

Copernicus Alliance Newsletter No. 9



COPERNICUS Alliance

European Network on Higher Education for Sustainable Development

Promoting transformational learning and change for sustainable development in higher education

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Prof Dr Daniella Tilbury
**Elected President
(2012-14)**

Dr Clemens Mader
**Elected Vice-President
(2012-14)**

Dr Ingrid Mulà
CA Co-ordinator

COPERNICUS Alliance Newsletter

This is the COPERNICUS Alliance (CA) Newsletter No.9. Its goal is to serve as a news and information platform for members. The CA Team would value feedback. Please could you take a minute to let us know if the newsletter serves its purpose and advise how it could be improved.

If you would like to make a contribution to the next newsletter please contact Dr Ingrid Mulà by the 25th April 2014 at: office@copernicus-alliance.org.

The newsletters are only available to CA members.

Partner of the Month

In every CA Newsletter, we showcase the work and activities of one of our partner organisations. The partner of the month is selected for its contribution to sustainable development and ESD.

University of the Basque Country (Spain)

The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) is a teaching and research institution officially founded in 1985, employing over 7,000 people throughout 31 faculties and schools geographically distributed in three campuses with over

50,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students. It is the only public university in the Basque Country, thus holding the responsibility to provide tertiary education both in Spanish and Basque to its society.

The University's Strategic Plan (2012-17) places sustainability as a key organising principle. It establishes actions to embed sustainability in the curriculum, research activities and University's operations. The Vice Rectorate for Students, Employment and Social Responsibility overviews and implements the sustainability priorities included in the Strategic Plan.

In November 2013, a call for grants for sustainability innovation was published, and 10 projects submitted by University Colleges and Schools were approved. These are projects in areas such as renewable energy, waste management or the improvement of energy efficiency, amongst others, which will have an impact to both the University campus and curriculum.

In addition, the University continues to be engaged with the Ekoscan Certification for environmental improvement. Currently, 15 out of the 31 Schools and Faculties are certified and a further seven have started the procedure. All these centres undertake an annual environmental improvement plan with the participation of the University community.

For more information about UPV/EHU, please click [here](#).

CA News

✦ A warm welcome to new CA members!

CA extends a warm welcome to [Canterbury Christ Church University](#) (UK) and the [National Union of Students](#) (UK) who have recently joined the network as institutional and NGO members respectively. We look forward to your participation in our planned activities for this year!

✦ Call for nominations for CA Advisory Board

We would like to invite all CA members to submit nominations for candidates to the Advisory Board before 31st May.

The CA Advisory Board is composed of prominent and experienced individuals who are in a position to provide strategic advice and support the development of CA as a membership network and/or represent the interests of members in this area. The Advisory Board has the important responsibility of calling for and considering nominations for CA President and Vice-President. It advises on income generation activities and avenues for funding and sets membership categories as well as annual fees. The Advisory Board also has a formal role in reviewing and acknowledging CA annual and financial reports.

The process of electing the Advisory Board and Leadership Team was reviewed at the last CA AGM held on 11 January at the University of Gloucestershire (UK). Members at the AGM agreed to invite three of its existing Advisors to remain as CA Advisory Board members and to open a call for nominations for an additional three positions.

Nominations for the following positions are now open:

- International Advisor
- Student Representative
- CA Member Advisor

More information about the nomination and election process will be sent to all CA members by email next week. The template for nominations can be downloaded [here](#).

Please note that the nominations will close on the 31st of May. The CA Secretariat will communicate the list of candidates on the 2nd June and online elections will close on the 30th June. The final results will be communicated by the 4th July.

✦ **CA to sign MOU with UNEP**

Following the approval of members attending the AGM, our President, Prof Daniella Tilbury has brokered a new partnership for CA. There are plans to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) next June 2014 with the [Global Universities Partnership on Environment for Sustainability](#) (GUPES).

GUPES is a flagship programme of UNEP's Environmental Education and Training Unit (EETU) that aims to promote the embedding of sustainability into teaching, research, community engagement and the management of universities, as well as to enhance student engagement and participation in sustainability activities both within and beyond universities. At present, over 370 universities from five different continents are part of the growing GUPES network.

The collaboration between CA and UNEP GUPES will include looking at opportunities to develop joint education materials and reports; deliver training programmes; and, exchange opportunities for members from both networks to participate at conferences and events hosted by both organisations.

Specific joint plans and activities between CA and UNEP will unravel within the following next months and will be shared with members through the newsletters. CA is pleased with this partnership plans with GUPES - one of the largest international networks on sustainability in higher education.

✦ **CA's New European Funded Project - UE4SD - kicks off with regional meetings in Spain, Czech Republic, Germany and UK (February-March 2014)**

University Educators for Sustainable Development (UE4SD) is a CA project that brings together 55 partners (mainly universities) from 33 countries across Europe and beyond to rethink the higher education curriculum to address sustainable development. The 3 year-project, funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme - Erasmus Academic Networks, commenced in October 2013 and will seek to innovate academic practice and curriculum by creating opportunities for university educators to develop professional competences and the academic leadership capabilities linked to ESD.

UE4SD activities are closely associated with the Alliance and the "Rio+20 Treaty on Higher Education" which was launched at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. The University of Gloucestershire is leading the project as well as co-ordinating one of four regional hubs across the partnership, working closely with the other regional

hubs co-ordinated at the Autonomous University of Madrid in Spain, Charles University in Czech Republic and Leuphana University of Lüneburg in Germany.

From February to March, four project regional meetings were organised in each regional hub and gathered partners from each region. The purpose of these meetings was to share management and administration issues as well as discuss the first phase of the project which involves each member country mapping its existing professional development opportunities for university educators. Project partners will map national and institutional initiatives, schemes and activities in this area. This data will inform four regional reports and one state of the art report which will be shared the 2014 CA Conference.

✦ **New! Dates for your diary: 2-4 October 2014, UE4SD Annual meeting, CA Conference and AGM**

The last CA Conference and AGM held at the University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, in January 2014 proved to be an important gathering for members to meet and discuss CA plans and ambitions. The Conference report, keynote presentations, AGM minutes and photographs can be found at the [CA website](#).

We are pleased to announce that the next Conference and General Meeting will take place this year in October at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic, and will be combined with the UE4SD Project Annual Meeting:

- 2 October: UE4SD Project Annual Meeting (only for UE4SD partners)
- 3 October: UE4SD/CA Conference (UE4SD partners, CA members and external participants)
- 4 October: CA Annual Meeting (only for CA members)

The dates have been chosen to ensure the maximum representation of CA members, since most partners are involved in the UE4SD project and will be funded to attend its annual meeting.

The CA Conference will have a focus on ESD in HE and the professional development of university educators in this area. The Conference will present the results of the UE4SD project and will be opened by keynote speakers internationally recognised for their leadership and expertise in ESD in Higher Education. Further details will be shared with CA members shortly. Our existing President and Vice President will stand down at the AGM and a new President and Vice-President will be elected.

Further information and details on this event will be communicated in the coming months. At this stage, we welcome ideas and feedback to ensure fruitful and enriching dialogues.

✦ **CA participates at the International Association of Universities (IAU) Conference in Peru**

From March 19th – 21st the IAU held its International Conference at Universidad Científica del Perú at Iquitos, Peru. The leading conference theme was: “Blending Higher Education and Traditional Knowledge for Sustainable Development”. Among the approx. 180 participants from around the world, CA and its members were represented by its Vice-President Prof

Clemens Mader and the Rector of the University of Siena (Italy), Prof Angelo Riccabioni.

The main conference theme as well as sessions during the conference, concentrating on the linkage between higher education and their surrounding communities showcased the need of experiences and exchange on whole institution approaches as well as the transformation of the higher education sector towards sustainable development. The president of the IAU, Dzulkifli Abdil Razak and the IAU Secretary General, Eva Egron-Polak in the name of the whole IAU board declared the importance of a sustainability transformation through initiating the development of the IAU Iquitos statement on higher education for sustainable development that will be finally published in the course of the UN Decade on ESD conference in Nagoya, November 2014. This statement will specifically address the need for whole institution approaches, mainstreaming sustainable development concepts, sustainable leadership development as well as transdisciplinary research and education approaches. In this statement as well as in the course of the conference itself, strong reference was given to the Rio+20 Treaty on Higher Education led by CA.

Finally the conference demonstrated the high relevance of sustainability in higher education and reached out to many new institutions. The Iquitos statement will be an important policy instrument to refer to in negotiations and discussions, institutionally as well as on national and international policy levels. CA looks forward to increasing exchange with IAU as well as with potential new members present at the conference.

Updates from Members

✦ **Sustainability commitments and achievements made by the National Union of Students (NUS)** by *Jamie Agombar and Russell Warfield (NUS, UK)*

The NUS has been championing student-led sustainability across the UK for ten years now. Delivering behaviour change programmes in over 100 students' unions, and recently securing £5 million of funding to embed sustainability across higher education, NUS works to help students leave their time in education as part of the solution to our environmental challenges.

NUS has made a successful priority of taking its greening initiatives beyond the boundaries of campuses, and now is excited to be moving beyond the borders of the UK as well – joining the dots with other national student movements, to create a global student voice on sustainability.

This year, NUS is really excited to launch its renowned Green Impact behaviour change model at MacEwan University in Canada. NUS has been supporting their students' association since last year, helping students and staff to green their institution, providing remote support, resources and good practice. Beyond Canada, NUS is preparing to launch across Australia next academic year – further empowering students to explore local solutions to global problems.

NUS is also taking an adapted version of its Student Switch Off model across the EU – delivering its energy-saving campaign in 12 institutions across four countries. Developed internationally under the name of SAVES (Students Achieving Valuable Energy Savings), the programme incentivises energy saving in halls of residence and student accommodation – a time when energy bills are often included in rent, and greener living might not come naturally.

NUS is committed to working with student associations across the international community to create a unified voice for sustainable development. They are really thrilled about the work they are already doing, and so excited for the future work which can be developed as new members of CA.

✦ **Open sustainability platform “SUSTAINICUM” wins RCE Award**
by Mario Diethart (University of Graz, Austria)

The United Nations University awarded SUSTAINICUM as "Outstanding Flagship Project" at the Global RCE Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2013. The committee emphasised the project's "contribution to the integration of sustainability into higher education curriculum through innovative teaching resources and methodologies". This is an open web-platform developed by three CA members in Austria, which offers free resources for sustainability education including teaching methods, lecture notes and teaching modules. These resources support teachers both in terms of content and through the practical application of innovative teaching methods, as well as promote systemic and holistic thinking.

For more information about SUSTAINICUM please visit the [platform](#).

✦ **EU funded project on strengthening science-society collaborations awarded to a partnership of CA members**
by Marlene Mader (University of Graz, Austria and Leuphana University, Germany)

A newly funded EU Tempus project “ConSus” (Connecting Science-Society Collaborations for Sustainability Innovations) has been awarded to strengthen science-society partnerships. The project coordinator is the University of Graz (Austria) who will work closely with CA members Leuphana University Lüneburg and BOKU as well as with partners from Albania, Kosovo and Ireland.

The project focus is the establishment of a sustainability network in Albania and Kosovo to enhance collaborations in education and research between higher education institutions and regional partners. The project is based on the former Austrian project – [SUSTAINICUM Collection](#). Project plans include the development of teaching resources centred on transdisciplinary exchange between higher education and regional stakeholders.

✦ **University of Gloucestershire (UoG) recognised with a special award from the UK Green League**
by Daniella Tilbury and Ingrid Mulà (UoG, UK)

UoG was presented with a special recognition award for 'consistent top ranking between 2007-2013' at the Green League 2013 Graduation Ceremony held at Manchester Metropolitan University on the 17th February.

The award recognises the institution's sustainability performance and consistent high ranking in the People and Planet's Green League. UoG is the only University to have maintained a top 5 place since the Green League

began. It received a First Class Honours award in 2013 attaining full marks in many areas including Environmental Policy, Sustainable Food, Staff and Student Engagement and Curriculum.

Sustainability is embedded within the University's Strategic Plan and progress is reported quarterly to the University Executive and annually to University Council. The Sustainable Development Committee plays an important role in monitoring progress and advising on key issues. For further information please visit the following [link](#).

[People and Planet](#) is the largest student network in Britain campaigning to end world poverty, defend human rights and protect the environment.

✦ **CA President commissioned to research and write the UNESCO Global Higher Education for Sustainable Development Report**

Prof Daniella Tilbury was commissioned by UNESCO ESD Section to research and write a report that reviews developments and progress in Higher Education in the area of sustainable development during the DESD years. The DESD, or UN Decade in Education for Sustainable Development, commenced in 2005 and will close this year with a celebration in Nagoya, Japan. The report tracks the stepping up of efforts across higher education in this area and assesses the catalytic impact of interagency approaches and government investment, the significant investment in lowering the carbon footprint of universities and colleges, and large-scale efforts to introduce sustainability into the curriculum. It documents glimpses of good practice in the reorientation of learning and teaching processes, curriculum design and quality systems towards sustainable development. The report argues that universities and colleges have also understood the value of outreach activities in gaining trust amongst stakeholders and affirming higher education's role in social change for sustainability. The evidence it presents suggests that progress in areas such as student leadership, adoption of governance structures and whole-of-institutional approaches has taken at a slower pace. The study concludes with recommendations for the ESD Global Action Programme to prioritise efforts and professional and leadership development opportunities for programme leaders, lecturers and tutors as well as senior managers and sector leaders who have responsibility for curriculum quality and academic development. Building capability and academic networks in this area may well prove catalytic in the quest to reorient higher education towards sustainable development. The report will be presented at the UN ESD Conference in Nagoya.

Events

✦ **UNU RCE Severn event: "Future Earth: Implications for sustainability learning" (9 April 2014, 12.15-1.30pm, University of Gloucestershire, UK)**

UNU RCE Severn is delighted to invite CA members to an event, led by Prof Tim O'Riordan, which will focus on the recently launched Future Earth initiative and provide insights on strategic partnerships to enhance the role of education and learning to respond to global sustainability challenges.

Professor Tim O'Riordan is an opinion leader and influential thinker in field of sustainability. He is Emeritus Professor of Environmental Sciences at the

University of East Anglia and has edited a number of key books on the institutional aspects of global environmental change, policy and practice.

This event will bring together colleagues engaged in sustainability learning, research and change for sustainability from the higher and further education, business, public, health and non-governmental sectors. It is free of charge and light refreshments will be provided.

Please click [here](#) for more details on this event.

For more information or to reserve a place, please contact Ms Barbara Rainbow before 4 April 2014: brainbow@glos.ac.uk.

✦ **ESD Conference: “Supporting employability, society and the environment a curriculum for sustainability’ (10 June 2014, London South Bank University, London, UK)**

This conference is for all course leaders and lecturers across HE and FE colleges who are interested in sustainability. In addition, contributions are invited from all service managers and leaders in sustainability in HE and FE.

It will bring together educationalists, NGOs and employers to promote and share good subject based and interdisciplinary practice across a wide range of areas, from both the natural sciences and the social sciences.

Key speakers confirmed include: Prof Daniella Tilbury (CA President), Prof Stephen Sterling, (Head of Education for Sustainable Development, Plymouth University) and Jane Davidson, Director, INSPIRE (Institute for Sustainability Practice, Innovation and Resource Effectiveness, University of Wales, Trinity Saint David).

For details and to submit a paper or poster proposal check out the link below to the [conference website](#).

✦ **ISCN 2014 Conference - Pushing Boundaries: Leveraging collective action for global impact (Cambridge, MA USA , 1-4 June 2014)**

Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), two of the world’s most innovative and influential organisations, will partner with the International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN) to co-host the ISCN 2014 Conference.

The 8th ISCN annual event will draw on the expertise of both Harvard and MIT, including renowned faculty, academic centres and leading campus sustainability offices, and will offer a powerful opportunity for participants to examine today’s emerging critical issues for sustainability and explore strategies centred on:

- Innovation – Pushing boundaries to generate new ideas
- Collaboration – Leveraging collective action
- Scalability – Impacting globally
- Metrics – Measuring outcomes

In one of the world's greatest innovation hubs, Cambridge, Massachusetts, conference participants will be engaged in critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and new collaborations to advance campus sustainability.

The ISCN 2014 Conference will consist of:

A Pre-Conference Workshop, 1 June 2014 – An engaging pre-conference workshop to explore and frame what a “next generation” office of sustainability could look like and accomplish on campuses.

The Main Conference, 2-4 June 2014. Participants will delve further into the topics of Innovation, Collaboration, Scalability, and Metrics, and utilise the Working Group sessions to develop practical solutions for tackling these critical issues.

More information on the conference program and speakers will be announced soon. For more information please visit the following [website](#).

Publications and resources

✦ **Online Guide to ‘Quality Education for Sustainability in Higher Education’ developed by the University of Gloucestershire**

The University of Gloucestershire has led a unique sector wide research project, which aimed to change the face of the higher education curriculum to make it more relevant to global sustainability challenges. Funded through the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) Leadership Governance and Management Fund, it is the largest national project to deal with sustainability as a curriculum and whole-of-institution priority. The online guide contains video clips, insights, tips and adaptable tools for institutions, to support them in embedding ESD through quality assurance and enhancement systems.

This work received an ‘Outstanding Flagship Project’ Recognition Award by the UNU RCEs in Education for Sustainable Development. The award was announced at the RCE Global Conference which took place at the United Nations Headquarters in Nairobi in November 2014.

Please click here to access the [online guide](#).

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The Copernicus Alliance brings together higher education institutions from across Europe which are committed to re-orienting universities so that they can make a meaningful contribution to sustainable development. These institutions have signed the [Copernicus Charta](#) which identifies ten change pathways for sustainable development in higher education.

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