

Information letter research and development project

“Climate change in higher education”

Commissioned by

Flemish government, departement of Education and Training (in the context of the Flemish Energy and Climate Plan)

Conducted by

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Start and end date

1 February 2016 – 31 January 2021

Purposes, research questions and design

Teachers in higher education express the need for support to adequately address sustainability issues such as climate change in their teaching practices. This research and development project contributes to **capacity building** by developing an empirical knowledge base as well as instruments for the dissemination thereof.

Research questions:

1. **What characterises education on climate change in Flemish universities and university colleges?**

Here, we aim to map the diversity of education practices (a broad view).

- Which learning outcomes are anticipated?
- How is the issue of climate change addressed in the teaching content?
- What characterises the pedagogical didactical approach of teachers?
- Which teaching methods are used?
- How are practices of climate change education situated in the curriculum?

2. **What are adequate teaching and learning practices on the issue of climate change?** Here, we aim at a qualitative study of concrete practices (in-depth).

- What do the students learn?
- How is the issue of climate change addressed in the teaching content? How does this relate to the learning outcomes?
- What is the influence of the pedagogical didactical approach of teachers on the learning outcomes?
- How do teaching methods influence learning outcomes?
- How does the curriculum affect the learning outcomes, teaching content, teaching methods and pedagogical didactical approach?

3. **What are vital conditions for adequately addressing climate change in higher education?**

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of diverse pedagogical didactical approaches?
- What are adequate teaching methods, teaching content, teacher interventions and curriculum characteristics?

Research question 1 will be answered by means of a targeted **survey** of teachers. The results thereof will provide insight in the diversity of education practices on the issue of climate change in Flemish higher education. Research question 2 requires in-depth, qualitative analyses of concrete practices and will be conducted by means of 15 **case studies**. Observations are crucial here (incl. video/audio-recording + transcription) as well as content analysis of course specifications, a survey of students and interviews with teachers. Cross-case analysis will allow us to answer research question 3.

In collaboration with end users we create an **inspiration guide** that lays the basis for further capacity building.

Your participation in the study

Delimitation

With this email we invite you to participate in the **survey** in view of answering research **question 1**. This will take about 25 minutes.

In case you are also interested in participating in follow-up research (in-depth case studies) you can provide an email address and some additional information. This data will be collected in a separate database and the software used will not allow the researchers to connect it to the answers to the questionnaire.

Why participating?

If you are teaching about climate change and/or topics related to it in a university and/or university college, your participation is **crucial for our study**. In order to gain insight in what characterises education on climate change in Flemish universities and university colleges and therefore it is vital that as many teachers as possible respond to the questionnaire.

Perhaps you are interested in learning more about the **results** of the study? We will send you the scientific report of this study and the inspiration guide upon request. Through an **invitation for conferences and trainings** you will have a unique opportunity to acquire new insights and inspiration for your own teaching practice.

Data protection

The new **European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** is applicable to this research. Since 25 May 2018, the GDPR assures a more extensive and stricter protection of your personal data. Therefore we provide you with the information below.

The legal ground for the processing of personal data in this study is consent. This means that we can only process your personal if you give your **explicit permission** for this. You can withdraw from the study at any time and you do not have to state why. All data already collected up until that moment will be used for the current and future research.

Ghent University is the **controller of your personal data** processed in the context of this research. This means that the researchers at Ghent University decide on the how and why of the processing in the context of the research. Of course, they are bound by your informed consent at the start of your participation in the study. Within Ghent University, all staff members for the handling of personal data are bound by the 'Generic Code of Conduct for the processing of personal data and personal information'.

In this survey we will not ask your name, the title of your course or any other type of information that makes it possible to **identify** you. If you want, you can provide an email address to receive the

scientific report of this study and/or the inspiration guide and/or an invitation for conferences and trainings at the end of the questionnaire. You can also indicate that you are interested in participating in follow-up research. In the latter case we will ask you to provide an e-mail address as well as some additional information. This data, which makes it possible to identify you, will be collected in a separate database and the software used will not allow the researchers to connect it to the answers to the questionnaire. This data as well as eventual answers on open questions in which you might provide information that makes it possible to identify you, will be kept securely in accordance with data protection regulations and can only be accessed by the research team. The researchers treat this information confidentially. They ensure that you cannot be identified in research publications

We would also like to mention that your personal data may possibly be **viewed** by:

- research monitors and auditors, possibly employed by the commissioner, his authorised representatives, who check whether the investigation is being conducted correctly and whether the information collected about you is accurate;
- national and international competent government bodies involved in keeping research safe for participants.

In accordance with the relevant Ghent University policy on research data, Ghent University will retain the data collected as part of the research for at least 5 years. During this entire period you may always:

- Ask for additional **information** about the processing of your data.
- Request **access** to the data that is stored about you.
- Request **corrections** if the data is incorrect or incomplete. During the assessment of this request you have the right to limit the processing of data about you.
- Ask for information about you in a common form to be **transferred** to yourself or someone else.
- Ask for your data to be **erased or removed** insofar as this does not threaten or seriously jeopardize the achievement and validity of the scientific research objectives.
- Object to the processing of your data.

If you have **questions** about the research you can always contact katrien.vanpoeck@ugent.be. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant you can contact the Data Protection Officer of Ghent University at privacy@ugent.be.

You also have the right to submit a **complaint** about how your personal data is handled, with the Belgian supervisory authority responsible for enforcing data protection legislation:

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1000 Brussel

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