Sustainability and study associations
Motivation and obstacles to moving forward
Green Office

Research question
RUG is working on 3 pillars of sustainability: People, Planet, Profit. Study associations are in the capacity to have an impact on students, society and the environment. How do they contribute to sustainability at the RUG?
- How important is sustainability to them at the moment?
- What helps or keeps them from improving?
- What do they need in order to improve?

Methods
- Purposive sampling of study associations
- Semi-structured interviews with board members
- Content analysis on their answers

Results
- Achievements by study associations: (1) Organising events with sustainability themes; (2) Reduced use of single-use plastics and other material in the office; (3) Writing multi-annual strategies on sustainability.
- The main obstacles in improving sustainability: (1) Added costs for implementing sustainable improvements; (2) Difficulty in ensuring long-term incorporation; (3) Not knowing where to start.
- General motivation to work on sustainability: (1) Personal interest/sense of importance for the topic; (2) Professional image towards external parties; (3) Subsidy/extra budget for being sustainable.
- Needs of study associations: (1) ‘Minimum effort’ protocols/starting point; (2) Help with structural and long-term change; (3) Engaging info on sustainability pillars.

Advice
- Providing a starting point for study associations: Which item to tackle first?
- Creating engaging (video) content to reach students and board members with the message that sustainability is important
- Use of a tool to transfer sustainability efforts to the next board of the association: an attempt designed here

Tool
Transfer document chapter including:
- Achievements this year
- Knowledge obtained and actions taken
- Impact on students and society
- Food for thought and lessons learned

Specifically for sustainability in the study association

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