

GAIiA

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SPECIAL FOCUS: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ETHICS OF SCIENCE – MUTUAL IMPULSES AND CHALLENGES

This Special Focus on *Sustainable development and ethics of science – mutual impulses and challenges* explores the pivotal question: Where, how, and to what extent are scientists and their institutions responsible for addressing interlinked environmental and societal challenges? It addresses the ethical and epistemological debates surrounding the role of science in sustainability transformations. The Focus features three forum articles and five research papers that critically examine epistemologies, pedagogical practices, and institutional structures.

Key themes include the development of a “survival science ethos” in response to climate change, sustainability transitions within university hospitals, and challenges to “techno-solutionism”

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COVER PICTURE

Über Alles wächst Gras/Grass grows over everything is the title *Michaela Friedrichs* gave to her 2021 photo, taken for a photo competition on littering. Literally, the title conveys the idea that the discarded plastic will eventually be overgrown and fade from view – a reminder that such environmental offenses are often deliberately ignored. At the same time, the title references the German proverb of the same name, which figuratively means that, with time, everything is forgotten or healed. By capturing a moment of everyday life and highlighting themes of (un)sustainability, the photo invites viewers to reflect on the broader themes of this Special Focus, contrasting the reality of (overlooked) waste with the aspirations and ethical dimensions of sustainability transformations.



in engineering education. Contributions highlight conflicts and opportunities within higher education for sustainable development, critique the overreliance on AI-driven solutions, and advocate for epistemic justice in participatory research. Case studies, such as transformations of regional agrifood systems, showcase the importance of integrating moral values in solution-oriented approaches. The development of a Code of Ethics for Real-world Labs of Sustainability underscores the need for ethical reflection within transdisciplinary practices. Collectively, these articles demonstrate how ethical inquiry fosters productive pathways toward sustainability transformation: ethics empowers, rather than impedes, these transformative processes.

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