Knowledge hub
-
Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

   BNE-Kompetenzzentrum Bildung – Nachhaltigkeit – Kommune (ESD Competence Centre
   Education – Sustainability – Municipality)

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

   Germany

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

   ☐ Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools

   ☑ Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development

   ☐ Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession

   ☐ Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation

   ☐ Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

The ESD Competence Centre is a joint project implemented by three partners: Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research, Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V. and Trägerverein Kommunales Bildungsmanagement Niedersachsen e.V.

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

48 model municipalities, local administration, local level, systematically developing, implementing ESD in educational landscapes.

6. What makes it a best practice? *

The ESD Competence Centre works to promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for and with municipalities and their educational landscapes across Germany. Our focus is on the entire chain of education: from early childhood education, primary, secondary and vocational schools, universities, adult education centres to non-formal education. We support municipalities in involving key players to help them collaboratively shape ESD. The ESD Competence Centre is seen as a best practice example as it combines different methods of support within one organisation: 1 Support municipalities and facilitate processes in the implementation of ESD in the educational landscapes (process facilitation), 2 Generates knowledge, 3 Distributes knowledge and make activities visible for different target groups.

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)
   This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:
   i) Which population was affected?
   ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
   iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

   The ESD Competence Centre focuses on the administration of municipalities and the stakeholders in the local educational landscapes. The lifelong learning (LLL) perspective is a guideline for all actions.

   Germany's National Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development (NAP BNE) contains proposals and recommendations for integrating ESD into the German education system. According to the National Action Plan, municipalities and their educational landscapes are the key to disseminating and promoting ESD. Research has shown that more action and (binding) commitment for the implementation of ESD are needed. Especially the cooperation between administration, civil society and other stakeholders in the educational landscape should be strengthened. Binding strategies and commitment within the educational landscape are needed to address ESD in the lifelong learning perspective. Therefore, the visibility of ESD stakeholders, activities and learning opportunities should be increased. This is where the ESD Competence Centre comes in to support the 48 model municipalities and to gain knowledge ("how to?").

   Building on practical and scientific expertise, the ESD Competence Centre serves as an information hub for ESD in municipal educational landscapes by bringing together scientific insight and practical experience and making both accessible in a targeted manner. The base of all our knowledge are the individual paths of implementation of ESD within the different municipalities. The process facilitation uses individual systemic approaches to address the needs and potentials of the model municipalities. Our research unit uses qualitative and quantitative methods to monitor and to systemize these different paths. Goal of this research is to identify good practices, process obstacles and key success factors.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)
   Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:
   i) What are the main activities carried out?
   ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
   iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
   iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?
   *

We provide professional and methodological expertise through on-site process facilitation, organize networking and peer-learning events and train staff working in local educational landscapes. In addition, we perform research-based evaluations of these processes, drawing on the results to continuously improve the support provided.

The project has been funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) since July 2020, initially until June 2023. Depending on which federal state the municipalities belong to, they are supported either by the team in Halle (North-East Germany), Munich (South Germany) or Osnabrück (North-West Germany). The municipality, supported by our team, draws up an implementation plan for the forthcoming process. With each municipality, 3-5 meetings or workshops (on-site) take place each year; these can be consultation meetings, workshops, or evaluation meetings. After each year, the municipality together with the ESD Competence Centre, reviews its achievements and challenges and updates its plans for the year ahead. In addition, we conduct a formative evaluation. The key findings are used to facilitate the municipality's progress. Municipalities can make use of the services offered by the ESD Competence Centre during its entire funding period free of charge.

The key implementation actors are the administrations in the model municipalities as well as the stakeholders in the local educational landscapes.

The project is funded by Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The competence centre consists of a team of project managers, process facilitators, researchers, and administrative staff at four locations in Germany. Municipalities can make use of the services offered by the ESD Competence Centre during its entire funding period.

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)
   To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:
   i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
   ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
   iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

   Our main goals are to have an impact on the management processes, strategies, and networks within the 48 model municipalities and their educational landscapes. Based on the key factors of success as well as the learnings from failure during the implementation processes of ESD, we are able to systematically describe and transfer the findings for a larger audience.

   Right now, our project is work in progress. In 2023 we will summarise the key learnings of our work in a "how-to" publication/practice manual (open access). You can also access information through our website (blog, definitions, good practices, scientific summaries e.g.).

   Due to pandemic restrictions, we are still in the middle stages of this project. We have not been able to assess our work yet.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)
    To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:
    i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
    ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
    iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

    The ESD Competence Center is still in its middle stages. Until now the model municipalities have been selected based on certain criteria, followed by the beginning of the process facilitation and the accompanying research. Therefore, not enough results and conclusions are available at this point to reflect in detail upon the project yet. At this point of the work, we can only make general assumptions. These are based on our individual impressions of the process facilitation as well as key findings of previous research. Key factors for implementing ESD within the educational landscape are for e.g. (not conclusive):
    - Clear role of the stakeholders and administration (and the staff) within the process,
    - Binding (political approved) strategy,
    - Personal (including time) and financial resources,
    - Reliable network of the (key) stakeholders and the local administration,
    - Open mindset of all stakeholders and administration to collaborate,
    - Transparency and visibility of ESD, the stakeholders and the educational offers in LLL perspective.
    In case of absence of these aspects, the success of the transformation process would be difficult. Unexpected global and national challenges (e.g., Covid-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine) have negative impact on the implementation of ESD within the educational landscapes due to resource prioritization (personal and financial resources, time).

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a "best practice". What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented "best practice" or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

In order to conduct complex transformation processes, supervision and support is needed to a certain extent, especially within organisations such as municipal administrations. You must enable the professionals and stakeholders to take part and to act. Therefore, it is crucial to support these transformation processes with knowledge ("how to?"), learning opportunities, qualifications, networking possibilities and direct support within the organisation (e. g. moderation, impulses, process structures, orientations). Complex transformation processes should be accompanied by external (non-profit) experts or organisations (e.g. "critical friend") to support the key stakeholders with their challenging mission of implementing ESD (and SDGs) in the educational landscape.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the "best practice" for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

www.bne-kompetenzzentrum.de (German)
www.bne-kompetenzzentrum.de/en (English)