



Report from March 24, 2021

Profitable DunE-BB-EU Parents' Dialogue Provides Valuable Design Advice

DunE-BB project leader Stefan Nowatschin was very pleased to welcome the three speakers Ms. Arja Krauchenberg, EPA European Parents' Association, Ms. Sabrina Wetzel, Bundeselternrat (Federal Parents' Council) and the former Bavarian state parents' representative and current chairperson of the federal initiative 3XMEHR Ms. Ingrid Ritt as well as the DunE-BB-EU network partners and other interested persons to a one-hour zoom meeting on March 24, 2021.

In her speech, Ms. Krauchenberg, who is based in Vienna, connected the Hundertwasser-influenced cities of Uelzen and Vienna through the sustainability-oriented buildings Hundertwasser-Bahnhof Uelzen and Hundertwasser House in Vienna. Hundertwasser was a sustainability artist who oriented his designs, including his buildings in Uelzen and Vienna, to the three dimensions of sustainability: ecology - social - economy. He had already been a sustainability pioneer at that time, who had worked successfully throughout Europe. Mrs. Krauchenberg was impressed that also through the initiatives of the BBS I Uelzen, the idea of sustainability of Hundertwasser, in the region of Uelzen and beyond, is gaining increasing importance. **In her opinion, the EU VET network makes an important contribution to sharing excellent VET practice and learning from and with each other.** In order to provide the best possible education and training, **the European economy and society need regional digitally-supported and sustainability-oriented centers of excellence in vocational education and training**, according to the spokesperson of the European Parents' Association. She concluded by emphasizing that it will not be enough for Europe to be willing to invest in vocational education and training through Erasmus Plus and structural funds. **There is a need for coherent investment and binding action plans for vocational education and training - also for vocational schools, in which the national states and the national funding partners (federal states and municipalities) must ensure appropriate co-financing.** The implementation of the goals and measures of the "Osnabrück Declaration on Vocational Education and Training in Europe - <https://www.bibb.de/de/133318.php> was signed by all Ministers of Education in Europe, including the Federal Minister of Education, Ms. Karliczek, and also by EU Commissioner Niclas Schmit on November 25, 2020. From 2021 to 2025, the EU education and vocational training area is to be designed jointly. **The establishment of regional centers of excellence in vocational education and training and a significantly higher level of cooperation are key success factors for jointly contributing to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) and the national and international climate targets.**

In her presentation, Ms. Arja Krauchenberg outlined the following areas of action and quality for the design of regional digitally supported and sustainability-oriented centers of excellence in vocational education and training in Europe:

What do parents generally expect?

- **A comprehensive approach that puts the learner at the center of everything they do**
- **An education that helps their children develop not only their professional skills, but also to develop their personality**
- **A good collaboration with companies**
- **Balanced and coordinated programs**
- **Well-established mobility programs**

What do parents want in particular?

- **Inclusivity**
 - **Being open and accessible to all**
 - **Consideration of the special needs of students (disabilities, linguistic and cultural differences, gender)**
- **Project-based teaching and learning**
 - **Focus on subject-specific and generic competencies**
 - **Practical orientation - working toward meaningful goals**
 - **Nodes of innovation**
- **Digitally supported teaching and learning**
 - **Receive inspiration through exchange with other centers**
 - **Work on innovations in networks**
 - **Cooperate**
 - **Updating training programs - adapted to the latest technology**
- **Summative assessment Formative assessment**
 - **Many ideas e.g. EBBD (European Business Baccaureate Diploma)**

Ms. Sabrina Wetzel, Federal Parents' Council, agreed with Ms. Krauchenberg's comments. The Federal Parents' Council also demanded to be oriented towards the 4K model.

Creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and communication are identified by the OECD as the four competencies for learning in the 21st century.

She emphasized that parents should be involved in the transformation of schools towards 4.0, which has already begun, even if the "children/young people" were already over 18 years old. From her point of view, there must be **a longer right of co-determination and co-design** also in the vocational school forms!

In the further transformation of the learning venues of general and vocational education, he said, one must orient oneself to very good examples.

Corona - has revealed the weak points in schools - including vocational schools. Ms. Wetzel mentioned the lack of training and continuing education for teachers, deficits in the Internet and technical equipment at vocational schools.

Digital educational formats and good practice of digitally supported teaching must also be usable in a meaningful way after Corona. According to Ms. Wetzel, **adapted and meaningful**

hybrid teaching-learning formats are therefore standard at a center of excellence for vocational education.

The fact that parents are left out in many European countries, especially in the vocational school sector, was confirmed by Mrs. Martine Riot, from the partner vocational school in Rouen (France). There are no parents' representative at french VET schools, so the Head of the Department of International Affairs.

It was noted that in the European vocational school areas the students are mostly 18 years old and the parents are no longer formally involved there.

Ms. Ingrid Ritt, former Bavarian state parents' representative and current chair of the federal 3XMEHR initiative, reported on the good approaches from the state of Bavaria. The state and the municipalities have started an exemplary digital excellence initiative together for selected vocational school centers. As part of the "Centers of Excellence at Vocational Schools" project, the Free State of Bavaria bears 50 percent of the total eligible costs for the technical equipment, while the other half is borne by the respective independent cities or districts as the sponsors of the vocational schools. This means that a total of around ten million euros has been made available for new technical equipment at the schools.

Addressing the impact of digitization on professional activities is a central educational mission of vocational schools. Vocational schools in Bavaria have actively taken on the challenges of a digital professional world. For this reason, the Free State of Bavaria invested in vocational education even before this program just mentioned, the funding program "Industry 4.0" and the funding program "Integrated subject classrooms at vocational schools" as part of the master plan BAYERN DIGITAL II.

The multi-year funding program "Budget for integrated specialist classrooms at vocationally qualifying schools" comprised a volume of 35 million euros in 2018. Integrated subject classrooms are classrooms at vocationally qualifying schools with occupation-specific hardware and software equipment.

All these programs aimed at a **digitally supported center of excellence**. With regard to **sustainable development, however, there is still a lot of room for improvement, even though models already exist, e.g., the climate school concept. However, there is still some way to go to achieve 360 degrees of sustainability in vocational education and training - Target profile of the German UNESCO Commission**, further information: https://www.bne-portal.de/files/BNE_Handreichungen%20Bildungsbereich%202018_Nachhaltigkeit_berufliche%20Bildung_web.pdf

Ms. Ritt also pointed out the concept of the climate school, which is not based on one-time actions, but is a binding path over several years in all CO2-relevant areas (communication and networking, purchasing and procurement, nutrition, digitalization, mobility, waste, heat, electricity) in a school and in the working world.

The Burkhardt Grob Schule, Mindelheim Technical School <https://www.bsmn.de/technikerschule-mindelheim/south-cheshire-college-england/> was awarded with its comprehensive commitment during the European Vocational Skills Week by the EU Commission in the school year 2020/21 as the best in the category Green Erasmus. The internationalization project of the vocational school was built up and constantly refined within 5 years. Its basic idea is directly derived from the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the meaning of vocational education:

(This is just one example of a model vocational school on sustainable teaching and learning).

The project manager of the awarded "**excellent**" **Bavarian vocational school** Mr. Studiendirektor Karl Geller added that the vocational school Mindelheim has a long tradition in environmental education and meanwhile has many connections to foreign schools. Together with the associated technical school, an "Energy Efficiency" project has been set up with our partner school in Crewe/England. Mr. Geller described that in 2020 this project was **awarded by the EU Commission as the best project in Europe in the category Green Erasmus**. "The core of this project is the idea of using our students in England as "climate ambassadors" for English students at the partner school in so-called Energy Days and thus pass on their own knowledge about sustainability at eye level and in the foreign language. The Brexit will most likely end this project, which is why we are considering offering a similar course at our own school. The basis for this is the energy efficiency course we have been offering for 7 years, which has received several national awards. This course should now be offered on a European level and combined with foreign language learning, as we already do with our students", Geller said. If interested: karl.geller@bsmn.de.

In her presentation, Ms. Ingrid Ritt outlined the following areas of action and improvement for the design of regional digitally-supported and sustainability-oriented centers of excellence for vocational education and training in Europe:

Let's start with the school buildings: What is the energy and technical condition? Can the building technology be used for teaching purposes? Is the school's energy consumption data used for teaching purposes? Could we possibly make a school project out of it based on the respective situation?

Education at vocational schools must be more sustainability-oriented than any other, because this is where the levers are greatest. Even if sustainable education is more than just energy or environmental education, on the one hand the deficits already start with the former. The vocational school sector, for example, probably needs the most energy and emits the most CO₂.

We would also have to look at the school construction programs of the municipalities and states: How are they structured?

What does the **initial and continuing training of teachers** look like with regard to sustainable development? This applies to the initial training at the university as well as to the 2nd phase in the seminar or in the teacher-traineeship at school. Is there a consumer-oriented basic education in the energy sector for every field of study? Whereby the energy field would have to be seen quite broadly, e.g. energy and agriculture, energy and nutrition, energy and house building, energy and mobility, energy and waste, etc.

At every professional center of excellence, there must be **sustainability officers or environmental officers**, or better yet, an entire team. Just as it is a matter of course that there are safety or fire protection officers, for example.

Sustainable development must be prescribed in the **QM program** of vocational schools and in the **evaluations** there must be questions about sustainable orientation and sustainable action.

Sustainability officers or environmental officers must be given **time allotments** for their work. On the one hand, because you can't constantly burden teachers with additional tasks without credit, and on the other hand, because without commitment, you can't demand that they take care of and perform the corresponding tasks.

Specialized staff positions for sustainability education must exist at governments or school boards. These positions simply must be created.

What is the situation in the **ministries of education**? Do they have staff explicitly responsible for sustainable development? However, structures like those that have now been created for digitization must also be created for sustainable development.

Back to teaching, the essential factor at schools:

Sustainability education is more than environmental education. The UN has formulated 17 goals for sustainable development. These may be little known at vocational schools. Accordingly, teaching is not oriented to them. But at a digitally supported and sustainability-oriented center of excellence for vocational education, this must be the case!

If sustainability is also to be thought globally - and actually it only makes sense in this way - comprehensive, sustainability-oriented **internationalization measures** would be necessary, as was and is practiced at the Mindelheim vocational school with the foreign projects mentioned at the beginning. Own knowledge acquisition in a sustainability area finds at the same time while using a foreign language to communicate with foreign partners and to produce problem solutions. This promotes social competence and self-esteem in equal measure. Let's not forget that vocational schools are not only good at theory, they are also good at practice. And presenting lessons as a problem-solving method also appeals to students!

Digitization is not an end in itself, but must pursue clear goals and bring added value. Data use, algorithms and artificial intelligence are enormous fields of knowledge for which a deep understanding is needed and which must be seen through.

Responsible decision makers in education and in politics have to act and decide according to these findings. Above all, thinking in the direction of sustainable development **MUST** start as soon as possible and be followed by decisive action. Equally important is the **interaction of the vocational centers of excellence with the companies and training enterprises**. It would be confusing if different digitalization and/or sustainability directions were taken at schools and in training companies.

Sustainability makes the most sense when thought globally! We do not live in an ivory tower, the natural, climate and weather events act in a worldwide interaction. For example, the rampant burning of the rainforest is also of concern to us and affects all of humanity.

And last but not least: **VALUE TRAINING is indispensable** for this!

If we want to act, work, teach and learn in a digitally supported and sustainability-oriented way, we have to live and stand up for our standards and **VALUES** defined in the Basic Law and the constitutions. Because regardless of whether we are dealing with material things, nature or people, only if we are able to deal with everything in a careful and appreciative manner can we live together in the long term and secure a future worth living for future generations.

So be motivated and let us help together to address our sustainability goals and digital transformation and demand it everywhere."

DunE-BB-EU project manager Nowatschin thanked the speakers and all participants for the productive dialogue. He concluded by informing about the next "online" dialogue formats - see https://www.bbs1uelzen.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/24.03.2021_DUNE_Parents-Now-1.pdf .

On 21.04.2021, starting at 5pm, the question will be answered from the point of view of the youth (pupils, trainees, students, ...):

"How should regional digitally-enabled and sustainability-oriented centers of excellence in vocational education be designed from a youth perspective?"