

Sustainability Assessment Tools in Higher Education Institutions

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Editors

Sustainability Assessment Tools in Higher Education Institutions

Mapping Trends and Good Practices
Around the World

 Springer

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Preface

Much has been written about sustainability in higher education, from the late 1980s when the concept of sustainable development was first discussed in-depth, to the 1990s with an emphasis on curriculum greening, and the period 2000–2012, with an emphasis on sustainability research. But despite the progress achieved over the years, and the plethora of publications on sustainable development produced to date, there are still many conceptual and practical gaps which need to be met. One of them is the need to map trends and good practice in higher education, and the ever-present need to document and disseminate them.

The book “Sustainability Assessment Tools in Higher Education—Mapping Trends and Good Practices at Universities round the World” is an attempt to fill in this gap. The aim of this book is to provide a contribution to the state of the art about current sustainability practices, with a focus on assessment tools, being used or applied in higher education institutions.

The first chapters discuss issues of sustainability in higher education, namely the role of universities in promoting sustainability and the emergent fields of sustainability science and education for sustainable development and how to integrate, motivate and consider time for education for sustainability into the universities. The subsequent chapters present several international examples of sustainability assessment tools specifically developed for higher education institutions, such as the AISHE—Auditing Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education, the GASU—Graphical Assessment of Sustainability in Universities tool, and the STAUNCH—Sustainability Tool for Auditing Universities Curricula in Higher Education. The use of other integrated tools are also presented to a lesser and to a greater extent.

All along, the papers have adopted a pragmatic approach, characterised by conceptual descriptions, including sustainability assessment and reorienting the curricula, on the one hand, and practical experiences on the other, with good practices from different edges of the world.

As the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) is coming to an end in 2014, this book provides a concrete contribution toward showing how sustainable development principles may be implemented in practice, and the sort of action that is needed in the coming decades. This publication is therefore forward-looking and pace setting, since it outlines some areas where action is and will be needed, for many years to come.

We want to thank all the authors for their inputs, and for sharing with us their know-how, their knowledge, and their experiences. We are convinced that this unique book will contribute to fostering the cause of sustainability in higher education, and that it will inspire more work in this ever-growing field.

We wish you a productive reading!

Sandra Caeiro
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