

## What's up at young universities?

June 2023

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Dear readers of the YERUN newsletter, June is the month of the Environment and we celebrate both the World Environment Day, on 5 June, and the World Ocean Day, on 8 June. What better occasion to also celebrate the diverse actions taken by YERUN universities to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and specifically the fight against climate change? In this month's newsletter, you will learn about key achievements and initiatives from young research universities on Sustainable Development from ongoing research projects, summer schools, Erasmus+ initiatives and study programmes. Enjoy the read!

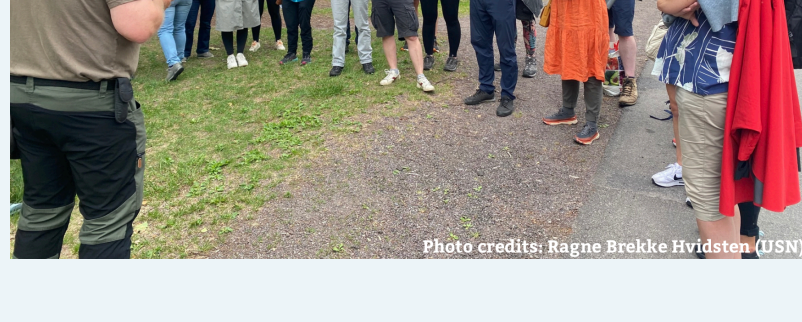
### Sustainable Development

#### YERUN ad hoc group on SDGs sets new objectives



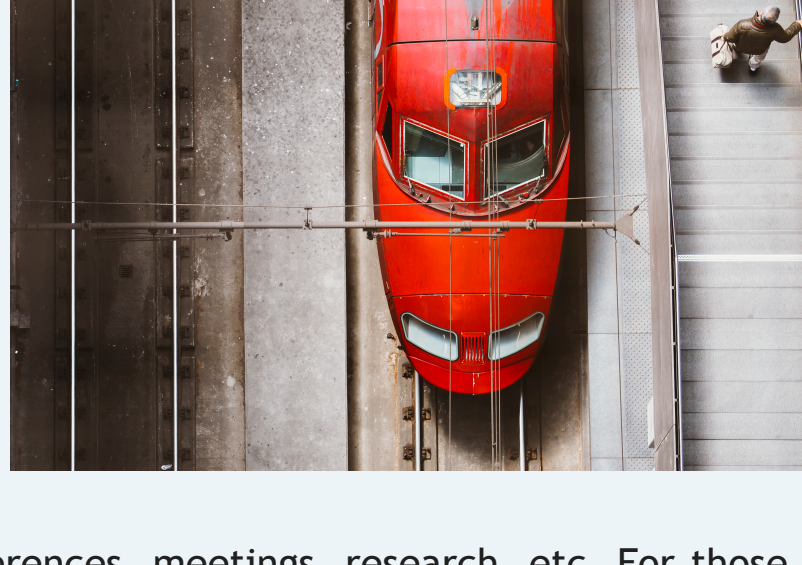
The YERUN ad hoc group on SDGs has been up and running since June 2021 and already reached substantial achievements: after a deep work on Education for Sustainability, which resulted in a publication launched last year ([Link here](#)), the group is now focusing on the development of sustainability strategies, policies and reporting mechanisms. As part of its work, the group is working on the development of a YERUN Summer School on Sustainability for doctoral students through an Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (BIP). For more information, please contact the [YERUN Office](#).

#### YERUN members driving sustainable futures in higher education



127 participants from 10 different European universities are gathered this week in the fjord-village of Åsgårdstrand in Norway to participate in the first part of the Erasmus+ programme "Driving Sustainable Futures in Higher Education". The Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme "Driving Sustainable Futures in Higher Education" is created by a consortium of four YERUN universities: University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), University of Limerick, University of Antwerp and NOVA University Lisbon. USN has taken the lead to develop and run the Blended Intensive Programme. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### UAntwerp takes the train to go abroad



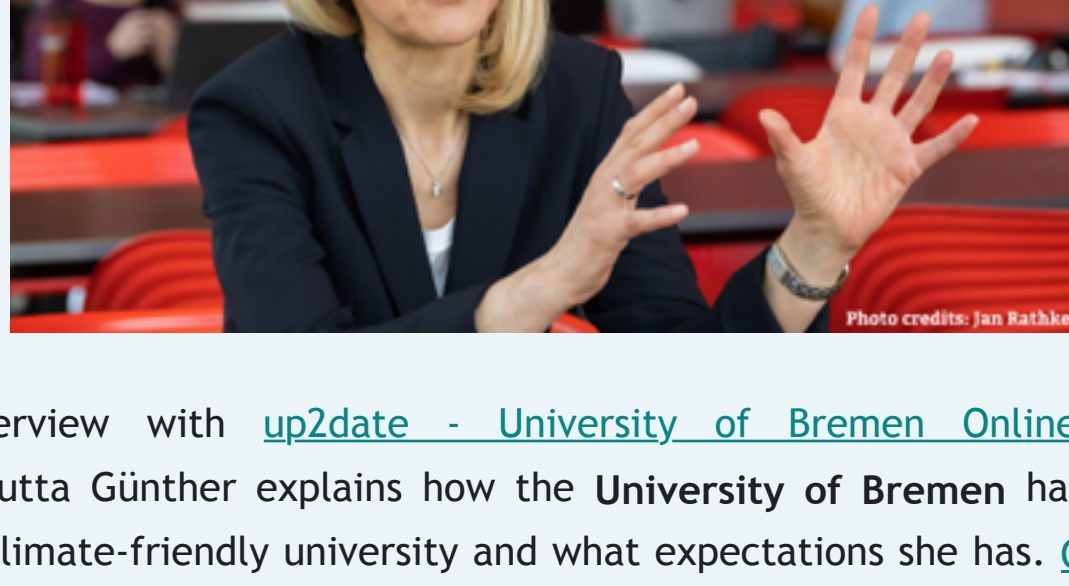
International conferences, meetings, research, etc. For those working or studying at a university, travelling abroad is part of the deal. On the Internet, a flight - often cheaply priced - is easily booked. However in the end, it is not the traveller but our planet that's left with a sizeable bill. This is because aircraft emissions high in the sky are very harmful to the environment. Therefore, the University of Antwerp has decided to discourage unnecessary air travel and instead promote train travel as an environmentally responsible alternative. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### UEF is on a good sustainability path



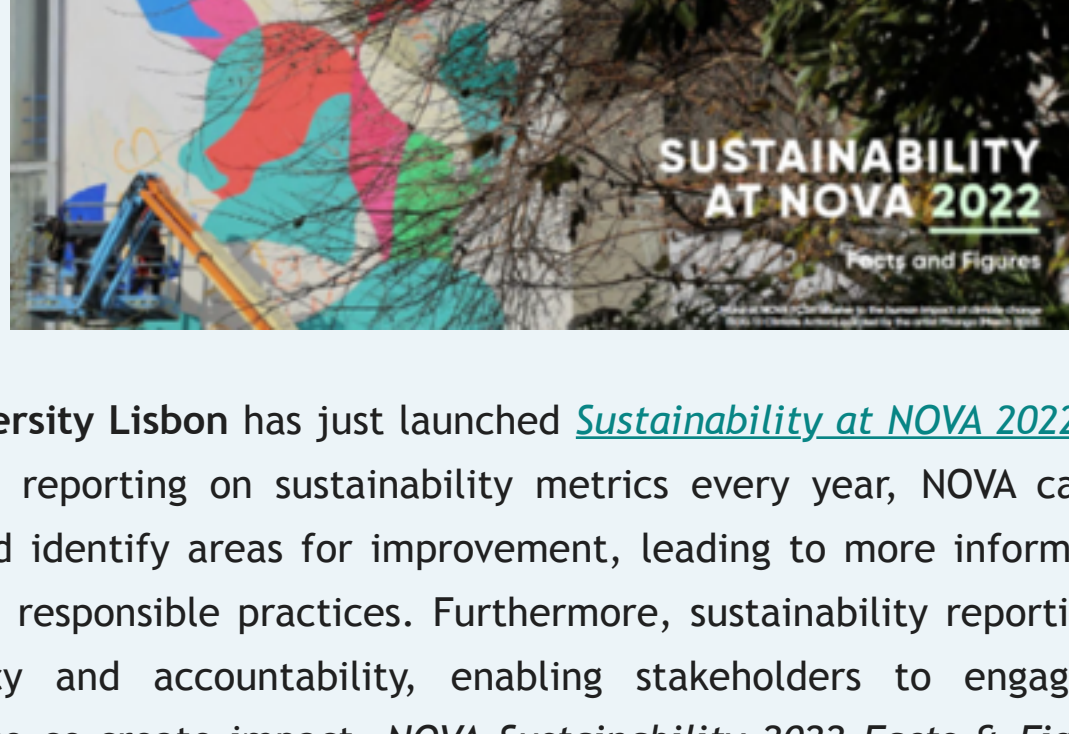
The University of Eastern Finland (UEF) strives to promote the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations. A couple of years ago, the university compiled its first SDG report to highlight the impact its research, education and other activities have on sustainability. The SDGs on which the university has the strongest expertise were also identified as part of that process, and specific attention has been paid to promoting them. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### A spotlight on sustainability, climate, justice, and climate neutrality



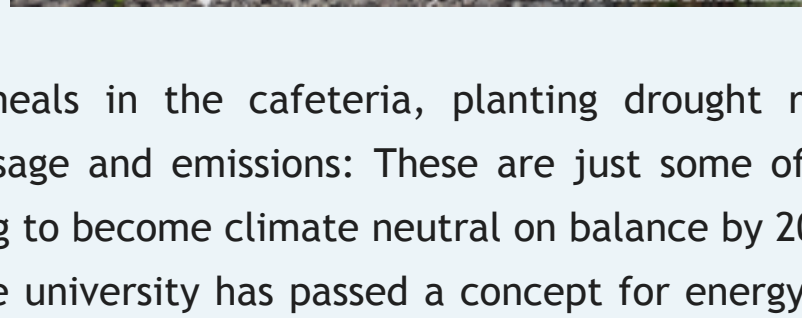
In an interview with [un2date - University of Bremen Online Magazine](#), President Jutta Günther explains how the University of Bremen has set out to become a climate-friendly university and what expectations she has. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### Sustainability at NOVA



NOVA University Lisbon has just launched [Sustainability at NOVA 2022 - Facts and Figures](#). By reporting on sustainability metrics every year, NOVA can assess its impacts and identify areas for improvement, leading to more informed decision-making and responsible practices. Furthermore, sustainability reporting enhances transparency and accountability, enabling stakeholders to engage with the University to co-create impact. [NOVA Sustainability 2022 Facts & Figures](#) reports indicators in several areas, highlights progress through some indicators since 2019, and showcases the university commitment and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### Ulm University aims for climate neutrality by 2030



Climate-friendly meals in the cafeteria, planting drought resilient perennials, reducing energy usage and emissions: These are just some of the measures Ulm University is taking to become climate neutral on balance by 2030 at the latest. To meet this goal, the university has passed a concept for energy saving and climate protection, which encompasses compensating emissions, e.g. by paying into certified climate protection projects. "Ulm University has set itself a clear goal: greenhouse gas neutrality on balance by 2030. In order to find out where action is needed, we mustn't leave a stone unturned", says Prof. Michael Kühl, Vice-President for cooperations and responsible for sustainability and climate protection. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### Actions speak louder than words



University of Limerick's actions speak louder than words. One such call to action has been the UL Sustainability Challenge. Postgraduate and undergraduate students were set a challenge to develop proposals to tackle our climate crisis; to come up with ideas to make our environment more sustainable - to either the campus, the city or wider Mid-West region or further afield. The projects each received up to €10,000 to develop their ideas and the shortlist demonstrated the depth of research within the UL community, covering areas such as plastic recycling, thermal energy monitoring, improving sustainable agricultural practices in Uganda, biodiversity in the Shannon Estuary, and efficiency improvement and cost reduction in hydrogen manufacturing. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### Living sustainably, but how?



What will the Earth look like in the future? How can we live so that future generations will still be able to make the earth their home? For the third time, the Sustainable Development Academy (SDA) is bringing together students and interested people from all over the world at the University of Potsdam in August to engage critically and creatively with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The program seeks to help participants develop approaches to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level, focusing specifically on two of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals: "sustainable cities and communities" (SDG 11) and "life on land" (SDG 15). [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### Students inspiring sustainability at AAU



Following the principle of "learning by doing", students took on the responsibility of managing the communication about the Sustainability Day at the University of Klagenfurt (AAU). The project was embedded within the course "Event Organisation" held by the Department of Media and Communication Studies. 15 highly motivated students used the course to improve their organisational and communicational skills, but also to advocate for sustainability, with the "Sustainability Day" serving as a concrete example. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### Making teaching more sustainable



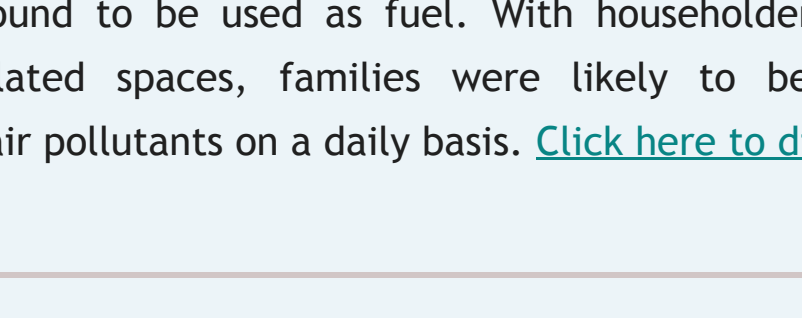
In June 2023, the University of Konstanz teamed up with 19 other German universities to form the network initiative "Transformative Skills for Sustainability". Its goal: establishing a community of practice that promotes the anchoring of transformative skills for sustainability across study programmes and teaches it in the respective course catalogues. In the certificate programme "Qualification N", the University of Konstanz is already teaching transformative competencies for sustainability. Qualification N enables students from any programmes to explore and discuss complex societal challenges like climate change, limited resources or social injustice. The interdisciplinary programme involves theoretical training, practical projects and networking events. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### Study looks to understand exposure to air pollution in informal settlements in Africa



A team led by Dr Isabelle Uny from the University of Stirling's Institute for Social Marketing and Health, gathered data to understand the relationship between fuel use and cooking in two slums in the East African nations as part of a research project exploring the cultures, behaviours and lived experiences of those who rely on wood, charcoal and animal dung for their cooking needs. The researchers, who spent two years working on the study, found that in the impoverished communities of Ndirande, Malawi and Mukuru, Kenya, most residents used wood and charcoal for their daily cooking, with plastic bottles, maize stalks and homemade charcoal briquettes, also found to be used as fuel. With householders often cooking in cramped, unventilated spaces, families were likely to be exposed to high concentrations of air pollutants on a daily basis. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### How can science help save our planet?

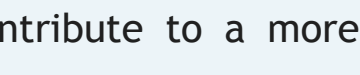


The researchers from Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (NCU) are looking for solutions that may protect us from, among others, climate changes and the extinction of bees. As a result of climatic change and the decrease of acreage, the system of plant growing is still evolving. The agriculture is aiming at industrialisation and focuses on fast production. What then could be done to make it in accordance with the nature? In order to complete this task, it is necessary to find new grounds for cultivation. One of the ways of developing new terrains for agriculture is the use of high salinity grounds, which exist in large numbers. [Click here to discover more.](#)

#### Sustainability Research: the video series



Many researchers contribute to the more a sustainable world. Maastricht University lets them explain you how they want to make a difference and what their research challenges are. And more importantly, giving you knowledge that you can use in your everyday life. [Click here to discover more.](#)



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