



EAUC Annual Conference University of Leeds 23 – 25 March 2015

CHALLENGING CONNECTIONS

Incorporating the Student Sustainability Summit, Further Education Sustainability Summit and Transformational Leadership Summit

Exchange A7: Linking activity in Europe – UNEP mapping and building sustainability across universities and colleges in Europe

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Global University Partnership
on Environment and
Sustainability (GUPES) network
in the European Region



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The Global University Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) was formed in 2012 to enhance the quality, policy, practice and relevance of university education globally in the context of sustainable development using UNEP's priority thematic areas.



GUPES offers



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- Opportunities to promote activities, exchange information and find collaborators across the globe.
- Opportunities to promote the integration of environment and sustainability concerns and principles into teaching, research, community engagement
- Encouragement for the management and greening of university campuses,
- Enhancement of student participation in sustainability issues within and beyond universities



GUPES-Europe



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This project, referred to as GUPES-Europe, has been developed for the UNEP Regional Office for Europe to identify and map the potential development and scaling up of the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) network in the European region



GUPES-Europe Overview



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In developing any road map or strategy for GUPES-Europe it is important to:

- Recognise existing processes and products
- Identify what GUPES offers to universities that does not duplicate existing work,
- Consider how GUPES could work to compliment and contribute to existing projects and initiatives



Sustainability Networks



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- There are many opportunities in Europe for networking focusing on sustainability and best practice already in place.
- These networks do not cover the same European region as defined by UNEP.
- There is an obvious potential for GUPES to develop links across this region to create intercultural dialogue from the exchange dialogue from different cultural perspectives across the UNEP region.



Other University Networks



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- These networks are focussed on themes, disciplines, treaties, or professional groupings
- There potential area for collaboration bringing these focussed networks together to explore how to improve the uptake of relevant issues in different sectors within and external to universities
- There is also potential to create groups to have direct input to UNEP thematic areas
- Possible outreach to promote current research and ideas to people not in academic areas



Student Networks



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- Student groups are advocating and supporting the development of sustainable campuses and teaching
- There is scope for GUPES to explore the involvement of student groups in future conferences, events and seminars to provide their views and become part of the debates and initiatives they will be inheriting as their careers (at universities or not) progress



Thematic Areas



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- Define how GUPES relates to other UN activities that institutes have signed up to and how GUPES can facilitate involvement in thematic areas such as Sustainable Consumption and Production
- Create a clear set of activities such as online seminars, an opportunity to contribute to thematic areas, and regular relevant communication through online mailings or newsletters to facilitate involvement



Scalability



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- Clarify how GUPES deals with the scalability around the region
- There is a potential role in working with other sustainable development networks to show how institutions of all sizes could find sustainable development relevant to their work, perhaps through encouraging exchanges, or cross regional online seminars.



Comments on overview



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- Work, rather than compete, with the many other networks already active within Europe to create online courses, summer schools training opportunities.
- Create links and bring perspectives from other regions from across the world and within the UNEP European Region.
- Provide a mechanism for students to have a voice within sustainable development debate within higher education institutes and places of learning.



Comments on overview



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- Create or promote resources that may help Green Campus initiatives globally.
- Develop further research into definition, and application, of sustainable development across all disciplines including social sustainability, economic sustainability, governance and environmental sustainability



Regional Office



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- Producing a platform for relevant networks or institutions to meet and find common ground perhaps by bringing together different sectors to discuss existing work and how to encourage sustainable development for example through a rector's conference or focussing on UNEP's thematic areas (climate change, resource efficiency etc.) ,
- Encouraging capacity building of universities (and their students) in matters of environmental sustainability as a two-way exchange of information between UN initiatives and universities through regular mailings and updates related to current UN themes.



Challenging Connections



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‘Challenging Connections’ for GUPES is to enhance and support not duplicate existing activity. A challenge for all the networks in Europe and the UNEP European Region. Discuss:

- How can we meet this challenge?
- What connections should we make ?
- How should we make them?
- What should GUPES offer universities across the region?