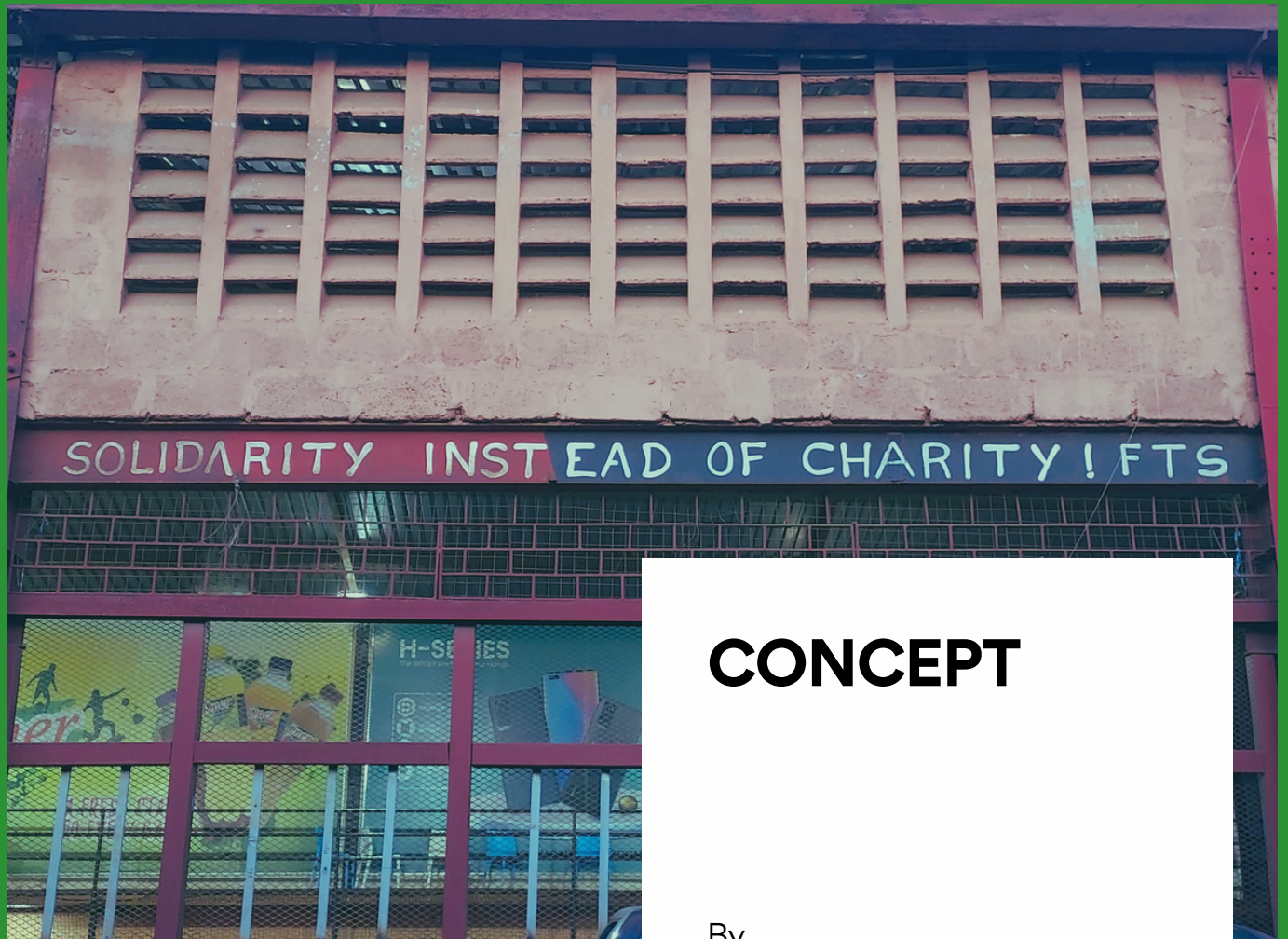


# PROFESSIONAL ESD EXCHANGE SAXONY AND UGANDA



## CONCEPT

By  
**ENTWICKLUNGSPOLITISCHES  
NETZWERK SACHSEN E.V.**

In cooperation with  
**KATOSI WOMEN  
DEVELOPMENT TRUST**

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## 0 Abstract

The concept presented here serves as the basis for the implementation of a virtual ESD exchange programme between Uganda and Saxony (one of the federal states of Germany), which is planned from mid-2025. It was created by the Entwicklungspolitisches Netzwerk Sachsen e.V. (Development Policy Network Saxony) in cooperation with the Ugandan organisation Katosi Women Development Trust.

The planned project is directed towards Saxon and Ugandan teachers, school principals, ESD experts and extracurricular ESD actors and enables participants to engage in a direct exchange with each other in order to discuss ESD-relevant content and approaches and the implementation in their own work or organisation and to learn from each other. The participants will be organised into working groups, with each dedicated to a specific focus. When the target group was surveyed during the conceptualisation phase, topics such as climate change, sustainable consumption and linking theory and practice were mentioned, as well as the desire to engage with ESD in the sense of a whole institution approach or to reflect on one's own work in a power-critical manner. In addition, the concept describes the opportunities the project offers with regard to a global orientation of ESD. Among other things, direct contact strengthens understanding and empathy for the different realities of life in Uganda and Saxony and the project contributes to the achievement of Global Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). The concept also describes which requirements should be met for successful implementation, e.g. sufficient knowledge of English or the reimbursement of additional costs for internet data volume for participation in digital working meetings on the Ugandan side. It also names strategies that can be helpful in dealing with challenges, such as conducting workshops to raise awareness on working in a project with participants from the Global South and North. The concept also contains information on which approach makes sense for the coordinating team, what the implementing organisations should pay attention to and which existing structures, services or programmes can be incorporated into the project. At the end of the concept there is information on the timetable and the cost plan, which is presented in three different versions.

# 1 Introduction

In 2024, the Entwicklungspolitisches Netzwerk Sachsen (Development Policy Network Saxony, ENS) was commissioned by the Saxon Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (SMK) to develop a concept for a cooperation project in the field of education for sustainable development (ESD) between Saxon and Ugandan teachers, school principals, ESD experts and extracurricular ESD actors. In cooperation with the Ugandan partner Katosi Women Development Trust (KWDT), the ENS developed the present concept, which is part of the existing partnership between Saxony and Uganda and complements the activities in the field of school partnerships and other activities.

The concept presented here serves as the basis for the implementation of an professional ESD exchange.<sup>1</sup> The specialist exchange will be organized in regular, virtual working groups (WGs) that will work on various ESD topic areas and issues. The main language of communication in the WG meetings will be English.

During the conception phase, contacts were established with schools, ESD experts and extracurricular learning locations in Saxony and Uganda. They were informed about the project and their perspectives, expectations and suggestions were integrated in the concept. In Saxony, the target group was initially involved via a questionnaire and then via a virtual meeting for interested ESD actors. A total of 61 schools, 4 school authorities, trainee teachers and ESD experts, ESD service offices and 40 extracurricular learning locations were contacted from which 15 responded. On the Ugandan side 15 schools and one extracurricular organisation were contacted. On the basis of the questionnaire, telephone interviews were conducted on the Ugandan side with 10 teachers and school principals plus one civil society organisation of the target group, with all school types represented. From Saxony, teachers and school management from various types of schools, as well as social workers and ESD experts, also contributed their perspectives. In addition, a binational online meeting was held, the focus of which was on getting to know interested parties from both countries, the preparation for virtual collaboration and an initial exchange of ideas.

In addition to the description of the target group and the project goals (Chapter 2), this concept also explains the approach that we, as the authors of the concept, consider to be appropriate for the coordinating team and what knowledge this team should have (Chapter 3). The following chapter explains the steps involved in setting up the working groups (Chapter 4). This is followed by a description of existing structures and services that can be included in the project (Chapter 5) and an explanation of the opportunities of-

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<sup>1</sup> The authors advise to not speak of school-centered development cooperation, as originally intended, because this term is confusing for the target group. Instead, we see the term professional ESD exchange as more suitable.

ferred by the project and how challenges should be dealt with (Chapter 6). At the end of the concept, there is information on the time frame and on finances (Chapter 7), which is presented in three different versions.

## 2 Objectives and Target Group of the Project

### Objectives and Outputs

The aim of the ESD exchange is for the participants from Saxony and Uganda to enter into a direct exchange with each other in order to share and learn with each other about ESD-relevant content and approaches and their implementation in their own work or organization. Through direct contact, the participants build relationships with each other, get to know the respective Ugandan and Saxon perspectives and deal with global issues of social, ecological and economic sustainability, but also with methodological approaches to ESD. All of this helps to significantly increase the relevance of ESD for both teaching staff and their target groups. In addition, direct personal access strengthens empathy and understanding for the different realities of life in Saxony and Uganda and raises awareness of the extent to which these are connected to one's own actions. The ESD exchange thus contributes to the implementation of the global Sustainable Development Goals 4 *Quality education for all* and 17 *Achieving the goals in partnership*.

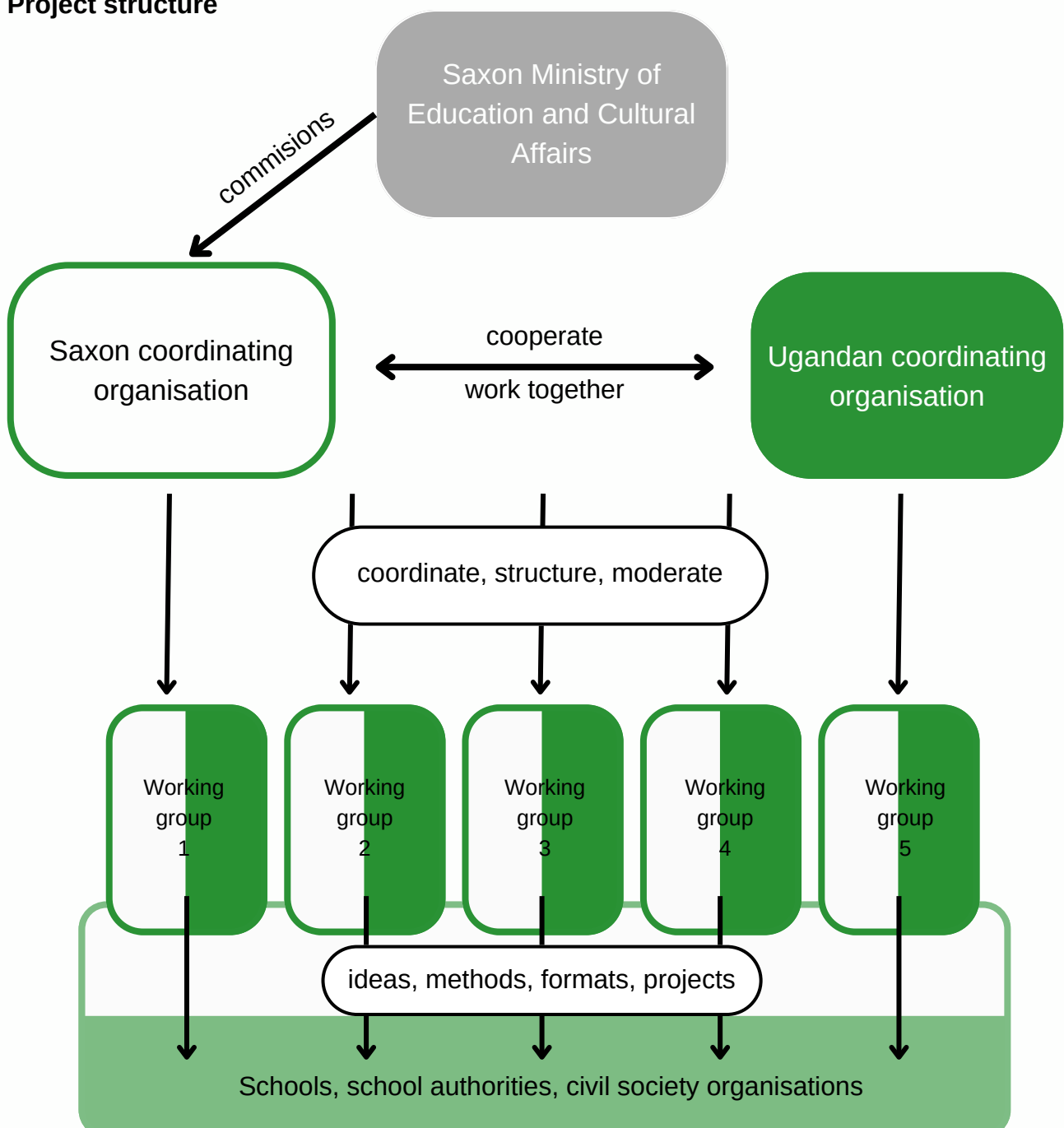
The central element of the cooperation are WGs in which Saxon and Ugandan participants come together according to their main areas of interest and activities. In the WGs, they define their own output according to their needs. Possible examples of outputs could be, jointly developed ESD methods or topic-specific Ugandan-Saxon class chats. Equally conceivable are projects that reach into the respective social spaces or whole institution approaches that are taken into the educational institutions and implemented with the secondary target groups. The multi-perspectivity of the working groups allows issues to be viewed from different angles and new solutions to be developed together. Multi-perspectivity also helps to reduce the reproduction of stereotypical views. The aim is for everyone to mutually learn from each other as equals wherever possible and to jointly develop outputs that have a positive impact for both Saxony and Uganda. Due to the existing colonial patterns of thought and unequal power relations in North-South partnerships, it cannot be taken for granted that cooperation will automatically be based on equal rights.

Cooperation between school staff and non-school ESD stakeholders also enables cross-institutional synergies. Through the exchange between the various WGs, all participants will benefit from the materials and methods developed, which can also be published.

## Who is the Project Aimed at?

The primary target group of the ESD professional exchange are teachers, school principals, school authorities, social workers from Uganda and Saxony as well as ESD officers working in schools who will work together in WGs. Ideally, they bring some theoretical and practical experience in ESD with them, in order to incorporate this knowledge into the professional exchange. The secondary, indirect target group is made up of pupils and students as well as people in the schools' environment. They are impacted by the outputs developed by the WGs.

### Project structure



In both Uganda and Saxony, respondents' experience with ESD ranged from several years of experience in various subject areas to little experience, although all were familiar with sustainability issues. In Uganda, an ESD campaign has been running since 2008 and several teachers at different levels of educational institutions have been trained over time and made familiar with ESD knowledge and commitment. However, the majority of teachers in the country are still not very familiar with ESD.

## Prerequisites

The following basic requirements should be met for successful implementation:

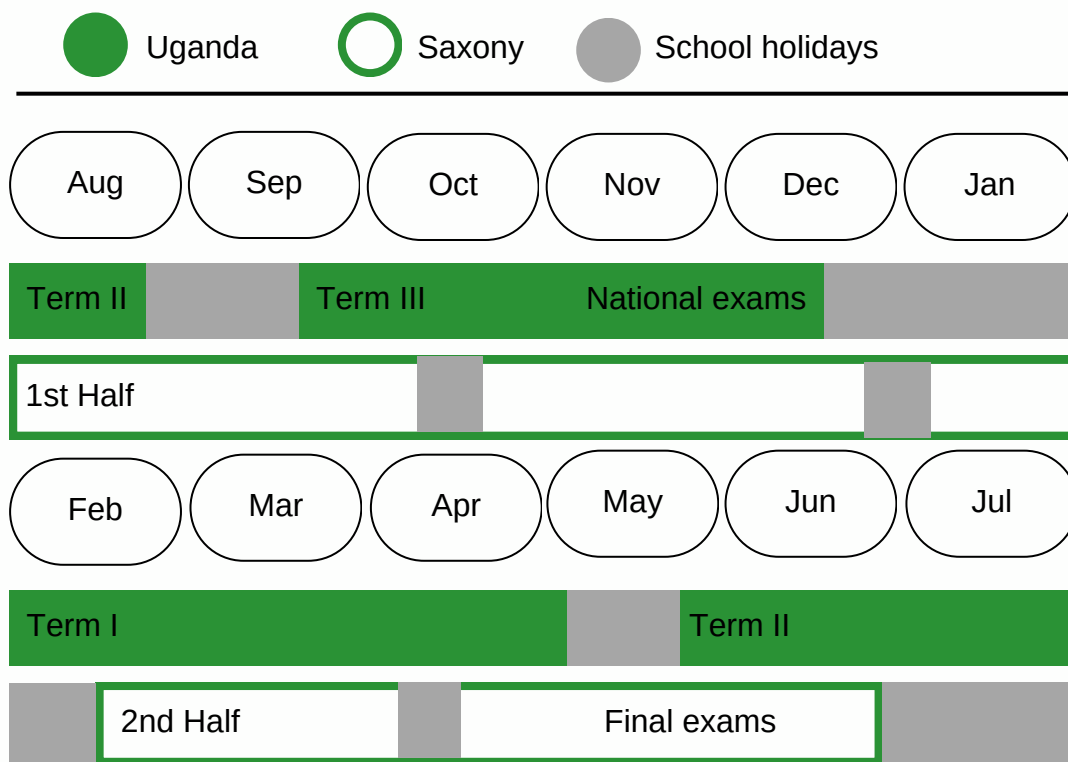
**Working language:** A sufficient command of English is necessary to ensure the possibility of communicating with each other. On the Saxon side, the interested persons were able to communicate sufficiently in English and all participants in Uganda are proficient in English, as it is both the language of instruction at school and one of the official languages. However, in the Saxon questionnaires two people also asked for interpretation. However, this would mean considerable additional financial costs. In addition, independent communication in English allows participants to build a closer and more stable working relationship and enables the working groups to work autonomously beyond the group meetings.

**Online resources:** As the professional exchange is virtual, a stable internet connection and appropriate end devices are required. In Uganda, internet coverage is not always guaranteed throughout the country, with access being best in the capital and other cities. The more rural the region, the more difficult or unstable internet access can be. In addition, most schools do not provide the school community with internet access, meaning that participants have to access the internet on their personal smartphones. The data volume required for this causes additional costs. In order to enable them to participate, it is therefore important to include funds for data volume in the financial plan. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that all Ugandan participants have sufficiently fast end devices and could therefore take part in meetings via their smartphone. However, access via smartphones makes it difficult to use the digital tools listed below in parallel. The purchase of up to 10 appropriate laptops should therefore be planned and the devices made available to the participants. After successful participation in the project, the beneficiary schools and organisations can keep the laptops, e.g. to ensure the implementation of the results.

In addition, the participants should be sufficiently familiar with the use of digital tools such as Zoom, Miro, Mentimeter, Padlet, Nextcloud, Google Drive or deepl, or they should be taught the relevant skills as part of the project. The tools mentioned are all available in English.

**Different structure of the school years:** The school year in Saxony and Uganda differs in that in Uganda it is structured into trimesters and in Saxony into semesters. In addition, the school year in Uganda begins in February and ends in December, while the Saxon school year begins in August and ends in June/July. In Uganda, the calendar for the upcoming school year is usually published in November on the website of the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports. Due to the upcoming 2026 presidential and parliamentary elections and local council elections in Uganda, the terms are likely to be postponed. In Saxony, the exact times of the respective school year will differ by a few weeks and can be viewed five years in advance on the website of the Saxon State Ministry of Culture SMK. Vacation periods in Saxony are between the semesters as well as during the semesters. The differences in the school years are extremely relevant for the scheduling, availability and time resources of the target group.

**The school year in Uganda and Saxony**



**Time difference:** For the realisation of the project and in particular for arranging meetings, it should be noted that there is a time difference between Uganda and Germany, which is one hour ahead of German time from the end of March to the end of October and two hours ahead of German time from the end of October to the end of March.

**Prior ESD knowledge:** The responses to the questionnaires in Saxony (8 in total) and the statements of a further 5 Saxon participants at digital meetings during concept development showed that the competences of the target group with regard to ESD are diverse.



Experience with ESD as a didactic concept ranges from “hardly any” (25 %) to “good knowledge” (37 %) to people who have ESD expertise (37 %) in Saxony. Some of the 11 Ugandan participants are very experienced in the practice of ESD (40 %), others are involved in ESD activities and projects without consciously looking at them from an ESD perspective (50 %) and still others have only heard about ESD through the concept development (10 %). The common feature is that all participants have an idea of current sustainability issues, both at local and global level, but often do not associate these with ESD. This is also due to the fact that ESD in Uganda is not yet formally implemented by the Ministry of Education and Sports and is not an official part of the curriculum. Although the national ESD policy has been formulated, it has not yet been approved by the cabinet to start implementation. There are some schools in Uganda that are implementing ESD because they have recognized the benefits of ESD at different levels of education. The schools that have shown interest in participating are those that either already implement ESD or see it as an opportunity to learn new ways of implementing education in their schools.

In Saxony, ESD has been anchored in the curricula since 2019 and is therefore mandatory in teaching. For practical implementation, regional ESD service centres have been introduced to support implementation.

Based on this overall picture, we recommend offering an introductory ESD workshop at the start of the project. In such a workshop, the participants can also discuss the respective understanding of ESD in Germany and Uganda. This could also have the positive effect of broadening the target group by also addressing inexperienced people with an interest in ESD. Participation in existing formats such as the ESD qualification series of the ENS would also be a good option for further training for interested individuals.

It should also be taken into account that there may be a different understanding of ESD in Uganda and Saxony. The overview developed by the concept team in the appendix provides an initial insight.

**Further requirements for the target group:** It makes sense for interested teachers, school administrators and social workers to have sufficient time, openness to new ideas, an interest in global exchange and a change of perspective as well as a certain intercultural competence in addition to the skills just mentioned. Experience in project-based work is also helpful.

### 3 Requirements for the Coordination Team

For the successful implementation of the project, a coordinating person is required on both the Saxon and Ugandan side. Together they form the coordination team. They will ensure the successful realisation of the project and set up the necessary project structure

(connection within the implementing organisations, establishing of communication channels, etc.) The coordinators will have the task of establishing contact with the target group and facilitating communication between the Saxon and Ugandan sides. Furthermore, they will coordinate and moderate the meetings of the WGs, organize workshops, e.g. for the introduction to ESD or digital work tools, which they will carry out themselves. Additionally, they will ask external persons to conduct a workshop to raise awareness of the target group in working in a global North-South context. The coordination supports the integration of existing programs and formats such as Chat der Welten (Chat of the Worlds) or Bildung trifft Entwicklung (Education meets Development). These formats are helpful for the work of the groups and can support the implementation of the results of the WGs. In addition, central coordination is helpful for pooling interests and as a central point of contact for questions or conflicts.

Especially at the beginning of the project, the Saxon-Ugandan coordination team should take sufficient time to establish a trusting basis for cooperation, create a space in which expectations and uncertainties can be openly addressed and invite team members to express criticism.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the meetings with the target group, regular project meetings will also be held between the coordination team and the SMK. At the beginning of 2026, an initial reflection meeting is also recommended to evaluate the joint work. At the end of the project period, a final reflection and evaluation should be carried out both within the project team and with the participants.

The coordinators should have the following skills

- Expertise in the field of ESD
- Good networking in relation to the project target group
- Competence in public relations work
- Fluency in the English language
- Good knowledge of digital work
- Experience in facilitating groups
- Sensitivity to discrimination and knowledge of issues in the context of decolonialism
- If possible, experience in working with North-South teams

## 4 Working Groups

The participants work together mainly in WGs. Up to five WGs are planned. The participants choose their WGs according to their own interests. The project coordination should

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<sup>2</sup> The VENRO handout *Pulling together* (2024), which is available free of charge in both German and English, provides helpful support for self-reflection.

ensure that at least one person from Uganda and Saxony is represented in each WG. Ideally, there should be a balanced ratio of Saxon and Ugandan participants in each WG, regardless of the actual number of participants. A WG size of four to six participants is optimal, as this enables different perspectives from Uganda and Saxony on the respective thematic focus, which is desirable. In addition, the WGs with four to six participants would remain operational even if one person is unable to attend the WG meeting or drops out.

The majority of those interested coming from Saxony (75 %) reported that they would like to work in topic-related WGs. Many pointed out that topic-related content can usually be adapted well to their own target group. Nevertheless, there was also a desire for WGs that are structured according to organization type or ESD as a whole institution approach (25 %). On the Ugandan side, the preferences of the participants were almost divided into two: 44% preferred an institutional approach when forming the WGs, i.e. at primary and secondary school level and extracurricular institutions, 33 % preferred topic-based WGs, while 22 % remained undecided.

During the binational meeting, the following topics were mentioned as interesting by the participants: Climate change (30 %) , Sustainable consumption (13%), Culture and social issues (13 %), Agriculture (13 %), Education (13 %), Global cooperation (8 %), Use of biogas, which is a highly relevant topic in Uganda (4 %), Gender equality (4 %), Holistic ESD approach (2 %). In addition to these specific topics, reflection questions were also included as desired topics such as: “What role does my own positioning play within educational work and how can I deal with this? How can ESD be made accessible and inclusive? How can ESD be sustainably integrated into everyday school life? Which methods and materials are particularly effective and perhaps also work without language?” In addition, the interviews and questionnaires identified the following topics as interesting: Environmental and waste management, global learning, social, economic and technical education for young people.

Based on these findings, WGs can be formed on content-related topics as well as on the Whole Institution Approach or, for example, at school management level. This should be decided together with the participants at the beginning of the project.

## Steps for the Formation of Binational Working Groups

The authors suggest the following procedure:

1. First of all the people who have completed the Statement of Interest should be contacted and offered a place in the project. In addition, all Saxon organizations con-

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3 The percentage distribution refers to all topics mentioned (100%). Multiple answers were possible.

tacted in the course of the concept development should be contacted to inform them about the project start. The potential participants from Uganda are eager and ready to participate as soon as there is assurance of an opportunity to be part of the project. They can easily be enlisted in the few weeks prior to the start of the project. Corresponding documentation will be provided to the implementing organization. Together with the Landesamt für Schule und Bildung - LaSuB (Regional department for schools and education) in Saxony and with the support of the Service ESD offices and the ESD experts, further schools and learning locations can be identified. In Uganda, the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNATCOM) is ready to help finding additional schools and disseminate all relevant information to stakeholders. In addition, the project should be publicized through appropriate public relations work. Contact with the target group and especially with the participants who showed interest already should be made at least six weeks before the planned start of the kick-off meeting so that they have time to provide feedback and schedule appointments. It should be borne in mind that the target group can only be reached to a limited extent during vacation periods and public holidays, so that more time may need to be planned for making contact.

2. All participants come together for a digital kick-off meeting in which the WGs are formed, expectations are discussed and questions are clarified. At this first meeting, the realisation of an ESD workshop should be discussed, which online tools should be used and whether there is a need for training on the online tools in Uganda and Saxony. A shared online repository such as Nextcloud or Google Drive facilitates collaboration, as participants can work together on documents there and the material created is directly accessible to everyone.
3. On the Saxon and Ugandan sides, an awareness-raising workshop will be held on working in the South-North context (see chapter *Opportunities and Challenges*).
4. The WGs begin their work. The WG meetings are prepared and moderated by the project coordinator. The moderation by the project coordinator can structure the work in the WGs and thus make it easier for the participants to take part in the project alongside their busy school day.

## Procedure of the Working Groups

The WGs will meet regularly online, accompanied by the project coordinator, who invites participants to the meetings, draws up an agenda and moderates them. In consultation with the participants, a regular rhythm for the WG meetings will be determined for the entire project period. No more than three months should elapse between the individual WG meetings. In the time between the WG meetings, the participants work individually with each other. The project coordinators will always be available to answer questions

and provide support. The working groups can call on small amounts of funding from the coordination team to realise the results of their work, for example to print teaching materials, posters and the like. This allows the participants to experience the direct impact of their working group results. For larger projects, external funding can be applied for (see chapter 5).

## 5 Integration of Formats, Methods and Programmes

The following German resources on global learning, ESD methods and support programmes can serve as inspiration for the development of the WG results. On the other hand, they can support the implementation of the WG results within the school community (especially pupils and students). Despite research, the authors are not currently aware of any such materials, formats and programmes from Uganda. However, the outputs developed in the WG can be forwarded to the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO. The commission acts as the secretariat/ coordination center for ESD in Uganda on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sports. The materials developed can be stored in their database and made available to schools and organizations participating in the project. Public access could also be made possible after consultation with the National Commission.

### Formats

#### **Chat der Welten (Chat of the Worlds, CdW) (Germany)**

- Virtual exchange on topics of global learning
- Accompanied by development policy education officers
- Coordination and implementation via [Eine Welt Netzwerk Thüringen e.V.](#)
- Exchange via video conference or video messages, development of joint online projects, focus on everyday aspects and personal connection to the topic as well as specialist knowledge

Target group: Schools (from 5th grade), clubs, youth organizations

Costs: Fees are charged individually depending on the scope and effort

#### **Bildung trifft Entwicklung (Education meets Development, BtE) (Germany)**

- Educational program for global learning, teaching of global contexts of the learners' living realities
- Support in organizing project days and training courses for teachers, provision of materials and specialist literature

- Coordination by the Eine Welt Netzwerk Thüringen e.V.

Target group: School and extracurricular target groups of all ages

Costs: Fee for day events approx. 30-50 €, training for multipliers approx. 100 €

## Methods and Learning Material

### **BNE Sachsen (Saxon ESD Portal) (Germany)**

- Online portal with materials, information and event tips on various ESD topics, usually in German
- Also contains information on organizations that provide ESD services in Saxony

Target group: Teachers of early childhood development, primary schools, secondary schools, grammar schools, vocational schools and universities, municipalities, students

### **BNE Portal (ESD Portal) (Germany)**

- Online portal with learning materials and methods as well as news and information on ESD
- Also contains videos and information materials in German for direct download

Target group: Teachers of early childhood development, primary schools, secondary schools, grammar schools, vocational schools and universities, students

### **Dialls (Germany/International)**

- Portal resulting from a research project with cross-language learning videos and appropriate material as well as further training material for teachers and educational consultants in English and German
- Topics: equality, fairness, human rights, tolerance, empathy, climate change, sustainable action

Target group: Students aged 4 - 15 years

### **BNEhoch3 (Germany)**

- Free continuing education platform in German with 12 modules on topics such as Whole Institution Approach, art and culture in education, environmental psychology, digitalization

Target group: ESD teachers

## Funding Programmes

### **SäLa-BNE (Directive of the Saxon State Strategy of ESD) (Germany)**

Who and what is supported?

- School and extracurricular educational offerings in the educational areas of early childhood education, general education schools, vocational education, universities, non-formal and informal learning, municipalities
- Training and qualifications of ESD teachers
- Creation of educational materials and online offers on ESD topics, events
- Measures may only be carried out in Saxony

Associations based in Saxony are eligible to apply; applications must be submitted to the [North-South Bridges Foundation](#).

### **Aktionsgruppenprogramm (Action Group Programme) (Germany)**

Who and what is supported:

- Development policy education and information work with a focus on development policy contexts
- Maximum funding amount is 2,000 €
- Organizations based in Germany
- Eligible to apply are clubs, schools and their support associations, kindergartens and day care centers and their support associations, vocational colleges, universities, foundations, non-profit organizations and public law institutions. Applications are submitted to [Engagement Global](#).

## **6 Opportunities and Challenges**

Working together in international teams is very enriching. To ensure that the joint work is as productive as possible, it makes sense to consider not only the opportunities but also the challenges right from the start and to develop appropriate strategies.

### **Opportunities**

The professional exchange is a great opportunity to gain direct insights into ESD in Uganda and Saxony and thereby make ESD more tangible for the primary and secondary target group. This also strengthens the overall effectiveness of ESD (see [impact-orientation model](#))<sup>4</sup>. Both teachers and students can be brought closer to understanding complex global contexts through direct contact. In addition, direct contact can increase motivation for ESD. Access to cooperation projects such as this is relatively low-threshold, as interested individuals can participate without their entire institution having to

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<sup>4</sup> In Uganda, ESD is currently generally implemented in a very practical way, while at the same time there are hardly any collections of materials and handouts available or they are not publicly accessible. In Germany, there is a wide range of ESD materials. The exchange of expertise between Ugandan and Saxon participants can be particularly fruitful due to the interweaving of tried and tested practice and theory.

agree to a partnership. In schools in particular, a school partnership can fail because the school management is not sufficiently interested in cooperation or simply does not have the time resources available. In the case of the professional exchange, this is no obstacle to interested teachers taking part. In addition, the virtual framework of the professional exchange makes it possible to keep access lower in terms of financial and time expenditure. Participation does not involve long travel times, nor are there high travel costs. In a discussion with a Saxon school principal, it also emerged that international cooperation such as the ESD professional exchange can increase the attractiveness for the teachers profession.

## Challenges

**Time resources:** Working in international teams that meet exclusively virtually requires more time to build personal relationships between participants. However, personal interaction should not be underestimated for successful collaboration. Therefore, especially at the beginning of the project, sufficient time is needed to get to know each other. In this respect profiles can be created in advance by the participants or break-out sessions can be used in meetings. Even when using virtual tools such as Zoom, Skype or Teams, it can be useful to plan meeting times a little more generously so that technical problems or power cuts can be responded to. Short breaks ensure that participants can continue to concentrate well. The Saxon side repeatedly reported that time resources in everyday school life are very limited and that there is therefore only limited time available for participation. On the Ugandan side, the busiest time of the year is from mid-October to December, when all schools are busy preparing for the national examinations in both primary and secondary schools. This should be taken into account when planning activities. Some Ugandan teachers are also involved in the assessment of national examinations, which takes place in certain institutions.

The authors therefore recommend discussing the time resources with the participants at the beginning of the project and comparing what necessities this will entail for the design of the WGs. One option to make participation in the professional exchange more attractive, especially for teachers from Saxony is to include the professional exchange in the training catalogue and to have a final certificate issued by the Saxon Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

**Communication:** Communication challenges can be both practical, such as insufficient English skills or unstable internet connections, as well as unconscious or cultural aspects, such as differences in communication styles.

As already mentioned in the previous section, it should be borne in mind that short power cuts in Uganda or unstable internet connections in rural regions of Saxony can lead to in-



interruptions in video conferences. On the Ugandan side, participants should be informed of upcoming appointments in good time, as some of them have to travel a distance from their workplace to the town centers where they have stable internet access. This will also require regular reminders. In addition, some participants' devices may not allow them to use multiple online tools at the same time. They will need support in using the available devices effectively. It should also be borne in mind that video conferences in particular are associated with additional costs for the participants due to the high data consumption in Uganda, which should be reimbursed to the participants.

The requirement of sufficient English language skills could limit the number of participants on the Saxon side. Furthermore, cultural differences in ways of communication styles can have an influence on cooperation, as can historically evolved global power relations and dependencies. This can lead to participants from Uganda being more reserved and taking up less space. Conversely, participants from Saxony may see their perspective as normative. Such dynamics can be counteracted by appropriate workshops to raise awareness and empowerment.

**Expectations:** Participants may have different expectations of the ESD exchange, e.g. that the exchange is a physical exchange. It will therefore be the task of the coordination team to clearly communicate the framework of the exchange to the participants. Nevertheless, it may make sense to expand the project to include a physical exchange in the future. The Saxon participants expressed several times that they would like clear structures and responsibilities from the coordination team and within the WGs, so that they can assess what is feasible for them in view of their limited time resources.

Partnership work between countries of the Global South and the Global North always takes place against the backdrop of historically evolved power relations. It is therefore important to ensure that the partnership is not confused with a sponsorship or develops in that direction. The exchange is designed as a mutually equal project.

At a kick-off meeting, it makes sense to discuss expectations and questions with all participants and to clarify requirements such as English language skills, internet access, ESD knowledge, etc.

**Discrimination sensitivity:** Historically evolved global power relations can influence cooperation in the South-North context. It is therefore important to sensitize all participants to the challenges of working together as equals at the outset. It is often unconscious structures and thought patterns that need to be looked at. Examples of this include unequal access to resources such as funding or qualifications and the persistence of colonial ideologies. Cultural differences can also play a role in working methods and communication. In order to prevent unintentional discrimination, it makes sense to reflect on one's own positioning and to discuss the conditions for equal cooperation together. It helps to hold sensitization workshops on both, the Saxon and the

Ugandan side, in which one's own positioning and the influence of colonial continuities are reflected upon. It can be helpful for the first workshop in particular to be offered separately for the Saxon and Ugandan target group, as fears or feelings of shame can arise. One organization that can conduct such a workshop in Saxony is Pokubi - Working Group on Political and Cultural Education Saxony. Pokubi also offers the opportunity to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts through mediation. Other organizations that can run awareness-raising seminars are the Berlin associations glokal e.V., the Berlin Development Policy Council and the Association for Development Policy and Humanitarian Aid – Venro. Ugandan organizations that can conduct such a workshop are: The Julius Nyerere Leadership Centre of Makerere University or the organization No White Saviors.

In addition, a number of handouts and educational materials are available free of charge online, some of which are also available in English:

1. *Pulling together* by Venro (in German/English)
2. *With colonial greetings* by glokal e.V. (in German)
3. *Telling about school exchange, but how?* by Engagement Global (in German)

**Sustainability of the project:** Projects are usually limited in time, which makes long-term collaboration and content development more difficult. Limiting the professional exchange to one and a half years could therefore have a negative impact on the motivation of some participants. The following statement by an interested person from an extracurricular institution in Saxony points to this problem: “Our association is increasingly adopting an attitude of: Please no more new projects, which are often only short-term and insufficiently funded, but require or presuppose continuous personnel and material cost structures.”

In the case of a longer-term project beyond 2026, it is worth taking the valuable ideas, approaches and actions that have been developed and turning them into a project brochure that can serve as inspiration for others.

In order to ensure that the exchange of expertise continues beyond the project period, the WGs would have to be prepared to act autonomously. This will definitely depend on the level of motivation and interest that the project generates among the participants and thus kindles the need to continue the partnership even without the funded infrastructure for project implementation.

## 7 Project Flow and Budget

### Project Flow

In order to simplify the start of the project after the contract has been awarded, it is advisable for the implementing Saxon organisation to already be in contact with a possib-

le Ugandan cooperation partner. The length of the project phases can change depending on the accessibility of the target group due to school holidays or examination periods.

### **1. Phase (2 months)**

- Implementing Saxon organisation receives the contract for the project
- Reaching agreement with Ugandan cooperation partner
- Recruiting staff for project coordination in Saxony (min. 8 weeks) and Uganda (6-8 weeks)
- Coordination team complete

### **2. Phase (2 months)**

- Coordination team starts work
- Meeting of the cooperation partners to clarify the modalities of cooperation: What is needed for a good cooperation? (see Venro Pulling together )
- Development of the necessary project infrastructure
- Contact with the Saxon and Ugandan target group using the submitted statements of interest and the list of schools contacted; Departments 32 and 61 of the LaSuB can be asked for support here
- Public relations work to recruit participants

### **3. Phase (4 months)**

- Preparation of the WGs
- Kick-off meeting with participants to clarify expectations, processes and responsibilities, collect useful digital tools
- If necessary, conduct an introductory ESD workshop (carried out by coordinators)
- Sensitization workshop (Saxony) and empowerment workshop (Uganda) conducted by external speakers
- If required, workshop and handout for introducing digital work tools
- First WGs start work and are organized, prepared and moderated by coordinators
- Meetings of WGs take place at regular intervals (max. of 3 months), with independent work in between

### **4. Phase (9 months)**

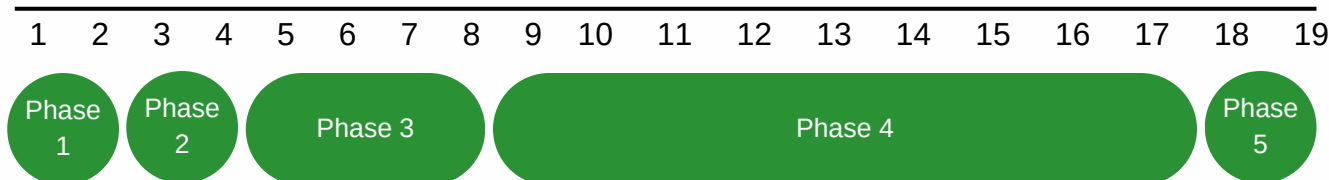
- All WGs have started work
- Interim status and presentation of first results from the WGs and interim reflection
- 2nd awareness workshop (project version 2 and 3)

### **5. Phase (2 months)**

- Workshop for final reflection with participants and sharing of results

- Possible publication of results
- Final reflection meeting of the coordination team
- Evaluation of the project
- Preparation of the proof of use

### Project Month



### Budget

	Version 1 online	Version 2 online	Version 3 online / in person
Number of working groups	3	4	5
Hours per week coordination (Saxony)	16 - 17	20	24
Hours per week coordination (Uganda)	18	32	40
Laptops (Uganda)	X	10	10
Sensitivity workshop* (Saxony)	1	2	2 (1 in person)
Empowerment workshop (Uganda)	1	2	2 (in person)
ESD workshop (Saxony + Uganda)	1	1	1
Digital tools workshop (Saxony + Uganda)	X	1	1
Final reflexion workshop (Saxony + Uganda)	1	1	1
Public relations	minimal	basic	extended
Total project costs	94.950€	126.940€	156.160€

\*Unless otherwise stated, workshops take place digitally.

## 8 Appendix

### Education for Sustainable Development in Uganda

by Philemon Michael Kirunda Mukisa

In Agenda 21 in Rio De-Jeneiro 1992, the international community affirmed the key role of Education, Sensitisation and Training in attaining the objectives of Sustainable Development (SD). Later on, the Johannesburg Enforcement plan in 2002 confirmed the importance of Education for sustainable development.

Besides re-affirming the educational objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Framework for Action, the summit recommended and proclaimed the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) as a way of mainstreaming the role of education and learning in achieving sustainable development in our societies. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) was declared by UN Member states (including Uganda) in December 2002, calling on member states to integrate ESD into their education plans and across all levels of education- from Pre-Primary training level to University.

Education for Sustainable Development is “an approach to teaching and learning based on the ideals and principles that underlie sustainability and applicable to all types, levels and settings of education” (Anderson, 2012, p.193).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a concept is multidisciplinary, lifelong and embraces a wide range of participatory learning experiences and programmes in formal, non-formal and informal education settings. ESD lies at the heart of the quest for solutions to problems threatening our collective future, such as poverty, under-nutrition, diseases, wasteful consumption, environmental degradation, HIV/AIDS, conflicts, and gender disparities among others.

#### Why ESD?

It is important to note that there would probably be no need for ESD if the economies of the world were functioning on the principles of Sustainable Development. Therefore, the salient factors that have necessitated ESD have come from the malfunction of the economic pillar because the relentless pursuit of economic growth stands as one of the most outstanding threats to sustainable development.

The jolt for ESD is based on the following factors:

- Sustainability as a concept has been often abused and reduced to only refer to economic considerations
- There is a high level of ‘scientism’ and ‘technicism’ (redressing environmental problems through scientific innovations and bountiful nature)

- The Development disciplines in schools, colleges and Universities have often had a tendency to emphasise the economic dimension (creating a parochial/narrow definition of development)

The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was established with an overall goal of integrating the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. This was to encourage change in behaviour that in turn creates a sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for the present, and generations to come. Its implementation was embedded into four major thrusts;

1. Improving access to quality basic education;
2. Reorientation of existing education programmes towards sustainable development;
3. Developing public understanding and awareness; and
4. Capacity building and training

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is fundamentally about values with respect at the center. Respect for:

- others
- present and future generations
- difference and diversity
- environment
- resources of the planet

#### **Characteristics of ESD are:**

- concern for education of high quality
- interdisciplinary
- holistic learning for sustainable development
- values-driven
- fosters critical thinking and problem-solving
- multi-method: word, art, drama, debate, experience
- participatory decision-making
- locally relevant: addressing local as well as global issues, using the language learners commonly use.

#### **Principles of ESD**

The guiding tenets for ESD are that;

- 1) ESD is relevant to everyone
- 2) ESD is an ongoing, continuous process and promotes acceptance of processes of societal change
- 3) ESD is a cross-sectoral task that has an integrative function
- 4) ESD is aimed at improving the contexts in which people live
- 5) ESD creates new opportunities for individuals, society and economic life
- 6) ESD promotes global responsibility

At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012 (Rio+20), Member States resolved to “promote education for sustainable development and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development” (para 223 of *The Future We Want*).

At its 190th session (October 2012), the UNESCO Executive Board agreed that a programme framework focusing on action on the ground should be developed as a follow-up to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014). The Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP) was prepared through an extensive consultation process and endorsed by the 37th session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2013 for an initial period of five years, after which it would be reviewed for extension. The GAP was brought to the attention of the UN General Assembly at its 69th session in 2014 for consideration and was approved.

### Focus

The GAP had five Priority Action Areas:

- 1) Mainstreaming ESD into education and sustainable development policies to create an enabling environment for ESD and bring about systemic change;
- 2) Integrating sustainability principles in education and training settings;
- 3) Increasing the capacities of educators and trainers for effective delivery of ESD;
- 4) Generating actions among youth; and
- 5) Encouraging local communities and municipal authorities to develop community-based ESD programmes.

The activities to support these areas included, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Strengthening ESD policy development and integration of ESD at all levels of government,
2. Promoting whole-institution approaches in formal education at all levels and in non-formal education,
3. Integrating ESD in teachers' pre-service and in-service training,
4. Supporting youth-led initiatives for ESD, and/or
5. Developing ESD programmes for local communities/municipalities.

### Understanding of ESD in Uganda

In Uganda, ESD is understood to mean the following

- Response to translating sustainable development into action in education, and information awareness
- Education that allows learners to acquire the skills, capacities, values and knowledge required to ensure sustainable development
- Education dispensed at all levels and in all social contexts (family, school, workplace and community)
- Education that fosters responsible citizens and promotes democracy by allowing individuals and communities to enjoy their rights and fulfil their responsibilities

- Education based on the principle of life-long learning
- Education that fosters the individual's balanced development

In Uganda, the understanding of ESD is not universal, and different people conceptualize it differently. Indeed, some people understand ESD as environmental conservation. This is because the environmental pillar in the tripartite synergy for sustainable development, has been side-lined for a long time. Therefore, most of the ESD activities and interventions have prioritized environmental protection, conservation and preservation, for sustainability. The other pillars of economy and society are often given less attention in most ESD endeavours in the country.

Integration of ESD in education has been left to individual institutions and individuals with knowledge in ESD. Because of this, ESD implementation in Uganda is still voluntary and optional to many as there is no policy that requires assessment of learning basing on the ESD parameters. Therefore, engagement in, and implementation of ESD in Uganda is at varying levels in the different regions and institutions in the country.

#### Uganda's milestones and strides in ESD

Adoption of ESD in Uganda has been somewhat challenging due to competing policy frameworks and development ideology. The Ministry of Education and Sports which should take the driver's seat in the ESD promotion, has only taken look warm responsibility over the task. The responsibility has been relegated to the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO with very little support. However, this maze notwithstanding, there has been progress in ESD promotion and adoption in the following ways:

- Introduction of the thematic curriculum at lower primary addressing the goals of ESD-making the curriculum locally relevant and culturally appropriate. In the thematic curriculum, the children can learn through their local language as they engage in a process of discovery and critical thinking with local relevance. Implementation however is still challenging.
- Compulsory science education in secondary schools is meant to address application and relevance. Science education is intended to help students reflect on the possibilities for solving environmental, social and development problems for sustainability.
- Completed the ESD Uganda Implementation Strategy in 2010 which spells out the responsibilities/roles of the different stakeholders as well as mapping the scope of Education for Sustainable Development implementation in Uganda.
- At the end of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Uganda drafted the National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of the Global Action Programme in 2015. The NAP spells out the particular actions that need to be implemented under the five priority action areas.
- In 2015, the Ministry of Education and Sports appointed a Task Force to spearhead the process of developing a national ESD policy for Uganda. The consultative process culminated into a Draft Uganda National ESD Policy (by end of 2016) that will



guide ESD integration in the relevant sectors. Although the policy was developed, it has not yet been passed by Cabinet of Uganda. It is the only step remaining, for the policy to be adopted for Uganda.

- As the country awaits the passing of the ESD policy, the Ministry of Education and Sports developed the Uganda National Education for Sustainable Development 2030 Framework (NESD for 2030) in 2022. This Framework is the latest ESD guiding document in the country, to contribute to the attainment of the global and country sustainable development agenda. The main goal of the framework is to provide direction to the implementation and acceleration of ESD's contribution towards the 17 SDGs.
- A network of over 500 Eco-schools in Uganda coordinated by Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and Conservation Efforts for Community Development (CECOD) where ESD is integrated and implemented through different locally relevant activities.
- There are three Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) on Education for Sustainable Development coordinated by NEMA and hosted by Universities- The Greater Mbarara RCE hosted at Mbarara University of Science and Technology, The Greater Eastern RCE hosted at Busitema University and, The Greater Masaka RCE hosted at Uganda Martyrs University-Nkozi. RCEs are collaborations with vertical, horizontal and lateral links between formal and non-formal education. Formal education encompasses primary schools, secondary schools, Universities and research centres. The non-formal education institutions include museums, botanical gardens, zoos, natural parks, local governments, community leaders, media, local businesses and local NGOs.
- Several Non-governmental initiatives including NGOs like Nature Uganda, Arocha and others, ESD clubs and other associations promoting ESD through different activities.

### **Structure of education in Uganda**

Uganda's education sector is organized according to different levels and forms. There are different levels as follows:

1. Basic Education (Pre-Primary and Primary Education). Pre-Primary is nursery school for children aged 2-5, while Primary School is for age 6 to 12. Pre-Primary Education is for a duration of three to four years depending on whether the child enrolls at two years or three years, while Primary Education is for seven years with the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE).
2. Ordinary Level/Secondary education. This is for ages 13-16 and takes four years leading to the award of the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE)
3. High School. This is for ages 17-18, two years leading to the award of the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE). The PLE, UCE and UACE are national examinations that are administered by the Uganda National Examinations Board which awards the respective awards/certificates.
4. From High School, a candidate can either join University for a degree or enroll in an alternative Higher Education Institution (HEI) for a Diploma or Certificate qualification.

High Education in Uganda is superintended by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) which was established regulate higher education and to implement the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of Parliament (UOTIA, 2001). Therefore, the NCHE is mandated to guide the establishment of institutions of higher learning as well as ensuring the delivery of quality and relevant education to all qualified persons.

Universities have their independent assessment and examination processes, while other Diploma-awarding institutions subscribe to the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB) which is a competency-based National Examinations Board mandated by the Act of Parliament of Uganda to streamline, regulate, coordinate, and conduct credible national examinations and award Certificates and Diplomas in the Business, Technical, and Vocational/ specialized education or training in Uganda.

### **Policy level**

Education in Uganda is planned for and supervised by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). The Ministry provides policy guidance and a supervisory framework to all educational Institutions. The Ministry supervises the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT), The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, and the National Council of Sports (NCS).

The Ministry of Education and Sports is organized in Directorates; i.e.

1. Directorate of Higher, Technical and Vocational Education and Training- overseeing Higher Education and Training, Teacher and Instructor Education and Training, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training
2. Directorate of Basic and Secondary Education- overseeing Pre-Primary and Primary education, Secondary Education, and Private Schools
3. Directorate of Education Standards- that is responsible for Basic Education inspection, Secondary Education inspection, Primary Teacher and Instructor inspection, and Technical and Vocational inspection.

The Ministry is led by a Cabinet Minister and three Ministers of State (for, Primary Education, Higher Education, and Sports).

#### **Management and Service Provision**

There are two modes of education provision in Uganda- Government and Private, at all levels except Pre-Primary. Pre-Primary education in Uganda is private. Uganda introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 and Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007. Most of the Primary-Day schools in Uganda provide free education and selected secondary schools that offer subsidized secondary education in the country.

Government Higher Education Institutions have a percentage of slots for government scholarships to best performing candidates from High School. Those who may not merit the Government sponsorship, have the alternative of enrolling as privately sponsored students in the various institutions run with government support.

Particularly for Government Primary Schools, day-to-day supervision is the responsibility of the Local Government Units (Cities, Districts and Municipalities). These, are responsible for the provision, supervision and inspection of the schools- both public and private, under the Universal Primary Education framework.

Reference:

Anderson, A. (2012). *Climate Change Education for Mitigation and Adaptation*. *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, 6, 191–206.

## How ESD is Understood in Germany

by Ulrike Rosemann

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an important pillar for achieving the 17 SDGs. Sustainability is understood as: 'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need.' [[United Nations, 1987](#)]

In the German understanding, ESD is closely linked to other educational concepts such as global learning, development education and environmental education and combines some of their approaches. In addition, transformative education sees itself as a further development of ESD by incorporating more power-critical perspectives and decolonial practices into educational work.

ESD is based on the assumption that education is a central aspect of social transformation towards ecologically, socially and economically sustainable societies.

Educational methods should not only provide learners with knowledge in the sense of information, but also explore sustainable options for action and enable learners to become active themselves. This can involve initiating changes at an individual level, such as their own consumer behaviour, or at a structural level, demanding or helping to shape changes in politics and the economy. The prerequisite for this is that learners understand their own position or, as the authors of the handout *Pulling together* put it: 'It [ESD] must support learners in understanding their position within global structures, dependencies and hierarchies, in recognising and implementing options for action.'

Core aspects of ESD are therefore:

- Holistic, participatory educational processes
- Imparting knowledge, skills, interdisciplinary knowledge and values
- Consideration of ecological, economic, social and cultural dimensions of sustainability
- Teaching multi-perspectivity and global interrelationships
- Reflection of one's own actions on the environment
- Enabling the development of sustainable trade strategies

Typical ESD topics include consumption, mobility, energy, gender equality, human rights, global mechanisms and power relations. [[German UNESCO Commission](#), in German]

There are also demands that the educational work itself, i.e. the teachers, methods, educational structures and political framework conditions, must be critically reflected upon. ESD should therefore reflect on and decolonise global power relations, which also relate to the area of colonial knowledge production and dissemination. In this context, it is important to recognise non-hegemonic knowledge as knowledge and not, as in the European understanding of knowledge, to define expert knowledge such as that of scientists or teachers as the only valid norm. [see *Pulling together*, p. 6]

## How is ESD anchored in the German educational landscape?

It was often NGOs from the field of environmental protection or development education that promoted the spread of ESD in Germany and fought at a political level for ESD to be anchored in educational structures. The global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted in 2015 and also apply to the Federal Republic of Germany, were anchored in the Framework for Global Development Education in the same year. It was adopted by the German Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs<sup>1</sup> and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. In Saxony, the Saxon State Strategy for ESD, which was adopted by the state government in 2019, makes recommendations for the implementation of ESD in all areas of education, from formal to non-formal education.

Resources:

- *Pulling Together*, Venro, 2024
- *Was ist BNE?*, Landesportal über und für Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung in Nordrhein-Westfalen

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<sup>1</sup> The Kultusministerkonferenz (Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs) is the supreme body in which the ministries responsible for education, training, research and science as well as cultural affairs are represented.

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Authors  
Philemon Michael Kirunda Mukisa, Ulrike Rosemann,  
Violetta Siering

Contributors  
Margaret Nakato, Fiona Mugisha Okwere

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