Constructing an Urban Future: The sustainability and resilience of cities – infrastructures, communities, buildings and housing.

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Educating tomorrow’s professional towards a sustainable built environment; Achievements and Challenges

• Format(s):
In-person presentation / written paper

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• Abstract (300 words):
The role of building professionals in shaping a sustainable built environment is an internationally agreed agenda. Educating and training tomorrow’s professionals who abide by and deliver an ecologically sensitive design is a critical mission that has been extensively embraced by architectural, design and engineering schools worldwide. Similarly to many schools worldwide, the Architectural Engineering program at the United Arab Emirates University has embedded sustainability throughout its curriculum, resulting in students technically knowledgeable and well prepared to design green and energy efficient buildings. However, while the program has increased and deepened the knowledge, the analytical and problem-solving skills in these areas, it has not necessarily translated into a higher awareness level and ethical commitment to sustainability. This may be particularly evident in the Gulf countries, where high earnings coupled with subsidized energy, do not reflect the true energy usage. The ethical commitment to the sustainable development in the built environment remains yet to be fully reached. This context may not be representative of most regions but it stresses the need for a
contextually grounded sustainable education. This paper presents the Architectural engineering program educational achievements in this area along the ethical commitment gap and the development of activities within a course to raise awareness and reinforce commitment to green design. The course content, objectives are outlined but more importantly it reports on a set of activities that seem to have raised awareness and triggered responsiveness. Above all, this paper aims to raise the issue of ethical commitments to sustainability and foster a wider discussion on contextual educational strategies to really meet the sustainability targets.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Kheira Anissa Tabet Aoul, a LEED AP, is currently a building science Professor and Chair of the Architectural Engineering Department at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU). Prior to joining the UAEU, Kheira was a Sustainability Design Director and LEED AP Coordinator respectively with Raenergie and Tishman Sustainability Corporation (USA). Kheira engages in education and practice-based research focused on advancing the design and execution of a more sustainable built environment in different climatic and cultural context. She draws from over 25 years of international academic and professional experience in USA, Algeria and the UAE. High Performance buildings and human factors in the built environment are her major areas of expertise and research interest. At the center of her current inquiries are questions of how higher education integrates the sustainably agenda to best prepare professionals who can play a greater role in addressing contemporary environmental and social challenges. Kheira holds a Bachelor of Science in Architecture and a PhD in Building Science with a focus on sustainable design from Sheffield University (UK). She is also a LEED Accredited Professional and Green Advantage Certified (USA).