



Transcript of the “*Wenden bitte!*” podcast:

Think global, act local: How does successful environmental policy work?

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Introducing the subject and today's contributors

Nadine Kreutzer:

Happy New Year to you all, and a warm welcome to Season 4 of our “*Wenden bitte!*” podcast. It's a new year with some exciting topics, so let's get started. In this podcast, experts from the Oeko-Institut provide answers to many of the key questions around the transition to sustainability. And as always, your hosts are Mandy Schossig from the Oeko-Institut ...

Mandy Schossig:

... and Nadine Kreutzer, journalist and presenter, who you've just heard. It's good to see you, Nadine. Every year, my colleagues in the research divisions work on hundreds of projects on a diverse range of topics: the resource transition, digitalisation, energy and climate policy, but also nuclear technology, a sustainable economy, and the land use and mobility transitions – they are all on the agenda. Not forgetting environmental law and a just transition, which are also topics that we address.

But today, we will be putting these issues aside or, should I say, shifting the focus and looking at projects in other countries. And to start off, we have an overview of today's topic for you.

Sound clip (brief subject overview)

Whether it is the climate crisis, plastic waste or conserving biodiversity: Germany cannot solve all these problems on its own. On the contrary, climate action, the environment and resource conservation require international cooperation. Many stakeholders are calling for industrialised countries such as Germany to take action across national boundaries, for our model of prosperity is based to a large extent on decades of resource use and exploitation, and this has resulted in the countless global environmental crises that we're seeing today. According to the OECD, Germany is the second largest provider of funding for development assistance. Alongside topics such as poverty reduction and health, these funds are increasingly being spent on environmental issues and cooperation.

However, the conventional model of development assistance is coming in for criticism. It is claimed that all too often, partner countries have ready-made solutions imposed upon them and there is rarely a focus on the real issues of concern to people in developing countries and emerging economies. Amidst this tension, what kind of action is meaningful and effective? Does international cooperation in the environmental sector make sense? What form should cooperation take in order to progress sustainable development on a global scale?

Mandy Schossig:

Yes, and today Andreas Manhart is here to answer these questions. Andreas is a geographer and Senior Researcher in the Sustainable Products and Material Flows Division at the Oeko-Institut's Freiburg office. He has worked on numerous projects in Africa and the Asian region and has been with us since 2005. Hello, Andreas!

Andreas Manhart:

Hello! Hey, everyone!

Nadine Kreutzer:

Hello from me as well. Andreas, you have been interested in raw materials and a circular economy for a very long time. You also spent two years in Indonesia and even speak Indonesian. Not everyone can claim to do that! So a quick question to start with: How do we say “Happy New Year” in Indonesian?

Andreas Manhart:

"Selamat Tahun Baru" is Happy New Year or Good New Year in Indonesian. We're going back some time here, but I can still say a few words.

Nadine Kreutzer:

Was it these two years in Indonesia that sparked your interest in international cooperation?

Andreas Manhart:

Yes and no. My interest in international themes began much earlier. Even as a child, I was interested in the big wide world; I was one of those kids who was always looking at maps and wondering what different places around the world looked like. And that interest stayed with me when I went to university. I studied geography, which is about asking why the world looks the way it does, in terms of its physiography but also how it is shaped by human influence. And that was what ultimately led me to topics like these.

So first of all, there were the periods spent in Indonesia, although not with the Oeko-Institut, but afterwards as well, when I joined the Oeko-Institut, issues such as resources, recycling and a circular economy were of interest to me precisely because they have a spatial dimension and because it is about exploring why resource flows operate in the way they do.

Redefining conventional development cooperation

Nadine Kreutzer:

Perhaps you could start off by clarifying the difference between the project work that you and your colleagues are engaged in and conventional development activities?

Andreas Manhart:

To some extent, conventional development cooperation stems from the notion of catch-up development. So we have the industrialised nations, and they assist poor countries with their catch-up development, industrialisation and poverty reduction. But of course, to some extent, this is an outdated concept nowadays, including in development cooperation itself. It's a more modern approach these days: it is about collaboration on equal terms.

We come from the environmental sector and just as other countries can learn from us, so we can learn from them. We are trying to distance ourselves from this notion of catch-up development as

the primary goal. Instead, it's about developing solutions to problems that are similar all over the world, and it's also about looking beyond our own backyard and asking: What works elsewhere? What works for us, and how can we learn from each other?

Mandy Schossig:

The Oeko-Institut had an international clientele and international projects very early on. How might we envision this? What kind of projects were they in those days, and who were the clients?

Andreas Manhart:

Well, for me personally, it started in 2008. We had already worked on e-waste before that, looking at how it is processed, recycled and what kind of risks it poses in Germany and Europe. And then we were approached by the United Nations Environment Programme. Back then, the reports that Germany and Europe were exporting electronic waste to African countries were relatively new. And then this enquiry came along. Would we be willing to join a team to look at questions such as: How did this trade come about? What is really going on? What are the drivers, and what is happening at the local level that we can investigate? And we were suddenly thrown right into it and through this very well-positioned project, we worked together with partners in West Africa. We also investigated what was happening in Europe. Why are these appliances being exported, and what happens to them when they arrive? The collaboration proved very fruitful and so it continued.

Nadine Kreutzer:

We mentioned the clientele. What does this mean, exactly? Which types of client are there?

Andreas Manhart:

Many of them are donors in the context of development cooperation, which is also known as ODA – Official Development Assistance – and involves the provision of funding for collaborative activities. These funds are increasingly being invested in the environmental sector because there is a demand for this in partner countries. It's said that there is less demand for conventional topics relating to catch-up industrialisation these days. Instead, the focus has shifted towards getting a grip on the problems associated with it. So of course, many donors come from this sector, but not all of them.

There are other forms of collaboration as well, which have evolved from the environmental sector itself, and we are increasingly receiving requests from countries for specific thematic support or cooperation.

Mandy Schossig:

And has this changed over time? The type of projects, I mean? Is that different now compared with 2008?

Andreas Manhart:

A lot has changed, of course. Many of the changes have come about because we can work in very different ways nowadays using modern technologies and video conferencing. In the past, the interaction with partners relied heavily on travel. Not that travel has been reduced to zero these

days. But we can now work in different ways with a more efficient internet and video conferencing. Back then, we were still using Skype and the connections were unstable. Everything was incredibly makeshift. In our day-to-day collaboration now, there is a genuine dialogue: you make a call and it's more like working with a team in another city in Germany. You'd never think we were separated by continents and oceans.

Nadine Kreutzer:

So how would you describe your understanding of international cooperation in relation to environmental projects these days?

Andreas Manhart:

As I said, for us, it's about an exchange of experience. And of course, there is considerable interest in what Germany and Europe have been doing in the environmental sector over the last 10 to 30 years. How have specific issues been regulated? What progress has been made, and what hasn't worked?

We often still see ourselves as frontrunners, but that's not always accurate. We are increasingly interested in learning. Which approaches exist in other regions of the world, in other countries? We increasingly see ourselves as being engaged in something more akin to an exchange. We must learn from each other in order to find ways of tackling problems effectively. Sure, the solutions won't be the same if we are talking about Ghana, Nigeria or Thailand and Germany. But we can identify certain patterns. And there are undoubtedly some interesting approaches that we can easily overlook if we stay in our German or European bubble.

Mandy Schossig:

What does this look like in practice? When you say that learning and exchange are so important, what forms do this cooperation or these projects take?

Andreas Manhart:

We have a different role in these partnerships compared to our role in Germany. In Germany, we are a civil society institute that takes part in the debate. If we go to a different continent, we can share our knowledge and methodologies, but we have to leave the political debate to the local stakeholders. How is the knowledge used? At most, we can say, "Well, in Germany, this was how it went" or "In Europe, we drew these conclusions". But we are not embedded deeply enough in these societies to be able to take that step in other countries.

We have a different role. And that's why it's always very important for us to work with good partners when it comes to interpreting the conclusions. What can be achieved, and by what means? What is appropriate in the given country? It is not about taking this step ourselves; it's about working together with partners and representing them.

Nadine Kreutzer:

Could you be more specific? If we are talking about other stakeholders entering the game, who is brought on board? How might we envision this? Ideally, who should be involved in order to arrive at a good outcome?

Andreas Manhart:

For us, it is very important to collaborate with partners who have a similar background to our own: partners who work on an independent, scientific and value-oriented basis. We look for organisations that might be described as the Oeko-Institut's natural counterparts in a broader sense. They exist in the majority of countries and stable networks have developed in some countries over the years. We know some of the people and we know the organisations fairly well. And this has increasingly evolved into friendships over the years and so we are very happy to work with many of these stakeholders.

And then of course, other stakeholders come on board as well. Naturally, we talk to governments, but that's not something we would do on our own in another country. It's not our role to provide direct advice to another country's government. Instead, we support our partners, perhaps by sharing methodologies or experience, but we want the policy-making to take place in the country concerned. All we can do is offer a scientific perspective.

Mandy Schossig:

I'd like to look again at the topics and project countries. Here in Germany, reducing emissions and climate action are right at the top of the agenda. What about countries that we're cooperating with – what's the situation there? What are the hot topics for them?

International cooperation: topics and objectives

Andreas Manhart:

There's no disputing that mitigating climate change is a major issue and it should certainly not be trivialised. And of course, it plays a very significant role in international cooperation as well. Nevertheless – and this is something that we see very often – the situation is viewed differently at the local level. In emerging economies, particularly those with megacities, there are environmental problems whose impacts are tangible: air pollution, water pollution, waste, toxic substances, which affect people each and every day whenever they step outside. So these are topics with additional and very substantial political relevance.

There is always the acid test: you arrive in the country and you take a taxi into the city and chat with the taxi driver. What are the main issues that come up? One of them will almost certainly have to do with the environment, but not the climate in most cases. Not that this isn't important, but it is similar to the situation in Germany in the 1980s, when the idea of protecting the environment was triggered by issues that were immediately visible and tangible. And that's the situation that many rapidly growing emerging economies are in today, and I think this needs to be considered in these collaborations. There will undoubtedly be more public awareness of climate change mitigation later, once it's clear that there are benefits to protecting the environment.

Nadine Kreutzer:

Is it something of a challenge to see that each country has different goals? Protecting the environment is always important, but each country has a different focus. Are you constantly having to look again and rethink your approach because the situation is like this in one country and different in another?

Andreas Manhart:

Well, of course, you have to listen to people. But I think it is quite understandable that if the air that people breathe every day is thick enough to cut with a knife, they will identify this as the more important problem that they face right now, because this is what poses a direct risk to their health. Compared with that, climate change is more of an abstract concept. Of course, it is real, but ultimately it is clear that politics must also focus on people's needs. And in many emerging economies, these are the direct threats resulting from air pollution, water pollution or poor waste management.

Mandy Schossig:

You have already drawn attention to the different roles and different project objectives. From your perspective, what makes for good cooperation in the project context? How do you determine whether it's going well?

Andreas Manhart:

It's whether you have a very high level of trust with the partners, you don't have to keep a close eye on what the other side is doing, and you have a shared project objective. It's not just about completing a project so that you can tick it off the list; it's about working towards a goal. And besides partnership and trust, another factor comes into play here, namely whether the donors allow for a degree of freedom. Let me put it this way: there are some tightly knit projects, with check lists to be followed and workshops to be organised and reports to be submitted and so on.

That's all well and good, but there also needs to be a degree of flexibility. After all, the aim is to arrive at an outcome, and at the planning stage, it is impossible to say whether a workshop or a report really is the best means of achieving this. A cooperation arrangement offers much more flexibility here, and it is good to have projects that allow some leeway – ones that set specific goals and identify specific thematic frameworks, but where you sit down with the partners and other stakeholders and say: "We all have a common goal, so how do we get there?"

Nadine Kreutzer:

What about cultural differences? Is that a problem or an enrichment?

Andreas Manhart:

I wouldn't describe cultural differences as a problem. From my perspective, that's somewhat exaggerated. Of course, things are done differently elsewhere. A workshop in Africa is run differently from a workshop in Asia or Europe, that's quite clear, and there will undoubtedly be one or two surprises along the way. But these people don't live in the back of beyond. We're talking about a global, educated middle class that is well aware of how we live, just as we know that things look different in African cities. So it is understood that knowledge doesn't come to us overnight and that there may be one or two missteps that we can let pass, on either side. Our partners also come to visit us in Germany and these are things that we can laugh about when we get together.

It's more of an enrichment, I would say. And one of the really fun aspects is seeing how things are done differently elsewhere. And that can be very enriching for all sides. I certainly wouldn't describe it as a problem.

Mandy Schossig:

You have talked about travel already. There was probably much more of that before COVID and there have been a few changes, with videoconferencing and so on. Does distance make cooperation more difficult, or have you established ways of working which ensure that things run smoothly? Perhaps you could tell us a little more about that.

Andreas Manhart:

Of course! Well, if trust and getting to know each other are important, personal contact has a key role to play. And in that sense, all the remote communications in the world are limited in their usefulness. Things are improving. We can see each other now; we can see people's faces during the meetings, but we all know that Teams tiles are not the ideal dialogue format for everything. You do have to meet in person. Did we travel more in the past? Yes and no.

As an environmental institute, we were always careful not to jump on a plane at every opportunity. Emissions from travel often pose something of a dilemma for us. On the one hand, we are keen to foster contact, so we ask ourselves: When does a visit genuinely make sense? Can we combine journeys, plan longer stays, bring the partners over to us? It is tricky.

So we always have to find a balance. Fortunately, we can do more and more with communications technology these days. And when we're working with partners who we have known for a very long time, there's a lot we can do without travelling. That's the case where we have stable relationships. Projects are increasingly being managed in ways which minimise the amount of travel. We might meet up at a conference once in a while, but we aren't constantly visiting the partner country these days, and likewise, our partners aren't always visiting us.

Nadine Kreutzer:

Think global, act local: that's what today's podcast is all about. It's about projects that the Oeko-Institut supports in other countries. Andreas, you're on board as our expert on the subject. Now, let's look at a project example. You previously mentioned Ghana and we would like to hear more from you about that. You have an exciting project on e-waste there. What is it all about?

Project example: e-waste in Ghana

Andreas Manhart:

Well, of course, that has to do with the project's history. As I said, this is where it all started for us. And then very good networks developed together with the Oeko-Institut in Ghana, and they would often approach us. And very often, the Ghanaian partners would then say: "Well, if we want to do something internationally, then maybe we should do it with the Oeko-Institut."

One of the projects that we are currently involved in is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). It's called [Sustainable Recycling Industries](#) (SRI). SRI is a large-scale programme operating in a number of countries and we have taken over the coordination in Ghana together with our long-standing partners. We work very trustfully with the Ghanaian authorities and the Ministry but also with the Swiss side to determine at half-yearly intervals where the priorities lie: What do we want to do? Which goals do we want to achieve? The project works well because we

have a great deal of flexibility, a good network and a high level of trust. And for me personally, it is an absolute highlight and that really motivates me to give my all.

Nadine Kreutzer:

Before we go into detail and you tell us more about what you and your colleagues are doing, perhaps you could say a few words about e-waste and Ghana since you know what's going on there. We often see the newspaper headlines, which can be somewhat alarming, but perhaps you can give us an insider's perspective to shed some light on the situation.

Andreas Manhart:

Well, around 10 or 15 years ago, the illegal trade, the exporting of e-waste or appliances that barely functioned was very much in vogue. The idea was that there might be someone out there who could repair the appliances or give them a second life. The volume of exports was quite large. There are no precise figures available but it has decreased since then, according to our observations. As always, and this is not specific to Ghana, consumption patterns change and people want and need these appliances, whether they are fridges, mobile phones or computers. And of course this changes the waste stream in a society that previously lacked these devices on such a scale.

So the question is this: How do we manage this issue, and how do we ensure that the problems with disposal are minimised as far as possible? It's also about getting a grip on these trade issues. On top of that, systems need to be in place for take-back, recycling and reuse. So we are working with our Ghanaian partners to pilot these systems on a stepwise basis; we're not just conducting studies, we are also testing how to set them up. It is a fascinating process and it also leads to some interesting experiments for engaging in other sectors as well.

What about waste tyres, for example? Until a few years ago, there was open roadside burning of tyres in Ghana. And nearby, there was a cement plant that burned coal day in, day out. So now there are schemes for targeted incineration of tyres in cement plants in order to comply with emissions standards and reduce the use of coal.

It's not ideal; it is still not carbon-neutral, but it's a great improvement on the situation that existed a few years ago.

Mandy Schossig:

And are there any specific project objectives? Or are you adopting a stepwise approach, as you have just described, and continuously redefining what you want to achieve? Can you explain in a little more detail?

Andreas Manhart:

There is a rough framework. It's about addressing the problems of e-waste in the waste sector, as well as other waste fractions. There is a steering group consisting of the Ministry, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Swiss side. The group meets with us every six months or so, depending on people's availability. And that's where we make adjustments and discuss exactly what needs to be done. We report on what has been achieved and on any aspects that are not working so well.

So the steering group is there to provide direction. And from our perspective, this is an incredibly good way to keep a project up to date. The frameworks might change, issues might change, so it's not about working with a document or check list for years on end. Instead, the project is continuously updated by the people who take the decisions, including in Ghana itself.

Mandy Schossig:

And who do you collaborate with? You have already mentioned other civil society stakeholders. Who else is on board?

Andreas Manhart:

We have two excellent partners in Ghana. For one, there is the Mountain Research Institute. This institute is very similar to the Oeko-Institut, only much smaller. And then there is the Ghana National Cleaner Production Center at the local level. The Center is hosted by the Environmental Protection Agency and is tasked with promoting and supporting better industry practices in Ghana.

So we have two partners with whom we have an excellent working relationship, and because they have spent so much time in Germany, including at the Oeko-Institut, and because we have known each other for a good many years, the dialogue is based on a high degree of trust, and a very high level of commitment has been achieved with the project.

Nadine Kreutzer:

As I understand it, you and your colleagues are working on battery recycling in Ghana and have also conducted a feasibility study there, is that correct? So do you currently focus solely on batteries in relation to e-waste? What exactly are you yourself working on within this project framework?

Andreas Manhart:

Yes, batteries still come into it if we look at what the biggest problems are, and this also comes from local stakeholders. And it makes a difference whether we recycle the batteries or an obsolete computer that contains batteries.

But then we find that by far the most serious localised pollution problem in relation to battery recycling stems primarily from lead-acid batteries, which are not part of the e-waste fraction but are used as starter batteries in cars or in older solar energy systems. If we quantify where there is the biggest impact on public health, that's where we come across these batteries. And as a result, we are working on this battery issue increasingly often in these projects now because it is a highly relevant problem, particularly in urban environments in emerging economies.

Donation-funded project on lead-acid battery recycling

Mandy Schossig:

This is a topic where we were very strongly engaged at the start of this international cooperation. We had a [donation-funded project – in 2015, as I recall – which focused on lead battery recycling in African countries](#). Perhaps you could tell us how it started and share some of your observations.

Andreas Manhart:

Yes, in conversations with various African partners who we already knew, we realised that this was not an isolated problem. In this case, incidentally, it is not the informal sector; it is the industrial plants with investments in these countries that aim to reclaim the metals, particularly lead, but their operations are often sub-standard and cause extremely high levels of pollution.

And so in our dialogue with various partners in a range of countries, we presented the hypothesis that these were not isolated cases, but a systemic problem. In many African countries and, indeed, outside Africa, this is a systemic practice. So we provided funding – and I’m very grateful to the donors here – to investigate this issue together with partners. It was a small-scale project but it gave us the opportunity to take a closer look together with partners in a range of countries.

It was indeed the case that the problems were very similar in most of the countries. This was a wake-up call. We published a brochure which we somewhat luridly titled [The Deadly Business](#) because as we said, this is a recycling sector where, in the worst cases, human life doesn’t count for much.

Mandy Schossig:

Did anything change after that, would you say, looking back?

Andreas Manhart:

Yes and no. On the one hand, there is now a much broader debate about the issue. There is even a UN resolution from a few years ago, which calls on all UN member states to take the issue seriously and regulate lead-acid battery recycling as a genuine priority. This is a major step forward and many countries have started to take action.

But if you look at the recycling plants – and we do go and look at one every so often – it has yet to have an effect across the board. A lot has happened and some facilities have improved but the problem still isn’t resolved. Nevertheless, there is a solution to the problem and we are seeing some progress here as well.

Mandy Schossig:

You have already mentioned briefly that this project and others that you are involved with lead on to new things and then you get more enquiries. Perhaps you could tell us a bit more about what the overall setting for this international engagement looks like and how you work.

Andreas Manhart:

With battery recycling, it is interesting that we are often perceived as an organisation that has been down this road before. I talked to some of my older colleagues and they said, “Yes, the kind of thing you guys are reporting on from Africa is precisely the same situation that we had in Germany in the 1980s and 1990s.” So we sat down with them and it genuinely is the case that the very same problems existed in Germany, and we have the studies to prove it. When we feed this back to our partners in Africa, we are naturally building a bridge. They say: “What? It was exactly the same for you?” They often find it hard to believe; they think that Germany is impeccably regulated and always has been.

And then, of course, you have a very different type of partnership if you say, look, your development is happening later but it is comparable, and we can share an insider's perspective on which steps have genuinely led to improvements. I rely on these former colleagues; in some cases, we call them on the phone and fetch them out of retirement. This builds a bridge that is based on empathy or leads to dialogue. And as a result, many of our African partners say to us: "Do you want to come on board? After all, this is an issue that you previously tried to resolve in Germany."

The role of international cooperation in environmental projects

Nadine Kreutzer:

Andreas, this work that you and your colleagues are doing is incredibly important, yet we don't really hear much about it. Many people know nothing about it at all. I'm in a privileged position in that sense because the Oeko-Institut kindly invites me to sit here with Mandy and ask you questions about it. But I am sure that if we were to take a stroll through a pedestrian zone, no one we spoke to would actually be aware that you and your colleagues are working on such important issues. Perhaps you could explain to us once again exactly what would happen if these consultancy services, for example, or this international project work did not exist. What does it achieve, and why is it so important?

Andreas Manhart:

There are several aspects to that question. Why the lack of awareness? Well, for one, it's not a topic that we need to advertise. What's important to us is that our partners and the issues they address have visibility. We are pleased to be network partners but there's no need for us to drum up much publicity here. That is part of the answer, perhaps.

Why is it important? I think it is incredibly important that we put our own house in order here in Germany and in Europe. And that's where the Oeko-Institut is coming from. It is not about investing all our energy in international projects. No, when it comes to global environmental problems, we must put our own house in order. And we also need to ensure that Germany is one of the frontrunners in Europe here. "Lead by example" is a hugely important principle.

Nowadays, however, most environmental problems are no longer localised; issues such as resource flows, waste streams, dispersal of pollutants across the planet and marine litter no longer only affect us in our own backyard. There is a lot that Germany can and must do here. But we will not come to grips with these problems by going it alone. Any country or society can try to muddle through and find its own solution. The alternative is to engage in dialogue. Personally, I think the second option is far more effective.

Peer learning helps us to find out what works and what doesn't. I think this is incredibly important. Learning from each other doesn't mean that we should or must solve problems in other countries, but it would be foolish to neglect the dialogue.

Mandy Schossig:

Speaking of learning, what are some lessons that you've learned recently? And as for peer learning, what does that mean for us? What are our takeaways from the project?

Andreas Manhart:

Let me give you a few examples: around 10 years ago, we were working very hard on energy-efficient products in Europe. There was the Energy-Using Products Directive, which set minimum standards for electronic devices and aimed to reduce their electricity consumption. In parallel, efforts were being made in East Africa, particularly Kenya, to bring consumer goods to rural households. And they also had efficiency standards, but for a very different reason: here, the aim was to avoid overloading the electricity grids. The TVs available on this local market used a tiny amount of electricity, yet they weren't available in Germany or Europe. Large-size TVs that ran on a few watts – it was incredible.

This went completely unnoticed in Germany. And I think there were lessons we could have learned from other regions of the world here. It's a conversation that we're having right now. How can we get e-mobility on the road? We see Ethiopia as a faraway country that is lagging behind, but they have a taxation model for new cars that is incredibly high for combustion-engine vehicles, amounting to two or three times the value of the vehicle. And now there is a new policy for tax exemption of electric vehicles at the time of purchase, coupled with a relatively affordable electricity price. I imagine that if this development continues, there may be a few surprises in store for us and we may find ourselves being overtaken by other regions of the world on some issues.

Outlook and conclusion

Nadine Kreuzer:

Andreas, you have already given us so much information, but of course, we still have one final question for you. If you were the German Chancellor, what would you do to make international cooperation in environmental projects a genuine success? What would be your first and most important action on taking office?

Andreas Manhart:

We are living through a period of budget constraints. While just recently unexpected resources have emerged in Germany's federal budget, we shouldn't expect a share of that. Regardless of whether funding remains unchanged or decreases, it is extremely important to foster dialogue. It's not necessarily about cash to initiate crisis-related projects abroad; it's about strengthening stakeholder dialogue in the environmental sector. This may mean that they come to us for longer periods, perhaps also to institutions or civil society groups. And it is about learning from each other, not against each other, and building capacities.

Mandy Schossig:

And if we ourselves and our listeners want to find out more after the podcast, do you have any tips for us on what to read, or perhaps a broadcast that we can watch? Do you have anything for us?

Andreas Manhart:

We talked about the issue of lead batteries. One of the people we were in contact with at the time was a woman from Kenya named Phyllis Omido. She had launched a campaign against a lead smelter which was polluting the environment; she was personally affected and fought for years to

stop the pollution. The lead smelter was shut down. She then wrote a book entitled "[Mit der Wut einer Mutter](#)" by Phyllis Omido, which is available in Germany. She recently won the Alternative Nobel Prize for activism. She is one of the long-standing partners with whom we cooperate and she is an incredibly impressive woman. I really do recommend the book.

Mandy Schossig:

Yes, I got to know her as well. We showcased her book at the Oeko-Institut; it was a wonderful evening. A must-read. We'll include the details for you in the shownotes.

Nadine Kreutzer:

Thank you so much. Andreas, what's next on your agenda?

Andreas Manhart:

Well, in fact, I have to visit Ghana in February. Although this doesn't happen very often, we will be joining our Ghanaian colleagues for a systematic inspection of the battery recycling plants around the country. We will be conducting industrial inspections every day and drawing up improvement plans for the stakeholders.

Nadine Kreutzer:

Great! Well, that brings us to the end of today's episode. Andreas, all the very best for the rest of the project and thank you for taking part in the podcast.

Mandy Schossig:

Andreas, many thanks from me as well. And of course, you must tell us how to say "see you soon" in Indonesian.

Andreas Manhart:

Sampai berjumpa lagi.

Nadine Kreutzer:

Sampai berjumpa lagi!

Mandy Schossig:

Sampai berjumpa lagi!

But it's not over yet, Nadine!

Nadine Kreutzer:

You're right, we want to talk about our next topic, so there is more to come. Our theme for next time is the energy transition. The energy transition, I hear you say? Yes, and we will be going into detail.

Mandy Schossig:

Yes indeed! It's incredible that we haven't talked about it before! At the Oeko-Institut, we like to claim that we actually invented it. At least, in the early 1980s, we produced a fairly ground-breaking study on how the energy supply might look if it were based around renewables – solar, wind and hydro, in other words. And what about today? Where are we with the expansion? Which obstacles are still on the agenda, the keywords being land competition and approval processes? We will be discussing all these issues in our next episode.

Nadine Kreutzer:

We will indeed. And if you'd like to, please leave a review for us on your favourite podcast platform. A fantastic review, obviously – that goes without saying! All that remains is for us to say “Sampai berjumpa lagi” and we hope you'll join us again. See you soon!

Mandy Schossig:

Until next time! Goodbye!