

EUSTEPs PROJECT: ENHANCING UNIVERSITIES' SUSTAINABILITY TEACHING AND PRACTICES THROUGH ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

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CONTEXT

In the last decade, an increasing number of studies (e.g., *Barnosky et al., 2016; Moore et al., 2012; Steffen et al., 2018*) has pointed out the role in altering the dynamics of the planet that humans have played, are playing and will still play, if the unsustainable trends of economies and societies around the world are not inverted.

Meanwhile, the education system has gained a central role in easing the transition to a sustainable world and, with the adoption of the UN Agenda 2030 in 2015, it has been linked with 16 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while sustainable, equitable education has become a core target of SDG 4.7 (*Collins et al., 2018*).

WHY?

As **EDUCATION** can **influence** our **societies** in many ways, the main objective of this study is to present a **NEW SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION PROJECT**: Enhancing Universities' Sustainability TEaching and Practices through Ecological Footprint (EUSTEPs).

CRITICAL NETWORK

These goals cannot be achieved by universities working in isolation; rather, to ensure EU-wide relevance and applicability of the project outputs, the specific needs of different geographical and cultural contexts needs to be taken into consideration from the onset, thus requiring the activities of the EUSTEPs project to be carried out transnationally.

SOCIETAL GOAL

REDUCE the impact of EU Higher Education Institutions (**HEIs**) on the planet's ecosystems and **CREATE** a future generation of environmentally-aware and sustainability-minded European citizens.

HOW?

INTERWEAVE conceptual knowledge of environmental, economic and social **PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY**, with popular digital tools and innovative teaching and learning practices.

Leverage the long acknowledged role of the Ecological Footprint concept in **COMMUNICATING** the scale and significance of **humanity's overuse of the planet's natural resources** in simple and powerful terms.

Set up an *innovative* "**LEARNING-BY-DOING**" approach that can be disseminated and scaled-up for adoption at the wider EU level and beyond

Contribute to **creating** a **NEW GENERATION OF SUSTAINABLE CITIZENS**, *aware* of the implications of personal behaviour and trained on climate change, sustainability and digital tools, and introducing new professional expertise in the society, and in the future labour market.

WHO?

PARTNERS

Transnational strategic partnership led by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece) with the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Global Footprint Network, the University of Aveiro (Portugal), the University of Siena (Italy), and the distance-education-based Universidade Aberta (Portugal)

PARTNERSHIP TO

- 1) **EDUCATE AND LEARN**: develop, test and scale-up novel approaches to sustainability teaching and learning to university students and the wider higher education community (teaching and administrative staff, and management bodies);
- 2) **ASSESS AND REDUCE**: equip European universities with an on-line tool, developed through a collaborative participatory process involving the whole higher education community, to quantify and address the sustainability of their campuses.

HEIs TARGETED COMMUNITY

- 400 undergraduate students;
- 100 master students;
- 8 PhD students;
- 25 teaching and 30 administrative staff;
- the management bodies of the involved universities (e.g., rectors, deans, and heads of departments)

References

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