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to 11th October within the Volunteer Swap Program

I went to the University of British Columbia as a participant of the Volunteer Swap Program which intends for student initiatives and its members to build a network, exchange ideas and build the grounds for a sustainable collaboration in which the corresponding partners benefit from one another's experiences and resources. First I visited in this respect the office of Mrs. Hunter. She is the Sustainability Student Advisor and as such involved in the University's Sustainability Ambassador Program. This Program aims at engaging and most importantly enabling students to initiate sustainability related programs in many different fields as well as they cooperate with other student groups as to influence and shape the teaching at university. The term sustainability in this context is considered rather widely and covers social as well as ecological sustainability. This is particularly interesting as I had not thought about sustainability in terms of social sustainability and gender equality before.

Personally spoken, this program is in particular interesting as it not just offers students to engage in fields that grasp their interest but rather demands a strong involvement in regular meetings and courses (e.g. leadership and project management are offered and are obligatory). Especially the aspect of university staff forwarding their knowledge in a course-format to a selected and motivated group has grasped my interest.

Further I have visited the roof top garden that is located on the newly built "Nest" that functions as a space for students and thus hosts a space to grow vegetables on to roof. Their aim is raising awareness and facilitate the students and the communities capacity around food. The garden is for everyone who is willing to use their hands and refinance the project by selling the self-made food and goods.

Moreover, I have met the student initiative SEC (Student Environment Centre). I got the possibility to promote the Volunteer Swap. The students seemed very interested. In my opinion SEC is in its internal structures close to Sustain It. That was one of the reasons why it has been very interesting to me. During my stay at UBC a networking event was organized by plenty of other student organizations concerning main topics of sustainability.

At the end of my stay I have visited the bike kitchen which is a nonprofit community that offers all kinds of services in field of cycling. They not just fix broken bikes, they also offer courses on this topic, make their tools available for people for fixing their bikes themselves and have created a system that allows everyone to rent a bike.

My stay at University of British Columbia was one of the first supported by University alliance for Sustainability, therefore I got the chance to make some new contacts to people in charge of sustainability at UBC. This was challenging to me, nonetheless I had a very interesting stay that might offer many opportunities for a long term collaboration and definitely awakened lots of inspiration.