



Newsletter First Annual Conference „eSchool4S“ No. 1/January 2015

1st Annual Conference in Esslingen, Germany October 27, 2014



Education for Sustainable Development – Concepts and Realization...
ESD between Europe, the Danube Region and the UNESCO Decade...

News

Project information: E-School for Sustainability in the Danube Region (eSchool4S)

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Working Together for Sustainability in Education: Working together for sustainability in education – these words get to the heart of the direction the Danube project "eSchool4S" is aimed at.

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Participants: 34 participants from 10 educational institutions located in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania.

Presenters: Ministerialraetin [Sabine Aichholz](#), Head of Unit European and International Affairs at the Ministry of Education Baden-Wuerttemberg; [Doris Thurau](#), Head of GIZ Regional Office South (Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg); [Dr. Thomas Hoffmann](#) of the State Seminar for Didactics and Teacher Training Karlsruhe; [Dr. Danijela Petrovic](#) from the University of Belgrade. Moderator of the topic "ESD between Europe, the Danube Region and the UNESCO Decade" was [Gabriela Pico Gamboa](#), project coordinator of the GIZ.

Hosts: [Brigitte Hertlein-Puchta](#) and [Christiane Spies](#) of the State Academy Esslingen, Germany

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Project information:

eSchool4S - a transnational e-learning cooperation platform for collaborative learning

The network-project E-School for Sustainability in the Danube Region (eSchool4S) unites 10 partners from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania who are specialized in different relevant fields of expertise and were brought together to pursue a common goal – bring sustainable development and European integration to schools.

eSchool4S designs an operational e-platform for cooperation and exchange of information and experiences in the field of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and develops interactive and web-based teaching and learning concepts to cover cross-border issues in the fields of sustainable development and European integration. The approach brings together decision-makers, (in-service) teacher training institutions, schools, and students across the Danube Region to raise their ecological awareness and to promote inclusion of these issues into the school curricula. Students and teachers learn to which extent there is interdependence between social, economic, environmental, and political development of a country, and why the balanced interplay of the development dimensions is a condition for sustainable development at national, regional and European level. They improve their computer skills, cognitive competences, communication as well as soft skills.

The eSchool4S is a project within the framework of the EU program "Lifelong Learning Programme" (LLP), Comenius-Multilateral Networks. It was recognized as an official project in the Priority Area 9 "Investing in people and skills", within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

Project data

Duration: 1st January 2014 – 31st December 2016

Target Group: students between the ages of 15 and 18

Project Lead: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Stuttgart

Internet: <http://eschool4s.eu>



Working Together for Sustainability in Education

First annual conference of the Danube region – Comenius project „eSchool4S" in Esslingen, Germany

Working together for sustainability in education – these words get to the heart of the direction the Danube project "eSchool4S" is aimed at. In this Comenius project, that runs from 2014 to 2016, ten partners of educational institutions from the Danube region countries Germany (Baden-Wuerttemberg), Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania work on the development of a transnational e-learning and cooperation platform for learning jointly with reference to topics of sustainable development. The project is expected to strengthen the role of sustainability and the realization of EU strategies in the curricula of the project partners.

“In the framework of this project subject interdisciplinary, interactive and web-based teaching and learning concepts will be developed on which all partners can work together”, explained the conference organizers Brigitte Hertlein-Puchta and Christiane Spies of the State Academy Esslingen in Germany. Through transnational joint learning students are to experience what they are able to contribute to sustainable development and also what chances and challenges this may bring.

The first annual conference in Esslingen on 27 October 2014 with 34 participants served in particular as medium to present the results of a baseline study concerning the implementation of topics of sustainability in the educational system of each project partner. The speakers of the conference not only addressed the different school systems but also the IT equipment at schools and the organization of teacher education.



Ministerialraetin Sabine Aichholz, Head of Unit European and International Affairs at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports Baden-Wuerttemberg, emphasized the importance of the project in her welcome address: “eSchool4S brings together decision makers, curricula planers, teacher training institutions, universities, schools, students, NGOs and education experts from the countries of the Danube region and is thus a project with enormous potential.

„All partners have excellent preconditions for the realization of ESD (Education for Sustainable Development)”, rejoiced **Doris Thurau**, Head of GIZ Regional Office South (Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg), Germany in her speech.



Dr. Thomas Hoffmann of the State Seminar for Didactics and Teacher Training (Vocational Schools) in Karlsruhe, Germany, described in his presentation how the topic of sustainability had been implemented in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Dr. Danijela Petrovic from the University of Belgrade, Serbia, presented the most important results of the baseline study focusing on the implementation of sustainability in the educational systems of the Danube region.



The subsequent panel discussion elucidating the topic "ESD between Europe, the Danube Region and the UNESCO Decade" was moderated by **Gabriela Pico Gamboa**, project coordinator of the GIZ office Baden-Württemberg.

In the afternoon, the participants of the conference could gather and exchange information about the topics "ICT - Working with Moodle" and "European Good Practice of ESD" in two workshops. “It is very valuable to learn from the experiences of the other project partners”, Lavinia Andrei from TERRA Mileniul III Foundation, Romania was pleased.

And also the conference organizers **Brigitte Hertlein-Puchta** and **Christiane Spies** drew a thoroughly positive balance.

In the upcoming months the project partners will collect learning materials for selected topics against the background of sustainability, prepare them for the respective school subjects and incorporate them on the learning platform Moodle.



Impressions of the Day:



The Baseline Study

(Prepared by Danijela Petrović and Vitomir Jovanović, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Psychology, Serbia)

The aim of our baseline study is to give a comprehensive up-to-date overview on the status of innovation in the thematic fields of the eSchool4S network. This baseline study presents the status in the eSchool4S network countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia) in the Danube Region concerning capacities related to the use of ICT in school and preconditions for implementing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

The methodology captures these aspects in various ways by gathering different types of data in order to have a sufficiently comprehensive picture of the ICT status in teaching and ESD in different countries through a desk analysis of relevant data, an analysis of content of school curriculum, an interview with relevant stakeholders and focus groups with teachers.

Based on the existing data and analysis, the following conclusion and recommendations should be made. Strategies for the implementation of ICT and ESD exist in each country of the eSchool4S network and digital competence is recognised as one of the key competencies. In some cases national policy documents do not correlate (like in Romania) and/or there are no action plans and practical guidelines on how to introduce ICT and SD in education. Free training for teachers on the use of ICT should be provided both in pre-service and in-service teacher education. Rural schools should be better equipped with computers and high-speed internet should be provided (especially in Romania, Serbia and some islands in Croatia). The eSchool4S network should rely on the existing results and positive experience in ESD on the European and international level.

There is a recommendation that the specific part of the programme should contain SD topics of particular importance for each member of the eSchool4S network. If we want teachers to successfully teach the content related to sustainable development, it is necessary that they themselves are committed to this system of values. This should be taken into account in the selection of teachers, who will participate in the eSchool4S project. The need for a basic ICT training to be able to use a web classroom should be taken into consideration in order to ensure the participation of motivated teachers without ICT competence. It is necessary that schools form

interdisciplinary eSchool4S teams of teachers. In addition to science teachers (disciplines where SD is already represented in the subject curricula), team members should also be teachers of social science disciplines.

The eSchool4S web classroom then needs to increasingly take into account the social aspects of SD issues as well as largely incorporate SD issues in social science subjects due to the practical importance, the motivation of teachers and students and a better connection between SD and real life problems.

Upcoming events:

2nd Annual Conference of eSchool4S (<http://eschool4s.eu/event-portal/>)

Date: 4th November 2015

Venue: College of Nyíregyháza, Hungary

Moodle Moot Romania 2015 (<https://www.moodle.ro/moot2015/>)

Date: 17th to 22nd August 2015

Venue: Constanta, Romania