

Original Research

Promoting the UN sustainable development goals in teaching, research and democratic urban life: Approaches to lifelong education for sustainable development

by Katrin Schwanke

Katrin Schwanke Bluepingu e.V., NGO (Nuremberg Institute of Technology) katrin@bluepingu.org

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The present paper looks into the field of Education for Sustainable Development by showing how sustainability-oriented topics can be integrated into foreign language teaching at school, into academic education and research in the field of business economics as well as into democratic city life in Germany. By focusing on these three different areas, it will be illustrated that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be easily addressed and even targeted. Moreover, it may become obvious that a wide range of skills can be promoted within the frame of shaping an overall culture of sustainability. In this way, people from different social and cultural backgrounds can develop a critical awareness for a sustainable society. Learning and building knowledge is clearly defined as an ongoing and even lifelong, continuous process. By presenting different approaches and projects that foster Education for Sustainable Development, the author argues that a comprehensive approach consisting of different disciplines and/or thematic areas is imperative in order to find solutions to global challenges.

KEYWORDS: sustainability, UN, SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals, lifelong learning, education for sustainable development, gender, democracy



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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all United Nations Member States at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York (SDG Knowledge Platform, 2015). It has to be emphasised that all these goals are interlinked and are not solely lim-

ited to the contexts of the so-called developing countries of the Global South. All nations should focus on an ecologically beneficial and environmentally sustainable transformation of society. However, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development with its Sustainable Development Goals (No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-

Being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Reduced Inequalities; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life below Water; Life on Land; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; Partnerships for the Goals) is still largely unknown to the general public. In order to change this and to raise awareness for sustainability-oriented innovation and transformation processes, the SDGs should be integrated more extensively into school and university curricula in addition to extensive discussions throughout society.

The present paper aims at illustrating how the SDGs could be addressed in teaching, research and practice on a societal level. First, it is shown how sustainability-oriented topics and the SDGs can be easily tackled within the framework of foreign language teaching at school. Second, an academic research project focussing on future-proof business economics with respect to planetary boundaries and the SDGs will be presented. Third, an innovative project aiming at transforming everyday life in society by promoting the SDGs and fostering democracy will be described.

2. PROMOTING THE SDGs IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1. How to integrate the SDGs into foreign language teaching

In 2016, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Bundesländer, the German federal states, in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development drew up an orientation framework for Education for Sustainable Development that could be used in German schools. This handbook reflects amongst other issues pedagogical-didactic challenges in the classroom and provides competence-oriented implementation examples for a variety of subjects and different types of schools. Nevertheless, this 464-page work may seem quite overwhelming to many teachers due to the prevalent time constraints in everyday teach-

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ing. However, sustainability-oriented aspects can be integrated quite naturally into the classroom and especially into foreign language teaching, without necessarily having to resort to specially designed materials or methods. An idea of how this may look like in teaching English and French as a foreign language at grammar school is suggested in the following sections.

2.2. Classic literary texts in English foreign language teaching

In EFL lessons in the German Oberstufe, equivalent to the sixth grade in UK education systems, students are required to familiarise themselves with and study various literary classics. The short story *Kew Gardens* by Virginia Woolf (1918) could be considered as a promising example to establish a link with sustainability issues.

The impressionist short story describes the outing of several couples/groups of people to the Royal Botanic Gardens in London on a hot summer's day as they pass by a flowerbed. Studying this short story has several advantages as far as the traditional requirements of English as a foreign language teaching are concerned: students' engagement with Virginia Woolf as one of the most important female English authors of modern literature as well as the exploration of the Stream of Consciousness as *the* modernist narrative technique Woolf pioneered. In addition, the unique characteristics of as well as similarities and differences between the impressionistic short story and the classical short story can be explored and iden-

tified, which in turn enhances students' literary and aesthetic skills (Poe, 1846; Nünning & Surkamp, 2006; Surkamp & Nünning, 2009; March-Russell, 2009; Thaler, 2016). Since linguistic progression plays a crucial role in communication-based English lessons, space for authentic, engaging conversations should be provided as frequently as possible to encourage eager participation and critical debate amongst students. By describing the setting with regard to the special colour scheme and the perspectives and impressions of the various protagonists depicting the evanescence of the moment, a theme frequently addressed by Virginia Woolf, the focus clearly lies upon the natural scenery presented in *Kew Gardens*. The contrast between, on the one hand, the snail as the focal point of the story and, on the other hand, the strollers and the final scene panning from the idyllic garden to the booming, war-time city, allows for a critical reflection on the tension between nature and man.

In the post-reading phase, the relationship between man and nature could be questioned through an oral or written reflective task. Taking urban contexts into account, a class discussion could focus on a critical analysis of how humans treat their environmental surroundings today and how they subsequently address environmental issues. The students usually mention topics such as urban gardening, renewable energies or the importance of rainforests for the global climate. Otherwise, the discussion could be led in this direction by presenting a visual stimulus, such as an image of an urban gardening project. Not only may the learners discuss the positive effects of a green city, but also the importance of food quality, the cultivation of fruit, vegetables and herbs, the fundamental aspects of the organic gardener and the vital role of soil and bees in the ecosystem. In addition to the promotion of linguistic and literary-aesthetic skills, the training of a critical political awareness is also included.

The SDGs 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and 13 (Climate Justice), which are particularly relevant here, can be directly addressed and

integrated into the learning process. It may be helpful, or even necessary, to use special flash cards with further information, explanation and specific vocabulary.

2.3. Extracurricular learning environments

In order to widen the perspective of teachers and learners, extracurricular learning environments outside the classroom offer numerous opportunities (Schwanke, 2020). Temporary events of contemporary cultural life should also be included here. A good example of such an event is the innovative-experimental *Kulturhauptstädtla* (Little Capital of Culture), which was located between the theatre and the opera house in Central-Nuremberg in the summer of 2019 (Buchmüller, 2019). This temporary meeting place was not only successful in engaging a diverse range of people in ecological, social and cultural city life but also in giving tangible form to this active, diverse involvement. The overall aim was to invite people of all ages with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to exchange ideas and participate in a wide range of formats. Over a period of four weeks, numerous cultural events such as concerts, theatre performances, workshops or panel discussions took place, which were accessible to all visitors free of charge. The installed café was run exclusively with rescued food in order to sensitise people to the issue of food waste which has become commonplace in Western societies. It is necessary to take into account that food waste and poverty represent an immense social issue reflecting great socio-economic inequalities. Moreover, food that goes to landfill has a tremendous environmental impact. Due to the numerous stages along the food production and distribution chain, wasted food significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions as well as land, water and biodiversity loss. Therefore, it is crucial to draw attention to this shortcoming and to demonstrate a respectful approach to food by respecting for instance the SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger) and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

Some events like the panel discussions 'Why we need more women in city professions' or 'How

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to do it together? Pathways to a City of Co-Governance' took place in English and served as an authentic situation of communication, where learners could use their language skills under the constraints of real time. Here, twelfth grade students would have been able to actively participate in open discussions on urban development. Contributions prepared in small groups in English on the topic of sustainable urban development would have been presented by selected speakers and discussed by all participants on site. This would give the learners the opportunity to come up with their own ideas and raise their wishes and concerns for discussion while critically questioning social living conditions and everyday habits. In urban contexts, solutions must be developed that address the sustainability problems arising from the spread of urbanisation.

'As our ecological footprint expands, so should our perception of issues of the greater scales beyond us, and of the broader impacts of our individual and collective life-styles, choices, and actions. Thus, our hope is that cities also concentrate the industry and creativity that have resided in urban centres throughout much of human history, making them hot spots for solutions as well as problems' (Grimm et al., 2008, p. 759-760). Real-life labs or experiments on site may lead to innovations and enable multi-faceted learning processes across a range of topics, including cultural and political norms or consumer behaviour, and involves the negotiation of diverse expectations of possible and desirable futures (Evans et al., 2016).

Since the *Kulturhauptstadtla* has oriented itself towards all 17 SDGs in planning and design, the SDGs can be presented and discussed very tangibly on the basis of this temporary inter-/transcultural meeting place. Through the use of authentic situations, many of the requirements and competencies formulated in the curriculum, e.g. with regard to intercultural communicative skills, are met. Some of this cultural meeting place's promising approaches may also be applied to school life on an action-based level. Why not install a zero-waste café as part of a future school event? Conceptual and organisational steps based on the SDGs could be developed by the students in English lessons and implemented in an interdisciplinary school project.

2.4. Audiovisual media in French language teaching

The teaching of foreign languages can serve to provide learners with multi-perspective information in the context of intercultural education to encourage critical thinking and to promote the development of critical political awareness. The concept of intercultural learning which is important for foreign language teaching and learning (Byram & Fleming, 1998; Kramsch, 1998; Liddicoat & Scarno, 2013; Bennett, 1993) refers to the linking of linguistic and cultural aspects within the learning process and can be regarded as a comprehensive approach. Language and cultural teaching and learning are inseparably connected. Although the term 'transcultural learning' (Hallet, 2015) is also used in academic literature and is sometimes even described as more appropriate, the term 'intercultural learning' will be used here, taking into account increasing cultural mixes and a comprehensive global aspect. The French language, just like English, is linked to various 'target cultures' and considered a *lingua franca*. Moreover, the approach of sensitising learners to act responsibly at a global level should be considered in teaching from an intercultural perspective in foreign language lessons. Different models and theories exist with regard to mapping the different dimensions of intercultural learning and its sub-categories (Byram

& Zarate, 1994; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Bennett, 1993). The (sub)competencies of intercultural learning that contribute to the development of intercultural communicative competence include for instance the development of critical political awareness. In this context, the importance of intercultural citizenship is promoted and emphasised (Byram, 2008; Byram et al., 2017; Porto et al., 2017). In addition to the ability to change and coordinate perspectives, a reflective approach to cultural difference and diversity is of great importance. Besides the need of coping with critical intercultural incidents, the training of intercultural communicative competence aims to develop intercultural awareness. This leads to openness with regard to different cultures and diversity in general and enables the learners to take part in shaping society. The skills and attitudes presented by Byram and Zarate (1994) and especially the competence 'savoir s'engager', also aiming to develop critical political awareness, contribute to the formation of the intercultural speaker. Hence the intercultural speaker becomes a mediator between cultures. Intercultural speakers are characterised by the ability to apply declarative and procedural knowledge in intercultural encounters in real time, to behave appropriately in intercultural communicative encounter situations and to apply linguistic and cultural knowledge in an appropriate and successful manner. In addition, intercultural speakers should always be aware that their own actions and their personal lifestyle have an impact on a global level and on the living conditions of people in other parts of the world. By raising awareness of selected SDGs, learners can be encouraged to actively recognise certain patterns and behaviours based on their own cultural and social background and then reflect on these patterns and behaviours and their impact at a global level. In addition, a critical response to this reflection may lead to a change in behaviour.

However, it is important to emphasise the processual nature, as the phases of recognising problematic behaviour patterns, critically reflecting on these patterns and changing them are part of an ongoing circular process. But how can audiovisual

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media be used to make the SDGs tangible in the context of intercultural learning and to stimulate critical thinking processes in learners?

In twelfth grade, classical chansons and modern French-speaking music have to be discussed in French lessons as is prescribed by the curriculum. As an example of a rather modern chanson, the title *Je suis un homme* by the singer Zazie could be used. In the lyrics of the song, a very critical view of the human species and its destructive behaviour in the world is brought to bear. Thus, man is ridiculed in his role as ruler of the world and described as the master of illusions and idiots. The ruthlessness of human beings, a destructive approach to nature and excessive consumerism are also portrayed in the video clip. It is set in a museum, where an exhibition takes place on the consequences, quantified in figures, of the ultimately mad and rationally inexplicable behaviour of human beings. It seems to be a promising approach to work with the video clip, which is initially shown to the students without sound, since the clip also contains some challenges due to inserted textual elements. At a further screening of the clip, the students should then take notes on the setting and the issues raised. After a short discussion with an appropriate presentation of results and further consolidation, the learners suggest a title for the song using the think-pair-share method and give reasons for their decision. The clip is viewed again, this time with sound. The lyrics of the chanson are distributed as cloze text which the learners are asked to fill in to train their listening compre-

hension. Due to time constraints, various questions have to be answered during homework (e.g. 'Why is the clip set in a museum?' or 'How does the singer describe and represent the subject of consumption?'), which will serve as a basis for discussion in the next lesson. With reference to the topics identified by the students, in particular the SDGs Zero Hunger, Clean Water and Sanitation, Reduced Inequalities, Responsible Consumption and Production as well as Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions will be discussed and questioned with respect to the learners' own experiences. Especially SDG 10 and its demand to reduce inequality in terms of injustice within and among countries and people could be of particular interest with respect to intercultural learning on a global scale.

How can we all contribute to a more sustainable and fairer society with our daily actions?

2.5. Synthesis of the presented approaches

As the proposed approaches to Education for Sustainable Development with regard to foreign language teaching and learning may suggest, sustainability-oriented topics offer the learners exciting and authentic opportunities for discussion, which are particularly suitable for fluency-based activities. By linking them with classical texts, extracurricular learning environments or audio-visual media, the SDGs can be integrated into foreign language teaching without much additional time expenditure.

In addition to the improvement of linguistic skills, intercultural competencies and literary-aesthetic competencies, learners further develop critical thinking and thus are trained to become citizens who strengthen democracy. In this context, it is also important to support the impact of Education for Sustainable Development approaches in a knowledge-based manner, as is planned, for example, within the framework of the ESD Laboratory at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in inter- and transdisciplinary cooperation.

Already during their studies, future teachers should be encouraged to address the issue of sustainability.

3. PROMOTING THE SDGs IN BUSINESS ECONOMICS

Not only future teachers, but also future business economists should engage with and actively contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and issues of sustainability as soon as possible, as the world-leading industries and corporations based on destructive forms of business contribute to greenhouse gas emissions on a large scale due to the unsustainability of the current economic system (Meadows et al., 1972). It seems obvious that the UN Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved by the current contributions of states, municipalities and organisations alone. However, there is a great number of scientific findings on problems and possible solutions that is becoming increasingly sophisticated. At the same time, there is a lack of well-defined implementation measures, which entail the major social, cultural and psychosocial challenges of our time. Consequently, the United Nations has declared 2020 the Decade of Action in order to achieve the SDGs. In addition, further goals such as the Paris Climate Protection Agreement and the European Green Deal have been formulated. For respecting and fulfilling all these goals, completely new and hitherto hardly tested approaches in culture, society, politics, economy and business economics/administration are imperative.

As a matter of course, taking action refers to the implementation of measures to achieve the outlined goals, which requires skills and resources. However, it seems as if in business economics a large proportion of content and competencies conveyed is geared to challenges of the past. This makes it all the more urgent that attention be paid very promptly to the development and teaching of competencies for dealing with prospective, largely still unknown challenges in economics and business administration. Against this background, the key issues of the innovative research and development project *Future Competencies for Transformation and Sustainable Management in the 21st Century* carried out at the Nuremberg Institute of Technology, which focuses particularly on social and cultural innovations, are the following.

(1) Which competencies and skills do (prospective) business economists and people with market-related, household-related tasks need in order to shape a social-ecological transformation in a participatory and welfare-oriented way?

(2) How should the contents, theories and models of economics with their approaches to solutions and especially business administration with its function theory be further developed?

(3) How are these competences best taught methodically and didactically? How can learners be motivated to acquire these competences in an implementation-oriented way?

In the current status quo of business economics and administration and most other disciplines, the focus in teaching and competence transfer is still little on innovative, future-oriented models of thinking. Novel methods, present and future-oriented content as well as interdisciplinary perspectives are not given much consideration. This is also true for gender perspectives and gender economics. With respect to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) students should nevertheless be introduced to the relevance of gender relations in economics, develop an understanding of the basic relationships between economics and gender relations (Nelson, 1995; Rubery, 2005) and develop their critical thinking skills. Besides, it seems obvious that the starting point for sustainable economic and business management approaches in research and teaching are the planetary boundaries and functional and reproductive ecosystems. Future models and theories of economics and, ultimately, of business studies are derived from these and must be expanded to the social dimensions of our democratic-humanistic values. Here, for example, Rawls's (1971) theory of justice offers an ethical as well as didactic starting point. Moreover, the imagination of a successful future and the ability to lead from the future (Scharmer & Kaeufer, 2013) do not yet seem to be part of training concepts for professions in the field of business economics. Initial solution proposals and future labs will provide starting points for theoretical and methodological approaches to further development of economics and business administration (Hochmann, 2020).

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In the central phase of the research and development project presented, didactic-methodological approaches and designs as well as content and theory are worked out, implemented in the academic teaching process and evaluated. The project results of sustainable competence training will be presented to a professional and scientific audience and put up for discussion in order to reflect on and calibrate in practice. Since in business economics and administration there is usually less room for so-called key competencies as a basis for democratic and cultural challenges and requirements, a special teaching unit will be developed. Students should have to deal with the basics of philosophy and ethics, as well as with the impact of language and communication, e.g. by means of cognitive framing. The effects of new technologies on attention, self-control and social interactions are to be critically reflected. Moreover, the development of a general cultural capability with respect to inter- and transcultural competences, the ability to change perspectives and a critical political awareness is of central importance.

Using the ecological agriculture and food economy as an example, it can be shown how the transformation and ecologisation of economic sectors can be achieved. At the same time, the business cycle of organic agriculture provides an ideal role model for the didactic and entrepreneurial derivation and development of both ecosystem management and circular economy. Social aspects and challenges can also be illustrated here (Niessen & Hiß, 2020). Sustainable corporate management as

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a holistic management approach thus implicitly takes into account multi-stake-holder perspectives as well as economic, social and ecological dimensions. Consequently, the SDGs Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life below Water and Life on Land are tackled here and should be discussed with the students. Again, it is important to critically reflect the impact of different business systems and strategies on a global scale.

The whole research and development project will be evaluated according to criteria of effectiveness and competence development. Through training on competences in sustainable development and business management, an awareness of complex and systemic interrelationships is raised. Students will be actively involved in teaching-learning research processes, e.g. by self- and external assessment and continuous research diaries. The combination of humanities and business administration provides a comprehensive basis for constructive and critical thinking that promotes sustainability-specific, cross-sectoral action. By linking traditional and current economic content with that from other disciplines, participants learn to critically question the current economic system in their studies or through professional training. They are also enabled to advance and further develop alternative and sustainable models in practice. The students' personal responsibility, their self-learning skills and organisational abilities are fostered through continuous feedback.

4. PROMOTING THE SDGs ON A SOCIETAL LEVEL

In addition to a thorough and sustainability-oriented education in school and university contexts, the SDGs should also be targeted throughout soci-

ety. Hence, the pilot project *SDGs go local*, which is funded by the German *Umweltbundesamt* (German Federal Environment Agency), is an interesting approach aiming at a versatile education for sustainable development. With respect to the acknowledgement of planetary boundaries and the limits to economic growth (Meadows et al., 1972), the project focuses on the direct involvement of civil society, science, economy, politics and culture in two exemplary model city districts in the Franconian area. The scientific evaluation of this longitudinal study is carried out by the research professorship for sustainability-oriented innovation and transformation management at the Nuremberg Institute of Technology. Thus, empirical surveys will be used to examine the content-related and process-related measures used for the development and implementation of sustainable solutions in urban districts, taking different notions of urban experimentation into account (Caprotti & Cowley, 2017). After the pilot phase, the developed and tested evaluation concept can be transferred to other municipalities in Germany. A continuous exchange of information and knowledge is to be established and a far-reaching, international network is to be built up. The results will form the basis for a guidance framework that may facilitate the political process by providing 'promising practice' examples in order to shape the implementation of sustainable solutions. Due to the many shortcomings of the term 'best practice' and the correctives that exist, *SDGs go local* aims at promoting so-called 'promising practices'. These emerging practices demonstrate long-term sustainable impacts, are culturally sensitive to their context and they also show effectiveness in addressing a commonly identified issue.

The SDGs are to be used to accelerate regional development and the implementation of ecological and social transformation processes in society. As the SDGs are hardly known to the general public, specific implementation approaches are necessary to convey knowledge and activate people. But what influence do inclusion and empowerment have on urban transformative capacity? According to Wolfram et al. (2019, p. 448), *'it becomes evi-*

dent that open and inclusive participation and the (related) empowerment of excluded and sustainability-oriented groups represent the bottom-line necessary condition for urban TC – and should thus be the first concern when approaching its development'. By working with a bottom-up process within *SDGs go local*, people's experience of self-efficacy supports their self-confidence and their ability to act in order to fill the SDGs with life. The bottom-up approach strengthens the resilience of democratic structures in society and contributes to a better mutual understanding. The cooperation of civil society, science, economy, politics and culture is thus supported. People taking part in the project become change agents (Bliesner et al., 2013) themselves. It could be argued that change agents within *SDGs go local* are people who foster change towards sustainable development and a sustainable culture on a societal level. Hence, they need in particular social, methodological and professional competencies to implement social and cultural innovations. Consequently, they become aware of their importance for a sustainable shaping of society through participatory processes and contribute to the development of an SDG empowerment tool at regional level.

Through an overall approach including society in its entirety, a real participation and co-shaping of democratic processes seems to be possible. For example, novel ideas of mobility, where a more extensive and safer bicycle network is promoted, as well as degrowth-oriented (cf. Kallis, 2018; Robra & Heikkurinen, 2019), economic concepts are gradually developed and implemented, new green spaces and cultural meeting places are created, and an innovative seminar concept focusing on the SDGs in the context of Social Sciences has been developed in cooperation with university. Moreover, it is the aim of the project to promote cultural and democratic awareness in civil society. Hence, a potential-oriented exchange between civil society and political representatives has been initiated as well. Within the framework of *SDGs go local*, democratic processes should be made tangible and it is thus imperative to establish an open and critical culture of debate and discussion in or-

der to enable people to jointly develop constructive solutions. Therefore, a cooperation with the Nuremberg Partnership for Democracy has been built up to promote critical debates with representatives at the administrative level and other experts through a novel format entitled *Democracy through Dialogue*. The key focus is on questions of participation, information policy and transparency in decision-making with regard to urban development, as people show great interest in shaping their district and cultural city life.

By means of a clearly defined concept of sustainability, which combines ecological, social, economic and inter-/transcultural aspects, it is possible to pursue a holistic approach with respect to all 17 SDGs. For example, sharing goods like a cargo bike in the district, which is accessible to everyone free of charge, can contribute to preserving resources and climate protection. Moreover, the sense of community is strengthened. In addition, the long-term economic advantages of environmental policy measures are communicated through various educational formats, in workshops and talks. It can already be stated that the project has opened up a range of new opportunities for inclusive policy-making and that carefully building, maintaining and working in partnerships is a key to success. Emerging practices show how actors with diverse backgrounds and at different levels are using increasingly sophisticated structures and mechanisms to tackle the complexities of implementing the SDGs. One key lesson – among others – that has been identified from international case studies (Partners for Review, 2020) is the effectiveness of working through umbrella organisations to reach stakeholders. Using well-established networks allows the integration of different perspectives and voices. Another important finding is that the different roles, competencies and interests of people involved have to be clarified and transparently communicated. Moreover, the increasing demand for peer learning has to be emphasised as change agents involved in sustainable development are interested in receiving feedback on specific issues, sharing their experience and learning from each other on site.

5. CONCLUSION

As has been shown, by giving an insight into various approaches and projects the UN Sustainable Development Goals can easily be targeted in educational contexts at school and university as well as on a societal level. However, a fundamental inter- and even transdisciplinary network is imperative in order to address the tremendous ecological and cultural challenges of our time. Thus, the SDGs have to be targeted from different perspectives and should be discussed and implemented in foreign language teaching and other subjects at school, in the field of business economics with its novel approaches in training and enterprise, and everyday urban life to shape a culture of sustainability and democracy. Therefore, the importance of quality education as perhaps the central goal

among the SDGs must be considered as the ultimate key to enable people to further sustainable development and take action.

Worldwide and also in Germany, ecological as well as social and cultural aspects are often subordinated to short-term financial gains. However, an unspoiled natural environment, biodiversity and the respect for human rights are crucial for preserving our living conditions on this planet. A careful use of available resources would also bring long-term economic benefits to humankind as a whole. Raising this awareness in different educational contexts and on various levels may lead to sustainability-oriented changes in people's everyday behaviour and could be an important contribution to a sustainability-oriented transformation of society.

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