

Unlocking the Potential of Education about Sustainable Lifestyles in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

This paper casts light on the role of higher education institutions in promoting sustainable and responsible living. Colleges and universities are vital institutions for addressing political, social and economic concerns at local, national and global levels. They are gateways into future that is in our own hands. Institutions of higher education have a profound responsibility to use their intellectual and technological expertise in order to achieve a sustainable future. In an age of globalization and rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) people live and work in the complex interdependent society. Therefore higher education institutions are oriented towards preparing their students to think and act as global consumer citizens. Tertiary institutions are seen at the junction of global and local activities. The paper outlines main characteristics of millennial generation to which students belong (e.g. attitudes, values, aspirations, etc.). It considers the issue of what knowledge and key competences are required for students to become engaged global consumer citizens affecting a positive change in their local and global communities. The concept of information literacy and its types are examined. Building ties and promoting cooperation between universities, business representatives, self-governments and policy makers are central on the pathway to sustainable future. The paper reflects on the joint project of Riga Technical university (RTU) and Tallinn University of Technology (TUT) "UseScience" as a collaboration between science and business to respond to current needs. Opportunities of such coordinated effort are analysed. Overall, this will contribute to sustaining life now and in future.