

GREEN OFFICE MODEL: 5 CASES IN COMPARISON

“Educational institutions and governments should provide the institutional support, resources and legitimacy for youth-led change processes towards sustainability.” – UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Youth Statement, Japan 2014

This report presents **five case studies** of student-led and staff-supported Green Offices from the Netherlands and UK. Together with these Green Offices, we developed these case studies so that they inspire you on how to adapt the Green Office Principles to your university. We would like to thank students and staff from Maastricht University Green Office, Green Office Utrecht, Wageningen Green Office, Students' Green Unit and Greenwich Sustainability Hub in their support for developing this report. Please get in contact with us in case that you want to learn more about the Green Office Model: info@rootAbility.com

All information in this document is made available under a **Creative Commons Licence**. This means that you can directly quote the material and adapt it, as long as you do not use it for commercial purpose – such as consulting – and reference rootAbility as the author. Learn more [here](#).

Maastricht University Green Office



Universiteit Utrecht

Green Office Utrecht



rootAbility gemeinnützige UG (haftungsbeschränkt)

c/o Schleicher-Tappeser | Berchtesgadener Str. 8 | 10779 Berlin | Germany

+31 61 808 95 98 | +49 151 64504499

info@rootability.com | www.rootability.com

August 2014

BACKGROUND

Our current way of life is deeply unsustainable: Humanity consumes the resources of 1.8 planets. If present trends continue, we will need three planets by 2050. Creating a socially desirable and economically viable human civilization flourishing within planetary boundaries is the primary challenge of our time, **the call of action for our generation**. The necessary changes will not come easy or through technical fixes alone. On the contrary they require **deep transformations** in the way we think, live, travel, eat, vote and work.

We believe that it is the **responsibility of universities** as public institutions to be the engines of local, national and global sustainability transitions: Universities should educate students as sustainability change agents, create new knowledge to inform these transitions, and reduce the ecological and social footprints of running the organisation itself. Creating more sustainable universities requires dedicated change agents.

Students are oftentimes overlooked and side-lined within a university's sustainability efforts. We believe this is a **missed opportunity**, given the energy and spirit of students, the learning opportunities that sustainability engagement presents and the sheer size of the student body as largest stakeholder group on campus. Yet for a large number of students to unleash their full potential as sustainability change agents, the **institutional support, resources and legitimacy** of universities and governments are required.

As a **student-led and staff-supported sustainability hub**, the Green Office Model presents an internationally recognized and open-source model to structurally empower students. The first student-led and staff-supported Green Office was founded at **Maastricht University** in September 2010. The Green Office acts as a platform for students and staff running sustainability initiatives, improves the communication around these initiatives, coordinates the development and implementation of the university's sustainability strategy, and provides new impulses to create a buzz around sustainability.

What started as an experiment developed into an **internationally recognized and awarded open-source model** for sustainability governance at universities:

- In 2012, Maastricht University won the **Sustainabul Award** as the Dutch university with the most transparent sustainability efforts, thanks to the relentless efforts of students and staff in the Green Office.

- Two Green Offices – Maastricht and Exeter – won the **Student Sustainability Award** of the International Sustainable Campus Network und oikos international two consecutive times, in 2012 and 2014.
- In 2013, the Green Office Model was recognized and recommended as a good practice by Uwe Schneidewind und Mandy Singer-Brodowski in their book **“Transformative Science”**, and a report by the expert commission **“Science for Sustainability”** of the government of Baden-Württemberg, Germany.
- The Green Office Model was presented as a good practice on the **UNESCO Education for Sustainable World Conference** in Japan in 2014, and inspired the central recommendation of the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Youth Statement that universities and governments should provide structural support for student-led change processes.

rootAbility was established by co-founders of Maastricht University Green Office as a non-profit organisation in 2012, to create a growing community of Green Office Alumni that support the replication of the Green Office Model. We developed the **6 Green Office Principles**, which form the basis of the model, and support students and staff in the adaptation of these principles to the context of their university. The Green Office Principles are **freely available** to everyone under a Creative Commons Licence. As a **process facilitator**, we deliver presentations, workshops and webinars, and provide guidance, inspiration, information and feedback for students and staff that want to write concept papers and funding application for their Green Offices.

Beginning of 2015, the Green Office Model has inspired student-led and staff-supported sustainability hubs **at 10 universities in the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom**. Over 58 students and staff work for these Green Offices, which have a combined annual budget of **800 000 Euro**. We support initiatives at universities across Sweden, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain in developing concept papers and funding applications for their Green Offices. In this sense, the Green Office Model gave rise to the growing and internationally active Green Office Movement. Goal of this movement is to engage over **10 000 students and staff in 100 Green Offices by 2025**, in order to help transition universities, higher education sectors and societies towards sustainability. Will you be part of this?

MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY GREEN OFFICE

Maastricht University Green Office was established in September 2010 as the first student-led and staff-supported sustainability hub at a European university. The efforts of the Green Office were recognized with the Student Leadership Award by the International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN) and oikos international in summer 2012. Through the efforts of the Green Office, Maastricht University also received the Sustainabul Award as the Dutch university with the most transparent sustainability efforts in 2012. rootAbility was also established by co-founders of the Green Office as a spin-off organisation in September 2012. Maastricht University Green Office in August 2014:

Students and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 8 student employees working as project managers (paid 14hrs per week)- Environmental coordinator (0.4 FTE)- PhD student (1 day per week)- Around 20-30 student volunteers per year- The Green Office also had one intern conducting a one-month research project as part of her studies about energy production at Maastricht University- The team is organised into portfolios: Education (1 student); Research (1 student and PhD researcher); Operations (3 students and the environmental coordinator); Community (1 student); Promotion (1 student); Student coordinators (2 students; one on administrative and one on strategic tasks)- If needed, each student employee recruits between 3-5 volunteers for projects.
Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Green Office is a student-driven university department that is responsible for managing Maastricht University's sustainability portfolio. Green Office initiates and coordinates sustainability projects at Maastricht University by empowering students and staff members.
Top 3 projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Green Catering: Development of a roadmap to more sustainable catering at the university together with the relevant stakeholders at facility services. At the same time research is being conducted through the Green Office's living lab project to investigate consumer behavior of UM's student population concerning sustainable catering.- Green Academy: The Green Academy is a distinctive student run educational project organized by Maastricht University Green Office. It consists of theoretical and practical skill sessions chaired by experts from academia, civil society and

	<p>cooperate professionals. The Green Academy programme typically takes place in bi-weekly sessions on Wednesday evenings throughout one whole semester.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Living Lab: The purpose of the Living Lab is to mobilize the student research capacities from various programs at the university to support the sustainability transition of the university and potential external clients, while simultaneously enhancing the research-based learning experience for students.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 164.000 €/year structural funding through Maastricht University - 20.000 €/year for the PhD from the International Centre for Integrated Assessment (ICIS), the sustainability research institute of Maastricht University - In September 2010, the Green Office started with a budget of 75 000 Euro. 50 000 Euro were newly invested through the Executive Board and 25 000 Euro were shifted from the budget of Facility Services as the environmental advisor was integrated in the Green Office on a 0.4 position.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated department into Facility Services - Reports to its own 7 member strong Supervisory Board, chaired by rector of Maastricht University
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Green Office has worked together with and involved a great diversity of actors from within and outside the university in its activities: Student initiatives and parties, ICT departments, multiple employees from Facility Services, Deans and members of the Executive Board, the sustainability coordinator of the city, etc.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two workshops through rootAbility in September 2013 and February 2014

Contact details

Website	www.greenofficemaastricht.nl
Email	greenoffice@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Facebook	/www.facebook.com/greenofficemaastricht
Telephone	+31 (0) 433 88 51 82



GREEN OFFICE WAGENINGEN

The establishment of Green Office Wageningen at WageningenUR (University and Research Centre) was inspired by Maastricht University Green Office. Green Office Wageningen was established in September 2012. Green Office Wageningen in August 2014:

Students and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- One Green Office coordinator (16hrs paid) and four student employees working as project coordinators (In total 8hrs/week; 4hrs/week paid and 4hrs/week voluntary work)- A staff member is not officially integrated into the team. Since the Green Office runs as a project of Facility Services, the Green Office coordinator meets the designated project manager once per week for one hour. The Green Office also closely works together with the sustainability coordinator of WUR.- Around 10-15 student volunteers per year. The Green Office also had one intern doing an internship as part of her study programme for half a year.- Compared to Maastricht University Green Office, GOW is not organised in portfolios. Always two students work on one project, a main coordinator and a supportive coordinator.
Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Green Office Wageningen believes that sustainability is our future and we have to act to make it happen. Universities play an important role in moving towards a sustainable future. They should lead the research and practice for a more sustainable future and educate future leaders, policy-makers, entrepreneurs and managers who will make this change happen. Green Office Wageningen works towards a more sustainable mind-set and practice at the Wageningen UR. We bring the change from inside, by involving students and employees in sustainability. We believe that the best results can be achieved if students and employees work together and apply obtained knowledge to create sustainable campus environment. The Green Office creates awareness, inspires, initiates and supports different initiatives aimed at making Wageningen UR a more sustainable institution. We are linking, learning and innovating for a more sustainable Wageningen UR.
Top 3 Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Collect-fix-share: WUR students who are leaving the university can sell their bike to the Green Office. The Green Office then gives the bike to an organisation that works with handicapped people to refurbish the bikes. The bikes are then sold to incoming students. At the beginning of the summer semester 2013/14, 50 refurbished bikes were sold to incoming students.- Student Cooking Corner: The Green Office arranged an agreement with the catering company that students can sell self-

	<p>prepared meals every Wednesday in the canteen during lunch-time. Around 20 students participate in this scheme, out of which some collect money for charities. All students are requested to sell vegetarian/ vegan meals. This way we promote eating less meat, which we believe have environmental benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability Day: On 10.10.2013 – the sustainability day in the Netherlands -, the Green Office organised a sustainability festival with people selling organic food, exhibiting results of sustainability projects, swapping clothes or attending a symposium. Around 300 students and staff participated in the events on that day.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Green Office has funding until 2015. Then the project will be evaluated and potentially another structure be put in place. - The Green Office does not have its own budget, as it is financed as a project through the sustainability budget of Facility Services. The total investment is around 35 000 Euro per year into the Green Office, for office space, salaries and a working budget of 1500 Euro.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Green Office is not an independent entity with its own budget, but is managed as a project of Facility Services. Discussions are on-going where to place the Green Office after the project period is over in 2015. - The Green Office receives advice from a five member strong Reflection Board, including three people from Facility Services (sustainability coordinator, general manager of FD, one facility service staff and two students from the student council. The Green Office meets the Reflection Board every three months. The Reflection Board also approves the annual report and plan of the Green Office, helps to establish contacts within the university and gives strategic advice. - WUR also established a Sustainability Board in November 2013 including senior managers from the university and a person from the student council. Currently, the main task of the board is to define the Corporate Sustainability Strategy of WUR and develop indicators on how to monitor progress. The Green Office is officially not part of this board, but holds informal contacts to members of the board.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Among others, Green Office Wageningen works together with the sustainability coordinator of the university, the catering company, student groups and representatives, Facility Services and local companies.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Green Office Wageningen participated in around four, short workshops over the last 1.5 years, on project management, leadership, external communication and storytelling

Contact details



Website	www.greenofficewageningen.nl
Email	greenoffice@wur.nl
Facebook	www.facebook.com/GreenOfficeWageningen



GREEN OFFICE UTRECHT

Green Office Utrecht (GOU) was launched at Utrecht University in September 2013. It presents the third Green Office at a Dutch university and is also inspired by and modelled after Maastricht University Green Office. Green Office Utrecht by August 2014:

Students and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- One Manager Green Office (28hrs/week) coordinates the team, gives advice to the various project groups, handles the finances, implements projects and manages internal and external relations. The direct supervisor of the manager is the general director leading the general administration (algemene bestuursdienst) of the university.- Three interns are working in the Green Office 12hrs/week. They receive a basic internship salary from Utrecht University. Different to the other Green Offices, the student interns do not work for a minimum of one year, but between 3-6 months in the Green Office. The interns can be students or recent graduates. [Note, by January 2015, the number of interns was increased to 6 students.]- The interns are also working together with student volunteers. The numbers of student volunteers vary, approximately there are some forty volunteers working on several GOU- and student projects <p>In August 2014, the three student interns fulfil the following roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communication: Running the website, newsletter, social media presence, poster campaigns in order to get the GOU known and to build a community.- Projects: This position is the contact person for the students that want to volunteer or implement their own projects. The position also implements GOU sustainability projects.- Policy & transparency: bridges the gap between the University's sustainability policy and the reality of students and co-workers. This position tries to engage students and employees with the sustainability goals set by the UU <p>[Note: With the addition of three new interns, the working structure of Green Office Utrecht was changed. The Green Office now has six coordinators working on: Activities, Campaign, Digital communication, Offline communication, Project Support, and Living Lab.]</p>
Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vision: Green Office Utrecht is the central hub where fresh minds and hands come together to support Utrecht University's sustainable development.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission: Green Office Utrecht achieves its vision by making the university's policy tangible in the everyday reality of its students and staff members by informing, involving and empowering them to act.
Top 3 Projects	<p>The GOU manages its own projects or assists students and student organisations in realising their project ideas, for instance by connecting them to relevant stakeholders within the university. Three of the projects that the GOU has implemented successfully:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selecta: Collaboration with the company owning the vending machines. Stickers placed on the vending machines that if you use your own cup you get 11 cents off. - Monthly brainstorming sessions: A person working on sustainability issues poses a question or problem he or she is struggling with. The 15-30 students and staff who are attending the session on average brainstorm on a solution to this problem. - Living Lab: students of the Master Sustainable Development, following the course Energy & Resource Efficiency, have done research on how the University Administration (Universitaire Bestuursdienst) can make its activities more sustainable. The following topics have been covered: Plastic Recycling at the Uithof, ICT improvements, a review of implementations, Energy Efficient building of new Installations at the Uithof, Improving Water Use at the Uithof, Greening the Introduction Week.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GOU received funding for two years, from September 2013 until August 2015. - In total, the University of Utrecht invests around 54 000 Euro per year into the Green Office, including a working budget and salaries. - The Green Office has a 90m2 office space for which it does not need to pay rent.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GOU is part of the general administration (algemene bestuursdienst). The GO manager has weekly meetings with the sustainability advisor of the university, who is not officially integrated into the Green Office. - The university has a Sustainability Project Group – which initiated the Green Office – and discusses the sustainability strategy for the university. Members of the group include the energy and sustainability coordinators, the general director, staff from the communication department and a director of research and education. The group meets once per month. The Green Office is not officially integrated into this group. - The ambition is also that the Green Office will receive an Advisory Board that should include six members and meet the

	Green Office twice per year to give strategic advice and feedback.
Collaboration	- Among others the Green Office works together with student groups, the university's communication department, the Sustainability Project Group, the catering company, as well as relevant course coordinators and researchers.
Training	- One workshop with rootAbility to determine the vision and mission of GOU

Contact details

Website	http://greenoffice.uu.nl/
Email	greenoffice@uu.nl
Telephone	06-28831459



GREENWICH SUSTAINABILITY HUB

Greenwich Sustainability Hub – alongside the Students' Green Unit at the University of Exeter – were both established in October 2013. Both projects are externally financed through the Students' Green Fund by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Between 2013 and 2015, HEFCE granted 5million British pounds to the National Union of Students to invest in student-led sustainability projects in England (www.studentsgreenfund.org.uk). The Greenwich Sustainability Hub has been inspired by Maastricht University Green Office and rootAbility assisted in writing the funding proposal. Greenwich Sustainability Hub by August 2014:

Students and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 6 student interns for a minimum of one year (on a flexible zero hour contract working a maximum of 20 hrs./week)- A full-time employee has been hired as coordinator of the GSH. In this sense, no existing staff member was integrated into the unit, but a new employee hired as full-time coordinator. The coordinator meets with the university's sustainability team about once every fortnight.- In the first year, the GSH was internally organised into the following project teams (Stand June 2014). These roles will change in the next academic year. Events and Campaigns (1 student), Green Impact (3 students), Education and Training (2 students)
Mandate	<p>GSH is a central point for students who want to get involved with and learn more about sustainability issues. It's mission is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To create sustainable and positive environmental behaviors amongst students, businesses and the wider community through collaborative programs and projects;- To improve the employability of our students and students in our partnering institutions;- To promote Greenwich as a center for sustainable tourism;- To enable students' to have a bigger impact on their University and community.
Top 3 Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Events: Student engagement through events, opportunities and activities including Green Week and the annual Sustainability Show.- Outreach to businesses: The GSH supports businesses to achieve Green Impact Enterprise environmental accreditation.

	<p>Green Impact is an environmental accreditation scheme that was developed by the National Union of Students and is now implemented at universities, colleges, public authorities and enterprises throughout the UK.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outreach to schools: The GSH organises workshops on education for sustainable development tailored to local schools .
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding is guaranteed for two years through the Students' Green Fund (www.studentsgreenfund.org.uk/about). The total grant for the two years is £171,572. - To guarantee the legacy of the project, the GSH aims to make income from some elements of the project to enable the GSH to become self-financing, as well as sourcing additional investment from the University of Greenwich.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different to the other Green Offices in the Netherlands, the GSH is an integrated unit into the Students' Union and jointly managed by the Students' Union University of Greenwich (SUUG) and the University of Greenwich Sustainability Team. - The GSH coordinator reports to the Membership Service Manager in SUUG and the Head of Sustainability at the University of Greenwich. GSH has a Steering Group of key staff from SUUG and the University of Greenwich Sustainability Team. - GSH also reports on a quarterly basis to the GSH Advisory Group (12 members including representatives from the senior management within the University of Greenwich and SUUG, student representatives, and external representatives from the Royal Borough of Greenwich, Partner Colleges and NUS).
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Among other, GSH works together with the Students' Union, clubs and societies, and the university's sustainability team. Given the explicit external focus of GSH, the unit mainly works together with outside stakeholders, including local schools and companies.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The GSH team received the following trainings: Induction and Sustainability Knowledge Themes where incoming student interns had to familiarize themselves with a sustainability topic; 3 x Rootability Workshops. Topics covered include Project Management; Sustainability in Higher Education, Communication and Stakeholder Engagement; Reflection and learning from experience); Public Speaking Training; Train the Trainer Training; Green Impact Project Assistant Training; Green Impact Auditor Training

Contact details



Website	www.suug.co.uk/sustainabilityhub/
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/SustainabilityGreenwich
Contact	http://www.suug.co.uk/sustainabilityhub/contact/
Telephone	020 8331 7656



STUDENTS' GREEN UNIT

The Students' Green Unit (SGU) at the University of Exeter was also established in October 2013 and receives external funding through the Students' Green Fund. The Students' Green Unit by August 2014:

Students and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Different to the other Green Offices, the SGU does not employ students, but five graduate employees working full-time 40hrs/week. These graduate employees are organised into five portfolios: Education (1 graduate employee); Research (1 graduate employee); Operations (1 graduate employee); Community & Student Engagement (1 graduate employee); Employability (1 graduate employee)- A staff member of the Students' Guild supervises the SGU.- Different to the other Green Offices, the SGU puts a strong emphasis that the graduate employees support student volunteers in implementing their projects, rather than implementing projects by themselves. At the beginning of the academic year, students submitted a proposal for a sustainability project that they want to implement. Then, 18 projects were selected and a budget was allocated to each project. Each staff member of the SGU supervises between 2-4 student projects. The staff and students meet with when is necessary, this often is weekly but can be fortnightly- it depends on student project updates and developments.- The funding allocated depends on the nature of the project. The range is between £500- £1500 per project. Each project varies in numbers, some projects are led by society members- in these occasions there can be around 4 or 5 students managing a project. We have a couple of projects which are led by individual students.
Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The SGU contributes to the ongoing sustainability strategy of the University of Exeter and enables students to become change-agents for sustainability.
Top 3 Projects	<p>The following three projects are managed by volunteers of the SGU, supported by the graduate employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Food Pile Up: Using tinned items to represent the wasted food from 3 halls of residence over the course of a week (in total 1 tonne of food), the Food Pile up was held in the main Forum Street to show students and staff how much food gets wasted. The tinned food was then donated to the local food bank to help families and individuals in need.- Going Wildwards: Carrying on from the biodiversity work that the University is already doing, this project looks at engaging

	<p>students to interact with the campus. This is being done through nature walks, putting up door mice boxes, working in the Community Garden and creating a series of maps that documents all of the eco-hot spots on campus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ExBags: 2 students have designed reusable jute bags to be sold at the SGU end of year showcase and during Fresher's week in September. This is to try and reduce the amount of plastics bags that is used on campus.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 150 000 £ per year for two years - Funding is guaranteed for two years through the Students' Green Fund managed by the National Union of Students UK (www.studentsgreenfund.org.uk/about)
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different to the other Green Offices in the Netherlands, the SGU is an integrated unit into the Students' Guild. - The SGU is overviewed by a Project Review Board that meets once a quarter. The board is made up of the sustainability manager of the university, the chief executive of the Guild, sabbatical officers and academics. This is to review the SGU's performance and to ensure the student projects are reaching a large number of students across the university. - The SGU also attends the meetings of the Sustainability Advisory Group, which is useful for the team to be aware of what is going on regarding sustainability across the university.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SGU mainly works together with all stakeholders that are relevant to implement the projects of the student volunteers. This includes among others the university's sustainability team, the estates departments, researchers and lecturers, local companies, schools and civil society organisations, as well as the National Union of Students UK.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 full days of training from Ambios (http://www.ambios.net/) - 1 full day of training from rootAbility for the SGU team, and their project leaders <p>Training from the Activities and Volunteering team from Exeter Students' Guild, specifically relating to event management</p>

Contact details

Website	www.exeterguild.org/greenunit/
Email	studentsgreenunit@exeterguild.com
Twitter	https://twitter.com/ExeterSGU



