

PRACTICE IN EUROPE / DZIAŁANIA PRAKTYKÓW

PETER VAN DER BAAN

Educational designer and teacher sustainable development
HAS Den Bosch, The Netherlands, BaP@hasdb.nl

FRIENDLY TO THE PEOPLE IN GLOBAL SOLIDARITY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

What can higher education do about the problems and challenges of globalization? How can we educate our students in higher education around this important theme? We want to debate and discuss with them and come to concrete actions. We want to know the world and life styles of the students of today. We experienced that global solidarity creates mutual understanding and creativity. Students from North and South really can learn from each other. Students will become ambassadors to their fellow students in secondary and vocational educational institutes. When they work after graduation at companies, they will likewise act and work as social and responsible employees and citizens. At HAS Den Bosch, an institute of agricultural higher education in The Netherlands, we did some pilot projects that gives answers to above questions. The article shows what happens and what the results were. The article also gives some leads to a new and very promising project in which the foreign internships will become more social and sustainable with the help of social responsible companies.

Key words: globalization, sustainable development, Corporate Social Responsibility, higher education

I. INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, some students from Environmental Technology knocked at the door of the chairman of HAS Den Bosch, an institute of agricultural higher education in The Netherlands. The students wanted to go on a study trip to Honduras and Guatemala in Latin America. The chair of HAS Den Bosch scratched his head. If I say 'yes' all kinds of misfortune and accidents can happen in those 3World countries. I will be held responsible when I have to call their parents to say that their children have died in....whatever. If I say 'no', the students will be very disappointed. Their teacher made them very enthusiastic about his contacts over there and I have to remember our slogan...HAS Den Bosch gives your passion a future! So, the chair said after due deliberation 'yes', not knowing that he started a chain of events that could not be stopped.

The students started their trip with adventure and exposure to other cultures in their minds. The trip ended in a vision in which sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, higher and

* *Pracę recenzowała:* prof. UR, dr hab. Joanna Kostecka, Uniwersytet Rzeszowski

secondary education mingled in an explosive mix of creativity, student exchange, community building, eco tourism and fair trade.

How that happened will be told in a chronological overview of spin-of projects in the following pages. The article will end with a conclusion on factors for success, but also on failures of failure.

II. THE PROJECT WORKING AND LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WLSD)

After the chair of HAS Den Bosch scratched his head in his decision making process, students and teachers scratched their heads alike. How to get the money for the 2 week trip to Honduras and Guatemala? Costs will be around € 1700,- pro student.

In a brainstorm session students decided to work for the money in the evenings and weekends. Instead of plain work in factories, income could best come from advisory projects in line of the study of the students. That means projects in the field of environmental technology and sustainable development.

Students also decided to earn more than the costs of their study trip, so they can invite poor, but promising students from 3World countries to do their internship in The Netherlands. Their motivation was that students from the North have a lot of possibilities to do a study according to their choices and wishes. Young people in the South don't have that opportunity. So, let's just work a little bit harder and student exchange and global solidarity is financed undependable from scholarships and other forms of grants. The idea of Working and Learning for Sustainable Development (WLSD) was born.



Fot.1. Students of HAS Den Bosch tries to pull their bus out of the mud in the forest of Honduras. A metaphor of doing efforts together to make sustainable development work !?!

Fot.1. Studenci z HAS Den Bosch próbują wspólnie wypchnąć autobus z błota w lesie w Hondurasie. To doskonała metafora wspólnej pracy dla zrównoważonego rozwoju !?!

A lot of Dutch companies, NGO's, regional and local governments gave sustainable assignments to the students. A fine example is the assignment given by the regional government of the province of Brabant, in which HAS Den Bosch is situated. The regional minister of environment wanted to have an investigation and a benchmarking on the sustainability of sugar beets in Brabant and Poland and sugar cane in Honduras [3]. Other

assignments of mostly NGO's and local governments were in the field of environmental education and information, environmental quick scans and surveys. This is mostly labour intensive work, which – in perspective of cost reductions - can best be done by students. By paying regularly wages, the work would be too cost- full and not be done.

Students also sold fair trade coffee, global handicrafts and world music CD's to their parents, families and the companies where their parents worked. In just a few months the money for Honduras and Guatemala was raised. A tremendous success.

The project WLSL succeeded, after the Honduras success, in more exchange trips to Indonesia, Kenya, Brazil and Vietnam. The coming trip will go to Surinam, a former Dutch colony, where The Netherlands still have special ties. Some 15 students from the agricultural university of Zamorano in Honduras did their international internship at HAS Den Bosch.

At Brawijaya University in Indonesia there is a lot of interest with teachers and students alike in student exchange, internships and joint courses and programs. Dutch students did some preliminary investigations on possibilities for joint projects [4]. Much help was given by the student organisation International Association of Agricultural Students and related sciences IAAS.

Problem is that still the more rich 3World students are able to come over to The Netherlands for study. Dutch students need more time in the WLSL project to earn more money for inviting over more of their fellow students they met during their study and exchange trip.

III. THE PROJECT CREATING YOUR COMMON FUTURE (CYCF)

Dutch government is very generous in giving grants for educational development, especially in the field of agricultural education. So, the idea of searching for new didactic methods that raises enthusiasm for sustainable development with young people is granted easily. In the project Creating Your Common Future (CYCF) new working forms were introduced, like educational events and workshops on twinning themes as work/leisure and learning/life long development. Special emphasis was laid on philosophy, history, art and culture as means of especially developing the People aspect in the triple P of sustainability (People, Planet, Profit). A lot of attention was given to the life styles of young people and how to discuss this and eventually change this in ways not too paternalistic.

Also new in the project CYCF was the co-operation between the students in higher and vocational education and pupils in secondary education (high schools) [1]. There was also a pilot in cross culture communication between students in the North and students in the South. In Kortrijk, Belgium, exchange students from 3World and EU countries worked together in workshops with Belgium and Dutch students [2].

IV. THE PROJECTS EINSTEIN GENERATION IN BRABANT AND AT HAS DEN BOSCH

Young people of today are called the Einstein generation, because they communicate with each other in using simultaneously the newest technology in mobile phones, the internet, pod and vod casting, SMS, MSM etc. They invent a language that older people (as the readers of this traditional formed article) even can not understand anymore.

The Einstein generation is also full of energy and creativity, and important in this context, wants to have the best for themselves, but also for the other. They are highly motivated to do the good things, be friendly to other people and learn from each other in global solidarity.

In the projects Einstein in Brabant (a Dutch region) and Einstein at HAS Den Bosch there were workshops for international students about the above Einstein generation related themes [5]. Two graduate students did an investigation on working and didactical methods in sustainable development for pupils in secondary education. They wanted to know which

methods pupils liked the most. Dutch pupils like to work with internet, in groups and in assignment of stakeholders outside the school. Teachers and traditional class room teaching are less and less popular. Learning effects does not differ very much between new teaching forms and traditional education [8].

A highly promising new didactical method, piloted in Einstein at HAS Den Bosch, is the so called 'open space' methodology. Students are stimulated to create their own workshops on their own themes. In the context of an educational event with motivating key-note speakers and a lot of debate, the energy and creativity of young people will be highly stimulated. It is important that after the event all this energy is canalised in (learning) activities that leads to concrete outcomes. One of the possibilities is a quick scan at the institute to investigate what sustainable projects are possible. In a debate or with the Delphi method, the most promising projects can be chosen [6,7]. Indeed, a famous quote of Einstein himself is: 'output is based on 1% inspiration and 99% transpiration'.

V. THE PROJECT TOWARDS A SOCIAL AND SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP MERGING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE WITH GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In August 2007, the chairman of the Dutch Higher Education Council (HBO Raad) visited HAS Den Bosch. He is very much concerned about the polarization in The Netherlands between Muslims and Dutch citizens. People with different cultures and backgrounds does not want to understand each other anymore, and this causes a lot of misunderstandings and problems. This is also seen in the discussions about globalization. If we are not prepared we also lose a lot of international business opportunities.

What can higher education do about this? How can we educate our students in higher education, or even more interesting how can we debate and discuss with them and come to concrete actions within the world the Einstein generation is creating now? How can global solidarity create mutual understanding and creativity? What can we learn from each other? And last... how can the students become ambassadors to their fellow students in secondary education and to their future employers?

There is a lot of experience at HAS Den Bosch to answer these questions [9]. The described projects with their spin of to succeeding projects (from Working and Learning for Sustainable Development WLSD to Creating Your Common Future CYCF and Einstein Generations) gives some interesting answers and possibilities for a new project: the Socialization and Sustainability of the International Internships [6,7].

Students of HAS Den Bosch are obliged to do their internship or practical period in foreign countries, also in 3World countries. It would be best if they form project groups from different disciplines and with students from the South. When they will be assigned to sustainable projects from social responsible companies and/or universities, when they will stay in eco hotels/resorts and when they will be involved in community building we truly can speak of a social and sustainable international internship.

How can we organize this? First we need a development group consisting of teachers from North and South and external advisers, hopefully also from companies. It would be good if students are involved. It is a new and promising concept if students are allowed to create their own education according to their Einstein generation insights. The development group needs development money. Companies that have business, or wants to create business opportunities, in 3 World countries has to be interested to give assignments to students for their international practical period. Companies who have a policy of Corporate Social

Responsibility CSR are more interesting than companies who's only concern is plain business and profit. More and more people will have the CSR mind setting, especially when we are able to educate students as future employees with this state of mind. Ties between Dutch companies and HAS Den Bosch are already very strong. It would be very interesting when Dutch and foreign companies are involved and co-operate also with universities in 3World countries and help them with guest lectures and practical period assignments.

A joint educational program will have the following elements:

- Globalization and the UN Millennium Development Goals.
- Cross culture communication with emphasis on culture i.e. religion, history and lifestyles.
- Creativity, future scenarios, art, empowerment.
- Skills for middle management working for multinationals, such as project management etc.
- Competences, learning-by-doing, traditional elements from the own culture, narrative ethics.

When students do their international internship/practical period they preferable stay in an eco hotel or resort. They can help by making the management more sustainable, by developing eco tourism (courses for guides) and give English to the employees. They also can help with the community building projects in which real eco hotels/resorts are mostly involved.

Another form of help students can give when they do their international internship is for fair trade farms and plantations. They can make the management more sustainable, investigate market opportunities in The Netherlands, do product/production improvement, and help with community building.

The international internship in a 3World country will really be social and sustainable if there is co-operation with students from the South and if those students can be invited back to the North. In that case, young people really can learn from each other and gain mutual understanding for their culture and background.

Another promising aspect is when students make a documentary from their experiences and show it to pupils in secondary education and to employees in CSR- companies. It will stimulate them to follow the same path and it will be a form of PR and marketing. This because the project has to be undependable from grants and subsidies and has to be financed in the end by assignments in the way the WLSO project is set up.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The line of succeeding projects executed by HAS Den Bosch, shows that it is possible to make global sustainable development concrete and workable with help of social responsible companies and stakeholders. Young people from the Einstein generation are very motivated, if treated and educated right, to enter the world of sustainable development with their hearts and minds.

It is very helpful at this moment in The Netherlands that there is a big shortage in the labour market. Young, highly educated students are very wanted. Companies are open for internships and for long term policy in which CSR can develop. Companies sees win-win situations and competition gain when they have experts who are concerned and involved with the people they work with when they do business in 3World countries.

A big concern is when economy is falling down. Then it will be business as usual with few concern for internships, CSR and social projects. It is also very important that there is commitment with the board, management and teaching staff of the involved educational institutes. Students have to act outside the regular curriculum. Searching for and working on paid assignments not only for their own study trip/international internship, but also for inviting students from the South is very time consuming for students. It will be a big gain when paid real-life projects are part of the regular curriculum.

But...the Einstein generation is very willing to be friendly to the people in global solidarity, to learn from each other and come to creative thinking with each other for the good of the planet. HAS Den Bosch has shown that sustainable development, corporate social responsibility and higher education can merge together and can create win-win situations for stakeholders all around the world.

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PRZYJAŹŃ MIĘDZY LUDŹMI W RAMACH GLOBALNEJ SOLIDARNOŚCI. ZRÓWNOWAŻONY ROZWÓJ I ZBIOROWA ODPOWIEDZIALNOŚĆ SPOŁECZNA W EDUKACJI UNIWERSYTECKIEJ W HOLANDII

Streszczenie

Jaki jest udział edukacji uniwersyteckiej w budowaniu zrównoważonego rozwoju i jak można rozwiązywać problemy i wyzwania globalizacji? Jak edukować studentów w kwestiach tego ważnego tematu? Chcemy to z nimi przedyskutować i razem dojść do konkretnych przedsięwzięć. Chcemy znać styl życia dzisiejszych studentów oraz ich świat. Doświadczaliśmy tego, że globalna solidarność stwarza możliwość wzajemnego zrozumienia i kreatywności. Studenci z północy i południa naprawdę mogą się od siebie wiele nauczyć. Potem będą ambasadorami dla swoich kolegów w szkołach średnich i zawodowych. Absolwenci uniwersytetów podejmując pracę, będą odpowiedzialnymi pracownikami i obywatelami. W HAS DEN BOSCH, w Holandii, w instytucji wyższej edukacji rolniczej, wykonano kilka pilotażowych projektów, które dały pozytywne odpowiedzi na powyższe pytania. Niniejsza praca opisuje rezultaty podejmowanych działań oraz podaje kierunki nowym, niezwykle obiecującym projektom, w których współpraca międzynarodowa stanie się bardziej powszechna i zrównoważona z pomocą społecznie odpowiedzialnych przedsiębiorstw i przedsiębiorców.

Słowa kluczowe: globalizacja, zrównoważony rozwój, zbiorowa odpowiedzialność społeczna, edukacja uniwersytecka