INTERNATIONAL NETWORK SEDwise

‘SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION – TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE FACE OF WICKED SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS’

Katrien Van Poeck & Leif Östman – Quito, Ecuador – 13 December 2017
SEDwise

SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION
Teaching & learning in the face of wicked socio-ecological problems
Embedding sustainability in education programmes

- Screening content and competencies
- Basics of SD in each program (obligatory)
- University-wide course (optional)

Learn from current and new experiences
Search for good practices, summer schools,…

System Analysis
- Compartmentalisation / no integration / mono-disciplinary
- No student-led education (lecturers decide)
- Societal relevance is (often) lacking
- Education is not appreciated during evaluation
- Dominance of 'outdated' lectures

Experiment with new education practices
Inter- and transdisciplinary; social media; societal relevance (community service learning); etc.

Improved evaluation system
E.g. personal objectives in career path, foster vision developments within several departments

UGent as a learning society for a social just and ecological sustainable future
- New content: focus on socio-ecological challenges
- New organisation: inter- & transdisciplinary approach
- New links between education, research and services to society
TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE FACE OF WICKED SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

International network SEDwise: trans-disciplinary action research:

- UGent as a ‘living lab’: Pilot experiments aimed at integrating sustainability in university education in various fields
- Sustainability education researchers as ‘critical friends’: Empirical research, theoretical underpinning
- Co-creation of more adequate teaching and learning practices
- Fruitful interactions between theory and practice
WICKED SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

- Far from agreement on norms and values at stake
  - Unstructured wicked problems
- Far from certainty on required and available knowledge
  - Moderately structured problems: discussion about suitable means
- Close to certainty on required and available knowledge
  - Structured problems
- Close to agreement on norms and values at stake
  - Moderately structured problems: discussion ethical acceptability of goals
TRANS-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Mono-disciplinary

Multi-disciplinary

Inter-disciplinary

Trans-disciplinary

Non-academic environment

Discipline
Discipline
Discipline
Discipline
Discipline
Discipline
Discipline
UGENT PROFESSORS + INTERNATIONAL ESE RESEARCHERS + NON-ACADEMIC PARTNERS

UGent partners: Thomas Block (promoter, Department of Political Sciences) – Gert Goeminne (Department of Political Sciences) – An Cluït (Department of European, Public and International law) – Michiel De Krom (Department of Sociology) – Brent Bleys (Department of General Economics) – Joost Dessein (Department of Agricultural economics) – Bea Merckx (Teacher Training Arteveldehogeschool) – Michiel Dehaene (Department of Architecture and urban planning) – Steven De Meester (Department of Industrial biological sciences) – Stefaan De Henauw (Department of Public health) – Bart Defloor (Department of General economics) – Erik Paredis (Department of Political Sciences) – Michel De Paepe (Department of Flow, heat and combustion mechanics) – Frank Nevens (Department of Applied Biosciences) – Angelo Van Gorp (Department of Social work and social pedagogy) – Katrien Van Poeck (network coordinator, Department of Political Sciences)

International partners (Environmental and Sustainability Education researchers): Leif Östman (Uppsala University, Sweden) – Hella Lotz-Sisitka (Rhodes University, South-Africa) – Jeppe Læssøe (Aarhus University, Denmark) – Jonas Andreasen Lysgaard (Aarhus University, Denmark) – Arjen Wals (University of Gothenburg & Wageningen University, Sweden & The Netherlands) – David O. Kronlid (Uppsala University, Sweden) – Eva Friman (Uppsala University, Sweden) – Alan Reid (Monash University, Australia) – Elsa Lee (University of Cambridge, UK) – Marcia McKenzie (University of Saskatchewan, Canada) – Johan Öhman (Örebro University, Sweden) – Stefan Bengtsson (Uppsala University, Sweden) – Michael Håkansson (Södertörn University, Sweden) – Luiz Marcelo de Carvalho (Universidade Estadual Paulista, Brasil) – Petra Hansson (Uppsala University, Sweden)
ACTIVITIES

- Research seminars and symposia
- Workshops for university teachers
- In-service training for (university) educators and educational policy staff
- Summer schools for doctoral and master students
- Joint (action) research projects
- Joint publications
- …
KICK-OFF MEETING – JUNE 2016
PILOT PROJECTS CURRICULUM REFORM
WORKSHOPS IN MONGOLIA – FEBRUARY 2017
MEETING – JUNE 2017: ‘UNIVERSITIES AS LABORATORIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE CITY’
EXAMPLE OF ON-GOING PILOT EXPERIMENT
AN URBAN ACADEMY IN GHENT

- Trans-disciplinary setting
- 3 functions of the university research, education and services to society are intertwined
- Focus on sustainability issues in the city of Ghent as research challenges: mobility, housing, gentrification, sustainable food supply chains...
- Collective learning among academic staff, students, policy-makers, citizens, businesses, civil society, etc.
- Taking complexity and controversy seriously, exploring multiple perspectives
AN URBAN ACADEMY IN GHENT

- **Vehicle for education innovation**: ‘action-learning’ (cf. action-research)
- **How?** Diversity of inquiry-based / experimentative methods:
  - New inter-faculty course ‘Sustainable cities’ organised as a collective inquiry into a particular sustainability issue
  - Mastertheses and bachelor-papers
  - Student assignments
  - Internships
  - Trans-disciplinary seminars & workshops
  - …
AN URBAN ACADEMY IN GHENT

Pedagogical principles:

– A space for meaningful, creative and educative encounters
– An ‘open’ space, providing ‘free’ time to think and reflect
– Crossing boundaries between disciplines, between university and city
– Collective practice: active involvement of students, teachers, researchers, citizens, businesses, (urban) governments…
– Concern-oriented: open-ended yet not relativistic → focus on a common matter of public concern
AN URBAN ACADEMY IN GHENT

Challenges:

– Long-term **viability**: funding, curator/coordinator, physical space…
– Taking care for the **philosophy** behind it (e.g. funding offered by actors who try to shift the focus on merely technological solutions)
– Starting small, from existing **solid engagement** of committed people
– Joint definition of the **type of issues** the academy will address
– Avoid dichotomy between traditional (‘bad’) and alternative (‘good’) education: create **links and cross-overs** with mainstream curriculum
– Collaboration with independent **student movements or initiatives**
– **Continuity**: linking work done by several generations of students
EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION:

WHAT CAN SEDWISE OFFER YOU?

WHAT CAN YOU OFFER SEDWISE?
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