

# ISSUE-FOCUSED MENTORING/BEFRIENDING

with the example of the

## *Project Mentoring/Befriending for Sustainable Development*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### 1.1 “Nachhaltigkeit“ (Sustainability) - a Term With a Long History

The original term “Nachhaltigkeit”- the German equivalent to sustainability – has been coined by Hans-Carl von Carlowitz. Carlowitz was the founder of modern forestry. In the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> century, he observed the devastating consequences of people treating European forests carelessly and short-sightedly. Within only a few years, primeval forests had turned into desert areas. The need for wood had increased rapidly in order to build ships and to support the mining industry. All in all, this development was disastrous. One tree is cut in a few minutes but it takes many decades until it has grown to the size of an adult tree again.

Hans-Carl von Carlowitz was Head Forester in Saxony. While travelling through Europe, Carlowitz identified the problem of the devastating wood clearing. In 1713, he published a long essay about how to treat the forest (*Silvicultura oeconomica*). In this essay, he first used the term “Nachhaltigkeit” (sustainability) respectively “nachhaltende Nutzung” (sustainable use). He points out that without a sustainable use of the forests, people will not be able to keep up standards achieved by society.

### 1.2 Sustainability - Today

The extensive use of the term “sustainability“ has increased within the past few years. It was included in the political agenda by the so-called Brundtland-Commission (named after the Norwegian prime minister Brundtland, the head of the Commission). For the first time, the term “sustainable development” had turned into a real concept relevant to the (political) future and dealt with various fields other than the field of forestry. The report was published under the title “Our Common Future“. Herewith, the Commission started off a debate that is still a topical issue: How can one use natural resources in a smart and anticipatory way by taking into account the steadily growing world population? The Commission gives advice on future cooperation within a globalized world: “A Global Agenda for Change” (Brundtland Report 1978: 5). The term “sustainable development” is defined by the Commission as a fair distribution system considering present as well as future generations and it is closely connected to the challenge of dealing with poverty.

### The Triangle of Sustainability

The concept of sustainable development is based on the so-called “Triangle of Sustainability”. All three areas - economy, ecology and society - should be taken into account if one wants to achieve sustainable development. E.g. one important ecological measure taken will be not effective - according to the idea of the triangle - if famine or unemployment of the people is the consequence. Leading a sustainable lifestyle therefore does not essentially mean the same thing as having a radical ecological consciousness. Everybody is able to improve his or her lifestyle towards a more sustainable everyday life - also companies and politics can work towards this goal.



### 1.3 Education – One Approach to Sustainable Development

“The goal of education for sustainable development is to teach skills to the individual, that enables it to actively and independently design a brighter future” (BNE-Portal)

How can we reach people regarding the topic of sustainable development? So that everybody knows what is going on and we can promote societal change?

At an early stage, education was defined as a key to fostering a change towards a more sustainable development. Like this, such a relevant interdisciplinary topic can be dealt with and people will get increasingly sensitive regarding the field. It is important to provide the necessary tools to contribute to sustainable development.

## **The UN-Decade “Education for Sustainable Development”, 2005-2014**

The United Nations declared the world decade of sustainable development from 2005-2014. It is the biggest worldwide concept for education. In Germany, topic-related projects are realized by the German UNESCO Commission. In the course of this decade, there also was a “competition to support local education and networks of expertise for sustainability”. This inspired us to deal with the topic within the framework of our Berlin network.

## **2 THE PROJECT MENTORING/BEFRIENDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 Why Connect Education for Sustainable Development with Mentoring/Befriending?**

- **Affinity to the Topic:** One can easily take up the topic since it already plays a relevant role in many mentorings/befriendings
- **Common Ground of Ideas:** Mentorships themselves are similar to the philosophy of sustainable development, because one cares about a child unknown to oneself and supports the upcoming generation. Therewith, hopes and expectations are connected with this generation, such as care and support when growing old.
- **Informal Learning:** The approach of building mentorships is very suited to playfully approach the topic within the context of informal learning. Like this, not only the child will learn something, but also the grown-up mentor. Thus, it is important that mentoring/befriending-programmes are able to communicate clearly. They have to show how much potential this specific learning form “learning within a tandem” has when it comes to future lifestyles and education.
- **Funding Strategy:** One further motivation for our Berlin network was to get funding. Like that, we could organize activities that crossed the boundaries of the single mentoring programmes.

### **2.2 Our Approach to Mentoring/Befriending for Sustainable Development –**

The concept of “Gestaltungskompetenz” (in English: competence of creation) was developed by the German educationalist Prof. Dr. de Haan. This concept helped us to establish a pedagogical guideline and stresses the relevance of mediating contents in the form of projects as well as action-orientated learning methods. We realized that these forms of learning harmonize well with informal situations – which are a characteristic of partnerships between mentor and mentee.

#### **Key Facts about the Project:**

- Running period: From October 2012 - September 2013 (the active project period for the Tandems was from mid-January until mid-June 2013)
- Supported by the BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Research) with 34,500 EUR within the context of a competition funding
- Participation of 40 Tandems from 8 different mentoring/befriending-programmes (1 mentor and 1 mentee form a tandem)

- 160 Euros for activities for each tandem for a period of six months
- Common task: create a project diary
- Production of a project brochure to hand over to interested mentors and mentees (1000 copies)

Florian Stenzel was the project manager and Bernd Schüler the author of the guideline, the newsletter and the project brochure. We organized activities for the most important actors of the mentoring programmes: The coordinators, mentors and mentees. The coordinators were invited to take part in a workshop dealing with education for sustainable development. They were given access to all the material that was made in the course of the project and were informed about the single steps the project was taking. We designed an obligatory introduction course for the mentors (introduction to the idea of our project). Furthermore, we offered them four optional workshops (Philosophizing with children, Learning within the context of mentorship relations, support of the mentee's skills and interests, intercultural communication). There was a guideline and six newsletters that informed and inspired the mentors. During two workshop discussions, coordinators had the possibility to exchange their ideas with the mentors.

### **2.3 Group Activities**

During the project we offered group activities for both mentors and mentees in order to make this complex topic as easily accessible as possible. Furthermore, we wanted to enhance the exchange between the tandems with the help of various common activities: a kick-off party, a cooking workshop, a soccerball sewing workshop, a visit to the forest school, meeting social role models on the girls- and boysday, the visit to a hydrogen 'gas station', a workshop on a scientific laboratory ship and a farewell party. Below we want to explain some of these activities to give you an example of our work. In the appendix you will also find a short documentation of the cooking/Culinary Misfits activity we introduced on Thursday evening the 27<sup>th</sup> of february.

#### **Example No 1: Workshop "Fairplay"**

The workshop "Fairplay" dealt with the topic of fair work conditions within a world with globalized trade relationships. Sewing was the central activity of this workshop. The goal was to sew a soccer ball made out of cotton. It was a teamwork that lasted for four hours. After the active part of the workshop, there was a short movie about the production of original leather soccer balls in Pakistani Sialkot. This information gave rise to a Q&A session dealing with various aspects of how - and under which conditions - soccer balls are produced. The Workshop had been developed and designed by some members of the "Sustainable Design Center". One of the best aspects of this workshop was the intense teamwork of the tandems. Since soccer is really popular among the boys, there was an above-average number of boys participating in the workshop. The balance between activity and theory (90:10) was perceived very positively.

#### **Example No 2: Excursion to the Forest School**

The forest school Plänterwald is the only of its kind that is easy to reach with public transport. It is frequently visited by schoolchildren. Due to former visits to the school with tandems, Florian Stenzel was well acquainted with its conditions as well as with the people working there. The visit was free of charge as it is a publicly funded establishment. The pedagogue of the forest school was highly engaged and considerate about her guests and surprised us with a special mission: The activity consisted of various elements: there was an introduction round with a warm-up and a team game, an explorer walk through the forest with looking glass cups, collecting herbs and preparing a dinner. One of the learning effects of this visit was to see how many living creatures reside within only a few square metres of forest. It was equally interesting to realize how many plants growing in there are valuable to us.

### **Example No 3: Starter and Kick-Off-Party**

The coordinators themselves developed the concept for the kick-off party and the farewell party. In doing so, we referred to historical role models. During the kick-off party, we introduced the life of Carl von Carlowitz, who coined the term “sustainability”. At the farewell party, according to the theme “Fit in the City”, we focused on the life work of the founder of “Hygienic Science”, Max von Pettenkofer. We came up with this idea partly due to the fact that the seat of a network association is located in the Pettenkofer Street. The hosting mentoring programme already had intensively researched about the life of Max von Pettenkofer. The quiz we designed for the kids was a good tool to create suspense within the group. Furthermore, it represented the energy that arises when obtaining knowledge and passing it on to others at the same time. In the end, there was a table with various rewards for the kids. This price table was designed according to the concept of sustainability: We asked everyone to bring old useful things that are no longer in use but are generally considered to be nice.

### **2.4 The Project-Diaries of the Participating Tandems**

Each tandem participating in the project received the task to conjointly write a project-diary. We have made really good experiences with diaries in the past and therefore decided to include this element in our project. We established some common principles in order to make this a memorable experience. The following reasons led to the decision of introducing the diaries:

- Writing a diary leads to reflecting on the topic. Thus, we hoped, the children will remember what they have experienced and there will be a learning effect.
- Some children might discover “writing” and using visuals as a useful method to process and archive their experiences.
- The diary represents an ideal visual support for a long term project: it documents various periods of planning and realising various tasks. It represents the discipline it takes to motivate oneself. And in the end, it ideally will give its author the chance to be happy about everything he or she has achieved.

Based on the diaries, we gained insights about the tandem's activities. These were activities that were developed by the tandems themselves. Here some examples:

- Build a kite out of garbage
- Plant and grow herbs
- Sew a cover for your diary out of an old shirt
- Visit an exhibition about wind energy
- Philosophize about feeding ducks and its consequences on the ecological balance
- Develop a quiz about honey bees and visit a beekeeper

### **2.5 The Publication**

The second period of the project was from June until September 2013. In this time period, Bernd Schüler – political scientist, scientific journalist and founding member of our Berlin-network - worked together with Jan Henrik Arnold. Jan Henrik Arnold is a graphic designer who is also an active member of the former mentioned Sustainable Design Center. He visualizes the concept of sustainability as well taking it into account when choosing the print materials and delivery services. The brochure “zwei für heute und morgen” (in English: “two for today and tomorrow”) is directed to mentors and provides background information on sustainability. Additionally, it gives advice and examples on how make the topic easily accessible to kids. Conclusions drawn from diary excerpts as well as evaluation results have been included into this booklet.



### **Documentation on our Website & Feasibility of our Project**

There is free access to all materials on our webpage ([www.kipa-berlin.de](http://www.kipa-berlin.de)). There were already parties from other “Länder” that have shown an interest to adapt the project. One student of the Hochschule für Nachhaltige Entwicklung (Academy for Sustainable Development) from Eberswalde/Brandenburg is working on the concept for her academy for sustainable development. The association “Mentoren für Kinder e.V.” (Mentors for Children) from Frankfurt a.M., which has evolved out of “Big Brothers Big Sisters”, is currently also working with our concept.

### **2.6 Conclusions**

A pilot project is very helpful in order to learn from one’s own mistakes.

Mentors – who all were working for the project on a voluntary basis – only have a certain amount of time. If there are too many events and too many requirements to fulfil, mentors will drop out of the project. This was the case with six participants.

The participation rate of the additional trainings was not as high as expected or hoped for. Future project managers should carefully think about how much time the mentors are able to spend on project related activities.

We think the activities related to both mentor AND mentee were the best way to deal with this challenge. This takes pressure off the mentor to think of activities related to the topic by him- or herself. Moreover, a workshop for both mentor and mentee will provide a space for collaborative work and a connection between encounter and education.

Altogether, it has become clear that the newly founded Netzwerk Berliner Kinderpatenschaften e.V. is an efficient organisation that is able to realize highly demanding projects. We all had the courage to approach a very challenging subject and therewith achieved to address a very important educational concept within our programmes.

We have shown that the subject of sustainability can be turned into valuable leisure activities. We hope that this project will be helpful to other mentoring/befriending-organisations in the future - either as a common ground for successful project proposals or as an illustration of the effectiveness and manifold possibilities of the method of mentoring/befriending.



## EDUCATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT USING THE EXAMPLE OF “THE RESCUE OF UGLY VEGETABLES“

### 1. Statement of the Problem

Every year, a tremendous amount of food is wasted in prosperous countries. A study by the “Frauenhofer” project group for the circulatory of recyclable material and resource strategies (2013) points out that one third of all bought groceries is simply thrown away. This adds up to an average of 81.6 kilogram waste per federal citizen, despite the fact that these wasted groceries still would have been eatable. Private households are responsible for 61% of all dumped groceries. Nevertheless, there is a big difference between urban and rural spaces. Households from the countryside use its food better than those in urban regions. This waste of food stands in huge contrast to the increasing worldwide demand for food products and biomass on the one hand, and the decline of crop areas due to erosion and overexploitation on the other.

### 2. Approaches to the Problem

There are various initiatives which each deal with this set of problems in different ways. The so-called “Bewegung der Tafeln” (English: “movement of the tables”) collects food that nearly has reached its expiration date and gives it away to people in need. Another organization that is called “Foodsharing” offers public refrigerators. These are located in relevant public places. They serve as a container of people’s spare food products. Moreover, activists of “Containern” (Engl. “dumpster diving”) systematically search through waste containers of big food chains. Like that, they can avoid abundant shopping.. This procedure gets little support and container activists will often have to deal with criminal complaints.

### 3. “Culinary Misfits”

In the context of our project „Patenschaften für nachhaltige Entwicklung“ (Engl. “mentoring/befriending for sustainable development“) we got to know a special approach to the problem by cooperators of the so-called “Culinary Misfits” organization. Lea Brumsack and Tanja Krakowski stand up for the decrease of food waste by combining their designer skills and their passion for cooking and ecological awareness: they “rescue” crooked vegetables directly from the fields. Instead of stealing them, they negotiate a fair price with farmers that care about a sustainable handling of their harvest . These “rescued” vegetables are then “designed”, meaning that they are prepared and presented in a very appealing way. The idea has already found a lot of faithful supporters. Meanwhile, the two women have opened up their own restaurants, after having sold their vegetables on regional markets for two years.



### 4. The Workshop: “Ugly Vegetables Belong on a Plate, not in the Garbage Can”

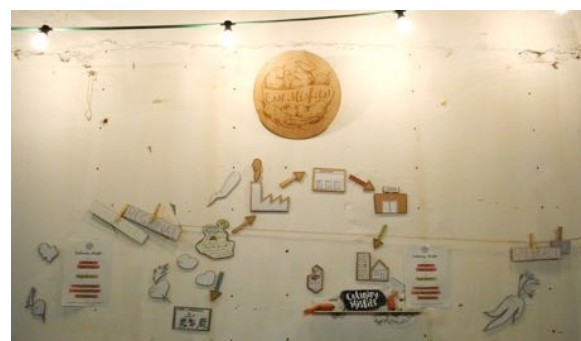
#### a.) Introductory Game: “Who am I?”

The tandem partners think of different kinds of vegetables. One person gets a sheet of paper with different terms, the meaning of which he/she has to guess by asking questions. Those questions can only be answered with yes or no. Children learn how to label different kinds of fruits and vegetables and simultaneously activate previous knowledge.



#### b.) Thinking Together

How does our vegetable move from the fields to our table? How is it possible that so much food is wasted on a daily basis? Why is this negative behavior? What kind of consequences may arise from this kind of behavior? Questions like these are answered within a





group discussion.

### c.) Exploration of the Market

The workshop takes place within a market hall. Each participant receives 50 cents and is supposed to explore the market with different tasks in mind: to find rare, unknown kinds of vegetables or vegetables that are shaped in an unusual way. Afterwards, the participants have to ask marketers where the food comes from and how it is called. Moreover, they have to describe its appearance and think about dishes that can be prepared with it.



### d.) Evaluation of the shopping tour

Every mentor and mentee brings his/her chosen vegetable and tells a story about it. In the end, the vegetables are lined up between the poles "well-known" and "totally unknown".



### e.) Processing of Vegetables

One highlight of the workshop is a soup made out of all different vegetables. After having received hygiene- and security instructions, all children help to prepare the dish.



### f.) Eating Together

Last but not least the soup is eaten together with the whole group. Each participant receives ideas for other recipes.

