University Social Responsibility through the lens of students: Does it really matter?

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UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO

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University Social Responsibility

Chase (1923) 'public-minded alumni'

Zomer & Benneworth (2011) The recent emphasis on USR in the 'third mission' of HEIs

UNESCO (1998), World Declaration for Higher Education in the 21st Century", affirmed the importance of USR in the face of the complexity and challenges of today's world

2030 Agenda - Sustainable Development Goals (2015) 4.Quality education| ensure equal access to all levels of education |sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity

ISO26000 - Guidance Standard on Social Responsibility (2010) represented a consensus for sustainable development, taking into account the local and global impact of each institution
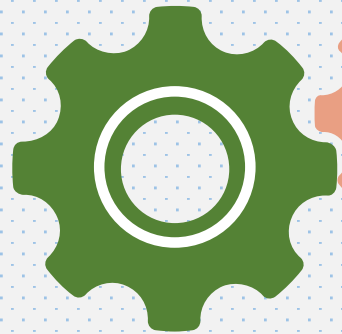
ISO 21001 - Management Systems for Educational Organisations (2018)

In the post-Bologna European context, special emphasis was placed on the responsibility of HEIs to provide equal opportunities for all to access, progress and reach higher education, despite their different cultural and social origins (London Communiqué, 2007)

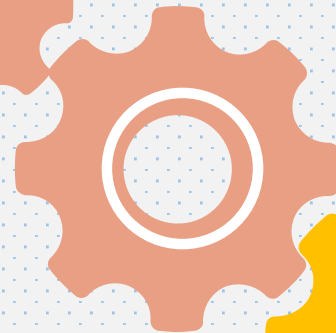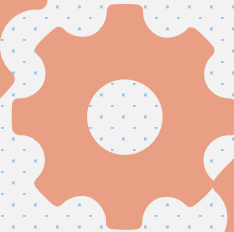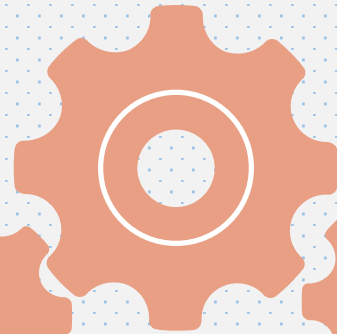# University Social Responsibility: Beyond the Ivory Tower

USR arising from the marketization and internationalization of ES

USR as deep transformation and institutional endeavour

Conservative pole

USR as an opportunity to achieve financial stability

Organizational governance and institutional reputation

Critical-transformative pole

Changing space,
Space of change, enhancer of innovation and practices
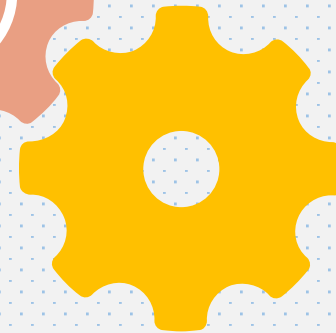
USR crosses Universities mission asa whole transformation at all levels

University Social Responsibility: Beyond the Ivory Tower

Reiser (2008)
USR focused on managment

Conservative pole

Velazquez, et al. (2006)
USR as administrative sustainability

Vallayes, et al. (2008;2009)
USR dinamic, interpenetrates University mission

Vasilescu et al. (2010)
emphasizes a collaborative role from the point of view of citizenship

Ecological University
(Menezes, et al. 2018)
Consistent holistic and systemic vision of its multifaceted and complex nature, built by different relationships and interactions, whether between its internal structures or with other social organisms

Critical-Transformative pole

The ecological university: A commitment with the world

Participation in projects/ extracurricular activities

The level of social responsibility influences their perceptions of responsible companies (Droms & Stephen, 2015)

Develops capacity in decision-making, involvement and accountability (Lopes, 2015)

Opportunity for training critical citizens

personal involvement and responsibility on the part of students, which are usually translated into autonomy behaviours (Lopes,2015)

Students as global citizens (Barnett, 2011)

University: multiple learning spaces

More than train professionals of excellence :
- future *alumni* with critical awareness and tools to work in the RS área
- allows them to become aware and improve the socio-environmental impacts of their actions
- citizens of todays' world

University Social Responsibility in action

Research / USR Projects
have a recognized potential in this area for their commitment to principles of equity, social justice and citizenship (European Commission, 2010)

In the **perceptions of the concept by the stakeholders** (Larrán, López & Márquez, 2011; Vàsquez, Aza & Lanero, 2014)

In the development of **instruments** that allows the **analysis and comparison** of USR practices (E3M, 2011) and benchmarks in this area (Martin, 2016)

There is a lack of research about USR in action (Rech, et al, 2016) and about the potential impacts of the training/participation of students in USR projects on their academic, civic and professional life (Larrán, López & Andrades Peña, 2012)
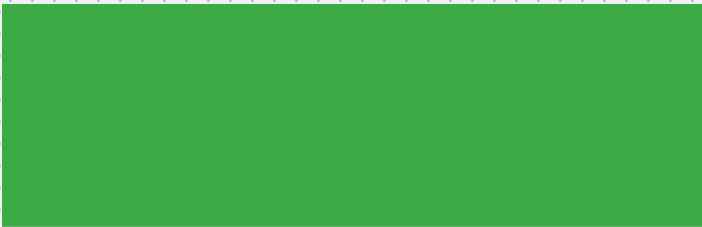
Research Goals

USR Strategy

Understand the impact of participation in USR projects in the dimensions of their academic, civic and professional life
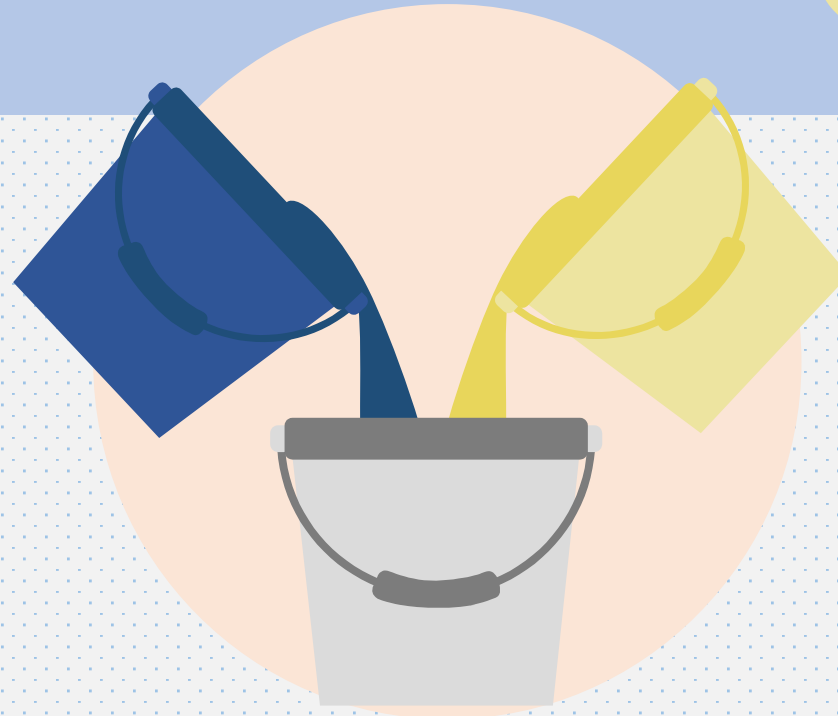
Map and take knowledge of projects and practices in different contexts, in order to understand how different European universities conceive and operationalize the training potential of the USR concept

Produce knowledge about University Social Responsibility in the European context

EXPECTED IMPACT

- A more flexible approach to student learning, assessment and certification
- Allowing students to engage with real world issues
- Enhancing of the use of student/learner centred approaches
- More effective integration of practical training and learning in and from real-world situations

OBJECTIVES

- Creating an innovative approach to the recognition and validation of knowledge, skills (including soft skills) and competences
- Producing a significant Open Educational Resource (OER) for a ECTS 5 Credit Certificate in Social Responsibility Auditing (EQF Level 6)
- Contribute to the wider process of developing alternative models of curriculum development

ACTIVITIES

- Facilitator training
- Student auditor training
- Audits
- Learning, assessment and certification

> A socially responsible University would understand its impact on the world. It would consider issues of justice and accountability, locally and globally, in creating a community that contributes to society.
>
> **Professor Mary Bownes**
> **Senior Vice Principal 2013/14**
> **University of Edinburgh**

ESSA PROJECT

European Students, Sustainability Auditing

Certificate in University Social Responsibility Auditing

KEY FACTS

Project Leader
National Union of Students of the United Kingdom - NUSUK

Partners
The National Unions of Students in Europe
The University of Edinburgh
Kaunas University of Technology
Universidade Do Porto
Edinburgh University Students' Association
Kaunas University of Technology Students Union
Student Association of Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences University of Porto
University of Porto

Duration
September 2016 - September 2019

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This project is co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.
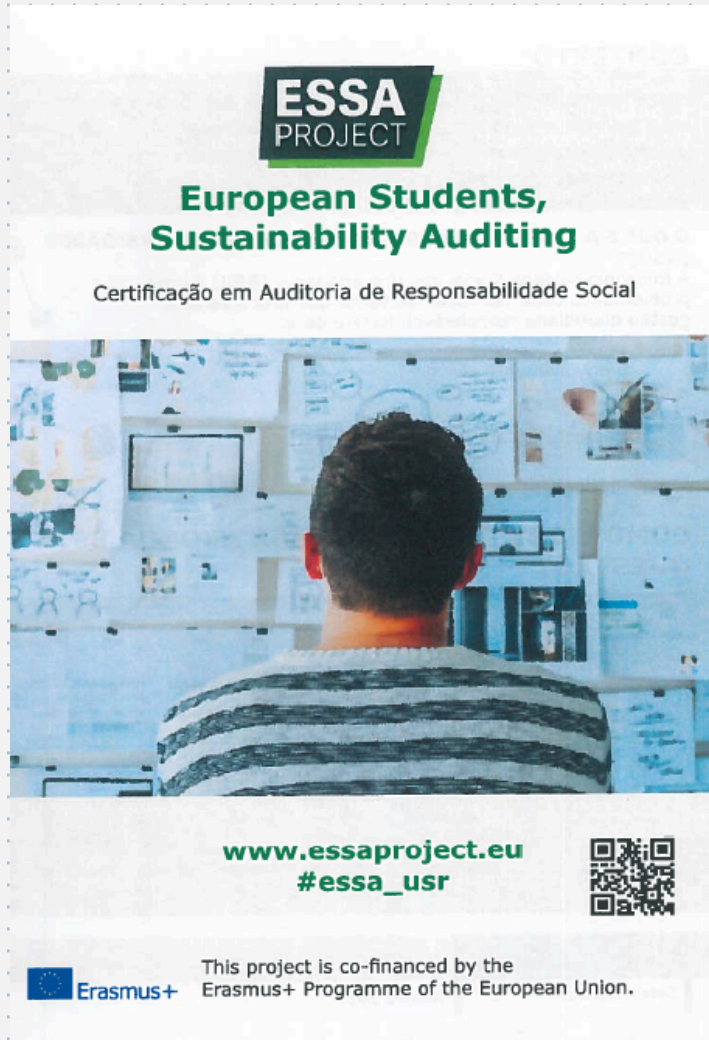
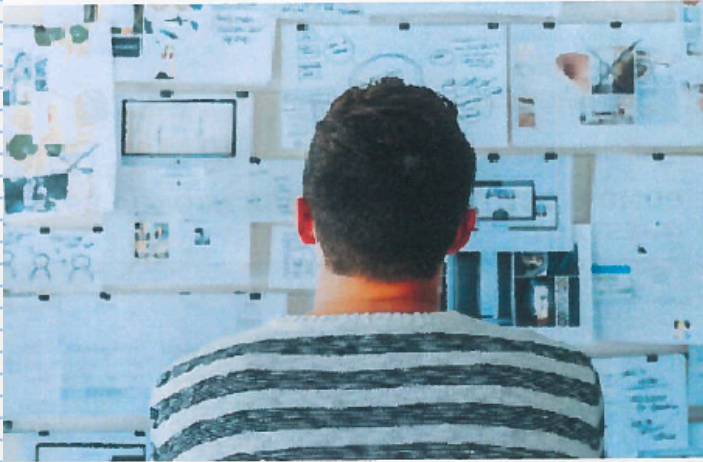**Facilitator Trainings**   **Student Auditor Trainings**   **Audits**

Research Context

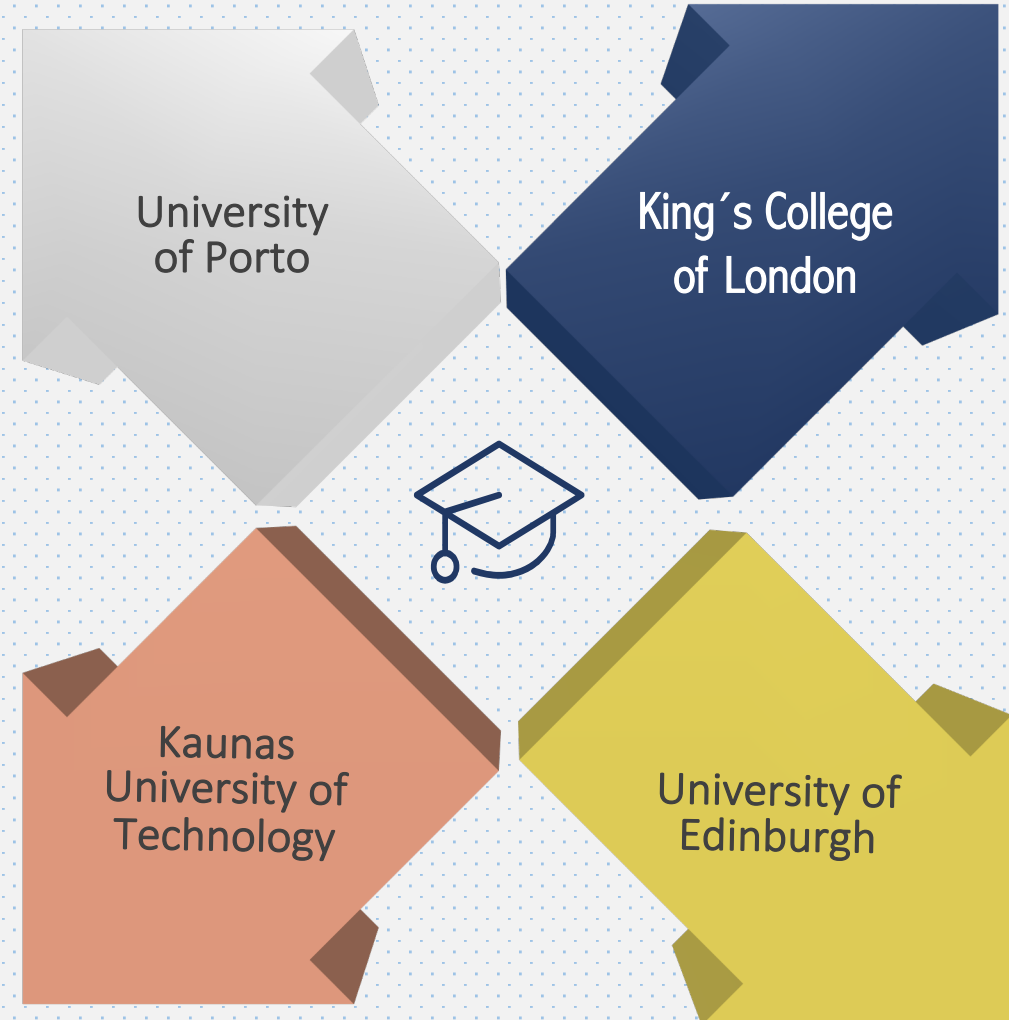ESSA PROJECT
European Students, Sustainability Auditing
Certificação em Auditoria de Responsabilidade Social

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This project is co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.
Erasmus+

University of Porto

King´s College of London

Kaunas University of Technology

University of Edinburgh

Mixed Research Methodology

(Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Bryman, 2006; Creswell, 2009; Vilelas, 2009)

Qualitative data

Quantitative data

combining different qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques

provides a more detailed, in-depht and multifaceted information collection

More in-depth and complex perspectives of all stakeholders

Statistically analyzed Results for a large number of actors

They serve a complementary purpose of extend understanding given the complexity of the object of study

Data Collection Methods

Qualitative data

Quantitative data

Focus groups (face-to-face and online)
with ESSA students

Secondary analysis of materials produced by ESSA students

Questionnaires
Academic community

Interviews
Stakeholders and USR Project Managers

Documental analysis
World and European USR guidelines
Universities information

Students Auditor Training Process

Students' Auditor training course

Audit a European University

• **online**: preparatory package with **readings and key videos** about the theme
• Beginning of a **individual training journal**

1st Fase

2nd Fase

• **Training week** focus on 3 main topics:
• **USR concept**;
• **Audit** in USR;
• Simulations of audits and reporting

• **online**: self evaluation activities and **reflexive evaluation**

3rd Fase

• Conducting a **supervised university social responsibility audit**

1st Audit: University of Edinburgh
2nd Audit: Kaunas Technological University
3rd Audit: University of Porto
4th Audit: King's College of London (2019)

Preliminary data analysis from ESSA project

? Students from the University of Porto who participated in the audit of University of Edinburgh (2016), Technological University of Kaunas (2017) and King's College of London (2019)

? Students from the University of Edinburgh and the Technological University of Kaunas who participated in the audit of University of Porto (2018) and King's College of London (2019)

? Students from the University of Porto who participated in the ESSA Auditor training course
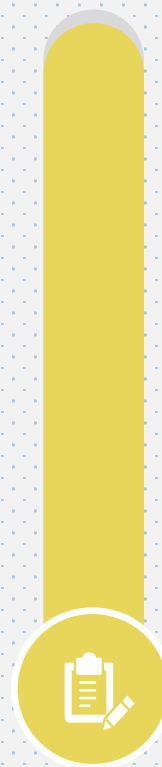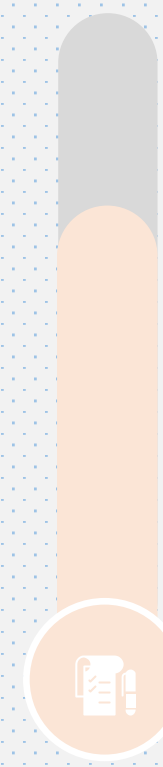
Base-line survey

Post- training survey
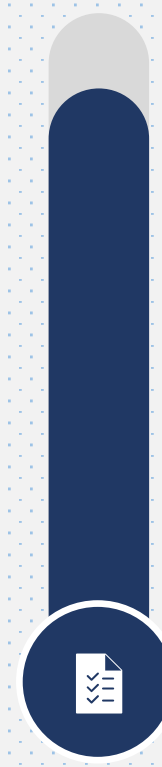
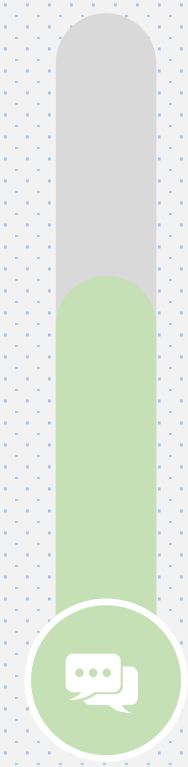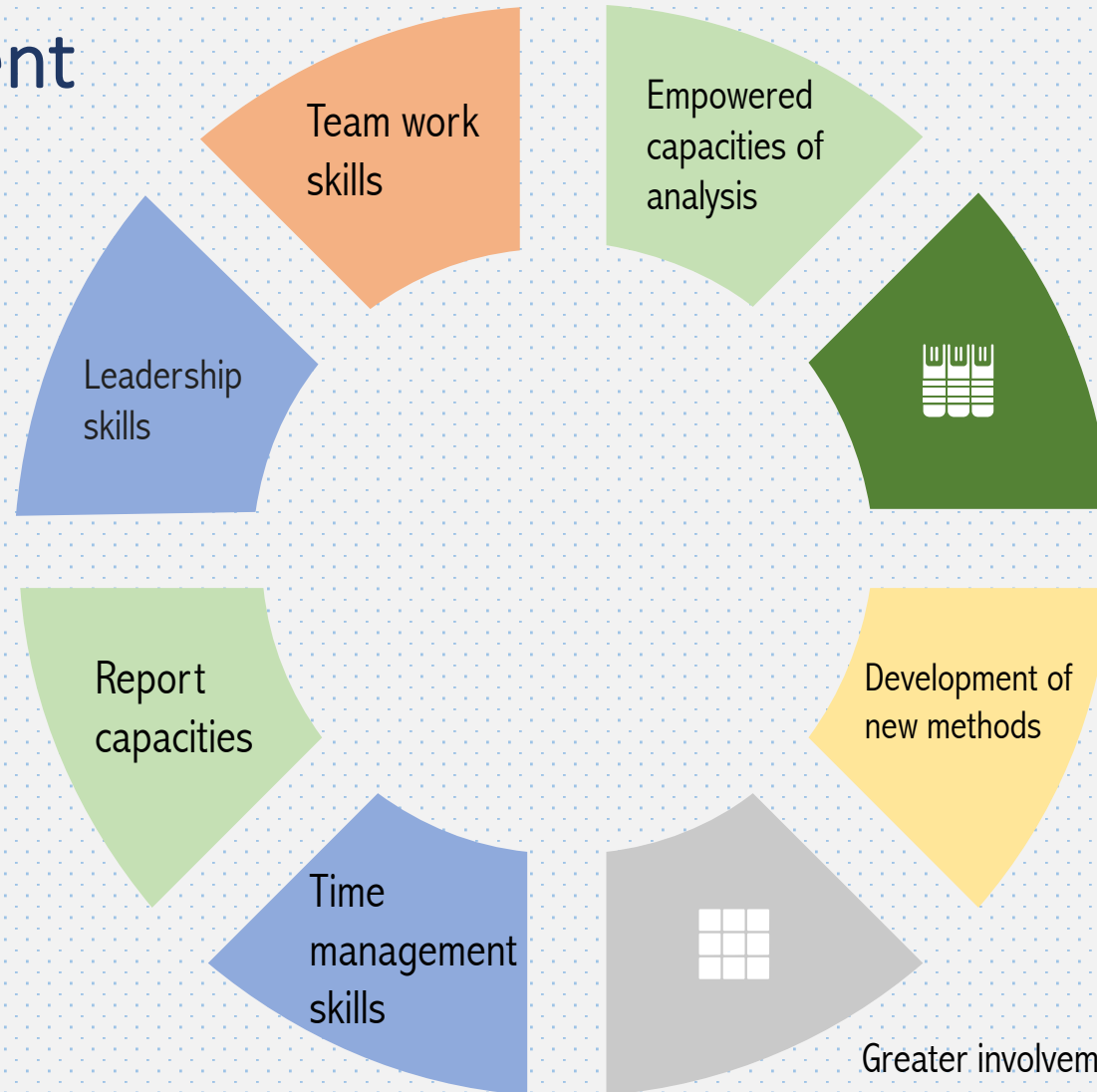Follow-up Survey

Endline Survey

Focus-group

Impact as a Student

"Now I will really start looking to my university with other eyes and try to make different things!"

Team work skills

Empowered capacities of analysis

Leadership skills

Influence on the perspective on their studies

Report capacities

Development of new methods

Time management skills

Greater involvement in their university

Impact as Citizens

"I was already interested in the topic and i was already working to improve the SR on people in general, but now i am really committed to make other people reflect about the topic (...)"

More active citizenship

Knowledge about SR

Better leading skills

More attention to the world

Conscience that everything has impact

Growth as a citizen

Identify social responsible companies

Approximation between university experience and the world
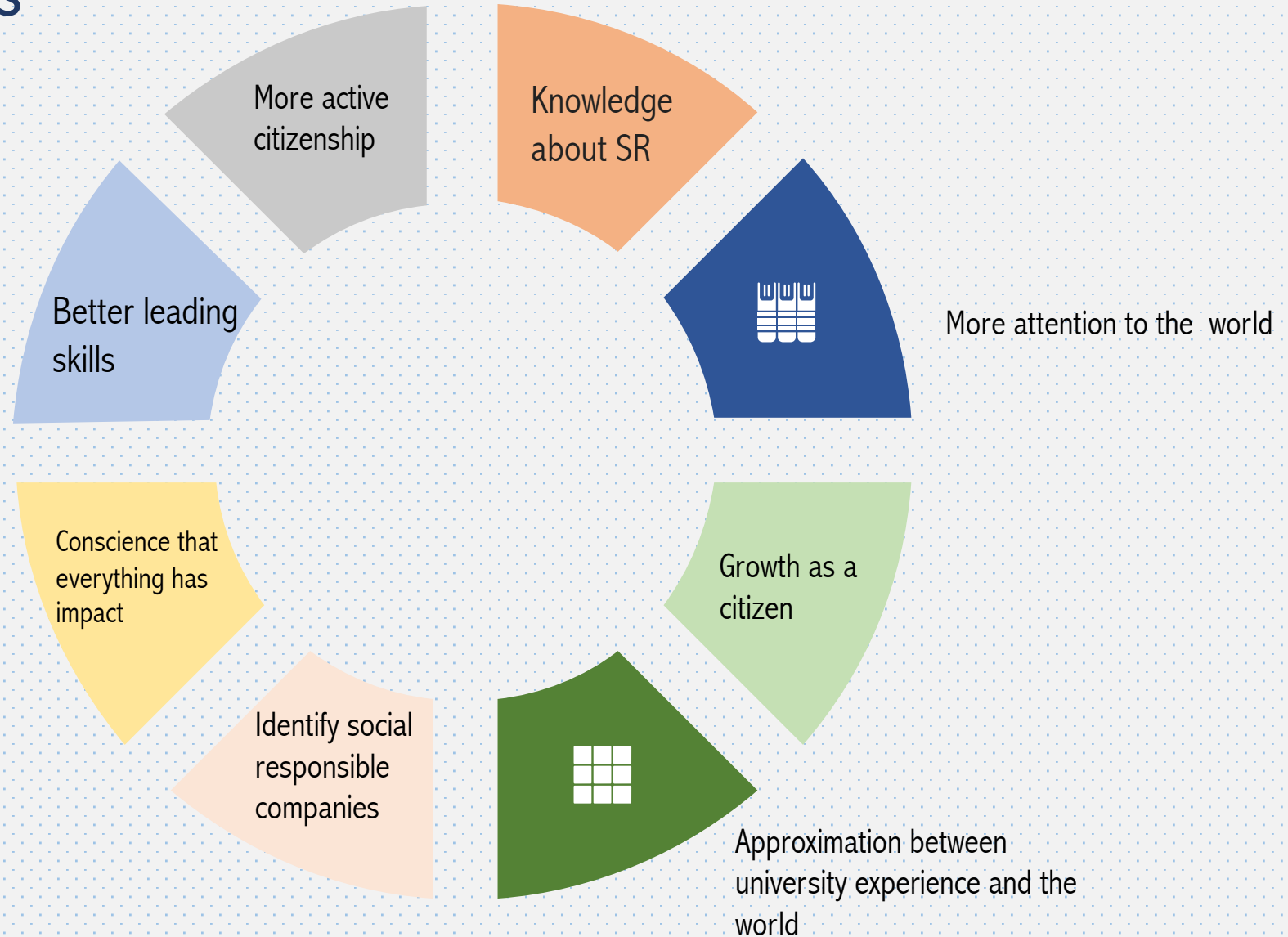
Impact on Employability

"*I have a different perspective of how Institutions are run and how measures should be implemented as a whole. I thing it can be an asset because it shows concern, awareness and responsibility*"

- employers are not sensitive to SR projects
- Improve CV
- Field experience in the area of studies
- Extra skills
- Empowered capacities of analysis
- Experience in topic highly valued nowadays
- Very differentiating conversation topic in a job interview
- Attract more attention for participation in international projects

Experiential learning

Advanced training

New abilities

Personal Growth

Opportunities to work outside disciplinary areas

Service learning

Transversal competences

USR projects

Development of transversal competences

Increased awareness of social responsibility

Better understanding of the connection between theory and practice
(Cheng, 2018)

Conclusions

USR projects are a distinct opportunity for improving practical and communication skills, enhancing sense of social responsibility (Cheng, 2018: 423)

HEIs can be a support to students in developing (…) the ability to combine subject matter knowledge and a set of complementary skills in ways that go beyond traditional classroom classic assignments and objective examinations" (Rutti et al, 2016: 422-423)

"when we had the **chance to analyse thoroughly what XXX is doing** regarding this matter, and **to talk to staff and students**, that's when we **really understood the difference** that was made in their lives the simple act of being careful enough to guarantee equal opportunities and caring for the community and the environment around us and them." (female, Psych)

"the auditing days in XXX were some of the most challenging days in my student life, since it a was a **continuous learning journey** (…) we felt that our **voice could be heard** and we could contribute to a society more aware of their responsibilities through the community." (male, Engineering)

As one participant student concluded "**USR borders are much more wide and comprehensive**" involving the HEI's "traditional commitment to the social tissue in **forming a critical, visionary and sustainable generation**" but permeating "the management of **all University processes**" (Male, UPorto).

" [1] … my **personal experience as a university student** … allowed me to grow on **skills** as important as communication, critical thinking and team-work…. The learning process that prepared the team to perform the audit was also **a fresh look into education itself**. [2] … an **impact on Higher Education Institutions** - … **create a network of engaged, reflective students**. [3]… the **improvement of society** itself, through the creation of more **engaged citizens**, more aware of their role in communities and the importance of fulfilling their responsibilities and acting together on sustainability." (male, Medicine)
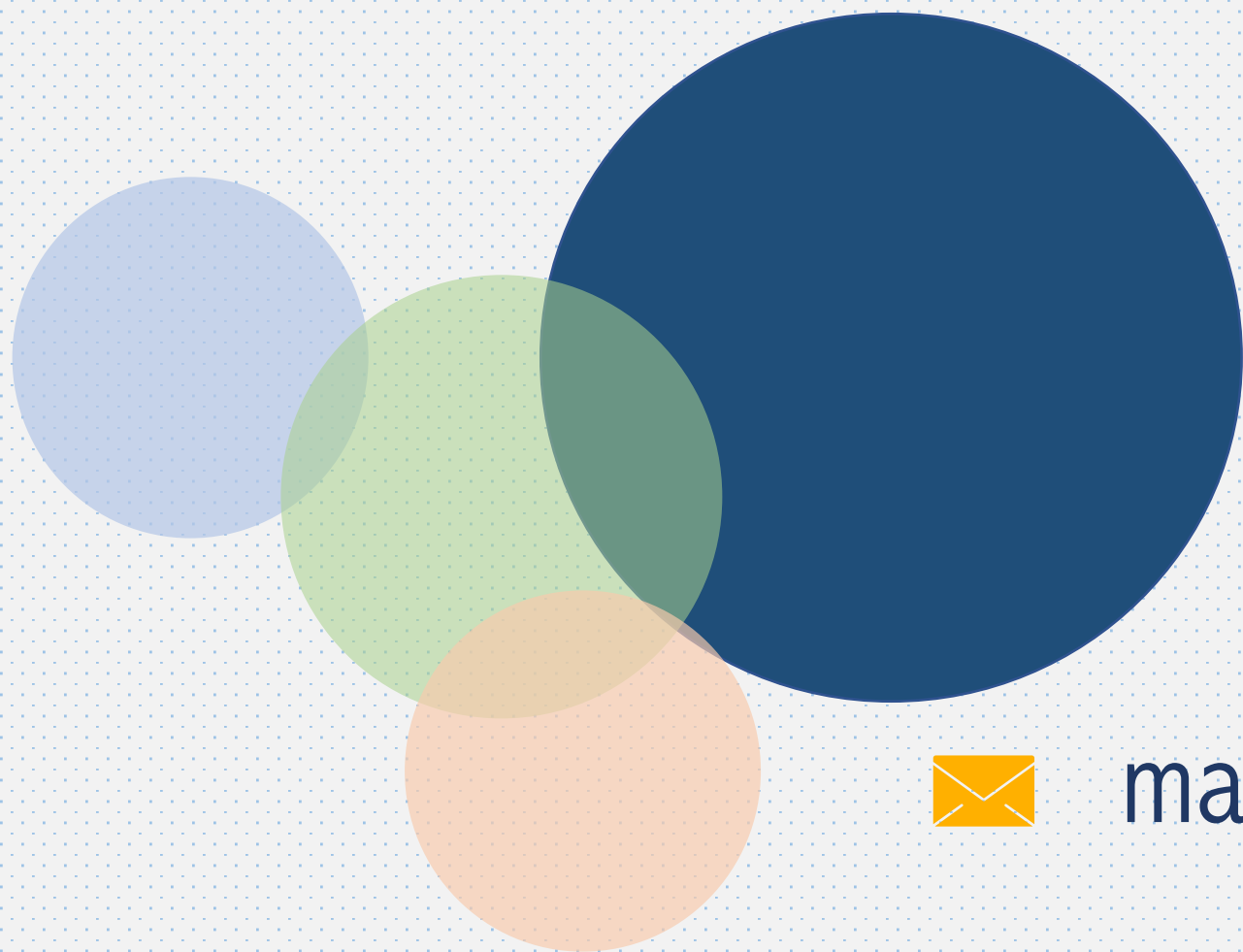
Thank you!

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