



THE BALTIC UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME

Universities have key roles in the Baltic region. Universities educate the young generation, they research new knowledge, and they address the general public, and cooperate with the society.

This role of universities is even more needed now in the dramatic changes after the cold war. The Baltic University Programme, a network of universities, initiated and coordinated by Uppsala University in Sweden since 1991, support these roles of universities, foremost through education. It has today developed into a group of 160 universities in the 14 countries within the Baltic Sea. The participating institutions include all kinds of universities. Since several years BUP Centre has been established, today there are 13 such centres.

The large network of researchers and teachers at the universities, more than 1000 persons, has contributed to develop the programme. Most of these are active within environmental science but contributions from humanities and social sciences gain in importance. The number of students that have registered for course is estimated to be about 18.000 up to spring 1998.

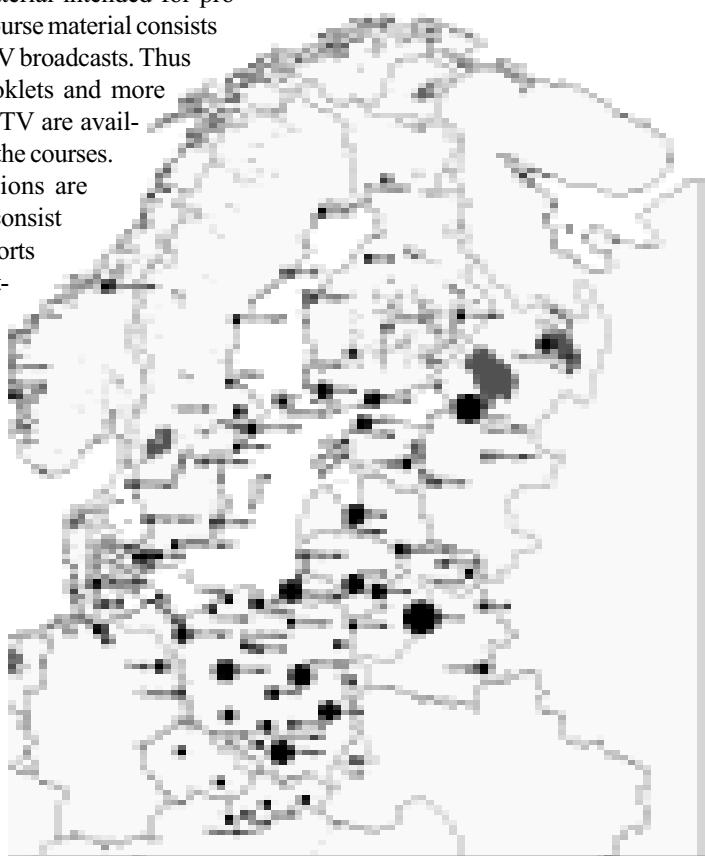
The courses produced by the programme are both produced and taught by universities. Satellite TV, used from 1991 to reach the participating universities, had initially the purpose to show what „the other side looked like”. It was also used to increase interactivity as much as possible. Spacebridges were staged as live TV broadcasts from two or three places simultaneously with students and teachers discussing with each other. Up to date three basic academic courses have been produced. The Baltic Sea Environment course deals with the environmental situation of the Baltic Sea and its surroundings. The Peoples of the Baltic treats the development of the societies with a focus on minorities, human rights, democracy and security. A Sustainable Baltic deals with the long-term future of the region with an emphasis on resource management.

The emphasis in the programme is to produce courses on master level and adap-

tations of the material intended for professionals. The course material consists of booklets and TV broadcasts. Thus a total of 28 booklets and more than 50 hours of TV are available for teaching the courses.

The TV productions are all thematic and consist of a series of reports from the participating countries. Many of the TV productions were also broadcast to the general public in particular Poland, Latvia and Lithuania adding to awareness raising and providing the general public with basic information on issues of importance in their societies.

The Baltic University started several cooperative projects with municipalities. Most recently the seminar on community development has been organised with the participation of 9 cities. Cooperation between the more fundamental level, i.e. the universities, and the applied level, i.e. the municipalities, will be a winning recipe for successful implementation of sustainable strategies in the future. In the near future both universities and municipalities are challenge to develop the concept of sustainability into a credible theory and practice. Offering a course on sustainable development is thus a true challenge. To support the teachers in the BUP network we have organised teachers seminars to discuss how to use the material, how to build a network to teach a course, not the least to cooperate with practitioners at their own



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municipalities, and finally how to address questions of sustainability.

As to the practitioners' side we have to ask ourselves: what is a professional competence in sustainable development? What skills should we teach and learn? Whatever the answer - we have several - we hope that our students will go into society with some competence of this kind and contribute positively to our common future.

Further information:

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