

## CONTINUING EDUCATION EVENTS

### Sustainability for journalists

An important prerequisite for a successful public discourse on sustainability is well-founded reporting and analysis of the matters at hand in the media. The practice of assigning journalists to specific desks often stands in the way of presenting sustainability topics appropriately with their overarching aspects. All too often, sustainability is relegated to the environmental desk—provided one exists.

The complexity of the subject matter is challenging not only for scientists and educators, but especially also for journalists. In addition, “balanced reporting” poses the risk that individual opinions diverging from the broad scientific consensus, for example climate skeptics’ arguments that have long been disproven objectively, are granted a disproportionately large amount of space. Since journalistic representations have a strong influence on public opinion, sustainability as a central subject area of the future is of particular importance in journalists’ training and continuing education.

For this reason, continuing education for journalists is an important focus of the foundation’s activities. To date, the following activities have been carried out:

- Seminars at the European Academy of Otzenhausen and the Evangelische Akademie Tutzing
- Support of the Certificate Program in Sustainability and Journalism at Leuphana University of Lüneburg.
- Support of the media and research forum [www.gruener-journalismus.de](http://www.gruener-journalismus.de) at Hochschule Darmstadt—University of Applied Sciences

### Certificate Program in Sustainability and Journalism Leuphana University of Lüneburg

The Professional School at Leuphana University of Lüneburg has been offering a Certificate Program in Sustainability and Journalism since October, 2012. It enables media professionals to deepen their knowledge of the various subject areas relating to sustainability at the master's level. The one-year part-time program covers all aspects of presenting green topics in the media.

The foundation Forum für Verantwortung supports the certificate program, for example, by granting scholarships to students in the academic years 2012/13 and 2013/14. The foundation's goal is to support the presentation of research findings on current and future problems of our society in a generally comprehensible fashion and to encourage a responsible public debate with the scientific community. The certificate program is headed by Prof. Gerd Michelsen, UNESCO Chair in Higher Education for Sustainable Development, and supported by Leuphana University staff members Dr. Daniel Fischer (through 2013) and Robin Marwege.



Source: Leuphana University of Lüneburg

### Green portal for journalists—[www.gruener-journalismus.de](http://www.gruener-journalismus.de) The first web portal for environment, sustainability, and journalism

Within the framework of a not-for-profit educational project, the Hochschule Darmstadt—University of Applied Sciences developed a web portal for journalists to support their work on sustainability topics. Conceptualized by journalists for journalists, it is tailored to the demands of their daily work. The portal went live in January, 2014—developed and implemented by professors Peter Seeger and Torsten Schäfer.

The foundation Forum für Verantwortung provided the funding to develop and implement the portal.



Prof. Torsten Schäfer

**Continuing education for teachers**

Even though sustainable development has long been considered a central challenge of our century, it is not firmly established within our educational system. As



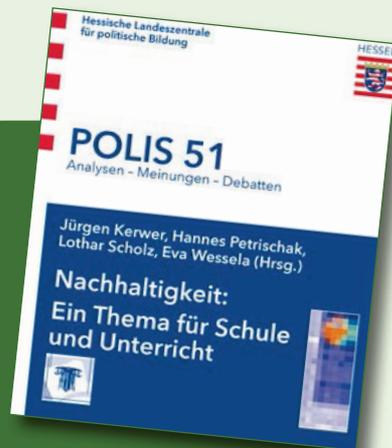
*At the seminar*

early as 1992, the guiding principle of sustainable development was laid down at the groundbreaking UN conference in Rio de Janeiro, and education was mentioned as the most important instrument. If education for sustainable development had been incorporated systematically and as an obligatory cross-cutting topic in kindergartens, schools, and universities at the time, the preconditions for the necessary societal transformation would be far better today. That is why continuing education for teachers is one of the most important elements of the educational initiative Encouraging Sustainability.

**Polis 51 – Nachhaltigkeit:  
Ein Thema für Schule und Unterricht  
(Polis 51—Sustainability:  
A topic for schools and teaching, 2009)**

Jürgen Kerwer, Hannes Petrischak,  
Lothar Scholz, Eva Wessela (eds.)

The projects for schools in general and for teaching that were developed by participants and resulted from the continuing education series or encouraged and intensified by it are of particular importance in practice. In this way, the continuing education events have succeeded in providing impulses and insights with direct effects on teaching in the classroom.



### Continuing education series for teachers with cooperation partners from Hesse and Saarland



*Petra Lauermann*

Against this background, the sponsors of the educational initiative Encouraging Sustainability, in cooperation with the Hessian State Centre for Civic Education and the Education Authority Darmstadt-Dieburg, implemented a series of continuing education events for teachers in which the participants were mentored for a year. The saarländische Landesinstitut für Pädagogik und Medien (Saarland Institute for Education and Media, LPM) has been involved since 2009 as well, so from then on, teachers from Hesse and Saarland alike have been able to participate. The same year, Petra Lauermann took over this responsibility at Forum für Verantwortung (after Dr. Hannes Petrischak had mentored the first class), and she has worked closely with Eva Wessela (EAO), Jürgen Kerwer and Daniel Baumgärtner (HLZ), Dr. Lothar Scholz (Education Authority), Christiane Bull (Education Authority/HLZ), and Catherine Haab/Mentz (LPM).

The continuing education events for teachers have been conceptualized to be in accordance with the concept of "Gestaltungskompetenz" (a comprehensive concept for education for sustainable development), but they also impart factual knowledge about sustainable development, i.e., about global challenges (the Earth system, over-exploitation of resources, excessive stress on ecosystems), their causes, the current state of research, and options for action at school and in society in general.

In this way, sustainability is supposed to become a part of the school development process itself in order to transcend the level of projects carried out only for a limited period of time. The teachers are also supposed to develop concrete projects for their own schools. If possible, at least two teachers from each participating school are to be involved in order to be able to overcome hurdles and challenges when implementing the ideas developed as a team. The initial and final seminars took place at the European Academy of Otzenhausen; the seminars in between at the participating schools in Hesse and later also in Saarland. The book series on the future of the Earth (p. 69) and the educational modules (p. 78) form the basis of the continuing education series in terms of content and methods. In addition, numerous book series authors have been invited to speak at the seminars to give the teachers the opportunity to discuss questions intensively with Prof. Hermann-Josef Wagner, Prof. Bernd Meyer, Prof. Klaus Hahlbrock, or Priv.-Doz. Dr. Dirk Solte, among others.

#### Outcomes

From the beginning, the interdisciplinary, activating approach spanning schools showed surprisingly clearly that each and every subject taught at school can make a contribution to sustainable development.

Many participants explicitly emphasized that learning about sustainable development and the discourse with renowned scientists were of outstanding value to them.

At first, one obstacle to recruiting participants was the perception of numerous teachers that they would have to grapple with sustainability on top of all their other responsibilities (and in part without the support from their principals). Yet in the course of the continuing education events, this was often transformed into the realization that the cross-cutting subject of sustainability could make their teaching more interesting.

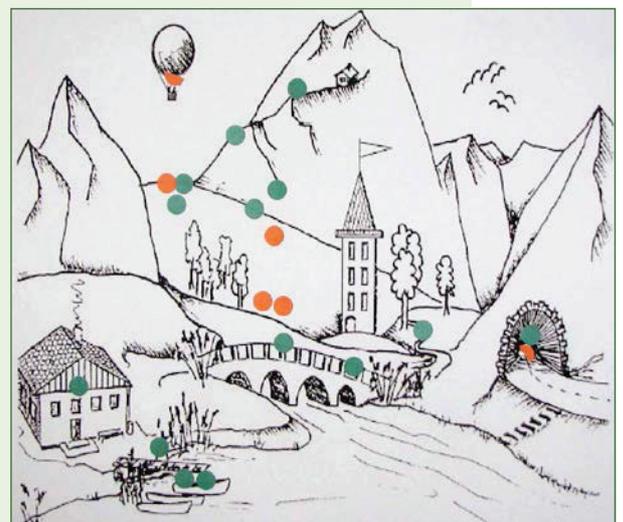
Other teachers had already been intensively dedicated to sustainability and could network with others during the continuing education events. During these events, and because of them, some schools successfully enshrined sustainability in their school profiles. The German UNESCO Commission distinguished some of the projects as official projects of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, among them Louise-Schröder-Schule in Wiesbaden with its virtual learning company "Parkhotel Wiesbaden KG," a curriculum for apprentices in the hospitality industry, and the public lecture series at the International Forum of the Bergdorf Community School in Seeheim-Jugenheim (with numerous authors of the book series).

**In preparation: Pilot project on teacher training**

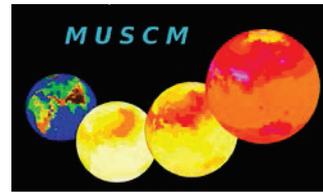
Following the successful series of continuing education events for teachers, the goal is to have sustainability become a cross-cutting topic of school curricula and to incorporate it firmly in teacher training. For this reason, Forum für Verantwortung, the European Academy of Otzenhausen, and the Hessian State Centre for Civic Education are collaborating with the Studienseminar für Gymnasien (training institution for teachers at academic-track high schools) in Wiesbaden on a multi-year pilot project beginning in 2015 to incorporate the topics from Encouraging Sustainability into teacher training. The process will be accompanied and evaluated by Dr. Daniel Fischer (Leuphana University of Lüneburg.).

Some teachers initiated Educational Sustainability Days at their schools in Hesse and Saarland (some as a result of their continuing education), which they held either at the European Academy of Otzenhausen or at their schools, with the support and participation of the educational initiative Encouraging Sustainability. Usually, an introductory lecture on the Earth system was followed by interdisciplinary workshops on sustainability topics.

*This associative image (drawn by Dr. Lothar Scholz) was part of the evaluation of the first continuing education series for teachers ending in February, 2009. Participants were to localize themselves in the landscape—for example on a boat, departing for new shores, or approaching the peak of a mountain.*



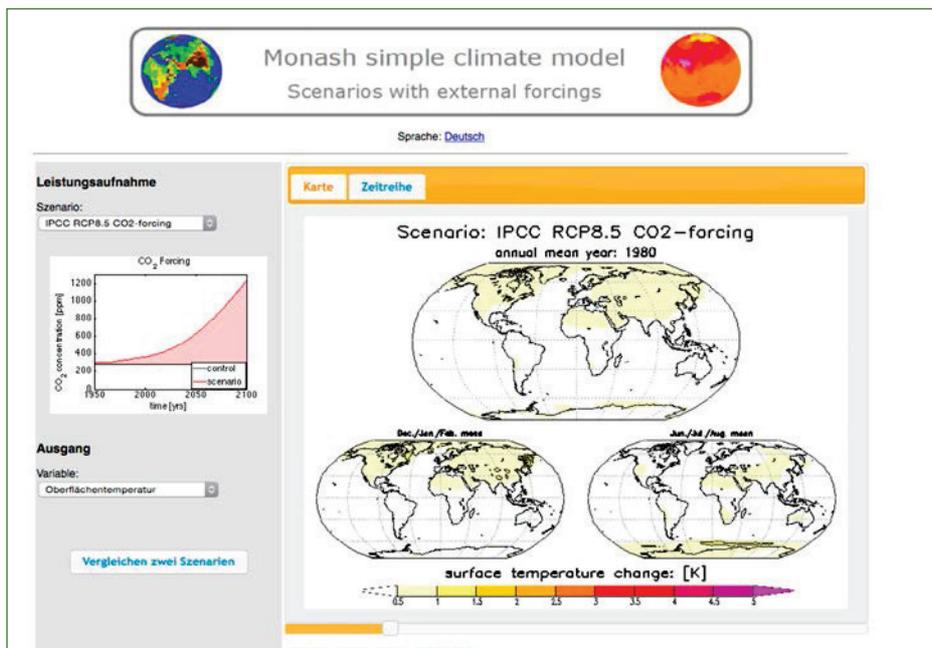
### Monash University Simple Climate Model (MUSCM)



The German Climate Computing Centre (DKRZ) is working on adapting the Monash Simple Climate Model for use at German schools and by the German-speaking public. The model, a test version of which is currently running at Monash University (Melbourne, Australia), simulates the most important physical climate processes and is also applied to scenarios of the future development of the climate. Even though it is highly simplified, the results are comparable to those of professional climate models.

In the summer of 2014, the MUSCM was transferred from the server at Monash University in Melbourne to a server at the DKRZ, and it is visible on the Internet. It will be pared down, and its navigation will be reworked and simplified again for use at schools. Its German translation will also be implemented gradually. A number of schools in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein are already using the model in the School Project on Climate Change.

The foundation Forum für Verantwortung supported the German-language implementation of the project.



Source: <http://maths-simpleclimatemodel-dev.maths.monash.edu/overview.html>  
April 6, 2015

**MORE INFORMATION: [HTTP:// MSCM.DKRZ.DE](http://MSCM.DKRZ.DE)**

**Continuing education on sustainability for business executives and employees**

Businesses are at the focus of education for sustainable development in several respects: They themselves can make processes and production conditions more sustainable by taking criteria such as efficiency, regionality, seasonality, durability, or underlying social conditions into account when selecting materials, suppliers, products, and services. In addition, they can achieve a competitive advantage if they take a pioneering role by offering consumers, who will be even better informed in the future, more sustainable alternatives to conventional products; ensuring transparency by means of certifications and labels, e.g. with respect to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and/or resource and water consumption; and by taking action for sustainability proactively, which makes for good advertising.

This requires a systemic understanding of the interconnections within the various sustainability topics above and beyond the usual corporate social responsibility reports in order to analyze the effects of one's own entrepreneurial actions and to be able to make changes at the decisive points. For this reason, the foundation Forum für Verantwortung has conducted continuing education events in several businesses and also for trade associations since the educational initiative Encouraging Sustainability was established. For example, Klaus Wiegandt has spoken frequently to audiences of specialists and executives about the responsibility of businesses for sustainable development and then conducted intense discussions with them about production processes, possible changes, and overcoming obstructive underlying conditions. Dr. Hannes Petrischak presented the Earth system and explained how our current economic activities are directly linked to the over-use of resources and excessive stress on ecosystems.

Representatives of the textile, food, chemical, mechanical engineering, packaging, financial, and agricultural industries, among others, have taken advantage of such training events in businesses. In addition, events were organized through junior managers' organizations, in regional trade associations, in forums and conferences at universities, as well as in professional training centers for executives and young leaders, both tailored to individual industries and across industries. Some training events took place in the context of seminars at the European Academy of Otzenhausen; however, the majority were held on-site in businesses or at their conference centers.