



## Contents

→ The UN Decade in Germany

Articles by:

- Gerhard de Haan
- Annette Schavan
- Ute Erdsiek-Rave
- Ulla Burchardt
- Dieter Althaus
- Herlind Gundelach
- Bärbel Dieckmann
- Max Fuchs

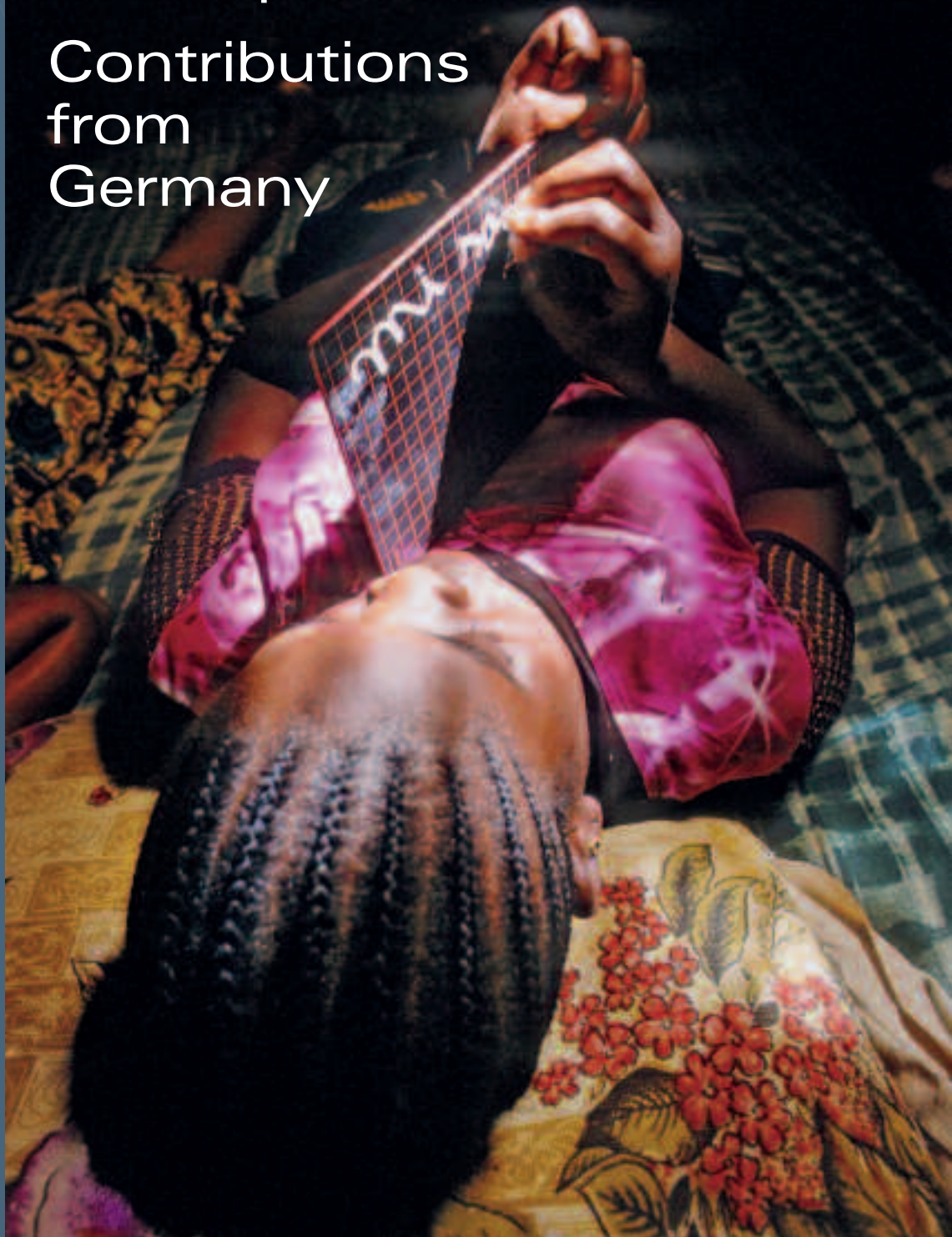
→ Official German Decade-Projects

→ The UN Decade worldwide

Interview with Aline Bory-Adams

Carl Lindberg: The Decade as a Golden Opportunity

# The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development Contributions from Germany



Nachhaltigkeit lernen



Weltdekade der Vereinten Nationen 2005-2014

Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung



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# Help for Street Children in Ecuador

Decade Project by Proyecto Esperanza e.V.

Thanks to the project by Proyecto Esperanza, homeless and poor children and young people in Ecuador are being given a new roof over their heads and new prospects for the future. Groups of six children live together with a tutor in one house. The children can attend school. The youngsters can learn a trade or acquire PC skills. One special feature of the project is its promotion of sustainable agriculture. Estate workers learn how they can use the principle of “permaculture” to create a self-sustaining environment. Permaculture is based on a sensible combination of crops in order to improve the quality of the soil naturally.



Foto: Proyecto Esperanza e.V.

## Decade Projects in Germany

The German National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development has recognised successful and innovative projects as official German contributions to the UN Decade. This issue of *UNESCO today* presents a selection of these projects.



## Solar Art Installations at Major Events and as an Inspiration for Educational Work

Decade Project by Huth Solar Performance, in cooperation with the German Society for Solar Energy (DGS), Regional Association for Berlin-Brandenburg



Foto: Huth Solar Performance

The project plans and executes art installations which make solar energy tangible through force, sound, movement, warmth and light. The aim is to waken people’s interest in solar energy by appealing to them on an emotional level through solar art installations. Following the events, spectators are provided with further information. For school groups, there is also a “solar laboratory” in Berlin, which provides adventure-based teaching on solar energy.

Walter Hirche

## Message of Greeting

Sustainability is not just an area of politics like any other – indeed, sustainability has established itself as the central concept for a human shaping of globalisation. Sustainable development means taking on responsibility for future generations and living together in One World, and Education for Sustainable Development is helping to make sustainability a reference point for the actions of every individual. It is a question of putting people in a position to take part in shaping a society with a future, in an active, thoughtful and responsible manner. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) is promoting these goals among political decision-makers and in civil society, where awareness of these issues is already widespread.

Seldom has a World Decade or an International Year attracted as much attention in Germany as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the international implementation of which is in the hands of UNESCO. The UN Decade is currently one of the most important and visible activities in UNESCO's programme in Germany. The National Committee for the UN Decade brought out a National Plan of Action as early as January 2005, which acts as a political reference document and a statement of commitments. The selection of over 350 official German projects for the Decade has had a great deal of resonance. Through the Round Table and its working Groups, the National Committee cooperates with over 100 initiatives promoting Education for Sustainable Development throughout Germany. The patron of the German activities for the Decade is the President, Horst Köhler.

Shortly after the proclamation of the World Decade, the German Commission for UNESCO set out a framework for the implementation of the Decade in Germany through its "Hamburg Declaration" of 2003, which has been incorporated into the National Plan of Action. On the basis of a unanimous vote on the UN Decade by the German parliament on the 1st July 2004, the German Commission for UNESCO is to coordinate the activities for the UN Decade in Germany through a

specially created National Committee. In its decision, the parliament endorsed the "political responsibility" of members of the United Nations "to drive forward education for sustainable development at national and international level."

In its coordinating capacities, the German Commission for UNESCO has two major comparative advantages:

- The ambitious targets we have set ourselves for the Decade can only be achieved if everyone involved is pulling in the same direction. As an organisation that positions itself between politics and civil society and enjoys widespread acceptance as a balanced and far-sighted mediator, the German Commission for UNESCO provides a platform that allows all those involved in Education for Sustainable Development to work together.
- As a UNESCO national commission, the German Commission for UNESCO is part of a worldwide network of 191 member states. This enables it to ensure that the German Decade activities are tied in with activities at the international level.

The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development has got off to a successful start in Germany. This is, of course, just the beginning. The task, now, is to maintain the encouraging momentum of the first years. In order to do so, we shall have to continue to work hard to convince all stakeholders – from the government and the federal states down to NGOs and private enterprise – that creating a society with a future through education must be seen as their chief priority and commitment. Not all of the "key players" are on board yet. We also have to work to ensure that Education for Sustainable Development establishes itself as an essential "umbrella brand" and quality criterion for future-oriented education. A further focus for the coming years must therefore be the assessment and further development of existing activities. Education for Sustainable Development is an innovation strategy which we should use for our



own activities as well. Finally, at the international level, the Decade has not yet gained the profile it deserves, given the importance of the issues it addresses. We need to put more work into convincing people to take action.

One thing that I feel has worked especially well has been the cooperation between politics and civil society in giving form to the World Decade in Germany. The broad spectrum of activities to be found in the Plan of Action's catalogue of measures and in the list of Decade Projects is impressive. Far-reaching political measures undertaken by government ministries are represented, as are seemingly small-scale, hands-on projects at individual kindergartens, schools or further education colleges. The diversity of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany is well reflected in the contributions to this magazine.

I should like to take this special issue on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development as an opportunity to

thank everyone who has been involved in the Decade in Germany for their hard work. After a very successful start, we now need to further develop our strategic perspectives and work tirelessly on their implementation. The theme of this Decade shall in any case continue to take on ever greater significance.

*Walter Hirche*

*Minister of Economics, Employment and Transport and Vice Minister-President of the State of Lower Saxony*

*President of the German Commission for UNESCO*

**Nachhaltigkeit lernen**



# Dear Reader,

We are proud to present this special issue of the German Commission for UNESCO's magazine on the theme of the implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany. Since it began in 2005, the UN Decade has generated considerable interest here and is now, as Walter Hirche, President of the German National Commission, remarks in his Message of Greeting, one of the most important elements of the implementation of UNESCO's programme in Germany. The present publication is intended to give readers an overview of how the Decade is organized in Germany, which partners are contributing to its implementation, and what our priorities and specific aims are. It also intends to present the very broad spectrum of activities underway to promote ESD in the context of the Decade.

The central body for the implementation of the Decade in Germany is the National Committee, which was instituted by the German National Commission in 2004 under the leadership of the renowned educational scientist Gerhard de Haan of the Free University of Berlin. Professor de Haan opens this publication with a general account of the aims and objectives of ESD. The National Committee is represented by an article jointly authored by its members and setting out the functions and roles of this steering body for ESD.

We are very pleased that a number of high-level representatives have contributed to this publication explaining their tasks and priorities in the German implementation process: Annette Schavan, Federal Minister of Education and Research, whose ministry is the lead ministry for the Decade at the national level and provides the German National Commission with support for its ESD activities; Ute Erdsiek-Rave, Vice-President of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder; Ulla Burchardt, MP, Chairperson of the Committee on Education, Research and Technology Assessment of the German Parliament, which passed a unanimous resolution

on the Decade as early as 2004; the Minister-President of the Free State of Thuringia, Dieter Althaus; Herlind Gundelach, as representative of the environment ministers of the Länder; and the Lord Mayor of the City of Bonn, Bärbel Dieckmann.

Aline Bory-Adams, Chief of UNESCO's ESD Section, has kindly agreed to an interview on UNESCO's role in the Decade. The international dimension of the UN Decade is furthermore represented by a contribution from Carl Lindberg, Member of UNESCO's High-Level Panel on the UN Decade. At this point, let me extend my gratitude to UNESCO which has made this English publication possible.

In addition to the articles outlining political priorities and detailing contributions from other important stakeholders such as NGOs, the business sector and UNESCO's Associated Schools Project, we have assembled contributions that explain in some detail how the organizational structure of the Decade in Germany works: in particular, we set out the National Plan of Action and how it was put together, and we explain how we award initiatives the title of "Official German Decade Project". A publication on the UN Decade would not be complete without some thematic articles on different aspects on ESD: the question of risk management and prevention is addressed in its relation to ESD; the role of culture in sustainable development; and the attitude of the younger generation towards sustainable development. Finally, I would like to draw your particular attention to the sample of some 15 German Decade Projects that we present throughout this brochure.

The world-wide undertaking of this UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development will only be a success if we manage to join forces, not only within UNESCO Member States but also internationally. There are few political goals that depend so much on international exchange and cooperation as do sustainable development and educa-



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tion for sustainable development. What we need to work with – on the basis of UNESCO's International Implementation Scheme – are common strategic objectives and priorities which reflect the specific needs of each stakeholder and Member State, and which contribute to the larger vision of a planet worth living on 50 or 100 years from today. This publication is an invitation to initiate a discussion and an exchange of views on how best to implement the UN Decade, and how to make use of what Carl Lindberg describes as the

“golden opportunity” that is the Decade.

Best wishes,



*Roland Bernecker  
Secretary-General,  
German Commission for UNESCO*

Participants at the International Workshop “Education for Sustainable Development Worldwide – Commonalities and Differences” in November 2006 in Bonn.

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## Contents

# UNESCO today

2007

Welcome..... 1 Walter Hirche	Where the journey should lead ..... 47 The National Plan of Action for the UN Decade Elmar Schüll
Dear Reader ..... 3 Roland Bernecker	The Recognition of Official Decade Projects..... 50 Heidi Consentius
Education for Sustainable Development – a new field of learning and action ..... 6 Gerhard de Haan	From São Paulo to the Solomon Islands..... 53 The UN Decade for Sustainable Development around the world Alexander Leicht
The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development from the Perspective of the Federal Government ..... 11 Annette Schavan	International Bonn Workshop on the Decade..... 57
From Global Ambition to Decentralised Implementation ..... 15 The UN Decade in the Federal States Ute Erdsiek-Rave	Facing Up To Fate ..... 60 Global natural hazards and Education for Sustainable Development Thomas Loster
Change of Course for Sustainability ..... 17 The UN World Decade from the perspective of the German Parliament Ulla Burchardt	Preparing for Catastrophes..... 64 UNESCO's Education and Information Initiatives Badaoui Rouhban
Impulses for Education Policy in Thuringia ..... 20 The Federal State of Thuringia has approved a Plan of Action on Education for Sustainability Dieter Althaus	Education for Sustainable Development – Cultural Education – Cultural Diversity ..... 66 Will what belongs together grow together? Max Fuchs
It's All Happening in the Federal States..... 23 Environment ministers from the Federal States are supporting the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development Herlind Gundelach	The Concept of Sustainability at the UNESCO Associated Schools..... 70 Case study: the joint network in Lower Saxony and Bremen Heinz-Jürgen Rickert
Sustainability in the Local Authorities..... 26 Bonn and the UN Decade Bärbel Dieckmann	Young People and Sustainability – A Relationship with a Future? ..... 74 Jasmin Godemann
The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development as a Project for Politics and Civil Society..... 29 Drafted by the National Committee for the UN Decade	Private Enterprise Promotes Education for Sustainability ..... 78 Deutsche Telekom's Children's Future Congress Marion Schöberl
Members of the National Committee for the UN Decade in Germany ..... 31	At a glance: ..... 81 The UN Decade "Education for Sustainable Development" in Germany
The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Implementing the UN Decade..... 33 Annette Dieckmann / Jörg-Robert Schreiber	Members of the Round Table on the UN Decade..... 82
The Need to Take Responsible and Long-term Decisions ..... 37 Carl Lindberg	Publication Data..... 84
"We have to respect the different pace chosen by each country" ..... 41 Interview with the Chief of the Section for ESD at UNESCO Aline Bory-Adams	



Gerhard de Haan

## Education for Sustainable Development – a new field of learning and action

*Gerhard de Haan, Chairman of the German National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, explains the concept and history of education for sustainability.*



Without a global education effort, sustainable development is not achievable.

Education for Sustainable Development (or ESD) is a field of learning and action that has been worked on in Germany since 1996 – four years after the Rio Conference on Environment and Development. In the closing document of the Rio Conference – the “Agenda 21”, signed by around 180 states from around the world (AGENDA 21 1992) – chapter 36 is dedicated to the importance of education in the process of sustainable development. Without a mental transformation, without awareness-raising, i.e. without a “global educational effort”, as it is stated here – and in many other chapters of this key document for the 21st century – sustainable development is simply not achievable.

### Agenda 21

The Agenda 21 definitively brought together two strands of international politics which, having already been linked in the 1987 Brundtland Commission report, “Our Common Future” (WCED 1987), were here joined together much more explicitly: the connection between environmental necessities and insights from development policy.

From the 1960s onwards, intensive efforts were made to find a way to resolve the inequality between the rich countries of the northern hemisphere and the poorer countries of the southern hemisphere, to reduce oppression and exploitation around the world. Numerous educational initiatives were connected with these objectives, which today can be characterised – despite their different nuances – under the title “global learning”.

Around ten years later – around 1970 – the exhaustion of natural resources, the extinction of animal and plant species and environmental pollution began to attract

considerable public attention. People began to talk of an “environmental crisis” and the survival of humanity was seen to be endangered. This major issue was not without resonance in the education sector. The concepts and ideas developed in this context can be characterised under the title “environmental education”.

### “Development education was aimed at creating a more just world”

At the heart of development education activities lay the aim of creating a more just world. Environmental education activities were characterised by the aim of protecting nature. Both educational fields were marked by their own form of alarmist rhetoric: while one group invoked imminent environmental catastrophe, the other was more interested in denouncing the rich North’s responsibility for the misery of the poor South.

The vision of sustainable development brought together – among others, but most significantly – the issues of environment and development. The aim – according to the accepted basic idea – is to manage the economy, conduct politics and live in such a manner today that decent living conditions are created or made possible for both current and future generations. This is only possible – suggests the concept of sustainability – when environment, economy and society are seen together in their interdependence. Binding economic prosperity to social justice while minimising environmental impact, using natural resources sparingly and not passing burdens on to future generations that would impair their opportunities – that is no easy task, but an indispensable one.



The international community, in 1992 at Rio and its follow-up conference in Johannesburg in 2002, was not alone in seeing things this way. The OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) shares this position. The OECD takes the stance – and one that it has made very much its own – that there are three overarching educational goals that should lie behind any modern concept of education and child-raising. These are: learning to respect human rights, being able to act within democratic structures and in terms of sustainability (c.f. OECD 2005). This goes to underline the importance attributed to sustainable development in teaching and learning outside the groups that have a track record of standing up for sustainability.

### A Transformation in Education

When one takes a closer look at the transformation of environmental education and “global learning” into ESD, major conceptual shifts can clearly be identified. The starting point for environmental education was a threat scenario: the exorbitant use of non-renewable natural resources, the influence of toxic substances in ecological systems and worldwide population growth were all warning signs that justified the protection of nature, a critique of expanding economic growth, draining and destroying nature, and of non-environmentally-friendly policies.

### “The starting point for environmental education was a threat scenario.”

Development education, however, warned of exploitation, poverty and oppression. This often went hand in hand with pointing accusing fingers at the major industrial nations and giving the citizens of these nations a bad conscience, their prosperity seen as having been gained at the expense of the poor. This built up a “suffering scenario” that often made people feel just as helpless as the “threat scenario” peddled by environmental education.

The concept of sustainable development raised the need for a reorientation of both environmental education and development education. It led away from the “threat” and “suffering” scenarios and towards “modernisation” scenarios.

### “In Education for Sustainable Development, it is a question of learning about creative solutions”

In the context of ESD, it is a question of learning about creative solutions that could make economic prosperity and the conservation of nature a simultaneous possibility; it is all about providing the knowledge needed to develop innovative, resource-saving techniques; about knowledge of new forms of political action in which the engagement of civil society is more highly valued; about reflecting on new lifestyles which combine wellbeing, contentment and respect for nature and other people; about taking up the viewpoints of people from other countries; about fair trade initiatives and new forms of worldwide cooperation. And this all has the aim of using education to make people capable of acting to create a fairer worldwide distribution of opportunities in life, while respecting environmental considerations.

### The Concept of Gestaltungskompetenz (Participation Skills)

The development of ESD has taken a decisive step forward over the last few years thanks to the formulation of the idea of “competency”. Educational goals in the area of sustainability remain enigmatic and vague if they are not linked in with the skills that can or should be acquired through the learning process.

The concept of Gestaltungskompetenz – sometimes translated as “participation skills” in English but somewhat wider in scope – was formulated with ESD in mind. Gestaltungskompetenz describes the ability to apply knowledge about sustainable development and recognise the problems involved in non-sustainable development. That is to say, to use analysis of the present and studies of the future to draw consequences about environmental, economic and social developments in their mutual independence, take logical decisions on this basis, understand their consequences, and act on them individually, cooperatively and politically so as to make sustainable development processes a reality. The concept ties in with the OECD’s idea of “key competencies” (c.f. OECD 2005), and is in turn broken down into sub-



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Under the idea of sustainability, environment, economics and social issues are seen together.

Sustainability has been firmly integrated into many curricula

competencies in order to provide a concrete, usable description of the goals of ESD, making recommendations for the choice of contents, formulation of tasks and assessment of learners.

Looking back at the progress of ESD in Germany over the last ten years, there is good reason to speak of a success story, considering that the importance of ESD has been proclaimed in resolutions on the issue passed by federal and regional ministries, by the federal parliament and by many state parliaments (c.f. BUNDESTAG 2000, BMBF 2002, BUNDESTAG 2004, BMBF 2005). Sustainability has been firmly integrated into many curricula, and the federal government, together with the states, has initiated many programmes to support ESD, promoting the field with a contribution running into tens of millions of euros (see, for example, the "Education for Sustainable Development" and "Transfer-21" programmes: [www.transfer-21.de](http://www.transfer-21.de)).

### Problem Areas in Education for Sustainability

It is nevertheless possible to pick out difficulties in the implementation and framing of ESD. I should like to mention three such problems:

First of all, ESD is not equally well positioned in all areas of formal education. In the areas of higher education and vocational training, as well as at the nursery and primary levels, less progress has been achieved in comparison with the

secondary level. Equally, in the informal and non-formal sectors of education, further transfer measures are necessary.

Secondly, the process of fusing and transforming environmental education and development education into ESD has not been without its conflicts. Integrating viewpoints has cost a great deal of effort, and those involved often found their own interests passed over. Thus, in the early days, ESD was often derided as "ecobother", given that ESD was often promoted by figures from environmental education. Equally, those with a background in development education were accused of neglecting the importance of the environment when formulating ESD programmes.

This fusion has moved forwards in the meantime, but shall remain problematic as long as both sides continue to claim separate positions rather than getting down to the outstanding tasks in ESD with their – generally abundant – specialist knowledge. Even beyond such divergences, major tasks remain to be fulfilled in the area of ESD to complete this fusion.

It is not sufficient to take elements from development education and environmental education and bring them together for ESD. Consumer education, peace studies, human rights education, mobility education, educational in financial issues and aspects of citizenship education (democracy education) provide expertise for ESD which must be integrated.

Thirdly, a vast problem arises from the extremely wide-ranging understanding of sustainability and the tasks of ESD, especially as formulated in international documents drafted by the United Nations and UNESCO. I shall examine this problem in more detail.

For the United Nations – as for UNESCO – the tasks of ESD include "Education for All", the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003 to 2012), the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS, and gender equality (c.f. UNESCO 2005 or UNITED NATIONS 2002). Strangely enough, the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" does not get mentioned. Nevertheless, the topics mentioned above – e.g. the development of sustainable lifestyles, demographic change, innovative technol-

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ogy, consumer issues, environmental pollution, climate change, etc... – do get brought up.

On the one hand, therefore, sustainable development is declared a subject of study, while on the other everything that could contribute positively to development or seems useful for the future is subsumed by ESD. It seems – and it is sometimes even formulated in these terms – as if ESD should be used to judge the overall quality of educational systems, to fight poverty, to promote literacy, to enforce gender equality. Important as these initiatives are, such aspirations overburden ESD. Additionally, understanding of ESD becomes more nebulous, and loss of credibility can result if so narrow a field of learning and action as ESD is expected to (help) shoulder all of these tasks.

How can we deal with this blurring and overburdening of ESD?

My suggestion is that ESD be given national specifications, and this for many reasons. This is less a matter of national sovereignty than one of specific problems and social structures, as well as the available expertise and professionalism.

Therefore, under various facets of sustainability it is surely right to call for “Education for All” in some countries. Where even eight to ten years of primary education is not in place, and where girls and women hardly have any access to education at all, these problems must be placed on the agenda from the perspective of ESD. Where, on the other hand, as in this country, full coverage has been reached – e.g. compulsory schooling to age 16 – it is less meaningful to make this a task for ESD. This remains true when reference is made to the high level of illiteracy that still exists in Germany in spite of compulsory education. If the task of reducing this level were given to the ESD experts, they would find themselves fully overburdened. It would be a sign of unprofessionalism to try to do justice to this field as well. After all, there are experts in Germany who are much better qualified to take on such issues.

This is also true of other areas which are attributed to ESD at the international level: in the area of HIV prevention there are active professional organisations and

experts, just as in the fight against racism and in social care and the combating poverty. This does not mean that these problem areas (and many others) can disappear from the ESD horizon. They are, with a different focus, very much a topic, but from the perspective of a narrower understanding of sustainability.

## Contributions to Combating the Educational Divide

Therefore, I see great potential in doing something through ESD to combat the educational divide in this country: specifically, by creating student companies which are managed in a sustainable manner. Student companies are small companies which are independently run by pupils in the school context. We know that motivation for learning rises particularly strongly among pupils from backgrounds with a weak educational tradition – at the Hauptschule and Förderschule schools, which serve less academically-minded students – when they are involved in student companies. And we know that young people give high priority to environmental issues and the creation of fairer living conditions. From this perspective, it is well worth starting up a bicycle workshop, a catering service with organic products, a company for low-impact regional tourism, among many other possibilities. Involvement in a student company also raises interest in regular classes. And it makes it easier to come into contact with local companies. That in turn increases the chances of these students finding their way into the employment market after leaving school.

To this extent, we can make a professional contribution through ESD to combating educational deprivation – just as we can also make a contribution through ESD to promoting education in so-called developing countries. This can be achieved, for example, when pupils come into direct contact with tea producers in India to distribute their organically-grown products in Germany, and give a proportion of the profits back to the farmers’ village on the condition that it is used to build a school or pay for a teacher.

**“Innovation depends on wide knowledge”**

The concept „Sustainability” and the tasks of Education for Sustainability are composed very widely within the UNESCO

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A national specification is also meaningful for other reasons. We live in a knowledge society. Germany is a country that lacks natural raw materials, and its prosperity depends on high technology and knowledge-intensive services. Innovation in these areas depends on wide knowledge. Many studies have proven over the years that knowledge is growth-factor number one.

The knowledge that goes into a product has long defined its price. When you buy a pharmaceutical product, for example, you pay a price in which more than 80% is determined by the knowledge that has gone into it. Developing technologies and services from a perspective of sustainability is also a question of having access to intelligent knowledge in the field. This spans a canon of topics that reaches deep into the natural sciences, basic technical education and the field of economic science.

Above all, sustainability offers a range of themes that can be seen as paradigmatic for an education for the future, for it is interdisciplinary and problem-oriented. This is not just drumming in dull facts; rather, ESD allows the acquisition of skills which are practice-oriented and meaningful for everyday life, and which are of exceptional use for both the individual and society – while also increasing pupil motivation.

How the national specifications of ESD will look in detail and which successes it is capable of bringing for the knowledge society – these are issues we shall have to consider over the next few years, in the context of the Decade.

*Prof. Dr. Gerhard de Haan is the Chairman of the German National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. He is Professor of Future Studies in Education Science at the Free University in Berlin.*

## Systematic Integration of Education for Sustainable Development into Teaching and School Life

Decade Project by the Dr. Flad Vocational Training Institute, Stuttgart



This governmentally recognised vocational training institute for chemistry, pharmacy and the environment is a partner in countless national and international projects which involve the entire student body and teaching staff. The school stands up for equal opportunities in education and provides bursaries to students from less well-off backgrounds and to foreign scholarship holders. Events are regularly held at schools on the issues of human rights and racism.

Annette Schavan

## The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development from the Perspective of the Federal Government

*The global guiding principle of sustainable development is being realised in different ways in different parts of the world, says Annette Schavan, Minister of Education and Research. In its role as lead ministry, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has particular responsibility for the Decade.*

“Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that seems abstract – sustainable development – and turn it into a daily reality for all the world’s people.” With these words, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan at once stressed the importance of implementing the key idea of the Rio Earth Summit and described the goal of the UN World Decade “Education for Sustainable Development”. All Member States of the United Nations are called upon to place a particular emphasis on education between the years 2005 and 2014, both nationally and internationally, in order to support the goal of a world society that ensures living and survival conditions for those living today and for future generations, and to show ways for reaching this goal.

**“The imperative of sustainable development is the aim and measure of our actions as a government”**

The idea of sustainable development is of great significance for the Federal Government. In the coalition agreement, it states: “The imperative of sustainable development is the aim and measure of our actions as a government, at national, European and international level.”

The idea of sustainable development can give the pursuit of economic performance, social justice and responsibility for the natural environment a common orientation. For both, individuals and society as a whole, sustainable development means

shaping the future with knowledge, creativity and confidence.

Education plays a special role in sustainable development. It connects past and future, conserves the old and shapes the new. This process means much more than passing down facts and techniques; education for sustainable development involves the formation of values and attitudes. Only in this manner does it become possible for people to make independent judgements about development processes and act accordingly. Education for sustainable development combines subject knowledge and “orientation” knowledge by networking scientific/technical, socio-cultural and philosophical/ethical teaching contents. It is inherently transdisciplinary and links knowledge from different subjects from an early stage. In this manner, education provides orientation and endows the ability to make judgements in a world that is speeding up and becoming ever more complex, whilst also promoting economic, cultural, social and political participation.

### **Anchoring the Idea of Sustainability in Education**

While in Central Europe the focus is on the transformation of our patterns of production and consumption to make them sustainable in the long term, the emphasis in other parts of the world is on satisfying the most elementary basic needs. The contribution of education to sustainable development in this World Decade will only take concrete shape at national and regional levels.



Education for Sustainable Development connects past with future, combines’ conservation with constructing

### Coordinating role of the German Commission for UNESCO

Germany is in an excellent position to implement the Decade successfully and take important steps towards sustainable development in the process. As early as 2001 the Federal Government's Report on Education for Sustainable Development documented an extensive range of stakeholders and penetration of the themes into almost all educational sectors. In the Report for the year 2005 it was observed that in the intervening four years the concept of Education for Sustainable Development had been further refined and more widely implemented. The 2005 Report also shows that the international dimension of Education for Sustainable Development has taken on greater importance.

### "The international dimension of Education for Sustainable Development has taken on greater importance"

The structural framework for our further activities in the near future will be the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. In the run-up to the UN Decade, on the 1st July 2004, the German Federal Parliament voted unanimously for the development of a national Plan of Action for Education for Sustainable Development. From this point onwards, the German Commission for UNESCO – like UNESCO within the United Nations system – took on a coordinating function. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research, which bears special responsibility for the Decade within the Federal Government, is supporting and equipping it in this task. A National Committee, set up by the German Commission for UNESCO in May 2004, brings together experts from the fields of science, culture and the media, representatives of the Federal Parliament, the Federal Government and the Standing Conference of Education Ministers, as well as figures who have a public profile for standing up for the idea of sustainability. The first task of this committee was to compile the National Plan of Action by the end of 2004.

### "A successful interplay between the state and civil society"

I am very pleased that we have been able to produce a Plan of Action in Germany that reflects the notable activities and

plans of a wide range of stakeholders from all sectors of education. The Decade has thereby already proven itself as a good example of successful interplay between the state and civil society.

### The BMBF's Contributions to Education for Sustainability

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research is, assuming responsibility for the following contributions within the framework of the National Plan of Action:

- The pilot experiments in initial and continuing vocational training (pilot experiments in business) promote sustainable thinking and action by developing occupational and cross-occupational competencies. The aim is to integrate such content in the training regulations and disseminate it through sectoral and topic-based regional and supra-regional networks.
- The EU's SOCRATES and LEONARDO education programmes address the issue of sustainability to a varying extent. The BMBF will continue to work to ensure that issues of sustainable development are included in the EU's educational programmes and projects in an appropriate manner.
- One of the aims of my Ministry's "Research for Sustainability" (FONA) framework programme – with planned funding to the tune of 160 million euros annually – is to create stronger links between research and education so as to improve the systematic transfer of research results into educational measures. The announcements of individual funding emphases therefore explicitly require consideration of specific educational aspects for the first time.
- In the general education sector, the Federal Government will in future encourage and support research for further thematic developments and the transfer of best practice initiated together with the state (Länder) governments, and it will contribute the results of this research to international reporting on the Decade.

In line with its role as lead ministry, the BMBF also has a special responsibility for the Decade beyond these areas. Sustainable development has clear relevance to

other areas of politics, such as for example environmental conservation, development cooperation and consumer protection. The most recent report from the Federal Government shows that nearly all government departments make contributions to education for sustainable development. My Ministry intends to continue and further extend this cooperation. However, it is of even greater significance for achieving the Decade goals that efforts are made to provide functional structures and forums for all participants. The National Plan of Action names four strategic goals:

- Further development and concentration of the activities and broad dissemination of good practices;
- Networking of stakeholders in education for sustainable development;
- Improvement of public awareness of education for sustainable development;
- Strengthening of international cooperation.

### **A Successful Balance Sheet: the First Years of the UN Decade**

The structures thus far established and the initiatives set up together with the German Commission for UNESCO, in particular the National Committee and the Round Table with its working groups, the countless national and regional events and the acknowledgement of Decade Projects, together with the measures contained in the Plan of Action, have resulted in the fact that we have come a lot closer to achieving these goals after just two years of the Decade: the various educational institutions and initiatives now have better opportunities to exchange good examples and learn from one another. The opportunities for cooperation at national and regional level are being used intensively. Transparency and public impact have been promoted considerably. The rising level of international commitment is demonstrated by the participation of representatives of other National Commissions for UNESCO in the Round Tables in Erfurt and Bonn and the International Workshop on the Decade in November 2006 as well as by the cooperation of the Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which adopted a common "Education for Sustainable

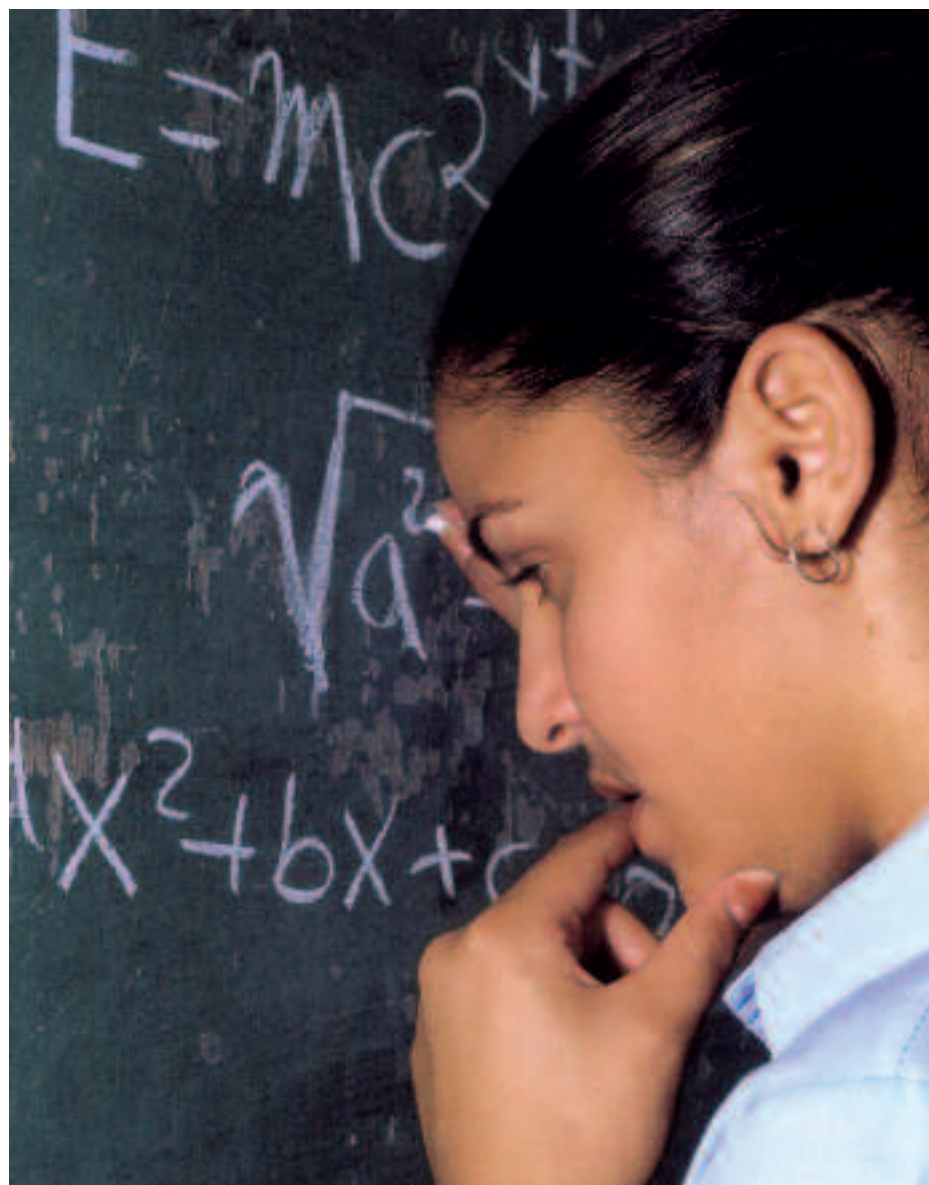
Development" strategy at Vilnius in 2005 and have been monitoring its implementation.

In 2007 the activities developed thus far will receive additional support through an "Education for Sustainable Development" internet portal, financed by my Ministry through the German Commission for UNESCO. Through this website we hope to achieve a further concentration of the competencies of the participants in joint projects, an increase in transparency and accessibility for potential users and a clear rise in public awareness of the Decade. In order to promote international networking, the portal will also provide English-language contents.

I see a special opportunity for the World Decade in intensifying international exchange and entering into new partnerships. Precisely because of the differences in cultural contexts and the diversity of ways in which sustainable

### **Four strategic goals**

Foto © UNESCO / MSC Waldo Jose Torres



The German internet portal “Education for Sustainable Development” is to start in 2007

development is achieved, global dialogue provides opportunities for a mutual learning process. Reinforcing international cooperation within the Decade is therefore strongly supported by my Ministry.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for their commit-

ment so far and wish them further success in the future!

*Dr. Annette Schavan, Member of the Federal Parliament, is Federal Minister of Education and Research.*

## Learning to Shape Life

### Decade Project by the Bavarian Regional Federation for the Protection of Birds

The aim of this project is to train kindergartens in the area of Education for Sustainable Development. Kindergartens get to know the contents and methods of education for sustainability in order to

transmit competencies in this area to children at an early age. This includes social experiences, motor skills, respect and participation skills. Thematic areas are: building and living, health and nutrition,

biodiversity, climate and resources. The project can be extended to other federal states.

Foto: Horst Munzig





Ute Erdsiek-Rave

## From Global Ambition to Decentralised Implementation

### The UN Decade in the Federal States

*The Decade of “Education for Sustainable Development” called by the United Nations has set itself ambitious goals. This “global vision” aims to “open up educational opportunities to all” and stimulate “positive societal transformations”; it calls for educational concepts and practices that are oriented towards the idea of sustainable development. These per se abstract and hardly uncontroversial foundations must now be filled with life, leave the paper and enter the hearts and minds of citizens to create a natural, lifelong humanitarian competency. While the German Commission for UNESCO has taken charge of organising the Decade at the national level, it is the educational authorities – the governments of the federal states – who are responsible for transferring it into the schools.*

Education for Sustainable Development – this is hardly a completely new issue for our schools. The three classical dimensions of sustainability – environment, economics and social issues – have long since been part of the curriculum, school programmes and in countless extracurricular projects and events. The Standing Conference of Education Ministers summarised its learning goals in nine points in its Declaration of the 25th May 1973; among other elements, it states that schools should “raise pupils to show tolerance and respect for the dignity of other human beings and respect for different beliefs” as well as for “freedom and democracy”. It also states that schools should “awaken peace-loving beliefs in the spirit of international understanding” and a “readiness to act in society and take political responsibility” while “enabling pupils to become aware of their rights and obligations in society”. It was only some years later that the aspect of the environment found its way into the political debate and into the canonical values: in 1980 the Standing Conference agreed on a motion entitled “Environment and Teaching”.

**“Sustainability must be a fixed component of teaching and education”**

These aims have now taken on a greater order of priority thanks to the UN Decade,

as their perspectives have been significantly widened. It is no longer simply a question of taking responsibility for your own immediate surroundings and environment. At the same time, it is a question of the insight that the future of the whole world depends, decisively, on whether we are able to – at the very least – preserve the basis for our survival and simultaneously make significant improvements to political, social, economic and environmental conditions for people in poorer regions. The UN Decade of “Education for Sustainable Development” thus raises wider contexts and ties individual learning goals together on a higher level.

#### A Natural Competency

Consciousness of and responsibility for sustainability in this wide-ranging sense should become a natural competency for us all. Sustainability must therefore become a fixed component of teaching and education, be taught and learnt, and as early as possible, in private, in families, and in public, in the different educational establishments. Increasingly, across Germany, curricula for nursery schools are being developed which deal with the issue of sustainability in a way that is appropriate to the age group in question. In general and vocational schools this goal should be more systematically and more decisively implemented than has been the case to present. The framework for the implementation of the World Decade is formulated in the Plans of Action drafted by the federal states and



A key concept of the National Plan of Action is learning that is relevant to everyday experience

Teacher training establishments are also addressed

city states, which are represented in the National Plan of Action. Beyond this, the North German states of Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein have set up the "North German Partnership in Support of the UN Decade" (NUN), in order to exchange knowledge and experiences and take advantage of synergy effects.

A key concept of the National Plan of Action is learning that is relevant to everyday experience, with examples from pupils' own immediate surroundings. If you recognise how your behaviour and actions can contribute to sustainability, and not just on a one-off basis but constantly, repeatedly, you have come a great step closer to the overall goal – better quality of life around the world in material and spiritual terms and more participation.

### "Motivating young people to undertake independent initiatives"

A key role in this Education for Sustainable Development falls to the adults: they are the disseminators. They are the givers of ideas, motivating young people to undertake independent initiatives. They can enthuse children and young people for a responsible and heavily networked sense of self-determination. Opportunities, catalysts for this are manifold, whether these be developments in the oil price, tsunami, civil wars or refugee crises: this is why parents should recognise the importance of the issues – also for their own benefit – and give their children corresponding stimulation. Teachers should bring "sustainable development" into the school, into the classroom, into all-day and extracurricular options. In order to do this, they need not only support, teaching materials and idea pools, but also contact addresses to possible non-school partners. The National Plan of Action supports them in this task for example through Transfer-21, the common programme pro-

vided by federal government and states, or through TheoPrax, and not least through the many regional propositions from organisations and institutions that work directly with schools.

### "Global Development"

A project has also been dedicated to the reinforced integration of Education for Sustainable Development into the curricula of generalist and vocational schools, which is currently being implemented jointly by the Standing Conference of Education Ministers, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and InWEnT ("International Training and Development"). In the framework of this project, an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary reference curriculum for the learning area of "global development" in the context of Education for Sustainable Development has been put together. Having been presented in mid-2006 at a specialist conference, it is to push the implementation process towards schools, providing teachers with concrete examples and possibilities. Teacher training establishments are also addressed, as are school authorities, institutions and businesses with their specific know-how and relevance for practice.

Education for Sustainable Development is undoubtedly fundamental. The success of this UN Decade, however, depends not least on whether we succeed in filling this huge framework with convincing content and integrating it into the lived reality of children, young people and adults. If we approach it as a good role model with good examples, if we scatter the issues widely, then we may just succeed.

*Ute Erdsiek-Rave was Chairwoman of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany in 2006. She is now its Vice-President.*

Ulla Burchardt

## Change of Course for Sustainability

The UN World Decade from the perspective of the German Parliament

*Sustainable development means a change of course; it means thinking afresh and deciding to do things differently than before; it means breaking out of old routines in the economy, science and politics; it means orienting yourself to the fact that preserving the natural conditions for survival is the precondition for any economic and social development with a future.*

Sustainability as an ambition gives the rough bearing for this change of course. At the beginning stands the insight that there is no prospect of a future in which everyone can live well if things go on the way they have in the past. What must change is everyday choices, the way people satisfy their needs, the way they treat each other and their natural environment. Less then becomes more: more prosperity and more quality of life through less consumption of energy and resources, less pollution, emissions and waste.

### “The resource called knowledge is the decisive factor”

This simple formula conceals a demanding task, a huge programme of innovation. But innovation requires an ability to innovate, and this is why the resource called knowledge and drawing upon this knowledge – in short, more and better education – is the decisive factor. New ideas do not come from out of the blue – they have to be learnt. Sustainability is and always has been a task of changing paradigms: away from short-termism, away from the electoral cycle and towards the long-term perspective.

### Parliament as Pacesetter and Driving Force

The UN World Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was a quantum leap: For the first time, governments committed themselves to orienting their national policies towards the idea of sustainability

and to developing a strategy aiming for economically effective, socially just and environmentally sustainable development.

However, government resolutions alone are not enough to enact a change of course towards sustainability. What is required is a pacesetter and driving force, and in Germany these roles have been performed primarily by the federal parliament. This is where, over the last fifteen years, the substantive foundations have been laid and where the course has been decisively set for the institutionalisation of the idea of sustainability.

In first place, surely, this has happened through the work of the two enquiry commissions into “Protecting People and the Environment”. These digested the tasks set by Rio, word by word, seeing them as a task for German federal politics, from the basic idea through to recommendations for action. The studies published by the Office for Technology Assessment – our “own” scientific advisory board – also proved decisive in driving forwards our own knowledge.

In Parliament we have experienced it at first hand: sustainability means work, in particular a lot of additional work. You run up against resistance, venture into unknown terrain or disturb other people going about their normal routine. But beyond the party divides, we have also had more inspiring experiences: this work brings us together, and successes spur us on to continue.

And there has been no shortage of successes over the last fifteen years, as an



“Government resolutions alone are not enough to enact a change of course towards sustainability”



Foto © BMU / transit / Härtrich

### Parliamentary resolution on the World Decade

impressive list of parliamentary initiatives and resolutions goes to show. The parties in Parliament have seldom been as united in any other area of policy as they have been in education for sustainability. Take for example the common recommendation for a resolution on "Environmental Education and Environmental Science" which opened the way to continuous reporting on education for sustainability by the Federal Government. Or take the inter-party recommendation for a resolution on "Education for Sustainable Development", in the year 2000, which led to a widespread integration of the concept of sustainability across all educational levels.

This is also why Parliament did not have to start from square one when the Plenary Session of the UN proclaimed the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in December 2002. On the contrary: the unanimous resolution of the federal parliament on the World Decade falls seamlessly into a strong and long-lived parliamentary tradition.

And with all due respect for the great engagement of civil society and individuals in education for sustainability, it is worth remembering: without this trail-blazing resolution by the German parliament, we could hardly have achieved so much success in barely two years of the World Decade in Germany.

## "The World Decade is not a project that can be executed by the Government"

It is nevertheless equally true that the World Decade, like sustainable development itself, is not a project that can be voted on by parliament and executed by the government. Without the engagement and participation of people from the most diverse areas of society, shaping a sustainable future is simply not feasible.

### Learning Sustainability

When people talk about education in Germany, a particular image always comes to mind: that there are educators and educated, and that implies: the former have the knowledge that the latter do not yet have but are to receive – by having a fixed canon of knowledge drummed in from textbooks in 45-minute chunks.

Sustainability and education cannot be thought of in this way. Rather, the idea of sustainability breaks through such categories. Sustainability is no clearly definable and timetabled final state, and therefore there can be no meta-curriculum drawn from it. There are good reasons for making the World Decade an open process, and it is certain that the National Plan of Action shall be regularly updated, evaluated and adapted in the light of the latest discoveries.

"Shaping sustainability" has to do with knowledge and abilities. Shaping the future sustainably requires new qualifications in the widest sense: "sustain abilities"! This also includes new practical and specialist knowledge of the complex interrelationships between human beings, nature and technology.

## "Shaping the future sustainably requires new qualifications"

But in order for the vision of sustainability to become reality, it is not just a question of knowledge. "Sustain abilities" – this implies the abilities to make practical use of this knowledge. And these are precisely the abilities that have hitherto been too little promoted at all educational levels in Germany: networked and forward-looking thinking, communicating problems

appropriately, showing empathy with others, and not least the ability to continue lifelong learning.

### The World Decade as an Innovation Programme

The parliamentary resolution on the World Decade has clearly underlined the fact: now the great opportunity presents itself to integrate the idea of sustainability into informal educational processes as well as into the classical educational institutions – from primary school to higher education, and in initial and continuing vocational training. If this is achieved in the ten years of the Decade, it will be a qualitative milestone for educational provision and practice in Germany.

The significance of “learning sustainability” goes far beyond the education system. The World Decade can also kick-start a social process of innovation. For the new skills and new knowledge from education for sustainability are what

make up a society’s capacity for innovation in the age of globalisation. These “sustain abilities” are the precondition if rapid social and economic transformation are to be not just suffered and survived. Rather, they enable participation and the ability to shape change actively through cooperation.

Through its resolution on the UN World Decade, the German Federal Parliament has once again made clear that it sees Education for Sustainable Development as the decisive key to viability for the future. However, education for sustainability will only become a matter of course when the path is cleared in the legislation and curricula of national and regional governments. How the change of course described in the introduction is dealt with is also a measure of the viability of politics for the future.

*Ulla Burchardt, Member of the Federal Parliament, is Chair of the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Research and Technology Assessment.*

The World Decade is planned as an open process

## Production and Use of Solar Lamps in Rural Areas of Developing Countries

Decade Project by the State Vocational School Berchtesgadener Land

The Solarprojekt Freilassing association is a development project created by the State Vocational School Berchtesgadener Land in Bavaria. Its aim is to initiate and promote the production and use of solar technology in rural areas of developing countries. In conjunction with competent partners from among the companies which provide apprenticeships for their students, a solar lamp was developed which is sent in kit form to developing countries, where it is assembled and used. The project’s partners in developing countries are provided with concepts and materials to widen the use of solar lamps, while workshop personnel and project leaders are trained. A number of solar workshops have already been created in Tanzania.



Foto: Solarprojekt Freilassing e. V.

Dieter Althaus

## Impulses for Education Policy in Thuringia

The Federal State of Thuringia has approved a Plan of Action on Education for Sustainability

*The state of Thuringia supports the aims and measures of this UN initiative and is participating actively in their implementation. As Minister President I have become patron of the UN Decade in Thuringia.*



Triad of sustainability

“Whatever you do, may you do it prudently, and look to the end”, reads an old Roman proverb. And indeed: in everything you do, it is important to think about the consequences. There is no better way to describe what is meant by “acting sustainably”. Sustainability means ensuring our quality of life and prosperity, while at the same time preserving a liveable future for generations to come.

Every generation has its own tasks to solve, and must not pass them on to future generations – a broad and exacting challenge. For acting sustainably does not just mean being sparing with natural resources, separating waste for recycling or saving energy. Living your own life responsibly with an eye on future generations is also a question of social justice and economic growth. Prosperity, social justice, education and good health services for all are not to be taken for granted in many parts of the world – and that is something we should remember when we grumble about problems in our own country, or waste resources thoughtlessly.

### “It’s a question of intensifying responsible actions”

If it is a question of intensifying economically, environmentally and socially responsible actions, all people are addressed. Sustainability for individuals means taking responsibility – for themselves and for others, at home and in other parts of the world, for the current generation and for our children and grandchildren. This makes it important to instil awareness of this “triad of sustainability” in young peo-

ple. Acting sustainably is something that can be learnt, and the way is through education. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is making a contribution to raising people’s awareness of sustainable actions and to integrating the idea of sustainable development into all areas of the education system. The aim is to provide individuals with the knowledge and abilities along the way which will make it possible for them to shape the future actively and responsibly.

### The UN Decade in Thuringia

The state of Thuringia supports the aims and measures of this UN initiative and is participating actively in their implementation. As Minister President, I have become the patron of the UN Decade in Thuringia. This is because education is an important focus of regional politics in Thuringia. Education is the key to development and innovation, and thus to a society with viability for the future. I am convinced of it: the UN Decade is giving important, farsighted impulses to education policy in Thuringia.

What we have achieved so far is clear to be seen: the 6th Thuringian Environmental Education Conference in 2004 marked the start of the UN Decade in Thuringia. Many representatives from politics, administration, business and non-governmental organisations spoke out in favour of Thuringia’s participation in the UN Decade and for a common plan for its implementation.

In 2005, the “Week of Sustainability” took place in Erfurt – with a number of

high points such as the session of the Round Table and the German National Committee for the UN Decade, the 1st Thuringian Education Congress, and not least the approval of the Thuringian Plan of Action for the UN Decade. This made the Thuringian State Parliament the first regional parliament in Germany to approve a cross-party plan of action to make sustainable development, in future, a fixed part of education in Thuringia.

### **“To fill the idea of sustainability with life in Thuringia is a task for all”**

And not only that: to fill the idea of sustainability with life in Thuringia is a task that cuts across all departments. On behalf of the two competent departments – the Thuringian Ministry for Agriculture, Nature Conservation and the Environment, and the Education Ministry – a non-governmental organisation is coordinating its implementation: the Thuringian Environmental Education Working Group. The advantage: the Working Group unites more than 100 non-governmental organisations under one roof. This is a good basis to address a wide public and raise interest for the issue of sustainability. The more people that deal with this issue for the future, the better will be the implementation of the Thuringian Plan of Action.

Here we are taking up the national and international aims of the UN Decade. Independent learning and acting for sustainable development should be made possible and promoted in all areas of life. Our education system naturally plays an important role. Education for Sustainable Development affects nurseries, schools and higher education institutions just as it does research institutes and further education colleges.

### **Model Projects go far beyond School**

An example: one important project for sustainable development at our generalist and vocational schools is the “BLK-21” programme of the Bund-Länder Commission, as well as the “BLK-21-Transfer” programme, which builds upon it. Thuringia has already been participating in the BLK programme since 2002 – and with success. In the course of this programme, a

network of 12 Environmental Contact Schools was built up. This year [2006], Thuringia is participating with 17 schools – including five primary and so-called “all-day” schools – in the “BLK-21-Transfer”. Our aim is to establish around ten percent of all generalist schools in the state as Environmental Contact Schools. As “Sustainability Consultants”, as knowledge conduits, these can have effects far beyond the school walls.

Passing on sustainable, future-oriented ways of acting is not just a task for educational institutions. The first place of learning and teaching for our children is the family. This is where values, behaviour and lifestyles are modelled. Parents play a particular role in bringing up children to act responsibly. Through the Thuringian Alliance for Families and the Thuringian Family Support Law, we are reinforcing the educational partnership between parents, nurseries and schools. For learning and teaching sustainability is a comprehensive task which can only be carried out effectively in unison.

Nevertheless, Education for Sustainable Development also affects regional authorities, local councils, associations, churches, enterprises and clubs. For example, the Thuringian Forestry Boards organise adventure-based environmental education activities for children and young people at forest education centres. In addition, the “Thuringian Forest as

### **Thuringian Plan of Action for Sustainable Development**

### **Environmental Contact Schools as “Sustainability Consultants”**

Foto © BMU / Bernd Müller



School" programme prepared by the Forestry Boards and the Education Ministry is further deepening cooperation between schools and forestry bodies.

Another example: the German Institute for Adult Education has developed a project entitled "Environmental Communication with New Media – an Educational Module for the Voluntary Environmental Year Out in Thuringia" in cooperation with the Thuringian State Institute for Geology and the Environment. The project was recognised for excellence by the German Commission for UNESCO in 2005.

These examples of projects show that the issue of sustainability is already being taken up in a variety of ways in Thuringia. It is decisive for the success of the UN Decade to continue to raise broad awareness of the issue among the general public and to encourage educators to pass on the necessary competencies and attitudes. Therefore, I call on all citizens to stand up for sustainable development. Sustainability can be learned – for a future worth living in.

*Dieter Althaus is the Minister President of Thuringia.*

## Sustainable Development in Vocational Training

### Decade Project by the Association for Initial and In-service Vocational Training (BWAU), Thuringia

This project is directed at trainees, particularly in IT and electronics professions and in the area of media at small and medium-sized enterprises in Thuringia. The aim of the project is to raise aware-

ness among stakeholders for sustainability issues and to transmit competencies and key qualifications for Education for Sustainable Development. In the course of a check-up, complex tasks in working

methods and processes are analysed, appropriate solutions are worked out and presented to company representatives.

Foto: BWAU Thüringen





Herlind Gundelach

## It's All Happening in the Regions

Environment ministers from the Federal States are supporting the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

*The path to sustainability leads via education. The Federal States play a pivotal role in this process, as they are "nearer to the action".*

*Alongside schools, the extracurricular education sector in its many facets is taking on ever greater importance.*

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, 178 nations – including the Federal Republic of Germany – signed the "Agenda 21" framework agreement, placing the principle of sustainability firmly on the agenda for the 21st century. Ten years later, at the UN World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, the international community was forced to admit that the implementation of sustainable development, for various reasons, had not made sufficient progress. Therefore, the United Nations called a UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for the years 2005-2014, and entrusted UNESCO with its application. The German government resolved unanimously to support the World Decade, and proclaimed a "Learning Sustainability Alliance".

Between the goal of worldwide sustainable development as proclaimed on the world stage and its implementation in people's everyday lives, there remains a huge gap to be filled. This becomes especially clear at the grassroots level, as it is here where efforts for sustainability collide with the most varied of interests. Sustainable development can only succeed by regulating many, often competing, levels: it is not just a question of conserving the physical environment, but goes far beyond this to the cultural environment, to productive economic growth, to social justice and environmental sustainability.

Potential for fundamental changes may exist in society in terms of sustainable consumerism, sustainable mobility or climate protection, but they cannot all be achieved through political or fiscal means. To achieve a sustainable society, what is

required is rather a process of transformation which affects all people and must be lived out by each individual on the ground. The path to sustainability leads through education, societal communication processes and the corresponding democratic decisions.

The Federal States play a pivotal role in this process, as they are not only "nearer to the action" but are responsible for almost all areas of education. Alongside schools, the extracurricular education sector in its many facets is taking on an ever greater importance. Here, the environment ministries in the Federal States have shown a remarkable level of involvement in supporting the UN Decade.

### The Extracurricular Sector takes on Greater Importance

The environment ministers of the States recognised this in good time, and as early as November 2003 (61st session of the Standing Conference of Environment Ministers in Hamburg, 19-20th November) approved "Recommendations on Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development". Here they underlined the importance of environmental education for the process of sustainable development and called on the states to take part in the UN Decade of ESD.

The number of events, training courses and projects that have been held with the support of the state environment ministries since the beginning of the UN Decade of ESD has been impressive. In the area of education and culture, the programme run by the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK), "Transfer 21", has been operating



Pivotal role of the Federal States



Foto © BMU / transit / Härtrich

successfully for many years, aiming to bring "Gestaltungskompetenz" – a package of participation and practice-oriented skills for the future – to pupils. But outside school, too, there are many excellent examples of Education for Sustainable Development, including the "Learning to Shape Life" project at the nursery level (Bavaria); the project by the Environment Centre "Naturgut Ophoven" entitled "Sunny Days – Green Classroom" (North Rhine-Westphalia); the competition "Young and Old for Development with a Future" (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania); the setting up of a coordination point for the Decade at an environmental association (Thuringia); certification for institutions and providers of environmental and development education (Schleswig-Holstein); or the nationwide model project "Sustainability in Initial and Continuing Vocational Training through the example of Heat Conservation Measures in the

Built Environment" (Hamburg), to name a few.

### **States draft own Plans of Action for the UN Decade**

The great interest aroused by the UN Decade and the engagement of many federal states can be seen in the number of start-up ceremonies that have taken or are due to take place, with considerable support from the environment ministries, since the beginning of the Decade in 2005. These states include Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia. Many states have approved cabinet resolutions in support of the UN Decade or the Education for Sustainable Development. Responsibility for supporting the UN

Decade of ESD was conferred on the environment ministries, usually agreeing close cooperation with the education ministry.

It is particularly remarkable that four states (Baden-Württemberg, Hamburg, Thuringia, North Rhine-Westphalia) have already approved their own Plans of Action for the Decade, and that other states (including Bavaria, Hesse and Saxony-Anhalt) have plans to do so. These plans generally contain guidelines for support of the UN Decade and go on to list particularly important plans at the state level.

### **The Conference of Environment Ministers supports the UN Decade**

The environment ministers and senators from the states, at the 63rd session of the Conference (4th-5th November 2004, in Niedernhausen), saw the need to be represented over the long period of ten years on the German National Committee for the UN Decade of ESD, given their great dedication to the topic. The National Committee accepted this request and named me Representative of the Conference of Environment Ministers (UMK) on the German National Committee.

Since then, the Conference of Environment Ministers has frequently taken on issues of Education for Sustainable Development and reiterated the importance of Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development in its resolutions, as well as distributing numerous suggestions for action. Thus, better cooperation between schools and non-school providers of Environmental Education, or the development of concepts and quality standards, for example, can make an important contribution to the UN Decade of ESD (UMK Resolution "Environmental Education at "All-Day" Schools", 62nd session, 6th-7th May 2004). Also in the nursery sector (UMK Resolution "Environmental Education in the nursery sector", 63rd session, 4th-5th November 2004) – in the opinion of the Conference – the theme of sustainable development should be integrated in initial and in-service teacher training, in the production of curricula at state level and in the quality development of nurseries.

*Staatsrätin Dr. Herlind Gundelach, of the Town Development and Environment Authority of the Free and Hanseatic Town of Hamburg, represented the Conference of Environment Ministers on the National Committee for*

### **Resolutions of the Standing Conference of Environment Ministers**

Information on the Internet:  
[www.umweltministerkonferenz.de](http://www.umweltministerkonferenz.de)  
[www.blak-ne.de](http://www.blak-ne.de)

## **World Ch@t – Environment and Development Topics in Teaching and at School**

Decade Project by InWent, Regional Centre North Rhine-Westphalia, in cooperation with the regional State Institute for Schools

The "World Ch@t" project offers young people the opportunity to communicate directly with stakeholders on the ground in Africa, Asia and Latin America about sustainability issues that interest both sides. The project can be applied in an interdisciplinary manner at schools. Integration in the regular curriculum is planned.



Foto: Ch@t der Welten

Bärbel Dieckmann

## Sustainability at the local level

The City of Bonn and the UN Decade



Foto: Michael Sondermann,  
public relation office of the city of Bonn

*Two years after the start of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development we are living in a town where future issues have a high profile. The change in structures called for by politics has been successfully mastered. The former federal capital has become a "centre for development policy, national, international and supranational institutions". Bonn today has clearly positioned itself as the second political centre in Germany, Germany's UN city, and a platform for international dialogue on worldwide issues for the future.*

The preconditions for successful work on the Decade were good. Sustainability is the central theme of the "new" Bonn. First of all, due to the 13 UN organisations in Bonn, gathered together in their Common Information Space under the motto "UN in Bonn – for Sustainability Worldwide". And continuing in the ministries and federal authorities, scientific establishments, development services and over 150 non-governmental organisations, the majority of which work in the areas of environment, development and health.

### "Sustainability is the central theme of the "new" Bonn"

Bonn has also repeatedly proven its competence as a conference centre and platform for dialogue. International conferences of states parties to conventions, for example, on climate and desertification, the International Freshwater Conference in 2001, the Conference on Renewable Energies in 2004 and the Early Warning Conference are milestones on the way to sustainable development worldwide.

Business, too, is becoming increasingly engaged for this goal. Companies in Bonn are assuming their responsibility. They are integrating the concept of sustainability into their business philosophies, publishing sustainability reports (so-called "Corporate Social Responsibility Reports") and cooperating with United Nations

organisations or non-governmental organisations.

### A Platform for Dialogue on Sustainability Issues

Education for Sustainable Development has a long tradition in Bonn and is full of life. Since as early as 1996 the town has held its annual "solar week", which in 2000 was awarded the prize for "Promoting Climate Protection in Local Authorities". The "Solar Market" featuring information stands and presentations is a big draw, and not just for the construction industry. Talks, information brochures and promotional events, "multiplier" programmes such as the 50/50 energy saving project at schools and innovative ideas such as the use of renewable energies at schools are helping to keep the issue of sustainability in the public eye. Bonn's activities to promote climate protection and more sustainable use of energy were not only awarded with the European Solar Prize, but were also certified with the European Energy Award, whose extensive catalogue of measures is currently being implemented.

A town that has dedicated itself to sustainability to this extent, and which wants to live out its convictions, carries responsibility far beyond its local radius. This is why the town repeatedly takes up the priority issues of the United Nations and implements them as "multiplier" projects for awareness raising. For example, in 2005 the Millennium Development Goals

UN in Bonn – Conference centre  
and platform for dialogue on  
sustainability worldwide

were successfully communicated on many different levels, from the Bonn UN Debate with Eveline Herfkens, to the festival on United Nations Day, with over 30 participating organisations in the infotent village, through to the "Millennium Stones" art project, by which young stonemasons interpreted the Millennium Development Goals in creative fashion.

## "Genuine value"

Bonn has a sustainability network that could hardly be denser. The common theme unites UN institutions, national organisations, non-governmental organisations, development cooperation services, scientific institutions and businesses in Bonn. All participants get genuine value from it – and abstract issues become tangible and understandable for the general public. Thereby, the town that the legislators designated for the purpose has made a substantial contribution to work on education in development issues.

So what could be more obvious than pushing the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development even further into the centre stage of Bonn's activities and the public consciousness?

## Local Initiatives and Sustainable School Projects

Two years on from the beginning of the Decade there is already a large number of stakeholders who are implementing Decade Projects in Bonn, including some internationally oriented non-governmental organisations, but also local initiatives and Bonn schools.

The town council itself is marking the Decade firstly through existing event formats, such as the Bonn UN Debate, United Nations Day (theme: Demanding Sustainability – Promoting Sustainability), and the annual partnership with the association "Help – help to self-help" in 2006 and the Association "Andheri-Hilfe" in 2007. Alongside these, we have also developed further educational projects which we hope to reach a broad public over the next years.

Since the January 2006 we have been implementing a project financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation at the company Tourism & Congress GmbH, which addresses the hotel, cater-

ing and conference services sector. In a town where conferences are held on the subject of sustainability, organisers and guests should meet in surroundings where this philosophy has been implemented and experienced, for example through transition to fair-trade products and consideration of environmental criteria.

## Sustainability in the Local Authority's Development Cooperation

Sustainability takes concrete form in the local authority's development cooperation work. Bonn town council's partnership projects make a real contribution to solving worldwide problems. For example, pupils from Bonn and Buchara (Uzbekistan) are currently working together in the framework of an EU project on teaching materials for energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Project partnerships such as this one have proven themselves. Real cooperation in common tasks has proved to be extremely fruitful for both sides in all of Bonn's project partnerships, such as Minsk (Belarus), Ulan Bator (Mongolia), La Paz (Bolivia) or Cuddalore (India). Through the exchange of experiences with local authorities throughout the world we have gained valuable insights which could give impulses to the international debate on sustainability.

On the occasion of the founding of the World Mayors Council on Climate Change in Montréal in November 2005, of which I am the Chair, I was able to observe this once again. Local authorities are not only able to have influence on individual and local issues, but this effect is amplified when our experiences are made useful to others. Furthermore, politics needs the experience and cooperation of local authorities if it is to put genuinely effective regulations for climate protection in place. And the ICLEI Conference in Cape Town has given me renewed strength to continue to insist on cooperation at local authority level.

## "The general public and publicity work are the be-all and end-all"

To mark the start of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, we

## Solar Market and energy-saving project at schools



Foto © BMU / B. Hiss

To mark the start of the UN Decade, a touring exhibition will be shown at schools

would like to raise the people of Bonn's awareness for these issues. By means of an exhibition and a brochure we shall present the goals, characteristics and contents of the project partnerships. The touring exhibition is to be put on show in public buildings and especially in schools.

The general public and publicity work are the be-all and end-all in issues of sustainability. Without the cooperation of the general public, even the best concept is doomed to failure – the public as electorate and the public in their daily lives, the public as a pool of knowledge, the

public as conduits for knowledge and of course as implementers. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development should make us aware that global problems affect EVERYONE and that EVERYONE can make a contribution to solving them. The Decade Projects have symbolic effect and act as role models. And I sincerely hope that every one of them will be able to set off a domino effect for sustainability.

*Bärbel Dieckmann is  
Lord Mayor of the City of Bonn.*

The Bonn Millennium Stones  
Foto: Rolf Rau



# The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development as a Project for Politics and Civil Society

By the National Committee for the UN Decade

People born in 25, 50 or 100 years time should have at least as good a chance of a fulfilled life as we do. But sustainable development is not just oriented towards the future. It is also about opening the way to a life of human dignity for all, today. These demands constitute the core concept of sustainable development. Sustainability – environmentally, economically and socially balanced development – is one of the great challenges of our time. It is a challenge for which we will have to work ever more intensively in the coming years.

## Institutional Ties

Education must play a greater role in our efforts for sustainable development than hitherto. This was one of the most important declarations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. Therefore, in the same year, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the years 2005-2014 as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. In 2003 the German Commission for UNESCO made proposals for the national implementation of the

Decade with its "Hamburg Declaration". In July 2004 the German Federal Parliament, in a unanimous resolution, called on the Federal Government to take an active role in its implementation. The Parliament proposed that the German Commission for UNESCO be entrusted "with the coordination of the national World Decade activities that extend beyond the government level". The Federal Ministry for Education and Research, the lead agency for the UN Decade within the federal government, then attributed three years' funding to the German Commis-

## Local Agenda 21 in Varel

Decade Project by the Agenda Office in Varel, Lower Saxony

The children's and young people's network and the regional young people's network are two projects which have been implemented as part of the local Agenda 21 in Varel. The Agenda Office aims to host a fully comprehensive network for work with children and young people. In cooperation with schools in Varel, an increasing number of projects are being carried out in Education for Sustainable Development. International cooperation is being carried out through the partnership between the town of Varel and a community in Nicaragua. The regional qualification network provides careers advice and networking between pupils, parents, teachers and firms.



Foto: Schülerzeitung Schülerfloh



Foto © BMU / B. Hiss

sion for UNESCO for its coordination activities.

On the international level, UNESCO – the world organisation for education, science, culture and communication – is the lead agency for the coordination of Decade

activities. The coordinating role of the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) in this country ensures that the German activities for the Decade are tied in with international developments. Thanks to its particular profile, DUK also presented an inclusive platform where a wide spectrum

of stakeholders involved in the Decade from politics and civil society could come together: although the DUK works on behalf of the government, it is nevertheless an organisation of members, in which the federal states, local authorities and a large number of civil-society organisations are also represented, in addition to federal politics.

### A Task for the Whole of Society

The proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly of a worldwide project such as the UN Decade is first of all just an appeal. Such a project will only become effective in Member States when the most important stakeholders take on responsibility for implementing it themselves. Sustainable development addresses attitudes and lifestyles and thus cannot be implemented as a strategy decreed from “on high”, but only with the participation of as many citizens as possible. If, in the foreseeable future, the contents and principles of a form of development which is environmentally, economically and socially viable in the long term are to be among the self-evident aims of all educational establishments, then as many social groups as possible must share the goals of the UN Decade. In this respect, the cooperation of politics – at the federal, state and local authority levels – is indispensable. For Education for Sustainable Development shall only become self-evident when legislation and curricula set the course. Equally important for the implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is the cooperation of representatives of civil society, such as non-governmental organisations, private enterprise, the media and foundations. Alongside the state institutions, these latter make up the second pillar of stakeholders in ESD.

With the calling of 30 institutional representatives and individual experts from politics and civil society onto the National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the German Commission for UNESCO has followed up on this conception of the Decade as a project for the whole of society. It also made the effort to reflect the broad spectrum of ESD – from development education through consumer education to environmental education – and to bring together contacts from all educational sectors – from the nursery sector



through to informal learning – in the National Committee. Universities and other research establishments are providing the scientific expertise. Moreover, the Committee comprises pupils' representatives. In order to ensure the implementation of the decisions taken, it was important to also win the cooperation of high-ranking decision-makers. The National Committee as a steering body should have a long reach and ability to assert itself. What role does the Committee play in the individual details of implementing the Decade in Germany?

### Consultation, Steering, Clearing – The Tasks of the National Committee for the UN Decade

With the help of the UN Decade, Education for Sustainable Development in Germany should take a clear step forward. This will only succeed if the decisive stakeholders come together to identify priorities and political measures for integrating ESD into all areas of education in Germany, and consult together on them. We – the specialists and decision-makers represented on the Committee – see this as the first task of the National Committee. We are convinced that this commitment to common action for the Decade will further strengthen the integrative function of the concept of Education for Sustainable Development. In the process of voting on a common course of action the National Committee also functions as a platform where the individual members can raise their respective ideas. Thus, for example, representatives of civil society can use the discussion processes of the Committee to demand stronger measures in support of ESD from the political decision-makers.

As a consultation forum for measures that bring forward learning for sustainability in Germany, the National Committee also intends to function as a nerve centre, taking onboard current ideas and trends for ESD coming from society. In order to gain cooperation partners, the National Committee called a Round Table of 100 stakeholders together right at the beginning of the Decade. These latter are to implement the Decade on the ground, advise the National Committee and give impulses for the execution of the Decade. The Round Table sits once annually, while its working groups on the different educational areas and the themes of ESD assure continuity between sit-

## The National Committee for the UN-Decade “Education for Sustainable Development”

### **Volker Angres**

German ZDF television network

### **Petra Bierwirth, MdB**

German Bundestag's (Parliament's) Committee on the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

### **Ulla Burchardt, MdB**

German Bundestag's (Parliament's) Committee on Education, Research and Technology Assessment

### **Dr. Ignacio Campino**

Deutsche Telekom AG

### **Prof. Dr. Gerhard de Haan**

Chairman of the National Committee, Freie Universität Berlin

### **Annette Dieckmann**

Working Group on Nature and Environmental Education (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Natur- und Umweltbildung)

### **MinDirig Dr. Volker Ducklau**

Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ)

### **Prof. Dr. Ing. Peter Eyerer**

Fraunhofer Institute for Chemical Technology (ICT)

### **Marco George**

Pupil's Union of the Federal State Brandenburg

### **Eva Goris**

Bild am Sonntag (newspaper)

### **Bettina Heinrich**

German Association of Cities (Deutscher Städtetag)

### **MinDirig. Karl-Heinz Held**

Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK)

### **Hendrik Hey**

World of Miracles (Welt der Wunder GmbH/H5B5 GmbH)

### **Klaus Hübner**

Bavarian Bird Protection Society (Landesbund für Vogelschutz Bayern)

### **Julia Hüttenrauch**

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### **MinDirig'in Dr. Christina Kindervater**

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### **MinDirig. Hans Konrad Koch**

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### **Prof. Dr. Lenelis Kruse-Graumann**

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### **Thomas Loster**

Munich Re Foundation (Münchener Rück Stiftung)

### **Dr. Barbara Meifort**

Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB)

### **Prof. Dr. Gerd Michelsen**

University of Lüneburg

### **Prof. Dr. Edda Müller**

Federation of German Consumer Organisations (Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband)

### **Ingrid Müller**

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU)

### **Werner Netzel**

German Savings Bank Association (Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband)

### **Prof. Dr. Dr. Franz Josef Radermacher**

Research Institute for Applied Knowledge Processing (Forschungsinstitut für anwendungsorientierte Wissensverarbeitung)

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### **Jörg-Robert Schreiber**

VENRO – Association of German Development NGOs (Verband entwicklungspolitischer Nichtregierungsorganisationen)

### **Hubert Weinzierl**

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### **Prof. Dr. Christoph Wulf**

Chairperson of the German Commission for UNESCO's Education Committee, Freie Universität Berlin

and (in an advisory role):

### **Dr. Roland Bernecker**

Secretary-General of the German Commission for UNESCO

tings. The aim of the "National Committee – Round Table – Working Groups" bodies is to provide a large number of opportunities for participation. The National Committee made well its first task as a consultation forum when it compiled the National Plan of Action in autumn 2004 and described the central goals and strategic guidelines for the UN Decade in Germany, in consultation with one another and with the stakeholders

represented in the Round Table. With its membership limited to 30, the National Committee is an effective working body that can also be seen as the political arm of the Decade, bringing together the work of individual participants and representing it vigorously in national and international politics and in the media.

Consultation and voting on common measures and the identification of priori-

ties also means that the National Committee takes on the role of a steering body in the implementation of the Decade. Making use of the specialist expertise represented on the Committee, it views the ESD activities in Germany as a clearing house – it evaluates them, tests the political framework conditions, identifies unexplored territory and makes recommendations. This too should take place in consultation with the Round Table and the Working Groups, for which reason every UN Decade Working Group has a contact on the National Committee who assures the connection with the Working Group.

Foto © UNESCO / Martin Bobic



One example for the steering function of the body is the identification of measures for inclusion in the National Plan of Action and the recognition of the official German Decade Projects. Measures and projects will be regularly evaluated from 2006 onwards, by which we mean to ensure that the Decade does not just consist of political goodwill declarations, but actually contributes to a genuine and measurable reorientation of the education system towards tackling sustainability more thoroughly. In this undertaking we are concerned to ensure that the official German Decade Projects base their work on a sufficiently complex interpretation of sustainability. The identification of prioritised themes within ESD and the encouragement of corresponding working circles – for example on the topics of Water and Consumerism – and events is a further example of the work of the National Committee as a steering body. One precondition for the steering of the UN Decade by the National Committee is that the body also works as a laboratory of ideas, making innovative conceptual considerations on Education for Sustainable Development.

The National Committee can only be successful to the extent that its members make the aims of the Decade their own and spread them outwards. Equally decisive is the readiness of all stakeholders who are not directly represented on the National Committee to take part in the work of the Committee and help to carry out its activities. Only as a true cooperation project can the UN Decade bring Education for Sustainable Development in Germany forwards.

*This article was written jointly by the members of the National Committee.*

Annette Dieckmann / Jörg-Robert Schreiber

## The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Implementing the UN Decade

*Samba rhythms accompany the buzz of countless children's voices as they present the results of their projects on stage and at exhibition stands in the Great Hall of Hamburg Museum. It is all about the production of bananas and chocolate, environmental protection and healthy eating, eating habits around the world, human rights and child labour, organic farming and fair trade, water as a basis for life, development projects in Mali... "World Breakfast" is the theme of the projects that 20 schools carried through in the run up to this common closing party.*

Education for Sustainable Development can take many different forms when people with different experiences, perspectives and temperaments participate in it. It seems to be particularly successful in those places – such as the "World Breakfast" projects organised by the Welthungerhilfe charity in Bonn, Berlin, Leipzig and Hamburg – where it succeeds in uniting stakeholders from Global Learning and from Environmental Education. It is clearly a promising new reality that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are cooperating with schools and other state education providers – as well as holding their own education events. Who are these non-governmental environment and development organisations, and which educational aims are they pursuing?

### What are NGOs?

NGOs are non-profit organisations working at the local, national and international levels, which stand up for specific objectives and are independent from the state. Citizens involve themselves in NGOs on a voluntary basis to further the goals which are of particular importance to them: human rights, conservation of nature or the environment, the fight against poverty, development projects, climate protection and alternative energies, fair trade, sustainable consumerism, preservation of biodiversity, and many other issues. As environmental and development organisations, many of them have

recognised education and awareness-raising work as the key to a form of development, which is viable for the future, and realised that environmental protection and development cooperation are also essential learning processes.

NGOs possess two particular characteristics in their self-understanding and public perception: they are considered a critical early-warning system for fast-changing (worldwide) economic, social, environmental and political frameworks, and they were one of the first to passionately advocate participation as a basic precondition for democratic and sustainable development. The "empowerment" approach, which VENRO (see Seitz/ Schreiber 2005) and others are promoting as a fundamental development strategy, reflects the need for a valorisation of civil society, in similar to terms to that already described in the Agenda 21. Sustainability requires empowerment and participatory politics. Empowerment in this sense describes the process of self-motivated learning by which people come to feel encouraged and enabled to take their own issues in hand and participate actively and creatively in processes of social change.

NGOs are often the organisers of projects. They have networked with each other on many levels and have often associated themselves with UN Organisations at the international level, where they are taking on an increasingly important role at world conferences and counter-conferences. Their role as education providers and





Event for the 2nd White Band Day, "Your Voice Against Poverty", on the 9th September 2005, in front of the Parliament in Berlin Foto: VENRO

cooperation partners for state-sector educational establishments arises from their specific social function, between the state and the market. With considerable independence from political interests and the economic pressure to maximise profits, NGOs can advocate the idea of sustainable development and take part in its implementation. In this process they are not limited to acting as role models, but also have extensive opportunities to have their say in the shaping of social and political frameworks. It is on this basis that environment and development NGOs contribute to the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

### **Professionalisation and loyalty to the grassroots**

Their success (given their limited personnel and funding resources) and their growing influence have raised the pressure to become more professional. Mid-sized and large NGOs are increasingly having to resort to professional project management and appropriate strategic planning, methodological competence and evaluation skills – not least in their education work. They must face growing competition in many fields. They are well prepared to do this, but they must also recognise that the growing tension

between professionalisation and loyalty to the grassroots represents a serious risk for them. Gathering the widest possible support among the population is not just part of their approach, but rather a precondition for their success. This is why programmes to train supporters in project management, communication and public relations work are important. Such courses would also respond to a growing interest in lifelong learning and personal development among citizens with a readiness to get involved. The particular attraction of NGOs is that these learning processes are bound up with active engagement, for example in climate pro-

tection, in local Agenda 21 groups or regional marketing initiatives.

The possibility of accompanying such sustainability initiatives with specialist advice, intermediary services and process monitoring was investigated in a project carried out by the Association of Environmental Education Centres (ANU). This showed that citizens' engagement in even the smallest projects – such as the cooks and connoisseurs of the "Home on a Plate" project, or the organic gardeners in the "Leaf and Root" allotment association – can successfully be supported using the tools of systematic organisational development (see ANU 2005). Successful self-motivated learning takes place through these processes.

The same goes for "world shops", volunteering services and development partnerships, which do not only aim to change the world around them, but are themselves an important site of democratic learning.

## Campaigns and Education Work

NGOs are not limited to formal teaching approaches in their education work, but achieve a significant public impact through their campaigns and informal education work – not least through the media. For example, the development policy umbrella group VENRO, together with its member organisations and a diverse range of similar initiatives around the world, was able to make an effective contribution to publicising the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals through its "Your Voice against Poverty" campaign. With the support of famous artists it was able to motivate German politics into making progress in meeting its 0.7% goal, and announcing further debt write-offs.

Successive – though often disappointing – political effects reinforce the conviction that effective public campaigns must be deepened by sustained educational work. The number of courses, workshops, projects, offers of cooperation and teaching materials coming from NGOs on the theme of the sustainable shaping of globalisation and global learning has become impossible to ignore. They are primarily oriented towards central everyday areas of action such as energy consumption, consumerism and mobility.

The major environmental associations – and first and foremost their youth organisations – are actively supported by numerous grassroots groups in their national campaigns, for instance on renewable energies, mobility or land use. On the occasion of the "Youth Energy Summit" – a conference on renewable energies for young people which took place on the fringe of the Renewables Conference in 2004 – a combined "Youth Alliance for Future Energy" was set up, with the aim of stimulating young people to take a more active role.

## Networking and Steering by Associations

NGOs working in the field of sustainable development form such a large proportion of civil society organisations that it is hard to get an overview.

The ANU, the Association of Environmental Education Centres ([www.umweltbildung.de](http://www.umweltbildung.de)), which is active across the country and has regional associations in 12 federal states, organises 680 environmental centres alongside other providers of extracurricular environmental education. The environment centres which have been established in many places over the last twenty years are often operated by nature conservation associations or local clubs. Through model activities they intend to create a visible presence and combine their role as a place of learning for schools with informal education in the leisure sector or support for informal learning processes. The ANU organises qualification, networking and public relations work for extracurricular environmental education, and supports the stakeholders involved in integrating the principles of education for sustainable development into environmental education.

Over one hundred member organisations nationwide are brought together by VENRO, the Association of German Development NGOs ([www.venro.org](http://www.venro.org)). These include the NGO networks at the federal state level, in which around 1800 mostly small and medium-sized NGOs are organised. VENRO primarily works for the defence of human rights and combating poverty by influencing development policy, but also by coordinating and supporting publicity campaigns and global learning programmes.

## Involvement in the UN Decade

Both ANU and VENRO are represented on the German National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and, through their member associations, in the Working Groups of the Round Table. They have introduced important measures to the National Plan of Action, assuming responsibility for their implementation, either alone or in cooperation with other stakeholders.

These measures contribute to organising dialogue and networking between ESD stakeholders and developing concepts and action plans at the federal state level. In content terms, they should expand the range of educational provision on the just shaping of globalisation, the Millennium Development Goals and environmental issues, as well as furthering the development of North-South partnerships.

Furthermore, development and environmental NGOs are supporting a reinforcement of education for sustainable development in schools as cooperation partners of state educational establishments – through their range of extracurricular places of learning, through their teaching materials on a diverse range of issues and through the provision of specialist speakers.

The ways in which the integration of sustainable development can take place in concrete terms is shown by the initiatives which have been recognised as "official Decade projects". In this regard, NGOs are right in the front line: half of all of the projects recognised so far are operated by non-governmental organisations.

To take one example, the Deutsche Umwelthilfe environmental pressure group (Northern Regional Association) is working to support schools in introducing sustainable purchasing policies. In student companies or other kinds of projects, pupils, with the participation of the rest of the school community, pursue the goal of supplying the school with organic, regionally-produced or fair-traded products.

Another example is the "artefact" energy adventure park in Glücksburg ([www.artefact.de](http://www.artefact.de)), an education centre with a guesthouse built from clay. In its courses on insulation in house-building, toys

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ANU (2005): Arbeitsgemeinschaft Natur- und Umweltbildung Bundesverband e.V & econtur Sustainability Center Bremen (Hg.): Nachhaltigkeit im Alltag voranbringen. Ein Leitfaden für Umweltzentren und Nachhaltigkeitsinitiativen, Bremen, 2005 [Promoting Sustainability in Everyday Life. Guidelines for Environment Centres and Sustainability Initiatives].

made from recycled materials or plant-based water treatment systems, it combines global learning with acting locally, and was recognised for its sustainable business concept.

### Development and Environment: Diversity and Common Goals

Development and environment NGOs, their people and their projects, are as diverse and distinctive in their goals, emphases and experiences as can be imagined. And this diversity represents immense potential for sustainable development and education processes for the future. In the past it was seen only in terms of NGOs stubbornly rebellious attitude towards attempts to bring them under the roof of education for sustainable development. What unites them all, however, is their orientation towards the idea of sustainable development. The fact that even in this point there is no

absolute consensus as to what this means should not be a source of discomfort, and nor should the fact that alongside low environmental impact, social justice and economic performance, development NGOs often stress a fourth aspect, that of democratic political decision-making (Good Governance). The very point of education is to be able to make ideas your own in a spirit of critical responsibility, and to fill them with content. In this the NGOs have much in common, for example the fact that very different civil society initiatives recognise the great importance and challenge of culture as the backdrop for sustainable development.

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artefact Energy Adventure Park, Foto: artefact



Carl Lindberg

# The Need to Take Responsible and Long-term Decisions

## The UN Decade as a Golden Opportunity

We all know former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's words: "Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that sounds abstract – sustainable development – and turn it into reality for all the world's people".

Perhaps not all of us also know what he said in his last great speech in Nairobi in Nov. 2006: "Climate change is not just an environmental issue, as too many people still believe. It is an all-encompassing threat. It is a threat to health (since a warmer world is one in which infectious diseases such as malaria and yellow fever will spread further and faster.) It could imperil the world's food supply (as rising temperatures and prolonged drought render fertile areas unfit for grazing or crops.) It could endanger the very ground on which nearly half the world's population live (coastal cities such as Lagos or Cape Town, which face inundation from sea levels rising as a result of melting icecaps and glaciers.) ... This is not science fiction. These are plausible scenarios, based on clear and rigorous scientific modelling ... And as we consider how to go further still, there remains a frightening lack of leadership."

**"This is not science fiction. These are plausible scenarios, based on clear and rigorous scientific modelling"**

The current situation is also described by a group of famous scientists in the book "Global Change and the Earth System: A Planet Under Pressure" as follows:

"The planet is now dominated by human activities. Human changes to the Earth System are multiple, complex, interacting, often exponential in rate and globally significant in magnitude. They affect every Earth System component – land, coastal zone, atmosphere and oceans.

The human driving forces for these changes – both proximate and ultimate – are equally complex, interactive and frequently teleconnected across the globe. The magnitude, spatial scale, and pace of human-induced change are unprecedented in human history and perhaps in the history of Earth; the Earth System is now operating in a "no-analogue state". ([www.igbp.kva.se](http://www.igbp.kva.se))

Responsible people all over the world cannot ignore these fundamental facts that also constitute the basis for the decisions taken at the Johannesburg Summit and for the UN Millennium Goals. It is also about the greatest challenge of our time: to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth. We know that the poorest of the poor are the most innocent victims of global climate change.

**"We know that the poorest of the poor are the most innocent victims of global climate change."**

One of the most important decisions taken at the Summit in Johannesburg, subsequently taken up by the UN's General Assembly, was to declare the years 2005-2014 a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The decision implies an urgent call for the nations of the world to completely change education in Pre-Schools, Schools and Higher Education Institutions so that they are better able to support sustainable development. I consider that the requests from Johannesburg and United Nations have not been taken seriously in most countries.

The reason why education is so important is that the political will and the responsible leadership for tackling the major challenges facing humanity in all our countries can only be created by



The decision to launch the Decade implies an urgent call for the nations of the world to completely change education in Pre-Schools, Schools and Higher Education Institutions

The 2005–2014 Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is the golden opportunity now offered to us all.

informed public opinion: a public opinion which in democratic elections would vote for political leaders who are able to take responsible and long-term decisions. This is the point of education for sustainable development.

The 2005–2014 Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is the golden opportunity now offered to us all – committed teachers at all levels, school and university heads, students, education ministers and other education politicians all around the world – to take serious matters seriously, to work with others to change all levels of our education systems, so that when the students have completed their education they will really possess the ability and the will to work actively for sustainable development in our societies.

The need to change education is of great urgency all over the world. But the need is greatest in the wealthy part of the world. Just as statistics are so convincingly demonstrating that people in the wealthy part have the longest and most advanced education, their lifestyles are consuming most of the world's limited resources. The population there is making by far the largest "ecological footprint". Therefore, we have to change education systems, particularly in the wealthy part of our world.

The need to change education is of great urgency all over the world.

Sustainable development must be the guiding light both in the everyday life of pre-schools, schools and universities, and in longer term planning. This requires everyone in schools and at universities – teachers and researchers, pupils and students, school managers, together with parents and representatives of the community – to discuss and clarify how best to profile school and university activities in order to support the development of a sustainable society. This presupposes, of course, that the laws, regulations and curricula that schools and the universities must follow are also designed to support such developments.

**"Sustainable development must be the guiding light both in the everyday life of pre-schools, schools and universities, and in longer term planning."**

Sustainable development must not be seen as a new field of study, but rather

as a perspective that is added to all school and university subjects. The sustainable development perspective can then be seen as an aid for teachers in selecting relevant content for the educational process. Active pupil and student participation must be built in as early as pre-school, and opportunities must be provided to consolidate it by allowing students to take part in planning activities throughout their time at school or university. The development of a capacity for critical thinking and questioning is particularly important, since there is no predetermined way in which to achieve sustainable development.

The students and their student organisations are extremely important in this context. It is essential we encourage them to tackle the issue of education for sustainable development. Those who are studying in higher education today are the ones who will be building for the future tomorrow. They are the ones who will have to bear the consequences of the wrong, short-term decisions that are taken today. A civil engineer who graduates this year will have an active working life until the middle of this century. A teacher who graduates this year will, during her or his teaching life, influence people who will live into the next century.

In Sweden, for example, the student representatives have considerable influence on the university Governing Boards and use it very constructively in a way that is greatly appreciated by university leaders.

One year ago I participated in an international conference in Gothenburg, Sweden on "Drivers and Barriers for Implementing Sustainable Development in Higher Education". Here are some of the comments from the participants:

**"Sustainable Development is an ever-evolving concept."**

- Even if there have been several attempts to make the concept of SD more operational it is clear that it cannot be exactly defined – and it should not be! It is an ever-evolving concept. It can be compared with the concept of health, as health cannot be defined in precise terms either, and yet everyone has an idea about what health is and health is important for everyone.



■ It must be hard to find anything else quite as multi- and transdisciplinary as sustainable development. It is also quite clear that the traditional discipline-based structuring of knowledge and research are here to stay. This combination constitutes a major challenge for universities when implementing learning for sustainable development in higher education.

■ A common experience from proactive universities is that some kind of organisation with supervision and responsibility above and beyond the traditional disciplines is essential for making multi- and transdisciplinary ESD activities become a successful and lasting activity. Such an organisation works as an engine for the issues that otherwise often end up as everyone's interest but nobody's responsibility. It therefore acts as an incubator for change and hence as a norm-supporting structure.

■ Both separate courses and programmes and/or an integrated perspective throughout the whole education process are needed. The separate course is needed to give the basic understanding of the challenges associated with sustainable development; to deliver tools and conceptual models for dealing with dynamic and complex systems; and to gain a feeling of how things are interconnected. The separate basic courses on sustainable development delivered at universities today often have an environmental focus. This needs to be balanced with more integration of the social and economic aspects of sustainability.

The report from this conference is the Technical Paper No 3–2006, in a series called "Education for Sustainable Development in Action" from the UNESCO Education Sector.

The sustainable development perspective must pervade all education that is carried out in society, including personnel training at companies and in the public sector. I am convinced that the companies and public institutions that make sustainable development the guiding principle of their personnel training will soon realise the great advantages of this approach. Their staff will feel proud to be involved in operations that aim to make a responsible contribution to the sustainable development of society. Here I believe trade



Foto © bpa / Reineke

union organisations can play a particularly important and proactive role.

**"I am convinced that the companies and public institutions that make sustainable development the guiding principle of their personnel training will soon realise the great advantages of this approach."**

What has happened since the decision on the Decade of ESD? Let me give you just a few good examples.

The Swedish Parliament has amended the Higher Education Act so that from February 1st 2006 Swedish universities and university colleges have to promote sustainable development in their activities. The change in this law implies that universities "in their activities have to promote a form of sustainable development which means that current and future generations are secured a healthy and sound environment, economic and social welfare and justice". At Uppsala University, Sweden's oldest University, the Vice Chancellor decided in December 2006 to instruct the boards of the Faculties firstly to be responsible for the integration of SD as a perspective and as a component of

knowledge in all educational programmes and relevant courses; secondly, to improve the possibility for the student to complete their education by taking additional courses on SD; and thirdly to prepare a central action plan on education for sustainable development. He also decided to instruct the board of a recently founded Centre for SD to follow up the work on SD, to earmark certain development resources, to offer a teacher training course on SD at the university and to develop support material for the teachers.

As early as the 1st of July 2004, the German Parliament took a unanimous resolution welcoming the UN decision to hold the Decade. In Germany they have established an award conferring the title of "Decade Project", which can be assigned for a two year period to schools, organisations, churches or university departments, for example. So far, around 400 projects have received this important recognition. ([www.dekade.org](http://www.dekade.org))

Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development are networks of existing formal, non-formal and informal education organizations, mobilized to deliver ESD to regional communities. They are mobilized by the United Nations University in all parts of the world and there were a total of 35 as of December 2006. ([www.ias.unu.edu](http://www.ias.unu.edu)) Norway has created a very well-equipped and well-

developed network on the internet between universities and the school system to support SD, named Learning for the Environment. ([www.miljolare.no](http://www.miljolare.no))

**“Considering the huge scale and importance of the challenge of changing education systems, the current level of activities is far from sufficient.”**

Many activities on ESD have been initiated all over the world. However, considering the huge scale and importance of the challenge of changing education systems, the current level of activities is far from sufficient.

It is here that governments, and especially Ministers of Education, must take on much greater responsibility. Moreover, all of us must take on our share of responsibility for creating education systems that support sustainable development.

For that reason I will briefly present 10 points of measures that must be taken:

### Ten proposals

1. Inform as many people as possible about the aims of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, (DESD 2005–2014), particularly journalists who work on educational issues.
2. Call on your Ministers of Education, and their Ministries, to develop action plans on ESD, giving government agencies clear roles and responsibility. Request that all relevant legislation and regulation reflect the importance of ESD.
3. Inform the general public about strategies for sustainable development and the link between ESD with these strategies.
4. Inform government and other stakeholders of the UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) strategy on ESD, adopted in March 2005. The Strategy, published in all the UN official languages, is available at: [www.unece.org/env/esd](http://www.unece.org/env/esd)
5. Call on your national governments to act as driving forces for ESD in different international assemblies, for example within UNESCO, The Council of Europe, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, and the EU.
6. Call on Members of Parliament to raise the importance of ESD with the government.
7. Call on national government bodies and agencies for international aid and cooperation, in their negotiations with the countries receiving support in the education area, to impose the condition that educational activities be permeated by the perspective of sustainable development.
8. Make politicians in local and regional government, especially those responsible for school issues, aware that ESD is an important dimension of issues of quality.
9. Ensure that conferences dealing with any aspect of sustainable development always discuss the importance of the role of education.
10. Urge national and international NGOs to inform their supporters and staff about ESD and monitor how national governments meet their international commitments towards it.

**The development of a capacity for critical thinking and questioning is particularly important, since there is no predetermined way in which to achieve sustainable development.**

I would like to conclude by quoting Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, from his Nobel Lecture in Oslo:

“We wanted to go to the moon, so we went there.

We achieve what we want to achieve. If we are not achieving something, it is because we have not put our minds to it. We create what we want. What we want and how we get to it depends on our mindsets. It is extremely difficult to change mindsets once they are formed. We create the world in accordance with our mindset. We need to invent ways to

change our perspective continually and reconfigure our mindset quickly as new knowledge emerges.

We can reconfigure our world if we can reconfigure our mindset”.

So, therefore: We can and we must reconfigure our education systems to genuinely support Sustainable Development.

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# “We have to respect the different pace chosen by each country”

Interview with Aline Bory-Adams, Chief of the Section for Education for Sustainable Development at UNESCO Paris

**UNESCO today:** As chief of the section for Education for Sustainable Development at UNESCO, you are the ‘task-manager’ for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). What, exactly, are your responsibilities?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** As the lead Agency for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO has two related roles to play. The first one is of leadership, that is to catalyse, coordinate and support the global processes initiated under the International Implementation Scheme (IIS). Particularly in supporting the re-orientation of national education systems and policies in support of sustainable development and encouraging civil society, the private sector and the media to respond to the imperatives of sustainable development. The second role is as a substantive implementer of the Decade. Through its programme sectors, UNESCO helps to facilitate an enabling environment for the achievement of the objectives and goals of the DESD.

The Secretariat for the DESD is ensured by the Education for Sustainable Development Section, which I am heading. The DESD Secretariat is located in the Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities. The main role of the DESD Secretariat is to promote the vision of the DESD in facilitating discussion among stakeholders and within UNESCO. The main areas of work for the DESD Secretariat are: International coordination of the DESD; Cooperation and mobilization of ESD networks; Supporting the development of teaching and learning resources for ESD; Supporting inter-sectoral collaboration in UNESCO’s response to the DESD; Supporting the publication and dissemination of ESD good practices and guidelines; Monitoring and Evaluation.

**UNESCO today:** What results can you see after the first two years of the Decade?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** The first two years of the Decade have put in place the mechanisms to facilitate and guide the implementation of the DESD at the global, regional and national levels. For instance, reporting, monitoring and evaluation frameworks are being developed at regional level in Europe and Asia-Pacific. To advise on the monitoring and assessment at the global level, UNESCO has set up a Monitoring & Evaluation Expert Group (MEEG) for the DESD.

The UNESCO Action Plan for the DESD guides the programmatic contribution of UNESCO to the DESD under the leadership of the Education Sector, coordinated by the Intersectoral Working Group (IWG) on ESD. The IWG provides overall coordination and facilitates strong inter-sectorality in ensuring that ESD is embedded effectively in the programmes of UNESCO, keeping in mind the other organizational priorities notably: Education for All, Education for HIV and AIDS and Literacy.

The UN Inter-Agency Committee (IAC) for the DESD has been established and it ensures coordination among the UN Agencies in the implementation of the DESD. The IAC had its first meeting in UNESCO Paris (mid-June 2006). The second meeting will take place during the CSD 15 session and will be hosted by UNICEF.

Furthermore, to facilitate the work of UNESCO in setting strategic directions and mobilization of partners, UNESCO Reference Group on the DESD has been established. The first meeting of the Reference Group was held on 19 – 20 October 2006 at UNESCO headquarters.

To advance the thinking of how research can create a foundation for the DESD, a joint UNU/UNESCO meeting was held in Paris on 20-22 February 2006 to set the stage for a strategic research agenda for



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UNESCO has two related roles to play: The first one is of leadership, the second one is as a substantive implementer of the Decade

the Decade. The overall purpose of the workshop was to exchange information and experiences on research and development issues in ESD and to initiate work on the development of a research agenda for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Specifically, the meeting addressed the need for coherence in the development and steering of a research agenda for the DESD which links research on ESD to the needs of all types of formal/non-formal/informal learning environments and policies and practices.

These are only a few examples of the types of cornerstones, which have been put in place at global level to ensure solid foundations upon which the DESD can rest. Of course much has happened at regional and country levels. Regional strategies for ESD have been developed or are in process in all regions. Many events dedicated to ESD and the DESD are taking place at the regional, sub-regional and national levels, for which our DESD Secretariat is often solicited to provide documents or technical inputs, suggest speakers, or to participate. The DESD website as well as our quarterly "DESD Progress to date", seek to give

visibility to local, national and international Education for Sustainable Development activities, initiatives and events, and to allow for exchange of information and resources.

**UNESCO today:** Could you give some good specific examples of national implementations of the Decades? Are there still any countries where the DESD does not play a significant role, so far?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** It is obvious that education for sustainable development is not reflected equally throughout the world. It is a process and needs to take into account the specificities of each country. While it is possible to identify countries where ESD has acquired visibility and is included in the educational priorities, we have to respect the different pace chosen by each country. It is my understanding that it is too early to distribute "good" and "bad" points. Our task is to ensure that eventually all countries will address in their respective learning environments the challenges set for us by the DESD.

**UNESCO today:** What initiatives and activities is UNESCO going to undertake

in the close future in order to promote the global process of the Decade?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** Many challenges lie ahead for the successful implementation of the DESD. As countries strive to integrate ESD into already existing frameworks, they should work to clearly and objectively state not only their specific goals for the DESD, but also their particular vision of ESD with regards to local needs and diversity. While there are many other challenges facing all of us, I would like to reflect upon some of them such as the partnerships, teaching/learning approaches, integrating ESD into existing programmes, for instance:

### Partnership

For anybody, even for the UN system, the DESD is too big to do on one's own. UNESCO recognizes the importance of partnerships and synergies in which each stakeholder has something to offer. In line with the concept of partnership, UNESCO believes that its role is similar to that of a shepherd. UNESCO hopes to

provide intellectual leadership/guidance, but UNESCO sees itself in many ways as being a partner with various stakeholders and helping provide guidance.

### Learning processes

It is crucial that we keep the focus on Education for Sustainable Development. It is increasingly recognized at agency meetings, workshops and government consultations that ESD is a complex issue comprising many different facets. Developing adequate teaching / learning approaches are, thus, an immediate challenge; education for sustainable development is about learning. Education systems need to be reoriented to respond more effectively to the learning challenges raised by ESD. How to change these systems towards more conducive teaching/learning methods? How to ensure that culture is truly included as a transversal dimension in all learning experiences? How to teach those skills, values, knowledge embedded in education for sustainable development is a tremendous challenge to all.

UNESCO helps to facilitate an enabling environment for the achievement of the objectives and goals of the DESD.

## “WORLD expedition” – Dialogue for Sustainable Development

Decade Project by the “expedition WELT” association

In February 2006, three students from the University of Witten/Herdecke left on an eight-month “WORLD expedition.” Around the world, they were visiting individuals and initiatives who are working actively for sustainable development and conducting interviews. In the centre of the “dialogue for sustainable development” are socially-minded entrepreneurs who are contributing to the solution of a social problem. The experiences of the expedition team, including extensive interviews held on the ground, were made accessible live to school pupils in Germany on the website [www.expedition-welt.de](http://www.expedition-welt.de). The aim of this project is to initiate a dialogue between schools in Germany and people in developing countries.



Foto: Expedition Welt e.V.

The Decade on Education for Sustainable Development is a process and needs to take into account the specificities of each country.

### Integrating ESD into existing programmes

There is a need to learn from what already exists and build on it. Many countries have carried out ESD programmes or activities. Identifying these, evaluating the results, and disseminating information about them will allow for quicker integration of this new vision of education into national plans. UNESCO sees collecting examples of "good practices" and sharing them among interested parties as an essential contribution. In collaboration with UNECE, a first set of "good practices" will be published, which will provide an overview of where different countries in the Europe and North America region stand in addressing ESD. Similarly, UNESCO is also about to publish a set of "good practices" in the area of Teacher Education resulting from the substantial work conducted by the international network of Teacher educators under the leadership of the UNESCO Chair. "Reorienting Teacher Education towards Sustainability" at New University in Toronto, Canada.

### Mobilizing the media

The media represents a powerful means of raising and disseminating awareness. Hence, we need to find innovative approaches to involve and engage the media in disseminating the DESD message. Making the media an ally for transmitting quality information to citizens is a means to achieving success.

**UNESCO today:** In 2009, the Decade comes to its 'halftime'. What visions do you associate with the Decade? What results do you expect to achieve until then?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** The vision associated with the Decade is the one stated in the IIS. The mid-decade represents a great opportunity to review the progress achieved, identify the gaps in the implementation of the DESD and draw the lessons, which will enable us to move forward. We will be particularly hopeful to see the momentum picking up speed, particularly in those parts of the world where the Decade has started may be at a slower pace.

**UNESCO today:** At the moment, there are further Decades focusing on other

key issues. What importance do you attach to the DESD within this context? Are there co-operations with other Decades within UNESCO?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** Creating synergies with other earlier international initiatives has been, from the beginning, an important feature of the DESD. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are geared to poverty reduction, Education for All (EFA), which focuses on universal access to education, and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), which is devoted to adult education, and the DESD share all a common vision: education is an essential component for sustainable development. In this context, I would like to draw the attention of the readers to the UNESCO publication "Links between the Global Initiatives in Education", which clearly explains the complementarities of all these initiatives.

**UNESCO today:** Are there any highlights planned within this scope? What do you expect from the end of the Decade in 2014? What success, do you think, can be achieved and what tasks will we be facing in the future?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** What is hoped from the Decade is a growing movement that enables everybody in the world to live a decent life without putting the life and the rights of future generations at risk. Throughout the Decade, ESD will have contributed to enable citizens to face the challenges of the present and future and leaders to make relevant decisions for a viable world. In other words, these different actors will:

- have acquired various skills (i.e. critical and creative thinking, communication, conflict management and problem solving strategies) to take an active part in and contribute to the life of society;
- be respectful of the earth and life in all its form and diversity;
- be committed to promoting democracy in a society without exclusion and where peace prevails.

This vision of the world is not an utopia, it is an ideal towards which to work. It is hoped that the Decade will have set a solid foundation, in which the ideals of a sustainable present and future for all will be concrete.

**UNESCO today:** Do you think certain educational sectors – for example school education – should be particularly accentuated during the Decade?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** While it is generally acknowledged that younger minds might be more susceptible to adopt new attitudes and values as well as assimilate new knowledge and skills, it is our belief that learning for sustainable development is a life long process. Focusing on school education, without the proper attention to the rest of the population might not be the most efficient way to advance the cause of the DESD. Public awareness programmes focusing on the population at large and on the young adults are an essential thrust of ESD. The role of higher education and of the world of work cannot be minimized in that they are the source of innovations, research and development which will nourish our strive toward sustainable societies.

**UNESCO today:** ESD deals with different topics. Which of those should be of

special importance for the Decade, in your opinion?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** I have to refer you to the International Implementation Scheme (IIS), which clearly states, “No universal model of ESD exists. While there is overall agreement on principles of sustainability and supporting concepts, there will be nuanced differences according to local contexts, priorities, and approaches” (IIS page 30). In other words, it is for each country to set its priorities, therefore the emphases and processes must be locally defined to respond to the local environmental, social and economic conditions. Essential characteristics of ESD have been outlined in the IIS and other publications to which I refer you.

**UNESCO today:** Education for Sustainable Development and Environmental Education are often considered as very similar educational concepts. What, in your opinion, is the difference?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** Sustainable development is rooted in United Nations history in the environmental movement. Many landmarks can be identified and are known of all. Progressively, it was recognized that while some attention was given to the social and economic aspects inherent in the environmental issues, the main focus was largely on the ecological issues. Experts agree to recognize that treating environmental concerns in isolation might become self defeating. It is for this reason that by the mid 1980, the UN came up with a larger strategy and proposed the Brundtland Commission report “Our Common Future” in which sustainable development was endorsed as an overarching framework. Education for Sustainable Development therefore, like all sustainable development programmes, has to address all the three spheres of sustainability –environment, society and economy with culture as a transversal theme.

**UNESCO today:** What is the role of ESD and the Decade in relation to the UNESCO programme “Education for

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All”? Are there any priorities or do you see potential conflicts within UNESCO?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** EFA and ESD are mutually supportive. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without literate, educated populations which is why the first ESD thrust in Agenda 21 is about quality education for all (EFA). While the EFA promotes access to quality education for all, the DESD strengthens the EFA agenda by bringing into focus the content, processes and quality of learning. It enables EFA to promote values such as peace, equality, and respect for human rights, gender, environment, and cultural diversity through all aspects and modes of education - thereby equipping citizens and their societies to develop in sustainable ways. UNESCO has the responsibility for both and to achieve synergies between all the UN initiatives in education; they have been placed under the Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education.

**UNESCO today:** Finally, a personal question: What did you do, before you

became the ‘task-manager’ for the DESD? What do you consider as most challenging and interesting about your job?

**Aline Bory-Adams:** I am an education specialist and I have had the opportunity to first hand experience the important role of education in bettering human lives through a number of years of work in the academia and in the international arena. Before coming to UNESCO to my current position, I was for many years with UNICEF where I was the Regional Advisor in Education for West and Central Africa and afterwards, Chief of Education for UNICEF – Ethiopia.

From my long field experience, I have clear understanding of the intricate interplay between the social, environmental and economic dimensions which impacts the realities on the ground and the situations faced by the people. Hence, any approach we are seeking for bettering their lives have to address these intricate interplays and different approaches will have to be found to address different situations.

Now, through the task-management of the DESD, it is an opportunity to promote a vision of development where all these dimensions are equally considered and acted upon. It is both a privilege to be associated with UNESCO’s efforts in this domain but also a formidable challenge.

**UNESCO-Website on the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development:**  
<http://www.unesco.org/education/desd>

**Download: International Implementation Scheme (IIS)**  
**Download: Publication “Links between the Global Initiatives in Education”**



Elmar Schüll

## Where the journey should lead

### The National Plan of Action for the UN Decade

*Plans of action offer participants orientation and provide a reference framework for joint action. They present the context of the undertaking in a concise form and have a target-setting function: Plans of Action set out where the journey should lead, and state the steps that must be taken along the way. The National Plan of Action brings together the activities for the implementation of the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development proclaimed by the United Nations.*

The great vision of the World Decade is to open up educational opportunity to all people, allowing them to acquire the knowledge and values as well as to learn the behaviour patterns that are required for a liveable future and positive societal change – this is how UNESCO formulates the goal of the UN Decade. Germany should like to do its bit by integrating the concept and contents of sustainable development into all educational sectors. How, though – runs the question at the dawn of the UN Decade – are we to approach this great task?

#### Four Strategic Goals

The National Plan of Action contains four strategic goals, which are to serve as an orientation for concerted work:

1. In Germany there are already a wide range of activities working towards a more sustainable direction for our society. Often, however, these are only visible at the local level or are too strongly restricted to their own fields. In order to achieve development in the direction of sustainability, the existing educational initiatives must be further developed in conceptual terms; they must combine their potential and divulge best practices more widely.
2. In order to achieve this, better cooperation and networking of educational initiatives is also necessary. Germany has a very diverse educational landscape. The potential of close conceptual and organisational cooperation is all too seldom taken advantage of.
3. Education for Sustainable Development is an unwieldy term and perhaps also

an unwieldy concept. It conceals, nevertheless, the central challenges and issues which our society faces. The intentions of Education for Sustainable Development must therefore be more strongly pushed into public awareness.

4. Finally, more than ever before, we must think of the challenges of our future in global terms. The intensification of international cooperation should therefore be a constant ambition in our efforts to achieve Education for Sustainable Development.

The political undertaking to develop these goals and to begin the drafting of a National Plan of Action for the implementation of the UN Decade in Germany was approved in summer 2004. In a unanimous resolution, the German Federal Parliament called upon the Federal Government to develop its own contributions to the UN Decade and to bring them together in a corresponding Plan of Action. At the international level, UNESCO was named the lead agency and entrusted with the preparation and coordination of the World Decade. The German Commission for UNESCO, in its "Hamburg Declaration", approved in summer 2003, had already given far-reaching recommendations for the creation of a National Plan of Action.

From the very beginning, great value was placed on the participatory aspect in the development of the National Plan of Action. Only if the partially differing interests of all of the stakeholders involved were taken sufficiently into account would the National Plan of Action be able to stake its claim as a reference document accepted by all involved. This is why as many relevant and interested





Foto © bpa / Faßbender

stakeholders from the field of Education for Sustainable Development as possible were to be involved in the process of drafting the Plan of Action.

### The Round Table

The first step in this direction was taken on the 2nd November 2004. Around 100 stakeholders in Education for Sustainable Development from across Germany, including representatives of federal states and local authorities, businesses and non-governmental organisations, came together in Berlin for the first Round Table to develop a common agenda for the implementation of the UN Decade in Germany. Right on time for this large convention, the German National Committee for the UN Decade presented a draft text of the National Plan of Action.

The members of the Round Table and interested members of the public supplied criticism, advice and suggestions for

improvements to the Plan of Action. Before a generally accepted document could emerge from the draft version, all perspectives had to be taken on board, discussed and voted on. On the UN Decade website ([www.dekade.org](http://www.dekade.org)) the Plan of Action was already available to the public during its drafting.

### Different Perspectives of Stakeholders

This consultation phase was also a learning process for all involved. The range of feedback received made clear to the National Committee the wide spectrum that exists within Education for Sustainable Development in Germany. Another thing which became clear were the varying perspectives of the different stakeholders. At many points the text had to be reworked, critiqued, improved and improved over again. If it is true that the National Plan of Action at some points

still does not sound very specific, this is due to the circumstance that the National Committee wanted to bring the large number of stakeholders onboard at the point where they found themselves at the beginning of this 10-year journey.

However, from the very beginning great value was placed on one facet of the document's contents: sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development were to be understood as future-oriented modernisation concepts, thus overcoming the still-existing defensive posture motivated by – chiefly environmental – crisis situations, and the striving towards a situation of balance and justice that is always situated in the past. Sustainable development means development that is capable of giving a future to people in the 21st century, and this is hardly compatible with a backwards-looking orientation.

Thanks to the good political preparations and the cooperation of all stakeholders involved, the National Committee was able to present the National Plan of Action to the public right at the beginning of the UN Decade. As a reference document, it also serves as a model for the federal states. Thus, for example, Hamburg, Thuringia and Baden-Wurtemberg have already got their own Plans of Action underway for the implementation of the Decade in their specific states, in the very first year of the Decade. Other federal states are showing signs of following suit. Due to the fact that the federal states have competence for education and due to the great importance of regional structures, there is particular potential for the Decade in the federal states, and it appears that the National Plan of Action has made a contribution to realising this potential.

### The Catalogue of Measures

Since it was first published, the National Plan of Action has undergone significant expansion in terms of content, more specifically through the so-called "Catalogue of Measures": this is a collection of 62 educational measures – at present – which now and in coming years are to further Education for Sustainable Development in structural terms. The Catalogue of Measures is a part of the National Plan of Action and should reinforce the political strength of the document by making binding and verifiable statements on implementation. In the Catalogue, for

each measure, alongside the responsibilities, the respective starting situation and the aims, concrete evaluation criteria are also stated, by which the future success or failure of the measure can be assessed. The Catalogue of Measures is thus to be seen as the planning for the implementation of the strategic goals listed in the National Plan of Action, and gives information as to how the overarching visions and the various goals of the National Plan of Action are to be pursued in detail.

### Continuing the Plan of Action

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of the UN Decade in Germany have already put in a great deal of work by creating the National Plan of Action. However, the National Plan of Action should not be seen as the result or end of a process, but rather as a contribution to the beginning and to the continuing supervision of the UN Decade. Neither the text of the National Plan of Action nor the Catalogue of Measures are finished documents. As part of Germany's sustainability strategy, the National Plan of Action is repeatedly updated and reworked. The Catalogue of Measures in

its current state still surely does not present the full spectrum of structural educational activities underway in this country. It requires expansion and shall be updated regularly.

The National Committee shall additionally incorporate new knowledge and experiences into the continued writing of the National Plan of Action, and shall assess the implementation of the measures announced.

From the current viewpoint, certain points have proved decisive in the drafting process thus far:

- **Transparency:** So that each and every interested party can play a part in the creation process, it must be clear to all the point the process has reached, how the process is set to unfold and where the journey is to lead. If there are good reasons why any given suggestion made by a stakeholder cannot be adopted or adopted in its entirety, this decision must be made comprehensible.

- **Diversity of stakeholders:** The political strength of the Plan of Action will depend upon whether the stakeholders, organisations and institutions involved see their concerns reflected in the Plan. In the course of the joint efforts, positions may converge. At the beginning, however, the important thing is to ensure that the different opinions are "onboard".

- **Brevity:** The shorter and clearer the Plan of Action is, the more often it will be read.

- **Speed:** The National Plan of Action was created in the minimum time possible. Certainly, the procedures in the participating organisations and institutions must be respected. Long drafting periods, however, are often just long waiting times. The consultation process must be kept alive and present – as must the implementation of the UN Decade as a whole.

*Elmar Schüll is programme officer for the UN Decade at the Berlin office of the Chair of the National Committee. He coordinated the drafting of the National Plan of Action.*

## Systematic Integration of Education for Sustainable Development into Teaching and School Life

Decade Project by the Alexander-von-Humboldt Grammar School in Hamburg

The Alexander-von-Humboldt Grammar School is a school with a clear "sustainability profile". The school has been audited and is itself intensively involved in the development of instruments for auditing schools. The entire teaching and administrative staff, 700 pupils and some thousands of local residents, external cooperation partners and parents are drawn into the schools wide-ranging sustainability strategy. Education for Sustainable Development in the regular curriculum is being worked towards.



Foto: hot/HAN

Heidi Consentius

## The Recognition of Official German Decade Projects



*One of the most important strategies for the implementation of the UN Decade in Germany is the support for individual stakeholders on the ground. The recognition of official Decade Projects places this strategy in centre stage. The Projects are model examples of innovative and effective implementation of Education for Sustainable Development.*

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) equally affects learning in nurseries, schools and colleges, in vocational and in-service training, at extracurricular educational and cultural facilities as well as in research institutes, businesses and public administration. ESD also takes place outside educational establishments, such as in the family, among friends, through the mass media and in consumer advice. ESD affects local authorities, associations, clubs, workplaces and families; it enriches every individual and opens up valuable opportunities for the future.

With the start of the UN Decade, the call went out to stakeholders and organisations in Germany to apply for recognition as an "Official Project of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014". This call received a great response. In March 2007 the 400th project was recognised.

There are three reasons why the National Committee decided to start an initiative for the recognition of Decade Projects: we want to make the activities of ESD visible; to encourage others to take up exemplary ideas; and not least to express our recognition for the people involved.

### The Spectrum of Stakeholders

There are many deeply involved individuals and institutions which want to set themselves the challenge of spreading the idea of Education for Sustainable Development or have been doing so for some time already. Many of these activities, however, are only visible within local limits or are only known to a small circle

of people. Through our recognition, we want to make these activities and the engagement of the people involved in them visible. In the process, it is becoming clear how broad the spectrum of stakeholders is, and where in the Republic sustainability is being learnt, experienced through play, tested and practiced with spirit and persistence.

### Diversity of Activities

The diversity of activities is extraordinarily wide and fascinating. Applicants have included:

- a village that sees itself as an engine of sustainable development in rural areas;
- a range of cultural and media projects for children at nursery schools;
- schools with a marked sustainability profile;
- projects on initial and in-service vocational training for sustainable construction;
- initiatives for saving resources;
- initiatives for sustainable development in chemical industry careers;
- universities (Sustainable Universities);
- environment centres and outdoor education centres, with ESD as all-encompassing principle;
- small initiatives such as school pupils' solidarity and social projects, which hold dialogue with countries from the South;

- projects for senior citizens, where older people are trained as knowledge conduits for ESD;
- sustainable school companies;
- art projects in the context of sustainability;
- training programmes for young managers who are active in global or multicultural areas;
- projects on mobility and consumer behaviour;
- monasteries and churches in the European network of Sustainable Churches

and many, many more.

As only projects which are innovative and/or have a model character are recog-

nised, making them visible means that others who are getting involved for the first time or who wish to expand their field of activities can better inform themselves. By presenting the award-winning projects to the general public at major awards ceremonies and on our website ([www.dekade.org](http://www.dekade.org)), all interested parties are given the chance to get the knowledge they need and take up direct contact with the project organisers.

### What Does Recognition as a Decade Project Mean?

It is an important task of the National Committee to accord projects recognition for their exceptional engagement by naming them Official German Projects for the UN Decade. For this engagement on behalf of ESD is hardly to be taken for

granted. If a school reorients its profile towards sustainability, or a group of senior citizens completes a full course programme and goes on to become active as instructors in sustainability issues, then this represents an investment of engagement that goes beyond the call of duty. To teach sustainability, to offer courses, to shape institutions from the perspective of sustainability means going beyond the norm in committing yourself to the cause at work and in your free time. If this is also done with a great deal of creativity, high investment of energy and often scant reward, then it is the least that we can do to create a culture of recognition. This is what we are standing up for with these awards.

It also comes as no surprise that recognition as an official Decade Project holds a

Foto: © UNESCO / brendan O





Foto: DUK

great deal of motivational potential for the award-winners. People are proud of this recognition, which is accompanied by the award of a certificate and a pennant. In addition, the projects receive the right to use our Decade Logo with the message that they are an Official Decade Project and a member of the "Learning Sustainability Alliance". There is also a very positive side-effect for the projects: thanks to the recognition, it not only becomes easier to attract new partners and visitors from the local area, as the award is often reported in the regional press. The recognition by the National Committee and the entitlement to use the Decade Logo is also a door-opener. It makes it easier to make yourself heard and often to attract additional funding – which is always desperately needed.

## How Do You Become a Decade Project?

We have developed a catalogue of criteria to this end and printed application forms, which are also available online ([www.dekade.org](http://www.dekade.org)). Any institution, organisation, business or project operator can apply if they have taken initiatives for ESD. These could be kindergartens, schools, universities, service companies and other businesses, authorities, associations, non-governmental organisations, local action groups or doable projects to take up and imitate.

On its initial application, a Decade Project should fulfil the following selection criteria, among others:

It should

- have an innovative character;
- be widely transferable;
- fulfil high quality standards;
- involve at least two dimensions of sustainability – environmental, economic and social;
- make efforts to network with other projects;
- and have clearly left the planning stage.

The selection takes place through a specialist jury made up of twelve members of the National Committee. As part of the celebratory award ceremony held two or three times annually, the projects and initiatives are awarded their certificate, pennant and stamp with our Decade Logo.

Recognition as an official Decade Project is valid for two years. Reapplications are encouraged. In a reapplication, it must be possible to identify a developmental progress through the completion of an evaluation questionnaire.

We hope over the ten-year course of the Decade to recognise 1000 projects that fulfil our criteria. The odds are looking good.

*Heidi Consentius is a staff member at the Berlin office for the UN Decade and is in charge of the Decade Projects.*

Alexander Leicht

## From São Paulo to the Solomon Islands

### Education for Sustainable Development around the world

*There is hardly a political objective in which international cooperation is as decisive as it is in the case of sustainable development. As part of the UN Decade and with the support of UNESCO, projects around the world for Education for Sustainable Development are to be promoted and linked together. The aim is to create a global alliance for learning sustainability.*

#### Three Examples from Across the World

The Brazilian megacity of São Paulo is surrounded by an immense protected greenbelt. School pupils from poor families who live in the area are being trained as tour guides for sustainable tourism in this protected area. They acquire knowledge about the biodiversity of the place, about recycling, about sustainable agriculture and forestry and receive a qualification in a rapidly growing professional area. Estimates suggest that sustainable tourism in the region will more than double over the next five years.

In the "Sandwatch" project, which was created as part of a school workshop on the Caribbean island of Tobago and is being implemented around the world in small island nations, pupils are investigating the beaches that surround them. They learn to assess environmental risks and study the possibilities for a sustainable use of the resources of the sea. The pupils also see the beaches from the perspective of property rights, and work on conflict resolution models for conflicts between different users.

In Tuvaruhu on the Solomon Islands, 20 young people have come together in a theatre group and trained themselves through independent study. They create theatre performances with other young people from surrounding areas; dealing with important issues for socially sustainable development such as HIV/AIDS pre-

vention and drug abuse. These issues are identified in joint conversations.

#### An International Undertaking

There is hardly a political objective in which international cooperation is as decisive as it is in the case of sustainable development. No one country alone can cool down global warming. No country can be indifferent to the fact that the sea level threatens to rise dramatically within the next ten years. No country can ignore ever stronger economic interdependence and developments of this kind of scale: should the Chinese economy continue to grow at current rates, it will have overtaken the US economy as soon as 2014.

If environmentally, economically and socially balanced development is a global ambition, the same is true for Education for Sustainable Development. The three randomly-chosen examples from Brazil, Tobago and the Solomon Islands give an insight into the diversity with which Education for Sustainable Development is being implemented around the world.

The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development lobbies for political support for initiatives like these. UNESCO also hopes to initiate innovative educational projects around the world and promote an exchange of experiences between the various approaches and projects involved in learning sustainability. The aim is a worldwide alliance of governments, businesses, non-governmental organisations and educational establishments which have recognised that the natural conditions for life can





Foto © UNESCO

only be secured, and global justice can only be realised, if we set the right emphases in education.

### **Catalysts for a Global Alliance – the Contribution of International Organisations**

Some of the most important tasks for intergovernmental organisations is to provide a forum for discussion, to act as catalysts for international cooperation and to draft an outline of the principles for living together in a globalised world. What can UNESCO – which within the United Nations is entrusted with coordinating the UN Decade – contribute to a global alliance for Education for Sustainable Development?

According to its mandate, UNESCO is active at a number of levels in the imple-

mentation of the UN Decade: firstly, it has the political task of giving the goal of Education for Sustainable Development greater political weight. To this end, it produced an International Implementation Plan during the first year of the Decade, which states the key strategic guidelines and should serve as an aid in showing how the Decade can be realised through the joint actions of politics and civil society.

Additionally, UNESCO is also providing stimuli in content terms through international events on the Decade, including – to name but two recent examples – an expert workshop on the question of the most important research focuses in Education for Sustainable Development, held in Paris in February 2006, and a panel debate on the fringe of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York

in May 2006, at which Germany was invited to present its implementation of the Decade as an example of good practice.

Ideally, UNESCO plays the role of a global laboratory of ideas through such activities, bringing forward the debate on political and scientific issues of Education for Sustainable Development through its ability to mobilise experts from around the world. UNESCO also develops concrete proposals to serve as examples of good practices as an orientation to Member States. The Brazilian project mentioned above, for example, was created in a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, and the “Sandwatch” project in the framework of the UNESCO Schools Network. UNESCO also has an excellent network of National Commissions established in the 191 Member States, and which in most cases allow a direct channel to politics and civil society.



In the UN's European Region – which also includes the USA and Canada – the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in Geneva has taken on a coordinating role for the UN Decade, in consultation with UNESCO. UNECE, the European regional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council, has also been involved in Education for Sustainable Development since 2003. In 2005 it approved a European strategy paper and founded a steering committee which meets annually.

The UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok, to provide another example, is active in the Asia-Pacific Region for the implementation of the Decade. Among other activities, it has compiled a comprehensive inventory that provides an overview of the state of Education for Sustainable Development in each of the states in the region.

### Challenges

The greatest challenge in shaping the UN Decade as a worldwide cooperation project is surely coming to a consensus on common goals and concepts of Education for Sustainable Development. This becomes visible when Decade activities from different countries are linked up. Dif-

ferences in emphasis become clear during the drafting of indicators of Education for Sustainable Development, which is being organised by UNECE for the European Region and by the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok for the Asia-Pacific Region. While some representatives would like to see quantitatively measurable changes to individuals' behaviour as the criteria for success, other countries – including Germany – see the aim of Education for Sustainable Development in providing people with the skills required to play an active and responsible role in shaping society, which can also include a critical discourse on concepts of sustainability.

Beyond this, the question of political priorities is raised. While countries like Sweden, the Netherlands, Australia and France are implementing the Decade in an exceptionally active manner and have in many cases set up their own national committees, a number of other countries have, thus far, only acknowledged the Decade in theory. In addition, a number of stakeholders feel that within UNESCO the Decade should be accorded more visibility. However, the entirely plausible comment made by an education official from a country from the South – "How

## Global and Intercultural Learning

Decade Project by the Sixth-Form Centre for Office Management and Services, Berlin



Foto: Stefan Marien

This project is to give students a practical and theoretical awareness of conditions in other countries. They should act in culturally heterogeneous groups at the school and elsewhere, and recognise the economic, environmental and social effects of globalisation. Furthermore, they can make use of opportunities for student exchange. Tackling the issue of sustainability is seen as a task that must be embedded in a school programme and an overall curriculum.

are we supposed to educate for sustainability when not everybody even goes to school in our country?" – makes clear how difficult it can be to defend giving greater political weight to Education for Sustainable Development. Sometimes, Education for Sustainable Development can be seen as a synonym for promoting sustainability by intensifying educational effort in general. Nevertheless, we need to make sure that the core of the concept of ESD does not get lost.

A further challenge is of a structural nature: international exchange within UNESCO and other intergovernmental bodies takes place at government level. However, as can be seen from the German implementation of the Decade, Education for Sustainable Development lives through the many activities carried out by civil society. On the international level, these are not always sufficiently integrated. One possible solution here, besides the necessary systematisation and in addition to the "official" contacts and conferences, would be to promote exchange between individual projects in the various countries more strongly.

## A Learning Process

The differing emphases around the world in Education for Sustainable Development are, however, also an opportunity. For in spite of the acknowledgement that development is in part culturally specific, a basic consensus already exists as to the overarching idea of worldwide and intergenerational justice. On this basis, the UN Decade should also be seen as an opportunity to exchange ideas on the differing priorities and practices in Education for Sustainable Development as part of a joint learning process. Learning processes are open processes. But all are condemned to success: for in the face of the great challenges which confront the countries of the world, there is no choice other than to learn the patterns of thinking and behaviour with which we can contribute to a future worth living in. This is equally true in Europe and Brazil, in the Caribbean and in the Solomon Islands.

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The most important international documents on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development are available on the website [www.dekade.org](http://www.dekade.org).

Further information at:  
[www.unesco.org/education/desd](http://www.unesco.org/education/desd)

Foto © UNESCO / Jean O'Sullivan



# Bonn International Workshop on the Decade

*Experts from more than 35 countries gathered in Bonn on the 28th and 29th November 2006 to discuss progress to date in implementing the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), at the conference rooms of the German Savings Bank Association. The 50 participants – drawn from the fields of science and research, government ministries, national commissions, non-government organisations and international bodies – met at the invitation of the Ministry for Generations, Family, Women and Integration of the German state of North Rhine Westphalia and the German Commission for UNESCO, with support from UNESCO in Paris.*

The aims of the conference were to discuss a common concept of education for sustainable development, to examine examples of best practice and to identify regional specificities and differences in the implementation of the Decade. Particular emphasis was placed on building dialogue between the countries of the South and the “industrialised world”, and the geographical origins of the participants reflected this. Representatives from over 35 countries took part, including representatives from Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, India, Japan, Senegal, Portugal, Sweden and Australia. Among the participants were Akpezi Ogbuigwe, Head of Environmental Education and Training at UNEP, Aline Bory-Adams, Chief of Section for ESD at UNESCO, and Carl Lindberg, a member of the High Level Panel which advises the General Director of UNESCO on the UN Decade.

The Minister for Generations, Families, Women and Integration of North Rhine Westphalia, Armin Laschet, used his greeting as an opportunity to honour the UN Decade as a contribution also to the struggle against hunger and poverty. In his introduction, Roland Bernecker, Secretary General of the German Commission for UNESCO, stated that, to date, only the most rudimentary of debates has taken place on the differing conceptions of sustainability in North and South. The Bonn conference, he added, provided a platform for discussion on what is to be understood by ESD. Werner Netzels, Executive Director of the German Savings Bank Association, stressed the significance of the debate on sustainability for the private sector.

Session I focused on “ESD – A common vision, a common platform?”, providing a

forum for a general debate on participants’ approaches to ESD, and was chaired by Aline Bory-Adams, Chief of Section for ESD at UNESCO in Paris. Challenges and goals for future work on the issues of ESD were discussed and defined. Session II, “ESD – What is it that we need to learn?”, discussed the skills and competencies to be learnt in ESD. The session was chaired by Maik Adomßent from the Institute for Environmental Communication at the University of Lüneburg. The connection between ESD and the general learning goals for a humane and forward-looking society was the starting point for a discussion that extended to wider thematic issues. Session III addressed the questions: “What are the key themes and focuses? Which regional specifications do we work with?”, chaired by Akpezi Ogbuigwe of

**“A huge worldwide effort is required to make ESD prevail.”**  
Armin Laschet, Minister for the Generations, Families, Women and Integration in North Rhine Westphalia



from left: Roland Bernecker, Aline Bory-Adams, Carl Lindberg, Akpezi Ogbuigwe, Gerd Michelsen



from left: Rietje van Dam-Mieras, Derek Elias, Moacir Gadotti, Aline Bory-Adams

Foto © Axxi / Maike Schmidt

“We need a new generation of innovative thinkers.” Linda Condon, National Centre for Sustainability, Melbourne/Australia

the UN Environmental Programme, from Kenya. Commonalities and differences between strategies for the implementation of ESD in different regions were identified. Debate also touched upon the questions of how implementation has proceeded thus far, and which conclusions from the workshops could be applied in the different regions.

### Commonalities and differences

The following *commonalities* regarding the concept of and approach to ESD were identified:

- ESD is an integrative, interdisciplinary, and holistic concept of education that covers far more than environmental education. It is founded upon the broad concept of sustainable development as developed by the UN and UNESCO.
- ESD also transmits a positive vision about how to build a humane future. It should not focus exclusively – perhaps not even mainly – on correcting the wrongs of, e.g., industrialization, although these wrongs do provide a strong motivation for engaging in ESD.

- ESD is not only about a change of behaviour in individuals. It is also about teaching and learning to influence the political level in order to foster sustainable development.
- Education for sustainable development makes an issue of our knowledge of existing problems and their possible solutions, changing the way we do things. But ESD is also empowerment for and implementation of sustainable living, reflecting on human competencies and choices in a complex manner.
- Most countries identified universities as the main promoters of ESD. Nonetheless, participants in the workshops identified a need for school education and informal learning to make up lost ground in the implementation of ESD. To date, the education system appears not to have done enough to rise to the challenges of ESD.
- The participants in the conference were unanimous in the belief that ESD can only be successful when the whole of society is involved. Genuine opportunities for participation must be created. A reorientation of school curricula in line with the aims of ESD was suggested as a possibility.

A number of regional *differences and focuses* were also identified:

- ESD has to work within drastically different education systems.
- The role of non-formal and informal education is particularly important in countries where universal access to education across the life span is not possible.
- Many participants from the countries of the South criticised the dominance of the European knowledge system in the worldwide discussion on ESD.
- In countries where implementation of the goals of ESD is not to be expected from government, cooperation between civil society and the private sector was considered desirable as a “second best option”.
- The values on which ESD is built vary widely, although it was also agreed that the concept of sustainable development provides a broad common basis. Many concepts are controversial or not clearly defined, and lead to conflict. A value-based approach



Akpezi Ogbuigwe and Aline Bory-Adams at the Bonn Workshop

Foto © Axxi / Maike Schmidt

would require consensus as to the values to be passed on.

- The role of tradition and traditions within ESD varies widely from case to case.

The debates at the workshop were pursued with extraordinary enthusiasm to learn from each other and in a spirit of partnership. It became evident that different approaches must be taken in different parts of the world, as actions are taking place in very different contexts. The diversity of the answers made it clear that it is impossible to reduce ESD to a simple definition. There was broad consensus that learners must be supported in the development of specific competences to enable them to respond to the challenges of the future in a democratic

and environmentally appropriate manner. While the participants often set different emphases in their analysis of the political strategies, there was agreement across all continents that ESD is indispensable for the conservation of our environment and for the protection of the planet – and that the Decade must therefore be seen as a one-off opportunity that must be taken.

Many participants described the workshop as a unique opportunity to debate worldwide ESD in a forum in which most regions of the world were represented. All participants agreed that ways should be sought to continue the exchange of views that the workshop was designed to enable.

*Charlotte Schmitz, Lina Franken*

“We should stress the idea that we don’t have a spare universe.” Moacir Gadotti, Paulo Freire Institute, São Paulo/Brazil

“We need education as sustainable development rather than education for sustainable development.” Kartikeya Sarabhai, Centre for Environment Education, Ahmedabad/India

Participants of the International Workshop  
Foto © Axxi / Maike Schmidt



Thomas Loster

## Facing Up To Fate

Global natural hazards and Education for Sustainable Development



*With a concept of sustainability that combines environment, society and economy, the extent and consequences of natural catastrophes can be minimised for those affected.*

Ours is a world full of dangers. Whether through technical failure – in a plane crash, for example – or through the onset of natural disasters – such as hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions – there is probably no place on Earth where people should consider themselves truly safe. With the population explosion, gathered ever more closely in megacities, and the increasing use of precarious living space, enormous potential for disaster has been built up around the globe. The latest series of natural catastrophes is a clear sign of this. The international statistics speak all too clearly: every year they break new records for damage caused – and, worst of all, for the huge numbers of victims.

### “The statistics speak all too clearly”

The year 2005 was the year with the costliest natural catastrophes of all time. The economic damage added up to around 220 billion US dollars, the insurance bill to around 95 billion. This broke the previous record from 2004 (145 billion / 45 billion USD) by a long way. The earthquake in Kashmir (Pakistan/India) on the 8th October 2005 claimed more than 80,000 human lives, and 2004 will go down in the history books as a tragic example: the tsunami in the Indian Ocean killed more than 200,000 people.

### The Social Component of Sustainability

The concentrated appearance of catastrophes over recent years is no coincidence. For there is a close relationship between the ongoing destruction of the environment and increased susceptibility to natural phenomena such as flooding, hurricanes and droughts. Experts are no longer counting on being able to stop climate

change. But it lies in the hands of the human race to at least slow down its progress.

Although awareness is spreading that the Earth is a whole, and that our existence is dependent upon it, many countries in their thirst for prosperity and development show little care for the needs of others. Thus, the lion's share of consumption of raw materials takes place in a small number of industrialised countries, where oil consumption in particular has reached a level that endangers the continued existence of this resource for future generations.

This context has brought a great deal of attention to the term “sustainability” over the last few years. It has simultaneously positioned debate on the environment on a new footing and ensured that increased value is placed on the issues of economics, the environment and socially responsible actions in politics, science, business and society. The term has often been used with reference to “management” or in societal contexts, but in connection with natural hazards, sustainability has received comparatively little attention.

### “Experts no longer count on being able to stop climate change.”

Sustainability – as formulated by the UN Commission chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland many years ago – calls explicitly for increased work on disaster prevention. Indeed, in this definition, sustainable development means nothing other than to satisfy today's needs without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The realisation of intergenerational justice leads directly to natural hazards: all human beings have an equal fundamental right

## Major Natural Disasters, 1980-2005

Date	Event	Region	Victims	Damage	
				Economic (Mio. US\$ at 2005 values)	Insurance
25th-30th August 2005	Hurricane Katrina	USA	1,350	125,000	60,000
17th January 1995	Earthquake	Japan, Kobe	6,430	100,000	3,000
17th January 1994	Earthquake	USE, Northridge	61	44,000	15,300
23rd-27th August 1992	Hurricane Andrew	USA, Florida	62	30,000	17,000
May to September 1998	Floods	China	3,650	30,000	1,000
19th-24th October 2005	Hurricane Wilma	Mexico, USA	42	19,000	11,500
26th December 2004	Tsunami	South Asia	> 200,000	10,000	1,000
29th -30th April 1991	Cyclone, storm floods	Bangladesh	139,000	3,000	100
8th October 2005	Earthquake	Pakistan, India	88,000	5,200	
July-August 2003	Heatwave, forest fires	Europe	35,000	13,000	

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to an intact environment and to a satisfactory standard of living. The needs of future generations must be taken into account when taking decisions today.

As worldwide climate change and the over-consumption of natural resources favour the appearance of storms, floods and droughts, the importance of environ-

mental and climate protection, and therefore of sustainable management, cannot be overestimated. Equally, the creation of effective early-warning systems and preventative measures are also demands of sustainability. The so-called Millennium Goal of combating poverty negotiated by the UN can only be achieved if people do not repeatedly see their homes, schools, streets and hospitals destroyed by natural catastrophes.



Flooding in the old town of Dresden in August 2002. Thanks to insurance, local businesses were quickly able to repair the damage and continue trading. Long-term damage is limited.

Foto: T. Loster

In order to prepare people in risk areas adequately for natural hazards, the United Nations declared the 1990s to be the "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" (IDNDR). As a consequence, global efforts for catastrophe prevention increased significantly and at the end of the Decade clear successes were visible. It was possible to develop effective protective concepts in many countries. The best example can be seen in the storm flood protections in Bangladesh, where the number of people killed by flooding has fallen considerably. Nowadays, threatened people near the coast can get to safety – a warning system sounds the alarm in good time.

In the aftermath of the UN Decade, numerous national and international initia-



The earthquake in the Kashmir region on the 8th October 2005 flattened large parts of the region. 88,000 people lost their lives. People will need years, if not decades, for reconstruction. For the poorest of the poor, it will be difficult to escape the cycle of poverty.

Foto: A. Allmann

tives were founded, such as the German Committee for Catastrophe Prevention in Bonn or the International Strategy for Disaster Prevention in Geneva, which continue to work to optimise catastrophe prevention to this day.

### **Catastrophe Prevention Tailored to People**

The social and cultural components of sustainability increasingly take centre stage against the background of the latest major catastrophes. Hurricane Katrina, which swept across New Orleans in August 2005, went to show that even in the USA, one of the world's richest countries with excellent early-warning systems, the dangers cannot be underestimated. Hundreds of people lost their lives because the evacuation measures were not suitably designed for the affected populations. A protective concept that pays heed to the risk perceptions of different cultural groups and the individual needs of human beings is thus desirable.

### **Catastrophe Response and Systems of Solidarity**

As natural catastrophes are not avoidable, we must at the very least prepare for them well. The social component of sustainability further requires that the people affected should be given the opportunity to minimise the consequences of major damage. That means rapid help and support in rebuilding, so that people can get back on their own two feet as quickly as possible and take responsibility for their own lives. Left to their own devices, people in developing countries after a natural catastrophe have hardly any chance to break out of the "cycle of poverty" that is passed on from generation to generation. In most cases the already wide-meshed social safety net is pulled away by natural catastrophes, so that existing social support systems fail. Insurance solutions are generally inexistent in the poorest countries, and the development of microcredit or microinsurance systems is proceeding slowly. These are precisely the instruments capable of significantly improving

the living conditions of this and future generations.

### **Sustain Knowledge**

Once people in an endangered region are prepared for possible catastrophes, sustainability takes on a new dimension. For knowledge about prevention must be sustained in the fullest sense of the word, as warning systems, protective facilities, logistics and infrastructure require intensive maintenance.

Education has an absolutely central role in this regard. Education for Sustainability bears particularly ripe fruit when it begins in childhood. This is as true for understanding of nature and ecology as it is for basic ethical and moral attitudes – evidently also with regard to awareness of natural hazards. As weather events are for the most part spectacular, passing on related information tends to be easy.



## “Seismic flood waves were a topic at school”

The tsunami catastrophe in South Asia brought right before our eyes how important early education can be. A little girl from Britain saved many people at her holiday resort from drowning because her school teacher had taught her about the signs of seismic flood waves; earth tremors – drop in the sea level – flood wave. At the first warning signs on the morning of the 26th December, the girl told people on the beach to find higher ground.

In Japan, an annual Disaster Prevention Day is held, on which people are informed about preventative measures for earthquakes. In school drills, even small children are prepared for earth-

quakes, which the country must reckon with due to its geological situation. This initiative ensures that the people affected know what to do should disaster strike. In addition, awareness of natural hazards and possible damage is maintained at a high level.

Education for Sustainable Development must be a fixed component of school education. The issue is taking on a key role in an ever more volatile and complex world. The more effort we put into implementing sustainable solutions today, the greater will be our success in overcoming natural hazards.

*Thomas Loster is chairman of the Munich Re Foundation and is a member of the German National Committee for the UN Decade.*



Building with an awareness of the risks: the newly-built houses in the tsunami area around Khao Lak, Thailand, are built on stilts. This allows the inhabitants to get to safety when the flood warning sounds. The measure is sustainable, provided the building regulations are complied with. Foto: T. Loster

Badaoui Rouhban

## Preparing for Catastrophes

UNESCO's Education and Information Initiatives



*In recent years, scientific progress and new technologies have made it possible to further develop strategies for overcoming catastrophes such as earthquakes, floods, landslides and storms through an integrated approach. Experiences from many catastrophes show the central role played by appropriate education and information work in minimising damage.*

Training programmes in which children and adults learn to act correctly in a catastrophe, and gather information and training for political decision-makers, are the decisive preconditions for any disaster prevention. In this process, contributions for the improvement of catastrophe information

strategies and teaching often come from affected areas, from village communities whose survival was assured by knowledge passed down through generations. On the island of Surin in Thailand, all 196 members of the Monkens (also known as the "sea people") survived the tsunami that

## Shaping Vocational Education for Sustainable Development

Decade Project by the Saxony Educational Society for Environmental Protection (SBG) and the company Chemieberufe Dresden mbH

This project contributes to enabling specialist staff, trained by the SBG, to fulfil their professional tasks with respect for environmental and safety regulations and for environmental criteria. They should comply with economic performance indicators and assume social responsibility. The teaching method for achieving these aims is a module entitled "Learning and Working in a Certified Company" to be taught in an integrative manner.



Foto: SBG

destroyed their settlements in December 2004, because they correctly interpreted the danger in the sudden fall in the sea level and moved back to higher ground.

UNESCO, the Secretariat of the United Nations' International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR), Action Aid International and other organisations have come together to create a worldwide alliance for education work in the field of disaster reduction. This alliance is currently developing a Plan of Action to improve education work on disaster reduction at the global level. The Plan of Action covers scientific, technical and economic issues, and also takes cultural differences into account in the context of different regions of the world. In concrete terms, the central goal is to bring educational modules into the curricula of primary, secondary and higher education. In this manner, awareness of disaster reduction should be raised among school pupils and among the general public as a whole.

In recent years, UNESCO has launched a number of initiatives along similar lines. A model example of these initiatives is a project in which schools in Tijuana (Mexico), Antofagasta (Chile) and Kathmandu (Nepal) are holding a joint training programme in close consultation with the local authorities to assess the risk of possible natural catastrophes and minimise their impact.

A further model project for UNESCO is the "Disaster Information Kit for Media in the Caribbean". This publication has already run into its sixth edition, alongside other materials which have been specifically developed for the region. The information kit provides background information for journalists reporting catastrophes and potential natural hazards in the region. The publication is available online at [www.cdera.org/media](http://www.cdera.org/media).

*Badaoui Rouhban is Chief of the Section for Disaster Reduction at UNESCO in Paris.*

## Systematic Integration of Education for Sustainable Development into Teaching and School Life

Decade Project by the Hamburg Environment Centre

The Hamburg Environment Centre is integrating the concept of Education for Sustainable Development into teaching and school life. The aim is to integrate aspects of sustainable development into as many existing courses as possible. New educational provision in Education for Sustainable Development is being developed, and a catalogue of criteria is being drafted as an orientation framework.



Foto: Hamburger Umweltzentrum/BUND

Max Fuchs

# Education for Sustainable Development – Cultural Education – Cultural Diversity

Will what belongs together finally grow together?



*“Education” can well be defined as that individual disposition that enables people to shape their life in accordance with self-set goals. Education is thus always sustainable, to the extent that it either encourages the current and future shaping of lives, or it is not education at all.*

This brief analysis of the term shows that the question to be dealt with seems very simple at first sight. For, naturally, Cicero’s classical definition of culture as “care and nurturing” still rings true today.

It is also no coincidence that the *cultura animi*, the cultivation of the mind, is described in an analogy with agriculture (*cultura agri*). And where else can you better learn to nurture and learn about sustainability than in agriculture? Thereby the objective connection between learning, education, culture, nature and sustainability was made right from the first appearance of the concept of culture.

Interestingly, the first appearance of the concept of sustainability (allegedly) also fits into this context: namely, 300 hundred years ago, when the mines inspector Carl von Carlowitz considered how he was to secure the necessary timber supplies for his silver mines. The international debate on the new concepts, which are constantly surfacing can be understood as individual aspects of a long-known whole successively taking centre stage: nurture, development, the relationship with nature, diversity.

## The Idea of Development

A second look, however, shows that this is not possible without contradictions. For Cicero, it was primarily a question of assuring future food supplies, but clearly – in line with Roman pragmatism – also of obtaining good harvests. For Carlowitz, economic motives are clearly in the foreground. It is of course possible to inter-

pret all important concepts in very different ways: in the context of human development, in the framework of social justice, but also from an economic perspective.

## “If you talk to an economist about development, development soon turns into growth”

The concept of development is a good example of this. If you talk to an economist about development, in most cases development soon turns out to be synonymous with growth. And this is rapidly transformed into cash flow. This is also what happened on the 20th January 1949, when the American President Truman described the greater part of the world as “underdeveloped” in his inaugural address. The “developing countries” thus, were defined to be brought onto the right path to development – and this path was of course oriented politically, socially and economically to the model of the USA.

Development is growth, according to many points in Article 1 of the OECD, and growth of course always means: economic growth. “Development” (as growth) became the goal, and it was rather difficult to go against the flow of the mainstream and try to show the limits to such development. It is precisely the “developing countries” which today often see environmental concerns as a luxury for the rich countries of the North.



Foto © UNESCO / Niamh Burke

World Decades are part of the political public relations armoury of the United Nations in this struggle for the right to interpret key concepts, to “put forward” other concepts, or to fight for established concepts to be interpreted differently. Between 1988 and 1997, for example, there was a World Decade for Cultural Development. Prior to this lay decades of failed “development policy”, during which people gradually caught on that the modernisation process cannot be so simply prescribed by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the major industrialised nations.

On the other hand, discovered through experience that our certainty about knowing the right path to development was on the wane. A role in this was played by the recognition that economic processes are often bound to social and above all cultural processes. This learning process was not just an expensive one in financial

terms, but it also cost many human lives – and it has not yet been completed. It is certainly valid to see the bitter conflicts being played out in the World Trade Organisation as a continuation of this disagreement as to the correct understanding of development.

### **The Concept of Sustainable Development**

It is altogether possible to be in full agreement with the attempt to reconcile economics and the environment through the concept of sustainable development, and nevertheless find one or two drops of bitterness. First of all, people should be clear that with these kinds of concepts they find themselves in a complex muddle of different discourses: philosopho-anthropological, politico-strategic, practical and economic interests and linguistic conventions all mix together.

Nowadays, it is no longer news that the definition founded in 1992 (“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”) was a compromise that secured the approval of heads of state, but left important questions open: Which needs? Whose needs? (c.f. W. Sachs, in: *Nachhaltige Entwicklung*, Ed. K.-W. Brand, Opladen 1997). It is also a question of the ever more pressing issue of justice, when most current worldwide conflicts find a sensation of injustice and disrespect among their causes.

In the meantime, the already complex debate on sustainability has been further extended by the consideration of “culture”. From now on, it is not just all about nature conservation, combating poverty and peace, but also about the protection of culture, and especially: cultural diversity.

## Distance MBA Course in “Sustainability Management”

Decade Project by the “Centre for Sustainability Management” at the University of Lüneburg

The distance MBA course in “Sustainability Management” is aimed at graduates who wish to make a career change and would like to combine this with sustainability issues. Alongside business administration knowledge and skills, the course shows how sustainable company development can be brought about. The distance study course can be followed either part-time or full-time alongside employment and is internationally recognised in line with the European MBA Guidelines.



Foto: University of Lüneburg

### “The opponent of cultural diversity was the prevailing economic reductionism”

Nature conservation had already got a head start, as there has been a Convention on Biological Diversity for many years now. This served as the model when a convention on cultural diversity came up for consideration. The arguments and motives were quite similar: the opponent was the prevailing economic reductionism that cares as little for culture as it does for nature, and is also insensitive to issues of social justice. The same arguments were employed once again: diversity is a source of innovation and wealth. The connection was also made with human rights.

### Sustainability and Cultural Diversity

At present, the most up-to-date and comprehensive range of concepts in international law is laid down in the new Convention on Cultural Diversity (passed by the UNESCO General Conference in October 2005), for which an extraordinarily complex structure of mutually inter-related concepts (identity, human rights, development, diversity, sustainability, heritage, innovation) was developed, the internal logic of which is not especially clear and which can justifiably give rise to suspicions of going round in circles. Here, it is worth remembering the character of these documents: these are indeed legal texts which are binding under international

law. But in the first place, however, they are political texts, which seek consensus around political objectives.

### “The concept of sustainability has also been attracting more interest from cultural policy”

Against this background, it is possible to consider that as binding texts the confluence of cultural, environmental, political and economic aspects has been a successful one. In particular, sustainability is mentioned explicitly at certain points in the new Convention (most prominently in point n° 3 of the preamble: Cultural Diver-

sity ... is a mainspring for sustainable development for communities, peoples and nations). The concept of sustainable development as a whole has also been attracting more interest from cultural policy in terms of a search for effective measures and structures.

So then we have the aspect of education. Indubitably, with all political and social activities one always ends up with the individual, her activities, values, her attitudes to life. All too often in political processes people have thought that it was enough to make decisions from the top down, assuming that the people lower down would take care of the implementation.

It is perfectly justified to state that one of the causes for the abrupt end of state socialism was neglect for the subjective factor. The subject and education rightfully take centre stage, and we must be especially careful in Germany not to make political or economic problems too heavily "educationalised". It is perfectly sufficient to make the right to human dignity – as the most fundamental aim of all national and international value systems –

the justification for educational efforts, but there are additionally the human rights of education and participation.

### Cultural Education and Environmental Education

Cultural education can, in this sense, be understood as generalist education that is acquired by means of culture-based working methods. This kind of education is an area which is open to development, covering teaching in the traditional arts and media as well as teaching through circus or play activities. This has little to do with the esoteric education in "the Arts" of previous decades. Rather, a more classical definition of education is being taken seriously: specifically, to create a conscious relation to the social, cultural and natural environment. "Environmental education" seen in this way is part of education as a whole, and part of cultural education in particular.

Methods involving the use of cultural work are applied with great success in many parts of education, as a working method that does not only call upon cognitive resources, but also upon the body

and the emotions is an effective way of learning and one that is popular with the learners. If we are to take UNESCO's wide-ranging concept of culture seriously, namely to add to the arts ways of life, then cultural education is a good way to finding and building your own project for living a good life.

Sustainability in societal terms will only be achieved when people, of their own accord, follow a lifestyle which has one eye on the classical definition of sustainability given above. Education is thereby the development of the appropriate competencies and attitudes. Cultural education work has long placed itself at the service of this common aspiration.

*Prof. Dr. Max Fuchs is Director of the Remscheid Academy, Chair of the Federal Association for Young Persons' Cultural Education, Chair of the German Culture Council and Chair of the Institute for Education and Culture. As an educational and cultural scientist, he teaches cultural studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen. He is a member of the German Commission for UNESCO and of its Culture Committee.*

## "RE-ART One"

### Decade Project of the Association for Art, Health and Education

Through the exhibition of craftwork and abstract art in public places, children and young people are made aware of environmental protection and recycling. At the same time, workshops are provided to stimulate creativity, using the material of rubbish. 51 artists from 15 countries are now involved in RE-ART One. The project is also presented abroad. A selection of 128 works were shown in Nairobi.

From left: Samuel J. Fleiner, curator of the exhibition; Prof. Wangari Maathai, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004; Dr. Klaus Töpfer, former Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); and Dr. Anna Tibajuka, Director of UN Habitat.



Heinz-Jürgen Rickert

# The Concept of Sustainability at the UNESCO Associated Schools

Case study: the joint network in Lower Saxony and Bremen



*The UNESCO Associated Schools are working to implement important sustainability measures and promote intrinsic engagement using “lean” concepts among pupils and teaching staff. The joint network between Lower Saxony and Bremen is attempting to place particular emphases in this field.*

The UNESCO Associated Schools have already positioned themselves on the front line. The spectrum of sustainability can only be established in manner which is viable for the future if the issues are tackled comprehensively, are experienced and reflected upon, and if responsibility for global contexts is recognisable in local actions. It should be highly questionable to carry out a “Run For Help” on behalf of an orphanage in Bolivia if the social, political and cultural determinants of the country are not first brought out, if the needs and living conditions of the local population are at best hazy, and if interdependences do not appear plausible.

The “Sustainability” project with its many facets is a good opportunity to accompany young people in the process towards liberation from egocentrism, and not only to reinforce self-esteem through concrete experiences, but also to let them discover and build upon their personal capacities. Taking on responsibility should not be seen as a burden: it should be perceived as a personal benefit. Schools should also not fall into the trap of trying to pass on all contents by means of the increasingly stretched “fun factor”. A certain sense of seriousness is indubitably of eminent importance when dealing with concrete issues and tasks. At the end of their school careers, given such preconditions, pupils should not become smug members of the bourgeoisie, conscientious strollers across a ballroom floor of vanities, but rather citizens, vocal, and critical members of society who take on responsibility for the common good and participate in it with heart and soul.

## Status Quo

The UNESCO Associated Schools have the duty to produce an annual report. Since 2004, every one of the member schools in the network of Lower Saxony/Bremen has been dealing intensively with one aspect of school work with relevance for sustainability each. This is a reflection of the effort that has been made so far, and is also an opportunity to develop constructive and promising ideas which it may be possible to implement in coming years. In 2006, the International Project Day and its consequences for the future school profile are being evaluated in the modules of sport, mobility, health and nutrition.

During the recent Regional Conference, many internal school initiatives were already being presented in the area of “sustainability”, and links with other schools sought. The concept has long since distanced itself from its restriction to the natural sciences, and has in the meantime extended to a much wider spectrum. The building blocks for activities are the keywords: preserve, protect, remember, promote, and regenerate. This includes contributions on memorial work, recycling, contacts with migrants, language learning, dealing with different lifestyles, partnership and sponsorship projects. This last area in particular has successfully led into regional cooperation between various schools and external partners.

## International School Partnerships

In the southern part of Lower Saxony, a



number of schools are pursuing projects in Southern Africa with a great deal of engagement, while in the north east of Lower Saxony a similar network is being established with establishments in Rio de Janeiro; and in the west of Lower Saxony a concept is currently in planning for intense cooperation with local schools and institutions in Ghana. Exchange programmes exist alongside fundraising and environmental projects. The opportunity shall soon be available for interested pupils to gain work experience through local placements in the partner countries.

Increasingly, over the last few years, regional and state-wide network initiatives for sustainability have been implemented. As early as 2003, the UNESCO Associated Schools in Lower Saxony and Bremen decided to stimulate a Euro-Arabian dialogue with seminars and workshops. Since then, among other projects, two internet magazines have been set up, produced by young people from Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Northern Germany. In 2005, a group of teachers travelled to

Beirut to make contacts with the UNESCO Associated Schools. In particular, the cooperation with the Lebanese UNESCO Commission has given the initiative on a sound footing. A pupils' workshop is planned for 2006, and in 2007 a major project for teachers and pupils is to be held in Alexandria, Egypt, with participants from a range of Arab and European countries – once again initiated by the Lower Saxony/Bremen network.

### **“Hand in Hand into the Future”**

At the state level, the UNESCO Associated Schools carried out the art project “Hand in Hand into the Future” in the 2005/6 school year, in which pupils from the mid-secondary level expressed their responsibility for the next and future generations by using artistic means. The artwork was first presented at school, then marked and eventually exhibited in many different places from summer 2006 onwards, before being awarded prizes by a specialist jury. Once this stage is complete, the prize-winning pieces will be placed in stor-

Foto: Herderschule Lüneburg



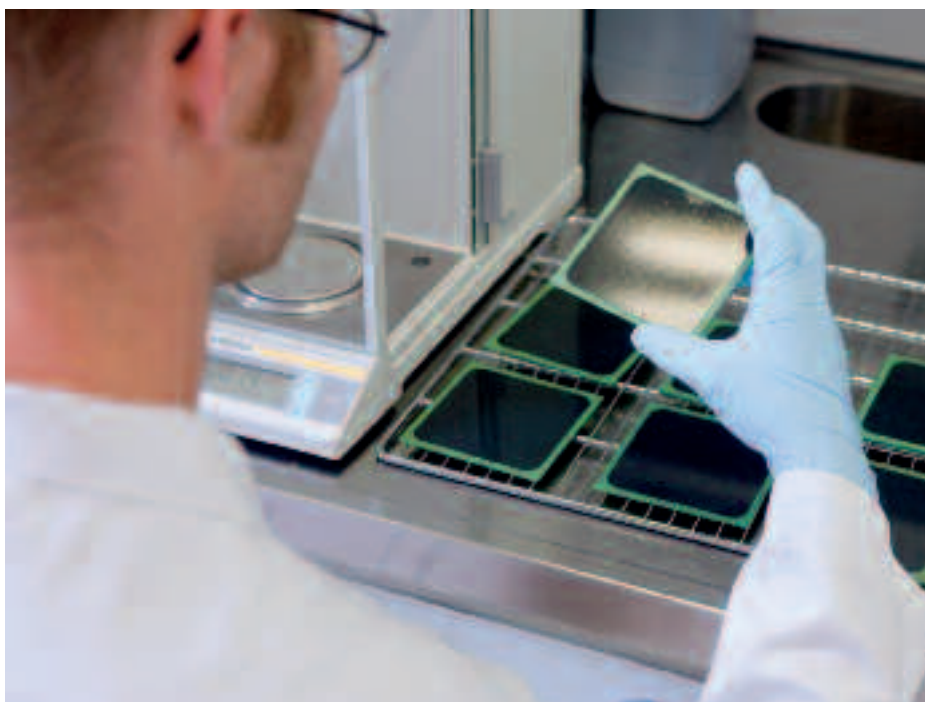


Foto © BMU / Rupert Oberhäuser

age at a museum in Lower Saxony for a number of decades. The teachers and students involved in the initiative have the opportunity to reflect on the work during a workshop at the Europahaus Aurich, and set the course for appropriate follow-up projects. The "leading school" is the Astrid-Lindgren-Schule in Edeweicht, a special-needs school with extensive experience in arts education.

## Dance Project

A further project with a high profile is the ambitious dance initiative "Where are you going? – Steps into the Future", a very free adaptation of Berlin's famous "Rhythm is it" initiative. 100 young dancers from the four UNESCO Associated Schools in the north eastern Lower Saxony region are the performers, and 30 music students provide the orchestra.

The project crosses boundaries between subjects and school types, counts on close cooperation with the region's cultural infrastructure (the School of Theatre and Music in Lüneburg), redefines the role of the teacher (simultaneously learners and mediators) and creates a professional foundation with a team of creative experts. The choreographer Kerstin Kessel and the conductor Kathy Kelsh created the artistic concept. It was implemented in working groups at the participating schools and brought together

shortly before the première on the 1st July 2006 in a project week.

"Where are you going?" interprets youth issues and problems (the search for a partner, conflicts with parents, longings and fears) over eight scenes through dance. The music, an original composition by the American conductor, combines elements of hip-hop and rap together with classical components. The initiative sees itself as an innovation in teaching and is intended to motivate young people to work individually to achieve collective success: a power station generating sustainable self-confidence for the participating pupils and schools.

## Stages in the Process

The UNESCO Associated Schools in the Lower Saxony/Bremen network see the concentration on the focus of sustainability as an ideal opportunity to lay the foundations for future school work. The thematic options coming from the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the linkage of global and local contexts and the need for cooperation with non-school partners are the catalyst for a general transformation in school life and school careers: connections become discernable, responsibility is encouraged, teaching more practice-oriented, processes are pushed forward, perspectives developed.

The state network has decided to create a clearly recognisable sustainability profile, both internally and externally, in the coming years, combining binding standards with optional proposals, recognising the contributions of the pupils and certifying the pupils' achievements at the end of their school career. The basic range of action extends from environmental aspects like "Turn It Off" to healthy options in the cafeteria, recycling, memorial work (often with regard to the Nazi period) and intercultural issues.

The second level is partially made up of temporary initiatives, which are developed and implemented in regional networks or across the state. These include the projects presented above, "Hand in Hand into the Future" and "Where are you going? – Steps into the Future", as well as existing or newly conceived partnership and sponsorship initiatives.

The third level of activity offers each individual school further opportunities in the context of "sustainability", preferably in cooperation with local partners and tailor-made for the local infrastructure.

The fourth element is the ideas and activities put forward by the pupils themselves. They can, for example, make use of their experience in youth groups or associations and bring this creatively into the classroom, for example through the

participation of non-school organisations in appropriate learning topics.

The processes and discoveries of this work, which is currently being structured, are to be regularly documented and evaluated in the annual report of the UNESCO Associate Schools. The results shall be made transparent and when appropriate published as a kind of "best practice". This profile serves accent-setting inside the school on the one hand, and positioning in the local educational landscape on the other – but above all the individual accompaniment and motivation of pupils' learning.

### Cooperation

Close cooperation with local and supra-regional partners is more than just opportunity – it is urgently required to bring together resources and improve the efficiency of the work. The UNESCO Associated Schools in Lower Saxony and Bremen are working intensively with the "BLK Transfer 21" programme, among others, and are active partners of the whole network.

In the north-east of Lower Saxony an alliance of a number of UNESCO Associated Schools is to carry out a sustainability audit (2006-2008). This represents a qualitative raising of the "sustainability profile" that is aspired to and binding for the whole range of UNESCO Associated Schools in Lower Saxony and Bremen: in a number of steps the participating schools shall analyse and evaluate aspects such as concept, competencies, school life, management, resources and existing cooperation – with technical assistance – and draw conclusions for future school work on this basis. The audit accelerates the development of quality at the schools, makes connections, optimises existing structures with a link to sustainability, promotes independent learning and creates a significant increase in pupils' and teachers' identification with the school.

### Taking On Responsibility

"On the one hand, sustainable development means being viable for the future. We have the responsibility to shape or live today in such manner that a life of human dignity is possible on the earth

50 or 500 years from now. But sustainable development also means doing your best to ensure that here and now, in all parts of the world, a life of human dignity is possible, that resources are not only used responsibly, but are also fairly distributed" – a summing up by Walter Hirche, President of the German Commission for UNESCO, which is accompanying the progress of the UNESCO Associated Schools in Lower Saxony and Bremen.

The network sees itself as an avant-garde in education policy, a creative motivator, a reliable cooperation partner and an instrument for accelerating the clear change in public consciousness by which sustainability is no empty term, but an expression of interest in and responsibility for this One World.

*Heinz-Jürgen Rickert is the State Coordinator of the UNESCO Associated Schools in Lower Saxony.*

## Master Course in Sustainable Resource Management

Decade Project by the Faculty of Forestry Research and Resource Management at Munich Technical University

Professional resource management is the subject learnt by students on the Masters course in Sustainable Resource Management at Munich Technical University. In an international atmosphere, students get to know the many demands of professional resource management. The aim is to learn and apply the key concepts of sustainable management.



Foto: TU München

Jasmin Godemann

## Young People and Sustainability – A Relationship with a Future?



*You might think that young people are only interested in mobiles, ringtones and iPods. And this impression seems to be empirically confirmed: according to the BRAVO magazine survey “The Youth Factor” (2005), mobile phones rank alongside fashion and cosmetics as the “High Interest Areas” for young people. Technology and the media are a firmly established part of young people’s daily lives and life cannot be imagined without them. Almost every household where a 12-19 year old is growing up has at least one television, mobile phone, CD player or computer with internet access (JIM 2005). But is it justified to reduce the young people of today to their affinity for technology and mobile communications? What defines the young generation, and what motivates it?*

The image of today’s young people is characterised by relative societal wealth and a self-evident use of material resources of all kinds. Brand-name products are popular with young consumers, and express belonging to a group or a sign of differentiation. In the search for your own personality, the need for an orientation is especially strong, and young people define themselves more through brands than other age groups. However, it can be observed that the creation of new youth cultures, as was seen in previous decades (the punk movement, for example), seems to have been “paralysed” and Dieter Rink (2002) has spoken of a “worrying normalisation” of young people.

### What characterises the young people of today?

Klaus Hurrelmann’s (2005) answer to the question “What characterises the young people of today?” goes in a similar direction: young people do not commit themselves to anything too early, they keep as many options as possible open and take an increasingly egocentric attitude. Over the last few years, the basic value system has shifted. Post-material values such as self-determination, enjoying life and creativity no longer take centre stage, but rather values that their grandparents might have held: hard work, security,

order and orientation are new additions, almost certainly as a reaction to the insecurity which has taken hold in many areas of life (the job market, the economic situation, the world situation).

What youth actually “is” is not easy to define, especially in an age of increasing individualisation. Youth is a flexible expression: it can refer to an age group range and apply to young people between 12 and 25; from a psychological point of view it can describe a stage of maturity; or the space of opportunity for development conceded by society to the up-and-coming generation.

### “Generation X”, “Generation Work Experience”

Against a background where only an undifferentiated classification of young people to cultures or groups is possible, attempts have been made over the years to describe young people with a kind of cultural diagnosis of the times. The result is labels like “Generation X” or “Generation Work Experience”. Whatever the different semantics and opinions about young people, there is consensus on one point: that this is the generation that is shaping the future. The future-oriented concept of sustainability is unthinkable without the youth of today, and the ques-



Foto © bpa / Reineke

tion of how young people feel about this societal vision is more than justified. Hitherto there have been no empirical studies giving a direct answer to this question. Nevertheless, there are plenty of signs as to how young people feel about individual aspects of the concept of sustainability.

### **How do young people feel about the concept of sustainability?**

One widely available access to questions of sustainable development is involvement in environmental issues and problems. How do young people feel about the environment? And can this specific topic be used to transmit the idea of sustainability? A one-size-fits-all answer to these

questions cannot be given, for interest in environmental and future issues is particularly varied among young people. Many young people get involved in "Green-teams" through Greenpeace or other groups to protect the environment together (Godemann 2001). Nevertheless, for most young people the topic of the environment seems to be "out". It is clearly an expression that since its revival in the 1980s has not retained its appeal. But a closer inspection raises the question of whether this aversion is just to the expression itself, or whether it extends to its contents as well.

Comparing the results for the importance given to the environment and the actual involvement of young people reveals a

contradictory picture: the 14th Shell survey from the year 2002 showed that the environment is no longer attributed such great importance, and that young people's interest in getting involved has waned considerably over the previous five years.

In the survey "Perspectives for Germany 2004/05", improving the environment came last place in the ranking of priorities, while in the "Environmental Consciousness in Germany 2004" survey, protecting the environment was in third place. And nevertheless, many thousands of – mostly young – globalisation protesters have demonstrated at the international economic summits of recent years, and the pressure group "attac" has seen the greatest increase in membership ever seen by an NGO in the space of one year. The readiness of many young people to get active was shown at the "Youth Action Summit" held in 2002 in Utrecht

on the occasion of the Rio follow-up conference in Johannesburg, with the slogan "For a Different Consumerism". The participants came from around the world and spent three weeks debating issues of sustainable development.

### **"The issues no longer revolve exclusively around protecting nature and the environment"**

Clearly, a change of perspectives has taken place. The issues no longer revolve exclusively around protecting nature and the environment, but also social and globalisation issues, while consumer issues and nutrition are also taking on greater importance. The term "the environment" and the narrow focus on "green topics" seem to have lost their powers of mobili-

Foto © BMU / Bernd Müller



## Environmental Protection Working Group

### Decade Project by Volkswagen Coaching GmbH

Conditioned by the large scale of the structures at Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, it has proven desirable to establish a separate working group for initial vocational training. This working group, made up of one representative from each occupation group, ensures continuous concern for the issue. The members of the working group are the first point of contact for colleagues and apprentices in environmental concerns, are knowledge conduits for environmental information and are responsible for a wealth of environmental projects.



Foto: Volkswagen Coaching GmbH

sation and motivation. For most young people, they have been exhausted and often too heavily "educationalised". Environmental issues have been present in schools for some time now and seem to have become self-evident. They are a fixed part of daily life, alarmist awareness-raising about environmental catastrophes has long since been institutionalised, and organisations like Greenpeace enjoy a high level of trust: among 18-30 year-olds, Greenpeace continues to be considered more trustworthy than the federal government, and environmental activists are more trusted than politicians (Neon 2005).

**"Among 18-30 year-olds, Greenpeace is considered more trustworthy than the federal government"**

Young people's interest in global and social issues suggests that the issue of sustainability could be capable of connecting with the younger generation. A student survey carried out by "Manager" magazine has shown that more than 90% are convinced of the importance of participation in society, whether this be in the areas of social issues, politics, or even sport or individual causes. Barely a third already participate in this way.

### Involvement cannot be imposed by decree

Today's young people are well aware that participation in society cannot be imposed by decree. In a Greenpeace survey (2005) a clear third said that the motivation to do something about environmental protection comes from themselves alone. In the implementation of sustainability, this is one of the central points of connection, as sustainability involves helping to shape society with a high degree of participation in a range of social fields. Sustainable development is a concept that combines environmental issues with social and economic elements. The perspective on current problems has thus been expanded.

A similar shift in themes is also to be observed among young people when it comes to their social participation. Interest is increasingly directed towards social and global problems, and is hardly contrary to the vision of sustainable development. If this interest can be captured and if it can be used to build a bridge to the issue of sustainability, then we can assume that young people and sustainability is a relationship with a future.

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Marion Schöberl

## Private Enterprise Promotes Education for Sustainability

Deutsche Telekom's Children's Future Congress



*Business has a fundamental interest in education and training. Germany is a highly developed country with a lack of raw materials, thus, education is an essential element for innovation and development.*

Among other things, this is reflected in the setting up of foundations and initiatives by businesses to promote education and make education more attractive to young people. In the context of debate on the sustainable society, a further factor is that in the age of globalisation the private sector is a decisive player when it comes to making our world viable for the future in environmental, economic and social terms. Given the broad reach and significant consequences of its decisions and actions, business has a key responsibility for the sustainable development of world society. The participation of business in the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development stresses the importance of education for businesses in a holistic context and represents the particular responsibility of the private sector for sustainability.

The idea of a balance between economic, environmental and social aspects has already fascinated many in the business world. But between idea and reality stands the barrier of implementation, and this is where the problems lie. In part, these are based on fact that sustainability is not such an easy concept to explain. For it is hard to gain an overview of all of the interconnected factors and their interactions.

### “How do you imagine the future?”

That is why in 2005 Deutsche Telekom, the national telecommunications operator, started what you might call an experiment. This experiment was called: The Children's Future Congress. 100 children between the ages of 12 and 14 were invited to Berlin to think about important issues for the future in ten groups. They

were lead by trained assistants. The topic was the shaping of the future at all levels.

“How do you imagine the future?” was the question that Deutsche Telekom, in conjunction with the Schools-on-the-Net Association, asked sixth-year pupils. Children from across Germany were called upon to apply for one of the 100 workshop places at this first Children's Congress. Around 1000 pupils from the sixth year showed an interest. An expert committee selected 100 pupils. The most important criterion was not academic achievement, but a personal interest in one of the ten workshop topics: One World, Your Music, The Universe, Active and Mobile, Our Food, New Design, Politics, Good Business, Modern Communication or Intelligent Fashion.

An expert advisory council, which included Prof. Dr. Gerhard de Haan, Chairman of the German National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and Head of the Institute for Future Studies in Education Science at the Free University in Berlin, supported Deutsche Telekom in choosing the children. Other members included Prof. Dr. sc. Hans-Dieter Burkhard, Head of the Teaching and Research area of Artificial Intelligence at the Humboldt University in Berlin; Dr. Erwin Brunner, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Bilingual Science Programme for Children, 'National Geographic World'; and Dr. Claudia Haas, Founding Director of the Zoom Children's Museum in Vienna.

### “The TV News in 2015”

Together with educationalists and specialists, the children were able to develop visions and ideas for the world of tomorrow.





Foto: © UNESCO / Amy OTCHET

row, and present them to experts, celebrities and the media as part of a major future exhibition at the Treptow Arena. Preventing wars, helping others, travelling through the universe, eating healthily, avoiding traffic jams – there were but a few of the visions that were developed at the Future Congress in 2005.

The presentations, in the form of films, songs and entertainment, spanned from the “TV News in 2015”, to a “Journey in Time through the Universe” and “Participating in Politics”. In centre stage stood the question of how children see their future in the light of sustainability. The Future Camp gave them a forum where – with the help of experienced educationalists and experts – they could create ideas for their own future, with a great deal of

involvement and an unbounded imagination.

Under the patronage of Edelgard Bulmahn, then Federal Minister of Education and Research, the Future Camp was one of the first projects carried out in Germany as part of the UN World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). Deutsche Telekom is a member of the German National Committee for the Decade, and is actively committed to take on its role as a mediator in the process of influencing a change in our society.

Sustainability is closely bound with shaping the future. Even if the word “sustainability” may not have been heard once that weekend in Berlin, the participants worked together to secure the future.

The playful methodology and the way the children's ideas were taken seriously produced a very attractive combination. The participants were enthused by the idea of being able to work on their own, and that their thoughts and ideas would be taken seriously.

### The Children's Future Congress 2006 on Climate Protection

Encouraged by the experiences from 2005, a second Children's Future Congress was held in 2006. In autumn 2006 in Berlin, only one topic took centre stage: climate protection. For the global warming of the atmosphere is one of the greatest challenges of our time. It shall not only change environmental conditions, but it will also have effects on business and our private lives. The ones most

affected will be today's children and tomorrow's adults.

At the second Deutsche Telekom Children's Future Congress the selected children were to tackle this topic, but also develop solutions to secure our society. The result could not be just a simple listing of catastrophes. There were serious attempts to deal with the issue of climate protection and its consequences, and alternative solutions were worked out through the perspectives of the participants. For children should not get the impression that they have no influence on the process. The future belongs to them – and they should get to feel this.

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## In-Service Training for Continuing Education Staff in Schleswig-Holstein for Sustainable Development

Decade Project by the Continuing Education Association in Neumünster

In knowledge-conduit training seminars, teachers from continuing education institutions are enabled to pass on and methodically implement contents of sustainable development. Training programmes on organisational development and education for sustainability are held at three cooperation institutions. By means of training by knowledge conduits, the goal of sustainable development in businesses and among the general public should be promoted.



Foto: Weiterbildungsverbund Neumünster-Mittelholstein

# At a Glance:

## The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany

**On the basis of a unanimous resolution of the German Federal Parliament on the UN Decade of 1 July 2004, the National Committee, set up by the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK), coordinates the implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany. The DUK is supported in this task by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF). Federal President Horst Köhler is the patron of the German implementation of the Decade.**

**The German National Committee for the UN Decade:** The National Committee is the central steering and consultation committee for the implementation of the Decade in Germany. It is made up of 30 institutions and experts, including representatives of the Federal Ministries, Parliament, regional State Ministries, non-governmental organisations, the media, private enterprises, scientific representatives, and school pupils. The Chairman is the educational scientist Gerhard de Haan from the Free University in Berlin. The National Committee is supported by a Secretariat in Bonn and an office in Berlin, set up with the financial assistance of the BMBF.

**Round Table and Working Groups:** In order to put the Decade together with the involvement of as many stakeholders as possible and to initiate a "Learning Sustainability Alliance", the National Committee has invited participation in a Round Table for the UN Decade. The Round Table, comprising around 100 stakeholders, sits once annually. Between sessions, the Working Groups set up by the Round Table contribute to the implementation of the Decade.

**National Plan of Action:** The Plan of Action states the key goals of the Decade in Germany, and contains the contributions and commitments of individual stakeholders in a Catalogue of Measures. The Plan was drafted by the National Committee in consultation with many members of the Round Table, and was presented at the nationwide start-up conference on 13 January 2005, before 300 invitees from the public. It is regularly updated, evaluated and adapted to new knowledge.

The Plan of Action defines the overarching aim of the Decade to be the integration of the idea of sustainable development into all areas of the education system. More specifically, this is to be achieved with the help of four strategic goals:

1. Further develop the concept of education for sustainable development and broadly spread good practices
2. Forge stronger links between individual players and stakeholders in Education for Sustainable Development
3. Increase public visibility of Education for Sustainable Development
4. Strengthen international cooperation

The Catalogue of Measures that completes the Plan puts these goals into practice by naming specific stakeholders and describing the way towards integration into the whole education system. More than 60 measures have been included in the Catalogue so far.

**Decade Projects:** Successful and innovative projects in Education for Sustainable Development have the opportunity to apply for recognition as an "Official Project for the UN Decade". This recognition, conferred by the National Committee, is valid for two years and comes with the right to use the Decade logo. The aim is to give visibility to local stakeholders on the ground and publicise the ambition of Education for Sustainable Development more widely. By March 2007, around 400 projects had been recognised.

The involvement of the German Decade activities in **international initiatives and debates** is an important element in the implementation of the UN Decade by the National Committee. This includes continuous consultation with UNESCO, the worldwide lead agency for the Decade, as well as joint events with UNESCO national commissions and coordination committees in other countries, and cooperation in the European steering committee for the Decade set up by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

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## Members of the German Round Table for the UN Decade

- Adolf Grimme Institute, Society for Media, Education and Culture (Adolf Grimme Institut, Gesellschaft für Medien, Bildung und Kultur mbH)
- Information and Education Working Group of the Bund-Länder Committee on Development Co-operation (AG Informations- und Bildungsarbeit des Bund-Länder-Ausschusses Entwicklungszusammenarbeit)
- Agenda Transfer/Federal level – Service Centre – Local sites
- Agenda 21
- AWO – Workers' Welfare Association (Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband)
- AGU – Commissioners for Environmental Questions in the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Germany (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Umweltbeauftragten der deutschen Diözesen)
- Commissioners for Environmental Questions in the Protestant Churches of Germany (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Umweltbeauftragten in den Gliedkirchen der evangelischen Kirchen Deutschlands)
- Bertelsmann Foundation
- Dadalos – International UNESCO Education Server for Civic, Peace and Human Rights Education
- The "Transfer-21" Bund-Länder Commission Programme
- BUND – German national branch of Friends of the Earth (Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland)
- BAK – Federal Chamber of Architects, Germany
- 2005 National Garden Festival, Munich (Bundesgartenschau München 2005)
- BIBB – Federal Institute for Vocational Training
- BMZ – Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development
- BMBF – Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
- Federal Association of the German Gas and Water Industry (Bundesverband der deutschen Gas- und Wasserwirtschaft)
- BDG – German Gardening Association (Bundesverband Deutscher Gartenfreunde e.V.)
- BKJ – German Association for Youth Cultural Education (Bundesverband Kulturelle Jugendbildung e.V.)
- BANU – National Working Group of State-funded Education Sites for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection (Bundesweiter Arbeitskreis der staatlich getragenen Bildungsstätten im Natur- und Umweltschutz)
- BpB – National Centre for Political Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung)
- "UNI21" COPERNICUS CAMPUS
- DBU – German Environmental Foundation (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt)
- DGfE – German Society for Educational Science (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft)
- GTZ – German Society for Technical Co-operation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GmbH)
- DGU – German Society for Environmental Education (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Umwelterziehung e.V.)
- DKJS – German Foundation for Children and Young Persons (Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung)
- German Beneficence for Monument Conservation (Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz)
- Youth and Social Affairs Department at the German Association of Cities (Deutsche Städtetag, Referat für Jugend und Soziales)
- DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service
- DED – German Development Service (Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst)
- German Savings Bank Association – Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband
- IIZ/DVV – German Adult Education Association and its Institute for International Co-operation (Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit des DVV)
- DIE – German Institute for Adult Education
- Education Services Organisation of the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB Bildungswerk e.V.)
- Didacta Verband e.V. – Association of education services providers
- Die VERBRAUCHER INITIATIVE e.V. – National consumer advocacy organisation
- Duales System Deutschland – Recycling company
- Evangelical Organisation for Social and Political Youth Education (Evangelische Trägergruppe für gesellschaftspolitische Jugendbildung)
- FechnerMEDIA GmbH
- Fraunhofer Gesellschaft
- ICT – Fraunhofer Institute for Chemical Technology
- Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg
- Genanet – Focal Point Gender, Environment, Sustainability
- Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research
- GEW – Union for Education and Science (Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft)
- Goethe Institute
- Alliance of Primary Schools (Grundschulverband – Arbeitskreis Grundschule e.V.)

- Institute for Peace Education (Institut für Friedenspädagogik)
  - Institute for Cultural Policy of the Association for Cultural Policy, House of Culture (Institut für Kulturpolitik der Kulturpolitischen Gesellschaft e.V. – Haus der Kultur)
  - and. Institute for Art, Culture and Sustainability
  - Institute for Environmental Protection in Vocational Training (Institut für Umweltschutz in der Berufsbildung)
  - IZT – Institute for Future Studies and Technology Assessment (Institut für Zukunftsstudien und Technologiebewertung, Berlin)
  - International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP)
  - InWEnt
  - KLJB – Catholic Rural Youth Movement (Katholische Landjugendbewegung Deutschlands)
  - KNH Foundation (Kindernothilfe e.V.)
  - Institute of Management and Design for Sustainable Development (Kolleg für Management und Gestaltung für nachhaltige Entwicklung gGmbH)
  - Leibniz Institute for Science Education at the University of Kiel (IPN)
  - Michael Haerdter, former head of Künstlerhaus Bethanien
  - Misereor
  - Administration of the National Park Bavarian Forest (Nationalparkverwaltung Bayerischer Wald)
  - Naturgut Ophoven, representing the ANU working group on nature and environmental education
  - "Nordländer" network project in support of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
  - ökom Verlag (publishers)
  - Ökoprojekt – MobilSpiel e.V. (Environmental education organisation)
  - Ecumenical One World Initiative, the co-ordinating agency for the international Earth Charter Initiative
  - Robert Bosch Foundation
  - Schering AG
  - Schulen ans Netz e.V. (Organisation for connecting schools to the Internet)
  - Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Länder (KMK)
  - SSWP/IDT-Hochschule St. Gallen
  - Nature Conservation Fund (Stiftung Naturschutzfond) in Baden-Württemberg's State Ministry for Food and Rural Regions
  - Beneficence Bridges between North and South (Stiftung Nord-Süd-Brücken)
  - Stiftung Warentest
  - TRUMPF Werkzeugmaschinen GmbH und Co. KG
  - Department for "Environmental Strategies and Research Planning" (Grundsatzreferat "Umweltstrategien und Forschungsplanung") within the Federal Environmental Agency
  - Umweltpione (Environmental project for schools)
  - UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network
  - University of Paderborn, Faculty for Natural Sciences
  - vzbz – Federation of German Consumer Organisations
  - Verkehrsclub Deutschland e.V. (Traffic club)
  - Weltladen-Dachverband (Interest association for fair-trade outlets in Germany)
  - Werkstatt 3 – Bildungswerk
  - "Science in Dialogue" (Wissenschaft im Dialog gGmbH)
  - Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy
  - (Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, Energie GmbH)
  - Zeitbild Verlag (publishers)
- As representatives from ministries of the federal states:**
- Ministry for Environment and Traffic of the Federal State Baden-Wuerttemberg
  - Bavarian State Ministry for Environment, Health and Consumer Protection
  - Berlin Senate Administration for Education, Youth and Sports
  - Brandenburg State Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports
  - Bremen State Institute for Schools
  - Hamburg Authority for Environment and Health
  - Hesse Ministry for Environment, Rural Regions and Consumer Protection
  - Mecklenburg – West Pomerania Ministry of the Environment
  - Lower Saxony State Department for Environmental Education and Environmental Consultation
  - Central Office for Environmental Education at the University of Essen, North-Rhine Westphalia
  - Ministry for School, Youth and Children of North Rhine-Westphalia
  - Rhineland-Palatinate State Centre for Environmental Awareness
  - Ministry for Environment of the Federal State Saarland
  - Saxony State Ministry for Cultural Affairs
  - Saxony-Anhalt State Ministry for Agriculture and Environment
  - Schleswig-Holstein State Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Culture
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Foto: Deutsche Umwelthilfe

## “McMöhre – The Natural Food Bar”: Healthy, Environmentally-Friendly Nutrition at School

Decade Project by the Deutsche Umwelthilfe association (DUH), Northern Regional Group

Through the “McMöhre” (McCarrot) project, organic, fair-trade, regionally produced, fresh and seasonal foods are to be made more appetising to school students. The DUH supports the schools in the planning, installation and operation of the Natural Food Bars. At the same time, the establishment of sustainable school companies and networking with organic farmers, environment centres, authorities and businesses is encouraged. The close involvement of pupils in the various stages of the project is a prioritised goal.



## Systematic Integration of Education for Sustainable Development into the “NaturGut Ophoven”

Decade Project by the NaturGut Ophoven Association

The NaturGut Ophoven in Leverkusen is a centre for innovative environmental education and Education for Sustainable Development. Over the last 20 years, practice-oriented environmental education has been carried out here for children, families and senior citizens. Daily, trained education staff lead numerous school classes around the grounds and the “EnergieStadt” adventure exhibition. Twice a year a programme is produced with more than 150 events on issues of nature and the environment for young and old. The “EnergieStadt” adventure exhibition model project and the “Green Classroom” stand out amongst the wide range of educational options.



Foto: NaturGut Ophoven

# Nachhaltigkeit lernen



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