

New Zealand Joins Global Sustainability Project

Wellington, New Zealand, 27 January 2016: First New Zealand stories to be featured on international compilation of sustainability initiatives

New Zealand stories feature for the first time in an international project that shares ideas from around the world about people working towards a more sustainable future.

FUTUREPERFECT, an international internet platform launched by the FUTURZWEI Foundation in Berlin and the Goethe-Institut worldwide network of German cultural centres, tells the stories of people, groups and communities creating more sustainable ways of living and doing business.

The site launched in July 2015 with 39 stories from 17 countries, with at least one report added each week. Projects highlighted on FUTUREPERFECT include a group of American surfers who make skateboards from fishing nets dumped in the world's oceans, a German workshop where young asylum seekers build and sell designer furniture, an enterprise in the United States that trains people returning from prison to work with bees, and an Israeli school where students from opposing sides of the Middle East conflict learn together.

The first New Zealand initiative to feature on the site is Inspiring Stories, a charity that supports young people to tackle issues ranging from energy use to food production to conservation.

Bettina Senff, Director of the Goethe-Institut New Zealand, says she is delighted that New Zealand has joined the FUTUREPERFECT community.

"Many New Zealanders are developing sustainability initiatives that aim to improve the world both ecologically and socially," she says. "We're happy that the Goethe-Institut can play a part in sharing those stories with the world."

FUTUREPERFECT is based on the FUTURZWEI initiative, which since 2012 has shared hundreds of stories about new economic, social and cultural practices through articles, books, films and podcasts in German-speaking countries.

Last year, the FUTURZWEI Foundation and the Goethe-Institut joined forces to take the approach to the world by launching FUTUREPERFECT.

Since then, almost 30 institutes within the Goethe-Institut network have joined the initiative, and another 30 are official partners to the project.

FUTUREPERFECT Coordinator Luise Tremel from Berlin says the platform aims to showcase local examples of sustainable transformation in order to inspire people to experiment with their own ways to improve their communities.

"I am extremely pleased to have stories from New Zealand in the collection. I imagine New Zealand to be a country of vast natural beauty, so I greatly look forward to reading about individuals from New Zealand who may be working to maintain the balance between natural beauty and modern lifestyles," she says.

All FUTUREPERFECT stories are available in English and German on www.futureperfectproject.org and www.goethe.de/nz

About the Goethe-Institut and FUTURZWEI

- The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. It promotes knowledge of the German language abroad and fosters international cultural co-operation.
- FUTURZWEI is a charitable foundation that provides resources with the objective of creating a sustainable future.