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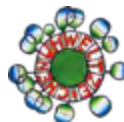
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The Austrian Sustainability Award for Universities



History and Background

The Austrian Sustainability Award is a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research and was established in 2007 as a means of promoting and increasing awareness for sustainability processes within Austrian universities. After a starting phase of networking and communication with the relevant stakeholders, the project has been supporting pioneers in this field by organizing a nationwide “Sustainability Award” for higher education institutions every two years, thus providing an incentive for institutions of higher education to work in this area. For Austria, this approach was innovative as it links a publicity related approach with an internal learning process and benchmarking. Furthermore, it was the first attempt to connect different (and separated) sustainability initiatives among various universities. The award is coordinated by FORUM Umweltbildung, an agency specialising in Education for Sustainable Development.

Characteristics

The Austrian Sustainability Award exhibits a whole-institutional approach. Thus, it is addressed to a large target group consisting of students, teachers, staff, administration and regional stakeholders. University-wide sustainability is understood as a process of participatory and reflective learning characterized by several alternative routes.

It does not target individual or one-time projects, but instead recognizes long-term processes and improvements that mirror the internal learning and formation processes of the institution as a whole, concerning eight different aspects of university organisation and activities. In each of the eight categories one project receives an Austrian Sustainability Award and there are second and third places as well. These categories are:

1. Curriculum and Instruction,
2. Research,
3. Structural Implementation,
4. Student Initiatives,
5. Administration and Management,
6. Communication and Decision-making,
7. Regional Cooperation,
8. International Cooperation.

For each of these categories, a series of guiding questions was developed to help applicants locate their initiatives. Participation, learning and innovation are supposed to be at the very heart of each project.

An interdisciplinary jury of sustainability experts from science and research, culture and media decides on the winner in each of the eight categories. The Sustainability Award has been awarded biannually since 2008, the latest ceremony taking place in June 2018.

Looking back, looking forward

Until 2007, many Austrian university initiatives for sustainable development were isolated and did not always get the necessary support from their administration. Inviting the whole university (from the vice-chancellor and pro-vice-chancellors downwards) to take part in the award competition led to 42 applications by 13 universities in 2008 and 45 submissions by 17 universities in 2010. Due to publicity campaigns on the part of both ministries and of FORUM Umweltbildung, there were approximately 80 applications from 2012 on. Over the years, more and more institutions of higher education have been participating, including various University Colleges of Teacher Education and Universities of Applied Sciences, sometimes with joint applications. The Austrian Sustainability Award has also attracted international attention and efforts are being made for introducing a similar award in Germany. The award is planned to take place again in 2020.

The examples presented on the following pages show that sustainability has become an important topic in many Austrian universities and can be implemented in a wide variety of ways. For more information, visit the homepage (partly in English, partly in German):

www.nachhaltige-uni.at



Federal Minister of Education,
Science and Research
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinz Faßmann

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Education, Science
and Research

■ “Achieving sustainable development is the overriding challenge of the 21st century”, stated the President of the UN General Assembly in 2013. With “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the General Assembly laid down this requirement of sustainable development on 25 September 2015. It implies that all people can use their potential with dignity and equality and fully flourish in a healthy world.

The 2030 Agenda with its 17 goals is a plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. Conscious of the fundamental importance of human dignity, this shared commitment was made to fulfil all goals and targets for all nations and peoples and for all groups in society. The related global and local sustainability challenges are characterised by interdependence between social, economical, ecological and cultural trends which lead to dynamic and mutual reinforcement and thus cannot be addressed by a quick or simple solution. Therefore, it is impossible to work out a successful science for sustainable development individually; it must take into account the complexity, potential mutual reinforcement, different geographical and temporal contexts, cultural differences as well as the inherent conflicts of goals and interests.

This is why sciences for sustainable development and its methods are flexible and adapted to the character and context of specific tasks and dilemmas of sustainability while taking into account interdependencies and complexity. Austrian universities have recognised these challenges early on and have worked on these difficult topics in different areas. As educational institutions for future decision-makers and centres of cutting-edge research, universities serve as examples for society by testing and implementing innovative processes.

For the sixth time since 2008, sustainable pioneering achievements in the tertiary education sector are being awarded the internationally acclaimed Sustainability Award for universities, technical colleges and pedagogical colleges and offer other institutions valuable suggestions and impulses. The submitted projects are consistently well thought-out, prize-worthy theses which offer valuable inspirations and encourage people to realise their own ideas!

I would like to thank all participants for their responsible action and invite you all to continue dedicating yourselves to attaining sustainable development with consistency, creativity and commitment to the “overriding challenge of the 21st century”!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heinz Faßmann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Federal Minister of Education, Science and Research
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinz Faßmann

1st place:

**Masters' Programme Global Citizenship Education
Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt**



The 21st century is shaped by an increase in complexity and profound societal and social changes. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form a political and educational answer to this development. By combining civic education, global education, intercultural learning and peace education in an interdisciplinary approach, the Master's Programme Global Citizenship Education marks the first educational implementation of the

SDGs in Austria. Due to this innovative and integrative approach, course participants develop knowledge and didactic competences that allow them to create adequate teaching and learning processes.

The course is organized on a modular basis, with an even balance between theory and practice. It is extra-occupational, blocked and lasts for a total of six semesters.

■ **Contact:** Werner Wintersteiner, werner.wintersteiner@aau.at

2nd place:

**Bachelor's and Master's degree Architecture –
Green Building**

University of Applied Sciences Vienna

■ **Contact:** Martin Aichholzer, Christian Polzer, bau@fh-campuswien.ac.at

3rd place:

**Training Course ÖKOLOG: Environmental
education and quality of life for the future
University College of Teacher Education Styria**

■ **Contact:** Nora Luschin-Ebengreuth, nora.luschin-ebengreuth@phst.at

1st place:

**Agricultural Risk Information System (ARIS)
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences
Vienna**



ARIS (Agricultural Risk Information System) deals with the identification of potential weather based cropping risks (drought and heat, heavy precipitation, late frost risk, overwintering conditions, soil workability etc.) for crop production using indicator based models. The results are updated daily and presented to users via a public access internet portal of the Austrian Agricultural Chamber in

a spatial high resolution grid (1 km). This operational monitoring system of weather related risks intends to provide decision support for e.g. crop management options and support sustainable production (by protection of natural resources such as water, soil, crops, biodiversity) as well as more efficient use of farm inputs (energy, irrigation, fertilizing, soil and plant protection).

■ **Contact:** Josef Eitzinger, Josef.eitzinger@boku.ac.at

2nd place:

**Network Social-Ecological Transformation
Inter-university project**

■ **Contact:** Christoph Görg, Christoph.Goerg@aau.at

3rd place:

**Urb@Exp - Towards new forms of urban
governance and city development: learning from
urban experiments with living labs & city labs
University of Graz (Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz)**

■ **Contact:** Friedrich M. Zimmermann, office@rce-graz.at

1st place:

WISIA: Women in Science – an Interdisciplinary Association | Inter-university project



Photo: WISIA

WISIA: Women in Science - an Interdisciplinary Association was founded in 2009 by female researchers from Austrian universities and research institutions working in basic research, applied sciences and technology. The aims are networking among women in science, culture and education, professional development through peer-to-peer-learning, joint research, cultural and networking projects and publications, and communicating

authentic images of scientific and technical professions to young audiences. Sustainable development is a main focus of WISIA, addressed from different perspectives of natural and social sciences and engineering. Innovative methods for teaching at schools, universities, continuing education and for science communication are shared and developed further on a regular basis.

■ **Contact:** Enikő Kallay, enikoe.kallay@meduniwien.ac.at

2nd place:

BOKU-LCA Plattform – (environmental) sustainability assessment capabilities: better integration and further development at BOKU | University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna

■ **Contact:** Nicole Unger, office.lcaplattform@boku.ac.at

3rd place:

Health in Motion 2.0 Carinthia University of Applied Sciences

■ **Contact:** Doris Gebhard, d.gebhard@fh-kaernten.at

1st place:

From Kinderuni to UniClub – Sustainable support for Young People with refugee background on their way to the higher education system Vienna University's Children Office



Photo: Vienna University's Children Office

Based on the long term experiences with Kinderuni and outreach programmes for children with refugee background Vienna University Children's Office created UniClub plus. The three pillars of UniClub aim at minors with a refugee or migration background – aged 13–19 yrs – who want to achieve higher education:

1. LernClub opens its doors twice a week, young people can get support with homework, language skills and gain information about the Austrian education system.
2. StudyBuddy program offers continuous personal 1:1 support for young refugees (implemented as integrative parts of teacher training programmes at the University of Vienna, Center for Teacher education)
3. Regular workshops, guided tours and study visits offer the chance to get a glimpse into various academic fields and aspects of university life.

■ **Contact:** Karoline Iber and Daniela Marzoch, kinderbuero@univie.ac.at

2nd place: oikos Vienna - students for sustainable economics and management University of Economics and Business

■ **Contact:** Maximilian Hollweg, max.hollweg@oikosvienna.at

3rd place: GO EcoSocial: Master Thesis Platform & Training by the EcoSocial Forum for Students Inter-university project

■ **Contact:** Bernadette Hebenstreit, bernadette.hebenstreit@oessfo.at

1st place:

Zusammenklänge - Making Music with Refugees

University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna



„Zusammenklänge – Making Music with Refugees“ (English translation: consonance) is a project launched by the hmdw, the official representation of students at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. At the moment more than 32 students of the university give weekly instrumental lessons to 41 young refugees within this project. The current offer includes several instruments but also a children’s choir and an orchestra.

Since March 2015 the idea has grown up to a broad initiative, supported by the university and non-profit organizations. The financial and personal contribution of the hmdw and the institutional support by the university are essential for the project. This social initiative tries to bring together different groups of local society.

■ **Contact:** Klara Harrer-Baranyi, harrer-baranyi@mdw.ac.at,
Jakob Schlägl, hmdw-vorsitz@mdw.ac.at

2nd place:

Conflict Management at the University of Vienna

University of Vienna

■ **Contact:** Christian Albert, christian.albert@univie.ac.at

3rd place:

sLiM - smart Living in a Metropolis

University of Applied Sciences Vienna

■ **Contact:** Susanne Schidler, susanne.schidler@technikum-wien.at

1st place:

Evaluation of the sustainability of scientific publishers: the Sustainability-Factor (S-Factor)

Inter-university project



Is scientific publishing sustainable? The development of a Sustainability-Factor aims to facilitate the selection of sustainable publishers for scientists.

In the scientific publication process there are numerous aspects which raise questions of sustainability. In order to comprehensively identify and evaluate these aspects, all of the opinion leaders in the field will be involved. Publishers, universities, environmental associations, editors and reviewers of scientific journals, and publishing scientists are asked to identify and evaluate the importance of sustainability aspects in scientific publishing. Based on the result of this step, a questionnaire and evaluation scheme will be developed that allows to create a Sustainability-Factor ranking of the examined publishers.

Based on the result of this step, a questionnaire and evaluation scheme will be developed that allows to create a Sustainability-Factor ranking of the examined publishers.

■ **Contact:** Yvonne Höller, yvonne.hoeller@sbg.ac.at,
www.uni-salzburg.at/index.php?id=52

2nd place:

Eat Locally-Think Globally I Inter-university project

■ **Contact:** Suzanne Kapelari, Suzanne.Kapelari@uibk.ac.at
& Markus Schermer, Markus.Schermer@uibk.ac.at

3rd place:

schubertNEST I University of Graz

■ **Contact:** Gregor Fallmann, gregor.fallmann@edu.uni-graz.at

1st place:

SolPol - Solar Energy Systems based on Polymeric Materials | Inter-university project



Photo: Sunlumo Technology GmbH

SolPol (Solar Energy Systems based on Polymeric Materials) combines the existing scientific and industrial expertise in the field of solar energy and polymer technologies in Austria and offers a tremendous potential for solar technology developments. With 19 business partners and 9 scientific partners, the SolPol research budget amounts € 14 million, and is directed and coordinated by the JKU Institute for Polymeric Materials and Testing.

The projects were and are funded by the Austrian Climate and Energy Fund (KLI.EN) within the programs “Neue Energien 2020” and “e!MISSION.at”. They are administrated by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG). It is intended to make a significant contribution to spread renewable energy technologies and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

■ **Contact:** Reinhold W. Lang, reinhold.lang@jku.at; www.jku.at/ipmt/content

2nd place:

k.i.d.Z.21-Austria - Preparing Austria's Youth for Climate Change Challenges of the 21st Century University of Innsbruck

■ **Contact:** Johann Stötter, hans.stoetter@uibk.ac.at

3rd place:

Green, healthy and environmentally friendly buildings and cities | Technical University Vienna

■ **Contact:** Azra Korjenic, azra.korjenic@tuwien.ac.at

1st place:

SUNDERPUR housing University of Art and Design Linz



Photo: Kurt Hoerbst

The project SUNDERPUR housing tries to improve the living conditions in the leprosy village Sunderpur situated in the North-East of India. Students from the University of Art and Design Linz designed and built high quality but simple homes made of earth for up to 12 families. Earth is an easily available low-cost building material that guarantees a comfortable indoor-climate while it is hot and humid outside. In the research, design

and building process 28 students and 15 local workers from Sunderpur were involved and could gather a lot of personal and professional experience.

BASEhabitat is a project studio at the University of Art and Design Linz. The focus of education lies on social competence, inspiration through handcraft and practical building experience.

■ **Contact:** Ulrike Schwantner, basehabitat@ufg.at, www.basehabitat.org

2nd place:

CASE - Competencies for a sustainable socio-economic development | Inter-university project

■ **Contact:** Petra Biberhofer, petra.biberhofer@wu.ac.at

3rd place:

Sustainable Urban Development - Facility Management & Real Estate Management WinterSchool | Inter-university project

■ **Contact:** Christian Huber, christian.huber@fh-kufstein.ac.at