



# Bonn Symposium 2009

Sustainable Development  
in Times of Crises  
Opposition or Opportunity?



## Bonn Memorandum 2009

Sustainable Lifestyles

Creating Incentives through Education, the Media,  
the Workplace and Communal Services



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The present global crises are an acute expression of long-term negative developments. They are the outcome of a lack of sustainability in economic behaviour worldwide. They therefore have deep-rooted causes, which have also given rise to the need for sustainable development: these causes include structures which create the wrong incentives, and a behavioural culture which has not internalised sustainability. We therefore see no contradiction between measures to safeguard sustainability and measures to tackle the crisis. Rather, we see the present crises as a wake-up call and an opportunity to initiate long-term reforms towards sustainable development.

Every individual can contribute to this process in their daily lives and work. In order to safeguard our quality of life over the long term, we must rethink our ideas about what constitutes our needs. Harmful habits are still the greatest barriers to sustainable development. Overcoming these habits is the most difficult challenge in making the principle of sustainability a reality.

This is the starting point for the Bonn Memorandum 2009. It provides examples of how incentives can be created for sustainable behaviour, outside the framework of structural reform, in four areas of life: **Education, the Media, the Workplace and Communal Services.**

Why these four areas?

**Education** can raise awareness of the need for sustainable behaviour. The **media** can highlight models (of best practice) and identify practical ways of taking sustainable action. The **workplace** and **communal services** have great influence over our daily lives and are therefore ideal forums in which to integrate the economic, environmental and social components of sustainability on an equal basis into our routines.

### Education for Sustainable Development

Education must help to raise awareness of sustainability, not only through formal channels but also through non-school and informal learning. The Bonn Declaration - the outcome document of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in spring 2009 - therefore refers to all levels of education.<sup>1</sup> From the thematic context of the Bonn Symposium, we highlight the following demands contained in the Bonn Declaration:

- Sustainable development issues must be incorporated, 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, curricula, learning materials, study programmes and the promotion of research.
- Education leadership development must be promoted, and the significant contribution of non-formal education and informal learning as well as vocational and workplace learning must be recognised.
- Education for sustainable development must become an integral part of the corporate policies of private sector actors, particularly in vocational education and workplace learning.

In Germany, the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development has initiated various processes which must now be taken forward and expanded:

- From 2004-2008, the nationwide "Transfer-21" programme brought education for sustainable development to as many as 10% of German secondary schools. It established durable advisory and support structures and provided training for multipliers. The Transfer-21 approach must be revived and its scope significantly increased. Similar programmes should be launched outside school-based educational settings as well.

<sup>1</sup> The Bonn Declaration is an interim outcome of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), which is coordinated by UNESCO and aims to help people to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge, and strengthen their ownership, responsibility and motivation, to make informed decisions for a sustainable future (see [www.bne-portal.de](http://www.bne-portal.de)).



- The “Cross-Curricular Framework for Global Development Education in the Context of Education for Sustainable Development”, adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, shows how education for sustainable development can be integrated into the curriculum.
- The German National Committee for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development has already recognised more than 800 projects as “Official German Projects for the UN Decade”. They include projects at all levels of the education system, with themes such as water, sustainable consumption and energy, school exchange programmes with developing countries, and Internet platforms (see [www.bne-portal.de](http://www.bne-portal.de)). The good practice demonstrated by the projects must be implemented throughout the education system.

### **The Media and Sustainable Development**

German journalist Hanns Joachim Friedrichs famously remarked that “A good journalist does not allow himself to be taken in by any cause, not even a good one.” Although his aphorism applies to the media’s treatment of sustainable development as well, the media can nonetheless play an important role in promoting the concept of sustainable development and encouraging the requisite changes in behaviour. However, the media must see their role as that of a critical companion and maintain the professional non-involvement required of journalists at the same time. In line with this approach, the media could support the principle of sustainable development in the following respects:

- Sustainability and incentives for sustainable behaviour should play a key role during journalism training, e.g. in relation to the criteria applied when selecting journalistic themes.
- The media should make it clear that every individual can support sustainable development by making changes in their every-day behaviour. Reporting should emphasise that changes in behaviour towards sustainable development do not necessarily reduce our quality of life. In this way, the media can help to overcome people’s reservations about a more sustainable lifestyle.
- The media can make a major contribution, through their programmes and content, by identifying negative developments and conveying a positive image of a sustainable lifestyle. In order to promote sustainable behaviour, reporting should focus especially on raising awareness of the need for sustainable development, e.g. by presenting practical examples of sustainable action, identifying negative developments and structural barriers to sustainability, encouraging ownership, and demonstrating the positive effects of sustainable behaviour on people’s own quality of life.

In particular, the quality press, with its own critical research capacities, can play a pioneering role in promoting incentives for sustainable behaviour and ultimately encourage a rethink on policies in this area. The following measures can also be considered for more intensive promotion of sustainable development:

- Establishing sustainable development as a governing principle in the programming mandate: The programming principles applicable to the German media incorporated under public law contain clear guidelines on the treatment of topics such as fundamentalism, xenophobia and youth protection. Sustainable development could be adopted as one of these principles and included in journalists’ training manuals.
- Integrating the principle of sustainable development in the selection, processing, production and publication of journalistic content.
- Integrating the principle of sustainable development into the German Press Code: for example, the current Guidelines for publishers and journalists issued by the German Press Council (Press Code) contain ethical standards which must be adhered to in reporting on topics such as discrimination, medical issues and youth protection. These standards could be extended to sustainable development as well.



## **Sustainable Development in the Workplace**

Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important competitiveness and success factor for companies. The various stakeholder groups of relevance to companies – financial market actors, customers, NGOs, politicians, the media etc. – are increasingly demanding a greater commitment to sustainability and therefore more corporate social responsibility. This means that companies must integrate sustainability into their corporate strategies and include sustainable management practices successfully in their operations.

First of all, companies must take a pro-active role in raising awareness of the concept of sustainability and its direct relevance to themselves, in order to create incentives for a stronger commitment to sustainability in the workplace. The “MIMONA – Motivation for Sustainability” ([www.mimona.de](http://www.mimona.de)) online database offers examples of how companies can involve and motivate their workforce and encourage them to think about and move towards sustainable action. On this website, the German Environmental Management Association (B.A.U.M.) lists hundreds of examples of schemes already being implemented by companies.

At a time of high and rising energy and resource prices in particular, energy saving and energy efficiency must be given higher priority. This reduces costs, which in turn improves companies' economic viability and ultimately helps to safeguard jobs. This is a win-win situation which can be achieved, for example, by effective awareness-raising aimed at encouraging employees to take a greater interest in sustainability and explaining the benefits in terms of their own job security. Managers should also ensure that their own conduct sets a good example in the workplace. Positive incentives can be created, e.g.

- by establishing in-company proposal schemes,
- by holding competitions,
- by setting up working groups, committees or other bodies composed of representatives of various departments and levels of seniority, who work together on sustainability issues,
- by providing human and financial resources to support sustainability projects that actively involve the workforce.

More sustainability in the workplace cannot be achieved without the active participation and commitment of the workforce. The working environment can also generate synergies for more sustainability in employees' homes and at work. Energy costs are a good example of how positive linkage can be created between these two settings: if a company provides information and/or meters that help employees save energy in the home, for example, they are more likely to adopt energy-saving measures at work as well, thus benefiting both sides.

## **Communal Services for Sustainable Development**

Tensions arising as a result of conflicting interests can be tackled directly at local level, and eco-efficiency can also be practised here. Communal services therefore play a key role in linking individual behaviour with the commitment to sustainability.

Local authorities need to identify barriers to sustainable behaviour patterns and construct barriers to unsustainable behaviour in order to increase the benefits towards more sustainability. A great range of tools is available to local leaders and authorities to modify the barriers and benefits.

By inserting environmental criteria into decision-making processes, communal services can respond to and guide sustainable development. Decisions on issues ranging from contracts for the supply of recycled paper to the construction of energy-efficient buildings and contracts for environmental cleaning services reflect minor, yet cumulative changes to sustainable behaviour as do smart metering, home energy audits, technical or financial assistance for installations, rebates for water or energy conservation, attractive



recycling services, improved walking and cycling tracks, and improved access to public transport. In this vein local authorities should:

- set ambitious and realistic long-term targets to measure, monitor and be accountable for progress,
- involve all local stakeholders and cooperate towards common objectives,
- promote local and needs-oriented capacity-building activities,
- be made aware of carbon trading options to actively participate in climate change mitigation schemes and efforts,
- encourage international city cooperation and organisations to support local initiatives through capacity-building, knowledge sharing and wider stakeholder involvement (for example R&D institutions, local communities, the private sector and civil society),
- facilitate flexible, bottom-up, results-based approaches at all levels with a view to enhancing ownership at local and sub-national level, especially concerning adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

Successful stories have in common local leadership and commitment to action plans and their implementation. Setting clear ambitious and achievable targets is important to support and measure progress against clear aims. Actions and improvements can be more readily achieved in cities with cooperating local stakeholders, supportive regional, national and international frameworks and cooperation, and backed with sufficient resources and skilled people.

- Public tendering, as the successes of the Procura+ Sustainable Procurement Campaign show, has produced results in the City of Lille (France). The city uses 50% recycled paper, serves organic meals in schools and at receptions, has reduced the use of pesticides and fertiliser in the management of green spaces, and reduced the energy consumption of public lighting by 32%.
- Decreasing energy consumption, replacing carbon intensive fuels, and converting waste to energy are some of the many ways local authorities can influence and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Cities for Climate Protection campaign highlights many of these opportunities and offers ways to measure the carbon footprint to improve target emissions. Local leaders and authorities have created new choices, markets and job opportunities by using renewable energy, building non-motorised transportation options and creating ways to reduce solid waste.
- The Global Alliance for EcoMobility draws together experiences from local authorities to highlight the merits of non-motorised transport to interested parties. For example Koprivnica (Croatia) received a Certificate of Honour for its project “Koprivnica – Town on the Move” which involved a broad range of stakeholders to expand the bicycle-friendly infrastructure.

As all these examples illustrate, it is important to establish public campaigns, commitment and understanding to implement effective tools for behaviour change.