

Excursion

An excursion is a trip by a group of people, in this case for educational purposes. As a teaching format, it provides alternative learning strategies for students, adding variety that is beneficial for both students and teachers.

Excursions to pioneers, enterprises, or start-ups in the field of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship, more specifically can help students understand the relevance of a sustainable economy and the need for alternative economic strategies. The format enables students to get to know different examples of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship in a concrete real-world setting. Students can discuss experiences with entrepreneurs as to the challenges and opportunities pioneers face in the emerging sustainable economy. Entrepreneurs can act as role models and activators who provide real-life feedback via their practical examples. Students get acquainted with sustainable entrepreneurs in different fields and learn from their approaches. Moreover, excursions to pioneers can give a practical introduction and illustration of inter- and transdisciplinary teaching and learning approaches. For optimal learning benefit, however, the outcomes of the excursion need to be integrated into the set teaching program.

Phase 1 – Planning

Depending on the purpose of the excursion, carefully chose the period of the year and duration for an optimal benefit from the activity. Consider seasonal or categorical time constraints at the partner's location. For diversity, visit various practical actors, for more profoundness, plan a longer stay at one destination (up to several days). Clarify the possibilities of mutual learning between the partner organization and the students. Define the involved actors (e.g. employees), the form (e.g. discussion) and a respective time frame.

Foresee arrangements for transportation and, if necessary, for accommodation well in advance.

Phase 2 – Preparation

Contextual theoretic knowledge can be imparted in form of a pre-seminar or compact block courses. This may include readings and reflections on the topics raised before the students get confronted with the real-life conditions.

Phase 3 – Excursion activities

First, get to know the place e.g. through a tour and presentation by the local host. Sharing the concept, activities and experiences are valuable insights before starting a discussion or another form of exchange. Ideally, students receive the opportunity to engage by participating at workshops or activities. Thus, the students can give feedback and bring in different perspectives from outside the visited organization.



Phase 4 – Reflection

At the end or after the excursion, time for reflection should be granted. To intensify the experience, a written format can be chosen.

“It was really interesting and enriching to meet the farmers and listen to them talking about their experience in the authentic environment on the farm, where we could see how everything works.” Master Student, Environmental Humanities, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Benefits

- *Opportunity to share the partners’ work with students*
- *Critical reflection on prior theoretical knowledge and assumptions*
- *Learning about different techniques, processes, conditions and consequences*
- *Personal and emotional engagement*

Success factors

- *Prior knowledge of and experience with the partner is a plus*
- *Open-mindedness of the partner and employees*
- *Arranging transportation far enough in advance*
- *Possibility of perception of impressions with all senses (visual, sensory, smell etc.)*

Challenges

- *Length of the excursion to be long enough for students*
- *Length of the excursion to remain manageable for the partner*
- *Scheduling the excursion at the most interesting period of the year (e.g. ecovillage in summer)*
- *Organizational efforts for longer excursions (over several days)*

