

6 Communication of Sustainability

Lesson 01: Communication of Sustainability

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Where are we?

Episode 6.1: Communication of Sustainability

Episode 6.2: Organizations & their Stakeholder

Episode 6.3: Strategic Communication of Sustainability

Episode 6.4: Sustainability Reporting



Learning outcomes

Learning outcome 1:

Describe the diverse nature of contemporary practices of sustainability communication on an individual, organizational and societal level, the relationship of strategic communication practices to other public communication practices, the role of stakeholders and publics and the communication practitioners in and outside of organizations (corporate, NGO, political and educational institutions etc.)

Learning outcome 2:

Develop comprehensive and well-founded knowledge in sustainability communication as field of study, an understanding of how other disciplines relate to the field and an international perspective on the field.

Learning outcome 3:

Understand the key elements of communication theories, strategies and tactics, and, thus, the character and operationalization of best practice sustainability communication planning frameworks.

Learning outcome 4:

Advance your understanding of social and civic responsibility and develop an appreciation of the philosophical and social context of sustainability communication. Advance your knowledge and respect of ethics and ethical standards in relation to communication of, about and for sustainability.

Learning outcome 5:

Anticipate and Interpret current issues and challenges of a world in transformation and social change. Develop a deep understanding of and skills to create change, develop advocacy, leadership and authorship in and for sustainability communication.



Overview

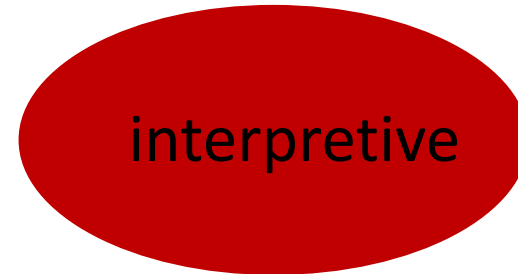
- A. Key concepts of „Communication of Sustainability“
- B. Subsystems & Communicators
- C. Function, effectiveness and key narratives



A. Key concepts of communication



pragmatic



constitutive



A. Key concepts of communication



Paradigms

- **Pragmatic** (information, education, instrumental sense of communication, functionalist/structural perspective, description of reality)



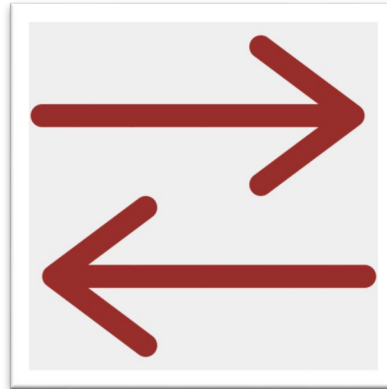
- **Constitutive** (symbolic action, social constructivism, sense making, define sth as problem, creates attention, evokes values, orientation, activates/stimulates engagement, exploration)



A. Key concepts of communication



COMMUNICATION *OF*
SUSTAINABILITY



COMMUNICATION
ABOUT CSR



COMMUNICATION *FOR*
TRANSFORMATION!

Sources:

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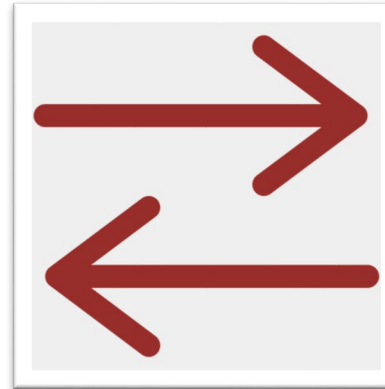
A. Key concepts of communication



COMMUNICATION *OF*
SUSTAINABILITY

**Direction / mode of
communication:**

One-directional, transmissive,
sender-receiver, one to many



COMMUNICATION
ABOUT CSR

**Direction / mode of
communication:**

Deliberative, horizontal,
many to many



COMMUNICATION *FOR*
TRANSFORMATION!

**Direction / mode of
communication:**

Participative, self-
organized, many to one



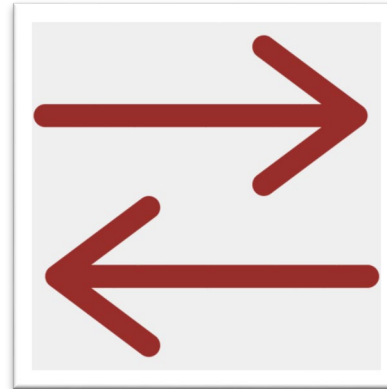
A. Key concepts of communication



COMMUNICATION *OF*
SUSTAINABILITY

Function:

Transmission, information and knowledge transfer towards an objective



COMMUNICATION *ABOUT* CSR

Function:

Deliberation, production of intersubjective/shared concepts, frames



COMMUNICATION *FOR*
TRANSFORMATION!

Function:

Participative, sense- and meaning-making, social change, cultivation

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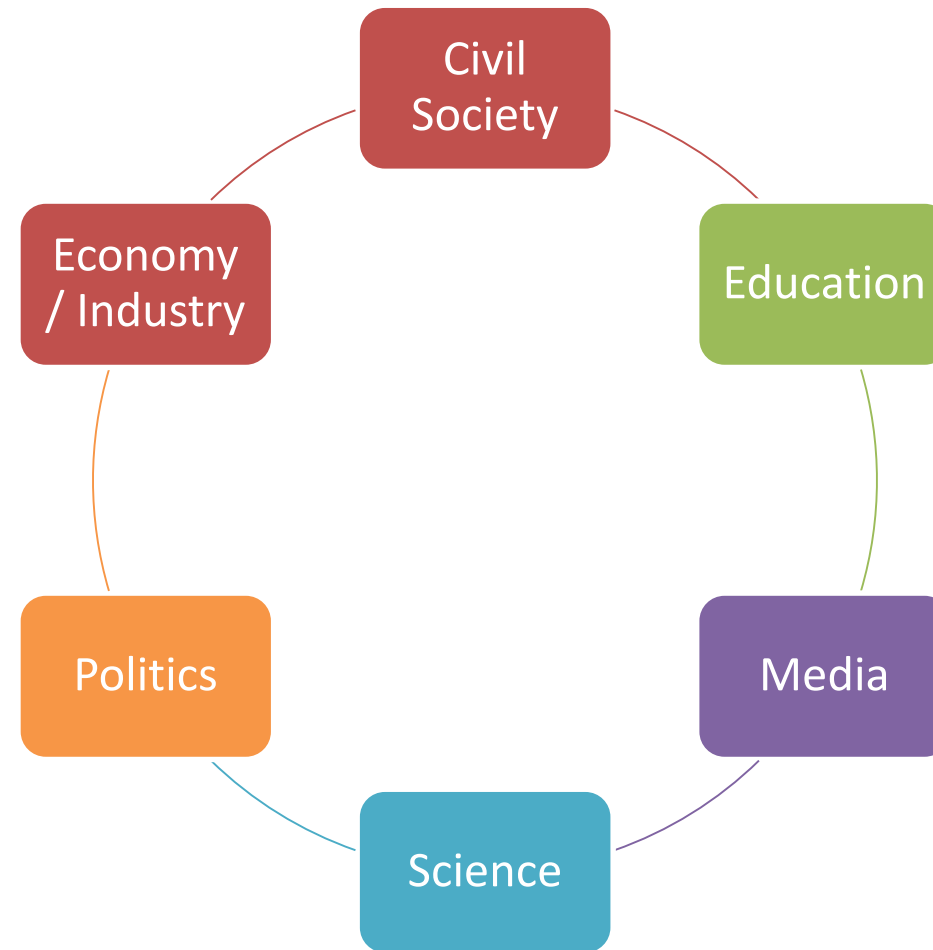
A. Key concepts of communication

Communication *of* sustainability

- Sender oriented
- Communication objectives
- Transmission
- Transfer of information
- Media as “tool”, „channel“
- Receiver as „stakeholder“



B. Subsystems & Communicators





B. Subsystems & Communicators

Awareness and information campaigns; marketing

Civil Society

Transfer of facts in traditional classroom, seminar settings

Education

Environmental journalism, climate change reporting, documentaries

Media

Transfer of scientific results/facts, science comm., public understanding of science

Science

Information, making people familiar with political will of parties, gov., bureaucracies

Politics

Transfer of information on possible behavior, improve reputation

Economy / Industry



C. Function, effectiveness and key narratives

Function

- Achievement of sender's communication objective
- Campaigning
- Sender & aim/goal oriented
- Monitoring effects



C. Function, effectiveness and key narratives

Communication of Sustainability

- S. as alternative within capitalism, conservation, compensation, sustainable growth

Communication about Sustainability

- S. as alternative to capitalism, abandonment, abstention, degrowth, restrictions

Communication for Sustainability

- S. as revolution, restoration and regenerative practices; new ecological identities, cultural change, innovation



Reflection

- How would you describe “communication of sustainability”?
- Who is doing it? What happens in different social subsystems?
- What is the idea behind “communication of sustainability”?
 - What are the main goals, what is communication of sustainability aiming for?
 - What kind of information needs to be communicated to meet the goal?
 - What are potential barriers?