

Call for papers: International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education – Special Issue on Professional Development in Higher Education for Sustainable Development

Guest editors: Daniella Tilbury¹, Marlene Mader², Jana Dlouhá³, Javier Benayas⁴, Alex Ryan⁵, Gerd Michelsen⁶

¹ *University of Gibraltar, Gibraltar*

^{2,6} *Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany*

³ *Charles University Prague, Czech Republic*

⁴ *Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain*

⁵ *University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom*

“Learning to change for a better world” is the catchphrase most often associated with the term education for sustainable development (ESD). Underpinning this education movement is a commitment to rethinking the purposes of education and to transforming curriculum frameworks and pedagogical practices. With the end of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) significant progress and potentials in ESD were highlighted, however more efforts will be required for a transformation towards a sustainable future. The new UNESCO Global Action Programme on ESD (2014) encourages strengthening education at all levels, as well as building upon ESD successes and transferring them into policies and institutional contexts. Building capacities of educators as change agents for delivering ESD has been identified as one of the main priority action areas. The People’s Sustainability Treaty on Higher Education, launched at the UN Rio+20 Summit in 2012, also calls for equipping university educators with professional ESD competences, while highlighting a transformative whole-of-institution approach for ESD. Higher education thus has a particular responsibility and role to play because it strengthens the capacity of educators to achieve systemic changes, acts as learning facilitator for ESD, and hence equips learners with the capabilities they in turn need if they are to contribute to a sustainable development.

Global and regional ESD strategies, such as the UN Decade on ESD, the Global Action Programme or the UNECE Strategy on ESD, are adopted to and implemented in different national and institutional contexts. Current research of the European higher education landscape shows that although the importance of ESD is recognised in the institutional higher education context, university educators still lack ESD competences and professional development opportunities (UE4SD 2014). Moreover, it is important to note that there are regional specifics in understanding and promotion of ESD at the higher education level throughout Europe (cp. Adomßent & Otte 2013). This special issue aims to address the lack of professional development opportunities from a conceptual, theoretical and practical approach and to identify drivers for developing ESD competences of university educators.

In order to be able to reorient curriculum and learning frameworks at higher education institutions towards sustainability, university educators need to be engaged and enabled through competences (cp. Tilbury 2010, Ryan & Tilbury 2013). As an example the competence framework for educators by UNECE (2011) identifies key ESD competences that educators should develop in order to be able to influence practice, pedagogy as well as people engagement. Another framework of five general key competences in sustainability is introduced by Wiek et al. (2011). The discussion about ESD competences addresses the individual contribution (of educators) towards sustainable development, nevertheless being embedded in the context of professional development approaches and holistic sustainability efforts in higher education (cp. Barth & Michelsen 2012, Mader & Mader 2012).

Consistent with these statements, this issue aims to identify:

- national, regional or institutional policy frameworks that support ESD professional development of university educators,
- concepts of professional development that support capacity building towards ESD among university educators,

- competence frameworks and ESD approaches of successful professional development initiatives for university educators,
- principles for scaling up successful capacity building initiatives for university educators to other regional and institutional contexts.

Papers employing innovative methodological approaches or theoretical frameworks of professional development towards ESD are especially welcomed.

Expressions of interest, initially consisting of a 500 words abstract with the full contact details of the authors, should be sent to: unesco-chair@uni.leuphana.de. The deadline for submissions of abstracts will be the 30th September 2015 and full papers are due by the 31st January 2016. Details on the **International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education** can be seen at: http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/author_guidelines.htm?id=ijshe.

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