
Introduction

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Biographical notes: Lisiane Celia Palma is a Professor at the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Sul (IFRS) in Brazil. She received her PhD in Management from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) and her Master's degree from the Center for Studies and Research in Agribusiness (CEPAN) at UFRGS. She is a Researcher Member of the Technological Innovation and Education Group at the IFRS and a Researcher Member of the Organizations Study Group (GESTOR) and the Research Group on Sustainability and Innovation (GPS) both at UFRGS. Her research interests encompass sustainability, education, organisations and management. She has worked in projects related with these topics in Brazil, Italy, Colombia and England.

Sustainability is a multidimensional issue that requires transforming to a more complex and holistic understanding of the world. In this process, education and educational institutions play a key role because they have a strong influence on the way that people understand the world, its connections and the relationship between human beings, organisations and the environment. In this sense, educational institutions seem to be appropriate places to promote innovation, change and learning at both the individual and organisational levels.

Thus, in the face of the challenges in the past decades, changes have occurred in universities in different areas and levels to address and insert sustainability. Therefore, this special issue on 'Innovations in Sustainability Management at Universities' aims to present research and discussions about what can and is being done in educational institutions and in different programs and courses aimed at promoting a sustainable world. It opens a space for the emergence of new solutions that are required to deal with issues related to sustainability.

The papers in this special issue bring interesting discussions and research from many parts of the world (Brazil, France, Russia, UK and the USA). The papers present different methodological proposals and approaches ranging from theoretical discussions to empirical proposals from educational institutions more broadly to specific programs and courses.

To begin with, the first paper brings a theoretical discussion about how sustainability education is conceptualised and delivered within higher education contexts. Holdsworth

and Hegarty explore the skills and capabilities required for the delivery of a sustainability educational praxis.

In the second paper, Fourati-Jamoussi et al. provide an overview of the theoretical framework of the birth and evolution of the concept of sustainability in universities and focus on a French initiative to set up sustainability approaches.

In the next paper, Salimova et al. explore the current state of sustainable development problems in the world, and in Russia in particular. They establish the challenges for sustainable development and evaluate the maturity level of various Russian social groups' awareness and understanding of these problems.

Subsequently, Brandli et al. present research from Brazil. They provide an overview of environmental sustainability at the Brazilian Federal Institutes of Education, Science, and Technology and offer some suggestions towards supporting action, steps and policies that promote sustainability in educational institutions.

In the next paper, Duram and Klein investigate the role of university food gardens within the broader context of sustainability in institutions of higher education. The research specifically addresses the extent to which university gardens serve as sites for formal and informal education.

Winter et al. then bring a discussion about transformative learning and education for sustainability and consider the potential for student transformation regarding sustainability in two UK universities.

Also from the perspective of transformative learning and critical reflection, Brunnquell et al. focus on Brazilian experiences and discuss the teaching of sustainability in administration programs. Similarly focussed on business education, Czykiel et al. explore ways of integrating the topic of sustainability into different undergraduate management courses and show that there are concrete ways to incorporate education for sustainability into management education.

To finalise, also focusing on courses, Arenas et al. present a discussion about the accomplishments and challenges of a university-wide course that offers both sustainability theory and practice to help students adopt pro-sustainability behaviours and analyse public policies that seek to transform urban areas and institutions of learning into truly sustainable places.

The papers presented in this special issue ensure rich reflections, a diversity of ideas and good examples that can help people from educational institutions, programs and courses seeking to expand their contribution to sustainability to create their own strategies for the inclusion of sustainability according to their different contexts.