

International research project "Development of Indicators to Evaluate Offerings and Performance in the Area of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)"

Brief description

The idea of sustainability should, as the stated goal of a majority of actors in politics and science, be established in national education systems around the world. Practitioners, politicians and scientists are all in unanimous agreement that simply taking action is not enough – it is also necessary to evaluate how successful efforts at reaching this goal have been. There have been a number of initiatives and projects in different countries, including Switzerland (CH), Germany (D) and Austria (A). The international research project "Development of Indicators to Evaluate Offerings and Performance in the Area of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)" (2008-2011) is a further endeavour. The project in Germany was funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), in Austria by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK) and in Switzerland by the State Secretariat for Education and Research (SER). The project's goal was to develop a set of indicators so that all levels of formal education (primary, secondary I and II, tertiary) in Germany, Austria and Switzerland could be examined, thus allowing the progress in integrating the idea of sustainability in the state-run education system to be evaluated, both in a national context and in international comparison.

The international project involved the following partners:

- Germany: Institute for Environmental Communication, Leuphana University Lüneburg; Division of Educational Future Studies, Freie Universität Berlin (M. Adomßent; I. Bormann, Project Management D; S. Burandt; R. Fischbach; T. Krikser; G. Michelsen, Management of the Overall Project)
- Switzerland: Interdisciplinary Center for General Ecology (IKAÖ), University of Bern; School for Teacher Education FHNW (M. Blaser; A. Di Giulio, Project Management CH; R. Kaufmann-Hayoz; Ch. Künzli David; C. Ruesch Schweizer)
- Austria: FORUM Environmental Education Vienna (A. Streissler, Project Management A; Ch. Rammel; E. Weninger)

The ESD indicator set was created through a negotiation process among actors from business, politics and practice. Actors from different fields were directly involved through expert workshops, expert interviews and written consultation in order to integrate their interests and experiences during the research process.

As sustainability becomes increasingly established in the education system, the goal of this project was to generate ESD indicators that build on what is already there, are validated by relevant actors and are manageable in terms of size. In addition care was taken that the indicators are compatible with national educational reporting in the three participating countries and moreover enable international comparability. The indicators of the proposed ESD indicator set are:

Education in specific competencies in the field of sustainable development

- 1 Competencies in the field of sustainable development
- 2 Teaching material for education for sustainable development
- 3a Sustainability study programmes in higher education
- 3b Competencies in the field of sustainable development in higher education (alternative to 3a; only for CH)
- 4 Further education in sustainability or education for sustainable development

Teachers' competencies in implementing education for sustainable development

- 5 Education of future teachers in education for sustainable development
- 6 Networks for actors in the field of education for sustainable development

Orientation of educational institutions to sustainability

- 7 Reporting on the orientation of educational institutions to sustainability

Establishment of education for sustainable development

- 8 Research and development in education for sustainable development
- 9 Political will to implement education for sustainable development

Societal awareness of sustainability

- 10 Awareness of the issue of sustainability in society

These indicators provide a contribution with regard to the evaluation of quality and progress of the integration of sustainability into the state-run education system. Thus a basis to decide on measures to optimise this integration is provided. The basis provided by the project is merely a first step. Further efforts are necessary before this indicator set can be used.