UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014
National Action Plan for Germany
2011
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2011
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Welcoming note by the German President

Creating a bright tomorrow involves asking the right questions today. Convincing solutions and patterns of behaviour need to be developed and put into action. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development plays an important role in sensitising people to these issues and integrating them into the processes of lifelong learning.

German President Christian Wulff, Patron of the UN Decade Education for Sustainable Development.

Welcoming note by the Director of the UNESCO Division of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development

UNESCO’s vision regarding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is clear: every human being should benefit from an education that provides the values, competences, knowledge and skills required to shape the future in line with the demands of sustainable development. ESD creates active and responsible citizens ready to address challenges like climate change and to act in an increasingly complex world. It is the objective of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005–2014) to integrate this fundamental education concept into all areas of education and learning.

The UNESCO World Conference on ESD in 2009 in Bonn, which was kindly hosted by the German Government, reaffirmed that ESD is crucial for attaining quality education. ESD increases the relevance of learning content, provides innovative pedagogies, and links education to other development priorities nationally and internationally. The conference set the stage for the second half of the UN Decade and reaffirmed the commitment of Member States, partners and UNESCO to the DESD, for which UNESCO is the lead agency.

Building on the outcomes of the Bonn Conference, UNESCO has increased its efforts to assist Member States and other stakeholders to revise education policies, plans and curricula in the light of ESD. The biggest challenge of our time, climate change, now plays a central role in our ESD activities and will be an important strategic focus of our programme in the coming years, together with biodiversity and disaster risk reduction. These three themes provide key entry points into the broader agenda of ESD.
UNESCO is concentrating some of its concrete efforts in ESD on those developing and least developed countries most in need of assistance. At the same time, we will continue to raise the profile of ESD at the global level, including in connection with the UN Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, where the essential contribution of education and learning to achieving green societies must be recognized. UNESCO is also working towards ensuring that the implementation of ESD will continue beyond the end of the Decade in 2014. Given the massive global challenges we are facing, equipping individuals and societies for building a viable future is something that certainly will remain on the global education agenda.

From the beginning of the Decade in 2005, Germany has been one of the most active countries implementing this major education initiative. The German implementation of the Decade, which is coordinated by the National Commission for UNESCO with funding from the German Government, has successfully combined political advocacy with the promotion of concrete practical education projects. On that basis, ESD in Germany has enjoyed a remarkably high level of stakeholder involvement across society and an extraordinary degree of visibility.

I am therefore honoured to welcome this revised National Plan of Action for the UN Decade and wish all stakeholders involved every success in the coming years. UNESCO continues to count on Germany’s vital contribution towards maintaining and increasing the momentum of the Decade. We look forward to working with Germany as a close partner in the effort, through ESD, to ensure the relevance of education today.

Mark Richmond
Director, Division of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development
UNESCO
Dear Readers,

Climate change, famine, the extinction of species – in view of the many challenges we face in Germany and worldwide it has long become clear that we must explore new approaches in our behaviour, lifestyle and economic system. We don’t have much time to do this and change will not happen by itself. The goal of sustainable development cannot be achieved without a change of mentality and the commitment of all citizens.

For this reason, in 2002 the United Nations designated the years 2005 to 2014 the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Its vision: every person should acquire the values, knowledge and skills that he or she needs in order to make their own life and life on Earth sustainable. All Member States are called on to implement this education campaign in their own country.

In Germany, the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) coordinates the process, based on a unanimous Bundestag resolution. We have created a National Committee for this purpose and established a coordination centre funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. With its support, we lobby decision-makers in German politics and civil society regarding the potential of Education for Sustainable Development, and its ability to make education future-proof. We create a common platform for all protagonists, providing impetus in the form of content and ideas, and making their activities visible to the public. Not least, over 1300 recognised Decade Projects send a clear message.


The current National Action Plan for 2011 to 2014 further refines these four sub-goals against the background of current developments. In addition, the ‘Strategy for the Second Half of the Decade’, jointly developed in 2010, sets specific priorities. All protagonists nationwide are encouraged to actively contribute to its implementation so that the ten years of the Decade in Germany leave their mark and send a signal that there should and will be no dropping behind the standards set by this educational concept.

Therefore the second focus of this publication are the political resolutions, declarations and recommendations that form the basis for the Decade both internationally and nationally, or that have been developed as part of the Decade. As key reference documents they give all protagonists and stakeholders an overview and the information necessary to continue championing the objectives of the Decade in their respective contexts.

In the interests of us all, I wish us good luck with this going forward. And for now, I wish you an enjoyable and informative read!

Former minister Walter Hirche,
President of the German Commission for UNESCO
The UN Decade of ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ 2005–2014

The United Nations (UN) proclaimed the years 2005 to 2014 as the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. UNESCO was tasked with the international coordination of the Decade. By proclaiming this Decade, the United Nations and UNESCO are sending out the signal that sustainable development concerns us all. We face crucial challenges that can only be tackled together. We have the responsibility and the opportunity to shape our lives so that everyone can live well – future generations as well as people in other parts of the world. A major global education initiative is needed to establish the necessary thinking and action, and to strengthen, promote and permanently embed it worldwide. The aim of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is to open up educational opportunities for everyone that enable them to acquire knowledge and values as well as to learn the behaviours and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation (UNESCO 2005). All UNESCO Member States are called on to make a concerted effort to implement this goal at national level.

What is sustainable development?

An unchanged perpetuation of the current lifestyles and economic activity of our industrialised society would lead to dramatic increase in ecological risks, economic crises and social injustice on our planet. The concept of sustainable development developed by the ‘Brundtland Commission’, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), back in 1987 was based on this insight: “Sustainable development is the kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” What is important for this is a vision oriented to both the present and the future, one that is marked by a common awareness of environmental, social and economic factors while also remaining open to change. Because there is no ‘once and for all’ solution: sustainable development is an ongoing and comprehensive social process of change and transformation. At the same time, the urgent challenge of responsibly dealing with our planet’s resources and ecological capacity is connected with the need to help improve living conditions in poorer countries and take local responsibility for global developments.

The debate about the necessity and opportunities of sustainable development is being conducted with great intensity worldwide, with different countries focusing on different aspects.

For example, in less developed countries the focus is primarily on meeting basic needs as set out in the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals (UN 2000). In other words, in many places the approaches focus on securing the basic...
foundations of life such as food and medical care, and on realising universal primary education (Education for All). In Germany, however, issues such as resource-conserving consumption, the reduction of climate change, safeguarding biodiversity, and improving educational opportunities in the knowledge society are high on the agenda. Other priorities include the issue of the responsibility borne by industry, trade and the financial sector, and possible alternatives to the current universal goal of ‘growth’. Being aware of these different interpretations of sustainable development depending on cultural and socio-economic context is a crucial element in understanding the concept of sustainability.

However, the quest for justice and fairness is a common denominator in the various perspectives on sustainability: fairness between generations and fairness between the world’s various regions, nations and cultures. For this reason, beyond the three ‘classic’ dimensions of sustainability – ecology, economy and social matters – the basic principles of the ‘sustainability’ concept also include global responsibility, cultural diversity and political participation. Achieving sustainable development in the interests of future generations and global justice requires taking a balanced environmental, economic and social approach to managing our dynamically changing world, and involving all people(s) in the political decision-making processes.

Given this background and the goals mentioned earlier, wherever processes of sustainable development are being striven for, there must be positive answers to two questions: do the political, economic, and/or social actions promote an individual and general welfare that is freely accessible to all? And: do these actions reduce the ecological footprint?

What does ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ mean?

There has long since been worldwide agreement on the fact that thinking and acting in the spirit of sustainable development has become an urgent necessity. As long ago as 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, 180 countries agreed to make significant changes to their economic, social and environmental policies. In Agenda 21, they agreed specific projects and measures to do this. “The commitment and genuine involvement of all institutions and social groups,” and hence „new forms of participation” were also cited as prerequisites for sustainable development here (UNCED 1992). This applies for individual citizens as well as for social institutions and democratically legitimised organs of the state. But sustainable development cannot be achieved with a top-down, centrally controlled strategy. It must be ‘brought to life’ locally and implemented in an ongoing societal process of change. Nor do skilled involve-
ment and effective participation arise on their own. This transformation process cannot work without a corresponding change in mentality. It is not merely about knowing the facts and contexts, but also about how people put the knowledge to use: the step from knowledge to action. It is about their motivation, the skills needed, and the ability to keep reorienting oneself in complex situations.

The path to sustainability involves, not least, education. It is the task of education to put people in a position to shape their personal, social and global development in a sustainable way. This insight caused the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, ten years after Rio de Janeiro, to highlight the role of education in the global change of course toward sustainability. As a consequence, in December 2002 the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 2005 to 2014 the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN 2002b – see page 17).

The name reflects a concept of education that is challenging and yet very down-to-earth: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aims to enable all people to acquire the values, knowledge and skills required to shape their life and society in a sustainable way. First and foremost, Education for Sustainable Development helps people acquire the skill to shape their own future. On the one hand, people need to know how processes of sustainable development are advanced, and how to recognise processes of development that are not sustainable. And on the other hand, it means they acquire the values and skills that motivate them and empower them to promote and substantially advance sustainable development individually and in cooperation with others.

Education for Sustainable Development is an integrative concept: it integrates the ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of a problem and takes into account the interlacing of global, regional and local structures and processes. It is based on a long-term view and considers the present from the perspective of the future. The concept is ethically founded, as it incorporates intra- and intergenerational fairness as well as gender equality. It not only considers humans, but all forms of life and habitats.

Education for Sustainable Development also involves innovations in the educational institutions themselves: educational institutions, too, must meet the requirements of sustainable development. This applies for the participation of teachers and learners in decision-making processes, as well as for their culture of teaching and learning and for staff qualifications. And not least it also includes designing and managing the buildings, and procuring the materials for them, in a spirit of sustainability.

Education for Sustainable Development therefore affects all areas of the formal education system as well as non-formal education and informal learning: in children’s day-care centres, schools, universities, vocational education and continuing education and cultural institutions or research institutes. Education for Sustainable Development is relevant for municipalities, associations, clubs, companies and families, cultural institutions and the media.

In Germany there are a multitude of extra-curricular establishments, such as adult education centres and centres of learning, and a very wide spectrum of informal learning situations – such as

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**Young ESD Voices**

At the 2009 UNESCO World Conference in Bonn, 25 young adults from around the world were invited to attend a workshop before the opening. Its findings would be used in the conference.

One of the questions the ‘Young ESD Voices from around the World’ had to answer in their applications was:

What is ESD for me?

The quotations in this publication give an insight into the range of their responses.
when opportunities for learning are created in the context of leisure/recreational activities. This educational landscape is always in flux. The ongoing educational reforms in Germany are causing new curricula to be developed, new learning methods to be established and networks with local partners to be promoted. Education facilities are opening up to new collaborations between the various sites of learning. Informal and lifelong learning are gaining importance in the same measure as traditional places of learning and formal education sectors are having to be redefined due to rapid processes of change. The task at hand is to take advantage of these circumstances and opportunities in order to reach everyone with Education for Sustainable Development. The United Nations Decade provides a shared framework for this.

Foundations of the UN Decade in Germany

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is lead-managing the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. In Germany, the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) submitted an important reference document: the ‘Hamburg Declaration’ of summer 2003, which formulated central aims for the upcoming Decade under the catchphrase ‘The Learning of Sustainability’ (DUK 2009 – see page 19). In May 2004, the DUK convened a National Committee to implement the UN Decade in Germany. On 1 July 2004 the Bundestag unanimously voted to initiate an Action Plan for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development as part of the Federal Government’s sustainability strategy (Bundestag 2004 – see page 21). In 2005 the UN Decade was inaugurated in Germany with the objective of making Education for Sustainable Development a priority in all areas of education. In doing so, the implementation of the Decade in Germany can build on a number of international and national developments.

At international level, the governments that signed Agenda 21 at the 1992 World Summit on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro underlined the role of education in Chapter 36. The Federal Republic of Germany’s own policies to date have explicitly pursued the ideal of sustainable development as set forth in Agenda 21. Germany is one of 53 members of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD). This body, founded in 1992 as a sub-organ of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), is tasked with facilitating the effective implementation of Agenda 21 worldwide and also, since 2002, of the Johannesburg Action Plan, which is based upon it and first set out quantifiable goals. In addition, the Commission is to develop proposals for the further promotion of sustainable development.

On a national level and with reference to German education policy, the decade is also able to link to many activities and agenda-setting decisions. For instance, as early as 1997 the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs issued a resolution on sustainable development (KMK 1997).

Based on this it has adopted two further milestones for ESD since the beginning of the UN Decade: in June 2007, the KMK and DUK jointly published
the recommendation on ‘Education for Sustainable Development at School’ they developed as part of the UN Decade (KMK/DUK 2007 – see page 26). At the same time the ‘Cross-Curricula Framework for Global Development Education in the context of Education for Sustainable Development’ prepared in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) was presented, suggesting ways that Germany’s Federal states could – in the context of ESD – especially integrate global issues and themes of sustainable development into the curriculum (KMK/BMZ 2007). In accordance with a KMK resolution of 12 May 2011, the Cross-Curricula Framework is being updated as a joint KMK/BMZ project in 2011 and 2012 and expanded to include other Secondary School Level I subjects and departments.


A major milestone in the international implementation of the UN Decade in recent years was the first UNESCO World Conference on ESD, which took place in Bonn in the spring of 2009. The conference was organised by UNESCO and the BMBF in cooperation with the DUK. It brought together 900 delegates and experts from some 150 countries, including around 50 ministers and deputy ministers. The ‘Bonn Declaration’ adopted as a consensus from this gathering issued an urgent appeal, given the global challenges, to UNESCO and its Member States to align education to the principles of sustainable development, and provides guidelines for further anchoring Education for Sustainable Development in education systems worldwide. The UNESCO General Conference unanimously endorsed the Bonn Declaration (UNESCO 2009 – see page 34). For UNESCO, the Member States, and other players around the world the Bonn Declaration serves as the basis for their strategies for the second half of the Decade. The conference marked the mid-term evaluation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014). The Bonn Conference also dealt with drafting the half-time report presented at the United Nations in autumn 2010. The report highlights ESD activities in all regions of the world, but also points to the large regional disparities in its implementation and the existing need for action up to the end of the decade.

The goals set by the German protagonists of the UN Decade and this Action Plan build especially upon the aforementioned Bundestag resolution of 2004 and the Hamburg Declaration of 2003. In the international context, German activities for the UN Decade take their cue primarily from the ‘International Implementation Scheme’ presented by UNESCO (UNESCO 2005) and the ‘UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development’ (UNECE 2005), as well as the Bonn Declaration. The concept of sustainability formulated therein and the ESD objectives set out therein serve as key reference values for the National Action Plan. It is the common reference document for protagonists in Germany involved in implementing the Decade.

The first National Action Plan was published in 2005 and was updated in 2008. The present revision addresses the current state of the Decade activities and provides an outlook for the period until 2014.
The primary goal of the strategies formulated in the Action Plan is to permanently embed the concept of sustainable development throughout all education sectors in Germany, so that Germany can make substantial progress toward sustainable development – initially until 2014, but in principle also beyond this date. As a country with special international responsibility, Germany is pursuing this approach at both the national and international levels.

To achieve this primary goal, Germany has set four strategic objectives.

1. **Further develop and pool activities, and ensure the transfer of good practice to a broad base**

   In Germany there is a broad spectrum of ESD initiatives and good practice. A lot of innovative and successful activities are in place all over the country and in all sectors of education, but not always at the same level of intensity and – still – not with the necessary degree of proliferation and anchoring. The task for the next few years is therefore to ensure that these activities are further developed, interrelated more amongst each other, and made available to the entire educational landscape. It is crucial to take the step from temporary project towards a permanent anchoring in the structure. The idea is to reach all educational institutions from children’s day-care centres, schools, universities and vocational education facilities to continuing education centres, as well as the broad spectrum of informal learning places, and establish sustainability as an object of lifelong learning.

   All protagonists are called on to focus especially on working towards the following sub-goals in the next few years:

   - Ensure that decision-makers in the Federal Government, Federal states, companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), associations and communities recognise the opportunities ESD offers; embrace the cause of ESD; and actively work for its integration into all educational sectors.

   - Further develop ESD concepts for the early-childhood development sector in such a way that they can be put into practice in a growing number of children’s day-care centres. Anchor ESD in the new education plans for the elementary level, and expand staff qualification accordingly. Based on the discussion contribution developed by the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) as part of the Decade, ‘Delivering Future Capacity in the Kindergarten: Giving Children a Stronger Role, Advancing Sustainable Development’ (2010), cultivate an intensive exchange about implementing the recommendations between decision-makers and experts.

   - Systematically establish ESD in schools for general education, based on the KMK/BMZ ‘Cross-Curricula Framework for Global
Development Education in the context of Education for Sustainable Development’ and the KMK/DUK ‘Education for Sustainable Development at School’ recommendation of June 2007. This refers both to the refinement of guidelines and curricula and to promoting the development and profiling of schools in the spirit of ESD. Another part of this is to strive for comprehensive education and training of teachers in this area of learning. Intensify cooperation with partners outside the school sector, and utilise instruments to improve and assure quality. Recognise schools that are particularly active in the field of ESD.

- Make available examples of good practice, especially from model projects and research results in the area of corporate and educational vocational training, for broad-scale use in vocational education. One important focus in this process is the integration of ESD aspects in the regulations on vocational education/training. It is important to advance not only the content aspect of sustainability-related professions, but also to pursue the didactic principles that support Education for Sustainable Development.

- Based on the Declaration of the University Rector’s Conference and the DUK ‘Universities for Sustainable Development’ (2010), intensify and structurally integrate ESD at Universities for Sustainable Development. Give student initiatives devoted to this area a platform and support them in their demands.

- Increasingly integrate sustainable-development topics in extracurricular learning and continuing education. Expand forms of public participation in shaping the public sphere and future policies as important areas of life-long learning. Systematically open up initiatives from independent educational institutions and in the context of projects, evaluate them using quality criteria, and further develop them.

ESD is characterised by numerous cross-sectoral issues. For example, no educational area can be singled out to assess the sustainability of products and services and of one’s own lifestyle all on its own. In addition to the formal educational sectors informal education is of great importance for ESD. Intensify the consideration of aspects of sustainability in the mass media, in workplace communications, and in leisure activities. The goal is to increase the public’s knowledge of sustainability and to expand their awareness of the existing necessities and opportunities to take their own actions.

As part of the ‘Strategy for the Second Half of the Decade in Germany’ (see page 70), possible approaches for realising this objective were further assessed according to importance and feasibility. The points mentioned there under Priority 1 ‘Underlining the fundamental contribution of ESD to educational quality and anchoring ESD in all sectors of the formal Education’ contribute to the realisation of this sub-objective.

2. Create a network of ESD protagonists

As an integrative educational concept, ESD is promoted by a wide range of protagonists and players in public administration, business, NGOs, educational institutions and various areas of politics, such as education, development, the environment, consumer affairs and economics. Networking between these protagonists, as well as their communications to the outside, needs to be further improved in order to win new demographics for ESD. Because of Germany’s federalist educational system, the Federal states are of great importance and have great potential. Since the launch of the UN Decade in Germany, numerous State Plans of Action have been developed by the Federal states (see page 55). At the regional and local government level, there is also the special opportunity of getting existing local protagonists involved, not least because education that takes place ‘on location’ always takes place ‘for the location’, too (see page 64).
All protagonists are called on to focus especially on working towards the following sub-goals in the next few years:

- Deepen the involvement of protagonists in the various educational fields that make significant contributions to ESD (such as global learning, environmental education, intercultural education, consumer education, civic education, health education), in line with ESD’s claim to being an integrative approach.

- Support protagonists through central specialised service agencies and trained ‘multipliers’, including in the areas of vocational education and training, universities, extracurricular education and informal learning. Establish mentor- and sponsorship schemes that let experienced players and projects make their expertise available to ‘beginners’ interested in ESD.

- In the school sector, expand existing national networks (e.g. UNESCO ASPnet School, ‘International Agenda 21 Schools’) and other initiatives, especially state-specific ones, and use them intensively for broadening the dissemination of ESD. Also, intensify the various forms of cooperation with extracurricular partners such as the private sector, municipalities and NGOs. Student enterprises are a particularly promising tool for reaching less scholastically inclined teens. Here, the task is to continue developing existing student enterprises for the purposes of ESD and to establish new, sustainable student enterprises.

- Expand local networks by involving local authorities, businesses, non-school youth and adult education facilities, clubs, foundations, and social and cultural institutions. The ‘Lernende Regionen’ (Learning Regions), local educational landscapes, and community education networks provide good models for this.

- Establish a network between Decade Projects to enable knowledge transfer and mutual motivation.

- Expand the academic research on ESD and link it more closely with the practical implementation of ESD.

- Publicise examples of good practice, innovative ideas and plans, ESD protagonists and their activities, findings from relevant research, international activities and news on the www.bne-portal.de web portal.

As part of the ‘Strategy for the Second Half of the Decade in Germany’ (see page 70), possible approaches for realising this objective were further assessed according to importance and feasibility. The points mentioned there under Priorities 4 and 5 ‘Intensify cooperation with the private sector / local authorities’ contribute to the realisation of this sub-objective.

3. Improve public awareness of Education for Sustainable Development

Nearly everyone endorses the basic ideas of sustainable development. Education plays a significant role in this and, by imparting relevant knowledge and values, it creates the conditions necessary for these principles being put into practice in everyday life, in the workplace and in society as a whole. A deeper understanding of the contexts of sustainable development also contributes to a greater public acceptance of measures initiated on a political level to promote sustainable development. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development seeks, through projects, persons and organisations throughout Germany, to enhance public awareness of the fact that each and every person can support and help shape sustainable development. Its goal is to demonstrate the chances that lie in this educational concept, and stimulate interest in them.

All protagonists are called on to focus especially on working towards the following sub-goals in the next few years:

- Ensure that, as citizens become more aware of the importance of sustainable development, they begin to recognise the personal options available to them for promoting sustainability and start demanding more ESD offers proactively.

- Familiarise professionals in all educational sectors with the essential elements of ESD. Make sure they see ESD not as one educational approach among many, but as a comprehensive new approach to teaching and learning and interacting with the world.
4. Strengthen international cooperation

Shaping the future of life on our planet in a sustainable way is an objective that depends more on successful international cooperation for its attainment than virtually any other political goal. As a global initiative, the UN Decade offers the opportunity of making a difference internationally and contributing to achieving a global perspective and global cooperation. One of the priorities in implementing the UN Decade in Germany is therefore to contribute Germany’s experience and model solutions into the global discussion on ESD while also learning from the experience and positions of other countries and cultures.

All protagonists are called on to focus especially on working towards the following sub-goals in the next few years:

- Intensify international cooperation and partnership, so as to contribute to the international success of the UN Decade. In 2009, halfway through the Decade, Germany organised the ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ World Conference. Steadily expand the contacts for which this joint UNESCO/BMBF event in cooperation with the DUK laid the basis.

- Give Germany’s contributions to the UN Decade international visibility, among other things through the worldwide network of UNESCO National Commissions and the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris.

- Introduce examples of good practice from other countries into the German education sector. Strengthen the global perspective and international exchange to significantly enrich the German education sector.

- Increase the integration of ‘Sustainable Development’ as a focus topic in educational projects and programmes at European level, and have the EU Commission define relevant thematic emphases.

Increase media coverage of how people can acquire awareness for acting in the spirit of sustainable development. Have them refer directly to the UN Decade in their reporting, to illustrate the worldwide common frame of reference, the importance of the issue, and the quality of the presented activities. The media should motivate people to take action.

- Make the ESD achievements of high-quality projects and communities visible by recognising them as official UN Decade of ESD projects/communities. This recognition illustrates to the public the diversity of possible approaches to ESD, encourages the parties involved to continue their commitment, and motivates other people to actively and practically deal with this issue themselves.

As part of the ‘Strategy for the Second Half of the Decade in Germany’ (see page 70), possible approaches for realising this objective were further assessed according to importance and feasibility. The points mentioned there under Priority 2 ‘Increase the public visibility of ESD’ contribute to the realisation of this sub-objective.
Further expand the focus on ‘education’, ‘the environment’, and ‘sustainable use of resources’ in Germany’s bilateral and multilateral development cooperation with partner countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas, and with ‘threshold countries’, especially with regard to the Millennium Development Goals.

The strategic objectives of the National Action Plan were drawn up in cooperation with responsible parties at Federal, state and local level, from business and academia, as well as other civil-society groups. They serve as guidelines for strengthening ESD in Germany. It is the responsibility of the National Committee of the UN Decade appointed by the German Commission for UNESCO to continuously observe and assess how we are progressing on this path. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is an ongoing process that welcomes all protagonists and interested parties. New experiences, insights and current events will influence the UN Decade’s progress and therefore both our general and strategic aims, too. In addition to these objectives, the numerous policy statements and recommendations that have been drawn up in recent years in the run-up to the Decade and as part of its activities also serve as benchmarks and signposts. They are meant to support protagonists in their work and lend urgency to the shared cause.

As part of the ‘Strategy for the Second Half of the Decade in Germany’ (see page 70), possible approaches for realizing this objective were further assessed according to importance and feasibility. The points mentioned here under Priority 3 ‘Strengthen ESD internationally’ contribute to the realisation of this sub-objective.

For me ESD is the only way to establish equity on our planet.

Leonardo Enrique Velasquez Garcia, Honduras

What is ESD for me?
Documents


UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 57/254
Adopted at the 78th plenary meeting on 20 December 2002 without a vote, on the recommendation of the Committee (A/57/532/Add.1, Clause 10).

57/254. United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The General Assembly,

Recalling chapter 36 of Agenda 21, on promoting education, public awareness and training, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992;

Reaffirming the internationally agreed development goal of achieving universal primary education, in particular that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling;

Appreciating the contribution made by the Commission on Sustainable Development to the issue of education for sustainable development since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Welcoming the fact that the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (‘Johannesburg Plan of Implementation’) confirmed the importance of education for sustainable development and recommended that the General Assembly consider adopting a decade of education for sustainable development starting in 2005;

Emphasizing that education is an indispensable element for achieving sustainable development,

1. Decides to proclaim the ten-year period beginning on 1 January 2005 the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development;

2. Designates the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as the lead agency for the promotion of the Decade, and requests it to develop a draft international implementation scheme, clarifying its relationship with the existing educational processes, in particular the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum and the United Nations Literacy Decade, in consultation with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations, Governments, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, with a view to providing recommendations for Governments on how to promote and improve the integration...
of education for sustainable development in their respective educational strategies and action plans at the appropriate level;

3. **Invites** Governments to consider the inclusion of measures to implement the Decade in their respective educational strategies and action plans by 2005, taking into account the international implementation scheme to be prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

4. **Decides** to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-eighth session an item entitled ‘United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development’.

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4 See resolution 56/116.

http://www.un-documents.net/a57r254.htm

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The value of ESD lies in respect — respect for other people, living now or in the future, respect for their diversity, for the environment and for the resources of our living planet.

Berate Sorima Constant, Benin

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What is ESD for me?

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http://www.un-documents.net/a57r254.htm
I.
The German Commission for UNESCO recommends that the following measures be included in a National Action Plan:

1. Existing networks such as the UNESCO Associated Schools, European Eco-Schools or BLK 21 schools should be used intensively for the transfer of innovation, and should receive appropriate support. Projects tested to date should be expanded and integrated into classroom teaching at the various school levels.

2. Textbooks, curricula and examination criteria should be revised with the Agenda 21 goals in mind. Scientific knowledge, intercultural competence and the development of comprehensive participation skills are just as important in this respect as the teaching of sustainable habits of consumption. Education for Sustainable Development requires interdisciplinary, action-oriented teaching, innovative concepts and integrated cross-curricular lesson materials (such as Agenda 21 kits). In particular, kindergartens and primary schools require expert support and suitable materials.

3. Education for Sustainable Development requires teachers, educators, trainers and a variety of multipliers. Any training deficits should be identified and eliminated.

4. Following the example of the ‘Learning Regions’, extracurricular youth and adult learning and continuing education should be developed in cooperation with local Agenda 21 initiatives and non-governmental organisations, associa-
In reference to the ‘The Results of the World Summit in Johannesburg’ resolution by the 62nd General Assembly of the German Commission of UNESCO in Nuremberg of 8 November 2002, the German Commission of UNESCO suggests that the German Federal government work, within the intergovernmental bodies of UNESCO, towards UNESCO incorporating sustainability perspectives in all programmes in order to implement the results of Earth Summit 2002 in Johannesburg. Innovative interdisciplinary projects in education, science, culture and communication should be developed for this. The German UNESCO Commission asks the Federal government to prepare its own German contributions to the planned UN World Decade of Education for Sustainability (2005–2014). UNESCO should be tasked with working out an international recommendation on ‘The Learning of Sustainable Development’.

Parliamentary paper 15/3472 (excerpts)
German Bundestag – 15th legislative period – 30 Jun 2004

Recommended resolution
of the Committee on Education, Research and Technology Assessment (17th committee) on the proposal from MPs Ulla Burchardt, Jörg Tauss, Ulrike Mehl, other MPs and the SPD parliamentary group and the MPs Grietje Bettin, Volker Beck (Cologne), Cornelia Behm, other MPs and the Buendnis 90/Die Gruenen (Green Party) parliamentary group

Initiate an Action Plan for the UN World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The Bundestag is requested to adopt:

The Bundestag notes:

The Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held from 26 August to 4 September 2002 in Johannesburg recognises the outstanding importance of education in promoting sustainable development. The Plan of Implementation contains detailed recommendations for action that are in line with the overall goal of considerably improving access to education especially in developing countries and “integrate sustainable development into education systems at all levels of education in order to promote education as a key agent for change.”

By adopting Resolution 57/254 on 20 December 2002, the UN General Assembly declared the years 2005 to 2014 the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and thus implemented one of the main recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The UN General Assembly resolution on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development lends weight to the Johannesburg World Summit’s recommendations for action, and underlines the political duty of the UN Member States to further the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development at national and international levels and to rigorously pursue the goals of educational policy already defined in the UN Millennium Declaration and at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000. The approval of the Millennium Declaration by the international community and the corresponding Millennium Development Goals provide a politically binding normative framework designed to improve
educational opportunities and gender equality in access to education for the extremely poor. The United Nations has thus codified the results of the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar.

The German Bundestag welcomes the decision of the UN General Assembly to give the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development top priority in educational policy and development co-operation by declaring the UN Decade.

It is now essential to take advantage of the impetus provided by the UN resolution on the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to advance and combine the varied approaches to promoting Education for Sustainable Development.

From the German Bundestag perspective, the providing of basic skills and knowledge regarding interrelationships between people, nature and technology is an essential prerequisite for equipping people with the relevant skills enabling them to participate in society’s efforts to achieve a lasting sustainable development. In this context it is vital to emphasise the interdependence of ecology, economic prosperity and social justice in keeping with a comprehensive concept of sustainability. Education should aim at networked, intercultural learning, and especially at creating awareness of the global consequences of one’s own actions and one’s responsibility regarding the use of natural resources. Cultural education and intercultural learning are vital for mutual understanding.

UNESCO has been entrusted, as lead agency, with the preparation and co-ordination of the UN Decade. By adopting the ‘Hamburg Declaration’ on 11 July 2003, the 63rd General Assembly of the German Commission for UNESCO has already resolved far-reaching recommendations for a national Action Plan as German contribution to the upcoming UN Decade, and called upon the responsible stakeholders from Federal government, Federal states and local communities, business, science and academia, and other civil-society groups to form an ‘alliance for the learning of sustainability’ in order to develop a joint Action Plan for the UN Decade.

The Federal government is called upon to participate in this process and to develop German contributions to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in close co-ordination with the German Bundestag. In this context, the importance of cultural education in development co-operation should also be emphasised.

The Report on Education for Sustainable Development issued by the Federal government in 2001 provides evidence for the fact that Education for Sustainable Development has already been initiated as an integrative educational concept in all areas of education – albeit to varying degrees of intensity – and is supported by a large number of stakeholders from administrations, NGOs, and various areas of politics.

The numerous activities and measures that have been initiated in recent years – significantly supported by impetus from the German Bundestag – provide a useful basis with regard both to the integration of the overall concept into all levels of the educational system, and to the promotion of basic education as a central dimension of a strategy for sustainability:

- ‘BLK 21’, the pilot programme of the Federal government and the Federal states has produced significant results with regard to the integration of the concept of sustainability into the German school education; it offers conceptual foundations as well as a variety of practice-relevant products and qualified protagonists in schools and further-education institutions for the further dissemination of the Education for Sustainable Development concept.

- The network of the 160 German schools of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project that, along with the worldwide network of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project comprising more than 7000 institutions, has produced important results with regard to the integration of the concept of ‘global learning communities’ into German school education, and offers conceptual foundations as well as practical examples of global education for other schools.

- Consideration of sustainability-related learning goals in the modernisation of existing (vocational) training regulations and in drawing up (vocational) training regulations for new professions; development of practice-oriented concepts in industry-specific pilot projects; and other preparatory and supporting measures, e.g., the general framework for integrating sustainability into vocational education.

- Promotion of sustainability in research and teaching at higher-education institutions, e.g. through fellowship programmes and supporting measures for young scientists in socio-ecological research networks; development of ideas for integrating the concept of sustainability
into higher-education institutions, in particular through support of the UNI21 project.

The initiative for the creation of the Open University for Renewable Energies (OPURE) at the International Conference for Renewable Energies in June 2004 in Bonn. OPURE’s mission will be to develop educational and training programmes for all stages of education, and decisively strengthen knowledge transfer in the area of renewable energies by fostering international co-operation and networks to support research.

Promotion of projects in the areas of ‘Nutrition education/sound nutrition’; the pilot project ‘Reform of nutrition and consumer education in general education institutions (REVIS)’; further education of educators in day-care centres with a focus on sound nutrition and physical exercise.

Special measures in the agricultural sector which aim at imparting technical expertise in sustainable farming methods or support the introduction into the market of renewable raw materials.

14 German biosphere reserves as model regions for sustainable development. As part of the world network of UNESCO biosphere reserves (440 in 97 countries), they contribute to further developing the concept of sustainable development. Biosphere reserves show how the protection of bio-diversity and natural resources can be brought into harmony with their sustainable use. The Seville Strategy adopted in 1995 stresses, among other things, the possible educational function of biosphere reserves and offers suggestions for its practical realisation.

The goals agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration and at the World Summit in Johannesburg to improve access to education and gender equality for the extremely poor. The World Bank’s ‘Education for All Fast Track Initiative’ plays a central role in achieving these goals. The initiative is now supported by the World Bank as well as G7, the other major bilateral donor organisations, the EU, UNESCO, and UNICEF. At the same time, Poverty Reduction Strategies have begun to be implemented by the developing countries. These strategies also receive massive support from the donor community. The Poverty Reduction Strategies usually include basic education as a central element. Thus promoting basic education has become a joint task of the international community, with responsibility in the hands of the developing countries. This has considerably improved conditions for a lasting achievement of the goals.

The Bundestag calls upon the Federal government to:

1. At national level:
   - Support the communication of a comprehensive concept of sustainability that shows the interdependence of ecology, social justice and economic prosperity; and that places special emphasis on the responsible use of natural resources and the importance of future technologies for sustainable development;
   - Ensure, in cooperation with the Federal states, that the results of ‘BLK 21’, the pilot programme of Federal government and Federal states, – which include innovative learning material, organisational frameworks, participation models, curricular modules as well as further-education concepts for teachers and disseminators – have a widespread effect and are integrated in the school systems. For this purpose, the Federal government and the Federal states should swiftly implement the transfer concept drafted in June 2004 for the BLK’s ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ programme;
   - Provide adequate financial support to the states in implementing said transfer concept; matters of funding are to be closely co-ordinated with the states;
   - Ensure transfer research and the provision of an information platform; regularly report on the evaluation of the transfer project;
   - Systematically pursue the development and testing of concepts for the integration of sustainability in vocational training in selected practice fields at places of vocational learning; intensify applied vocational training research in this area; and promote documentation and dissemination of good-practice examples;
   - Review the establishment of a transfer co-ordination agency for sustainability-related projects, research, good-practice examples from and for trade, business and industry, and pilot projects in vocational training – to serve as a common platform for pooling information, communication, and cooperation, with links to the general education platform;
· Promote the development of qualification measures and training material for training staff in businesses and vocational training institutions, in close cooperation with the Federal states;

· Examine the promotion of an action programme oriented towards the action fields defined by the guidelines for the integration of sustainability in vocational training, in order to systematically integrate the wide variety of measures in the field of vocational training for sustainable development;

· Cooperate with the Federal states to increase the contribution of higher-education institutions to promoting sustainable development at the levels of creating, teaching, disseminating and applying knowledge. For this purpose it is necessary to extend interdisciplinary training and research programmes, intensify fellowship programmes and supporting measures for young people, and initiate partnerships across universities;

· Encourage a stronger integration of sustainable development topics in formal and informal educational processes in the field of general continuing education; create further education and qualification offers for multipliers; and further extend local Agenda 21 processes with the participation of Federal states, communities, and agencies of continuing education;

· Aim to extend and disseminate nutrition knowledge, especially among children and adolescents, in particular through initiatives for training and further education and through public relations activities;

· Promote, by linking research projects and development efforts with the development of educational concepts, the transfer of findings from sustainability research to different educational domains and leverage the experience of the biosphere reserves as model regions for sustainable development;

· Connect developmental aspects of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany with strengthening the awareness of the global effects of one’s actions. This includes making Germany and its citizens aware of their responsibility for sustainable patterns of production and consumer behaviour in industrialised countries.

2. At international level:

· Further intensify its efforts to implement the Millennium Declaration and the international Development Goals, particularly with regard to basic education and gender equality. The Federal government should make good use of its developmental focus and act as a driving force in both the ‘Education for All Fast Track Initiative’ and the implementation of national Poverty Reduction Strategies;

· Align German development cooperation – including programmes and measures to promote Education for Sustainable Development – in order to improve the quality of Germany’s developmental achievements and effectiveness, based on an OECD Development Assistance Committee recommendation and the ‘Rome Declaration’ on the harmonisation of donor procedures.

· Make efforts to improve the implementation of developmental coordinating tasks in the co-operating countries and to further improve the coordinated approach of the governmental implementing organisations in this context as well;

· Offer increased consultative support to co-operating countries, in close collaboration with donor organisations, in order to integrate sustainable-development aspects in curricula and learning programmes;

· Participate in the development of the UNESCO implementation plan for the World Decade with its own suggestions and initiatives. In the responsible UNESCO committees and bodies the Federal government should insist that the international implementation plan be duly adopted at the 59th session of the UN General Assembly in autumn 2004;

· Form new alliances with civil-society groups in Germany as already envisioned in the ‘Action Programme 2015, The Federal government’s contribution to halving extreme poverty in the world’, in order to enhance social support for the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development throughout the world and, in particular, to reach the international development goals of basic education and gender equality;

· Support the Open University for Renewable Energies (OPURE), which was initiated at
the International Conference for Renewable Energies, and gain further support for this initiative from other governments and institutions, taking into account the links with existing institutions and programmes at the international level.

3. Task the German Commission for UNESCO with the coordination of national activities related to the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development that go beyond direct governmental action, and provide it with sufficient financial means to do this;

4. Combine its activities for the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development at national and international levels in an Action Plan, which as the Federal government’s contribution to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development should become an integral part of the Federal government’s sustainability strategy. The fields of general education, vocational training and higher education should each be represented by adequate contributions.

Berlin, 30 June 2004

The Committee on Education, Research and Technology Assessment

Ulrike Flach (Chair)
Ulla Burchardt (Rapporteur)
Bernward Müller (Gera) (Rapporteur)
Grietje Bettin (Rapporteur)
Christoph Hartmann (Homburg) (Rapporteur)

The above proposed resolution was unanimously adopted at the 118th Session of the 15th legislative period of the German Parliament on Thursday 1 July 2004 (Plenary proceeding report 15/118 protocol, agenda item 32ff).
Recommendation by the KMK and DUK on ‘Education for Sustainable Development at School’ (2007)


Abstract

After describing the initial situation and the targets of the paper, the Recommendation of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) and the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) at School provides practical advice for the implementation of ESD at school and for a useful framework. The definition of ESD formulates a vision of education and teaching which is meant to provide everybody with a better understanding of the world we live in and the capability to change it as regards sustainability. This particularly refers to the understanding of the complex connection between globalisation, economic development, consumption, environmental pollution, population development, health and social conditions. ESD defines a holistic interdisciplinary vision of education and teaching, imparting knowledge and options for action which are important for a sustainable future for our planet. The concept of ESD aims at qualifying school students for active participation in the creation of an environment-friendly, economically efficient and socially fair environment, taking into account global aspects, basic democratic principles and cultural diversity.

Introductory remarks

On 20 December 2002 the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) proclaimed the years 2005 to 2014 the global ‘Decade of Education for Sustainable Development’. The global vision of the World Decade is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive social transformation directed at sustainability. UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was designated the lead agency for the implementation of the Decade. The activities in Germany are coordinated by the National Committee for the UN Decade of ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ appointed by the German Commission for UNESCO.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) promotes the targets of the World Decade of ‘Education for Sustainable Development’. Together with the German Commission for UNESCO, the KMK recommends further strengthening and embedding Education for Sustainable Development in schools. This recommendation is meant to provide schools with a guideline for the integration of the ideas of sustainability as a social responsibility in classroom teaching. This recommendation is not only meant for schools but also for the administration of cultural affairs and educational institutions for continuing education of teachers. Joined to the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development at schools is the expectation that education will become a key for a sustainable society in the context of globalisation.

1. Initial situation

On the occasion of the United Nations World Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, 178 governments adopted ‘Agenda 21’, which aims to achieve greater recognition of central ecological and social ideas at global, national and local levels, that is, everybody’s right to live in dignity, the idea of global cross-generational justice, respect for the earth’s capacity to absorb pollution and respect for different paths of cultural development. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 points out that the idea of sustainability should be considered the basis of local, national and global development requiring innovative knowledge, new awareness processes and a change in attitudes. These aims cannot be
achieved without far-reaching educational measures. The World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, ten years after the Rio World Conference, reaffirmed the need for a global change of course toward sustainability. The participants of the World Summit underlined the need to integrate the central idea of sustainable development into all levels of the educational system – from preschool education to university as well as in non-formal education. As a central support for the development of local, regional and national education plans, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the years 2005–2014 the World Decade of ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ in December 2002. All UN member states are called upon to develop national and international educational activities to support the world community’s aim to safeguard conditions for life and survival for both current and future generations. In doing so the World Decade not only bears in mind the targets of the World Conference in Rio 1992, but also the UN Millennium Declaration from 2000, with its resulting Millennium Development Goals.

In 2005 UNESCO presented an ‘International Implementation Scheme’ (IIS). The IIS provides a comprehensive framework for actions to support the UN Decade. This is a strategic document, defining the goals of the UN Decade and relating them to other UNESCO activities in the field of education and teaching. Since the mid-1990s the Federal administration and the Länder have been adapting their policies to the basic concept of sustainable development which underlies Agenda 21.


- In the same year the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion presented the ‘Framework of reference for Education for Sustainable Development’.

- In 2000 the German Bundestag unanimously passed the resolution ‘Education for Sustainable Development’.

- One year later the German government set up a state secretary committee for sustainable development, which is maintained by the present government, and appointed the Council for Sustainable Development.

- In 2002 the national strategy on sustainability ‘Perspectives for Germany’ was published.

- Several Länder additionally formulated their own strategies on sustainability, while others are still in the process of developing their own concepts.

- In 2005 the German Bundestag established a parliamentary advisory board for sustainable development.

What sets ESD apart in formal education is its combination of specific content, skills and teaching approaches.

Nadia Lausselet, Switzerland
· In 2002 and 2005 the Federal Ministry for Education and Research presented the government’s first and second reports on Education for Sustainable Development based on a decision of the German Bundestag.

· To implement the concept of sustainable development into all educational levels in Germany, a National Plan of Action for the UN Decade was developed in 2005 on the basis of a resolution unanimously adopted by the German Bundestag. The aim is to integrate ESD cross-sectorally in all policy areas that are relevant to sustainable development. Some Länder have already initiated their own plans of action for the promotion of the UN Decade, while several others are preparing those plans.

2. Objectives of Education for Sustainable Development at schools

The aim is to embed the concept of ESD in schools. ESD is intended to provide school students with skills for sustainable development. Students will learn to recognise and assess problems arising from unsustainable development and apply their knowledge regarding sustainable development. ESD provides recommendations to acquire skills to shape the future. Sustainable development combines environment-friendly solutions with economic efficiency and social justice, taking into account democratic political issues as well as global and cultural aspects.

The National Plan of Action includes numerous measures for planning, dissemination and embedding ESD. The BLK programme ‘Transfer 21’ is one of these measures. The concept of participatory skills in ESD is being developed within the framework of Transfer 21, together with the ‘Cross-Curricular Framework for Global Development Education’ being elaborated by the KMK and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Further important examples are the development of teaching materials on subjects related to sustainability (e.g. energy, climate protection, biodiversity) provided by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the elaboration of a framework for ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ for school curriculums in North Rhine-Westphalia, the certification of extracurricular educational institutions in the field of environmental education and global learning in Schleswig-Holstein, the establishment of a regional network for ESD in primary education in Bavaria, embedding the overall concept of sustainability in the vocational education and training ordinances issued by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), the initiative ‘Hamburg Learns Sustainability’, and the regional ESD network in Hesse. The measures cited above and a multitude of other measures from the Länder and also from the Federal government, companies and organisations are aimed at preparing and testing teaching materials, developing quality criteria for teaching and evaluating student competencies in the context of ESD, establishing quality standards for ESD-schools, and forming regional networks as well as networks at national and international level.

3. Recommendations for the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development at schools

The issue of sustainable development is very complex and therefore needs to be discussed as part of as many subjects as possible and in interdisciplinary and subject-linking programmes, as well as being an important topic of a school’s daily life. In the field of primary education, the interdisciplinary subject Social Studies and Science is suitable for teaching ESD issues, whereas in secondary education there is a need to deal with ESD issues in an interdisciplinary and subject-linking way and to strengthen the integration of ESD in the relevant subjects. It is important to provide a curricular structure for the wide variety of individual subject matters on the basis of skills and standards. The guideline on ‘ESD in secondary education’ prepared in the framework of the BLK Transfer 21 programme provides further concrete orientation in the field of activity concerning school and offers a guideline to support students, teachers and lecturers in continuing education to meet the demands made by the complexity of ESD by means of systematic teaching of skills. The ‘Cross-Curricular Framework for Global Development Education’ was prepared by a KMK-BMZ working group and shows how competencies can be embedded in the curricula for an important ESD teaching field and how to teach competencies in different subjects as well as in cross-curricular and interdisciplinary teaching methods. Some Länder also have their own guidelines, of which use can be made.
ESD is a holistic concept. It not only offers opportunities to prepare lessons with regard to content and didactics, but also provides impetuses to develop an overall concept for schools, the school profile or the school’s quality programme. ESD points to possibilities for shaping a school as an open learning situation. Key activities in this context are the opening of schools towards the local surroundings and towards students’ real life situations, the design of schoolrooms and learning surroundings, and increasing the students’ opportunities to learn and to gain experiences. This concerns not only the acquisition of general knowledge but also the application of that knowledge in concrete situations where the students learn to assess the results of their own actions.

It is useful to apply quality development tools in schools for the implementation of ESD in schools. In the framework of an internal and/or external evaluation it is possible to check the extent to which a school has implemented development processes aimed at systemic embedding of ESD in daily school life. In this context an internal sustainability audit in the school can show the targets and measures which have already been realised. It is recommended to consider certifying schools which are particularly active in the field of ESD.

### 3.1. Acquisition of competencies

In the framework of the BLK ‘21’ programme and its transfer phase (BLK ‘Transfer 21’ programme), three different teaching and organisation principles for the acquisition of competencies have been developed to enable the students to deal with the key problems in the field of sustainable development, to discover possible solutions and to learn how to evaluate them and find possibilities for action. These objectives can be reached by teaching interdisciplinary knowledge, forms of participatory learning and the establishment of innovative structures.

- **Interdisciplinary knowledge** is based on the necessity of ‘linked thinking’, in particular the linking of the natural and cultural worlds and the development of corresponding competencies to solve problems. The objective is to establish corresponding issues and working methods within the curricula.

- **Participatory learning** takes up the central demand of Agenda 21 for participation of all social groups in the process of sustainable development. Schools can provide preparation for such participation by extending their teaching culture with teaching and learning methods aimed at conveying democratic participatory competencies.

- **Establishment of innovative structures** assumes that schools, as a holistic system, work for education by publicly discussing current issues in school reform such as quality development, profiling, opening of schools, learning culture etc., and by continuously developing the structure of such issues in participatory processes. Against this background, cooperation with partners from outside schools is very important.

The concept for the acquisition of participatory skills (Gestaltungskompetenzen) was developed and tested within the framework of the BLK programmes for ESD. Participatory skills are the ability to apply knowledge about sustainable development and to recognise the problems of non-sustainable development, resulting in drawing conclusions on the basis of analysis of the present and studies of the future as regards ecological, economic and social development in its interdependence, and making corresponding decisions suitable for joint political implementation. Both the guideline ‘ESD in secondary education – reasons, competences, samples, exercises’, which was prepared as part of the BLK Transfer 21 programme, and the ‘Cross-Curricular Framework for Global Development Education in the Context of Education for Sustainable Development’ which is very important in the context of ESD, connect with the increasingly results-oriented educational management and standards. To assist the preparation of new education plans and school curricula, partial competencies, contents/issues and sample exercises to test the acquisition of competencies in certain subjects are provided for the core competences in the area of global development studies. Competence profiles are being developed for different school levels and vocational education with the aim of consecutive learning. The guideline describes the concept of participatory skills, and offers example exercises and a catalogue of quality indicators for schools wanting to develop their focal point in a sustainability profile.
3.2. Cooperation in schools and with partners

ESD can only be viewed as a joint task for schools because it modifies the structures and communication patterns in schools as well as towards the surroundings of schools. Headmasters and headmistresses are asked to support ideas and initiatives to promote a modification process. Coordination groups for work in the context of ESD bring together members from all areas of daily school life and facilitate close cooperation between school administration, student/teacher working groups, parents, technical staff and partners from outside the school system. It is recommended to permanently maintain and strengthen existing local, Land-specific and national networks in order to develop curricula and the organisation of schools in a sustainable way.

Against this background the participation of schools in programmes in their Land and cross-state programmes is also to be welcomed. International school partnerships can also be used to make clear the global aspects of sustainability and the perspectives of different cultures referring to sustainable development processes. Systematic cooperation with partners from outside the school system increases the opportunities and framework of action for educational work in schools, resulting in a larger spectrum of themes and the promotion of competencies that are mainly covered by extracurricular learning locations and programmes. In this way schools can become a part of municipal action programmes. In addition to non-governmental organisations and scientific institutions, companies are also important cooperation partners for ESD. The cooperation with these partners in the framework of ESD can result in school partnerships, student companies and jointly managed projects and campaigns.

3.3. Issues of sustainability in teaching

When deciding which of the various issues of sustainability are to be dealt with in the lessons it is advisable to consider the following criteria:

The issues should:

- be based on the principle of sustainable development (integration of different dimensions);
- be clearly related to ESD competencies;
- be of long-term importance;
- be based on broad and differentiated knowledge from science, research and politics with reference to the specific issue;
- enable relation to the daily life of the students as well as a global perspective;
- provide promising possibilities for actions for the individual and/or the community, the people affected, politics, economy as well as science and technology;
- offer favourable conditions for self-organised learning and changing perspectives;
- be relevant to the educational objectives of students;
- offer the potential to be combined with specific competencies to be acquired during lessons.

Tested teaching contents and numerous sample exercises for the wide variety of ESD issues have been developed in the framework of the BLK ‘21’ programme and can be found in the guideline ‘ESD in secondary education – reasons, competences, samples, exercises’ and in the teaching materials for global development in the framework of ESD.
3.4. Teacher education

The implementation of ESD in teaching and school development needs the development of corresponding competencies in all phases of teacher education in these standard areas:

- teaching;
- education, consulting and accompanying;
- general vocational competencies;
- internal evaluation, development and shaping of the school.

During the first phase of their studies teachers should already acquire competencies enabling them to deal in a professional manner with the subject of sustainable development in the context of schools. The interdisciplinary perspective is not only important for didactic methodical implementation but also for a prior scientific understanding of the relevant issues. In the second phase, the basic aspects of ESD should be integrated more and more into education modules in the compulsory area. In the third phase, teachers should undergo teacher training that needs to respond to rapid global change and the modified requirements of schools.

Education for Sustainable Development can change teaching and schools in ways that enable us to appropriately react to the challenges of the future. Increasing efforts are made in all fields of school education in order to achieve the objectives of the UN Decade. KMK and DUK support schools in the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development.

ESD is like a blossoming seed that can nourish many people intellectually, economically and socially if properly cultivated and harvested.

But it can only grow with the right motivation and the willingness to overcome all obstacles, and if it adapts itself to conditions on the ground.

Claudia Harra, Lebanon
Bundestag resolution to ‘Continue the active implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development’ (2009)

Parliamentary paper 16/12450
German Bundestag – 16th legislative period – 25 Mar 2009

Proposal
by MPs Anette Hübinger, Stefan Müller (Erlangen), Michael Kretschmer, Katherina Reiche (Potsdam), Helmut Brandt, Axel E. Fischer (Karlsruhe-Land), Eberhard Gienger, Monika Grütters, Hartmut Koschyk, Carsten Müller (Braunschweig), Dr. Norbert Röttgen, Uwe Schummer, Marion Seib, Marcus Weinberg, Volker Kauder, Dr. Peter Ramsauer and of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group as well as the MPs Ulla Burchardt, Dr. Ernst Dieter Rossmann, Willi Brase, Dieter Grasedieck, Klaus Hagemann, Christel Humme, Dr. Uwe Küster, Ute Kumpf, Lothar Mark, Gesine Multhaupt, Thomas Oppermann, René Röspel, Renate Schmidt (Nürnberg), Heinz Schmitt (Landau), Swen Schulz (Spandau), Dr. Peter Struck and the SPD parliamentary group

Continued active implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development – Development of follow-up activities to the UNESCO World Conference

The Bundestag is requested to adopt:

I.

The Bundestag notes:

Education makes a significant contribution to meeting the challenges of ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development. The proclamation of the years 2005 to 2014 as the ‘UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development’ has obligated United Nations Member States to undertake intensive efforts during these years to anchor the idea of sustainable development in all educational sectors. Education for Sustainable Development aims at providing every individual with the principles, values, skills and knowledge they need to responsibly and sustainably shape the future. Education for Sustainable Development therefore also makes an important and timely contribution to the overall quality of education. It is furthermore a central component of a comprehensive innovation concept that aims to provide future generations with the skills to find appropriate responses to changing conditions in all areas of society, at as early a stage as possible.

II.

The Bundestag welcomes

· the fact that Germany is the host of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development from 31 March to 2 April 2009, held to mark the mid-term of the UN Decade. This first UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development will make it possible to cultivate an international exchange on this important future issue and develop joint strategies for global implementation of the Decade in its second half. Hosting the conference in Germany should also be seen as recognition of the special commitment of the German protagonists;

· the implementation to date of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 to 2014) at national level. Based on the National Action Plan, which was developed on the initiative of the Bundestag in 2004 and updated in 2008, all participants have made progress in anchoring the ideal of sustainable development across all areas of education. The implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany and the results obtained are internationally regarded as exemplary. The cooperation of government and civil society as partners, along with broad international networking, also play a decisive role in this.
III.

The Bundestag calls upon the Federal government to:

· Actively support the continued implementation of the UN Decade in Germany in accordance with the four goals of the National Action Plan (1. Further develop and pool activities in the field of Education for Sustainable Development and broadly spread good practice; 2. Create a network of Education for Sustainable Development protagonists; 3. Improve the public awareness of Education for Sustainable Development; and 4. Strengthen international cooperation). Education for Sustainable Development needs to be further strengthened to be widely recognised as an integrative education concept that meets the complex idea of sustainable development and its multiple dimensions. The German Commission for UNESCO is further tasked – in accordance with the resolution of 1 July 2004 (Parliamentary paper 15/3472) – with coordinating the national activities related to the World Decade Education for Sustainable Development that go beyond the governmental level, and shall be provided with sufficient financial means for this task;

· Ensure that new partners are involved in the implementation of the UN Decade and the pursuit of the Education for Sustainable Development objectives;

· Work towards ensuring that all participants emphasise how Education for Sustainable Development contributes to the overall quality of educational processes, e.g. with research projects, and thereby strengthen the embedment of Education for Sustainable Development in all sectors of education. This requires a broad social basis. Sustainable issues and skills are not to be seen as optional, additional modules, but as overarching concerns;

· Use the UNESCO World Conference to present the wide variety of activities in Germany and expand the dialogue with international protagonists;

· Take action in the following areas to mark the UNESCO World Conference: promote interest in sustainable development and Education for Sustainable Development in the entire population; establish interdisciplinary UNESCO Chairs for sustainable development; transfer research on Education for Sustainable Development and on setting up an international research network with appropriate partner countries; expand capacity for

Berlin, 25 March 2009

Volker Kauder, Dr. Peter Ramsauer and parliamentary group
Dr. Peter Struck and parliamentary group

The above proposed resolution was adopted at the 214th session of the 16th legislative period of the Bundestag on Thursday 26 March 2009 by the entire house except the Left Party (Die Linke) (Plenary proceeding report 16/214, agenda item 25a).
‘Bonn Declaration’ by the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (2009)

UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development
31 March to 2 April 2009, Bonn, Germany

Bonn Declaration

The Bonn Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development was adopted by consensus in the closing plenary

We, the participants gathered at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development held in Bonn, Germany on 31 March to 2 April 2009 issue the following statement and call for action:

1. Despite unprecedented economic growth in the 20th century, persistent poverty and inequality still affect too many people, especially those that are most vulnerable. Conflicts continue to draw attention to the need for building a culture of peace. The global financial and economic crises highlights the risks of unsustainable economic development models and practices based on short-term gains. The food crisis and world hunger are an increasingly serious issue. Unsustainable production and consumption patterns are creating ecological impacts that compromise the options of current and future generations and the sustainability of life on Earth, as climate change is showing.

2. A decade into the 21st century, the world faces substantial, complex and interlinked development and lifestyle challenges and problems. The challenges arise from values that have created unsustainable societies. The challenges are interlinked, and their resolution requires stronger political commitment and decisive action. We have the knowledge, technology and the skills available to turn the situation around. We now need to mobilise our potential to make use of all opportunities for improving action and change.

3. The impacts of unsustainable development, priorities, responsibilities and capacity differ between regions and between developing and developed countries. All countries will need to work collaboratively to ensure sustainable development now and in the future. Investment in education for sustainable development (ESD) is an investment in the future, and can be a life-saving measure, especially in post-conflict and least developed countries.

4. Building on the Jomtien, Dakar and Johannesburg promises, we need a shared commitment to education that empowers people for change. Such education should be of a quality that provides the values, knowledge, skills and competencies for sustainable living and participation in society and decent work. The Education for All agenda underlines that the availability of basic education is critical for sustainable development. It similarly emphasises pre-school learning, education for rural people and adult literacy. Achievements in literacy and numeracy contribute to educational quality, and will also be critical to the success of ESD.

5. Through education and lifelong learning we can achieve lifestyles based on economic and social justice, food security, ecological integrity, sustainable livelihoods, respect for all life forms and strong values that foster social cohesion, democracy and collective action. Gender equality, with special reference to the participation of women and girl children in education, is critical for enabling development and sustainability. Education for sustainable development is immediately necessary for securing sustainable life chances, aspirations and futures for young people.
Education for sustainable development in the 21st century

6. Education for sustainable development is setting a new direction for education and learning for all. It promotes quality education, and is inclusive of all people. It is based on values, principles and practices necessary to respond effectively to current and future challenges.

7. ESD helps societies to address different priorities and issues inter alia water, energy, climate change, disaster and risk reduction, loss of biodiversity, food crises, health risks, social vulnerability and insecurity. It is critical for the development of new economic thinking. ESD contributes to creating resilient, healthy and sustainable societies through a systemic and integrated approach. It brings new relevance, quality, meaning and purpose to education and training systems. It involves formal, non-formal and informal education contexts, and all sectors of society in a lifelong learning process.

8. ESD is based on values of justice, equity, sufficiency and responsibility. It promotes gender equality, social cohesion and poverty reduction and emphasises care, integrity and honesty, as articulated in the Earth Charter. ESD is underpinned by principles that support sustainable living, democracy and human well-being. Environmental protection and restoration, natural resource conservation and sustainable use, addressing unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and the creation of just and peaceful societies are also important principles underpinning ESD.

9. ESD emphasises creative and critical approaches, long term thinking, innovation and empowerment for dealing with uncertainty, and for solving complex problems. ESD highlights the interdependence of environment, economy, society, and cultural diversity from local to global levels, and takes account of past, present and future.

10. Linked to different needs and the concrete living conditions of people, ESD provides the skills to find solutions and draws on practices and knowledge embedded in local cultures as well as in new ideas and technologies.

Progress in the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

11. During the first five years of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, led and co-ordinated by UNESCO, many countries have made progress in implementing ESD and have designed innovative policy frameworks. A number of UN agencies, NGOs, regional bodies, and partner networks are engaged in concrete activities that support specific areas of ESD. Many people and organisations are committed and engaged in action. Efforts towards better understanding, promotion, implementation and assessment of the quality of ESD are underway. A global monitoring and evaluation framework has been designed. Efforts at the global level have been complemented by regional strategies and initiatives.

12. We recognise that education is a significant factor in improving human well-being. We now have the knowledge and experience available to significantly improve the contents, methods and purposes of education. We know how to begin re-orienting education systems to emphasise lifelong learning. Through ESD we are learning how to improve links between formal, non-formal and informal education. We know the importance of strengthening and sharing knowledge of educational change processes.

13. Science has provided us with a better knowledge of climate change and of the Earth’s life-support systems; it has gathered significant knowledge about HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, heart diseases, and other serious health challenges. We know more about natural systems, and human impacts on them, and the ways that biodiversity supports our well being. We know that current economic thinking has to change, and that there is a need to avoid unsustainable production and consumption and promote and support the emergence of ‘sustainably developed’ countries. Social science has provided insight into ethical, cultural, cognitive and affective aspects of human development, as well as sociologies of change.

14. We now need to put this knowledge into action. This is especially important to strengthen and extend the outcomes of the UN DESD in the next five years, but also to ensure longer term implementation of ESD.
A call for action

15. The progress of ESD remains unevenly distributed and requires different approaches in different contexts. In the coming years, there is a clear need for both developed and developing countries, civil society and international organisations to make significant efforts to:

At policy level in member states

a) Promote ESD’s contribution to all of education and to achieving quality education, with particular regard to fostering the linkages between ESD and EFA within a coherent and systemic approach. Foster the goals of the ESD agenda in international fora and at the national level.

b) Increase public awareness and understanding about sustainable development and ESD, by mainstreaming and expanding the learning and insights gained in the first 5 years of the UN DESD into public awareness policies and programmes and various forms of informal learning. This should include promoting the role and contribution of the media for fostering public awareness and understanding of sustainability issues. It should also include capacity-building of media professionals.

c) Mobilize adequate resources and funding in favour of ESD, in particular through integrating ESD into national development policy and budgetary frameworks, into UN common country programming processes and other country-level policy frameworks (such as sector-wide approaches), as well as into EFA and MDG initiatives. Promote and include ESD in the priorities of foundations and donors.

d) Re-orient education and training systems to address sustainability concerns through coherent policies at national and local levels. Develop and implement ESD policies through co-ordinated inter-sectoral/inter-ministerial approaches that also involve business and the corporate sector, civil society, local communities and the scientific community.

e) Develop and strengthen existing international, regional and national enabling mechanisms and cooperation for ESD that respect cultural diversity. Establish regional and country-level committees, networks and communities of practice for ESD that strengthen local-national, and national-global links, and that enhance North-South-South and South-South co-operation.

At practice level

f) Support the incorporation of sustainable development issues using an integrated and systemic approach in formal education as well as in non-formal and informal education at all levels, in particular through the development of effective pedagogical approaches, teacher education, teaching practice, curricula, learning materials, and education leadership development, and also by recognizing the significant contribution of non-formal education and informal learning as well as vocational and work-place learning. Sustainable development is a cross cutting theme with relevance to all disciplines and sectors.

g) Reorient curriculum and teacher education programmes to integrate ESD into both pre-service and in-service programmes. Support teacher education institutions, teachers and professors to network, develop, and research sound pedagogical practice. Specifically support teachers to develop ESD strategies that can work with large class sizes, and to evaluate ESD learning processes.

h) Promote evidence-informed policy dialogue on ESD, drawing upon relevant research, monitoring and evaluation strategies, and the sharing and recognition of good practices. Develop national ESD indicators that inform effective implementation and review of ESD outcomes and processes.

i) Develop and extend ESD partnerships to integrate ESD into training, vocational education and workplace learning by involving civil society, public and private sectors, NGOs, and development partners. ESD should become an integral part of the training of leaders in business, industry, trade union, non-profit, voluntary organizations, and the public services. Re-orient TVET programmes to include ESD.

j) Involve youth in the design and implementation of ESD. Engage the commitment, solidarity and potential of youth and their organisations and networks in enhancing ESD. Foster young people’s ownership of ESD questions and issues.

k) Enhance the major contribution and key role of civil society in stimulating debate and public participation, and initiating ESD actions. Explore ways to further this involvement and commitment.
l) Value and give due recognition to the important contribution of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge systems for ESD and value different cultural contributions in promoting ESD.

m) ESD should actively promote gender equality, as well as create conditions and strategies that enable women to share knowledge and experience of bringing about social change and human well-being.

n) Develop knowledge through ESD networking. Identify and support schools, universities and other higher education and research institutions, education centres and education networks that could serve as centres of expertise and innovation that develop and share knowledge, and create resources for ESD. Explore the potential of specific geographical and bioregional sites which can serve as spatially defined ‘laboratories’ for ESD.

o) Encourage and enhance scientific excellence, research and new knowledge development for ESD through the involvement of higher education institutions and research networks in ESD. Mobilise the core functions of universities: teaching, research and community engagement to strengthen global and local knowledge of ESD, and utilise the UNESCO ESD Chairs and UNESCO programme networks in this process. Establish institutional and organisational structures that facilitate flexibility, student participation, and multi-disciplinary programmes and develop model projects that can respond to the complexity and urgency of ESD. Reward structures should be developed and implemented to support ESD initiatives and research in higher education.

p) Develop institutional mechanisms during the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and other ongoing Decades as the UN Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’ that will ensure that ESD continues to be implemented beyond those Decades.

q) Engage the expertise available within the UN system to strengthen ESD in key sustainable development conventions for example those focussing on biodiversity, climate change, desertification and intangible cultural heritage.

r) Intensify efforts in education and training systems to address critical and urgent sustainability challenges such as climate change, water and food security by developing specific action plans and/or programmes within the UN DESD umbrella and partnership framework.

16. The participants in the 2009 World ESD Conference request UNESCO, as lead agency responsible for the UN DESD, to:

a) Enhance its leadership and co-ordination role for UN DESD based on the International Implementation Scheme in co-operation with other UN agencies and programmes such as UNEP, UNU, the EFA convening agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank) - amongst others, and incorporate ESD into ‘one UN’ strategies at country level, particularly through UNDAF processes.

b) Support member states and other partners in the implementation of the UN DESD, particularly through upstream capacity-building and policy advice on the development of coherent national strategies, monitoring and evaluation, recognising and sharing good practices on ESD, advocacy and global partnership development, with due consideration to post-conflict and least developed countries.

c) Represent and/or promote the ESD agenda in other major education and development forums such as international conferences and negotiations such as the G8, G20, Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, EFA High-Level Group, UN Chief Executives Board, and UNESCO world conferences (amongst other ongoing events and activities).

d) Utilize the expertise that exists within UNESCO biosphere reserves, world heritage sites and other science, culture and education programmes, such as TTISSA (Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa), ASPnet schools and LIFE (Literacy Initiative for Empowerment) to further ESD objectives and ensure that key priorities for ESD are integrated into longer term programmes and strategies within UNESCO.

e) Promote ESD-related research through UNESCO’s programmes in order to enhance the quality and evidence-base of ESD. Further develop the global monitoring and evaluation system to evaluate ESD and take initiatives to develop international strategies and practices that can lead to a successful conclusion of the UNDESD with visible and concrete outcomes.

f) Highlight the relevance and importance of education and training in the UN Summit on Climate Change (COP 15) in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009 in consultation and co-operation with other partners.
g) Intensify efforts and initiatives to put climate change education higher on the international agenda, in the framework of the DESD, in the context of UNESCO’s strategy for action on climate change, and as a component of UN-wide action.

17. Furthermore, the participants in this conference undertake to work towards implementation of this Declaration.

18. The participants encourage the mobilization of adequate funding in support of the recommendations contained in this Declaration.

19. The participants in the World ESD Conference express their gratitude to the German government for hosting this conference, and welcome the intention announced by the Government of Japan to host jointly with UNESCO the end-of-decade world conference on ESD.

For me ESD is a compass for achieving quality education.

Magali Decloedt, Belgium

What is ESD for me?
Universities for sustainable development

Declaration by the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) and the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) on Higher Education for Sustainable Development – A contribution to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

Resolution adopted by the 7th General Meeting of the German Rectors’ Conference on 24 November 2009

Resolution by the Executive Committee of the German Commission for UNESCO on 22 January 2010

Preamble

As a commitment to conserving our natural resources, the principle of sustainability has a long tradition. In its modern form – decisively shaped by the UN “Brundtland-Commission” report (1987) – ‘sustainability’ equally reflects the complexity of material and social living conditions and their interlinkage in global contexts and dependencies, and finds – in normative terms – its expression in the concept of ‘sustainable development’ as an imperative, namely “[humanity] meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In the global context, this not only means ‘generational equity’, but also the goal of ‘global justice’ in the distribution and development of resources, affluence and quality of life, so that today’s societies do not live at the expense of future generations and one region of the world does not do so at the expense of other world regions. Building on the basis of the ‘Brundtland Report’, the community of states worldwide has since committed itself in a series of international conferences led by the UN to actively promoting the principle of sustainability in all areas, both national and international, and to aligning political action accordingly. The ‘Agenda 21’ (‘Rio Conference’, 1992) marks the beginning of intensive, public debates on the concept of sustainability and a wide range of different action programmes at national level. In 2002, the ‘World Summit on Sustainable Development’ (‘Johannesburg Conference’), emphasised the interrelationship between sustainability and education in the continuation of the action programme after taking stock of the national activities, and occasioned the UN to declare the period from 2005 to 2014 as the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Universities and higher education institutions are social institutions which essentially form the core of the science system with their three activity fields: Research, Teaching and Services. Universities are responsible for contributing to the future-oriented development of society. Future-oriented development is today led by the guideline of ‘Sustainability’. In Germany, this is already expressed not only in the constitutional provisions as a national ‘state objective’ (Article 20a GG) but also in the Higher Education Acts adopted by the individual Federal states. In realising sustainable development in the sense of this guideline, the universities – both institutionally as well as individually for all those working at these – have an exceptionally important role to play, because sustainable development needs social acceptance, which has to be supported and advanced through Education for Sustainable Development so as to initiate and embed the required change processes in individual directions and actions in society as a whole.

Universities, in their capacity as education facilities for training future decision-makers, play a decisive role.
accordance with the problem at hand and therefore represent parts of the internationality of universities. With their network of international relations, universities have a worldwide infrastructure at their disposal, which needs to be used for tasks in the field of sustainable development. By engaging in international collaboration in the service of Education for Sustainable Development, universities can, both in teaching and in learning, as well as in research with a corresponding thematic-contextual focus, link up with established forms of international collaboration and continue to expand these, above all in teaching and learning.

Universities are called upon to continue to consolidate these approaches so as to transform Education for Sustainable Development into a constitutive element in all their activity areas. Universities are called upon to continue to consolidate these approaches so as to transform Education for Sustainable Development into a constitutive element in all their activity areas.

II.

With this declaration, the ‘German Rectors’ Conference’ and the ‘German Commission for UNESCO’ take up both the demands made by the Confederation of European Union Rectors’ Conference in 1994, with which the universities were called upon to organise themselves in line with the guidelines of sustainable development, as well as with the call made by the European ministers responsible for higher education to the universities on the occasion of the Bologna follow-up conference held in Bergen in May 2005, to consider the guidelines of sustainable development as an element in the creation of a European Higher Education Area. The ‘German Rectors’ Conference’ and the ‘German Commission for UNESCO’ welcome the initiatives and programmes with which universities have already – either individually or in various forms of collaboration – followed the guideline of sustainability, both in the conceptional elaboration as well as in the practical implementation in fields of teaching and learning, research, services, and also in their institutional-administrative working practices.

Universities are called upon to continue to consolidate these approaches so as to transform Education for Sustainable Development into a constitutive element in all their activity areas.

III.

Wherever appropriate in research and knowledge transfer, subject-specific specialisations should be combined with cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives in order to take the complex interactions between humanity and environment into account. Individually and in social action fields, the global problems of human cohabitation can only be meaningfully explored when the findings and expertise are more strongly combined in the humanities, economics, social and behavioural sciences and well as in the natural sciences and engineering.

In teaching and learning as well as in continuing training and professional development, universities should promote knowledge and competences of their students, thereby enabling them to recognise and assess problems of sustainable develop-
ment in interdisciplinary contexts, so that in their respective disciplines and professional working contexts they are kept informed and can act with responsibility. Academic and special knowledge must join together with communicative competence to create participative decision-making and conflict-solving processes. The combination of research and teaching and cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary study opportunities plays a key role.

Institutionally, universities should also orientate their internal working practices and procedural processes in line with the guiding principle of sustainability. Efficient resource management, energy efficient university construction, extensive use of public transport by university staff and members as well as consideration of the principles of fair trade when making acquisitions and purchases, are fields in which universities can act as role models. University executives are called upon here to communicate the principle of sustainability to all members of the university as basis for their work with reference to individual work areas.

With a comprehensive orientation towards the guideline of sustainability and the integration of the specified principles of research, teaching and services in Education for Sustainable Development, universities can prove their important and leading role and further consolidate their position as workshops of the future for social development.

The German Rectors’ Conference is a voluntary association of public and state-recognised universities in Germany.

The German Commission for UNESCO is an intermediary organisation for Germany’s foreign cultural and educational policy. On the basis of a unanimous resolution by the German Bundestag and with the support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the German Commission for UNESCO coordinates the implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany.

7 As a forum of self-organisation for the exchange of information and experience about single activities, especially of non-governmental stakeholders, the Round Table of the UN Decade Education for Sustainable Development had been established by the "National Committee of the UN Decade" on behalf of the German Commission for the UNESCO (DUC). At the conference "Implementation of Sustainability at Universities" at the TU Darmstadt 6–7 May 2009, a follow-up event to the previous year’s event, the Round Table’s working group ‘Universities and Sustainability’ was formed and institutionalised. At European level, the EU is pursuing the Strategy on Sustainable Development adopted by the European Council in 2006, with the relevant research fields and the activities promoted and supported by education institutions http://iec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index_de.htm and http://iec.europa.eu/sustainable/civil_society/index_de.htm.
9 On this, see the proposals for the new, contextual activity areas directed towards tasks of sustainable development of joint international study programmes of the “International Commission on Education for Sustainable Development Practice”.
12 Cf. e.g. the Lübeck Declaration "Universities and Sustainability" of the conference of the Northern German Alliance to support the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (INU) 2005–2014 (NUN), Lübeck, 23–24 November 2005 (http://www.fh-cow.de/de/downloads/18/luebeckererklaerung.pdf) as well as documents of the conference "Implementation of Sustainability at Universities" organized by Hochschulinformationssystem Hannover (HIS) and TU Darmstadt at TU Darmstadt, 18–20 June 2008 (www.his.de/publikation/seminar/Nachhaltigkeit_062008).
Discussion paper by the DUK on ‘Delivering Future Capacity in the Kindergarten’ (2010)

Delivering future capacity in the kindergarten: giving children a stronger role, advancing sustainable development

A contribution to the discussion by the German Commission for UNESCO within the scope of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014)

Addressing those responsible for early-childhood education in the Federal and state governments, in local communities, non-governmental organisations and churches, as well as child carers

1. Education for Sustainable Development aims to provide each individual with an opportunity to acquire the values, competences and knowledge required to be able to create a future viable world, independently and autonomously. To promote this educational concept worldwide, the United Nations declared the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 to 2014). Education for Sustainable Development must begin to form in early childhood, even though it will continue to be significant across the whole lifespan.

2. Early childhood is a particularly sensitive phase in a child’s physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. What humans acquire in early childhood in terms of basic skills, values and convictions plays a major role in how they will behave towards themselves, towards others and towards their environment in their further life. The principles of Education for Sustainable Development, such as the adoption of a situation, action and participation focused approach oriented towards integral and holistic, self-organisation and cooperation must, in this respect, be seen as key elements of modern educational theory and action.

3. Contemporary kindergarten education respects the protected space that childhood is – and simultaneously creates points of reference towards the life world. Children must not be weighed down by the problems of unsustainable developments for which adults are responsible; nevertheless, they must be accompanied appropriately as they proceed to learn about the world and its complex realities. Taking children seriously today, in their childhood, means giving them the opportunity to discover the enormous prospects that are open to them in a world that is developing ever more dynamically and that is becoming culturally ever wider and diverse so that they, too, can make their contribution. They must be given the opportunity to experience being ‘small world citizens’.

4. Education for Sustainable Development offers early-childhood education a wide range of approaches and opportunities for realising its educational mission in a spirited manner:

   a. Discovering and shaping the world: By coming to terms with topics of relevance to the future, such as biological diversity, water, climate, energy, a place to live, consumerism, clothing, health and nutrition, children advance and strengthen their skills and abilities in respect of participation and empathy, and experience that the actions they take are of importance.

   b. Learning in projects: Education for Sustainable Development not only maintains close contacts with the life world via its objects and subject matter, but also promotes ‘learning in real situations’ and projects. Project work encourages the ability to organise oneself, a sense of community, negotiating and decision-making processes, and is particularly suited to fostering a child’s learning.

   c. Value based education: Children have an affinity for categorising the world along fundamental values. Education for Sustainable Development offers motivational access points for this. Acquiring facts about others and the environment here never occurs separately from the delivery of fundamental value orientations which make it possible to live together in the future in respect and tolerance.

   d. Language skills and communication: Education for Sustainable Development delivers the skills and competences needed for engaging in participation and so consolidates the commu-
4. When revising the education plans, Education for Sustainable Development must be given broader scope and range in its capacity as a guideline. Where Education for Sustainable Development is not explicitly mentioned, it should be seen as one of the key guidelines in the practical implementation of the plans.

5. How Education for Sustainable Development can be beneficially formed and integrated into early-childhood education is already exemplified by a range of different activities. The German Commission for UNESCO welcomes these activities. It considers the further integration of Education for Sustainable Development into early-childhood education to be necessary. The education and orientation plans pursued by the Federal states in the elementary sector, of which some are being revised now, reveal numerous access points for Education for Sustainable Development. However, it is also apparent that Education for Sustainable Development has generally not yet been sufficiently integrated into the education planning. When revising the education plans, Education for Sustainable Development must be given broader scope and range in its capacity as a guideline. Where Education for Sustainable Development is not explicitly mentioned, it should be seen as one of the key guidelines in the practical implementation of the plans.

6. The great potential that lies in Education for Sustainable Development for early-childhood education means that it is already necessary to acquaint trainee child carers with the concept of Education for Sustainable Development during their training and to continue to provide in-service and professional development courses for child carers on the contents and methods of sustainability-relevant education. The current professionalisation of child-care training offers good opportunities for this.

7. Opportunities for daytime child care centres are available among the educational offerings provided here and extend beyond the preoccupation with sustainability-relevant topics. Daytime child care facilities can become significant pilot sites for a future viable local community, if they focus all their activities in line with the principles.
of sustainable development. This applies, for example, to the type of management, the choice of suppliers and the design of buildings and grounds.

8. Besides child carers, the authorities responsible for providing child care facilities bear particular responsibility for implementing Education for Sustainable Development. The wide-ranging creative freedoms open to individual providers gives them the opportunity to use the innovative potential of Education for Sustainable Development for a forward-looking, high-quality education. This also calls for dialogue between the providers on the principle of sustainable development.


The study includes, inter alia, that: (1) Education plans which reflect contents, methods and working practices that can be seen as elements of Education for Sustainable Development, lack information on how specifically to organise and arrange this. (2) In topics such as »nutrition and health«, »water« or »energy«, which many education plans address, the associated potential for promoting sustainable educational approaches is not maximised. (3) Express reference to Education for Sustainable Development has only been found in very few education plans. (4) Although many education plans recommend cooperation with regional child care facilities in the sense of community building, environmental protection, nature conservation and consumer associations are only mentioned in one of the education plans.


3 An example is provided by Leuchtpol of Arbeitsgemeinschaft Natur- und Umweltbildung Bundesverband e.V., »KiTa 21« of the Save-Our-Future Umweltsstiftung Hamburg; »Leben gestalten lernen« of Landesbund für Vogelschutz in Bayern; Continuing training as a specialist for Education for Sustainable Development »Fachkraft Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung« maintained by Evangelische Landjugendakademie Altenkirchen, Stiftung Ökologie und Landbau und Lokale Agenda 21 Trier on behalf of Landeszentrall für Umweltaufklärung Rheinland Pfalz.


The study includes, inter alia, that: (1) Education plans which reflect contents, methods and working practices that can be seen as elements of Education for Sustainable Development, lack information on how specifically to organise and arrange this. (2) In topics such as »nutrition and health«, »water« or »energy«, which many education plans address, the associated potential for promoting sustainable educational approaches is not maximised. (3) Express reference to Education for Sustainable Development has only been found in very few education plans. (4) Although many education plans recommend cooperation with regional child care facilities in the sense of community building, environmental protection, nature conservation and consumer associations are only mentioned in one of the education plans.
Policy paper on ‘Biological Diversity and Education for Sustainable Development’ (2010)

Extract from ‘Biological diversity and Education for Sustainable Development: key topics and starting points for educational programmes.’ Produced by the Working Group on Biological Diversity established by the Round Table of the UN Decade, Bonn 2010, pp. 6–9 and 25–30. The full publication is available for download at www.bne-portal.de/dekade-publikationen.

1 Introduction

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In Germany this convention was implemented in November 2007 as the National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS). In this context biological diversity encompasses species diversity, genetic diversity within species and habitat diversity. In addition to the conservation of biodiversity, both documents also call for the sustainable use of biological resources, fair access to them and equitable sharing of the benefits and drawbacks arising from their use.

Education plays an important part in the implementation of these objectives. The importance of education was significantly boosted by the declaration of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014), in which biological diversity is named as a priority issue. The international mid-term conference of the UN Decade, which was held in Bonn in 2009, emphasised the importance of safeguarding biological diversity as an educational task of the world community. In addition, biological diversity is quoted as a key issue in the Bonn Declaration produced by the participants of the world conference: the decline in species diversity and the reduction in cultural diversity are mentioned as important problem areas; stress is laid on the importance of protected areas, especially biosphere reserves, for the conservation of biological diversity and as places for Education for Sustainable Development (Espinosa 2009; Naughton-Treves et al. 2005). Biosphere Reserves are “representative landscapes, designated for the purpose of ecosystem conservation, and as areas where sustainable economic use of the landscape should be combined with preservation of the population’s cultural identity.” (EUROPARC Germany 2007: 5). […]

Transmitting understanding in an educational context of the complex problems and possible solutions associated with the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and with equitable benefit-sharing is no easy task. It involves establishing a deep-rooted awareness of the multifaceted phenomena involved, their causes and the links between them. It is particularly important to encourage the development of values and attitudes relating to sustainable development and to promote the acquisition of the necessary skills and willingness to act. The starting point for greater willingness to take responsibility for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is the analysis of the relationship between humans and the natural environment. […]

Education for Sustainable Development should aim to promote an understanding of nature that sees nature as the foundation of human life, which needs to be both conserved and used. Nature and culture should not be perceived as separate or even opposing areas; instead, the fundamental ways in which they interlink and interact must be recognised and evaluated […]. By building on such an understanding of relationships between humans and the natural environment, life on the planet can be shaped sustainably now and in the future. That involves heeding the natural coherence of life, using resources responsibly, observing human rights and striving for global fairness in our ‘one world’.

Key questions for educational processes therefore include:

- What is the meaning/value of biological diversity for different social groups?
- How do such values arise?
- What ways of using biological diversity are people familiar with?
- To what extent do we feel responsible for the sustainable conservation of natural resources?

[…] In this context the following fact is always of fundamental importance: Humans are dependent upon the biosphere if they are to survive –
however, the increasing overuse of the biosphere by a growing number of people on this planet means that a new way of managing its vital resources is now essential.

A useful means of structuring and evaluating action objectives is the system of ‘differentiated intensities of use’ proposed by W. Haber (1984, 1998; see also WBGU 2001); this moves away from a rigid separation of conservation and use, instead recommending integration of these two objectives. Each of the objectives is weighted differently in different situations. Under ‘conservation before use’ valuable areas would be designated as protected areas. ‘Conservation through use’ could involve use through low-impact or sustainable tourism, in which human usage interests are balanced against the conservation requirements of a landscape or resource. In the category ‘conservation despite use’ the emphasis would be on economic use. It should be borne in mind, though, that the basis of economic use (fertile soils, regions for mass tourism) also needs to be maintained and cared for.

2 Key topics

The main risks to biological diversity include the modification and overuse of habitats, general environmental pollution, the spread of ‘alien’ (invasive) species and climate change. In the light of this the Biological Diversity Working Group has identified the following four key topics as a basis for highlighting the challenges associated with the conservation of biological diversity in the context of Education for Sustainable Development:

- habitat diversity
- services of nature
- climate change and biological diversity
- consumption and biological diversity.

These key topics will be used to illustrate how ‘learning sustainability’ can take place at several levels and be considered from various perspectives. They are relevant both to each and every individual and his/her actions and to a wide range of social groups, political organisations, administrative bodies, companies and business associations. Interactions between these levels provide many educationally valuable opportunities for examining individual issues, involving a range of third parties in the educational work, engaging in critical (self-)reflection and developing and implementing shared plans for the protection and maintenance of biological diversity. […]

3 Starting points and didactic challenges for educational programmes

[…]The] issue of biological diversity is a highly complex one involving varied and intricate interactions […]. At the same time, however, the preceding discussion suggests areas – such as nutrition, transport, leisure – in which it is entirely feasible to elaborate specific suggestions for sustainable behaviour. […]

Education for Sustainable Development is a discovery and learning process for everyone involved. Education and information programmes relating to biological diversity therefore cannot be developed and implemented on the basis of a standard structure or an educational formula; they must be individually designed for different educational settings and age groups. The planning of educational programmes must take account of the intended age group(s), reflect the specific context (circumstances affecting the specific situation and specific physical and social environment) and relate to the action area under consideration. Relevant experts and stakeholders involved in different activities within society – such as culture, the church, sport, welfare and business – should also be involved in the planning and running of educational programmes as appropriate. In this way different forms of knowledge, different types of experience and different opinions can be brought together and new ‘learning landscapes’ can be developed; these may involve new learning situations such as the weekly market, the Sunday walk or a visit to a farm […].

According to the psychology of learning, the most effective learning programmes are those that enable students to engage actively and in a hands-on way with the material and that aim to strengthen the individual’s problemsolving abilities. Teaching and learning processes will fail in their purpose if students do not accept the problems being described as their own learning problem, because they do not expect the learning outcomes to expand their action options and life opportunities in any way. This means, therefore, that the selected problem area should involve a central local or global key topic relating to the importance of biological diversity and should be relevant to the everyday life of the students. However, wherever possible the perspective from the local to the global and back again should be borne in mind and explored.
The acquisition of factual knowledge alone is of little or no value in changing attitudes and action patterns. While knowledge of the facts about biological diversity is a necessary condition, it is only understanding of the complex interactions and global connections (system knowledge) that provides a sufficient basis for future competent involvement in decisions. To this must be added the ability to reflect on (cultural) values and on ethical issues of (intra- and intergenerational) distributive justice (orientation knowledge). In addition, people need to be helped to acquire information about alternative forms of action at both personal and societal level (action knowledge), so that they can understand the implications for their own everyday behaviour [...] It is also useful to impart predictive knowledge, since the effects of one’s own positive or negative actions are often regarded as insignificant or may be far removed in either space or time; they therefore cannot be experienced directly and via one’s own senses. These facts have far-reaching implications for judgement formation and the perception and evaluation of risk in relation to the loss of biological diversity.

Over and above knowledge of the various types described above, there are other factors to be taken into account when supporting decisions and actions that relate to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. These other factors include:

- the importance of cultural and groupspecific norms and values (e.g. image of nature) for the acceptance of conservation conditions or changed conditions of consumption,
- infrastructure elements (e.g. a school garden, good range of organic food) and incentives (e.g. for low-impact tourism), and also
- the general conditions and distribution of responsibilities in the various areas of politics, business, administration and institutions (e.g. legislation).

As quality criteria for Education for Sustainable Development, various questions and points of view have been formulated (Adomßent & Stoltenberg 2011; de Haan n.d., NBBW 2008) that are of importance for the formation of action and organisational skills in the context of sustainable development processes. They relate in particular to the following areas:

- **People’s relationship to nature**
  The relationship between people and nature is relevant to the way in which nature is treated; it is manifested in behaviour, which may involve the conservation and use of nature or its destruction. Our ideas of nature, our perceptions, interpretations and evaluations – e.g. of nature as ‘natural’ in the sense of untouched and wild or simply ‘left to nature’ – also have a crucial influence on the way we relate to nature and are reflected in everyday actions. Creating awareness of images of nature (see above) – whether these images are held by whole cultures and societies, by specific (sub)groups and roles or by individuals – is therefore an important part of the education process.

Since reshaping and consolidating the relationship between humans and nature is a large-scale social and cultural task, educational programmes should also help to develop skills that are at risk of being lost from the everyday lives of many people. These skills include the ability to perceive, to engage with nature and with a diverse flora and fauna and to feel for oneself. What do locally grown, freshly harvested fruit and vegetables taste like? How do I feel after a tasty meal made with a small number of ingredients from the region? What is the effect on quality of life of a school garden that we have planned and laid out together? What do I know about the attitudes and preferences of others in relating to nature? Such experiences provide new ways of approaching the relationship between humans and nature and that between people in nature.

- **Ethical issues and standards**
  Education processes should increase participants’ awareness of the diversity of the natural foundations of life (biodiversity) and the carrying capacity of our planet and should encourage reflection on conservation and use. It is therefore important to address not only ethical issues and standards relating to human responsibility but also questions of human dignity and human rights, issues of intra- and intergenerational fairness and the distribution of life opportunities and quality of life in different parts of the world. To whom does biological diversity belong? What does global fairness mean in relation to the conservation and use of biological diversity?

- **Understanding retintity: learning to think and act in terms of connections**
  Complexity is a hallmark of the core problems of global change and hence of the key topics of sustainable development; this must be described and explained in teaching and learning situations. At the same time the problems selected
for teaching purposes must be made didactically ‘manageable’ and geared to the specific circumstances and expectations of the learning group. The ‘sustainability square’ (Stoltenberg & Michelsen 1999) can be used as an aid in helping people to understand complexity. The square divides the actions of society into four areas – ecological, economic, social and cultural – for analytic purposes. It provides a means of describing approaches to biological diversity in more detail and of identifying and reflecting on situations in which conflict plays a part (see also BMZ & KMK 2008). In this way the links between the conservation of biological diversity and its sustainable use can also be explored.

- **Global cause-and-effect relationships and global responsibility**

Following on from the central core problems of global change that affect and also endanger human life (see Section 1), one of the tasks of educational events should be to explore global aspects of the subject of biological diversity. What global developments and circumstances affect biodiversity? Are the general conditions in place for global action through international agreements? What regulations are there at national level? What political action should be taken in the light of global responsibility (cf. Overwien & Rathenow 2009)? Another task, though, is to explore the local situation with its global connections. In what ways are the global cause-and-effect relationships that involve the increasing loss of biological diversity noticeable at regional level? And also: How do we perceive the loss of biological diversity at regional and local level and how do we evaluate it? Do these evaluations affect our consumption and leisure decisions (e.g. tourism)?

- **Specific opportunities for action as a contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity**

Since Education for Sustainable Development aims to encourage people to become actively and responsibly involved in sustainable processes, participants should reflect on how they themselves can work with others to influence particular issues. Education programmes should therefore promote initiative and create opportunities for participation.

There are many openings for concrete action with regard to the use and conservation of biological diversity. It is extremely important to help individuals and groups develop a realistic outlook. Identifying opportunities for action that are relatively easy to implement and do not require an extensive input of time or money (‘lowcost actions’) can be a first step towards behavioural change. This can be particularly useful since it is commonly felt that in the area of political lobbying or individual consumption decisions individual actions achieve only a minimal impact and that even taken as a whole they are therefore inadequate. This feeling applies both to possible harm arising from an action and to efforts to make a positive contribution, e.g. to conservation of the habitat of an endangered species. Perceptions and judgements of this type must be taken seriously and worked on, and their important role in the adoption of more sustainable modes of action must be highlighted […]. With regard to realistic options for action it is also necessary to counter popular arguments. For example, lack of time and/or material resources is often quoted as a reason for non-sustainable consumption behaviour. There are, however, many opportunities for action that conserve resources without necessarily in-
volving significant time and/or financial expense. People may be motivated by examples that show that individual consumer decisions and consumption preferences lead or have led to changes in production processes.

The fundamental aim must be to identify or develop solutions that are positive and encouraging. It is even more effective if opportunities for action are implemented and tested by a group of people working together. For example, a group of school students can, for one or two weeks, try out a diet that actively contributes to climate change mitigation and provides an experience of the varied tastes associated with biological diversity. This can lead to many surprises, new insights, the dismantling of prejudices and engagement with contradictory situations and information.

In the context of action opportunities as a contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity it is also important to address individual (i.e. person-related) conditions, social conditions (e.g. group norms) and external conditions (e.g. existing or lacking openings for action, political and legal circumstances). These conditions must be incorporated into the education process and analysed, and students must become aware of their effects. These are key preconditions for the necessary modification of behaviour and for permanent lifestyle change conducive to sustainable development.

The chosen ways of working should, as far as possible, involve self-directed learning processes, as in student companies [...] Similarly, events should arouse participants’ interest in complex situations and encourage them to think through all the implications; they should not result in people being demotivated or deterred by intricate scenarios.

Competitions, such as the ‘Discover Diversity!’ competition for schoolchildren and young people (www.entdecke-die-vielfalt.de), can also be motivating and encourage deeper involvement. It is useful to incorporate case studies and to follow up any work with a presentation of the results and the cause-and-effect relationships identified. This can be done by using posters, mind maps or role play. Real-life encounters at local/regional level through field trips and excursions also form part of the successful educational process. These might include visits to botanical gardens, zoos, research institutions or a weekly market; other opportunities are provided by (school) farms or guided city tours offering a critical perspective on consumption. A variety of approaches can be adopted using interviews, discussions between people of different generations and simulation and planning games. Changes in perspective can be brought about by drawing on the experience and stories of people in other parts of the world or through role play (see e.g. www.34plus.de/unterricht/rollenspiel-klimapolitik.html), drama [...] and fantasy journeys.

Finally, for guidance purposes it is worth mentioning some of the key quality criteria that are of importance when addressing the issues and challenges of biological diversity in the context of Education for Sustainable Development and that clearly promote the formation of action and organisational skills (cf. de Haan 2008, Adomßent & Stoltenberg 2011). It should be noted that this checklist needs to be extended and sorted according to subject and target group:

- Does the issue represent a key local or global theme of (non-)sustainable use of biological diversity?
- Is the connection between the conservation of biological diversity and its use addressed?
- Are aspects of global fairness considered?
- Are global connections highlighted in connection with the chosen issue and are these global connections also linked to local aspects?
- Are relationships between humans and nature addressed and reflected on from the point of view of biological diversity?
- Are links between the selected issue and the everyday lives (both private and work-related) of the participants discussed and reflected on?
- Does the educational work involve methodological approaches that not only facilitate the acquisition of knowledge but also specifically address attitudes, values and opportunities for action?
- Is opportunity provided to explore cultural influences on ways of looking at and evaluating biological diversity (e.g. the Eurocentric perspective)?
- Are attempts made to understand the perspective of others (outside one’s own sub-group or one’s own country/nation) and to reflect on the significance and evaluation of biological diversity from this perspective?
- Are positive, encouraging solutions and promising options for action identified and where possible tried out?
- Does the education programme provide opportunities for initiative and participation?
List of references


A strategy aiming at achieving sustainability based only on political regulation, technical innovation and economic incentives is not sufficient. Sustainable development requires a comprehensive change in mindset and the acquisition by all citizens of forward-looking competencies in accordance with fundamental values – such as intergenerational and global justice – which only education can bring about. The 1992 Rio Conference and the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on sustainable development recognized that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) represents a significant path towards achieving sustainability.

Working towards sustainable development is always learning for sustainable development which is why ESD aims to enabling everyone to acquire the values, competences, knowledge and skills required for engineering sustainable societies and green economies today and tomorrow. The goal of the DESD is to integrate Education for Sustainable Development throughout educational systems and learning contexts. This is in accordance with Chapter 36 of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration, the UN General Assembly Resolution 57/254 as well as the ‘Bonn Declaration’ adopted at the UNESCO World Conference on education for sustainable development held in 2009 in Bonn, Germany.

The particular importance of ESD in the framework of a green economy was recognized in the joint statement by Heads of UN agencies on Green Economy from 2009 ‘Green Economy: A Transformation to Address Multiple Crises’: “The shift towards a green economy requires education for sustainable development including training in new job skills and newly required health systems.” ESD contributes to poverty eradication and the shift towards a green economy through the acquisition of so-called green skills but also thanks to the promotion of more general competencies like long-term and critical thinking, interdisciplinary approaches to problem-solving as well as the ability to act autonomously and participate in social decision-making processes. ESD encourages and supports life-long learning. Education for Sustainable Development doesn’t happen only from 6 years old on and until the learner leaves the formal education system. It starts during the early childhood where the basis for future learning is laid out and continues in non-formal and informal settings during the entire work life and beyond.

Political decision makers at national and international levels will only be in a position to commit to sustainable development in the long term if citizens recognize the importance of this societal objective and therefore support and requests further efforts in the field of sustainable development. ESD has an essential role to play in this regard and needs to be highlighted at the Rio + 20 Conference. The German National Committee for the DESD calls for the outcome document of the Conference to integrate ESD – not only as example for inter-sectoral themes but as a main strategy for achieving sustainability and green economies. The German National Committee further calls upon the UN system and Members States to use the opportunity of the Rio + 20 Conference to discuss and plan follow-up activities to the UN Decade of ESD beyond 2014.

The German National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was appointed by the German National Commission for UNESCO on the basis of a unanimous resolution by the Bundestag. The National Committee is the main decisional body for the national implementation of the DESD in Germany.
How is the Decade being implemented in Germany?

The institutional framework

The strategic design and implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is a multi-stakeholder process. Many protagonists from politics, educational practice, science, business, government, NGOs and the media are involved. The German Commission for UNESCO coordinates the implementation of the Decade in Germany on behalf of the Federal government. It has appointed a National Committee as central steering and coordinating body and established a coordination centre funded by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research. The institutional framework in detail:

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Within the Federal government, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is leading the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. It oversees all government tasks related to Germany’s implementation of the UN Decade within its area of responsibility. The BMBF has tasked the German Commission for UNESCO with coordinating Germany’s implementation of the Decade, involving civil society and linking Germany’s activities internationally, and has equipped it with the funds to do so.

German Commission for UNESCO

The United Nations proclaimed the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development following the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, and designated the United Nations specialist organisation for education, science, culture and communication (UNESCO) the lead agency for the Decade. UNESCO is responsible for the international coordination of the World Decade. In Germany, the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) coordinates the national activities “related to the World Decade that go beyond direct governmental action”, based on a unanimous resolution by the German Bundestag of 1 July 2004. The DUK has appointed a National Committee for this. With support from the BMBF it has established a German coordination centre for the UN Decade, consisting of a secretariat in Bonn and an office with the National Committee Chairman in Berlin.

The German Commission for UNESCO is an intermediary organisation for Germany’s foreign cultural and educational policy and has the statutory responsibility of advising the Federal government, Parliament, Federal states and civil society in UNESCO matters, and supporting the implementation of UNESCO’s programmes in Germany.
National Committee

The German Commission for UNESCO appointed the ‘National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development’ as an advisory and steering body for the duration of the Decade. It first convened on 27 May 2004 in Berlin and meets at least twice a year. The 30-odd members of the National Committee were appointed by the Executive Board of the German Commission for UNESCO for an initial period of four years. In spring 2011, the National Committee was reappointed in its current composition (page 80) for the period until the end of the Decade, to ensure continuity in its successful cooperation to date.

The Committee includes representatives from the relevant Federal Ministries, Parliament, the Federal states, municipalities, the private sector, the media, non-governmental organisations, academia, and individual experts. Since early 2006, two student representatives from schools have also participated in the National Committee. This composition ensures that programmatic and organisational decisions on the implementation of the UN Decade are taken based on extensive expertise and are backed by a broad political consensus. ESD can only be effectively implemented in close cooperation between politics and civil society. The education sectors – from the primary sector to vocational education and university education – are also represented in the National Committee, along with the full spectrum of content that is taught in ESD. The National Committee thus also contributes decisively towards promoting integrative approaches on Education for Sustainable Development. The Chairman of the National Committee is the futurist and education researcher Prof. Dr. Gerhard de Haan of the Free University of Berlin. The Deputy Chairman is Prof. Dr. Lenelis Kruse-Graumann, of Heidelberg University’s Psychological Institute.

The German Commission for UNESCO and the National Committee, via the BMBF-financed coordination centre, primarily fulfil the following tasks as part of Germany’s implementation of the Decade:

· Political agenda-setting: ESD and its relevance is conveyed to decision-makers and multipliers. The potential of ESD and its ability to future-proof education are promoted among politicians and civil society.

· Creation of a platform, network-building: The Decade’s organisational structure makes it possible for protagonists to speak with one voice and thereby get more of a hearing, coordinate with each other and develop joint activities.

· Provide impetus in terms of content and ideas: Evolve the techniques and concepts of ESD as a whole or in parts – e.g. regarding the annual themes. Incentives for innovative developments will be created for ESD protagonists, in particular by awarding recognition for Decade Projects.

· Create visibility for ESD, information management: ESD activities will be made visible among the professional public and beyond. High-profile public relations for ESD protagonists, positions and developments are to increase demand for ESD.

Round Table

The National Committee initiated the Round Table in 2004, and invited key experts from politics, educational practice, science, administration, NGOs, associations and ESD initiatives in Germany to participate. The aim of the Round Table of the UN Decade is to place the implementation of the Decade in Germany on a broad basis and promote networking among ESD protagonists. In 2008 the Round Table set down its role and tasks in a paper as follows:

1. The Round Table is a forum for sharing information, networking and discussing issues, contents and strategies regarding the implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, across all sectors and topics.

2. Thanks to the breadth of its membership, the Round Table serves as an initiator of new developments in ESD on the one hand and, on the other, carries matters of ESD forth into society.

3. The Round Table also aims to be a catalyst for its members’ joint activities, for example, by initiating cooperation projects from within the circle of the Round Table.

The Round Table usually meets once a year. An extraordinary Round Table was also held both before and after the Decade’s mid-term conference hosted by Germany in Bonn in 2009, for preparation and follow-up purposes. Meetings are held in different German states at the invitation of the respective minister president. The members of the Round Table are generally elected by the National Committee every two years. Some 130 members have been appointed for the period 2010 to 2012 (page 82).
Working Groups of the Round Table

The very first Round Table of the UN Decade in 2004 established groups to work on specific themes and educational sectors, and since then they have continuously participated in the implementation of the Decade between annual meetings.

The Working Groups are made up of members of the Round Table and other interested experts. The Working Groups are an important source of expertise and offer the possibility of integrating additional specialists into the existing networks. At the same time they are a good opportunity for the institutions themselves to make use of available expertise beyond existing structures and established procedures and to benefit from the experience of other members.

Currently there are nine Working Groups that are in principle open to all interested parties. The first point of contact are the groups’ spokespersons (see p. 86).

In addition, the representatives of the officially designated Cities and Local Authority Districts of the UN Decade meet twice a year in the ‘Local Authorities and ESD’ Working Group. The official representatives of the states also regularly exchange ideas at the Round Table.

The groups work on various projects such as policy recommendations, conferences and handouts. For example, in the tradition of the ‘Education for Sustainable Development at School’ (2007) recommendation by the KMK and DUK initiated by the School Education Working Group, the joint ‘Universities for Sustainable Development’ declaration (2010) by the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) and DUK was published on the initiative of the Higher Education Working Group, and the DUK declaration on ‘Delivering Future Capacity in the Kindergarten: Giving Children a Stronger Role, Advancing Sustainable Development’ (2010) on the initiative of the Working Group on Early-Childhood Education.


In 2010 the Biodiversity Working Group published a detailed handout on the topic of ‘Biological Diversity and Education for Sustainable Development: Key Topics and Starting Points for Educational Programmes.’ With a view to the current international relevance of the topic, it was translated into English.

Working Groups: Educational sectors
- Working Group on Early-Childhood Education
- Working Group on School Education
- Working Group on Initial and Continuing Vocational Education and Training
- Working Group on Higher Education
- Working Group on Extracurricular Learning and Continuing Education
- Working Group on Informal Learning

Working Groups: Areas of expertise
- Working Group on Biological Diversity
- Working Group on New Media
- Working Group on Economics and Consumption
- Working Group on Local Authorities and ESD
Contribution of the Federal states

The Federal states play an important role in the implementation of the Decade, not least because of Germany’s federalist education system. They each have a representative at the Round Table, and are represented on the National Committee with one or two representatives from the Environmental Ministers Conference and the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. Responsibility for matters of Education for Sustainable Development lies partly with the ministries of education and cultural affairs and partly with the environment ministries, where it is part of the tradition of environmental education. In Thuringia, state ESD action is lead-managed by a non-governmental organisation. Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein also work together in a ‘North German Partnership to support the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014’ (NUN), with Bremen taking part as a guest for the time being. Eleven states have now presented their own Action Plan for the UN Decade (as of 31 Jul 2011).

State Action Plans

Baden-Württemberg
Baden-Württemberg published its second state Action Plan at the mid-term of the Decade in 2009 (first edition: 2005). It provides an introduction to the Education for Sustainable Development concept and the implementation of the Decade in Germany; elaborates on the guidelines, structures, protagonists and processes of the Decade’s implementation in Baden-Württemberg; gives an overview of the state’s Decade Projects; and defines the need for action in specific fields, such as elementary education, high school or extracurricular places of learning, based on the four sub-objectives of the National Action Plan.

www.bne-portal.de/baden-wuerttemberg
www.dekade-bw.de (go to Service > Downloads)

Bavaria
In its main section under the heading ‘Paths’ the Bavarian Action Plan, first published in 2009, identifies five areas of action in connection with the four sub-objectives of the National Action Plan: qualification and certification, innovation and transfer, networking and cooperation, public awareness, and cooperation and international focus. Under the heading ‘Prospects’ goals are formulated for eight different areas of education. The annex includes Decade Projects from Bavaria up to 2008.

www.bne-portal.de/bayern
www.umweltbildung.bayern.de/idee/undekade.htm

Brandenburg
In May 2011 the final version of the Brandenburg Action Plan was published. It focuses on an initial survey of existing ESD activities in Brandenburg and the formulation of ten goals, and will be updated continuously.

www.bne-portal.de/brandenburg
www.mugv.brandenburg.de/cms/detail.php/lbm1.c.400231.de

Hamburg
Hamburg has submitted an Action Plan every year since 2006. The fifth Hamburg Action Plan in 2009/2010 was the first bilingual edition, published in German and English. Its key feature is an overview of ESD-related measures in Hamburg’s various educational sectors – from child day-care facilities to informal learning.

www.bne-portal.de/hamburg
www.hamburg.de/nachhaltigkeitlernen

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania
In 2008 Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania published an accompanying concept and an Action Plan for the UN Decade for non-formal education sectors, under the heading ‘Lifelong learning’. The publication provides an overview of the basic requirements of ESD in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, followed by details on which projects across the state and in each region contribute to ESD in the extracurricular sector.

www.bne-portal.de/mecklenburg-vorpommern
www.regierung-mv.de/cms2/Regierungsportal_produktion/Regierungsportal/de/service/Publikationen

North Rhine-Westphalia
The North Rhine-Westphalia Action Plan was published in 2006. Its goals are based on the four sub-objectives of the National Action Plan, focusing especially on the five areas of ‘extracurricular education/environmental education’, ‘school, including all-day schools and activities’, ‘early-childhood education’, ‘occupational training, adult education, family education, political education’, and ‘higher education/innovation’.

www.bne-portal.de/nordrhein-westfalen
www.umwelt.nrw.de/ministerium/bildung/bildung_ne/index.php
Rhine­land-Palatinate
The Rhine­land-Palatinate Action Plan, jointly pro­duced by the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Education and the State Environmental Inform­ation Centre (Landeszentrale für Umweltauf­klärung) was published in 2009 together with an Environmental Education Handbook. Besides the Decade Projects, the Action Plan focuses on which approaches to Education for Sustainable Development exist in Rhine­land-Palatinate at schools and in the area of “extracur­ricular learning/extracurricular partners”.

www.bne-portal.de/rheinland-pfalz
http://nachhaltigkeit.bildung.rlp.de/index.php?id=5485

Saarland
Saarland published its second Action Plan in 2009. It starts with a presentation of Saarland Decade Projects and then on the basis of various fields of work elaborates on eight themes of ESD, such as climate change, development cooperation and sustainable consumption. It presents services and activities offered in Saarland related to these themes, as well as for the four target groups of day-care centres, schools, youth groups, adults and families, along with the designated future goals.

www.bne-portal.de/saarland
www.saarland.de/bildung_nachhaltige_entwicklung.htm

Saxony-Anhalt
The fourth revised edition of the Saxony-Anhalt Action Plan, published in 2010, refers to the Bonn Declaration of the UNESCO World Conference in 2009. After the 2007 Action Plan chose examples from environmental education, the second Action Plan draws on the economic sector for its introductory examples. It also presents important ESD protagonists in the state, points up funding opportunities for activities and projects, and provides a catalogue of measures giving an overview of the state government’s goals and programme, as well as projects and initiatives of civil-society protagonists in the various educational sectors. The annex consists of two documents: the State Parliament ESD resolution of 2008 and the Bonn Declaration.

www.bne-portal.de/sachsen-anhalt
www.sachsen-anhalt.de/index.php?id=28579

Schleswig-Holstein
The Schleswig-Holstein Action Plan of 2007 ex­plicitly encourages everyone in the state to “ac­tively participate in the UN project”, shows starting points and gives tips. It describes the current Decade Projects in the state and gives a tabular overview of ongoing ESD-related projects and activities in Schleswig-Holstein.

www.bne-portal.de/schleswig-holstein
www.bne.schleswig-holstein.de (go to UN Decade BNE > In Schleswig-Holstein)

Thuringia
Thuringia’s fourth Action Plan, for 2009/2010, mentions three overarching goals of implementing the Decade in the state: empowering individual action, strengthening structures, and strengthening the social impact. The stocktaking of 2007/08 and the outlook on 2009/10 focus on describing the key protagonists in Thuringia – from the Round Table, its various Working Groups and the ‘core team’, to the participating ministries and subordinate institutions to the universities and official Decade Projects. This is followed by separate detailed stocktaking and outlook for the individual regions of Thuringia.

www.bne-portal.de/thueringen
www.dekade-thueringen.de

Information on ESD in the other Federal states:

Berlin:
www.berlin.de/sen/wirtschaft/lez/lernen.html#1

Bremen:
www.bne-portal.de/bremen

Hesse:
www.bne-portal.de/hessen

Lower Saxony:
www.nibis.de/nibis.phtml?menid=1385

Saxony:
www.bne-sachsen.de
World Decade Projects

Good ESD in practice is represented by the numerous initiatives throughout Germany that the German Commission for UNESCO designates for two years at a time as official ‘Decade Projects’. They do exemplary educational work, clearly show what Education for Sustainable Development can and aims to do, and motivate people to follow their lead. Since the beginning of the Decade, more than 1,300 projects have been officially designated (as of 31 Jul 2011). Applications are still gladly being accepted!
Since the beginning of the Decade, several times a year the German UNESCO Commission recognises initiatives that put the concept of Education for Sustainable Development into practice in an exemplary way. These ‘Official German Projects of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development’ are active all over Germany. They introduce children, adolescents and adults to ways of thinking and acting that reflect the philosophy of sustainable development. How do we achieve economic well-being and social justice while at the same reducing our ecological footprint? How can we develop solutions for social problems?

The Decade Projects devote themselves to different priorities and take different approaches. As ‘energy detectives’ even young children can learn playful ways of thinking about the effects of their actions locally and in the world. In student enterprises, children experience how they can act in an environmentally sustainable and socially just way that also makes sense economically. Citizen initiatives inspire others for fair trade; institutes train professionals in the field of sustainable investment; and young activists explain to interested people how sustainable consumption works.

The recognition of Decade Projects is characteristic of Germany’s implementation of the Decade. There is a lot to be said for the concept:

- It provides visibility for the full spectrum of efforts by the many protagonists across the country – both of the quantity and the wealth of ideas. The concept thus helps visualise the idea of Education for Sustainable Development, and inspires other projects to follow their lead.

- The award recognises the significant work – often volunteer work – done by the projects’ staff, and motivates them to continue doing it. The recognition also makes it easier for the Decade Projects to recruit additional support.

- The application process and associated advice and revision processes secure and improve the quality of the practical implementation of ESD. This strengthens the shared basic understanding in Germany of what Education for Sustainable Development can and aims to do.

New projects can apply by March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1 of each year – the criteria and application documents are posted online (www.bne-portal.de/projekt-bewerbung). A guideline for applying to become an official Decade Project (‘Offizielles Dekade-Projekt werden. Ein Wegweiser’) may also be downloaded or requested here. A jury consisting of members
of the National Committee and its representatives decides whether a project meets the requirements. It may have to make some adjustments and improvements, after which it is awarded the certificate for two years. Re-applications are possible and are very welcome. Award ceremonies at which the certificates, banners and logo stamps are officially presented to the projects usually take place four times a year: fixed dates generally include the didacta education trade fair in February, the Days of Action in September and the Round Table in November.

Since 2005 more than 1,300 projects have been recognised as ‘Official German Projects of the UN Decade’. Interest continues high, even though the criteria were expanded again in 2010. The projects must now include the three dimensions of sustainability – ecology, economy and social aspects – and make their efforts available to the public online. In addition, the requirements for re-application have been raised.

A complete overview of all Decade Projects can be found on the ESD website at www.bne-portal.de/datenbank

Current members of the jury for recognising projects and local authorities

Volker Angres,
ZDF (public-service German television broadcaster)

Dr. Roland Bernecker,
German Commission for UNESCO

Annette Dieckmann,
National Working Group for Nature and Environmental Education (ANU)

Prof. Dr. Gerhard de Haan,
Free University of Berlin

Klaus Hübner,
State Association for the Protection of Birds (LBV)

Jasson Jakovides,
Fields GmbH

Prof. Dr. Lenelis Kruse-Graumann,
University of Heidelberg

Alexander Renner,
Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF)

Dagmar Winzier,
Federal Institute for Vocational Education

Dr. Ulrich Witte,
German Federal Environmental Foundation

www.bne-portal.de/.projekt-bewerbung

www.bne-portal.de/datenbank
Examples of Decade Projects by educational sector

Early-childhood education

‘Kinder im Garten’ (Children in the Garden) is a joint project by the ‘Palmengarten’ and city kindergartens in Frankfurt am Main. Children aged 3 to 6 can participate in three-day educational courses where they explore the ecological, economic, social and cultural significance of a given group of plants to humans. Various methods are used according to age: group discussions; ‘research trips’ with ‘research jobs’ in outdoor settings and the Palmengarten glasshouses; experiments in the research laboratory; preparing lunch in the kitchen; and creating things like scroll paintings from bamboo or lip balm with coconut oil. Preparatory and follow-up seminars are held for educators, while families are involved through parent-child activity afternoons.

The ‘leben gestalten lernen – Werte leben’ project by the Bavarian Society for the Protection of Birds (LBV) has already been recognised three times: It seeks to encourage a debate on values and show values can easily be explored in the daily kindergarten routine. Values such as a zest for life, confidence, courage, openness, team spirit, and a sense of responsibility are linked with topics such as biodiversity, toys, food, soil, water supply, energy and mobility.

School education

The Alexander von Humboldt Grammar School in Hamburg, which was recognised for systematically anchoring ESD, is committed to sustainable development as set out in Agenda 21. The school participates in ‘fifty-fifty’ projects for resource conservation and operates its own solar power facility. Aspects of social, environmental and career orientation are integrated in the curriculum, and there are fixed and mandatory socio-ecological project days. Its teaching approaches are based on the acquisition of participatory skills. The school runs addiction and violence prevention projects, and is active in global learning partnerships and international exchanges. The students are also taught to put co-determination and active participation into practice at school. The implementation status is evaluated in external and internal audits.

The aim of the ‘Innovative Sustainability Working Group’ (iNAG) at the Pascal Grammar School in Grevenbroich is to anchor ESD in all subjects at school and all extracurricular activities as an interdisciplinary topic. Their projects centre on the external dissemination of ESD, using specially created ‘knowledge kits’, or ‘how-to guides’ for ESD. The scope of their activities now extends to Grevenbroich, Neuss and Düsseldorf. The resulting ‘network of schools for Education for Sustainable Development’ was one of the three 2011 winners of ‘Ideen Initiative Zukunft’, a competition jointly run by the dm drugstore chain and the German Commission for UNESCO.
Initial and continuing vocational education and training

The ‘Berufsoffensive Energiewende’ campaign to promote professions in alternative energy by the Bürgerstiftung Energiewende Oberland (Oberland Community Foundation for Energy Shift) gives secondary-school pupils guidance on career opportunities and prospects in the fields of renewable energy use, energy efficiency and energy saving. It motivates youths to take a closer look at these careers by means of the www.jobs-mit-energie.de platform; project days; networking with local businesses and technical colleges; and internship opportunities as a way to get local vocational training.

Students in the ‘Government-certified Business Administrator’ degree program at Elberfeld Vocational College (Wuppertal) obtain a Consultants for Sustainable Economies (FANWI) qualification. They are taught the objectives of sustainable economic activity, along with related economic and legal issues. The programme also includes corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable investment and development policies. The trainee consultants are given a sound basic knowledge of various instruments of sustainability and learn how to communicate them – even in a foreign language – in business and intercultural settings. A partnership with a Finnish college enables a mutual exchange of internship slots, teacher exchanges and the establishment of a common curriculum.

University

The ‘Greening the University e.V.’ student initiative has set itself the goal of making the University of Tübingen a place where approaches to solving future global issues are researched and taught, and where sustainable action is put into practice on the inside and communicated to the outside. The multidisciplinary ‘Studium Oecologicum’ programme introduces students of all disciplines to issues relevant to the sustainability discourse. Issues of sustainability are also tackled in the public lectures of the ‘Studium generale’. In 2010, the university set up an advisory council for sustainable development that aims to develop a comprehensive sustainability strategy for research, teaching and administration.

‘Sustainability – Face the Challenge’: students of the University of Erfurt’s AG Nachhaltigkeit Erfurt e.V. (Sustainability in Erfurt Working Group) organise their own lecture series for the interested public, and link the university with regional partners in cooperation projects. The members of the organisation team are taught in advance about facilitation, teamwork, and project and time management. Events concerning the theoretical background behind the sustainability concept are hosted for students. Successful projects are used to show individual and institutional ways of acting sustainably. At an ideas workshop, students get together with industry partners to jointly initiate projects.
Extracurricular learning and continuing education

The ‘Licherode’ environmental school camp and conference centre in Alheim, north Hesse, is a nationwide centre for environmental education. About 3,000 children and 1,000 ESD protagonists attend its educational weeks and seminars each year. The centre is known far beyond the borders of Hesse as a consulting and concept-development body for other extracurricular educational institutions. Research and pilot projects with a focus on ESD include ‘senior trainers as tutors for children’ training courses for elderly people or the ‘Iss von hier’ (Eat local) project that aims to help permanently anchor healthy, regional organic school meals at all-day schools in the Hersfeld-Rotenburg district.

As part of its ‘Lernpartnerschaft Zukunft’ (Learning Partnership for the Future) Decade Project the ‘Ökoprojekt – Mobil-Spiel e.V.’ association enters into learning partnerships with other educational institutions in the formal and non-formal education sector. Together with its partners, it runs educational projects on lifestyle topics. The project tests innovative methods of networked thinking and new forms of sustainable everyday action using topical issues like healthy eating, mobile phones, cosmetics or money and values. Methods and topics are jointly adapted to the local situation, and training is provided for the teaching staff. The aim is to make ESD topics and methods an integral part of the respective institutions.

Informal learning

Under the motto ‘Deine Welt im Fokus – Tu mundo en el visor’ (Focus on Your World) the Berlin environmental and development agency ‘KATE’ (Kontaktstelle für Umwelt und Entwicklung e.V.) has teamed up with international partners to run a project with young people from Germany, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Participants deal with aspects of their living environment in a journalistic way, and are in constant interaction with each other about the articles they write, selecting their topics from among three themes: ‘working conditions and trade’, ‘ecology and environmental protection’ and ‘globalisation’. The young people learn journalism and photographic techniques in workshops. Their work is documented on an online platform, where photos and videos can be posted along with comments. All articles are published in a bilingual exhibition and brochure.

At the ‘Prima-Klima-Kinder-Stadt’ (Healthy Climate Kids’ City) ‘construction playground’ in Bamberg, children can try their hand as architects, carpenters and decorators in the summer, free of charge, while participating in a varied programme of games, experiments and handicrafts tying in to the theme of ‘energy and climate’. Managed by the Chapeau Claque association’s Spielmobil (playbus), the project aims to make children aware of the consequences of climate change and to enable them to make their own decisions in future, all in a fun, playful way. In particular, the children learn how to handle resources, how renewable energy works, and the interrelation and interaction of citizens, politics, administration and business.
Criteria for initial application to become a Decade Project

- The project demonstrably provides education in the spirit of ESD and communicates the skills and information needed for actively shaping a present and future worth living in. The project relates to the economic, ecological and social aspects of sustainability. References to aspects of sustainable development that encourage participation, cultural diversity and international understanding are desirable.

- Information on the public presentation, the number of people currently reached and the number of people to be reached in future must be provided. The project must have at least a regional reach.

- The project leads to at least one definite result or product. The expected positive effects for sustainable development (e.g. awareness-building, resource conservation) must be described (‘good local practice’).

- There must be a connection to at least two of the four strategic objectives of the National Action Plan:
  - Further develop and pool activities, and ensure the transfer of good practice to a broad base: The project develops good practice in a given sector.
  - Create a network of ESD protagonists: The project links at least two protagonists in a strategic alliance.
  - Improve public awareness of Education for Sustainable Development: The project results in increased public awareness of ESD and sustainability in a clearly defined radius and among a clearly defined target group.
  - Strengthen international cooperation: The project promotes international cooperation on ESD with at least one international partner.

- The project must have a website that makes it clear that
  a) Education for Sustainable Development is its main focus and
  b) what skills the participants/learners can acquire in the project.

- Using terms such as ‘environmental education’, ‘global learning’, ‘experiential education of nature’ ‘development education’, ‘health education’ and ‘consumer education’ is not enough.

- The individual aspects are listed in detail on the application form (www.bne-portal/projekt-bewerbung).

Additional criteria for re-applying

- Progress must have been made since the first application.

- The project must have expanded its reach since the first application.

- The project strives to fine-tune or augment the results of the first project phase; to further develop the project; to review its effectiveness; or transfer it to another context.

- Starting with the third application, ESD must be systematically and comprehensively anchored as a permanent fixture in the institution.

- There must be a reference to at least three of the four strategic objectives of the National Action Plan.
In some cases, the impetus to promote ESD came from committed citizens, in others from municipal leaders and administrations. Local authorities pursue quite different approaches and set their own priorities depending on local conditions. In Gelsenkirchen, for example, a variety of extracurricular ESD projects are offered. The initiators are networks such as the ‘Kreativwerkstatt’ (Creative Workshop), the ‘Arbeitskreis Natur als Bildungsnetzwerk’ (Work Group on Nature as an Educational Network), the ‘Zukunftswerkstatt 50plus’ (50plus Future Workshop), the ‘Gelsenkirchener Färbergärten’ (Gelsenkirchen Dyers’ Gardens) and the ‘Bildungsoffensive Hassel’ (Hassel Education Campaign), which aims to promote the talents of children and young people from less academically inclined backgrounds. Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz has prominently anchored ESD in its town mission statement: ‘A Future-Proof Neumarkt’ (2004, 2010). The close cooperation with industry there is regarded as exemplary, as is the annual Neumarkt Sustainability Conference and the ‘Bürgerhaus Neumarkt’ (community centre), which provides consultation on social issues, serves as a think tank and incubator for projects, and as a centre for active citizen participation.

In Frankfurt am Main, one focus is on linking climate-protection technology and educational measures, e.g. in the context of the ‘12 points energy-saving initiative for schools.’ The Frankfurt ‘GrünGürtel’ (greenbelt) around the city centre is also regarded as a model of sustainable landscaping in an urban setting, and sustainable urban development. It was further developed into an educational setting for children, teens and adults in 2003.

Since 2006, 13 cities and local authorities (as of 31 Jul 2011) have been awarded the title for two years, most of them repeatedly:

- City of Aalen (2009/10)
- City of Bad Homnef (2011/12)
- City of Bonn (2008/09, 2010/11)
- City of Erfurt (2008/09, 2010/11)
- City of Frankfurt/Main (2008/09, 2010/11)
- City of Freiburg (2012/13)
- City of Gelsenkirchen (2008/09, 2010/11)
- Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2007/08, 2009/10)
- City of Heidelberg (2007/08, 2009/10)
- Municipality of Hellenthal (2008/09)
- City of Minden (2009/10, 2011/12)
- City of Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz (Upper Palatinate) (2007/08, 2009/10, 2011/12)

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Representatives of the Official Cities and Local Authorities of the World Decade have met for working meetings twice a year since the end of 2009 to share experiences, discuss new developments, and develop and promote funding public opportunities for ESD in municipalities. Past meetings have been held in Erfurt, Neumarkt and Alheim, at the invitation of the respective local authorities. Hamburg, the Green Capital 2011, is organising the next meeting, with Heidelberg following suit in early 2012. At the end of 2011, a publication on ‘Future-Proof Communities: Opportunities through Education for Sustainable Development’ is scheduled for publication.

Application criteria for Cities and Local Authorities of the UN Decade

The city, local authority or district

1. has made a formal decision at a political level (e.g. city council, district council) to make Education for Sustainable Development part of the municipality’s mission;

2. can prove it has established activities in line with the four strategic objectives of the National Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development;

3. formulates Education for Sustainable Development objectives and measures for the next two to five years in accordance with the existing educational structures;

4. describes a focus area where Education for Sustainable Development enjoys a particularly high profile in the area, or describes which of the activities can serve as a model;

5. provides an evaluation of the educational activities’ positive effects on sustainable development, e.g. raising public awareness, changes in mobility behaviour, resource conservation, international cooperation etc.;

6. provides an insight into local ESD activities on the city or local authority’s website;

7. in case of re-application after two years, submits an ESD progress report and outlook.

For recognition as a City, Local Authority or District of the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the applicant’s activities regarding the aforementioned criteria must be far above average when compared to other cities.
From project to structure: the ‘Official Measures of the World Decade’ play a central role in the implementation of the National Action Plan’s strategic objectives. In contrast to the many more locally focussed Decade Projects that are designed as examples of good practice, Official Measures make a structural contribution to the systematic anchoring of Education for Sustainable Development. Usually it is Federal and state ministries, state institutions and non-governmental organisations as well as individual companies, foundations and scientific institutions that initiate and support Official Measures.

Examples of Measures include the anchoring of the concept of sustainable development in the national vocational education system by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education, or the establishment of a state-wide ‘Sustainable Citizen’s Community’ learning network by the Bavarian State Ministry for the Environment and Health. Other measures are aimed at in-school education, such as the ‘Schools of the Future – Education for Sustainability’ campaign of the Nature and Environmental Protection Academy of North Rhine-Westphalia, which supports and certifies the development of ESD-related school projects, profiles and programmes throughout the state. The certification of non-school educational institutions is on the agenda in Schleswig-Holstein and other states. The Association of German Non-Governmental Development Organisations (VENRO) has developed and disseminated teaching material and runs cross-sector campaigns to anchor the Millennium Development Goals in civic/political education. The Saxon State Environmental Foundation’s environmental education network (Netzwerk Umweltbildung Sachsen) coordinates and pools the activities of all environmental education institutions and freelance environmental educators in Saxony: new training modules that meet ESD criteria are shared with partners at workshops and seminars.

The Catalogue of Measures in the National Action Plan consisted of 66 measures in 2008. Six more were added in 2009 and 2010:

- Leuchtpol
- Kita21 – Die Zukunftsgestalter (Shaping the Future)
- ÜBER LEBENSKUNST.Schule (Artists’ initiative for culture and sustainability at schools)
- Chat der Welten (Chat of the Worlds)
- Nachhaltige Schülerfirmen (Sustainable student enterprises)
- The www.mehr-wissen-mehr-tun.de (know-more-do-more) internet campaign

The concept underwent further development based on a survey of the 72 Measures in early 2011. With a view to the end of the Decade 2005–2014 and the question ‘What remains?’, at its meeting on 1 Jun 2011 the National Committee decided to revise the categorising of Measures and the whole application procedure. The criteria were adapted to the expanded criteria for Decade Projects as per 2010. In addition to the requirements for Decade Projects, Measures must fulfil three further conditions: 1. Their activities should have a political-strategic approach. 2. Their scope is at least supraregional. 3. They demonstrate they have a lasting impact on the educational sector in Germany, i.e. their effects clearly extend beyond the end of Decade in 2014.

In this context, in the interest of comparability, all existing Measures must reapply for certification, too. The first application deadline is 1 Nov 2011. In the following years, the application deadlines are 1 Mar and 1 Sep. The National Committee selects Measures based on a statement by the jury for the Decade Projects. Unlike the Decade Projects, which are each certified for two years, Measures are in principle designated ‘for life’. However, at the end of their term, but no later than 31 January 2014, a detailed report shall be filed documenting the enduring contribution of the Measure as part of the Decade. This description and evaluation will be included in the overall documentation of results of the Decade.

From January 2012, the updated Catalogue of Measures will be posted online and continually updated.
Criteria for Applying as an Official Measure of the World Decade

- The Measure has a demonstrable **educational approach** in line with Education for Sustainable Development. Its content reflects all of the integrative dimensions of sustainability: the ecological, economic, social, political and cultural dimension.

- The Measure makes a significant contribution to at least two of the four **strategic sub-objectives of the National Action Plan**:
  
  1. Further develop and pool activities, and ensure the transfer of good practice to a broad base: The Measure develops models, tools and programmes.
  2. Create a network of ESD protagonists: The Measure strategically links multiple partners.
  3. Improve public awareness of Education for Sustainable Development: The Measure increases public visibility of ESD beyond the region.
  4. Strengthen international co-operation: The Measure promotes lasting and strategic international cooperation.

- The Measure strives for **results** that promote the conceptual or practical further evolution of Education for Sustainable Development. Because of its suitability as a model, the results can be implemented in other educational contexts as well. The results may be accessed by the public.

- The Measure’s **reach** is at least state-wide, and if possible nationwide or international.

- The Measure has a programmatic character. It has a far-reaching political or social impact and **verifiably** contributes to permanently anchoring ESD at the structural level. It has a **long-term** approach and its results should at least continue to have an effect well beyond the end of the Decade.

- The Measure evaluates its progress and takes appropriate action to ensure high quality and goal fulfilment.

- The Measure results in a discernible, broad **public image**. The mandatory website makes it clear that Education for Sustainable Development is central to the Measure.
The ESD portal

The central website for the implementation of the Decade in Germany is the bne-portal.de platform. The ESD site is a portal for professionals that also strives to meet journalistic standards. In addition to background information about the Decade in Germany and worldwide, its offerings include recommendations for teaching and learning materials; a presentation of Decade Projects; an event calendar; the option to apply for ‘Decade Project’ status; and an overview of all protagonists and institutions involved in the implementation of the Decade. An extensive database facilitates research, allowing users to search for Decade Projects by Federal state, their designation period, thematic focus or educational sector.

The portal aims to give its various users the best possible access to the topic of ESD. For example, ESD novices can get an initial picture via the ‘Beginner’ menu item, while journalists or teachers can get information on specific topics of interest for their target group with one click.

Where can I find information on...?

Shortcuts:

- www.bne-portal.de/un-dekade
- www.bne-portal.de/datenbank
- www.bne-portal.de/dekade-publikationen
- www.bne-portal.de/presse
- www.bne-portal.de/kontakt
- www.bne-portal.de/nationalkomitee
- www.bne-portal.de/runder-tisch
- www.bne-portal.de/arbeitsgruppen
- www.bne-portal.de/akteure
- www.bne-portal.de/dekade-projekte
- www.bne-portal.de/massnahmen
- www.bne-portal.de/kommunen
- www.bne-portal.de/bundeslaender
- www.bne-portal.de/jahresthemen
- www.bne-portal.de/aktionstage
- www.bne-portal.de/wettbewerbe

Days of Action and annual themes

Information, interaction and networking in the analogue rather than digital world: since 2008, local ESD Days of Action are held once a year. All over Germany, during a specific week in the autumn, people show what each and every individual can do to create a decent future. Visitors experience and learn what sustainability means, right then and there. Organisations, educational institutions, schools, companies: everyone is invited to join in and contribute their own actions, be it a conference or open day, a competition or project work. Interested parties can register at www.bne-aktionstage.de and browse the events calendar.

In 2006, the National Committee of the UN Decade set annual themes for the years 2007 to 2014 – e.g. water, money or food. The annual themes are meant to

- give content suggestions,
- focus the Decade protagonists’ activities,
- help activate new cooperation partners, and
- facilitate the communication of Decade matters to the public.

A separate section of www.bne-portal.de contains background information, events, and advice about educational materials for the topics. At least once a year, a major event is held on the current year’s theme. The Decade also presents at the didacta education trade fair under the year’s motto, and it is prominently featured at the panel discussion on the exhibition’s UNESCO day. The next year’s theme is jointly prepared for at the preceding Round Table meetings.

Overview of annual themes:

2007: Cultural diversity
2008: Water
2009: Energy
2010: Money
2011: City
2012: Food
2013: Mobility
2014: UN Decade: Conclusions and Outlook
Decade Timeline

Chronological overview of the Decade

1987   Brundtland Commission report (WCED 1987)
       and adoption of Agenda 21
2002   World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (Rio+10)
       United Nations General Assembly declares 2005 to 2014 the World Decade of Education
       for Sustainable Development
2003   ‘Hamburg Declaration’ of the German Commission for UNESCO
2004   Bundestag adopts its ‘Action Plan for the UN World Decade of Education for
       Sustainable Development’ resolution
       In the lead-up to the Decade: the National Committee is established;
       a Round Table organised in Berlin; and the www.dekade.org online portal goes live
2005   National and international events to kick off the Decade
       Publication of the National Action Plan
       First Decade Projects are recognised
2006   The first Local Authorities of the UN Decade are recognised
       Introduction of annual themes
2007   Relaunch of the website as www.bne-portal.de
       The Decade presents at the didacta education fair for the first time
       Publication of the KMK/DUK ‘Education for Sustainable Development at School’
       recommendations
2008   Launch of the annual Days of Action
       Publication of the updated National Action Plan
2009   UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development and adoption
       of the ‘Bonn Declaration’
2010   The 1000th Decade Project is recognised at didacta
       Publication of the HRK/DUK ‘Universities for Sustainable Development’ declaration,
       the DUK discussion paper ‘Delivering Future Capacity in the Kindergarten’
       and the ‘Biological Diversity and Education for Sustainable Development’ policy paper
2011   Publication of the National Action Plan 2011
       Publication of the declaration on ‘Future-Proof Communities: Opportunities through
       Education for Sustainable Development’ (in progress)
2012   United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20)
2014   Final Conference of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Japan
2015   General Assembly of the United Nations evaluation of UNESCO’s Final Report for the
       Decade and resolution on follow-up activities
Next steps

Strategy for the Second Half of the Decade

National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development:

Strategic Framework for the Second Half of the Decade in Germany

Introduction

This paper provides recommendations and proposes guidelines and specific activities for the second half of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany. It was created on the basis of consultations within the National Committee and the Round Table of the UN Decade held in the wake of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Bonn. Moreover, a Delphi study was carried out among protagonists to examine what objectives should be pursued as a priority; how promising involvement in individual areas of action can be; and to what extent they would personally campaign to achieve the objectives. Furthermore, the National Action Plan and the state plans of action were evaluated with regard to the central objectives. The National Committee adopted the paper on 01 Jun 2011.

[...] 

Priorities for the Second half of the Decade

The criteria listed here were agreed by the National Committee after consultations with other protagonists and are intended as guidelines for the National Committee and Coordination Centre, and as recommendations to all other protagonists who are active as part of the German implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.
1. Highlight ESD’s fundamental contribution to the quality of education, and anchor ESD in all areas of formal education

Concept/Background:

Picking up on the corresponding requirements of the Bonn Declaration, more emphasis is to be given to the relevance of ESD for a future-proof approach to education. This means creating connections between ESD and current educational goals and debates (integration of non-academically-inclined people, Germany’s education system in an international comparison, etc.) and providing better proof for the effectiveness of ESD. It must become clear to protagonists outside ESD why they should open up to ESD.

In accordance with the Bonn Declaration, formal education remains a priority in the implementation of the UN Decade. Formal education is distinguished by the fact that it reaches everyone. It should be noted however, that in a knowledge society a wide range of knowledge and options for action is also acquired through non-formal and informal education.

Until now the focus has been on highlighting individual examples of good practice (for example, the Decade Projects). Another focus has been on anchoring ESD in the curricula and classroom in the context of the KMK and DUK recommendations on ESD at School and the ‘Cross-Curricular Framework for Global Development Education’. The aim now is to take advantage of these approaches to increasingly embed ESD in the structure of the school routine and to intensify its integration in non-formal and informal education.

Recommendations:

· Recruit any key education protagonists who are not yet involved in ESD for the cause of ESD.

· Anchor ESD in educational policy documents, curricula and educational standards.

· Link ESD to current debates in education policy.

· Explore the connection between formal and non-formal/informal education in greater detail, and strengthen the attendant synergies.

· Early-childhood education: Demonstrate the important contribution ESD can make in the rapidly happening reorientation of early-childhood education. Initiate a discourse about a qualitatively meaningful type of early-childhood education – for example: ESD can help form ‘young citizens of the world’.

· School: Ensure that the observed quantitative expansion of ESD is not achieved at the expense of quality. Continue to pursue the implementation of ESD as an interdisciplinary task, or as mandatory content in modified school and learning cultures. In connection with the further development of quality education, there is to be an emphasis on value-oriented education – also at vocational schools and in vocational training.

· Further training, vocational education: Demonstrate how the integration of ESD in vocational education and training leads to ‘better’, more motivated employees, who are capable of critical reflection and thinking outside the box. It should also become obvious that getting involved in ESD ‘pays off’ for the company – e.g. through savings achieved as the result of a more aware use of resources.

· Adult education: Demonstrate how providers of adult education can win customers using ESD and how sustainability as an interdisciplinary topic can be integrated in educational events.

- Educational research: Establish a dialogue with the empirical educational research sector and their clients. Develop sets of indicators for monitoring purposes.

**Priorities for specific activities:**

- Meetings (‘Perspektivkonferenzen’ / Perspective conferences) with ESD protagonists and potentially recruitable protagonists from all sectors of education if possible (initially: adult education, vocational education, educational research, schools, higher education, early-childhood education); in addition joint long-term projects, if possible.

- Adult education protagonists to be won: German Adult Education Association, German Institute for Adult Education, trade unions, Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, churches, state councils for adult education, etc.

- Vocational education protagonists to be won: chambers of commerce, industry and trade (to integrate ESD into master’s examinations, etc.)

- Educational research protagonists to be won: empirical educational research contractors (OECD, KMK, Federal government), Institute for Quality Development in Education, individual empirical educational researchers (Bamberg [education panel], TU Munich), etc.

- Protagonists to be won in schools: state ministries of education, all three phases of teacher training, Federal state continuing-education institutes, Institutes for Quality Development in Education of the Federal states, parents’ associations (to increase the demand for ESD), teachers and students (e.g., teacher councils and student councils). In particular, the involvement of protagonists committed to school matters should be optimised to exploit synergies (e.g. UN Decade School Education Working Group, KMK-BMZ Cross-Curricular Framework for Global Development project group, and ESD representatives of the Federal states)

- Early-childhood education protagonists to be won: parents, churches, local authorities, welfare organisations and trade unions as organisations responsible for day-care centres, academia and relevant Federal state ministries

- Integrate international organisations, especially the OECD

- Follow-up activities to the ‘Universities for Sustainable Development’ declaration to anchor ESD in as many study programmes as possible together with the HRK, etc.

- Follow-up activities to the early-childhood ESD declaration

- Highlight the link between formal education and other educational sectors by presenting appropriate good examples on the ESD portal

- Intensify interaction between ESD, cultural education, media education, political education and other related fields of action

- Cultivate contacts to other ministries (beyond the BMBF, BMU, BMZ), to the Council for Sustainable Development, as well as to politicians and associations, and highlight the importance of ESD for their activities

- Advance the cooperation with and continuation of existing older activities (eco-schools in Europe, Transfer 21, etc.) as part of the Decade

- Clarify what happens at the end of the Decade, who takes over the continued coordination, which activities will be continued, etc.
2. Increase public visibility of ESD

Concept/Background:

The relevance and benefits of ESD are to be given wider visibility, beyond the narrow circle of ESD protagonists. When representing ESD externally to interest a wider public, ESD protagonists should de-emphasise their internal conceptual differences, and focus on clear, easily communicable messages. ESD must formulate clear courses of action that can be routinely practiced on an ongoing basis in real, everyday life.

Recommendations:

- Get journalists more interested in ESD Measures and Projects (beyond local coverage).
- In partnerships and communication with journalists, focus on linking ESD with current debates in education policy.
- Use new media to target young people more.
- Communicate low-threshold options for action, clear messages, but also conflicts and events in connection with ESD.
- Enable the numerous Decade Projects and Official Cities and Local Authorities of the World Decade, as well as contributors to the Days of Action, to use a shared ‘corporate design’ in their communications.
- Integrate ESD more into existing mass media formats.

Priorities for specific activities:

- A campaign that communicates ESD with a clear message
- Actively approach journalists (e.g. using the journalist mailer from the World Conference)
- Call on public-service broadcasters to continue contributing to the UN Decade, via broadcasting councils; NC appeal to broadcasting councils
- Link ESD public relations work with programmes such as ‘Lernende Regionen’, ‘Lernen vor Ort’, etc.
- Cooperate with media companies, newspapers, etc. (similar to ‘FOCUS Schule’ during the dm campaign)
- Further develop the ESD portal through targeted offers and updates
- Use Web 2.0 for informal ways of learning sustainable development
- Concentrate and intensify communication strategies in relation to the wider public (make ESD easy to understand)
- Open up additional, new, specific target groups in professional circles (for example via the trade press)
- Offer seminars and workshops for journalists
3. Strengthen ESD internationally

Concept/Background:

Based on Germany’s leading role in the implementation of the Decade and the successful implementation of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, work should continue on making sure that the Decade is actively implemented around the world. As the UN organisation lead-managing the Decade, UNESCO and its network of National Commissions play the central role in this. Germany and the German Decade protagonists should increasingly make their expertise and experiences available to other Member States and Decade protagonists for ‘capacity building’ purposes. Here, they can draw on the World Conference organisers’ large network of people who were actively involved in the World Conference as workshop coordinators or rapporteurs. At the same time, in the interest of internationalising activities, other countries’ experience should be shared with Germany.

Recommendations:

- Further strengthen ESD within UNESCO.
- Systematically advance networking between German and international ESD protagonists in order to exchange good practice.
- Integrate ESD and in particular the results of the UNESCO World Conference into multilateral political forums and bilateral German development cooperation.
- Increase the share of German ESD initiatives/projects that have an international component.
- Communicate good German ESD practices to other world regions. Make use of good examples from other countries and regions in our own activities.

Priorities for specific activities:

- Systematically link German Decade Projects with projects from other regions of the world
- Input to the German Foreign Office and BMBF regarding the implementation of the Decade by UNESCO
- Ongoing coordination regarding the UN Decade with the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris
- Encourage the official recognition of Decade Projects in other countries and possibly globally
- Organise ‘capacity building’ workshops on various aspects of ESD implementation (including the practice of recognising Decade Projects)
- Increasingly translate work results and good practice and make them accessible internationally
- Systematically collect and present good practice from other countries
4. Intensify cooperation with the private sector

Concept/Background:

In the further implementation of the Decade there should be a focus on the private sector as a central protagonist in matters of sustainability. The financial and economic crisis has made this even more relevant. ESD must – as the Bonn Declaration notes – also promote new economic thinking. ESD should be linked with an ethos of sustainable business practices, while also making it clear that ESD can create and add value. Besides, there is evidence that companies who subscribe to sustainable development are better at coping with the financial and economic crisis.

In linking ESD and business, both service providers and manufacturers should be addressed as well as consumers/clients: industry/companies (areas of activity include the operational level, financial markets, suppliers, products, customer contact/markets) and individuals (fields of activity include: financial expertise, consumers, policy/frameworks) require different yet somehow interlinked skills, for example in the context of new, sustainable value-creation networks (integrating customers in the development of products and services).

Recommendations:

- Promote initiatives in which companies also consider their in-house training and education with a view to sustainable development.
- Strengthen ‘business’ and ‘consumption’ dimensions of ESD-related activities.
- Build awareness of ESD especially among the management level.

Priorities for specific activities:

- Provide support in the development of teaching and learning materials for an integrated analysis of sustainable business and consumption
- Organise a management-level event highlighting the potential of ESD
- Initiate and support events on sustainable value-creation networks
- Continue cooperation with dm-Drogeriemarkt and develop new collaborations
- Explore and show more clearly the benefits companies can expect from ESD
- Gather examples of ESD in businesses and make them known to other companies
5. **Intensify cooperation with local authorities**

**Concept/Background:**

Cooperation with local authorities is to be strengthened based on the Local Cities and Authorities of the UN Decade recognised to date, to increase the role of local authorities in the implementation of ESD. This should be linked with the promotion of sustainable educational landscapes. Linking ESD with the issue of integration at local or regional level also plays an important role in this.

**Recommendations:**

- Identify and expand intersections between ESD and other activities for local networking.
- Include concepts such as ‘integrated educational planning and educational landscapes’ or ‘Lernende Regionen’ which deal with linking education policy and local politics across existing/traditional professional boundaries and areas of responsibilities, as well as sectors of education.
- ESD should be linked with the educational activities and guidelines of leading municipal associations.

**Priorities for specific activities:**

- Intensify cooperation with leading municipal associations regarding the interrelationships between education, sustainability and regional development in the knowledge society.
- Approach the protagonists of regional education landscapes and their contacts in the state ministries for the purpose of integrating ESD.
- Organise events with with children’s day-care centre operators, to develop and implement ESD (see 1. above)
- Host workshops with Cities and Local Authorities of the UN Decade and other interested parties to develop models for sustainable educational landscapes and regional ESD networks.
- Emphasise ESD as a locational advantage to attract business.

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**A process of enlightenment resulting in demonstrable changes in behaviours at the individual, societal and global levels.**

**Education that equips the young and old for an uncertain future.**

*Hayden Montgomery, New Zealand*

**What is ESD for me?**

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**NEXT STEPS**
Outlook

The National Action Plan shows that in Germany, a lot has happened in Education for Sustainable Development since the beginning of the United Nations Decade - and there are big plans that probably won’t be completed by the end of the Decade in 2014. Activities are running or in preparation on a number of levels. To mention just a few:

As part of the annual Days of Action this year, Tuesday 20 September 2011 will be the first ‘Tu’s Day’ (Do It Day). The idea is to encourage as many students nationwide as possible to tackle issues of sustainability. The Network of Students’ Initiatives for Sustainability, founded as part of the ‘Universities for Sustainable Development: Good Practice in Teaching’ conference in December 2010 in Berlin published a List of Demands in late June 2011, to give concrete suggestions for how the path to sustainable development in a university environment can succeed. This list can be downloaded and discussed at www.nachhaltige-hochschulen.de; a petition to support it is also posted here. The Cities and Local Authorities of the UN Decade and the German Commission for UNESCO will jointly publish a declaration on ‘Future-Proof Communities: Opportunities through Education for Sustainable Development’. It will elaborate on various benefits that arise for a community when they systematically put Education for Sustainable Development into practice.

But there is also still much work ahead, and by 2014 we will have gone down barely a third of the path described in this National Action Plan. Three aspects in particular are of great importance to further anchor Education for Sustainable Development in Germany:

1. It has become obvious that there is no alternative to sustainable development, which makes it all the more amazing that the role Education for Sustainable Development can and must play in this still hasn’t been sufficiently recognised. Education for sustainable development not only allows for acquiring the skills vital to shaping a sustainable society with a sense of global responsibility; with its modern teaching and learning techniques and focus on real-life problems and fascinating everyday issues, ESD also helps promote children, adolescents and adults’ motivation to learn, ability to cooperate, and long-term vision. All of these are tasks of a general education system for all.

2. ESD activities are still linked to the commitment of individuals. There are so many great projects that keep coming up with new, impressive ideas. But if we do not systematically anchor individual projects we tend to merely tread water. The motto for the next few years must be ‘From project to structure’. There need to be special ESD departments in government, at schools, companies and associations. It should also be mandatory to incorporate ESD in educational plans and frameworks, and training and study regulations. ESD must become a matter of course.

3. Ten years is a very short period of time when it comes to influencing peoples’ style of thinking and ways of life and anchoring a concept in all areas of the education system. The Decade can only be the prelude to a long-term push. With this in mind, we are already looking beyond 2014 and considering how the many good approaches and results from around the world can be continued and advanced on an international level. This should also be on the agenda at the United Nations Conference in Rio in June 2012. International and national commitment to ESD definitively cannot end with the Decade. We also need a global initiative for ESD – in the interests of a good, sustainable future for present and future generations.

Prof. Dr. Gerhard de Haan
Chairman of the National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
# List of Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>German Foreign Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLK</td>
<td>Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion</td>
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<td>BMBF</td>
<td>Federal Ministry of Education and Research</td>
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<td>BMFSFJ</td>
<td>Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth</td>
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<td>BMU</td>
<td>Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety</td>
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<td>BMELV</td>
<td>Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture</td>
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<td>BMZ</td>
<td>Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>DESD</td>
<td>Decade of Education for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>DUK</td>
<td>German Commission for UNESCO</td>
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<td>ESD</td>
<td>Education for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>HRK</td>
<td>University Rectors’ Conference</td>
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<td>KMK</td>
<td>Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>NAP</td>
<td>National Action Plan</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>RNE</td>
<td>Council for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>UMK</td>
<td>Conference of Environment Ministers</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td>WCED</td>
<td>World Commission for Environment and Development (‘Brundtland Commission’)</td>
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ESD is a tool to transform societies ...

Adriana Valenzuela,
Colombia

What is ESD for me?
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(as of 31 Jul 2011)

**Federal Ministries**

Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU)
Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

**Federal states**

Baden-Württemberg  Baden-Württemberg Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy Economics
 Bavaria  Bavarian State Ministry of Environment, Health and Consumer Protection
 Berlin  Berlin Senate Administration for Education, Science and Research
 Brandenburg  Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Brandenburg
 Bremen  Bremen State Institute for Schools
 Hamburg  Hamburg State Ministry of Urban Development and the Environment
 Hesse  Hessian Ministry of Environment, Rural Development and Consumer Protection
 Lower Saxony  Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture
 Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania:  Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania
 Rhineland-Palatinate  Rhineland-Palatinate Ministry of the Environment, Agriculture, Food, Winegrowing and Forestry
 Saarland  Saarland Ministry of the Environment
 Saxony  Saxon State Ministry of Culture and Sport
 Saxony-Anhalt  Saxony-Anhalt Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment
 Schleswig-Holstein  Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Areas
 Thuringia  Thuringian Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Conservation and the Environment

‘North German Partnership to support the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014’ (NUN)

Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal States (KMK)
Other institutions

Action Network in North Rhine-Westphalia
(AZUL)

Adolf Grimme Institute

akuTH e.V. – Thuringian Coordination Centre of the UN Decade

Alfred Töpfer Academy for Nature Conservation

Allianz Environmental Foundation

Arbeitsstelle Weltbilder

atavus e.V.

AWO Federal Association

azv Südholstein AöR

Baden-Württemberg Development Education and Information Centre (EPIZ) ‘Education Meets Development’ programme

Baden-Württemberg Society for Environmental Education

Bavarian Forest National Park Authority

Berlin Development Education and Information Centre (EPIZ)

Bertelsmann Stiftung

Bread for the World

BUND – Federal Working Group on Environmental Education

Catholic Federal Task Force for Adult Education (KBE)

Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt – Department of Geography Teaching

City of Aalen/Local Authority of the World Decade

City of Bad Honnef/Local Authority of the World Decade

City of Bonn/Local Authority of the World Decade

City of Erfurt/Local Authority of the World Decade

City of Frankfurt am Main/Local Authority of the World Decade

City of Freiburg/Local Authority of the World Decade

City of Gelsenkirchen/Local Authority of the World Decade

City of Heidelberg/Local Authority of the World Decade

City of Minden/Local Authority of the World Decade

City of Neumarkt i.d.OPf./Local Authority of the World Decade

Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)

Deutsche Bahn AG

Deutsche Post AG

Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V. – Berlin headquarters

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.

Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.

DGB Bildungswerk e.V.

didacta Association

Ecumenical One World Initiative (ÖIEW)

Education and Science Union (GEW)

Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst e.V.

Fair Trade Forum

Federal Association for Economic Development and Foreign Trade (BWA) – Global Economic Network e.V.

Federal Chamber of Architects

Federal Environmental Agency (UBA)

Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB)

Federation of German Consumer Organisations (vzbv)

Forum for Sustainable Investment

Fraport AG

Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg/Local Authority of the World Decade

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

German Adult Education Association (DVV) – Institute for International Cooperation

German Environmental Management Association (B.A.U.M.)

German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU)

German Federation for Arts Education and Cultural Learning (BKJ)

German Savings Banks and Giro Association

German Society for Environmental Education (DGU)

German Society for International Development (GIZ) – formerly Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED)

German Society for International Development (GIZ) – formerly Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GTZ)

German Society for International Development (GIZ) – formerly Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH (InWEnt)
Goethe-Institut
IG BCE – German Mining, Chemical and Energy Workers’ Union training institute
IG Metall
Institute for Futures Studies and Technology Assessment (IZT)
Institute for Sustainability in Education Employment and Culture (INBAK)
Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis of the Karlsruhe Research Centre (ITAS), part of the Helmholtz Association
International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany (IJAB)
Jugendorganisation Bund Naturschutz (JBN) – Voluntary Ecological Year department
Karl Hagemeister School Werder (Havel)
Körber Foundation
Kulturbolitische Gesellschaft e. V. – Institute for cultural policy
Leuphana University of Lüneburg – Institute for Environmental Communication
Leuphana University of Lüneburg – Institute for Integrative Studies
MACHmit! Museum for Children
Munich University of Applied Sciences – Department of Applied Social Sciences
Municipality of Alheim / Local Authority of the World Decade
Municipality of Hellenthal / Local Authority of the World Decade
National Centre for Political Education (bpb)
National Network for Civic Engagement
Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU)
NaturGut Ophoven
Oak Witten/Herdecke – students for sustainable economics and management
Ökoprojekt Mobilspiel e.V.
Protestant Support Group for Socio-Political Youth Education
Robert Bosch Foundation
S. O. F. Save our Future Environment Foundation
Sächsische Landesstiftung Natur & Umwelt – Academy
Schulen ans Netz e. V.
Schutzmehaenschaft Deutscher Wald
Society for Vocational Training Measures (GFBM) – Kreuzberg Education Centre
St Marienthal International Meeting Centre (IBZ) – environmental and civic youth education
terre des hommes
The Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research
Triple innova GmbH
Türkisch-Deutsches Zentrum e. V. (TDZ) – Turkish-German Environmental Centre Berlin
Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland (TGD)
UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network – Nationwide coordination
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University of Freiburg – Institute for Forestry and Environmental Policy
University of Kassel – Didactics of Civic Education Department
University of Paderborn – Department of Sport and Health
University of St. Gallen – Institute for Public Services and Tourism
University of Stuttgart – Department of vocational, economic and technology education
University Rectors’ Conference
Verband kommunaler Unternehmen e. V.
Working Group of the Environmental Advocates of the German Dioceses
Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy
WWF Germany – Berlin representation
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Zeitbild Verlag
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Publishing credits

Publisher: National Committee for the UN Decade Education for Sustainable Development on behalf of German Commission for UNESCO
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53115 Bonn
Germany

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Editor: Dr. Marianne Dehne
Layout: www.bert-odenthal.de
Translation/Editing: Larissa Stillman
Printing: Druckerei Lokay e. K.
Print run: 1,000 copies

Fotos:
Cover: DUK/Cornelia Danetzki, S.O.F.-Bildarchiv (www.kita21.de); U2: Ökoprojekt – MobilSpiel e.V./Albrecht Haag, DUK/Ziehe; U3: DUK/Cornelia Danetzki, Bert Odenthal; back cover: The Global Experience

September 2011

Printed on 100 % recycled paper (EnviroTop)

ISBN 978-3-940785-35-0
Making personal and professional decisions to ensure that people worldwide can lead a good life today and in the future requires knowledge about the many interconnections between business, society and the environment. But motivation and skills to put this knowledge into action are also needed. The United Nations proclaimed the years 2005 to 2014 the ‘Decade of Education for Sustainable Development’ so that everyone can acquire the necessary values, knowledge and skills. All Member States are called on to anchor this concept in their education systems. In Germany, the German Commission for UNESCO coordinates the process based on a unanimous Bundestag resolution and funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. This National Action Plan provides information on the goals Germany has set itself and how the Decade is being implemented here in Germany.

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ISBN 978-3-940785-35-0