

HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLENGES IN TRANSITION TO CIRCULAR ECONOMY

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Abstract

In the EU, the paradigm is shifting from “take-make-consume and dispose” lifestyle to the full-use of each natural resource. Many companies have taken circular economy thinking into their strategies. The transition is complex and requires a whole new way of re-design, new skills and a change in mindsets of people, especially coming specialists making eco-effective decisions.

This Practical Approach for Teaching Circular Economy is based on the results of the couple of NordPlus projects from Latvia and Lithuania.

The aims of this research are to develop a joint curriculum for teaching in transition to circular economy, find out best pedagogical practices and connect to labor market in order to ensure an economic activity that promotes overall system health.

The study method is based on application of the different size of circular economy modules and best pedagogical solutions gathered into a common toolbox. Modules and didactic solutions can thereby be used in appropriate combinations for specific purposes.

The analysis of the existing curriculum in Environmental Sciences shows the weak relationship between scientific ideas and their commercialization as well as insufficient insight of profitable development of new business models. Despite the notion of sustainability has been incorporated into the study courses, there is still a lot to be done in putting this kind of wide and systemic thinking into practice. The innovative feature of this Joined Curriculum and Toolbox for Circular Economy is that high level of political and social ambitions will be put into practice in bachelor and master level education.

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