

# Copernicus Alliance Newsletter No. 12

## March 2015



## COPERNICUS Alliance

European Network on Higher Education for Sustainable Development

Promoting transformational learning and change for sustainable development in higher education

## Welcome to the spring edition of the COPERNICUS Alliance newsletter!

The goal of the newsletter is to serve as a news and information platform for our members and related contacts and networks. If you think we are, or are not, meeting this goal, we would like to hear your feedback! Please contact Laura Machackova Henderson at [office@copernicus-alliance.org](mailto:office@copernicus-alliance.org)

This newsletter is available at the COPERNICUS Alliance website where you can read more about our aims and activities <http://www.copernicus-alliance.org/>.

## News and upcoming events

### Call for Papers COPERNICUS Alliance Conference and COPERNICUS Alliance Annual General Meeting, November 24th & 25th in Madrid, Spain

This years COPERNICUS Alliance Conference will focus on “Evaluation and assessment of higher education for sustainable development”.

#### SAVE THE DATE:

November 24th COPERNICUS Alliance Conference

November 25th COPERNICUS Alliance Annual General Meeting

## Call for papers:

We welcome abstracts for posters and short presentations on the following topics:

Special Session on Evaluation and assessment of higher education for sustainable development

- Assessing sustainability in higher education institutions
- Capacity building through assessment
- Stakeholder involvement in HEI assessment
- Sustainability assessment at the interface of HEI and policy
- The impact of quality systems in higher education for sustainable development
- Assessing the impact of university sustainability networks

General Session on Innovative Teaching and Learning for Sustainability in Higher Education

- Innovative teaching formats
- Intercultural learning for sustainable development
- ICT for ESD
- Research oriented teaching and learning in higher education
- Professional training for ESD in higher education

**Deadline for abstract submission:** June 5th 2015

Abstracts should be written in English language and include:

Title, Name and institution of authors, short outline of the presentation with maximum of 500 words, references.

The outcome of the conference will be a common policy brief focusing on the special topic of the conference. A draft will be distributed before the conference for public discussion. This policy brief can then be spread to institutional, national, European and international policy makers.

## Event partners:

- CADEP / CRUE – La Comisión Sectorial de la CRUE (Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas) para la Calidad Ambiental, Desarrollo Sostenible y la Prevención de Riesgos
- Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic

## Copernicus Alliance website moved and updated

The web pages of the Copernicus Alliance have been moved to the Charles University server. The web address remains the same - <http://www.copernicus-alliance.org> - but we have completely changed the publishing system so that the web is now much more flexible for future demands. The graphic template has also been changed slightly and will be further developed in the future. All the content from the old web pages has been transferred to the new system.

We invite you to contribute with any news, events for inclusion in the web calendar, articles and other messages – please send them to [office@copernicus-alliance.org](mailto:office@copernicus-alliance.org)

## UE4SD workshop at World Environmental Education Congress

**29th June–2nd July 2015, Gothenburg, Sweden**

UE4SD members are taking the opportunity of WEEC to host a workshop: Capacity Building for ESD – Taking Action on Professional Development. The session will be organised by Daniella Tilbury and Alex Ryan from the University of Gloucestershire and Javier Benayas del Alamo from Universidad Autonoma de Madrid University. The workshop will explore the issue of Staff Professional Development as a critical requirement for the success of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with a focus on the higher education sector. The workshop will share evidence gathered on ESD professional competences, leading practices in ESD professional development and further training needs in ESD. Participants will be involved in interactive discussion of the project research, its training initiatives and resource development in ESD.

## Call for Proposals

The UNESCO Chair 'Higher Education for Sustainable Development' cordially invites proposals from interested scholars and active networkers committed to integrating sustainable development into higher education to contribute to the 5th International Conference on Higher Education for Sustainable Development: Higher Education for Sustainable Development: Joining Forces, which will take place from 17th-19th September 2015 at Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany.

In 2015 the closing of the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development marked at the very same time the start of the “Global Action Programme on ESD” (GAP). Over the past ten years there has been considerable progress in implementing sustainability into higher education institutions. However, there is still a lot to be done to make sustainability a guiding principle in this educational area. Therefore the 5th Conference on Higher Education for Sustainable Development is now focusing on joining forces for the years to come, to bring together the expertise of different actor networks, including but not limited to sustainability-related UNESCO Chairs, the Global University Partnership for Sustainability, Regional Centers for Expertise, students’ networks etc.

Against the backdrop of the GAP, the 5th International Conference on Higher Education for Sustainable Development is focusing on empirical insights and innovative conceptual approaches in five priority areas:

- Policy support: Integrating ESD into Higher Education frameworks,
- Whole-university approaches: Embracing ESD at all levels and in all settings,
- Educators: Instilling capacity and agency for change in teacher education,
- Youth: Unleashing genuine student participation,
- Local communities: Advancing sustainability on universities’ doorsteps.

Based on a thorough investigation of and reflection on current practice of HESD, the conference aims to initiate a dialogue on future perspectives and requirements in this educational area – until the end of the “Global Action Programme on ESD” and beyond. The organisers would be pleased to welcome a wide range of representatives active in the field of higher education for sustainable development in order for the conference to make a profound contribution to the international discussion. The conference will be held in English.

For more information about the conference please visit the conference webpage which is available at <http://www.leuphana.de/en/unesco-chair/conference-2015.html> or contact the team of the UNESCO Chair ‘Higher Education for Sustainable Development’ at [unesco@uni.leuphana.de](mailto:unesco@uni.leuphana.de).

## **Networking and publication opportunity – call for contributions**

The Global Conference on Cleaner Production & Sustainable Consumption taking place 1st – 4th November, 2015, in Sitges, near Barcelona, Spain, follows successful traditions of ERSCP & EMSU conferences which are closely associated with the Journal of Cleaner Production mission and regularly contribute also to its content (special issues are regularly produced in consequence of these events). Usually these conference series encompass two main themes: the European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP) was concerned with technological prerequisites for transition towards sustainability, while the Environmental Management for Sustainable Universities (EMSU) focused on educational conditions, especially in higher education. The EMSU stream has become independent over the 15 years of its existence, gradually involving leading institutions in the field.

This time, the themes of the Conference are even more broad as all aspects of “ecologically, ethically, socially, culturally, and economically sustainable transition” are of interest here. The organizers have already negotiated numerous strategic alliances and involved representatives of different global networks and institutions in the preparatory process to integrate global efforts towards sustainability.

COPERNICUS Alliance is an intellectual contributor to the conference this year and we consider this to be a unique opportunity to highlight its mission in the area of higher education, as well as the specifics demonstrated by its individual member institutions. Presentation of CA members’ activities and input in the field of teaching, operations, policies and other sustainability innovations within higher education would thus be very much welcome either as individual presentations or in the form of a workshop, exhibition, panel discussion or another jointly organized initiative. We hope to highlight the specific character and unique input of COPERNICUS Alliance in the context of other networks’ initiatives, providing opportunities to cooperate with other actors with different roles in higher education at European as well as at global level.

For individual contributions please follow the call for abstracts the deadline for which is 17th April, 2015

A paper reviewing HE networks for ESD, with particular relevance to the CA, is planned for the conference publication. If any CA member would like to contribute to this paper as a co-author, we would welcome your participation. Please contact us at [office@copernicus-alliance.org](mailto:office@copernicus-alliance.org).

## **First CA online discussion! Innovative teaching for sustainability in higher education: experiences and reflections from transdisciplinary cases.**

The first CA online discussion will take place on 21st April at 9am Central European Time.

In CA online discussions, CA invites people from around the world to discuss aspects of sustainability in higher education through a moderated one hour online video exchange. April 19th at 9am we have the pleasure to welcome Katja

Brundiers, from Arizona State University, US to talk about „Innovative teaching for sustainability in higher education: experiences and reflections from transdisciplinary cases”.

Katja will provide a short input on the topic, followed by an open discussion with people joining us online. The whole session will take one hour and should inspire us for the rest of the day and weeks.

People from around the world can follow the discussion by video or contribute questions by text messages.

Katja Brundiers is the Community-University Liaison for the School of Sustainability at Arizona State University. She matches up professors and students with people in the community—from government, business, and non-profit organizations—and supports their collaboration on sustainability solutions. Katja is also a PhD student, currently conducting fieldwork in New Zealand and Indonesia for her thesis on “disasters as opportunities for sustainable development”.

Due to technical and moderating reasons, active participation by video is limited to eight people. Please register on a first come first served basis at: [office@copernicus-alliance.org](mailto:office@copernicus-alliance.org). Members of the COPERNICUS Alliance will be given priority to participate.

## **COPERNICUS Alliance Capacity Building Micro Fund**

As of 2015 COPERNICUS Alliance will put 20% of its annual budget aside to fund members’ initiatives that contribute to the overall CA ambition to build capacity in higher education for sustainable development. The aim of this micro fund is to support members in their endeavours to organise activities that support capacity building throughout the CA community.

In 2015, we will be able to fund 6 projects, awarding each project 500 EUR. We hope that this will provide some stimulus to motivate some interesting activities. The deadline for the first Micro Fund call for 2015 is 30th April!

An amount of up to 500 EUR can be made per application providing it fulfils the conditions stipulated in the fund regulations.

These activities might involve (but are not limited to):

- Workshops
- Conferences
- Publications
- Networking (CA capacity building)

To ensure a fair procedure the following requirements need to be met:

- Only full institutional members are eligible to apply for the fund.
- The initiative needs to involve at least two members of the CA
- The main organiser of the initiative needs to be a CA member
- The aim and outcome of the initiative needs to meet the goals and vision of the COPERNICUS Alliance.
- Outcomes need to be reported in the CA website and newsletter.

Over the year there are three calls for proposals to apply for the fund:

- 30th April
- 15th August
- 15th December

For more information about eligible costs and conditions please see the Micro Funds article on the CA website.

## **New Knowledge Alliance CASE - Competencies for A sustainable Socio Economic development**

The Project Case - Competencies for a sustainable socio-economic development has received funding for 2015-2017 from the EU Erasmus Plus - Knowledge Alliances funding stream. CASE KA aims at changing the EU landscape of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) towards a stronger accentuation on new inter- and transdisciplinary ways of teaching and learning as well as sustainable entrepreneurial education, increasing university-business cooperation, new university spin-offs or relate start ups in the area of a “green economy” and a subsequent change in the curricula of European HEIs.

At the end of the proposed project, an open access knowledge platform will provide modules and shall account and enable European universities for the implementation of a Joint Master and for their own curricula building processes. This knowledge platform will be linked with and supported by global multipliers such as the UNU / global RCE network or the COPERNICUS Alliance in order to sustain the activities and partnership of the proposed KA.

## Project Partners

- Austria: Leadpartner RCE Vienna, WU Wien/ Boku Wien/ Wiener Stadtwerke
- Italy: Freie Universität Bozen/ Terra Institute
- Germany: Universität Vechta/ Ulrich Walter GmbH, Lebensbaum; Diepholz
- Czech Republic: Masaryk Universität, Brno/ Environment Center Kapraluv mlýn; Brno
- Sweden: Universität Göteborg/ Ekocentrum Foundation; Göteborg

## Contact details

Petra Biberhofer and Christian Rammel. More Info soon available at <http://www.case-ka.eu/>

## Charles University has joined the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES)

GUPES was launched in June 2012, in the lead up to RIO+20 and the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI). The partnership currently has over 500 partner universities worldwide. The goal of GUPES is to promote the mainstreaming of environment and sustainability practices and curricula into universities by supporting innovative approaches to education.

For more information please see the full article on CA website.

## Monitoring of Sustainability Communication in New Media

The project "Monitoring of Sustainability Communication in New Media" financed by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy focused on two major challenges: on the one hand, it is difficult to communicate sustainability, since it is a complex and extensive concept, on the other hand it is challenging to gain attention, because of an overflow of information on the internet and in the media. The first question should be addressed through arousing emotions in sustainability communication and the link to everyday life, as well as by the communication of concrete examples and practical applications. For the second challenge, it is recommended to have a well-balanced combination of text and entertaining images. In general a unified communication strategy, authenticity and the use of various media are very essential. Furthermore, differences between Websites and Facebook pages were analysed. Since websites go more into detail, they provide more information and extensive descriptions. Facebook pages are used more likely for interactions with the target group and for a pictorial communication. Due to a rapid change in this research field, a continuous observation and study of the sustainability communication on the Internet would be necessary. For more information about the project and its results please contact Professor Dr. Friedrich M. Zimmermann ([friedrich.zimmermann@uni-graz.at](mailto:friedrich.zimmermann@uni-graz.at)).

## University of Gloucestershire's "Promising Futures" Review

The University of Gloucestershire has a long term commitment and ambitious plans for Sustainability. 'Promising Futures 2008-2015' presents the University's sustainability strategy for progressing this commitment. It has informed the University's efforts and approaches in this area for the last six years.

The Dean of Sustainability, Prof Daniella Tilbury, has commissioned a formal review of the University's plans and performance in sustainability during the period 2008-2015. The review will be informed by independent reports on key performance areas such as education, public engagement and partnerships, carbon and the student experience. The reports will go to a panel consisting of peers and experts from external organisations who will review the evidence of progress and achievements, interview key stakeholders as well as provide recommendations going forward.

We would like to invite you to contribute to this review as peers engaged in similar processes. It would be most helpful if you could send any observation or feedback on the University of Gloucestershire's efforts in Sustainability to Jimmy Brannigan of Netpositive ([jimmy@netpositivefutures.co.uk](mailto:jimmy@netpositivefutures.co.uk)). This need not be more than a few lines and may present your observations as a peer or document examples of the interaction you may have had with the University or the reports or resources it has generated. Please indicate whether you would like to remain anonymous or be named in the report.

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to what we consider to be an important part of continuous improvement.

*Professor Daniella Tilbury, Dean of Sustainability, University of Gloucestershire*

## NUS' Responsible Futures Accreditation Mark

The NUS' Responsible Futures Accreditation Mark is coming to the end of its pilot year and is preparing to roll out more broadly in summer 2015. Responsible Futures is an externally-assessed certification of a whole institution approach to social responsibility and sustainability. This means the students' union and the institution work together through a set of

criteria which act as a framework for action. The aim is to facilitate institutional change through partnership which results in improved student knowledge, understanding, skills, and attributes relating to social responsibility and sustainability, with a focus on both the formal and informal curriculum. The accreditation mark recognises and celebrates progress being made along a journey of change, rather than it being certification of an endpoint.

Thirteen institutions have taken part in the pilot, including FE and HE across England and Scotland. The early findings indicate that the framework provides institutions with strategic direction, specific actions, and easy-to-understand tools to effectively embed education for sustainable development across their institutions and students' unions. The scheme will open to new registrants in summer 2015 and pilot year research findings will be made publically available along with the set of criteria. More information at <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/news/article/greenzone/Accreditation-mark-for-greener-curriculums/>

## **Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria**

The Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria was founded three years ago and since then has become a well-established network. Its aim is to promote sustainability issues in Austrian universities through its common appearance and thus to contribute to a more sustainable society. It also provides added motivation to its members and adds support to their efforts through exchange of experiences.

Currently nine Austrian universities are members of this informal network. The Alliance follows an all-in-institution approach and covers the fields of research, education, operations, society/knowledge transfer, as well as identity. Several working groups deal with topics such as sustainable mobility management, climate friendly climate research, sustainable entrepreneurship or sustainability strategies.

For further information please refer to the website <http://www.sustainableuniversities.at> or contact Lisa Bohunovsky ([lisa.bohunovsky@boku.ac.at](mailto:lisa.bohunovsky@boku.ac.at)).

## **Sustainable Development. Culture. Education: Interplay of Traditions and Innovations in Education for Sustainable Development**

The 13th International JTEFS/BCC Conference will take place on 5th-8th May, 2015, Riga, Latvia. For more information please see the conference website: <http://ise.du.lv/en>

## **Partner of the Month**

### **University of Bucharest – leading academic institution since 1864**

The University of Bucharest is rich in history and has been actively contributing to the development and modernisation of Romanian higher education, science and culture since 1864. The University of Bucharest is one of the leading higher education institutions in Romania and South-East Europe by actively contributing through research and teaching to the development and use of knowledge. The University's main objective is to offer high-quality academic programmes and research facilities, and becoming a forefront of research and teaching.

The University of Bucharest offers numerous study programmes, from Bachelor degrees to Postdoctoral programmes, as well as lifelong learning programmes and Erasmus programmes. All the University's programmes are accredited or authorized. Enhancing international cooperation, the University of Bucharest has defined partnerships and strategic collaborations with more than 100 prestigious universities from 40 different countries.

The University of Bucharest offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses in social sciences and humanities, and natural sciences. The University consists of nineteen Faculties, each specialised in an academic field. This structure gives the students and academic staff a strong sense of community. The Faculties offer high-standard academic programmes and in return they demand excellence from their students. The University's graduates and alumni effectively contribute to public agenda setting and decision-making processes, and contribute to international research in all academic fields.

The University of Bucharest constantly reaffirms its commitment to sustainable development by embarking on various social responsibility campaigns. The University's latest endeavour regarding this is the development of a Green Office. The Green Office's main objective is to promote amongst students, professors and the administrative staff green behaviour by initiating and promoting sustainable development projects within the University. The University of Bucharest is the first Romanian University to develop such a strategy, thus consolidating its status as a leader in developing sustainable development strategies in higher education institutions. The Green Office is an integrated academic structure that is responsible for carrying out lifelong learning educational programmes for academic and non-academic staff; it will develop an institutional management strategy by the end of 2015 and it will initiate interdisciplinary research programmes concerning sustainability.

## Publications/resources

### **Transforming Higher Education for Sustainable Development' for the UN Global Sustainable Development Report 2015**

Clemens Mader (Leuphana University of Lüneburg, University of Zurich) and Christian Rammel (Vienna University of Economics and Business) have published a policy brief on 'Transforming Higher Education for Sustainable Development' for the UN Global Sustainable Development Report 2015. The GSDR-Brief is now online for discussion and rating. The GSDR-brief highlights outcomes from a global study on sustainability integration in higher education institutions as well as calls for reforms towards more transdisciplinarity in education and research.

The brief can be downloaded, rated and discussed at: <https://gsdr2015.wordpress.com/2015/03/02/transforming-higher-education-for-sustainable-development/>

### **WU-Competence Center for Sustainability English website**

The Competence Center for Sustainability at the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) now has a website in English. Check it out at <http://www.wu.ac.at/sustainabilitycenter/en/>

The Competence Center was created to fill WU's commitment to sustainability. It supports the integration of sustainability into teaching, research, and university management and works to device, plan, and implement sustainability-related measures.

As the largest business and economics university in Europe and Austria's leading institution for the training of business leaders, WU can make a sustainable difference. The so-called Sustainability Map outlines the strong role sustainability already plays at WU today – in university management, research, teaching, and the university's interaction and exchange with the public. One example of the Sustainability Map is the List of Sustainability-Related Courses at WU which was compiled by the Competence Center. The Map also shows that WU is moving and growing – sustainably.

### **First results from the UE4SD project (University Educators for Sustainable Development): New mapping report shows ESD professional development opportunities for university educators across Europe**

In the course of the European Union project UE4SD 54 higher education institutions from 33 countries across Europe were engaged in mapping the state of the art of ESD in higher education from February till May 2014. The partners represent an area of more than 3,000 higher education institutions with more than 24 million students. Besides identifying the status of ESD integration, the focus was on mapping existing ESD professional development opportunities for university educators.

The results of the mappings can be downloaded at the project website <http://www.ue4sd.eu/outcomes>.

For further information please get in contact with the project manager Prof Daniella Tilbury, Director of Sustainability at University of Gloucestershire, e-mail: [dtilbury@glos.ac.uk](mailto:dtilbury@glos.ac.uk), or Marlene Mader, responsible partner for the mapping report at Leuphana University of Lüneburg, e-mail: [marlene.mader@leuphana.de](mailto:marlene.mader@leuphana.de).

### **Developing Skills for Future Leaders**

The International Sustainable Campus Network and Global University Leaders Forum have published a state-of-the-art report which shares examples of campus sustainability from 25 of the world's leading universities. The report emphasizes the educational value of full immersion in a „living laboratory“ environment for sustainability.

Download the report at: <http://www.international-sustainable-campus-network.org/latest-news/developing-skills-for-future-leaders-iscn-and-gulf-share-report-at-world-economic-forum.html>.