more equality and the quality of society, as demonstrated by Wilkinson & Pickett in <i>The Spirit Level</i>. So, more equality has a direct impact on the question of well-being, and facilitates the search for new interpretations of it. I will not develop the question of equality now, since professor Wilkinson will speak here on Wednesday.</p> <p>'Sufficiency' then, means that as a society we have to learn to live within certain limits, which implies the need for developing new ideas of well-being and of a good life.</p>

	<p>I hope that meanwhile it has become clear that Sustainable Development has strong ethical implications. And in this respect it is not simply a question of a better care for the biophysical environment. Sustainability concerns the quality of society.</p> <p>To explore this issue further, I will make a comparison between the normative principles of Sustainable Development, and those of Social Work.</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>For this I use the well-known Brundtland definition. It proceeds from a process within the fold of the United Nations. It has the widest acceptance in the world, and so it is the most important reference for policy.</p> <p>“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>It contains within it two key concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which priority should be given; - and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.” <p>(WCED, <i>Our Common Future</i>, 1987: 43)</p> <p>This definition is rather vague, especially since the definition is mostly used without the two specifications about the priority of the needs of the poor, and the acceptance of the notion of limitations.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>At least from the definition we can say that Sustainable Development concerns the needs of people.</p> <p>And therefore it takes both the dimensions of space and time into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Space: Sustainable Development takes a global perspective; it’s about the needs of all people, here and elsewhere. - Time: Sustainable Development is about all generations, now and in the future. <p>Anyway, after the publication of <i>Our Common Future</i> in 1987 a big debate began about the interpretation of Sustainable Development.</p> <p>This discussion is not only defined by different views on the strategies to be followed, but for the greater part by fundamentally different views on equality and on ecological concerns.</p> <p>How to value the fact that there are many interpretations of Sustainable Development?</p>

20	<p>That the concept of Sustainable Development is vague, is not necessarily a problem, because this reflects the complexity of the issues at stake.</p> <p>Furthermore it is important to regard Sustainable Development - in line with notions such as 'democracy', 'freedom', 'social justice' – as a political concept.</p> <p>Different interest-based positions make up its very content. Apart from an easily understandable 'first-level' meaning and general political acceptance, around the core ideas lies a deeper contestation. Thus, Sustainable Development is an essentially contested concept. It is part of today's democratic struggle for the desirable direction of our society.</p> <p>As a result there are many different conceptualizations, agendas and representations of Sustainable Development. Well known is the 'triple bottom line', or the 3 P's: people, planet, prosperity (profit).</p> <p>So, I think, Social Work must follow this political interpretation of Sustainable Development, and set its own agenda for it.</p>
21	<p>And this is possible, since during the UN-process about Sustainable Development, many principles, relevant for Social Work, are at stake. Here you have an overview.</p> <p>The prominence of social-ethical principles and thus the importance of the social dimension is striking.</p> <p>I will come back to this list. But first, I will discuss an important elaboration of the concept of justice. It illustrates also the political character of Sustainable Development.</p>
22	<p>Within the social movements has been developed the concept of 'ecological justice'. It brings together respect for ecological limits and demands of justice. Therefore it is important to learn to understand justice also in biophysical terms.</p> <p>Ecological justice is a concern about an equal right of access to ecological resources.</p> <p>Viewed in this light the global process of Sustainable Development, is formulated as a process of 'contraction and convergence'. This process includes a dematerialization of the global economy, together with a just distribution of welfare.</p>
23	<p>A rather fast decrease in the use of resources by the economies of the industrialized countries, is the contraction process.</p> <p>This still leaves room for some growth in the rest of the World. On the longer term though, the intention is a sustainable and more equal pattern of use of resources, and so of environmental impact. That is the convergence process.</p>

	<p>So, this figure presents what a just transition means. And studies say that we have no more than thirty to forty years to accomplish this sustainability transition.</p>
24	<p>As an example, this chart illustrates what that means for the emissions of carbondioxide.</p> <p>Anyway, I think that the concept of `contraction and convergence` gives an important general framework for positioning the relation between SW and SD.</p>
25	<p>I come now to a further elaboration of the relation between Social Work and Sustainable Development from a normative standpoint.</p> <p>I start with a comparison of the ethical principles of Sustainable Development with the basic principles of SW.</p> <p>For this I will mention the mission of SW as it is stated in the international definition.</p>
26	<p>`The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work` (IASSW & IFSW, 2001)</p> <p>I want to use this definition for the same reasons</p> <p>I use the Brundtland definition for Sustainable Development: its wide acceptance on an international level, and its normative character.</p> <p>You are all familiar with this definition.</p> <p>Notice especially the emphasis on processes of social change.</p>
27	<p>On the left side of this table you find again the list of normative principles of Sustainable Development. On the other side, I make the comparison with principles of Social Work.</p> <p>Let me direct your attention to the following points:</p> <p>First: the difference in the formulation of finality: meeting of needs versus enhancing well-being, which gives in my opinion SW a broader perspective.</p> <p>Second: the absence (till now) of an ecological principle in the mission of Social Work.</p> <p>And Third: The principle of `common but differentiated responsibilities` in Sustainable Development was drafted in the first place for the relation between nations. For instance we saw it used in the argumentation for contraction and convergence.</p>

	<p>Yet it is a more general ethical principle, also used for the relations between individuals and between groups, which is a characteristic of the ethics of empowerment.</p>
28	<p>We can conclude that there is a large similarity between Social Work and Sustainable Development concerning their normative principles, with the exception of an ecological principle.</p> <p>There are still other important common characteristics: orientation to process, and a multi-level and multi-actor character.</p>
29	<p>It is then my thesis that Social Work and Sustainable Development have possibilities to strenghten each other:</p> <p>In the first place Social Work has to actually broaden its contextual view towards the biophysical environment. This is what a social-ecological approach tries to do. In the slide I give some examples of what that means for practice.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">In this vein, it would be appropriate to include the principle of sustainable development in the international definition of Social Work.</p> <p>In the other direction Social Work can reinforce the social dimension of Sustainable Development.</p> <p>Last but not least, Social Work can help widen the focus of Sustainable Development on (basic) needs to other aspects of well-being, particularly those referring to new views on a meaningful life. We have mentioned this social-cultural aspect as decisive for the required sustainability transition of society.</p>
30	<p>Therefore, Social Work has to renew its theoretical frameworks. I mention as decisive, and consequently fundamental in my proposal for a social-ecological approach of SW, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an ecological world view and a related relational idea of man; - a choice for theories of participative practice; - and new ideas about well-being.
31	<p>For the elaboration of these frameworks we don't have to start from zero.</p> <p>Many interesting ecological ideas had already an onset within the theoretical traditions of SW. I can't discuss the details here.</p> <p>But I will indicate that my proposal builds on some attempts of the last years to come to a new synthesis, in the table called 'convergence of different perspectives'. Particularly I shall use central elements of the 'eco-social approach'.</p>

32	<p>Concerning new ideas about well-being and a 'good life', I want to stress the decisive place of the idea of man. A relational conception means that one sees humans as intrinsically social beings. This idea is also part of an ecological world view.</p> <p>This insight is based on the acceptance that on our finite planet earth we are in a situation of a shared destiny, not only with other human beings, but also with the other species. For our life we depend on others and on all other life.</p> <p>This sheds new light on ideas about autonomy and emancipation, but also on the meaning for our life of our relationship with the natural environment.</p> <p>Furthermore it is important to see that the meaning of a life has a narrative structure, and thus is connected with some kind of engagement in a life project. And this makes a big difference with happiness understood as 'feeling good'. This makes also the relation plausible between well-being and participation and citizenship. And all this has influence on our relation to time. "<i>Time is meaning</i>" may be a good motto to express that.</p>
33	<p>For this reflection on well-being it is interesting to mention the empirical evidence that from a certain level of welfare onward, Life Satisfaction is no longer dependent on further economical growth.</p>
34	<p>I come to the final part of my lecture. I will try to present a general model for framing how social work, with his very broad and diverse spectrum of actions, can contribute to Sustainable Development. It is like assembling a jigsaw puzzle: although the elements are familiar, one has to look for what is useful for arriving at a consistent synthesis.</p>
35	<p>Therefore we need an appropriate representation of Sustainable Development. Since it is a political concept we must acknowledge that a representation is not neutral. On the contrary, the communicative power of a representation is an important means to establish a social agenda.</p> <p>Hence, I will first go to a common view, in which Sustainable Development is seen as a balance between the ecological, social and economic dimension. The main problem with this kind of image is that it puts the three dimensions on the same level. Thus, it has a lack of reality. For instance it doesn't include a representation of the notion of ecological limits.</p>

36	<p>What we need is a model that corresponds to an ecological world view. Therefore we apply ecological systems theory and systemic representations.</p> <p>Following a systemic view , it becomes clear that society is embedded in the ecosystem, and that the economy is part of society. Such a representation through `nesting systems' joins also the concept of ecological economics.</p> <p>I want to emphasize the mediating position of the social sphere for all social (and political) action. This is especially important for the presentation of my proposal.</p>
37	<p>In this slide I've put together some advantages of such a more holistic image. Next to what has already been said, I mention the affinity with the person-in-environment concept of Social Work.</p>
38	<p>This way of representing offers the opportunity to look at the systemic interactions from the perspective of society. The economic production as well as our behaviour towards the natural environment are socially mediated processes.</p> <p>That's what you see in this representation of the contribution of the economy to Sustainable Development, derived by Nigel Roome, a professor marketing. The arrows indicate a cooperative process of responsible business with the rest of society. As for the economy, you can in a similar manner look at other spheres of social practice, such as science, technological research, health care and so on. Here I do that for Social Work.</p>
39	<p>Inspired by the international definition of Social Work and by an European research project of Aila-Leena Matthies, the so-called `eco-social approach in social work', we have come to the following premises.</p> <p>The main contribution of social work to Sustainable Development is to develop `social capital'. In this respect, empowerment is a more or less elaborated normative-methodical framework allowing social work to enhance the social capital with its specific target groups, thus connecting with a broader process of Sustainable Development.</p> <p>This brings us to the interpretation in this slide of our model for Sustainable Development. But now it represents the contribution of SW.</p>
40	<p>I'd like to indicate that this model has heuristic possibilities for formulating also more specific objectives of SW practices in relation to Sustainable Development.</p>

	I illustrate this here for the contribution of social economy to a more inclusive model of labour.
41	<p>In the further elaboration of the general model, three connected concepts play a central role: empowerment, social capital and resilience.</p> <p>It is important to emphasize that the term 'empowerment' stands both for the overall process of practice and for the result of this process: actual social change. Furthermore is empowerment a multilevel construct, from the individual to the political level. And the same applies to 'social capital' and 'resilience'.</p>
42	<p>The relations between them are presented in this chart, which elaborates the arrows in our model inb more detail. We can read the process as follows:</p> <p>Empowerment starts from the possibilities and strengths of people, individuals and groups, in order to enhance their social capital.</p> <p>Social capital is a basis for resilience. And resilience is a condition for empowerment, and so for actual social change in a bottom-up process.</p> <p>One should not see this as a simple linear process. It concerns a complex process of which the different elements can be connected by many loops of positive feedback.</p>
43	<p>Yet we have a representation of a process of social change from a functional point of view. But social processes are never ethically and/or politically neutral.</p> <p>So as a complement these processes have to be framed by an ethical-political discussion about the desirable direction of action.</p>
44	<p>I will now further discuss the interpretation of the three central concepts. I start with empowerment as a crucial issue in SW practice.</p> <p>I mentioned already the strengths perspective as a decisive starting point. In the light of the ethical principles of Sustainable Development, also the democratic and participative approach of social change is crucial.</p>
45	<p>Because empowerment aims at social change, I will again emphasize the multilevel character of it, hence its political side, and the need for a political interpretation. This emphasis on empowerment as a multilevel construct is also illustrated in this quote of Julian Rappaport:</p> <p><i>'Empowerment suggests both individual determination over one's own life and democratic participation in the life of one's</i></p>

	<p><i>community, often through mediating structures such as schools, neighbourhoods, churches, and other voluntary organizations. Empowerment conveys both a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power, and legal rights. It is a multilevel construct applicable to individual citizens as well as to organizations and neighbourhoods; it suggests the study of people in context.'</i> (Rappaport 1987:121).</p> <p>Thus, it is important to challenge the individualizing interpretations of empowerment that dominate today's social debate. By contrast, I want to emphasize the group-based character of empowerment processes.</p>
46	<p>Furthermore we need a clear concept of power. Since 'power' is a political concept, it is important to distinguish it from the notion of 'strengths'.</p> <p>Power indicates a relationship between people, and then there are two possibilities. Mostly power is seen as negative because it relates to domination or <i>power over</i>.</p> <p>But there is also a positive notion of power. It refers to cooperation and partnership or <i>power with</i>. The latter is the meaning of power in empowerment: a process of positive interaction, in which the 'common' capacity for action increases through recognizing and joining together the particular possibilities of individuals or groups.</p> <p>We need both notions of power. So, in the case of situations of domination, empowerment becomes a process of building counter-power for social change.</p> <p>I hope it has meanwhile become clear that our view on empowerment is not restricted to SW, but is a view on a good society as such.</p>
47	<p>I come now to social capital.</p> <p>The importance of social capital for sustainable development can be argued both in a functional and an ethical way. The global social-ecological crisis will inevitably lead to major and rapid changes of society. Such a thorough social transition demands considerable adaptability or 'resilience' from individuals and social systems alike. In a moment I will indicate how resilience depends on social capital.</p> <p>Moreover, from an ethical point of view, everyone has the right to participate in these changes and to contribute to a new way of life. This requires solidarity and social inclusion.</p>

	<p>So, improving social capital is simultaneously a condition and a part of a sustainability transition.</p> <p>In general, it is my conviction that, in view of Sustainable Development, community building, in all its variations, is the most important perspective for Social Work.</p>
48	<p>Social capital may not be seen as a static condition of a society. For SW it is important to perceive social capital as a co-operative process of continuous building and support of human relationships on different levels.</p>
49	<p>That is represented in this figure (inspired by Golam Mathbor).</p> <p>At the basis is a process of 'bonding': bringing together individuals in trusting relationships and groups of all kinds. At a second level a process of 'bridging' makes connections and networks between those groups. At a third level social groups, organisations, movements and networks make connections with governments, public institutions and big organisations.</p> <p>As said, from an empowerment perspective, this is a cooperative process of building power for social change. So, if SW wants to realize its structural agenda, above all a just and sustainable society, it is important, I think, to make networks with social movements.</p> <p>I come now to the next theoretical step. For a social-ecological approach of this process of social change, we need to interpret this figure in terms of 'social-ecological systems'.</p>
50	<p>Social-ecological systems form a complex network with a multi-level character, called 'panarchy'.</p> <p>Systems are not static. They are always in evolution, a process with a cyclic character. Different systems are at different phases in that process, and are influencing each other.</p> <p>In this approach 'resilience' is an important characteristic for the sustainability of a system.</p>
51	<p>We can define 'resilience' as 'the capacity of a system to positive adaptation in risk situations or in great processes of (social-ecological) change'.</p> <p>It may be clear that in the light of a process of SD, we want to emphasize the development of resilience as an important contribution to social change. So, resilience is in this case not about adapting to the existing situation of society.</p>

	<p>Furthermore, I'd like to indicate that in our action model we bring together two theoretical lines within one social-ecological approach on alle levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - resilience as a basic characteristic of sustainable social-ecological systems - and resilience as a condition for empowerment
52	<p>To make the connection with our concept of social capital, it is important to interpret also the resilience of individuals in a relational manner. At the basis is our relational idea of man.</p> <p>Resilience is not an individual psychological trait, but has a social-psychological character. The domains that contribute to the resilience of a person are here presented in the model of a house. The bonding and engagement with significant others and the informal social networks form the actual basis for personal resilience, here shown as the foundation of the house.</p>
53	<p>What we learn then from ecological systems theory is that the sustainability of a system depends on an adequate balance between the efficiency of its processes and exchanges with other systems, and its resilience. For a sustainable system this balance has to be within a window around an optimum. And resilience is based on a diversity of subsystems, possibilities and processes, and on the number and character of the connections between them. Sufficient diversity and connections must provide a 'surplus' of opportunities. Yet, they function as back-ups in problem situations.</p> <p>It is here that we find the meaning of building social capital as a contribution to a resilient society. In a complementary manner can also a capability approach contribute to a resilient society. But for this I refer to the lecture by Jean-Michel Bonvin.</p> <p>In contrast with that, unilaterally striving for efficiency through streamlining subsystems, possibilities and processes will undermine the resilience of a system. Yet, underperforming efficiency causes productivity problems.</p> <p>So, with regard to sustainable development, ecological systems theory teaches us that increasing the social capital can be a vital contribution, while a management model solely based on efficiency achieves the opposite of what is aimed for. Streamlining and rationalization of 'redundant' connections diminishes the resilience of systems. So they become stiff and fragile, what subverts their effectiveness on a longer term.</p>

	<p>(We can illustrate this based on the experience of the 'care paradox'. One tries to counter the demand for more affordable yet high-quality care by developing controllable protocols. When this results in the rationalization of the caregivers' time budget, they tend to consider this as a loss of care. After all, the quality of care is largely dependent on this 'surplus' of time which allows for meaningful interaction.)</p>
54	<p>After this short exposition of empowerment, social capital and resilience, I come to the end by assembling the last jigsaw pieces of a general practice model.</p> <p>For that we use the conceptual framework of the 'eco-social approach' of Aila-Leena Matthies and partners, broaden it, and bring it together with our earlier model for the contribution of SW to SD.</p> <p><i>The Eco-Social Approach</i> makes use of three basic concepts:</p> <p>First: It implies a broad contextual view. This corresponds to the classic person-in-environment approach of SW, however, with more attention to the biophysical environment than in the usual systems approach.</p> <p>Second: At the core of it, we find the social action concept of <i>empowerment</i> and citizen-oriented practice. Key element is, as mentioned, a positive view on the users' own possibilities. They are approached as 'partners' of social work, as participants in a process of learning, development and social change. And as a structuring concept, the research focus shifts from social exclusion to social capital.</p> <p>Third: <i>Social impact assessment</i> (SIA) through participative research by social workers makes the actual connection between the two other concepts.</p>
55	<p>The three concepts encompass each other, and thus can be represented by concentric circles.</p> <p>This framework has been developed for community work in European cities to build more sustainable living environments.</p> <p>To broaden this approach to a more general framework for the contribution of SW practice to Sustainable Development, we note that in SW around the core of empowerment also other important practices are situated. This slide mentions 'social learning', but think also of advocacy and political work.</p>
56	<p>'Social learning' is a significant methodical approach which becomes increasingly important from a sustainable development perspective.</p>

	<p>The road to 'unsustainability' is usually well known, the road to sustainability is much less known. Solutions which seem adequate at first sight, often appear to hold major risks for the present and future generations. (For example: the suppression of food production by the bio fuel crops)</p> <p>That's why Sustainable Development implies by definition a broad and continuous learning process in all fields: production and consumption, way of living and way of life, mobility, leisure activities, travel, behaviour towards open spaces and nature, and so on. These learning processes are mainly informal. They take place as social workers work with people, yet they require renewed attention.</p> <p>In the organization of some specific activities, 'social learning' as a goal can play a decisive role from the start. One example is creating community gardens as a framework of learning for Sustainable Development. An interesting aspect is working in a community in order to learn to become a community again.</p>
57	<p>We add now the concentric figure of the eco-social approach to our previous representation of Sustainable Development.</p> <p>What we see then in this figure is the social-ecological approach as an 'action paradigm' for the contribution of SW to Sustainable Development.</p> <p>The picture shows a circle with a dotted line around the core of empowerment, which means that SW includes a broad area of actions, whereby SW and society penetrate each other. This interaction between SW and society is also made explicit by the double action arrow.</p> <p>In this way, Social Work may contribute to more positive power for a just society, and building social capital can lead to a more resilient society.</p>
58	<p>I thank you for your attention.</p>

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