

THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: LITHUANIAN CASE

Ciburienne Jadvyga

Kaunas University of Technology, Gedimino str. 50, Kaunas, 44239 Lithuania

Navickas Mykolas

Kaunas University of Technology, Gedimino str. 50, Kaunas, 44239 Lithuania

Abstract

Present scientific article evaluates the formation of sustainable development, its main features and goals. This theme aims to examine the evolution of sustainable development goals and its fundamental values. The objectives of this article are: to describe the dynamism of economic growth, to characterize the sustainable development goals on the global, the European Union (EU) and Lithuanian levels; to evaluate fundamental values of different sustainable development stages. The dynamism of economic processes is evaluated as modernization of the economic activity on the country. Sustainable development goals are analyzed as the way of modernization of economic development.

Keywords: economic development, education and economic development, fundamental values of sustainable development, sustainable development goals.

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Introduction

At world level, the integration among countries of the world is developing, and the obstacles of goods, capital and people mobility among countries are constantly decreasing. All of this is beneficial to the economic development of the countries and to the growth of world economy. Economic growth and growing inequality decline are among the most important goals of economic development in all countries. The country's economic growth is directly related to one of the most important macroeconomic indicators of the state – the growth of real gross domestic product and the indicator of the change in quality of life. On the other hand, economic growth is associated with quantitative and qualitative changes that occur continuously in various fields (economic sectors, economic activities, etc.). In scientific literature (Galiniene et al., 2007, p. 10), this is described as a tendency towards a dynamism, which manifests in economy as a system and the environment that determines its development, in pursuit of specific goals. Dynamic changes in economic processes relate to the modernization of economic activities in various aspects. Modernization processes take place on a global level and involve more and more countries in the world, and increase the concept on which sustainable development is based.

Evolution of sustainable development

The concept of sustainable development is widely debated and analyzed in various sectors of economy (public, private), in various economic activities, at national, regional and global levels. The United Nation Organization (UN) has played an important role in shaping and developing economic and social development:

1. The consistent formation of the idea of sustainability is associated with the UN Stockholm Conference organized for addressing global environmental issues in the year 1972, linking economic and environmental issues for the first time (Report of the United Nations, 1972);

2. Of great importance is also the year 1986 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Ottawa, which discussed the World Security Strategy, characterized social justice as a decisive factor in "sustainable and equitable development" (Čiegis, 2005);

3. The Brundtland report in the 1987 (Our Common Future, 1987) of the UN Commission on the Environment and Development has characterized sustainable development, covering three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. The report draws attention specifically to development that would result in people's welfare not only in the current time but also in the future;

4. The UN Conference on Environment and Development in the 1992 year in Rio de Janeiro, adopted a long-term "Agenda 21" action plan seeking to ensure a stable and sustainable global environment; responsible consumption and usage of natural resources assessment;

5. In 2000, the UN Millennium Summit in New York hosted major changes in eight directions, signed by 189 heads of states from the world, as described in the Millennium Declaration (2000): 1) halve poverty and deprivation in the world; 2) guarantee universal primary education; 3) ensure equal rights for women and men; 4) reduce the mortality rate for children under 5 years of age by two thirds; 5) reduce maternal mortality by three quarters; 6) stop the spread of HIV and other communicable diseases; 7) ensure sustainable economic and environmental development; 8) develop a global partnership for development.

6. At the Johannesburg Summit of UN in 2002 (Earth Summit on Sustainable Development), all Member States had been invited to set up long-term programs for the promotion of sustainable consumption and production (2012–2022). The meeting emphasized the importance of production and consumption patterns, their changes, interconnection, in solving sustainable development issues (Mikalauskienė, 2014, p.13).

7. Recognizing that sustainable development processes face a variety of challenges, the UN in 2015 announced 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 Challenges, all of which are implicitly related to human resources and research and experimental development (R & D), which determines the progress and positive changes in the country's society. This document, which replaced the "Millennium Development Goals" (2000) is set out to be more ambitious and relevant not only to the poor, but also to all of the 192 countries whose leaders signed this "Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030" (2015) resolution. "The Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030" (2015) includes 17 objectives:

- 1) eliminate all forms of poverty;
- 2) eliminate hunger, ensure food security and nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;
- 3) ensure healthy life and promote the well-being of all age groups;
- 4) ensure comprehensive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning;
- 5) achieve gender equality and empower women and girls;
- 6) ensure access to water, sustainable management and sanitation for all;
- 7) ensure everyone has access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and up-to-date energy;
- 8) promote sustainable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, productive employment and decent work;
- 9) develop a resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and promote innovation;
- 10) reduce inequalities inside the states and between the states;
- 11) make cities and people living in areas safe, resilient and sustainable;
- 12) ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- 13) take urgent action to combat climate change and its consequences;
- 14) conserve and sustain the use of oceans and marine resources;

15) protect, restore, promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustain management of forests, combat desertification, and stop land degradation, stop biodiversity loss;

16) promote peaceful societies for sustainable development, ensure access to justice for all and create effective, accountable institutions at all levels;

17) strengthen implementation measures for the development agenda and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

These main goals are aimed at ensuring the realization of all three aspects of sustainable development, including the realization of human rights of individuals. Changes in the economic system (both internal and external) or in any sector or economic activity are always related to people (Sakalas et al., 2016). Changes, according to Sakalas et al. (2016, p.259-260), related to the direction of system development, the involvement of participants in the activities of organizations, the content of information and channels of information, the strategy of cooperation in the organization. In scientific literature the direction of system development (Schiller, 2013) it is observed that human capital determines that one country is socially and economically more advanced than the other, and that social capital is better used and valued in countries where human intellectual capital is better utilized the development is more even. It is argued that education, knowledge and their transfer ensure equal development of society, promote openness, equality and democracy and coherence (Atkočiūnienė, 2013). The development of science and knowledge is one of the conditions for the development of society. The link between higher education system and the labor market is ensured through the knowledge acquired during the study process, skills, competences and skills acquired in various fields. The level of education also results in better employment conditions. People, especially young people, that are ready to enter the labor market become economically viable for activities and are prerequisites for sustainable development in the country (Ciburienė, 2014; Ciburienė et al., 2017). A comparison of the "Millennium Declaration" and "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" highlights the differences between their fundamental values, which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The fundamental values, essential for sustainable development, in two periods of sustainable development

Millennium Declaration, 2000, p.2	Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015, p.2
Freedom – the right for men and women to live and raise their children free from hunger, violence, oppression or injustice;	People – to give the opportunity for all people to live in dignity, to eliminate all forms of poverty;
Equality – the equal rights and opportunities for men and women;	Planet – economical use of natural resources, responsible use and production;
Solidarity – equity and social justice for all members of each society;	Prosperity – to achieve life satisfaction;
Tolerance – the respect one to other in the variety of cultures, languages and religious and etc.;	Peace – to seek to create peaceful, just and inclusive societies, since sustainable development is impossible without peace and vice versa;
Shared responsibility – the responsibility for economic and social development of the world must be shared among all countries of the world;	Partnership – the sustainable development is based on partnership and solidarity among the various strata of society.
Respect to nature - economical use of resources.	

A comparison of fundamental values shows that in 2015, the confirmation of sustainable development goals primarily relates to the human factor, making it possible for self-realization, involving them in the solution of various problems and cooperation. By matching up the goals of the organization and the individual activity, the performance (qualitative, quantitative) growth is expected. Human capital includes all human qualities that are important from an economic point of view, i.e. not only education in the general sense, but investment in

knowledge, skills and labor productivity. Many studies have shown a strong negative relationship between income inequality and the educational level of the population, so the growth of the GINI coefficient may have a negative impact on the level of education of young people.

Sustainable development priorities in Lithuania

It is important to note that the Amsterdam Treaty of the European Union (1997) sets out four horizontal priority objectives: 1) sustainable development, 2) gender equality and non-discrimination; 3) information society and 4) regional development. The EU Member States must comply with the first two objectives as requirements for structural assistance, and the third and fourth, according to the needs of the country. In the year 2015 Lithuania has endorsed and signed the UN Declaration „Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development“ (2015), which identifies the 17 sustainable development goals. In addition, in Lithuania four priority areas are identified from the point of view of sustainable development: (1) reduction of social exclusion and poverty, (2) healthy lifestyle, (3) energy efficiency and (4) climate change and sustainable consumption and production (Važgauskaitė, 2016). Lithuania's priorities are in line with the concept of sustainable development, while representatives of non-governmental organizations among priority areas miss such areas as education or development cooperation. Particularly important is the fact that in Lithuania the most important factor for development is educated people, which determine the country's competitiveness. In this case, the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, which is responsible for sustainable development, assesses that the areas of education and development cooperation are horizontal and cover all 17 goals of sustainable development.

In Lithuania, the Sustainable Development Strategy was prepared in 1993, and revised in 2009, but lacks implementation of the coordination objectives. Lithuania receives structural support from the EU under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, but the Ministry of Environment of Lithuania is responsible for the sustainable development policy. The main dimensions of sustainable development: economic, socio-cultural and ecological can be realized in addressing educational issues. They include:

- economic development, which must ensure that future generations' personal income per capita is not lower than present generations;
- social-cultural development, which must not only preserve the community but also develop it, i.e. to maintain close social relations and relationships among people, as well as to strengthen them;
- ecological development, which preserves the diversity of biological species, essential ecosystems and ecological processes.

The main objective of Lithuanian sustainable development (National Sustainable Development Strategy, 2009) is "to achieve, by 2020, the efficiency indicators of economic and social development, resource use up to the EU Member States average in 2003, according to environmental indicators – to comply with the EU permitted standards, to comply with international conventions, limiting environmental pollution and impact on the global climate". In the field of economic development, in order to achieve the main objective set in the strategy and by year 2020 to achieve the current level of economic development of the old Member States of the EU, it is necessary to ensure an annual growth rate of gross domestic product by at least 6-7%, reducing the differences between regions. In the separate economic activities of the country, in addition to increasing their ecological efficiency twice, the following main long-term tasks are envisaged: development of industry, transport, agricultural economic activities. In the area of social development in Lithuania, the main focus must be on problems of employment, poverty and social exclusion and, secondly, on education and health protection and the preservation of cultural identity. The following main long-term tasks are foreseen for

social development, of which the most important are highlighted at both microeconomic and macroeconomic levels (National Sustainable Development Strategy, 2009):

- to develop competences that are important for the professional activity of a person;
- to develop competencies at public level for social activities;
- to evaluate the time factor in the process of education and to educate people who are capable of constantly adapting in a changing world in the person's self-expression;
- to ensure access to education at various levels and achieve that about 60% of Lithuanian young people would acquire high-quality higher education.

The changes of employment level in Lithuania of the employees aged 20-64 years according to the qualification / education is analyzed in the years 2005-2016 and presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Population employment rate by education, %

Indicator/Year	2005	2010	2015	2016	Increase rate
1. ISCED 3-4					
<i>ES-28</i>	69,5	69,9	70,7	71,6	3,0
Ireland	75,0	63,1	65,7	68,3	-0,93
Estonia	70,0	64,6	74,8	74,7	6,7
Latvia	69,5	61,8	69,4	69,1	-5,8
Poland	57,8	62,7	64,7	66,3	14,7
<i>Lithuania</i>	69,1	58,8	67,2	68,5	-8,68
Hungary	66,1	61,8	69,9	72,5	9,7
Germany	69,6	74,9	78,4	79,3	13,9
2. ISCED 5-8					
<i>ES-28</i>	82,7	82,4	82,7	83,4	8,5
Ireland	85,6	79,4	81,2	82,0	-4,2
Estonia	83,9	78,4	85,2	84,0	1,2
Latvia	83,6	82,7	85,1	86,5	3,5
Poland	81,1	82,5	85,0	85,8	5,8
<i>Lithuania</i>	86,3	85,7	88,7	90,4	4,8
Hungary	82,5	77,5	82,1	84,4	2,8
Germany	82,8	86,8	87,8	88,0	6,3

Source: EUROSTAT data

The level of employment of Lithuanian employees according to the qualification levels is compared to the average of the results of the other member states of the EU and the member states of the EU-28. Two qualification levels are compared: the average qualification level corresponding to ISCED 3-4, and a high level of qualification corresponding to ISCED 5-8 education.

The data presented in Table 2 shows that in Lithuania an average qualification (education level ISCED 3-4) of the group of employees aged 20-64 years employment rate in the years 2005-2016 decreased over the period. In 2005 it was 69.1%, and in 2016 dropped to 68.5%. A positive shift was observed between the year 2015 and 2016, when the employment rate increased from 67.2% to 68.5%. The employment rate of middle-level qualification workers in 2005 in the EU-28 was marginal (0.6%) higher than in Lithuania, and in 2016, this difference increased (and accounted for 4.3%). The employment rate of highly qualified staff (education level ISCED 5-8) in the analyzed period in Lithuania increased from 86.3% to 90.4%, which exceeded the average employment rate of the EU-28, which was 82.7% and 83.4%, respectively.

It is anticipated that the number of low-skilled workers will tend to decrease by about 40%, the average qualification will increase by about 20%, and the high qualification will increase by about 40%. Different types of empowerment are important for the growth of the demand for qualification in the labor market in the country, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Types of empowerment

Economic empowerment	Political empowerment	Human and social empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – aims to provide skills, opportunities and resources that will ensure sufficient income; – supports and promotes entrepreneurship; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the ability to organize, analyze and mobilize, i.e. empowering citizens to pursue their rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the ability to change their lives, the community according to what is significant to them.

Source: Civinskas, Tamutienė, Lazauskaite, 2016, 16-17

Empowerment concerns the youth and is understood as providing opportunities for young people – this is the promotion of youth opportunities in order to renew society, strengthen the country's values and contribute to the achievement of its goals. Economic empowerment provides the skills, capabilities and resources that will enable people to get the right income. This is especially concerns young people seeking economic independence. Young people who are ready for the job market are encouraged to start their own business. Public services are provided in Lithuania in favor of people intending to start a business using the EU structural funds, state and municipal funds for promoting entrepreneurship and development of small and medium business (Civinskas et al., 2016). Youth entrepreneurship in Lithuania promotes:

- 10 business, tourism and business information centers; 4 business incubators; 8 science and technology parks;
- public institution "Versli Lietuva", which provides various consultations for new business, and in the course of a half-year the founders of companies have the opportunity to receive professional consultations in the field of accounting, marketing, strategic management and other issues during the first years and participate in various trainings. This institution has set up a national network of mentors and organizes mentoring sessions, where experienced business representatives help start-up entrepreneurs search for the best possible solutions for specific business development; organizes a business mission to foreign countries; organizes business exhibitions and other services for business;
- public institution "Business Angels" is a wealthy group of people who invest their money in financing projects for entrepreneurs, often taking on a high risk;
- entrepreneurship promotion fund – the purpose of this fund is to facilitate individuals to start their small or medium-sized businesses, for example: providing guarantees for investment projects or working capital loans; provides soft loans from this fund by reimbursing 95% of interest paid;
- the loans are provided by all 9 commercial banks licensed by the Bank of Lithuania, 8 branches of foreign banks, 69 credit unions and other financial institutions are able to provide loans. These institutions use "shopping baskets" to promote business start-ups, the first year starting business does not include fees for everyday business banking services.

For two consecutive years (in 2011 and 2012) in Lithuania, a representative survey of entrepreneurship monitoring was conducted covering all regions of Lithuania (Laužikas, et al., 2012). The results show that 25% of young people (18-24 years old) started their own business in the period of 2011-2012; the number of other start-ups decreased from 21% to 17%, but the number of inception businesses increased from 27% to 30%. It has been noticed that the number of owners among respondents dropped significantly from 15% to 8%, while the number of those who left the business increased from 9% to 14%. In youth aged 25-34, there was a decrease in the comparative weight of business creation, creation of business for others, intending to start a business and number of owners; the comparative weight of the number of business owners only increased. The study shows that these two young people groups (18-24 and 25-34) are not strongly involved with business. From a 35-44 age perspective, business is more promising and group aged 45-54 was characterized by almost all types of business development growth. It is important to note that in the age of 55-64 business development perspectives are stable.

Concluding Remarks

As shown by a survey of business overview in Lithuania in 2011 and 2012, growing youth, especially young people aged 18-24 and 25-34 years old involvement in the labor market in the development of small and medium-sized businesses will significantly determine the growth of income in the country in the future, which will determine the rise of the standard of living and ensure the sustainability of economic development in the country. The growth of educational attainment in schools, the growth of the quality of studies in higher education institutions will increase young people's motivation and active involvement in the country's labor market. Only in this perspective will Lithuania's sustainable development goals index, calculated in 2015 with a score of 72.1, have the potential to increase and improve the country's position among all of the 192 countries that signed the "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". According to the year 2015 data, Lithuania according to achieving the goals of sustainable development took the 31th place, behind Estonia (21 place, the score is 74.5) and Latvia (28th place, the score is 72.5). From the point of view of the implementation of sustainable development goals, Sweden occupies the first place (the score is 84.5), Lithuania lags behind it by 15%.

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