

"It was great to feel appreciated for the teaching and learning we are doing here with the students. It is hard sometimes to see the suffering of the young people – and at times to recognize the same suffering in our own lives. We know from experience that it is hard, and here in the workshop, we feel appreciated for who we are, for our commitment, and for our care for the young people. It gives us hope and strength to continue"

- participant

"Work of helping young people to put sustainability and social support into action."

- tutor

A Sustainability Portrait of Educators for Sustainability

Peter Berliner and Elena de Casas
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Educators are essential to promoting values of sustainability, Nordic values of social justice, a culture of peace, and equality, and Indigenous peoples' values of self-determination. Educators are core to this, not just through disseminating knowledge on these values, but also by performing them everyday in the learning. This is central to Nordic values of education, from kindergarten, where we listen to the voices of the children, to universities, where we value the academic freedom. In the workshop for educators at the Majoriaq Centre in Maniitsoq in 2023, the teachers made a sustainability portrait of themselves as a team of educators of sustainability.

The workshop was learning by doing as the participants did a sustainability portrait through psychosocial activities, including among others the "safe group", "emotional knowledge", and "letter to my teacher". The safe group is telling about an experience in life of being in a group where you feel safe and secure. After telling the story with many details, we reflect on the principles

of such a group and write them on a poster. Emotional knowledge is about formulating culturally embedded emotions and reflect on how they can provide social support. The portrait is about being appreciated. Letter to my teacher is inspired by the famous letter of gratitude, which Albert Camus, when he received the Noble Prize in Literature, wrote to his schoolteacher.

The teachers at Majoriaq developed the activities into wondrous experiences of storytelling and connectivity. It became a workshop of creativity and of unfolding our creativity, engagement, and social support.

We jointly elaborated on the "letter to my teacher" and made it a "letter to my students". The teachers wrote appreciative letters to the students at the Majoriaq Centre, in poetic and supportive words that made the resources, kindness, curiosity, and social commitment of the young students visible. In a learning loop, in the very process of writing to the students, the teachers became visible as engaged, supportive, and committed educators.

After writing these letters to the students, the teachers decided to put them on the wall at the entrance hall of the school as a mural of poetic words, welcoming and supporting the students, and transmitting a caring and supportive approach to learning. Togetherness, trust, and commitment as values of sustainability and social support beam from the words and show a committed approach to learning that opens the right to education, to art, and to knowledge for everyone in a framework of social justice and joy of living.

In poetic texts, in collages of words and drawings, and in songs, the team of teachers created a marvellous and amazing portrait of being



Figure 1. Majoriaq teacher engaged in the Sustainability Portrait workshop for the students at Majoriaq. Maniitsoq, 2023. Copyright: Siunissaq.



Figure 2. Announcing the community event and exhibition. Photo: participants in the portrait workshop at Majoriaq, Maniitsoq, 2023. Copyright: Siunissaq.

"We appreciated the recognition and mutual support during the workshop. It gave us hope and strength to continue our efforts in helping young people implement sustainability and social support in action, both in education and in community building."

- participant



Figure 3. The Majoriaq Director engaged in the Sustainability Portrait workshop for the students at Majoriaq. Maniitsoq, 2023. Copyright: Siunissaq.

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The four-day workshop participants were the six teachers at the Majoriaq Centre in Maniitsoq in Greenland and Elena de Casas and Peter Berliner, community psychologist in Association Siunissaq. Majoriaq is a second-chance educational option for the educational and social system to grant educationally marginalised young people the right to education, knowledge, and cultural activities. Siunissaq works in close collaboration with the Majoriaq Centre by Director Bitten Heilmann, Creativity Teacher Peter Josefsen, in cooperation with the Siunissaq Visual Artists Tina Enghoff and Soeren Zeuth, and in dialogue and cooperation with our Nordic partners in Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

educators for sustainability. In deeds, they proved their words in practice, as a welcoming and strong team of educators for human dignity, cultural viability, and social support. Educators for sustainability. Their experience and practices of learning can be supportive to educators for sustainability throughout the Arctic. ●

Figure 3. The portrait of the teachers with family. Taken by the young participants in the Sustainability Portraits Workshop. Maniitsoq, 2023. Copyright: Siunissaq.

