

## ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS ON THE PRO-ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE ASPECT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract:

The objective of this paper is to propose effective methods to implement sustainable development principles among young people, both in schools and universities. The authors of this article recognize the significant potential among young individuals whose actions and choices have a substantial impact on the environment. By analyzing the knowledge and behaviors of young people towards sustainable development and environmental protection, based on surveys conducted among pupils and students from the south-eastern region of Poland, this paper identifies gaps that require improvement and proposes actions aimed at raising pro-ecological awareness among the youth. The analysis revealed that only 25% of the respondents have heard about the "Agenda for Sustainable Development – 2030", 20% were familiar with the goals of sustainable development, and few have participated in initiatives for sustainable development. However, 58% of respondents claimed to engage in activities for environmental protection in their daily lives. The article also presents the degree of compliance with the assumptions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on both global and local scales. Furthermore, the paper analyzes two aspects of students' awareness of sustainable development: their knowledge of goals and documents, and their pro-ecological behavior in daily life. Based on the findings, this paper proposes ways to introduce sustainable development principles in selected areas of school and university functioning to enhance ecological awareness and shape pro-ecological attitudes among young people. Concrete actions to facilitate implementation are also suggested.

**Key words:** *sustainable development, environmental protection, environmental awareness, education, survey*

### INTRODUCTION

The ongoing advancement of technology, coupled with a rapidly increasing global population and escalating human demands, continue to heavily exploit and pollute the natural environment. As noted by the authors [1, 2], human activities have had a detrimental impact on the environment.

The preservation of the global environment is crucial for sustainable economic and social development across different generations. Given the limitations of current technology, humans are unable to create an alternative habitat, such as on another planet. Hence, sustainable development has gained significant attention in recent years [3], with its role in various aspects of human life and functioning continually expanding [4]. Sustainable

development is essential for resolving present and future fundamental challenges of humanity [5], which includes not only ensuring the sustainable development of natural resources and the environment, but also the proper functioning of the economy and the sustainable well-being and happiness of people [6].

While sustainable development is commonly associated with environmental protection activities such as river purification, pollution reduction, and responsible utilization of global resources [7], its scope encompasses many other areas as well. These include not only actions directly related to the natural environment, but also initiatives aimed at ensuring the proper functioning of the economy and society.

The Hartman Group recently presented fascinating research [8] which suggests that consumers are actively engaged in adopting sustainable practices in their everyday lives, even if they do not necessarily use the term "sustainable development". Rather, consumers tend to associate their actions with being "eco-friendly" or "environmentally conscious". This growing trend highlights a shift towards greater environmental awareness, as people are realizing that they bear individual responsibility for the protection and preservation of the natural environment, as well as the impact of their actions on its degradation [9]. Of note, young people are particularly interested in the environment and actively participate in various initiatives aimed at addressing environmental concerns.

Another crucial aspect of sustainable development is the development of innovative solutions for environmental protection [10, 11]. Sustainable technologies such as clean energy in production, green and reverse logistics, and others, are creating opportunities for industrial development and future growth through the implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies and innovations aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [12].

In recent times, there has been a need to shift towards the use of renewable energy sources due to the implementation of EU directives and the increasing prices of various energy sources, which are sometimes influenced by political situations, as seen in the recent months with the situation in Ukraine [13].

The success of sustainable development depends not only on external factors such as technology and policies, but also on internal and subjective factors related to individuals and their behavior. Therefore, the article aims to emphasize the crucial role of individual awareness, mental and spiritual state, value system, and ecological consciousness in achieving sustainable development on a micro scale, including activities aimed at protecting the environment of households and individuals.

The implementation of the concept of sustainable development into the practice of economic life in Poland is at a good level, as evidenced by the SDG indicator (80%). In the article, the knowledge of an individual, young people, about sustainable development was assessed. Young people need to know that their actions and seemingly small choices have a large impact on the environment. It is extremely important to educate young people and children in terms of activities for sustainable development.

People, who are the future of our planet, must be made aware that they have a choice between products and services that degrade the environment and those that are produced in an environmentally responsible manner. Collaboration between industry and academia is necessary to promote the adaptation of green technologies, enabling sustainable social development. Education for sustainable development at the level of higher education "allows to get to know and understand the relations with the world around us, explain the processes taking place in it, and also teach how to function properly (...)" [14].

In light of the fact that "the education and competences of people are becoming the most important values of

modern civilization and knowledge-based societies (...)", emphasis should be placed on the development of these competences, which in the aspect of sustainable development to a large extent determine the future (also the quality of life) of future generations [15].

The rapid pace of technological progress and the increasing demands of the economy emphasize the need for specific professional competencies among young people, which are acquired through education at schools and universities. As a result, environmental and health education have become essential components of the didactic and educational process at every level, including higher education. The purpose of this education is to equip young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to observe and implement the principles of sustainable development.

Therefore, the subject of sustainable development, particularly awareness of it, is of paramount importance. Ecological awareness should be instilled in individuals from an early age so that it translates into a positive attitude towards the environment in the future.

It is important to note that the implementation of sustainable development principles should not be limited to formal education but should also include informal education through various activities such as workshops, seminars, and educational campaigns. In addition, it is necessary to involve young people in sustainable development projects, encouraging them to take an active role in the implementation of sustainable solutions.

Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that sustainable development education is integrated into the curricula of schools and universities, and that teachers and professors are trained to deliver this education effectively. This can be achieved through partnerships between educational institutions and organizations specializing in sustainable development.

Moreover, the paper suggests that it is necessary to create a culture of sustainable development in schools and universities. This can be achieved through the implementation of sustainable practices, such as reducing waste, promoting energy efficiency, and using sustainable materials. By creating such a culture, young people will be more likely to adopt sustainable practices in their personal lives.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Sustainable development goals

The most popular definition of sustainable development specifies it as "(...) development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" [16].

The term "sustainable development" was used for the first time in the Brundtland (1987) report created by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development [9, 16]. With time, it gained more and more importance. Today, there is no need to convince anyone that the resources of the environment are constantly decreasing and that is why people should live differently than before. We must bear in mind the good of future generations and look

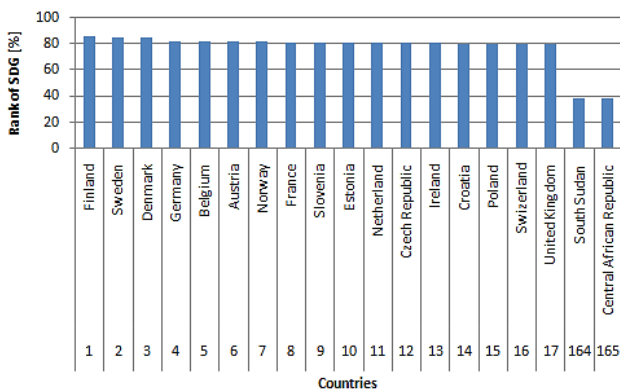
for solutions that will stop the environmental degradation that has been going on for decades.

The concept of sustainable development was incorporated into politics when the world finally understood the effects of climate change and the effects of rapid urbanization and a modern lifestyle. Sustainable development is perceived as a contemporary paradigm that allows us to meet these challenges and creates an opportunity to create new mechanisms for building the desired future [17, 18, 19].

Already in 1972 at the World Conference in Stockholm ("Only One Earth") [16] the first action plans for the protection of the Earth were taken. Many years later, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be defined as a universal call to action to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all [20, 21]. It is a set of goals, created as international agreements, that were created to save our planet. These targets were formally adopted by the heads of state and government of 193 countries gathered at the 70<sup>th</sup> United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September 2015. They are in force from 2016 to 2030 [22]. Their program is based on the principles of sustainable development. It is people, planet and welfare action plan that aims to eradicate poverty and hunger worldwide; fighting inequalities within and between countries; building a peaceful, just and society; protecting human rights and promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls; and ensuring the sustainable protection of the planet and its natural resources [23].

The SDG indicator shows the progress of individual countries towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This indicator can be interpreted as a percentage of the achievement of the SDGs, with a score of 100 indicating that all the SDGs have been achieved.

Report results [24] for chosen countries out of 165 in 2021 are presented in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1 Structure of the SDG indicator for chosen countries**  
Source: [24].

The analysis shows that 17 countries, including Poland, have achieved over 80% of the SDGs. The leading countries are Scandinavian countries – Finland (85.9%) and Sweden (85.61%). At the end of the list, among the countries that take an active part in activities for the protection of land are African countries – South Sudan (38.9%) and Central African Republic (38.27%).

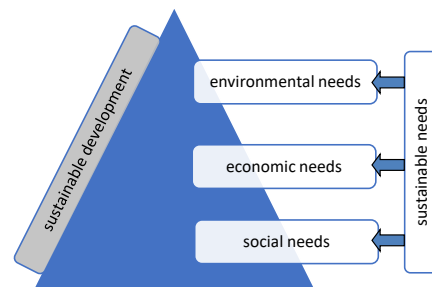
In order to achieve the goals contained in the document "Agenda for Sustainable Development – 2030", society should be intensively educated about sustainable development and the importance of activities carried out by each individual entity. Actions for sustainable development can be achieved on a macro and micro scale. The macro scale includes activities that are the responsibility of the governing states and includes activities related to:

- climate and energy policies of states,
- striving to build a "circular" economy,
- increasing energy efficiency,
- development of low-emission technologies,
- better use of renewable energy sources.

The achievement of these goals is monitored at the national and global level. On a macro scale, we strive to voluntarily take social and environmental issues into account by enterprises in their activities and relations with stakeholders, and to allocate profits by enterprises to the public interest.

**The needs of society in terms of sustainable development**

The current approach to sustainable development actually eliminates the narrowly understood field of ecological policy as an independent field. Each decision concerning the development of the economy or its sectors has consequences for the other pillars, i.e., environmental and social. Thus, all sector plans and programs should be considered in the same terms. The basis of actions for sustainable development is therefore development that takes into account various, often competitive needs with an awareness of the environmental, social, and economic constraints that we deal with as a society (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2 Sustainable development's domains**  
Source: [25].

According to authors [26, 27] these three areas must be integrated with each other in order to achieve sustainable development. The right decisions on the sustainable management of resources will bring about the sustainable growth of a sustainable society [28, 29]. Social needs are among the basic human needs – security, stability, food, housing. They must be satisfied. However, care should be taken to ensure that the cost to the environment is as low as possible. The second group of needs are economic needs. They are satisfied through the consumption of goods and services. Often these are needs beyond measure and are not necessary. In this area, educating the public about alternatives is very important. More and more often recycled items, second-hand clothes are used. The

environmental needs are of the greatest importance for the protection of the environment, i.e. those for the production of which the most natural resources are used. It is people satisfaction that is the biggest problem. Enterprises producing goods and services aimed at meeting the needs must improve processes in order to reduce the negative impact on the environment, reduce emissions and noise. Characteristics of activities within the framework of the sustainable development are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Characteristics of activities within the framework of the sustainable development**

Group of needs	Needs	Activities within the framework of the sustainable development
Social needs	Social needs - safety, stability, food, housing. Nature provides man with food and this need can be met in harmony with nature.	- providing satisfactory conditions for the population living in the agricultural and rural environment, both in terms of the level of income, social status and place in modern societies, - valorization of environmental services, utilization of agricultural labor resources, contribution to the maintenance or development of economic and social vitality of the countryside and cultural values, - "healthy and creative life in harmony with nature". The principles of sustainable development should be applied in each area: - sustainable construction, - sustainable agriculture, - the principle of second hand.
Economic needs	- satisfying the excessive material needs of modern generations, - consumption beyond measure without caring for the condition and possibilities of a satisfying life for future generations,	- production in sufficient quantity, with acceptable quality and good performance, - obtaining a stable and economically viable production, - ensuring the stable production of an appropriate amount of food of the desired quality and at prices acceptable to the society, - changes in the structure and model of contemporary consumption, - promotion of consumption corresponding to the concept of sustainable development, - raising societies that respect and use natural resources sparingly, - making sustainable development a natural choice.
Environmental needs	- industry, - emission, - exploitation of riches, expansive agriculture	- not polluting, but rather valuing natural resources, - obtaining production in a way that does not endanger the natural environment, - ensuring long-term balance of the agro-system and preventing degradation of the natural environment, - ensuring the protection of soil, water, air and the agricultural landscape, and the welfare of farm animals.

Source: [29, 30, 31, 32].

### Environmental awareness

Environmental awareness makes people understand how important the natural environment around them is and how they influence this environment. It can be defined in various ways. In a broader sense, it means the entirety of recognized ideas, values, opinions about the environment as a place of human life and development (society), common to specific social groups in a given historical period. On the other hand, in a narrower, more axiological sense, ecological awareness is the state of knowledge, views and perceptions of people about the role of the environment in human life, its anthropogenic load, the degree of wear and tear, threats and protection, including the state of knowledge about the methods and tools for managing the use and protecting and shaping the environment [33, 34]. However, not everyone is aware of what sustainability really means and why it is so important, why it should be followed. Furthermore, not everyone realizes that this does not concern only the environmental protection. Such an approach often exists among people [35].

The basic components of ecological awareness, as the study of the literature on the subject shows, are [36]:

- ecological knowledge expressed in the knowledge and understanding of the way humans and nature coexist;
- ecological sensitivity, manifested in the form of an emotional attitude towards nature;
- pro-ecological attitudes, i.e. actions taken to protect the natural environment.

The basic tool in shaping ecological awareness is ecological education, i.e., the concept of educating and educating society in the spirit of respect for the natural environment, in accordance with the slogan "think globally - act locally".

The aim of environmental education is to raise the level of environmental awareness and to shape attitudes, supporting young people in their intellectual, emotional, social, ethical, physical, and aesthetic development, as well as preparing them to live in harmony with themselves, with people and nature, and among adults - strengthening desired attitudes towards the environment and human health [37, 38].

In common understanding, environmental education is any form of activity aimed at society, with particular emphasis on children and adolescents, which is aimed at influencing the level of environmental awareness, promoting specific behaviors beneficial for the natural environment, and disseminating knowledge about nature [39].

The Preamble to Agenda 21 states: "Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health, and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being ". Man has run out of control at the dizzying pace of civilization's development. Nature cannot cope with the destructive power of man, who has become the perpetrator of the imbalance in the natural environment, but also the recipient of its dangerous effects. A chance to improve this situation is

environmental education of society, consistent with the principles of sustainable development [37].

Therefore, it can be concluded that appropriate ecological education should build ecological awareness of our society. Only such an approach will allow to stop or minimize the negative actions of ordinary people, who do not always know that their daily habits may have a negative impact on the surrounding natural environment. Conducting various types of training or pro-ecological campaigns can be a good solution to improve this condition.

## METHODOLOGY

The aim of the research was to assess the awareness of young people (pupils, students) regarding environmental protection and sustainable development. An additional aim was to stimulate the respondents to rethink their behavior in relation to the natural environment. The results of the research will show whether young people know what sustainable development is, whether they take part in various types of actions for environmental protection and what their motives are.

The research was conducted among high school students and students at universities in the south-eastern part of Poland. The research took the form of an online questionnaire, which was made available to the research group of respondents. It was assumed that at least 300 people should take part in the research.

The survey consisted of 16 questions. The questions were developed on the basis of the current knowledge of the authors on sustainable development and environmental protection, as well as literature research.

The research was conducted in January-March 2022. Ultimately, 359 people took part in it. The responses of the participants were analyzed to indicate the percentage share of individual responses. The results of the survey were used to undertake activities aimed at greater popularization of the principles of sustainable development with the goal of their application. The article presents only a general analysis of the answers given by the respondents.

## RESULTS

The analysis of the results was divided into several parts, taking into account the subject matter of the questions and answers that are required from the respondents. In the first eight questions, the respondents answered YES/NO to the following questions directly related to their knowledge of global environmental protection goals and participation in environmental protection initiatives:

- Q1 - Have you ever heard about the document "Agenda for Sustainable Development – 2030"?
- Q2 - Do you know the goals contained in the above-mentioned document?
- Q3 - Do you think educating society about sustainable development is sufficient?
- Q4 - Do you know what actions you can take for sustainable development?

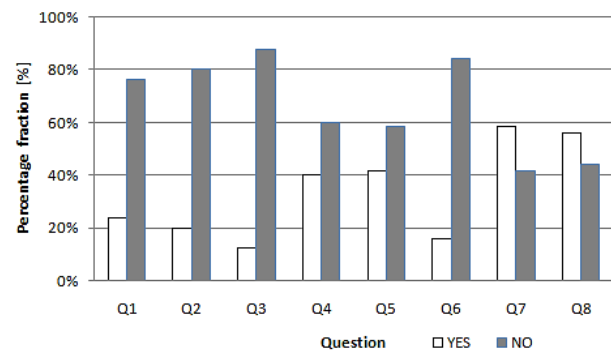
Q5 - Do you have knowledge of sustainable development initiatives carried out by the institution in which you study?

Q6 - Are you consciously participating in sustainable development initiatives?

Q7 - Do you conduct activities for sustainable development in your daily life?

Q8 - When buying products, do you pay attention to the packaging and its environmental friendliness?

Percentage shares of answers "yes" and "no" were calculated for the individual questions. The results were shown in Figure 3. The analysis of results shows that only 25% of respondents have heard about the document "Agenda for sustainable development – 2030". A low percentage of respondents (20%) knows the goals contained in the above-mentioned document. The answers to the first two questions are worrying and show a very low level of education of the "young" society on sustainable development. As many as 88% of respondents admitted that educating the society on this subject is at a very low level. Only 40% of respondents know what actions they can take for sustainable development (Q4). Just over 40% have knowledge of sustainable development initiatives run by the institution in which they study. Unfortunately, only 18% admit that they consciously participate in initiatives for sustainable development. The Figure 3 also shows that 58% of respondents conduct activities for sustainable development in everyday life, and 56% of respondents, when buying a product, pay attention to the packaging and its environmental friendliness.



**Fig. 3** Answers to questions about knowledge about global environmental goals and participation in environmental initiatives

Subsequently, the respondents also had the answer "I don't know" at their disposal. Respondents also answered questions about climate change and economic growth due to environmental degradation:

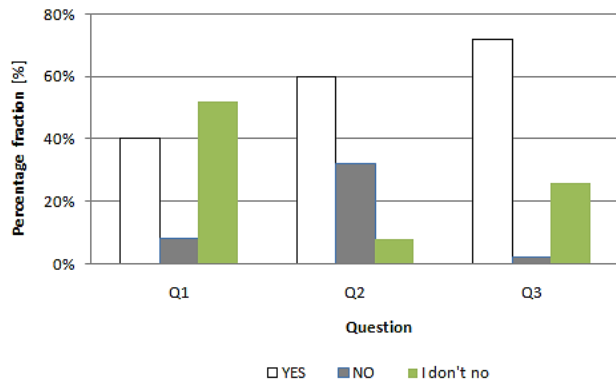
Q1 - Can the effects of climate change be stopped by actions for sustainable development?

Q2 - Is economic growth strongly related to environmental degradation?

Q3 - Knowing the principles of sustainable development, will you apply them to protect the environment?

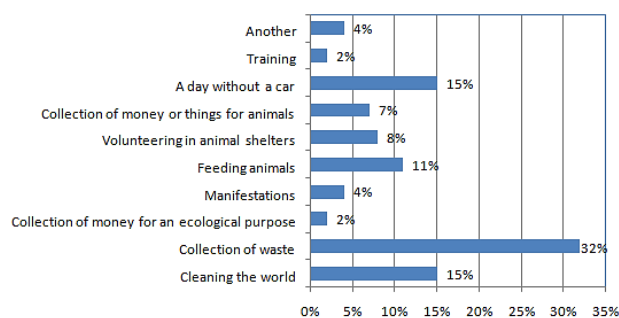
The results of the analysis of the answers to these questions were presented in Figure 4. To the question "Can the effects of climate change be stopped by actions for sustainable development?" an affirmative answer was given

by 40% of the respondents and only 8% did not. To the question "Is economic growth strongly related to environmental degradation?" 60% answered in the affirmative way, 32% in the negative and 8% don't know. Almost 72% of respondents admitted that knowing the principles of sustainable development they would apply them.



**Fig. 4** Answers to questions about the impact of climate change and economic growth on environmental degradation

Another question was about taking part in various types of social actions related to environmental protection. The respondents had the following answers at their disposal: cleaning the world, collection of waste, e.g. taps, collection money for an ecological purpose, manifestations, feeding animals, volunteering in animal shelters, collecting money or things for animals, other. The respondents could indicate more than one answer. The results of the analysis of the obtained answers were shown in Figure 5.

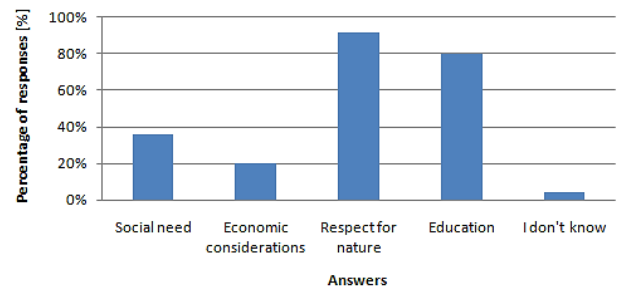


**Fig. 5** Answers to question about participation in social initiatives for sustainable development

The research shows that 32% of respondents take part in the collection of waste, 15% in cleaning the world and 11% in feeding animals. The least popular social initiatives for sustainable development among the respondents are training and collecting money for an ecological purpose. The next question concerned the reasons that motivate respondents to take action to protect the environment. Among the answers, the respondents had at their disposal: social need, economic considerations, respect for nature, education, I don't know, other. They could indicate more than one reason. The results of the analysis are shown in Figure 6.

The analysis of the conducted research shows that the most common reason that encourage the respondents to

participate in social initiatives for sustainable development are "respect for nature" and "education".



**Fig. 6** Answers to question about the reasons that motivate participation in social initiatives for sustainable development

The analysis of the conducted research shows that the respondents have little knowledge about the world development strategy 2030, which is thoroughly discussed in the Agenda 2030 document. They do not know the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, global assumptions and documents. They admit that they have not participated in training for sustainable development and are not taking "conscious participation in initiatives for sustainable development". However, in everyday life, 58% of them conduct activities for sustainable development as well as pay attention to the packaging and its environmental friendliness (56%). There is a high probability that the number of people who care about the environment would be much greater if they knew the principles of sustainable development. This goal can be achieved through education and training.

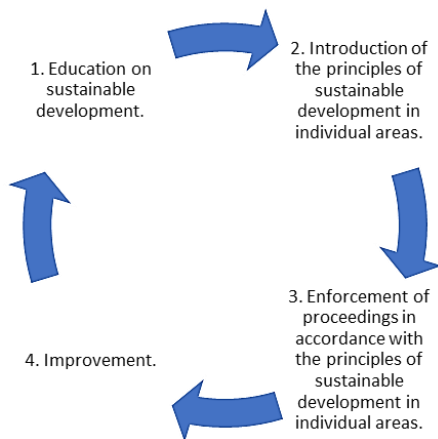
## DISCUSSION

The author [40] emphasized the critical role of ecological education in promoting responsibility for the natural environment and eco-development across all stages of education. In line with the principles of pro-environmental education, it is essential to undertake actions within school institutions that aim to raise the environmental awareness of young people. Furthermore, it is crucial to prepare teaching staff to implement a range of effective methods and strategies to achieve optimal results in the education process of the younger generation.

According to Danuta Cichy [41] the key problem in introducing eco-development is the environmental awareness of adults. Therefore, students – often future decision-makers - should be familiarized with the Agenda 21 document. Among the competences that young people acquire at school, there are also civilization competences (including environmental ones) [42]. Efforts should be made to ensure that these competences are properly mastered as they determine the quality of life for future generations. Caring for the environment must become a habit for young people. In the process of education for sustainable development, it is more important than mastering the knowledge or skills to develop the ability to make ethical decisions and the realization of values [43].

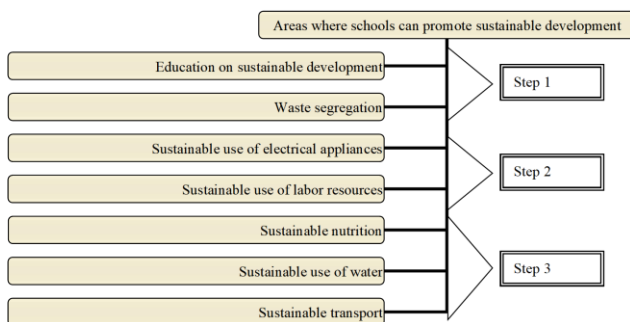
In the opinion of the authors of this paper, education for sustainable development should be supported by specific activities enabling the formation of the desired attitudes. The school, along with the infrastructure, should enable

and encourage the application of the principles of environmental protection. The stages of implementing the principles of sustainable development at school are presented in Figure 7.



**Fig. 7 Stages of implementing the principles of sustainable development at school**

The areas where schools can promote sustainable development are presented in Figure 8 and Table 2. The steps are presented from the easiest ones that can be taken immediately to the most difficult ones that take time (time to introduce changes and get used to a different course of action).



**Fig. 8 Areas where schools can promote sustainable development**

The first step, if it has not yet been implemented, can be taken today. The key is education, talking about important things and realizing that each of us has an influence on them.

The second step, which includes "Sustainable use of electrical appliances" and "Sustainable use of labor resources", requires more time and a change in thinking and therefore in the behavior of the individual. Means of work are equipment and materials needed for work or study. We should try not to throw away electronic equipment if it can still be repaired. Many things can be used in a different way than before, so we can change their use. It is imperative to reduce the use of paper. Electronic documents can be used more frequently. In times of widespread use of mobile phones, it is no longer useful to print leaflets and posters for advertising purposes. Therefore, the printing of leaflets, catalogs, and posters should be restricted. Devices left in standby mode still consume electricity. Leaving them in this mode overnight or for the

entire weekend causes unnecessary consumption of electricity, which in Poland comes mainly from the combustion of fossil fuels.

**Table 2 Activities for sustainable development at school**

Education on sustainable development	conducting courses and lectures for pupils, students, and doctoral students on climate change and sustainable development.
Waste segregation	equipping schools/departments with bins for waste segregation, liquidation of individual, single baskets.
Sustainable use of electrical appliances	- turning off heating and air conditioning in rooms where the appropriate temperature does not need to be maintained, especially during weekends and holidays, - obtaining energy from renewable sources in newly constructed facilities.
Sustainable use of labor resources	- limiting the number of printed forms, - resignation from printing leaflets and posters.
Sustainable nutrition	- introducing plant dishes in canteens, enabling selection, - use of biodegradable packaging in canteens and shops, - excluding products in plastic packaging, - setting up "community refrigerators" on the campus or at schools so that students/pupils can donate surplus food.
Sustainable use of water	- assembly of sanitary facilities that consume less water and, where justified, a double water cycle can be introduced, using "gray water".
Sustainable transport	- increase in the number of bicycle paths, - electric vehicle charging stations - availability of public (collective) transport, - organizing lectures and classes in the form of videoconferences.

It is estimated that the storage of an average e-mail on servers for a year is approximately 0.1 grams of CO<sub>2</sub>. Although this amount seems small, considering the number of employees and students as well as the content of our mailboxes and virtual disks, it turns out that this sum is no longer insignificant.

Waste segregation is the responsibility of each of us, resulting from the provisions of the European Union and national regulations.

Step three takes time and money, but can be rewarding. These outlays will certainly pay off and will be the basis for further improvements. Actions in the areas of "Sustainable use of water", "Sustainable nutrition" and "Sustainable Transport" will bring huge benefits, although they require time, effort and financial costs.

**CONCLUSION**

The introduction of the principles of the sustainable development is closely related to the quality of life. People must realize that many small choices are extremely important for the environment, even giving up the still popular disposable bags.

The analysis of the conducted research shows that only 25% of respondents have heard about the document

"Agenda for sustainable development – 2030". Only 20% of respondents know the goals contained in the above-mentioned document. As many as 88% of respondents admitted that educating the society on this subject is at a very low level. Pupils and students of non-ecology and environmental protection faculties do not have a subject that would deal with this topic. Only 40% of respondents know what actions they can take for sustainable development. Just over 40% have knowledge of sustainable development initiatives run by the institution in which they study. Few of the respondents (18%) consciously participate in initiatives for sustainable development. Almost 58% of respondents conduct activities for sustainable development in everyday life, and 56% of respondents, when buying a product, pay attention to the packaging and its environmental friendliness. This number, with little effort, could be much higher.

40% of respondents believe that the effects of climate change can be contained by actions for sustainable development. The respondents concluded that economic growth is strongly related to environmental degradation (60%). It is promising that almost 72% of respondents admitted that knowing the principles of sustainable development, they will apply them. The research shows that 32% of respondents take part in collection of waste, only 15% in cleaning the world and 11% in feeding animals. Only 2% of the respondents participated in training for sustainable development. However, in everyday life, 58% of them conduct activities for sustainable development as well as pay attention to the packaging and its environmental friendliness (56%). There is a high probability that the number of people who care about the environment would be much greater if they knew the principles of sustainable development. This goal can be achieved through education and training.

If sustainable development is introduced and discussed in schools and universities, teachers can encourage students to participate in activities related to environmental protection. This can help students to develop a sense of responsibility towards the environment, which they can apply in their personal lives as well. Schools should organize activities that promote sustainable development and involve young people in them.

Social actions and campaigns on environmental issues, appropriate environmental education, and changes in legal regulations have contributed to an increase in environmental awareness among people. As a result, people are more conscious of the need to protect the environment and are making efforts to change their habits in order to do so. However, there is still much to be done in terms of promoting sustainable development and creating a more environmentally friendly society [44, 45].

Environmental education plays a vital role in introducing various subjects and topics related to environmental protection into the curricula at different levels of education. It aims to promote multilateral human development, emphasizing the importance of environmental protection, raising awareness of environmental threats, sensitivity to

its destruction, and encouraging active responses to its degradation.

In addition to classes, an important aspect of ecological education is participation in various types of pro-environmental actions. These activities not only improve the condition of the natural environment but also engage people in the cause. Thus, it is highly recommended to actively participate in such initiatives.

The paper acknowledges some limitations in the study. One limitation is that the authors created the questionnaire themselves, which may have missed some important aspects related to the topic. Additionally, the authors had no control over the research sample, as the survey was conducted online and was voluntary and anonymous. This raises the possibility that the questionnaire may have been filled out by people who were not part of the target group. To address this, the authors supplemented the questionnaire with respondent characteristics to eliminate answers from people who were not part of the target group, but there is still the possibility that respondents provided false personal information.

Despite these limitations, the authors view the participation of respondents in the survey as a way of building awareness of sustainable development and environmental protection. They hope that respondents have rethought their approach to the topic and may behave in a more pro-ecological manner in the future. Furthermore, the authors plan to conduct further research using the questionnaire in other regions of Poland and Europe.

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