

# Developing the human capital

On September 25<sup>th</sup> the United Nations decided on the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Energy is the seventh out of 17 goals, putting the issue of “affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all” on the global agenda for sustainable development.



**The Eurosolar Prize for the energy and environmental management programme is a result of a good foundation from the training that has led to this qualified achievement in a competitive environment.**

Photo: Europa-Universität Flensburg

On the same day, the 25<sup>th</sup> batch of graduates of Masters in sustainable energy studies for development cooperation has been released from Europa-Universität Flensburg. A total of 300 professionals in sustainable energy have so far graduated from this institution, which makes it a small, but experienced institution in the field.

Founded in 1989 under the name ARTES (Appropriate Rural Technology and Extension Skills), the programme changed into SESAM (Sustainable Energy Systems and Management), until it became Energy and Environmental Management in Developing Countries (EEM) in 2009. EEM is one of the first of meanwhile 40 study programmes oriented towards international development cooperation in Germany that receive support by DAAD, the German Academic Exchange Service.

To celebrate the silver jubilee, but also to discuss the future development of the programme, EEM had invited 36 alumni and all current students to a 4 day seminar in late September. Supported by DAAD, at Sankelmark Academy near Flensburg the workshop addressed current issues of energy management, the further development of EEM, as well as career advancement of present students and

recent graduates. “I am really thankful to the ARTES/SESAM/EEM family,” as Zahid Hasan from Bangladesh put it, “and I have gained advanced knowledge from meeting all former and current students during this workshop”. Part of the workshop formed an exhibition of posters from all participants, as well selected papers, both of which addressing alumni experiences, projects and contributions to sustainable energy development in their countries.

The challenges of sustainable energy are best met with an interdisciplinary approach. The EEM programme therefore combines the prerequisite of candidates to have relevant work experience on top of a Bachelor of Engineering with a concept of active, problem-based learning, supported by strong alumni contacts. The small team of researchers and lecturers, along with batches of up to 15 students, is able to address a multitude of technological, economic and human challenges in the Master of Engineering programme, greatly enriched by local experience from Germany and nearby Denmark. “My stay in Flensburg expanded my horizon on the use of renewable energy systems for our society,” says Pushkar Manandhar, “now this is helping me to contribute to the development of the energy sector in Nepal”.

Being awarded the 2015 German Eurosolar Prize within the category of “One-World Cooperation”, the programme is continuously developing to meet the requirements of a fast-accelerating sustainable energy market. Alumni are proud to be part of it, as without the substantial input from current and former students the programme would not be the same. As Mbony Wilson Khen from Kenya put it; the Eurosolar Prize is a “result of the good foundation from the training that has led to this qualified achievement in a competitive environment”.

Alumni-networking is an essential aspect of a global study programme linking industry, NGOs and organisations of development cooperation. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary was a great opportunity to use input from alumni to give the organisers the confidence of the quality of the current programme; to address areas to improve; and to contribute with many new ideas, which are now to be implemented.

We believe that two main requisites of sustainable development are education and cooperation. At Flensburg, future professionals of sustainable energy management are trained, but equally important, during their studies they also become part of a global network for sustainable development. This is the human capital required to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

Bernd Möller

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