

GOOD PRACTICES II.4

Higher Education and Sustainability in Europe: Sharing Actions for Change

The following experiences are a selection of good practices on higher education and sustainability. Some of them were presented at the 5th International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education and others are part of the GUNi observatory.

The good practices cover the following institutional areas:

Curricula and learning innovation



Community and social engagement



Institutional management



Research



GOOD PRACTICE 1

Tackling educational disadvantaged, widening participation and enhancing civic engagement between DIT and the wider community

Institutional area(s):



LOCATION: DUBLIN

INSTITUTION: Dublin Institute of Technology

The aim of the Community Links Programme is to help in the alleviation of educational disadvantage at local (inner-city Dublin), national and international levels. This is achieved through initiatives primarily directed at personal development including self-esteem, confidence, motivation and empowerment of individuals and communities. The Community Links Programme is made up of five very different projects, but what they all have in common is a commitment to support communities and individuals to reach their full potential. The programmes are located in the primary, secondary, third level and community sectors. The issues concerned are the alleviation of absenteeism, prevention of drop-out, increases in the attainment in schools, return to education in communities and access to education for all, civic engagement and social change.

Detailed information is available at GUNi HEiOBS:

<http://www.guninetwork.org/guni.heiobs/good-practices/tackling-educational-disadvantage-widening-participation-and-enhancing-civic-engagement-between-dit-and-the-wider-community-1>

GOOD PRACTICE 2

Grassroots cross-boundary innovation in higher education

Institutional area(s):



LOCATION: Netherlands

INSTITUTION: Wageningen University

The Initiative for Transformative Sustainability Education (ITSE) at Wageningen University is a grassroots working group of academics, teachers, and students who have developed a framework for cross-boundary sustainability education that addresses not only theoretical knowledge and practical skills, but also guides students to question their values, attitudes and behaviour, develop leadership skills, learn to empower themselves and others, and learn to facilitate social and collaborative learning among a great diversity of stakeholders. Currently, ITSE is applying this framework to the design of a BSc Minor programme in Sustainable Development: Empowerment for Action.

Detailed information is available at GUNi HEiOBS:

<http://www.guninetwork.org/guni.heiobs/good-practices/grassroots-cross-boundary-innovation-in-higher-education-lessons-from-the-process-of-designing-transformative-sustainability-education>

GOOD PRACTICE 3

Baltic University programme

Institutional area(s):



LOCATION: North America, Europe

INSTITUTION: Uppsala University

The Baltic University Programme (BUP) is a network of about 225 universities and other institutes of higher learning throughout the Baltic Sea region. The network is coordinated by the Baltic University Programme Secretariat, a part of Uppsala Centre for Sustainable Development (Uppsala CSD) at Uppsala University, Sweden. The Programme works mainly through producing and offering courses for studies of the Baltic Sea region, its environment, political change, and sustainable development. All courses have an element of regional studies and are interdisciplinary. Cooperation with other actors in society in applied projects is an important part of studying and developing sustainability strategies, and promoting competence development at large.

Detailed information is available at GUNi HEiOBS:

<http://www.guninetwork.org/guni.heiobs/good-practices/baltic-university-programme>

GOOD PRACTICE 4

The ECOART project

Institutional area(s):



LOCATION: Spain

INSTITUTION: UNESCO Chair on Distance Education

The project starts from the need for conciliating two worlds, two cultures that are being developed with little contact between them: Science and Art. The project arises from the fact that in order to confront the serious environmental problems facing humanity, we need to look at these from multiple perspectives. Therefore, it is necessary, not only to analyse with scientific accuracy, which is totally essential, but also with a creative vision that helps to imagine future scenarios of sustainable life on the planet. Thus, ECOART develops like a 'cross bred' art, born from the shared search in both territories, and offering the opportunity to show how these types of knowledge complement each other.

Detailed information is available at GUNi HEiOBS:

<http://www.guninetwork.org/guni.heiobs/good-practices/the-ecoart-project/>

GOOD PRACTICE 4

Educational innovation in university education: A proposal from the UNESCO Chair in Environmental Education and Sustainable Development

Institutional area(s):



LOCATION: Spain

INSTITUTION: UNESCO Chair on Environmental Education and Sustainable Development

Two projects are presented in this work, which are focused on two educational strategies, respectively: (a) The construction of conceptual maps, which is a technique that enhances analytical and rational thinking, using the editor Cmap tools; and (b) online groups of collaborative learning, which is a technique that promotes teamwork and enhances participation, discussion and divergent thinking. The projects were implemented during the academic years 2006/07 and 2008/09, respectively. Each of them was presented to the students as a pilot experience with an expected workload of 25 hours (equivalent to 1 ECTS credit) and participation was voluntary.

Detailed information is available at GUNi HEiOBS:

<http://www.guninetwork.org/guni.heiobs/good-practices/educational-innovation-in-university-education.-a-proposal-from-the-unesco-chair-in-environmental-education-and-sustainable-development-uned/>

GOOD PRACTICE 4

Keeping it Local: Shared Solutions for Sustainability

Institutional area(s):



LOCATION: United Kingdom

INSTITUTIONS: University of Northampton

This project puts partnership working at the centre of sustainable development and recognizes that universities need to demonstrate leadership in a new era of localism. By partnering with local public and private sector organizations, the project will identify common targets, objectives and solutions for sustainability in the county of Northamptonshire as a pilot project, with the aim of identifying the multiplier effects above and beyond that which are achievable by any one organization. 'Shared Solutions for Sustainability' will be created and some trial actions implemented across the county. The learning gained will be developed into toolkits, events and presentations to facilitate the dissemination and encourage adoption of best practice by other higher education institutions in partnership with their local communities.

Detailed information is available at GUNi HEiOBS:

<http://beta.guninetwork.org/guni.heiobs/good-practices/keeping-it-local-shared-solutions-for-sustainability>

GOOD PRACTICE 5

Living and learning sustainability in higher education: a research study on indicators of social learning

Institutional area(s):



LOCATION: United Kingdom

INSTITUTION: University of Gloucestershire

This research looks at the learning that occurs within the social contexts of HEIs. This study refers to this learning as 'social learning'. It was conducted at three universities in the UK that have made an explicit commitment to sustainability and it seeks to capture and document lived experiences of staff (academic, administrative and support) which are informed by social learning opportunities regarding sustainability within these institutions. Furthermore, the research has involved a group of members of staff who have reflected on their stories about social learning for sustainability in each HEI.

Detailed information is available at GUNi HEiOBS:

<http://www.guninetwork.org/guni.heiobs/good-practices/social-learning-sustainability-higher-education-indicators-institutional-change>

The reader can also find the following good practices related to sustainability in Europe at the GUNi Observatory:

- Awareness and education in sustainability at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU)
LOCATION: Spain
INSTITUTION: University of Basque Country
- Challenges for the 21st century: teaching sustainability in the context of higher education
LOCATION: Spain
INSTITUTION: University of Burgos
- Curricula innovation of the study programme
LOCATION: Macedonia
INSTITUTION: University of St Kliment Ohridski
- Developing a centre to coordinate sustainability efforts at Franklin College Switzerland
LOCATION: Switzerland
INSTITUTION: Franklin College Switzerland
- Disciplinary integration in research and teaching to promote sustainability models
LOCATION: United Kingdom
INSTITUTION: Kingston University
- Dutch national network for sustainable development in higher education curricula (DHO)
LOCATION: Netherlands
INSTITUTION: Dutch National Network
- Educating leadership for sustainable environments: international MSc programme 'Environmental Governance'
LOCATION: Germany
INSTITUTION: University of Freiburg
- Environmental design in university curricula and architectural training in Europe (EDUCATE)
LOCATION: Spain
INSTITUTION: University of Seville
- Hazardous waste management at the University of Alicante
LOCATION: Spain
INSTITUTION: University of Alicante
- Integrating art and education for sustainable development: student seminars in context of a transdisciplinary cooperation project
LOCATION: Germany
INSTITUTION: Leuphana University of Lueneburg
- Intergenerational course on methods for sustainable development
LOCATION: Austria
INSTITUTION: University of Graz

- Is social networking pedagogically sustainable? Putting social learning objects into action
LOCATION: France
INSTITUTION: Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3
- Porto Polytechnical Engineering School sustainable development action plan
LOCATION: Portugal
INSTITUTION: Porto Polytechnical Engineering School
- Social representations of sustainable development of Polish, French and German students
LOCATION: France
INSTITUTION: Université de Provence
- Study programme sustainable development – cross-cutting programme for bachelor's students
LOCATION: Germany
INSTITUTION: COAST – Centre for Environment and Sustainability Research
- Sustainable development in higher education through the increased quality of doctoral programmes
LOCATION: Romania
INSTITUTION: University Dunarea de Jos of Galati
- Teaching sustainable architecture and urban design
LOCATION: Poland
INSTITUTION: Cracow University of Technology
<http://www.guninetwork.org/guni.heiobs/>