How to describe, define and work with sustainable development and how it relates to quality management – a study of Swedish Universities

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Abstract
Sustainable Development (SD) has been on the agenda for some time. SD is an overall objective of Swedish Government policies. In an official document, Strategic Challenges - a Further Elaboration of the Swedish Strategy for Sustainable Development (Comm. 2005/06:126), issued in 2005 by the Swedish Government the national strategy from 2004 is further elaborated. It is stated that the strategy covers the following three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. It stems from a long-term vision of sustainable development and is related to international sustainable development efforts, including UN initiatives and the EU's strategy in the area.

Already 2004 it became obligatory for Swedish schools and universities to include sustainable development in the curriculum. Thus, Universities should be in a good position to interpret what sustainable development is and transferring it to actions. It is after all universities who will provide the people to live and lead the change needed. Universities in Sweden have now had 6 years to work with sustainable development and there should be good examples of how this can be done. Interesting questions are how universities have interpreted sustainable development and how they are working with it. This paper presents an explorative study on to which extent the Governments sustainability strategy has been absorbed and become part of the strategy of the Swedish universities. The main purpose of this paper is to discuss how sustainable development is being interpreted. We also look at how the value per harm concept could contribute to the understanding of sustainable development. It is an exploratory case study on how 17 Swedish universities integrate SD in its mission.

It is obvious that all of the studied universities have broken down the university decree into its lowest common denominators and managed to mark some of its educations by placing a sustainability sticker here and there in their course catalogues and policy documents but we are sorry to say it but beneath this superficial surface the is not much, from a sustainability point of view, integrated, wise, insightful and sound teaching going on.

The question then is, how did all this happen? The collected data show that all universities are aware of the university decree. A problem with the decree is that it is vague while it clearly calls for action. This is perhaps a possible approach if the attitude is that anything goes. But as the aim is to accomplish directed action on a sustainable development that through their activities shall promote sustainable development that ensure that both the present and coming generations are guaranteed a sound environment, economic as well as social well-being and justice, this is a not so efficient approach. This mission is too vague and there are not enough guidelines on how to interpret it, create a meaningful strategy, implement, manage, measure, or report on it.

Keywords
Sustainable development; Quality Management; University; value per harm;

Paper type
Research paper
Background

Sustainable Development (SD) has been on the agenda for some time. The Brundtland commission definition from 1987 states that: *Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs* (WCED, 1987:43). A fundamental issue is that the foundation of the WCED committee when issuing the above definition was not organizational/industrial or consumerist. Its concerns were natural philosophic—earth cannot carry the burden of a growing population driven by consumerist ideals (Kemp, 2008). Therefore, the committee mainly focused on sustaining human existence.

In spite of immense criticism this is still the definition that mostly is used. With an increasing global temperature, with a billion people that go to bed hungry, with overfishing of the oceans, with fresh water scarcity and with a reduced biological diversity it is easy to agree that we are not living up to the Brundtland commission definition of SD and that we are apparently not in a state of sustainability. However, from agreeing that we need to do things differently to knowing what exactly should be done seems to be difficult.

For any change to take place one prerequisite is that there is an understanding of what should be changed and why. Isaksson & Hallencrutz (2008) argue that change requires a definition and a way of measurement. The first risk we have with making the definition of sustainable development too abstract is analysis paralysis – we get stuck in defining, which stops us from doing anything. The opposite risk is – anything goes – we call everything sustainable development whereas it mostly is business as usual with a new label. In order to improve effectiveness and efficiency in work for improved sustainability we need working definitions. The quest for the perfect definition should not stop us from starting work with something which is good enough. Isaksson & Steimle (2009) propose the use of value per harm as a way to related different dimensions of sustainability.

Already 2004 it became obligatory for schools and universities to include sustainable development in the curriculum. Universities should be in a good position of interpreting what sustainable development is and transferring this to actions. It is after all universities who will provide the people to live and lead the change needed. Universities in Sweden have now had 6 years to work with sustainable development and there should be good examples of how this can be done. Interesting questions are how universities have interpreted sustainable development and how they are working with it. This paper presents an explorative study on to which extent the Governments sustainability strategy has been absorbed and become part of the strategy of the Swedish universities. The main purpose of this paper is to discuss how sustainable development is being interpreted. We also look at how the value per harm concept could contribute to the understanding of sustainable development.

Methodology

Definition of sustainable development and sustainability are discussed from different perspectives. One way of providing a structure for change towards sustainability might be found within TQM that can provide a number of methodologies and tools for change towards sustainable development, (Isaksson, 2006). The basis is in a perspective that looks at organisations as process based systems where sustainability performance is measured in terms of stakeholder value per stakeholder harm, (Isaksson & al, 2008), (Isaksson & al, 2010).

The empirical framework is based on a study of how 17 Swedish universities work with SD. The universities have been selected using the annual ranking made by URANK, which is an
independent association for Swedish university ranking. The 8 highest and the 8 lowest
ranked universities have been selected including 2 universities that have distinguished
themselves as interesting benchmarks: Gothenburg University and Blekinge Institute of
Technology (BIT). Additionally Mälardalen University has been added as a benchmark.
Gothenburg and Mälardalen have been recommended from circles working with Education
on Sustainable Development in Sweden. BIT has been ranked as number 1 in Sweden within
the framework of Engineering Education. A review of these universities carried out shows
that they indeed are benchmarks in comparison with other randomly chosen universities.
We have looked at to what extent SD is mentioned, how it is defined and used based on a web
survey where the following questions were answered.

1. Free text search in Swedish and English on the word Sustainable Development – first
page hit list saved and analyzed for relevance
2. Search of opening page for links to SD
3. Search for policy on sustainable development
4. Search under courses offered with the word SD (in Swedish) – calculation of hits
compared with total number of courses.
5. Find yearly report and search for word SD in Swe and Eng, count hits and analyze
relevance
6. Call switchboard and ask for person who is in charge with the university SD – note
how answer is given and if there a clear answer

The assessment of relevance of hits for question 1 is qualitative. The hit should not be a link
but refer to an internal document of relevance or an education or some centre for work within
SD. If there are doubles, these are excluded. The leading principle is that is should give the
student relevant information and provide possibilities for further education within SD and
within the university in question. The link is not relevant if it refers to some historical even or
report. Courses and activities referred to should be taking up the triple bottom line and not
only refer to for example environment.

The links on the opening page are marked as direct if the first page contains information on
SD. Another test is if the text under information on the university contains a mention of SD. If
neither of these conditions were fulfilled then the result is no direct links.

The search for courses is depending on the website structure. A basic search was carried out
with the purpose to relate the number of basic courses with SD to the total number of basic
courses. Also free searches for courses were used to try to form on idea of the percentage of
courses with SD.

During the data collection it has become apparent that the universities sometimes have
documents on sustainability, which are not made publicly available at their website.

The collected data has been analysed looking at number and relevance of hits. This has been
done separately for highest ranking, lowest ranking and benchmarks.

The general situation is qualitatively described.

Finally the presented results are analysed critically based on the value per harm concept and
the ethical requirements of Sustainable Development.
Theoretical framework

**Perspectives on Sustainable development**

Many of the critics of the WCED definition question how needs are defined and by whom, and how the definition conceptualizes technological development that allows future generations to use different resources (Mohanty, 2003). It could be seen as dubious to use technology as an excuse for continued consumerism. Other critics question how the definition deals with issues of fairness and allocation of resources. Discussion about the impact of power and conflict (about allocation of resources) is also claimed to be lacking (Eckerberg et al., 2003). These are relevant considerations but beyond the scope of this thesis. There is a tense debate about understanding sustainability, given that it is extraordinarily complex and flexible and that despite all efforts it will remain imprecise (Eckerberg et al., 2003). Lélé (1991) argues that as the meaning of sustainable development is not clear and broadly accepted there is a risk that it will be dismissed as a fad or co-opted by forces opposed to the change needed:

...if SD is to be really "sustained" as a development paradigm, two apparently divergent efforts are called for: making SD more precise in its conceptual underpinnings, while allowing more flexible and diversity of approaches in developing strategies that might lead to a society living in harmony with the environment and itself (Lélé, 1991:618).

Having followed the initial debate on defining sustainability or sustainable development (Beckerman, 1994, 1995, 1999; Daly, 1995; Jacobs, 1995; etc.) and the resistance to and criticism of the WCED definition (Jacobs, 1999), we believe that the disagreements are rooted in the fact that the discussion participants, debate from different standpoints and have different perspectives and value basis to the concept. For instance, when arguing for the necessity to cease consumption of finite resources it is not unexpected that one finds counterarguments from those with a stake in the consumerist perspective. The debaters hold contrasting stakes in sustainable development. With a starting point in the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1998; Pava, 2007) we can depict different sets of values. At the economic extreme we would have those that believe in the invisible hand of the market and that it will solve all problems. When resources will get scarce, prices will go up and new alternatives found. Values in the economic field could be characterised as weak sustainability (Ehrenfeld, 2005), meaning that natural capital can be substituted with manmade capital (Kemp, 2008). Persons with a strong environmental focus would believe in strong sustainability making in non acceptable to trade natural values for manmade values. There would be distrust in the market mechanisms and opposition to consumerism. Socially oriented values place the human in focus with the purpose of eradicating poverty. Nature and market would be seen as means for servicing humanity. To some extent this could be compared to different political beliefs of how to solve problems in the best way. Even if we all agree that development is not sustainable this does not necessarily lead to action. The problem is that we do not share the same values and have different mental models of how things could be improved. The WCED report recognizes a broad stakeholder approach and invites a continuous debate on the issue but insists on the position that sustainability requires fundamental change:

Interpretations will vary, but must share certain general features and must flow from a consensus on the basic concept of sustainable development and on a broad strategic framework for achieving it. Development involves a progressive transformation of economy and society (WCED, 1987:43).

We all know that something has to be done, but struggle with our understanding of how the global environmental system works and what is really the best way to effectuate SD. Is ethanol fuel a possible means to save energy or is not. Maybe ethanol fuels instead contribute
to deforestation? Sustainable development provides the framework to integrate the environmental, social and economic dimensions of human activity at every level from local to global (Roome, 1998:3). The traditional approach to economic and environmental interests follows the path of efficiency and effectiveness. The ideas that have shaped this decision-making process is governed by valuation (Roome, 1998) – how to get the most bang out of every buck (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Edvardsson and Enquist, 2006). This approach to sustainability could be seen more as reducing unsustainability (Ehrenfeld, 2005). The interpretation is that we continue with business as usual but behind some green washing smoke screens.

The Gotland municipality in Sweden has launched a policy for its future development with sustainable growth as motto. The policy document describes growth rather traditionally (Roome, 1998) but with concern for the nature. There is no link to global problems and the fundamental changes needed. The apparent problem could relate to the fact that the bang for buck approach needs to be complemented with limitations given by how many bucks are available. Isaksson & Steimle (2009) propose along the same lines as “bang for the buck” the value per harm concept originating in the WBCSD, (WBCSD, 2000). The difference is that where value in the WBCSD is equal to company sales value and harm is environmental harm, Isaksson & Steimle (2009) describe it broadly as stakeholder value and stakeholder harm. Focus is on maximising value produced per harm done with limitations on maximum harm. A parallel is drawn with economic improvement where increased productivity is not only a question of saving costs, but also of creating more value. If work with sustainability would only focus on minimising harm without considering value great mistakes could be done. The easiest way to save costs in a company is to close it down. Applied in the extreme on sustainable development we would all move back to be hunter gatherers with a very low environmental impact, especially since the world bearing capacity for this type of lifestyle would not be more than some hundreds of millions of people. It could be argued that there are two main global stakeholders; humanity and nature. One of the major problems is poverty. To solve this we could either increase world GNP in order to provide enough for everybody or the rich world could share their wealth with the poor. The former strategy is the dominating one, which puts pressure on maximising value produced per harm done. For the second approach we would need to drastically change the awareness of our personal responsibilities. Kemp (2008) presents different perspectives of Sustainable Development in his book the Global Citizen. He argues that an ethical perspective that focuses on our responsibilities to work for the common good is a necessity for any sustainable development to take place, we all need to become responsible global citizens. In a secular society we need drivers that push us beyond our default focus on here and now. According to Kemp (2008) the global citizen is educated – having “Bildung”, which he defines as having the ability and will to learn more in order to work for a common good.

The quality management approach to sustainable development
A well performing process is effective, that is, it does the right thing for the customer. It is also efficient, which means it does everything in the right way to ensure minimum resource consumption. Since requirements change quickly the process is also flexible, meaning that it can change product specifications quickly without losing efficiency. If we substitute customers with the collective of stakeholders and quality with sustainability we could create a process based model. The right thing for a customer is a product that has the right specifications; it is what the customer wants or preferably needs. The customer is the one that judges what the value is. However, other stakeholders like the state could decide that certain products are not needed and reduce the consumption of these by taxes.
For the same value most customers would look for the cheapest product. That is, quality could be seen both as an absolute and relative measure. The customer in this case is not looking for the best value ratio, but for the lowest price for a chosen quality. This would indicate that there are two quality indicators, one of the absolute quality level and another which is relative. If we want to apply the same logic on sustainability, which would be the level of value per harm for a product compared to what is acceptable in the long run. Instead of having only one customer we would have a collective of stakeholders where it still in most cases would be the customer or consumer that is at the centre. Without any customer interest there is no product. Value produced for different stakeholders would vary. For the supplier it is the sales value. This is the value used in the original definition for Value per harm, (WBCSD 2000). Also, the GRI guidelines are basing their Economic sustainability indicators on sales value and on how it is distributed. This has been criticized by Isaksson & Steimle (2009) as a serious problem where the customer value is not acknowledged. In a world of scarce resources it could be argued that it is the user value, which should be at the centre. The problem is that the customer might perceive a high value, like when booking a private trip in a space shuttle, but objectively seen this would not be highly ranked. From a supplier’s point of view there could be great sales value, which even could be spread to other stakeholders.

The GRI guidelines demonstrate the same problem in that they only focus on how things are done not on what is done. As an example, manufacturing landmines can be described as sustainable if only due concern is given to the sharing of profits, energy saving, recycling, staff management and labelling the mines correctly. The problem is that the issue of the right thing is not dealt with. Even if hard to assess, every product could be classified based on some objective criteria of what the real need fulfilment is. All of us could rate the necessity of products in some type of order starting for example from providing basic food and ending with things like organising private space travel. However, doing the right thing does not seem to be on the agenda, but focus is on doing the thing in the right way.

The Triple Bottom Line of economic, environmental and social performance used in the GRI guidelines comes with the problem of lack of integration. The dimensions cannot be added and not even the individual indicators can be added. This means that an organization can show improved performance for different indicators without it being clear if this has any relevance or not. The global problems are threatening and are not bound to be solved only by recycling paper cups and using less water in the shower. In order for any activity to be considered as furthering sustainable development there should be a transparent link to some of the major global problems. It should be possible to demonstrate the relevance of what is being done. One way of doing this is comparing some major value indicators with some major harm indicators. The world GNP is often used as a measure of performance and related to the supplier value produced. A major harm consists of manmade carbon emissions. Today’s figure is about 2000 USD/t CO2. We need to reduce CO2-emission with at least 80% until 2050. With a 4% GNP-increase by year the GNP will quadruple until 2050. This means that the required value produced compared to CO2-emissions becomes 40 000 USD/to CO2. Not many companies can perform at this level today, not even in Sweden. The question then is what do we do to achieve this? Do we educate students the right thing? An interesting observation in this context is that the cost for CO2 would be dramatically changed if we would consider it as a non renewable resource. There is only room for a certain amount of carbon emissions if we are to respect the threshold of +2°C increase in the global average temperature. Based on the figure above we would in that case face prices ranging from 2000 to 40000 USD/metric ton of CO2 instead of the 20 Euro per metric ton paid by today on the
carbon market. One of the core values of TQM is decisions based on facts. We need good process indicators that describe sustainability when put to work. Since global heating is one of the main global problems, affecting directly for example poverty by the destruction of farm land, it serves as a good example. The question on an individual, municipal, organisational and national level should be what and how activities contribute to the value per CO2 indicator.

Isaksson & Steimle (2009) propose working definition for sustainability and sustainable development presenting them as position and change, see Figure 1. Using the above mentioned Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of GNP/CO2 we could indicate both the level and speed of change in Sweden. It proves that even if Sweden often is mentioned as best in class in reducing carbon emissions, while increasing GNP, the rate of improvement is only a fraction of what is needed to reach a state of sustainability. Sustainable development is much more than reducing carbon emissions, but at least it could be expected that at this level there is an understanding and plan on what to do. Universities could be expected to be those that educate the persons that will have to solve the problem. If nothing significant is done in reducing carbon emissions during the next 10-15 years then we are bound to cross the +2C global temperature increase which could lead to major global problems. This means that those being educated now has to be prepared to do the job, to lead the change process by thinking differently, by contributing innovative thinking.

An important issue is to what extent universities promote students to choose an education that can contribute to solving some of the global problems. Are universities doing the right thing in terms of SD or are they mainly focused on making ends meet by selling those educations that have a demand irrespectively of where they lead to. What is the university produced value? One would be tempted to answer, employability and additionally employability with change agent skills. The will to work for sustainable change is an important component where the “Bildung” or general education would consist of the ethical view of the world citizen as defined by Kemp (2008).

![Figure 2 Performance in function of time that describes level of sustainability and progress towards sustainability for relevant indicators, (Isaksson & Steimle, 2009)](image-url)
The TQM contribution would be using the core values in a slightly altered form. Customer focus would be replaced by *stakeholder focus* (Johnson, 2007) where the values leadership commitment, continuous improvement, focus on processes, basing decisions on facts and letting everybody be committed still would apply (Isaksson, 2006). Additional value could be such as system focus, transparency and variety. The process view can be used to measure the Triple Bottom Line in everything from global processes to low level process in organisations (Isaksson & Garvare, 2003). The value per harm and the positioning of it provide an approach for measurement which gives facts and enables continuous improvement.

**Requirements for Sustainable development in Swedish universities**

Sustainable development is an overall objective of Swedish Government policy. In an official document, Strategic Challenges - a Further Elaboration of the Swedish Strategy for Sustainable Development (Comm. 2005/06:126), issued in 2005 by the Swedish Government the national strategy from 2004 is further elaborated. It is stated that the strategy covers the following three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. It stems from a long-term vision of sustainable development and is related to international sustainable development efforts, including UN initiatives and the EU's strategy in the area.

The core assumption of the Swedish Governments sustainability strategy is that members of one (the present) generation should not conduct their lives in a way that prevents their children or future generations from enjoying a decent standard of living (Comm. 2005/06:126, page 9). In the document it is further argued that this must actively influence and shape all policy areas. The environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development are expected to be pursued in a coherent manner by the Swedish public authorities, including all universities. The university decree (kap 1 § 5 Högskolelagen 1992:1434) state that Swedish universities, through their activities shall promote sustainable development that ensure that both the present and coming generations are guaranteed a sound environment, economic as well as social well-being and justice.

**What is done with Sustainable development in Swedish universities**

Now it is the year 2010. Six years have passed since the national strategy originally was made official; five years have passed since the Government made some clarifications.

**Free text search in Swedish and English on the work Sustainable Development**

All of the investigated University websites clearly show that sustainable development is a concept that is frequently used. But it has also become evident that the universities sometimes use the concept to create smoke screens behind which work continues without being more than superficially influenced of the core ideas of sustainability. It seems that there often is a lesser number of persons at the university who more dedicatedly strive to use the concept in a more fruitful way. We also believe that there is an ongoing but slowly moving process that aims to involve people in working in a more insightful manner with sustainability. The overall impression is that focus is on doing the thing right, which means colouring previous courses with links to sustainability.

**Search opening page for links to sustainable development**

As the Government decree so clearly states the importance of acting to contribute to a sustainable development it is a disappointment to discover that the universities do not use the concept to position themselves at the opening web site. Many universities forget links to sustainable development on the page called: University information (“Om universitetet”).

**Search for policy on sustainable development**
Most of the universities have some kind of policy related to sustainable development and often they reproduce the statement of the university decree and sometimes also the definition of the Brundtland commission. Sometimes this is supplemented with a line of reasoning that disintegrates the concept by talking about economic development, environmental development and social development as if it was three separate entities. But there are also a few universities that present a truly insightful and knowing approach to sustainable development. In several cases sustainable development is found as part of the environmental policy, which is a hint of it being a later addition or that sustainability is still perceived to be only an environmental issue.

Search under courses offered with the word SD
The investigated universities all offer some courses that in one way or the other relate to sustainable development. In some cases the concept seems to be used very elastically to cover a business more or less as usual. But there are also several examples of really dedicated courses.

Annual report and mention of SD in Swedish and English
Most universities annual reports use the word but most often it seems to be used to decorate other phrases without influencing a “business as usual” approach.

Calling switchboard and asking for the person who is in charge with the university Sustainable Development
This work is still ongoing and not all universities have been asked. Out of those asked there was in some cases hesitation and in some no available answer. Results from the survey presented in Table I.

A short summary of the web search
The empirical search of the universities websites has shown that all of them respond to the demands of the university decree but at varying levels of ambition. It should also be made clear that the universities may have a more extensive dedication to sustainable development than our exploration have disclosed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>URANK position</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Q6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Karolinska institutet</td>
<td>Eng: 123 hits Swe 211 hits Out of 20 first page hits only a couple had substantial relevance. Obviously SD is heavily linked to environmental care.</td>
<td>No direct links to SD</td>
<td>Yes, but no definition, and main focus on environmental issues</td>
<td>3 of 134.</td>
<td>1 in the Swedish version with semi relevant content.</td>
<td>Christina Hallgren environmental controller, Kicki AtKisson environmental manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stockholm School of Economics</td>
<td>Eng 73 4/10 first relevant Swe: 14 hits 1/10 first relevant</td>
<td>No direct links to SD</td>
<td>No policy found</td>
<td>Checked in school brochure – 1 non relevant mention and candidate program – no mentions</td>
<td>No yearly report found on website. No mention in school presentation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences</td>
<td>Eng: 1068 hits Swe: 1031 hits Out of 10 hits in Swedish 7 of</td>
<td>2 direct links to SD</td>
<td>Nothing explicit</td>
<td>3 of many</td>
<td>3 in the Swedish version with irrelevant content.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URANK position</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>Q6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Uppsala University</td>
<td>Eng: 1000 hits 10/10 relevant</td>
<td>No direct links</td>
<td>No policy found</td>
<td>1/107 programs 14/1838 courses</td>
<td>No yearly report found on website</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lund University</td>
<td>Eng: 1787 hits 9/10 relevant</td>
<td>No direct links to SD.</td>
<td>Yes, they use the definition from the university decree. But at another place they use the Brundtland definition.</td>
<td>13 in Swedish, 2 in English</td>
<td>1 in the Swedish version with semi relevant content. In the English version: 0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chalmers University of technology</td>
<td>Eng: 1328 hits 9/10 relevant</td>
<td>No direct links to SD.</td>
<td>Nothing explicit</td>
<td>9 in Swedish, 11 in English</td>
<td>73 in the Swedish version of which about 10 contains relevant or semi relevant content. In the English version: 115 hits of which about 10 contains relevant or semi relevant content.</td>
<td>N/A but they have a named environmental manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/BM2</td>
<td>University of Gothenburg</td>
<td>Eng: 1689 2/10 relevant</td>
<td>No direct link.</td>
<td>No explicit policy. Environmenta l policy mentions sustainable development. Sustainability report.</td>
<td>Many – Courses marked for SD-content and if &gt;50% with SD</td>
<td>No mention in ordinary annual report. Separate sustainability report based on GRI guidelines</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Linköping University</td>
<td>Eng:1040 3/10 relevant</td>
<td>No direct link.</td>
<td>No explicit policy. Environmenta l policy mentions sustainable development.</td>
<td>Check on economy and cross functional courses 0/64 1 with free search</td>
<td>No mention in Swedish report. In English report a Master program called Science for Sustainable Development is mentioned</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/BM1</td>
<td>Malardalen University College</td>
<td>A considerable amount of hits in both English and Swedish. Ssw: 4 of 10 hits of relevance Eng.: 5 of 10</td>
<td>No direct links to SD but via profile SD can be found</td>
<td>Yes, and they refer to the Agenda 21 document when defining its content</td>
<td>Difficult to assess but approx. about 10 in Swedish and 2 in English</td>
<td>3 in Swedish 0 in English</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>University West</td>
<td>Eng: 6 1/6 relevant Ssw: 12 3/12 relevant</td>
<td>No direct link but page with info of HV leads to SD</td>
<td>Declaration on web site that takes up the Triple Bottom Line</td>
<td>1/329 basic courses in Swedish</td>
<td>1 mention relating to responsibilities oft he quality council</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Dalarna University College</td>
<td>Eng: 69 hits Ssw: 175 hits Out of 10 first hits in Swedish 2 of relevance, Eng.: 2 of 10</td>
<td>No direct links to SD.</td>
<td>There is no explicit and integrated policy. There are however policies on diversity and environmenta l issues that somehow relates to SD.</td>
<td>5 in Swedish and 0 in English</td>
<td>No hits in the Swedish version. No English version available.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Linneus</td>
<td>Eng: 211</td>
<td>No policy.</td>
<td>Some hits</td>
<td>Not found</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URANK position</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>4/10 relevant Swe: 238 6/10 relevant</td>
<td>direct link</td>
<td>but information of that one is being prepared</td>
<td>but none very relevant</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>BM3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Halmstad University</td>
<td>22 hits Swe: 873 hits</td>
<td>Out of 10 first hits in Swedish 1 of relevance, Eng.: 1 of 10</td>
<td>No direct links to SD.</td>
<td>Yes, def. from the university decree but no integrated TBL approach. Instead they talk about the three dimensions as if they were possible to separate.</td>
<td>No hits</td>
<td>2 in the Swedish version with irrelevant content. In the English version: 5 irrelevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Blekinge Institute of technology</td>
<td>2360</td>
<td>No direct links to SD.</td>
<td>No SD policy. Environment policy mentions SD. SD described and interpreted on website.</td>
<td>4 different programs with SD. 2 relevant. 3 courses, all relevant</td>
<td>Annual report 2009. 2 hits Not relevant.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>University of Gävle</td>
<td>128 hits Swe: 243 hits 1 out of 5 first hits in Swedish of relevance, Eng.: none of 5.</td>
<td>No direct links to SD.</td>
<td>Yes, Yes, they use both the definition from the university decree and the WCED.</td>
<td>10 in Swedish and 1 in English</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Katsu Sammalisto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Skövde</td>
<td>7/10 rel SWE: 153 5/10 rel</td>
<td>No direct link</td>
<td>No explicit policy. Environment policy mentions sustainable development.</td>
<td>About 10/1500 in Swedish</td>
<td>No mention. Latest report found from 2007</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>University of Gävle</td>
<td>125 hits Swe: 64 hits</td>
<td>Out of 10 first hits in Swedish 1 of relevance, Eng.: 1 of 10</td>
<td>No direct links to SD.</td>
<td>Nothing explicit</td>
<td>12 of 320 in Swedish and 1 of 320 in English</td>
<td>2 in the Swedish version with semi relevant content. In the English version: 11 with semi relevant content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It has also become obvious that the universities in most cases seem to have a rather superficial and perhaps even ignorant approach to sustainable development. Most frequently they lean towards avoiding an integrated TBL approach. Instead they seem to prefer separate and treat the concept as if it was three separate entities, which is impossible.

At a first glance it is hard to see any difference between the highest and lowest ranked universities. The analysis still needs to be improved, deepened and broadened. The benchmarks universities do not clearly differ in the table except for the number of hits when searching for SD on the website. Some more detailed review also shows that there are numerous activities within SD.

One future question to be asked is how universities prepare the students to become change agents for sustainable development within their chosen areas? Is the educations really generating ethically aware global citizens within fields important for SD or, is it still mostly business as usual with some green washing in the form of an increased general knowledge in
the topics of Sustainable Development? Gothenburg University presents itself as the leading university within SD. They have a long track record having been certified for ISO 14001 for quite some time and they also have issued sustainability reports according to the GRI guidelines. In the recently issued report from 2009 different stakeholders are listed. In the long list with some 20 stakeholder, employers are not identified. Employability could be seen as the main value produced in universities. The value per harm indicator could in that case be employability per total cost and per total carbon emissions. Value could also be the contribution, the employee (former student) can generate during his or her working life. Ideally the student should be an effective change agent promoting SD. In order to have an idea of how this is working it could be argued that future employers should be the most important stakeholder. With the “leading” SD-university this is totally absent. Our preliminary conclusion is that universities are still continuing with business as usual. Looking at results obtained during six years it is obvious that the rate of improvement is slow and not living up to requirement of True Sustainable Development, see Figure 2.

Discussion

Our unsustainable behaviour has now driven us to a point where the need to change is urgent. It is likely that this has been understood by many governments and consumers. The increasing amounts of CSR dedicated corporations make it evident that this also has begun to include corporations. A main reason why we have universities is to provide the private and public sectors with a competent a workforce. Gummesson (2009) in his rather provocative paper *The global crisis and the marketing scholar* remind us that as society change so must the universities. The Swedish government’s university decree is present to force the universities to start delivering updated competence to the two sectors. Gummesson (2009:119) advocates that theory, research and education *should consider fostering economically responsible attitudes and building more robust and sustainable economic systems*. We would like to extend his advocacy by also more clearly including or rather integrating the two other dimensions of sustainable development that tend to be step motherly treated, namely the environmental and social dimension (Johnson, 2007). It is not just about economic growth; we need to start balancing the TBL consequences of all our actions, private, and public as well as individual. One possible way of doing this is to work with the value per harm concept. Above all a driving force for change is needed. To be able to create that, universities need to start to include ethical considerations in the education provided. Gummesson (2009:125) states the following:

> Ethics has to do with empathy, wisdom, insights and sound judgement. These qualities are absent in the world of orthodox “scientific” techniques. In the extreme interpretation of what science is no wisdom is needed, only adherence to techniques.

The data collected clearly show that much of the education that is provided in Sweden is normative, mechanical and focused on delivering bachelor and master student spare parts that can be put into any machinery, if and when needed. It is obvious that all of the studied universities have broken down the university decree into its lowest common denominators and managed to mark some of its educations by placing a sustainability sticker here and there in their course catalogues and policy documents but we are sorry to say it but beneath this superficial surface the is not much, from a sustainability point of view, integrated, wise, insightful and sound teaching going on.
As an example of what kind of future finance work force we are educating, Sjöberg and Engelberg (2009) show that business school students specializing in finance were gamblers and risk takers, that do not care about money. Instead they are more dedicated to sensation seeking, and success and more or less lack altruistic values. *Individuals high in sensation seeking are more extraverted, impulsive antisocial, nonconformist, and less anxious than others... while they search for new experiences.* Too much tools and techniques but an obvious lack of empathy, wisdom, insight and sound judgement, or for short ethics.

The question then is, how did all this happen? The collected data show that all universities are aware of the university decree. A problem with the decree is that it is vague while it clearly calls for action. This is perhaps a possible approach if the attitude is that anything goes. But as the aim is to accomplish directed action on a sustainable development *that through their activities shall promote sustainable development that ensure that both the present and coming generations are guaranteed a sound environment, economic as well as social well-being and justice*, this is a not so efficient approach. This mission is too vague and there are not enough guidelines on how to interpret it, create a meaningful strategy, implement, manage, measure, or report on it.

The mission is not properly defined but there seems to be some sort of measures. Without a clear mission it is difficult to establish an appropriate strategy, without a strategy it is difficult to organize the work, without organization there will not be that much action. Or, with a blurred mission you will get many diffuse strategy that get interpreted in many different ways, which in its turn lead to many ways to organize and obtain action.

**References**


WBCSD 2000
