

Ecopreneurship – In the Baltic and Nordic Countries

Purpose

The purpose of the course is to implement an intensive course on green entrepreneurship (“ecopreneurship” for the purpose of this course) for University students in the Baltic and Nordic countries. The primary learning focus will take place during a one week seminar at Buskerud University College.

Project summary

The project will be based upon a blended learning approach It will include: pre-course work based on internet sources which explore ecological entrepreneurship, an intensive one week seminar highlighting lectures and student project work and finally post course based upon the student course evaluations. This project will build on experiences gained from previous EkoTekNord courses in entrepreneurship implemented by Högskolan Dalarna in Leksand, Sweden in 2007 and by Arcada University in Helsinki, Finland in 2010. The 2012 course will address the new dimension of environmental and sustainable practices in business and how to start and run a successful business venture.

Full description of the project

Pre-Work

The participants will be second or third year students in higher education. First, they will participate in the course by reviewing information published on FRONTER. Here they will study the concepts of ecological entrepreneurship prior to the intensive one week seminar. During this period each student group will identify one ecopreneurial case focusing on the challenges of the enterprise. They will be required to write a summary of the case and be prepared to present it during the intensive week. The summary will be placed on Fronter at Buskerud University College before the intensive week by a set deadline. Each student will then have virtual access to all cases before the intensive week begins. This will be assessed by the participating faculty.

Intensive Week

The intensive week will focus on team-building, group activities, lectures (including guest speakers), educational films and a company visit. A set number of participating teachers will advise the students and give lectures on important topics regarding ecological entrepreneurship.

To initiate the course week each student group from each respective university will present their case findings in plenum (pre-work).

Then the week’s activities will involve forming and then working in new and mixed cross Baltic-Nordic groups. These groups will be presented with a case study (case 1) and will be expected to solve a problem reflecting core concepts of ecopreneurship and the teamwork process. These findings will be presented in plenum. Teachers will be the facilitators, monitors, observers and coaches of the sessions. Case 1 will be given feedback but not graded.

The final assignment (case 2): students will design and present an innovative ecopreneurship project and engage the audience including students, teachers and experts to question and to comment on the cases. Students will assess and judge the case presentation and teachers will assess and judge the feasibility of receiving funds for the case project. Groups will also be required to complete a self-evaluation.

Working in cross Baltic-Nordic teams will enable students to reflect on their own understanding of national identity and ecopreneurship. The group assignments will allow the students to reflect on different models of ecopreneurship and how greening their economy as entrepreneurs can contribute to their countries and to world-wide community sustainability.

This project experience will enable Baltic and Nordic teachers the opportunity to build specialized educational and corporate networks, share teaching experiences and explore new ways for cooperation.

The one week seminar will also include social activities and a cultural program for the participating students and teachers.

The final session will summarize the content of the course and review all aspects of the course work including student and teacher contributions.

Post-coursework

Students and teachers will cooperate jointly on the editing and publication of the ecopreneurial cases on FRONTER. The teachers will use these materials for developing a future virtual course in ecopreneurship.

After completing the course students will receive 3 ECTS.

Project purpose in details

The purpose is to make students aware of the entrepreneurial climate, structure and trends in environmentally friendly entrepreneurship practices. In addition, students should understand what basic conditions are required for successful ecopreneurial endeavors including the entrepreneurial mindset.

Account of activities/project plan

Planning meeting

Six months before the course implementation there will be a planning meeting held. This meeting will focus on defining work packages and tasks of each teacher participating. Each university will be responsible for implementing these project tasks.

Pre-Coursework

Invitation to the interested Universities

Recruitment of students (5 per university)

Registration of students online by January 23, 2012

Course start at home universities

Internet studies

Course

The intensive one week seminar at Buskerud University College will take place as described. Registration of teachers and students will take place in the afternoon Sunday 4 of March 2012.

Post-Coursework

Students will be required to complete an individual course evaluation (found on FRONTER) and in addition be required to write an essay reflecting on their personal experiences and learning process during the intensive week. Student evaluations will be assessed by the participating teachers. Teachers will also be required to complete an evaluation of the course week which will form the basis for eventual future development and reexamination of the project work published on FRONTER and the course activities. This will help the development of future courses.

Expected learning outcomes (what do you expect to benefit from the project)

The result of this student experience is to enhance the participating students' understanding of ecopreneurship and also allow students to achieve a Baltic-Nordic understanding of green entrepreneurship.

The students will also receive knowledge enabling them to use innovative ideas in establishing ecopreneurial endeavors. This will include: communication skills, critical thinking, ethics, team-building and social skills.

They will be made aware of what being a green entrepreneur entails, being someone driven not only by the possibility of making a profit, but also driven by environmental and social concerns, thus contributing to improving the quality of life.

Students will also gain firsthand experience of working with people of different nationalities. They will receive exposure to other languages and cultures by participating in project work within an intercultural learning environment. The students who have participated in the intensive course week will have developed a better understanding of the Baltic and Nordic countries. In addition they will have been given the opportunity to establish a network of contacts in these countries.

Dissemination of results (how do you plan to share your results)

The students will present their course learning outcomes at their home universities. The home university together with their students will attempt to receive coverage of their experiences in their local press. A summary of the project and group evaluations will be published on the EkoTekNord website.

At completion of the ecopreneurship intensive week course each student will be awarded a certificate of participation endorsing 3 ECTS by their respective universities. The certificate will be issued by Buskerud University College. The certificates will be sent to participating universities to be awarded to participating students by the end of April 2012.

Plans regarding reporting and evaluation

If possible, participating teachers will have a follow up meeting in order to compare and discuss student evaluations and will document their experiences by writing a paper to be presented at a conference and/or by writing an article to be published in a scientific journal. The course summaries of activities and experiences will be published on the EkoTekNord website.

Project duration

The pre-coursework will start February 6, 2012. At this time all students will be registered and will have access to materials published online. The intensive course week will start Monday, March 5 and end Friday, March 9, 2012. All universities must arrive no later than Sunday March 4, 2012. Student post-coursework will end March 16, 2012.

Ecopreneurship Program

Sunday, March 4: Teacher get together at 18.00 (HiBu)

Student registration at Grand Hotel 13.00-17.30

Please note: Participation during all the activities is mandatory

Monday, March 5:

9.00-9.20 Welcome to Buskerud University College, Ringerike Campus in Hønefoss
9.20-12.30 Kick-off session/icebreakers (presentation of institutions)
12.30- 13.30 Lunch
13.30-15.30 Pre-course work presentations
15.30-16.00 Formation of Mixed Groups
16.00-18.00 Lecture 1: Team work lecture and exercises (Christa: Arcada)
18.00- Social program (HiBu students)

Tuesday, March 6: (Company will be disclosed on this day)

8.30 Leave for XYCompany A/S in Drammen by bus from Grand Hotel
10.00-10.45 Lecture 2: Sustainability and ecopreneurship (Marge and Charlie)
11.00-12.30 Lecture 3: Cradle to Cradle and Industrial challenges (Charlie: Niels Brock)
12.30-13.00 Lunch
13.00-14.00 Lecture 4: Company Presentation Research Manager in XY Company
14.00- 16.00 Business case excursion (coordinator Arnt Farbu: HiBu)
16.30 –18.00 Presentation of case assignment challenges
Mixed teams group work: formulation of core problem (1 hour)
Preparation of case presentation
18.00 LEAVE DRAMMEN FOR HØNEFOSS

Wednesday, March 7:

8.30- 12.00 Casework Stage 1: Student work on case concept
Teacher guidance available (between 9.00 and 10.00)
10.00- 12.00 Presentation of case concept and teacher feedback (individually not in plenum)
12.00- 13.00 Lunch
13.00- 13.30 General feedback on concept presentation
13.30- 15.30 Lectures and guest presenters (ecopreneurs): (coordinator Arnt Farbu)

- The entrepreneurial mindset of the ecopreneur including ethics (Ola Tronrud, Tronrud Engineering)??
- Innovation and design or Social Innovation? (Guest company: Bård Westgaard, Devotek)??

15.30-18.00 Student group work on case continued
18.00- Social activity (HiBu students)

Thursday, March 8:

9.00 –11.00 Lecture: The business model, financing and feasibility (Arnt Farbu: HiBu)
11.00 –18.00 Casework Stage 2 (with lunch break)

- Preparation and research for case continued
- Guidance by the teaching team (between 13.00-14.00 and 16.00-17.00)
- Processing of data from the XY company field work
- Preparation of case presentation and finalization
- Publish written report assignment on FRONTER

18.00 - Cultural programme/ Buffet at HiBu

Friday, March 9:

9.00-12.00 Case presentations
Comments from external experts after each presentation
Discussions, and feedback from teachers and students and evaluation
12.00-12.30 Lunch
12.30 – 15.00 Continue case presentations
Conclusions (Grade will be received after completion of the course)
Departure