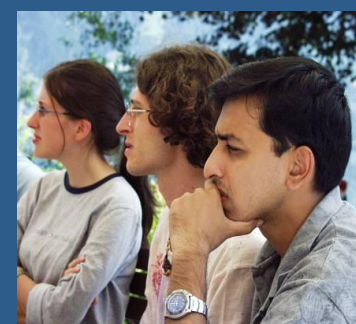


Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES)

The Challenge of a Sustainable World
Living for 10 Billion People



Courses for upper level undergraduate and graduate students from all disciplines and all nationalities

The Sustainability Challenge

The world is facing a severe global crisis: current patterns of economic and social development are putting an unbearable strain on our natural environment and cultures. Can young people begin to move our society towards the ideals of justice, equity and sustainability? Our goal is that after you participate in YES you will be able to say: YES, we can, YES we will, YES, we MUST!

The Vision for the Future

In June 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development adopted “Agenda 21”, calling for all nations to “develop and put into effect their own national strategies, plans and policies for sustainable development, and to be prepared to deal with the common challenges facing human kind”. The tenth year anniversary of the Rio Conference was marked by the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Rio Conventions, signed by 150 countries, and other such global initiatives, were supposed to help us chart a course for the 21st century. The reality is that workable solutions to the environmental, social and economic imbalances in our world are yet to be devised and global conversations about sustainable development continue to wrestle with how to put these visions into action.

YES is inspired by a set of questions arising from the gap between the principles in Agenda 21 and the potential for putting these into action in the 21st century:

- What do the individuals pursuing careers and leading lives in the 21st century have to say about issues of sustainable development?
- What are the views, concerns and fresh approaches of tomorrow’s leaders to these problems?
- What progress has been made in making sustainable development a reality and what remains to be done?

Young people of today constitute an important group, the cradle of tomorrow’s leaders and thinkers, whose decisions will have a growing influence on markets and styles of living.

YES brings together such young leaders from all around the world to explore the challenges of sustainable development and the state-of-the-art research developed to address them. They explore economic, social and technical complexities in meeting the sustainability challenge and gain better understanding of the need for multi-disciplinary perspectives for problem solving.

The Youth Encounter on Sustainability YES

In the year 2000 the Alliance for Global Sustainability (AGS) first created the course concept for the “Youth Encounter on Sustainability-YES” to help develop the leadership capacity for a sustainable future. The first course was held in Braunwald, Switzerland that same year and from then on continued to be held twice each year, attracting highly diverse groups of students to discuss global challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. Building on the resounding success of the YES courses in Switzerland, YES courses were expanded to other world regions. Courses have since been held in Costa Rica, Colombia, Slovakia, Kenya, Japan, Austria and Australia in collaboration with local course partners. At the start of 2011, more than 1200 students from over 120 different countries have been trained in the YES course. They form the core of the strong and active network of YES alumni located all around the world, with follow up activities and projects.

Types of YES Courses

YES Basic Courses

The YES basic courses are operated in different parts of the world, with an additional focus on regional priorities or otherwise specified focus. The framework and the applied methodology for the courses are based on the basic framework developed over the years of successfully running the YES International course in Switzerland. Typically 2 weeks in duration, the course trains a maximum of 40 students per session with a focus on basic sensitization to the multifaceted concepts of sustainable development. The regionally focused basic courses aim to connect regional priorities and challenges to the global

context. Regional courses are developed with a thorough understanding of the regions culture, history and social development in order to effectively prepare students to take effective action. Participation in the courses is open to upper level undergraduate and graduate university students, as well as young professionals from all disciplines. In all the basic international courses a multicultural, multinational and gender balance is maintained.

YES Special Courses

The YES Special courses are open specifically for YES Alumni – individuals who have already attended a YES basic course. A limited number of young professional with an academic background may be accepted as well. The special courses focus on one particular subject or theme and incorporate many of the pedagogical and didactical approaches of a YES Basic course. The courses are typically 7 to 10 days in duration held in collaboration with local partners in a location of great interest and relevance for the course theme.

Elements of a YES Course

A typical course incorporates academic work, field trips and experience, workshops, cultural and social activities in some of the world's great natural settings. Students participate in:

- An in-depth investigation into key issues in the sustainability debate with leading faculty and special guests from world renowned institutions and organizations
- Discussions on the role of science, industry, civil society and public institutions in moving societies toward sustainable development
- A “values and responsibilities” component, which considers the role of the social sciences and discuss the individual behavior changes and ethics in promoting sustainable development
- A unique opportunity for close collaboration with an international multicultural and multidisciplinary group of peers in small working groups on specific projects
- Field experiences in the form of excursions unique to the location providing opportunities to learn first hand from approaches to address sustainability challenges
- Unique Social and cultural activities among the participants
- A practical approach on how to realize own projects and activities based on sustainability principles

Outcomes for Participants

- Enhance your understanding of the principles of sustainability in a dynamic world, across geographic and disciplinary boundaries
- Unique personal and professional development that will open up further education and career opportunities
- Inspiration from interacting with like minded, motivated young individuals from all around the world with interesting and valuable experiences to share
- Provide you with methodological and system thinking skills to develop holistic and appropriate solutions to sustainability challenges
- Develop your interdisciplinary, intercultural, and leadership competences
- Stimulate your creative thinking about local, regional, and global issues on sustainable development and broaden your perspectives
- Connection to the YES alumni group and associated communication platforms, a strong and expanding international network of over 1200 young scholars and professionals from around 120 countries supporting one another with follow up activities
- Practice in presenting, facilitating and working in groups in English in a relaxed and supportive environment

Feedback from Alumni Students

“YES provides an extraordinary opportunity for young people from all over the world to come together; to learn from one another and to set the stage for a better world.”

“YES gave me motivation and hope, broadened my horizons, empowered me with new knowledge and skills and helped me to understand sustainable development from a holistic perspective”

“The best educational experience I have had- the fact that there were so many different countries

represented made the whole experience priceless”

“YES gave me direction, connections and valuable resources for my future career”

“YES is very unique...so many elements, interesting topics, surroundings, different people from all over, with different views. This makes such a strong impact, it is great while you are there, and I realize even more what an amazing trip it was after getting back home”

“The teaching was exceptional – an excellent pool of experts, modules and presentations”

Collaborating Institutions

The YES courses and programs are directed by ACTIS, in collaboration with various local institutions who form part of a network of cooperation in various world regions. ACTIS GmbH – *Activating Talent in Sustainability* is a swiss organisation founded in early 2009 with the purpose of taking over full operation of the YES courses and associated activities. ACTIS was created as a special “ETH spin-off” organisation due to the strong involvement of the ETH Zurich in the establishment and operation of the YES courses from 2000 to 2008. The ACTIS core staff have been responsible for running the program since its creation.

The main collaborating organisation for the YES programs is the Alliance for Global Sustainability (AGS), an international partnership created in 1997 between the ETH Zurich, MIT, the University of Tokyo and Chalmers University of Technology. The AGS brings together hundreds of university scientists, engineers, and social scientists to address the complex issues that lie at the intersection of environmental, economic and social goals. Read more about the AGS at: <http://theags.org>

For more information on the AGS Partner Institutions:

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
<http://lfee.mit.edu>
University of Tokyo (UT)
www.globalsustainability.jp



Chalmers University of Technology
www.ags.chalmers.se
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich
(ETH Zurich) www.ethz.ch

Local Collaborating Partners

YES courses are held in collaboration with additional local partner organizations. In the past courses have been hosted in partnership with UNEP in Nairobi, INCAE Business School and CATIE in Costa Rica, AVINA in Colombia, TU-Vienna, Hosei University in Japan, Egerton University in Kenya, the International Water Center in Australia (an alliance between the University of Queensland, Monash University, Griffith University and the University of Western Australia), the Wadi Environmental Science Center in Egypt and with the Sustainability Institute, in partnership with the University of Stellenbosch, in South Africa.

The international group of Faculty for the YES courses is drawn from the AGS partner universities, as well as from regional public and private partner organizations.

Further Information

Please see the enclosed inlay for more information on specific courses, and how to apply. Visit our website to apply for the next course and for more information.

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