

## **Proposal: Protestant RE teachers' attitudes towards sustainability**

This research project brings together religious education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and asks about the attitudes of Protestant RE teachers towards sustainability. Therefore, a qualitative empirical study was carried out. 16 interviews were conducted with Protestant RE teachers who mainly teach at primary schools in Austria.

The results reflect the diversity of topics within the concept of sustainability. What is noteworthy, however, is that the RE teachers surveyed focused primarily on the ecological dimension of sustainability. But they also bring in the idea of interdisciplinary work, which is well suited to this subject area. What is also noteworthy is that the RE teachers surveyed did not mention either the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the ESD concept.

The RE teachers surveyed deal with the topic in a reflective manner, they deal with their lifestyle and have a realistic view of their sphere of influence - it is primarily about implementing small steps and less about wanting to save the whole world.

The RE teachers surveyed argue theologically (responsibility for creation) when they talk about their responsibility. Among other things, it is also about the relationship level, because creation is seen as a relationship process. This level of relationship is meant in several ways - between people, people and God, people and their fellow world. It also becomes apparent that the relationship level in Protestant RE in small groups that are common in Austria plays a special role for the RE teachers surveyed.

Other important issues are power, the lack of power and dealing with guilt. For example, it is important to the RE teachers surveyed that they are authentic and stand by their unsustainable actions.

Opportunities and obstacles for RE can be seen in the results. RE teachers see a great opportunity to work on the topic of sustainability, especially in the inclusion of the living environment and the relationship level in RE.