

## SUMMARY

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In its first White Paper “**Shaping the Future of Higher Education in a Changing World**”, the Circle U. Think and Do tank shares an initial joint understanding of its mission, its way of working and its main development strategy. The Think & Do Tank is one of the four platforms of Circle U. It will seek to **influence the future of higher education** towards a European Education Area that is sustainable, responsible, peaceful, democratic, collaborative and prosperous. Its main focus will be to **enhance the quality of teaching in higher education**, by **combining thinking and doing** and by **imagining, highlighting and disseminating** new ways of teaching and learning. We are convinced that the Think & Do Tank has some special features that can make a difference:

- **It connects students, faculty, researchers, institutional leadership, administration, associate partners and other external stakeholders** to contribute to and influence the debate on the future of higher education.
- The **integration of *thinking and doing*** at the core of the Think & Do Tank should provide both theoretical and practical means to improve educational practices and reach out to other European universities, stakeholders and decision-making bodies. The Think & Do Tank will generate and disseminate evidence-based knowledge, connect research and education through pedagogical experiments, bring research closer to practice, promote innovative approaches to pedagogy. In doing so, we will build bridges between different backgrounds and cultures, laying the foundation for exchange and change.
- The Think & Do Tank will be a **laboratory for reflection and experimentation in pedagogical innovation** for academics and researchers, students, academic staff and stakeholders, to transform the universities from the inside. The expected impact is that the Circle U. community will act for more sustainable ways of teaching and learning. Based on this “**self-transformation**” process, the Think & Do Tank will be even more powerful influence the policy-makers towards a more **sustainable education**.

The Think & Do tank’s publications will allow us to engage in debates with politicians at the European and the nation levels, in order to facilitate initiatives grounded in factual and empirical knowledge. The Circle U. Think & Do Tank’s mission is to be **a link between the Circle U. European University, its various regional environments and the local, national and European policy makers** in order to contribute to shaping the future of higher education. Convincing and advocating in favour of sustainable education will target four main levels:

1. **In teaching and learning spaces** so that professors implement innovative teaching methods that connect research and education, are student-centred and encourage the active participation of students in their own education ;
2. At the **University level**, aimed at the universities’ leaderships, to encourage the transformation of curricula towards a more sustainable education, to disseminate good teaching practices and identify the opportunities for, and obstacles to change.
3. Towards **national policy makers**, to better link universities and societies. In that respect, the Think & Do Tank will tie new knowledge and solutions to governance issues, in order to identify opportunities and obstacles and be proactive thinkers on the future of higher education.

4. Within **European institutions**, to engage in broader reflections about the present and future challenges of our changing world.

The Circle U. Think & Do Tank has two core topics for the alliance Pilot Phase, **sustainable education and multilingualism**:

- **Our goal is to embed sustainability in topics and activities related to education**, giving our students skills that will be useful throughout their lives to solve the complex issues that the world is facing. Sustainable education is a vector of change, provided there is sufficient clarity and evidence to build a common understanding.
- **Another goal is to see multilingualism as a resource.** As privileged institutions for the learning of languages, we argue that there is a need to raise the awareness of multilingualism as a resource by pointing out the opportunities for, and obstacles to the dissemination of multilingualism, and by developing solutions to overcome these obstacles.

**This *white paper* is the first one of a series to be published during the pilot phase.** It will be disseminated at different levels, **within the Circle U. alliance**, to introduce the Think & Do Tank inside our universities so that we can generate involvement from our colleagues, students and university staff – and **beyond the alliance**, to our associated partners, our funders and other alliances.