

University Educators for Sustainable Development (UE4SD)

Press release: UE4SD Closing conference launched an Online Resource Platform for university educators

June 29th, 2016, University of Gibraltar

The Conference “Universities as Beacons of Change: Education for Sustainability lighting up pathways for a new world” was held on 27 – 28 June 2016 in the University of Gibraltar. This conference was a contribution to the UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which have acknowledged that there is a need to improve support for university educators to re-orient teaching and learning for sustainable development. It was also a final meeting of the UE4SD project, funded by the European Commission, which has identified and documented a series of leading practices on professional development in ESD in Europe that can enlighten universities interested in rethinking the purpose of education and becoming beacons of social change. The Conference brought together over 100 delegates from across the world who discussed existing international and UN frameworks on ESD, the role of higher education institutions and specifically university educators in ESD processes, and on more practical level, possibilities of future networking and cooperation with each other. Topics such as professional development issues, possibilities for change, and pathways for quality and partnerships were discussed in three parallel sessions.

At the Gibraltar conference, a unique web toolkit created by the UE4SD project – the Online Platform for professional development in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) – was launched by Dr Alexander Leicht, Chief of the “Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship” section, UNESCO Paris. The Platform is a professional development resource to help those involved in education and learning to develop the future-facing, globally-conscious, transformative capabilities the 21st century requires – and to bring these approaches into their teaching practice, to assist their students in developing these competences.

This online platform has collected the best practices identified from across Europe and new activities developed through the project. This is the first collection of materials devoted to professional training and capacity building of educators in ESD.

The Online Platform contains:

- 26 good practice examples of ESD professional development initiatives
- The framework, designs and usable tools from the UE4SD Academy residential training
- New ideas, guidance and materials on ESD that we found on the UE4SD journey
- Overview of the policy landscape for ESD in Europe plus useful readings and publications
- Video clips of project partners sharing ESD professional development experiences

The Platform is one of the new tools and adaptable examples delivered by the UE4SD project that can inform future innovations in practice and shift thus an understanding of ESD and its relationship to professional development. Colleagues with this educational priority can build upon this resource and further cooperate in the framework of COPERNICUS Alliance network of higher education institutions.

All conference information can be found here: <http://www.ue4sd.eu/gibraltar>.

The production of the Online Platform as an outcome of the UE4SD Project has been funded by the European Commission - Lifelong Learning Programme. This platform is available on www.platform.ue4sd.eu

For further information about the Online Platform please contact the Work Package Lead Dr. Alex Ryan at University of Gloucestershire: aryan@glos.ac.uk

More information about the UE4SD Project can be obtained from the Project Lead Prof. Daniella Tilbury at the University of Gibraltar, daniella.tilbury@unigib.edu.gi, the UE4SD Project Coordinator at the University of Gloucestershire ue4sd@glos.ac.uk and at the UE4SD Project website <http://www.ue4sd.eu>.