

# THE MAGAZINE FOR VET PROFESSIONALS



***Sustainability***

# The Magazine for VET Professionals

## Issue September 2020

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### **EDITOR**

Leif Haar

### **COORDINATOR & GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Vittoria Valentina Di Gennaro

### **CONTRIBUTORS**

EfVET Members

### **PICTURES**

EfVET Members  
Pexels (cover and others)

### **PUBLISHER**

European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EfVET)

EfVET is a unique European-wide professional association which has been created by and for providers of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in all European countries. Its mission is to champion and enrich technical and vocational education and training through transnational cooperation and building a pan-European network of institutions that could lead European VET policies.

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# MESSAGE FROM EFVET PRESIDENT

BY JOACHIM JAMES CALLEJA

**“ If there is one essential lesson to be learnt from the pandemic that has hit the world, this is that sustainability must be redefined in the context of technology.**



In the situation of Vocational Education and Training (VET), this is even more significant as most of the activity is based on work-based learning and practical hands-on experiences.

**Sustaining VET is a challenge on its own merit.** The experience over these last six months has seen online learning taking over from the traditional face-to-face activities. What impact has this had on the overall learning process is still being analysed and studied. What is for sure is that many educational institutions were a ghost town and a place where the lack of activity was the result of an unsustainable sector such as VET when hit by extraordinary circumstances imposed by social distancing. This unsustainable situation has also been the cause for disruptions in other vital sectors of the economy such as aviation, tourism, leisure, and entertainment as well as in areas in which the day-to-day interaction of people is what keeps the economic ball rolling.

The questions that many VET institutions are asking are what will happen if the pandemic prolongs its impact particularly if the vaccine is produced in early or late 2021? Will this generation of young people fail their education and training programmes? Will they be ready for their employment or will they have to prolong the start of their working life by another six or more months? How will teachers and lecturers cope with an untenable situation in which learning for the next academic year will be prevalently online? Are quality assurance mechanisms

ready to ensure that online learning is up to standard? Are young people really engaged at home when studying on their own? **Questions on the sustainability of VET as a self-regulating sector are increasing by the day.**

Some questions cannot be answered as the local, regional and national situation changes day-by-day. However, sustainability in the context of technology calls for an educational policy that bases its activities on the need to invest heavily in information technology, on the re-training of teachers and lecturers as well as having E&T programmes that ensure an embedded approach shifting learning from home to College to work environments on a regular and frequent basis. **VET Colleges might well become clearing houses for learning rather than housing learning in the traditional sense of the word.** What will be sustainable in E&T is what will be flexible and rotating from one small group to another and from one set of teachers to another. **Rotation and flexibility will be the two concepts upon which the sustainability of education and learning can be based.** By rotation one is referring to the need to set timetables through which education and work-based learning take place in larger environments but in smaller groups. It also implies that teachers may not be required to physically report to work on a daily basis and therefore get used to having to sit in their own private home environment and conduct their business as usual.

***These are paradigm shifts that all of us have to learn in the next few weeks and months. Hence the need for flexibility in the sense that the hours of learning and working might change according to the prevailing situation in which the College or VET school or workplace operates in.*** Experience over these last few months has shown that where learning working conditions were flexible, the response from learners has been positive; when the conditions for learning remained static, young people were left at home or without an adequate learning experience.

***In a volatile sector such as education and training, planning sustainability should become part of business continuity.*** Whereas in working contexts in which productivity can take place online, in E&T results show that people are physically and remotely engaged. One may argue that augmented reality and virtual learning environments today are as close to the real world as much as possible. This is true and one needs to invest in such technology to sustain the learning periods that a learner or a teacher is away from the real working/learning environments. However, nothing can substitute the real laboratory or the real workshop or workplace. Sustaining temporary College environments is a measure that College Principals and CEOs must take into serious accounts if the academic year begins and ends according to a yearly calendar.

The sustainability of VET is an expensive enterprise which requires good planning and foresight as well as the involvement of all stakeholders not least employers who may be able to sustain the work experience in a more tangible manner than one centralised College system. This implies that henceforth VET requires a much wider and active network of employers and places of work so that learning is de-centralised and employers might end up becoming educators for short or longer periods of time. It also implies that VET educators must have a closer and extensive relationships with workplaces so that when learners spend time in different work settings they can keep up the learning spirit as much as possible.

Hence the need for employers to engage warranted educators and trainers to supervise and monitor the learning that takes place away from College. All such measures require sustainable funding throughout the whole year. Depending on the working sector, employers might they themselves take the opportunity to sustain the continuous professional development of their employees at times when work is either slow or cannot be performed at all.

In the so-called new normal associated with the pandemic, the significance of sustainability has become very fluid. Increasingly sustainability is the act of meeting needs without compromising the ability of future generations meeting their own needs. It implies primarily the need to flexibly manage resources (not only natural ones) in a way in which the resource itself can ensure continuity in the quality of life of current and next generations. In VET, it means that the learning process continues under different circumstances but with the same positive impact that physical learning environments provides. This is a tall order in E&T. But mitigating measures can be planned, financed and implemented. Business as usual might not be an option any more. People will find that working and learning from home is more productive; but likewise learning and working together is more attractive and fits the sociability of our human nature. ***Striking a balance between these new realities could sustain sustainability in Vocational Education and Training as well as in other sectors of the economy.***

***This theme and related issues to COVID-19 and the impact on Vocational Education and Training will be among the topics discussed in our Web Summit in October. I am aware that to-date, over 200 members have already registered for this important annual event. I urge you to join us in October for the Annual EfVET Conference which you can enjoy from the comfort of your home or your Offices.***



#EfVET20

## EfVET Annual Virtual Conference 2020

**"COVID-19 beyond 2020: A new generation of VET?"**

Conference: October 22, 2020  
Workshops: November 5, 2020  
Roundtables & Marketplace: November 19, 2020

## EfVET WebSummit Conference "COVID-19 beyond 2020: A new generation of VET?"

*More info available at [www.efvet-conference.eu](http://www.efvet-conference.eu)*

The 29th Annual Conference in Kuopio has been postponed due to the precautionary measures that the EfVET Steering Committee took in response to the outbreak of COVID-19, and will be now held in a virtual format.

It is EfVET intention to hold the conference on the impact of post COVID-19 on Vocational Educational and Training and gather the many varied experiences across Europe and other parts of the world with the scope of enriching the learning process of the future. EfVET cordially invites you to our **Annual Virtual Conference** on **"COVID-19 beyond 2020: A new generation of VET?"**, which will take place online on the **22nd of October 2020**.

Every year the EfVET Conference includes

Workshops, Roundtables, and the Marketplace.

Unfortunately, this year because of the COVID-19 and social distancing rules, EfVET has taken the collective decision to have an **online session of workshops**, which will be held at a later date on the **5th of November 2020**, while the online **Roundtables & Marketplace** on the **19th of November 2020**.

For more information, registrations, and updates, please refer to the [EfVET Conference website](http://www.efvet-conference.eu) at [www.efvet-conference.eu](http://www.efvet-conference.eu).

**EfVET Conference Team**



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## **SUSTAINABILITY AND THE SDG'S**

BY LOUIS AQUILINA, MCAST (MALTA)

*Over the last decade, the issue of Sustainability has gained a higher degree of prominence at a national level in Malta, be it in new legislation, work practices, lifestyle, and education. The publication of the 17 SDG's in late 2015 helped in a significant way to reinforce this drive.*

Looking from the perspective of VET, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), which is the major PVET (Professional and Vocational Education and Training) centre in Malta, addresses a **substantial number of SDG's**, apart from SDG 4, in its curricula. In addition, MCAST also strives to integrate **Sustainability** and the SDG's seamlessly in its actions, initiatives, and operations.

It may be stated that in general terms MCAST addresses the matter by:

1. Incorporating Sustainability and the SDG's in its curricula;
2. Adopting a practical approach to Sustainability within its organisation, its campuses and its operations;
3. Supporting research and innovation linked to Sustainability and the SDG's;
4. Participating in Sustainability related fora and initiatives.

A closer look at these points gives more details:

### **1. Incorporating Sustainability and the SDG's in its curricula**

As a PVET institution, MCAST has developed numerous accredited courses related to

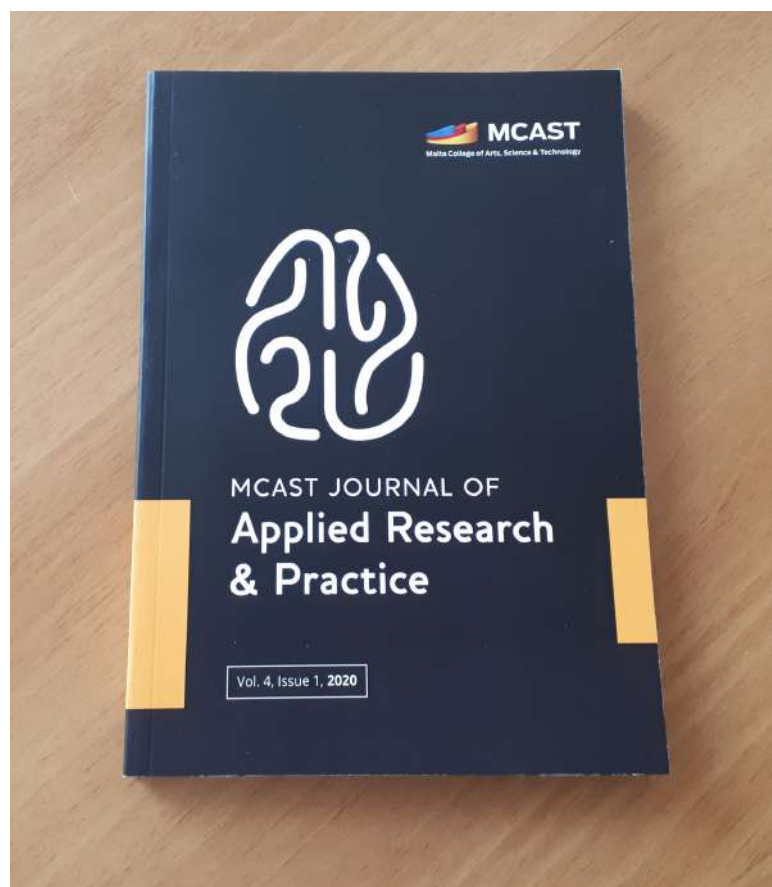
Sustainability and the SDG's. Apart from this, other courses are blended with contributions related to Sustainability. In this way, learners are introduced and strengthened in their knowledge of the subject.

A few examples of the courses delivered are: Advanced Diploma and Bachelor's Degree courses in **Environmental Sustainability, Health Services, Food Technology, Environmental Engineering, Environmental Health, Nursing**, a wide range of **Agriculture and Aquaculture** related courses, **Entrepreneurship, Health and Social Care, Inclusive Education**. Sustainability is also addressed and included in numerous **Engineering** related courses. MCAST also offers a selection of Master's Degrees, some of which are directly linked to Sustainability, such as: MSc in **Environmental Engineering**, MSc in **High Performance Buildings**, MSc in **Integrated Water Resource Management**, MSc in **Lean Enterprise**, MBA for Small Businesses. In addition, a Bachelor's degree in **VET** and a Master's in **VET Applied Research** are also provided.

## 2. Adopting a practical approach to Sustainability within its organisation, its campuses and its operations

MCAST is convinced that the commitment to Sustainability is best evidenced through tangible actions that contribute to this goal. Over the years, MCAST has embraced a **Green Campus approach** and implemented a number of initiatives within its organisation. These include:

- All new constructions on its campuses are **energy efficient**;
- The installation of hundreds of **PV panels** on its campuses;
- **Water wastage control**;
- **Paper use reduction**: going electronic wherever possible;
- **Recycling of used water** to maintain a Green Roof System that grows shrubs and plants;



© Photo by MCAST

- **Waste separation.**

## 3. Supporting research and innovation linked to Sustainability and the SDG's

The MCAST R&I department works in various research areas related to Sustainability and the SDG's. These include substantial **research in water technology and renewable energy**. The MCAST also runs a Water Research and Training Centre. The R&I effort is consolidated through participation in various international projects related to these areas of interest but not only. The R&I department is also working on research on AI and VR technologies that can be utilised in PVET delivery. The College has also published its strategic plan related to AI. MCAST regularly publishes a **Journal of Applied Research and Practice** that illustrates its initiatives.



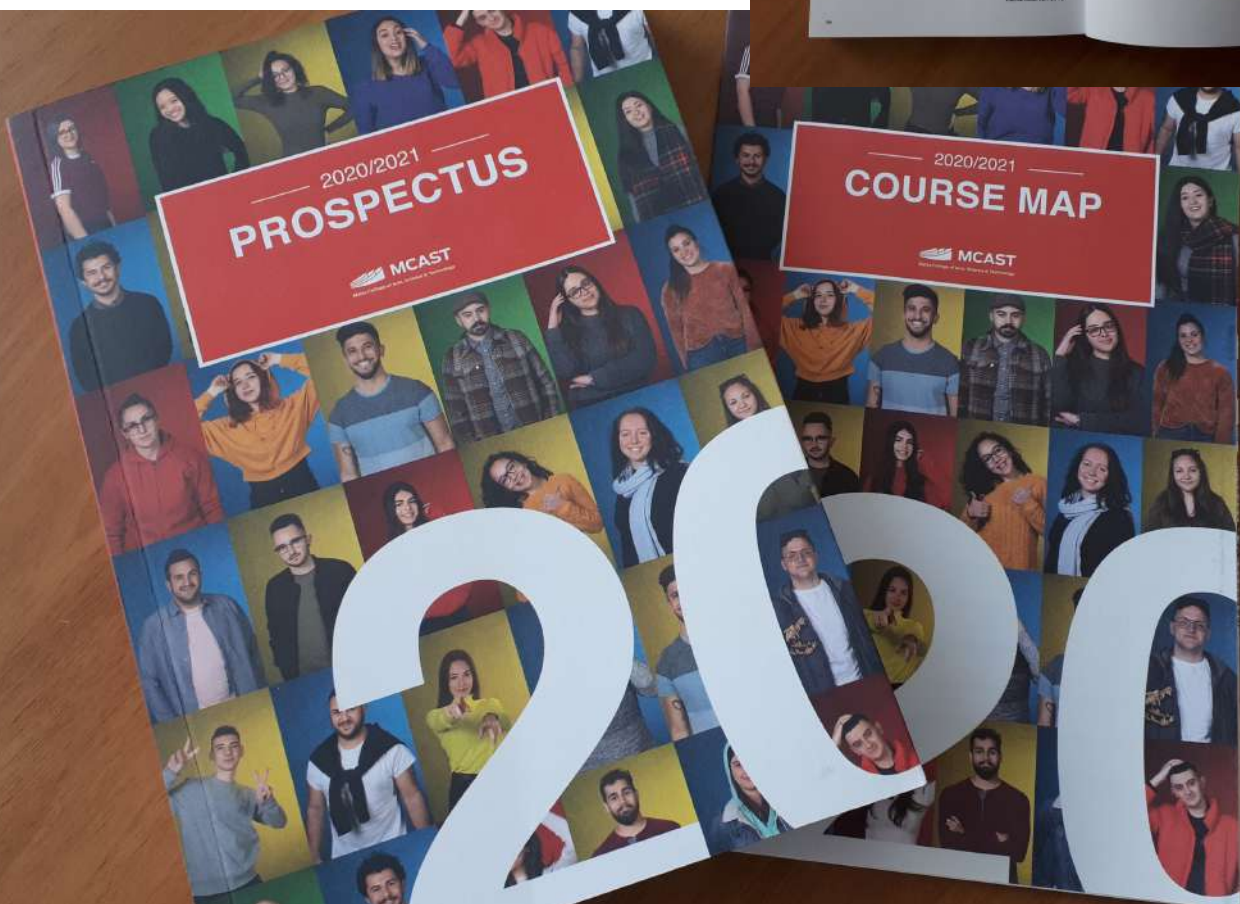
#### 4. Participating in Sustainability related fora and initiatives

MCAST understands that in the modern world we are living in, international networking and partnerships are essential factors to be able to strive, evolve and move forward. Therefore, the participation in international networks and fora is key to ensure that the goals set and effort done at organisation level are congruent with the global direction where Sustainability and the SDG's are at the forefront of the agenda of these fora.

An example is that MCAST, the only UNEVOC Centre in Malta, works closely with the UNESCO UNEVOC Office in Bonn, Germany in a number of key areas, including Sustainability and the SDG's. MCAST is both a contributor and a beneficiary of knowledge related to Sustainability through **UNESCO UNEVOC's extensive global network**. In fact, MCAST is the main coordinator of the BILT project

(Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET) related to Greening. MCAST is also one of the first 10 global UNEVOC Centres to become an Innovation hub in 2019.

***Sustainability is a subject that many institutions talk about. Yet, a gap exists between what is said and what is effectively done. MCAST believes that actions speak louder than words and is committed to maintain Sustainability and the SDG's in its focus as it grows and moves forward.***





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## **VET COLLEGE EUC SYD IN SØNDERBORG, DENMARK, IS PLAYING A MAJOR ROLE IN THE AMBITIOUS STRATEGY OF THE CITY TO BECOME A CARBON-NEUTRAL REGION BY 2029**

**BY HANS LEHMANN & LENE BONNEN SANDHOLDT, EUC SYD (DENMARK)**

*The city of Sønderborg in Denmark has an ambitious strategy to become a carbon-neutral region by 2029, and its VET college EUC Syd is playing a major role.*

EUC Syd has been a partner in the initiative – called **ProjectZero** – since 2008 and is strongly involved in the region's green transition.

Sustainability is thus part of the strategy of the college strategy at all levels.

In its VET, adult training and technical education programmes, it integrates **sustainability and green skills** through

projects, thematic weeks and everyday teaching. EUC Syd has taken the lead in **upskilling craftsmen in sustainable construction and renovation**, and works with the **National Union in construction sector** and the **Danish Technological Institute**. EUC Syd hosts twice a year the **Bright Green Engineering Seminars** for advanced international students in **plumbing, ventilation and building**. The 2-week seminars focus on **thermal shell and indoor climate engineering** and introduce future professionals

to the latest energy-saving, sustainable developments, equipment and solutions. The seminars are a combination of theory, practice in workshop, and visits in relevant Danish businesses. EUC Syd also works towards more sustainable ways to operate its **building and transport**. For example, it recently bought two biogas cars for staff use.

***“We have set the target to be carbon-neutral here as well in 2029”, says Vice-Principal Hans Lehmann. “We therefore work to reduce our transportation, our heat consumption, etc.”***

The ProjectZero Roadmap2025 – which seeks a 75% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2025 – is not just a **climate action plan** but also a **green job creation and innovation plan** for **sustainable growth**. Involvement in the project provides EUC Syd with access to networks, partnerships, and knowledge to aid development and organisational change.



***“We believe education and training are essential for a green and sustainable transition, as we need the right and updated skills and competencies in our students, but certainly also in staff and in all of us as citizens”, says Lehmann.***

Sønderborg received the 2010 the EU Energy Award in 2010, and the “EU Covenant of Mayors Award - Cities in the Spotlight” in 2018. In 2016, Sønderborg was accredited as a UNESCO Learning City. EUC Syd – the first VET college in Denmark to do so – is now pursuing the Green Flag Award, which is given to schools and colleges that involve students and staff in securing a sustainable environment.

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## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS EMBEDDED IN ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION IN FINLAND**

**BY LIISA METSOLA, AMMATTIOPISTO LIVE  
(FINLAND)**

***In 2020 Finland has compiled an interim report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Finland's current Government Programme (2019–2020) is premised on an economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable society built on competence and inclusion.***

Finland's prosperity is based on growth resting on **education, research, and innovation**. People's strong basic skills and capabilities to learn new things and upgrade their competence throughout their lives and careers play a key role amidst the transformation of the world of work.

In the field of education, the Government has specified the following objectives in connection with **Agenda 2030**:

1. The level of education and competence among the population will rise at all levels of education, differences in learning outcomes will decrease, and educational equality will increase;
2. Children and young people will feel well;
3. Education and training will enhance gender equality and non-discrimination in society; and
4. Finland will be an internationally attractive place to study, conduct research, and invest.

Finland has developed education and training

at all levels with due attention to increasing wellbeing and community spirit. Emphasis is also placed on a **competence approach**, such as the essential key skills: learning and problem-solving skills, multiliteracy, and creative and critical thinking.

In the future, everyone should have the capacity to engage in **lifelong and continuous learning**, including at the workplace. Development of continuous learning is based on working methods and conceptualisation geared towards meeting the demand from society and businesses. In the Finnish context, the holistic approach towards sustainable development in schools and other educational institutions means that learning environments, everyday organisational culture, and school management and leadership are also targets of continuous improvement alongside learning contents. Sustainable development is already effectively captured in learning contents within documents such as the National Core Curricula for early childhood education and care, basic education, and VET.

### VET reform

The latest examples of developing flexible learning pathways include the reform of vocational education and training and the new **Vocational Education and**

**Training Act** (531/2017), in force as of the beginning of 2018. Under the new system, it is possible to flexibly apply for Vocational Education and Training through a rolling application procedure where necessary. Each student is provided with a **personal study plan** and they can complete an entire vocational qualification or individual qualification modules according to their own needs. There are also preparatory education and competence development programmes on offer. Competence is assessed against the qualification requirements for vocational skills and competencies, irrespective of how, where, and when these were acquired. Competence, including sustainable development skills, is demonstrated by performing **practical work tasks in real-life work situations**. The reform abolished the distinction between vocational programmes intended for young people and adults.

### 15% of young people are left without an upper secondary certificate

A specific concern is that young people's level of education is no longer rising. After comprehensive school, one out of nine young people lacks the capabilities required to pursue further studies and find employment. The situation increases the risk of social exclusion, just like the

growth in learning differences between both genders and regions. Moreover, even second-generation immigrants have lower learning outcomes when compared with the mainstream population. As a "medicine" the Government is pursuing the extension of compulsory education – a widely controversial and discussed topic in Finland at the moment. The aim is that, having completed their comprehensive school education, all students gain an upper secondary qualification. The minimum school leaving age will be raised to 18 years.

### Climate change

Stepping up efforts to combat climate change is quite a topical theme in **education, training, and research** as well. In 2019, the **Finnish National Agency for Education** launched an awareness-raising programme entitled 'Climate Responsibility in Education' to strengthen the means to support learning about climate responsibility. The programme aims at creating a learning vision for 2025 on climate responsibility.

### Evaluation of sustainability in TVET

In the Finnish TVET sustainability is considered one of the key skills and an essential part of vocational competence. The **Finnish Education Evaluation Centre**

(Karvi) conducted an evaluation of the sustainable development learning outcomes of vocational upper secondary qualifications in spring 2015. The aim was to evaluate how well the **sustainable development objectives** defined in the qualification requirements for vocational qualifications have been achieved. In addition to this, the evaluation aimed to produce information that education providers could utilise in the development of their own activities and teaching as regards the sustainable development objectives. The assessment of sustainable development focused on comprehensive **ecological, social, cultural, and economic sustainable development competence**. The competence in regard to the different dimensions of sustainable development was examined from the perspectives of overall competence as well as knowledge-based, and functional competence.

### Sustainability at Vocational College Live

Vocational College Live based in the capital area of Finland is a college for students with demanding special needs, thus we are in our part participating to ensure **inclusive and equitable quality education** and promoting **lifelong**

**learning opportunities** for all. At Vocational College Live the development sustainable skills are embedded into all learning contents, the focus being especially on the functional based competence i.e. learning by doing, whether you are a student in the rehabilitative education for work and independent living or a student in TVET.

In the verge of COVID-19 lockdown, we opened our brand-new school building in Espoo. The design of the new school building is based on consideration of **sustainable solutions**, e.g. **accessibility and energy saving**. We hope that the corona situation will soon allow for full use of the building and its sustainable learning facilities.





© Photos by Jan Dijkstra & Frank Kroondijk, Friesland College

## **FRIESLAND COLLEGE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

BY SABINE SCHROTEN & DOMINIQUE DERKS, FRIESLAND COLLEGE (THE NETHERLANDS)



*'Friesland College educates students to become 'practical world citizens' who are able to find their way both in their profession and in society.'*

*This is laid down in our Strategic Plan 2019-2022. It is Friesland College's belief that the 17 SDG's will help achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, which is why we have adopted these goals in our strategic course, encouraging both our students and employees to 'embrace' them.*

*We are also convinced that our students will have a better chance on the labour market when they are taught both job specific and civic skills.*

Friesland College is an ambitious and innovative school, always open to new and fresh ideas. Improving the quality of our education has been and always will be one of our main priorities. To stimulate and ensure our **sustainable course**, the **Practorate 'Think Sustainable, Act Sustainable'** was established in 2019. This practorate aims at turning our sustainable ambitions into concrete actions and making them a natural and integrated part of our education. The practorate connects and supports our teachers and students but engages in practical research as well.

According to Dutch educational legislation, every VET student needs to develop himself as a citizen; schools should encourage students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values they need to engage with the world, such as critical thinking, research skills, and an open, cooperative, and proactive attitude. To achieve that goal, Friesland College is working towards vocational education where **civic education** is not taught as 'an additional subject' but is fully integrated into the curriculum. After all, any subject offers the opportunity to discuss and work on civic 'themes'. A framework for our civic education, with 7 themes such as '**Climate & environment**' was currently developed. The SDG's are integrated into these themes.

Students will not simply become responsible world citizens in a classroom; quite the opposite – they should take an active role in the community. Which is why Friesland College works together with partners on a regional, national and international level, because it helps us to teach our students how to 'think and act sustainable'! Our collaboration with Spark the Movement, a regional network of schools that inspire and encourage each other to make their **education sustainable**, is a good example.

Our staff is keen to learn how we can develop our **civic and sustainability education** further. Practised-based research will help to identify the effects, impact, and student satisfaction of our **educational innovations**. The next step will be to establish a **Learning Community** of enthusiastic colleagues who are interested in developing our civic and sustainable education further and taking it 'to the next level'. Teachers who take part in this Learning Community can develop educational designs based on theoretical knowledge and then test and evaluate them. Additionally, other colleagues can learn from the practice-based results as well. This approach will also help to work towards another important Friesland College ambition: to be a learning organisation,

always looking for opportunities to improve itself.

**M**any initiatives and projects have already taken place or will take place in the upcoming year. Friesland College gladly encourages and supports these initiatives. A few examples:

#### **Cooking by the principles of Dutch Cuisine**

Our 1st-year cooking students learned to cook by the Dutch Cuisine principles, which means cooking sustainably and using regional and organic products. By making our students aware of what this way of cooking entails, directly at the start of their training, they can apply this knowledge during the rest of their training and their future careers.

#### **Electives Sustainability/SDG's**

Our students can choose from various electives on sustainability/SDG's. All of our students (level 1-4) can take part in our elective 'Sustainability and your profession' where they will work on sustainability issues relevant for their profession, meet with a sustainability consultants and will discover just how sustainable their mindset and actions really are.

#### **KA2 Erasmus + Craft your future**

Friesland College, with regional partners and partners from Spain and Bulgaria, works on combining old crafts with new techniques and the circular economy. The regions of Friesland, Central Bulgaria and Valencia have vast amounts of knowledge and skills when it comes to old crafts. Another thing that these regions have in common, is waste. In this project, students research whether traditional crafts can help current and future trends, as well as modern technologies, can help us transform our waste into a resource.

On 9 October, celebrating **Sustainability Day** (10 October), Friesland College will organise an event in an international context. International partners will exchange sustainability issues, and students of the partners involved will deliberate on possible solutions to solve these.

If you have any sustainability issues that you would like to share with our students, you are invited to e-mail them to Sabine Schroten, International Affairs Coordinator at [s.j.schroten@fcroc.nl](mailto:s.j.schroten@fcroc.nl).





© Photo by Hostelería y Turismo

## SUSTAINABILITY: “OUR COMMON FUTURE”

BY MARÍA JOSÉ FERNÁNDEZ CAMPOS, ASSOCIATION OF VET CENTERS FPEMPRESA (SPAIN)

*By definition, sustainability is the satisfaction of current needs without compromising future generations' capacity to satisfy theirs, guaranteeing balance between financial growth, environmental care and social welfare.*

In order to link present and future, education comes up as the fundamental cornerstone. Its primary objective towards sustainability is to raise awareness of the fact that we live in a planet where our actions affect others, and that the decisions we make today will undoubtedly affect tomorrow.

We deem it essential for our centre CIFP

Hostelería y Turismo in Gijón (Spain) to be much more than just an education and training provider; to be a committed centre with good practices and **respect for the environment**, where everyone tries their best to make the whole education community understand that they can actually do their bit. We can all contribute proactively and in a responsible way to **resource saving, waste reduction, and recycling**.

Besides having the ISO 9001 quality certificate, EFQM and SICTED tourism quality commitment, we decided to participate in 2010 in the **Schools Network for Recycling**; a common space organised by **COGERSA** (a Spanish

company for waste management) for information, debate, and exchange of teaching experiences with the aim of fostering the European culture of **"The 3 Rs": Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle**.

In 2011, we were appointed as the centre with the best regional teaching project on recycling. That allowed us to represent our region, Asturias, in an international event that took place in Paris. In 2016/2017, our centre obtained the **highest qualification given by COGERSA: "Triple R"**.

Some examples of our commitment to reduce our environmental footprint are the RECAPACICLA initiative for waste classification or the initiative about **cigarette butt pollution and plastic waste**. In both initiatives, practical solutions were provided.

Since in our curriculum we also include many courses in the field of Tourism, we are always working hard to further study and promote **sustainable tourism**.

**A**dditionally, we have carried out other initiatives:

1. Participating in the project **"Gijon, sustainable tourism"**, promoted by the City Council.
2. Social initiatives such as food donations, help to aid organisations, charity fundraising, etc.
3. Participating in the **European Week for Waste Reduction**, with different activities such as a photography contest, a solidarity calendar, Resaborea, a menu made up with good leftovers or an initiative to clean regional beaches.
4. Collaborating with the project **"La Gran Cadena"**, by Ecovidrio.
5. Contributing to the project **"Coomida"** by **COGERSA**, an online platform for food donation.
6. Exhibitions, radio interventions, and the responsible restaurants campaign **"Aquí no sobra nada"**, to avoid food waste.



*Creativity, commitment, hard work, and effort are only some of the present ingredients in our centre. We are always inviting everyone to think about the impact of our actions and promoting collective action.*

*We may still have some time, but every minute counts!*

*The best waste is the one that does not exist, and if it exists the best thing to do is recycling!*

# I.F.O.A. AND SUSTAINABILITY

BY LUCA BOETTI, I.F.O.A. (ITALY)



*Luca Boetti, member of the Innovation & Development Team, and responsible for EU and international projects at I.F.O.A. had the pleasure to talk to EfVET and introduce the theme of sustainability in the organisation he works for.*

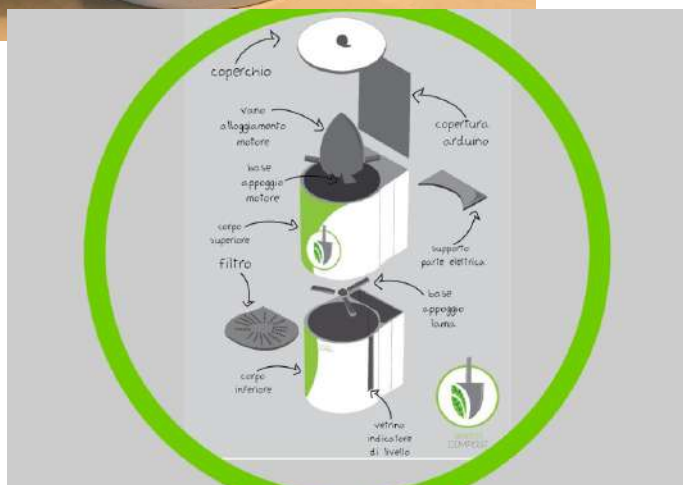
*I.F.O.A. is a training and employment agency linked to the Italian Chambers of Commerce and Member of EfVET. As a private, not-for-profit organisation, I.F.O.A. works on national and international levels, aiming at transferring useful knowledge to people, businesses and territories.*

*I.F.O.A. develops its activities according to the rules of an ethical code based on individual professional growth.*

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***Is IFOA engaged with the theme of sustainability?***

Yes, we are, and in many ways. In 2013, when we moved to new premises, paying attention to energy efficiency

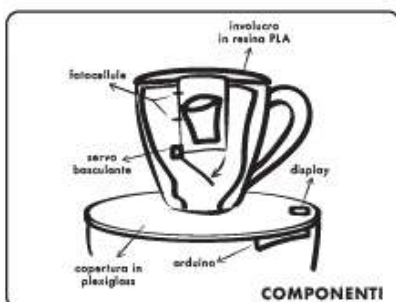
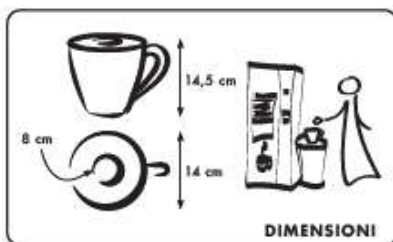


was one of the major concerns we had. We now regularly recycle paper, plastics, organic, glass. We started using low-impact inks and toner for printers. The company provides students and employees with free bikes for short displacements within the surroundings. Coffee machines use recycled and recyclable materials, we are introducing water dispensers to avoid plastic bottles, in open areas lights switch on and off automatically, etc. No individual printers are allowed: if I want to print anything, I have to choose one remote printer, step-up, walk there, input a personal code, and

get my printouts. In other words, I am encouraged to think if I really need to print a document, before I do. We have well-being policies for our staff and families, including baby-sitting, fitness, etc. More, IFOA adopts an ethical behaviour code, which learners sign as well, including sustainability issues. In fact, we include sustainability in learning outcomes and contents of all courses and programmes we delivers. Not to say about quality training, gender equality, etc. More generally, we can say that IFOA's policies somehow address all the 17 goals set in the UN Agenda for 2030.

### **Can you describe some projects on sustainability you work in in your organisation?**

I.F.O.A. “embeds” sustainability in all training programs at EQF levels 4 and 5. An example from the training programme for “Industrial designer” (EQF 4). Students are divided in groups and run project works to solve problems posed by companies, or to develop innovative products. Sustainability is a core issue, insofar the programme applies design, innovation and advanced technologies (e.g. 3D printing, laser cut, etc.) with environmental sustainability. Let us take a few recent examples: a group produced a device to encourage people recycling used plastic cups for coffee in vending machines (called eCoffee). A second group designed a machine for composting organic waste at home (called GreenCompost). Another group developed with recycled materials a furnishing accessory (called “Goccia”,



“drop” in English) equipped with sensors that monitor the quality of the air in the house (gas, humidity, mould, etc.).

**W**e are also partner in Erasmus+ projects covering sustainability issues. For example, the most recent ones:

### **NEGHTRA – Next Generation Training on Intelligent Greenhouses**

(621723-EPP-1-2020-1-EL-EPPKA2-KA), a KA2-Knowledge Alliance addressing knowledge transfer in precision agriculture. It aims to provide innovative training on smart greenhouse technologies coupled with selected optimum matching of technologies/cultivations, based on conditions for economic and environmental sustainability.

### **SWAP – Sustainable solid WASTE management and Policies**

(618723-EPP-1-2020-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP), a KA2-Capacity Building aiming at sharing and transferring sustainable policies in urban solid waste management and recycling from the EU to South-East Asian countries.

### **Does IFOA provide training on green skills?**

Yes. We deliver many courses and programmes, both public and private-funded. Some are totally “green-oriented”, other cover green skills as part of the programme, referring to specific job profiles. Public funded courses are at EQF levels 4 and 5, like: Environmental technician (EQF 4); Agri-food specialist (EQF 4); Agri-food Higher Technician (EQF 5).

A set of green skills is anyway included in all our programs. Private funded programmes usually respond to market needs and specific company requirements. Most frequent cases are about waste management, waste cycles regulations and processing/production standards, social responsibility, circular economy, energy efficient buildings, etc.

### **According to your experience, how do you see the VET education and VET students on top of the developments in sustainability?**

VET can play a fundamental role in creating and developing competences more and more required by the market. The overall awareness, and consequently the relevance of sustainability is constantly increasing.

The market demands for it, so companies move to it, so VET should prepare people not only able to fulfil requirements, but also able to act as “sustainability ambassadors” in companies, conveying sustainable knowledge, skills and behaviours at the workplace with a multiplier effect.

***Do you see sustainability as a policy priority of the future?***

Yes. It is not by chance that, besides the 17 goals mentioned above, we have the European Green Deal. Sustainability needs are increasing. Every year we consume Earth resources at a faster pace. In 2019, the Earth Overshoot Date fell on July 29, this year on August 22 (like in 2006), but probably simply due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We must move to sustainable mind-sets and behaviours, to sustainable processes and products. There is no way out of a “win-win” attitude between those delivering products and services and those receiving/purchasing them. This requires vision, policies, networking.

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***Are there any general best-practices for green/sustainability provision you could share?***

Well, I do not know if they are best practices, as we never benchmarked them. I would rather call them “lessons learnt”. They are:

- Make sustainability a cross-cutting subject, not differently from IT, foreign languages, etc.;
- Ensure that your organisation and your teachers/trainers behave as an example as to sustainability to learners, in their daily work;
- Build local networks with stakeholders to make clear sustainability is a “must” to everybody;
- Make learners practice with real world cases and work-based learning;
- In doing that, foster learners to “think sustainable”: encourage the usage of poor/recycled materials, give them a limited budget, etc.;
- Spread around the work done, make others know you are active in sustainability, communicate.

***What are your (personal as a professional and/or organisational) inputs about sustainability?***

Personally, my view is: increase awareness, feel responsible, take action. Think globally and start acting locally, even from small things: one small gesture can change a life.



Professionally, I think sustainability must be part of any training programme: developing sustainability skills means equipping learners with competences for their personal, employment and career paths. So, sustainability favours employability.



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# NE(W)AVE: CAN THE WORLD RUN ON RENEWABLE ENERGY?

FROM THE NE(W)AVE NEWSLETTER, EUC SYD  
(DENMARK) & PARTNERSHIP

*“The nation that leads in renewable energy will be the nation that leads the world.”*

— James Cameron

Without doubt, **renewable energy is on a roll**. Denmark is producing 43% of its energy from renewables, and it aims for 70% by 2020. Germany, at more than 25% now and 30% soon, is going for 40% to 45% clean power by 2025, 55% to 60% by 2035, and an incredible 80% by 2050. China, despite many challenges, is the world’s leading source of renewable investment, as well as the largest solar manufacturer. The potential in the job market is huge and new technical competences have already started to be requested by employers

in the renewable energy sector. In order to face this urgent need to update skills and competences of professionals, the NE(W)AVE project aimed to create, test, and implement a comprehensive learning model for the future professionals in the sector and develop other tools to support VET trainers too, promoting their professional development.

What has been done in these 3 years? In three years, the project developed an **Overall Report** containing the results of the research on skills needed for jobs related to renewable energy, available in English, Italian, Greek, Danish, German, and Spanish. Through this comparative research the project provided a

general glance on the situation in the renewable energy sector and the process of an appropriate adaptation of trained skills in the project partner countries. Moreover, this research gave a clear view of the skill mismatches between job demands and learning offers in the renewable energy sectors of these countries.

For the project consortium the research findings served as a basis for the content development of the **NE(W)AVE Open Online Course** which is freely accessible by all those learners who want to upgrade and convert their existing “green” competences. This Open Online Course is addressed to future professionals of the renewable energy sector, especially plumbers and electricians, who want to upgrade/convert their competences and requalify themselves in this field. The online course was tested by 24 learners from Italy, Denmark, Austria and Greece who after the piloting had the chance to attend a **2-week mobility in Spain and in Italy**. Here the learners were hosted by two companies specialising in renewable energy, Heliotec and St.H, and their mentors and through classes, visits and workshops, the participants not only learnt more about green energies but also boosted their soft skills, such as their communication and intercultural skills, improving their technical English and getting used to working and sharing ideas with people from other countries.

With the aim of supporting VET trainers, tutors and mentors in their acquisition of new competences, the NE(W)AVE project partners also developed an **E-toolkit for education professionals in vocational education and training**. This online tool, based on innovative training materials, helps VET trainers modernise and diversify their educational offer related to the renewable energy sector and promote the methodology and contents developed by the project on a larger scale. Through this tool, VET trainers can increase their awareness of the competences

upgrading methods in VET, increase their interest in using e-learning approach and in mobility opportunities for VET learners.

All the best practices gathered during the NE(W)AVE project led to the development of the **NE(W)AVE Opportunities and Recommendations**, an excursus from VET learning to jobs in the field of renewable energy. Over the course of the 3-year project, NE(W)AVE has received valuable input from VET stakeholders and key players in the renewable energy sector, which resulted in this output. These recommendations aim at being an inspiration for local and regional stakeholders across the EU on how to enhance the transition of VET learning jobs to jobs in renewable energy and promote the collaboration between VET providers, companies and other relevant stakeholders.

All the NE(W)AVE project results were presented at the **national Multiplier Events** arranged in Spain, Italy, and Greece. Here the partners, despite the limitations faced due to COVID-19, held final events to introduce and promote the NE(W)AVE Policy Recommendations and all other project outputs.

Also, the project partners defined the last steps and actions to spread the results and support learners, teachers, trainers, and stakeholders in the use of all the NE(W)AVE products. All the participants were invited to access the project outputs, which are freely downloadable on the multilingual NE(W)AVE website at [www.newaveproject.eu](http://www.newaveproject.eu).

The outputs are available in English, Italian, Danish, German, Spanish, and Greek; including the Open Online Course, which - through its innovative learning modules - offers learners new updated knowledge and both technical and soft skills, while offering VET trainers new materials and methods to be implemented in their professional course in the renewable energy sector.

Considering the urgent necessity to train new technical professionals in the green sector over the next years, the NE(W)AVE project offers its results and innovative tools to support both learners and VET trainers in the new demand for skills and competences and supports the creation of new and updated professional figures, contributing to **increase the employability and inclusion** of NEETs and VET learners. The NE(W)AVE partners will keep on promoting the project results and the close cooperation among stakeholders from the education and business field.

If you would like to learn more about the NE(W)AVE project, please contact Simona Palumbo at [simona.palumbo@cesie.org](mailto:simona.palumbo@cesie.org) or visit the website [www.newwaveproject.eu/](http://www.newwaveproject.eu/)





# Welcome to New Members



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**Augmented Training Services**  
[www.augmentedtraining.org](http://www.augmentedtraining.org)



**SWEDEN**  
**Academedia**  
[www.academedia.se](http://www.academedia.se)



**GREECE**  
**Omega**  
[www.omega.gr](http://www.omega.gr)



### SENSE

Sexual Diversity in Social Domain Vocational Training



### SCHOOLS 4.0

Innovation in Vocational Education



### VET4ALL

Professional Development of VET Tutors & Trainers to Enhance Social Inclusion in WBL



### SWIRL

Student Work Experience in Real Life



### PECVET

Partnership for ECVET



### D-CARE

Dementia: Respect and Respite



### FIT FOR 4.0

Training Teachers and Trainers for the 4.0 Paradigm



### EARLY SCHOOL WORKERS

Renovation of VET systems; innovative training, learning approaches, and Methodologies for higher competitiveness of young students



### LET'S PLAY VET

Enhancing the Learning Experience Through Playlists



## DIGITAL TOURISM



## VENHANS

VET European  
Networking  
Enhancement



## Pilot Platform of Vocational Excellence Water

Pilot PoVE Water



## FIELDS

Addressing the current  
and Future skill needs  
for sustainability,  
digitalization, and the  
bio-Economy in  
AgricuLture - European  
skills agenDa and  
Strategy.



## DRIVES

Development  
and Research on  
Innovative  
Vocational  
Education Skills



## INTERVET

Internationalization  
of VET systems in  
Western Balkans



## SAAM

Supporting  
Alliance for African  
Mobility.



## PR.E.S.T.O

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disability Transnational  
mObility.



**Rue d'Arlon 40,  
B-1000, Brussels Belgium**



**+32 (0)2 27 19 084**



**efvet-office@efvet.org**



**www.efvet.org**



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