

Progress by member States in implementing the UNECE strategy for Education for Sustainable Development for agenda item 2 (Belgium)

1. How are the recommendations of the Expert Group on Competences implemented at the national level and adapted to national contexts?

In Flanders, the document “Learning for the future: Competences in Education for Sustainable Development” has first been discussed and disseminated among all stakeholders at the ESD-platform of June 22 2011. This document was translated into Dutch and found its way to the Netherlands. The Dutch translation was highly appreciated.

One person recommended the document to the HRM-department of his organization in search of new educators.

Another organization spread a popular version of the document through a newsletter reaching out to all schools of that organization.

At the Environment department of the Flemish government this document became a topic for discussion within the learning network for teacher training (organized within the ECOCAMPUS project). Members of the learning network are discussing and adapting the document to the local context whilst defining the links with basic competences for teachers. A new document will be produced to stimulate discussion, reflection and integration in teacher training (June 2012).

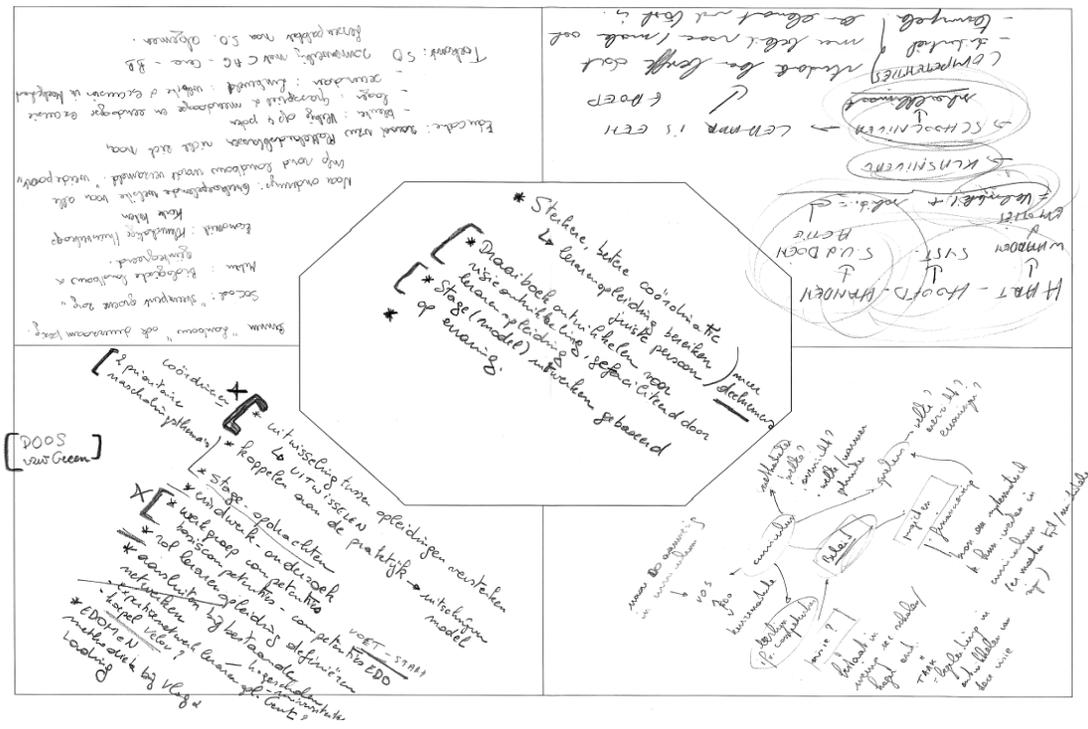


Fig. 1 Placemat-method to discuss in groups during the learning network teacher education

A crucial ongoing process within the ECOCAMPUS project discusses the role of higher education in the transition to a sustainable society. There are three central questions:

What is the role of institutions of higher education within a society facing more and more and ever new challenges in the field of sustainability?

Which competences should a student develop to be able to cope with these challenges?

How do we create graduates that are ready to cope with the challenges of the transition to a new, sustainable society?

Selected professionals within the field of higher education are defining the framelines of this complex process in regular "expert groups". A number of focused student debates ("cafés") are being organized throughout the Flemish higher educational landscape.

One highlight in the ECOCAMPUS project is a broad symposium at which the central questions will be discussed by (national as well as international) experts, high-level policy makers, and other stakeholders.

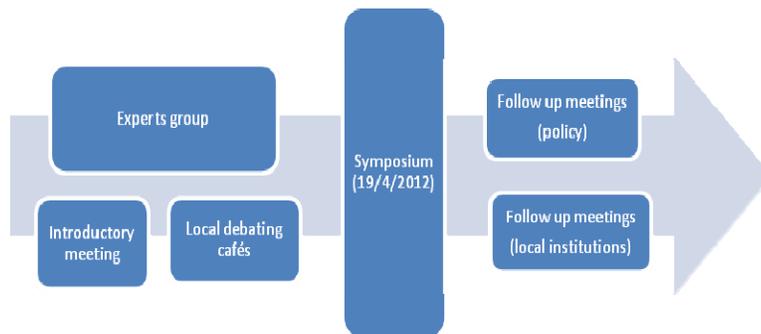


Fig. 2 Approach and timing of the ECOCAMPUS-project (Environment Department and Education Department)

Competences on ESD have also been discussed in a course called nature and environmental education organized by the Environment department in November 2011, as well as in different workshops at a Flemish day of nature and environmental education on February 14 2012.

How is cooperation between governmental departments in the field of ESD promoted?

The policy advisors of all thirteen departments of the Flemish government meet monthly in a working group on sustainable development. The cooperation between governmental departments in the field of ESD is furthermore promoted through the ESD platform (meeting twice a year), and through an interdisciplinary management on specific topics (ECOCAMPUS, MOS environmental performance at schools, development education, sustainable tourism education).

Are there any ESD activities carried out or planned to respond to the demands of a green economy, especially as regards technical and vocation education and training?

A number of technical schools are developing a sustainable building center of expertise called "Green Center" for other schools and teachers. (<http://www.rtcoostvlaanderen.be/>)

There is also a "Clean Tech Ambassador" training aimed at promoting clean technology and bridging schools and the clean tech industry. (<http://www.cleantechplatform.be/cleantechpunt/opleiding-cleantechambassadeur.html>)

In the field of lifelong learning (VDAB) has also established a center of expertise on sustainable building (Competences for sustainable building).

Has the economic downturn impacted ESD activities in your country?

The economic downturn affected the subsidies to stimulate projects of NGO's.
