

Recognizing potential for change, taking responsibility

Under the title »Sustainability and Responsibility in the 21st Century« the Dual Studies Department of the HWR Berlin hosted the Berlin International Week for the second time in November 2020.

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Between the 30th of October to the 11th of November 2020, 28 students from 6 countries, supported by international experts from Germany, Turkey, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Austria and Italy, devoted themselves to the topic "Climate and Innovation" in seminars, workshops and projects.

Due to Corona, the Berlin International Week (BIW) took place digitally this time – a challenge for all participants: "We had to switch from an (almost) pure presence event to an (almost) pure digital event at very short notice. With a few exceptions, all seminars and lectures took place virtually. This was a challenge especially for the participants, but also for the speakers," says Anke Droese from the International Office, describing the situation.

New digital tools in action

"At the same time, however, the project work on the development of user-centred service innovations has opened up new possibilities for conducting user interviews and tests via videoconferencing tools," add Prof. Dr. Silke Bustamante and Prof. Dr. Thomas Afflerbach from the Department of Cooperative Studies.

In addition, by working on digital whiteboards (Miro), students were able to acquire new skills in the development of (digital) prototypes. And as a replacement for the originally planned field trips, new ideas were quickly developed: for example, forest bathing and intensifying digital corporate talks.

The Berlin International Week in figures

- 28 Participants, of which
- 19 students were of the HWR Berlin
- 8 guest students from the UK, Switzerland, Austria, Spain
- 1 external student from Ghana

- 11 events, including

- 1 opening event in person
- 11 online sessions
- 3.5 days project work
- 5 corporate talks
- 1 panel discussion
- 1 excursion
- 1 future workshop

Corporate Talks, project work and the climate policy game as highlights

The students gave positive feedback especially for the corporate talks, the intensive project work and the climate policy game. At the **Corporate Talk**, representatives of Vattenfall, SirPlus, BSR, Staiy and CDP Europe presented their companies and their sustainability concepts.

As part of the **project work**, the students worked in small groups using the "Service Design" method for 3.5 days on problems, the so-called Design Challenges, by the project partners BASF, Ostdeutscher Sparkassenverbund or Grüneo (Team of the Startup Incubator Berlin). During this period, the students developed and tested user-centred innovations, such as digital games designed to sensitise employees to sustainability issues in everyday office life (Gamification) or new experiences for gardening on the windowsill (Urban/Indoor Gardening).

In the **climate policy game**, students put themselves in the role of nations that should negotiate their contributions to climate protection.

Feedback from students

„I think it was very inspiring and very important. We were educated from very different perspectives, also through very practical approaches. The corporate talks were amazing and I believe it taught us a lot about the actual sustainability approaches in the business world – that is especially interesting for me as an IBMAN student.“

Luisa Unterbörsch

“I had an insightful and inspiring week. Most of the topics mentioned were of high relevance to me and deepened my knowledge in the field ... Especially interesting were the interactive parts of the week such as the UN conference game or the corporate challenge. The latter let us experience the impact that young people who are concerned with sustainability can have on businesses that are well established such as BASF or OSV but also on startups like Grüneo. The solutions we came up with felt substantial and the companies seemed to be very willing to try to implement them.“

Jan Nahrstedt

BIW in the theme year of Responsibility

"In the Berlin International Week, we want to underline the ways to act responsibly and the importance thereof, as entrepreneurs, employees, investors, consumers, citizens, etc. and show solutions to sustainability challenges. In some modules this is addressed in a very concrete way, for example "Corporate Social Innovation" and "Sustainable Finance". Case work is particularly well suited to show students their potential for change and to encourage them to actively take responsibility," explains Prof. Bustamante.

General information about the BIW

The Berlin International Week 2020 was hosted by Prof. Dr. Silke Bustamante and Prof. Dr. Thomas Afflerbach from the Department of Cooperative Studies with their organising team. The event took place under the umbrella of the [TOOLIP](#) project.

The BIW was established in 2019 with the aim of integrating sustainability and responsibility aspects more strongly into the curriculum of the study programmes. The focus on "Sustainability and Responsibility" was thus established. This has a new focus every year, in 2020 it was "Climate and Innovation". The approach is always disciplinary and international. Participation is open to students and visiting students of the HWR Berlin, alumni and interested students from other universities.