Climate University: climate education collaboration within universities in Finland

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Climate change and the sustainability crisis require urgent actions in all fields of the society. Recently in Finland, the nationwide Climate University project (blogs.helsinki.fi/climateuniversity) was established by the funding form the Ministry of Education and Culture to advance teaching of climate and sustainability topics in Finnish higher education. The Climate University network consists of 11 universities as well as universities of applied sciences all around Finland and includes collaborators from schools and the working life.

In the beginning of the project, a study of needs was conducted. We asked our collaborators about the needs of higher education in the time of climate crisis. The answers emphasized on multidisciplinarity, holistic understanding, data and statistics, science communication, including the private sector and markets, consumer perspective, as well as values and ethics.

Based on the study of needs, we will produce the following open access learning materials by the end of 2020: Systemschange.now - Systems thinking in global challenges; Sustainable.now - Introduction to sustainability in climate change; Solutions.now - Project course in private sector collaboration; Climate.now for schools - High school level course on basics of climate change; Climate data and statistics - Statistical tools for analysing climate data; and Science communication in climate change.

Open learning principles were already piloted in the Climate.now project in 2016 (www.climatenow.fi) and the Climate.now courses (2-5 ECTS) are currently run in eight universities in Finland. We have also produced open online courses on the multidisciplinary topics of sustainability leadership (www.leadforsust.fi) and circular economy (www.circularnow.fi). Collaboration and co-creation with multidisciplinary experts from all across the society has been highly fruitful, and we foresee Climate University has the potential to thoroughly reshape and re-create the Finnish climate education field.