



## MUNICIPALITIES FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE 17 SDGs

THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**By 2030 poverty is to be ended in all its forms.**

No one should have to live in extreme poverty any longer. In particular, at-risk or vulnerable groups should be enabled to follow a path out of poverty. Target 1.2 is important for Germany: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to the German definition.

**STRATEGIC POVERTY REDUCTION IN GELSENKIRCHEN**

➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Located in the Ruhr Region, Gelsenkirchen is one of the cities in Germany with the highest proportion of children receiving social security benefits. The city has set itself the task of improving these children's opportunities for participation, in order to break the poverty spiral of lack of education, unemployment and receipt of social welfare.

➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Back in 1997, the city council of Gelsenkirchen voted unanimously in favour of Agenda 21, and one year later voted unanimously to establish the 'aGenda 21' workshop for the future. In 2016 the city signed the specimen resolution 'The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Building Sustainability at the Local Level', drafted by the Association of German Cities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

To enable children to grow up well, they are supported from birth until they join the workforce. This involves establishing prevention chains, networks and structures for sustainable education. There are also counselling services and networks for parents and children as well as numerous out-of-school learning opportunities – for instance as part of an adult education programme.

➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

As part of the 'City of the Future 2030+' programme run by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Gelsenkirchen will devise ideas for a holistic development of the municipality. This will expand existing education and participatory activities into a 'mesh of networks' designed to give all children better opportunities for participation.



**City of Gelsenkirchen**

➔ North Rhine-Westphalia



Population:  
**260,000**



Mayor:  
**Frank Baranowski**





## EDUCATION TO FIGHT CHILD POVERTY

In Germany, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, 12.9 million people are living in poverty or are at risk of poverty. According to the World Bank definition, anyone living on less than 1.9 US dollars a day is extremely poor. In affluent countries, poverty is seen in relation to the respective level of prosperity. In Germany, anyone earning less than 60 per cent of the median national income is considered to be relatively poor. Groups particularly hard hit by poverty include the unemployed, families with a migrant background, single parents and children. The City of Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr Region has a high unemployment rate, and is one of the cities in Germany with the highest proportion of children receiving social security benefits. With the welfare of children in mind, the city is taking a firm stance against the problem of poverty – despite its empty coffers.

‘Experience has shown how important it is to begin supporting children as early as possible’, says Annette Berg, Head of Department for Culture, Education, Sports and Integration, City of Gelsenkirchen. ‘We support children from birth until they join the workforce by establishing prevention chains, networks and structures for sustainable education.’ This begins with the welcome visit to each family in Gelsenkirchen with a newborn child. The chain extends from counselling services for parents, through language training and sports promotion, to support with educational issues and child care services. ‘The various actors must form a community of responsibility to enable children to grow up well’, says Berg. The activities are integrated into the state programme ‘Leave no child behind’, in which Gelsenkirchen is a model municipality. ‘We want equal opportunities for all children’, emphasises Annette Berg. This is why the city performs social monitoring, which involves analysing parts of the city and evaluating the opportunities for participation available to the children living there.

Following a council resolution, in 2016 the city signed the specimen resolution ‘The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Building Sustainability at the Local Level’, drafted by the Association of German Cities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. By doing so the city committed to implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Here it will be able to build



The City of Gelsenkirchen intends to create equal opportunities for all children. (Photo: The aGenda21 Office in Gelsenkirchen)

on the lessons it learned when implementing Agenda 21. Werner Rybarski is director of the City of Gelsenkirchen’s ‘aGenda-21’ office – the organisational hub and information centre where things are coordinated and controlled. Education for Sustainable Development was always a high priority in the Agenda process, and is seen as key to reducing poverty. ‘We’re not just talking about school education in the traditional sense’, says Mr Rybarski. He goes on to explain that education touches on almost all the other SDGs. Through networking, out-of-school learning centres have arisen such as the creative workshop for children and youth run by the City of Gelsenkirchen and aGenda-21, which is also part of the adult education programme. Activities and projects offered by more than 60 providers are clustered here. They include dye-plant gardens where plants are grown that produce dyes, children’s environmental education projects, nature excursions and many other low-cost offerings for children and families.

Gelsenkirchen is also developing new ideas for sustainable urban development. One aim is to enable all children – regardless of their social background – to live self-reliant lives as members of the urban society.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

[www.agenda21.info/english/start.htm](http://www.agenda21.info/english/start.htm)

<http://skew.engagement-global.de/zeichnungskommunen-agenda-2030.html>



**Access to food, and nutritional practices, differ widely at the global level.** In developing countries hunger and malnutrition play a different role than in the northern hemisphere. When implementing SDG2 at the local level in Germany the key aim is to improve the management of food. This involves strengthening sustainable agriculture and ensuring that consumers handle food sustainably.

## URBAN-RURAL PARTNERS FOR FOOD

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

‘Original Regional’ – a brand name that translates as ‘Original food from the region’ – emphasises the diversity of regional specialities and products from the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region. At the same time, all agricultural landscapes are being preserved. And not only that – consumers are being enabled to better assess the quality of food produced in the region using traditional methods.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Twenty-seven regional initiatives have joined forces with some 1,500 direct marketers and producers from the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region. At the same time numerous municipalities have set clear targets for the use of regional produce in municipally-run canteens, child day-care centres and schools.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

In the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region it is chiefly the main cities of Nuremberg, Führt and Erlangen and rural areas that work together as partners. The rural areas supply the cities with GMO-free food and other products produced in the region. This benefits both the region and the individual municipalities.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Step by step, quotas for regional produce are being increased and quality standards raised. The City of Nuremberg is going even further by including organic quality as a further criterion in addition to regionality. Its target for 2020: 75 per cent organic food in child day-care centres and 50 per cent in schools.



## Nuremberg Metropolitan Region (NMR)

➔ Bavaria



Population:  
**3.5 million**



District Chief Executive and President of the NMR Council:  
**Armin Kroder**





## **NO HUNGER: ORIGINAL FOOD FROM THE REGION IN THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF NUREMBERG**

Using sustainable agriculture to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition by 2030 – this is the goal of the UN. It intends to achieve this goal amongst other things by preserving the genetic diversity of seed, crops and animals. It also intends to restore the focus on ‘traditional knowledge’ in food production.

To achieve this, according to the UN ‘all forms of subsidy’ need to be abolished in rich countries, and export opportunities for the poorer countries improved. At the same time agricultural methods are required that increase yields, preserve sustainable ecosystems and build resilience to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events. Regional value chains are an important element of this. With its ‘Original Regional’ brand the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region is setting a good example.

### **STEP BY STEP TOWARDS 100% FOOD FROM THE REGION**

‘At the beginning everyone was sceptical. Today it’s almost a cult’, recalls Herbert Eckstein, District Chief Executive of Roth, provided some key ideas for the ‘Original Regional’ brand, as Christa Standecker, Managing Director of the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region (NMR), confirms. It all began with the regional sausage speciality head cheese. According to Ms Standecker, Mr Eckstein’s successful head cheese competition in 2005 was a kind of revelation.

He wanted to ‘make the diversity in the region visible and draw attention to characteristic strengths’. This resulted in a variety of strategies for making products from the region more attractive, also for the cities. Non-GOM food was the key focus right from the start. The short channels of supply were an obvious advantage. Those responsible in NMR soon agreed that ‘The basic elements must come from the region’. And they agreed that people needed to work together – including both suppliers and purchasers.

Step by step, the process was driven forward. Municipalities have developed their own regulations in hospital canteens, and for caterers in schools and child day-care centres, for instance regarding the percentage of regional and even organic products used.



The production of organic foods is being continuously expanded in the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region. (Photo: Messe Nürnberg/Thomas Geiger)

### **PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN RURAL AREAS AND CITIES**

Today, people often no longer stop to ask whether mutton should originate from landscape conservation projects or juices and sparkling wines should come from orchards. Ms Standecker and Mr Eckstein agree that ‘This protects our cultivated landscape’.

In the city of Nuremberg, by 2020 75 per cent of the food consumed in municipal child day-care centres is to be organic. The target for schools is 50 per cent. The latter figure also applies to receptions held by the mayor, who intends to set an example in this respect.

In small towns such as Gräfenberg there are also plans for school meals in all-day schools. In the ‘Kitchen louts’ project, students are involved in designing a healthy and sustainable menu. The food is obtained from the region every day. The school knows the suppliers, and has framework agreements with them regarding quality standards.

There are now 2,412 organically certified companies in NMR, and the figure is rising sharply. The ‘Original Regional’ brand has become a network that includes not only municipalities, but also bakers, butchers, small producers and caterers. The network provides 120 specialities from the region, creates jobs and prevents superfluous transport routes. It also improves and preserves knowledge on agricultural production methods.

### **INTERNET ADDRESS**

<http://original-regional.metropolregionnuernberg.de>



**Health is a human right. Improving the health of all is therefore one of the declared goals of the 2030 Agenda.** Access to health facilities and preventive measures is just as important to achieving this goal as research and the development of vaccines and medicines. To improve the health of people worldwide it is also necessary to ensure health financing and professional training.

### THE BREMEN MODEL: HEALTH INSURANCE CARD FOR REFUGEES

#### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

In 2005 the City Council of Bremen introduced an electronic health insurance card for asylum seekers and refugees. This was designed to reduce discrimination. With their own card people can go straight to the doctor and do not have to first obtain approval from the social services department.

#### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

In 2004 Bremen began talks with health insurance companies on introducing the health insurance card for asylum seekers and refugees. The AOK – one of Germany's leading health insurers – came out in favour of the project. Bremen and the AOK then entered into a framework agreement which came into force on 1 October 2005.

#### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

Since 2005 all asylum seekers and refugees have had an electronic health insurance card, entitling them to medical care. This means that when they are ill they can obtain treatment as quickly as possible and choose their own doctor. Bremen continues to meet the costs, while the insurer takes care of payments in return for an administration fee.

#### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Hamburg adopted the Bremen model as of 1 July 2012, and in 2015 the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia entered into a framework agreement with eight health insurance companies. State-wide introduction has come to a halt however – one reason being that many municipalities fear increased expenditure.



## Free Hanseatic City of Bremen

➔ Bremen



Population:  
**557,464**



Mayor:  
**Dr Carsten Sieling**





## JUST GOING TO THE DOCTOR'S – THE HEALTH INSURANCE CARD FOR REFUGEES

Toothache or fever – asylum seekers or refugees in Germany who fall sick in Germany have a problem, at least in some parts of the country. Before they can go to the doctor's they need to be examined by the local health authority. If that results in approval, the responsible social services department then issues the municipality with a treatment certificate. Only then can the patient go to see the doctor.

In 2005 Bremen thought about what it could do to reduce the stigmatisation of asylum seekers. To avoid duplicate structures, it decided to use the expertise of the health insurance companies to manage payments. On 1 October 2005 Bremen entered into a framework agreement with the AOK, a leading German health insurer. Since then refugees and asylum seekers in Bremen have been issued with a health insurance card. When they are ill they can go straight to the doctor. Expectant mothers or mothers who have just given birth are also covered, and vaccinations can also be provided. Case-by-case reviews are only necessary for services such as convalescence treatments or psychotherapy.

Bremen – Germany's smallest federal state – has thus performed some pioneering work with regard to the SDGs. One important target – 3.8 – is about achieving universal health coverage (UHC), including access to quality essential health care services and affordable medicines. The health insurance card guarantees discrimination-free access.

### EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN MET

According to David Lukaßen, spokesperson for the social services department in Bremen, expectations regarding the introduction of the health insurance card have been met in full. There are structural reasons why Bremen introduced the health insurance card as a federal state. As a city state, Bremen does not have a second state level within its administration. Its workforce also performs the tasks of a state administration. This applies particularly to the social services department, which is responsible for refugee-related tasks. Instead of having to pay for each individual treatment for asylum seekers, doctors follow the usual procedure of submitting bills for their services to the health insurance company, which then pays them. To cover their additional



Asylum seekers in Bremen have been receiving health insurance cards for over ten years. (Photo: Stockfotos-MG/fotolia.de)

costs the health insurance companies receive an administration fee of ten euros plus a one-off fee of eight euros for issuing the card.

The Bremen model was also introduced in Hamburg in July 2012. North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) has also entered into an agreement with eight health insurance companies. However, only 20 out of 400 municipalities in NRW have introduced the card.

### MUNICIPALITIES' EXPERIENCE WITH THE CARD HAS BEEN GOOD

By introducing the Asylum Procedure Expedition Act (Asylum Package I) in late 2015, Germany's Federal Government created the option of introducing a health insurance card for asylum seekers with limited entitlements. Many municipalities fear high costs, yet experience with the card – chiefly in the cities of Cologne and Düsseldorf in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia – has been positive.

Anja Stahmann, Bremen's Senator for Social Affairs, Youth, Women, Integration and Sport, says that the procedure is discrimination-free for the refugees, and relieves pressure on the social services department. She emphasises: 'We introduced the card more than ten years ago, and it only has benefits.'

### INTERNET ADDRESS

[www.gesundheitsamt.bremen.de/fluechtlinge-15222](http://www.gesundheitsamt.bremen.de/fluechtlinge-15222)

**SDG 4: ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**



**Education is a human right.** It is crucial in determining how people are able to develop their capabilities and what goals they achieve in life. The 2030 Agenda aims to achieve inclusive and quality education for all plus lifelong learning, which also affects other SDGs such as reducing inequality (SDG 10). In Germany education is the responsibility of the federal states, although municipalities do play a central role in key areas such as education for sustainable development.

**LIVING SUSTAINABLY: FROM GRANDCHILDREN TO GRANDPARENTS**

**➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?**

Alheim in the federal state of Hesse has committed to sustainable education for young and old. And the results are there for all to see – It has already been nominated a model municipality for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development four times. In 2016 UNESCO awarded it the title ‘Excellent Municipality – in the World Action Programme of Education for Sustainable Development’. Alheim also became Germany’s most sustainable municipality in 2016.

**➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?**

Alheim is almost self-sufficient in renewable energy. Here, though, sustainability is also about lifelong learning for sustainability. For instance, the municipality has an environmental education centre that trains senior environmental instructors. Knowledge on sustainability and climate change mitigation is imparted to children in kindergartens, schools and numerous out-of-school learning environments.

**➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?**

In 2000 Alheim presented two projects at Expo in Hanover: the Alheim – Licherode environmental education centre with the slogan ‘A region becomes a natural learning environment’, and Oberellenbach district as a contribution to ‘Village 2000 – Examples of sustainable rural development’. This prompted the switch to renewable energy. Soon education programmes were to developed in order to get everyone on board for more sustainability.

**➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

Alheim has networked with other municipalities. It is part of the support programme ‘ZuBRA – A Future for Bebra, Rotenburg and Alheim’, and as part of this association is taking part in the competition ‘Municipality of the Future’ held by Germany’s Federal Education Ministry. The competition focuses on sustainability.



**Alheim** ➔ Hesse



Population:  
**5,300**



Mayor:  
**Georg Lüdtko**







## A LIFETIME OF LEARNING

Spending a lifetime learning and discovering new things – this is what the citizens of Alheim in the federal state of Hesse do. The municipality has committed to sustainability, and education is the key to it. Alheim has already been voted a model municipality for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development four times. It is thus making a key contribution towards achieving SDG 4, because training learners in sustainable development is a key component of achieving the goal by 2030.

In Alheim the path to sustainable education began in 1994 with a new nature-centred strategy for tourism. The second step was Expo in Hanover in the year 2000. There, Alheim was able to present two projects: Licherode environmental education centre, and Oberellenbach district as a contribution to ‘Village 2000 – Examples of sustainable rural development’. 40,000 international visitors came to see Alheim at the world exhibition. This encouraged the municipality to continue along the path to sustainability.

As Mayor Georg Lüdtkke puts it: ‘At that time a vision emerged. By 2015, we envisaged that 80 per cent of the energy we use will be sourced from renewables’. A target so ambitious that barely anyone believed it. This is why it was necessary to arouse people’s interest. Why should we be a part of the energy transformation? ‘Education is the key’, says Mr Lüdtkke: ‘Education for sustainable development’. In Alheim this starts during childhood. At the child day-care centres children are shown how a solar power system works. The sun shines on a small solar panel, and the wheel connected to it starts turning almost right away. Children tell their families about this when they get home, and by doing so become ambassadors of the energy transformation.

Solar power in Alheim soon began to boom. Today the municipality obtains 100% of the electricity it needs from renewables. A little hydropower, a biogas plant, but above all solar power. As Mr Lüdtkke puts it, ‘These are not huge solar power plants owned by an investor. They are citizens’ own solar power systems’. It is also the citizens themselves who earn money when electricity from their systems is sold, he explains.

Yet sustainability is more than just green energy. How does organic farming work? How is bread baked? In out-of-school



Cooking with solar power – in Alheim, the youngest learn a great deal about sustainability. (Photo: Gemeinde Alheim)

learning environments, children learn how organic farmers or bakers work. Acting as energy detectives, they study energy consumption, or they take water samples from streams. This enables them to learn that we are responsible for our environment. But it is not only children who are trained in sustainability. Their parents are also involved. At the environmental education centre in Licherode many senior citizens train children and adults on a voluntary basis. One thing is clear to the citizens of Alheim: they share responsibility – for their environment and for the quality of life they share in the community.

This municipality in Hesse is now spreading its vision around Germany. Every year some 3,000 children from all over Germany come to the environmental education centre in Licherode. Adults also come for training. And Alheim is advising similar institutions in other federal states. Mr Lüdtkke is strongly committed to networking. ‘I’m no longer a localist, I’m a regionalist’, he says. Alheim has been part of the ZuBRA region for several years, for instance. Together, the towns involved are taking part in the ‘City of the Future’ competition run by the Federal Education Ministry. Together, municipalities develop ideas for liveable and sustainable regions. And they devise a framework plan for education, because environmental awareness and sustainability need to be communicated.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

[www.alheim.de](http://www.alheim.de)

[www.umweltbildungszentrum-licherode.de](http://www.umweltbildungszentrum-licherode.de)

[www.bne-portal.de/en/education-sustainable-development-germany](http://www.bne-portal.de/en/education-sustainable-development-germany)



The United Nations has set itself the target of ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls all over the world. This includes eliminating violence against women and girls, and putting an end to child marriage and genital mutilation. It also includes recognising and appreciating unpaid care work and housework performed by women within the family, and ensuring full and effective participation and equality of opportunity for women in political, economic and public life.

## GENDER EQUALITY AFFECTS EVERYONE

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Gender equality affects a whole range of areas of public life. This is why Osnabrück's gender equality officer Katja Weber-Khan attends meetings of the cross-departmental management conference led by the mayor. This is how Osnabrück ensures gender equality.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

In 2014 Osnabrück approved a gender action plan. Today, all proposals for council resolutions must answer the question of how they will affect gender. Supported by a network of advice centres and associations many things have been implemented, ranging from systematic support for girls to part-time jobs in managerial positions.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

In Osnabrück the gender equality officer is part of the municipal administration. She is also able to draw on a network of advice centres and associations. They support her work, and help identify where gender issues need to be addressed. Osnabrück also hosted the event 'In tandem against violence', which was funded by the federal state of Lower Saxony.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

In 2016, Osnabrück came fourth in the first 'Gender Award – Municipality With a Future' competition held under the auspices of the then Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth – reason to be pleased and an incentive to carry on. The gender equality officer Katja Weber-Khan intends to enlarge her network even further. The plan of action is also being evaluated and will be updated.



## Osnabrück ➔ Lower Saxony



Population:  
**162,403**



Mayor:  
**Wolfgang Griesert**



## ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

Ending discrimination against women and girls all over the world – to achieve this goal, much has to be done for gender equality in a wide range of areas across society. **Katja Weber-Khan, the gender equality officer of the City of Osnabrück, is working to realise this goal.**

In 2014 Osnabrück approved a gender action plan. Today the gender equality officer always knows what is planned because she is involved in the work of the local authority and the city's decision-making processes. This enables her to ensure that gender equality is upheld. Might a decision stand in the way of gender mainstreaming, i.e. promoting equal opportunities for women and men? This question is raised for every project, and is part of proposals for council resolutions.

'Many people are not aware of the fact that a decision can affect gender equality', explains Ms Weber-Khan. Continuously asking the question raises awareness of the issue. The municipality wishes to set a good example for gender equality. It practices the 'shared management' model. Two people, both of whom work part time, share a managerial position. This means that despite working reduced hours they both hold a key position. There are currently two jobs of this kind in the municipality of Osnabrück.

Ms Weber-Khan is able to draw on a broad network of women's advice centres and associations. The gender equality officer has held her position for two years. Her predecessor spent 15 years building the network. Ms Weber-Khan intends to manage and expand it. 'It helps to see where structures are lacking, and then support the implementation of programmes', she says. Here is a current example: Refugees have created new tasks for the advice centres. For instance, the important topic of domestic violence also plays a role in the context of migration. This is why staff at various advice centres in Osnabrück would like to receive training in the field of intercultural skills. The municipality was able to support them with the event 'Working together against violence'. This was funded by the prevention council of the federal state of Lower Saxony, and Osnabrück was one of five cities in Lower Saxony to profit from this support.



Campaign in Osnabrück to mark the International Day to End Violence Against Women on 25 November (Photo: Monika Meißner)

'My work is very diverse', says Ms Weber-Khan. She mentions a girls' refuge in Osnabrück that she visits regularly. It has just celebrated its 25th anniversary. 'It is important to create free spaces in which girls can develop', says Ms Weber-Khan. Counselling and therapy is provided, but it's also important simply to have somewhere to meet after school. The 'Girls can do it' programme is designed for girls from migrant families where life is shaped by very traditional roles. The girls are shown that the world is also open to women.

In Osnabrück there is also the 'Family-friendly employer' certificate that companies can use to certify their credentials. Restaurants and shops can use the sticker 'Breastfeeding welcome' if they wish to give women an opportunity to breastfeed their child undisturbed.

There is no one major leverage point for gender equality. A large number of measures in a variety of areas act in concert and help bring about change. The City of Osnabrück has clustered them in its action plan – and new areas are being added all the time. This is the only way to achieve the major goal of gender equality.

### INTERNET ADDRESS

[www.osnabrueck.de/gleichstellungsbuero](http://www.osnabrueck.de/gleichstellungsbuero)



**Clean water and appropriate sanitation are essential for a healthy and dignified life.** The United Nations is committed to providing universal access to clean water, improving water quality worldwide and protecting water-based ecosystems such as mountains, forests and lakes. Municipalities bear special responsibility here, because they are responsible for water supply and sanitation.

## MANAGING RESOURCES SUSTAINABLY

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Since 2011 the municipality of Baruth/Mark has been twinned with Murun in Mongolia. This partnership focuses on sharing knowledge and technology for water supply and sanitation, and the sustainable management of the tree population. Baruth/Mark has learned many lessons in both areas, which it is now transferring to Murun.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

During the training campaign 'Our water', over the last few years Baruth and Murun have shared information and technology for the sustainable management of natural resources. Murun now has amongst other things water filters for several schools, and a laboratory for monitoring water quality.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

The two sides shared information at regular meetings in Germany and Mongolia. In Murun one aim is to raise public awareness and encourage the population to support the sustainable management of their natural resources. To help achieve this, schools and environmental associations from the region were involved in a large water conference in Murun.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

In 2017, with support from Baruth/Mark work was commenced on building a training centre for trades in Murun. The construction process itself provides training to those involved. Most of the materials used are available locally, and sustainable construction methods are being used. The building will be made from timber and insulated using sheep's wool.



## Baruth/Mark ➔ Brandenburg



Population:  
**4,100**



Mayor:  
**Peter Ilk**





## WATER, FORESTS, KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Protecting water as a natural resource and making it universally accessible – this is one of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. In Baruth/Mark, sustainability has become a guiding principle over the last 20 years – to protect forests and water. This municipality in the federal state of Brandenburg, with its huge pine forests, has built a modern industrial zone that supports the sustainable management of timber resources. 'One person's waste is another person's raw material', says Peter Ilk, Mayor of Baruth/Mark. A sawmill, two plants for fibreboards and a laminating plant, a biomass cogeneration plant, a mineral water bottling plant and a beneficial species grower are all profiting from the shared site. Since German reunification the municipality has also reorganised its water supply and sanitation.

Since 2011, the lessons learned by Baruth/Mark in this context have been benefiting a municipality located a good 7,000 km away in Mongolia – Murun, which has a population of 40,000. What the municipalities have in common are their huge forests, their freshwater resources and their relatively low population density. When the mayors of the two municipalities establish this at a meeting in 2011, a lively process of exchange began. Initially the process is focusing on drinking water supply.

### NATURAL RESOURCES BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Murun is located at Lake Huvsgul, an important water reservoir in Mongolia. As Peter Ilk explains, 'The water in the pipes is not fit for drinking'. Supermarkets stock imported water. The situation is entirely different in Baruth, where the 'Brandenburger Urstromquelle' bottling plant fills 1.2 billion bottles a year. Local drinking water could also be bottled in Murun. Peter Ilk has already suggested this to the Mayor of Murun, Tserenbadam Gansukh.

However, delivering clean piped water is a more urgent matter. This is why in 2016 the two sides focused on the project 'Our water', which was supported by Engagement Global's Service Agency Communities in One World. Eleven water filters are now available at four schools in Murun. 'Each one of them delivers 1,000 litres of clean water every day', says Peter Ilk. Staff of the waterworks in Baruth trained their colleagues in Murun in managing the filters. They also helped set up a water laboratory to monitor quality. And they



The mayor of Baruth/Mark, Peter Ilk (third from left) visiting Mongolia (Photo: Gemeinde Baruth/Mark)

cleaned the sewers together with their colleagues in Murun. They also brought a gift along – two gas detectors that will make work very much safer in the future. When the visitors from Mongolia come to Brandenburg they will get to know the water utility companies in Baruth and the industrial zone in detail – knowledge they will be able to use when they return home.

### SUSTAINABILITY – AN EDUCATIONAL MANDATE

In October 2016 Baruth organised a water conference in Murun, which involved water specialists from the Czech Republic and the owners of tourist camps around Lake Huvsgul. Games and a poster competition were provided for Mongolian schoolchildren. These activities were designed to enable them to learn about sustainable water management.

In 2017 work commenced on the construction of a training centre for trades in Murun. The local vocational school is involved. The construction process itself provides training – also for sustainability. This is because chiefly local materials are being used, such as sheep's wool to insulate the timber structure. The Service Agency is supporting the project with financial resources and professional inputs. The project 'Our water' is being provided with approximately 250,000 euros under the Partnership Projects for Sustainable Local Development (NAKOPA) programme, which is delivered by the Service Agency. This is money well spent, because it is being invested in safe drinking water, education and the sustainable management of natural resources.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

[www.stadt-baruth-mark.de](http://www.stadt-baruth-mark.de)  
[www.baruth-murun.de](http://www.baruth-murun.de)



**Most of the energy consumed today originates from finite fossil-based sources.** Consuming them causes immense damage to the environment. For many people, the energy produced is unaffordable. This is why the United Nations intends to ensure access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services for all by 2030, and increase the percentage of renewables in the global energy mix. A further aim is to double the global rate of increase in energy efficiency.

## BIOENERGY VILLAGE ASCHA

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Ascha is already largely self-sufficient in renewable energy. The municipality obtains both its building heat and electricity from renewables. Yet Germany's 'Bioenergy Municipality 2016' – Ascha in Lower Bavaria, with a population of 1,600 – still intends to achieve much more on its path to sustainable energy supply.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

The first step was an energy consumption analysis, followed by the development of solutions. A kick-off project was the biomass heating plant. The first of its kind in Bavaria, this plant heats around 100 buildings via a local heat network. This was followed amongst other things by solar power systems, solar panels on the roofs of private buildings, a, eco-housing development, a water wheel power plant and solar-powered street lighting.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

Since 1989 the municipality has been making efforts to make its energy supply more sustainable. Numerous citizens are involved in working groups on this issue as volunteers. The municipality intends to replace all the oil heating systems that still exist with environmentally friendly alternatives. One milestone on the path to energy independence was the award of the official title 'Bioenergy Village'.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Ascha town hall plans to use energy storage systems in order to become self-reliant. By doing so it intends to set a good example and encourage citizens to do likewise. Furthermore, every year the municipality will make subsidies of up to 70,000 euros available for heating pumps, electric scooters, projects or a competition to save electricity.



**Ascha** ➔ Bavaria



Population:  
**1,600**



Mayor:  
**Wolfgang Zirngibl**





## THE LONG ROAD TO AUTARKY

In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) took place in Rio. There, delegates from 178 countries met to discuss environmental and development issues for the 21st century. The key output of the conference was the so-called Agenda 21. This plan of action also called on municipalities to consult their citizens and adopt a Local Agenda 21. Under the motto ‘Think global – Act local’ many municipalities responded to this call. At that point in time Ascha had already been pursuing a local energy agenda for several years. This also closely matches UN SDG 7: ‘Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.’

Ascha’s resolute energy path is strewn with awards. In the year 2000 the municipality was awarded the title of ‘Environmentally Conscious Municipality’ by the Bavarian State Government. In 2016 it was declared the ‘Bioenergy Municipality’ by Germany’s Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture. Today Ascha already generates more electricity than it consumes, and the municipality generates a large proportion of the heat it requires. However, the village also envisages a path leading to independence from the large energy suppliers and ultimately to sustainability.

### A LANDFILL THAT WAS PREVENTED

It all began in 1989, when there were plans to build what would have been Bavaria’s largest landfill in Ascha. This would have caused huge environmental impacts. ‘So we developed alternative solutions’, recalls Mayor Wolfgang Zirngibl. Intensive waste separation rather than a large landfill – a strategy that the municipality continues to rely on to this day. Some of the citizens’ working groups which arose at the time are still active. In 1998 the Forum for the Future of Ascha was founded. This body acts as a steering committee for village renewal and Local Agenda 21 processes as Ascha moves closer towards sustainability and energy autarky. Ascha has already been a ‘bioenergy village’ with the ‘special feature: heating oil-free municipality’ for years. Photovoltaic systems on buildings and just outside the village produce more electricity than citizens and companies there consume in the course of the year. Citizens are working on ways to cover their heating requirement where possible using regional sources of energy. Their maxim is: move away from oil, towards wood. This is because in the Bavarian Forest significantly more wood grows that is harvested. The first biomass heating plant in Ascha was too large, which is why today there is a smaller wood heating system

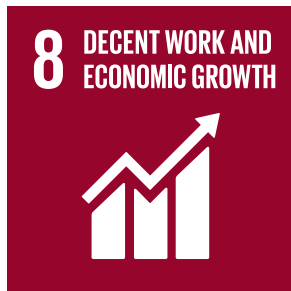


The Bavarian municipality of Ascha is a pioneer of sustainable energy supply. (Photo: Heinz Wraneschitz)

that provides heating chiefly in winter, and two cogeneration units. One of them is connected to the heat network of the Nahwärme Ascha GmbH company, and is fired by wood pellets to cover the heating requirement in summer. At the same time an agricultural biogas plant is in operation. This produces 250 kW of electricity plus heat for several households. Wolfgang Zirngibl believes the following points are important in all projects: ‘We keep our citizens on board. But we do not ask whether what we’re doing is cost-effective. We just do it.’ One example is an electricity saving competition, with subsidies for heating pumps or electric scooters. For this purpose an annual 70,000 euros are earmarked in the municipal budget. All existing street lamps in Ascha are LED-based. All new lamps are to be solar-powered, and 50 of these are already in place. There is also a wooden mill wheel that produces electricity at an old mill site. There is an eco-housing development that meets strict energy and environmental criteria, as well as a housing development connected to a district heating system. Both are well accepted in Ascha. Where do things go from here? Wolfgang Zirngibl believes the municipality has a duty to remain a pioneer in the future. The town hall is one example of this. It is envisaged that the building will achieve full energy autarky using electricity storage facilities – and hopefully encourage others to do likewise. ‘We, the municipality, have never made a profit out of this, but what we’re concerned about is the environment’, explains Mr Zirngibl. One thing we shouldn’t forget is that instead of spending money on oil, the money that would have been spent on energy remains in the village. According to Wolfgang Zirngibl’s calculations, ‘one million euros are then left over every year’. The mayor sums up his experience in a memorable sentence: ‘Sustainability is a long path, and you have to keep analysing things along the way.’

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

[www.ascha.de](http://www.ascha.de)  
[www.nachhaltigkeitspreis.de/en/](http://www.nachhaltigkeitspreis.de/en/)



**Only sustainable economic growth will eradicate poverty and ensure decent work for all.** We need to break the link between economic growth and environmental degradation. People's lives should be improved through modern production methods and technologies. We need to make the global use of resources for consumption and production more efficient and sustainable, create decent working conditions, and promote local culture and products.

## SUSTAINABILITY KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Citizens of the Rostock have been working hard for fair trade and the creation of decent jobs for many years. This goes back to the One World movement and the peaceful revolution of 1989/1990. There were two key processes: the Agenda 21 movement and the fair trade process that began in 2011.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Rostock is one of the so-called fair trade towns, which aim to implement fair trade at the local level. In 2013 Rostock won the 'Capital City of Fair Trade' competition, which is held every two years by Engagement Global's Service Agency Communities in One World.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

Fair trade products are available in more than 80 shops and 40 restaurants in Rostock. They can be found in an online atlas. Schools, various educational institutions, the university and the churches are also actively involved. Rostock uses the funds it was awarded as prize money to finance a fair trade coordinator.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The City of Rostock is trying to make the fair trade coordinator's position a permanent one. Following the spectacular campaigns of the past, the aim now is to make fair trade part of everyday life in Rostock. For example, the refectories at the University of Rostock now offer fair trade products.



## Rostock ➔ Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania



Population:  
**206,000**



Mayor:  
**Roland Methling**





## FAIR TRADE IS PART OF EVERYDAY LIFE

**‘Fair trade and environmental protection are issues that affect the future’, says Rostock’s spokesperson Ulrich Kunze. Above all they are absolutely essential for achieving SDG 8. This requires safety at work for all. All over the world people must earn a living wage rather than one on which they merely survive, and forced labour and child labour must be abolished. Fair trade is key to this. In Rostock there is a manifest political will for fair trade. The City Council and citizens have adopted corresponding resolutions.**

This engagement and the global perspective on the economy have a long tradition in this city on the River Warnow – which goes back at least as far as the peaceful revolution in 1989/1990. According to Ulrich Kunze, at that time the activists of the One World Movement and the student environmental movement were able to gain a hearing for the first time. Their ideas and views remain relevant today. The citizens of Rostock clearly would like to play their part in achieving the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

### ‘FAIR TRADE TOWN AND CAPITAL CITY OF FAIR TRADE’

In 2013 Rostock won the ‘Capital City of Fair Trade’ competition held by the Service Agency. The city has injected vitality into the topic of fair trade in ways that have raised public awareness.

Winning the Service Agency’s competition meant prize money of 30,000 euros. The city is using this to pay for a fair trade coordinator. As Mr Kunze explains, she is hugely important as a hub for all the activities. Particularly so since the title was awarded, as there have been numerous campaigns since then. In the field of sustainable textiles, for instance, a fashion show took place showcasing clothing that was fair traded and produced under socially sound conditions. Its motto was ‘Fair trade on the catwalk’. The campaigns that drew the attention of numerous citizens of Rostock to fair trade also included a T-shirt swap and an upcycling studio.

In the Fair Trade Towns campaign the city meets five criteria which demonstrate that engagement for fair trade is firmly established in the municipality. One criterion is that retailers



The City of Rostock attaches high priority to fair trade products. (Photo: Thomas Häntzschel / nordlicht)

offer fair trade products. At all public meetings, fair trade coffee and another fair trade beverage are served, and other fair trade products are offered. At public institutions such as schools, fair trade products are used and fair trade is addressed in educational settings. A local steering committee coordinates efforts, and local media report on them.

### THE APPLE-MANGO JUICE

Today more than 80 shops and 40 restaurants in Rostock offer fair trade products. According to Ulrich Kunze, the most well-known is the apple-mango juice: a blend of a regional apple variety with mangoes grown under fair conditions in the Philippines. So far an estimated 100,000 litres of it have been sold.

This old Hanseatic city now has to make sure that these activities remain operational. The position of the fair trade coordinator would require further funding, explains Mr Kunze: ‘She keeps the whole thing running’. In the future there will be a strong emphasis on mainstreaming the topic of fair trade in the everyday lives of Rostock’s citizens.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

[www.rostock.de/fairtrade](http://www.rostock.de/fairtrade)  
[www.eine-welt-mv.de](http://www.eine-welt-mv.de)  
[www.fair-plus-regional.de](http://www.fair-plus-regional.de)  
[www.textilbuendnis.com/en](http://www.textilbuendnis.com/en)

**SDG 9: BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION**



**Industry, innovation and infrastructure** – three central and interdependent areas that underpin our economic coexistence: no infrastructure without innovation, no industry without infrastructure. This also applies to a more sustainable future. This will require equal access to infrastructure, and the use of clean technologies that lead to environmentally sound production.

**CYCLING AROUND WUPPERTAL**

**➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?**

Since 2014 the Nordbahntrasse in Wuppertal has been a route for pedestrians, cyclists and citizens enjoying leisure time. In this hilly city, the almost flat trail offers 100,000 people an alternative to car travel. At the same time, the conversion of the two disused railway lines made it possible to preserve important structures such as bridges, tunnels and viaducts.

**➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?**

Since 2006 a total of 22 kilometres of disused railway line have been reactivated as a pedestrian, cycling and recreational trail. Bridges and tunnels in particular required extensive restoration measures. Funding was applied for under EU, federal government and state government programmes, and donations were collected.

**➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?**

In 2006 the citizens' association Wuppertalbewegung e. V. began pressing for a feasibility study on the conversion of the line. In 2009 the City Council of Wuppertal agreed to implementation of the project. Near the line the city has built cycle paths along many roads, and approved around 130 one-way streets in the opposite direction. The association itself collected donations of 3.3 million euros.

**➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

The route is very well accepted by the population. In the cyclist satisfaction test conducted by the ADFC (Germany's national cycling association) in 2014, Wuppertal was awarded the title of 'Catch-up City of the Year'. In 2016 it won second place in this category. The city is currently working on a new master plan for bicycle traffic. Citizens are also participating in the process. Promoting bicycle traffic is one of 13 key projects for the urban development strategy 'Wuppertal 2025'.



**Wuppertal** ➔ North Rhine-Westphalia



Population:  
**358,523**



Mayor:  
**Andreas Mucke**





## CITIZENS BUILD SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Infrastructure – that sounds like motorways, airports or power grids. The term actually means much more than that. Sustainable infrastructure includes renewable energy and innovative mobility strategies. Sustainability also means strategically developing old infrastructure that is no longer required so that it can be used in new ways. This is exactly what happened with the so-called Nordbahntrasse in Wuppertal.**

Along this disused railway line that leads through the city there is now a 22 kilometre-long path for pedestrians and cyclists with no puddles and virtually no junctions. A quantum leap for bicycle traffic, which used to occupy a niche due to the fact that Wuppertal is so hilly. Some 100,000 people live in the immediate catchment area of the path, who as a result now have an alternative to car travel. The Nordbahntrasse is sustainable infrastructure which at the same time contributes to a sustainable city (SDG 11) and climate action (SDG 13). The development of the line also made it possible to preserve important cultural structures such as viaducts, tunnels and bridges.

As part of the 'Rhine Line' between Düsseldorf and Dortmund decommissioned in 1999, the line remained in a state of disuse for a long time. Plans to convert it into a cycle path emerged early on, but the City of Wuppertal lacked the financial resources needed to fund this.

### CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION LAYS THE CORNERSTONE

The idea was not brought to life again until 2006, when 21 citizens founded the association Wuppertalbewegung e. V. The association put forward a feasibility study on the conversion of the line, and suggested applying for EU funding and collecting donations in order to finance the project. Their aim was to create a pedestrian, cycle and leisure route that would be independent of car traffic.

Carsten Gerhardt, First Chair of the association, says that initially there was no support from the municipality. 'We had to fight for years', he says. Campaigns to get people involved revealed that citizens were very interested. They cleared wood from around the line and cleaned up more than 70,000 square metres of land that could be used. In 2007 a first section of the cycle path about 100 metres long was unveiled for demonstration purposes.



The new route for pedestrians and cyclists also leads through old railway tunnels such as the Rotter Tunnel. (Photo: C. Mrozek)

The City Council responded by deciding to support the association. Funding applications were submitted to the EU and the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The association collected donations of 3.3 million euros, and generated a further 12 million euros of funding. In 2010 Nordbahntrassen GmbH, the company founded by the association, began developing the first section. At the end of 2014 the entire line was opened to citizens. At the opening, the then Minister of Transport in North Rhine-Westphalia, Michael Groschek, said: 'The Nordbahntrasse is a superb example of successful civic engagement'. The achievements of the association and its supporters were indeed remarkable. By generating 2.5 million euros in cash donations, 0.8 million euros in contributions in kind, and personal contributions and labour market projects worth 1.6 million euros, the citizens' association made a significant contribution towards the financing and implementation of the project. The total costs of reactivating the Nordbahntrasse amount to around 30 million euros.

### IT IS WORTH THE EFFORT

Today the municipality and the association share responsibility for maintaining the path. According to Mr Gerhardt, cooperation now works very well. As he puts it, 'On fine days the path is almost too full, despite the fact that it is six metres wide. The municipality itself is currently working on a new participatory master plan for bicycle traffic. Promoting bicycle traffic is also one of 13 key projects for the urban development strategy 'Wuppertal 2025'. The aim is to make Wuppertal a bicycle city by 2025.

### INTERNET ADDRESS

[www.nordbahntrasse.de](http://www.nordbahntrasse.de)



**Reducing inequality and discrimination is a goal of the 2030 Agenda.** This means tackling not only inequality of income and wealth, but also inequality of opportunity. Everyone should participate in economic progress and social achievements regardless of their income, gender, age, ethnicity, background or religion, and regardless of whether or not they have a disability.

## PARTICIPATING IN LIFE

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

The municipality of Nieder-Olm is in the process of realising its action plan to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It includes a large number of measures designed to enable persons with disabilities to participate in the life of the municipality. At the same time this is designed to raise awareness of their needs among all citizens.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Announcements such as the one concerning basic social security for senior citizens are being made available in 'plain language'. In the town hall the municipality has funded a tactile guidance system for the blind, and in the school has funded a lift. Since 2011, holidays for children with disabilities have also been offered. Measures such as these ensure greater participation in a wide variety of areas across society.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

In 2010 the municipality of Nieder-Olm set up an advisory board for persons with disabilities. A year later, Nieder-Olm was the first municipality of its kind (i.e. an association of towns) in Rhineland-Palatinate to launch an action plan for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities has since increased.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The municipality of Nieder-Olm will evaluate the progress it has made in implementing its action plan at regular intervals. It intends to persuade associations, churches and other organisations to work in partnership with it. The municipality has also applied to the Aktion Mensch association (a voluntary organisation dedicated to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities) to be included in its 'inclusive municipalities' study as a model municipality.



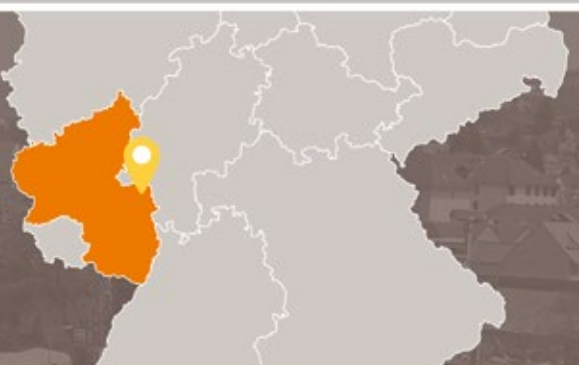
## Nieder-Olm ➔ Rhineland-Palatinate



Population:  
**32,390**



Mayor:  
**Ralph Spiegler**





## PARTICIPATION NEED NOT BE EXPENSIVE

**Reducing inequality and discrimination – to make SDG 10 of the 2030 Agenda a reality, something needs to change in many areas of our society. The municipality of Nieder-Olm is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to participate in the life of society.**

For this purpose in 2010 Nieder-Olm created an advisory board for persons with disabilities. A year later, the municipality was the first of its kind (an association of towns) in Rhineland-Palatinate to launch an action plan for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. 'We went on a journey around the municipality with our eyes open', says Ralph Spiegler, mayor of Nieder-Olm. Where are there issues to be addressed? How can we change things? In close consultation with the advisory board for persons with disabilities, the mayor and the responsible professional bodies, targets were defined and a time line was set for implementing the action plan and the tasks it contains.

There are very different areas where greater participation needs to be facilitated. One of the first projects the municipality implemented was the inclusive holiday pass. The holidays offered to schoolchildren were widened in order to include children with disabilities. A great deal has happened in Nieder-Olm over the last few years. A school was equipped with a lift, and the town hall foyer was made fully accessible. Structural measures like these are expensive. Yet the lack of lifts is not the only thing that prevents people with disabilities from participating in everyday life. 'It's often a matter of the small measures that are not so expensive', says Mr Spiegler. In the town hall, for instance, there are now tactile door signs that blind people can read. A number of official announcements have also been made in 'plain language', i.e. language that is easy to read and understand. The workforce of the municipality have been trained in the basics of sign language.

Ralph Spiegler found that everybody can benefit when the needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account. Measures include official letters that are easy to understand, or a guidance system that makes it easier for persons with impaired vision to find their way to the citizens' office. 'More and more people are recognising the fact that it is in everyone's interests', says Mr Spiegler.



At the town hall a tactile guidance system leads people to their destination.  
(Photo: Verbandsgemeinde Nieder-Olm)

Progress is evaluated at regular intervals. What measures were a success? Where was the plan too ambitious? What can still be done? The municipality has just applied to the Aktion Mensch association (which is dedicated to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities) to be included in its 'inclusive municipalities' study as a model municipality. This study looks at how social spaces can be designed and further developed inclusively.

One of the major tasks is to raise all citizens' awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities. It is important that people with and without disabilities meet and talk to each other face-to-face, so that citizens without disabilities can discover what challenges people with disabilities face in their daily lives. According to Ralph Spiegler, the advisory board for persons with disabilities has made a major contribution here. He explains that the board has done a splendid job of persuading people, drawing their attention to problems and motivating them to eliminate those problems. Associations and churches can support efforts to increase participation. In the municipality of Nieder-Olm the drive to take things further remains: 'We'd like to see the concerns of persons with disabilities being taken into account in all respects whenever measures are being planned, when decisions are being taken and when activities are being implemented, rather like automatically checking the statics when building a house', says Gracia Schade, chair of the advisory board for persons with disabilities.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

[www.vg-nieder-olm.de](http://www.vg-nieder-olm.de)

[www.aktion-mensch.de/kommune-inklusiv](http://www.aktion-mensch.de/kommune-inklusiv)



Cities and municipalities are responsible for delivering general interest services. However, to an increasing extent the challenges that need to be met in municipal development and municipal management can only be tackled on a cross-sectoral basis: climate change, demographic development, migration, inclusion. To implement sustainable development at the local level, integrated strategies are needed.

## SUSTAINABILITY KNOWS NO SECTORS

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

The municipality of Neumünster's Integrated Urban Development Master Plan is one example of such a strategy. Information is managed systematically and presented transparently in order to support decision-making by administrators and policy-makers.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

To cut across the sector-based organisation of the municipality, in 2014 Neumünster set up an office for work connected with the master plan. The office is attached to the department for urban planning and urban development. This master plan office is supported by a cross-departmental master plan working group.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

Every one to two months a working group meets that is attended by all departments, including budget planning, statistics and gender equality, the coordination desk for integration and the staff council. The working group compiles information, discusses tasks and reports every three months to the responsible policy-makers and administrators.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The municipality intends to expand its budget reporting system to include a traffic light system that clearly indicates which key measures from the master plan have been completed, which are currently being implemented, which are still being clarified and which have been recommended by the administration. Linking the master plan targets and measures through the budget planning system will enable decision-makers to update plans at any point rather than adhering rigidly to what was originally put down on paper. This will turn the master plan into a dynamic management instrument.



## Neumünster → Schleswig-Holstein



Population:  
**81,000**



Mayor:  
**Dr Olaf Taurus**



## INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEUMÜNSTER

Cities occupy just two per cent of the Earth's land area, yet more than half the world's population live in urban spaces – and the figure is rising. SDG 11 helps address growing urbanisation, and focuses on sustainable local planning and governance to guarantee the quality of life of the world's population. The criteria for sustainable local development include areas as diverse as clean air, affordable housing, safe traffic routes, inclusion and disaster risk management.

Given the large number of tasks that a municipality has to deal with, individual goals can easily escape the attention of the actors involved. This applies both to local administrators and to political decision-makers. By 2030 the UN aims to increase the number of cities that adopt and implement integrated policies for managing this diverse array of tasks. The municipality of Neumünster is in the process of putting just such a management system in place – its Integrated Urban Development Master Plan.

### TURNING A PLAN INTO REALITY

Every municipality is familiar with the scenario – a plan is devised, discussed, approved, and then at some point disappears into a desk. Something similar also happened to the 'Neumünster Integrated Urban Development Master Plan 2020'. It was developed in 2006 in order to boost the municipality's identity and raise the quality of local housing and life in general. In 2013 the municipal council decided to update the plan, but this time wanted to do things better. 'Our intention was to develop a system that was dynamic and responsive, and that everybody can use at any time', says municipal planning officer Uta Rautenstrauch. The first milestone in establishing sustainable management is a new system of objectives for the master plan which the municipal council approved in November 2016 following a process of intensive consultation and discussion.

Five overarching objectives were defined: maintain and strengthen Neumünster as a regional centre; stabilise the population or increase it to between 80,000 and 90,000; take various sections of the population and their special needs into account; develop unique selling points and a specific profile, and make the town (centre) more attractive.



In Neumünster urban development planning is supported by an Integrated Urban Development Master Plan. (Photo: Stadt Neumünster)

Under this 'roof' the municipality uses the six product lines of the municipal budget as activity areas, ranging from 'central administration', to 'environmental management' to 'central financial flows'. The product lines are allocated product line objectives. The key measures which the municipality approves must be suitable for allocation to this system of objectives. Developing a new website is a key measure for the product line 'central administration', and is allocated to the product line objective 'modernise administration'; developing a new housing estate is allocated to the product line 'environmental management' and the product line objective 'make Neumünster a more attractive place to live'; adjusting local rates of taxation serves the objective 'make fiscal policy sustainable' for the product line 'central financial flows'.

This information will be allocated to the relevant lines in the double-entry budget plan. Since all administrative personnel and policy-makers have access to the system, the municipality's budget and projects will be more transparent. In the future, anyone will be able to look up what the municipality is currently working on. Uta Rautenstrauch is convinced: 'Decision-making will be improved, or will at least be made transparent, when it is based on better information.' And if a year passes and nothing happens with regard to a particular objective, it will be necessary to ask whether that objective should be retained.

### INTERNET ADDRESS

[www.neumuenster.de/cms/index.php](http://www.neumuenster.de/cms/index.php)



**SDG 12 Is about ensuring sustainable patterns of consumption and production.** This means organising our economic life permanently such that we do not consume at the expense of the environment or humankind – either here or in other countries. Managing natural resources more efficiently, conserving nature, respecting human rights and social standards and ensuring fair trade – these are the challenges.

## DEPOSIT AND RETURN SYSTEM FOR COFFEE CUPS IN FREIBURG

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Coffee to go is very popular, particularly in cities. The other side of the coin is that huge quantities of avoidable waste are generated, which increases the environmental burden. In the city of Freiburg alone, every year 12 million disposable cups need to be managed as general waste. The city intends to counteract this with a deposit and return system.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Since November 2016, cafés, bakeries and restaurants in the inner city participating in the scheme have been serving coffee in the 'Freiburg cup' – a returnable receptacle for coffee to go. The deposit is one euro. The cups can be returned to all participating outlets, where they are washed and reused.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

The 'Freiburg cup' is a joint campaign by the City of Freiburg and the municipal waste utility company Abfallwirtschaft und Stadtreinigung (ASF). They provide the operators of the outlets with the cups free of charge. The city is continuing to pay for the introduction of the system, while ASF is responsible for coordination. The catering trade in Freiburg was also involved in designing the scheme.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Initially 14 cafés were involved. Four months after the cups had been introduced, 72 establishments were already on board as partners. The deposit system has been extended to other parts of the city. The city and ASF plan to fully establish the system within one year and subsequently hand it over to a private service provider.



## Freiburg ➔ Baden-Württemberg



Population:  
**226,393**



Mayor:  
**Dieter Salomon**





## NACHHALTIGKEIT TO GO

**One important target on the path to a sustainable economy is the challenge of preventing waste. Here it is important not least to recognise and address negative developments that occurred in the past. One example is coffee cups to go.**

According to Environmental Action Germany, 320,000 coffee to go cups are consumed every hour in this country – almost three billion cups a year. A huge number, caused solely by the fact that for a number of years people been ordering their coffee to go. The problem is that disposable cups constitute waste which is not recycled. Even the manufacturing process uses largely new paper fibres. This is compounded by a plastic lining, and plastic lids or stirrers. So from an environmental perspective the cost of the coffee cup to go is high. Too high, in Freiburg's opinion – which is why it is tackling the problem.

In November 2016 Freiburg became the first city in Germany to introduce a deposit and return system for coffee cups. On the initiative of the city's environmental department, together with Freiburg's waste management utility company Abfallwirtschaft und Stadtreinigung (ASF) the so-called 'Freiburg cup' was developed: a stable, dishwasher-safe returnable cup that is made available to cafés and bakeries free of charge. Since then, customers in participating cafés have been able to choose whether they would prefer to have their coffee to go in a returnable cup and pay a deposit of one euro. They can redeem their deposit at any participating outlet. The cups are washed and reused. The costs for the returnable cups – so far approximately 24,000 euros – are met by the City of Freiburg, while responsibility for coordinating the scheme rests with ASF.

### ESTABLISHING THE DEPOSIT SYSTEM PERMANENTLY

No costs are incurred by participating cafés, hence their interest in the scheme is relatively strong. 'Thanks to the broad response in the media when the campaign was launched the cup became a talking point in the city almost overnight. Everybody wanted one – and the Freiburg cup has remained popular', says Michael Broglin, Managing Director of ASF. The figures prove it: four months after the project was launched, 72 establishments were already taking part. The deposit system has now been extended beyond the city cen-



In Freiburg a returnable cup for coffee to go is designed to help prevent waste. (Photo: Abfallwirtschaft und Stadtreinigung Freiburg GmbH (ASF GmbH))

tre to other parts of the city. At the end of March there were 14,000 cups in circulation. ASF and the municipality are continuing to work on optimising the deposit and return system. 'Among other things we intend to improve the return of used cups, for instance through a smartphone-accessible city map showing all the establishments taking part in the scheme', says Gerda Stuchlik, Mayor for the Environment.

This is important because there is still a long way to go until the pilot project really takes effect. In Freiburg alone, 12 million empty cups are produced every year. The municipality and ASF intend to firmly establish the 'Freiburg cup' in the local catering trade within one year. Since ASF, which is a waste management company, is not supposed to become a permanent 'cup provider', there are plans to hand over the established deposit and return system to a start-up company which can then combine environmental goals with economic targets.

This might be made easier by the fact that the Freiburg cup is attracting interest beyond the city limits. Other cities in Germany such as Hamburg, Munich and Berlin have either already introduced systems to prevent disposable coffee cups based on the Freiburg model, or are planning to do so.

### INTERNET ADDRESS

[www.freiburg.de](http://www.freiburg.de)



**Protecting the global climate is one of the major challenges of the 21st century.** The UN climate agreement reached in Paris at the end of 2015 sets the international target of keeping the increase in global temperature well below 2°C. If this target is not met there will be an increased risk of irreversible climate changes, and the scope for people and ecosystems to adapt to climate change will be reduced. SDG 13 relies on international cooperation to combat the global threat of climate change.

## ACT LOCAL TO ACHIEVE THIS GLOBAL GOAL

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Since 2011 Potsdam (capital city of the federal state of Brandenburg) and Zanzibar City have been linked through a climate partnership. As part of the Service Agency's 'Municipal Climate Partnerships' project the two partner cities shared ideas and expertise at regular intervals and drew up a joint programme of action for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

In Zanzibar City there is a public square which is badly affected by flooding. To counteract this the World Bank financed drainage measures. To complement this Potsdam and Zanzibar planted trees. The partnership addresses appropriate waste management. Solar-powered lamps are being financed and education projects are being initiated. The universities of Potsdam and Zanzibar City also maintain a partnership, as do two primary schools.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

Since 2008 the municipality of Potsdam has had a coordinator for climate action. When the Service Agency launched the pilot phase of the project '50 Municipal Climate Partnerships by 2015' in 2011, the City of Potsdam took part. It already had links with Zanzibar. There are now a number of projects through which Potsdam and Zanzibar are making a contribution to global climate action.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

In Zanzibar City there is a housing development which the GDR built there in the 1960s. Here, as part of the climate partnership there are plans to modernise the grounds of the old GDR buildings. In Potsdam a similar rehabilitation project has succeeded in making the Gartenstadt Drewitz estate more socially sound and energy-efficient.



## Potsdam → Brandenburg



Population:  
**170,000**



Mayor:  
**Jann Jakobs**





## JOINING FORCES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

The rise in global temperature must be contained. At the same time measures must be taken to adapt to climate change. To achieve SDG 13, as well as joint international efforts it will also be necessary to incorporate measures to mitigate climate change into national policy-making. This is why the Service Agency initiated the project 'Municipal Climate Partnerships' and is now supporting some 60 climate partnerships worldwide. One of these is between Potsdam and Zanzibar City.

Since 2008 Potsdam has had a 'coordinator for climate action'. When Potsdam and Zanzibar City entered into a climate partnership in 2011 the coordinator also assumed responsibility for coordinating its activities. The partnership began with representatives of the two municipalities meeting in order to identify starting points for cooperation. They asked the questions: What do we have in common? And how can we support each other? 'At the municipal level people quickly get round to issues of infrastructure, resources and money', says Cordine Lippert, coordinator for climate action in Potsdam. 'In these areas we can help each other a great deal and share lessons learned.' At the same time Potsdam can also prompt infrastructure projects in Zanzibar City. Under the 'Partnership projects for sustainable local development' (Nakopa) programme, the Service Agency has delivered 60,000 euros to fund implementation of the jointly developed programme of action. This has enabled Potsdam to support Zanzibar City with a major challenge. Mnazi Mmoja Grounds, a centrally located public square, is regularly hit by flooding. The World Bank provided support to fund drainage measures. To complement this, Nakopa funds were used to plant 50 trees around the public square to serve as protection and at the same time provide shade for children playing and sportspersons. Twenty benches and 20 waste bins were also put up and twelve solar-powered lamps were installed to make the square attractive again.

Alongside the infrastructure projects there are also a number of programmes designed to create awareness of climate change. For instance there is a partnership between the primary schools in Potsdam and in Zanzibar City. Environmental teams have been formed at the two schools, and the children write letters to each other to find out what everyday



Solar panels in Zanzibar – this African city has a climate partnership with Potsdam. (Photo: Koordinierungsstelle Klimaschutz LHP)

life is like 12,000 kilometres away. Potsdam also succeeded in getting the Chamber of Industry and Commerce on board as a supporter. The Chamber has entered into an education partnership with Zanzibar City. Through train the trainer programmes, this partnership aims to improve the theoretical foundations underpinning vocational training. The University of Potsdam and Zanzibar are also partnering for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Since 2006 preparatory work has been under way on another urban development project. Zanzibar City is home to a prefabricated housing estate, Kikwajuni, which was built by the GDR in the 1960s. There the two sides plan to improve the infrastructure, and on the Kilmani estate they plan to reactivate the former botanical garden. Another aim is to remove the illegal rubbish tip that has grown up there and revitalise the green spaces in its place. The Gartenstadt Drewitz estate in Potsdam will serve as a model for this. Today, this once dilapidated prefabricated housing estate is now an attractive residential area. Can the lessons learned here be transferred to Zanzibar? This was a question that four students – two from Germany and two from Zanzibar – spent six months thinking about. Their work was supported by the ASA Municipal programme, in which the Service Agency works with the ASA training programme to enable young people to develop their skills in a development setting. Zanzibar City and Potsdam intend to continue their joint engagement. Since 28 April 2017 they have been partnering not only to combat climate change. The two cities have now also entered into an official twinning arrangement, which focuses on both economic cooperation and civil society exchange.

### INTERNET ADDRESS

<http://en.potsdam.de>

**SDG 14: CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



Earth's sensitive marine ecosystems are under threat from pollution, overfishing and acidification. To protect them we must reduce waste and nutrient pollution. Marine and coastal ecosystems must be managed sustainably. Efforts must be made to stop acidification and put an end to over-fishing. Small-scale fishermen must be given easier access to marine resources and markets.

**SAFEGUARDING THE NORTH SEA AS A HABITAT**

**➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?**

Plastic waste is threatening the world's oceans. The island of Juist is implementing various measures to fight beach litter, and is working to ensure that less plastic waste is generated locally. Furthermore, Juist has joined forces with the six other East Frisian islands – Borkum, Norderney, Baltrum, Langeoog, Spiekeroog and Wangerooge – as well as the town of Norden to form the 'Guardians of the Wadden Sea'. Together they intend to protect the North Sea and the coastal region.

**➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?**

Together with Friends of the Earth Germany, the island of Juist has installed pallet cages on the beaches in order to collect and dispose of plastic waste. The other East Frisian islands have adopted the pallet cages.

**➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?**

The island municipality of Juist is pursuing a systematic policy for sustainability, and has signed the specimen resolution 'The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Building Sustainability at the Local Level', drafted by the Association of German Cities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

**➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

The island municipality of Juist is implementing various projects in an effort to ensure that less plastic waste is generated on the island. It has approved corresponding procurement guidelines. Furthermore, it is also supporting the hotel and catering trade in reducing the use of plastic.



**Juist** ➔ Lower Saxony



Population:  
**1,596**



Mayor:  
**Tjark Goerges**





## PLASTIC IS THREATENING THE OCEANS – THE NORTH SEA IS ALSO AFFECTED

Marine habitats are under threat. Toxins and plastic waste from the mainland are reaching the oceans. Currently approximately 6.4 million tons of plastic waste reaches the oceans worldwide every year. 20,000 tons of this reaches the North Sea. Every year around 10,000 birds and marine mammals die as a result of marine pollution. And every year several tons of waste are washed up on the East Frisian Islands. The sustainable management of marine resources must therefore aim to prevent or reduce all forms of marine pollution, including marine waste and over-fertilisation.

### PALLET CAGES FOR PLASTIC WASTE

The inhabitants of the East Frisian Islands have decided to fight plastic waste. The island of Juist is leading the way. For years it has been holding days of action, during which volunteers have cleared the beaches of washed-up waste. Many holidaymakers also keep the beaches clean during the holiday season.

In 2010, together with Friends of the Earth Germany the municipality launched the project 'Plastic-free Juist'. This project aimed to support the voluntary waste collectors and organise disposal. 'We have developed pallet cages in which we collect the waste', says Nadja Ziebarth, Director of the Friends of the Earth Marine Protection Office in Bremen. Visitors to the beach can deposit any waste they have collected there. 'The municipality then collects the waste and takes it to the harbour', explains Thomas Vodde, sustainability officer for Juist. Final disposal on the mainland is funded by the district of Aurich.

And it's not just a matter of a few old fishing nets. 'It's no joke when you see all the things that get washed up on the beach', says Thomas Vodde. As he explains, this includes absolutely everything – from small plastic items to TV sets and even fridges. In 2013, a total of 4.6 tons of waste had been accumulated by the time the pallet cages were emptied. This is another reason why the idea of pallet cages is now also being adopted on the other East Frisian islands. Juist's environmental protection and climate action programme includes further measures designed to make the island more plastic-free. A procurement regulation ensures that the municipality avoids plastic when procuring goods.



The island of Juist is fighting plastic waste in order to protect the sea and the coastal region. (Photo: Hans-Werner Schultz / pixelio.de)

Through its programme 'Fast Track to Climate Action' the Federal Environment Ministry will in the future be promoting the procurement of returnable cups and organic cotton bags. These will be made available to the local catering industry free of charge in order to prevent disposable cups and plastic bags. Hotels on the island will no longer use shower gels that contain microplastics. So people in Juist have been working to preserve the oceans in the spirit of SDG 14 for a long time. Accordingly, the municipal council has signed the specimen resolution 'The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Building Sustainability at the Local Level', drafted by the Association of German Cities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

### 'GUARDIANS OF THE WADDEN SEA'

All seven of the East Frisian Islands Borkum, Juist, Norderney, Baltrum, Langeoog, Spiekeroog and Wangerooge, and the town of Norden, wish to protect and preserve the coast. They have joined forces to form the 'Guardians of the Wadden Sea' in order to tackle their problems together. Those responsible on the island are discussing the matter and developing new ideas to protect the North Sea. Their aim is to protect the sea and the coast, in order to preserve ecosystems and at the same time promote sustainable tourism.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

[www.juist.de](http://www.juist.de)

[www.wattenmeer-achter.de](http://www.wattenmeer-achter.de)

**SDG 15: PROTECT; RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS**



A wide array of strategies are required in order to fight biodiversity loss. These range from sustainable forest management to halting desertification; from ending trade in protected plants and animals, to the restoration of mountain ecosystems. The protection and sustainable management of terrestrial ecosystems are also supported by the goals for food security (SDG 2), water supply (SDG 6) and climate action (SDG 13).

**NATURE AND HUMANKIND IN HARMONY**

**➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?**

The municipality of Bad Saulgau in Baden-Württemberg, which has a population of 18,000, has been actively involved in nature conservation for decades, and provides an example of how municipalities can nurture biodiversity locally. Bad Saulgau is also a member of the 'Municipalities for biological diversity' association, in which 114 municipalities committed to nature conservation have joined forces.

**➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?**

Since 2016 Bad Saulgau has managed all public green spaces to environmental standards. This is unique in Germany. This 'Transformation of uniform green spaces into species-rich grounds' was the 'Nature Conservation Project of the Year 2016'.

**➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?**

Fully lawned areas were developed into species-rich flowered areas that require barely any pesticides or fertilisers. These colourful areas attract many bird and insect species. Citizens who were initially sceptical were eventually convinced through participatory activities and extensive communication of the objectives.

**➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

A so-called 'nature theme park' is currently being created: The four biodiversity themes of plants, animals, geology and water will be linked right across Bad Saulgau. 'Nature tours' have just been launched. Trained nature guides will show groups of visitors on two-wheeled Segway PTs various themed areas.



**Bad Saulgau** ➔ Baden-Württemberg



Population:  
**18,000**



Mayor:  
**Doris Schröter**





## SUSTAINABILITY AS A BRAND

For Bad Saulgau, 'Nature and landscape has become the most important marketing element' – according to the municipality's Environmental Officer Thomas Lehenherr. Today, this town in Upper Swabia has more than 300,000 overnight visitors every year. Thanks also no doubt to its title 'Regional capital of biodiversity', representatives of many other municipalities, public authorities and associations want to see for themselves how biodiversity has become part of the life of the municipality.

SDG 15 is worded very broadly Target 15.5 calls on municipalities to reduce the degradation of natural habitats and halt the loss of biodiversity. It also calls for action to prevent the extinction of threatened species.

### THE ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER AS INITIATOR

1992 was the year in which Bad Saulgau municipal council created the position of environmental officer. The incumbent was mandated to 'take the municipality forwards with environmental issues'. Yet it was not just the environmental officer alone, but also the involvement of citizens, associations, educational institutions and indeed all relevant groups that made the environmental master plan he developed a success.

### UNITED IN AN ALLIANCE OF 114 MUNICIPALITIES

Bad Saulgau was and is not alone in this. The entire alliance of German 'Municipalities for biological diversity', which is based in Radolfzell (Baden-Württemberg) and now has 114 members, sees the preservation of biological diversity as a key task. It formulates fundamental objectives, and 'places individual projects and activities in a wider context', says Tobias Herbst, project manager of the alliance. The model for success is the same in all participating municipalities: A biodiversity strategy approved by official decision-making bodies creates binding requirements, and strengthens everyone's awareness of the fact that nature protection is a joint task for all the municipality. The association has named this strategy 'Life – Nature – Diversity'.

### MANY ACTIVITIES – ONE CONCEPT

In Bad Saulgau the sustainability team that work with environmental officer Thomas Lehenherr and senior municipal gardener Jens Wehner get all sorts of individual activities up and running. Yet they all pursue the same overarching objective of local biological diversity. Examples include the



Species diversity instead of uniform green – flowers blooming along the roadside in Bad Saulgau (Photo: Stadt Bad Saulgau)

perennial flowered areas alongside roads and cycle paths, or the unsealed traffic islands with species-rich blends of shrubs or verge species that thrive on gravel.

The lawned areas that preceded them had to be mowed 20 times a year, whereas the flowered areas developed over years now only have to be tended twice a year. Moreover, these colourful areas attract many bird and insect species and are an attractive sight. Many citizens who were initially sceptical were eventually convinced through participatory activities and extensive communication of the objectives. For example, every year environmental hiking days and information events are held for citizens along species-rich biotopes and town-centre green spaces.

This transformation of public green spaces began more than 20 years ago. Today there are almost twice as many 'colourful' areas as there were then. This does not require more personnel. As the environmental officer Mr Lehenherr explains, 'The costs of garden maintenance and planting have fallen significantly'.

### AND THINGS CONTINUE....

The planned nature theme park with the four areas water, plants, animals and geology will bring together all the educational nature trails, biotopes and other environmental attractions. Here, the municipality and local tour operator will even be providing nature tours on Segway PTs. One entirely new project is the 'Town you could eat'. This involves growing or vegetables in plant pots in the town centre, all of which are available for passers-by to try.

### INTERNET ADDRESS

[www.kommbio.de](http://www.kommbio.de)

**SDG 16: PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS**



SDG 16 aims to create peaceful and just societies, provide universal access to justice, and build effective and accountable institutions. The aim here is to significantly reduce all violence and violence-related mortality, and especially child abuse and exploitation. This will involve strengthening the rule of law, drastically reducing illegal financial and weapons flows, and fighting organised crime.

### BUILDING BRIDGES FOR PEACE

#### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

The German city of Jena in Thuringia is twinned with the Palestinian town of Beit Jala. It is also part of a three-way relationship that includes the French municipality of Aubervilliers. The three municipalities have now also established cooperation agreements with Gilboa in Israel.

#### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Links with Beit Jala emerged from 1997 onwards, initially at the level of citizen, following a visit by today's Mayor of Jena, Dr Albrecht Schröter. This was followed by reciprocal visits by associations, cultural groups and municipal delegations. The twinning agreement was signed in 2011 at an official ceremony in Beit Jala.

#### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

One key starting point is the annual festival of peace and culture in Beit Jala. Municipal policy-makers and administrators, interested citizens, sports teams and cultural ensembles travel to Palestine to attend this festival. In 2015, together with the Service Agency Communities in One World, Jena hosted the Second Conference of German-Palestinian Municipal Partnerships. In September 2017 the series was continued with the Third Partnership Conference in Jericho.

#### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Intensive work is under way to further develop meetings between Jena and Beit Jala. There is also an active network of eight other German-Palestinian (project) partnerships. This network, which is supported by the Service Agency, creates space for meeting, networking and sharing municipal expertise.



Jena → Thuringia



Population:  
**110,000**



Mayor:  
**Dr Albrecht Schröter**







## TURNING COOPERATION INTO FRIENDSHIP

Creating peaceful societies is a key goal of the 2030 Agenda. The path to peace and friendship is often a long one, but it pays off. This is demonstrated by the twinning arrangement between Jena in Thuringia and Beit Jala on the West Bank. It began with two trips to Palestine made by Albrecht Schröter, who at the time was a pastor. In 1995 he also visited Beit Jala, which is home to one of the oldest Christian communities in the world. This link between the Protestant pastor and Beit Jala developed into what he likes to call a 'lasting and productive relationship'. He reports that he 'took his passion for that country with him' when he went into politics, and became mayor in 2006. When Dr Schröter discovered that Jena's twin city in France, Aubervilliers, was already cooperating with Beit Jala, he decided to establish a partnership in Palestine.

From his years of experience, Dr Schröter concludes that a municipal partnership – like a romantic relationship – must pass through three stages of development: 'First of all the two sides meet, then they do something together, and finally they make a firm pledge to enter into a relationship.' This was followed initially by links at the level of citizens, in some cases also involving teamwork with Aubervilliers. In late 2008 the two sides 'got engaged'. In 2010 they then met at a first festival of culture and peace in Beit Jala, and in September 2011 they signed the agreement at a ceremony in Palestine.

Prior to that Jena had already noticed that Palestinian municipalities were very interested in partnerships with German municipalities. People in Palestine wanted people to come and see exactly what was going on for themselves rather than having their opinions shaped by propaganda, explains Dr Schröter. They were not interested in money, but rather in expert advice, for instance regarding municipal services, tourism, culture and social cohesion. 'They simply wish to leave isolation behind', says Dr Schröter.

The fact that they have succeeded in doing so is demonstrated by the many visits in both directions and the joint projects between Jena and Beit Jala. Ties emerged for instance with a rehabilitation network and with a women's cooperative in Beit Jala, whose works have since enriched the Christmas market in Jena. Meetings take place between theatre groups and circus projects in Jena and Beit Jala, and there are church



Footballers in Jena's fan project with their partners in Beit Jala (Photo: Fanprojekt Jena)

communities that cooperate with each other. The fan project in Jena is supporting football in Palestine, and schools have developed exchange programmes. In Thuringia workshops have also been developed for young Palestinians on dealing with violence, and on treating women and men equally.

According to the mayor, who visits Beit Jala himself once every three years, the aim is for as many citizens as possible to meet and for as many associations as possible to correspond with each other. The city council has also earmarked an amount of 50,000 euros for development cooperation in the municipal budget, which is open to all Jena's twinning schemes, including the partnership with San Marcos in Nicaragua. In Beit Jala this item is being used to build a library and a football field, and to develop a classroom in a former monastery.

Together with the municipalities of Bergisch Gladbach, Xanten and Cologne plus the relevant municipal partners from Palestine, in 2016 and 2017 the City of Jena is implementing a further project – using funds from the Service Agency's NAKOPA programme. One aim is to create an office for the joint coordination and marketing of tourism in the environs of Bethlehem, which remain largely undeveloped for this purpose. Local capacities will be organised and a viable marketing strategy will be developed so that a large proportion of the value created will remain in the region. In this setting tourism will function not only as a driver of peace and mutual encounter, but also as a way to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

[www.jena.de/de/startseite/210413](http://www.jena.de/de/startseite/210413)

<http://skew.engagement-global.de/funding-from-the-nakopa-programme.html>

**SDG 17: STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



**Global sustainable development needs global partnerships.** They will help mobilise financial resources, boost international knowledge sharing, make global trade more just and reduce the over-indebtedness of poor countries. Multi-stakeholder partnerships will be developed in order to support achievement of the SDGs in all countries.

**SUSTAINABILITY KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES**

**➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?**

The City of Leipzig in the federal state of Saxony and the Municipality of Travnik in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been cooperating since 1997, initially on the level of an informal friendship. Ideas are generated by a vibrant bilateral citizens' association. In 2003 the two sides turned their relationship into an official twinning scheme.

**➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?**

The focus is on exchange between people, enabling each side to get to know how people on the other side work, live and think, and to get to know their strengths and weaknesses. Citizens and businesses in Leipzig are supporting the town of Travnik in the Balkans in overcoming the legacy of war and building sustainable structures. One sign of friendship is that in Leipzig there is now a 'Travnik Street', and in Travnik there is a 'Leipzig Square'.

**➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?**

The members of the association get involved selectively in projects for democracy, the environment, sports, culture and economic affairs. They also cultivate personal friendships. Since 1998 citizens have made annual visits to strengthen links at the grassroots level. In 2016, donations collected in Leipzig were used to fund a new organ at the Guca Gora Monastery.

**➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

In January 2017 the two municipalities raised their cooperation of 20 years to a new level by agreeing to enter into a 'Municipal Partnership for Sustainability' as part of a Service Agency pilot project. This involves embarking on a dialogue process, and long-term and systematic cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs.



**Leipzig** ➔ Saxony

Population:  
**575,000**

Mayor:  
**Burkhard Jung**





## FROM HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SUSTAINABLE COOPERATION

The civil war in ex-Yugoslavia that lasted until 1995 has left traces that can also be seen and felt in Travnik in central Bosnia. When the association to promote the partnership between Leipzig and Travnik was founded in 1997, the primary aim was to therefore to build networks and provide humanitarian assistance.

One of the first successful projects involved installing a heating system for a child day-care centre in Travnik. One result of the war was the destruction of the organ in the Guca Gora Franciscan Monastery. The visitors from Saxony were impressed by the courage with which the monks had given refuge to members of all ethnic groups during the war. They therefore organised four concerts with Bosnian elements in Leipzig, thus raising the 7,000 euros needed for a new organ.

The work of the association now focuses more on promoting youth and economic development. In close cooperation with Leipzig town hall, many projects have been realised that were designed chiefly 'to support the systematic objective of enabling a municipal partnership to grow from the bottom up', says Michael Weichert, who has chaired the association for many years as well as being a member of the federal state parliament. He explains that a cooperation arrangement of this kind can only be made sustainable in the long-term if ambitious citizens are actively involved in generating ideas.

The association currently has 120 members in Leipzig and 33 in Travnik. They work to facilitate exchange between institutions, organisations and private individuals in the two municipalities. There are a number of joint projects, school exchange schemes, reciprocal internships, business trips and many other activities besides. Small and medium-sized enterprises in Saxony get involved and make a contribution through campaigns such as 'Water meters for more sustainability'. In 2009 the European Parliament recognised this engagement by awarding the European Citizens' Prize. 'This partnership works because both sides benefit from it – and it works well perhaps for the very reason that Travnik is so 'small' and Leipzig so 'big'', thinks Mr Weichert.

In 2016 the two municipalities decided to take part in the Service Agency's pilot project 'Municipal Partnerships for



Signing up to the Leipzig-Travnik partnership for sustainability (Photo: Barbara Frommann)

Sustainability'. They are supporting each other in integrating the themes of the 2030 Agenda into existing urban development plans and strategies. Regular expert meetings and joint workshops are held for this purpose. Here too, the differences between the two municipalities are an advantage. Dr Gabriele Goldfuß, Head of Department for International Cooperation, City of Leipzig, gives the following example: In Leipzig, urban agriculture is currently being developed in manifold ways. In Travnik, agriculture is part of people's everyday lives. Leipzig, which is in eastern Germany, is sharing the lessons it learned in its process of development and transformation for more sustainability after 1989. In the process of developing a new and viable economy, sustainability needs to play a role as early on as possible, explains Dr Goldfuß. It is then important to get citizens and councillors on board right from the start. The exchange of ideas and expertise on strategic local development between Leipzig and Travnik takes this into account. In the end both sides profit: 'You always learn the most by teaching', says Dr Goldfuß. She also emphasises that sustainability is a topic that must be harmonised Europe-wide.

### INTERNET ADDRESSES

<http://english.leipzig.de>

<http://skew.engagement-global.de/municipal-partnerships-for-sustainability.html>

**ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH**  
**Service für Entwicklungsinitiativen**

Tulpenfeld 7 · 53113 Bonn  
Postfach 12 05 25 · 53047 Bonn  
Telefon +49 228 20 717-0  
Telefax +49 228 20 717-150

[info@engagement-global.de](mailto:info@engagement-global.de)  
[www.engagement-global.de](http://www.engagement-global.de)

## MUNICIPALITIES FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE 17 SDGs

### THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On 25 September 2015 the 193 Member States of the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to a preamble it comprises four parts:

- (I) the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government
- (II) the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which encompass the 17 SDGs and 169 Targets
- (III) the reaffirmation of the global partnership with the aim of mobilising and delivering appropriate funds for efficient and effective implementation of the SDGs
- (IV) the framework for monitoring, reporting and reviewing implementation of the Agenda

The centrepiece of the 2030 Agenda is the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These are linked both directly and indirectly to the municipal level. Worldwide, municipalities are therefore playing a key role in implementing the 2030 Agenda as the level that is most responsive to citizens and their concerns. This compilation highlights which measures are making a contribution to specific SDGs. It contains examples from the field that identify corresponding activities for each of the 17 SDGs. The 2030 Agenda is highly diverse, hence this compilation falls far short of covering all the possible options.

Have you got a good example of implementation of the 17 SDGs from your municipality? If you have, then please get in touch with us.

On behalf of



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development