

ACADEMY REPORT (WP5)



UE4SD ACADEMY OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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UE4SD ACADEMY

The context

Sustainable development has been identified as one of the greatest challenges that our societies are facing in the 21st century. Unsustainable practices are increasing social, economic and environmental inequalities; exacerbating the impact of environmental degradation; and limiting quality of life. Our education systems are critical to achieving sustainable development goals: by using Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) they can equip learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to re-orient social structures and systems towards more sustainable ways of life.

The Higher Education (HE) sector is ideally positioned to address sustainable development as it prepares the future generation of professionals, challenges dominant paradigms and produces ground-breaking research. However, there is evidence that to bring in ESD approaches to re-orient the curriculum, there is a need for more professional guidance for staff who teach and who support learning in HE. Despite interest in ESD, its approaches to learning and education are not yet common practice in the HE sector. There are still large 'translation gaps' in applying ESD ideas in different subjects and courses, so that the learning process can contribute to a sustainable future.

What is the 'Academy' programme?

An "Academy" refers to a collective of bodies and people involving in a learning process; a place of study or training in a special field; a society or institutions that aims to promote and maintain standards in its particular field.

Why an Academy of ESD in HE?

The UE4SD Academy of ESD in HE is a professional development program developed as part of a three-year project entitled University Educators for Sustainable Development (UE4SD), funded by the European Commission and led by the University of Gloucestershire (United Kingdom). The ultimate goal of the Academy is to support change for sustainability in HE institutions by supporting university educators to develop their own ESD competences. The programme also seeks to develop the participants' leadership and change agency skills needed to facilitate change processes towards sustainability.

The Academy is composed of institutional teams and a support team. Colleagues work together to develop and implement institution-wide change initiatives in ESD professional development that can help university educators rethink their teaching practices and develop core ESD competences. The Academy provides the space, time and support for these teams to think creatively. Teams are mentored throughout the learning process, ensuring that the Academy can generate impact and institutional change.

The concept of the Academy has been inspired by the Change Academy and Green Academy initiatives led by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in the UK. The professional development process is informed by principles of distributed leadership, change management, action learning and peer-to-peer learning.

What are the aims and objectives of the Academy?

- The intention is connecting theory and thinking about ESD in HEI in practical level.
- It aims to involve different actors of the university in practical processes that is shared, helped and supervised by experts who guide this work.
- Define a professional development program to support university educators to develop their own ESD competences.
- To promote experiences that generate impact and institutional change that can continue after the UE4SD project. Identify the ways in which change can happen in our institution.
- The Initiatives must be focused on the professional development of teaching staff in EDS.
- These experiences are not the focus, the objective is to identify strategies and processes that can be shared to drive changes in universities.
- Ultimately to identify good practices and lessons learned and how they can be applied to other universities

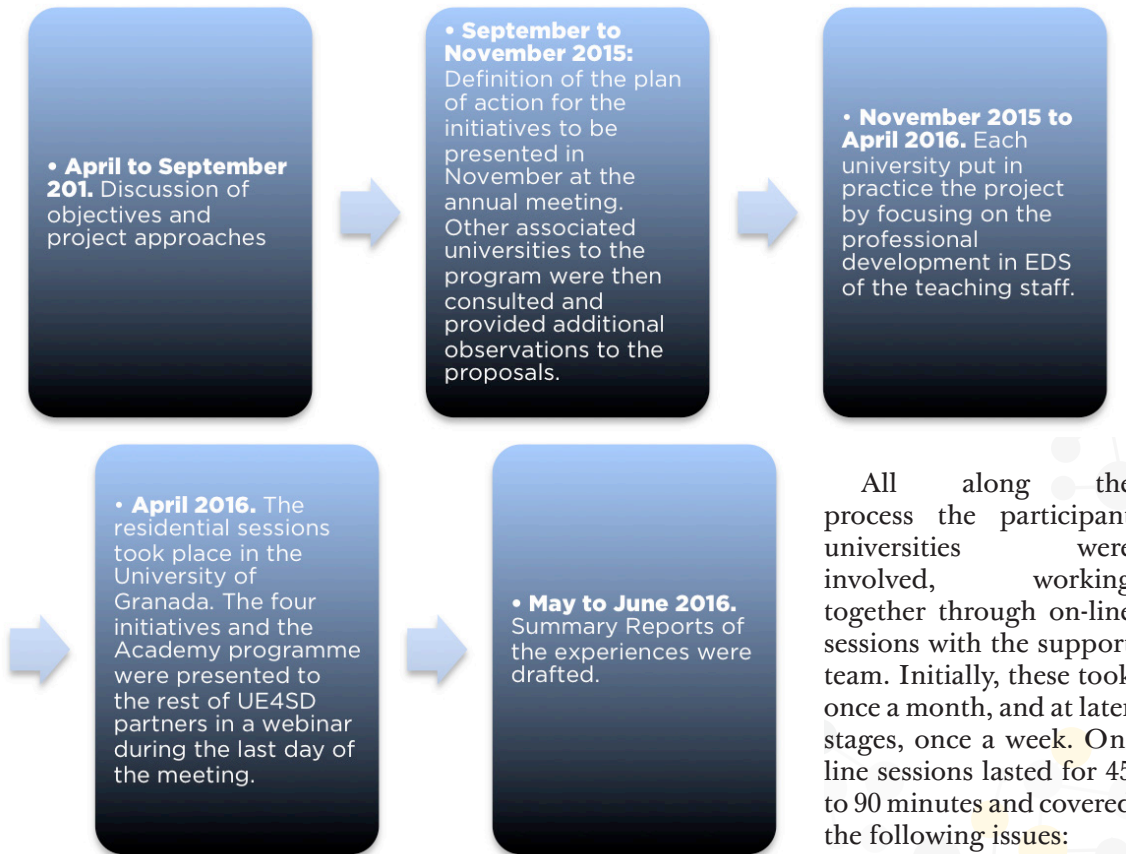
The Academy's Pilot Initiatives

The UE4SD Academy is being tested out at four universities in Spain: Autonomous University of Barcelona, University of Girona, University of Basque Country and University of Granada. The pilot initiatives started in July 2015 and will end in April 2016 after the residential event in Granada. The process has been led by the Autonomous University of Madrid (Spain) with support from the UE4SD Steering Group and UE4SD partners. The results and lessons learned of these initiatives can be useful to develop an Academy framework which can be used to adapt and/or replicate this professional development programme in other places.

The Methodological Process:

The aim of this package is to set up a professional development programme in the form of a training academy to support university educators to develop their own ESD competences. These actions are intended to generate an impact and to promote an institutional change that can continue after the project. The four Spanish universities will develop dedicated programs and initiatives over one year under the technical advice of the support team.

These pilot initiatives have been carried out in the following phases:



All along the process the participant universities were involved, working together through on-line sessions with the support team. Initially, these took once a month, and at later stages, once a week. On-line sessions lasted for 45 to 90 minutes and covered the following issues:

- ✓ Discussion of objectives and practical approaches.
- ✓ Presentation of initiatives and advancements in their application.
- ✓ Identification of barriers and problems found on the process and the ways to overcome them.
- ✓ Discussion of alternatives and suggestions for each case.
- ✓ Evaluation of the results obtained.
- ✓ Planning of next steps.

DANIELLA TILBURY
VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF GIBRALTAR &
UE4SD PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The UE4SD Academy has broken new ground. It brought together colleagues from the same institution with differing responsibilities but a common purpose - to embed Education for Sustainability into core institutional policy and practice. Each has adopted a unique approach and set of actions that aligns with the institutional needs and contexts and yet all seeking to improve the student learning experience for sustainability in higher education. The outcomes speak for themselves – the beginnings of educational change, a growth of opportunities for learning in sustainability and the establishment of cross-institutional teams that can progress ESD well beyond the life of the UE4SD project.



THE ACADEMY INITIATIVES

1.- UNIVERSITAT DE GIRONA

University Educators for Sustainable Development

The Academy initiative carried out by the Universitat de Girona (UdG) was conceived and designed with the purpose of supporting both coordinators of studies of different areas of knowledge and teachers and research staff to incorporate the perspective of sustainability in the university teaching. Regrettably was impossible to match all the schedules and finally the coordinators of studies meeting will be at the same time of the UE4SD Academy Residential.

However, the institutional team with support of the Science Institute of Education of the UdG decided to go ahead with the initiative. We consider the session of this year as a test to work in an improved offer addressed to coordinators of studies and teachers next year.

The initiative session was attended by teachers and research staff from different areas of knowledge. We were working in relation with the concept of Education for Sustainability at the university level, also identifying the aspects of sustainability that they are working in their respective fields of knowledge and linking the different disciplinary perspectives on a shared vision. Challenges, difficulties, strengths and common expectations emerged.



JORG RUDOLF ZIMMER

VICE-CHANCELLOR OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY OF THE UDG



‘Our commitment with the University and city of Girona goes beyond keeping the legacy in regards of the Education for the Sustainability. We intend to keep working in the application of the principles of sustainability in the curriculum of all our areas of knowledge as well as in the transformation of our infrastructures with the aim of making our university a reference of change. This ideas have been reinforced by our participation in the UE4SD Academy’ Residential Sessions held in Granada, Spain, where we have experienced the propelling of the best professional networks and most innovative work methodologies in this field. Our next step is to celebrate during the next month of September the ‘XVI International Summer School of Environment of the Insitut de Medi Ambient of the UdG’. This edition has been specifically designed to share the results of this Academia project among all catalan universities, with the purpose of reaching agreement on new strategies and work alliances.

2.- UNIVERSITY OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY

Campus Bizia Lab Programme: a transdisciplinary research(action process for sustainability through staff-academic-student partnership



The Academy initiative proposed by UPV/EHU seeks to develop a collaborative process by designing the EHU Campus Bizia Programme (a Campus Living Lab) to address the sustainability challenges/problems through transdisciplinary approaches to research involving administrative staff, students and academics as researchers and partners.

Campus Bizia Lab Programme is in keeping with the priority lines of the Strategic Plan 2013-2018, along with the IKD educational model (dynamic and cooperative learning) of the University of the Basque Country. The Office of the Vice-Chancellor of Students, Employment and Social Responsibility is supporting this initiative, with the collaboration of the Educational Advisory Service (Vice-Chancellor for Degree Programmes and Innovation).

Campus Bizia Lab Programme will focus on mobilising and generating synergies between the many lecturers who have been working in recent years in the sphere of education for sustainable development in different initiatives and projects at a specific and local level, many of whom have likewise experience in innovation (project/problem-based learning).

Campus Bizia Lab will consist of a research process/action aimed at developing a high impact practice among students (cross-curricular learning based on challenges relating to sustainability) where the academic staff will act as a researcher of their own practice. This high impact practice will be curricular in nature and will be implemented in this first phase through the Final Year Degree Dissertations (TFG) and Master's Degree Dissertations (TFM).

The challenges/problems addressed in those TFG and TFM on sustainability will be designed based on needs detected in the UPV/EHU campuses with the participation of the PAS to pinpoint and specify them. They will not only provide a return in terms of student learning, academic staff and PAS taking part, but will also contribute to a better more sustainable management of the university itself.

JAVIER GARAIZAR CANDINA VICE-CHANCELLOR OF CAMPUS OF ALAVA OF THE UPV/EHU



The Campus Bizia Lab programme presented at the Academy and carried out in Granada within the framework of the UE4SD Project, has made it possible to connect the learning (Final Year Degree Dissertations (TFG) and Master's Degree Dissertations (TFM) syllabus) of the students with the practice of sustainability and innovations in the Campus, incorporating services staff and aligning objectives of the Programme with the educational model of the "lkd" (cooperative and dynamic learning) university and the strategy plan. The interdisciplinary work to be carried out will involve collaborative learning as well as the additional incentive of working on real challenges of the Campus itself, including the totality of the university community.

The Academy has offered the chance for a deep reflection on the Programme in addition to strengthening the commitment of our University on the difficult path towards sustainability.

3.- UNIVERSITAT AUTÓNOMA DE BARCELONA:

Professional development in sustainability of UAB university educators: connections and effervescence

The initiative is carried out as part of the Action Plan for Sustainability of the UAB in collaboration with the Vice-Rectorate for Institutional Relations and Territory, the Environment Office and the Complex Research Group. It is aimed to design and implement a virtual space for reflection and action for the development of professional competences in Sustainability and Education for Sustainability linked to an institutional change related to sustainability.



A pilot scheme has been drawn up in order to identify the limitations and opportunities that university educators detect in the development of their competences in Sustainability and Education for Sustainability. The training is planned to take place around practical work areas with an emphasis on participation, encouraging dialogue, debate and exchange of views. The participants are from a wide variety of departments. This pilot scheme has a face workshop followed by a virtual one.

Considering that the process undertaken to design and implement the initiative may be relevant for transferring to other institutions, it has been decided to use a SWOT analysis to collect the reflections that have emerged during the design and implementation process of UAB-Initiative. This analysis will allow us to: (i) detect external and internal University elements that have facilitated and / or hindered the development of the project; (ii) identify the decisions made by the team during the project design; (iii) explain the strengths and weaknesses that universities interested in replicating similar initiative should take into consideration.

Sharing our initiative proposal and the process carried out with the project partners is a great opportunity to evaluate, redesign, and build the institutional space frame addressed to professional development in sustainability at the university level.

PERE YSERN
HEAD OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE



The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) has a strong commitment with Sustainability and Environment. Thus, the UE4SD project fits perfectly in the UAB Sustainable Plan (2013), which has strategic lines and actions devoted to promote the “internal greening” of the university and raising awareness. In this framework, two internal workshops have taken place. The most important things were, on one hand, the diversity of people attending from different fields of knowledge and, on the other, that this workshop are leading to the constitution of a stable group for working on this subject.

4.- UNIVERSIDAD DE GRANADA

Unigrajunior Teacher Program for Sustainability Teacher Competencies in Higher Education

Unigrajunior Program for Sustainability Teacher Competencies in Higher Education is focused on design innovation and training program about professional development at the beginning of university teacher career. Its point is to improve sustainability competences that promote the collaborative work between novel and senior teachers.



Universidad de Granada

The initiative is carried out as part of the Action Plan for Sustainability of the UGR in collaboration with the Quality, Innovation & Prospective Office and the Environmental & Institutional Evaluation Research Group. It is aimed to design and implement a virtual space for reflection and action for the development of professional competences in Education for Sustainability linked to an institutional change related to sustainability. The Institutional context is launched by Junior Teachers Training Programme UGR.

Specific objectives of the program:

1. Promoting the collaborative training between novel teachers and seniors. The experience of senior teachers with significant trajectories on sustainability in the teaching, researching and management field in Higher Education.
2. Forming an interdisciplinary innovation and training group that favour the transfer of “good practices” between novel and senior teachers.
3. Enriching this plan in a pilot and a generalization phase with cooperation in virtual format of other members of the UE5SD Project.

TERESA ORTEGA

VICE-RECTOR OF SOCIAL RESPONSABILITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS



The UGR is committed and bet on the environment. The management of this commitment is mediated from different sectors, specially from the education and awareness among members of the university community, as well as, the own the environmental management through environmental policies of the UGR, policies that are coordinated by the Environmental Quality Unit, that belongs to Healthy Campus, Vice rectorate of Social Responsibility, Equality and Inclusion.

THE RESIDENTIAL SESSIONS

What are the Academy's Residential Sessions?

These are an essential stage of the process. They comprise intensive meetings where joint workshops are held together with an exchange of the individual experiences of each university participant in the Academy. They also serve to launch and promote the on-going of these experiences since they train those representatives in charge that ensure their development.

The residential event in Granada is designed to support the four pilot institutional teams in the implementation of their ESD initiatives and to reflect jointly on the lessons learned of the Academy process. Each team was composed of four members (including the champions of the initiative, a senior manager, an academic or support staff member) who will be engaged in a vibrant and transformative program with interactive and hands-on activities to:

- critically reflect on the ESD institutional initiatives and learning processes associated with facilitating change for sustainability
- share and discuss the true nature of the challenges and opportunities of embedding change for sustainability in a higher education institution
- identify key ambitions and map out core steps to achieve these goals
- establish tangible objectives and future action plans
- develop new relationships and create new partnerships for change for sustainability

The residential event has a strong professional development component and seeks to have an impact to each participating institutional member.

At the end of the residential program, we hope that participants will have:

- deepened and strengthened their expertise in ESD in HE
- enhanced their understanding of change processes for sustainability
- increased their confidence and abilities as change agents within their institutions
- further developed skills of analysis, problem solving and creative thinking
- reinforced their abilities to work effectively with key stakeholders and create new relationships

Who is involved?

1) Support teams: experts, staff from other universities that have developed similar processes or initiatives, but in different contexts if it is possible.

2) Champions initiatives teams: Addressing the Academy to institutional change in the Residential process is very important the participation of people with responsibilities in the management or decision making of the government of the university. These teams has involved:

- Vice-Chancellors of Academic Planning, Social Responsibility or Sustainability Processes.
- Technical staff of environmental offices, offices of social responsibility, as well as specialist from departments for designing training plans of academic staff
- Teachers and researchers related to sustainability, to serve as champions by the technical team of the initiative.

Methodology:

The residential program includes a diversity of activities, presentations, workshops and panel discussions intended to facilitate the exchange of information between participants. All discussions will take place in a safe environment and in an atmosphere of mutual respect and support. Colleagues will be encouraged to share their ideas in an open manner and respect differing views and opinions. The information shared during the sessions will be treated with discretion and the identity of individuals will be hidden in public reports and any academic outputs arisen from the pilot study.



Work process:

✓ Day 1

- Ice-breaker activity
- Discussion on ESD in HE
- Sharing of institutional initiatives and support initiatives→reflection
- Meeting of institutional teams

✓ Day 2

- Updating of institutional initiatives
- Session on ESD professional development
- Meeting of institutional + support teams→projection
- Panel discussion- institutional delegates

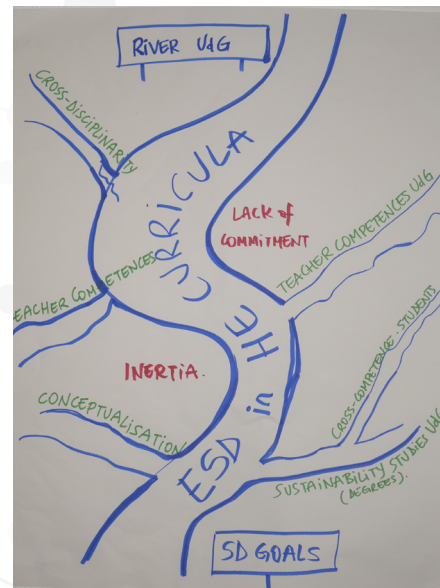
✓ Day 3

- Webinar with UE4SD partners

Assessments and recommendations on the process developed at the Residential Sessions

- ✎ It is important that support and initiatives teams receive in advance detailed information about the programme for the workshops held in the Residential sessions.
- ✎ It is also important to promote a good environment that encourages group work along the residential sessions, where team members realize of the utility of their participation and be able to applying it to its sphere of application. An environment of trustworthiness, cooperation and mutual respect must be created where each member can offer its own contribution in a very specific and applied context. Applied discussions are not meant to be the only goal, but also to engage members into originate new proposals and actions.
- ✎ Specific activities for the different members of the teams can be organised, but these must be linked to the rest of activities of the programme.

- ✎ It is advisable to create an environment where the leaders of the initiatives can freely ponder on their experiences without having the institutional representatives present. Simultaneously, institutional representatives should have a space too for themselves, in this case to here to present their future prospects in their respective universities.
- ✎ Time should be allocated to allow each team to work together in their own initiatives, since the opportunity to work together fully devoted on the matter without the burden of other duties, as it is usually hard for them to focus properly when they are in their universities.
- ✎ The usage of diverse strategies of group dynamisation (for instance: Ladders and Snakes) are key to keep a high involvement of participants and to promote communal thinking.
- ✎ Teams must integrate their interventions in the process and systematize the conversations such as put names to what it is being discussing and detect what can guide participants in the exercise. This is intended to prevent and exchange of concerns or ideas without a clear goal.
- ✎ It is important to finish each session with a round table of results, in order to identify improvement terms and advances for all experiences.



LESSONS LEARNT

The Academy aims finally to identify lessons learned that can serve as support to develop similar actions at other universities. Among the most notorious findings to be highlight are:

- ✎ Academy has been a seed that has already generated some benefits among the universities where it has been applied along 2015-16, and it is expected to expand to other universities and countries in the future.
- ✎ Academy has been only possible thanks to the previous work of all partners involved on project UE4SD with the State of the Art Report, the Leading Practice Publication and the on-line platform: <http://www.ue4sd.eu/>
- ✎ The continuous work process together between the involved teachers from the different projects at each of the four universities has allowed to reach a communal learning on how to overcome the difficulties to apply the sustainability to the university teachers.
- ✎ The involvement of academic authorities from the beginning of the project has been essential to achieve a real reach and impact within the university itself.
- ✎ Although the first steps were hard to initiate, once the process has been set in motion the implication and enthusiasm of the teachers ease its development.
- ✎ About the residential, it is highly valuable to set up some general workshops at the start and end of the program. In this regard, the first session would address the definition and set in motion of the Academy while the closing one would conduct the final evaluation.
- ✎ All experiences have faced important difficulties and barriers that put in risk their effective implementation. Nonetheless, the joint work has allowed using any emerging problematic as elements for joint assessments where alternative solutions were identified in order to improve the viability and effectiveness of the projects.
- ✎ Connecting this initiative with other projects already in place from the Universities has been essential to have a wider impact among teachers. It is important to generate

DAVID ALBA

UE4SD SOUTH HUB COORDINATOR AND LEADER OF THE UE4SD PROJECT QUALITY ASSURANCE



It was very exciting how we have shared with Spanish teams the Academy process. From the first ideas to the development of their workshops and activities. I learnt a lot about the difficulties that they have faced. I would like to remark the opportunity of working with people who play different role at university. I think that a key thing of the success of these initiatives is the fact that every people have a responsibility, no matter they are teaching staff, technical staff, vice-chancellor or students. If we want to transform all the institution, every part of their community have to be on board.

changes on top of processes already in motion within the universities. Initiatives should be seen as part of a strategy not isolated projects.

- ✍ In all the meetings and international conferences where the results of project UE4SD and in particular the Academy process have been shown, a broad interest has been expressed to replicate it as to apply it other contexts.
- ✍ The main final goal of Academy is to dynamize those processes that engage teachers in order to make them leaders of new initiatives of change within the University.
- ✍ Even though the voluntary participation processes only engage those teachers more interested, they can become seeds of deeper institutional changes that may appeal to educators less motivated.

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Involved teachers keep working to strengthen these initiatives within their universities and to ground them in permanent actions along time. Groups and networks have been constituted to give continuity the actions in future years.
- ✓ At the final meeting it has been proposed to launch similar processes in those partner universities that were associated to the project.
- ✓ Contacts have been established with leaders of GUPES from UNEP and GAP from UNESCO and the network SDSN of the United Nations to extend the initiative to universities of other regions and countries.
- ✓ Some countries of Africa (Morocco) and Latin-America (Colombia and Mexico) have targeted for future application of Academy project.
- ✓ A workshop in the Univ. of Girona has been organized to be held in September of 2016. This aims to identify future lines of action. In particular, it is aimed to make a proposal for CRUE (Spanish Universities Chancellorship' Sustainability Commission) to take a leading to apply the process to other universities across the country.

JAVIER BENAYAS COORDINATOR OF THE ACADEMY PROJECT

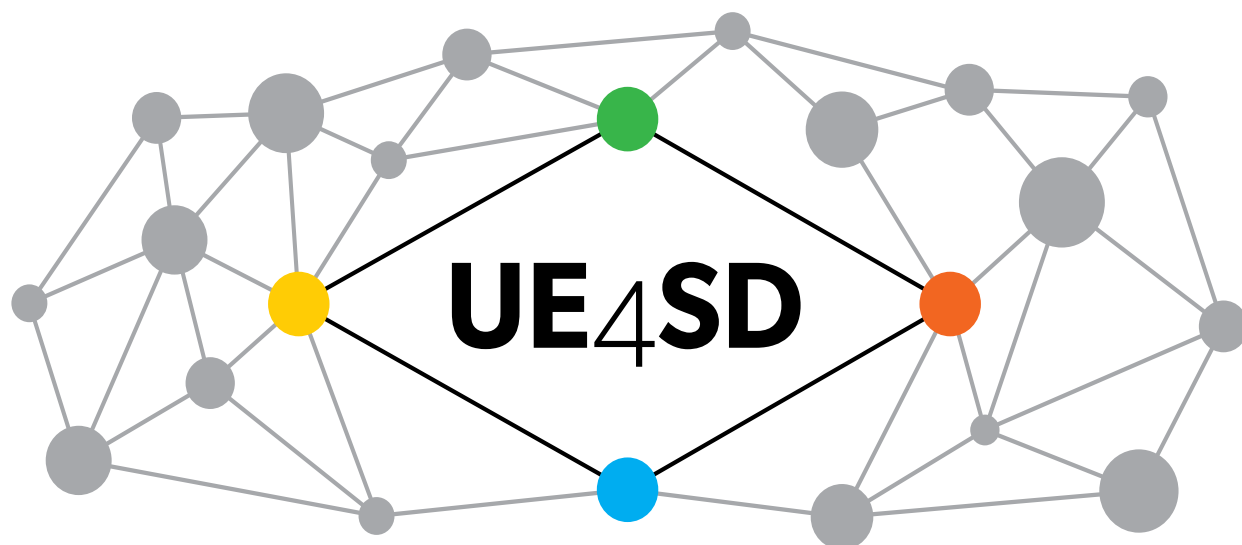


A sustainable future is possible if we are able to generate permanent changes. To do this, the university should be involved in introducing change processes involving both teachers and students.

The main objective of the Academy project is to serve as promoter for these continuous and permanent changes within the university.

During the project we have learned to work together to advance more effectively. But we have also identified those lessons and processes that can help other teams and universities to advance faster.

The future is in the hands of people who are able to stimulate changes.



UNIVERSITY EDUCATORS
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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