

## University Educators for Sustainable Development (UE4SD)

### Press release: New publication released highlighting best practice examples of European ESD professional development for university educators

**November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 at “La Corrala” - Autonomous University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain**

The Leading Practice Publication (LPP) has been launched at the annual meeting of the European project *University Educators for Sustainable Development* (UE4SD) hosted by the Autonomous University of Madrid at the Cultural Centre “La Corrala” in Madrid, on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. The publication is the result of the project’s second stage of “Developing resources”, building on the knowledge and experience of 53 partners from 33 countries active in the area of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at European higher education (HE) institutions. Following the mapping stage of the field of ESD on HE level in all involved countries with special emphasis on UNECE competences, the publication provides an overview of 13 selected best practice examples of professional development opportunities for European university educators in the area of ESD. It also reviews possibilities of how to implement ESD professional development at the HE level throughout Europe, i.e. it provides information on the ways in which relevant professional development in ESD can be acquired, and what is needed at policy level to reach this transformation.

The LPP introduces the concept of professional development of university educators in the area of ESD, describes key methodological approaches, identifies processes and tools, and presents the best practice examples from the four UE4SD regions in Europe - North, South, East and West - to document the progress already achieved. In the “lessons learned” section, the publication reports on some general principles and outlines possible ways forward. The LPP concludes with key messages and recommendations for future developments in the area of university educators’ professional development.

The overview of the 13 best practices collected from 10 European countries show that there already exist some excellent opportunities for university staff to develop their ESD competences and these can serve as model examples for the development of new PD initiatives in different cultural contexts throughout Europe. Such new initiatives are needed since many university educators still lack ESD professional development opportunities. In terms of implementation, existing networks seem to be a good supporting factor for the development of successful PD initiatives at various levels of engagement from large international consortia to relatively small institutional networks or learning communities.

The publication is intended for all stakeholders who are concerned with ESD, and with professional development on the higher education level in particular. It is therefore relevant for anyone who teaches, supports learning, or works in staff development in higher education. It can be especially used by policy makers engaged in the higher education system – for example: national ministries with agendas relating to HE and ESD and their administrative offices, European policy makers, funding agencies, quality assessment bodies, international organisations – to include ESD principles in teaching quality assurance mechanisms and criteria. It is also relevant for those forming part of the communities which the higher education system serves – for example NGOs, professional bodies, community educators, businesses and young people, professional mentors and trainers. The expected ways of using this resource include: strategic decision-making on different HE policy levels, using it as a framework for educators’ self-reflection and assessment of their own work, and assisting professional development teams at universities as a background resource and for inspiration.

The production of the publication as an outcome of the UE4SD Project has been funded by the European Commission - Lifelong Learning Programme. The full publication is available for download here: <http://www.ue4sd.eu/outcomes/111-leading-practice-publication-launched-at-the-ue4sd-annual-conference-in-madrid>

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