

Sustainability walk activity

Purpose:

- ☐ To identify, discuss, and deepen understanding of sustainability and unsustainability (both common and more ambiguous examples) in your local context
- ☐ To explore what the local environment can offer as a basis for discussing and envisioning short- and long-term sustainability change

Contexts to use the activity:

- ☐ Sustainability-related courses
- ☐ Formal, informal and non-formal learning settings
- ☐ Place-based education for children and adults

What is needed:

- ☐ Multiple groups of people (2 to 6 people per group)
- ☐ Between 1 and 3 hours (activity can be adapted to suit the timeframe, age and ability of the group)
- ☐ A phone, digital, or instant camera (minimum 1 per group) with the ability to upload images with captions to a platform (if using digital cameras), such as Padlet. Alternatively, the facilitator physically prints out the images and captions or uploads them to a PowerPoint to share in the plenum
- ☐ A predefined area* to explore. It is up to the facilitator to determine how specific the routes are. If required, maps can be used to plot different predefined routes to ensure different paths are taken

*This activity can be adapted to work in multiple settings, including inside environments, campuses, and community settings



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Considerations for the activity facilitator:

- ☐ This activity was trialled by upper-secondary school teachers and later with their students. The Padlet screenshot below is from a teacher professional development course, where images were uploaded with captions as they walked. However, if time permits, organising the captioning and uploading of images as a separate stage can enhance the reflexive process and promote more in-depth documentation of the group dialogue, rather than just descriptive captions.
- ☐ A plan ideally should be in place regarding whom to communicate the outcomes to, such as any short- or long-term sustainability change ideas. For example, if this walk is done on a school or university campus, involve the facilities and grounds management in what is discovered
- ☐ This activity can be utilised as a one-off event or as a recurring activity that takes place each semester (with the same or different participants) and builds upon previous knowledge gained and communicated at earlier sustainability walks

Organising and introducing participants to the activity:

- ☐ Create groups of 2-6. Each group is to decide in advance who will be the designated photographer. Ensure each group has a camera
- ☐ If you have pre-planned routes for each group to take, make sure the routes match the time available and hand out maps accordingly
- ☐ Either explain the instructions (next page) verbally or hand out a printout of the instructions to each group. Decide in advance if the captions for the photographs will be written while on the walk or when the group returns



Lokalproduserte varer i gårdsbutikken.



Drivhus, fordeler og ulemper?



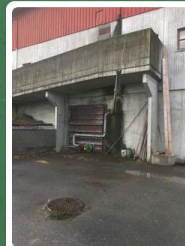
Kunstgressmatten.



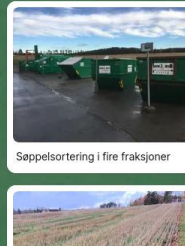
Gårdsbutikk med lokal- og selvproduserte varer



Buffer rundt jordet; hindrer avrenning



Gjødselkjeller for husdyrgjødsel



Søppelsortering i fire fraksjoner



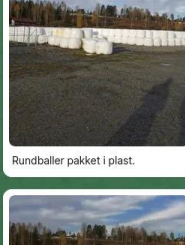
Tom, praktfull bygning. Det sku bo folk i husan



Energibua: Solfangere, solceller på nabohytta (Energi og miljø-linja)



Beitemark = Husdyrvelferd, utnyttelse av forressursene, pleie kulturlandskapet



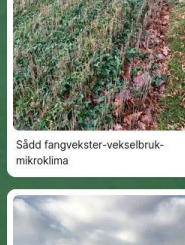
Rundballer pakket i plast.



Velkommen :-)



Søppelsortering med tydelig markering hvor ting skal kastes



Sådd fangvekster-vekselsbruk-mikroklima



Låve med høyloft - alternativ til rundball?



Rundballer med plast



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Step 1 - First part of walk (minimum 15 minutes):

- ☐ Take the path indicated on the map and walk towards the destination marked or within the specified area. Pay attention to what strikes you as **unsustainable** (you will pay attention to what is sustainable on the way back) and collectively agree on what you think is a good example of this. Take two to six pictures of what you decide on as a group

Step 2 - Second part of walk (minimum 15 minutes):

- ☐ Once you have reached your destination or the agreed-upon time to turn back, start returning along the same route. Repeat the previous step, but now pay attention to what strikes you as **sustainable** and collectively agree on what you think is a good example of this. Take two to six pictures of what you decide on as a group

Step 3 (optional 15-30 minutes) - Creating image captions:

- ☐ Each group is to work together to upload/print the picture(s), along with a short text (can be descriptive or written creatively as a provocation) to Padlet or another sharing format
- ☐ If captions were made and uploaded during the walk, this step is not necessary. However, if needed, uploading the images with captions (through group discussion) can be an additional step that happens as each group returns from the walk
- ☐ This editing process will differ time-wise, depending on the number of images taken or if needing to download from SD cards
- ☐ Depending on the timeframe, take a short break

Step 4 – Plenum (approximately 30 minutes, depending on the timeframe):

- ☐ Each group is to present their images and conversation topics that emerged during the walk
- ☐ Group discussion around the photos, if needed, the facilitator directs* the discussion, prompting the groups to clarify why they selected their images
- ☐ If any short- or long-term sustainability changes come up, make a record of this and decide as a group how to proceed with what has been discovered and envisioned

* The discussion can reveal some common understandings but also some differences. The aim is not to determine who is (most) correct or incorrect, as that misses the point entirely. There may also be some categorisation of pictures into themes, such as health, mobility, energy, biodiversity, etc. In an educational context, topics that emerge can serve as a starting point for more in-depth inquiry. Learners can prioritise issues and choose, for example, one they wish to investigate further. In a professional development setting, you can also ask the educators to select a topic they believe would be worth exploring further and then inquire how different subjects or curriculum themes connect to that issue.

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References and resources suggested for further reading:

- Padlet is the platform we used for sharing the photographs and captions with the whole group - <https://padlet.com/>
- PhotoVoice resources and training courses can provide ways to enhance this activity both creatively and in terms of supporting social change in communities. See this website for more details - <https://photovoice.org/>
- Place-based education literature offers educators various activities to bring learning out of the 'indoor' classroom and into the surrounding community and environment. See, for example, Canadian-based *Learning for a Sustainable Future* resources - <https://lsf-lst.ca/resources/>

Academic publications for further reading

Beames, S., Higgins, P., & Nicol, R. (2012). *Learning Outside the Classroom: Theory and Guidelines for Practice* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203816011>

Lloyd, A., Truong, S. & Gray, T. Place-based outdoor learning: more than a drag and drop approach. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education* **21**, 45–60 (2018).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s42322-017-0002-5>

Prince, H, Hordern, R., Towers, D & Holman, C. (2022). Outdoor learning and place-based curriculum framework. Cumbria: University of Cumbria. Retrieved from
<https://insight.cumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/6723/>

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