Case Study: CHARM European University

Creating transdisciplinary, trans-institutional, pan-European Knowledge Creating Teams (KCTs) to design and develop a Master’s in Global Challenges for Sustainability

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CHALLENGE

To pilot a transdisciplinary university structure (European University Alliance CHARM-EU) through the creation of a Master’s programme in Global Challenges for Sustainability that:

- implemented transdisciplinarity through challenge driven approach and challenge-based learning (CBL);
- gained consensus and full support of all partners (Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, University of Barcelona, University of Montpellier and Eötvös Loránd University);
- supported policy – European mission and global societal challenges linked to sustainability;
- utilised existing teaching staff from partners;
- connected the curriculum with the research activities of partners;
- engaged extra-academic actors;
- maximised the knowledge base and strengths of partners;
- supported and produced students to address global challenges.
Global challenges are complex problems that require equally complex networks of people, ideas and actions.
DEVELOPING MASTER’S CONTENT THROUGH KCTS

**Figure 1: Structure and composition of Food theme KCT**

**Figure 2: Curriculum design blueprint for the Master’s in Global Challenges for Sustainability**
1. **Protecting innovation** This was a pilot but also a Master’s that would be operationalised. Tension between innovation and quality assurance; between existing governance and ideal modelling; between national/European awarding regulations and experimentation.

2. **Staff recruitment and resourcing** Clarity and uniformity regarding resourcing of staff from the outset.

3. **Curriculum development** Agreement on and creation of working definition of transdisciplinarity (TD); clarity on importance of and role of facilitators; more time; KCT training first (TD and CBL); review and agree curriculum design approach and sequence; clarify interplay between TD framework/epistemology and challenges as pedagogical tool.

4. **Extra-academic actors** Involve extra-academic actors from the outset.
1. What are the barriers to transdisciplinarity in your institution?