

GUNI 6th International Conference on Higher Education, Barcelona

Side Event:

***"The People's Sustainability Treaty on Higher Education:
Engaging communities of learning in change for
sustainability"***

13 May 2013, 9.30-12.30

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC), Barcelona

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

A Post Rio+20 Event:

It has been six months since the launch of '[The People's Sustainability Treaty on Higher Education](#)'. The Treaty now has 75 signatures and the support of HE agencies, associations, institutions and individuals from around the world.

The Copernicus Alliance ([CA](#)) and the United Nations University ([UNU IAS](#)) are delighted to co-host a side event which seeks to:

- ◆ share innovative approaches and practices which contribute to the implementation of the HE Treaty
- ◆ seek contributions for a UNU IAS - CA publication which will be launched in November 2013

This Side Event is of interest to people working to reorient higher education towards sustainable development. It will bring together COPERNICUS Alliance members, Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCEs) and signatories of the Treaty, to share insights, challenges and successes in engaging learning communities in change for sustainability.

DEADLINES: Contributions to the Side Event: 31 January 2013

Side Event registration deadline: 28 February 2013

Contributions:

We welcome contributions that can provide fresh perspectives and share innovative practice in higher education for sustainability. The Treaty outlines key areas where transformation is needed:

Cultural	Change is required so that sustainable development becomes a guiding principle for higher education. Cultural change underpins a whole-of-institution approach to sustainable development and enables the embedding of sustainable development within governance, research, teaching, management, operations and public engagement. Senior management, staff and students commitment is critical for cultural change and this leadership needs to be backed by institutional as well as higher education sector stakeholders if change is to be achieved.
Campus	The last ten years have seen significant advances in campus management for sustainable development at universities and colleges. These include: modelling biodiversity and energy conservation; adopting sustainable procurement principles; adopting environmental management systems; building campuses as living laboratories for learning; research and community engagement; supporting fair-trade food and products and socially just causes; promoting healthy lifestyles; and lowering carbon footprints. This practice needs to be mainstreamed across the sector. Higher education funding and regulatory agencies, associations, student groups and professional support bodies all have roles to play in helping to extend good practice.
Curriculum	Perhaps the greatest challenge of all is to reorient the higher education curriculum so that it supports sustainable development. This requires more than the inclusion of relevant subject matter and the pursuit of inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches. It also requires the development of competencies in education for sustainable development, for university and college educators as well as learners. Strategic work in this area is needed for the development of vital graduate competences associated with: systemic thinking; critical reflective thinking; futures engagement and values clarification; the ability to deal with complex and contradictory situations; the capacity to work in partnership in order to facilitate transformative actions towards sustainability.
Community Engagement	Sustainable development can revitalise the roles and relationships universities and colleges develop with the communities they serve. Higher education institutions can be accused of being too inward looking, with boundaries that fail to fully connect with local, social and professional communities. Sustainable development should support improved access to higher education and greater connectivity with the social mission of the sector. Academic, administrative and support units all have a role to play, while community and government stakeholders can accelerate this process by providing opportunities and incentives for change.
Connecting the System	There are contradictions in the purpose and practice of higher education that appear at many levels across the system. It is important to review the various policies, mechanisms, platforms, incentives and rewards that drive higher education, to ensure that they are aligned with sustainable development. To understand the need and potential for change across the system also means rethinking the priorities and measures associated with <i>quality, excellence and impact</i> .

Potential presenters are encouraged to submit proposals for work that provokes the widest range of questions around engagement, participation, social change and paradigm renewal in higher education. In your submission please indicate if you are interested in being considered for the UNU IAS - CA publication.

Submissions Guidance:

Please email abstracts of ***no more than 200 words*** as word attachments before **31 January 2013** to:
office@copernicus-alliance.org

Abstracts must include the following details:

- **Title:** no more than 15 words
- **Authors:** names for each author with surname first, presenting author underlined
- **Abstract:** in English, size 10 Arial font, single line spacing – please note abstracts must not include tables, pictures or diagrams
- **Institutional Affiliation:** name of institution or professional association
- **Contact Details:** email address and telephone number for the presenting author

Criteria for selection:

There are limited spaces for presentations and contributions to the side event. A selection of contributions will be made by the organisers.

The following criteria will underpin the selection:

- innovative and creative projects, initiatives or approaches which use participatory approaches and challenge current paradigms in higher education
- approaches consistent with that of the '[*People's Sustainability Treaty on Higher Education*](#)'
- evidence of influence or change
- geographical/gender balance

Registration:

The side event is free of charge. To reserve a place, please contact Ingrid Mulà before **28 February 2013**. Email: office@copernicus-alliance.org

Timelines:

31 January 2013 Submission of 200 word abstract. Please submit to:

office@copernicus-alliance.org

15 February 2013 Selected presenters of the side event and potential authors for the UNU IAS Publication will receive a confirmation from the organising/editorial team.

28 February 2013 Deadline for registrations to the side event

15 April 2013 First draft of full paper due (only for authors selected for the publication)

13 May 2013 Side event and GUNI Conference

November 2013 Launch of the UNU IAS Publication