

**Extended Summary of ISCN Working Group 3 Sessions  
2011 ISCN Conference, University of Gothenburg**

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**Objectives of WG 3:** To better understand how Universities can assume their role with respect to fostering sustainable development of campus and in society at large by integrating learning, research, campus development and the development of new forms of community engagement on and beyond campus.

**Objective of the Gothenburg WG 3 meetings:** To formulate expectations and what outcomes from WG 3 would be useful, as a basis for developing joint objectives, deliverables and a work process.

**Main outcomes:**

1. Develop a website with practical resources for change agents: e.g. overview table on key measures from ISCN-GULF reports and other WG3 members.
2. Develop case studies of selected Universities.
3. Develop concept papers on:
  - Knowledge production, communities of practice & living laboratories
  - Interdisciplinarity
  - Interest was expressed in a paper on 'well-being', 'quality of life', and value-change

Joint knowledge production drawing on practitioner and academic input.

- Case- and problem-based WG3 sessions.
- The collaborative process and the deliverables count.

**Action points:**

1. *Overview table on 'Integration activities' from ISCN Gulf Charter Reports:* Please correct or add information on your campus in the attached overview table. If you have comments on or suggested improvements for its format, please let us know.
2. *Case studies:* Would you be interested in preparing a case presentation of your organization at the next ISCN meeting, and/or a case paper in approaches to integration at your University as a resource for our WG3 website? Do you have comments / suggestions on our suggested format for the case studies?
3. *Concept papers:* Do you feel there are core concepts we should add to our list of concept papers? If so, might you be prepared to be lead author?
4. *Issue-hosts for world café session Oregon 2012:* Do you have suggestions for issues we should address in our world café session in Oregon? Would you like to be an issue host? (E.g. Emma from Bradford had ideas for two issues, she could host one of them: transition from a well-funded grass roots initiative to an institutionalized non-funded initiative – where and how to find funds? How to prepare for a Leadership transition in your organization?). Hosting would involve a short 5-10 minute presentation on your issue, facilitating and documenting discussions on it in the world café hour, and presenting a synthesis of team suggestions in the 3<sup>rd</sup> session part.

## **Agenda of Working Group 3 Meeting (June 2011):**

### **Session 1: Sustainable education? (90 Minutes)**

10' Introductions & expectations

10' Overview: Objectives for WG3 and this session & approach (Ariane König)

20' Case 1: Curriculum reform in Lüneburg: courses on sustainable development for all (Daniel Lang)

Discussion by group members of related activities at their own Universities - successes and challenges.

### **Session 2: Research for sustainable development (90 minutes)**

5' Overview: Session objectives & approach (Nancy Budwig)

20' Case 2: Connecting Sustainability @ Macquarie University (Leanne Denby)

Discussion by group members of related activities at their own Universities - successes and challenges.

Discussing next steps for WG3:

- Expectations of WG3 work?
- Development of case studies for a book?
- Objectives for the case study and proposed structure?
- Who would like to propose a case study of their own University?

### **More detailed account:**

The remainder of this summary will provide details on expectations of participants, main outcomes, a starting point for concept papers, and a summary of the input presentations from the Leuphana University in Lüneburg and Macquarie University.

*Background* – this was the first time WG 3 met. WG 3 is asked to make meaning of the ISCN-Gulf Charter principle 3 for the development of tools and best practices for change agents within Universities. Deliverables can include a website that serves as a resource repository, including overviews, case papers, concept papers, and possibly eventually a book.

*Expectations of participants – useful tools for change agents – main questions raised:*

- What experience can we draw on for curriculum reform ? (Brown, Clark, Harvard, HKU, Leuphana, Luxembourg, Macquarie, MIT, and others).
- How can interests of students, staff, faculty and partnership organizations be balanced in such reform processes?
- What does 'integration' mean and how can it be achieved?
- How can we use campus and city as living laboratory?
- How do on campus and off-campus situated learning and knowledge production opportunities compare?
- What questions can we ask ourselves to improve our approach and practice? What aspects of our organizations can we compare, and what can we learn from the differences?

### *Main outcomes and deliverables*

The discussions highlighted the need to produce quickly accessible tools for practitioners and change agents to draw upon to inform their efforts to integrate teaching, research, facilities and community engagement in a meaningful manner. A web site as repository allowing quick access to such tools that have an overview function and facilitate drawing on diverse experience brought together by the ISCN was suggested. On the other hand the group also agreed there was a need to draw on diverse experiences brought together under WG3 to do conceptual work that will all help us to give our activities more traction and for our campuses to serve as more effective living laboratories. The group thus agreed to working on three main types of products / deliverables, and that the level of engagement to contribute to any one of these was open to all participants.

1. Develop a webpage as part of the ISCN site with practical resources for change agents: the first product to be posted here will be the overview table on key measures for 'integration' from ISCN-GULF reports and other ISCN members. This overview table can for example help each of us to decide which reports from which other Universities will be most worthwhile for us to read in more detail.
2. Develop case studies of selected Universities
3. Develop concept papers.
  - Changing notions of Knowledge and practice and the concept of Living laboratories
  - Interdisciplinarity
  - Well-being, quality of life and value change
  - Other?

*WG 3 Process and outcomes count:* The WG3 itself with diverse participation of sustainability officers and academics from diverse disciplines, and people who consider themselves being at the interface of both, was also seen as an experimental field suitable for refining and getting feedback on individual cases. This group will allow establishing processes for integration by linking research from diverse disciplines, practice, and community engagement. Our joint knowledge production will draw upon both practitioner and academic input. We can consider this group as a safe place for experimentation in a diverse learning community.

At the next ISCN meetings we will plan for two types of WG3 meetings (of 3 hours): an issues-based world café that will allow us to work on selected issues of our WG3 members as a group, and a case based working session. Please bring us your provocative issues. The collaborative process and the deliverables will count as success for our group.

Issues suggested for World Café sessions:

- Transition from a well-funded grass roots initiative to an institutionalized non-funded initiative – where and how to find funds? (Emma Griffiths, Bradford University)
- How to prepare for a Leadership transition in your organisation? (Emma Griffiths, Bradford University)
- Integration of research, teaching and community engagement in innovative learning environments (Daniel Lang, Leuphana)

*Below we provide brief introductions to the Core Concepts. Please let us know if you are interested to contribute to one of the concept papers, or if you feel a core concept is missing that we should broach as WG3. The third paper has not as yet found a lead author.*

### *1. Changing notions of Knowledge and practice and the concept of Living laboratories*

There is a transition from largely conceiving of knowledge production as decontextualized with the aim of producing generalizable globally applicable concepts with established legitimized reproducible methods in disciplines. However, disciplinary knowledge often does not translate to real world settings. Lately also with increasing urgency to tackle challenges of sustainability and the recognition of the complex and intricate intertwining of the social and the material world in terms of for example the co-evolution of technologies and social norms, the conception of knowledge production has shifted to recognizing the need for a second concept – knowledge that transcends disciplinary boundaries embedded in action and communities of learning - Emphasis is on repertoires of practice- sets of beliefs, habits and capacities intricately related to the construction of knowledge.

Traditional laboratories are usually associated with traditional, disciplinary knowledge production and hence often have as a main aim the production of evidence for causal links. Traditional labs typically are bounded spaces (control) and provide a stage for formalized learning processes (causal attribution). Such labs assist in setting up of experiments that generate results, repeat over time (possibility of reproduction or iterative design) and feed into policy. Experiments can serve to frame new futures and sets of options – they have transformative power (Callon et al. 2009, Davies 2010). Measurement, recording, visualization and detailed reporting can be seen to serve to materialize the empirical (Marres 2009). Experimentation can represent the practical dimension of adaptation.

Living laboratories on the other hand are messy and multivariate – but can serve for connecting theory from diverse disciplines to practice and diverse interests for more socially robust and community-situated knowledge production :

- Integration of learning, research and facilities
- Perspectives from multiple disciplines to characterize complex systems
- Participatory processes for identifying, framing and reframing issues over time
- Partnerships
- Can serve to cultivate new techniques of knowledge production and governance (Hodson and Marvin 2007)
- The laboratory does not need to be on campus (e.g. Oxford road project, UK)

From producing abstract, globally applicable, disciplinary knowledge to case- and place-based, socially-robust, problem-based knowledge for sustainable development.

### *2. Interdisciplinarity*

Natural science involves the study of complex natural phenomena for which identifying causal links can be more than tenuous. Assumptions underlying diverse disciplinary models and methods pose severe limits to representations. Social science involves the study of complex social phenomena, for which identifying causal links can be more than tenuous. Assumptions underlying diverse disciplinary models and methods pose severe limits to representations. Most challenges our society faces today come from the interaction of complex social and complex natural phenomena. With our past focus on producing knowledge rooted in disciplines we also produced many blind spots between the disciplines.

*Leuphana, University of Luxembourg and Clark University will lead the drafting of this paper.*

### *3. Well-being, quality of life and value changes?*

### *Case presentations*

Daniel Lang and Leanne Denby each presented case studies that will be posted at the website. The two presentations nicely contrasted the variation in approaches to sustainability. In Daniel's case, the university adopted a new vision that centered around issues of sustainability and interdisciplinarity which provides affordances for progress and coherence on working group 3 issues. Leanne pointed out some of the complexities of bringing sustainability into the curriculum.

*Prof. Daniel Lang* presented on a novel approach to institutionalizing sustainability in research, partnership, campus development and education based on experiences at Leuphana University in Lueneburg Germany. The University is in the midst of a major restructuring that takes sustainability as a central axis of the university. One of the goals of the work at Leuphana has been to rethink the approach towards sustainability science based on stressing the importance of inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary study and research. Also emphasized is the notion of the importance of collaboration in networks with strong partners on authentic projects. The model presented was based on a unified vision which included the construction of a new sustainable building.

Another key feature is a semester of the bachelor's degree program required for all students (regardless of their major) which includes a significant focus on sustainability issues. The University also has coordinated programs across bachelor, master, MBA and doctoral level with sustainability foci. The educational mission of the University is highly connected to sustainable community development and transdisciplinary research processes. All of the various activities of the University (education, research, campus facilities, and community development) come together under a unified vision related to the sustainable university. The presentation was inspiring and clearly represented how a university could develop a plan around the topic of the working group which then is implemented, as opposed to adding on sustainability programming at the margins.

*Ms. Leanne Denby* presented the case of Macquarie University, which underlined the reality of implementation: holistic integration of sustainability into curriculum is not an easy task. Even with strong supporting governance structures, and in the case of Macquarie University this includes strategic documents, graduate capabilities and curriculum focus all supporting sustainability, embedding it into curriculum has been difficult. Some good progress has been made on an ad hoc basis, including utilizing the campus for teaching and research, but many barriers have impeded efforts to move this agenda along. Practitioners and academics alike need to ask very basic questions pertaining to what it is they are trying to achieve, and what can realistically be achieved. Understanding what success looks like is also important. A good starting point is to have a high level definition of sustainability, which can be interpreted and articulated across the various disciplines: it is hard to start the conversation with academics without this. Furthermore, an approach purely from a content perspective (i.e. inserting information about sustainability into units) is not helpful. Rather, the importance of process should be highlighted (i.e. how is learning occurring? Experiential learning, reflective practice, peer mentoring and interactive learning are examples of good practice). Look for trigger points to incentivize change across academic departments and ask how this can be leveraged to achieve goals and objectives? Real integration will take time.