Good practices for sustainable internationalisation in Higher Education Institutions

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This publication is the outcome of in-depth consultations undertaken by the Green Erasmus consortium:

- Erasmus Student Network
- European Students' Union
- European University Foundation
- Students Organising for Sustainability UK
- Technische Hochschule Köln
- Université Libre de Bruxelles

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Introduction

Sustainability and internationalisation are two frequently discussed topics in the Higher Education Sector. Both are considered to be core values of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), but their relationship is rarely investigated. Sustainability in internationalisation can be measured in economic, ecological and social terms. The Green Erasmus project focuses mainly on the ecological aspect of sustainable internationalisation. We all know that travelling is one of the key elements of the Erasmus+ programme and the benefits of mobility for students are countless: greater knowledge, improvement of skills and attitudes, cultural awareness, cooperation opportunities, and many more. With millions of students and higher education staff benefiting from the Erasmus programme, how can we reduce the resulting environmental footprint? On the one hand, the new Erasmus+ programme for 2021-2027 is very ambitious in terms of increasing student mobility and this comes with the risk of an increased carbon footprint, in particular due to air travel and poor environmental choices. On the other hand, mobilities can also result in positive outcomes, for example when students improve their consumption behaviour therefore decreasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the host country (Shields, 2019, p.597). The four main categories of an individual impacting the biocapacity of Earth are: Nutrition, Housing, Mobility and Other consumption, such as clothing, appliances, furniture, electronic devices, paper, etc. There are several factors in each category that will have a major impact on the individual footprint. The size (and proportion) of these categories vary from country to country based on the industrialisation, habits, lifestyle, climate and natural resources of the country (Borzsak et al, 2019:124). In the period between 2020 and 2022, the Green Erasmus project will aim to uncover the environmental impact of the Erasmus+ programme and promote and incentivise actions towards a greener and more sustainable internationalisation. This paper focuses on the environmental impact of international student mobility in the two following areas:
- Travel-related carbon footprint caused by students as part of their mobility
- Changes in emissions caused by the students' personal consumption behaviour while studying abroad

The first Intellectual output (IO1) of the project focuses on exploring the habits of Erasmus+ students. The desk research and the survey aim to shed light on the students' behaviours and attitudes towards the four main categories of the impact of humans on the biocapacity of Earth: Nutrition, Housing, Mobility and Other consumptions (clothing, furniture, electronic devices, etc.) (Borzsak et al., 2019, p.124). The second intellectual output (IO2), which includes this paper, is the second research carried out by the project, with the purpose of investigating good practices

of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to support their international students in adopting more environmentally sustainable behaviours.

What is sustainability?

The term "sustainability" commonly refers to environmental, social, and economic sustainable development, first defined in the Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), notably with ethical commitments to equity being part of the notion from the beginning. In the Brundtland Report, sustainable development can be seen as a two-pronged effort that seeks to preserve or improve the natural environment, and at the same time provide means to improve the conditions of the socially and economically disadvantaged in the world.

What is internationalisation?

Universities have a unique and critical role in helping to address the challenge of climate change. The Higher Education sector has a major role in the global search for solutions to sustainability challenges. Thus, it is unsurprising that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focus on increasing access to higher education and on utilising scientific research to produce more sustainable technology, specifically cleaner forms of energy (United Nations, 2015a).

Literature has given substantial attention to international student mobility in higher education with minimal consideration to its sustainability. In order for the Higher Education sector to contribute to the world's sustainable development goals, it must first transform itself (Peoples' Sustainability Treaty on Higher Education, 2012).

Is internationalisation of higher education sustainable?

As Ilieva R. et al (2014) state in their article, If we apply the commonsense rules of environmental sustainability and energy consumption to international education, by every definition international education is unsustainable in terms of the academic mobility (and energy consumption) it promotes. The environmental sustainability of the higher education sector represents a challenge that is intriguing researchers from all over the world. For example, Canada's University of Toronto organised a conference on Shaping Sustainable Futures for Internationalisation in Higher Education in 2019, which showed researches from South Africa, India, Brazil, China, Israel, Croatia and Azerbaijan, among others, on the subject. They all share the same opinion that internationalisation strategies should include more environmental sustainability aspects than they presently do.

Obstacles

The internationalisation of higher education undoubtedly leads to carbon-based emissions as a result of international mobility. The next section will explore several significant obstacles to a greener internationalisation.

Long-distance mobility

Even though our focus is mainly on the Erasmus students travelling within the territory of Europe, we should also mention that there is a large number of incoming students from partner countries, such as China. For instance, a student travelling between Beijing and Paris is responsible for 2,69[1] tons of CO_2, which is equivalent to driving 10,746 km in an average car or charging 343,062 smartphones[2]. Unfortunately, overseas flights have no convenient alternative and cannot be avoided, but there are other ways that can compensate for their impact on sustainability which are explained in the next section.

Cheap short-haul flights

Cheap and convenient short-haul flights are quite popular in Europe and are another obstacle to a greener internationalisation. Their convenience has resulted in them being amongst Europe's top polluters[3]. In May 2020, the Eurail (in cooperation with ESN) conducted a survey on Erasmus students' travel behaviour, in which 1967 former Erasmus students took part. The results showed that 75% of students use planes to move to their Erasmus destination and 79% to return from their mobility. That clearly shows that short-haul flights are a challenge to the sustainable internationalisation and higher education stakeholders need to put more effort into encouraging students to use alternative means of transport.

Insufficient alternatives to air travel to some regions in Europe

The challenge of greening Erasmus mobility is not so much a lack of will as it is a lack of accessibility: the uneven infrastructure in Europe, insufficiently developed in some regions, fails to offer an attractive alternative to air travel. For example, the distance between Brussels and Strasbourg is 750 km, and the trip by train takes approximately 4 hours, whereas the distance between Sofia and Bucharest is only 384 km, yet the

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[1] https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator

[2] https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator

[3] https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/how-can-internationalisation-be-compatible-carbon-neutrality

train journey takes at least 9 hours. Moreover, some local transport companies do not provide an English version of their websites which makes the booking process much harder, and is potentially another obstacle for students who will choose to book a flight, as the faster and easier option.

Good practices

The next section is the core of this research, which collected different good practices of universities in Europe and worldwide on how to implement a more sustainable internationalisation in higher education. The examples are divided in categories: travel-related, sustainability changes of the University structure, curricula and mobility, and sustainability strategies.

Travel-related good practices

Create a travel report

This good practice consists not only in the action of encouraging and implementing incentives for students to reduce their negative environmental impact, but also in measuring this impact. The first step, before thinking of how to reduce the negative impact a higher education institution might have on the environment, is to assess the extent of this impact. The University of Edinburgh, for instance, created a full report on the methodology for recording and assessing business travel within the university[4]. The methodology consists of 6 stages (data collection, data standardisation, data import, data processing, analysis and checking, and reporting) and is a good example of an action towards measuring the university's carbon footprint. It could be used not only to record business travels, but any types of travel, such as journeys made within the host country by international students, visitors or invited guests of the university, etc. This would provide a global understanding of the carbon emissions' impact, and help to identify which of these journeys are necessary and which are not.

Understand traveller behaviours

Through quantitative and qualitative surveys, universities are able to identify the behaviour of travellers and develop strategies to influence different target groups (students, academics, administrative staff) towards more sustainable behaviour. This aspect is a big part of the scope of the KA2 Strategic partnership project, Green

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[4]

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/business_travel_report_methodology_statement_-_october_2020.pdf

Erasmus, focusing on the students' behaviour. The University of Edinburgh also developed an internal project, which consisted of identifying university staff travel behaviours, attempting to change them (e.g. air to rail) and initiating a university working group to work on recommendations to put into practice. The University of Cambridge also implemented practices to keep track of the staff and students' habits regarding their daily commute to the university. In October, 2,581 staff and 225 students completed the annual travel survey, providing important data for monitoring the progress towards more sustainable commuting. The University's target is for 75% of staff to commute sustainably. The survey results reveal that the figure is currently close to the target at 69%. The survey found that 36% of staff cycle and 31% drive to work. In addition, the University installed automatic counters to track the number of cyclists and pedestrians on site.

Provide free personal travel advice

The Erasmus University of Rotterdam offers customised travel advice to staff on the various available means of transport and the corresponding costs (car, public transport, bicycle or combination).[5] This is a great example that can be offered to incoming students in the beginning of their Erasmus exchange.

Walk the talk

As explained in the obstacles section, it is unrealistic to think that we can completely stop travelling by air. However, there are certainly several occasions that do not require our physical presence. As Kjerstin Aukrust, an associate professor at the University of Oslo (UiO) noticed, many academics travel by air, often unnecessarily. Therefore, if university staff reduces travel and adopts environmentally friendly habits, students might be more likely to follow their example.

Offer a cheaper bicycle renting system for students

German universities are particularly active on this subject, offering bicycle renting schemes that are cheaper for their students. With the German company Nextbike operating since 2004, universities in the biggest cities of the country benefited from different mobility programmes.[6] Cooperating universities include: Ruhr-University Bochum, Hochschule Bochum, Hochschule für Gesundheit Bochum, University of Duisburg-Essen, Westfälischen Hochschule, Hochschule Ruhr-West, University of Technology Dortmund, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Dortmund, Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences, University of Cologne, University of Applied Science Cologne, among others.

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[5] https://www.eur.nl/en/about-eur/vision/sustainability/operations/sustainable-mobility

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nextbike

Sustainable changes of the University structure, curricula and international mobility

Appoint a working group/person responsible for international sustainability

Appointing or recruiting a person responsible for the sustainable development of the institution is a good practice that many universities have or are planning to implement. In Germany, Greifswald University established, already in 2012, a comprehensive institutional framework on sustainability in a participatory way, including recommendations for universities to appoint a "sustainability coordinator" at the rectorate level, a "senate commission on sustainability", and a non-formal "environmental management group" to address sustainability topics in education and implement good strategies in their institutions. In the U.S.A., the College Sustainability Report Card of 2011 indicated that among the 322 participating schools and colleges, 75% had full-time staff dedicated to sustainability initiatives and education. Despite the fact that universities are opening sustainability positions, results are not always immediately visible. The key for success is to ensure collaboration with the other departments, such as the international relations office, giving suggestions on how they can advise their students on sustainable internationalisation.

Integrating sustainability in the curricula

In teaching programmes, sustainability is becoming a subject of focus to an increasing number of academics worldwide. According to Jadhav et al, 2014, students should get acquainted with all the skills and information related to sustainability. The case study argues that the curriculum should motivate students to participate and solve environmental problems. Several examples of proactive teachers who focus on sustainability in their courses include the subject Human Rights and Responsibilities: University Principles and Global Challenges, at the Sorbonne University, where additional aspects of sustainability and environmental respect were added. Another example comes from the University of Côte d'Azur, which included a new course called "Shaping a climate change", which is an educational programme designed for international students[7]. SOS-UK, one of the partners of the Green Erasmus project, runs a programme called "Responsible Futures", which is about embedding sustainability into the curricula. To date, more than 30 universities have worked with SOS-UK on this subject.

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[7] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYd6QQ14fnI&t=536s

Focus on longer mobility instead of short-term mobility

Laura E. Rumbley, associate director at the European Association for International Education (EAIE), stated in her article for the issue 100 of International Higher Education (Winter 2020) that international mobility relies heavily on air travel and contributes directly to the global climate crisis and that the greenhouse gas emissions outputs generated by student mobility in 2014 were already equivalent to those of entire countries, such as Croatia and Tunisia.

In response to how to reduce the impact of student mobility, H. de Wit and P. Altbach suggest, in their article for the University World News, reducing short-term mobility (8 weeks or less). This approach has been used by Japan Students Services Organisations, who will no longer support short-term exchanges from 2021, although this type of mobility represents 60% of the mobile studies in Japan.

Sustainability strategies of the University

Carbon offsetting

Carbon offsetting, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, is the "the process of trying to reduce the damage caused by releasing carbon dioxide into the environment by doing other things that remove carbon dioxide, for example, by planting trees".

Many universities are using this strategy to reduce their carbon footprint. Tree planting, for instance, is a very common offsetting strategy, however, as SOS-UK's stance, the offsetting should only be used in instances where there is not any other alternative to reduce the carbon footprint. To understand how many trees are needed to absorb 1 tonne of CO_2 (1 person living in Belgium consumes 8 tonnes of CO_2 per year on average[8]), Stephenson et al. (2014)[9] explain that a tree with a trunk diameter of 100 cm adds 103 kg of dry mass on average per year (around 300kg of CO_2). Average trees in the cities are not that big and remove around 6-20 kg of CO_2 per year. This means that we would need to plant around 70-80 trees to remove 1 tonne of CO_2.

The University of Cambridge initiated a Carbon Offsetting Scheme, a guidance for departments and institutions on how to implement carbon offsetting measures. Loughborough University prepared a list of things we should be looking for when offsetting. They include quantifying, reducing and eliminating the emissions. First, we

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[8] https://www.energuide.be/en/questions-answers/what-exactly-is-a-tonne-of-co2/2141/
[9]https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259766087_Rate_of_tree_carbon_accumulation_increases_continuously_with_tree_size

need to define the steps that the institution could take to reduce its current negative environmental impact. Once all possibilities of reducing the emissions have been explored, it should offset the emissions which cannot be eliminated, including quantifying those emissions. Several standards, according to the University of Cambridge, have recently emerged: The Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS), the Gold Standard and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard. While they focus on different types of offsets, all the standards share the goal of bringing continuity across the many carbon offsetting schemes.

Promote, raise awareness and give incentives

Promoting good practices and keeping university audiences constantly informed about them is probably the most influential action of all. For example, the University of Pavia is frequently raising awareness on climate change and the importance of travelling by train whenever possible to avoid air travel (CANiE Europe Summit, 2020). For instance, each year the University launches a competition to collect proposals on green projects to be implemented on campus and uses social media and websites to disseminate booklets and promote their sustainable activities, such as "students' flea-market", tips to improve the environmental footprint, carbon offsetting and others.

SOS-UK has developed an engagement programme for workplaces called "Green Impact" which has won the UNESCO prize for sustainability in education. The programme relies on a bottom up supportive approach, focusing on the following aspects:
- Help staff members envisage what sustainability looks like for their institution;
- Set out a structured framework for ongoing improvements, to enable everyone to make a change and track their progress;
- Create lasting, positive organisational change;
- Encourage collaboration and team-building;
- Provide opportunities for knowledge and skill development.

A good incentive to stimulate sustainable internationalisation, not just addressed to students, but for staff as well, is to give them means to assess their carbon impact. There are many tools that provide calculations of the carbon footprint. Among the most popular are: https://www.carbonfootprint.com, https://www.footprintcalculator.org and https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/. Another green project funded by the Erasmus+ programme, called Erasmus Goes Green, led by University of Versailles, is currently developing a tailor-made carbon footprint calculator for the participants of the Erasmus+ programme. The tool will be made available on the website of the Erasmus Goes Green project.

Ghent University informs all their Erasmus students about the possibilities to use car sharing, bus and train while being on Erasmus. Among the suggested links are: Eurostop.be, roadsharing.com, kaarzoo.eu, ridefinder.eu, rideforcents.org, blablacar.nl, covoiturage.fr, carpool.eu, Eurolines.be, megabus.com, Raileurope.com, nmbs.be, voyages-sncf.com, nl.rail.cc/treinkaartjes.

Georgetown University has developed communications on 10 simple tips to reduce one's carbon footprint. They include switching off the light, taking the stairs, taking shorter showers, powering down the computer when not in use, unplugging electronics not in use, keeping room temperature moderate, doing full loads of laundry, using fewer or shared appliances (e.g. a fridge) and switching to LED bulbs.

In 2014, the Computer Lab at the University of Cambridge installed a Green Impact stand at their department (image shown below), to talk about what they are doing on environment and energy issues in their department. This is one of the many examples of simple actions to raise awareness about environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the Sustainability Team of the University of Cambridge created guidelines on how to run environmental events, as well as a document with good practices on how to engage students with sustainability. They include the following:
- Keep students up-to-date with the progress - report regularly on what is being achieved and where new input can be added;
- Send regular bulletins/newsletters to students, including a welcome bulletin for the new students;
- Hold a launch event or gathering so that students can find out more information about the sustainability actions at their Department;
- Make a plan with opportunities to engage students throughout the academic year month by month, including posts on social media, organising events, sending newsletters, inviting for surveys, etc.;
- Offer a range of opportunities – fun events, competitions between teams, developing and running own projects;
- Consider if there are any barriers or challenges that may prevent students from getting involved, for example:
    - Are meetings held at times which are inconvenient/impractical?
    - Are students fully briefed on what they are expected to do?
    - Are students given a chance to pursue their own ideas?
    - Are they provided with the resources they need (e.g. are they given access to communication resources)?

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic obliged universities to close their doors for students and switch to online teaching, which many found challenging. The remote learning environment, however, offered opportunities to adopt more sustainable habits in our lives. An example of Georgetown University shows how challenges can be transformed into opportunities, as they used those difficult times to create a sustainable remote living guide for students in collaboration with student environmental organization, GREEN, to provide sustainability tips on caring for ourselves, our communities and our planet[10]. The virtual studying, however, increases the carbon impact and students should be aware that turning video off during the online classes can lower carbon emissions by 96%.[11]

Stimulate healthy food habits

Ghent University has invested in 11 cafeterias and seven restaurants all over the city, which provide diverse and healthy food for a very reasonable price. They promote

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[10] https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/9yxab7d3y0n496p7ddk0xayjlmz9gwrq

[11] https://eandt.theiet.org/content/articles/2021/01/turning-video-off-during-zoom-calls-found-to-lower-emissions-by-96-per-cent/

vegetarian food in their menu and thus encourage students to have better and healthier food habits.

Meat-free Mondays initiative is also a largely used incentive among universities worldwide, which intends to remove meat options from the menu of their canteens every Monday.

Another social campaign is the "Eating Better" alliance, in which SOS-UK is among the 60 civil society organisations.

The oldest Portuguese university, the University of Coimbra, stopped serving beef in 2019 in their canteen. The production of beef is a large source of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and this initiative is part of the strategy of the University to become carbon-neutral by the end of 2030. In an article from 2016 on their website, Cambridge University reports that removing beef and lamb from their menu "has had a dramatic effect on food-related carbon emissions at the University".

Collect furniture and other household items from former students

Some universities and university networks are initiating green campus projects, which aim to build a community of volunteers working on improving the sustainability of the campus life[12]. One of the common green campus initiatives include collecting furniture, cooking equipment, among others, from students that are leaving student residences (including mobility students) and donating them to incoming students (Example from University College Dublin on the CANiE Europe Summit, 2020).

Establish a waste management policy

The Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) has placed new recycling bins throughout the campus, where everyone can dispose properly of coffee cups, paper, plastic and residual waste. Besides this, EUR is raising awareness of how this initiative will contribute to a very high reduction of their corporate waste and will save more than 300 tons of CO_2 per year. And indeed, reducing and composting are the initiatives that should be implemented in the first place. At Harvard University, for example, there are an extensive waste reduction initiatives, focusing first on reuse and next on recycling and composting[13]. Harvard University Dining Services has launched a reusable container program at several locations, and provides reusable mugs and reusable mug discounts at its retail locations.

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[12] http://rootability.com/sustainable-campus-and-green-university-networks-and-initaitives/

[13] https://green.harvard.edu/topics/waste

Provide international students with green guides and handbooks

Ghent University is very active in providing sustainable initiatives on campus. One of them is the Green Guide – a guide for a sustainable student life in Ghent. It covers all aspects of the students' needs - transport, food, shopping, waste recycling, and provides many useful tips and resources.

The University of Hamburg also adopts this approach. Each year they distribute the sustainability handbook and guide to more than 25,000 new students. The guide shows everything from organic markets to cycle circuits. The booklet also includes discount vouchers to encourage students to patronise green and sustainable commerce and that it is kept and referred to over time (UNESCO, 2019).

Host events organised by climate protection bodies

In 2019, the Botanical Garden of the Universitat de València hosted the Young Climathon, as part of the "Young Innovators" project of the EIT Climate-KIC. This initiative gathered 220 students from five Valencian public institutes and allowed the youth to share ideas and proposals to fight against climate change, which they had been working on previously over the last few months. French universities are inviting the French non-profit organisation The Climate Collage, which has developed an innovative game-based 3-hours workshop which raises awareness of students and university staff on climate change. The workshops have been delivered to more than 50 thousand people since 2018 and their number is constantly growing[14].

Collaborative work with other national universities towards a greener future

In 2019, an article in KTH.se announced that in Sweden a total of 36 universities have created and combined a climate framework to serve as the basis for individual climate strategies, with the ambition to align with the goals of the Paris Agreement of 2015.[15] The framework includes concrete measures for universities on how to lessen their damage to the climate. The actions include reducing their climate impact and raising awareness of their work, to inspire and spread knowledge to other stakeholders.

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[14] https://kaizen-magazine.com/article/fresque-climat/
[15]
https://www.kth.se/en/aktuellt/nyheter/larosatena-tar-helhetsgrepp-om-sitt-klimatarbete-1.9
13020

Good practices at national and European level

While higher education institutions can influence the sustainable behaviour of students and staff members, national and European authorities can significantly support global sustainable internationalisation. The following section provides a few examples of good practices that support sustainability in higher education.

Good practices of National Agencies: Movetia[16] case

Movetia, the Swiss National Agency, has recently released a kit for Swiss higher education institutions on how to make exchange and mobility greener. These are practices already applied by ETH in Zurich, the universities of Geneva, Neuchâtel, Basel or the Zurich University of the Arts. Movetia produced a document called "Greener mobility best practices: Let's get inspired!" with the following best practices which, hopefully will inspire a larger audience beyond the Swiss higher education[17]:

- Train grants: to stimulate the choice to travel by train, cover the difference between a flight and a train ticket, whenever the train ticket is more expensive
- A list of "green" destinations, which are easily reachable by train from Switzerland. For these destinations the mobility grant is replaced by the train grants to cover higher travel costs.
- A green call: specific funding instruments for institutions to promote green activities with regards to cooperation and mobility.
- The SEMP/Erasmus charter is adapted to include the promotion of green mobility.
- Students should consider green mobility during their studies (for example they should be encouraged to stay at their country destination for the complete duration of their studies and not return home without good reason).
- Examples of best practices implemented by Swiss HEIs, p.4-5

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[16] Movetia is the national agency for promotion of exchanges and mobility in the education system. https://www.movetia.ch/en/

[17]

https://www.movetia.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Bereich_4/Praxis_Wissen/GreenerMobilityBestPractices_LetsGetInspired_Movetia_2020.pdf

Good practices of National Agencies: Nuffic[18] case

Nuffic has focused on developing a more sustainable travel policy. This travel policy was designed following the examples of global programmes such as the European Green Deal, the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, the Dutch National Climate Agreement and the SDG Charter for Dutch HEIs.
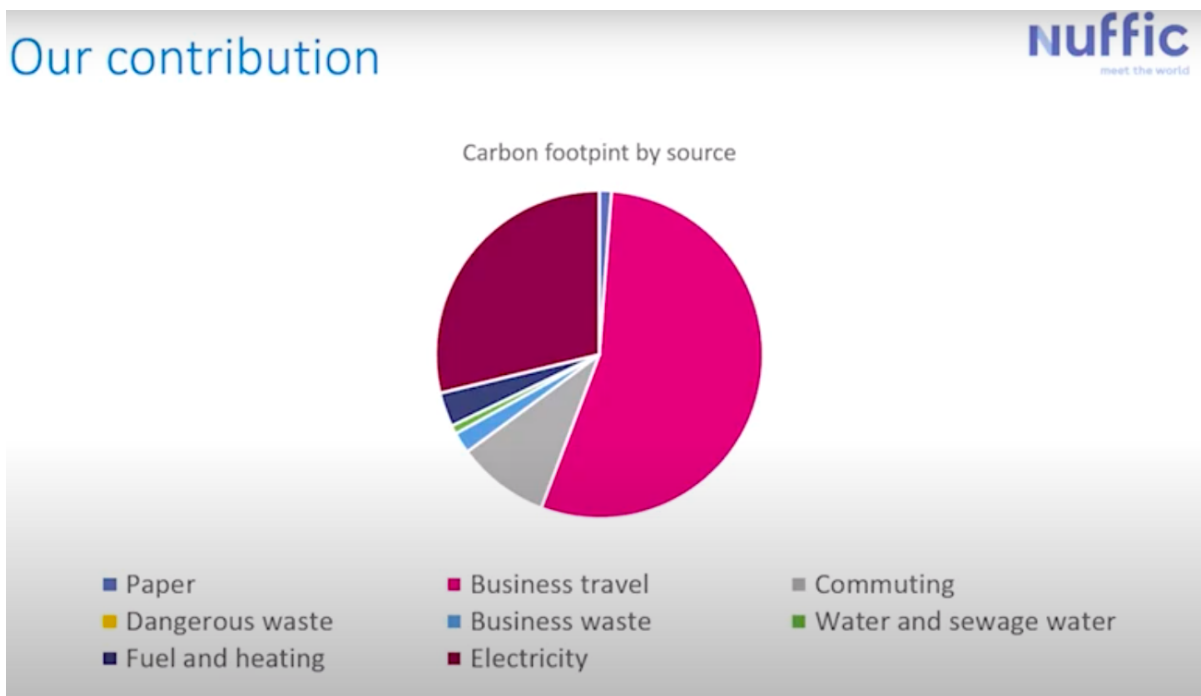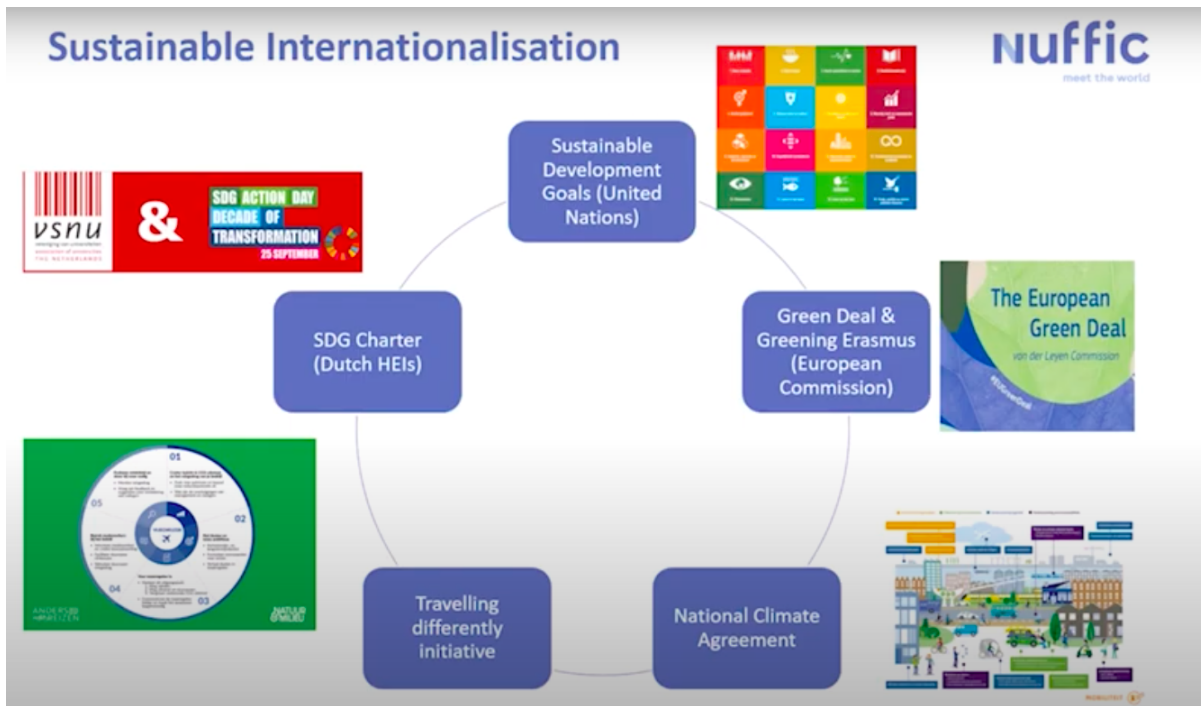
The process of policy development started with finding ambassadors at the institution – colleagues that are aware and involved in reducing carbon footprint. These ambassadors created a working group, collecting good practices from literature and examples within the Higher Education sector and looking for ways to link with the existing policy at the National agency. The next step was to draft the first version of the policy paper and distribute it among the different departments at Nuffic in order to collect feedback from all colleagues. After gathering sufficient feedback and implementing it into the draft, the final policy development paper was submitted to the board, containing a list of issues and their concrete action to solve them. The final step, and certainly the most important for applying a change within any organisation, was to ensure all staff are committed to implementing the policy.

The policy entails alternatives to travelling and default options: online meetings when possible, taking the train within 750 km, compensation of any carbon emissions.

In addition, Nuffic shared best practices from higher education institutions in the Netherlands and is planning to offer a platform for discussion on how to increase sustainability of their support programmes (Erasmus+, etc.).

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[18] Nuffic is the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education. It is an independent, non-profit organisation based in The Hague, the Netherlands. Its most important contract partners are the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture & Science and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuffic

Source: CANIE Europe Summit 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUCtmqpsU5o

Good practices of Governments: Norway

A recent article in sciencenorway.no (Daehlen, 2020) revealed that the Norwegian Government wants higher education institutions to compete to be best on environment and climate issues. Among the criteria of assessment are: how often

guest lecturers are travelling by plane? Are students recycling in the canteen? How sustainable are lecture and reading rooms? And how much of the institution's research relates to the environment? The Government stresses that universities have a crucial role, not only to cut their emissions, but also to equip their students with necessary knowledge to fight against climate change.

Good practices of the European Union: Financial incentives to encourage students to travel by train

The EU is currently discussing the possibility of investing about 700 million euros between 2021 and 2027 on free Interrail passes for young Europeans as part of the Discover EU programme.[19] The programme consists of offering young people, when they turn 18 years old, free interrail tickets to travel up to 30 days around Europe. The ticket is valid for 6 years. 20,000 young people were selected in 2019 and in 2020. The goal of this initiative is to enable youngsters to take advantage of the freedom of movement in the European Union, while exploring the diversity of Europe and its history, and develop important skills such as openness to other cultures.

Conclusion

Recent studies (Rosantrater K. and Burke B., 2017) show that students are aware of climate change and are interested in environmental topics. This started being even more visible since Greta Thunberg initiated the global student movement Fridays for Future in 2018. Higher education institutions, on the other hand, are implementing different sustainability-friendly policies and encouraging students to act in a more environmentally sustainable way. This document has explored what actions universities, national agencies, governments and the European Union are taking in order to influence student environmental behaviour and stimulate other higher education institutions to take action to reduce the negative impact of the higher education sector on climate change. Climate change is a global problem that impacts us all and thus everyone should do their part to reduce their carbon footprint. Higher education institutions have an important role in encouraging and implementing beneficial environmental practices and policies, however these measures and policies will not be implemented successfully unless all actors across the higher education area are engaged and willing to meaningfully contribute.

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[19] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POf0VzZYgD0&t=71s

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