

Governance | Individual communication

IC - (20890) - COLLECTIVE LEARNING PROCESSES BY ENGAGING STUDENTS IN SUSTAINABILITY COOPERATION PROJECTS

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Background and objectives

Sustainability needs to focus not only on environmental or technical innovations but needs to integrate the social dimension. However, while five SDGs are dealing with the social dimension, this field is often neglected, not only in literature but also in practice, for instance regarding the integration of social work and sustainable development perspectives.

An integrative approach to bring together the social dimension is to focus on collective learning processes. Collective learning processes call for engagement for different groups of society. One important group within civil society which can be engaged and engage others, are students.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Within the transdisciplinary project "TRICOP", possible forms of cooperation are investigated and initiated to connect sustainability initiatives, businesses and social work institutions (e.g., linking urban gardening with day centres for people with mental illnesses or marginalized groups such as refugees), opening up spaces for trilateral cooperation and innovation.

TRICOP is realized through various student projects at the EH Freiburg and the University of Basel. The students with different disciplinary backgrounds investigate and initiate forms of cooperation between different initiatives as well as its barriers and enabling factors and thus are educated and engaged as transition enablers. Based on experiences of student projects in six semesters, this paper explores these forms of bottom-up engagement and the implication for setting up and forming collective learning processes in the field of social/environmental sustainability.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Through different seminars and workshops students learn different skills to research and identify various cooperation potentials, using literature/internet research, interviews/focus groups. Moreover, through investigating and setting up potential cooperation projects, the student function as enablers and thus initiate collective learning processes.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

The paper contributes to theoretical&practical discourses on engagement of students within sustainability transitions and links this to the underresearched field of collective learning processes. Moreover, it integrates social work and other forms of sustainability.

Palavras-chave : Collective learning processes, Sustainability transitions, Sustainability cooperation, Engaging students, social work