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Lösungsideen der nächsten Generation

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VORWORT

Das YES! – Young Economic Summit ist der größte Schülerwettbewerb mit Schwerpunkt Ökonomie in Norddeutschland. Es steht unter der Schirmherrschaft von Bundeswirtschaftsminister Sigmar Gabriel und wird von der ZBW – Leibniz-Informationszentrum Wirtschaft in Kooperation mit der Joachim Herz Stiftung und dem Institut für Weltwirtschaft organisiert. Es vermittelt Schülerinnen und Schülern Informations- und Medienkompetenz, Verantwortlichkeit und ökonomische Bildung.

Rund 250 Schülerinnen und Schüler aus Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg und der Türkei haben über sechs Monate lang Lösungsideen für drängende ökonomische, ökologische und soziale Herausforderungen bearbeitet und diese abschließend beim Schülerkongress YES! untereinander und mit Führungspersonlichkeiten aus Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft, Politik und Zivilgesellschaft auf Englisch diskutiert. Auf dem Weg zum YES! 2016 wurden alle Projektgruppen von einem Expertenteam begleitet und in den Themenbereichen Recherche, Forschung, Präsentation und Medienarbeit unterstützt. Im Anschluss haben die Schülerinnen und Schüler demokratisch über die beste Lösungsidee abgestimmt.

Zu folgende Themen haben die Jugendlichen innovative Lösungsideen erarbeitet:

YOUR ECONOMY

- Making Trade Agreements Work for the Citizens. How an Ideal Trade Agreement Could Look Like
- Sharing Economy – Innovative and Sustainable?

YOUR GOVERNANCE

- Digitalization and Trade. Which Governance is Required to Let All People Benefit from New Technologies
- Financial Governance: Making Global Finance Inclusive and Green
- Reforming Asylum and Migration Governance

YOUR SOCIETY

- Bringing Refugees into Work
- Future Cooperation between Turkey and the EU
- Libertarian Paternalism and Choice Architecture – Nudging People into the „Right“ Direction

YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- A World without Waste: Putting the Circular Economy to Work
- Building Sustainable and Smart Cities: Challenges for Industries and Societies
- How to Effectively Implement Sustainable Infrastructure Projects
- Implementing the SDGs – Measuring the Sustainable Ocean

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DIE BESTEN LÖSUNGSEIDEN – ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

1. PLATZ IN DER KATEGORIE „BESTE LÖSUNGSDIEE“

„eFISHient System“

YES!-Projektgruppe Lernwerft Kiel

Die YES!-Lösungsidee für die Herausforderung „Implementing the SDGs – Measuring the Sustainable Ocean“ von der Projektgruppe der Lernwerft Kiel beschäftigt sich mit nachhaltiger Fischerei. Die freie Verfügbarkeit der marinen Ressourcen führt zu einer starken Belastung des marinen Ökosystems. Überfischung ist ein schwerwiegendes Problem, dem es zu begegnen gilt.

Die YES!-Schülerinnen und YES!-Schüler fordern die Einführung des „eFISHient Systems“, ein System rotierender Schutzzonen, das der Überfischung Einhalt gebietet aber gleichzeitig die artisanale Fischerei schützt und langfristig die Grundlage für die industrielle Fischerei gewährleisten kann.

2. PLATZ IN DER KATEGORIE „BESTE LÖSUNGSDIEE“

„Mehr Sicherheit im Straßenverkehr durch Nudging“

YES!-Projektgruppe Gymnasium Wellingdorf

Die YES!-Lösungsidee für die Herausforderung „Libertarian Paternalism and Choice Architecture – Nudging People into the ‚Right‘ Direction“ von der Projektgruppe des Gymnasiums Wellingdorf beschäftigt sich mit der Fragestellung, wie man Erkenntnisse aus der Verhaltensökonomie nutzen kann, um mehr Sicherheit im Straßenverkehr zu erzielen.

Die YES!-Schülerinnen und YES!-Schüler fordern die Verwendung von ‚Nudges‘, wie etwa bestimmte Markierungen auf Fahrradwegen, um Verkehrsteilnehmer zu mehr Aufmerksamkeit im Straßenverkehr anzuregen, ohne auf Gesetze und Verbote zurückgreifen zu müssen und auf diese Weise die Unfallhäufigkeit zu reduzieren.

3. PLATZ IN DER KATEGORIE „BESTE LÖSUNGSDIEE“

„Kurssystem zur Arbeitsmarktintegration von Flüchtlingen“

YES!-Projektgruppe des Helene-Lange-Gymnasiums

Die YES!-Lösungsidee für die Herausforderung „Bringing Refugees into Work“ von der Projektgruppe des Helene-Lange-Gymnasiums soll zur schnelleren und effektiveren Arbeitsmarktintegration von Flüchtlingen beitragen. Bei der Einstufung in das Kurssystem wird die bisherige Ausbildung und Berufserfahrung der Flüchtlinge berücksichtigt und kann dementsprechend genau auf deren Bedürfnisse und die Bedürfnisse der Arbeitgeber zugeschnitten werden

Die YES!-Schülerinnen und YES!-Schüler fordern die Einführung des Kurssystems für die Arbeitsmarktintegration von Flüchtlingen, um ihnen eine aktive Teilhabe zu ermöglichen und sie schnell in die Gesellschaft integrieren zu können.

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DIE BESTEN LÖSUNGSEIDEN – AUSFÜHRLICHE DARSTELLUNG

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EFISHIENT SYSTEM



LERNWERT
CLUB OF ROME SCHULE KIEL

Eine Lösungsidee der Lernwert Kiel

Beteiligte: Lisa Autzen, Hanna Hanß, Henrieke
Massierer, Julica Schütz und Benjamin Vorbeck

Verantwortliche Lehrkraft: Andrea Görge

The Challenge

Implementing the SDGs – Measuring the Sustainable Ocean

In continuation and expansion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the United Nations agreed on 17 „Sustainable Development Goals“. During the next 15 years, countries are supposed to put in a lot of effort to end all forms of poverty, overcome inequalities and tackle climate change.

Goal #14 reads: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The oceans are essential for life on earth as we know it. The oceans driven global ecosystems and were always important for trade and commerce. The problem of competing utilization, a public use on the one hand (security of life) and a commercial use on the other hand (as a pollutant sink, source of resources and transport), is concentrated here. A long term balance must be established between those competing utilizations. Therefore, a prudent management of oceans and marine resources is key to a sustainable future.

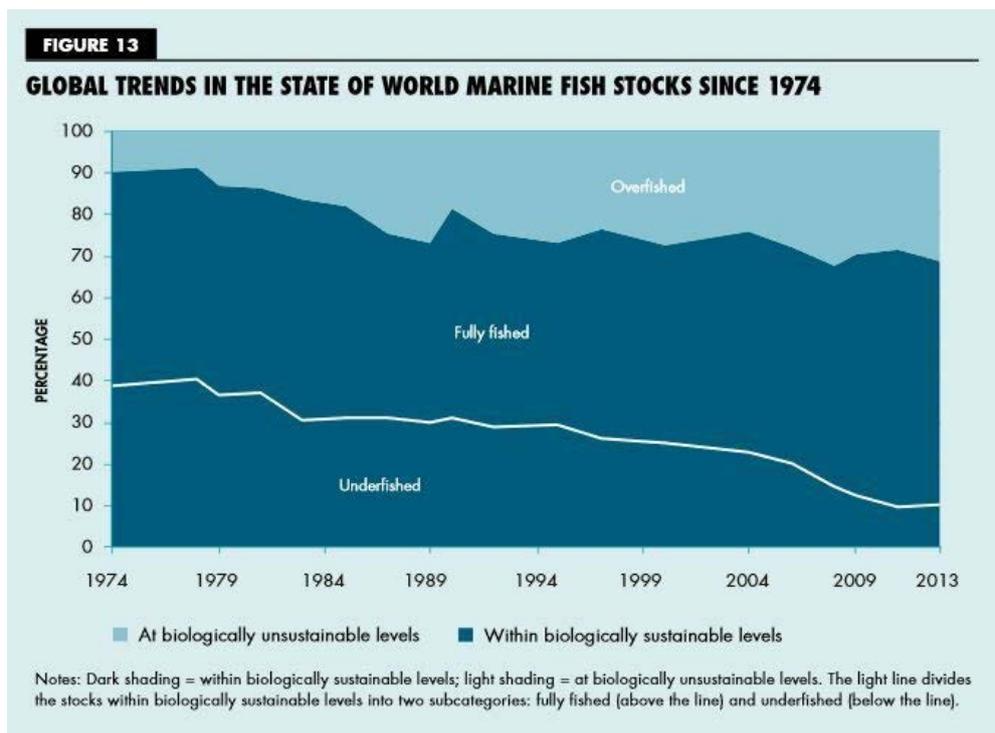
How to ensure a sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources? How to quantify and measure a sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources? Which measures must be taken to achieve the goals formulated by the UN and what can each and every one of us do to play his/her part?

The Ocean - A Source of Life

Summed up, our oceans cover more than 70% of the entire Earth's surface and roughly 60% of the world's population do not live further than 20 km (about 12,5 miles) away from the nearest coast-line¹. The seas supply us with natural resources and thus provide a solid basis of food and various materials, produce sustainable energy and represent a significant part of world trade.

All marine resources being available to humans at all time, the resulting excessive usage leads to a strongly strained ecosystem underneath the water surface. Big problems are overfishing, the exploitation of sea ground's resources and the acidification resulting from carbon dioxide emissions, residue from maritime industry and water pollution.

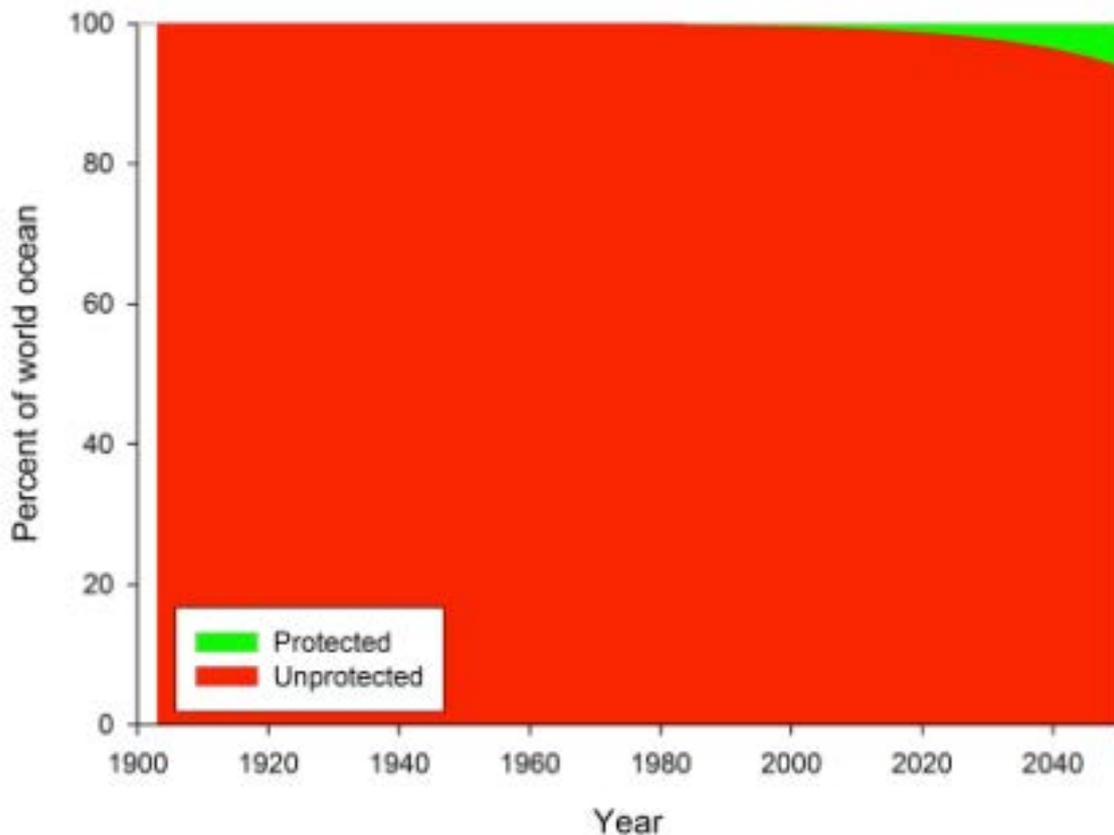
Overfishing, to this day, is barely being restricted through any legal regulations. According to FAO research in 2009 57% of all fish stocks were already exploited to the very last limit, 29% were considered overfished.



The Food and Agriculture Organization by the United Nations: *In Brief - The State of World Fisheries and Agriculture 2016*

¹ Visbeck Martin, Vortrag zum Thema: „Meeresversauerung“, anlässlich der Club of Rome-Woche an der Lernwerft, Club of Rome Schule Kiel
maribus gGmbH: World Ocean Review. *Mit den Meeren leben - Ein Bericht über den Zustand der Weltmeere 1. Die Weltmeere - Motor des globalen Klimas*

Although studies have demonstrated the efficiency of marine reserves², the method is only being used on less than 2% of the oceans' surface. In total 300.000 km² of the global marine area are being protected, but of those less than 10% are considered to be 'no-take' marine protected areas³, meaning that absolutely no fishery or industrial activity is allowed.



Wood, Louisa: Protect Planet Ocean: *Protect Planet Ocean is about marine Conservation.*
<http://www.protectplanetocean.org/collections/introduction/introbox/globalmpas/introduction-item.html>

Not only are the Oceans a source of energy and food, they also provide work for 56.6 Million people, 90% of which work in small-scale fishery⁴.

The Oceans' importance is also being reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations⁵.

² Gascuel, Didier; Le Pape, Olivier; Lucile Mesnildrey: *Integrating Marine Protected Areas in fisheries management systems: some criteria for ecological efficiency.* <http://www.alr-journal.org/articles/alr/pdf/2013/02/alr130056.pdf>

³ Protect Planet Ocean is about marine conservation, <http://www.protectplanetocean.org/collections/introduction/introbox/globalmpas/introduction-item.html>

⁴ The Food and Agriculture Organization by the United Nations: *In Brief - The State of World Fisheries and Agriculture 2016,*

⁵ Sustainable Development-Knowledge Platform: Sustainable Development Goals. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

The SDG's contain, amongst others, the importance of the marine's ecosystem's protection in view of mankind's future⁶. Within the YES!-Young Economic Summit we have decided to contribute our own part to the idea of making sustainable use of our oceans⁷.

Our „eFISHient" System

We came up with a system of protected marine zones in order to put an end to overfishing but limit any economic damage at the same time. Using the example of the North Sea we have assembled a system which divides a region into equal zones with each zone being parted into smaller, equal sections.

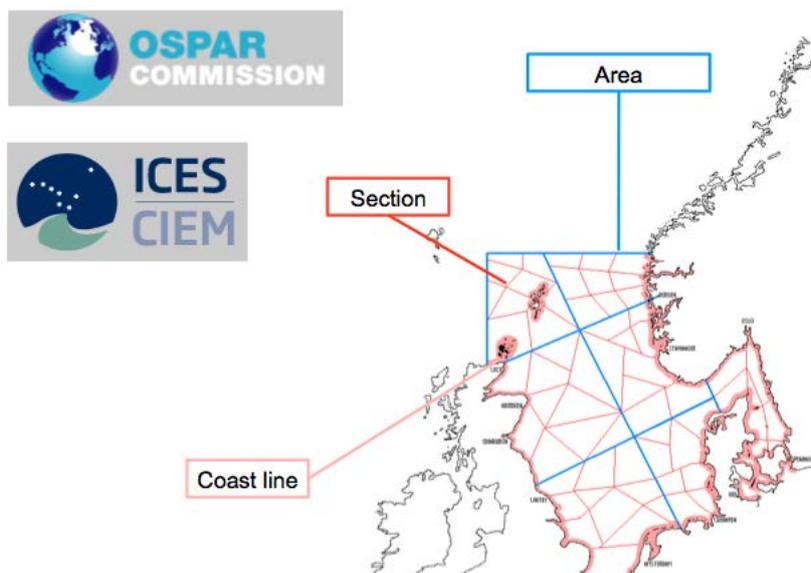
The zones reach about 80.000 km², each section has a size of up to 8.400 km². The sections' size allows for the fish populations to move and recover from fishing on one side, but still leaves enough unprotected space for the fishers to fish on the other⁸. Up to two sections per zone are considered protected, meaning that crossing the area is allowed, but all kinds of fishery are prohibited.

The sections' borders are set at islands and seaside towns where fishery represents a strong branch of industry in order to provide at least one unprotected area to fish in at all time. However, the frontiers are adaptable to certain species, in case there only are few or just very small fishing grounds. The protected zones are being chosen randomly, besides the fact that they should not adjoin.

⁶ Sustainable Development-Knowledge Platform: Sustainable Development Goal 14. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg14>

⁷ Themen des YES!: *Implementing the SDG's - Measuring the sustainable Ocean*. <http://www.young-economic-summit.org/sustainable-oceans/>

⁸ IUCN and UNEP-WCMC (2013), *The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)* Cambridge, UK: UNEP- WCMC.



A map of our system, using the example of the North Sea

The protection takes place for a certain time frame which is being set in advance to just protect a certain species or the entire ecosystem in the area. The time frame can vary from one or two years to several decades, since it depends on how long it takes for the fish stocks to recover and each individual to grow bigger⁹. The sections' sizes as well as the time frame is to be adjusted, depending on the region one wants to implement the system on and the species one is trying to protect.

With an average size of 544 km², most marine protected areas are smaller, with the ten largest MPA's skewing the average. The median on the other hand is less than 5 km², giving a more lifelike picture of reality.

Marine reserves on the other hand tend to be even smaller, with 50% of the 124 examined marine reserves being less than 3,75 km² big. Although scientific recommendations describe the ideal minimal size of marine reserves as well as marine protected areas ranging from at least three to about 13 km² only 35-60% meet those numbers¹⁰.

Excluded from the system of rotating protected sections is a coast-line (about 12 seamiles wide) where industrial fishing is prohibited permanently. This protects the artisanal fishery which provides more labour for people per fish caught than industrial fishing.

⁹ Gascuel, Didier; Le Pape, Olivier; Lucile Mesnildrey: *Integrating Marine Protected Areas in fisheries management systems: some criteria for ecological efficiency*. <http://www.alr-journal.org/articles/alr/pdf/2013/02/alr130056.pdf>

¹⁰ Protect Planet Ocean is about Marine Conservation-*Global Facts about MPA's and marine reserves*. <http://www.protectplanetocean.org/collections/introduction/introbox/globalmpas/introduction-item.html>

Implementing and Controlling Institutions

Three existing organizations could be appointed to implement the method and controlling the systems' success.

OSPAR, an agreement between countries directing the North Sea's and the North East Atlantic's protection, engages in preserving the area in our example. At the moment the OSPAR Commission concentrates on the problems caused by dumping and the offshore industry, but its main interest is the preservation of biodiversity in marine ecosystems¹¹. Getting involved with the fish industry would therefore only partly be a new field, since its consequences affect the exact same. Since not every one of the contractual partners is part of the EU, the OSPAR Commission proves the countries' shared interest to work on solutions, even beyond borders of communities of states. That kind of institution is exactly what we need to implement our system.

In order to ensure the fishers' compliance with the protected sections' borders and the fishing prohibitions, we want to use the existing S-VMS, the Satellite Vessel Monitoring System. The S-VMS allows the police to follow the fishing boats' routes as well as communicate with them. Every fishing boat longer than 12 meters is bound to have the connecting device on board. On the basis of speed and course data specialists can distinguish the purpose of the excursion, whether the boat is just crossing the area or whether it is fishing. In that case, they can also identify the applied fishing method.

ICES, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, is responsible for the collection of data on fishing grounds, fishery and fish populations¹², which can be used to monitor the systems' success. Both parties would benefit from the collaboration.

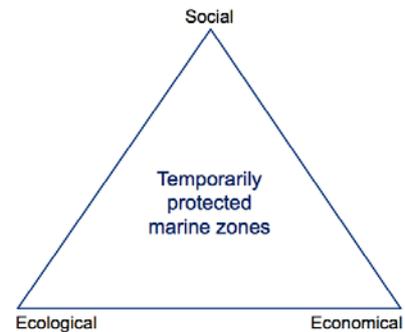
¹¹ Dr. Darius Campbell: introduction from the Executive Secretary, <http://www.ospar.org/about>, OSPAR Commission

¹² International Council for the Exploration of the Sea: *What we do - Science for sustainable seas*, <http://www.ices.dk/explore-us/what-we-do/Pages/default.aspx>

The three Dimensions of Sustainability

Since the YES!-challenge is about sustainable development, the three dimensions of sustainability, the social, ecological and economical side, have to be taken into account:

Our system of protected zones provides recovery for endangered species and protection for others, both of which result in the sustainable improvement of the marine ecosystem.



It supports and secures artisanal fishery, preserves the long-term base for industrial fishery as a strong branch of the industry and reduces the damage of recreational fishing (regarding tourism).

The size, time frame and the borders' position being adaptable, the economic damage is being limited and the remaining fishing ground is being distributed evenly.

Our Systems' Versatility

The efficiency of marine protected areas has been proven, yet they are underachieved. Our system closes this gap and presents the idea of marine protected areas in an entirely new form. Not only does it fulfil all three dimensions of sustainability, it is also implementable on regions of every size and condition. It can be used to stabilize the entire ecosystem of a region or to protect of a certain species. The system can generally be based on the collaboration of three existing organizations, which have the means to implement the system and to control the fishermen as well as evaluate the systems' success.

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maribus gGmbH: *World Ocean Review. Mit den Meeren leben - Ein Bericht über den Zustand der Weltmeere 1. Die Weltmeere - Motor des globalen Klimas*

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MEHR SICHERHEIT IM STRAßENVERKEHR DURCH NUDGING



Eine Lösungsidee des Gymnasiums Wellingdorf

Beteiligte: Ali Anaissi und Eduard Tetzlaff

Verantwortliche Lehrkraft: Malte Rohm

The Challenge

Libertarian Paternalism and Choice Architecture – Nudging People into the “Right” Direction

One classical example for nudging is a small soccer goal in a urinal. This little measure alone leads men to aim better and reduces the amount of urine on the floor of public men's room by 80%. This sounds like a fun example but nudges can be used in all kinds of settings.

Nudging is a term from behavioural economics. It is a method to influence people's behaviour in a predictable manner, without the use of imperatives or prohibitions or the change of economic incentives.

The so called “libertarian paternalism” and the according choice architecture nudges people gently into a direction which is, from the viewpoint of the actor, good for them. The crucial point is that this happens without the restriction of peoples' freedom.

A critical examination of this new policy instrument seems to be indicated, since it suggests a “superior knowledge” of the actors.

Who is allowed to use this instrument to influence others? Who determines the “wise” decision? What considerations define a “smart” decision? How to ensure that nudges are used openly and transparently to prevent manipulation and paternalism? What should be the overall goal of nudging interventions (for example, social welfare, and personal autonomy)? What to do when the overall goals are mutually exclusive?

What is 'Nudging' all about?

Nudging is an instrumental method aiming to influence people's behavior without changing their choice set. A lot of (policy) interventions are targeting the behavior of individuals in one way or another. For example taxes or subsidies set incentives or disincentives to act in a certain way, while laws, bans and mandates dictate a given mode of behavior and therefore have an coercive nature. Nudges, on the other hand, steer people into a certain direction, without limiting their freedom of choice. So it is a liberty-preserving approach to affect the decisions of individuals in a positive way, as Sunstein (2014) puts it, with the possibility to decide otherwise. So, for a (policy) intervention to classify as a nudge, it must alter '*people's behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives. To count as a nudge, the intervention must be easy and cheap to avoid.*' (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

One important aspect of nudges is that they are designed to make people's lives easier, simpler and safer. Empirical studies have shown that people, in a lot of situations, make decisions with bounded rationality. So often times, when confronted with complex situations, people tend to employ established paradigms, rules of thumb, simple heuristics and feelings to reach a decision, rather than taking all information and facts into account. When understanding those mechanism people use to reach a decision, one can use easy instruments, namely nudges, to reach socially desirable objectives (Vodafone Stiftung, 2014). They can take a lot of different forms like default settings (for example, opting-in or opting-out), increasing convenience (for example, making the healthy food options easier accessible at the cafeteria), sending out reminders (for example, for overdue bills), editing of information given to individuals, and many more.

So implementing nudges is a powerful tool, however, especially when the government starts to nudge, there is some skepticism out there. Nudges can easily be understood as manipulative and patronizing. So the use of nudges should be cautious and transparent (Bruttle & Stolly, 2014)

Where to Nudge People?

As mentioned above, nudges can span a wide range; they can come in a great variety and are applicable at a lot of different scenarios. We, the YES!-Team of Gymnasium Wellingdorf, want to help cyclists to ride safer. Nudges can direct their behaviour into a more sound and reasonable direction, when it comes to traffic behaviour.

This topic was especially relevant for us due to personal experiences and the fact, that riding a bike is very present in our lives. One of Ali Anaissi's cousins got hit by a truck a couple of years ago in Kiel, while riding his bike, and died. The accident happened on his daily way to school while crossing a street.

The bike is a very important mean of transportation in Kiel. According to the road safety report of state capital Kiel 2015 (Verkehrssicherheitsbericht, 2015), roughly 17% of intra local trips are conducted by bike, compared to 9% in the nationwide average. In 2015 more than 450 cyclists were involved in accidents; almost half of those accidents were mainly or partly caused by cyclists. Not adjusting speed was the most common cause for accidents mainly caused by cyclists. But also disregarding red lights and disregarding right of way were accident sources, which are rather induced by inattentiveness.

The statistics show that getting involved in an accident while riding a bike is not just a subjective feeling caused by personal experience, but a severe problem. So we decided to use nudges to direct cyclist into the 'right' direction.

How to Nudge?

To reduce the number of accidents, we were thinking about dangerous spots where cyclists could be nudged to reduce velocity or pay more attention. One useful nudge to get people's attention are graphical warnings in bright colours (Sunstein, 2014).

First of all we thought about lines on the streets. Those could be used at hard bends or corners to get the cyclists attention and make him or her aware of upcoming obstacles, like a sharp turn. To show the direction of curves that are difficult to see, the markings on the street could be angled in the same way and point the cyclist in the direction. In addition, differently coloured lines can indicate the level of difficulty, i.e., green for a low level of difficulty, orange for a medium level of difficulty and red indicates the highest level of difficulty, warning the cyclist in advance. For better visibility at night time, reflectors should be added to the markings.

Figure 1 depicts an exemplary curve, with bad visibility which is predisposed for accidents. The added markings should help cyclists to better assess the upcoming situation and make them adjust their mode of behaviour accordingly.



Figure 1 - exemplary curve with markings

As mentioned above, the markings are especially designed for bends and corners, however, there are a lot of different situations where it is necessary to get the cyclists attention and/ or slow him or her down. Examples are streets going downhill or having a difficult to assess overall traffic situation, i.e., hard to see that the cyclist has to yield right of way, etc.

To get people to slow down, we think about a game the cyclist can play while riding his or her bike. 3D-stickers can be placed on bike paths to nudge cyclists to slow down by encouraging them to play a game. We are thinking of two different types of 3D-stickers.

One version of stickers is a 3D star coin, inspired by jump and run computer games, where the player has to collect as many coins as possible. The location and number of coins used depends on the slope/ traffic situation on the bike path. The coins are being distributed unevenly on the path, such that the cyclist must make an effort to “collect” them by riding over them. In consequence, he or she has to slow down to get all the coins.

The other version of stickers is a 3D pylon. Pylons are known by a lot of people from road safety education, physical education, sports, etc. The 3D pylons will be placed on the path in a way that the cyclists can ride a slalom course. Here again, they can play a game, have fun and slow down at the same time, since they won't go in a straight line.

Another way to nudge people to pay more attention in traffic, and especially get them to slow down or stop at dangerous crossings, is to show them constantly changing jokes and fun facts. An easy way to do so is to put up electronic displays which show a “phrase of the day”, which is written in a font size that can only be picked up when slowing down or stopping all together. The constantly changing phrases keep the interest of the cyclist going this way on a

regular basis up and are therefore a good instrument to get them stopped to read it for an extended period of time.

To sum it up

Nudges are a powerful tool to steer people in a particular direction without taking away their freedom of choice.

We want to use nudges to bring more safety on the streets for cyclists. As the road safety report 2015 shows, accidents with cyclists are a serious problem in Kiel, but probably also in a lot of other cities. A lot of the reported accidents involving cyclists are induced by too high velocity.

Through markings on the streets, 3D stickers on bike paths and electronic displays at dangerous crossings, we want to nudge cyclists to pay more attention, slow down and ride in a more attentive way. At the same time, we want to keep up the fun and find a more appealing way to change cyclists' behaviour than mandates and laws.

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KURSSYSTEM ZUR ARBEITSMARKTINTEGRATION VON FLÜCHTLINGEN



Eine Lösungsidee des Helene-Lange-Gymnasiums

Beteiligte: Felix Gaebler, Tom Hinz, Marie Krämer,
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Mats Steinicke und Hannes Thoms

Verantwortliche Lehrkraft: Janika Apitz

The Challenge

Bringing Refugees into Work

Around the world almost 60 million people are forcibly displaced according to the UNHCR.

Both while they are displaced and when they return to their often utterly destroyed country of origin, finding a livelihood that does not depend on transfers is possibly the most important economic challenge.

However, there are relatively few policy options that go beyond providing some basic skills that might foster economic success in the labour market. Where refugee numbers are very large as a share of the population or where their skills do not match those demanded by employers, full economic integration is very difficult.

In some countries this had led to the emergence of ethnic enclaves, where immigrants do not directly compete with natives and rather work in newly emerging firms. Just as the economic recovery after returning to a home country, the economic activity in these enclaves is highly dependent on refugees' entrepreneurship.

Still, while available labour is often abundant, refugees typically lack capital, especially when returning to a war-torn place, the institutional setting may be detrimental to economic growth. And even if foreign aid or money from the diaspora provide the necessary capital, a low starting point will mean that reaching a high level of prosperity will take a very long time unless growth rates are extremely high.

Ideas and solution proposals are needed on how such fast growth can be achieved. The ideas presented should offer ways of bringing many people into work and prosperity in a short time.

How can we achieve integration of refugees into the labour market? How can we foster entrepreneurship in order to generate rapid economic growth? How can we bring many people into work and prosperity?

Introduction

According to UNHCR *Global Trends*, more than 65 million people were forcibly displaced from home; among those are more than 21 million refugees seeking protection abroad. Since 2013, almost 1.4 million people applied for asylum in Germany, more than 650.000 people applied already in 2016 (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2016). The influx of so many people poses serious challenges to administrations and the countries' infrastructure. It is still unclear how these numbers will evolve over time, but independent of this, it is important to ensure integration of those people into the educational system, the labour market and society (Brücker, 2015).

As Hinte, Rinne and Zimmermann (2015) highlight, refugees should not be considered a burden, but an investment into the future. According to IAB (8/2015) estimates, roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of asylum seekers are working age and could be an enormous benefit for the labour market in the medium and long run. Language skills, education and a job are often times named as key factors to integration.

Resilient data about the qualification level and work experience of refugees coming to Germany is still scarce. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Rich, 2016) collected data about social structure, level of qualification and employment on a voluntary basis of first-time asylum applicants during the application procedure. Even though the explanatory power of those data has to be handled with care, they give a good overview and estimate about social component of the people seeking asylum in Germany. The data show that qualification and schooling varies a lot between refugees and their countries of origin. A lot of asylum seekers are still of an age where they have not completed their education or finished university. Almost $\frac{1}{3}$ of refugees' (mostly from Iraq, Afghanistan, Serbia and Macedonia) stated to have no formal schooling or only completed primary school. Even refugees with medium or good education levels will most likely need time to get fit for the labour market, since they often lack language skills and vocational training.

An easy, efficient and versatile system is needed to meet all the different needs of refugees, with diverse backgrounds, knowledge and skills, to ensure successful integration.

1.4 Million Refugees. 1.4 Million People. 1.4 Million Stories.

How can we adequately take care of those people coming to Germany and how can we successfully integrate them? This seems like a huge and highly demanding task, but often, small ideas and alterations can improve the existing system in a sustainable way. This is why we came up with the Refugee Integration Course System. It is *easy, efficient and individually*.

The Refugee Integration Course System

The refugee integration course system is a highly customizable and individual system that allows refugees to get graduation and facilitates the transition to working force.

Admission to the Refugee Integration Course System

The refugee integration course system is designed to fit a large part of migrants coming to Germany. Even though, there are some basic conditions needed to be met by applicants. First of all, the refugee has to have been granted asylum, he or she needs basic language skills, i.e. Goethe-B1 certificate, and has to have completed the integration course of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Furthermore, applicable participants of the refugee integration course system must be above school age. German citizens are also eligible to the course system, but they also must have completed compulsory education.

Process of the Refugee Integration Course System

After being admitted to the program, the refugee completes a two-week internship. During this time, his or her educational and social skills are being scrutinized and evaluated. Afterwards the employer can give an assessment of the refugee's skills and the participant has to take a school qualification test. Based on this test and the employer's assessment of the practical and social skills of the refugee, he or she is classified into a course that fits his or her previous education and all in all knowledge best.

There are nine different course levels (level 1-9) according to the curricular of public schooling (grades 1 to 13) in Germany and corresponding to the different German degrees, i.e. Hauptschulabschluss, Mittlere Reife and Hochschulreife. The classification to the course level applies for all mandatory subjects, but it is possible to get individual support if needed in some subjects. Unless the regular curricular of a high school, the course system only covers a reduced subject range, namely German, Mathematics, English, Social Studies and Physical Education. Each course has duration of only three months and is held on a regular basis throughout the year. So it is possible to redo courses when needed and the waiting period to start a course is limited. The compact course work limits the time required to complete each course and enhances efficiency.

After the completion of all the necessary courses, participants are graduating with a fully-fledged school leaving certificate. With this acquired qualification, the refugees are now ready for the labour market. They can either look for an apprenticeship training position or start a long-term internship for further orientation.

Benefits of the Refugee Integration Course System

The refugee integration course system provides a lot of advantages for the refugee as well as for society. First of all it speeds-up the academic qualification process of refugees, due to a compact course work and a highly flexible admission to different courses. Individualisation is the second big advantage of the system. The refugees can enter the course system according to their previous attended schooling, acquired knowledge and skills. This way it is highly customisable to each individual and training time can be kept as short as possible by taking previous experiences into account. As mentioned before, language skills, education and a job are often considered key factors for a successful integration. The refugee integration course system pools those factors, by offering sound schooling combined with practical experiences. The refugees get personal contact and become part of society. By considering and promoting social, professional and academic skills during the refugee integration course system, the refugees boost their chances for a good job and a satisfying work life. Even though the course system afflicts public spending at first, in the medium long run, it facilitates the labour market integration of refugees, which in turn lessens the pressure on social security transfers.

Practical considerations

The courses will be held by qualified and specially trained teachers. The premises of educational institutions can be used.

Of course, the implementation and realisation of the course system comes with costs. Teachers, teaching materials, premises and transportation have to be paid for. However, the efficient assignment of teachers to the different courses as needed, as well as the usage of modern technologies like e-book readers will help to keep the costs low.

Incentives to Take Part in the Refugee Integration Course System

For refugees taking part in the refugee integration course system means to forego possible short term earnings (when they manage to get a job without graduation). But after successfully completing the course system and having a fully-fledged certificate, they have better chances to get a well-paid job offer and have higher earnings in the future. Furthermore, the system is a good mechanism to getting fully integrated into society.

Another important key factor for the success of the course system is the involvement of firms which are willing to offer internships to refugees and to take the time and put in effort to scrutinize and evaluate the working skills of the refugees. The participating firms will get a certificate stating their involvement in this project and acknowledging their commitment to take over social responsibility. Furthermore, taking part can be seen as a long-term investment into workforce, counteracting the threat of skills shortage.

Conclusion

With the influx of hundred thousands of refugees each year, measures have to be taken to ensure successful integration of refugees into society. Furthermore, it would pass up a chance to not invest in the advanced training of refugees, especially taking the demographics and the skills shortage German firms are facing, into account.

Especially looking at the diverse educational backgrounds and skills of the asylum seekers coming to Germany, a versatile and flexible system is needed to support the refugees in a way that suits their strength and weaknesses.

The refugee integration course system offers an efficient and highly individual way to endow refugees with a fully-fledged school leaving certificate, which provides them with the necessary prerequisites and starting conditions to start vocational training and get a good job later on.

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