Advancing Sustainable Development at a Local Level with Education!

Statement by the mayoresses and mayors of the towns and municipalities declared Official Local Authorities of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
**Official Local Authorities**

As part of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) the German Commission for UNESCO granted awards to local authorities that were particularly committed to the subject of "Education for Sustainable Development". All local authorities are still invited to display their commitment and contribute their expertise to discussions.

The following local authorities were awarded until 2014:

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<th>Aalen</th>
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<td>Markt Eggolsheim</td>
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<td>Bad Honnef</td>
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<td>Minden</td>
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<td>Bonn</td>
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<td>Dinslaken</td>
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Further information and contacts at:
www.bne-portal.de/en
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Statement by the mayoresses and mayors of the Decade Local Authorities

The Decade Local Authorities introduce themselves
Dear readers,

the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development declared by the United Nations comes to a close this year. Despite the many noteworthy successes over the last ten years, we are still faced with the sizeable challenge of establishing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in all sectors of the education system. The United Nations are therefore expected to adopt a five-year UN Global Action Programme in late autumn 2014. With five priorities, it shall aim to promote the continuous integration of ESD in national and international education and sustainability politics. Local authorities and local education landscapes are some of the main areas of action and are called to "accelerate the search for solutions for sustainable development on a local level using ESD".

The 21 towns and municipalities awarded by the German Commission for UNESCO are proof that ESD is already widely offered and implemented in formal and non-formal educational institutions on a local level. Their exemplary activities and in particular the creation of networks in which various institutions from administration, foundations, societies, companies and curricular and extra-curricular learning centres work together are an important contribution to regional transformation and thereby also to the sustainable development of local authorities.

We assume that ESD already takes place in most local authorities without the term and concept being specifically named. Making these - often singular - activities visible and bringing the stakeholders together in networks with a stable structure are key tasks for the coming years. Only that way can synergies and development dynamics be created that generate new knowledge and develop solutions to systematically integrate ESD into the regional education landscape. There is no generally applicable approach as to how local authorities ought to promote ESD and position it firmly in their community. Every town and municipality has its own options, needs and political and civil society constellations. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile for every municipality to pursue these "unearthed treasures", and help further establish and systematically expand them.

This mayoral statement draws attention to this considerable and often untapped potential and encourages other towns and municipalities to also make steps in this direction. The statement was drafted by the "Local authorities and ESD" working group of the UN Decade Education for Sustainable Development Round Table, which was made up of representatives of the towns, administrative districts and municipalities awarded Decade status – and adopted by their 21 mayoresses and mayors.

The UN Decade has laid the path for the structural establishment of ESD in the German education landscape. Particular focus must be placed on ensuring that local authorities recognise the chances that ESD offers them in their social, ecological, economically fair and political development in the future. "Local knowledge", cooperation amongst various ESD stakeholders and the involvement of citizens in participatory processes are all important elements in establishing an educational landscape in accordance with ESD. After all, in a world where global prosperity and people’s welfare and well-being depend on individual knowledge and communal action, ESD is a decisive factor for sustainable development on the local level.

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

Every year the children in Dornstadt collect green miles for the global climate.
Hamburg was awarded official UN Decade city status four times for the "Hamburg lernt Nachhaltigkeit" (Hamburg Learns Sustainability) initiative.

"Krumme Gurken" (Curvy Cucumbers) party on sustainability day in Erfurt.

Villa Kunterbunt: A fair kindergarten in Dinslaken.

"Grüner Aal" (Green Aalen) sustainability management system at Aalen schools.

Winners of the 6th Agenda Competition "Osnabrück nachhaltig mobil" (Osnabrück – sustainably mobile).

Campaign against excessive consumerism – “Fair-Schenkt doch mal Gerechtigkeit” (Why not spend a little on equality).
Statement by the mayoresses and mayors of the Decade Local Authorities

Advancing Sustainable Development at a Local Level with Education!

The Decade Local Authorities welcome the "Education for Sustainable Development" Global Action Programme planned to begin in 2015 and call upon all local authorities to intensify their ESD activities and firmly position them in their mission statement.

Local authorities will be faced with significant challenges in the future - from climate change and equality in education to the financial security of sustainable public services. Local authorities are of particular importance in their role as a link between citizens and politics, as the local level can be viewed as a yardstick for sustainable development.

The local authorities awarded UN Decade status by the German Commission for UNESCO have been successfully committed to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development for many years now. ESD has become a key driver for local authorities in the transformation required in our thoughts and actions.

The orientation and active knowledge obtained by citizens here helps local authorities to solve impending future problems and makes a significant contribution to the attractiveness of the municipality as a place to live, work and recover in the sense of a sustainable education landscape (see "Zukunftsfähige Kommunen: Chancen durch Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung", DUK 2011).

As a follow-up activity to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO has proposed an "Education for Sustainable Development" Global Action Programme which with five specific focal points shall seek to provide new impulses when introduced in 2015. The Decade Local Authorities already called for emphasis to be placed on local sustainable education landscapes in February 2013. The draft presented by UNESCO expressly lists local authorities as one of five priorities.

We, the signatory mayoresses and mayors of the local authorities of Aalen, Alheim, Bad Honnef, Bonn, Dinslaken, Dornstadt, Dresden, Erfurt, Frankfurt/Main, Freiburg, Gelsenkirchen, Hamburg, Heidelberg, Hellenthal, Hetlingen, MarktEggolsheim, Minden, Munich, Neumarkt i. d. OPf., Osnabrück and Solingen, welcome the planned Global Action Programme.

We want to continue to support ESD within the Global Action Programme and hereby state:

- Our local authorities successfully participated in the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development which took place from 2005 to 2014. It became apparent that ESD is pivotal in individuals shaping a "good life" in the sense of the sensitisation for and development of socially just, economically fair and ecological behaviour. ESD therefore provides an important foundation and orientation for the expansion of our local and regional educational landscapes.

- We, the German UN Decade Local Authorities, are working intensively on effective and innovative solutions for the formation of sustainable development in our local authorities

- We support the notion of ESD being established on as many levels as possible within our formal education system (from kindergarten to university), in non-formal education (e.g. extra-curricular youth education) and in informal learning in all areas of life.

- We shall advance the "dialogue and cooperation with a variety of relevant stakeholders" as stated in the draft Programme of Action. In addition to the "diversification and expansion of existing networks", we as the responsible parties on a local level shall also strengthen the "availability of learning opportunities regarding sustainable development" as called for in the Programme of Action.

“While our goals are global, they can most effectively be achieved through action at local level”
(Kofi Annan, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, 2005)
• Particular emphasis is placed on the intensification of joint learning processes in international dialogue by enabling exchange amongst experts. Furthermore, efforts are being made to forge international partnerships, e.g. with local authorities’ twin towns or internationally active networks (e.g. Regional Centres of Expertise on education for sustainable development (RCE) and the ICLEI cities network).

• In order for the regional transformation to sustainable development to be a success, we in our roles as mayoresses/mayors hereby make a commitment to establishing ESD more strongly as a cross-sectional topic in the mission statements and strategy plans of local politics and local administration.

• We call upon the federal government and Länder governments* to create legal and financial foundations for a successful implementation of the Global Action Programme. The network of 21 Decade Local Authorities put together by the German Commission for UNESCO offers opportunities for a fruitful exchange and must be retained and continued. The administration structures responsible for the local implementation of ESD must be strengthened in order to promote existing ESD networks and structures as effectively as possible.

• The support of cooperation between local authorities that has been provided so far by the German Commission for UNESCO must be strengthened so that other local authorities in Germany also intensify their promotion of ESD and thereby make advances in sustainable development. Establishing an awards procedure plays a major role in that. It is not only motivational, but it also creates basic legitimation for local authorities in the performance and implementation of ESD.

• In that sense we encourage other towns, municipalities and administrative districts to intensify their efforts in promoting ESD. We call upon them to also participate in the Global Action Programme and to actively exchange ideas with other local authorities in order to save resources and use synergies.

Thilo Rentschler  
Lord Mayor of Aalen

Georg Lüdtke  
Mayor of Alheim

Wally Feiden  
Mayoress of Bad Honnef

Jürgen Nimptsch  
Lord Mayor of Bonn

Dr. Michael Heidinger  
Mayor of Dinslaken

Rainer Braig  
Mayor of Dornstadt

Martin Seidel  
Mayor for Social Affairs of the State Capital Dresden

Andreas Bausewein  
Lord Mayor of the State Capital Erfurt

Peter Feldmann  
Lord Mayor of Frankfurt am Main

Dr. Dieter Salomon  
Lord Mayor of Freiburg i. Br.

Frank Baranowski  
Lord Mayor of Gelsenkirchen

Olaf Scholz  
First Mayor of the Free and Hanseatic City Hamburg

Dr. Eckart Würzner  
Lord Mayor of Heidelberg

Rudolf Westerburg  
Mayor of Hellenthal

Monika Rickhof  
Mayoress of Hetlingen

Claus Schwarzmann  
First Mayor of Markt Eggolsheim

Michael Buhre  
Mayor of Minden

Christine Strobl  
Third Mayoress of the State Capital Munich

Thomas Thumann  
Lord Mayor of Neumarkt. d. OPf.

Wolfgang Griesert  
Lord Mayor of Osnabrück

Norbert Feith  
Lord Mayor of Solingen

* Insofar as the local authority is also a Land, no such request is made of the Land government.
The Decade Local Authorities introduce themselves

Cities (up to 1.8 million inhabitants)

**Bonn**
In addition to the United Nations, about 150 NGOs that are involved in sustainability have their headquarters in Bonn. Participation in international networks and projects is implemented by exchanging experiences and sharing knowledge in the area of ESD.

**Dresden**
Dresden’s goal is to permanently involve sustainability in local planning and action processes, especially by strengthening local authority education management. The "Lokale Agenda 21 für Dresden e. V." (Local Agenda 21 for Dresden) association provides strong impulses.

**Frankfurt am Main**
The "Nachhaltigkeit lernen in Frankfurt" (Frankfurt Learns Sustainability) network forms the centrepiece of the Frankfurt programme, which was founded in 2008 with the participation of various stakeholders from institutions, companies and civil society. The "Umweltlernen in Frankfurt am Main e. V." (Environmental Learning in Frankfurt) society coordinates ESD activities in the city.

**Hamburg**
The Free Hanseatic City Hamburg already launched the "Hamburg lernt Nachhaltigkeit" (Hamburg Learns Sustainability) initiative in 2005 and has integrated the sustainable development mission statement in all education sectors. Authorities, associations, societies, companies and individuals are involved in the initiative.

**Munich**
Sustainable development is a cross-sectional subject in Munich throughout politics, administration and civil society. In order to permanently establish sustainability in the city’s community, Munich wants to create a "culture of sustainability". The specially founded society, “BenE e. V.”, supports the Bavarian capital.

Medium-sized cities (up to 250,000 inhabitants)

**Erfurt**
Thanks to numerous Agenda 21 projects, ESD has been integrated in many measures and structures. Administration, NGOs, stakeholders in school and extra-curricular education, and business all work together to implement ESD.

**Freiburg**
Freiburg has felt especially committed to the principle of sustainability for a long time. A "Freiburger Nachhaltigkeitsrat" (Freiburg Sustainability Council) was introduced, consisting of experts, town council and administration as well as representatives from civil society.

**Gelsenkirchen**
With the local Agenda 21 forming a starting point, the participation of citizens, various organisations and associations as well as the church and business is central to the sustainability process.

**Heidelberg**
ESD is practised in many areas of city life in Heidelberg. The concept covers the whole spectrum of ESD subjects. The activities are coordinated by the Agenda office in Heidelberg’s environmental office.

**Osnabrück**
Sustainability topics have a long tradition in Osnabrück. The local Agenda 21 has been active in a well-connected education landscape for 20 years and the city has developed a sustainability strategy.

**Solingen**
ESD plays a significant role in Solingen. The numerous "Solinger Aktionsprogramm 2013" (Solingen Action Programme 2013) projects and campaigns are proof of this, e.g. in the area of environment, climate and resource conservation, or in intercultural education.
**Small cities**
(up to 80,000 inhabitants)

**Aalen**
The Agenda Parliament in Aalen, consisting of heads of administration, politicians and citizens, deals with the implementation of ESD. Emphases are placed on the local Agenda 21 and schools as well as, in partnership with the university, on multidisciplinary projects.

**Bad Honnef**
The city combines its ESD activities and motivates the population to be actively involved in developing a healthy lifestyle in-keeping with its motto "Live healthily – Protect the environment – Shape the future". A health fair and a sustainability conference take place annually in the city.

**Dinslaken**
The Agenda office in Dinslaken promotes the creation of networks and participates in campaigns, amongst them international campaigns. That has not only established ESD in schools, but has also made it accessible to the general public.

**Minden**
The implementation of ESD is coordinated by the "Aktionsgemeinschaft Friedenswoche Minden e. V." (Minden Peace Week Action Community). It is the 'nucleus' of all activities, with a vibrant mix of around 25 initiatives, churches and state institutions as well as representation from private business with the network "Obere Altstadt Minden" (Upper Old Town Minden).

**Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz**
ESD emphasis is placed on climate change, with extensive education and support programmes, as well as the implementation of global learning projects. The Office for the Promotion of Sustainability was founded to coordinate ESD activities.

**Municipalities**
(up to 9,000 inhabitants)

**Alheim**
The Alheim motto "Alheim – voller Energie!" (Alheim – Full of Energy!) covers five large areas: social energy transition, economic strengthening, sustainable education of young and old, the creation of an energy, health and education region, and a generation network.

**Dornstadt**
The "Dornstädter Zukunftsgealter – Gemeinsam für Morgen!" (Dornstadt Future Designers – Working Together for Tomorrow!) initiative forms the core of activities in Dornstadt. Art and culture projects for young and old provide various impulses for a positive future in the municipality.

**Hellenthal**
The municipality’s goals include the creation of binding framework conditions for the sustainable development of housing, life, work and leisure quality. ESD is firmly positioned in various areas of the mission statement.

**Hetlingen**
The municipality of Hetlingen places emphasis on the elementary sector. Education offers for children and teenagers are provided together with the local water management company.

**Markt Eggolsheim**
Markt Eggolsheim focuses on the sensitisation of citizens for the subjects of ESD. In accordance with the approach of lifelong and multifaceted learning, every age group is appealed to individually and taken seriously as an important multiplier.
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U3:
1) Children at the solar play area by the Kirchner Solar Group, © Alheim
2) Primary school pupils at the Löwenburgschule municipal public all-day school and the Catholic Sankt Martinus primary school rap as network schools of the Decade event "Prima Klima in der Offenen Ganztagsschule" (Great Climate in Public All-Day Schools) at the re-awarding of Bad Honnef as a UN Decade 2013/2014 city for climate protection, © Codewalk ICT Consulting
3) Climate station Markt Eggolsheim, © Markt Eggolsheim
4) Sustainability conference in the former plenary of the German Bundestag in Bonn, © Michael Sondermann/Press Office of the City of Bonn
5) A sustainable city can only develop with the participation of all citizens, © Ökostation Freiburg

U4:
Blue banquet on the Frankfurter Römerberg, © Stadtschulamt Frankfurt

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The German Commission for UNESCO is an intermediary organisation for Germany’s foreign cultural and education policy. On the basis of a unanimous resolution of the German Bundestag decision by the Bundestag and with funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research it coordinates the implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany for which a national committee has been set up, and with funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research a coordination centre has been established.