



Switzerland

Projects/Initiatives

Research and Learning for Sustainable Development

GEDUC (Global/ General Education) initiated in 2005 the “meta-course” - Implementation of a higher-education course on Education for Sustainable Development. The main objectives of the initiative are to:

- Draw attention to the environmental and socio-economic dimensions inherent in a discipline (which are not always covered in a traditional course);
- Further knowledge of the social, cultural, political, environmental, economic and technical contexts in which future graduates will move, with emphasis on reflection on the ethics of responsibility;
- Encourage reflexive, critical and creative thought;
- Highlight the complex and systemic character of issues relating to sustainable development;
- Stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration among teachers in relation to both teaching and research.

Meta-courses involve the introduction of specific topics into a traditional course. This innovative concept is based on exchanges between faculties and disciplines on questions of an ethical, political, legal, cultural, technical, economic, social or environmental nature. Meta-courses are aimed at highlighting the complex and systemic character of issues relating to sustainable development and furthering, through a trans-disciplinary approach, awareness of the ethics of responsibility. The principle is simple: for an hour or two, a guest teacher takes part in the course of a faculty or discipline other than his or her own. He or she will throw new light on a topic and will have the task of encouraging reflection on the ethics of responsibility. In addition to opening students' minds to these challenges, this approach should encourage teachers to integrate new approaches into their teaching or research. This project involves the participation of four or five different stakeholders: the teacher responsible for the half-yearly or annual course, the guest teacher, GEDUC and the participants in the course. Former students and civil society can play the role of fifth stakeholder, for they are encouraged to point to the gaps in certain courses to cope with the responsibility that future graduates will have to assume towards society.