

«Encontro de Jovens das Cidades Irmãs e Amigas de Aveiro»
Aveiro, 14 de Setembro de 2000



**"THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
PROCESS"**

Viriato Soromenho-Marques
(Universidade de Lisboa)

1. Youth and Sustainable Development.
2. Features and Indicators of Sustainable Development.
3. Environmental Crisis, Political Activism and Sustainability Perspectives.
4. Young Voluntary Action for Sustainable Development amidst Old and New Values.

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Comunicação: "The Role of Young People in the Sustainable Development Process"

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**1-«Encontro de Jovens das Cidades Irmãs e Amigas de Aveiro»
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Comunicação: "The Role of Young People in the Sustainable Development Process"

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Central Themes

I-Youth and Sustainable Development

II-Features and Indicators of Sustainable Development

III-Environmental Crisis, Political Activism and Sustainability Perspectives

IV-Young Voluntary Action for Sustainable Development Amidst Old and New Values

- Transparency in the information process
- Participation in the decision process
- Strategic planning
- Long run perspective
- Step-by-step approach to the implementation process to avoid the risk of no-return
- Synergetic plus-value
- Combination of policies and sectional areas
- Environment-accounts from the design stage
- Prevention versus end-of-pipe approach
- Internalization of environmental impact in costs
- Permanent monitoring
- Social (and political) responsibility

2-Why do young people matters in sustainable development strategies?

1. Sustainable development is about the future.
2. Sustainable development is about the understanding of society as a fair compact between generations.
3. Sustainable development is about ethical and political responsibility concerning concrete human beings, living creatures and ecosystems.
4. Sustainable development is about values and lifestyles.

Thomas Jefferson: "The earth belongs in usufruct to the living."
(1789)

John Stuart Mill: "It is scarcely necessary to remark that a stationary condition [in terms of economic growth with severe ecological damage] implies no stationary state of human improvement. There would be all kinds of mental culture and moral and social progress [and] much room for improving the Art of Living."
(1848).

3-How to acknowledge a Sustainable Development Project?

- Integrates Complexity
- Implies multidisciplinary Analysis
- Transparency in the information process
- Participation in the decision process
- Strategic planning
- Long run perspective
- Step-by-step approach to the implementation process to avoid the risk of no-return
- Synergetic plus-value
- Combination of policies and sectional areas
- Environment accounts from the design stage
- Prevention versus end-of-pipe approach
- Internalization of environmental impact in costs
- Permanent monitoring
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4 e 5-Thinking Sustainability

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6 e 7-A Five-Level Perspective on Sustainable Development

Knowledge Conditions

- Thinking Complexity
- Multidisciplinary and Comprehensive scientific Approach
- Learning from Trial and Error.

Policy Framework

- Horizontal Integration of Institutions and Agendas
- Institutional Flexibility and Synergistic Relations
- Public Administration <> Civil Society Cooperation

Planning Scope

- Strategic Planning
- Step-by-Step Development against no-return Dynamics
- Monitoring of Decisions and Results
- Long-Run Reach.

Economic Implementation

- Ecological modernization versus end-of-pipe approach
- Ecological accountability against externalities or "uncompensated disservices"
- Common rationality (ecological economics).

Social Features

- Emphasis on cooperation (diminishing conflict potential)
- Actors identification and organization
- Sharing of information/transparency
- Social visibility and responsibility of actors

8-The several actors and domains of the current environmental crisis

1-What's new about environmental crisis?

- Planetary dimension
- Irreversibility and entropy (massive extinction)
- Cumulative acceleration
- Growing political and social unrest

2-Levels and Actors:

- Public institutions and policies
- Civic, non governmental, different kinds of stakeholders
- Youth organizations
- Political parties
- Mass media
- Science and school systems
- Economics, marketplace
- Ethics, philosophy, religion

9-Voluntary action and the triangular realm of citizenship

1-The essence of Public Life is the dynamic relation between **Actors** and **Tasks**

2- **Two ways** of looking to the Public Affairs Sphere:

- a) **Formal** (by the methods used);
- b) **Material** (by the ends intended)

3- Triangular Realm of **Citizenship**:

- a) **Polity** (grounding level)
- b) **Politics** (process level)
- c) **Policy** (strategy level)

10-Society and Political Culture: Three Polity Models

Priorities in **Hierarchical** Polity Model:

- Administration
- Politics (center<>periphery)
- Constitution

>*Extreme*: Military Power

Priorities in **Organic** Polity Model:

- Politics (clubs, like in 19th century GB)
- Administration
- Constitution

>*Extreme*: Tribal Society

Priorities in **Covenant Polity Model**:

- Constitution
- Politics
- Administration

>*Extreme*: Anarchy

11-Political Trends in Nation-State Development

- a) **'Civil Society'** returning as political slogan in the age of globalization
- b) Sovereignty **transfer** in federal or almost-federal political phenomena.
- c) Sovereignty **weakening** in key political areas by new technologies and new political alliances at regional and global levels.
- d) Sovereignty **fragmentation and reorganization** at specific policy levels as a tool for tackling new challenges

12-Broader sustainability perspectives open by the Amsterdam Treaty.

- Sustainable Development (Preamble and Article B, TEU; Article 2, TEC).
- Integration of environment protection in other policy areas (Article 3c, TEC).

- Strengthening of European Parliament through extended co-decision procedure (new Article 175 TEC).
- More access to information within the E.U. (new Article 191a, TEC).
- More E.U. powers in public health areas (Article 129, TEC).
- Consumers' protection as horizontal policy (Article 129a, TEC).

13-The 'Old' Social Movements and their Values

- a) Ideology of **Progress**.
- b) **Scientific** and technical **Optimism**.
- c) The Core Role Played by **State** Structures (the *Ermitage* metaphor).
- d) The **Teleological** (final oriented) conception of historical process
- e) The **War Analogy** in the Reading of Political Process (**Feind-Freund** political theory).

14-Environmentalism and Social Values

- a) **Pluralism** instead of Progress ideology.
- b) **Critical Reading of Science-Technology.**
- c) **Suspicion about State's Power & Performance Capabilities.**
- d) **Refusal of any 'end of history' worldview** (the 'show must go on'...).
- e) **Political Process** as integrating **Cooperation Behavior** aimed at common Survival.
- f) **New Emphasis** on the **Local Participatory Political Process** and in the care of **Local Cultural Roots.**

15-Young voluntary action: the wide scope of sustainable development causes

- Urban environment (municipal policies, Agenda 21)
- Nature conservation
- Gender equity
- Ethnic integration (citizenship against racism)
- Cultural international exchange ('cosmopolitanism' against chauvinism)
- Cultural and historical heritage

- Civic engagement (NGOs, political parties, etc...)
- Consumers' rights
- Sports, arts, creative output

16- Critical features in voluntary civic intervention

- 1-**Pre-emptive** action and initiative.
- 2-*Kairos*: Looking for **adequate timing**.
- 3-**Combination** of tools and methodologies
- 4-Extensive and intensive **legal framework** of intervention.
- 5-**Amplification** of claims through mass media.
- 6-Exhaustive **scientific preparation** of all campaigns in order to attain **credibility**.
- 7-**Autonomy** and **indirect** public representation.
- 8-**Institutional permanent gains** and results.

With this meeting subordinated to the theme *The Role of the Young Persons in the Sustainable Development* we intend to throw light on this subject as actual as controversial and ambiguous.

The approach will be structured around four main subjects:

1. Clearing up the acuity of the meeting theme. What are the reasons that turn the universal subject of the sustainable development into an issue that involves and compromises specially the young people?
2. Analysis of the several meanings, characteristics and indicators that permit to turn the concept of sustainable development into an operational device for drawing effective political and economical strategies capable of changing the social reality.
3. Explanation of the purposes that lead to an indissociable relation between the environmental crisis and the sustainable development. This relationship is produced by different modalities of political activism, both by the civil society and the national and international institutions.
4. The mobilization of the youngest it is inseparable from the values and the ideas of the world, which allows them to read the social and natural dynamic reality where we move. To conclude, we defend the thesis that for building sustainable societies we have to radically change the values and live styles.

Biographical note on Viriato Soromenho-Marques

Viriato Soromenho-Marques (1957) teaches Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Nature and Environment at the University of Lisbon, where he is Associate Professor. Since 1978 he has been engaged in the civic environmental movement in Portugal and Europe. He wrote over one hundred and fifty works on Philosophy, Environment and International Relations matters. He was speaker in numerous conferences in Portugal and twelve other countries. Among other books, he was the author of the following titles: *Europe: The Risk of the Future* (1985); *Europe: Maze or Common House* (1993); *Back to Earth: Environmental Awareness and Environmental Policy* (1994); *The Era of Citizenship: From Machiavelli to Jefferson* (1996); *Our Fragile Future: The Challenges of Global Environmental Crisis* (1998); *Reason and Progress in Kant's Philosophy* (1998); *Ecology and Ideology* (1999).