

Netzwerk Weitblick: learning from one another – being effective together

Netzwerk Weitblick is an offer by journalists for journalists of all departments in the German-speaking world. The term "Weitblick" means Farsightedness. We inform media professionals about the interdisciplinarily relevant cross sectoral issue of sustainability and support them in their work.

The non-profit association, founded at the beginning of 2015, offers services, opportunities for exchange of experience and networking as well as information events. Weitblick equips prospective and practising journalists with the necessary knowledge and new perspectives on sustainability issues so they, as multipliers, can trigger societal debates more effectively. In 2018, the network published a 12-volume publication series (<https://www.riffreporter.de/netzwerk-weitblick/>) to be used by journalists to access new topics and by educational institutions as handouts for seminars. In light of the UN Global Sustainable Development Goals 2015, Weitblick emphasises the need for journalistic work regarding relevant information and formation of opinion on that matter.

Our motivation: Sustainable action determines the future viability of societies and economies. High-quality journalism is more urgent than ever before, since ecological threats such as climate change, environmental damage, loss of biodiversity, water shortage or drought and resource scarcity, as well as social challenges such as hunger and poverty, human rights abuses and poor working conditions, refugee flows or demographic changes create facts, many of which soon or already are no longer revisable.

Therefore, our goal is to promote quality and quantity in reporting about sustainable issues. Global challenges require journalists not to engage in fear mongering but to provide a reporting that evokes long-lasting interest and motivation to act. Their task is to point out the causes and consequences of non-sustainable acting to analyse alternatives and to explain the potentials of acting sustainably. However, they can only win over the eyes, ears and minds of their readers, listeners and viewers for the challenges of our future if they themselves are well informed and inform in an appealing way.

Network Weitblick supports future-oriented journalism so that

- journalists of all departments consider sustainability as part of their day-to-day business,
- junior journalist develop a sense for that cross sectoral issue,
- the power of judgment increases in order to be able to better evaluate events and developments,
- colleagues are motivated to deal with the challenges of our time in a meaningful, critical and thought-provoking way.

Weitblick launched a **qualification initiative** in 2016. "Anyone who is aware of correlations and interactions poses other questions, thus receiving different answers and reporting from other perspectives," says CEO Susanne Bergius. In the first major project, completed in 2018, network members have developed 12 teaching modules, tested them with education partners and trained more than 130 (prospective) journalists. To do this, they have written manuals and scripts. The qualification initiative is to be continued, "because journalists need thematic knowledge and technical tools to evaluate developments appropriately", education manager Heike Janßen explains.

The network Weitblick received two awards for its initiative: 2016 from the Rat für Nachhaltigkeit (German Council for Sustainability) and a Media Prize in 2018.

Members of the network come from the German-speaking regions and work home and abroad including for ARD (German television channel), Deutschlandradio (German radio station), Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Handelsblatt, Süddeutsche Zeitung and Tagesspiegel (German newspapers). We welcome new members, sponsors and cooperation partners. Full membership can be obtained by anyone who accepts the statute as well as our goals and principles. A sponsoring membership is also possible.