

World Student Summit 2013 in Nairobi

Introduction

The student summit is the annual meeting of the World Student Community for sustainable Development (WSCSD). The is an umbrella organisation from student groups which care about sustainability from all over the world. [project21] which is based in Zurich is one founding member and involved in the activities from WSCSD. In 2009 the student summit was held in Zurich, organised by the Zurich student organisation. In 2012 the conference was mainly organized by Nickson Otieno, who is the current president of WSCSD and based in Kenya. That is why the conference took place there. The overall topic of the World Student Summit 2012 was “student leadership towards a green economy”. This title implies that student engagement is one important aspect to reach a green economy, which for instance includes a sustainable resource use. Student leadership is necessary to make a change in the development of the world. Around 150 students from more than 20 countries were invited to participate and share their knowledge about projects in their countries.

[project21] was asked to prepare one of five workshops at the conference. We found a team of three people which prepared the workshop and finally we, Dominique Jaquemet and Martha Vogel went to Kenya.

Aim

The aim of the planning committee from the Student Summit 2012 was to enable an exchange between students from all over the world to discuss global issues. The summit activities focused on five different topics related to the title of the conference “student leadership towards a green economy”. The subjects were mobility, food, water, energy and waste. The activities of the different topics were thought to start already before the conference. Participants could apply for one of the five groups and had the opportunity to present posters in front of the conference audience during the summit. The output from the five different thematic groups should be visualised in one exhibition container (in collaboration with SIKA). This container should act as a “mobile exhibition” presenting independent self-reliant technologies of every of those five topics. The mobile exhibition was planned to go on tour in Kenya after their constructions. The approach was ambitious and it was thought as a concrete output beside oral discussion.

Planned workshops

- water (experts from Nairobi)
- sustainable energy contest (Antoine Khalife Lebanese based in London),
- waste (Prof. Martin Klöti, ZHAW),
- transportation (Dominik Mösching, myclimate), bike container from Sweden (did not make it)
- nutrition and food (Dominique Jaquemet and Martha Vogel, both UWIS from ETH Zürich)

Description of our Workshop

Food and food security are very relevant and critical issues in most of the african Countries and also in Kenya. During our workshop we want to bring different experiences and ideas together to develop measures and solutions to overcome these problems. The discussion outcomes will be presented at the end of the conference and the participants will be able to provide commitments to improve food security in Kenya.

As there are already lots of discussions on international level about food insecurity we want to focus especially on practical part in our workshop. Therefore our workshop is structured as follows: first a brainstorming to analyze challenges in the value chain of food. Secondly discussing the different outcomes. This should lead to new solutions which could be implemented to improve the single steps along the food value chain. The practical workshop will take place in the kitchen, where we show one method to preserve fruits. The processing of food is a critical issue in Kenya. The fresh fruits are consumed but the surplus stock is not preserved and therefore often rots. The processing of fruits is not common on the one hand because of traditions and on the other hand because of lacking of know-how. But food preservation not only helps to access fruits during the whole year but also to add value to the products. If the processed fruits are packed and labelled and sold small-scale farmers could generate an higher income. To support such ideas we decided to do this practical workshop.

Our Resources

We had expertise from literature (Weingärtner & Trendtman, 2011: Handbuch Welternährung; Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, 2009: Welternährung) and through contacts with Thomas Gröbli and Martin Klöti. Additionally we had a partnership with THE ORGANIC FARMER Magazine, a project of the Swiss Biovision Foundation.

Accomplishment of the Workshop

The workshop took place on the second day of the conference with participants. Our programme was working well and the students were all motivated to get involved. We had lively discussions about food habits in different countries and problems along the food value chain. We had four groups covering the four parts of the food value chain. The participants were

Agricultural production	processing	distribution and retailing	marketing	(consumption)
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Figure 1: value chain

engaged in different fields and had already lots of knowledge about food problems. The biggest lack of know-how was in the access to the markets, marketing and consumption. Every group was to come up with at least two important points to present. Then every group chose a group speaker so that a presenting team was found and presented the findings in front of the conference.

In the practical workshop every participant had handson. The final product of 2 hours of work in the hotel kitchen were about 15 glasses of conserved mango compote, as the group photo shows.



Figure 2: group picture of the food workshop participants with the selfmade product

lectures

The conference hosted a variety of interesting speeches and discussions:

Topic	Lecturers
global overview	Mr. Mat Billot, Head of Global Environmental Outlook Unit, UNEP
food	Dr. Peggy Oti-Boateng, Senior Programme Specialist, Basic & Engineering Sciences, UNESCO
water	Dr. Thomas Chiramba, Head Freshwater Ecosystem Unit, UNEP
energy	Prof. Martin Klöti, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland
waste	Mr. Andre Dzikus, Coordinator Urban Basic Services Branch, UN-HABITAT
transport	Mr. Rob de Jong Head Transport Unit, Division of Technology Industry and Economics, UNEP

Personal feedback Dominique Jaquemet

To my the participation at the conference was a very worthwhile experience. It was the first time for me to get in contact with African students. I appreciated the openness and critical analysis about the state of their own countries. Among the students present at the conference the spirit one of change makers and facilitated through the exchange among the participants. I was happy to learn that the often stigmatised image about the poor and awkward africans was not true but in contrast I met smart, interested and innovative persons.

The conference organisation team did such a well job and even exceeded my expectations. It has managed to link and involve many official partners ranging from two big Universities to UNEP and the Prime ministers office. As broad the range of involved partners as wide was the range of the covered topics.

The typical setting of the conference thought was rather short, which gave the opportunity to visit one of the biggest slums, namely Kibera. It was very impressive to see the contrast between the modern central Nairobi and the vast slum area. I was surprised to discover that most of the inhabitants in the slum have access to TV programmes and mobile communication but not to clean Toilets or drinking water. I had to revise my concept of poverty and development aid. It was interesting to see how many different NGO's can be found in the slum whereas it seems they do not really have a sustainable impact on the state of things in the slum, which was confirmed by the inhabitants, we talked with. Nevertheless some NGO state the exception of the rule, such as the community based organisation that obtains biogas from human waste for cooking and therewith fostering community building.

The second excursion took us to the countryside of Kenya to a small village called Nyankongo in the western province. The conference organisation team had arranged a meeting with the head of the village and all interested inhabitants, who welcomed us cordially. The aim was to start a case study of a sustainable development. While listening to the situation of the

inhabitants we realised that one of the main problems were that the rural location of the village hindered the women to get a second income through other business than agriculture. It will be a challenge to find solutions to empower the community. Additionally to the partially used sand filters a participant from Uganda proposed to build water tanks from natural materials the store the water. I am confident that the long-term cooperation with the village to implement measure their against poverty will be successfully, because in the village lives also the sister of the main organizer, which is a strong link and giving an additional motivation.

To conclude I can say that the World Student Summit made me reflect and revise many concepts and perceptions I thought to be settled. Last but not least I now have many friends in Africa and especially Kenya.

Personal feedback Martha Vogel

I am very glad that I had the opportunity to participate in the conference. I could gain lots of personal experiences which I can share. Overall I was impressed by the well organised conference and the international participants. For me it was a great experience to exchange with other students. They were well-educated, self-confident Africans with very good english skills which made a deep conversation possible. If I saw these students I was more confident that we can manage to bring our world to a more sustainable pathway.

The conference programme was diverse. I think that it was especially good that we went to Kibera, which was told us to be the second biggest slum in Africa. There we could see how the real-life apart from our conference is looking and what poverty means. The slum was really dirty and there were countless number of small huts with corrugated tin roof. We visited a NGO which is engaged in hygiene and education projects there. They for example obtain biogas from organic waste which can be used for cooking. Furthermore they provide facilities with toilets, showers but also rooms for common activities. I liked the projects from the NGO and I think such work on a local scale is really one key step in solving problems in developing countries. During the conference we also had the possibility to see one village in the west of Kenya called Nyankongo. The inhabitants received us all cordially and we had a meeting with them. They told us their problems which are in particular access to clean water. In contrast to the slum the people there had all enough space to live but this not protects them from poverty. We discussed with them and tried to find solutions to empower the community. For example they can use sand filters which are used to clean the water. Furthermore they could build water tanks with natural materials the store the water. Now there shall be a long-term cooperation with the village to implement measure their against poverty.

Finally I can say the World Student Summit made me reflect about how we can engage us personally and act to overcome problems in developing countries. I think that therefore it is important to support small initiatives with locals.

“How can we really help and why do some of those people not show own initiative for change?”

The open question for me after the conference was: How can we really act?

I had the feeling that there is no know-how transfer from the younger generation to their parents/no transfer from city to countryside.

What could be improved?

The conference was a very interesting event and well organised. For next time we would recommend to have more time to work in your focus groups. We only had one day to discuss and work together and to already produce commitments and recommendations. These were ambitious targets and lead partly to more superficial results. Furthermore we had a very short stay in the village. This was mainly due to delay in the schedule and problems with our bus. So for next time it would be helpful to try to stay in the schedule. We hope that ongoing activities can really lead to an implementation from the conference ideas.

Who is the target audience / benefits most from the summit?

The audience were students from all over the world but with a strong focus on local students. For the conference in Nairobi the Kenyan students represented the largest part and also they could collect lots of knowledge which helped them to implement their own projects. We gained lots of experience in Kenya and our personal knowledge about work in so called developing countries could be expanded. In particular the Kenyan students could benefit a lot as we often discussed about issues in their country. From a cultural perspective we got most input.

Learning outcomes - what did we learn during the summit?

We learned a lot from the summit and the relating activities. There was a good intercultural dialogue amongst us students. The atmosphere was good and there were lots of people willing to change something. We learned that you have to start with small steps and that is very important to not only discuss but also act afterwards. With the help of a good network of people you can get organized and finally do things by yourself. There are lots of ideas around, which are very good but they do not help if they are not implemented.