

Assessment of sustainability processes on the example of the University of Graz

Analysis by application of the Graz Model for Integrative Development

Background

This building block shows how sustainability processes can be analyzed. A case study has been conducted on the sustainability process of the University of Graz. The Graz Model for Integrative Development is used as a teaching method. The Graz Model describes development processes on the basis of five principles: Leadership & Vision, Social Network, Participation, Education and Learning, and Research Integration. For detailed information on the Graz Model and its application, have a look at the *Graz Model for Integrative Development* section under Teaching Methods on the Sustainicum Website.

Being institutions for research and education, universities play an important role in society. The University of Graz gives an example on how the integration of sustainability can be implemented at university level. The aim of a 'sustainable University of Graz' has been incorporated in the mission statement of the University of Graz. The rectorate, the management of the university and the students are actively involved in this process, a sustainability task force and a sustainability library have been established and the first sustainability report of an Austrian university has been published. This building block gives the students an overview of the development process of the University of Graz to become a sustainable university. The students also get a deeper understanding of the larger context of this process and they learn to apply the Graz Model for Integrative Development.

The sustainability process of the University of Graz illustrates how such a process can be described and reflected. It is also possible to use the Graz Model to analyze other development processes and discuss them in class.

Learning targets

The following learning objectives should be achieved by working with this building block:

- Understanding of the larger context of the sustainability process of the University of Graz
- Understanding the Graz Model for Integrative Development, its principles and applicability

- Analysis of the integrative connections of the sustainability process at the University of Graz by application of the Graz Model
- Independent application of the Graz Model in unknown development processes
- Reflection on development processes and the role of integrative thinking

Approach

A PowerPoint presentation analyzing the sustainability process at the University of Graz by application of the Graz Model for Integrative Development in detail is attached to this building block. You can use the presentation in a lecture to give an example on the assessment of sustainability processes at universities. At the end of the presentation there are also questions that can be discussed. You can also use the presentation in seminars and internships where students should analyze the sustainability process in an organization, institution, NGO, company or network themselves. The University of Graz serves as an example of use. For detailed information on the application of the Graz Model for Integrative Development have a look at the corresponding teaching method on the Sustainicum website.

Prerequisites

This building block is based on the Graz Model of Integrative Development. An understanding of the model is necessary for this building block. Detailed Information on the Graz Model can be found on the Sustainicum website under Teaching methods. A thorough study of the teaching method is recommended before using this building block in own courses.

Literature

- Mader, Clemens (2012) Sustainability process assessment on transformative potentials: the Graz Model for Integrative Development, Journal of Cleaner Production, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2012.08.028>
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- Zimmermann, Friedrich M., Risopoulos, Filippina (Hrsg.), (2009) Nachhaltigkeitsbericht Universität Graz 2008. Grazer Universitätsverlag, Leykam, Graz, 86 S.
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