

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

CHAIR OF “DIANE FOUNDATION” DOCTORAL SCHOLARSHIP

Education in Eco-Citizenship and Sustainable Development (CEEDD)

Saint Joseph University of Beirut

The Chair of “Diane Foundation” for Education in Eco-Citizenship and Sustainable Development is inviting applications for a 2021 doctoral scholarship. The scholarship is awarded to doctoral researchers working on Sustainable Development themes. It is granted for a three-year period, and it covers the registration fee. Following an initial selection, three candidates will be selected. The nominated participants will be invited to present their thesis proposal before a jury, which will select a single application.

Eligible themes

For this year, the **eligible themes** are:

- Sustainable Agriculture – Agroecology
- Ecotourism and Heritage Enhancement
- Education and Awareness on Sustainable Development

Thesis project

The **5-page** thesis proposal must contain the following points:

- Background
- State of the art
- Problematization
- Axes of the theoretical framework
- Work methodology
- Basic references

Eligibility

1. Holding a Master’s degree in Science, Geography, Agronomy, Educational Science or Economics
2. Being admitted at Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ)
3. Providing 8 hours of availability per week at the Chair to work on projects related to the thesis
4. Having a duration of the doctoral thesis: 3 years
5. Proposing the thesis in French or English

Application/Deadline

Please submit your application *by email to:* ceedd-fondation-diane@usj.edu.lb no later than **April 30, 2021**, with:

- A curriculum vitae
- A photo
- A thesis project (*see part «Thesis project document»*)
- A letter of intent

Annex

Sustainable Agriculture – Agroecology

About 70% of the world’s population depends directly on agriculture as a mean of subsistence. A stable agricultural sector ensures a nation of food security. Agriculture is the world’s leading source of biodiversity erosion. This is due to the transformation of systems, through the simplification of rotations and the conversion of grassland systems (meadows, lawns) to plowing, but it is also due to the transformation of landscapes, through the abandonment of land (homogenization) and the progression of the forest and the urban areas. While many species and ecosystems depend on agricultural activities (46% of Mediterranean ecosystems) and biodiversity can add value to agriculture (production, agronomic services: auxiliaries, windbreaks, grassing, etc.), biodiversity conservation has long been dissociated from agriculture. It is possible to increase agricultural production in quantity and quality, to ensure better control of pest populations and to reduce dependence on inputs, by increasing biological diversity in agroecosystems and optimizing biological interactions within them” (Malézieux et al. 2009). The biodiversity of agricultural landscapes provides and maintains the ecosystem services essential to agriculture. Sustainable agriculture makes efficient use of water, land and nutrients, while producing sustainable economic and social benefits. Agriculture can create rich natural habitats and the heterogeneity and complexity of the landscape is favorable to biodiversity. The latter is mainly present in semi-natural environments: the greater the quantity and type of these environments, the more biodiversity can increase. “Agroecology is the science of the management of natural resources for the benefit of the most disadvantaged faced with a disadvantageous environment. This science, of a biophysical nature in the broad sense, thus focuses on the accumulation of knowledge on the functioning of ecosystems (cultivated). It leads to the design, creation and adaptation in the participatory form of complex productive cropping systems and consequently attractive despite an unfavorable environment and despite a very low use of inputs...” - Miguel Altieri (1995).

Ecotourism and heritage enhancement (natural and cultural)

According to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), culture and cultural heritage/landscapes are integrally linked to climate change, energy problems, urbanization, health and poverty reduction. The key issues in heritage conservation are urbanization, globalization and loss of local identity, unsustainable tourism, natural disasters, including climate change disasters, heritage relations with local communities, the often inadequate integration of heritage considerations into urban planning, the absence of ecological perspectives in urban settlement planning and policies, and the importance of human rights-based approaches to cultural and natural heritage processes and outcomes. In other words, the success of heritage conservation depends heavily on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Conversely, the SDGs can also be achieved through cultural heritage. Indeed, it is considered a key element of urban sustainability, an engine of inclusive economic development, a catalyst for social cohesion, inclusion and equity, and it enables the improvement of the habitability and sustainability of urban areas. Cultural heritage thus contributes strongly to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ecotourism is the form of tourism that aims for sustainable development through the safeguarding of the environment, the protection of cultural and social heritage, and the economic development of the territories concerned (Whelan, 1991; Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996; Wood, 2002). A project is called ecotourism if it ensures both the continuous preservation of the integrity of the ecosystems and culture of the places visited, as well as the production of benefits (Gössling 1999).

Sustainable Development Education and Awareness

Eco-citizenship is a subject that must be treated in all its dimensions. This area of research is essential for the implementation of sustainable development. It is essential to approach Ecocitizenship from a global and systemic perspective, thus showing three organizational levels: citizenship (the system or society), the environment (the environment), and the relationship between the two (citizenship/environment). Eco-citizenship and education on sustainable development aim to empower individuals with an environmental citizenship consciousness. It must be seen as an interdisciplinary culture to be established and must aim to build in individuals behaviors, skills and knowledge that will enable them to make decisions and act in an eco-sustainable manner. To build it, the accessibility and popularization of basic data on the environment and society is essential. New technologies have made it possible to disseminate knowledge by making it available online to all. This has also reduced inequality.

The thesis must then address a problem related to the effective and efficient means to achieve awareness and education of citizens (accessible to all) to the environment and sustainable development, and ensure the implementation of knowledge.