

Ruractics

is the academic discipline of educational science that systematically researches, documents and communicates education and training in rural areas in their historical and contemporary forms.

Background

Prof. Dr. Margit Stein and Detlev Lindau-Bank founded the research focus Ruractics in 2018 as a science of didactic concepts and methods of formal, non-formal and informal education in rural regions and living environments.

The word Ruractics is the fusion of rural (agrarian, country) and didactics.



Objectives

The vision of Ruractics is to meet the future challenges of Agriculture 4.0 with an adequate education offer for rural regions. Ruractics is interdisciplinary and based on findings of educational science, psychology, sociology, cultural studies.

The aim of Ruractics is to describe and promote school and curriculum development and the development of didactic concepts in relation to the social needs of rural regions.

In a closer understanding Ruractics is the science of didactic concepts and methods of schools and extracurricular education in rural living environments. The subject of Ruractics as applied science is the development and research of concepts of general didactics and subject didactics with the aim to meet the future challenges of agriculture 4.0 with an adequate educational offer for rural regions.

Call

Over the next few years, we want to compile and publish a collection of best practice examples and research studies worldwide. Anyone interested in this project can contact us at the email addresses below. Be part of our project „Ruractics“.



Projects Examples

ACEWild (Alternative Curriculum Education out of the Wild) aims to demonstrate how secondary schools can improve their students learning, skills and 'life chances' through outdoor or environment-themed learning programs.



Selected groups of secondary school students from the UK, Germany, and Netherlands, who have been identified as being at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training), have participated in a range of Erasmus-funded pilot programs, designed to:

- raise pupils' aspirations and self-confidence
- develop communication, collaboration, critical and creative thinking and global citizenship skills



MetESD - The main objective of the three-year MetESD (Methods for Education for Sustainable Development - competencies and curricula) project was to develop a sustainable development education curriculum that can be integrated into any vocational training. For this purpose, a basic curriculum was developed at the University of Vechta.



Course examples and teacher training modules are didactically designed and prepared so that they can be integrated into vocational school curricula of different training courses and national training systems.

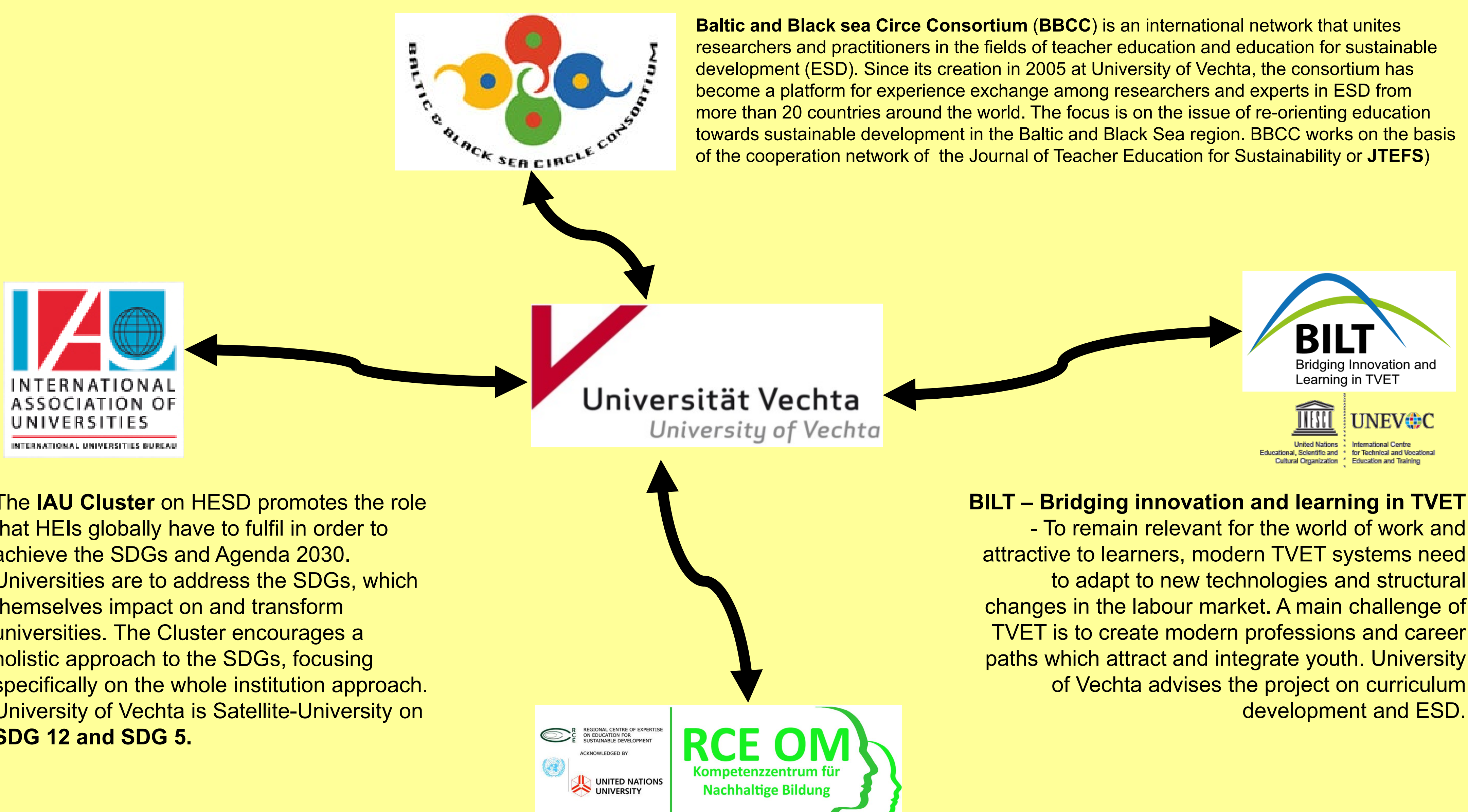
Participants in the project MetESD were partners and project schools from Germany, Latvia, Austria and Great Britain, so that an international comparative perspective is possible.

Regional Youth Reporting - As rural infrastructure is regionally diverse, however, Margit Stein and Detlev Lindau Bank have created regional youth reports for local communities in rural areas to trace the diversity of lifestyles among young people, as well as to support municipalities in social policy decision-making by designing and implementing regional youth reports.



In this respect, regional youth reports not only contribute to the justification of social and educational policy decisions, but also use and promote the social engagement of young people for the future of their life.

Networking with global activities on ESD



University of Vechta is partner of the **RCE Oldenburger Münsterland**. In 2003, in response to the UN resolution on the UNDES, the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) launched global multi-stakeholder network of **Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD (RCEs)** RCEs aspire to translate global objectives into the context of the local communities in which they operate. RCEs are committed to further generating, accelerating and mainstreaming ESD by implementing the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, and contributing to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SDG 12 Cluster

Responsible Consumption and Production



Background

The University of Vechta works within the IAU HESD Cluster on SDG12 (sustainable consumption and production) led by the Luther College at the University of Regina, Canada.

University of Vechta anchors the principles of sustainability in all its areas - teaching, research, procurement and campus life. The University of Vechta engages especially within SDG 12, as there are a lot of student activities within the domain of service learning concerning SDG 12.

These efforts of our university within struggling for the SDGs, especially the aspects of fair and sustainable production and consumption, are reported and monitored.



From single action to structure

In 2018 we started an initiative for an evidence-based monitoring of our activities on sustainable development. We use a university-specific sustainability code which consists of 20 criteria.

It is based on the German Sustainability Code as a (transparency) standard that many companies of all kinds and also some public institutions use to report on their challenges and achievements for sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Council (RNE) approved it in 2011 as a voluntary standard.

This university-specific Sustainability Code was developed by a research-network of several universities. The network has supplemented the code in specific sectors and developed tailor-made guidelines.

The criteria are not completely independent of each other. They are bundled to four overarching categories:

- Strategy,
- Governance,
- Environment and
- Society.

The Sustainability Code is more than a reporting tool if it can stimulate transformative processes at the university. In terms of sustainable production and consumption, the first report focuses on the procurement and consumption of materials. To do so, however, it is necessary to involve students, staff and researchers to deal directly with the criteria of the Sustainability Code.

Prof. Dr. Marco Rieckmann
Sustainability Officer
of the University of Vechta



From single action ...

All teachers of the University of Vechta are called upon to integrate topics and methods of the concept of Education for Sustainable Development into their regular teaching during the **ESD-Action-Week**.



... via projects ...



The **sustainable rondel** at University of Vechta stands under the sign "renewable resources". Renewable resources are agricultural and forestry-produced products that are not used as food or feed. Their use is diverse, as a substance or for the production of heat, electricity or fuels. Central content refers to consumers (such as environmentally friendly products that are easy to dispose of), the industry (such as alternatives to fossil energy sources), agriculture (such as new value-added opportunities in the non-food sector) and the physical environment (eg CO2-neutral energy production).

... to structure

Governance and Strategy

In order to organize the processes of sustainable development the working group "Sustainable University" was founded in 2015.

The working group is deliberately run as an open and cross-status working group with the aim of creating a participatory work culture in which both, employees and students, can contribute their ideas and suggestions.

Teaching and Research

Sustainable development is understood as a cross-sectional task in teaching and research. The students should be prepared and enabled to recognize, analyze and evaluate social, economic, cultural and ecological challenges of the present and the future in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary contexts.

Students run a café where they serve fair trade and ecologically grown coffee and tea as well as little snacks they produce. Together with students members of the training staff run an urban gardening project, dwelling two little gardens and harvesting and cooking together.



Procurement and Environment

The label "Green Procurement - Recycling Paper-friendly University" stands for an environmentally friendly and resource-efficient action in everyday life. The University of Vechta pays attention to energy-efficient criteria when procuring new IT equipment.

Networking with global activities on ESD



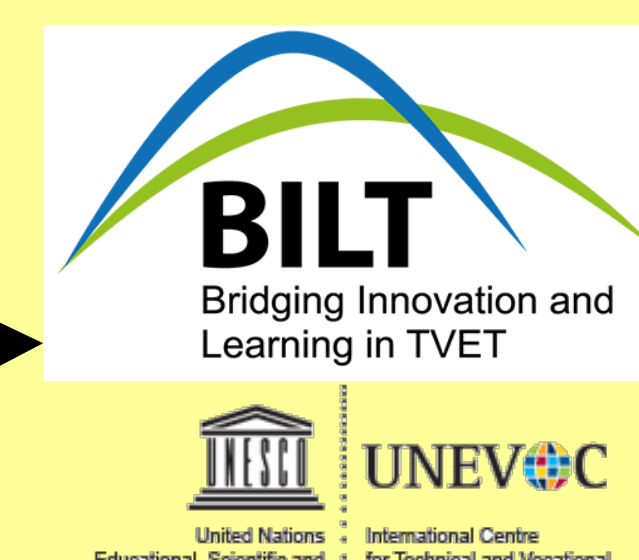
Baltic and Black sea Circe Consortium (BBCC) is an international network that unites researchers and practitioners in the fields of teacher education and education for sustainable development (ESD). Since its creation in 2005 at University of Vechta, the consortium has become a platform for experience exchange among researchers and experts in ESD from more than 20 countries around the world. The focus is on the issue of re-orienting education towards sustainable development in the Baltic and Black Sea region. BBCC works on the basis of the cooperation network of the Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability or **JTEFS**)



The **IAU Cluster** on HESD promotes the role that HEIs globally have to fulfil in order to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2030. Universities are to address the SDGs, which themselves impact on and transform universities. The Cluster encourages a holistic approach to the SDGs, focusing specifically on the whole institution approach. University of Vechta is Satellite-University on **SDG 12 and SDG 5**.



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BILT – Bridging innovation and learning in TVET
- To remain relevant for the world of work and attractive to learners, modern TVET systems need to adapt to new technologies and structural changes in the labour market. A main challenge of TVET is to create modern professions and career paths which attract and integrate youth. University of Vechta advises the project on **curriculum development and ESD**.

