



Towards more critical and more meaningful Education and learning for sustainability. Moving beyond the DESD¹ *Arjen Wals²*

This brief personal reflection is based on two reviews I was commissioned to carry out by UNESCO of the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (Wals 2009a, 2009b, 2012) and a special report on social learning-based ESD prepared for the end of the DESD conference as a backdrop Wals et al. 2014), I conclude that in order to address prevailing un-sustainability citizens, young and old, need to become active participants in transitions that break with dominating routines founded on untenable principles and values. Another key conclusion is that the DESD has unwillingly ignored the loss of identity and sense of place that is affecting citizens across the globe as a result of globalization and the related ICT-revolution. This is where environmental education has a lot of experience and a lot to contribute to the Global Action Programme for ESD that will be launch in November of this year in Nagoya Japan. I will close this contribution by stressing the synergy between environmental education and sustainability education which is also a key premise of the 8th WEEC congress in 2015 in Gothenburg, Sweden.

This is the year in which the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development will end and during which the field of EE will be fast approaching its fiftieth anniversary. When considering the state of the *Planet* today we can only conclude that despite some patchy progress in certain parts of the world, the overall picture remains rather grim as we are facing continued loss of biodiversity and

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