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SHiFT

*Support Systems for Sustainable
Entrepreneurship and Transformation*

Good practice collection University support for sustainable entrepreneurship

*Leuphana University
of Lüneburg
Germany*



Good practice collection

SHIFT (“Support Systems for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Transformation”) is a unique research project and is funded through the EU programme ECO-INNOVERA: www.eco-innova.eu. SHIFT’s main goal is to enable universities, incubators, business development organizations, financial institutions and other relevant actors to support eco-innovation and sustainable entrepreneurship more effectively. On the basis of thorough empirical analysis of the status quo and the identification of good practices world-wide, concrete and realistic recommendations have been developed for policy makers and actors of the support systems: www.shift-project.eu

The Leuphana University of Lüneburg is part of a selection of good practice examples the Borderstep Institute has collated in the context of the SHIFT project to highlight exemplary activities of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Finland, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the USA that have successfully integrated sustainability in their respective entrepreneurship support system.

Leuphana University of Lüneburg – Germany

Characterization: *Humanistic, action-oriented and sustainable university with entrepreneurship as cross-cutting theme*



Good practice highlights

The Leuphana University of Lüneburg’s development is **rooted in an all-encompassing perspective on education** and its **subject matter and value-orientated implementation of activities**. The university aims to become a humanistic, sustainable and entrepreneurial university.

Leuphana University’s semester starts with a kick-off week for all first semester students. Working together as a team, they get involved in broadly conceived **projects developing solutions that make our society a place worth living in**.

Leuphana Conference on Entrepreneurship (LCE2016):

Explores approaches of sustainable entrepreneurship and its interaction with sustainability innovations, sustainability-orientated business models and business cases.

Centre for Sustainability Management (CSM): A centre of excellence in research, teaching and academic training as well as knowledge transfer in the fields of entrepreneurial sustainability management, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and social entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship Hub: Pools all entrepreneurial activities at Leuphana University. In co-operation with other relevant stakeholders it raises awareness of these activities.



Key data

Location: Lüneburg, Lower Saxony, Germany

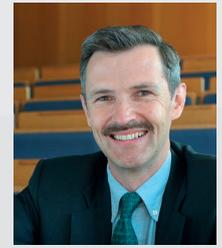
Founded: 1946: as a pedagogical university
2005: Leuphana was created based on a merger of the University of Lüneburg and the University of Applied Sciences at Nordostniedersachsen (FH NON)

Number of students: 7,350

Profile: Culture, sustainability, business and education are the four thematic focus areas in research and teaching with which the Leuphana University of Lüneburg addresses the future of social responsibility vis-à-vis civil society in the 21st century. In recognition of its development as a humanistic, proactive, and sustainable university, in 2007 Leuphana received an award from the German Science Foundation (“Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft”) within the scope of the competition on “Strategies for Excellence at Small and Medium-sized Universities”. In 2013 Leuphana was honoured by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) as one of the best entrepreneurial universities in Germany.

Interview with Prof. Dr. Stefan Schaltegger

*Professor for Sustainability Management
Head of the Centre for Sustainability Management (CSM)
Leuphana University of Lüneburg*



Why did your university/business school start to support sustainable entrepreneurship and/or eco-innovation endeavours?

It is difficult to consider all actors and processes of the whole university in a short reply but as most sustainable entrepreneurship activities are located at CSM, as a head of the institute, I can say something about my own motivation. Sustainability and entrepreneurship had already been one of my key areas of interest during my own university studies. In 1998 I wrote a newspaper column titled "From Bioneers to Ecopreneurs" ("Von Bionieren zu Ecopreneuren") in the Basler Zeitung. Back then I used made-up terms to describe interesting phenomena more tangibly but the concepts were still very basic. I received numerous responses which motivated me to develop a research project. In 1999 the R.I.O. Management Forum took place in Lucerne, Switzerland, a conference dedicated to the notion of "Ecopreneurship". I transferred the project from Basel to Lüneburg. Together with Holger Petersen we conducted several studies on that topic and created content on its basis which was subsequently integrated into the teaching curriculum piece by piece: at first as part of the general sustainability management lecture and in 2000 as a specific lecture on sustainable entrepreneurship. When filling Ph.D. positions we also tried to identify people interested in this topic. Over time, other faculty and staff who joined CSM got slowly interested in sustainable entrepreneurship. Consequently, this resulted in a range of additional activities in our research, teaching and knowledge transfer areas. On the university level, environmental and sustainability sciences

were established in 1990s but not with a specific link to entrepreneurship.

Who initiated your programmes, what were the milestones of their evolution?

With regard to environmental and sustainability education and research it was Gerd Michelsen, Senior Professor for Sustainability Science, who initiated the integration of sustainability into the university's vision, research and teaching programme. He had already launched a project in 2000 which dealt with Leuphana University's Agenda 21 focusing on the university's sustainable development (editor's note: Agenda 21 is a non-binding, voluntarily implemented action plan of the United Nations with regard to sustainable development). Gerd Michelsen also involved CSM in that process. The project had no direct link to entrepreneurship. The goal was to create a more sustainable campus and organization. Perhaps, one could say that we took a first step at establishing sustainable entrepreneurship for the university as an institution.

What can other universities learn from it?

We have been in contact with researchers worldwide interested in sustainable entrepreneurship and try to keep up with the exchange. Most of our exchange on sustainable entrepreneurship with other university colleagues is research-oriented.

What are your next steps/future plans?

At the moment we are not planning to change our activities. In our lectures we try to create awareness for the topic,

motivate students to engage in sustainable entrepreneurship and develop ideas. In our MBA programme we focus on continuous learning and the support of our alumni. Our more specific lectures take place in our undergraduate programme. Transfer activities go on as part of the Innovation Network Sustainable SMEs, Sustainable Leadership Forum, etc. With our research, teaching and transfer activities we continue striving to support entrepreneurial activities for sustainable development. Leuphana University's Entrepreneurship Hub has more of a conventional entrepreneurship focus, a comparatively large number of staff and a lot of resources. Fortunately, it has begun to also embrace start-up activities with a sustainability motivation. In this sense, both areas are in the process of creating implicit links although only little and no formal exchange has been realized so far. I think it is very encouraging that for the first time, initiated by the organizer of the Leuphana Entrepreneurship Conference, we are going to organize a joint event: the 6th Leuphana Entrepreneurship Conference: "Creating solutions through sustainable entrepreneurship".

What has been the impact of your sustainable entrepreneurship support?

The module "Sustainable Entrepreneurship" in our Bachelor's programme helps create awareness among students for the topic at an early stage. Different start-ups have been spun off from our MBA in Sustainable Management alumni network during or after the programme. For example, one MBA student founded a trading company on photovoltaics employing around 100 staff today.



Additional Information

Leuphana University of Lüneburg:

<http://www.leuphana.de/en/>

Centre for Sustainability Management (CSM):

<http://www.leuphana.de/en/institutes/csm.html>

Entrepreneurship Hub:

<http://www.leuphana.de/en/topics/economy/entrepreneurship-hub.html>

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Find SHIFT online at: www.shift-project.eu

www.borderstep.org

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