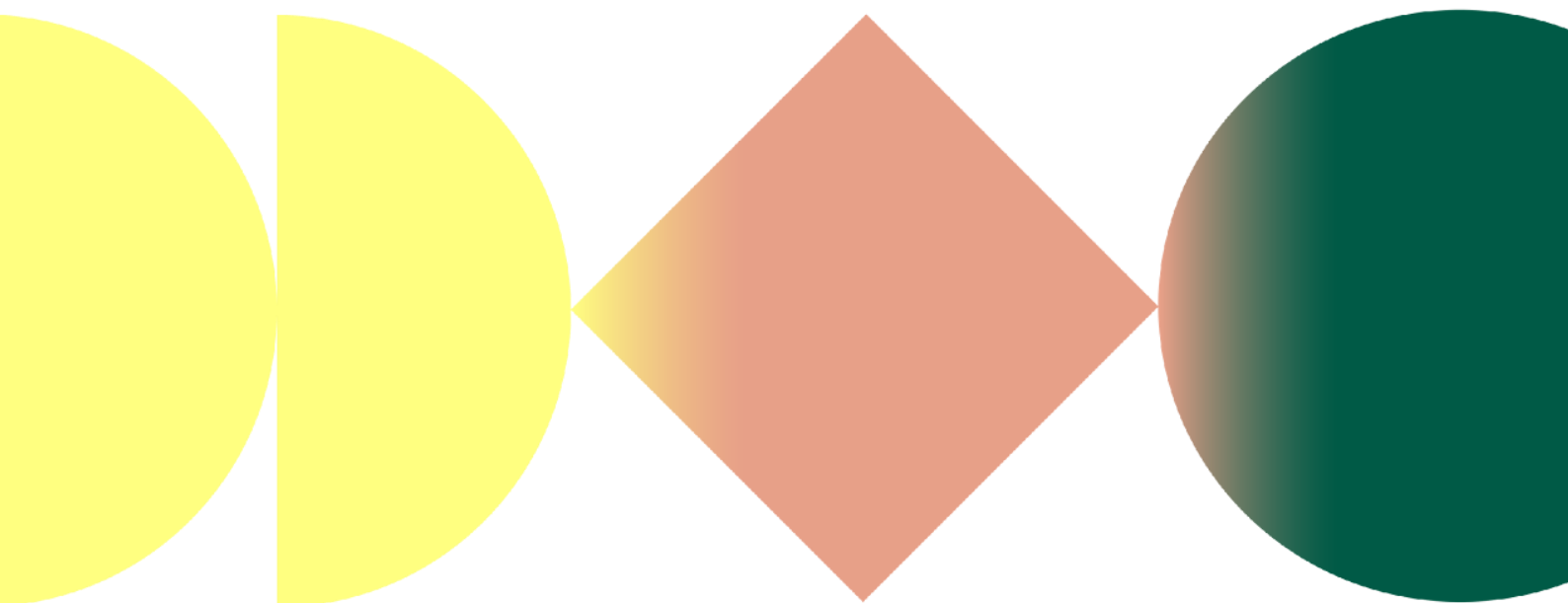


Program for Virtual Exchanges

Design of Virtual Exchange Framework for Sustainability Education



UnaEuropa for Virtual Exchanges (UnaVEx) project: 2024-2027
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VIRTUAL BRIDGE
BETWEEN EUROPEAN & AFRICAN STUDENTS
FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES



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This document is the 1st version of an interactive document, which will be expanded in a cumulative manner by the UnaVEx teams based on experiences of the UnaVEx Virtual Exchanges (VEs) for moderators and students.

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1.BACKGROUND

The Una Europa Virtual Exchange in Higher Education (UnaVEx) project focuses on the co-design and implementation of a virtual exchange framework for sustainability education in an international and intercultural context. At the core of this project consortium are three Una Europa partner universities, the University of Helsinki (UH), Finland (Coordinator), the University of Bologna (UNIBO), Italy, KU Leuven (KUL), Belgium, and three African partner universities, the University of Kinshasa (UNIKIN), Democratic Republic of the Congo, the University of Nairobi (UoN), Kenya, and the University of Johannesburg (UJ), South Africa

All six consortium partners are engaged in the Una Europa - Africa partnership, an informal group initiated in early 2022 as part of Una Europa’s ambitions to engage meaningfully with like-minded higher education institutions (HEIs) across the globe. The UnaVEx project is anchored as a first concrete opportunity to bring together students from across Europe and Africa around sustainability challenges in an international and intercultural context. The UnaVEx project aims to make a concrete contribution to a future generation of students and young academics competent in building environmental awareness, knowledge of the green transition and skilled in sustainability transformation of societies both in Europe and Africa.

2.UnaVEx OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the UnaVEx project:

Objective 1: Equipping students across the globe with high-quality sustainability education

All Work Packages (WP) are united by the overarching objective of the UnaVEx project to equip students from across the European and Sub-Saharan Region with high-quality sustainability education in an interdisciplinary, international and intercultural context. At the same time, it aims to foster the development of digital, transversal and soft skills such as intercultural communication skills, language training and teamwork through Virtual Exchanges (VE). Objective 1 should be seen as a transversal, cross-cutting objective that guides the work of all work packages.

Measuring achievement: Unit is the number of students participating in the virtual exchanges with a baseline of 0 students and target value of 2 500 students.

Objective 2: Design of impactful virtual exchange framework for sustainability education

In Work Package 2 (WP2), UnaVEx aims to design an impactful virtual exchange framework for sustainability education and corresponding guidelines, co-designed by European and African scholars and virtual exchange experts. Such a framework will specifically look to provide guidance to European University Alliances in their international dimension as well as other strategic collaborations of universities active in the field of international sustainability education. In the context of Una Europa, this framework is expected to be taken up both internally within the alliance as well as scaled to collaborations with like-minded partners across other regions world-wide.

Measuring achievement: Finalised framework and guidelines. Baseline: no existing virtual exchange framework for sustainability education in the context of European University Alliances / virtual exchange collaboration with non-EU partners materials; target: 2 guides.

Objective 3: Training international moderators for sustainability education in a European and African context

Work Package 3 (WP3) will focus on the development of a high-quality training programme, tailored to the specific context of moderators for sustainability education in an interdisciplinary, international and intercultural context. This training will leverage existing training materials and resources across the partner institutions, complemented by a dedicated project-wide workshop. In the first instance, this training will benefit a set number of moderators from across the six participating institutions for online activities planned within the lifetime of this project. UnaVEx will specifically focus on training early-career researchers and students in the final phase of their studies, as they stand to benefit the greatest from such opportunities for transversal, digital and soft skills development in an interdisciplinary, international and intercultural context as they progress in their careers – whether inside or outside of academia. The training material and lessons will be co-designed based on the complementary expertise and experiences across the project consortium. Ultimately, the training has the potential to be taken up and scaled to other collaborations.

Measuring achievement: Unit is the number of trained moderators, baseline: 0, target: min 10 trained moderators per partner organization.

Objective 4: Educating the future generation of students and young academics about sustainability

At its core, Work Package 4 (WP4) will focus on developing the right skills, competences and capabilities for providing high-quality sustainability education to a large number of students from across the full partner institutions as well as associated partners. Virtual exchanges conducted within the UnaVEx project will be anchored in the state-of-the-art research conducted at the participating universities and latest pedagogical methods, ensured by active involvement of leading European and African academics in the field. This project will be open to students at all levels of higher education with a particular focus on students at Masters level across both the social sciences and humanities as well as the natural sciences. It aims to not only reach the 2500 students, as foreseen in this project, but open up further opportunities for students from associated partners and beyond. Ultimately, UnaVEx aims to initiate a multiplier effect across other international networks with the aim of increasing sustainability awareness and climate action in a larger group of students both in Europe and Africa in the long-term.

Measuring achievement: number of students participating in the online facilitated virtual exchanges and successfully completing the UnaVEx virtual exchange programme, thereby receiving the dedicated 'Global Sustainability Advocate' certificate. Baseline: 0 students, target: 2 500 students.

Objective 5: Scaling virtual exchange opportunities to various partnerships across the world

Work Package 5 (WP5), focused on the communication, dissemination and sustainability aspects, will not only facilitate the dissemination of project outputs and relevant information but also encourage the take up and scaling of actions to other higher education partnerships across the globe. In particular, UnaVEx will promote virtual exchanges as pathways to providing more inclusive, affordable and accessible international experiences to all types of students. In addition, it will focus on communicating the value of sustainability education conducted in an online facilitated format more broadly, and promote synergies with other projects and initiatives in the area of sustainability.

Measuring achievement: Unit for measuring: Number of national and international networks, alliances and higher education institutions engaged in Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa Region. Baseline: 0, target: 20

3. VIRTUAL EXCHANGE FRAMEWORK

During the three years of the project's lifespan (Jan 2024 - Jan 2027), UnaVEx aims to bring together **2500 higher education students** from across the partnership and actively train between **10-15 university staff per participating institution** (lecturers, teachers, researchers and others) as moderators of online exchanges. This project targets interested students at all levels of higher education but focuses particularly on students at Master's level. Furthermore, the project will look to empower students to later become moderators themselves and create an **active UnaVEx alumni community** with a virtual space to exchange beyond the limited lifetime of this project.

The basic scheme for becoming a Climate Advocate is illustrated in Figs.1 and 2: The student will first take the UnaEuropa "Introduction to Sustainability" MOOC (3 ECTS), followed by the UnaVEx Virtual Exchange (1 ETCS). Finally, the students will need to take at least a further 2 UnaEuropa MOOCs from the 4 available (Climate.now 2 ETCS; Biodiversity.now 2 ETCS; Political Economy of Sustainability 2 ETCS; Sustainability and the Arts 1 ETCS).

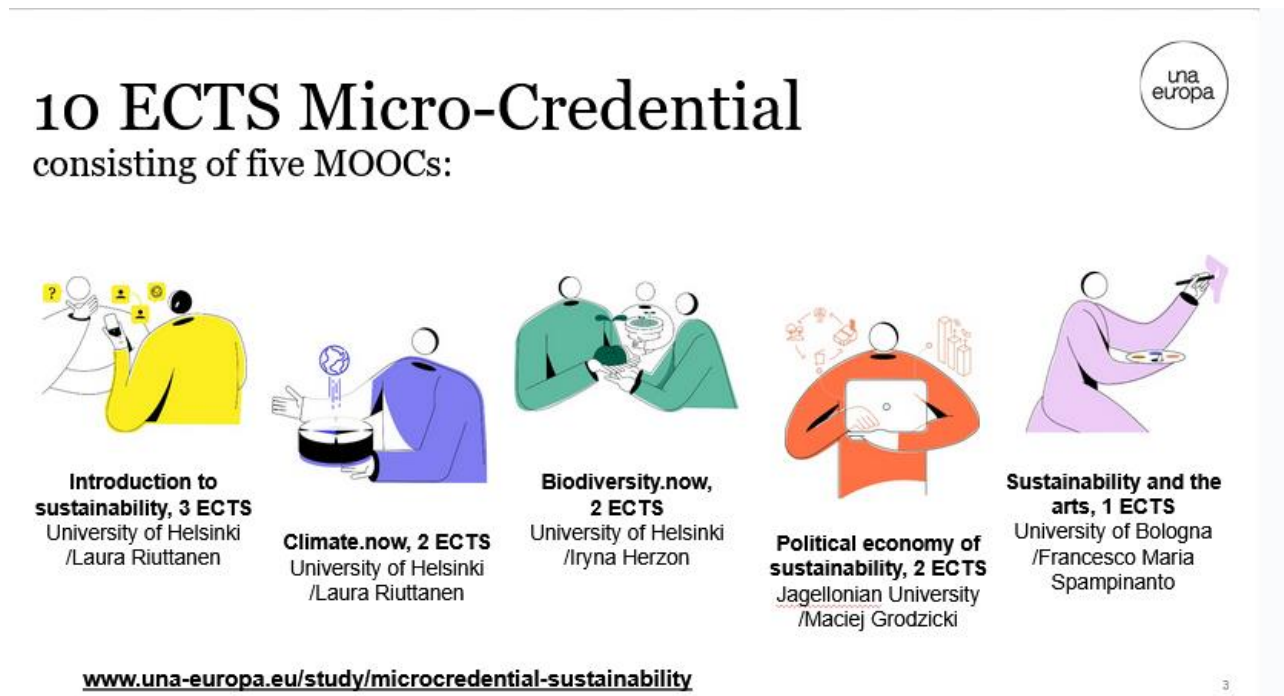


Fig. 1 - The five Micro-Credential MOOCs available by UnaEuropa.

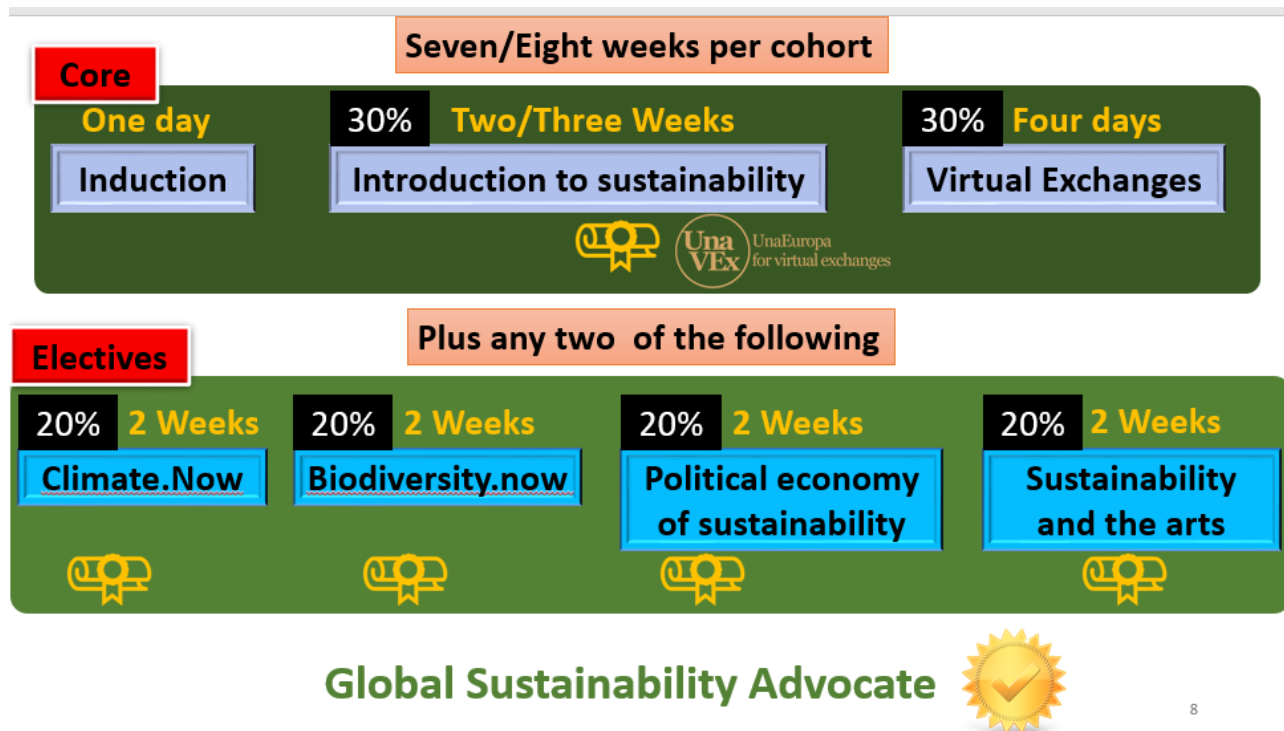


Fig. 2: The basic scheme for becoming a Climate Advocate (4 ETCS + 3 or 4 ETCS).

- ❖ In 2024-2027 UnaVex organises 5 iterations of the VE virtual workshops
- ❖ Students register for the Virtual Exchange workshop through the “Open University” of the University of Helsinki
- ❖ When the student is registered, (2 weeks) before the workshop the University of Helsinki opens the “DigiCampus” platform, where they can find the necessary background material for the workshop
 - ❖ 500 students will participate in each workshop.
- ❖ Joint lectures can be scheduled for students, after which they go to break-out rooms.
 - ❖ Small groups are 10 students and one trained moderator.
- ❖ In small groups, they discuss and go through a joint exercise related to sustainable development

The expressed aim of this project is to achieve parity in terms of participation, ensuring a **50% balance of both students and moderators** coming from the partner countries associated to the programme on the one hand and from the third countries not associated to the programme, Region 9 - Sub-Saharan Africa, on the other. This geographical balance - hand in hand with a strong commitment to achieving gender balance - of participating students and trained moderators is a priority for the UnaVEx project consortium.

UnaVEx will employ tools and tested methods and pedagogical expertise across the project consortium to co-design a **virtual exchange framework for international sustainability education**. Building on the **Una Europa Micro-credential in Sustainability**, this project will capitalize on the complementary expertise of the partner universities to co-create innovative Virtual Exchange (VE) interactions to the benefit of all students. Co-developed by three Una Europa partner universities, the Una Europa Micro-credential in Sustainability consists of five interconnected MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) covering environmental, economic, and social aspects of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Embedding the Micro-Credential provides this project with a solid digital platform and supporting materials to be used as a basis, while also opening up the possibility to award ECTS credits.

Within UNAVEX, the timeline of the Virtual Exchange Calls will be adjusted to the UnaEuropa online MOOCs’ annual schedule. All the current UnaEuropa on-line courses are continuously carried out and the courses are evenly distributed throughout the year (<https://www.una-europa.eu/study/microcredential-sustainability>)

During a three-year period, in total, 5 VE Calls will be announced (for First and Second semesters, with the first Call starting from February/March 2025). Each VE Call will invite 500 students from the Partners’ Universities as well as other Universities in European (50%) and Region 9 - Sub-Saharan Africa (50%), on the other.

The consortium will produce Virtual Exchange (VE) guidelines, which will include:

- VE implementation plan, including Integration of VE into curricula

- Code of conduct
- Calls for participation (for moderators and students), including selection criteria
- Recommendations regarding online communication, including use of digital tools, language barriers, etc.
- lessons-learned: existing VE initiatives

4. PROGRAM FOR VIRTUAL EXCHANGES

4.1 Structure of the Virtual Exchange

The Virtual Exchange component will be made up of 5 online synchronous sessions, of 3 hours each, and additional independent work developing climate action tasks. The first session will take place before the students engage with the Introduction to Sustainability MOOC. Before the first synchronous session, the students will be asked to introduce themselves asynchronously on Digicampus online learning platform, so that they can start getting to know their cohort and the moderators. During the first synchronous session, the educators (and moderators in their small groups) will introduce the resources, respond to students' expectations, clarify doubts and ensure everybody is onboard. This initial session aims to ensure engagement and commitment on the part of all those involved.

The students will then have **two weeks** to complete the "Introduction to Sustainability" MOOC, (<https://courses.mooc.fi/org/uh-inar/courses/introduction-to-sustainability>) and respond to questions and prompts in an online forum.

Finally, the students will meet for 4 weekly sessions of 3 hours each. Following a plenary intervention, the students will meet in small groups of 10-15 students from different partner and associated institutions, moderated by facilitators. During these group discussions, they will be able to explore different perspectives on the issue of sustainability, climate change, biodiversity, sustainable economy and the arts. On the latter aspect, the UnaVEx project consortium will look to collaborate with arts collectives from across the universities' ecosystems, such as the Ndaku Ya La Vie Est Belle Arts Collective. This way, the students will be able to build their knowledge and consider how their new understanding can develop into impactful action, both at a global and local level.

In addition to the 5 x 3-hour sessions, students will be expected to work independently for 10 additional hours to develop their climate action tasks (total 15 + 10 hours, corresponding to 1 ECTS).

The plenary interventions will include keynote lectures and activities that will help the students to investigate other perspectives on the topics presented in the Introduction to Sustainability MOOC, particularly those coming from Sub-Saharan Africa. The main idea is that students will experience the complexity of local and global environmental issues and climate change, and engage in discussions with students located in different geographical areas, in order to deepen their understanding on the issues from different perspectives and be able to take action within their communities.

Below is a tentative plan regarding the content of the virtual exchange sessions:

	Session 1 (pre-MOOC)	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5
Asynchronous preparation	Individual introduction on Digicampus	Complete the Introduction to Sustainability MOOC	tbd	tbd	tbd
Topic	Introduction to UnaVEx / MOOCs	Sustainability	Climate	Biodiversity	Political economy & art in sustainability
Plenary session	Presentation of Introductory MOOC and VE component	<plenary talk on sustainability >	<plenary talk on climate>	<plenary talk on biodiversity>	<plenary talk on political economy / art>
Resources					
Discussion in the small groups (questions below the timetable)	Getting to know one's small group; questions related to the themes of the virtual exchange; planning the action task.	Updating on the climate action task; questions related to <i>Introduction to Sustainability MOOC</i> .	Updating on the climate action task; questions related to the day's topic.	Updating on the climate action task; questions related to the day's topic.	Finalizing the climate action task; questions related to the day's topic.
Action task	Find one resource to share with your peers on a sustainability project in your local community, and one that involves people globally.	After brainstorming ideas, develop your specific climate action plan based on what you have learned during the sessions and on the specific community/communities involved.			

Questions for the small group discussions:

Session 1: Introduction to UnaVEx and the MOOCs (Mon. 24 Feb)

- 1) Round of introductions:
 - Home country, study background, interest/relationship to climate change and sustainability issues
- 2) What does sustainability mean to you?
- 3) How is climate change affecting you personally? And your local community?
- 4) Which global issues linked to sustainability are you familiar with? How do they affect/involve you?
- 5) Start planning how your group will approach and implement the climate action task.

Session 2: Sustainability (Fri. 7 March)

- 1) Weekly update on the action task.
- 2) How are sustainable development and the UN SDGs viewed and approached in your home country? What is your home country's SDG score? What do you think are the biggest accomplishments and challenges regarding the SDGs in your home country? Explore: <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/map>
- 3) Do you know what is the difference between the conceptions of weak and strong sustainability? Can you come up with examples of both views? What are some benefits and challenges regarding this dichotomy?
- 4) Which of the planetary boundaries are at the most urgent state? What do you think should be done to mitigate the challenge? Can you find links between your action task and the planetary boundaries?
- 5) How would you describe urbanisation in your city? Can you name some local sustainability issues?

Session 3: Climate (Fri. 14 Mar)

- 1) How is climate change impacting your everyday life and living environment?
- 2) Using the interactive map (<https://www.carbonmap.org/#>) to compare your home continents and countries on different parameters related to Climate change. What is the most surprising result? Can you notice some of the parameters' effect in your everyday life? If so, how?
- 3) CO2 emissions form 75 % of all greenhouse gas emissions. Coal, oil and natural gas are the biggest sources of global CO2 emissions. Using the interactive map, compare and discuss your home countries' rates of emissions. <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions>
- 4) What is the connection between the day's topic and your group's Climate Action task?

Session 4: Biodiversity (Fri. 21 Mar)

- 1) Based on the plenary talk and your previous knowledge, how do you understand the concept of biodiversity? Why is biodiversity important?
- 2) Looking at your home city, where would you say is the greatest biodiversity?
- 3) One way to demonstrate the importance of biodiversity is the classification of ecosystem services. Ecosystem services are benefits for humans that are provided by ecosystems and nature in general. Ecosystem services include, for example, supporting services (habitats) and provisioning services (food, for instance). Is the classification that emphasizes the benefits for humans sufficient in your opinion? Can you think of other reasons why it is important to protect biodiversity?
- 4) Shifting baseline means that your grandparents' childhood landscape is different from your childhood landscape. However, you both experience this landscape as normal and for this reason you may not fully understand the constantly growing deterioration of the environment. Can you come up with examples of your local nature's deterioration during your own lifetime? What about your parents or grandparents' lifetime?
- 5) What is the connection between the day's topic and your group's Climate Action task?

Session 5: Sustainability in the arts and political economy (Fri. 28 Mar)

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

- Margaret Mead

- 1) Can you name movies that deal with climate change or environmental change? What do they say about the issue? (Examples of popular films touching on sustainability issues: Wall-e, Don't look up!, Avatar, Mad Max ...).
- 2) Data related to climate change and biodiversity is typically illustrated using graphs and charts, helping to understand the quantitative information. Is the rhetoric of scientific objectivity enough when discussing sustainability issues? Are there other aspects to sustainability that this approach does not cover? Can you think of other ways of communicating and illustrating climate change, biodiversity and sustainability issues? (You can think of how the news, documentaries, movies or social media content portrait climate change and sustainability issues.)
- 3) Grassroots organizations have played a key role for several historical social changes. They have a central role in the current climate change discussion as well. Have you ever been part of a grassroots organization? What do you think of their power in influencing change?
- 4) Some grassroots organizations such as Extinction Rebellion use non-violent citizen disobedience (e.g. roadblock protests). What is your opinion on this kind of citizen disobedience in general? Is it an acceptable or efficient way to communicate the urgency of the climate crisis or other societal issues? Can you think of other historical events where citizen disobedience was used as a means to communicate societal demands?
- 5) What is the connection between the day's topic and your group's Climate Action task?

Suggested keynote speakers

UNAVEX will invite several keynote speakers from the participating countries and beyond. All the guest speakers have done significant work in the field of sustainability. Potential keynote speakers for UNAVEX include:

- Leila Benali, Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco (Morocco)
- Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (Denmark / Kenya)
- Ali Mohammed, Kenya's special envoy on climate change (Kenya)
- Tanseem Essop, Executive director of Climate Action Network - International (South Africa)
- Evans Njewa, Least Developed Countries' lead climate negotiator on climate finance (Zambia)
- Tarja Halonen, Former president of Finland, involved in the UN sustainability work (Finland)
- Lara Martins, Climate Executive, Youth20 G20 delegates (Brazil)
- Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Professor in social anthropology in University of Oslo (Norway)

4.2. Pedagogical approach: Engaging head, hands and heart for transformative sustainability learning

'Head, hands and heart' is a pedagogical approach for transformative sustainability learning. In this approach, learning processes are rooted in individuals' cognitive (head), psychomotor (hands) and affective (heart) domains (Sipos et al., 2009).

Applying these principles to UNAVEX,

- *Head* refers to learning MOOCs.
- *Hands* refer to the Climate Action task to be planned and completed during and in between the VE sessions.
- *Heart* refers to interaction and discussions during the Virtual Exchange Week.

4.3 Dates of the VE implementation

After the first Pre-MOOC session, the virtual exchange sessions will be organized once a week for four consecutive Fridays. Due to practical reasons, the weekly format makes it easier to attain a larger number of participants compared to a one-week VE. The five-week format is also more flexible as it enables to make possible improvements and adjustments already during the first VE.

The virtual exchanges will take place:

- 1st VE : Feb-March 2025
Dates of the sessions: 24 Feb, 7 March, 14 Mar, 21 Mar and 28 Mar.
- 2nd VE: Oct-Nov 2025

- 3rd VE: Feb-March 2026
- 4rd /5th: September-December 2026

4.4 Learning outcomes for the VE component

The 5 MOOCs offered within the Microcredential have their specific Learning outcomes (LOs). The VE component adds to these outcomes with the following:

After completing the VE, students will be able to:

- 1. Explain the basic concepts linked to sustainability (climate change, biodiversity, sustainable economy and sustainability in the arts), and how these impact societies, globally and locally.
- 2. Critically reflect on their own views on sustainability, resilience and climate justice, and how these views have changed as a result of the VE.
- 3. Explain different international and intercultural perspectives on sustainability, climate change, biodiversity, sustainable economy and sustainability in the arts, with reference to different European and Sub-Saharan perspectives.
- 4. Explain the difference between working face-to-face and in digital environments also in terms of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- 5. Carry out teamwork and manage small projects in diverse international/intercultural settings.
- 6. Communicate and present their work in English, while activating their plurilingual repertoires to communicate effectively with their peers.

4.5 'Global Sustainability Advocate' certificate

An **interdisciplinary and international online environment** is key to teaching about interrelations of global challenges and the complexity of achieving common sustainability goals in all parts of the globe. It is precisely the value of international, intercultural and interdisciplinary exchange that will form the basis of the UnaVEx Virtual Exchange programme described above.

Following the initial part of the programme (Introduction MOOC + VE), students will have the option to dive more deeply into different aspects of sustainability from ecological, social and economic perspectives with the option to select between four different MOOCs:

- ❖ Climate.now
- ❖ Biodiversity.now
- ❖ Political Economy and Sustainability
- ❖ Sustainability and the Arts.

Upon completion of all steps of the programme, students will receive a dedicated '**Global Sustainability Advocate**' certificate. This certificate will attest that students have successfully passed the UnaVEx virtual exchange programme, equipped with skills to critically analyse issues related to sustainability in diverse economic, socio-cultural, technological, political, legal, and scientific contexts. In addition University of Helsinki provides one credit point via Open University.

4.6 Recruiting moderators & their training


Moderators will be recruited to facilitate the small-group online discussions during the VE sessions. The call for Moderators will specify the ideal profile, which includes:

- Having a high level of proficiency in English and/or French
- Having fluent English, French language skills are an advantage (Virtual Exchange Week and MOOC materials are in English)
- Having at least a Bachelor's degree (preferably Master's or PhD)
- Having some experience moderating online discussions, or the motivation to learn
- Having an interest in issues related to sustainability
- Being available during the Training and VE periods, preferably for two iterations of the VE.



Moderators will be offered training including the technical skills (using Zoom), soft skills (handling challenges and conflicts effectively) and content, e.g., group exercise based on issues related to the plenary talk; ensuring ethical and responsible behaviour online.

For recruiting the moderators, an internal call text was distributed among the UNAVEX partner universities in June. For the internal call, each partner university aims to recruit 10-15 moderators by August 27th 2024. After this, the call for moderators will be made public. Moderators can and are encouraged to facilitate more than one of the UNAVEX virtual exchange units.

Call text for moderators



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Join the Moderators' training Program for Una Europa Virtual Exchanges for Sustainability (UnaVEx)

Call for Moderators is open – opportunity for work, training and credits!

Are you passionate about fostering **international connections** between **Europe and Africa** and facilitating meaningful discussions? Are you eager to take on a leadership role in sustainability within a **dynamic online community**? If so, join our team of moderators for the UnaVEx virtual exchange!

As a UnaVEx moderator you play a central role in **creating an engaging environment** for students **worldwide**. You host interactive Zoom sessions, facilitate **interdisciplinary** discussions in sustainability topics, and inspire active participation. You gain valuable skills in **communication** and **leadership** through comprehensive training. If you're passionate about promoting collaboration, diversity, and sustainability, **apply now** to shape the future of virtual exchange and make a global impact.

As a **Moderator** you will:



- Gain experience on remote facilitation and education
- Participate in Moderators' training @Digicampus online platform
- Host for two or more iterations, each 5 sessions (2-3 hours) for your own intercultural group of students (approx. 10 students)
- Facilitate active and fair discussion forums for all participants
- Learn about the *Introduction to sustainability MOOC*

The 5 sessions to be hosted by moderators during 1st Virtual Exchange will be in February and March 2025 (Fri. 24 Feb, Fri. 7 March, Fri. 14 Mar, Fri. 21 Mar, Fri. 28 Mar).



Apply no later than September 30th, 2024!

To enroll fill in the form:
<https://forms.gle/qEM4GQczgKQZAE48>

Dates for the following Virtual Exchanges have not been decided yet. Moderators will be able to acquire 3 ECTS point credits from open university by moderating at least 2 iterations of the virtual exchange.

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The skills expected from the moderators are:

- English proficiency
- Comfortable in leading group discussion and interacting online
- Open-minded and motivated about multicultural online exchange
- Interest in sustainability topics

About the training. An introduction of the moderator role and training will be provided during a two-hour session at the beginning of December 2024. Several sessions (4 x 2h) of online training for moderators will be held in January-February 2025. The moderators who subscribe engage themselves to follow the online 3 ECTS MOOC Introduction to sustainability (<https://courses.mooc.fi/org/uh-inar/courses/introduction-to-sustainability>).


Apply no later than September 30th, 2024!

- Enroll as a moderator, please fill in the form: <https://forms.gle/qEM4GQczgKQZAE48>
- Stay updated on UnaVEx https://www.atm.helsinki.fi/unavex/?page_id=116

More about UnaVEx:
Una Europa Virtual Exchanges for Sustainability (UnaVEx) is an international, interdisciplinary and intercultural online bridge between European and African students for sustainability education. UnaVEx is a EU-funded ERASMUS+ project coordinated by University of Helsinki and other leading -intensive universities in Europe and Africa. UnaVEx offers accessible, affordable and sustainable international online student exchange opportunities to all students interested in Global Sustainability education.

The first UnaVEx virtual exchange will be held on **February 24th, March 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th, in 2025**. In total, five iterations of the virtual exchange will be organized in 2025-2027. UnaVEx aims to increase **environmental awareness**, knowledge of the **green transition** and **skills in sustainability transformation** of young generations and societies both in Europe and Africa. The virtual exchange looks at sustainability from economic, socio-cultural, technological, political, legal and scientific perspectives.

For any inquiries, please contact: Julia Karhumaa, julia.karhumaa@helsinki.fi



4.7 Recruiting students to participate in the VE programme

A Call-for-Students will be issued among Partner and Associated institutions in order to recruit the 5 cohorts, as defined in the project proposal, following the steps described below:

- Preparatory work for opening “Students’ DigiCampus” for registration and materials organised by the University of Helsinki
- Preparation of the Call text
- Opening 1st Call-for-Virtual Exchange
 - Use of networks for distributing the call
 - UnaEuropa Associated partners’ universities (see Appendix)
 - UnaEuropa - Africa Working Group
 - UnaEuropa–Africa Partnership African universities:
 - Eduardo Mondlane University
 - Kampala International University
 - Makerere University
 - University of Ghana
 - University of Johannesburg (UnaVEx partner)
 - Université de Kinshasa (UnaVEx partner)
 - University of Nairobi (UnaVEx partner)
 - University of the Witwatersrand

- 1st Virtual Exchange week in February-March 2025

Call text for students



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Join the UNAVEX virtual exchange!
Una Europa Virtual Exchanges for Sustainability

Call for Students is open!

Are you interested in **global sustainability** and **international environments**? Have you considered applying for a **student exchange**? If so, UnaVEx virtual exchange might be just for you!

UnaVEx offers a versatile look into sustainability – topics of the virtual exchange include:

- Introduction to sustainability
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- Climate change
- Biodiversity
- The intersections of political economy and the arts in sustainability



UnaVEx is a five-week long virtual exchange unit consisting of a total of five sessions. During the virtual exchange you will attend **inspiring plenary talks** on different perspectives to sustainability. You will also be introduced to your own **international small group** and a moderator. In your groups you will discuss and develop a collaborative, sustainability-themed action task.

No previous sustainability or natural science studies are required. UnaVEx is a platform for **multidisciplinary** and **intercultural** encounters for university students interested in sustainability and the future of our common planet. UnaVEx welcomes students from EU and African nations, building a bridge between the continents for sustainable futures.

Co-funded by the European Union




VIRTUAL BRIDGE
BETWEEN EUROPEAN & AFRICAN STUDENTS
FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES



UnaVEx is organized by:

- University of Helsinki (Finland)
- University of Bologna (Italy)
- KU Leuven (Belgium)
- University of Johannesburg (South Africa)
- University of Nairobi (Kenya)
- University of Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo)

WHEN: 24. Feb – 28. Mar 2025
PLACE: Online on Zoom
COMPLETION METHOD: online participation and a collaborative group assignment.
REGISTER ON DIGICAMPUS, course name: UH: 2. UnaVEx Virtual Exchange 1
<https://digicampus.fi/course/view.php?id=5314>

Course key:
WHO CAN APPLY: BSc, MSc, PhD, PostDoc students
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 30 Sep 2024
LANGUAGE: English
COST: no fee

More about UnaVEx:
Una Europa Virtual Exchanges for Sustainability (UnaVEx) is an international, interdisciplinary and intercultural online bridge between European and African students for sustainability education. UnaVEx is a EU-funded ERASMUS+ project coordinated by University of Helsinki and other leading -intensive universities in Europe and Africa. UnaVEx offers accessible, affordable and sustainable international online student exchange opportunities to all students interested in Global Sustainability education.

The first UnaVEx virtual exchange will be held on **February 24th, March 7th, 14th, 21st, 24th, in 2025**. In total, five iterations of the virtual exchange will be organized in 2025-2027. UnaVEx aims to increase **environmental awareness**, knowledge of the **green transition** and **skills in sustainability transformation** of young generations and societies both in Europe and Africa. The virtual exchange looks at sustainability from economic, socio-cultural, technological, political, legal and scientific perspectives.

- UNA VEX website: <https://www.atm.helsinki.fi/unavex/>
- Stay updated: https://www.atm.helsinki.fi/unavex/?page_id=116
- For any inquiries, please contact: Julia Karhumaa, julia.karhumaa@helsinki.fi

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4.8 Technical setup

- Selecting and installing the e-platforms and e-tools (e.g. Open University DigiCampus, Flinga, Zoom).
- Selecting approaches and technical tools to overcome language barriers.
- Recruiting technical staff for the VEs to support stable and effective technical connections and communication channels.
- All the materials for the VEs as well as the access to zoom sessions are located on DigiCampus online learning platform (<https://digicampus.fi/>). The moderators and students will have their separate course pages on the platform.

4.9 Evaluation and assessment of the VE programme

Students will be asked to complete pre- and post-questionnaires with practical and motivational questions, as well as feedback questions. The feedback collected using e-forms will be used to fine-tune the following iterations, and the virtual exchange framework in general.

In addition to developing the following iterations, the survey results will be utilized for a published paper and Julia Karhumaa's (UH) PhD research.

APPENDIX UnaVEx Associated partners

Associated partners

The UnaVEx project is supported by all Una Europa partner universities as well as Una Europa vzw, the legal entity of the alliance, as associated partners. Concretely, the associated partners are expected to

- Support the overall visibility of the UnaVEx project, leveraging institutional platforms as well as links to relevant national, European and international networks and initiatives
- Promote UnaVEx virtual exchange opportunities to their respective student communities, opening up further opportunities for students and extending the potential reach of the project
- Contribute to the communication, dissemination and sustainability dimensions of this project, encouraging the uptake and scalability of UnaVEx project outputs

If successful, the UnaVEx project will build a more comprehensive approach to reach out to further partners, in particular in Africa to ensure the involvement of further interested stakeholders. The partners in the Una Europe – Africa Partnership will be approached in this regard. The 1st online meeting with the Associated Partners will take place in September 2024.

Una Europa vzw

Una Europa brings together 11 leading research-intensive universities from all corners of Europe: Freie Universität Berlin, Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, University College Dublin/An Coláiste Olliscole Baile Átha Claithe, The University of Edinburgh, Helsingin Yliopisto, Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie, Universiteit Leiden, KU Leuven, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Université Paris 1 Panthéon – Sorbonne and Universität Zürich. The Una Europa community spans more than half a million students, 100,000 members of staff and 10 languages, grounded in over 1,000 years of collective heritage. The alliance brings together universities with global reputation and reach, who each contribute to a socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse Una Europa in a unique way. The Una Europa partner universities stand together to face the global and societal challenges of our time and believe in the power of international cooperation as the best means to realise and promote our values, both within Europe and beyond.

Freie Universität Berlin (FUB)

Freie Universität Berlin was founded in 1948 by students and professors as a response to reprisals faced by critical students at the traditional Berlin university, at that time called 'Universität unter

den Linden', which was located in the Soviet sector of the divided city. The US Allies and Berlin politicians approved of the plans for founding a free university. This paved the way for Freie Universität to become an internationally recognized university. Within Una Europa, FUB leads the alliance's Sustainability and Climate Protection Task Force, based on the university's experience as a European frontrunner in the area of sustainability.

University College Dublin (UCD)

University College Dublin (UCD) is one of Europe's leading research-intensive universities; an environment where undergraduate education, postgraduate studies, research, innovation and community engagement form a dynamic spectrum of activity. UCD is Ireland's most globally engaged university with over 33,000 students drawn from 144 countries, including almost 4,000 students based at our overseas campuses.

University of Edinburgh (UEDIN)

The University of Edinburgh (UEDIN) is the sixth oldest university in the UK and the oldest civic foundation in the English-speaking world. Today, the University is home to over 45,000 students spread across five campuses. UEDIN has a deep and long standing relationship with Africa - The University has collaborated on 3,000 research projects with 84 institutions across Africa in the past ten years and has a community of over 3,600 African alumni across 45 countries.

Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie (JU)

Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie is a leading Polish higher education institution. It is a comprehensive university, where excellence in research is combined with the highest quality education, innovation and responsible social engagement. It is a place where the rich and creative history of one of the oldest universities in Europe blends with state-of-the-art research infrastructure, innovative technology and future-oriented thinking.

Leiden University (ULEI)

Universiteit Leiden was founded in 1575 and is one of the leading international research universities in Europe. The motto of Universiteit Leiden is 'Praesidium Libertatis', or 'Bastion of Freedom'. The university has over 7100 staff members and 32 800 students. Universiteit Leiden is ranked amongst the top 100 universities and part of a number of international networks of universities. Within Una Europa, Leiden University leads the alliance's International Task Force, which sets the strategic direction for Una Europa's international collaboration dimension.

Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM)

Universidad Complutense de Madrid dates back to the 13th century. The original Ciudad Universitaria campus was founded in 1927 with the goal of merging education, science and culture. Its graduates are given 'lifelong training' that furnishes them with professional skills allied to their chosen fields of work and alongside their academic studies.

Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Founded in 1253, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne is one of the oldest universities in the world. The policy of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne is to conduct excellent interdisciplinary research and learning. It has close and long-standing ties with 400 universities around the world and is a member of international

networks. The overall goal is to provide researchers and students with a unique opportunity to interact with a broad and global network.

University of Zurich (UZH)

Universität Zürich (UZH) is committed to the free and open pursuit of scholarship and fosters the values of diversity, interdisciplinarity and scientific discourse. With more than 28 000 students, 9000 staff and more than 800 professors, UZH is Switzerland's largest university. Founded in 1833, UZH was Europe's first university founded by the will of the people. Research, teaching, continued education and services are the key tasks of UZH.