Educating Planners for the New Challenges of Sustainability, Knowledge and Governance: Report from a EU/US Exploratory Collaborative Project in Planning Education

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Content

- Atlantis Programme and Plan-Ed project: rationale and activities
- Project outcomes
- Analysis: parameters for building transnational courses in planning
- Conclusion: reflections on project and Atlantis funding stream for planning education: what have we learnt?
Atlantis: addressing challenges of globalisation through education policy

- Neoliberal rationale: economic cooperation, economic growth => education sector will deliver skills and reinforce knowledge base economies, answer transnational and global agenda

- To meet evaluators’ criteria: transnational tuning of learning outcomes and planning skills

- EU and US funding

- Bottom-up approach/seed funding for policy measure
PLAN-ED project

- €70000 + $70000+ institutional funding
- Partners: VCU, PSU, UWE, LUH - with city links

- exposure of faculty to local planning practices
- Enhancing teaching and research
- model for transnational planning skills, joint provisions

- 4 themed one week seminars+ staff exchange
  - Sprawl
  - Urban regeneration
  - Public health and planning
  - Governance
Results and outcomes

✓ Seed funding for identifying common challenges and skills needed for planners to deliver sustainable communities

✓ Exposed teaching staff and students to different planning cultures, professions, practice (studios, outreach)

✓ Internationalisation of curriculum

✓ Long-term plans for webinars, distance learning, exchanges
What we did not do

Little resources to reflect on theoretical issues for integrating planning curricula and developing mobility

- Validity of transnational planning?
- Identity of planning as an academic subject and a profession?
- Politics and economics of course development

How to reconcile:

- Need to respond to market and need for new skills and
- Scope of transnational planning research and skills required by planning practice and profession
Validity of transnational planning ideas?

Validity of “planning knowledge” sharing, transnationality of curriculum/and mobility

➢ Role of planning? Think global, act local… spatial justice, healthy and sustainable cities and economic growth (Healy and Upton, 2010)

⇒ Planning culture, local contexts?

➢ Risk if ignored? Policy tourism
Identity of planning as an academic subject/profession in comparative contexts

Are roles similar in USA and Europe? Revisit Myers’s anchor points in JPER (1997) in the age of social networks and global warming... and politics:

- improvement of human settlements
- interconnections among distinct community facets
- future and pathways of change over time
- identification of diversity of needs and consequences in human settlements
- open participation in decision-making
- linking knowledge and collective action

+ compare US and EU sets of values for the profession
Conclusion on PLAN-ED - I

✓ Fit the conditions for a policy-orientated measure or policy change: basis for change = set of common problems

✓ Knowledge sharing first

✓ Exploratory exercise: examining planning practice across continents... and inform a theoretical comparative model that would support knowledge exchange...
Conclusion on PLAN-ED - II

- How can we ensure that our graduates leave with more than a toolbox of analytical and presentational abilities?
- How can we connect them to the values of the field and making them more effective idealists?
- What is the appropriate balance between structure and interdisciplinarity?
- Are we teaching practice or research?
- Are we promoting bureaucracy or advancing a progressive agenda?
Conclusion on Atlantis

- Different targets for scientific and social science subjects
- Consider structure of Higher Education in different contexts
- Move away from market driven rationale
- At least introduce sustainability targets
Thank you

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