



UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) will be held from 31 March to 2 April 2009 in Bonn, Germany

Information: <http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/home.html>

Press registration: online until 30 March 2009

At: <http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/press-information.html>

Aims of the Conference

The “**World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development – Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade**” marks the midpoint of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. It is organized by UNESCO and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO.

The conference will provide a platform for dialogue and advocacy on ESD at the global level. Some 700 participants from all regions will attend, representing UNESCO Member States, UN agencies, civil society organizations, youth and the private sector.

The World Conference on ESD comes at a time when education is increasingly recognized as a motor for change. And change - a massive reorientation of the ways people all over the world think and act - is required to ensure a sustainable future. The conference will be a major opportunity to highlight the role ESD must play in this process.

The Conference has four main goals:

- To underline ESD’s essential contribution to all education and to achieving quality education

“Why is ESD relevant?”

- To promote international exchange on ESD

“What can we learn from each other?”

- To assess DESD implementation

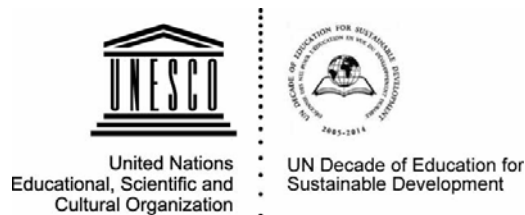
“What have we achieved so far, what are the lessons learnt?”

Empirical results as well as global and regional reports from the first Monitoring and Evaluation exercise – currently being conducted by UNESCO – will provide input.

- To develop strategies for the future

“Where do we want to go from here?”

Major recommendations resulting from the Conference will be expressed in a Bonn Declaration. More detailed results (from plenary sessions, workshops and other conference events) will be made available in a post-conference publication.



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What is Education for Sustainable Development?

In Tuvalu, islanders involved in the Small is Beautiful project are being trained to tackle environmental problems threatening their survival. The San development programme in southern Africa brings not just schooling but also food, clothing and health facilities to a marginalized population. The international YouthXchange project distributes a teachers' toolkit designed to make sustainable lifestyles attractive to young people. These initiatives are all facets of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) seeks to integrate the values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education.

The definition of sustainable development given by the World Commission on Environment and Development ("Brundtland Commission", 1987) remains valid: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

With persisting global patterns of poverty and inequality, along with emerging issues such as the impact of climate change and the current financial and economic crises, sustainable development is a central challenge facing the world today.

Achieving sustainable development requires a global change of mindset and behaviours, for which education is a key prerequisite.

ESD is thus a comprehensive package for quality education and learning within which key issues - social tolerance, gender equality, poverty reduction, environmental protection, natural resource conservation, corporate social responsibility, prevention of HIV/AIDS, protection of indigenous cultures, etc.- are addressed.

ESD is a lifelong undertaking starting from childhood, through formal schooling and throughout adulthood. ESD is relevant not only to formal education settings, training and workplace learning but also to public awareness-raising and many kinds of non-formal and informal learning.

In whatever setting, ESD encourages an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to teaching and learning and promotes critical and creative thinking in the educational process. It therefore implies new ways of teaching and learning.



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United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

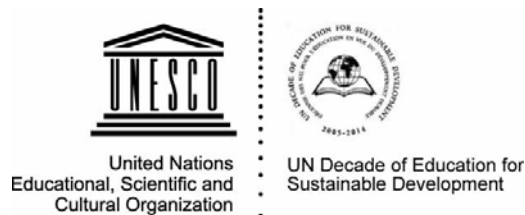
In December 2002, by Resolution 59/237, the UN General Assembly declared the years 2005-2014 the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). Member States thus made a commitment to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into education and learning. The UN General Assembly designated UNESCO the lead agency for the global implementation and coordination of the DESD.

As the International Implementation Scheme for the DESD (IIS, 2005), states: “The basic vision of the DESD 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 societal transformation.”

The IIS proposes four main objectives for the DESD: to facilitate networking and exchange among stakeholders in ESD; to foster increased quality of teaching and learning in ESD; to help countries attain the Millennium Development Goals through ESD efforts; and to provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts.

To approach the development of ESD initiatives holistically, four main directions have been identified: facilitating access to quality education; reorienting existing education systems to address sustainability concerns; launching public awareness and understanding initiatives; and establishing training programmes to address specific social, environmental and economic sustainability issues.

The DESD must be viewed in relation to other international priorities in development and education. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide the relevant framework for international development cooperation; the six Education for All (EFA) goals aim at extending the reach of basic education to everyone; and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) focuses on the contribution of youth and adult literacy to building knowledge societies in which all may participate. Oriented towards the goal of sustainable development, the DESD focuses specifically on the content and purpose of education and learning.



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UNESCO's role in ESD Decade

UNESCO's role as lead agency for the DESD is in line with its past involvement in sustainable development, its mandates and its function as laboratory of ideas, standard-setter, clearing house, capacity-builder and international cooperation promoter. All parts of UNESCO work together in an intersectoral manner.

As global coordinator of the DESD, UNESCO is working to:

- catalyze new partnerships with the private sector, youth and media groups;
- encourage a research agenda on ESD;
- serve as forum for bringing together key stakeholders, such as multinationals, faith-based institutions, indigenous people, etc.;
- share good ESD practices;
- link Member States that have put in place ESD curricula, policies and research with those Member States requesting help
- establish global frameworks and mechanisms to ensure effective monitoring and assessment of DESD implementation
- convene working groups on specific ESD topics;
- provide strategic guidance.

UNESCO's actions around the world

UNESCO has established coordination mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Committee for the DESD and a Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Group. UNESCO Regional Offices are playing a key role - UNESCO Bangkok, for example, has set up an Asia Pacific regional inter-agency committee and organized consultations. UNESCO National Commissions have helped launch national Decade committees.

At national level, Cluster and Field offices have helped Member States implement ESD. For instance, UNESCO Brasilia has provided technical assistance to the Brazilian government within the Education Development Plan (PDE), to develop programmes that include ESD in basic education, higher education, vocational education and literacy.

UNESCO has in addition prepared a variety of web-based tools, information and print materials. Vision-building has also taken the form of school contests, awards, ESD-related projects (essays, debates, income-generating projects) as well as joint school and community DESD initiatives.

UNESCO's Associated Schools (8000 schools in 177 countries) are initiating regional and international intercultural projects within the DESD framework (such as the Baltic Sea Project, the Great Volga River Route Project, or the Western Mediterranean Sea Project). Their activities encourage deeper understanding of issues associated with sustainable development - poverty, environmental degradation, population growth, urban and rural transformation, health, cultural diversity etc.

Partnerships have been established and synergies created between programmes and initiatives. UNESCO has entered into a number of partnerships or joint actions with sister UN agencies (in particular with UNEP and UN-Habitat), civil society partners, the private sector, media professionals, and faith-based organizations.

So far so good: highlights from the First DESD Global Progress Report

Since the start of the DESD, many activities have been undertaken by a broad range of stakeholders. National Committees have been set up, networks have been established, education materials have been developed and disseminated, good practices have been highlighted and shared, and meetings have been organized to encourage international exchange.

By the end of 2008, at least 73 countries in the world had a national ESD coordinating body, up from 44 at the end of 2006.

Worldwide, there is a notable presence of ESD in national policy documents.

Much remains to be done, however, before ESD occupies a truly central place in educational and learning processes and fulfils its potential to improve education quality.

**Interview with Charles Hopkins, UNESCO Chair in Education for Sustainable
Development, York University, Canada**

by Farid Gardizi, Deputy Spokesperson, German Commission for UNESCO

Farid Gardizi: The financial market crisis is a typical example of missing Sustainable Development. Are you optimistic about the future of the world?

Charles Hopkins: For so many of the world's poor it's a disaster. So I am not very optimistic. But the good news is we realize that we can't just suddenly switch from focusing on the environment to addressing the economy or social issues, each in isolation, as in the past. This time we are capable of looking at the market in a concerted way through the concept of sustainable development. So I am optimistic that we could make a better recovery. In the meantime it's going to be very, very hard on many on the world's poor.

G: Who lags behind so far? Is it more society, the economy or politics?

H: From an ESD perspective I would say it is society in general. Many countries around the world don't have an integrated ESD or even an effective SD strategy. The society in these countries is often not engaged. In other countries we are finding that the general society has not been exposed to sustainability at all. But we need the ESD public awareness and understanding programs. We need training programs at all levels and we need better education programs that deal with the real sustainability issues. Once we have an informed society we can better address the environmental and economic issues in a more equitable and informed manner.

G: Schools are an important interface for education for sustainable development. If young people acquire the knowledge and values, they have the chance to think and act with lasting effect. So how can students best learn to understand the exceedingly abstract subject of sustainability?

H: One of the best ways is by not calling it sustainability, especially with younger students. ESD has to deal with the students' and teachers' real issues such as sharing, caring and relating, before you slowly move from a "me" focus to a "we" focus. Dealing with their own local environmental and social issues first and then slowly building up to a global perspective is a workable entry for schools. An important component of formal education's engagement with ESD is using ESD to address the existing academic goals. *Access* and *Retention* in quality education is a shared thrust of ESD and school systems. Using sustainability issues to enhance critical thinking skills is but one of many examples of overlapping objectives. To begin, we should focus on age appropriate competences. These competences go beyond factual knowledge and include skills, values, perceptions and action skills. ESD however is "place-based" and must also be developed in a locally relevant and culturally appropriate manner.

G: What are good ESD practices at school level?

H: One place to start is the curriculum. What is being taught and modelled? If we are trying to promote democracy, we must model democracy in the classroom. What kind of governance models do we have in the school itself? These are the sort of surface things that would be good practices. But also there are much deeper ones: What do we fund or timetable? What do

we evaluate and what do we report upon? What is it that our whole school system models in its purchasing, school meals and buildings? The system must declare ESD a priority, fund it, measure its progress and report upon achievements. That way the teachers, students and school officials will know that ESD truly is important and not just another peripheral add-on.

G: Do you think that the teachers have already realized how important education for sustainable development is?

H: Usually they intuitively understand and agree. But they often say there is no time in the curriculum, there are no resources. Some teachers think it's just another societal issue for schools to deal with without training or fiscal or human resources. To change this, we really need to engage the senior education leaders. They have to understand ESD, be mandated and resourced to develop strategic, concerted implementation plans. We also need to work with parents and the entire community as they don't know yet what ESD is trying to accomplish. So we have to work both from the top down and the bottom up.

G: What could be extra steps to ensure that the important role of education for sustainable development is emphasized more strongly?

H: One major step needed is to ensure that at least the new teachers will have competences in ESD. There are 60 million teachers now in the world. We just don't have funding to retrain them all. But we certainly can be working with the faculties producing the new teachers. We need to engage those institutions and the ministries that direct them. UNESCO knows this and is working hard with countries and institutions to address this issue.

G: What do you expect from the World Conference in Bonn?

H: The first thing is a more informed senior leadership in our ministries worldwide. If they are to redirect policy and resources, they have to understand what ESD is, both currently and its potential. This would be a tremendous asset on its own. Secondly, I expect that we will be surprised to see all that is going on around the world in ESD right now and to celebrate our gains. Thirdly, I expect we will have some agreement on concerted work plans in various sectors and regions that engage people at all levels. Lastly, I expect that we will come out of the Conference reinvigorated, with ESD as a priority worth funding, and with the willingness to work synergistically for the remaining years of the Decade and beyond.

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PROJECTS

Chanuka Express

By Yvonne Otieno and Susan Scrull-Carvalho

An older man was walking along the beach and came upon a sandy stretch where thousands of starfish had washed ashore.

Just ahead, he spotted a teenager picking up starfish one at a time and tossing them back into the ocean.



They've arrived! Excitement as the Express arrives.

“Oh! You’re being silly!” he exclaimed. “You can’t possibly save *all* of these starfish. There are too many!”

Smiling the teenager replied, “I know. But I can save this one,” and she tossed another into the ocean, “and this one”, toss, “and this one, and...”

Each and every one of our acts of caring and taking responsibility is critical.

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This is the message Chanuka Express is spreading among young people—both in and out of school: always do the “right thing” because we can make a difference! And young people **CAN** ... and **ARE** doing just that. They’re realizing that this is **our** life and **our** world and they’re learning—one step at a time—how to take care of it for their life and for future generations too.

In Kiswahili Chanuka means to “*Get with it or ‘bloom’ by using knowledge.*” This is a youth-centred learning and capacity-building motivational programme based on the *Young African Express* educational newspaper and the principles of *Education for Sustainable Development* or ESD. As a partnership between UNESCO and the newspaper’s publisher, Jacaranda Designs—with help from the private sector including Tetra Pak and Shell—it’s a mobile outreach training programme operating out of a bus—the *Chanuka Express*. Our slogan is *Maisha Yetu, Dunia Yetu* (Our Life, Our World) and the theme is “*Learning for Sustainable Living.*”

Reaching teenagers in low-income primary schools and communities, the programme focuses on smaller groups of peer-selected Chanuka Club leaders and trains and prepares them to create and share messages and skills with others. These young leaders *identify their own* priority issues of personal safety, health, hygiene, water and sanitation, and environmental degradation. Confronted by the harsh realities of poverty, violence and joblessness, the *Chanuka* facilitators are helping young people realize how much they already know and how capable they are in sharpening their skills and using these to inspire themselves, their peers and other people in taking responsibility for improving their *quality of life*—despite tough multiple challenges.



Like the young woman with the starfish, their level of determination is making an impact not only on them but on their communities, schools and families too. Sustainable development in our country is depending on them: on young people equipped with productive knowledge, practical skills and a positive character.

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Warm up: An icebreaking game launches the Peace and Reintegration Day held with Save the Children.

Through open honest discussions, participatory training and interactive learning support, young people are choosing to be ‘agents of change.’ By learning and using their knowledge, practical life skills and capabilities of motivating and inspiring action for positive change, they are choosing *Chanuka!*—or *to Get with it!*

A day in the life of Chanuka

In the morning, Chanuka facilitators—a trained and motivated team of young adult volunteers, mostly university students—climb aboard the Chanuka Express bound for the day’s venue. With them is a raft of teaching tools, props, and art supplies. Among these tools are copies of the *Young African Express*, a monthly educational newspaper aligned to the Kenyan curriculum and filled with illustrated articles, cartoons, facts and games focusing on essential life skills.



On arrival, they meet up with a pre-selected group of teenagers from schools and youth clubs in the area. Teachers and other members of the community are there too. After a short highly participatory puppet show or community theatre introduction, the youth form four Chanuka teams—Peace and Safety, Health, Water and Sanitation, and the Environment.

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Safety team at work: Chanuka facilitator, Dagmawit, leads an activity with the Safety group.

In small groups, the young people engage in games, demonstrations, discovery sessions, role-plays and discussions to identify key local challenges and solutions. These young leaders form the backbone of the Chanuka Clubs set up in every school involved. The day ends with presentations of the identified key issues and the action plans made by each group.

The Chanuka Express visits each site 2–3 times a year. Between visits, the young people and teachers are not idle. They form Chanuka Clubs with Health, Water and Sanitation, Safety and Peace, and Environment teams. The teams recruit others in their schools, passing on the messages they created and mobilizing others to join in taking action on important issues. They record their plans, obstacles and successes in supplied notebooks and these are used by the Chanuka facilitators on return visits to assess their progress and assist with problem-solving.

The results are impressive. Chanuka Club members at Evangel Primary School in Baba Dogo, Nairobi realised there was a high rate of absenteeism at their school, which was affecting the pupils' performance.

The club members investigated and found out that pupils were missing school due to stomach ache. They connected the stomach aches to worms caused by unhygienic habits including eating with unwashed hands and drinking unsafe water.

The club's solution was to help pupils and teachers understand this health issue and how to help themselves. They started a de-worming campaign in the school.

First they raised awareness using information and they held discussions with their schoolmates to motivate action. To feel better, they needed to get rid of the worms by taking de-worming tablets. To buy these, they came up with a plan—they asked every member of their school community to donate Ksh 20 to the project.

Their parents were so impressed by the idea that they contributed more money, and the club was soon able to buy de-worming tablets for the entire school community—children, teenagers and the adult teachers!



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Teamwork: Chanuka joined with Save the Children in a programme to aid the reintegration of IDP's in schools. This activity demonstrates the need to work as a team to reach a goal.

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Water schools shed light on Yangtze pollution

By Gong Yidong

Water is a daily necessity for most people, but it is a constant companion to primary school student Sun Yao in southwest China's Sichuan Province.

He has lived alongside Baicao River, a tributary of the Yangtze, the largest river in China and the third longest in the world, for more than 12 years.

At the upper reaches of Yangtze, the Baicao River provides drinking water to the 6,600 inhabitants of Piankou Town, Beichuan County, which was among the most severely damaged during the May 12 Wenchuan earthquake that claimed more than 80,000 lives. However, the *Mother River* has seen a drastic change over the last two decades.



© Tang Ming

Two primary school students watch a dying fish in Baicao River in Piankou Town, Beichuan County, southwest China's Sichuan Province.

Sun was concerned about the foul-smelling “rubbish mountains” along the 10-km river, piles of polyfoams, cupboard cups, food scraps, medical needles and tubes, and plastic bags.

The run-off from private gold mines and sandstone collectors adds to the filth. The mushrooming small and medium-sized hydropower stations also pose an ecological risk to the livelihoods of the people living nearby.

The 1,000-plus towns along the upper reaches of the Yangtze pump the numerous tributaries with waste, causing a huge environmental problem at the Three Gorges Dam, says Fu Zhiping, a professor of ecology at Mianyang Normal University, Sichuan.

The Yangtze river system produces 40 percent of the nation's grain, a third of its cotton, 48 percent of its freshwater fish and 40 percent of the total industrial output value. However, it is also a depository for 60 percent of the country's pollution, making it the single

largest source of pollution in the Pacific Ocean, according to Shangri-la Institute for Sustainable Communities (SISC), a Chinese non-governmental organization.

In the spring of 2008, both Sun and Fu took part in the *Water School for a Living Yangtze* under the *International Water School Program* sponsored by Austria's Swarovski company, a program that also includes the Nile in Egypt and India's Ganges.

The Chinese program, supervised by the SISC, with the Ministry of Education and UNESCO as its partners, has involved more than 50,000 students from 27 middle and primary schools in Sichuan and the adjacent provinces of Qinghai and Yunnan, as well as Shanghai, where the Yangtze meets the East China Sea.

Under the guidance of teacher Tang Ming, Sun and his classmates at Piankou Central Primary School began to monitor water quality by using graduated cylinders and test papers, which they had never used before. The preliminary test result confirmed Sun's concerns: the PH index stands at 5.8 at the lower reaches of Baicao River, with the turbidity reaching Grade IV,



showing that the water has already been polluted to an alarming extent.

Based on further investigations in and around Piankou Town, Sun and his classmates proposed in a written letter to re-arrange the 15 dustbins along the two major streets "in a more scientific way" and establish a rubbish disposal system.

© Tang Ming

Students of a local middle school observe the water quality by using a graduated cylinder in Yuli Town, Beichuan County, southwest China's Sichuan Province.

To their great surprise, the town government approved their proposal, and a sewage treatment plant based on the scientific principles of a biological wetland is also under discussion.



The students also disseminated questionnaires to the communities of Piankou, and 89 percent of the respondents believed it was necessary to treat the river pollution.

"The project provides a platform for effective environmental protection around the branches of Yangtze, and it is a model for shifting away from the exam-focused educational system," says Fu, who has 14 years' experience in the field of environmental education.

© Tang Ming

Primary school students carry out a survey among the villagers in Piankou Town, Beichuan County, southwest China's Sichuan Province.

The water schools on the Yangtze have gone beyond the boundaries of campuses to complement local social, economic and cultural conditions.

For instance, the lamas of Dongzhulin Temple, in Deqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, are invited to contribute to water protection through their religious teachings that link nature and man.

“The value of this project lies in its integrated model that involves the communities over a broad spectrum, instead of a technical solution targeting a minor issue. We encourage the process of learning by doing, so that a tangible change in mindsets and behavior will impact the policy-making of government, which promotes wider public participation in long-term environmental protection,” says Dorjie, SISC program coordinator.

In 2009, the project will expand to China’s capital Beijing, a city notorious for its scarcity of water. Besides the *Education for Sustainable Development on the Tibet Plateau* project surrounding the Yalu Tsangpo River, the SISC is also aiming to carry out a similar environmental education project along China’s second longest river, the Yellow River, says Dorjie.



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Everyone knows Facebook – but do you know Solar Net International?

By Bianca Bilgram



Bui Thi Doan Trang, 22,
Sai Gon, Vietnam

"Solarnet is not only a website, but a community where people, countries, thinkings are connected. It is like a whole-packaged visual traveling, offering new friendships, knowledge and experience; yet costs you nothing."

Through the internet, the world is just one click away. To make 'the world' more tangible an international exchange forum was established by a group of students and teachers at the Schillergymnasium in Münster, Germany, in 2005. The internet platform was named Solar Net International and has set itself the aim to improve the intercultural competence of young learners and at the same time to encourage their media and communication skills and environmental awareness. Since 2005 over 1400 students and young learners from more than 90 countries have registered to be part of the Solar Net Network. Solar Net International has since grown from a school project to a globally active non governmental organisation, registered as an association in Germany and Poland. The network provides people with a platform for intercultural exchange by initiating and supporting various educational, environmental and social projects in its partner countries. Members communicate and cooperate with each other daily through the communication board.

What makes Solar Net special?

The main pedagogic interest of the project is to motivate young people from different cultures and backgrounds to share their lives and ideas with each other. The appeal is that it is quite simple for members to post reports for one another, especially relaying their everyday lives. With a wide range of topics covered in these reports, and the potential for feedback and discussion, the report system at Solar Net compliments the aims of global learning. Through the reporting, new perspectives and insights into other cultures can be gained, and it reflects how perceptions of other countries and cultures are often influenced by media or stereotypes that do not represent the daily life of other cultures. One unique component of this project is

the fact that each participant – regardless of age, gender, colour, or culture – is both a student and a teacher.

The reports and discussion topics also initiate enthusiasm and participants gain motivation to present themselves, their culture, their language, their environment or any topic that is of importance to them. In this way, the project engenders a natural curiosity for topics of personal significance and at the same time generates awareness for important issues that have been brought up by other members. Global, political, environmental, and religious topics are discussed and common and differing point of views shared.

"Through Solar Net International , you get to know the real life of the other countries, break all your stereotypes and enjoy wonderful friendship that grows every day. I'm happy that I can present my country to the whole world!"



Ahmad, Egypt

Learning each others' language at the same time...

Learning a foreign language is the first step to understand and to exchange with other cultures. In our modern world cross-cultural competence and foreign language skills gain more and more importance. Since 2007 Solar Net produces regularly video language courses, so far with the focus on German and Polish language, although courses have been published in 14 other languages which can be seen on Solar Net TV. All those video language courses are published on Youtube: www.youtube.com/magauchsein. Through this tool new users are introduced to the network and the network grows continuously.

Solar Net encourages its members from all around the world to produce video language courses for their partners and in its languages forum its members plan new video language courses, help each other with learning languages and form online learning groups.

"Besides learning so much about the everyday lives of people from around the World, I now have awesome international friends. But mostly I have been beyond blessed by the language lessons they have produced and the constant support I have gotten in my quest to learn a new language. I love being part of the community. So thanks Solar Net International!"



Spacecowgirl, 34,
United States

Initiating educational, environmental and social projects in partner countries

At local level members of Solar Net work together on media, environmental and language projects and share expertise and experience when developing new projects and implementing them. For example: through local media workshops in schools members help young learners to gain multimedia skills and learn how to photograph, film, record audio sounds and how to use graphic- and video-editing programs, which are then posted on the website.

One example: School village Baumgartsbrunn in Namibia

The school village of Baumgartsbrunn in the Khomas Highland of Namibia consists of the Primary School Baumgartsbrunn (state primary school) and the Institute for Domestic Science and Agriculture (domestic vocational school for young women).

The school village, founded 30 years ago by the German couple Helmut and Gertraude Bleks, is now, among others, supported by several groups from Solar Net. The association of Solar Net International has been involved for several years namely in the fields of renewable energies and international youth exchange. The association supported the installation of a photovoltaic station in the vocational school and the installation of a solarthermic warm water supply in the primary school, which, since last year, has been providing more than 300 pupils with warm water for the first time.

The basic idea of the project is to bring together young students from Namibia and Germany through the internet platform and school exchange trips. In the past years, five successful youth exchanges with students from Baumgartsbrunn and Münster could be realized. Not only do these meetings of students help to fight prejudices and develop mutual understanding for the relevant cultures, but they also promote motivation and social commitment in all participants.

Common projects like films, presentations and exhibitions helped Solar Net to provide information and to acquire sponsorship, donations of material and money for the improvement of living conditions of the people in Baumgartsbrunn. By extending the internet access of Baumgartsbrunn and establishing a Namibia Forum in February 2006, a public communication platform could be initiated on Solar Net international.



Martin, 15, Pupil
Münster, Germany

"I enjoyed the visit to our partner school in Namibia very much. It was just a wonderful experience! I am a member of Solar Net International and I want to extend my media skills and my knowledge about renewable energies. Everyday I get in contact with new people all around the globe!"

Encouraging youngsters...

Since 2007 Solar Net also provides a Junior Area on its website, enabling the internet-based exchange of young students (up to age of 16) worldwide.

The project is supported by teachers in Germany, Namibia and Poland. The students are given a task every month, which they have to complete together through the help of the internet and the Solar Net network. Besides intercultural exchange and environmental awareness raising the aim is also to encourage their media and communication skills in general but also to continue expanding the scope of Solar Net International.



Justyna Kała, 20, Student,
Katowice, Poland

"Once I've said that people are like books and you just need to know how to read them and have a will to do so. Now I can also say that Solar Net International is the best library I've ever been in! Great people,
- great aims -,
great fun! I love it!"



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The Swiss International Teachers' Program

By Dr Lawrence Byrnes

What do 300 wonderful teachers from Brazil, Canada, South Africa, Vietnam, USA, and Switzerland have in common? They all participated in the SITP, an unforgettable educational and social experience at an American university where they studied and played together while learning about the interrelationship of the economy, ecology, and society. They met with teachers, politicians, business owners and citizens to learn about the local community and issues they face. They took fascinating field trips to get an up close and personal feel for the sights and sounds of the environment and the culture of the area.

Participants selected an action team to role play and solve problems of a fictitious country called ECOLAND ravaged by pollution and poor decisions by government, households, and business. They used a computer simulation program called ECOSYS, which is a macroeconomics software program that allows participants to realize the cumulative impact of their decisions on the quality of life of the citizens of ECOLAND. One goal of the SITP originators was to have participants return home and change the way they teach their students.



Participants invested several weeks of their summer holidays to engage in lively debates about how to build a sustainable future locally, nationally, and globally. They learned the necessity of listening to others and practiced letting go of biases to reach consensus. Indeed, some participants from the summer 2000 program are still communicating and visiting each other. Others have taken what they learned back home and implemented projects and programs based on the knowledge and skills acquired at the SITP.

© STIP

STIP students taking part in Six Mile Cypress Slough Walk, Florida

One Swiss participant from the 2005 program expressed her feelings as follows:

“After attending the SITP, I regularly e-mail Brazil, South Africa, and Florida. But there are other things too. First, I’m going to give some presentations on the occasion of our team meeting. I’m going to talk about ECOSYS, the hot topics such as bullying

and diversity at schools. Second, I changed the first topic in the subject: people and their environment. Normally, I started the new school year with the learner's improvement of language skills. But after SITP 05 I started with: 'I am responsible for my own learning and response-able to the success of the group.... Finally, the Brazilians are tremendously interested in the peacemaker project at our semi-independent state school. To sum up, my time in Florida was great and I learned a lot. Thanks.'



© STIP, *STIP participants, 2005*

I am aware of my personal attitude towards political and environmental views....The key word sustainability must not only be used as an essential business-oriented word but also experienced, lived and believed in. This is exactly what I learned during those four wonderful weeks."

To fully appreciate the evolving success of the SITP over eight years, one must understand the complexities of the program and the challenges of designing, implementing, and managing an international enterprise. The participants come from different nations, speak many languages, and possess different world views and cultural traditions. They leave home to live and study together for three or four weeks. During the program they laugh and cry together, shop together, share transportation and living space, grapple with a difficult economics-based simulation game, and create democratic communities of learners within their living quarters. One participant captured the essence of the program as follows:

"I originally chose to come...because I saw it as a great opportunity to brush up on my English. I personally consider it as most important to do so...But then I realized that it was more important to have conversations with the Brazilians and the South Africans, because studying grammar is something that can be done in Switzerland as well, but there would be no one telling us about his time in the underground when the Apartheid still took place in South Africa, no one speaking about daily struggles being a divorced mum and so on....I definitely improved my speaking skills, and in addition to that got to learn a lot about other people's circumstances of life."

The program was launched at Florida Gulf Coast University and had a very successful six years tenure before being transferred to Virginia Tech University. A significant factor in the program's success at both institutions has been strong partnerships with the School of Education at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, and the Swiss business partner Holcim Inc. These close working relationships created energy and the teamwork necessary to anticipate and respond to changing circumstances. The SITP legacy will live on in 2009 as

Evaluation and improvement were keys to success. Each week participants completed a survey so we could make rapid improvements to our services. In addition, the results of a course-end formal evaluation were analyzed to make programmatic changes for the following year. One participant's comment has been a common theme for eight summers:

"Referring to your question about the impact of your excellent program, I can assure you that it has changed my whole outlook on life and teaching.

teachers throughout the world converge on Virginia Tech University for life changing experiences.



© STIP
Swiss Project Director, Charles-Marc Weber



Margaret Byrnes, ECOSYS Instructor

Project-based Workshops at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

In the afternoon of the second day of the conference, all participants will be invited to participate in a workshop at an ESD project in the region. The aim of the project-based workshops is to strengthen the international exchange of good practice. Project-based workshops are organised by local ESD projects and will focus on the implementation of ESD in practice. Examples from Germany will be showcased through discussions and with hands-on experiences. In addition, project presentations and guided tours around the project area will be provided. Project-based workshops will also provide space for informal exchange between project representatives and conference participants.

I - Relevance of ESD for key sustainable development challenges

Water as a source of life: From traditional Excursions to streams towards innovative Stewardship of streams by schools, Bonn

This project-based workshop will focus on projects with the aim of increasing knowledge on water as a source of life. Participants will be divided into smaller groups and rotate between three stations. The Erich Klausener Gymnasium will present its active role within a stewardship of streams which has been in operation for more than ten years: aquatic, solid and cultural-historical problems are thematised within the classroom and through field work. As a second station, the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union will offer active experiences with water through the participation in experiments and practices as well as the introduction of methods related to real-life activities. The NEPTUN (new partnership for transnational understanding and co-operation in water management) project will showcase as a third station its contribution to the further development of professionals in the water management field, via development of concepts, curricula and learning content based on the European Water Framework Directive.

Water quality and research – the ship MS Burgund as a swimming classroom, MS Burgund on the river Rhine

This project-based workshop will be conducted by the Ministry for Environment, Forest and Consumer Protection of the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate. It takes place on the research ship “MS Burgund” on the river Rhine. Workshop participants will take part in hands-on experiences normally conducted with school classes. Stations of learning with their exercises and working material specially created as a concept of teaching and learning within secondary schools will be presented to the workshop participants. These stations are guided by authentic experts like the ship’s captain and the operator of the ship who normally present the stations to students. The project-based workshop wants to educate participants towards being “laboratory assistants” “stream researchers”, “discoverers of the Rhine” and “ship’s masters”.

Biological Diversity and Education for Sustainable Development, Bonn University Botanic Gardens, Bonn

This project-based workshop is offered by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the Bonn University Botanic Gardens and Inwent Capacity Building International. The aim is to come into contact with colleagues of different countries and different backgrounds and talk about Biological Diversity as a key theme for ESD. Biological diversity in this context encompasses the conservation of species and habitats as well as a

sustainable use. The great potential of Botanic Gardens and similar institutions for ESD in this context will be shown. On stations in the Botanic Gardens, small groups will discuss with project representatives about experiences in their own countries and opportunities for cooperation.

Learning sustainability in Forests and Nature - Examples of good practice in Germany, German Hunting and Conservation Association, Bonn

Forests are an ideal place to demonstrate the principles of sustainability: Here, nature inspires one with regard to a great variation of topics. The core of forest and nature education is to foster an understanding with all senses, based on Pestalozzi's idea of learning with "head, heart and hands". Forest education combines more than one educational method and has the potential to teach essential competences for a sustainable development. Moreover, the principle of sustainability will be shown through examples of forest use, e.g. forestry and hunting. In innovative projects, sustainability is a process of negotiating ecological, economic, social and cultural factors. In the project-based workshop, four projects of interdisciplinary teaching outside of schools in and about forests will be presented.

II - Building partnerships to promote ESD

From research to action: implementing ESD in higher education, German Academic Exchange Service, Bonn

Due to the summer school hosted by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), 50 experts from different developing countries will get together in order to address the question as to how universities can actively face up to the challenges associated with ESD, and to what extent targeted structural changes can contribute to transforming universities for sustainability. In order to address varied experiences, as well as to emphasize cultural and regional issues, two topics will be presented, namely: "Sustainable Development as Strategy and Aim of Higher Education" (University of Lüneburg) and "From Research to Practice: The Role of Education for Sustainable Development in Natural Resource Management in Research, Education and International Cooperation" (University of Greifswald). Cross-border education and cross-cultural experiences will be interactively discussed with the audience and the conference delegates. In cooperation with the United Nations University (UNU) this workshop fosters a diverse platform in order to empower international experts on this agenda. With this instrument, the DAAD summer school on ESD, aims to encourage an interdisciplinary and holistic approach in the field of ESD.

ESD and the socio-economic dimensions: a challenge towards changing behaviors and consumption patterns, German Academic Exchange Service, Bonn

Due to the summer school hosted by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), 50 experts from different developing countries will get together in order to address the question as to how universities can actively face up to the challenges associated with ESD, and to what extent targeted structural changes can contribute to transforming universities for sustainability. In order to address varied experiences, as well as to emphasize cultural and regional issues, two topics will be presented, namely: "Poverty and Social Inequality in Education and its Impact on Sustainable Development" (University of Kassel) and "Sustainability within the organic chemistry lab course" (University of Braunschweig). Cross-border education and cross-cultural experiences will be interactively discussed with the audience and the conference delegates. This workshop fosters a diverse platform in order to empower international experts on this agenda. With this instrument, the DAAD summer

school on ESD, aims to encourage an interdisciplinary and holistic approach in the field of ESD.

How to approach global justice? Methods and instruments enhancing global competences and understanding, Inwent – Capacity Building International, Bonn

This workshop invites the participants to get involved in a direct dialogue: In the framework of this workshop, participants will learn about different approaches to education for sustainable development covering different target and age groups, including persons with disabilities. All participants will have the opportunity to interact with different methods and instruments to achieve an interesting intercultural and transgenerational dialogue on global justice. An exhibition presenting the different methods and instruments accompanies this workshop.

III - Capacity Development for ESD

ESD and ICT: Multimedia learning, Wissenschaftsladen, Bonn

Multimedia and learning with ICT is becoming more and more important day-by-day. In this project-based workshop, different models of learning through multimedia for ESD will be introduced. A brief introduction will present the different models of ICT-based learning. Participants will then have the possibility to have hands-on experience at the different projects within a large exhibition together with representatives of projects. After this, a discussion on the process of learning through multimedia in different countries will be held.

Non-formal Education for Sustainable Development through Experiential Learning, Finkens Garden, Cologne

Finkens Garden is an eco-social natural garden of 50,000 m² where pre-school and primary school children can experience nature with hands-on experiences and senses. Within the project-based workshop, there will be a guided tour through the project area as well as the presentation of four partner projects from the city of Aalen, Aalen University, the BUND-Centre Heilbronn and the Society for Environmental Education Baden-Württemberg. Participants will discuss the orientation of ESD towards experience and how to foster the interest of people of all ages for environmental topics by means of experimental learning, e.g. sowing, planting and harvesting as well as sensory experiences such as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling; also in contact to natural elements like air, soil and water – by actively discovering and taking action.

Non-formal Education for Sustainable Development in visitor centres, exhibitions and nature experience activities, Naturgut Ophoven, Leverkusen

This project-based workshop focuses on non-formal learning. Three stations will deal with ESD at exhibitions and nature experience activities. The International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) is an educational programme for school classes from the Wadden Sea countries Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands. It wants to put into effect the idea of a trans-boundary approach to the protection of the Wadden Sea with the younger generation. The Germanwatch Climate Expedition brings climate change, its impacts and solutions into the class rooms by the means of live satellite images. By viewing the Earth from space, one can compare the situation of polar ice, glaciers, lakes, rainforests and other ecosystems in former times to their actual conditions. The project-based workshop takes place in NaturGut Ophoven, one of the greatest points for extracurricular environmental education in the federal

state of North Rhine-Westphalia. It has a big innovative exhibition on the topic of energy and a natural site with demonstration habitats of over 60,000 square meters. It works with schools, kindergartens and adults.

IV - ESD and the teaching-learning process

UNESCO Associated Schools working towards ESD, Robert Wetzlar Vocational School, Bonn

The German UNESCO ASPnet has 192 member schools of all types and age groups. The main topics of its work are Human Rights, Peace and Democracy Education, Intercultural Learning, Education for Sustainable Development and World Heritage Education, to name just a few. The Associated Schools use methods like open school, interdisciplinary classes, projects for different age groups and others to implement UNESCO's aims and principles in their school programmes. Three ASP Schools will take part in the project-based workshop in Bonn. The Schillergymnasium Münster will present Solar Net International, an association to support intercultural exchange projects. The Comenius Kolleg Mettingen will present group activities for first year university students based on ecological projects that were the results of German-Brazilian cooperation. The Robert Wetzlar Berufskolleg is the host school and will present projects on sustainable breakfast and barrier-free tourism within the region.

Pre-conference for the Children and Youth International Conference for the Environment (Brazil 2010), Emilie Heyermann Secondary School, Bonn

The Project "50/50 – energy efficiency and renewable energy" of the Emilie Heyermann Secondary School in Bonn is part of Agenda 21 at school and an official German project for the UN Decade. Students from Bonn and their partner schools in Budapest (Hungary) and Buchara (Uzbekistan) will set in motion working groups on the themes of climate change, energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste avoidance and prevention of violence. Workshops will take place as a Conference at School in the lead-up to the Children and Youth International Conference for the Environment to be hosted by Brazil in 2010. This conference is a pedagogical campaign that brings together both the participation and the environmental-political dimensions for education on the theme of global responsibility. Workshop participants will get involved in direct dialogue with the students discussing their ideas of projects to be started at the school.

Education for Sustainable Development in Life and at Work, House of NICA (sustainability within chemical vocational training), Hürth

The House of NICA is a common pilot project of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), the Institute for Innovation and Sustainability (IRIS) and the educational institution "Rhine-Erft Academy", financially supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Starting with programmes like „responsible care“, there is a trend in the chemical industry towards developing a corporate culture. This goal can only be achieved with the participation of the whole staff. The pilot project NICA tries to transform the more abstract business principle of sustainable development into practical work. The pilot project is divided into the following sub-projects: development and testing of modules to integrate sustainability into VET; development and testing of a model of indicators and key figures to assess sustainability; "House of NICA" – apprentices plan and construction of a sustainable house; The sustainable educational institution. Within the project-based workshop, the project will be presented by vocational students.

**Starting strong: Education for Sustainable Development in early childhood, Kindergarten
“Hand in Hand”, Oberhonnefeld**

This project-based workshop will show that skills and competences of fundamental importance can be nurtured long before the first day at school. The approach of “Learning to shape life” has been implemented into everyday work at several hundred kindergartens within Germany. One of these, the day nursery in Oberhonnefelde, will discuss their work on ESD in early childhood through an exchange of ideas and experiences with participants. The implementation of this approach through information, cooperation, education, support and creativity within the federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate will be shown as well.



UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

Education for Sustainable Development Resources

UNESCO DESD Website: www.unesco.org/education/desd

Publications:

- UNESCO and Sustainable Development brochure
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001393/139369e.pdf>)
- Linkages between global education initiatives
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001408/140848m.pdf>)
- Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001433/143370e.pdf>)
- Good practices in education for sustainable development: teacher education institutions
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001524/152452eo.pdf>)
- Good practices in the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001533/153319e.pdf>)
- Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001524/152453eo.pdf>)
- ‘Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future’ multimedia teacher education program
(www.unesco.org/education/tlsf)
- The DESD in brief leaflet
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001416/141629e.pdf>)
- DESD International Implementation Scheme
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001486/148654E.pdf>)
- Framework for the UN DESD International Implementation Scheme
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001486/148650E.pdf>)
- International Implementation Scheme in brief (user friendly booklet)
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