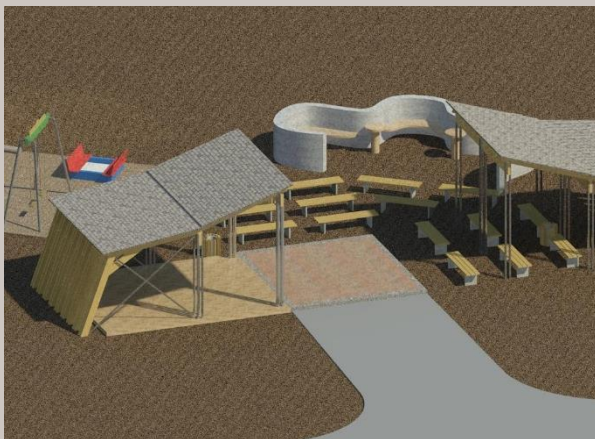


Case Study

Social project for engineering students: an introduction to RRI

Activity

Vilnius College of Technologies and Design runs special participative initiatives in order to respond to strategic goals for sustainability. One of those initiatives is *Social project* – an optional course, targeting 1st - 2nd year professional bachelor engineering students. This course links knowledge, enquiry, and action to help students become an active society member and solve practical problems for their communities. Through their work with chosen society actors (CSO, society group, public schools, etc.) students learn to solve local community issues in a variety of areas, such as the environment, health and education.



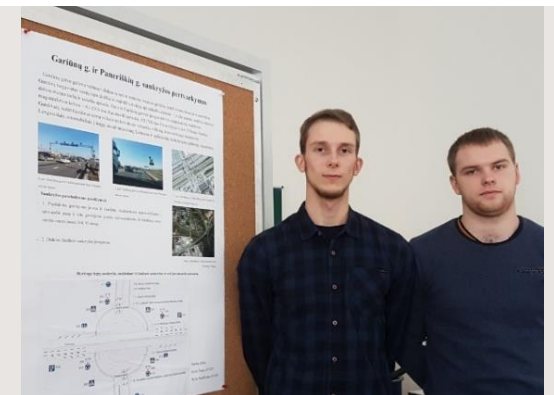
Methodology

The first 4 weeks of the semester, through active learning and participatory methods, students learn to identify and structure problems and analyze them from various perspectives. After this training, for the next 10 weeks, teams of 4-5 students work with the chosen problem, trying to implement their project and solve some small real problem of societal actors. Some of these projects are carried out as Science Shop community-based research (CBR). At the end of each project, student teams get feedback from external evaluators and have a thorough discussion about their teamwork and lessons learned.

Learning outcomes

By implementing community problem based projects students learn to consolidate and master their professional knowledge, develop their skills of creative and effective problem solving, cooperation, critical thinking, time and risk management, proper communication and presentation of their ideas.

Students are being prepared to engage in RRI, by considering the environmental, economic or social impact of the project, from short-term to long-term impacts. They learn to collaborate interactively and to apply new knowledge from the research project to create change.



Conclusions

This course is considered a small scale RRI intervention and a good start for further participation in community service learning (CSL) and community based research (CBR) projects. Due to course methodology, requiring active participation of the students, situational awareness, participatory ability, adaptability and social responsibility of students increases, they feel more ready to join other CSL/CBR projects.

Trainers' and Learners' profiles

1st - 2nd year professional bachelor students, studying Construction, Transport Engineering, Electrical and Automation Engineering.

The course is delivered by the lecturers experienced in community based project management.

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