

JAPANESE-GERMAN CENTER BERLIN [JDZB]
ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN TEACHERS OF GEOGRAPHY
HIROSHIMA GEOGRAPHIC ALLIANCE OF THE JAPANESE SOCIETY FOR GEOGRAPHICAL
SCIENCES
in cooperation with
UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development [DESD]

German-Japanese Cooperation on Education for Sustainable Development
(ESD)

from Tuesday, August 19th – Thursday, August 21st, 2008

Results:

The participants of the workshop continued their efforts to rethink education towards ESD by discussing and developing teaching materials which reflect the interconnections and interdependencies of the economic, ecological and social dimensions - central to sustainable development. The benefit of this approach: sustainability is an ideal organizing theme for encouraging holistic, integrative, critical and problem solving-oriented thinking.

These individual qualities will be necessary to deal with complex situations.

The participants discussed the problems of ESD-Geography teaching materials, the fundamental need of restructuring school curricula and teaching methods. Knowing that in Japan the lecture type lessons at high school are still dominant which is certainly more effective for preparing the entrance examination of universities than practicing ESD qualities. However the Japanese participants mentioned that slight changes have been started to activate the students, e.g. role playing – but that is certainly dependent on individual initiatives of some teachers. In Germany, there is a more student-based learning style. One of the major similarities in both countries is the participants' strong interest on the concept of environment education and ESD because they are aware that Global Learning and ESD are indispensable for encountering global challenges.

The presented results of a survey on implementing ESD exhibited the barriers – internationally and as they are seen by Japanese experts. This enables the participants to ascertain common efforts on specific initiatives within the Second Half of the Decade.

I. BARRIERS - efforts to reduce them:

1. To support any initiative which is directed to raise public awareness, esp. to make other stakeholders aware about the real need of sustainability.
2. To form partnership with those stakeholders who are more influential on policy framework than those of the education sector – because all countries are facing a growing pressure on public spending by globalization: Consequence: social expenditures are kept under control, inclusive education budgets. The private and economic sector however will be strengthened. This results in a lack of financial resources and political will for implementing ESD.
3. To demand substantial support by the administration
4. To ask for appropriate training modules and teaching materials
5. To practice a closer cooperation within the community of schools
6. To demand that teacher education is reformed towards Education for a Sustainable Future

7. To qualify students to think integratively, act with competence, accept responsibility and be sustainability-oriented

II: Curricula – the main focus of the German-Japanese cooperation:

The discussion, based on an internal survey, has revealed the following deficits

1. Curricula are still characterized by a supremacy of environmental aspects, more EE than ESD
2. Especially from the viewpoint of the Japanese experts: the curricula show predominantly
 - no decision-making structures
 - no overt or covered triangle of the economy-society-environment dimension
 - and curricula do not offer methods to promote “sustainability” values

An ESD- Manual has been presented for implementing ESD into a curriculum which might be an appropriate tool for doing this by oneself.

III. Discussion

The Japanese Ministry of Education will introduce ESD by the end of 2008. But the introduction won't meet a well prepared system; there will be a lack of the necessary infrastructure, no network and no manpower. The presented approach of Rhineland –Palatinate with its manifold initiatives will be helpful as a 'best practice' model for the discussion in Japan.

Still an open question – how to measure ESD, should it be measured at all? Prof. Urabe has been asked to do more research on that – since ESD is a must.

The presentations on ESD in Higher Education gave insight in the way of how Geography should be taught so that students are educated to think and act in terms of sustainable development. The focus in Higher Education should also be an inter- and transdisciplinary teaching, preferably accompanied by outdoor learning, real life projects – thus it will be more than EE.

The lectures on different subjects for ESD Curricula in Japan revealed that both countries are facing a cluster of same issues. The participants agreed that this should be followed by cooperating on these issues, e.g.

- catastrophes, e.g. in area of flood plain; additional viewpoints: use old knowledge of the ancestors and their way of dealing with this
- unsustainable tourism within World Heritage sites
- and others too – where the emphasis is on becoming aware that local actions are not isolated from global consequences, i.e. the global dimensions should be in everybody's mind when being active on the local scale.
- the results of the working groups on “*Transportation – an approach for a common ESD curriculum*”_have proven that there is a doable approach which will work in German as well as in Japanese classrooms. Subjects have also been discussed and

evaluated in how far they are suited for ESD, followed by presenting objectives for teaching units or frameworks for exemplifying this approach.

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Outlook:

1. Continuing the successful cooperation of the German-Japanese initiative on implementing ESD, especially with the focus on reducing the present barriers and restructuring of curricula and supporting the introduction of ESD in the Japanese educational system by 'best practice' models.
2. Strengthening cooperation in both countries among teachers/students on developing ESD teaching units, as indicated above there and others too.
3. Disseminating the results of the workshop

Co-Directors of the Program

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Berlin, 21st August 2008