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What capacities make universities effective sustainability change agents?

To act as effective **capacity builders for sustainable action**, universities must transition into dynamic, living laboratories where sustainability is lived, not just taught. This transformation occurs through three key shifts in institutional behavior.

Building Capacity Through Integration and Action

The university must **embed sustainability into its core DNA by systematically renewing curricula and governance**. Capacity is built when **sustainability is no longer a niche elective but an integral part of every discipline**.

- This requires a shift from purely top-down mandates to a systematic renewing of our curricula and binding sustainability aspects across the board.
- There must be a sustainability policy that directs actual follow-up and action, ensuring the institution moves beyond sustainability reports that likely do not change anything.
- By establishing an accessible sustainability plan, the university provides the structural frame necessary to turn goals into measurable change.

Second, the university serves as a capacity builder by **fostering a culture of "productive failure" and inclusive learning**. By creating learning environments that allow failure, experiment, and spaces for informal learning, the university **builds the collective resilience needed to tackle complex, non-linear environmental challenges**.

- Real transformation requires moving away from short-term results and instead celebrates the process of learning.
- This involves using data to see failures and creating sustainability forums at university levels to share ideas/projects.
- Crucially, this capacity must be inclusive, including diverse voices in sustainability ESG and bringing together all staff (cleaning, engineering, studies, prof, admin) to negotiate shared understandings.

The university's truest capacity-building power lies in its ability **to provide a platform for the entire community to act as "sustainability agents"**. The university builds capacity through **transdisciplinary mobilization and ecosystem connection** acting as a bridge, **using student voices to push for sustainability and positioning students as ambassadors & translators to the wider world**.

- This is achieved through transdisciplinary co-production and a firm orientation on real-world challenges in both research and teaching.
- By forming formal agreements with NGOs, industry, etc. and hosting joint workshops (educational programmes) with regional companies, the university ensures that its sustainability knowledge is practically relevant.

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