

# STATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN CZECHIA FROM GEOGRAPHY POINT OF VIEW



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# AIM AND STRUCTURE OF THE CONTRIBUTION

- The aim: to summarize and assess the current status of teaching geography in the context of environmental education in Czechia
- Structure:
  - About projected curriculum (especially the curricular documents analysis)
  - About realized curriculum (the position in schools, education in ecological centres)

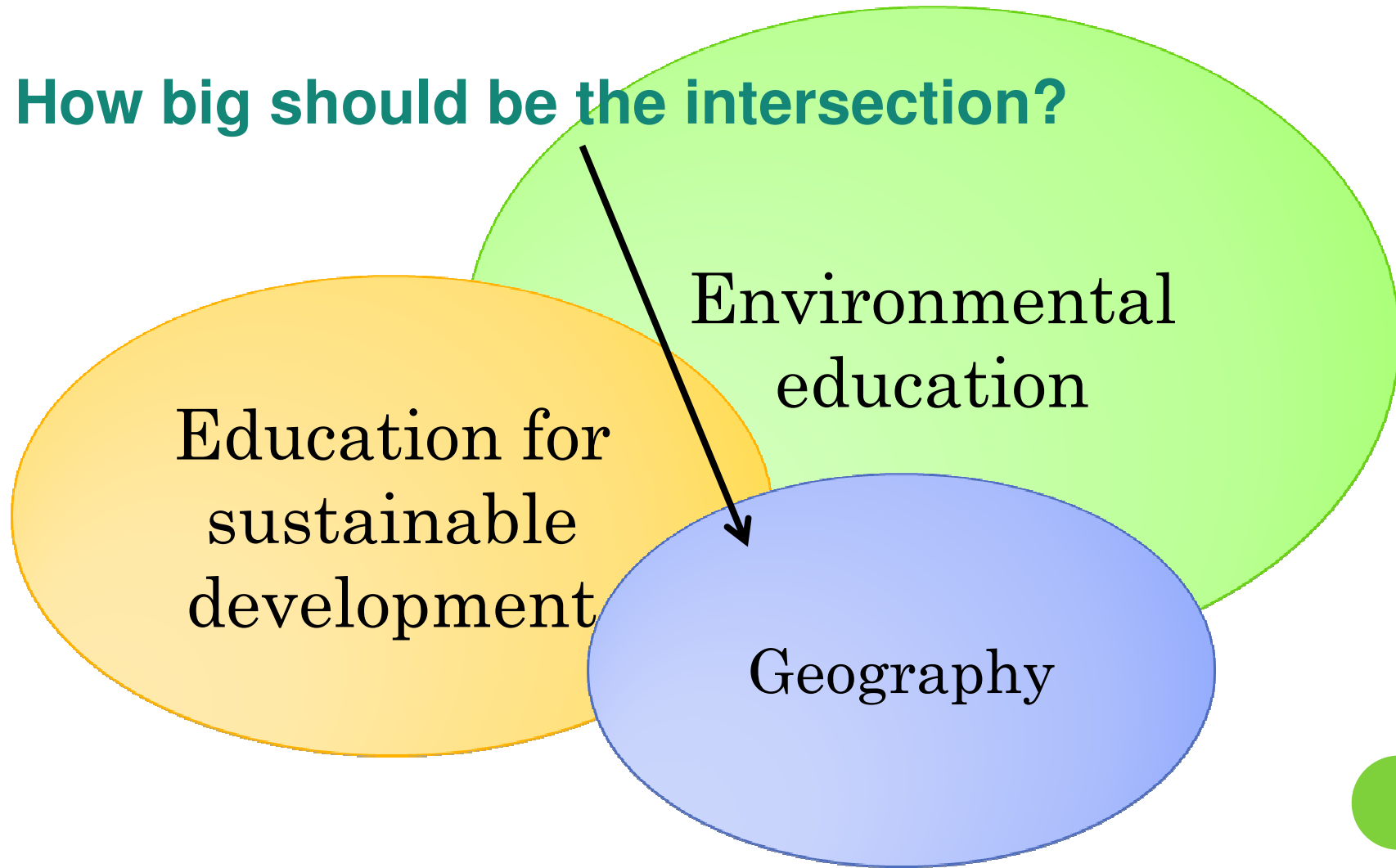


# DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

- **Environmental education** = conscious shaping of a responsible relationship of man to the environment.
  - **Sustainable development** = environmental strategy, which consists in the mutual alignment of environmental, economic and social needs and requirements. The main objective is to maintain a good quality and stability of all components of the environment, conserve natural resources for future generations, the diversity of life and acceptable conditions of his existence on Earth.
  - Education for SD is a natural part of the environmental education
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# DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

**How big should be the intersection?**



# PROJECTED CURRICULUM: GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- At international level – **Lucerne Declaration** on Geographical Education for Sustainable Development
- Or: „action topics“ in **United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDES)** – near all they have geographical perspective: environmental, water, rural diversity, climate change, disaster reduction, biodiversity, market economy...
- The **IGU Commission on Geographical Education**: EE should be implemented into geography curriculum at all school levels and in whole world

# PROJECTED CURRICULUM. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN CZECH OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

- The state program of environmental education and awareness in the Czech Republic (since 2000 three-year action plans)
- Framework Educational Programmes = state level of curriculum
- School Education Programmes – prepared by school after state FEP → wide autonomy of schools




# PROJECTED CURRICULUM: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN FRAMEWORK EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

- Environmental education = cross-curricular subject (theme)
- Thematic Areas of the Cross-Curricular Subject (upper secondary):
  - Issues of the relationship between organisms and the environment
  - Man and the environment
  - The environment of my region and the Czech Republic
- Thematic Areas of the Cross-Curricular Subject (lower secondary):
  - Ecosystems
  - Basic conditions for life
  - Human activities and environmental problems



# REALIZED CURRICULUM: MAIN ACTORS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS IN CZECHIA

- Governmental institutions – shaping legislative environment, financing etc.
  - Primary and secondary schools – realization of environmental education (but big variety in extent and quality)
  - Non-profit NGO's – mainly centres of ecologic education (EE id their main „business activity“, but weak connections with school subject, incl. Geography)
  - Foundations, funds, companies, individuals – financing
  - Universities - the preparation of future teachers and NGO's staff
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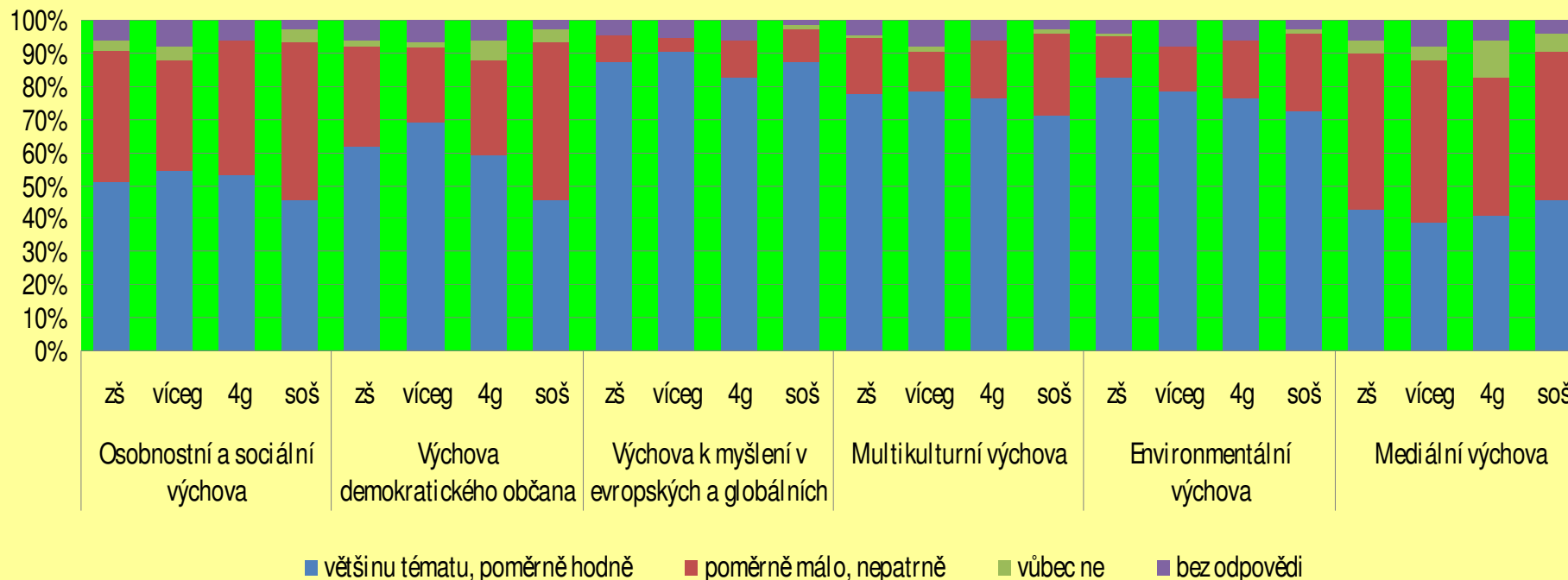
# REALIZED CURRICULUM: SITUATION OF EE IN CZECHIA

- Official state documents allows the implementation of EE into geography, but – in comparison with other disciplines – do not create exceptional conditions for it.
- EE in schools can be implemented as a separate subject (which may or may not teach a geographer), as part of several traditional subjects (geography, biology, chemistry, civic etc.), as cross-curricular project, or a combination of the above options.
- A specific situation in the NGO's: its portfolio of educational programs increasingly include geographical themes, but the NGO's staff are not usually geographers  
=> themes are indeed geographical, but their realization often lacks the geographic aspects.



# REALIZED CURRICULUM: SITUATION OF EE IN CZECHIA

Which of cross-curricular subject are included into geography in you school?



# SWOT ANALYSIS: GEOGRAPHY AND EE IN CZECHIA

## Strengths

- EE as cross-curricular subject in school geography
- Existence of the Czech Geographical Society, Commission for geographical and environmental education
- Existence of postgraduate study programme (Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague)
- Publishing the Geographic views journal (Geografické rozhledy) focus on implementation of curricular reform principles (incl. EE) in school education (published for 19 years)
- Existence of National geographic Olympiad

## Weaknesses

- Lack of national conception of geographical and environmental general education
- Atomization of geography – a small number of experts developing a holistic view of geography science
- Lack of awareness among university geographers about the ongoing educational reform as well as reality in school
- Lack of “disciplin icons“
- Lack of long-term and targeted promotion of geography and geography education in the field of EE
- Lack of cooperation between professional geographers and non-profit organizations focused on the EEA

# SWOT ANALYSIS: GEOGRAPHY AND EE IN CZECHIA

## Opportunities

- Incorporating cross-curricular subject EE into school geography
- To exploit growing interest in EE in general
- Support of Environmental education through national and international grant projects
- Media market with the development of diverse forms – possibility to implement this into EE

## Threats

- Too general specifications of EE in the state curriculum (FEP) – the main actor is biology; consequently „facts rather than attitudes“ and the "dismantling“ of geography matter
- limited and unsystematic flow of finances into science and education in general
- non-systematic education of teacher in practice, an oversupply of courses of different levels and intensity of demand



# CONCLUSIONS

- ...and SWOT analysis are (i.a.) dependent on the type of personality – optimistic vs. pessimistic
- Czech situation is not very different from other countries, we have similar problems → we are lucky we have EUROGEO and EGEA





**THANK YOU FOR PAYING  
ATTENTION**

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