

By  
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# Where the new leadership hides: A call for acknowledging extracurricular commitment

**S**tudents and faculty alike are sitting with the quest for a way of leading and learning that will move us towards a more sustainable future. Conversations around a different kind of leadership, a new set of skills, and a more human-centred way of participation, are gaining traction. We at oikos, as student change agents for sustainability, claim and see that this vision is already practised in many spaces referred to as 'extracurricular'.

## **It's time for a different kind of leading – a truth that can hardly be denied at the dawn of a global sustainability crisis**

Facing this reality, students and faculty alike can sense that the traditional ways of learning and teaching are not enough to move us towards the future we imagine. All too often, the conversations nowadays revolve around a new set of skills and a more human-centred way of participation, which is backed up by a growing body of scientific evidence across multiple fields.

Deans, faculty and other shapers of the education system find themselves wrapped in questions of 'how', 'when' and 'where' as they start giving into the 'why'.

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## GRLI Special Supplement

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**What's overlooked:** there are multiple spaces in the context of higher education where these new skills are already being practised, where the envisioned has been status quo for the past years or even decades. oikos, our international student initiative for sustainability in management & economics education, is one of these spaces. Ever since 1987, a growing number of local groups has been gathering around questions like 'How do we want to lead, learn and live together?', translating their visions into realities on campus and beyond. oikos chapters find themselves intrigued by the shortcomings in their own education, by the clearly visible steps one could take to make the campus greener, and the impact of bringing people together around a shared purpose. They might not always have the most scientific or professional language, but they have the passion that drives them to create projects like conferences, community learning programmes, or small, yet impactful campus initiatives, and to even reach out to their faculty, setting out on the journey of transforming their own education. Our students support each other in their work as they find new ways to organise and relate. They live co-creation and facilitate the new between all the commitments of student life. There is play, there is joy, there is a drive to have an impact. There is serious, purposeful commitment and engagement with the hard work everyone is putting in.





Observing the increasing power and strength of our network, we at oikos International recently reinforced our purpose of tending this beautiful community. Our role is to support students in their personal development through diverse leadership initiatives, offering platforms to build a strong global support network, and collaborative, context-specific programmes to accompany the chapters' work in transforming their own education.

Whereas we can only talk about oikos and our own experience, we want to acknowledge that there are thousands of great student initiatives out there. Each of them is unique, and all of them are united by the idea of providing a brave and safe space for exploration, practice and proactive change. All deserve to be seen as learning playgrounds, where students step out of their comfort zones, take ownership, and experience true leaps in their personal development.

**What would be possible if we'd acknowledge these spaces, start to collaborate and integrate what is there, and thereby narrow the gap between formal and informal learning?**

**Where around you does the new leadership hide?**

We, the student change agents at oikos and beyond, not only invite you to ask yourself this question, but also to reach out proactively and acknowledge our work and learning. Our hands and hearts are open, and we are seeking allies on the paths towards a more thriving future.



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**About the authors**

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