

UE4SD Press release, October 2014

ESD Professional Development of University Educators

New mapping report shows good practices and gaps across Europe.

From February till May 2014 54 higher education institutions from 33 countries across Europe were engaged in mapping the state of the art of education for sustainable development (ESD) in higher education. The partners represent an area of more than 3,000 European 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 as quality in higher education teaching is seen as vital for preparing students with the competences they need to address 21st century challenges.

The results of the national mappings were analysed in four regional reports covering countries from Northern, Western, Southern and Eastern Europe, which were again compiled in a state of the art report. The first outcomes were presented at the annual meeting of the UE4SD project ("University Educators for Sustainable Development") on October 2nd, 2014 at Charles University Environment Center in Prague, Czech Republic.

Essential outcomes: ESD gains importance in higher education across Europe. In almost all UE4SD partner countries guidelines or legislations exist that recognize the importance of sustainability in higher education. A majority of countries furthermore reports that higher education institutions have developed guidelines and mission statements that promote sustainability and ESD. Nevertheless in many countries university educators lack ESD professional development opportunities. Only a few countries have vital programs or requirements for university educators to acquire teaching competences, which will be highlighted and further elaborated in a leading practice publication and online platform of resources.

The level of integration of sustainable development in higher education across Europe differs according to the cultural and institutional context. It will present a challenge for the UE4SD network to serve these diverse demands when developing an academy for supporting university educators in developing their ESD competences. Joint efforts will be required to actively contribute to a transformational development towards ESD in the European higher education area.

Are you interested in the network and do you want to engage in ESD in higher education? Have a look at www.eu4sd.eu or www.copernicus-alliance.org, the European Network on Higher Education for Sustainable Development, which initiated the project.

Or get in contact with us: Prof Daniella Tilbury, Director of Sustainability, University of Gloucestershire, e-mail: dtilbury@glos.ac.uk

The state of the art report can soon be downloaded at www.ue4sd.eu/outcomes. Enjoy reading!