



Higher education's role in lifelong learning for energy security, access and efficiency in Small Island Developing States

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Abstract:

Compared to non-island places, Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) face distinctive challenges to ensure the sustainable socio-economic development of their current population. Many of them resemble inherent island characteristics such as remoteness, small populations, a limited resource base, vulnerability to climate change, natural disasters and external shocks, and a disproportional dependence on international trade as well as international aid receipts and, finally, a heavy reliance on fossil fuels to meet energy demands.

This poster will illustrate the opportunities for integrating the topics of energy access, energy security and energy efficiency into higher education in the context of Small Island Developing States to improve the adaptive capacity as well as increase resilience of island populations especially to the impacts of current climate variability and projected climate change. In particular, it highlights the need for appropriate lifelong learning schemes that involve international technology transfer and capacity-building for students and staff of higher education institutions (HEI). Transnationally designed courses may offer valuable opportunities particularly for SIDS that face many challenges associated with their geographical extension. SIDS also need to improve the integration of energy themes into university curricula so that these better address their distinctive knowledge and technology needs and demands to enable a sustainable transformation of island energy systems.

Drawing from the example of the current EDULINK project "LEAP - Lifelong Learning for Energy Security, Access and Efficiency" it will be demonstrated how higher education institutions on small island developing states, together with European universities, develop appropriate solutions and sustainable approaches that may, in the long run, benefit the socio-economic development of SIDS in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Region (ACP). It is concluded that more effort should be placed in capacity building, focusing on the broad range of lifelong learning activities, also embracing ICT solutions, in the area of energy, can be a valuable crosscutting measure to address the chronic human capacity problem that constrains the quicker uptake of sustainable energy technologies in SIDS.

Keywords: Higher education, life-long learning, capacity-building, sustainable energy, e-learning, SIDS.