



Erasmus Thematic Network Project  
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*“The invisible hand of Adam Smith is morphing into an invisible handshake. Since his day in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, economists have built their models on the assumption that humans are self-interested and not inclined to share...The new work paradigm—sharing, rather than protecting, trade secrets—is quickly becoming the way forward.”*

Rana Foroohar

## Consumer Citizenship Education Guidelines: addressing global problems

“Angry protesters demonstrate at World Trade Organization meetings.” “Pandemic Asian bird flu threatens entire populations.” “Online-gambling increases indebtedness.” “Scams and identity theft affect millions.” Such recent headlines as these confirm the fact that consumer-related problems face individuals and communities throughout the world. Rather than diminishing, they appear to grow in number and intensity. Educational institutions move forward slowly in their efforts to meet the challenges of modern society.

The Consumer Citizenship Network partners have, during the two years since the start of the CCN, discussed, debated and carried out research about concepts and practices related to sustainable development and consumer citizenship education. The network partners have consulted in thematic group meetings, at conferences and in online discussions. A survey was carried out to map topics related to consumer citizenship. By bringing together the various elements which constitute consumer citizenship education, the guidelines highlight the universal need for common reflection on the implications of “improved quality of life” and of the consequences of present consumption patterns. The guidelines emphasize the value of developing quality modules/courses in higher education which support the European Bologna process by enhancing the relevance of European higher education to society’s present needs. The main intention of the guidelines is to stimulate education which facilitates students’ ability to analyse, understand and cope with real, everyday life problems and to empower them to be active participants in modern society. Active consumer citizens are individuals who not only make selective, reflected lifestyle choices in the market but who also effect changes by engaging

as stakeholders in the dialogues and debates which determine policy, contribute to transparency and guarantee accountability.

Far from attempting to support the idea of a stereotype consumer citizen, the guidelines support the conviction that although there are central principles which define consumer citizenship, specific knowledge which is necessary to have and certain competences to be acquired, there are many ways of exercising consumer citizenship. The varying approaches require, nonetheless, in-depth, up-to-date understanding and awareness of the constantly changing conditions which create the landscape in which the consumer citizen must function. Though it is impossible to find definite answers to many questions related to consumer citizenship, it is possible to provide students with basic tools which enable them to better deal with these questions. Volume 1 of the Guidelines has been prepared for teachers in higher education in general and teacher trainers in particular. These guidelines provide a pluralistic approach to consumer citizenship education. A number of models are presented and suggestions are made as to competences, learning outcomes and methodology. The Guidelines are in the process of being evaluated and tested.

## CCN Activity Updates

It is through the contributions of all the partners in the Consumer Citizenship Network that the network functions. The agreed upon workplan for this final year of the first CCN three year cycle consists of the following tasks: All CCN partners including thematic group members are encouraged to

- Make contributions to the CCN academic database (references, links)
- Carry out research and development work to be presented at the annual international conferences, some published
- Make contributions to the Teaching/learning Guidelines for Consumer Citizenship education (vol. 2. secondary school)
- Submit suggestions of indicators of consumer citizenship
- Identify/map generic/subject specific competences for consumer citizenship education
- Disseminate information/material about consumer citizenship and consumer citizenship education
- Report to CCN Core Unit about activities related to CCN

In connection with meetings held in October and November 2005 the thematic groups have also consulted and been working on the following tasks. The distribution of the tasks for project year 3 was based on suggestions made by the thematic group members and CCN partners at large during the second CCN project year.

*Thematic group #1 (Ethical challenges)*  
Development of public appeals about consumer citizenship education and strategies for implementation of public appeals. The group will begin the initial carrying out of these strategies in cooperation with the CCN steering group/Core Unit.

*Thematic group #2 (The information society)*  
Development of an online version of the Teaching/learning Guidelines for Consumer citizenship education vol 1 (Higher education)

*Thematic group #3 (Consumer rights and responsibilities)* a) Development of a database of professional associations and forging links with these by information, communication, etc.; b) working on identifying indicators of responsible consumption

*Thematic group # 4 (Global Solidarity)* a) Coordinating cooperation with associated partners from countries outside of Europe (Erasmus Mundus CCNI), b) preparing a new

application for Erasmus Mundus for new 3-year cycle, c) preparing application for an African workshop on consumer citizenship (in cooperation with the Volksvagen foundation)

*Thematic group #5 (Social involvement)*  
a) Supervising the LOLA (Looking for likely alternatives) pilot project (searching for cases of social innovation as a didactic process to raise sustainability awareness), b) Compiling and editing volume 2 of Teaching/learning Guidelines for Consumer Citizenship Education in Secondary Education

*Thematic group #6 (Sustainable Development)*  
Designing an 8-10 hour consumer citizenship training course to be delivered in connection with the Hamar conference. Include the testing of Guidelines and dissemination of other relevant material.

**CCN Steering group** meet also in October and continues to: provide academic direction for the project, maintain positive and constructive atmosphere for international cooperation, provide guidelines for the development work with the web site and databases, general guidelines for the preparation and carrying out of the annual conferences in cooperation with Core Unit and conference committee, contact dignitaries and media, keep an overview of the publications of the network, prepare new three year proposal and budget plan, disseminate the project's outputs, maintain on-going evaluation of the project.

The **CCN Core Unit** has continued to carry out the basic project management which among other things involves: communication between partners, maintenance of the administrative infrastructure, coordination of CCN conferences and meetings, the compilation and publication of the newsletter and reports, the dissemination of information and outcomes, financial transactions and reporting, and maintaining CCN web site. In addition the Core Unit has the task of searching for sponsors, and contacting other networks, institutions and associations who are interested in cooperating with CCN

### Promoting New Responses: a new publications series

The CCN has started a new publications series entitled "Promoting new responses". The first volume to be printed in this series is "Taking Responsibility", which contains 14 articles originally presented at the CCN Second international conference held in Bratislava in May 2005.

## The third CCN Conference

### *Catalyzing Change*

**May 15-16 2006  
Hamar, Norway**

**Extended dates for  
submission of abstracts:  
January 15, 2006**

**For online registration  
February 15, 2006**

### **CCN Conference**

As previously announced, the third CCN international conference will focus on consumers as agents for change. Dramatic and rapid transitions characterize the world today. Triggering *constructive* change is a major challenge facing the global community. Yet many individuals do not have the opportunity, the knowledge or the competence to actively participate in the debates and decisions that shape their lives. Commercial and political pressures often convince people that they have no influence. Empowering people to play a more effective role in the development of a just and caring society involves creating new attitudes, spaces and mechanisms which can stimulate involvement and strengthen trust. The third international conference of the Consumer Citizenship Network will focus on consumers as agents for constructive change. The following issues will be examined:

- Which incentives contribute to the development of consumer citizenship?
- What can be done to transform the consumer's frustrations and uncertainties into change-creating energy?
- How can consumer citizens contribute to improving public discourse and informed debate?

- How can responsiveness, transparency, and trust between the producer and the consumer be stimulated?
- How can consumer citizens use scientific research to create sustainable lifestyles?
- How can commitment and consistency to sustainable consumption be promoted?

In addition to the presentation of CCN partners' research and development work, there will be new features this year: several symposia, a panel debate with representatives from corporate enterprises, more time for round table discussions, a "World Café" session, an exhibition of cases of sustainable consumption created by CCN partners involved in LOLA, and an international reference library with examples of teaching materials. The conference will take place in Hamar, Norway just a short train ride from the Oslo airport. For more details and online registration see the CCN website ([www.hihm.no/concit](http://www.hihm.no/concit)) under "conferences". The 17<sup>th</sup> of May is the Norwegian national day and is celebrated in a unique manner, quite unlike any other country. Those who want to stay until the 18<sup>th</sup> of May and participate in one of the two post-conference programs are welcome to do so. More details are available on the CCN website

### **ISO guidance standards for social responsibility**

The International Standard Organization is in the process of creating guidance standards for social responsibility. The structure and overall contents, as well as a target release date of last quarter 2008 have been decided upon. The ISO Working Group on Social Responsibility (WG SR) laid the foundations of ISO 26000 at its second meeting, 26-30 September 2005, in Bangkok, Thailand. ISO 26000 will give organizations harmonized, internationally agreed guidance for social responsibility, drawing on best practice and consistent with relevant declarations and conventions by the United Nations and its constituents. The standard will not contain requirements allowing ISO 26000 to be used for certification. The CCN's focus on social responsibility was the background for the CCN project managers participation in the ISO Bangkok meeting in September 2005.

## Delayed printing of CCN conference proceedings

Due to circumstances beyond control, the final printing of the proceedings from the Consumer Citizenship Network conference, *Taking Responsibility*, held in Bratislava, has been delayed. The book, which will contain approximately 30 of the papers is expected to be available in the spring of 2006. Meanwhile, all the CCN partners have received a copy of the cd ram from the conference which consist of all the presentations plus the pictorial summary from the conference.

## UN Decade for education for Sustainable Development

The following is the UNESCO *vision and definition* of education for sustainable development: Education for sustainable development is about learning to:

- respect, value and preserve the achievements of the past;
- appreciate the wonders and the peoples of the Earth;
- live in a world where all people have sufficient food for a healthy and productive life;
- assess, care for and restore the state of our Planet;
- create and enjoy a better, safer, more just world;
- be caring citizens who exercise their rights and responsibilities locally, nationally and globally.

The *YouthXChange guide* is now online The guide approaches sustainable consumption via the 3 pillars of sustainable development - environment, ethics and economics - highlighting the dynamic and interrelated nature of the topic. Full of illustrated facts and figures, it is also a road map to the website, with clear references to where issues can be further explored. The website is an easy-to-use training resource that appeals to both trainers and youth. Its friendly, multimedia approach strikes a chord with the interests of young people and encourages them to network towards sustainability. <http://youthxchange.e-meta.net/>

## Communication

The CCN Core Unit would greatly appreciate receiving from the CCN partners their a) updated, completed and signed work sheets indicating how much time they have spent on CCN related work. b) copies of any articles, reports or webpages which refer to work done by or for the CCN. Thank you.

## Indicators of sustainable consumption

One of the most significant changes in collective efforts, be it within business, education or public life, has been the identification of criteria for progress. Such indicators have transformed abstract visions into concrete action plans. Rather than assessing progress on the basis of assumptions and impressions, social scientists have been able to examine more closely the elements of change.

Consumer Citizenship Network partners are working to compile a set of viable indicators of sustainable consumption which can serve as a tool for individuals in their private attempts to modify their lifestyles and become more responsible, sustainable consumers. If you have any contributions to make to this process, send your ideas and suggestion to thematic group 3 care of the CCN Core Unit ([ccn@hihm.no](mailto:ccn@hihm.no)).

## Dates for you to remember

- **January 15, 2006** Extended date for submission of abstracts for CCN Conference "Catalyzing Change"
- **February 15, 2006** Online registration for CCN conference "Catalyzing Change"
- **February 16-18, 2006** CCN steering group meeting and meeting of all thematic groups in Budapest
- **March 1, 2006** Submission of research and development papers for CCN conference
- **March 1, 2006** Submission date for final application for new three year cycle
- **May 14, 2006** Steering group and thematic group meetings
- **May 15-16, 2006** Third CCN conference to be held in Hamar, Norway

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