



## Germany

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

The main initiative consists of implementing the UN Decade ESD in Germany by providing a participative organizational structure. The organizational structure established encompasses all types of stakeholders, from governmental to non-governmental. The key elements of the initiative are:

The **National Committee for the UN Decade** assembles the key stakeholders: Federal Ministries, the Federal States, or *Länder*, Parliament, the Council of Cities and Towns, non-governmental organizations, universities, media, the business sector, and representatives of school students. The Committee is the central steering body for the Decade in Germany. It consults and decides on key Decade activities and agrees on programmatic priorities. Among other things, it defines annual thematic priorities. In 2007, the theme is cultural diversity and ESD, and in 2008, it will be water and ESD.

A **Round Table for the Decade**, which comes together annually on the invitation of the National Committee, facilitates networking among around one hundred initiatives and provides a forum so that these initiatives can voice their priorities regarding ESD and the UN Decade. Their priorities are then fed back into the consultations of the National Committee.

**Round Table Working Groups** were instituted along the lines of the education system, that is, a working group each deals with ESD in preschools, schools, vocational training, universities, further education, and informal learning. Additional Working Groups have specific thematic foci, such as responsible consumerism and fair-trade. The Working Groups develop ESD guidelines for their respective fields and serve as a resource for ESD expertise.

**Specific events** carried out on behalf of the National Committee further highlight the importance of ESD in the general and the education public, among them an annual presentation of good ESD practice at Europe's largest education fair, Didacta, an international workshop on the implementation of the Decade worldwide in November 2006 and an international conference on the contribution from Europe in the context of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union in May 2007. The **German Plan of Action for the UN Decade of ESD** gives a strategic direction to the contributions to the Decade. It defines as the overarching objective of the Decade *the comprehensive orientation of the education system towards the concept of sustainable development*. All areas of the education system are addressed: schools and universities, extracurricular adult education, vocational training and informal learning, among others. In order to achieve this overarching objective, the Plan of Action spells out four strategic objectives:

- Further develop the concept of education for sustainable development and broadly spread good practices
- Forge stronger links between individual players and stakeholders in education for sustainable development
- Increase public visibility of education for sustainable development

- Strengthen international cooperation within education for sustainable development

The Plan of Action is supplemented by a catalogue of specific measures that operationalizes these goals by specifying participating organizations and players and their contributions and describing in detail the developments towards a comprehensive orientation of the entire education system in the light of sustainable development. Because the catalogue contains evaluation criteria, progress is measurable. Over 60 measures have been included in the first version of the catalogue. For example: the Ministry of Education plans to set up a central Internet portal for education for sustainable development. The Federal Agency for Political Education is to make sustainability a theme cutting across all of its work. The Transfer 21 Programme intends to provide specially developed teaching materials on education for sustainable development and corresponding training initiatives to teachers in 10 per cent of German schools. The Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Federal Ministry for Development Cooperation are working on a model curriculum for global development education in schools.

Successful ESD projects by a large variety of organizations are awarded the status of **Official German Project of the Decade** by the National Committee in order to advertise good practice ‘on the ground’. Around 450 projects have been recognized by summer 2007. The scheme to award the title of Official German Decade Project focuses on highlighting initiatives that subscribe to a broad and complex concept of ESD, i.e., that go beyond, for example, pure environmental education.

## Implementation of the UN-Decade „Education for Sustainable Development“ in Germany

