

Guidebook Sustainable

development in Adult Education



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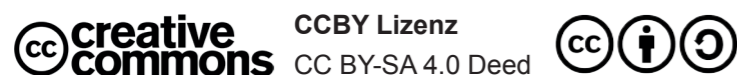
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DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e. V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association. As the leading professional organisation in the field of adult education and learning (ALE) and development cooperation, DVV International provides worldwide support for the establishment and development of sustainable structures for adult education and learning.

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Foreword

“We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it.”

Barack Obama

It is undeniable: Climate change and its consequences have been proven by science many times over; we all see and feel the effects almost every day. In many parts of the world, the effects on people and the environment are clearly noticeable. Leaders and activists around the globe discuss climate change, its consequences and possible responses with passion, often in heated discussions. However, the debate about a socio-ecological transformation towards greater sustainability is not limited to climate change. Rather, a fundamental social change is needed that takes into account the multi-layered dimensions of sustainable development. The United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight this complexity. Discussions surrounding issues such as gender equality and the rights of minorities are also generating strong reactions and controversy.

It would certainly be naïve to believe that these questions can be resolved with more education alone. The causes are as complex as the interests and power constellations that often stand in the way of energetic action. However, education and – to use a traditional term – enlightenment can and must make a significant contribution to overcoming this crisis. Only those who understand the larger context will be able to act appropriately and tackle key issues. And since time is of the essence, it would be wise to begin with the education and information of adults and young people: They are the ones who are now setting the course for the future. Adult learning and education therefore undoubtedly has a major role to play, which brings us directly to the ALE centres. In adult learning and education, the challenges go far beyond designing the curricula: The centres as a whole must live out the change if they want to be credible and motivate people in their environment. This is what the “International ESD Alliances” project is all about. For us at DVV International, this project has a very high priority because it deals with one of, if not the, central future issues facing humanity. And it does so in a unique international alliance of adult education institutions that have mutually enriched each other in partnership and – supported by individual experts – have compiled this guidebook. We hope that the concepts and models presented here will be widely used, and that we will be able to support participating organisations and many others in using it in the future.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research for funding the project. Our thanks also go to the extremely dedicated project team of Mirja Buckbesch, Eva Heinen and Anne Lukas, as well as to the partner organisations and individuals who made this project a success.



Introduction

Dear Readers,

With the Guidebook SustainabALE and the complementary working tools, we aim to support organisations of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in implementing a holistic, sustainable organisational development process in accordance with the Whole Institution Approach. The models and good practice examples presented here were developed as part of the BMBF-funded project “International ESD Alliances”. Initiated by this project, twelve ALE organisations from seven countries have embarked on the process of sustainable organisational development. In addition to the DVV International project team, the ALE organisations were each accompanied by a process facilitator from a team of seven experts. The experiences were collected, evaluated and reshaped into a two-part model of a Whole Institution Approach for adult education. The results of this three-year WIA laboratory are presented in this Guidebook:

We begin with an introduction to the concepts of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Whole Institution Approach (WIA) and give you an insight into our project work in the following chapter “The International ESD Alliances”. We then present the two-part model of a Whole Institution Approach in adult education, which consists of four priority areas and a five-phase model. While the priority areas focus on the content of the WIA, the phase model describes the process of sustainable organisational development in detail. The descriptions and explanations are interspersed with examples of implementation from our partner organisations, and thus provide you with a good insight into how this is done in practice. In the final chapter, some of our non-European project partners share their perspectives on ESD and the WIA, and lastly we receive an assessment of the significance of transformative education in the European political context.

To accompany the Guidebook, we have created a workbook and additional practice-oriented tools that will make it easier for you to implement your own WIA process. All materials are available to you free of charge in the **ALE Toolbox** from DVV International.

We would like to thank all alliance partners involved for their outstanding commitment and the great trust they have placed in us. Their courage and wealth of ideas led to this great collection and gave us and many other network partners inspiration and motivation. Last but not least, we would like to thank the alliance partners for the many wonderful hours we were able to spend together, online and on the study trip to Sweden.

We hope readers enjoy exploring this brochure. In all chapters you will find links or QR codes to further reading and to the accompanying work materials.



Education for Sustainable Development: Shaping Our Common Future

“We borrow environmental capital from future generations with no intention or prospect of repaying. They may damn us for our spendthrift ways, but they can never collect on our debt to them. We act as we do because we can get away with it: future generations do not vote; they have no political or financial power; they cannot challenge our decisions.” (Brundtland Report p. 25)

“**Our Common Future**,” the prominent report published in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission, remains the cornerstone of our efforts in promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The report highlighted the pressing need to address unsustainable practices of all nations as they draw heavily on environmental resources, jeopardising the future for subsequent generations.

The concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was introduced by UNESCO to encompass not only environmental concerns but also socio-economic challenges, such as poverty reduction, peace and conflict resolution, gender equality, health care, and human rights. The UNESCO Decade of ESD, which began in 2005, marked an international commitment to integrate education on global policy issues to achieve sustainable development across past, present, and future contexts. Since then, various commendable practices have emerged to foster ESD through tailored approaches and the involvement of local stakeholders.

Anchoring ESD along the entire education system is of particular importance. For instance, schools have embraced cross-curriculum management, interweaving various subjects to create a comprehensive learning experience. They incorporate the study of environmental issues not only in science but also in language and music classes, fostering dynamic engagement through inquiry-based and project-based approaches to address sustainable issues. This empowers students to become proactive in finding solutions to environmental and societal challenges. For example, they can identify vulnerable populations such as individuals with disabilities or those from diverse cultural backgrounds through community mapping exercises. Adult education and community learning centres organise advocacy programme and issue-based learning activities, promoting socio-economic and environmental resilience such as poverty alleviation, coping with an aging society, and disaster risk reduction. There is an emphasis on comprehending climate change as a global issue and preparing communities with essential plans, such as robust evacuation strategies.

ESD initiatives incorporate sustainability issues into staff development programme, fostering a sense of accountability and social consciousness through corporate social responsibility and values that prioritise societal well-being alongside commercial profits. This allows them to become relevant and authentic partners for educational institutions. Higher education and research institutions actively engage in ESD activities and provide valuable scientific findings that contribute to evidence-based policymaking, benefiting overall education systems. Furthermore, universities introduce ESD into national and transnational teacher education.



Our
common
Future

ESD aims to advance learners to become critical and reflective individuals. This leads to institutional and social transformations that promote sustainable economics, politics, lifestyles and societies. Key principles derived from ESD experiences include:

- **Balancing competencies in knowledge, socio-emotional skills, and behaviour**
- **Encouraging a dynamic process of reflection, anticipation, sharing, and action**
- **Recognising the importance of individual efforts leading to the transformation of whole institutions and the entire community**
- **Emphasising community-based learning, promoting inter-generational learning to involve stakeholders of all ages in shaping a sustainable future**

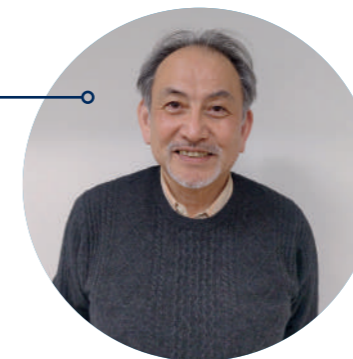
To advance the practices of ESD, our efforts need to encourage active citizenship engagement to foster social participation and political decision-making. Also, we must establish links with the broader community and strengthen local as well as global networks. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a global agenda for 2030. ESD is a driver of these goals by fostering the acquisition of scientific and local knowledge, skills, and competencies, enabling effective collaboration to address local and global challenges. UNESCO, the lead agency for ESD, identifies five priority action areas under “**ESD for 2030**,” focusing on policy, learning environments, educators, youth, and local-level actions.



ESD for
2030

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerability of our society, underscoring the importance of mutual cooperation in creating a better and resilient planet. Furthermore, the current challenges posed by climate change, political tensions, and armed conflict call for a renewed commitment to “our common future.” Reflecting on the actions we have taken and considering future steps is essential in shaping a sustainable and prosperous world for generations to come.

Kiichi Oyasu
Asia-Pacific
Cultural Centre for
UNESCO (ACCU)



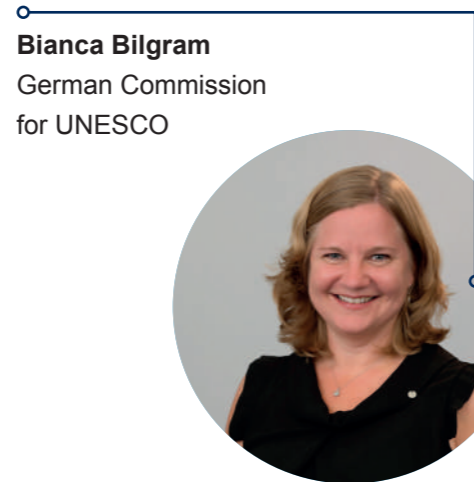
Yoko Ito
Development
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Resource Center



Whole Institution Approach: Creating Spaces to learn and experience Sustainability



Jorrit Holst
Freie Universität Berlin



Bianca Bilgram
German Commission
for UNESCO

Whether intentionally or not, people in educational institutions learn at all times - in the hallways, in the canteen, in conversations with other participants and, of course, as part of educational programme. For coherent sustainability learning, it is thus crucial to consider the entire institution, including the spatial and social environment, the “normal” everyday activities just as the educational programme. The concept of a **Whole Institution Approach** picks up on this understanding: Educational institutions become experiential spaces of sustainability learning, where social, ecological and economic sustainability is practically experienced and collaboratively enacted. If the importance of the environment for learning is not considered, the opposite can quickly happen: The educational programme is about climate justice, but the building, the grounds or the catering, for example, convey that fossil energy, the constant consumption of meat or the use of disposable products are completely normal and acceptable. It can give the impression that topics such as climate protection or social justice are only talked about, but not acted upon.



Systemic Overview on the WIA in Sustainability Science

In contrast, a Whole Institution Approach encourages management, employees, lecturers, learners and partners of the educational institution to embark on a joint journey to bring sustainability to life in their workplace and as a place of learning. The global and local sustainable development goals, such as climate protection, biodiversity conservation and social justice, become a core component of organizational development and the everyday life of the institution - from procurement to personnel development, communication, the operation of buildings, catering and, of course, as part of the educational programme. Such a development is not a one-off intervention, but an ongoing learning process involving various groups in and around the institution. This process focuses on the joint negotiation of conflicting goals and the development of context-specific approaches, especially when financial resources are limited. A recent survey of around 3,000 young people and teachers conducted by the national ESD monitoring team in Germany shows the effect of aligning places of learning with sustainability: The more learners and educators experience sustainability in the sense of a whole institution approach at their educational institutions, the more empowered and motivated they feel to contribute to sustainability - and the more they act sustainably themselves (Holst, Grund & Brock, in review).

The importance and meaningfulness of a Whole Institution Approach for coherent sustainability learning is also being recognised in politics: The member states of UNESCO, the European Union, and national governments, have committed themselves to strengthening the development of sustainable learning locations in the sense of the whole institution approach **in all areas of education**.



EU Commission for the EU Working Group Schools: Learning for Sustainability

POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

UNESCO’s ESD programme “Education for Sustainable Development: Achieving the Global Sustainable Development Goals - ESD 2030” came into force in 2020. The roadmap clearly emphasises the key role that ESD plays in achieving the SDGs. To this end, UNESCO defines five priority action areas that continue the main focus areas of the Global Action Program (2015-2019):



Advancing Policy



Transforming learning environments



Building capacities of educators



Empowering and mobilizing youth



Accelerating local level actions

Priority action area 2 focusses on the holistic transformation of teaching and learning environments in line with sustainability criteria:

“To encourage learners to become change agents who have the knowledge, means, willingness and courage to take transformative action for sustainable development, learning institutions need, themselves, to be transformed. The entire learning institution needs to be aligned with sustainable development principles, so that learning content and its pedagogies are reinforced by the way facilities are managed and how decisions are made within the institution. This whole-institution approach to ESD calls for learning environments where learners learn what they live and live what they learn.” UNESCO Roadmap ESD, p. 28



UNESCO Roadmap ESD

The Role of ESD in Adult Education

Publicly-funded adult learning and education which is open to all responds directly to the demand raised by **SDG 4: Providing quality education for everyone**. Thanks to adult learning and education organisations such as Volkshochschulen, all citizens can pursue lifelong learning opportunities which are close to home, diverse, target group-oriented and relevant to everyday life. Adult learning and education can promote ESD in particular through diverse target groups since ALE programmes are open to everyone and thus also promote intergenerational learning.



SDG4: Inclusive and equitable quality education

As lifelong learning is a key prerequisite for shaping a sustainable society, the broad-based provision of ALE organisations is another core component of sustainable development. If the institution also actively promotes integration, as Volkshochschulen in Germany do through language and integration courses as well as school-leaving qualifications and basic education, they also directly incorporate other SDGs such as SDG 10 (Reduce inequalities) into their work. Traditionally, one focus in adult learning and education has therefore been the social dimension of sustainability. The topic of ESD has also taken centre stage in the adult education landscape at European level, for example, when “Adult learning and the green transition” were chosen as the annual topic for EAEA 2023, as well as through various Erasmus+ partnership projects.

ALE institutions have visibly expanded the ecological dimension of their educational programmes in recent years. These initiatives have included repair cafés, do-it-yourself and upcycling as well as traditional environmental education topics and informational events on climate and energy saving. Annual topics are based on individual SDGs, and in cooking courses, participants discuss the carbon footprint of the food they use. Environmental Learning Days or Weeks are also held to encourage learners to think about different aspects of sustainability and how their everyday lives can contribute towards a more sustainable future. Adult learning and education must take a different approach to daycare centres, schools and universities, and first convince and attract participants with their offerings before the ESD triad of “head – heart – hands” can be fully implemented. This is another reason why the institutional component of ESD is an important factor. Efforts and aspirations to become more sustainable, for example, in purchasing departments or event planning, must be clearly communicated to participants and visitors of the institutions in order to be perceived as authentic drivers of transformation processes. ALE institutions can capitalise on their role in this area, since their participants come on a voluntary basis and are intrinsically motivated for further education and new experiences.

In the German ALE landscape, there are nationwide practical exchanges, national conferences and network groups that serve to provide further training for colleagues on ESD and the SDGs. The most daunting challenges for ALE in the implementation of ESD are time and money. Experimenting in the educational environment, developing visions and initiating change takes time. ALE also needs funds to hire new and train existing staff, and to further develop modern infrastructure for the future.

In many places, the first steps towards a holistic ESD approach have already been taken: Outmoded structures, such as the differentiation into various programme areas at adult education centres, are beginning to give way to more comprehensive models; people are pursuing interdisciplinary options, reaching out and seeking new venues and cooperation partners. The structured ESD process in ALE institutions often begins with introspection: What resources are already available, and what do we still need for our own ESD vision? Discussion follows on action and solution orientation, democracy, global contexts, target group orientation or diversity, and these concepts are then incorporated into the mission statement, strategic development goals, programme planning and the type of educational offer. Through this process, adult educators and participants become pioneers and social role models.

Florin Feldmann

Landesverband der Volkshochschulen Schleswig-Holstein e.V.



Maria Balbach

Volkshochschulverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V.

QUALITY EDUCATION

Target 4.7: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.”



WIA success Factors: an Analysis of the Framework Conditions in Adult Learning and Education

The implementation of a holistic and sustainable organisational development (Whole Institution Approach, WIA) represents an agile, consciously applied, structured change process within an organisation. Successful WIA implementation in adult learning and education (ALE) institutions places complex demands on process development. WIA goes far beyond the individual organisation, but also begins right there within the organisation itself. When introducing WIA in ALE institutions, it is important to consider whether there are framework conditions that favour implementation and which factors can contribute to successful implementation. ALE institutions can be divided into four types: **public, specialised, private and commercial**. The different types are subject to different financing and administrative structures and are subdivided into a variety of legal forms (e.g. part of the local authority, self-run organisations, clubs or associations). Ultimately, however, it can be said that the type of legal form is not a factor that favours or hinders the implementation of a WIA, but it does influence the specific scope for action. Rather, factors such as motivation, financial security, access for disadvantaged groups to educational formats and the internal organisational structure play a role in the implementation of the WIA. In general, the following factors can be identified that can favour the implementation of a WIA within ALE institutions:

1 Financing

Long-term financial security, e.g. through funding from the local government or the state, enables financial and human resources to be freed up for the implementation of long-term projects and processes. Money alone is not a prerequisite for success in implementing the WIA. However, financial security is necessary in order to be able to focus on overarching issues. Conversely, consistently high or increasing financial pressure on an ALE organisation can lead to a review of priorities. The motivation and basic mood that are important for the successful implementation of WIA in an organisation, as well as communicative openness, also suffer from constantly uncertain funding. It is therefore essential for adult education organisations to have fundamental, long-term financial security, including for internal processes, and the opportunity to invest in organisational development processes.

2 Management structure

The management and control of an adult education organisation is a key factor in the organisational flexibility required for WIA. In most adult education organisations, the number of freelance staff is significantly higher than that of the permanent employees. This means that the organisation is run and managed by a comparatively smaller team of permanent employees. It is primarily these permanent employees who meet and engage in regular communication; permanent employees are naturally more closely integrated into the traditional hierarchical structures than external freelance staff. This highlights the question of the changeability and adaptability of decision-making processes: for a successful implementation of WIA, it is necessary to define and specify a decision-making framework. In the sample, this framework is usually decided by the administration, the board or at management level. This management level must consciously desire the WIA implementation and ensure the necessary decisions. Without the motivation of management, a holistic development approach cannot be realised. Moreover, the employees need a clear and unequivocal commitment to the process.

3 Course offerings

A broad programmatic range as well as methodological and didactic flexibility are further factors that favour a WIA in one's own organisation. Specialised ALE organisations, which often have a narrow thematic focus, can benefit from an expansion of their methods and community-oriented formats, for example by cooperating with other (civil society) actors and thus also tapping into new target groups. Organisations that are already thematically diverse can in turn integrate the various aspects of sustainability into all formats (e.g. vocational, technical, political, civic education), and also make a contribution to the 2030 Agenda with interdisciplinary approaches to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

4 Language & communication

When implementing a WIA, the communication of an ALE organisation, both internally and externally, holds great potential and draws together essential conditions for success. For example, the sustainability concept as a WIA aspect can certainly offer a competitive advantage over other educational institutions, since sustainability particularly appeals to both learners and teaching staff. In turn, internal communication allows management to go beyond directives to explain the introduction of WIA, promote its benefits and motivate employees. A deliberate and increasingly communicated positioning of the organisation and its courses with reference to the increasingly well-known SDGs underlines the awareness and agility of an organisation. Strong, clear internal communication supports the development process within the organisation enormously.

5 Networking

Another factor that favours the implementation of a WIA is excellent networking within and outside the local authority or region. This networking does not have to be limited to ESD or sustainability explicitly. Rather, it is strong partners and networks that facilitate the implementation of many sustainability measures, e.g. through synergies in the education programme, or in public relations and lobbying work.

In summary, it can be said that solid funding, inclusive access, clear management structures, good internal and external communication, inclusive programme offerings that reflect an appreciation of diversity, are conducive, and indeed indispensable, for successful implementation. If these conditions are lacking, they can be considered inhibiting factors in the literal sense and vice versa. Once again, the management of an organisation holds a key responsibility: Managers must drive and steer the change process intelligently. If they do not do this, or if the management level even opposes it, members of management themselves become a decisive inhibiting factor.

Robin Gosejohann, PhilanthroOffice

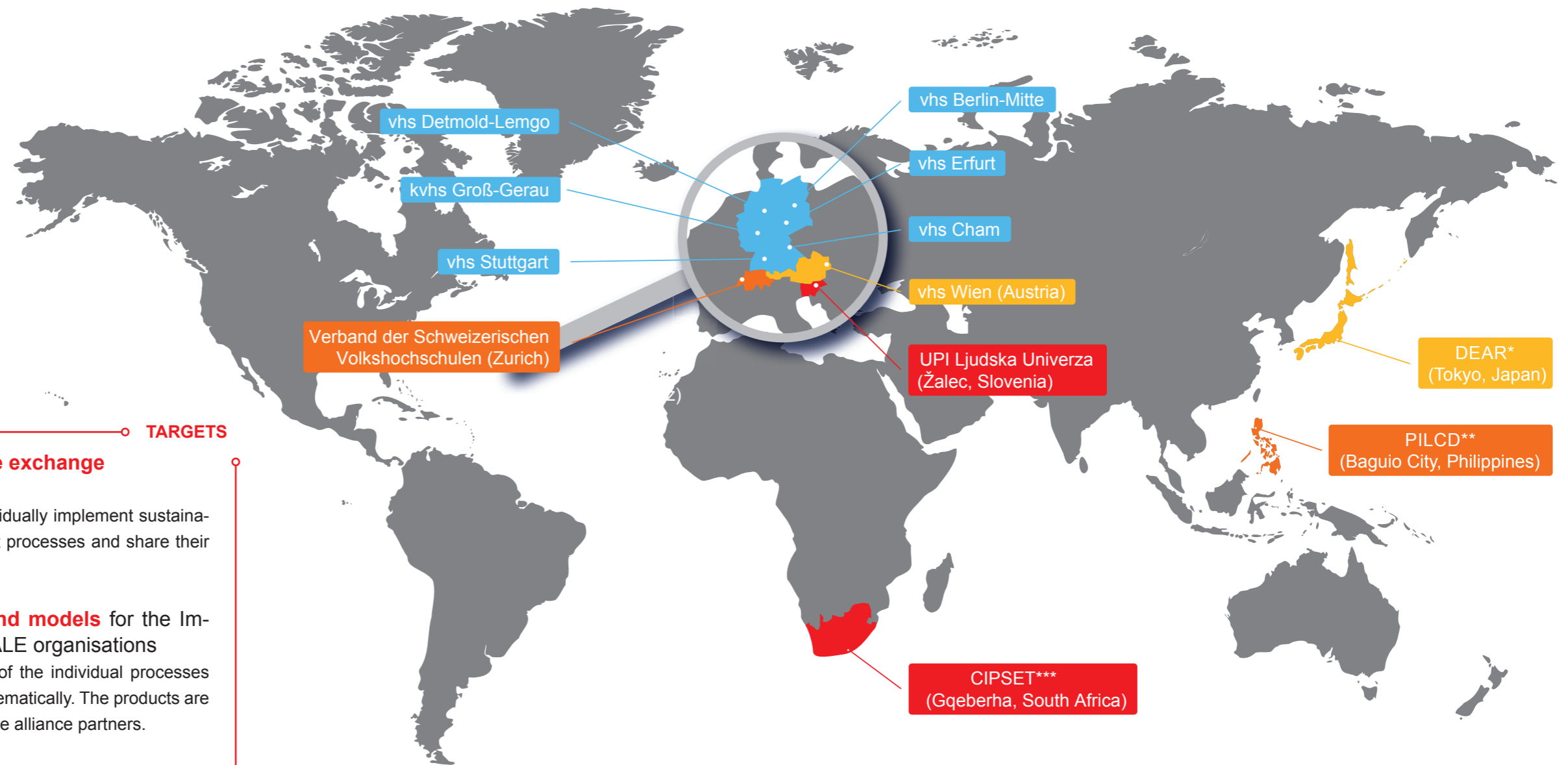
These findings are based on research work that identified possible success and inhibiting factors in the context of the results obtained in the project. In addition to a document analysis, qualitative interviews were also conducted with selected partner organisations in the summer of 2023.



International ESD Alliances

A cross-border Initiative for Sustainable Adult Education Institutions

* Development Education Association & Research Center
 ** People's Initiative for Learning and Community Development
 *** Center for Integrated Post-School Education & Training at Nelson Mandela University



TARGETS

Cross-border knowledge exchange and transfer on the WIA

The partner organisations individually implement sustainable organisational development processes and share their experiences.

Development of tools and models for the implementation of a WIA in ALE organisations

The experiences and insights of the individual processes are analysed and prepared schematically. The products are transferred internationally via the alliance partners.

International discourse on the importance of a WIA and transformative education in different local and international contexts is promoted and intensified.

The outcomes of the discourses are disseminated by all alliance partners in their spheres of activity and networks.

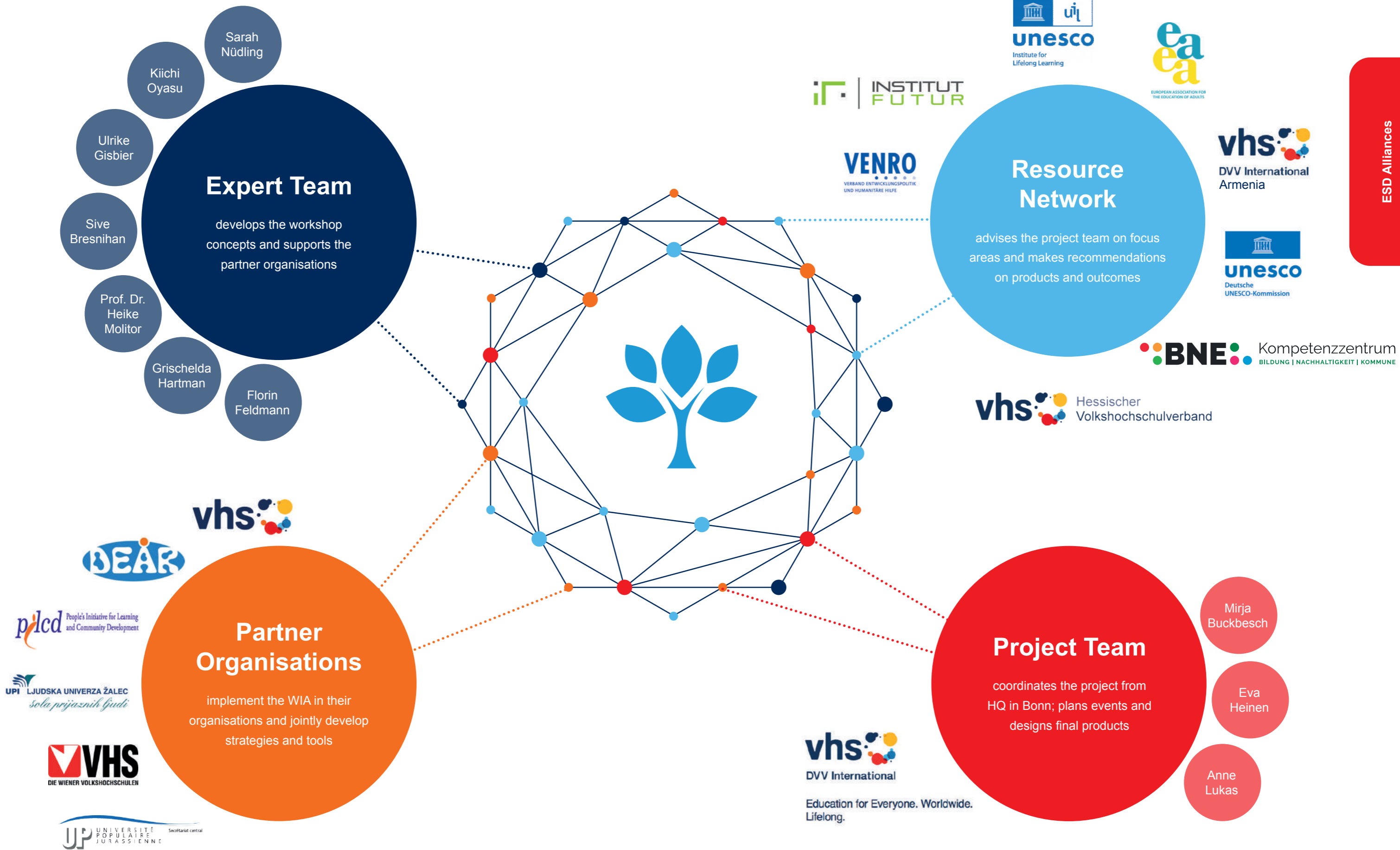
GENERAL INFO

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Coordination	DVV International

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Members of the ESD Alliances



ESD Alliances

The Partner Organisations



Yoko Ito
Development Education Association and Resource Center (DEAR)
The project provided us with an opportunity to reflect on how we communicate and promote ESD, and whether the organisation itself is moving to bring ESD to the world.



Bettina Krauß
Kreisvolkshochschule Groß-Gerau
For us, the participation of everyone - employees, course instructors and the public - is the key to further embedding ESD in our organisation.



Mihaela Anclin
Ljudska Univerza Žalec
Sustainability is a topic that has been close to our hearts for a long time. The WIA was therefore something natural and logical for our institution to participate in.



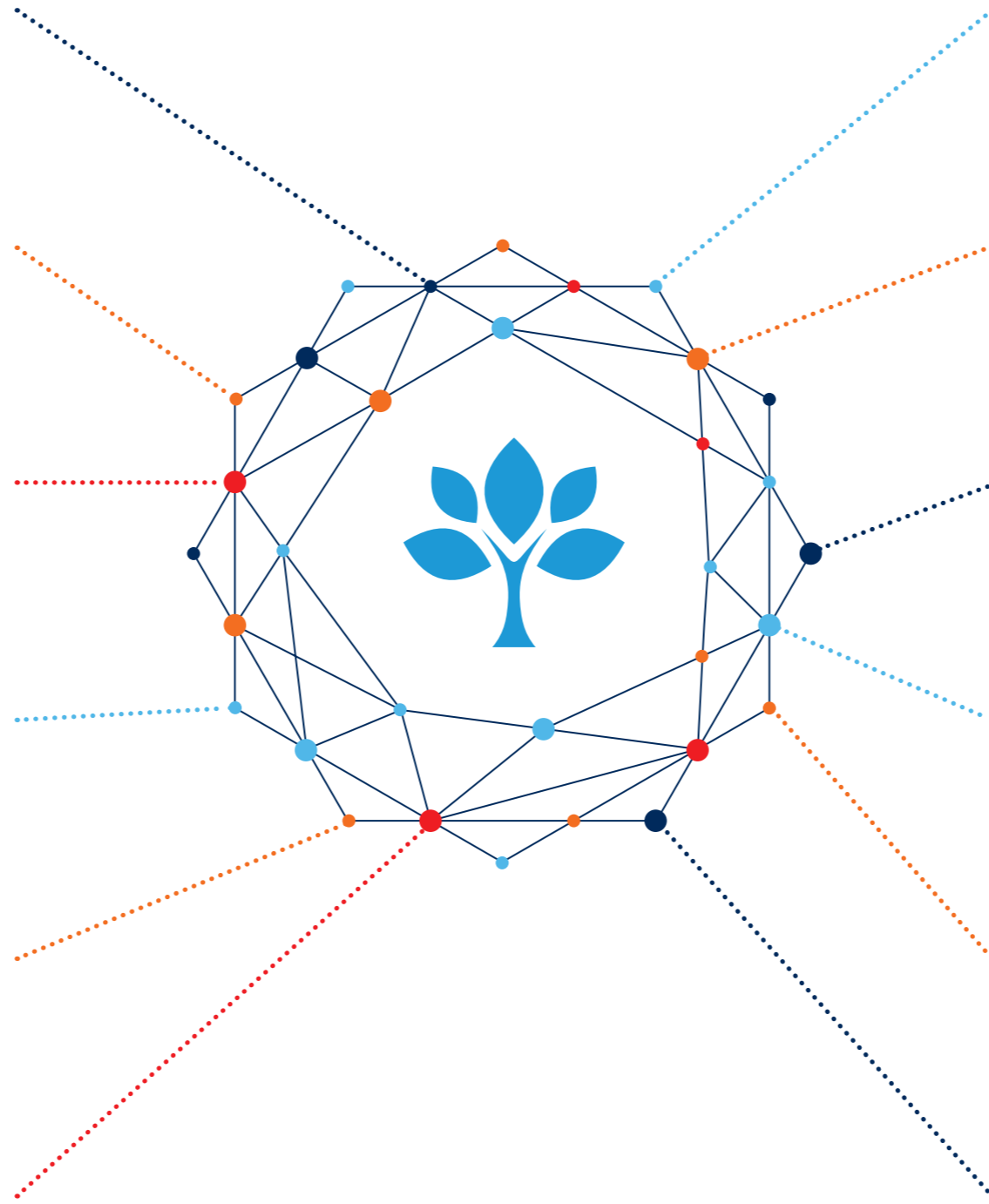
Claudia Biehahn
Volkshochschule Detmold Lemgo
The task of achieving the sustainability goals is huge. The project has helped us to break it down into achievable parts and tackle them with a great deal of optimism.



Ivor Baatjes
Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET)
We need to engage in a much broader debate about the role that adult education should play in the socio-ecological transformation of the world.



Dagmar Müller
Volkshochschule Berlin-Mitte
Every day we are pleased that we have started the process and have been able to define our goals. This has also given us greater visibility in our networks.



Senad Lacevic
Die Wiener Volkshochschulen
The WIA has brought about a structured exchange about what is already happening here in ESD and motivated people to get involved who would not have participated before.



Claudia Preker
Volkshochschule Stuttgart
We are very proud of what we have achieved as a small team. We will definitely keep working on the issues and continue to take small steps towards a more sustainable organisation.



Noemie Maibach
Verband der Schweizerischen Volkshochschulen (VSV)
WIA relates to economic and social aspects. This is enriching for us. As representatives of Adult Education institutions, we convey, think and live sustainability for the future.



Sabine Gröpel
Volkshochschule im Landkreis Cham e.V.
There is no alternative to a WIA, and for us it goes without saying that we are on this path, because sustainability is the topic of the future.



Ramon G. Mapa
People's Initiative for Learning and Community Development (PILCD)
To truly live ESD, we need to look at our conventional thinking and behaving and think about how we can promote change towards a more sustainable future.



Susanne Scharschmidt
Volkshochschule Erfurt
The project allowed ESD to become a bigger part of the daily life at our Volkshochschule and for all employees, thus leaving a greater impact for our future way.



Milestones of the Project

First Partner Meeting
September 2021



Kick-Off of the Project
December 2021



First Meeting of Resource Network
July 2022



Kick-Forward Workshops at PO
September - December 2023



Midterm - Workshops at PO
January - March 2023



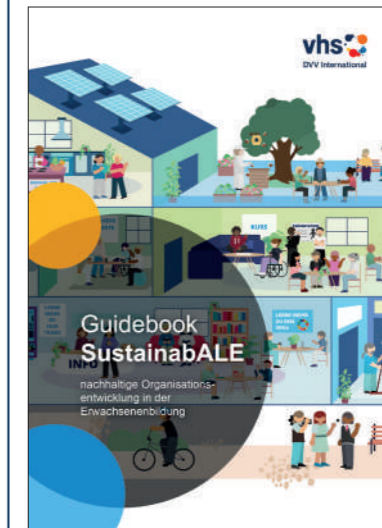
Concept Workshop with Expert Team
November 2021



Kick-Off Workshops at the PO
March - June 2022



Project Meeting and Study Visit to Sweden
September 2022



Start of work on Guidebook SustainabALE
July 2023

Virtual Closing Event
April 2024



ESD Alliances

Alliances established

May - September 2021

ESD Alliances

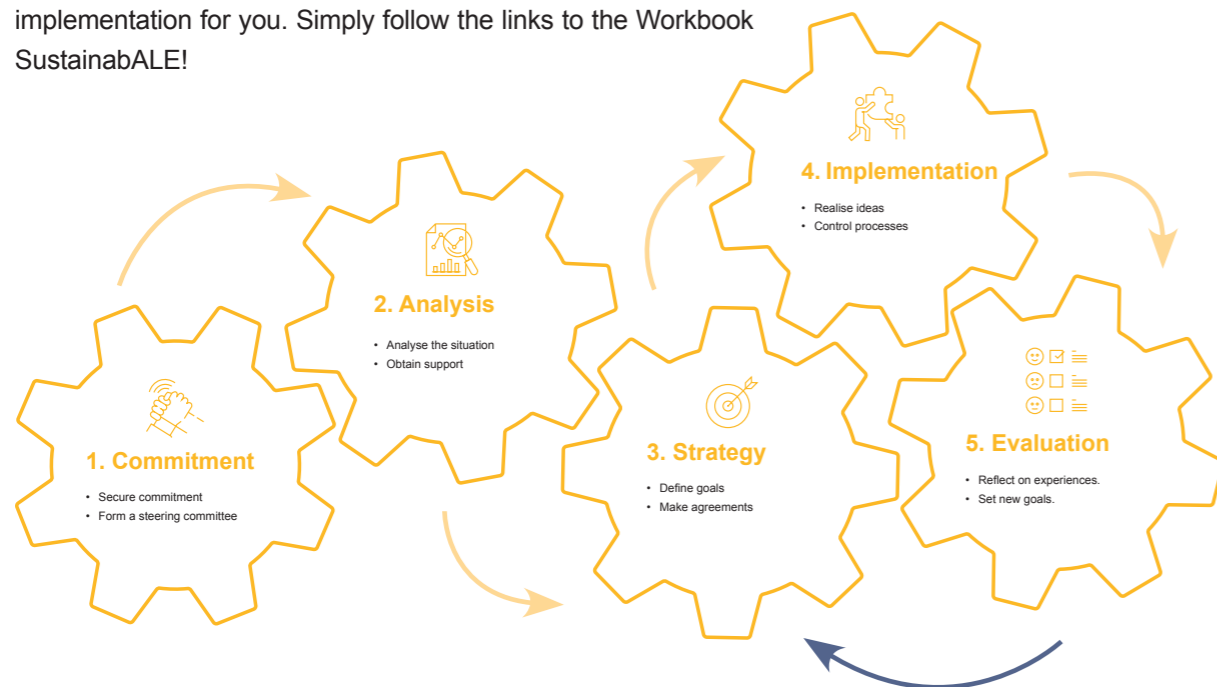
The Whole Institution Approach in Adult Learning and Education: a Model for systematic Implementation

Experiences drawn from the “International ESD Alliances” project have shown that the Whole Institution Approach (WIA) plays a unique role in the institutional development of ESD within adult learning and education. Many ALE institutions have implemented selective measures in the area of sustainability, yet for the most part these remain fragmented and lack a structured and planned approach. One finding from the project is therefore that both the content-related implementation of sustainable organisational development and the process-related approach should be tackled in a systematic manner. To this end, a “phase model” of the WIA for adult education was developed, which consists of five consecutive stages while guiding members of the organisation through the implementation. Equally important for a successful WIA, however, is the consideration of the various “priority areas” that offer potential for sustainable implementation in an adult learning and education organisation. The ESD Alliance has identified a total of four priority areas with various sub-categories.

Both components – the phase model and the four priority areas – together provide a useful roadmap for the Whole Institution Approach at an ALE centre. You can find more detailed information in the following two chapters, **Priority Areas** and **Phase Model**.

A PHASE MODEL

Based on traditional approaches to organisational development, the phase model is aimed at a process that – once established and consolidated – is implemented cyclically and continuously. The first initialisation phase (Phase 1: Commitment) is followed by an assessment of the organisation’s own position (Phase 2: Analysis). Then the concrete work begins (Phase 3: Strategy) and initial measures are implemented (Phase 4: Implementation). The final step of the cycle – reflection – is particularly important in the WIA (Phase 5: Evaluation). During this stage, lessons learned are developed and the path is laid towards the next implementation phase. The individual phases are explained in detail below and illustrated with practical examples and quotes from our partners. We have also created some tools for direct practical implementation for you. Simply follow the links to the Workbook SustainabALE!



THE FOUR PRIORITY AREAS

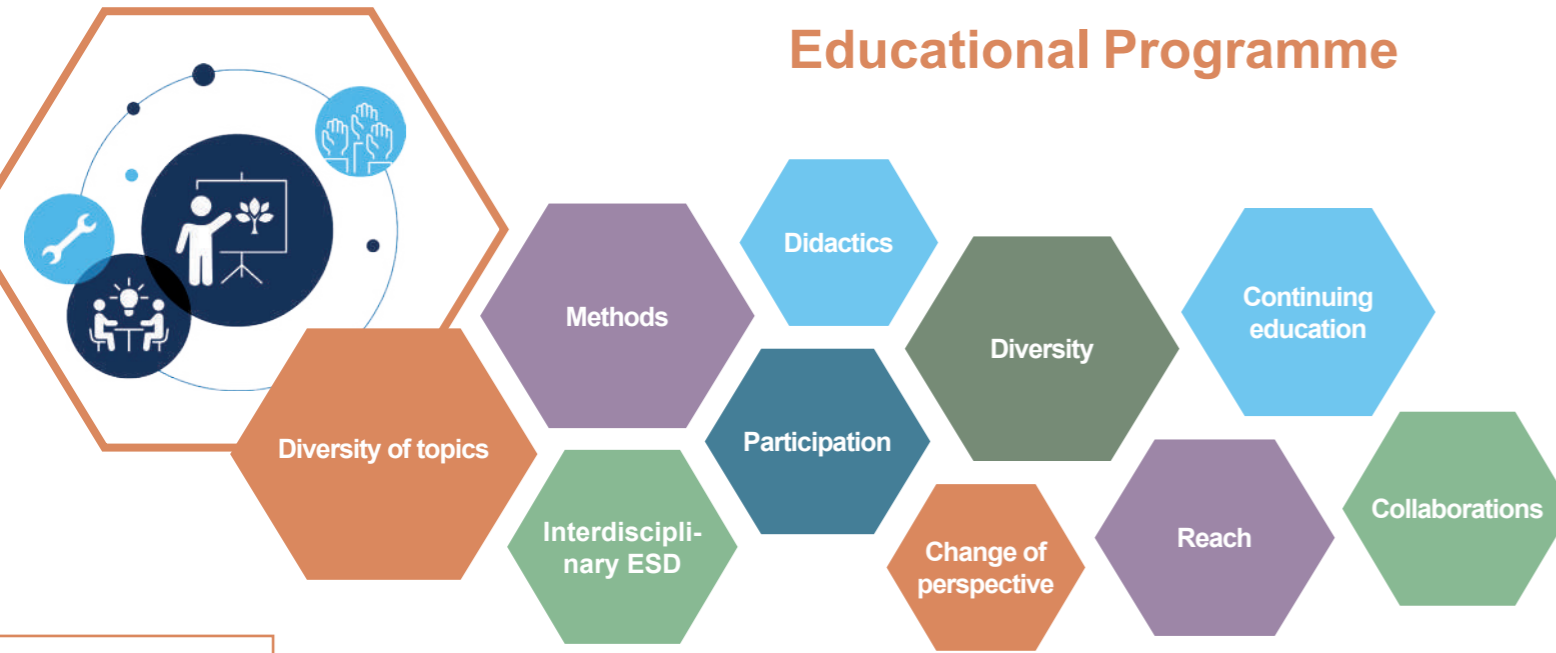
On the following pages, we first present a model of four priority areas: Educational programme, Management, Teaching and work environment, and Networks. This model of priority areas helps to structure the content of the WIA process. The priority areas make it easier to systematically analyse one’s own organisation with regard to the many facets of holistic ESD and to develop structured goals.

The four priority areas were developed together with the ESD alliances’ team of experts and tailored specifically to educational organisations. As the priority areas presented here and, in particular, their associated organisational areas cannot be described in full within the scope of this guidebook, we have deliberately brought out main points on the following pages.

It should also be noted that the four priority areas are a model that supports an analytical and structured approach. In practice, individual objectives or areas of work in an organisation usually may correspond to several of the priority areas. Assignment to a specific priority area therefore serves to better structure the process of analysis, objective setting and implementation.



Educational Programme



The programme of an educational organisation makes up the core of the organisation, and usually comprise the area in which Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is already well established. Through ESD, participants are taught skills to enable them to actively shape the social transformation process. It is therefore not just a question of simply placing sustainability topics in the programme and imparting knowledge, but rather the methodological approach and the ability to take action are also important key factors of ESD. Within the framework of the Whole Institution Approach (WIA), the aim is to strengthen ESD in the education programme. This can be achieved on different levels, for example by placing ESD as an interdisciplinary theme in the course offerings, by reaching and integrating new target groups, or by strengthening ESD-specific didactics and methodology in the courses offered, for example through continuing education opportunities for instructors.

ESD AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TOPIC

The diversity of the UN's **sustainable development goals** offers an opportunity to anchor ESD in an educational programme as an interdisciplinary topic in many areas, revealing direct fields of application and techniques for acting sustainably. It also reaches people who may not be primarily interested in sustainability. The participants are thereby supported in integrating sustainable behaviour into their everyday lives, and learning the necessary skills and competences.



Subcategory	Description	Questions to guide us in this process
Diversity of topics in program	ESD encompasses different aspects of societal development which can be incorporated as educational activities in the various areas of the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we offer specific events or activities on the SDGs subjects? At which points are sustainability subjects incorporated in our programmatic areas or activities? Which SDGs do we cover with our program? Which do we want to increase working on in the future?
All SDGs possible	The UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form a basis for this process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply chains and fair trade (SDG 8) Innovative forms of housing and 'green' traffic (SDG 11) Animal welfare or regional activities, e.g. bee-keeping (SDG 15) Do we offer online programs to reach different target groups?
ESD in other educational areas	Alongside specific events or activities on ESD subjects, aspects of ESD and sustainability can be integrated in further educational areas and programs (e.g. language courses, health classes).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In which programs/activities do we currently include sustainability subjects in our educational programs (explicitly/implicitly)? Where can we integrate sustainability subjects in the future? How can we adapt curricula accordingly?

Find inspiring questions for your goal definition in the Reflection Catalogue!



Reflection Catalogue

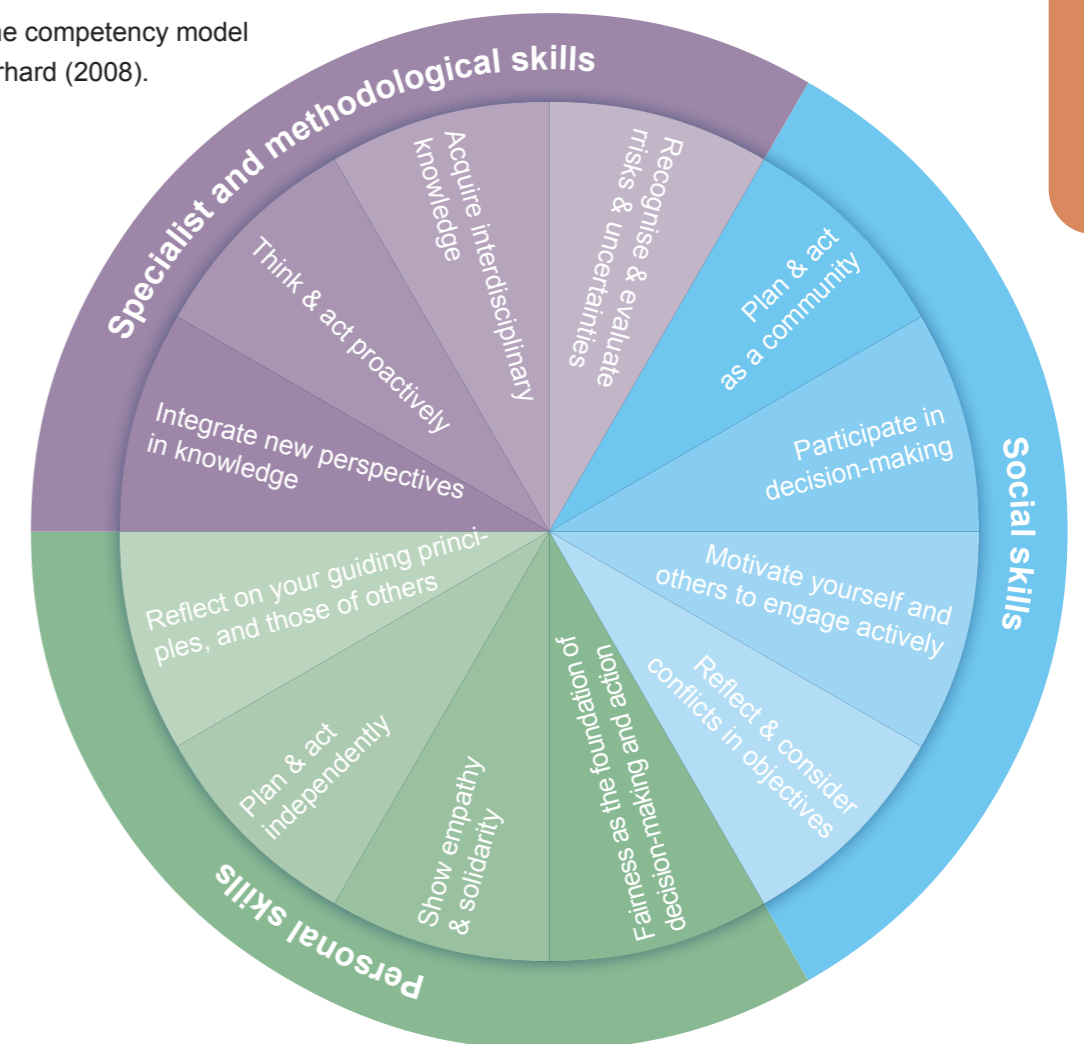
Bettina Krauss, kvhs Groß-Gerau

"At the Groß-Gerau District Adult Education Centre (kvhs), we are creating a new educational space for sustainable development, our 'Forsthaus room'. At this location, we seek to promote the topics of forests, environmental protection and biodiversity, sustainable management, fair supply chains and climate change. The SDGs serve as didactic guidelines. The 'Forsthaus Room' anchors ESD as an interdisciplinary topic at our centre. The kvhs and district administration teams, as well as course instructors and participants are involved step by step in the design of the learning environment. Our ESD Escape Room offers a playful exploration of ESD topics. The Smartboard provides knowledge about the history of the location, offers research opportunities on the SDGs, and promotes transfer to other educational formats, such as language lessons or creative programmes of cultural education. Individuals active in sustainability topics from the region come together in our digital knowledge route on climate adaptation and show what sorts of ESD commitment already exist in our region."

STRENGTHENING ESD TEACHING METHODS

Education for sustainable development imparts knowledge, values and competences that enable participants to shape their lives responsibly and to protect the planet as a habitable and beautiful place for future generations. ESD makes it possible to understand complex interrelationships to better understand our globalised world, for example, by getting to know different perspectives and other forms of action.

Model based on the competency model from de Haan, Gerhard (2008).



PARTICIPATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND REACH OF THE PROGRAMME

A diverse educational offering, and the integration of ESD as an interdisciplinary concept, enable educational organisations to increase their reach in society. At the same time, it is important to adapt the programme to the needs and interests of potential participants. An orientation towards the lived experience of individuals is not only an important principle in ESD. The wide range of topics and methods of ESD offers numerous starting points for very different target groups. In order to maximise a needs-oriented educational programme, it is necessary to create spaces for participation. These enable (potential) participants to actively shape the programme and, where applicable, also the structures of the educational organisation. This in turn strengthens the connection to the organisation, and the participants see themselves not only as consumers, but as active creators and contributors of ideas. Employees receive new and valuable insights that allow them to think outside the box. The educational centres thus become lived places of democracy and attractive educational providers.

BNE DIDACTICS AND METHODOLOGY

Specific BNE didactics are required in order to impart skills to the participants. ESD is characterised in particular by a combination of instruction of social, personal and specialised skills, as well as methodological learning. In doing so, ESD endeavours to connect to the immediate, lived environment of the participants and supports them in recognising complex interrelationships, in reflecting on their own and others' points of view and finally in developing concrete options for action: **Recognise – Evaluate – Act**. Varied, interactive methods, as well as sufficient time and space to reflect on what has been learned and to make connections to their own lives, therefore provide a solid basis for excellent ESD.

What methods have we used so far in ESD?
Are these applicable in other programme areas?
Which materials/tools can we use to implement ESD?

Are our instructors familiar with these didactic principles, and do they design their courses accordingly?
How could we support our course instructors in designing their courses (information materials)?

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR INSTRUCTORS

In order to integrate ESD holistically into the course offerings, it is important to train instructors in the subject areas, didactic principles and proven methods of ESD instruction. In particular, the content of and methodical linking of ESD as an interdisciplinary concept offers the potential to create attractive opportunities for a large number of instructors from a diverse array of programme areas. Regular continuing education programmes for teachers and employees should therefore be integral to a Whole Institution Approach.



ESD materials from DVV International

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES: CONVINCING INSTRUCTORS OF THE BENEFITS OF ESD

Claudia Preker, Ökostation at vhs Stuttgart: “ESD conference for multipliers”

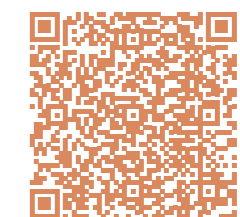
“We wanted to integrate the topic of Education for Sustainable Development more broadly and solidly into extracurricular education in the region. At vhs ökostation, we organised a specialist conference for multipliers from various areas of formal and non-formal education. In particular, we reached out to educators in early childhood and after-care programmes as well as specialists in nature, orchard and forest education. Our aim was to get the multipliers excited about the topic of ESD and to network them with other actors in the field. The participants learned which factors are decisive for mediation in order to convey the basic ideas of ESD well in their courses or excursions. For this purpose we also focused on a diverse mix of methods at our symposium. The multipliers learned about practical examples, and were able to attend various workshops offered by the vhs ökostation. There were many take-aways from this conference for their work, and the participants found learning and networking together in person to be particularly beneficial.”

Petra Kriesel, vhs Detmold-Lemgo: “ESD summer party for lecturers”

“In order to raise awareness of Education for Sustainable Development among our lecturers, we at the Detmold-Lemgo vhs organised a summer party for instructors on the topic of ESD. In addition to strengthening the topic of ESD, the aim of this low-threshold event was also to increase the appreciation of the vhs towards its instructors, and in turn promote their loyalty to the vhs. The lecturers were able to get to know each other better and exchange ideas over drinks and delicious food in the vhs Detmold garden. The aim of the summer party was to sensitise the lecturers to the topic of ESD and to the importance of sustainable thinking and action, as well as to convey ESD methods. The world map ‘Let Diversity speak!’ served as a special attraction and sparked discussion. In addition, the participants were able to expand their knowledge of the SDGs by playing card games, crossword puzzles, and matching games. They were further able to improve or discuss their daily activities. All in all, it was a successful day for the programme planners and instructors, and it provided new motivation and ideas for our work in the future.”

Tip

Use this poster to motivate your instructors to integrate more ESD into their courses. This poster was developed by the partner organisations of the ESD alliances.



ESD poster for teachers

Management



The management of an educational organisation includes numerous areas that can be aligned more closely with sustainability criteria as part of a Whole Institution Approach. This involves a change in organisational structures, processes and guidelines that regulate day-to-day work and cooperation among instructors. Education for sustainable development (ESD) is practised as a holistic concept. Moreover, a holistic, sustainable organisational development process means more than simply focusing on environmental protection standards. A look at the **SDGs** makes it clear that topics such as equality, diversity and participation also play an important role in the Whole Institution Approach. This is essentially the guiding principle of the WIA “**Living what we teach.**”

VALUES AND MISSION STATEMENT

The values of the organisation are the foundation of its work and form the framework for all employees. The entire corporate culture is based on these ideas. Ideally, the values are determined and defined in a participatory process. Moreover, these values should be reflected in the **organisation’s mission statement**. This is because the mission statement represents the values to the outside world and formulates the goals and guidelines for how the organisation works, making these concepts visible to participants, partners or other parties. It gives the principles of an organisation’s work a concrete framework to which all activities are aligned. A mission statement thus provides orientation and guidelines for all employees. It can also make it easier to identify with the employer and their objectives.

Tip

To ensure that you can incorporate Education for Sustainable Development holistically in the organisation, it is advisable to anchor ESD as an interdisciplinary issue in the mission statement. Formulate specific guiding principles for sustainable development. By grounding ESD in this way, it becomes a fixed point of orientation in everyday working life.

Yoko Ito, Development Education Association & Research Center (DEAR)

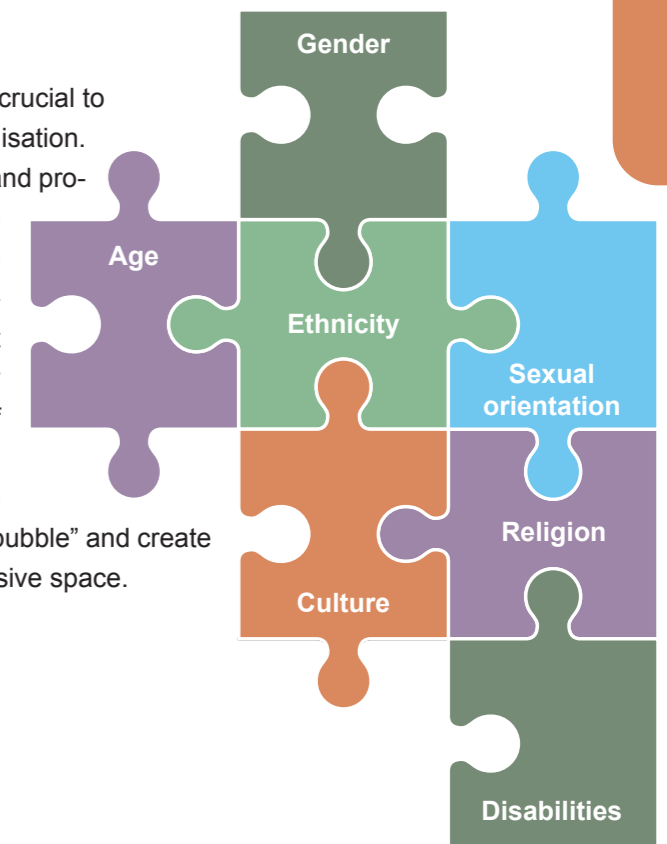
“DEAR is a network organisation that promotes ESD. Our mission statement, which reflects the organisation’s attitude and guiding principles, should aim to promote a sustainable society and education, for we believe that ESD cannot be successful in the communities and places where our members work if the message and the methods do not match. Since ESD encompasses many areas, it is important to include ESD as an interdisciplinary theme in the mission statement. For example, it is important to consider the organisation’s environmental concerns, employee rights, the strengthening of organisational infrastructure, and the way decisions are made on all these issues. As DEAR, we have developed a mission statement as well as values and visions for our work. The mission statement became more understandable by explaining in the vision and values what kind of society we are striving for in a broader sense, and what kind of attitude is necessary to achieve this goal.”



DIVERSITY

Appreciation of diversity is an important aspect of ESD, and is clearly reflected in the SDGs. Diversity within an organisation describes differences and similarities between employees, but also between target groups and partners. The differences and similarities generally relate to the following factors:

Recognising and appreciating these diversity factors is crucial to the success of an adult learning and education organisation. These factors promote better collaboration, innovation and productivity. By reflecting a diverse population within the organisation, a variety of perspectives and needs are brought to the table. This is an important success factor for educational institutions in particular. In practice, it means that management needs to analyse the diversity of the workforce in terms of the factors mentioned: If groups are found to be underrepresented, the reasons should be analysed and, if possible, reduced. In the area of ESD, it is also important to puncture your own “bubble” and create a learning environment that creates a diverse and inclusive space.



DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES AND EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

Employees want to play an active role in shaping their workplace. They bring a variety of perspectives and knowledge to the table (see Diversity), offering enormous potential for innovation. In order to capitalise on this potential, we need creative spaces and participation formats for as many employees as possible. Flat hierarchies and transparent decision-making structures are important factors for attracting employers in the modern working world. In an atmosphere in which all employees can develop, where there are forums to contribute their own ideas and participate in the development of the organisation, all employees foster the sustainable and holistic development of the organisation with their diversity of perspectives. The most important basis for this is a corporate culture of appreciation.



EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

In order to meet the demands of a constantly changing (working) world and to acquire the skills and competences to actively shape sustainable transformation, the employees of an adult learning and education organisation also need opportunities to further develop their knowledge and skills and to learn new things. Continuing education programmes, the use of educational leave, or the motivation to take part in training courses and conferences, can strengthen employees, competence in Education for Sustainable Development. The skills that employees already have and that they can pass on to their colleagues should not be overlooked.

Michela Anclin, UPI Žalec: Promote and spread in-house knowledge

“We focused on three objectives when implementing the Whole Institution Approach. One of the objectives was to promote in-house knowledge. As we have been involved in ESD for a long time, we wanted to share our knowledge and experience with our colleagues. We are a small team and attach great importance to good relationships and the well-being of all our employees. We thought about using the ‘Friday workshop’ format to process and impart this knowledge in an attractive and entertaining way. These workshops take place once a month on Fridays. They are designed to be short and fun. Their content is related to sustainable development topics – more specifically the 17 SDGs. Whichever colleague suggests the topic moderates the workshop. Some examples include making candles from recycled materials or nature-related activities such as a visit to a beekeeper who offers instruction at our centre. The purpose of these workshops is not only to learn and familiarise ourselves with new ESD topics, but also to promote internal networking and team building.”

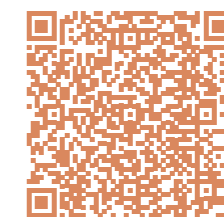
QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Quality management systems (QM systems) are well-established in many adult learning and education organisations. There are numerous starting points here for integrating Education for Sustainable Development. ESD-specific assessment categories can be created for this purpose. However, it is more advisable to analyse where existing synergy points are located in order to embed ESD holistically. Just as ESD is implemented in an interdisciplinary way in the educational programme and the entire organisation in the Whole Institution Approach, it makes sense to anchor it in a quality management system in a similar way. Some external QM systems have already integrated ESD and sustainability into their assessment criteria.

Noemie Maibach, Association of Swiss Adult Education Centres

“We decided to integrate ESD into our existing quality management system. The recommendations contained in the ESD correspond to the structure and guiding principles of the Swiss Adult Education Centres. At the Association of Swiss Adult Education Centres, we offer our members services, e.g. for quality assurance. The association cannot intervene directly in the structures of the adult education centres; it can only make recommendations. The quality label for adult education centres developed by the association serves this purpose. We provide adult education centres that wish to acquire this label with a guideline containing basic questions for analysing their structures. The assessment criteria are based on sustainable development criteria such as sustainable society, organisation and accessibility. We have deliberately integrated ESD as an interdisciplinary topic into all assessment categories, and defined a separate category. Sustainable development criteria can therefore be found in assessment criteria for: Leadership, Audience, Qualifications, Didactics, Sustainability, Communication, Learning Environment, and Risk Awareness. For example: Adult education centres should consider whether or not the programme includes questions on ecological sustainability, or which offers have the potential to address sustainability issues.”

In our reflection catalogue you find helpful questions on many topics in the field of management and organisation.



Reflection Catalogue

Organisation/Management		
Subcategory	Definition	Questions to guide us in this process
Values	Agreeing on common values and guidelines should form the basis for any sustainable organisational development processes. These common values are developed by means of an open and transparent process and are supported by the entirety of the staff. The values are the foundation for all subsequent development processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are our common values and guidelines? Where do we see conflicts or different stances on matters? Where do our values and actions contradict each other? How can we develop these values further and what kind of needs do we have for this process? How can we ensure the involvement of all staff / levels in this process? How do we ensure a form of liability to our agreed values?
Mission Statement	A mission statement in accordance to ESD principles serves different functions. A sustainable organisation can use the mission statement to transport the common values and principles internally and create a common basis for working together. Furthermore, it serves a communicative purpose as it displays to the outside world that this organisation operates sustainably and therefore can act as a role model within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is sustainability anchored as principle in our mission statement? Can we further develop our mission statement and align it with sustainable principles? How can our mission statement reflect our common values and guidelines? How can we align our work subsequently with our sustainable mission statement? How can we reassess our mission statement regularly?

Teaching and Work Environment



This priority area deals with the infrastructure of the adult learning and education organisation. This offers many very specific opportunities for a Whole Institution Approach (WIA): building management and supply, access to and within the building, or topics such as procurement and learning venue design. An ALE organisation is more than just a place to learn: It is a place of encounter, education, exchange and collaboration. Here, visitors and employees can see and directly experience how sustainability can be implemented in practice. For participants, it is a place where they can learn new things and meet other learners and instructors. For employees, it is the workplace where they spend a lot of time and exchange ideas with colleagues and participants alike, as well as jointly developing the organisation's content and structures. An organisation should examine what measures it can take in each area to position itself more sustainably and become a **place of learning for the future**.

BUILDING MANAGEMENT

When it comes to supply and disposal within the building, the focus is primarily on the efficient use of resources and consumption from renewable sources. This area is closely linked to procurement and purchasing. By defining criteria based on sustainability standards, these can also be applied to the entire building management.

What sort of waste separation system do we have?

What electricity source do we use, and from what provider?

Is it possible to create a more efficient water use system?

How efficiently is our energy and heat consumption regulated?

Dagmar Müller, vhs Berlin-Mitte: A new waste separation system

"We consider it a great success to have an ESD working group that we really enjoy, where we regularly take time to work on new topics. It also gives us a good opportunity to discuss sustainability issues. We have visibly implemented WIA goals in three major areas. One is in the area of waste management. Thanks to a grant, we were able to purchase centralised waste separation systems for the corridors for 35,000 euros, and we simultaneously got rid of rubbish bins in all the rooms. This means that every participant and every employee now has to participate in waste separation in the corridors on a daily basis. This is not a new topic in itself, as waste separation systems have been around for a long time. However, implementing this in an educational institution with many stakeholders is always a challenge, so the new waste separation stations now make this possible for everyone in the entire organisation."

PROCUREMENT AND PURCHASING

Sustainable procurement takes into account compliance with social and ecological (minimum) requirements when purchasing products. These can be guaranteed, for example, through ecological or fair trade labels. However, regional production is also an important aspect, with the aim of minimising the negative impact on the environment and maximising the positive social impact when purchasing products. To ensure that these criteria are implemented, it is advisable to integrate these aspects into the award criteria. The use of second-hand products also conserves resources.

Tip

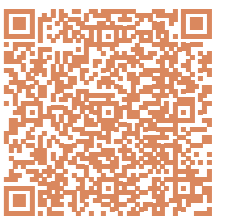
You can already find a lot of detailed information and (free) training on the subject of fair and sustainable procurement, e.g. at the Competence Centre for **Sustainable Procurement**.



The Priority Areas

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The expansion of digital infrastructure can also contribute to sustainable organisational development. A well-developed digital workplace can break down barriers and favour greater diversity among colleagues. It conserves resources, facilitates work processes and communication. Moreover, it helps the adult learning and education organisation to become a modern, attractive employer. The digital infrastructure is also an important success factor for the education programme. Reliable, easy access to digital programmes and work tools opens up new target groups. Removing restrictions in terms of location and time makes the programmes flexible. However, as with all processes, the needs of the workforce and target groups must be taken into account, and work processes must be revamped.



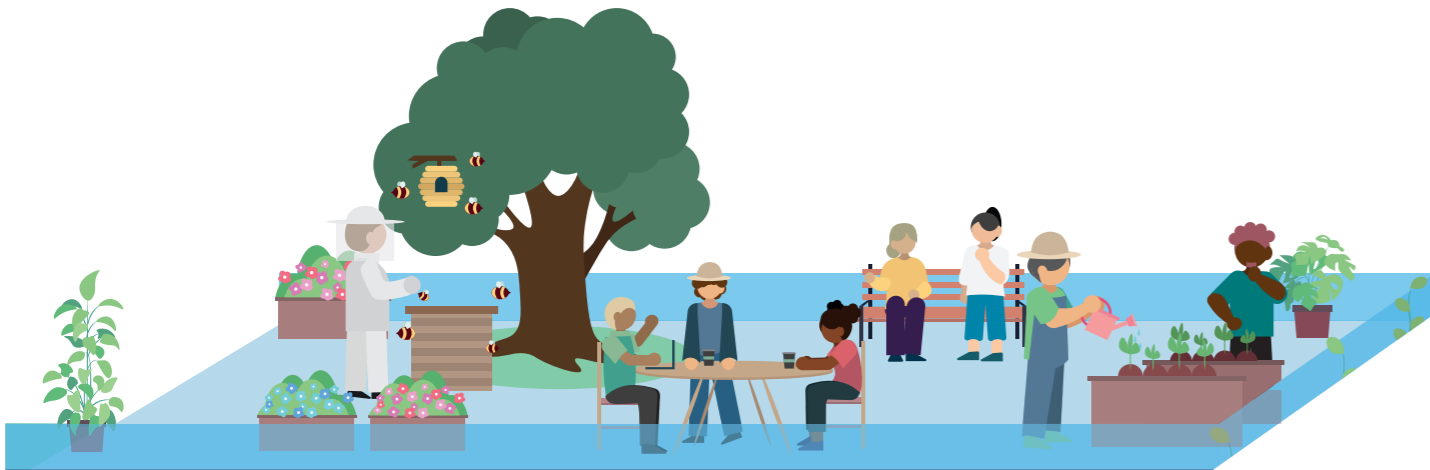
Reflection Catalogue

Learning / Working Environment		
Subcategory	Description	Questions to look at in the process
Procurement / Purchasing	Sustainable procurement considers compliance with social and ecological criteria. To implement this, the institution integrates sustainability aspects into its procurement and tender criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a catalogue of criteria for procurement that takes into account not only price but also ecological and social standards? Are criteria such as regional, fair, seasonal and ecological taken into account? What energy efficiency class should new appliances have? What materials are our consumer goods made of? Under what conditions and where are they produced?
Events	The planning and implementation of in-house events holds a lot of potential for alignment with sustainable criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we consider sustainable options when planning events? Where do we source catering, do we consider environmental and social aspects? Off-site events: Do we consider sustainable venues in our search? Quizzes: Where do our guests stay? Do we consider sustainable hotels/accommodation? Do we use sustainable materials for our event materials?
Facility Management	The supply and disposal of a building offers numerous potentials for alignment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How aligned is our energy and heating/cooling system? Do we use smart controls, are there other options?

LEARNING VENUE DESIGN

The learning location itself should fit the content, but also excellent ESD **didactics and methods**. To this end, learning venues should be reconsidered and, if necessary, enable other forms of learning and instruction. For example, rooms can be designed to facilitate cooperative learning. Free wi-fi in all areas enables the integration of digital forms of learning. Flexible room design, for example with movable furniture or room dividers, allows individual customisation for learners and instructors. The use of outdoor areas as learning spaces should also be considered, for example as teaching gardens, or as places where courses and working groups can meet.

Last but not least, the procurement of furniture is also important for the sustainable design of learning spaces: How and where was the furniture produced? How durable is it? Are second-hand products an option?



MEALS AND CATERING

Wherever people work and learn, they also need to eat and drink – whether in the in-house cafeteria, in the kitchenettes, in cooking courses or when ordering catering for special events. When it comes to food services, it also makes sense to adhere to similar standards as for purchasing and procurement, and to firmly anchor this in its purchasing and award criteria. By using regional, seasonal and fair products, the organisation naturally supports ecological and socially responsible food production. These criteria should also be asked of external suppliers. In this way, employees and participants are quietly shown that it is not difficult to adhere to such standards in everyday life. After all, a cup of fair-trade coffee or local organic milk is a great conversation starter.

ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY

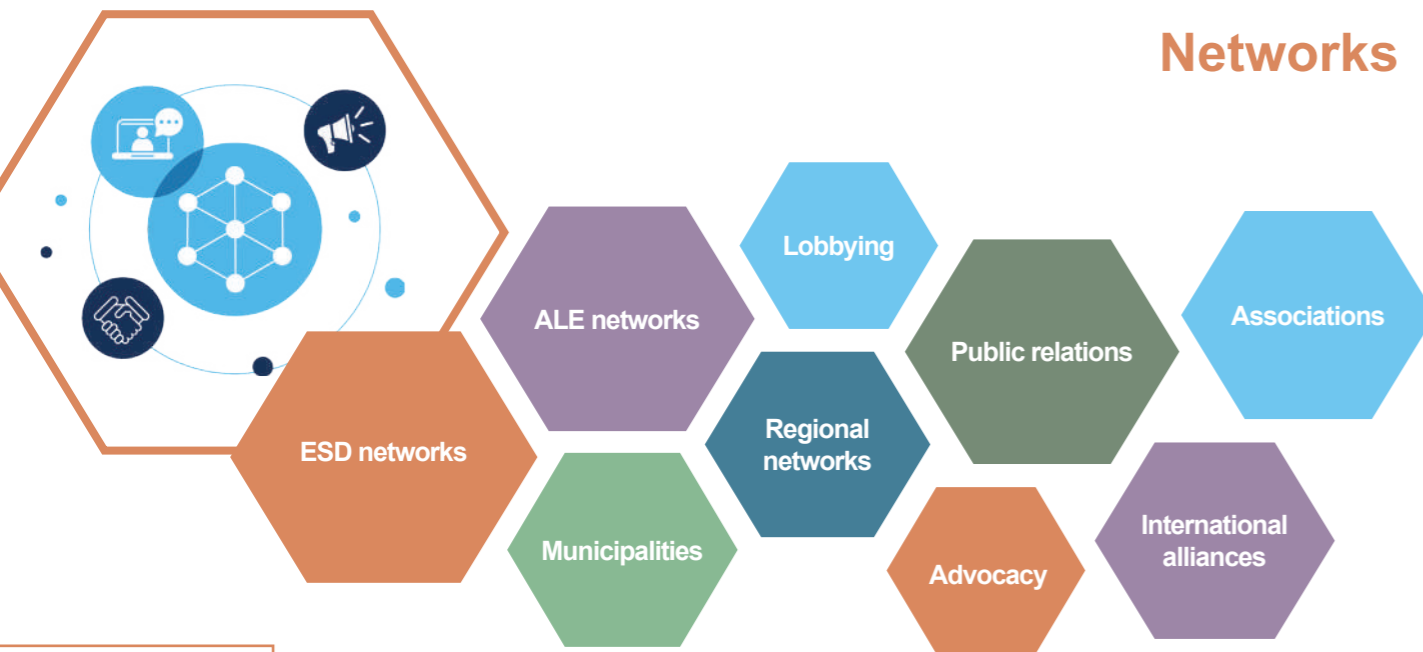
Barrier-free access to and within the educational institution is an important prerequisite for a diverse, inclusive learning venue and workplace. This often requires structural changes, but barrier-free access to digital services (see above) also facilitates access. In this way, the organisations make a valuable contribution to SDG Goal 10 of reducing inequalities. The accessibility of the organisation is also an important factor in reducing inequalities and conserving resources. Aspects such as public transport connections, accessibility on foot or by bike, and bicycle parking spaces, all offer crucial benefits, as do offers such as company bikes and charging stations for e-bikes. Here too, the needs of participants and employees must be surveyed in participatory processes, and those who are not yet represented in the organisation must also be taken into account.



Sabine Groepel, vhs Cham: Photovoltaics and mobility

“For those of us in management, the economic aspect is naturally very important, and we are often thinking about ways to save money. For example, we considered a photovoltaic system, which not only allows us to save energy, but also to feed surpluses into the grid. This was also the deciding factor for us when purchasing an electric vehicle. As an adult learning and education centre in a rural area, our employees often have to travel long distances. In addition to the economic aspect, the role model function of the adult learning and education centre is also important. If our sustainable behaviour is visible to the outside world, then it has a different character. To strengthen our position as a role model, we publicise our sustainability topics in our monthly newsletter, for example, and hope that we serve as a good example in the region and provide inspiration for other institutions.”





Social and ecological transformation can only happen collectively and through joint action. Adult learning and education organisations can be important promoters of this change in their dual role as actors and multipliers of sustainable practice. ALE organisations are not alone in this mission; they are integrated into diverse networks and have a broad societal impact. Networks and collaborations can act as catalysts to place education for sustainable development (ESD) in the centre of societal and social debate. ALE institutions can utilise their role in existing networks and strategically position and promote the topic of sustainability. They can create new networks and collaborations in order to promote sustainability issues and sensitise members of society to sustainable local and global action. At the political level, ALE institutions can strengthen the topic of sustainable development and the concerns of their target group. Last but not least, it is important to communicate to the outside world which sustainable change processes the organisation is driving forward and to position the topic of ESD as well as the Whole Institution Approach (WIA) in public relations.

Bettina Krauss from the Kvhs Groß-Gerau:

"We at the Groß-Gerau Kreisvolkshochschule (district adult learning and education centre), have implemented so-called 'klima.fit courses' together with the climate protection management of the municipalities and the climate department of the district administration. These courses are aimed at interested and committed citizens who want to help make their towns and communities climate-friendly and adapt to the consequences of climate change. An initiative to promote biodiversity and climate-adapted design of public or private spaces has emerged from one of these courses. With their commitment, and in cooperation with other stakeholders, for example kvhs course leaders, valuable steps are taken not only for the outdoor areas of our location at Dornberg Castle, but also for further networking and anchoring future-oriented ideas at the adult education centre. These activities are supported by the international Erasmus+ project TALE (Transformative Adult Learning and Education for Green Transition). Our experiences from the implementation and transfer into our educational programme will be shared as a process and example of good practice, including within a European context."

Networks

NETWORKING

Networks have complex characteristics that promote specific topics and also strengthen partners over the long term. Such characteristics of networks include:



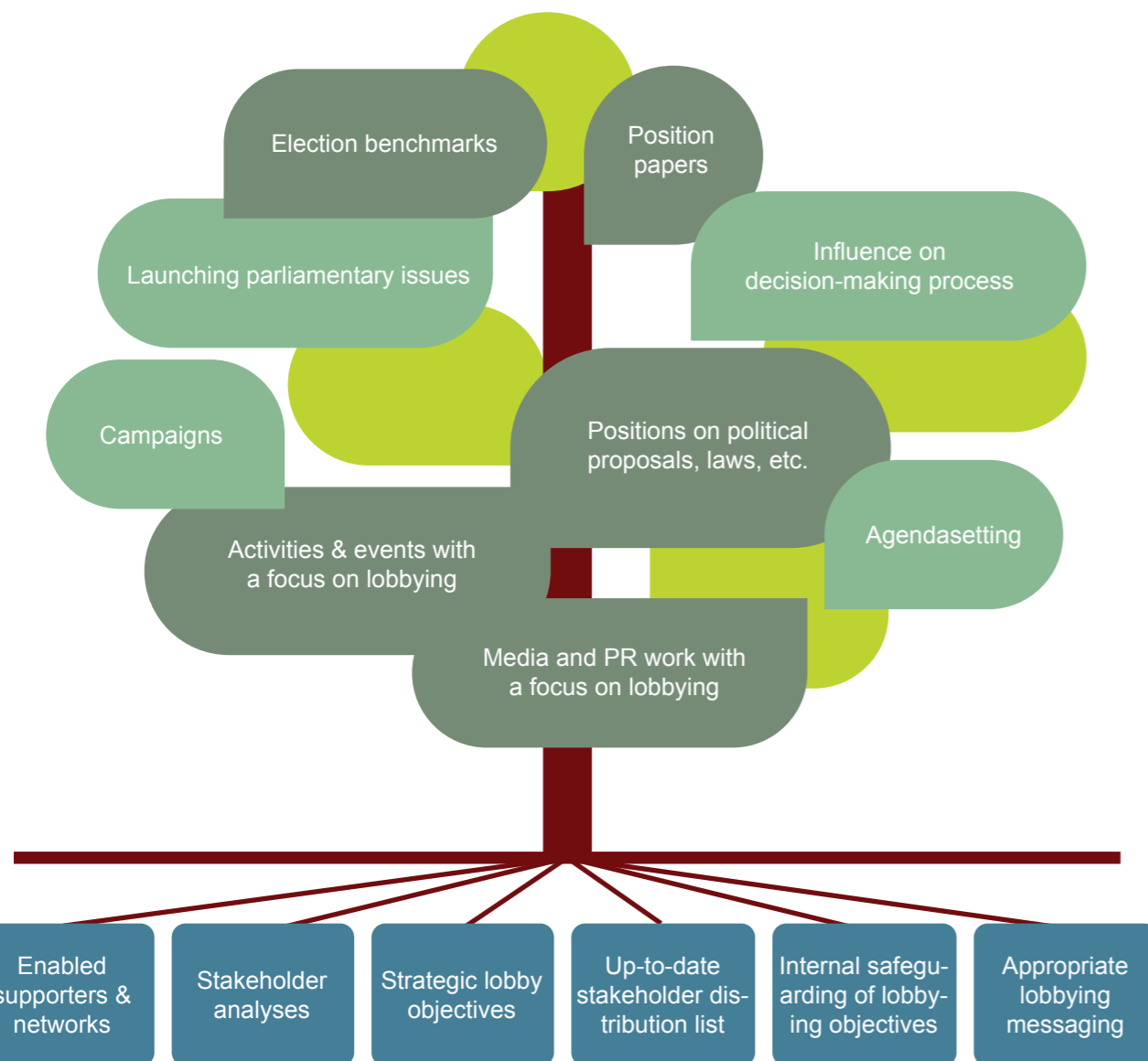
Networks can have different spatial references: They work at local, regional, national or international levels. They all have one important effect in common: They create alliances for topics and stakeholders. In particular, the challenges of sustainable development are limited to the issues within an organisation, and can be tackled most successfully through synergies and alliances. When integrated into a strong network structure, adult education organisations can promote the topic of ESD in the continuing education sector and highlight links to other areas of adult education. In the same way, however, ALE organisations can work to ensure that adult and continuing education are given greater significance in the national and international ESD discourse. To this end, an organisation should analyse which networks it is already active in, and what role ESD plays in them. A structured network analysis can be helpful here.

Mihaela Anclin from UPI Žalec: The importance of international networks for ESD

"In order to strengthen ESD, cooperation at international level is very important to me. It's a way to gain new insights, share experiences and learn from the examples of others. And because ESD and sustainability encompass such a broad field, the different perspectives on it can be very enriching. I would also say that through international cooperation I have been able to share my experience and knowledge not only within my organisation but also throughout my environment, both regionally and nationally, and multiply it in other areas where I work. It also provides a level of psychological support. You realise that the problems you are facing also have to be tackled by other colleagues in other countries and that you are not alone in your quest or challenge for sustainable development and the WIA. This is quite reassuring in today's world of constant change and uncertainty. For these reasons I would strongly recommend international cooperation."

LOBBYING

Lobbying plays an important role in the sustainability of adult learning and education. ALE organisations have a dual role to play in the holistic positioning of ESD. On the one hand, it is important to strengthen the important role of adult education in ESD, as it is not uncommon for policy and funding programmes in education to focus primarily on formal education. On the other hand, it is also important to promote the topic of ESD in the ALE landscape and thus strengthen its own structures. In order to make the interests and needs of ESD heard in adult and continuing education, as well as to advance as a role model in terms of sustainability, it is important to address politics directly. This can be done at very different levels (municipal, regional, national, international), though it depends on both the respective concerns and the individual circles of influence. For a strong presence, it makes sense to utilise existing networks for lobbying and to strategically place issues with interest groups (e.g. associations). It is important to specifically introduce ESD topics in discussions with (political) representatives of the municipality, state or federal parliament and make them visible.



PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK

Public relations work is an important building block for strengthening the impact and significance of ESD and gaining more visibility for personal efforts towards holistic, sustainable organisational development. In this way, adult learning and education organisations become mouthpieces and role models for sustainable practice. In addition, the reach of educational programmes is increased through effective communication of ESD in public relations work. In the best case scenario, adult education organisations will be able to address different target groups through focused placement and approach, thereby expanding the diversity of participants and communicating ESD to people who have previously been less familiar with it. To this end, offers should also be developed that anchor **ESD as an interdisciplinary topic**. The programmes can be advertised with titles that appeal to as many groups as possible. External communication makes the sustainability practised in the organisation visible. The educational organisation is recognised as an authentic communicator of ESD. True to the motto:



Do good and talk about it.

Dagmar Müller, vhs Berlin-Mitte: ESD and social media

“We have been relatively busy with ESD on Instagram and other social media channels to show the lecturers and participants who follow us on these platforms that their courses and content are part of the 17 goals. Our ESD social media presence has sparked better visibility.”

Sonja Watson from vhs Detmold-Lemgo

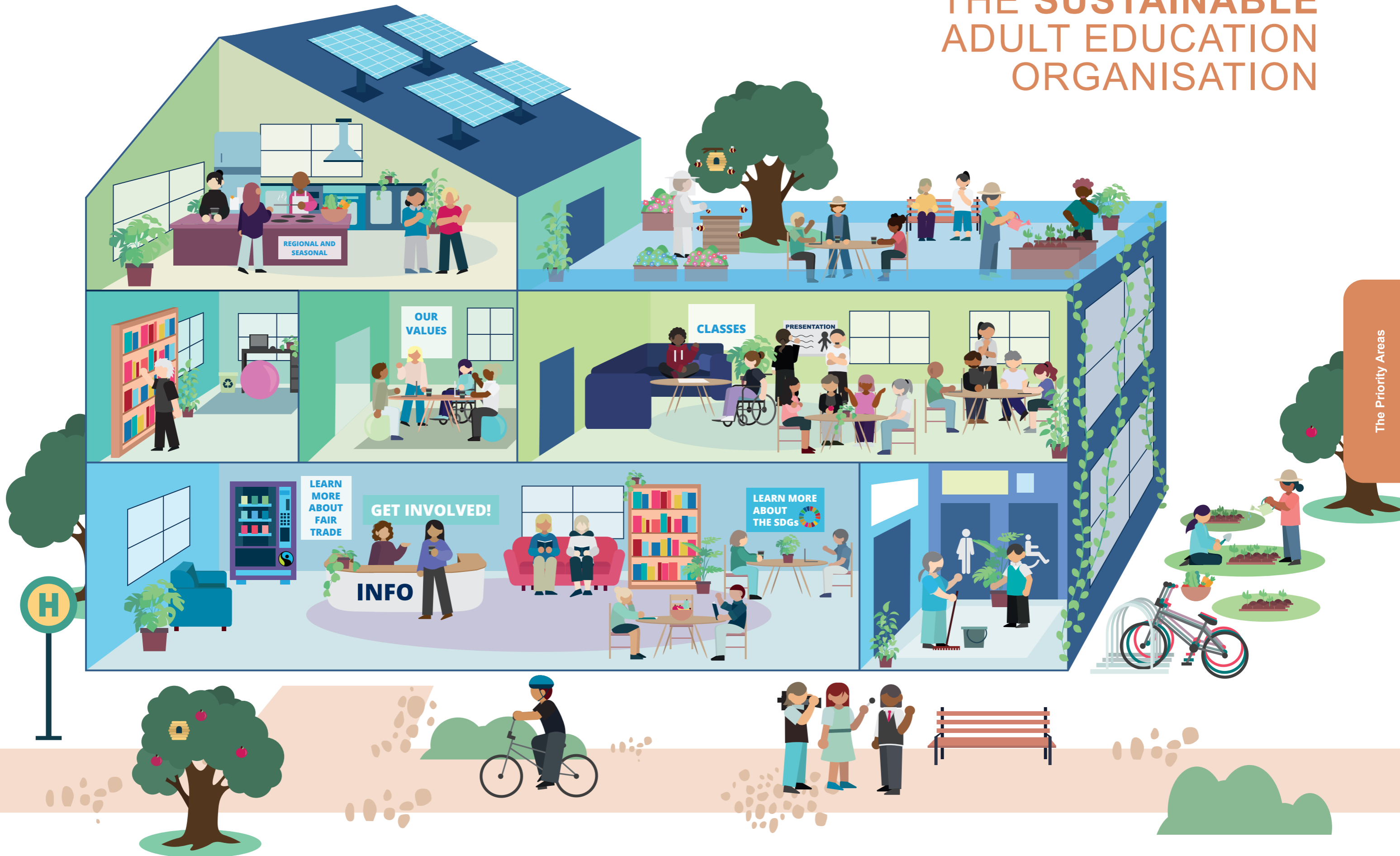
“One of our goals is to integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) more strongly into internal and external communication. To this end, we at vhs Detmold-Lemgo have drawn up guidelines in which we define ESD for our adult education centre and show how we seek to implement ESD in our institution. We want to make our internal communication transparent, participative and targeted. For example, we offer workshops for employees and instructors to sensitise them to ESD topics. We place ESD as a fixed item on the agenda of all meetings, and integrate small tidbits of information into our internal mail. ESD also plays an important role in the revision of our mission statement. All of these processes are designed to promote employees' understanding of and commitment to ESD. ESD is also an important part of our public relations work. We use various communication channels, such as our website, social media, press and newsletter to share information about our ESD activities, milestones in our Whole Institution Approach, and our networking activities.”

Subcategory	Description	Questions to question the process
Municipal and local networks	ESD is growing in importance inside the local communities. In politics as well as in administration, and along the municipal education sector. Here are opportunities for synergies, cooperation and support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there an ESD strategy at the local community level? Is there an ESD officer? What role does ESD play in the educational sector (kindergarten, schools, adult education)? In which networks are we involved at local level and what role does the sustainability agenda have in these networks? How can we provide training for ESD for municipal employees?
Networks of adult education stakeholders	There are regional, national or international adult education networks. They enable an exchange among the stakeholders and provide a platform for specific advocacy of ALE institutions. ESD is increasing in importance in these networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In which adult education networks do we participate? How is the topic of ESD discussed in these networks so far? How can we strengthen the topic of ESD in these networks? Which allies do we have in relation to the topic of sustainability? How can we create synergies and make them beneficial for us?



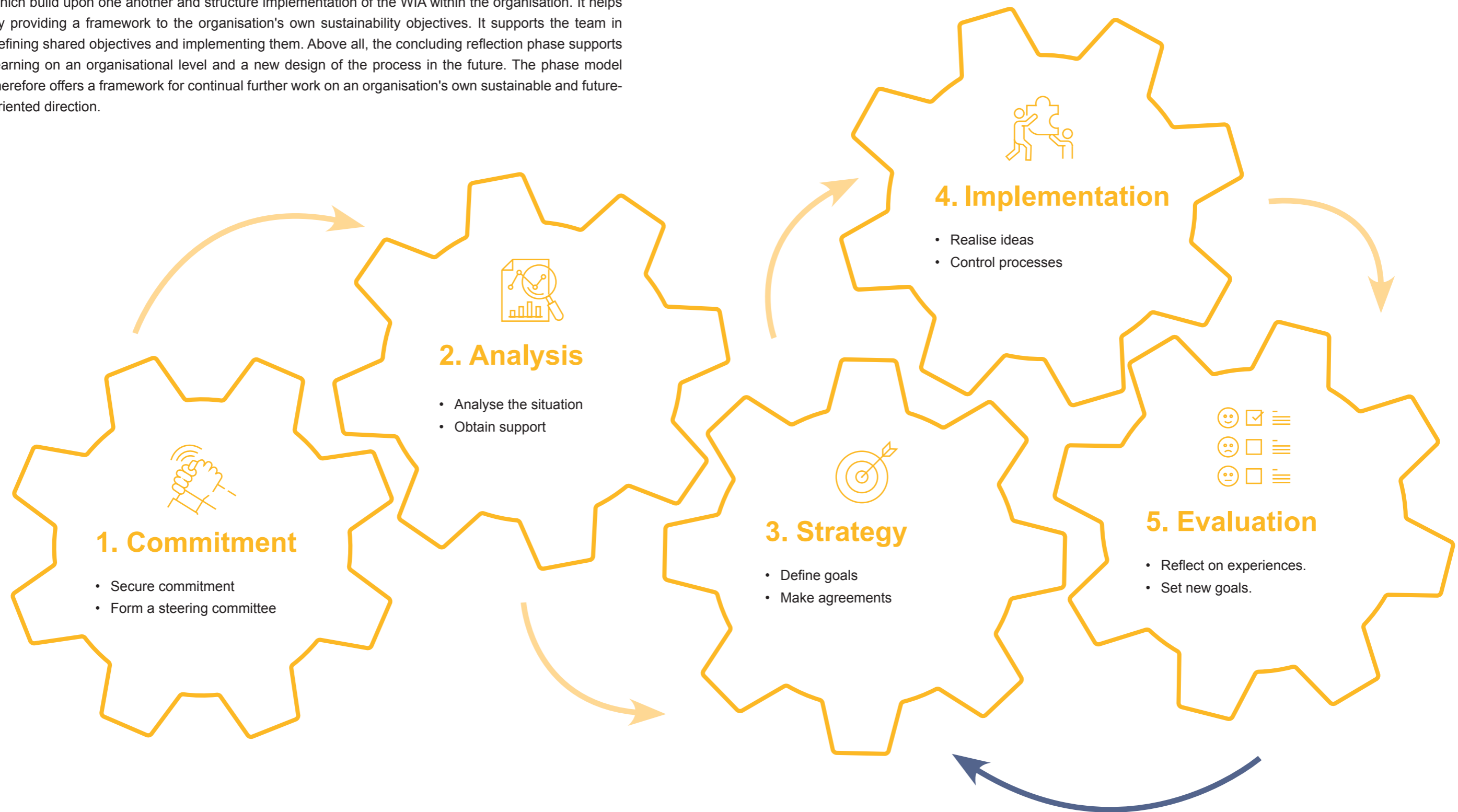
Reflection Catalogue

THE SUSTAINABLE ADULT EDUCATION ORGANISATION



The Phase Model in Adult Learning and Education

The WIA phase model for adult learning and education is composed of five consecutive process phases which build upon one another and structure implementation of the WIA within the organisation. It helps by providing a framework to the organisation's own sustainability objectives. It supports the team in defining shared objectives and implementing them. Above all, the concluding reflection phase supports learning on an organisational level and a new design of the process in the future. The phase model therefore offers a framework for continual further work on an organisation's own sustainable and future-oriented direction.



Phase 1: Commitment

Secure commitment.
Form a steering committee.

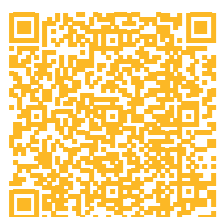
COMMITMENT OF MANAGEMENT

In educational institutions, employees contribute many ideas that can generate motivation and potential for change processes. This is important because long-term, far-reaching changes require the support and willingness of staff on all organisational levels. A holistic change process (Whole Institution Approach, WIA) stands and falls with the commitment of employees, management and relevant committees. In this context, a good roadmap combines top-down and bottom-up approaches: The support and cooperation of the management level is necessary in order to be able to ensure the structural framework for systemic changes. In turn, the involvement of all organisational units and the distribution of tasks strengthens the sense of responsibility of all employees, enables broad representation of diverse interests, and promotes acceptance of the process and thus the implementation of individual measures (Holst 2022). If the idea for a WIA process in your own organisation has not come originally from management, it is advisable for the initiating employees to first get **management** on board. If there is support from the management level, the next step is to put together a steering committee (core team).

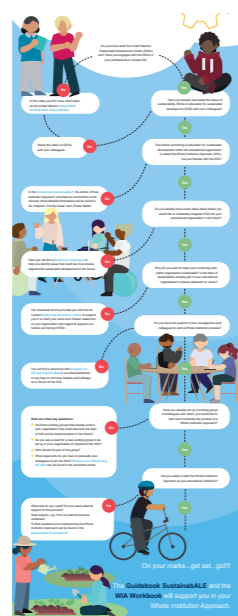
Franja Centrih, Director of UPI Žalec, Slovenia on the question “Why did you decide in favour of a WIA?”

“As director of the Institute for Adult Learning and Education in Žalec, I am convinced that the ‘Whole Institution Approach’ is very important. Education for sustainable development is part of our mission, our task and guiding principle. And if we want to convey the importance of sustainability and sustainable development to other people – for example, our course participants – then it is important that we educate ourselves first. And that’s why I believe that we need to be open to change and that we need to think about sustainable development as a whole team. For this reason, we decided together to integrate the WIA into our daily work.”

You can find arguments to convince your management in our Decision Tree

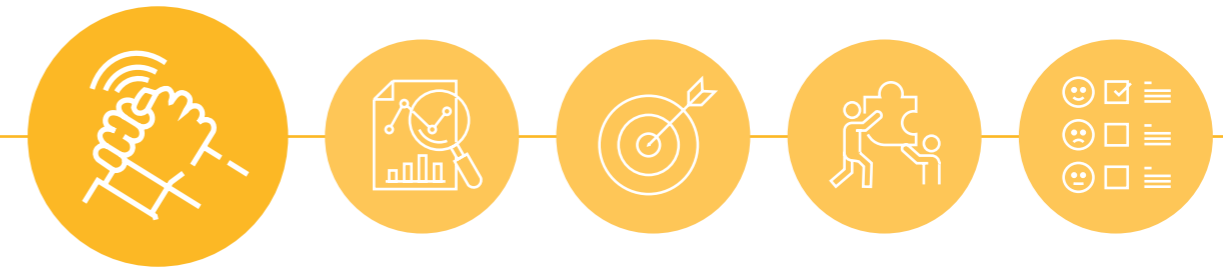


Decision Tree



Tip

For the discussion with management to prove persuasive, it should be well prepared. Draft arguments in favour of a WIA process and, if necessary, put together a presentation. At the beginning of the discussion, mention successes that your institution has already achieved in the area of sustainability. Then present your arguments and use concrete examples to show which objectives your institution could achieve. You may also be able to provide examples of best practices from other organisations in your network.



THE CORE TEAM

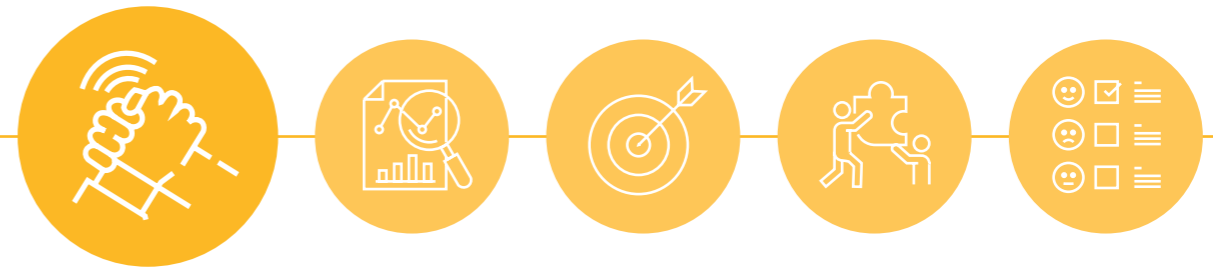
Aligning the entire organisation with the Whole Institution Approach requires commitment, creativity and courage. However, the most important element is the employees themselves: They develop ideas and objectives together, and implement them. The first step is therefore to establish a core team to steer the process within the organisation. This team should represent as many perspectives, spheres of action and opinions of the staff as possible, and work in close collaboration with various departments and stakeholders both inside and outside the organisation.



This core team forms the unit which puts the Whole Institution Approach in motion. However, the core team does not work in a vacuum, but has an impact on other circles through its own work. In the first instance, the core team works closely with its own colleagues and the management level. For individual projects, colleagues can be brought in for implementation as required, e.g. employees from the purchasing department who offer support in creating new guidelines.

Teachers are then also informed and, if possible, involved further, for example by providing advice and support in the reorganisation of teaching and learning locations. The next sphere of influence is the participants of the educational offers: These participants are motivated to act sustainably themselves through the educational offers of the teachers and through tangible examples of new measures in the organisation (e.g. fair trade purchasing, waste management, energy-saving measures). Another important (and often underestimated) sphere of influence is the network partners and local/regional stakeholders. The core team can report on the success of its own measures within networks and inspire other organisations to follow suit. At the same time, the (selective) involvement of external stakeholders in the core team can provide new ideas for further steps and open up potential synergies and collaborations. More information on this can be found in **Priority Area 4: Networks**.





MEMBERS

Choosing the members of the core team depends on the individual framework conditions and human resources of each organisation and, of course, on the motivation of the individual employees. Here are a few suggestions to guarantee taking as many perspectives as possible into account in the process. Each role offers its own advantages:

Tip

Course instructors and participants in the educational programmes can also become permanent members of your core team and contribute their own perspectives. If you wish to keep your core team internal, it is still worth creating other participation formats to involve these groups of people, e.g. planning workshops, a forum, or surveys.

<p>MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep an overview ● Know framework conditions ● Possess decision-making competences ● Serve as door openers 	<p>SPECIALIST PLANNERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer a diversity of perspectives ● Know educational programme ● Understand qualifications ● Serve in bridging function 	<p>ADMINISTRATION / FINANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand processes ● Have an overview of finances ● Work in of administration ● Know regulations
<p>PUBLIC RELATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance public image ● Communicate the vision ● Serve as motivators 	<p>QUALITY MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrate process into QM systems ● Offer synergies with other processes ● Understand potential for future developments 	
<p>WORKS COUNCIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Represent interests of the workforce ● Involve employees ● Ensure internal communication 	<p>BOARD / COMMITTEES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer external perspective ● Have decision-making authority ● Bring broad expertise 	<p>NETWORK PARTNERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide diverse, external perspective ● Create synergies ● Empower and advocate

Senad Lacevic, Chair of works council at Vienna vhs on the question "HOW DID YOU BUILD YOUR TEAM?"

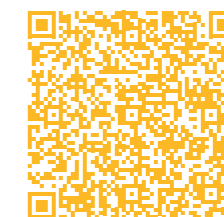
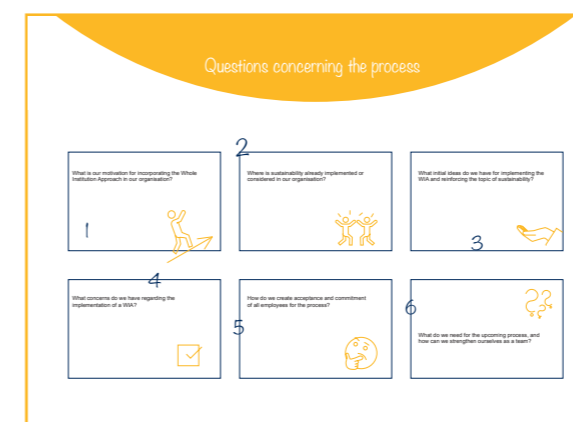
"Our Vienna vhs is a very large institution with around 1,000 employees and 42 locations. In this respect, it was absolutely essential for us to form a team in such a way as to involve all locations and as many employees as possible. While building this core team, we actually exchanged ideas for the first time about what is already happening in the Vienna adult education centres. It also gave people the opportunity to get involved who would otherwise not have done so before. The environmental advisory service, the works council, personnel development and central programme design are all involved, as well as the department heads. Ideally we could add people to the team who work in different functional groups, e.g. people from customer service, cleaning, building services and also from management." – Senad Lacevic, Chair of Works Council of the Vienna Adult Education Centres

COORDINATION OF THE CORE TEAM

It is advisable to clarify a few basic organisational questions at the start of the collaboration:

- How often should we meet?
- How/In what form should we meet (remote/in-person)?
- Which instruments do we want to use (meeting notes/MiroBoard or similar tools)?
- How do we communicate as a team?
- How do we communicate with other parts of the organisation?
- What are the roles of individual members?
- Who else should be on the team?

In addition to these questions, it is advisable to bring all colleagues up to speed at the founding meeting, e.g. by providing input on the topics of ESD and WIA. There should also be an initial brainstorming session and a brief reflection on the team members' individual motivations for being part of the group. This reflection phase creates a common groundwork, and is important for the cooperation of the core team. The total time allotted should be approximately 2–3 hours in a workshop format. A detailed template for this can be found in the WIA workbook.



Workbook SustainabALE

Phase 2: Analysis

Analyse the situation. Obtain support.

ENGAGING SUPPORT FOR THE PROCESS

For an organisation, the Whole Institution Approach means not only developing new educational activities and adapting existing processes, e.g. in procurement or building management, but also questioning existing structures: How does internal communication take place? How transparent and democratic are the company's own decision-making structures, and who may have been excluded from discussions so far? To ensure that all interested groups can participate equally in the process and that the focus of the joint work is not lost, it is therefore advisable to bring external process support on board. This ensures that all participants from the organisation can contribute to the topic without having to switch between their different roles.

Whoever provides this type of support, for example as a coach or facilitator, should be comfortable with the structures of adult education or non-formal education. In particular, they should have experience in sustainable organisational development, change management or be familiar with the Learning Organisation approach. The external facilitator serves both to guide the process and to moderate the accompanying workshops (see phases 3 and 5). The process support also helps to establish the structure for your own process, identify focal points and set priorities.

ANALYSE YOUR OWN SITUATION

Every approach to sustainable organisational development is individual. It is therefore essential to start by taking stock of your own institution and analysing the current status of ESD activities. This analysis helps the core team to better assess their own organisation and existing resources, and to recognise what is already being done and implemented.

This provides a strong basis for new topics and sustainability goals to then be jointly derived.



Tip

Schedule regular updates or feedback loops (e.g. one two-hour Zoom update per quarter) with your process support right at the start. The facilitator should be a good fit for you and your organisation, so be sure to take enough time for the selection process!



STEP 1: "OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SDGS"

An excellent first step involves employing the 2030 Agenda with its 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a fairer and better future as a foundation for analysing your work. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a well-rounded understanding of sustainability in its various facets; and therefore also offer the opportunity to take a differentiated look at the activities of your specific educational organisation. The core team can undertake this analysis during an initial meeting. To do this, the team examines each of the sustainability goals together, and discusses whether their educational organisation is already carrying out activities to achieve each respective objective.

STEP 2: "THE WIA IN OUR ORGANISATION"

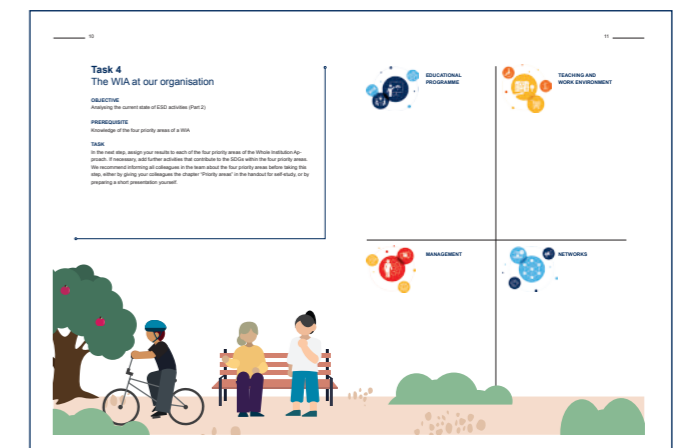
In the second step of the analysis, various work areas of the organisation are discussed in terms of the current situation based on the four WIA Priority Areas (see chapter "Priority Areas"). The analysis reveals possible deficits and gaps, but conversely also uncovers room for manoeuvre and potential for future measures. In addition, all members of the core team become familiar with the four priority areas as an analysis tool and are able to locate their own activities within them in a very practical way. This identification of strengths and challenges is a good orientation for your own planning and can also help you to gain support within your own organisation. This analysis is best carried out using the **Workbook SustainabALE** and by engaging all colleagues in the core team.

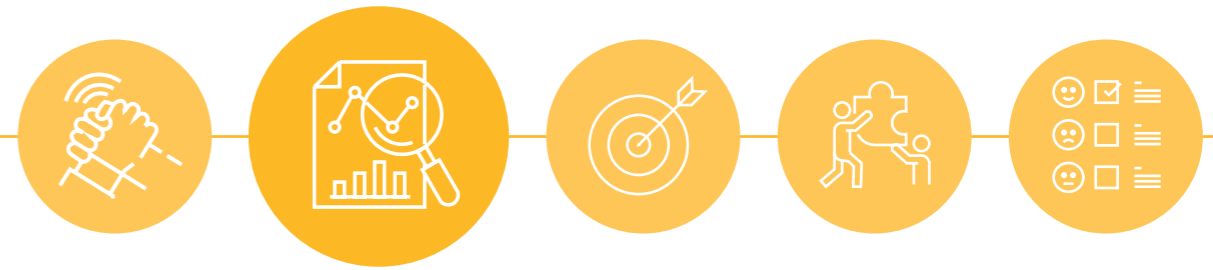


Workbook SustainabALE

Workbook

The Workbook SustainabALE is an accompanying tool that supports you in your individual WIA process. It contains templates and suggested methods for specific implementations of the individual phases described here. In this phase, for example, you will find a template in the workbook for working with the SDGs and how you can carry out an actual state analysis.





OBTAIN SUPPORT WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION

Before moving on to the next phase (defining concrete goals and work packages), it is important to involve your colleagues in the process in advance. To this end, the project can be communicated internally, or the support of the staff can be obtained in the form of participation formats. There are various options here. For example, the members of the core team can act as spokespersons for their respective work unit: Each member of the core team communicates the results and plans of the WIA process individually to their own area, e.g. in a jour fixe process, or through regular reports. Another option is a newsletter or a simple information e-mail that reports regularly on the process and also asks for requests or ideas from employees. Here are several other good examples that have been put into practice:

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE 1

Digital survey “Your vote counts!”

- How can I save resources/materials in my day-to-day work?
- How can I save energy in my day-to-day work?
- What other suggestions might you have for environmental protection in our organisation?

Possible answers:

Improvement of waste separation

E-cars
Light sensors

Digital payslips

Desk-sharing
Remote working

Regulating heaters

Digital administration

Sensitisation workshops

Water dispenser

Sustainable learning materials

“The survey was sent to all employees to ask for their opinion on sustainability and suggestions for improvement. The survey had two particularly positive aspects: It raised awareness of the issue at an individual and institutional level, and it generated many new ideas and suggestions for improvement. Many of these have already been considered and implemented e.g. payslips are now only printed out on request.”

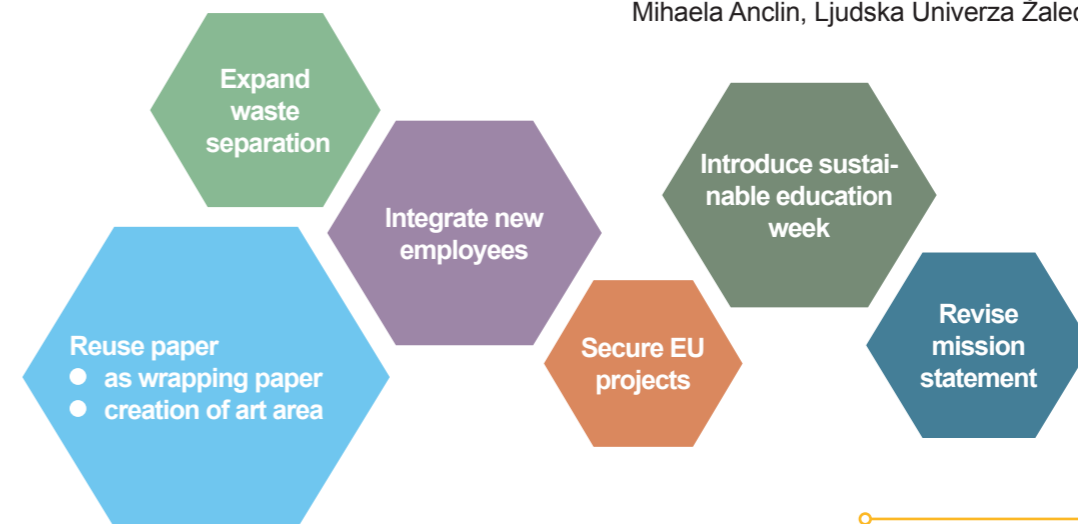
Aleksandra Sikorska, vhs Cham

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE 2

MOSAIC FROM ŽALEC

“All of our employees are an integral part of our WIA process, and each individual is involved in this development story in one way or another. So we asked ourselves: “How can we identify, collect and present these different sustainability stories?” We chose a slightly different method for this. All employees described their aspects of sustainable development and how sustainability is already practised in our company by writing key words on ceramic tiles in our office. These notes on the ceramic tiles developed into a mosaic, which we then photographed and presented to the public. This process encouraged ALL employees to think about how sustainability is already being practised and become aware of it. It gave them the feeling that sustainability is part of their story, a story which they themselves can contribute to. Sharing this story with all employees was the key to our success and generated progress towards sustainability.”

Mihaela Anclin, Ljudska Univerza Žalec, Slovenia



Dagmar Müller, Head of Programme at vhs Berlin-Mitte, on the question

“HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO GET YOUR COLLEAGUES ON BOARD?”

“We first trained all employees on the topic of ESD. We then asked who would like to continue working on the topic at the adult education centre and which area they would like to continue working in. Since that time, all employees have been able to work together on sustainability topics in a working group that meets roughly once a month. This working group also set key topics, which were then addressed further in subgroups. Different groups are hence working in parallel on different ESD topics. There are also colleagues who see it as their responsibility to bring these topics to the district office on occasion or to contribute to networking groups. Some are even involved in NGOs here in the area and bring new ideas back into the organisation and the working group.”

Phase 3: Strategy

Define goals.
Make agreements



ORGANISE A KICK-OFF WORKSHOP

A process carried out in line with the Whole Institution Approach (WIA) supports the transformation and reorientation of the entire organisation. At this point, an initial implementation phase will involve defining concrete goals and milestones based on the analysis of the current situation and the ideas and wishes of the employees surveyed in the previous phase. The four priority areas of a WIA process (see Chapter 3 **Priority Areas**) can serve as a good basis for identifying specific measures for your own organisation. It is advisable to conduct a one- to two-day workshop with the core team, and if necessary involve other strategically important players. The workshop should focus on the following questions:

- **Where do we want our organisation to be in the future?**
- **What goals with sub-goals/milestones do we want to set for ourselves?**
- **How do we want to pursue these goals (coordination & roles)?**

The workshop should take place in person and in a neutral environment, e.g. a conference room, so that the participants are not distracted by the demands of everyday work. Ideally, the participants should work together on two half-days in a row. This allows part-time employees to participate, and topics discussed on the first day can “sink in” overnight and be “re-evaluated” the next day.

You can find a template for an exemplary workshop programme here. It provides a good structure with tips for methods and content on how you can organise your joint planning day.

Kick-off Workshop plan

Example "Kick-off" workshop plan - "We are launching our Whole Institution Approach"

"Kick-off" workshop plan - "We are launching our Whole Institution Approach"

Venue: Internal meeting room or an inspiring external location where you can go into retreat
Participants: Core team (plus management, if this is not part of the core team)
Time: Full-day workshop or split into two half-days
Facilitation: External moderation is recommended, ideally a person who accompanies the entire process
Material: Pinboards, posters/flipchart, Metaplan cards, pins/adhesive tape, markers, prepared posters (see below), loudspeakers to play music (vision) if necessary, sticky dots, printout of SDG symbols
Preparation: Depending on the level of knowledge of the staff on the topics of ESD and WIA, it is advisable to provide input on these two topics in advance of the kick-off workshop in order to get all colleagues on board.

Time	Unit	Topic and questions	Objectives	Method/format
5min	Welcome			Adapted to the respective group
30 Min	Starting the day	1) Why have I decided to take part in the process?	Participants get to know the motivations of the other participants.	1) Oral round or metaplan cards Question: Why have I decided to take part in the process?
	1) Motivation	2) What expectations do I have of today's workshop?	Together with the facilitator, they work out which expectations can be dealt with during the workshop, where priorities can be set or the programme can be adapted slightly.	2) Participants write their expectations on Metaplan cards, cluster on pinboard Question: What expectations do I have of today's workshop?
	2) Expectations	3) Today's plan, expectations are compared with the programme?	Participants have been given an overview of the process and content of the workshop.	3) Poster with schedule Facilitator links expectations and motivations to the schedule.
	3) Procedure for today			

An external moderator who understands organisational development processes and the moderation of internal workshops (see phase 1) should guide the process. To ensure that all participants can participate freely, the moderation of the kick-off itself should not be handled by a member of the core team.

To-does for a good kick-off:

- ✓ **Involve management:** Management staff can assess what room for manoeuvre exists and ensure follow-through.
- ✓ **Space for vision and brainstorming:** Don't schedule the agenda too tightly, leaving enough space for dialogue and joint visioning.
- ✓ **Alternative venues:** Use other locations, e.g. a courtyard, the canteen/kitchen, or meet at an external location. New surroundings also prompt new insights.
- ✓ **Creative methods:** Use unfamiliar methods, e.g. the Lego method or Appreciative Inquiry, to create new experiences together.
- ✓ **Don't take on too much!** Initially, only set a few objectives as a core team and choose quick wins, i.e. goals that can be achieved quickly. This assures joint success early on and keeps motivation high!
- ✓ **Conclusion:** Complete a “mood check” before you close the workshop. How is everyone doing, and what are their thoughts for the future?



DEFINE INITIAL GOALS

The first priority at this point is to identify objectives jointly with the process support. As every organisation has different framework conditions and requirements for a WIA process, the possible objectives for a sustainable organisational development process are also diverse. Essentially, this step involves the following questions: What are the areas where we want to develop further? What exactly do we want to change? Where might there be room to manoeuvre? Who do we want to reach by achieving our objectives?

Tip

In Chapter 3, you will find a large number of measures and ideas for concrete implementation within your organisation, as well as numerous practical examples for all four priority areas.

Sabine Gröpel on the question: "WHICH TOPICS DID YOU WORK ON SPECIFICALLY?"

"We set ourselves goals in various meetings at different levels (management, educational staff, works council), which we then tried to implement during the project. The result was that we implemented practical solutions relatively quickly, e.g. a member of our cleaning staff set up a clothes exchange corner in addition to an international bookcase. We also continued and finalised the plan for a photovoltaic system on the roof, and when it came to purchasing a new vehicle, we decided to buy an electric one, which is feasible in our rural area with many short distances. We also involved the course instructors in the question of how more sustainability can be implemented in lessons and got some good ideas for the future."

Sabine Gröpel, Deputy Director of the vhs in the District of Cham e.V.

Workbook
SustainabALE



With the help of tools such as the **WIA workbook**, the ideas can be organised into an initial table. Once all the ideas have been recorded, the team can work together to prioritise initial measures.



AGREEMENT ON RESPONSIBILITIES AND TARGETS

The goals that the core team pursues first should ideally be agreed within the team in a democratic process (e.g. through joint prioritisation in the roadmap). Taking employees' personal interests into account when allocating tasks can promote motivation and further innovation. It is important that a time frame is set for all objectives and a time for (interim) evaluations is defined (see Chapter 5 "Evaluation"). It is therefore advisable to clarify and record the following points.

Responsibilities for the work steps:

Specific individuals should be assigned responsibility for each goal. Depending on the personnel possibilities and scope of the project, one or two people can be appointed for each goal. By working in tandem, time resources and responsibilities can be shared. Working together guarantees a constant dialogue, but also requires a higher degree of coordination.

Clearly defined steps:

A preliminary discussion of the first possible steps for individual objectives makes it easier for the responsible individuals to start working after the kick-off.

Next meeting of the core team:

At the end of the workshop, organisational questions should also be clarified, e.g. when the next meeting will take place and which work coordination tools the team will use.

Response from vhs Erfurt to the question: "HOW DID YOU DEFINE YOUR TARGETS?"

"We asked ourselves the following initial questions:

- What will a sustainable educational programme at our organisation look like in five years' time?
- How can we address the topic holistically as part of our broad range of programmes and incorporate it into all programme areas, while also integrating it for specific target groups?
- How can we extend the holistic approach of ESD not only to the programme level of the Erfurt Adult Education Centre, but also to the institution as a whole?

We first worked on these questions in small groups and then compared and discussed our ideas. This allowed us to develop a shared vision of how we see the future of our education programme. We then used this as a basis to derive concrete goals, e.g. finding new course instructors, seeking cooperation with NGOs or associations and offering training for our employees and course instructors. With these concrete goals in mind, we asked ourselves how we could get closer to this vision based on the current situation.

This allowed us to identify a number of aspects for the next two years that we have already implemented and will continue to implement, e.g. offering training courses for course instructors, organising a sustainability theme week, or incorporating ESD into seminars in all departments. We want to build on this so as to continuously expand our programme."

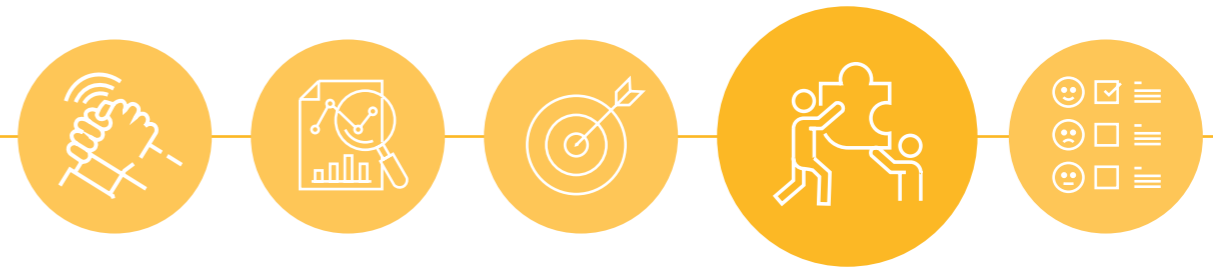
○ Susanne Scharschmidt, Provisional Director of vhs Erfurt

Tip

Ideas that cannot be processed at the moment remain on the roadmap for further processing. You can then use this "parking spot" to define new goals together in later phases.

Phase 4: Implementation

Realise ideas.
Control processes.



PROCESS CONTROL

Now that the initial goals and milestones have been defined in the previous phase, the next step is the concrete implementation of individual measures. For the core team, this phase is about using different strategies and tools and trying out which working mode is suitable for pursuing the goal. It is therefore worth taking a closer look at the core team of the organisation and the management of the processes. A few points should be considered in order to keep a consistent process running:

<h3>FREQUENCY</h3> <p>A regular time to meet should be defined. This could be once a month, every six weeks, or quarterly. It is important that all members agree on the interval together.</p>	<h3>COMMUNICATION</h3> <p>Digital tools (e.g. MS Teams, Cloud, Trello, Miro) are best for communicating within the entire team. Records and documents should be accessible to all members at an assigned location (internal server, cloud).</p>
<h3>RECORDING MEETINGS</h3> <p>The core team should agree on whether meeting notes or reports (e.g. quarterly) should be written. This makes it easier for the entire team to be ready to report at certain times (e.g. committee meetings, annual reports).</p>	<h3>ROLES</h3> <p>At the kick-off, the exact responsibilities and roles of the individual members of the core team should be clearly defined (e.g. responsibilities for the next meeting, internal communication with employees).</p>

It is important to note that every organisation has different structures and processes. The WIA process can therefore also offer an opportunity to try out new ways of working (e.g. rotating moderation). New and unfamiliar formats and approaches also support “learning as an organisation.”



TARGET TRACKING

Once the initial goals and milestones have been defined, the next step is the concrete implementation of individual measures. For the core team, this phase is about using different strategies and tools and trying out which working model is suitable for pursuing the objectives.

In this phase, regular updates are on the agenda. This can take different forms, e.g:

Once a month...



Meeting of the **entire core team**



Meetings of **individual members** of the core team on specific objectives

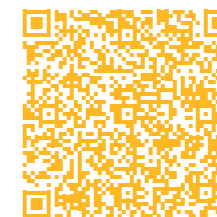


Update **all core team members** using digital tools

During these updates, measures for individual objectives are discussed and changes are made where necessary. The WIA roadmap works well as a joint working tool in this phase since it allows all members to see at any time which objective is currently being implemented, by which person, and provide feedback or ideas.

Workbook

The Workbook SustainabALE contains templates and suggested methods to support you in your implementation on site. For this phase, two alternatives of a detailed work plan are available, which you can use for the work in your team.



Task 8
Develop a work plan.
Option 2: Work plan/time flow

OBJECTIVE
Structure the work processes

IMPLEMENTATION
At least 1 plan was produced in the previous step

APPLICATION
The manager presented here is intended to help you to better structure the process of implementing the objective and to focus on short goals, measurable factors or tasks right from the start. Create a detailed work plan for each goal. The work plan can be continuously updated during implementation and also helps you to evaluate the progress along the way and at the end.

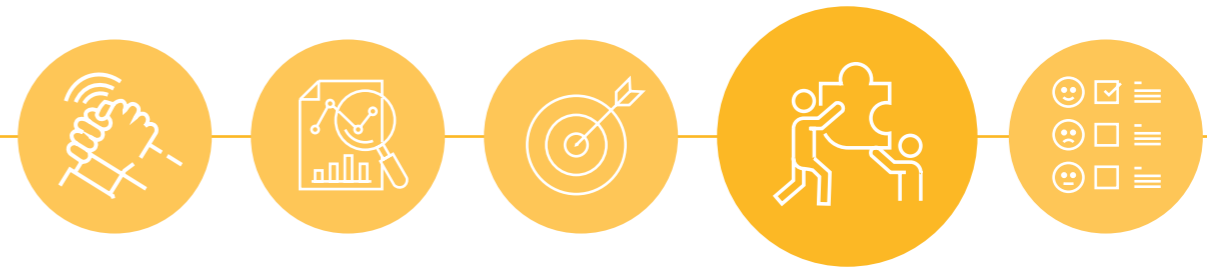
QUALITY CRITERIA
Measures: Identify important criteria/requirements for achieving the goal. Define specific work strategies (roles, responsibilities, time) and tasks (responsible) for each criterion.

CHALLENGES
Are there any challenges or risks to achieving the goal? Develop possible strategies for dealing with them, e.g. in the form of milestones.

OPERATIONALISATION
How do you ensure the achievement of the goal? Are there strategies, services or other opportunities?

Work plan/time flow

With these templates, you can create a detailed work plan for each goal.



“SPREAD THE WORD”

Communicate internally:

As the implementation of your own WIA process is now in full swing, it is time to push ahead with internal communication. An important aspect of sustainable, holistic organisational development is continuously involving the entire staff (see phase 2). Regular reports in committee meetings or at staff meetings are suitable for this. However, it is also worth developing your own creative formats to achieve this goal.



Communicate externally:

In order to promote social transformation under the motto “Do good and tell people about it,” it is also necessary to communicate your own efforts and experiences to the outside world and thereby motivate other people and organisations to take action. One way of doing this is to involve local/regional media channels, e.g. weekly papers/newspapers, local radio and TV stations and social media.

Tip

It is crucial and strategically advantageous to network and establish collaborations, above all cooperation with the local authority or municipality. Other educational institutions (e.g. libraries, museums) can also be useful as strategic partners by implementing joint publicity campaigns or educational programmes and reaching other target groups (further information can be found in chapter “Priority Area 4”).

Senad Lacevic, Chair of works council of the Vienna vhs on the question

“WHAT FORMAT DO YOU USE TO INVOLVE COLLEAGUES?”

“In my opinion, the most important implementation that we have achieved within the WIA is our ‘ESD lunch.’ We meet regularly to eat healthy, sustainable food and talk about ESD. We plan specific projects and concrete ideas that can be implemented relatively quickly. [...] For example, we have addressed the issue of where employees can order or take-out food (e.g. for lunch breaks or event catering), choosing venues which implement sustainable aspects, e.g. through reusable plates and cutlery concepts. This gave us the idea of a tips and suggestions poster which we are currently creating for the central office. We discuss such topics at the ESD lunch, and the event is such a great achievement for us because different people in diverse roles come together at lunch and exchange ideas.”

Senad Lacevic, Workers' Council at Wiener Volkshochschulen

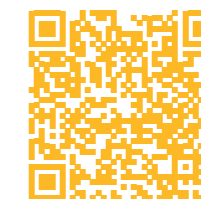
Let's talk about money!

Funding is an important factor in the implementation phase of the WIA. The financial resources of the respective educational organisation determine whether certain measures can be implemented or, for example, whether it is possible to involve external process support. Funding options depend heavily on the region or country in question. Nevertheless, here are a few ideas on how sustainable organisational development could be supported:

- **State funding:** Funding may be available from various donors. In addition to funding programmes at national level, some individual regions/federal states also offer various options for financial support. It is worth contacting your own ministries and authorities!
- **Municipal funds:** Measures at the local level, e.g. in the area of climate protection, could also be a funding option for you. Network with the responsible climate protection manager in your municipality and discuss possible support together.
- **Erasmus+:** In the EU area, this **funding programme** enables mobility projects and cooperation opportunities with other educational organisations in other European countries. You may be able to find partners for a programme from your networks!
- **Prize money:** Endowed prizes are another way to cross-finance your measures. This source of funding also supports your public relations work and emphasises your strong commitment. One example is the **UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development**, which is awarded annually.



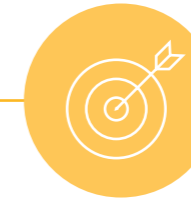
Funding programme



Prize

Phase 5: Evaluation

Reflect on experiences.
Set new goals.



EVALUATION WORKSHOP

The team has now had some time to take the objectives that were agreed in the joint kick-off (phase 3), break them down into individual measures and drive forward their implementation (phase 4). In the next step, it is important to evaluate these implementations and learn from the process to this point. A further planning meeting (e.g. in the form of a one-day workshop) should therefore be organised at a specific later date (e.g. six months after the kick-off). This meeting should focus on the following key points:

- Evaluation of the objectives and measures to achieve them,
- Reflection on the entire process and collaborative work,
- Realignment of the process for the next phase.

EVALUATION OF THE OBJECTIVES

An important element of the workshop is the consideration of the previously set objectives and their realisation. The **Workbook SustainabALE** is best for this purpose. Using the table it provides, it is possible to jointly review which measures have taken place for which objectives. The responsible members of the core team each provide a brief update on the status of the individual objectives. At this point, however, the joint review should go beyond mere reporting. In order to learn from the measures, more in-depth questions should be discussed by the entire team:



Workbook
SustainabALE

REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS

In this phase of the evaluation, it is just as important to reflect on the collaboration within the team and the process as a whole as it is to consider the objectives and measures pursued. Essentially, this involves the following questions:

- How did collaboration in the core team function?
- What went well? What should we change in the future?
- Who is missing from our team? Who should we bring on board?

Creative methods that also support team collaboration are recommended for this part of the workshop. For example, an association collage can be created by all team members to visualise their own process. Journaling is an alternative method. Each participant writes their own associations to questions in their own notebook or journal. The facilitator asks the respective question (ideally supported by metaphors – e.g. the process as a flow – quotes or similar inspiring storytelling elements) and gives time for individual responses. The individual questions are then discussed by the entire group.

Tip

Talk openly about your expectations and the error culture in the team. Where did we set overly high expectations for ourselves? What didn't work out so well, and how should we deal with it? An open error culture and discourse about your own standards of perfection are also part of a resilient, **sustainable organisational structure**.

Which measures have worked well?

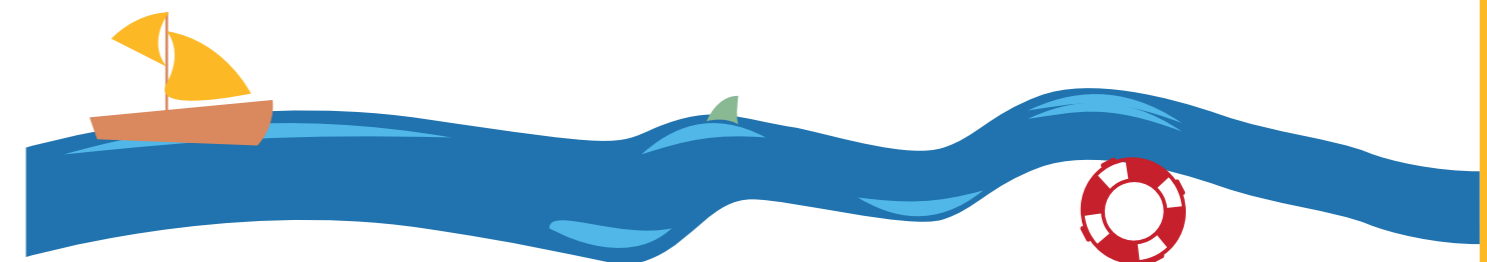
- Why did they work?
- What factors favoured implementing the measures?
- Would we like to continue working in this area in the future?

Which measures have not (yet) been successful?

- Do we know why they were not successful?
- What could we do differently in the future?
- Do we lack certain elements to implement this objective (e.g. learners, teachers)?

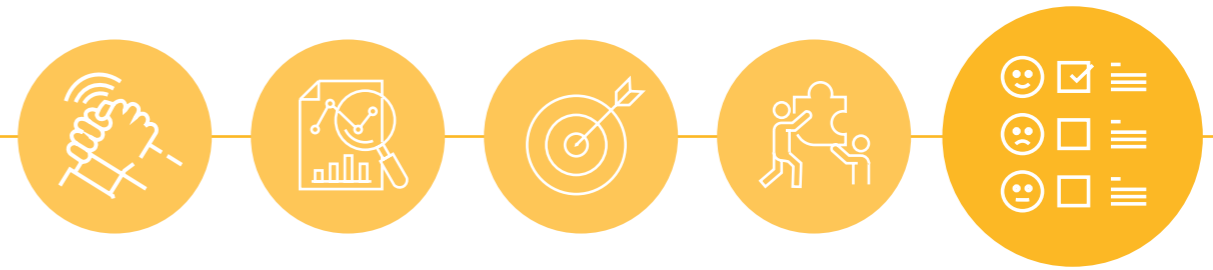
Which measures have we not pursued for the time being?

- What resources did we lack?
- Do we have these resources in the future or are we "parking" the objective for the time being?



A good way to conclude this evaluation phase is to share the individual successes and achievements of the process so far. For example, all team members can share their personal highlight of the process so far by asking the question "What was a moment when ESD and the WIA really became tangible for you at our organisation?"

And don't forget: Celebrate your successes as a team! 🎉



**Dagmar Müller, Programme Director at vhs Berlin-Mitte on
“WHY IS THE EVALUATION PHASE IMPORTANT?”**

“These workshops were very important for us because they served as milestones. We always knew that we had to manage our intermediate steps in time with these scheduled workshops because this would allow us to discuss the past months together and also consider what we want to do in the future. This was a good process for us that encouraged us to question: ‘How do I reflect?’ and ‘What will my process look like in the future?’ Reflection time is quickly lost, especially in ongoing projects since time resources are limited. But particularly with WIA, these reflection loops are what ultimately improve quality. That’s why it was very important for us and gave us the impetus to look more closely at these areas under evaluation.”

REALIGNMENT

Evaluation and reflection offer the opportunity to steer your own Whole Institution Approach in a new direction. Now things are really moving along!

In this step, you circle back to **phase 3** and consider as a group which objectives you would like to work on in the coming period, and with whom. Are there any measures that have worked well and that you would now like to develop in greater depth? Do you now have capacity for an objective that was previously “parked”? Are there any new developments in your organisation or your municipality that might prompt fresh ideas?

As in the kick-off, brainstorm ideas and prioritise them according to interest, time and personnel resources. Then jump back to implementation and collaboration for the next period. This is the core of your Whole Institution Approach: the continuous development of ideas and the joint exploration of room for manoeuvre!



Now it’s your turn! We wish you much success and fun with the implementation!



Heike Molitor on the question “WHAT ROLE DOES PROCESS FACILITATION PLAY?”

In my role as process facilitator, it is important to me that the adult education institution finds its own path towards sustainability and formulates its own goals. I accompany the employees and support them in the transformation process. It takes courage to change, and I support organisations in recognising their potential and transforming it into concrete action steps.

Prof. Dr. Heike Molitor, Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development

SMALL STEPS LEAD TO THE GOAL

Franja Centrih on the question “WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS?”

“I would also like to inspire other institutions to follow this path and introduce the Whole Institution Approach in their organisations. I am convinced that a long-term process with lots of small steps is very important. We can achieve great things with small steps, and we need to recognise and celebrate these small actions in our institutions. But first you have to start, get on the path and keep going, incorporating ESD into your own educational mission.”

Franja Centrih, Director of UPI Žalec, Slovenia

International Perspectives on ESD

The following interviews - conducted over the summer of 2023 - offer rich, lively, localised perspectives on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Whole Institution Approach (WIA). The interviews cover socio-political legacies, the uneven distribution of climate change burdens, and the need for adult education programmes which dig deep, raise consciousness, and build solidarity.

Ivor

Ivor Baatjes is the Executive Director of Canon Collins Trust. Prior to joining the Trust, Ivor served as director of the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET) at Nelson Mandela University and was co-host of the National Research Foundation Chair in Community Adult and Worker Education and Chair of the Education Policy Consortium in South Africa. Ivor was the founder and country director of the Paulo Freire Institute - South Africa, and served as a member of the international advisors to the Paulo Freire Institute (Brazil).



Ivor, could you tell me something about your research work in recent years and how it links with ESD?

Over the past 15 years we have been interested in understanding the big issues that impoverished communities in South Africa face. All the issues that we have been researching and writing about - food systems, energy, the ecological crisis, health, education, including how one thinks about vocational education - emerge out of our engagements with communities and a methodological approach which we think is vital (socially engaged scholarship) - and which needs to be promoted within university spaces. I believe that we need to look, in much greater detail, at the value and transformative potential of participatory research methodologies. The forms of education that we encourage are oriented towards the transformation of our society and as part of addressing the issues of the past. So, the issues that we raise and that emerge out of our research speak to ESD, though it is not the term that is commonly used.

Could you share some insights from your research in/with communities?

As part of our research, we visited several communities across South Africa to see how they were experiencing the post-school education and training (PSET) system. We observed several life-making activities. Whether rural or urban, we observed people on the streets busy with a range of livelihood productions: selling food, including small butcheries, doing carpentry, making school clothes, recycling waste, caring for people who are not well, busy with food gardens, bartering or exchanging goods, etc. Also 'stokvels' - a South African term for a savings club where people jointly save money. In short, an

unending stream of what we call 'socially useful production' which has value to the people in a geographical space. All these activities are about making sure that people have care, water, food, etc. Very often these activities happen without the assistance of government.

In these settings many young people cannot find 'work' - the formal labour market is too rigid and hostile to their knowledge. Young people are told they do not have the right skills or experience and so on. Therefore, they turn to alternatives, and this is what we refer to as "pockets of hope", which are these demonstrations of possibility - ways in which people use their agency to build socially useful life-making activities. All these expressions involve learning and could benefit from educational responses. They need a small injection that can support them to grow bigger. Having said that, it must be in ways determined by themselves, not by any outside agency. Communities are constructors and holders of knowledge.

I don't want to paint a romantic picture of all of this - we must remember that South Africa experiences multiple social issues - however these expressions of hope offer proposals for a better future and a different kind of society. Many disadvantaged communities are dreaming of a different society where they live in peace, justice and where their rights are being met. So, this is part of my education - learning from communities and seeing the emergence of these autonomous spaces. Some of the spaces are transformative whilst others are reformist - an important distinction. It is common to hear people say 'we need skills to get into the formal labour market' (reformist), whereas the transformative view says: 'we need to look at the skills that we already have and how those skills need to be recognised and used in order to advance the building of communities.'

In these times we're in, what do we need to bring more from the education side?

What may not be prominent enough is a focus on the power of community organising as an educational process. This is going to be important in the future. South Africa has a history of organising, and I think we need to return to the ways in which community organising was used to mobilise people's participation, and to use that participation as a force for social change. I always remind my colleagues that community organising itself is an educational process. As adult educators, we have an incredibly important role to play in supporting communities in organising for change. And it is important how one thinks about education as a vehicle for change because education is not the solution. There is often too much emphasis on education as 'the' panacea to change things. We should be thinking about how one uses it for social action, for social change, for community development, and so on. It plays a role in change, but cannot do it on its own.

Having worked for so long in the university, what is the role of the university in all of this? And what challenges do you see?

Universities are critical, and need to start focusing on how to use their gravitas as institutions of power to shape policies and processes in ways that are meaningful to the lives of communities. There has been a significant increase in scholarship (Masters' degrees, PhDs) in universities. We need to weigh that up against the increase in social problems, and I would argue there is a mismatch emerging between scholarship and its relationship with bigger social issues in society. This raises questions about the philosophical orientation of the university, its ethics and the methodological approaches it encourages. I do not think we have the power to re-orient the university completely because there are many forces at play. For example, many academics are publications-focused, searching for research funds as part of the marketisation in higher education. We need a radical education orientation – one that views universities as located within communities, implicated in the problems that communities face, and integral in formulating solutions and possibilities for change.

For you, what does a response to the ecological crisis look like?

In South Africa the whole issue around the just transition started with energy. This is an important start, but it is much broader than that - we must look at it in a multi-disciplinary way and see that these things are interrelated and connected. The ecological crisis is the generative point from where we must start because it affects everything and is everywhere. Linked to this, we need to get people to start thinking about what kind of world it is that we want to live in and the social and economic systems that we need to design to take us there. And then to look at the kind of adult education system or systems needed as a vehicle to help us to get there. I am not convinced that adult education just for the sake of it is useful – we must think about its role as a vehicle for change. An educational response will be required, and we need to look at what that should look like. The work that DVV has started around ESD and the Whole Institution Approach has great potential - we must engage in a much bigger debate on the role that adult education should play in transforming the world. I think this project provides a good foundation for us to intensify the conversation between the global South and North – this is a development imperative.

Ester

Ester Hakobyan has led the DVV International Armenia Country Office since 2018. For over a decade (2000-2012), Ester worked as a manager for donors and aid agencies. Most recently, before moving to DVV, Ester was the programme director at the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), Armenia's leading community development organisation. Her extensive experience as an evaluation consultant led to assignments with USAID Armenia, UNICEF Armenia and the EU.



Ester, what kind of education approaches are you taking in DVV Armenia?

Usually, we speak about adult education in three main directions - personal growth, skills for the labour market, and then the last one is democratic participation, community participation, civic participation. Understandably as the DVV we very much want to emphasise the third direction, but when we come to a country like ours, which 30 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union is still in some ways living and working in a transitional society, it always comes back to skills that are in demand in the market, for example hairdressing, nail arts, English, accounting, computer literacy. What we try to do is to build interest in that third direction incrementally and in different ways. One of these ways is through community involvement - involving our learners in community festivals to increase their pride in the community, giving them a chance to represent their community and understand the values that are in their community. We are also bringing in subjects like media literacy, financial literacy. I cannot say we have fully overcome the challenges of bringing people into these types of courses - but we're getting there, and I think ESD is now up there in terms of importance. Whenever we have an opportunity to bring in an additional project, I try to put some kind of ESD in there.

Can you tell me some more about the context for ESD in Armenia?

If you try to talk to people anywhere about these things, it's clear that it's going to impact their everyday routines and maybe they're not ready to get into something that changes their daily comforts for some ultimate long-term benefit. It's very difficult, and I would say it's even more difficult in post-Soviet countries. Speaking of Armenia as the example, there wasn't consumerism under the Soviet Union. This was a social state in so far as everyone had a more or less equal lifestyle, but there was also the absence of many things. Following the collapse of the USSR, most of the countries including Armenia entered some kind of territorial conflict or other kinds of crisis, and as a result, most experienced energy shortages of one kind or another. In Armenia we lived without electricity/water for almost 2 years, often going for days without. All of these things have not prepared people here to go once again into a limitation mode where you limit your needs or go into some different kind of deprivation for the wider good. It has been 30 years with ups and downs where people experienced a lot of crisis and then at a certain point started to understand what it means to be able to buy and buy and buy and then waste. It's only in these past five years that I have been seeing movements in Armenia to limit these buying and wasting cycles, and most importantly to fight for such causes as preserving trees or limiting mining. But it's difficult because, as I said, this period of almost 30 years has been volatile and, after all the cycles of military conflict and crises, people just want to live normally and enjoy life.

Given this context, what kind of approaches could be meaningful? What questions seem important?

What really hit me last year and made me start to think in more depth about these issues was a trip to Jordan. I'm so used to seeing greenery when I travel in Armenia - used to mountains, greenery, small rivers and so it was kind of shocking for me to drive through a country for two hours with no green. I started thinking, do we understand as a nation, as a people, as a community how fortunate we are to have our different climatic zones and a countryside that is so green and so giving in its nature? I think we have to try and strike people with the realisation that we live in a country which has water resources, mountains, forest and land for cultivation, and we have to appreciate it and be able to transfer it to our next generation, to keep our country intact, to keep its beauty, its resources. I think this kind of patriotic approach could work here.

I also think we have to give people the troubling facts that force them to question the ways they live. But even with all of this I question myself - do I change my behaviour? Is it enough that we have a paper recycling box in the office? Is it enough to take these very small steps? So, these are all complex issues that we have to consider and find ways of bringing these ideas and these realities to people.

Anything further on challenges?

A big challenge is the way in which environmental issues are politicised, as they are in any other country. This week for example waste was overflowing on Yerevan's streets. I was watching the news and could see how upset our deputy mayor was with the situation, and how he was tasking the responsible people to handle it, but I could also see how political an issue this is because mayoral elections are expected in a few weeks. Candidates will promise to do a much better job with waste removal or green urban areas but then after the elections you never know how long it will take them to fall back into their old habits. And this is an economic issue because they don't have enough trucks, they don't have enough people working for them. So, economics, the environment, everyday life are very much interconnected, and they are also politicised. With such realities it is not easy to find a right direction.

What encourages you? What are you excited to try? What's next?

Before last year I had never thought about the Whole Institution Approach - that as an institution you can look at your processes, procedures and ask how, as an institution, you are doing. There are small things like switching off the lights, having paper for recycling, but there are so many other things that I'd never thought about like procurement, single use plastics and so on. Let's put aside for a moment all those complicated things - there are small things that we can do. With our ALE centres, we are planning to build recycling/up-cycling into our existing handicraft courses, and alongside these hands-on types of courses, speak about the more complex issues of resources and the environment with learners. I have also been thinking about how we could turn our ALE centres into ESD hubs with special corners dedicated to fact sharing, screening small videos, having a small library - so this idea of striking people and starting conversations around those facts and realities.

Perceptions, practices but also understandings of facts are areas that we have to start diving into. And I don't want to use the word motivate, but really you have to hit people, you have to get to their hearts and emotions because on the other side you have their incomes and balancing those is a very difficult thing.

Ramon

Ramon G. Mapa is the Executive Director of People's Initiative for Learning and Community Development (PILCD). He has worked for more than 25 years in community-based adult education and community development work, and specialises in sustainable livelihoods, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and participatory local governance.



Can you tell me about PILCD's approach to education?

As an organisation, as a movement, we understand that education work is not an easy task - that it's not simply about making people learn, but about our learning as well. This is especially for those of us who are pushing for change - we need to change as well and to make changes that are not simply economic but also behavioural. Our education system has been owned by a dominant political and economic system, and has had a lot of influence on us - so we have come to the point of challenging some of our assumptions. This is what we call critical thinking, and it's not only thinking for the learners but developing our critical thinking as well. That is why we say, 'learning to change and learning for change'. And it explains our approach in terms of developing programme - it's community based. We also learn from the community where we work. Understanding their context, making it work within our own context, and developing the content, learning strategies and methodologies from that basis. Equally important is that we develop and plan our learning programme in a way that is integrated, meaning that it is addressing the economic, political, cultural, and environmental issues of the community. We do advocacy in terms of policies and systems, but whatever change we achieve at the level of the national is rooted in education in whatever form, whether it be formal, non-formal, adult - we are about making education meaningful at the community level to produce change that will somehow elevate the social economic conditions.

How is ESD entering into your work these days?

Interdependence is something we really emphasise within the education work - local, national, global but also the interdependence of different development aspects - the cultural, the economic, the political. As much as possible we design our programme in a holistic manner. When we do climate change education in one of the island project areas, for example, it's not only about building community capacity in terms of disaster preparedness. It's about the local and global dimensions of climate change. It's about building awareness and understanding that vulnerability is not simply because of climactic location, but that it has political, cultural and social dimensions as well. For example, poor governance affects resilience, as does poor economic planning. Equally important is building community capacity to adapt, and this is where scientific and participatory pilot studies on resilient livelihoods come in. For example, one of two islands that we're working in is very exposed, so there's building the social cohesiveness of the community, building awareness on how changes will impact them and how their livelihoods are vulnerable, as well as bringing adaptation - so climate smart technologies and ways that are more adapted to the change that's happening.

In terms of your approach, what's different now compared to 20 years ago?

The context is getting more complex, and this has given rise to a more interdisciplinary stakeholder approach. Before we would have done a lot ourselves, whereas now we engage with different government levels and agencies and partner with universities. 20 years back the context was such that we didn't want to be working with government, but now we see it differently. Also, in terms of ESD we recognise that it is equally important to facilitate this kind of learning within government - after all they are the duty bearers from a rights-based perspective. International linkages are also more necessary than ever. Our contribution to carbon emissions is insignificant compared to other countries, and yet at the same time we are bearing the brunt of climate change, so this is one of the reasons why we need to work at the global scale. Lastly, when working with questions of the environment and sustainability in the Philippines, we have to engage with how our government works because it's a problem if the government is not functioning well, if there is poor governance, poor economic programming. Changes in local government (administration, municipality and so on) have big impacts on the work. This is why our context - as compared to say adult education in Europe - is possibly different. Here, you are not simply doing education work - you are raising problems that are very much linked to each other and that you can't ignore. If you do, your education work won't go very far.

What are some other challenges?

Overall, the changing context brings many challenges, and the work we are having to do is becoming more complex. For us then reflection on this context is everything - the context of the community, our own personal context. For us to be effective, we really need to keep up with that, keep learning and unlearning, and challenging the assumptions we have. In our case this is a challenge - The information you have access to these days is vast so even trying to make sense of what's happening in other parts of the world and how it affects us is a challenge. What's happening to a lot of education providers or NGOs is that there's this this rapidly changing context, but the programme of these organisations are not seeming to adapt or grasp the changing context. We see this strongly on the government side, but also within NGOs who have been developing traditional programmes.

What are your thoughts on ESD discourse more generally - its gifts, its limitations?

What UNESCO has been doing is a good starting point - it provides a platform to engage the government around what sustainable development is and the role of education and so on, but there are limitations. Sometimes it feels too narrow, sometimes it feels too institutional, and sometimes it focuses a little too much on the environmental, and loses its strong connection with the political, cultural, social. Even here in the Philippines there are NGOs promoting ESD, but when you look at what ESD is for them it's all about environmental education - environmental awareness, clean ups and so on. For me, ESD is about so much more. ESD is about affecting change to make our world and people's lives better. Doing this requires us to confront our conventional thinking and dominant views and reflect on how our values, beliefs and behaviours can promote change towards a more sustainable future.



Sive Bresnihan

About the interviewer: Sive Bresnihan is a member of DVV's Expert Panel for the Cross-border Sustainability Alliances - an international initiative for Sustainable Adult Education Institutions. In addition to this role, she is Training and Education Co-ordinator for Comhlámh (Dublin, Ireland) and is a member of numerous all-Ireland training panels including the IDEA (Irish Development Education Association) Code of Good Practice Panel. Sive worked with international NGOs in Rwanda and later in Zimbabwe between 2003 and 2008 before moving into adult education in 2010. One of her areas of interest is non-formal learning and social change. Sive holds an MA in International Development Studies and an MEd in Adult Education from the University of Cape Town.

What can be done at the providers' and practitioners' level to promote ESD?

In order for ALE to reach as many learners as possible, some basic conditions need to be met:

- **Capacity building in ALE**

Adult educators and other staff need to have access to comprehensive training and support to effectively integrate ESD principles, emphasising knowledge and skills in sustainability through innovative pedagogical approaches. Participation in European projects can contribute significantly to exchange and innovation.

- **Outreach and inclusion**

Special measures for outreach to and inclusion of adults from disadvantaged backgrounds can ensure that ESD reaches all learners. Social equity in participation in ALE is central: This can ensure that all social perspectives are taken into account and that an active dialogue on sustainable development can be created.

- **Critical thinking and media literacy**

In the face of scientific scepticism about the climate crisis, the promotion of critical thinking and encouragement of research and evidence-based decision-making plays a particularly important role. This can enable learners to identify genuine sustainability efforts and develop an understanding of their necessity, while also fostering an open and constructively critical culture of discussion.

- **Multi-stakeholder collaboration**

At the level of ALE providers, strengthening cooperation between educational institutions, social services, civil society organisations and local communities can be conducive to maximising the potential of ESD through the exchange of knowledge and practical solutions.

Raffaella Kihrer
European Association for the
Education of Adults (EAEA)



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