

**Middlebury College**  
**Middlebury, Vermont**  
**Environmental Education or Outreach (events/campaigns)**

**SCHOOL**

Middlebury College, private, 4-year, 2,500 students, Middlebury, Vermont.

**ABSTRACT**

Education for sustainability is a central building block of forward-looking societies and economies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The goal of this project was develop new ideas about sustainability and new ways of teaching it to Chilean universities. In the past two years, a growing number of Chilean government officials, business leaders, higher education administrators and university faculty have been actively involved in promoting sustainability on university campuses. Middlebury College contributed to this process from the very beginning. In fall 2009, Middlebury student Jonas Schoenefeld received a Middlebury College Sustainable Study Abroad Grant to attend seven meetings to support and inform negotiations for a university-government protocol for sustainable campus development. This protocol was signed by more than eight Chilean institutions of higher education and the Chilean Ministry of the Environment (CME) in April 2010. Middlebury College signed as an international affiliate and the protocol provided a political framework for a conference on campus sustainability in Santiago, Chile in June 2010 in which over 350 representatives from universities, government and non-governmental organizations participated. In June 2011, Jack Byrne, Director of Sustainability at Middlebury, and Jonas Schoenefeld returned to Chile to collaborate with Dr. Jeff Stevenson, Director of Middlebury's schools in Latin America, and with the CME on curriculum development workshops with Chilean faculty from a variety of disciplines and universities. These workshops focused on developing creative approaches to incorporating the concepts and practices of sustainability into new or existing courses, or the development of new programs. Final workshop products were a variety of diverse concrete implementation plans for various Chilean universities.



**GOALS AND OUTCOMES**

**Goals**

This two-year project aimed to infuse Chilean university courses and programs with ideas and practices about sustainability in their operations and curricula through collaboration and exchange of experiences with each other and Middlebury College. We worked with numerous government representatives, university faculty and staff, as well as with many students to develop a political agreement—the Sustainable Campus Protocol, signed in April 2010 by eight Chilean universities and Middlebury College Chile to serve as a declaration of intent to pursue. We also helped develop a kick-off conference (June

2010) to draw attention to the Protocol and its signatories, and to begin the process of implementation. We also helped develop and organize a three-day curriculum development workshop (June 2011). These initiatives have helped jump-start and reinforce the introduction of sustainability to higher education in Chile. In addition, this initiative serves as a pilot project and a model for other Middlebury schools around the globe in the years to come. We plan to continue to participate in the Chilean initiative, and to replicate this activity in other countries where Middlebury College has abroad programs with interests in this area.

### **Accomplishments and Outcomes**

Eight Chilean universities, Middlebury College and the Ministry of the Environment signed the Sustainable Campus Protocol in April 2010. As a result of this protocol and subsequent actions, several universities have created sustainability integration offices to coordinate efforts at their institutions. In addition, the protocol provided a political framework for the June 2010 conference, as impetus for the curriculum development workshops. We fully achieved our goal in providing workshops to Chilean university professors in 2011. Twenty-three people participated and developed sustainability-focused curricula or community-based programs including implementation plans and schedules over the three-day workshop. We will stay in touch with the programs to learn about implementation, which will take place throughout the end of 2011 and beyond. In addition, we plan to communicate this initiative to the directors of the other Middlebury schools abroad.



### **Challenges and Responses**

Significant challenges included communication since not many of the participants were bi-lingual. There are also some cultural differences that required adjusting to, for example, there is a difference in regard for punctuality between the two cultures that meant building flexibility into scheduling. Because the Ministry of the Environment had faced significant administrative change at the outset of the project, there were challenges figuring out who was responsible for what at times, and who had authority for certain items. Prior to running the workshops, we knew very little about concrete needs of Chilean university professors, as invitations to the workshop were sent very late. We prepared and provided a number of resources to be as flexible as possible during the workshop. It was also somewhat challenging that the workshops were led in English for Spanish speaking participants. This required the employ of two translators and slowed the pace of the workshops considerably. It also meant additional time and effort in preparing materials and reports in two languages or translated into the other.

### **Campus Climate Action: Your School's Carbon Footprint**

This project helped bring a stronger focus to the need for higher education institutions to address the climate issue as a core component of their larger sustainability efforts. It also helped bolster efforts at some institutions to initiate a greenhouse gas inventory as an important first step toward a climate action plan.

### **Commentary and Reflection**

Working in Chile has been an enormously enriching experience, because sustainability isn't a one-size-fits-all concept. Rather, Chilean cultural, linguistic, historic and traditional frameworks necessitated re-

inventing and discovering the meaning of sustainability in Chile. Issues such as Chile's dictatorial history, its unique geography, and a natural resource based economy play important roles in discussions about sustainability in Chile.

## **ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT**

### **Leaders and Supporters**

Key participants of this project were Dr. Jeff Stevenson (Director of Middlebury's School Abroad in Chile), Jack Byrne (Director of Sustainability Integration Office, Middlebury College), Jonas Schoenefeld (student, Middlebury College), Roberto González (Environmental Ministry Chile), Manfredo Langer (Chilean Environmental Commission) and numerous members of the Chilean Environmental Ministry, as well as Oscar Mercado (Universidad Metropolitana) and other Chilean university representatives.

### **Funding and Resources**

We received outstanding support from the Middlebury College community in general and from the Middlebury School in Chile and the Middlebury Sustainability integration Office in particular. Universities and the Environmental Ministry in Chile provided much of the local set-up and valuable support to conduct the conference in June 2010 and workshops in June 2011.

- Sustainable Study Abroad Grant, Middlebury College: \$500
- CME and universities provided venue and resources for the Conference in June '10
- Environmental Council Grant from Middlebury College (March 2011): \$2,500
- Individual Grants from Middlebury College supporting offices: \$1,800
- Ministry of the Environment support for workshops: \$10,000

### **Education and Community Outreach**

We communicated directly and through the Environmental Ministry with local universities, as well as faculty and students. We shared Middlebury College's sustainability experiences through a number of lectures, presentations and meetings at Chilean universities, as well as meetings with individual students. At the end of the sustainability workshops, we invited presidents of participating universities to attend a briefing where we presented key results from the workshop and provided a roadmap for the future.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**MORE ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL**

**Campus Sustainability History**

Middlebury's Environmental Studies Program, founded in 1964, was the first of its kind in the United States. Today, sustainability is a core principle of most campus activities. Over forty departments are associated with the environmental studies program. Weekly lectures, as well as student groups add to the vibrant nature of this environmentally conscious campus. The community benefits from sustainable building design, which ranges from a wood chip plant to power most of the campus to use of local and sustainable building materials and a college-run organic garden that sells its produce to our cafeterias.

Middlebury Sustainability Program: <http://www.middlebury.edu/sustainability/>

**Image credits:** Jack Byrne