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Sustainable Development in The Academic Community as an Opportunity to Develop The Awareness of Urban and Rural Residents

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Abstract The purpose of the article is to present the activities carried out by the Warsaw School of Economics, including the Department of Economics and Finance of the Local Government, aimed at both activities aimed at the diversified development of the broader sense - the activities of the Universities in this respect and in the strict sense, i.e. the activities of one of the departments, i.e. the Department of Economics and Finance of the Local Government within research and development at the local government level. The activities in the area of sustainable development include the membership to the Sustainable Development Goals Accord, the seat of the Polish branch of OIKOS International . On the other hand, activities in the field of sustainable development strictly mean activities in the field of research and development as well as conducting lectures and postgraduate studies in the field of sustainable development in the broad sense of the word. These activities are carried out by the mentioned department. The activities are therefore implemented on a large scale in order to increase the promotion of the idea of sustainable development in order to support the idea of sustainable development at every possible level, from national to local.

Keyword:

sustainable development, Warsaw School of Economics, Department of Economics and Finance of Local Government, finance- technology, green energy, suburbanization

1. Introduction

The activities of the Warsaw School of Economics in the area of sustainable development as it was mentioned in abstract include the membership of the Sustainable Development Goals Accord - an agreement of the international academic and scientific community established to implement the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the seat of the Polish branch of OIKOS International an international student organization that seeks

to strengthen sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship among tomorrow's leaders and decision makers, by sensitizing students of economics and management to sustainable development issues. On the other hand, activities in the field of sustainable development strictly mean activities in the field of research and development as well as conducting lectures and postgraduate studies in the field of sustainable development in the broad sense of the word. These activities are carried out by the Department of Economics and Finance of the Local Government. In the area of these activities, the research project "Location of local government support instruments for SMEs operating on the basis of the model of multi-level regional management (REGIOGMINA)" is carried out on a wide scale, not only national but also international, in cooperation with the local government and another university in Poland. The statutory study "Suburbanization processes in selected urban agglomerations in Poland - assessment of the condition and challenges for the future" is also carried out, as well as postgraduate studies focused on the development of knowledge in the field of sustainable development in: Waste Management Studies, Studies of Local Government Managers, Studies in Spatial Economy so important in the process of sustainable development, both in the city and in the countryside, as well as studies in modern finance, i.e. finance-technology, which in the era of COVID-19 and non-contact transactions, due to health protection, are in the lead, i.e.: Postgraduate studies –“Finance technology in a Global Monetary Policy” and postgraduate studies in modern management methods, i.e. “Corporate governance, risk and compliance management” . It is worth emphasizing that due to the fact that the Department of Economics and Finance of the Local Government has scientists who also deal with the broadly understood issues of renewable energy sources: wind, photo-v, sun energy, biofuel in the near future, it is planned to open postgraduate studies in this field, i.e. "Green Energy Management".

The activities of the university and the department itself are therefore implemented on a large scale in order to increase the promotion of the idea of sustainable development in order to support the idea of sustainable development for the "green world" at every possible level, from national to local and through a number of market elements. So let's see how all what it was already mentioned looks like.

2. Warsaw School of Economics and its impact on the sustainable development

On November 7, 2018, the Warsaw School of Economics was the first Polish university to join the Sustainable Development Goals Accord - an agreement of the international academic and scientific community established to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. This initiative was undertaken due to the key role of science and education in the implementation of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations for 2015-2030. SDG Accord is a mutual obligation of the participants of the agreement to implement and report actions for sustainable development and to share good practices in this area. The Sustainable Development Goals Accord, of which SGH became a partner, is an agreement between the academic and scientific community, initiated by the British organization Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges and the Australian-New Zealand organization - Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability. So far, SDG Accord has been signed by 92 teaching and research institutions from 6 continents. In addition to the Warsaw School of Economics, the members of the agreement include, among others: Boston University, Business School Lausanne, Kedge Business School, Kyoto University, University of Copenhagen, University of Edinburgh, University of Manchester, as

well as partner universities of our School - Finnish Aalto University and the New Zealand University of Otago. In September 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including 169 detailed tasks. The challenges are to be a continuation of the Millennium Sustainable Development Goals for 2015-2030. The following priorities were formulated:

1. Eradicate poverty in all its forms worldwide.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and better nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Provide healthy lives for all people of all ages and promote well-being.
4. Provide quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.
5. Achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
6. Provide all people with access to water and sanitation through the sustainable management of water resources.
7. Ensure access for all to sources of stable, sustainable and modern energy at affordable prices.
8. Promote stable, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all people.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequalities within and between countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Provide patterns of sustainable consumption and production.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its consequences.
14. Conserve oceans, seas and marine resources and use them in a sustainable way.
15. Protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, the sustainable management of forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse soil degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, ensure access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

SDG Accord was initiated to emphasize and strengthen the key role that universities play in sustainable development by educating and educating young people, creating the conditions for debate and the added value generated for governments, business and society at large. The characteristics of the tasks of higher education mean that they are identified as potentially key agents of change. In addition, the goal of the authors of the Agreement was the mutual obligation of the universities joining the initiative to undertake activities for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to share good practices with associated institutions. Each year, the Warsaw School of Economics, together with other approved partners of the Agreement, will report on progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and share good practices in this regard. On the basis of reports submitted by individual universities, as in previous years, reviews of the overall progress in the higher education sector will be prepared, and later presented at the UN High Level Political Forum.[1]

In addition, at the Warsaw School of Economics there is the aforementioned Polish branch of Oikos International, an international student organization inspired by the idea of sustainable development, which was established to support environment-friendly

entrepreneurship and sensitize economic students to the problem of sustainable economic growth. Oikos Warszawa operates as the SKN Sustainable Development OIKOS at the Warsaw School of Economics, currently has about 30 active members: students of the Warsaw School of Economics, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Warsaw University of Technology and the University of Warsaw. The main goal of the organization is to integrate issues related to sustainable growth into a common field of knowledge and introduce its teaching to the education process at leading economic universities. The activity of Oikos Warszawa includes the organization of lectures, conferences and workshops on pro-social and pro-ecological issues, as well as the implementation of projects aimed at the practical application of the principles of sustainable development.[2]

It is also worth mentioning that as part of the global activities of universities aimed at promoting the awareness and importance of the idea of sustainable development by the academic community, seminar meetings were organized in 2018/2019 as part of the school of energy project, where topics related to renewable energy sources were discussed, including: in support systems for renewable energy sources in Poland in 2018. [3] It is also worth mentioning that the university conducts research in various colleges on issues related to sustainable development from various points of view, and then they are presented in the form of a monograph.

3. The Department of Economics and Finance of the Local Government and its impact on a local sustainable development

The Department of Economics and Finance of Local Government was established in the summer semester of 2001. Its establishment was a response to the needs of the practice of managing the economy and finances of local government in Poland as well as scientific research in this field. The Warsaw School of Economics had an appropriately educated staff, most of whom graduated in the field of urban economy, and gained practical experience in the field of local government economy during foreign internships. (USA, Germany, Austria) and in the implementation of USAID projects in Poland. Thanks to this, the employees of the Department could competently implement projects for local government units and conduct research enriching the knowledge about the problems of functioning and development of these units. The activities of the Department follow the tradition of scientific research and self-government education initiated at Warsaw School of Economics in 1915. by the Department of Communal Policy (in the interwar period, there was a local government at the Warsaw School of Economics), and after the war, from 1953, continued by the Department of Urban Economy, the Department of Housing Policy, and then by the Institute of Urban Economy and Housing Policy. In its current research, the Department is looking for solutions that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local government economy management and contribute to the improvement of the quality of its services. Its mission is to serve practice and management theory in this field.[4]

3.1. Department research in the field of sustainable development

At present, the department of economics and finance of local government actively participates as one of the contractors in the project: "Placing at the level of local governments support instruments for SMEs operating on the basis of the model of multi-level regional management (REGIOGMINA)" which research results may have a significant impact on further sustainable development in the area of small and medium-sized enterprises, both in cities and in the countryside.

The project provides for the development of methods and instruments of support for the growth of competitiveness and innovation of SMEs on the part of local governments operating under multi-level management with the voivodeship self-government and its institutions. Delivery time - 32 months. In the initial phase of the project implementation - the research phase, a methodology will be developed that will allow for the detailed identification of companies on the regional scale, taking into account their territorial and industry distribution, as well as their development dynamics. As a result of research and analyzes, an up-to-date image of companies in the voivodeship will be prepared, presenting their productivity, competitiveness, innovation and cooperative relationships. The existing support instruments for SMEs will also be subject to identification and evaluation, as a result of which recommendations necessary for the possible introduction of the identified instruments and mechanisms relating to the institutional, regulatory and legal sphere will be created. Based on desk-research and questionnaires, the methodology and formula of the voivodship economic development program will be developed, defining a practical and measurable way of using the export and investment potential of the region. It will define the role of SMEs in its development in cooperation and cooperation with key companies in the region for the growth of investments, exports and product innovation, using the endogenous development potential of the voivodeship. The developed method of collecting, processing and sharing information on company management and their competitive position for selected industries, types of activity and subregions of the voivodeship will constitute the assumptions for the functioning of the Regional Economic Observatory as a permanently updated regional development information resource for self-government companies and support institutions. In the second phase - the phase of preparation for implementation, questionnaire surveys for focus groups will allow to assess the adequacy of instruments in relation to the structure of companies and support institutions, as well as activities recommended in the economic program, while the pilot will check the effectiveness of the proposed and created support instruments for SME, Regional Economic Observatory and other proposed solutions.[5]

The Department is also starting statutory research in the area of suburbanization entitled "Suburbanization processes in selected urban agglomerations in Poland - assessment of the condition and challenges for the future". These studies are to show the more and more common in Poland the phenomenon of depopulation of cities in favor of living in rural areas. It is worth emphasizing that the COVID-19 epidemic only intensified this phenomenon, as the overwhelming majority of people who have switched to remote work begin to look for green areas to live in. Remote work living in an agglomeration where the possibility of good or very good internet in rural areas is not slowly becoming a problem in Poland, it seems to be more and more attractive. Living and working remotely Living in rural areas guarantees not only better housing conditions for less money, but also lower maintenance costs than in the city. Therefore, it seems that the statutory research that is to be carried out in the near future by the employees of this department also shows that the awareness of sustainable development and issues related to living in green areas should dominate not only in Polish but also in other international communities.

3.2. Activities of the Department in the field of academic education in the field of sustainable development

The Department of Economics and Finances of the Local Government consists of employees of both theoreticians and practitioners in the area of activities related to

sustainable development in a wide spectrum. The Department offers postgraduate studies in the following areas related to sustainable development, including related issues, e.g. in the area of environmental protection. The aim of the postgraduate studies: Waste Management is to provide students with modern knowledge on the functioning of waste management - with particular emphasis on the aspects of municipal enterprises. Participants will use the acquired competences while managing a waste management company, cooperating with local government units and with the public and private sector cooperating with waste management and environmental protection - "My father always scared me that if I was rude, he would send me to collect the waste. I wasn't always polite. Dad didn't keep his word, so I finally sent myself to the waste management industry. I guess it's an industry for naughty people who see it as something more than just rubbish. It's mainly new jobs, energy from rainfall, legal solutions and how to "scratch", we will come to a new model of urban economy - green cities ". The waste management industry is the basis of the future model of urban management. Waste management is not only about enterprises, it is also a commune that must manage the entire process of waste collection and management.[6]

Another postgraduate program implemented by this Department is postgraduate studies in Spatial Management. It is a training program that provides interdisciplinary preparation of public administration staff to perform managerial and executive functions in the offices of local government units and in other entities specializing in spatial management issues. The education process covers a wide range of issues including: legal foundations of spatial management, social and economic conditions for its implementation, financial and economic aspects, as well as selected elements of strategic management, a local government unit. The advantage of the studies is the skillful combination of the theory and practice of the discussed issues, so important in the event of sustainable development and living in harmony with the nature to which so much owes. advisory services cooperating with communes, poviats and local government voivodships, design offices, as well as other people interested in acquiring and deepening knowledge in the field of spatial management. The education process provides knowledge in the field of preparing draft spatial development plans for the voivodeship, study of the conditions and directions of spatial development of a commune and local spatial development plan, evaluation of investment projects and preparation of strategic management documents for a commune.[7]

It should also be noted that activities in the field of sustainable development in academia cannot be carried out without the appropriate managerial staff who will be able to manage properly in this area both at the global and local and level, which is why the Department focuses on educating local government managers. Postgraduate studies of global management: Corporate governance, risk and compliance management which is a newly developed comprehensive training program. The aim of the studies is to enhance the ability of students working primarily in legal, compliance, risk, audit departments, other control functions as well as managers and company directors. Real-life business cases from different business sectors will be used during the studies to increase practitioners' awareness of corporate governance, risk and compliance management. The studies will help students understand ethics and compliance principles, corporate governance, anti-money laundering, risk management concepts; thus, strengthening their ability to respond professionally to the legal and regulatory requirements.[8]

The Local Government Managers are aimed at providing students with modern knowledge about the mechanisms of functioning and development of territorial units as

well as about methods and techniques of managing them in the conditions of dynamic socio-economic changes in the globalizing world.[9]

It should be noted that the Department, as part of its branches in the area of combining the issues of sustainable development, both at the global and local level, introduced studies in the area of finance-technology, which is a new element of the contemporary financial market. Until recently, the issue of virtual finance, cryptocurrencies and the blockchain mechanism seemed to be a new phenomenon and arousing a number of controversies due to its diffuse mechanism of functioning and the emergence of traditional centralized flat finance in the world. However, currently facing the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual finance, virtual money, e-commerce shopping, capital investment in cryptocurrencies, operations using the blockchain mechanism for food transport and control are beginning to play a dominant role. Therefore, postgraduate studies at this department: Finance Technology in a Global Monetary Policy seem to be a new model of economic order in the world and therefore deserve their further development, not only on academic grounds.[10]

4. Summary/ Concluding Remarks

Summing up, it is worth emphasizing that due to the fact that this Department also employs many specialists in the field of renewable energy sources, which are one of the main elements of sustainable development and the green world, it is planned to launch postgraduate studies: Green Energy Management. In the face of the European Green Deal and the goal climate neutrality of European economies in 2050, it is necessary to limit the emission of harmful substances as much as possible in energy production, especially in the combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas. For this reason, the power sector in Poland will have to develop rapidly towards a distributed and digitized system, largely based on the so-called green energy, mainly wind and solar energy. The profitability of energy consumption in a competitive environment will seem to be one of the most important factors influencing the competitiveness of Polish industry, but also the budget of local government units and the consumer portfolio. More and more enterprises and local government units are heading towards a green energy transformation, striving for the maximum transition to green electricity. However, power supply from wind and solar energy alone is insufficient. Even with the most effective "mix" of these two technologies, it is necessary to secure a stable supply of electricity. Action is needed to secure the supply of all forms of energy when it is needed: electricity, heat and transport energy. These activities can be grouped into three groups: (1) Electricity Conservation (ESCO), including demand-side response, (2) electricity storage, and (3) sector coupling) for the purpose of consumption and possible storage of electricity in the form of heat (heat pump) or transport energy (electromobility). Only a comprehensive implementation of all measures can achieve the desired effect of a reliable supply of zero-emission energy. Enterprises and local governments face the dilemma of when and in what order to implement comprehensive measures. But energy producers and service providers also need to adapt to a rapidly changing technological, economic and regulatory environment. These studies will have the task of decision-makers in managing complex and long-term projects in the field of production and consumption of energy, especially that generated from "green" sources.

In the assumption of sustainable development and its transmission from the academic environment, i.e. from the area of research and projects to postgraduate studies, it is worth emphasizing that in order for the idea of a green world / green university to reach people's

awareness, academic activities are important both in the area of university activities as an institution and the activities of individual cathedrals so that all this reaches the societies of cities and villages from different areas. It is important that there are more and more specialists, both from modern management to management in the local government sector with the skillful application of knowledge from waste management, energy management, including renewable energy sources, to well-thought-out management spatial management, support for the activities of small and medium-sized enterprises, observation of trends among urban and rural residents using the latest IT technologies to follow the spirit of future financiers, without which the effectiveness and success of a number of initiatives cannot be achieved.

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