

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education

Sustainable Development Goals and the OVHR-model in Higher Education

Iván Zádori, Zsolt Nemeskéri, Marianna Sebők

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2017, pp. 79 – 94

Publicat de: Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Superior - ARACIS

Locul publicării: București, România

Tipul publicației: tipărit, online

ISSN: 2066 - 9119, 2069 - 2188 (online)

Adresa: Bd. Mărăști, nr. 59, Sector 1, București, cod poștal 011464

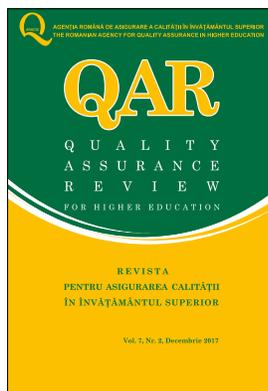
Telefon: +40 21 206 76 00; Fax: +40 21 312 71 35

E-mail: qar@aracis.ro

Pagină electronică: <http://www.aracis.ro/en/publicatii/qar-magazine/numarul-curent/>

Revista *Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education* este editată din fondurile proprii ale ARACIS și, în această etapă, contribuie și la sustenabilitatea proiectului „Dezvoltarea și consolidarea culturii calității la nivelul sistemului de învățământ superior românesc - QUALITAS”, Contract POSDRU/155/1.2/S/141894.

Toate drepturile rezervate. Pentru a reproduce un text din Revistă este necesar acordul scris al colegiului de redacție al Revistei pentru Asigurarea Calității în Învățământul Superior. Solicitarea poate fi trimisă Editorului, la adresa de poștă electronică: office@aracis.ro
Răspunderea pentru conținutul textelor publicate aparține autorilor.
Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a ARACIS.



Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education

Sustainable Development Goals and the OVHR-model in Higher Education

Iván Zádori, Zsolt Nemeskéri, Marianna Sebők

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2017, pp. 79 – 94

Published by: The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ARACIS

Place of publication: Bucharest, Romania

Publication type: printed, online

ISSN: 2066 - 9119, 2069 - 2188 (online)

Address: Bd. Mărăști, no. 59, sector 1, Bucharest, Romania, postal code 011464

Phone: +40 21 206 76 00; Fax: +40 21 312 71 35

E-mail: qar@aracis.ro

Web page: <http://www.aracis.ro/en/publications/qar-magazine/current-issue/>

Quality Assurance Review for Higher Education is edited from ARACIS own funds and, at this stage, also contributes to the sustainability of the project “The development and the consolidation of quality culture at Romanian higher education system – QUALITAS”, POSDRU Agreement 155/1.2/S/141894.

All rights reserved. No part of this Review may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the Editor. The request may be sent to the Editor by e-mail, at: office@aracis.ro

The responsibility for the content of their contributions belongs to the authors.

The content of this material does not necessarily represent the official position of ARACIS.

Sustainable Development Goals and the OVHR-model in Higher Education

Iván Zádori

*Professor, Faculty of Cultural Sciences,
Education and Regional Development,
University of Pécs, Hungary
zadori.ivan@kpvk.pte.hu*

Zsolt Nemeskéri

*Professor, Faculty of Cultural Sciences,
Education and Regional Development,
University of Pécs, Hungary
nemerski.zsolt@kpvk.pte.hu*

Marianna Sebők

*Professor, Corvinus Business School,
Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary
marianna.sebok@uni-corvinus.hu*

Abstract: *From the second half of the 20th century humankind has had to face serious sustainability challenges: the negative effects of the intensive economic, social and environmental processes all over the world have resulted in a slow reevaluation of the role and impact of human activities in many fields and generated the idea of sustainability and sustainable development. Universities, like other institutions, market actors, governmental and non-governmental organizations all around the world – also should cope with the present challenges of sustainability. These economic, social and environmental issues and the potential answers for these challenges should be an integral part of the new sustainable management approach and quality assurance in higher education. This paper, on the basis of the OVHR-model, presents the sustainability challenges, potential answers and possible contributions of higher education towards the implementation of UN SDGs.*

Keywords: *sustainability, sustainable development goals, higher education, OVHR-model*

Foreword

With varying degrees of intensity, sustainability has employed scientists, researchers, economists and general public from the 1960s: the increasing environmental challenges, the depletion of natural resources and the increasing globalization of problems generated by humankind has strengthened the need to consolidate the economic, social and environmental balance. Social, economic and environmental challenges and reactions are not new in the history of human communities but there is a substantial difference between the earlier periods and

the present situation: the economic, social and environmental challenges are much more global instead of local in an interdependent, interconnected world (Zádori, Sebök, and Nemeskéri, 2016).

Many scholars argue that sustainable development is feasible at all, but there are several historical examples and present practices that show that it is certainly possible to organize a sustainable resource management for communities and humanity as well. To achieve this, however, it requires system thinking and also requires enormous restraint from societies socialized for consumption and permanent growth (Zádori, 2011).

Despite the fact that, in the last decades, the increasingly intensifying economic, social and ecological challenges have not resulted a real “breakthrough” in connection with sustainability, growing number of international and governmental organizations, economic actors, non-governmental organizations and local communities are trying to achieve better level of sustainability in different areas all over world, in some cases successfully, in other situations completely unsuccessfully.

Of course, these challenges and the answers of the state and local government institutions and organizations could contribute to re-thinking of the role and goals of the public sector and state-financed institutions as well. State-financed higher education plays an important role in this process: the task of education and training enables learners to acquire knowledge elements that are able to give creative responses to economic, social and environmental challenges as active citizens and teach them to be able to make responsible decisions at both individual and community level.

Most higher education systems around the world have put in place a range of quality assurance, auditing and accreditation systems over the past three decades. There has been a general shift from looking at simple quality control systems to building internal capability for continuous quality assessment and improvement (Fadeeva et al., 2014).

In quality assurance requirements set up for higher education institutions, it would be essential that universities have to deal with sustainability challenges. For higher education institutions, sustainability can be interpreted in two dimensions: on the one hand, how can the institution operate in a sustainable way, reducing the organization’s ecological footprint, and on the other hand how sustainability questions appear in educational content as the present generations who attend higher educational programs would likely face much more intensively sustainability challenges during their lifetime.

This paper presents the OVHR-model related to the institutional sustainability of the state and local government sector organizations, which can be interpreted in the case of state-financed higher education institutions as well. Beside the main dimensions of institutional sustainability that has to be an integral part of quality assurance policies of the institutions, the article is also focusing on the potential role of the universities implementing UN Sustainable Development Goals, and finally

presents a sustainability-related course at the University of Pécs, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development.

A New Sustainable Public Service Organization Model: the OVHR-Model

The challenges of sustainability have an increasing impact on the government sector and its institutions worldwide. If sustainability means truly a value and new patterns for the government sector in each country, local public service actors can play an active role in mediating and presenting these values and good practices. However, we have to distinguish the steps that are seen as voluntary actions of the institutions in connection with sustainability from the situations where individual actors are forced to focus more on sustainability questions.

Examples in most cases show that the potential role and the level of activity of the public sector depends on the intensity of negative feedbacks that have an impact directly on the respective institutions. Of course, in the case of negative feedbacks, the attitude of the government sector may change very rapidly if local government actors are forced to compel them to address negative feedbacks and mitigate their effects.¹ Although the public sector operates within the framework of market coordination, it is fundamentally not, or only partially market-oriented, and in addition, state-funded organizations may not be able to develop and apply sustainability patterns in the absence of adequate financial and human resources and do not pay appropriate level of attention in the longer term to sustainability challenges related to their operations and their activities.

The sustainable public service model developed by the Labor Sciences Research Group of the University of Pécs, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development and the Corvinus University of Budapest, Human Resource Development, Organizational Development and Culture Research Center. The OVHR Model (Zádori, Nemeskéri, and Sebők, 2016) presents the four key areas (operations, values, human resources, responsibility) are the necessary and sufficient conditions that are needed in public institutions to rethink and reorganize their activities, to create the foundations of a future sustainable operation. All the four areas are inevitably needed, if one or more of them are missing from everyday operation, the idea of changing organizational processes to real sustainable ones will remain a fiction. On the other hand, there are certain overlaps and interactions about the four areas that should be taken into consideration in everyday operation by an organization. This model is a simplified variant of the seven-pointed SERVICE star of a sustainable business model for public service organizations (Osborne et al., 2014). After achieving results in these fields, organizations could deal with the other propositions of the seven-pointed SERVICE star model like innovation, co-production or engagement.

¹ A good example of this is the governmental communication of the California drought, where the government institutions are trying to convince consumers of new patterns of water consumption. In detail: Nemeskéri and Zádori 2015

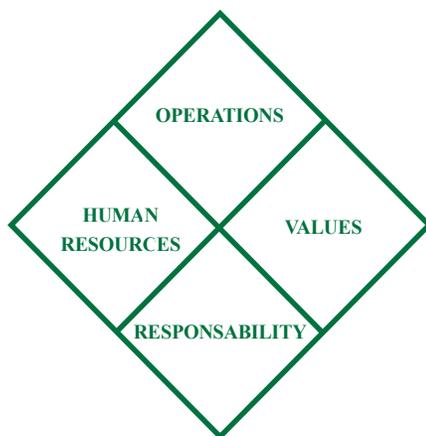


Figure 1. OVHR-Model for public service organizations (figure developed by the authors)

Operations: public service organizations (PSOs) should manage their financial and human resources in a sustainable way, they should use sustainable practices in their own operations to improve quality services for the public.

Values: through different activities PSOs could express sustainability values; PSOs can also serve as models for good practices through a wide range of activities including the management of their resources, decision-making and policy development.

Human resources: PSOs need to employ a labour force with appropriate competencies, knowledge, flexibility and adaptation ability, which is satisfied on the long run.

Responsibility: social and public engagement, CSR, visibility, responsible actions are also substantial in the new sustainable way of thinking within an organization.

Of course, besides the classical public services, the model is also suitable for designing key sectors for higher education institutions, which can result in more sustainable activities in the longer term. In the past, it may have been obvious that the basic model would be expanded later, taking into account the specificities of higher education institutions, with the emphasis on universities on the extent to which sustainability appears at the level of training programs.

To verify this model, between February 15 and March 20, 2017, 300 Hungarian public servants responded to the first pilot survey of OVHR, almost 60% of them from higher education. According to our results of the OVHR core model, the following fields are considered to be relevant for higher education institutions:

Operations

In the everyday operation of a university, it is important to reach institutional and financial sustainability to provide the required resources for the activities of the institution. This is a rather important challenge as most of the organizations

are financed and maintained by the state. Public financing should be predictable and stable which could result the normal operation of the given organization. On the other hand, the changing financial strategies of the state often result in more attention for fundraising, projects or any other opportunities that could result in extra budget incomes. In an optimal situation, these activities are in balance, the financial background is relatively stable and predictable, the institutions have enough resources to purchase the missing competencies from the market. From a sustainability point of view, the second most important principle for organizations is sustainable resource management (utilities, waste, renewable resources), which should become a priority for the management and staff. Even though universities use very different resources, there are significant differences and various approaches about sustainability. The most frequently recommended activities are as follows:

- Starting energy saving programs;
- Renewable energy use;
- Sustainable waste management;
- Using sustainable development strategies;
- Becoming self-sufficient institutions;
- Minimizing environmental impacts of the institution;
- Intensifying public engagement.

It is important to point out that in Central Eastern Europe and in other parts of the less developed world the infrastructural background is simply not appropriate for a more sustainable operation, since buildings are old, the utilities are from the 20th century or even earlier periods. In these situations, remodelling, rebuilding is only feasible from outside (mainly governmental) resources. These outside funds are dependent on government preferences and policies, which cannot equally affect all institutions at the same time. In a newly built infrastructure it should be a priority to create and develop the proper conditions for sustainable resource management while the state must try to develop strategies to deal with sustainability challenges of the old infrastructural conditions.

In our pilot research the data shows that in higher education more than 80% of the respondents work in relatively old buildings (12% of them were built before 1900, 40% were built between 1900-1945, 32% between 1945-1990 and only 16% after 1990). This usually means that the infrastructural background is not perfectly appropriate for a more sustainable operation, the typical process that seems from the answers that there is a permanent renovation that could help to meet the needs of the 21st century although most of the respondents are relatively satisfied with the present conditions.

According to the sustainable focus in the everyday operation, the second important field for organizations is the sustainable resource management (utilities, waste, renewable resources) that could also be a substantial priority. According to the results, the most important fields are the next ones:

- Starting energy saving programs (52%);
- Using sustainable development strategies (41%);
- Renewable energy use (42%);
- Sustainable waste management (28%);
- Minimizing the environmental impacts of the institution (17%);
- Becoming self-sufficient institutions (11 %).

We can conclude, it is inevitable that higher education institutions in Hungary prefer one of the most convenient way of sustainable operation with energy saving programs but, according to the answers, self-sufficient operation is the less relevant way to get to a more sustainable level.

Values

According to the seven-pointed SERVICE star model, values are mainly about internal efficiency that leads to significant improvements in the efficiency of public services- and designing service processes to produce maximum value for end-users by rethinking the existing organizational culture to satisfy the needs of them. By understanding the importance of the above-mentioned fields, we presume that public services institutions are appropriate structures for setting examples, best practices, good patterns and precedents for the public.

To achieve this, the first step is to specify and clarify what sustainability means in each public service organization, including higher education institutions. It is also substantial to define what kind of tasks could be identified about sustainability, how the outcomes could be presented and communicated to service users in parallel with determining how it could be achieved in practice. The whole process is much easier if there is a central direction and if sustainability is a basic priority in the public sector.

It is important to point out that if a given organization is not forced to deal with the challenges of sustainability, similarly to other situations, these issues will be neglected. The situation may change easily, especially if the public sector is forced to respond to these challenges: this is exactly what happened in California in the last years. The serious water problem quickly changed the attitude of the public-sector institutions and they did their share to help the adaptation processes of the citizens. If there is no strong negative feedback, public sector organizations can play a proactive role in starting a new way of thinking, and teaching new values of sustainability to other institutions, market actors and to the public.

Values related to sustainability could result in significant improvements in the efficiency of public services and designing service processes to produce maximum value for end-users by rethinking the existing organizational culture to satisfy the needs, parallel with making precedents and patterns for the public. According to the results of the survey, the most important value that public sector must follow through its operation is legality (64 %). This result is quite significant in a country where

in the last few years the government sector went through serious changes. Legality is followed by partnership and quality (57%), equal opportunity and truthfulness, openness and consistency. It is important to point out that among the less important values we can find honesty, solidarity and temperance. On the other hand, almost all respondents stated that the sustainability is (14%), or partly is (85%) an integral part of the organizational culture of their institutions.

Among the most often mentioned elements we can find environment friendly programs (43%), green environmentalism (36%), renewable energy use (35%), energy-saving programs (29%), recycling (28%), reduction of paper-based bureaucracy (22%), and social responsibility actions (21%). It is important to note that most of the cases organizational culture reflects to the present sustainability challenges although these values, according to the survey, are not an integral part of the communication with the public. In some situation, the given service doesn't really allow the mediation of these values and, in other cases, institutions simply don't pay enough attention for these precedents and they are basically satisfied with just following the green trends within the organization but through the service processes they do not expand these values towards the public. In some reactions, it also appears that without stronger negative feedbacks institutions are not really making efforts to change the consumer behaviours and attitudes of the society.

Human Resources

Similar to market actors, public service organizations also depend on certain resources which they have to use efficiently and effectively to reach their aims on a long run. One of the most important resources is human resources within an organization and there are several situations when institutions should rethink how they use and manage their human resources to maintain high quality services which meet the needs of the public. It is important to point out that the organizational answers for sustainability challenges are not only given at the operational level and must involve more than the simple reduction of the ecological impact of the given institution. It is also about how organizations manage their available human resources and how they pay attention to the social and human aspects of the operational process. According to Ehnert, organizations need to focus on the following strategic goals when communicating the importance of sustainability about Human Resource Management (HRM) and Human Resource Development (HRD):

- Attracting and retaining talent and recognizing them as an “employer of choice”;
- Maintaining employee health and safety;
- Investing into the skills of the workforce on a long-term basis by developing critical competences and lifelong learning;
- Supporting employees' work-life-balance and work-family-balance;
- Managing ageing workforces;

- Creating employee trust, employer trustworthiness and sustained employment relationships;
- Exhibiting and fostering (corporate) social responsibility towards employees and the communities in which they are operating;
- Maintaining a high quality of life for employees and communities;
- Managing and communicating sustainability values and integrating it into the organizational culture.

Although not all the above-mentioned principles are traditionally part of HRM and HRD, they show perfectly the importance of people as a real resource that need to be developed, cherished and sustained instead of the ‘hire and fire’ attitude (Ehnert, 2009). Dealing with these issues could lead to more sustainable and responsible public service organizations that play a crucial role in the state not just expressing and communicating basic values of sustainability but also acting upon them when they manage the human component of the organization responsibly.

On the other hand, understanding human resources as valuable assets that also could become scarce or could be exploited in an organization is also an important sustainability aspect.

In higher education institutions, according to the principles of quality assurance processes, this element of OVHR-model seems the most significant. Organizations need highly committed, loyal and motivated workforce to reach the aims of the organization along with the personal goals. On the other hand, most of our respondents in the pilot survey stated that the available human resources of their employers are not perfectly enough for fulfilling the basic tasks of the institution with high quality. Only 48% thinks that their current human resources are sufficient for the operations. Some of them even emphasized that the loyalty of the workforce in strategic areas of the institution should be strengthened significantly, this should be an area where human resource development has an important role.

The good news concerning HRD is that the majority opinion of our respondents was that the institutions are constantly investing in the human capital of their employees (almost 70%). Most of this investment is through traditional professional training, development programs or institutional support for academic progress of the employees. The current HR development programs in higher education are not focusing on the values of sustainability: none of our respondents reported sustainability-related programs in this field. Only 14,3% of the institutions have integrated the values related to sustainability party in their HRD actions. Work-life balance and ageing programs – that are directly connected with the UN development goals - are not widely used in Hungarian institutions at this moment. Our data shows that there are virtually no examples in the Hungarian higher education, where the development or the transformation of the culture of an institution is taking sustainability values into account. Less than 20% of our respondents stated that the intentional formation of the organizational culture is even related to this issue.

Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) appeared in the academic literature from the 1960s. Although this phenomenon came from the business world where the actors realized that business should not only be concerned with profitability and growth but also with its social and environmental impact, and must pay more attention to the concerns of its stakeholders (employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers, local communities, civil society), the public sector also should adopt this concept into its operation.

Corporate social responsibility is the duty of a corporation to create wealth in ways that avoid harm to societal assets, while also protecting and enhancing them with market actions, externally mandated and voluntary actions. Organizations of the 21st century have been confronted with the difficult challenge of balancing their economic, legal and social responsibility for the variety of stakeholder groups with which they interact. The concept of CSR in Hungary, like in most of the transition economies in Central and Eastern Europe, is still relatively new and not well-known. Before the political changes in 1989, under socialism, state-owned socialist corporations and organizations had many social and cultural policies which played a major role in the maintenance and development of social and cultural services in the areas where they were located and ran their activities. In the 1990s most of these state-owned corporations and organizations were closed, restructured or sold, privatized and the new owners did not care much about the former social and cultural infrastructures. Since the mid-1990s, corporations and public-sector organizations have slowly begun to pay more attention to their social responsibilities. The present CSR activities are not coming from the past: most of these activities are imported activities both at business organizations and public institutions.

According to Steiner and Steiner, there are three main actions within organizations about CSR that result in responsibility (Steiner & Steiner, 2011). The first is market actions, which comes from the logic of market coordination. The actors who create products or provide services produce things that are useful for the public. If these products were not useful, they would disappear from the market soon, but the presence of these products and services of the market certainly mean a kind of responsibility because these organizations produce what the public needs. The second is mandated actions, where – within the legal framework – organizations should observe the norms of the law. Legal regulation also come from the working mechanisms of human societies where these social structures create the rules of the game that could secure the sufficient operation of these systems on the long term, that also result in responsibility. The third one is voluntary actions where organizations exceed the first two forms of actions and carry out responsible actions for society and the public.

Most of the respondents (86%) stated that responsibility of public institutions has a crucial role regarding sustainability, and their institutions use different types of tools to strengthen responsibility actions. It is important to point out that in

case of universities this ratio is lower (71%). Among the typical forms, we can find external activities like supporting of social/non-profit initiatives, supporting/funding sport, help business angels, assist research and development programs, offer grants, develop trainee and volunteer programs, and initiate environment protection programs. Of course, parallel with external activities, internal actions also appear between the answers, including steps to reach family friendly workplace, develop educational programs, organize events for the employees, and strengthen the internal communication and public relation activities.

About responsibility, it is also important to have an institutional strategy to manage this field. In other cases, what is also very typical in Central Eastern Europe and Hungary, responsibility actions are just incidental uncontrollable processes where the results are weak and not authentic for the public, CSR policies are defined under the concept of sustainability and mainly cover economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development and/or including policies of specific human rights and charity activities.

Sustainable Development Goals and the OVHR-Model?

In 2015, UN countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the first part of the survey the target group had to rank from 1 to 7 the general importance of these sustainable goals and then they had to evaluate the importance of these goals in public sector. Results show relatively precisely on which areas the Hungarian public sector could play a role to achieve the sustainable development goals. In case of the first question related to the mentioned goals, the results are not a surprise: most of the respondents think that these goals have a great importance in sustainability. The second part seems much more interesting: this shows the potential contribution of the Hungarian public sector to reach these aims. The most significant fields where public sector could play a role in achieving SDGs are highlighted in the table.

Table 1. *The relative importance and specific characteristics of SDGs in Hungary (table developed by the authors)*

Sustainable Development Goals		Specific to Hungary	Importance for public sector
Goal 1.	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	High	High
Goal 2.	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	Low	High
Goal 3.	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	Medium	Medium

Goal 4.	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	High	High
Goal 5.	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Medium	Medium
Goal 6.	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	Low	High
Goal 7.	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	Medium	Medium
Goal 8.	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	High	Medium
Goal 9.	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	Medium	Medium
Goal 10.	Reduce inequality within and among countries	High	Medium
Goal 11.	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	High	High
Goal 12.	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	Medium	Medium
Goal 13.	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	Low	Low
Goal 14.	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	Low	Low
Goal 15.	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	Low	Medium
Goal 16.	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	Medium	High
Goal 17.	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	Medium	High

The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report and the UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP) have published a paper that makes policy recommendations for equitable and affordable higher education to better support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. To do this, the policy paper reviews recent trends in higher education expansion, identifies disparities in student participation, examines policy tools and practices for fostering equity, and explores ways to target assistance to those who need it the most.²

In conclusion, it can be stated that, in the case of higher education, the more attention given to the elements appearing in the OVHR model and the handling as a priority can lead to more sustainable activities, taking into account the sustainability target system, if there is serious intention on the part of the institutions concerned, the way and their potential to contribute to these goals. Another important task of higher education is the development of training programs on the specific fields of science, to be able to prepare students to - at least - know the context of how their field is related to sustainability.

In Hungarian higher education, such training or initiatives are not too intensive: it is enough to think that in domestic educational programs, besides one postgraduate training course, in 2017 there is no BA or MA education program where the name of the educational program includes the expression “sustainability”. This does not mean, of course, that sustainability does not appear in the content of courses of educational programs (eg. nature-environmental teacher, nature conservation engineer etc.) and other less-related training courses. These knowledge elements may also be incorporated into subject programs. The latter is a good example of a course called Global Education, which was introduced in the Human Resources Counselling Master Study Program on the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development at the University of Pécs, from the 2015/2016 academic year, and from the 2017/2018 academic year under the name Social Responsibility and Sustainability as a Hungarian and English language course as well.

Good Practice: Global Education and Human Resources Development

In 2014, the Faculty of Adult Education and Human Resources Development from University of Pécs launched an English language Human Resources Counselling Master study program. The Hungarian version of this program is among the most successful Master programs of the University of Pécs. Due to the fact that internationalization of higher education programs is an important priority of the University of Pécs, the colleagues of the school started to develop the English language version to attract local and international students as well.

The purpose of this course is to educate and train professionals who are experts in providing help to organisations and companies regarding any area of human resources management, one of the functional areas of leadership counselling. In

² <http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/unesco-six-ways-to-ensure-higher-education-leaves-no-one-behind/>

this program, besides laying a sound theoretical and methodological foundation, students will acquire up to date methods and techniques of strategy building, change management, personnel work and human resources management. Great emphasis is laid on specific aspects of organisational and social psychology relevant to the objectives listed.

In accordance with European tendencies, special attention will be paid to career-planning and counselling, and a major discipline is devoted to equal opportunity and the treatment of disadvantaged groups. According to the tradition of this faculty, students will also deal with employment policy, adult education as well as the interdependence of education and the workforce market. From among the practical skills trained, the abilities of counselling and conflict management should especially be pointed out. The curriculum also arranges for a compulsory professional field practice, where skills and knowledge acquired may be applied and deepened in practice. The holistic, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach of the educational program is strongly focusing on the role of education and equal opportunities, psychological aspects of defining personality, adult education and labor market issues, the role of Human Resources Management in an organisation, the sociological impacts of new communicational technologies and the socio-economic environment of labor market.

The students of this program have to understand the challenges of the workforce in a globalized world where the exponential increase in global workforce mobility in the past decade, the increasingly complex workplace relationships certainly result in active, global citizens. These “mobile” professionals improve their learning abilities, their capacity to transfer their skills into new areas, they have to be ready to work in various fields, and accept that this process requires flexibility, adjustment, adaptivity and investment in human capital. The almost 20 years’ experience of the Hungarian and English version of the Human Resources Counselling program shows that it is important to widen the scope of the students about global economic, social and environmental processes and challenges that enable them to understand and take the potential advantages of global knowledge and become active responsible citizens of the human community.

Global consciousness has a great notability in these days in Hungary: although many attempts, programs and initiatives exist in the country on the field of global education, the multicultural, interdisciplinary approaches in education, as well as democratic values, autonomous institutions, the level of tolerance and the openness for the world have deteriorated in many aspects in the last few years. Therefore we think that, in higher education, in our programs we have to focus more on these challenges in the next years.

The Faculty of Culture, Education and Regional Development was established in 2015 with the integration of two faculties of the University of Pécs (Faculty of Adult Education and Human Resources Development and the Illyés Gyula Faculty, Szekszárd). After the merge in September 2015, the Human Resources Counselling

Master study program was still running on the Faculty of Culture, Education and Regional Development, and this Hungarian and English language MA program is permanently an important priority of the newly established faculty of the University of Pécs. As a result of the above mentioned processes, the Global Education course was introduced on this MA program as an optional class, primarily for those students who are already attending the Human Resources Counselling Master study program. The course is focusing on the next perspectives and student learning outcomes:

- Planet Earth – an understanding of the working mechanisms of global ecosystems;
- Economic, social and environmental activities of humankind – an understanding of the historical background behind the past and present economic, social and environmental processes;
- Interdependent and interconnected world – an understanding of the evolution, the effects and impacts of globalization;
- Basic concepts and perspectives of Global Education – an understanding of the evolution, role, significance and relevancy of education in a globalized world;
- Identity and cultural diversity – an understanding of the role of cultural background and the links between cultures;
- Social justice and human rights – an understanding of the impact of inequality and discrimination, the importance of consciousness and responsibility;
- Peace building and conflict resolution – an understanding of the importance of building and maintaining positive and trusting relationships and ways conflict can be prevented or peacefully resolved;
- Sustainable futures – an understanding of the ways how human communities meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs;
- Global citizenship – an understanding of the concept that enables people to develop the core competencies which could result in active and responsible citizens;
- Labor market challenges and global citizenship – an understanding of the global workforce mobility and complex workplace relationships.

Summary

The main task of the 21st century higher education institutions is to promote the social, cultural and economic development of their field of activity, to work as a training, further training, cultural and scientific centers, to play a role in strengthening territorial cohesion and to continuously develop their training portfolio, meet modern challenges, develop marketable programs that reflect for the social, economic challenges of the given region.

Higher education has a unique opportunity to provide learning for the future and help the world address the rapidly unfolding social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability challenges of the 21st century. However, to fulfil this role at the regional, national and international levels, higher education institutions themselves have to undergo critical transformation towards sustainable development in their philosophy and practices and put in place the quality assurance systems to ensure that this transformation is consistently implemented and effective (Fadeeva et al., 2014).

The realistic management of increasingly intensifying economic, social and environmental challenges justifies higher education institutions taking a more prominent role in knowledge transfer that will prepare future generations for effective management of sustainability challenges. This particular adaptation must mostly address the fact that the operating rules of relationships between economic, social and environmental systems and the causes and consequences of human activities have to be aware and evident at all levels, and as a result, current students – the future actors and stakeholders – will be able to adapt better to the complex and rapidly changing world.

References

- Ashworth, Rachel, Ewan Ferlie, Gerhard Hammerschmid, M. Jae Moon, and Trish Reay. 2013. „Theorizing Contemporary Public Management: International and Comparative Perspectives”, *British Journal of Management* (24, Supp. 1): S1-S17.
- Ehnert, Ina. 2009. „Sustainability and human resource development: a conceptual and exploratory analysis from a paradox perspective”. *Contributions to Management Science*. Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag.
- Ehnert, Ina. 2009. „Sustainability and human resource development: reasoning and applications on corporate websites”, *European Journal of International Management* (4): 419-438.
- Galkute, Laima, Clemens Mader, Scott Geoff and Zinaida Fadeeva, eds. 2014. *Sustainable Development and Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Transformation of Learning and Society*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Nemeskéri, Zsolt, and Ivan Zádori. 2015. “Government Communication of the California Drought”. In *Vision and Conflicts. PR in Theory and Practice*, edited by Gábor Szécsi, 182-199. Budapest: Foundation for PR Development.
- Osborne, Stephen P., Zoe Radnor, and Greta Nasi. 2013. „A New Theory for Public Services Management? Towards a (Public): Service-dominant Approach”. *American Review of Public Administration* 43 (2): 135–158.
- Osborne, Stephen P., Zoe Radnor, Isabela Vidal and Tony Kinder. 2014. „A Sustainable Business Model for Public Service Organizations”. *Public Management Review* 16 (2): 165–172.

Osborne, Stephen P., Zoe Radnor, Isabela Vidal and Tony Kinder. 2014: „Sustainable Public Service Organizations: a Public Service Dominant Approach”. *Society and Economy* 36 (3): 313–338.

Senses-Ozyurt, Saba, Sándor Klein and Zsolt Nemeskéri, eds. 2016. *Educating for Democratic Governance and Global Citizenship*. San Diego: WCCI.

Steiner, George A., and John F. Steiner. 2011. *Business, Government and Society. A Managerial Perspective, Text and Cases, 13th Edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Ehnert, Ina, Harry Wes, and Klaus J. Zink, eds. 2014. *Sustainability and Human resource development. Developing Sustainable Business Organizations*. Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg.

Zádori, Iván, and Zsolt Nemeskéri. 2016. “Regional Tools of Knowledge Management”. *Knowledge Management* 17 (1): 17-35.

Zádori Iván, Marianna Sebök and Zsolt Nemeskéri. 2016. “Sustainability, HRM and Public Services”. *Pro Publico Bono: Hungarian Public Administration*. Hungary: Journal of the National University of Public Service (2): 42-57.

Zádori, Ivan. 2011. *Sustainability Challenges and Socio-economic Answers of the Channel Islands*. Pecs: Alexandra Publishing House.