



**studierendenwerk**  
darmstadt



# **Sustainability Report**

2019/2020





**studierenden**werk  
darmstadt

# **Sustainability Report**

2019/2020



# Excerpt from our mission statement

## Who are we?

We are the central partner for students in Darmstadt and Dieburg

- we promote the health and social life of students
- we tailor our range of services to the needs of the students
- we see the internationality of the universities as a guiding star
- we strengthen the ability to study of students with children

## What is our goal?

We are committed to the overall social responsibility of the Studierendenwerk and tailor processes and structures consistently to the principles of sustainability and the common good. We constantly develop our expertise further - so you can study successfully.

## How do we do that?

- we create sustainable structures and processes

We regularly set ourselves verifiable targets that balance economic, social and ecological aspects. Leadership and quality management tools support us in collecting and processing the necessary data and key figures and using them to control the organisation.

- we rely on our employees and support them in their further development
- we are guided by the principle of continuous improvement
- we see difference and diversity as a chance

A “colourful” Studierendenwerk is a successful and powerful house of diversity: differences in personality and profile, age, origin, gender, and religion are deliberately encouraged and utilised through human resources policy, collaboration and management style.

Our appreciation of diversity is also reflected in our range of services. Achieving a good balance between family and career or studies is a hallmark of our thinking and actions.

- we rely on the students
- we build networks

Note: find the complete mission statement (in German) on [www.stwda.de/leitbild](http://www.stwda.de/leitbild)

# Studierendenwerk Darmstadt - Student Services Darmstadt

## University catering

- 1 Stadtmitte canteen & bistro
- 2 LesBAR
- 3 Bios bistro
- 4 Lichtwiese canteen & bistro
- 5 Lichtwiesn students' beer garden
- 6 Haardtring bistro
- 7 Schöfferstraße canteen
- 8 TUBAR
- 9 Athene bistro
- 10 Dieburg canteen

## Student halls of residence

- 1 Pallaswiesenstraße
- 2 Karlshof
- 3 Student village
- 4 fair
- 5 Nieder-Ramstädter-Straße
- 6 rest
- 7 Neckarstraße
- 8 LAB
- 9 Poststraße

## Advice and counselling

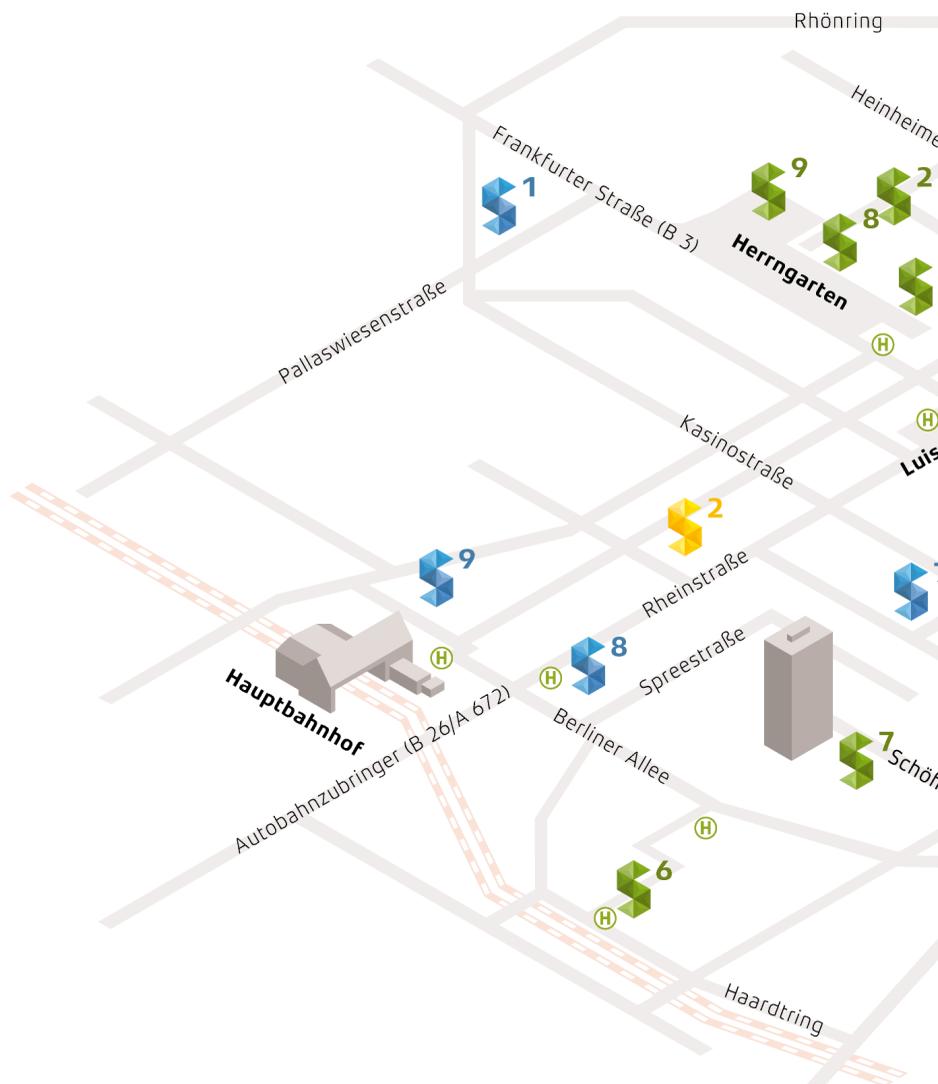
- 1 Stadtmitte canteen
- 2 Steubenplatz (PBS)

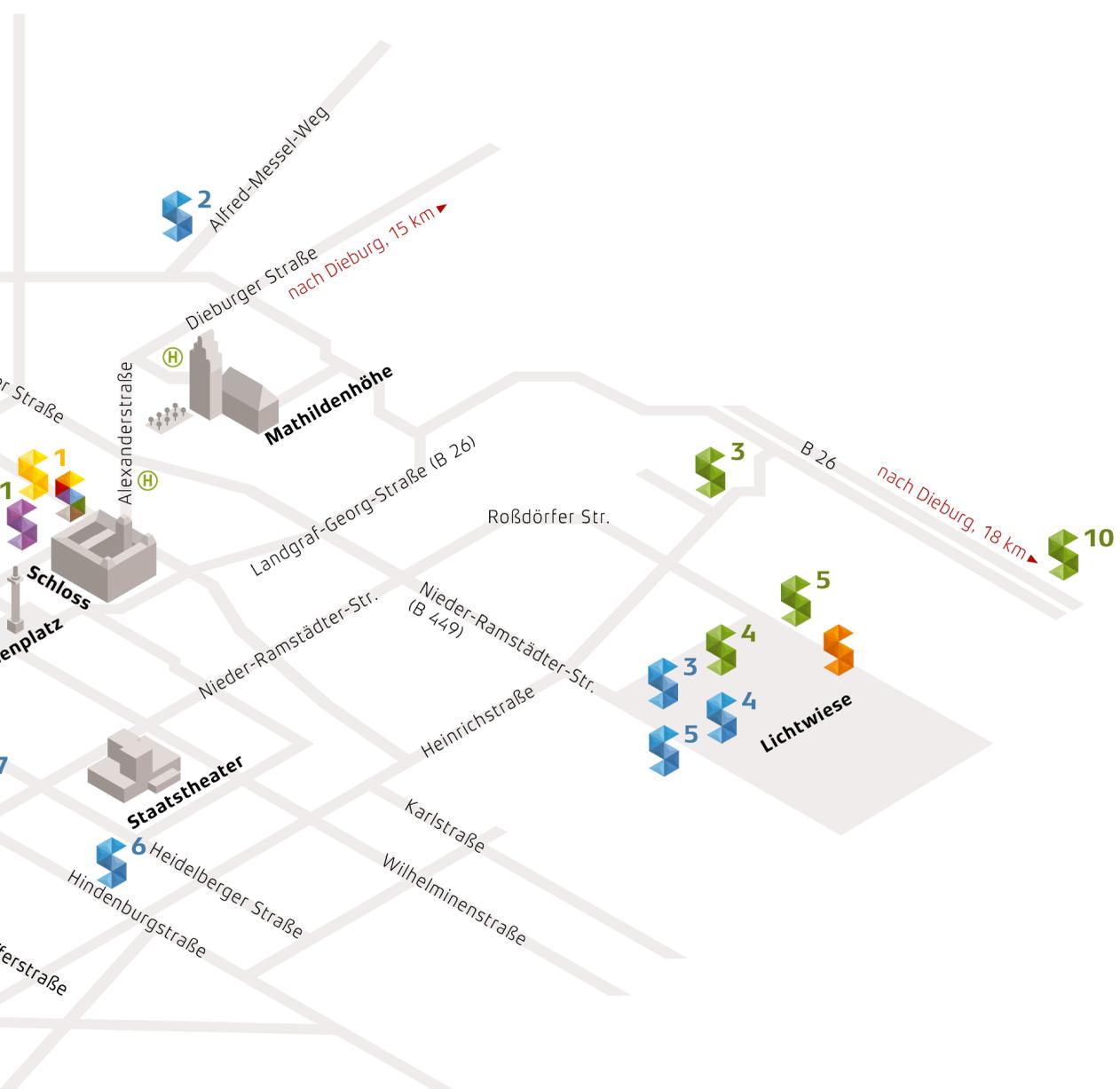
## Intercultural affairs

Stadtmitte canteen

## Funding of studies

Lichtwiese canteen





Alfred-Messel-Weg

Dieburger Straße  
nach Dieburg, 15 km



Alexanderstraße

Mathildenhöhe

Landgraf-Georg-Straße (B 26)

Roßdörfer Str.



B 26

nach Dieburg, 18 km



Schloss

Nieder-Ramstädter-Str.

Nieder-Ramstädter-Str.  
(B 449)

Heinrichstraße



Lichtwiese



Staatstheater

Karlstraße



Heidelberger Straße

Hindenburgstraße

Wilhelminenstraße



## Message from the Managing Director

Dear readers

Making the services and actions of the Studierendenwerk more and more sustainable is a challenge on the one hand and an inspiring task on the other. Based on the conviction that we can and must all contribute to preserving the earth for our children and future generations, a lively corporate culture has developed that involves students and employees. We are always looking for, finding and breaking new ground in order to further develop the Studierendenwerk ecologically and socially while respecting the economic framework conditions. Our task is to promote and support students so they can successfully complete their chosen course of study, regardless of their social or geographical background or their financial resources. For me, focusing on sustainability is the decisive factor for success.

This report is a concise presentation of what we have achieved and what we plan to do to fulfil our mission in a sustainable way. I am proud of what we have achieved and at the same time grateful that many people at the Studierendenwerk - often together with students - have taken on the concept development, coordination and implementation of our measures and projects with great commitment. My wish for all of us is that, despite the current pandemic-related crisis, we can join our forces to act sustainably and in doing so make an ever greater contribution to climate protection, participation and an increase in the quality of life in the higher education area.

Without the employees and the management team of the Studierendenwerk, the Administrative Board and the State of Hesse, as well as people and institutions who work with us, advise us and support us, the progress presented here would not have been possible. To all of them I say thank you from the bottom of my heart.



**Ulrike Laux**

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## Introduction of Studierendenwerk Darmstadt



### 03 City centre canteen (*Mensa Stadtmitte*)

Studierendenwerk Darmstadt (stdwa), the student services organisation of the universities of Darmstadt, was founded in 1921 and has been a public-law institution for almost 60 years.<sup>1</sup> At present, the 285 employees of the Studierendenwerk support more than 42,000 students, run 4 canteens, coffee bars and bistros, handle nearly 6,000 applications for financial support according to the Federal Training Assistance Act, *BAföG*, provide about 4,000 counselling sessions per year and offer approx. 2,600 places in student halls of residence.<sup>2</sup> This is complemented by a wide range of health-oriented, social and (inter-)cultural services.

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1 [History \(in German\) – studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://www.studierendenwerk-darmstadt.de/en/about-us/history)

2 [About us – studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://www.studierendenwerk-darmstadt.de/en/about-us)

## Sustainable corporate management

Sustainable corporate management has been a fundamental part of stwda's work since 2012 and encompasses the entire strategic orientation right through to operational processes and measures. With the help of methodical documentation of all work flows in all core and support processes, stwda uses process management to ensure that work steps are consistently implemented and that all employees know their tasks and the steps to fulfil them and can identify them at any time. To document, measure and ensure a more ecologically, socially and economically sustainable development of the organisation, the instrument of a Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC) was introduced, which is described in more detail in chapter 3.2. With this SBSC, the students' wishes can be systematically identified and checked in order to increase satisfaction with the services offered.

## Social responsibility and mission statement

In the Law on Student Services at the Universities of the State of Hesse [*Gesetz über die Studentenwerke bei den Hochschulen des Landes Hessen*]<sup>3</sup>, Studierendenwerk Darmstadt is named as one of the five Hessian student services organisations responsible for providing services to students in Hesse. On behalf of the state of Hesse, stwda provides social, health, economic, and cultural support to students in Darmstadt and Dieburg. In fulfilling this task, stwda acts as a central social partner for students to ensure successful studies. As such, stwda not only offers the appropriate infrastructure, but also actively helps to shape the university as a living environment in its role as a support and counselling company, an office for educational funding, a large-scale catering business, and a housing company. The focus here is on shaping the framework conditions for studying, integrating international students and creating equal opportunities. Economically, stwda is a non-profit enterprise whose services and prices, especially in the catering area, are subsidised by government grants. The economic premise is to cover costs through its own income, students' social contributions and subsidies from the state. Economic, ecological and social criteria are included in decision-making and planning processes.

The following excerpt from the stwda's mission statement<sup>4</sup> shows that the issue of sustainability affects all levels of the Studierendenwerk's work. The aim of implementing the guiding principles set out here is sustainable corporate management that ensures needs-based services for students and an attractive workplace for employees.

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<sup>3</sup> [studentenwerke-hessen.de](http://studentenwerke-hessen.de)

<sup>4</sup> [Mission statement \(in German\) – studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](http://Mission%20statement%20(in%20German)%20-%20studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de)



04 Compensation planting in the Karlshof park

## **Excerpt from the mission statement of Studierendenwerk Darmstadt with a focus on sustainability**

### **What is our goal?**

We are committed to the overall social responsibility of the Studierendenwerk and tailor processes and structures consistently to the principles of sustainability and the common good. We constantly develop our expertise further - so that your studies are successful.

### **How do we do that?**

We create sustainable structures and processes and regularly set ourselves verifiable targets that balance economic, social and ecological aspects. Leadership and quality management tools support us in collecting and processing the necessary data and key figures and using them to control the organisation.

## Milestones in the development of sustainable corporate management

### 2014

- Establishment of the mission statement with the key element sustainability
- Introduction of process management for a sustainable corporate management

### 2015

- Renaming and new corporate design; selection of the new logo, which was developed in a student competition
- First vegan week at stwda; training of the chefs by Björn Moschinski, since then vegan dishes have been offered every day

### 2016

- Foundation of the “organic” project (*Projekt “Bio”*) to increase the proportion of dishes made from organically produced food in the catering outlets
- Introduction of a lifetime working-time account

### 2017

- Creation and staffing of the sustainability management unit

### 2018

- Student survey on the further development of sustainable catering
- Start of participation in the programme of the *Hessische Ökomodellregion Süd*, the Southern Hesse organic farming model region: introduction of regionally sourced organic potatoes and milk
- Participation in the development of a reusable Darmstadt coffee cup
- Execution of a materiality analysis
- Concept development and formulation of the Sustainability Balanced Scorecard

### 2019

- Participation in the mobility consultancy service “*südhessen effizient mobil*”
- Start of the internal series of workshops on sustainability at the Studierendenwerk for employees
- Introduction of the canteen app
- Approval of leadership principles

### 2020

- Designation of the canteen & administration at the city centre location (*Stadtmitte*) as “*Ökoprotit®-Betrieb FrankfurtRheinMain 2020*”
- Introduction of separate waste separation for guests in the canteen and the city centre bistros
- Preparation of the first sustainability report

## Sustainability and responsibility

The measures mentioned below relate to the years 2019 and 2020. Apart from a few exceptions, the figures relate to the year 2019. If possible for stwda, reporting on sustainability performance is based on the criteria of the German Sustainability Code for Higher Education Institutions.<sup>1</sup>

### Understanding of sustainability

For the context of stwda, the term “sustainability” is defined as the balance of the three equally important dimensions of ecology, economy and social issues.<sup>2</sup> All efforts for a sustainable development of processes in this sense are guided by the maxim “Don’t live today at the expense of tomorrow and don’t live here at the expense of elsewhere.”<sup>3</sup>

With this in mind, the Sustainability Management staff unit was created in 2017. Its responsibilities include the coordination of all sustainability issues and thus require close and regular cooperation with those responsible for all processes concerned. This cross-sectional task promotes the continuous development of sustainability in all areas of the Studierendenwerk.

### Materiality analysis

In a first materiality analysis in February 2018, the most important issues for the Studierendenwerk itself as well as for external stakeholders were identified. For this purpose, stwda executives took the internal and the stakeholder perspective in two evaluation exercises.

Issues that required special action in terms of sustainability in 2018 were identified as key issues for the Studierendenwerk. They were referred to as “future issues”. The issues that were assessed as not very important or not important from this point of view, without an acute need for action, such as “conduct in compliance with the law and regulations”, are of course taken into account and implemented within the usual binding quality standards.

Important stakeholders for stwda are in particular students and employees, as well as the Technical University of Darmstadt (TU Darmstadt) and the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences (h\_da), the Administrative Board of the Studierendenwerk, non-student guests of the canteens and bistros, and applicants for vacancies at the Studierendenwerk. The key issues for the most important stakeholders were defined as those that contribute to academic success and equal opportunities. In order to guarantee that the materiality analysis is up-to-date, it is regularly reviewed and revised. Such a review is on the agenda for 2021.

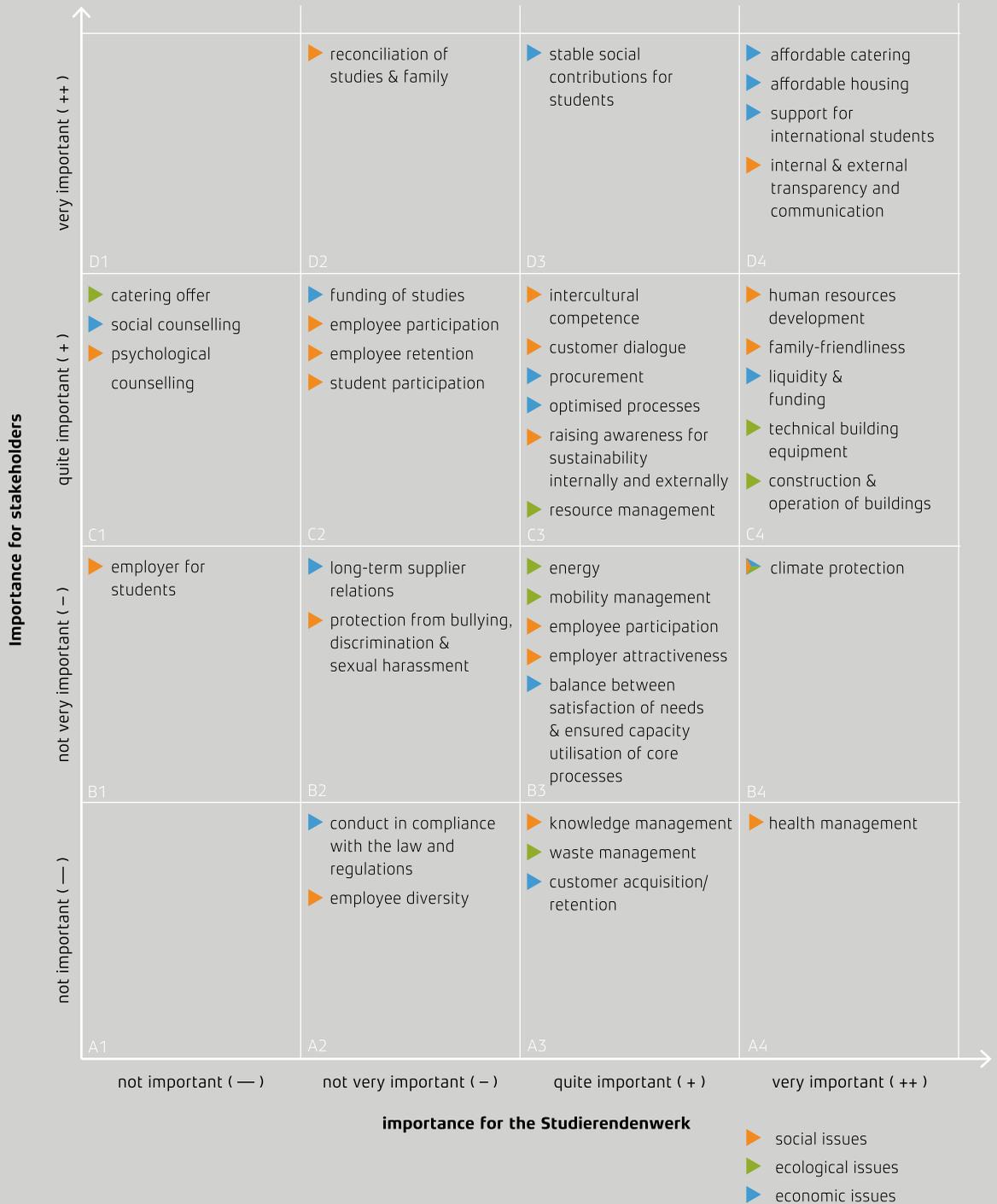
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1 [German Sustainability Code – Higher Education Institutions \(deutscher-nachhaltigkeitskodex.de\)](#)

2 [Mission statement \(in German\) – studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](#)

3 [Utopia.de: Das Changemaker Manifest \(2009\) \(in German\)](#)

### Materiality matrix: “Future issues for the sustainable development of Studierendenwerk Darmstadt” (as of February 2018)



*“We are committed to the overall social responsibility of the Studierendenwerk and tailor processes and structures consistently to the principles of sustainability and the common good. We constantly develop our expertise further – so that your studies are successful.”*

**From the Studierendenwerk’s mission statement**

## Sustainable Development Goals

The issues of the 2018 materiality analysis are also reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) identified as applicable to stwda. The SDGs comprise 17 UN policy goals “for socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development [... These goals] range from ending global hunger to strengthening sustainable consumption and production to climate action.”<sup>4</sup>

By **purchasing certified green electricity in all buildings of the Studierendenwerk** and **operating a photovoltaic system to generate electricity from sunlight** on the roof of the Lichtwiese canteen, the Studierendenwerk contributes to the following SDGs:<sup>5</sup>

→ **Goal 7: Renewable energy**

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

→ **Goal 13: Climate action**

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

## Integration of sustainability into the everyday life of the Studierendenwerk

### Internal training

Since 2019, all Studierendenwerk employees have regularly been offered sustainability workshops under the direction of the Sustainability Management; participation is mandatory for new employees. In 2019, a total of 110 employees, managers and trainees from all areas of the Studierendenwerk were trained in ten half-day workshops.

In four workshops on topics such as “organic food and waste”, the managers of university catering were also made more aware of sustainability with regard to their direct activities. This included a visit to a new regional organic supplier by a total of 21 managers and chefs.

The Managing Director’s annual internal “round trip”, which comprises a keynote lecture followed by a discussion with employees on site, was entitled “Leadership Principles and Sustainability” in 2019. In the previous year, the focus had been on a critical examination of organic farming issues.

In 2020, the “round trip” had to be suspended due to the pandemic situation; nevertheless, four full-day sustainability workshops took place. In compliance with a hygiene concept, 29 employees and 9 trainees were trained on the issue of sustainability and joined a field trip to a local farm working according to the principles of organic food growers’ organisation Demeter. Thus, despite the exceptional situation caused by the pandemic, stwda was able to involve employees in sustainability management. The central concern of the workshops is not only to inform the employees about new internal projects and measures regarding sustainable development, but especially to promote the active interest and initiative of the employees.

<sup>4</sup> [Agenda 2030 | BMZ \(bmz.de\)](https://www.bmz.de/agenda2030)

<sup>5</sup> [SDGs | United Nations Association of Germany \(dgvn.de\)](https://www.dgvn.de/sdgs)

## Key issues

Based on the first materiality analysis in 2018, Sustainability Management focuses on the following four key issues:

### Food

The focus of this issue is the development of the “organic” project, or *Projekt “Bio”*, in university catering (see chapter 5.1). Medium-term goals include the labelling of the CO<sub>2</sub> values of all dishes and the labelling of particularly climate-friendly dishes. Combined with further information, the guests of the canteens and bistros will thus be made more aware of the **relation between food and climate protection**.



- 06** Promotion of regional organic potatoes      **07** Solar heat system on top of the “rest” hall of residence  
**08** Beehives on top of the Lichtwiese canteen      **09** Bicycle parking in the “rest” underground car park

### Operation of buildings

As a contribution to climate protection, the focus is on reducing the consumption of electricity and natural resources. With the exception of the Dieburg canteen, green electricity has been used at all Studierendenwerk locations since 2011.

After changing to certified green electricity from ENTEGA in 2019, a good 1,004 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> could be saved in the canteens with their electricity consumption of 2,504.517 MWh, compared to the German electricity mix. In the halls of residence, 681 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> were saved with an electricity consumption of 1,698.827 MWh.<sup>6</sup>

### Procurement

In 2020, the development of a catalogue of criteria for sustainable procurement was completed as an annex to the Studierendenwerk's new purchasing guidelines. This catalogue defines criteria for more sustainable procurement from food to printing supplies to pencils, taking into account ecological, social and economic aspects. By applying this catalogue, stwda will be able to meet its responsibility as a purchaser of goods and services in 2019 amounting to €16.8 million.

With the complete change to **recycled printer paper certified by German eco-label "Blue Angel"**, or *Blauer Engel*, the following savings were achieved according to the German Environment Agency<sup>7</sup>:

	Recycling	Water	Energy	Wood	CO <sub>2</sub> e
	(packs of 500 sheets)	(l)	(kWh)	(kg)	(kg)
<b>2018</b>	1,337	144,396	25,804	10,028	2,139
<b>2019</b>	1,280	138,240	24,703	9,600	2,047

### Mobility

In 2019, participating companies in the "südhessen effizient mobil" programme for efficient mobility in Southern Hesse were advised in workshops about possible measures for improved company mobility, such as e-mobility and bicycle promotion. This advisory service resulted in a plan of action for the Studierendenwerk, which includes the implementation of a mobility day with cycle route planning and bicycle testing. Due to the pandemic, this is scheduled for 2021.

This plan also includes the expansion of the use of company bicycles and the examination of the company's own fleet of vehicles for its potential for downsizing or switching to car-sharing schemes. To date, stwda has a fleet of four electric vans, which are used by the internal craftsmen's service and as messenger vehicles. The craftsmen's service also has an e-bike at its disposal; the employees at the city centre and Lichtwiese locations each have access to a pedelec. An attractive job ticket has been available to Studierendenwerk employees since 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Petra Icha, Federal Environment Agency: "Entwicklung der spezifischen Kohlendioxid-Emissionen des deutschen Strommix in den Jahren 1990–2019" Climate Change 13/2020 (2020) p. 9

<sup>7</sup> [Paper and print products | German Environment Agency \(in German\)](#)

## Networking

Beyond the planned sustainability measures, cooperation with other parties from the associated universities is an important component of the Studierendenwerk's sustainability management. For this purpose, the HONEDA<sup>8</sup> network (see chapter 6.2) was founded in 2018, in which representatives of stwda, h\_da, TU Darmstadt and student sustainability groups participate. Due to the pandemic, the first "Sustainability Week" organised by HONEDA in 2019 cannot be continued until 2021.

## ÖKOPROFIT® FrankfurtRheinMain 2020

For its outstanding commitment to environmental issues, the city centre canteen, or *Mensa Stadtmitte*, of the Studierendenwerk was awarded the title "ÖKOPROFIT®-Betrieb FrankfurtRheinMain 2020" (in the following referred to as ÖKOPROFIT) in September 2020.



ÖKOPROFIT® stands for "ECOlogical Project For Integrated Environmental Technology"; an initiatives-oriented programme that supports businesses in their energy, environmental, and sustainability management.<sup>9</sup>

As a participant in the ÖKOPROFIT® introductory level programme, stwda was trained and advised over a period of twelve months on environmental law, environmental policy, and business organisation topics through working materials, face-to-face workshops and, due to the pandemic from March 2020, in online events. A central aspect was the development of an individual environmental programme allowing for a company-specific implementation based on a jointly developed action plan. For the city centre canteen, this plan includes, among other things, the introduction of waste separation in the catering area and the conversion to LED lighting. In addition, annual electricity savings of approx. 6,800 kWh are to be achieved by raising the temperature of beverage cold stores and server cooling by 2 °C.

## Goals and planned projects

The following measures in sustainability management are planned for the period 2021-2022:

- implementation of the mobility plan prepared in early 2020
- further implementation of the action plan prepared with ÖKOPROFIT®: e.g. defining fixed reduction targets for controllable electricity consumption in the canteens
- "ÖKOPROFIT®-Betrieb FrankfurtRheinMain 2021" award for the Lichtwiese canteen
- balancing of the CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions of services and processes
- further development of the internal sustainability workshop
- review of the introduction of a systematic proposal system

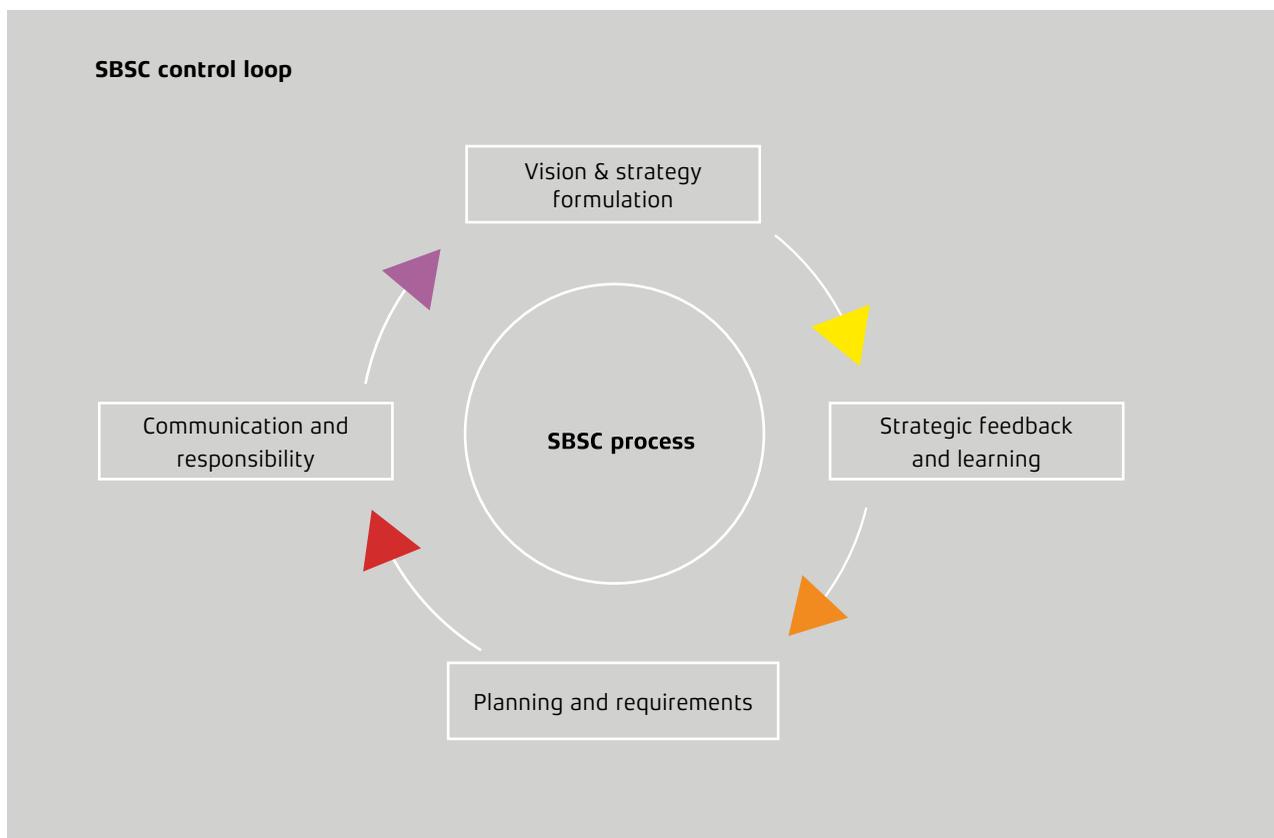
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8 [HONEDA – darmstadt4change.de](https://www.honeda-darmstadt4change.de)

9 City of Frankfurt am Main: "ÖKOPROFIT® FrankfurtRheinMain 2020" (2020) p. 8 (in German)

## The Sustainability Balanced Scorecard – control instrument for sustainable development

Management systems usually refer to monetary factors in order to satisfy funding bodies. Such models are usually not applicable to student services organisations. Studierendenwerk Darmstadt has therefore introduced a Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC), which integrates and manages sustainability in addition to financial, legal and organisational goals, without losing sight of economic goals.

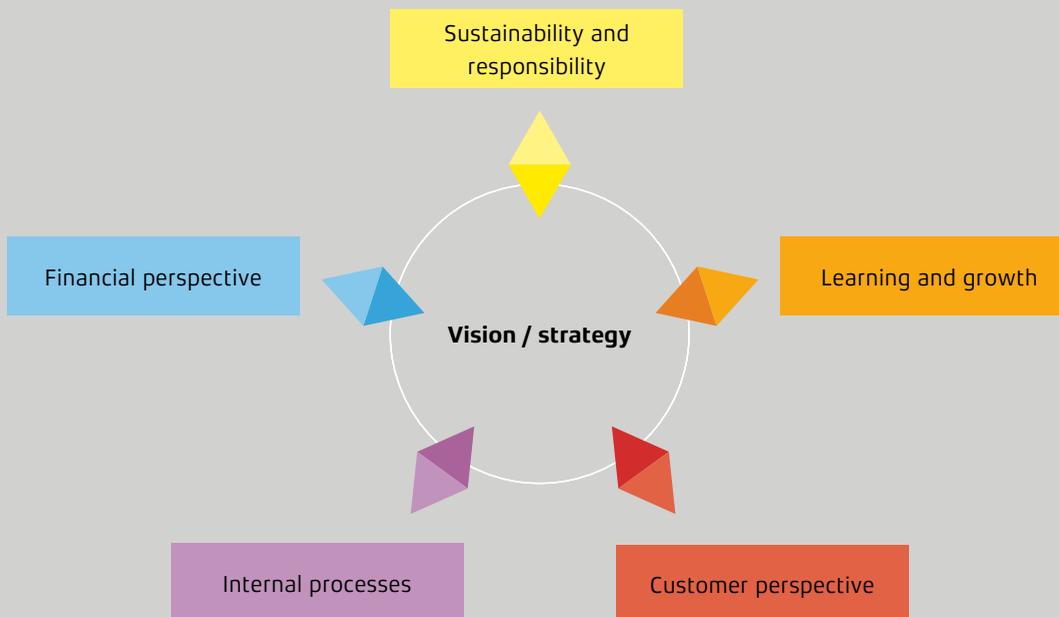


Based on the corporate strategy defined in the mission statement, the SBSC is continuously reviewed in a control cycle. Internal communication enables employees to see themselves as part of the system. Their contribution is key to achieving the goals.

Binding requirements are established by integrating the derived goals and key indicators into corporate planning. The regular comparison of the strategy with goals, key indicators and measures ensures that the Studierendenwerk continuously learns how to develop further.

Goals, key indicators and measures are considered according to five perspectives that are interrelated. Key indicators from business mathematics are defined as well as key indicators for observing developments, e.g. of customer satisfaction. As the goals and key indicators of one perspective always have an impact on the next perspectives, a balanced system of indicators is created.

### Vision of the SBSC adopted from the Studierendenwerk's mission statement



The **sustainability perspective** comprises overarching and long-term sustainability goals. In the **financial perspective**, mainly economic goals such as cost savings are established, which secure the organisation's continued existence. The **customer perspective** focuses on goals that ensure the satisfaction of customer needs. The **internal processes perspective** comprises goals and key indicators for the most important processes of product and service creation. In the **learning and growth perspective**, goals for the development of employee potential and for the improvement of the organisational and infrastructure are supported by measures and key indicators.

## Examples for goals in the five perspectives of the SBSC



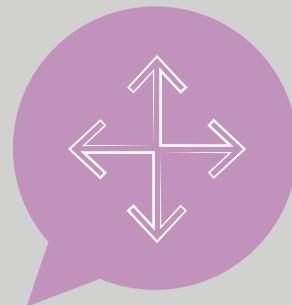
- ▶ Stabilise students' social contributions
- ▶ Introduce a sustainability management
- ▶ Establish sustainability communication



- ▶ Increase the profit margin
- ▶ Further develop sustainable financial transactions
- ▶ Ensure long-term liquidity



- ▶ Expand sustainable range of services
- ▶ Ensure access to the range of services
- ▶ Increase customer satisfaction



- ▶ Continuously optimise processes and procedures
- ▶ Expand sustainable procurement
- ▶ Integrate students in development processes



- ▶ Promote and develop leadership skills
- ▶ Create attractive working conditions
- ▶ Promote sustainability competence

# Finances 2019

## REVENUE FROM...

rent/accommodation

**10.5M**

catering revenue

**8.7M**

semester fees

**6.7M**

subsidies

**2.7M**

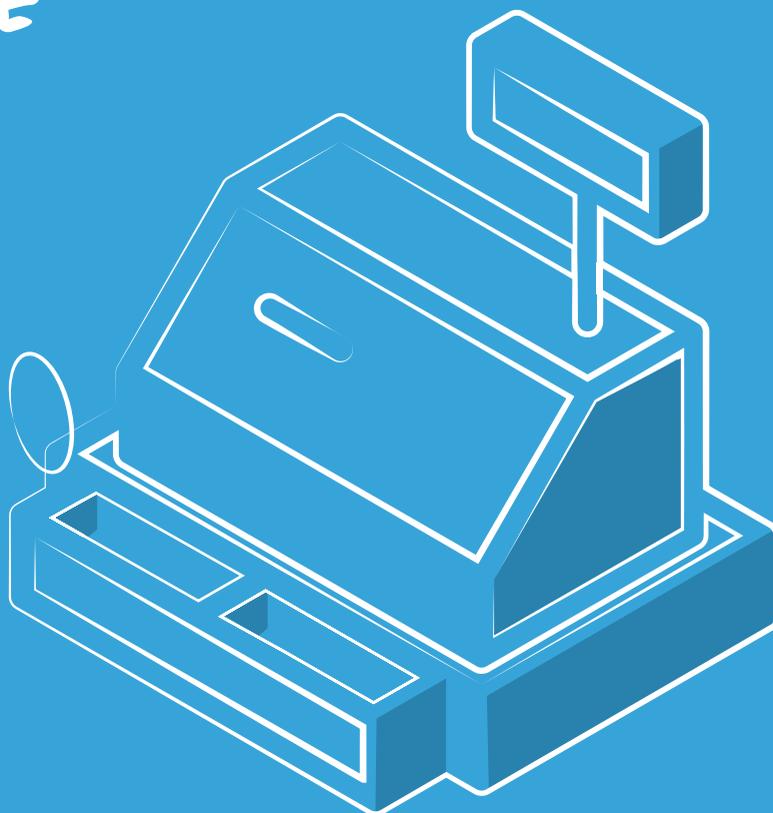
reimbursement of BAföG expenses

**1.3M**

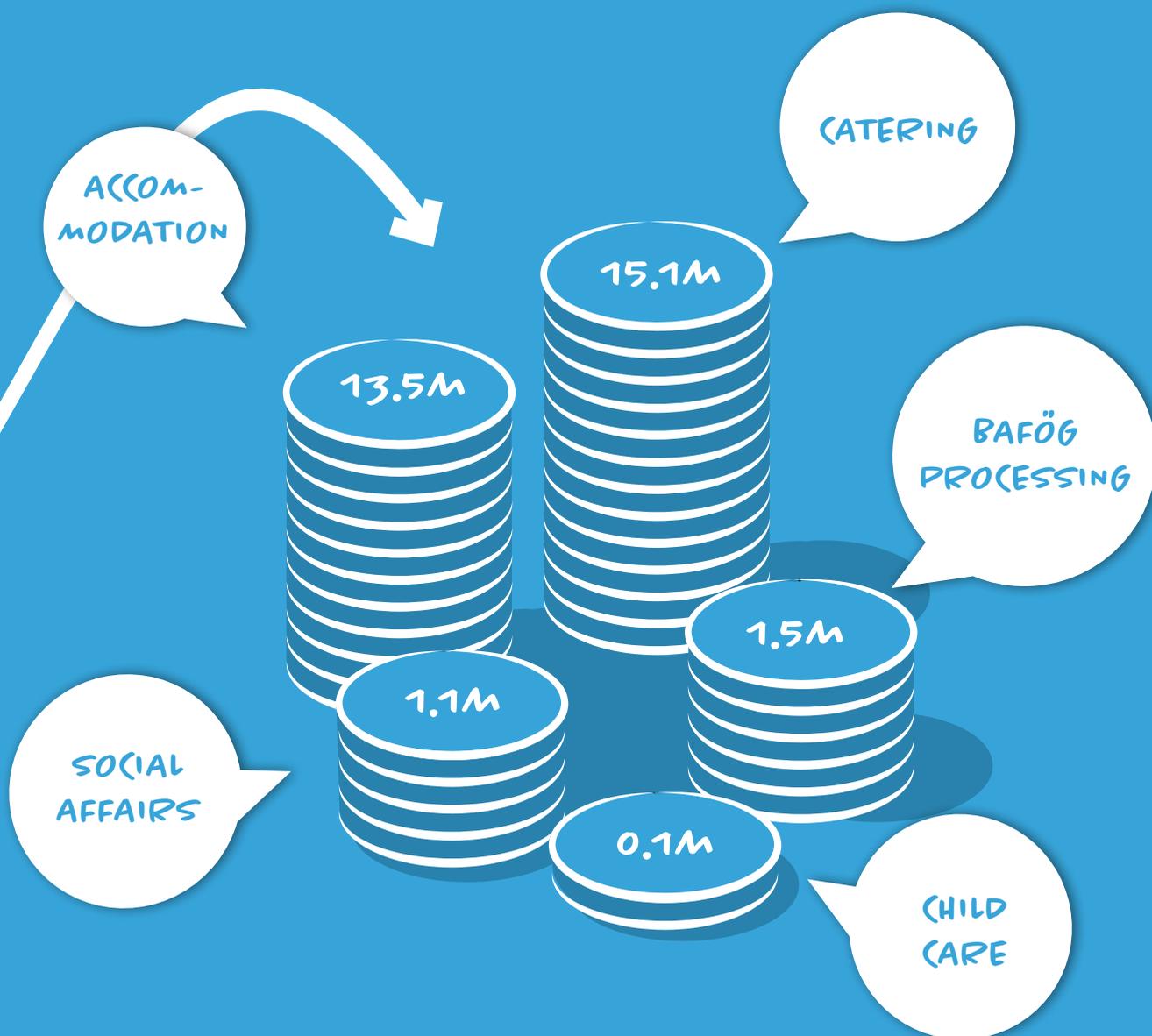
other revenue

**1.5M**

**31.4M**



USED  
31.4M



# UNIVERSITY CATERING

4

CANTEENS

17%

ORGANIC<sup>1</sup>

1.73M

MEALS IN 2019

69% To 31%

RATIO OF MEAT TO  
MEATLESS DISHES<sup>2</sup>



→ **21% REGIONALLY SOURCED GOODS<sup>3</sup>**

- 1 share by weight of organic food to total goods purchased in 2019
- 2 ratio of dishes sold in 2019:  
69 % with meat, 31 % without meat, 15 % of these vegan
- 3 including beverages



11 “Bios” bistro at the botanical garden

## University catering

### Sustainable catering: from organic to regional

The impulse for the accelerated development of sustainable catering at the university locations was given by the managing director, who is convinced that sustainably produced food is an important parameter for combating the climate crisis and the extinction of species. In accordance with the Studierendenwerk's mission statement (see chapter 2.2), all university catering facilities have been certified according to the EU organic standard<sup>1</sup> since 2007.

### “Bio”, the organic food project

The starting signal for an intensified change to organic food was given by the public lecture “Canteen and Responsibility” followed by a workshop by Felix zu Löwenstein, which was held in 2016 on the premises of the Studierendenwerk. The overarching goal of the changeover is to gradually increase the proportion of organic food in the canteens and bistros. The resulting higher-quality dishes are also intended to attract new guests.

While organic food accounted for 3.7% by weight of all products bought in 2017, the **proportion of organic food had already risen to 17%** by the end of 2019. In 2020, the share of organic food bought was 26% - however, this value is not comparable with the previous year's values due to the greatly reduced number of meals served as a result of the pandemic. In addition to further increasing the share of organic food, the current goal is to offer completely organic meals.

Due to the Corona pandemic, all stwda university catering facilities closed on 18 March 2020. Initially, two canteens reopened in May with a to-go offer; at the start of the winter semester 2020/2021, in October, restaurant operations in the Stadtmittel, Lichtwiese and Schöfferstraße canteens followed.

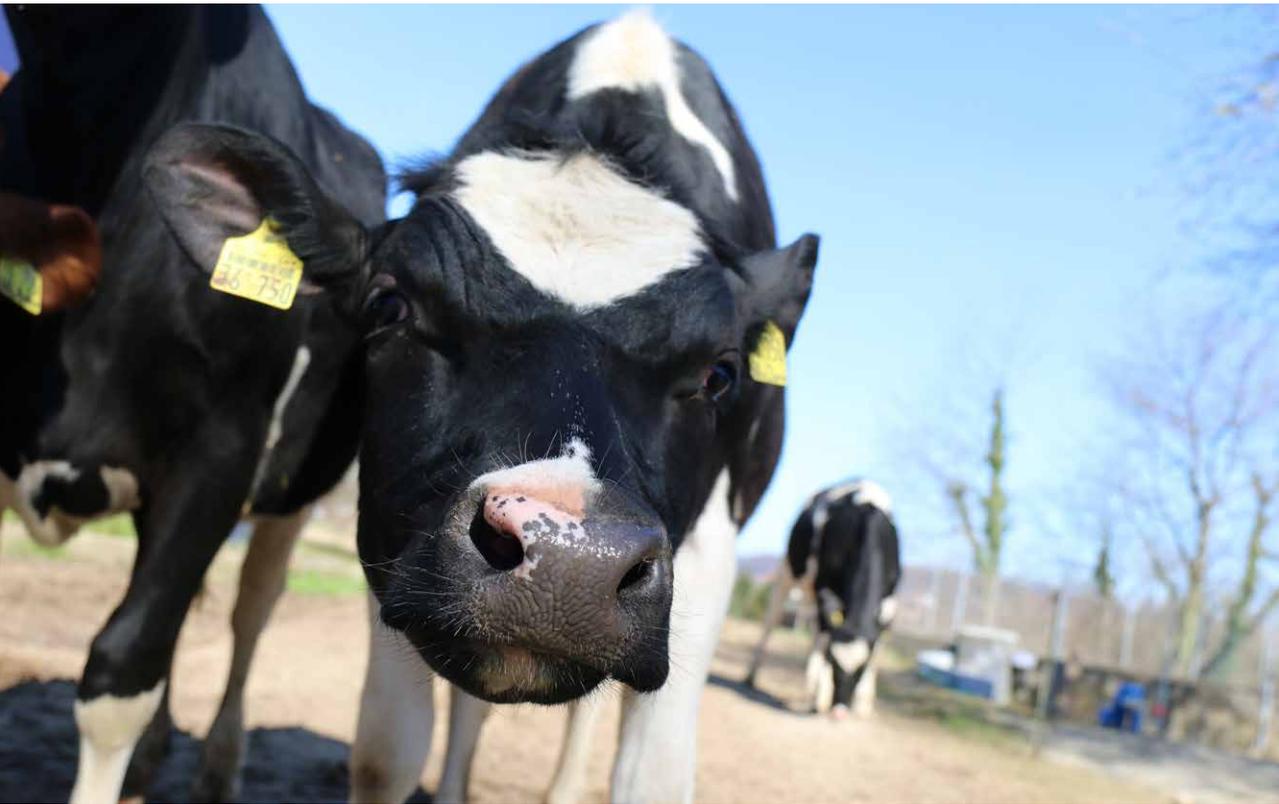
Compared to the previous year's figures, only 15% of the meals could be served in October.

### “Sustainable catering” project

Since 2016, the “Bio” project has evolved into the “Sustainable Catering” project and includes additional criteria such as regionality and animal welfare. The guidelines of this project can be summarised as follows:

**Organically produced products** comply at least with the currently applicable EU Organic Regulation. This will be revised at the beginning of 2022 and “defines how organic food is produced, inspected, imported and labelled. “Bio” is the highest legal standard of agriculture and food

<sup>1</sup> [Regulation \(EC\) No. 834/2007 | EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/853/oj)



## 12 Sonnenhof impressions

production in Germany.<sup>2</sup> Thus, stwda makes a deliberate contribution to good animal husbandry and animal welfare.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the Studierendenwerk supports the goals of the *Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft e.V.*, an alliance of the ecological food industry, to make organic food visible and accessible to the general public. This does not only provide sustainable support for organic farmers, but also for “diversity in the fields and healthy soil”.<sup>4</sup>

The stwda defines **regionally produced products** as those produced and grown within a maximum radius of 100 km around Darmstadt. This area includes the Wetterau, Taunus, Rheinhessen, Main-Franken, Baden, Kurpfalz and Südpfalz regions bordering Southern Hesse.

When sourcing meat, the **focus is on animal welfare**. The stwda commits itself to promote, step by step, a higher standard of animal rearing and husbandry conditions and to increasingly offer meat dishes on the entire menu of the university catering facilities using organic meat or meat from

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2 [EU Organic Regulation | Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft \(boelw.de\) \(in German\)](#)

3 [EU Organic Regulation - animal husbandry | Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft \(boelw.de\) \(in German\)](#)

4 [What we do | Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft \(boelw.de\) \(in German\)](#)

suppliers with a particularly high animal welfare standard. A general minimum standard for all types of meat is not defined, as this would make regional sourcing impossible.

Taking into account a daily variety of meat dishes in line with demand, the proportion of **vegan dishes on offer** is to be increased. Following the motto “50 for the climate”, the menu has already included a 50 per cent share of meatless dishes since October 2018, which will be continuously expanded to include vegetarian and vegan options. The goal is to offer 50 % vegan dishes by 2025.

## Product changes

In 2019, the frozen fruit and vegetable range as well as the spice range were changed to organic products. This means that organic dishes can be offered in the future.

Since the beginning of 2020, stwda has been using two new pasta machines in the Stadtmitte and Lichtwiese canteens to produce fresh pasta from organic durum wheat semolina and water, without any other additives. The result is delicious pasta dishes made from high-quality ingredients that are nothing like ready-made products.

## Regionality

An important component for sustainable catering is the regional sourcing of food. This helps to reduce emissions and strengthen regional supply structures.



**13** Organic potatoes, e.g. those from the Habitzheim estate



**14** Happy chickens



15 In-house bakery team

## Regional producers

### In-house bakery

For over 40 years, stwda has been preparing delicacies for students and guests of the canteens and bistros in its own bakery. From two o'clock in the morning, two pastry chefs and two bakers bake fresh cakes and pastries every day. Students and staff often come up with ideas for new creations. That is how, for example, gluten-free and vegan cakes have been added to the range. In a pandemic-free year, the Studierendenwerk's in-house bakery produces 27,000 nut slices and 23,000 vegan carrot cake slices, to name just a few.

An organic mixed rye bread has also been part of the range since 2019. Guests can take it home once a week as a whole loaf or enjoy it on the spot as an open sandwich that is nicknamed "Studi-Stulle".

### Sonnenhof

Since August 2018, stwda has been sourcing organic potatoes and milk from the Sonnenhof farm, a Naturland eco-certified farm of the Nieder-Ramstädter Diakonie Foundation in Mühlthal. Supported by specialist staff, around 40 people with disabilities are employed in the cowshed, filling room and

peeling kitchen.<sup>5</sup> On 160 hectares of arable land, Sonnenhof produces cereals, legumes and fodder for the dairy herd.<sup>6</sup>

The cooperation between stwda and Sonnenhof came about as part of the *Ökomodellregion Süd*, the Southern organic farming model region, which further develops regional organic farming<sup>7</sup> and in which the Studierendenwerk has been involved since 2018.

### Odenwälder butcher's shop

The beef and pork offered in the canteens is mainly sourced from regional suppliers. The Odenwälder butcher's shop from Fränkisch-Crumbach, for example, supplies stwda with meat and sausage products from cattle and pigs from the Odenwald.

## Regional suppliers

Cooperation with regional traders is also an important aspect of regionality. This allows stwda to support local companies and to keep both the economic and ecological costs of delivery low by ensuring short distances. For stwda, regional suppliers are those who are located in the geographically defined areas for regionally produced products, but who do not necessarily supply or process regional products, but for example products from overseas.

An important partner and pioneer for sustainable logistics in the food trade<sup>8</sup> is the company Transgourmet Deutschland GmbH & Co. OHG, based in Riedstadt near Darmstadt. Other regional trading partners are the companies Lebensmittel Becker GmbH & Co. KG from Griesheim and MAUS-Früchtegroßhandel & Schneidebetrieb e.K. from Gernsheim.

## Products with sustainable added value

### Fair products

Another aspect of sustainable management at stwda is the constant increase in the purchase of fair trade goods. The bistros and café bars offer only **organic and fair trade coffee products**. In addition, some confectionery such as chocolate and the soft drinks of Lemonaid & ChariTea e.V. have been awarded the Fairtrade seal.

### Sustainable fishing

In order to protect the remaining populations and not to support questionable catching and breeding methods, stwda refrains from using tuna, shrimps and hoki in the canteens. The fish on the menu is regularly checked with regard to criteria for the protection of species and, if necessary, the offer is adapted accordingly. Where possible, the university catering menu includes fish with the **MSC seal, from sustainable and traceable fishing**.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [Our farm | Stiftung Nieder-Ramstädter Diakonie \(nrd.de\) \(in German\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Our products | Stiftung Nieder-Ramstädter Diakonie \(nrd.de\) \(in German\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Ökolandbau Modellregionen Hessen \(oekomodellregionen-hessen.de\) \(in German\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Our future, our responsibility | Transgourmet \(in German\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> [MSC | Marine Stewardship Council](#)

### Other products

As a more sustainable alternative to the beef burger, the canteens have been offering **insect burgers** since the beginning of 2020. The burger patty consists of organic soy protein and ground buffalo worms, whose carbon footprint and edible content compares favourably with other animal products.<sup>10</sup>

Meat-reduced burgers, consisting of equal parts beef and mushrooms, have also been broadening the range of university catering facilities since the beginning of 2020.

In addition, the bistros offer Forest Gum's environmentally friendly and plastic-free products rather than conventional chewing gum. They rely on chicle, the juice of the sapodilla tree, as a chewable base and avoid the use of plastic right down to the packaging.<sup>11</sup>

## Measures to avoid waste

### Reusable coffee cups

After the amount of disposable cups handed out for hot drinks reached a peak of 293,207 cups in 2013, stwda was able to reduce the number of cups handed out by gradually increasing the price by a total of 30 cents to 68,811 cups in 2019. Since 2017, stwda has also been involved in the development of a reusable cup together with partners such as the city of Darmstadt, h\_da and the municipal waste disposal company EAD, which will be introduced in Darmstadt in 2021.

### Packaging waste in canteens, bistros and cafés

By changing from cardboard bowls to reusable trays for the presentation of pastries and sandwiches, stwda was able to save a total of 274,100 disposable cardboard bowls weighing 1.6 tonnes and procurement and disposal costs of around €4,650 in 2019. Guests can choose between a plate to eat on the premises or a paper bag to take away their baked goods.

By **changing from composite cartons to reusable bottles**, which are taken back, rinsed and reused, Sonnenhof supports stwda in reducing packaging waste. In 2019, this saved 7,682 composite cartons.

The introduction of dispensers to avoid plastic sachets with single portions of ketchup and mayonnaise, planned for 2020, has been postponed to 2021 due to the pandemic.

### Waste separation in the dining area

Supported by students, a concept for waste separation in the dining area was developed as part of an h\_da project course in 2018, which was first introduced in the Stadtmitte canteen in 2020. After consultation with the municipal waste management company EAD, only slightly soiled paper napkins can be disposed of in the paper collecting bins. In this way, a large proportion of the napkins will no longer be incinerated but recycled.

This measure **protects the environment<sup>12</sup> and reduces disposal costs**. Exact figures regarding the effects will be available after the first year of the changeover.

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**10** [Eating insects | Verbraucherzentrale.de \(in German\)](#)

**11** [Plastic-free and sustainable chewing gum | Forest Gum \(in German\)](#)

**12** [Papier recycling | Utopia.de \(in German\)](#)

### Food waste and process residues

In November 2020, software was introduced to reduce food waste, which averaged around 85 g for each of the 1.8 million meals served in 2019. With the help of artificial intelligence, factors such as weather and semester times of the universities are included in the quantity calculation for optimised production. Meals that have nevertheless been produced in excess and cannot be recycled have been offered at half price at the end of opening time as a “too good for the bin plate” since autumn 2020.

Leftover food, which is produced despite demand-oriented quantity planning and subsequent production, is used to **generate electricity and heat in a bio-gas plant** in neighbouring Pfungstadt. A specialised company in the Taunus produces bio-diesel from the old oils and fats of the catering facilities.

### Information and integration of guests

As part of the first-semester welcome, stwda informs first-year students about the university catering services and regularly discusses issues such as portion sizes and the (vegan) menu in the canteens with the university student committees. In addition, the Studierendenwerk informs its guests about various sustainability issues and asks for feedback on the following occasions, for example:

- European Week for Waste Reduction 2017 and 2018: information booths on “Reusable cups and waste caused by disposable cups”.
- Hessian Sustainability Day 2018 and European Sustainable Development Week 2019: information booth and workshops on “Bees”.
- Guest survey on satisfaction and desired quality of the food offer 2018: feedback from 4,200 participants
- European Sustainable Development Week 2019: “*Klimateller*” award, the climate dish (see chapter 6.2)

### Planned further developments

Together with the *Ökomodellregion Süd*, the Southern organic farming model region, it was planned to utilise two organic cattle in their entirety for the stwda canteens in May 2020 as part of the “nose to tail” project. This is intended both to **appreciate the whole animal** and to **strengthen the regional value chain**.<sup>13</sup> Due to the pandemic, this project was postponed to 2021.

With this in mind, it is also planned to change to poultry sausages from farms **raising the male brother chicks of laying hens** in 2021. In addition, it is also intended to buy **regionally produced organic eggs**: currently, the Studierendenwerk’s catering facilities are sourcing their organic eggs from North Rhine-Westphalia.

In future, the introduction of a food management system will avoid the food waste which is currently still produced by the display plates.

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13 [More than 20 % organic - studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de \(in German\)](https://studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de)

### Measures already implemented to protect the climate and resources in the canteens

- use of process water in the guest toilets of the Lichtwiese canteen
- photovoltaic system on the roof of the Lichtwiese canteen with an output of around 58 kWp
- the canteen's own bee colonies on the grounds of the Lichtwiese canteen (Mensa bees)
- modern dosing technology for cleaning and rinsing agents in all of the university catering facilities

## Contribution of university catering to the Sustainable Development Goals

By increasing its sourcing of organically and regionally produced food, stwda's university catering promotes the following issues and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>14</sup>.



### Goal 2: Zero hunger

- Promote sustainable agriculture and food production



### Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production

- Buying organic, regional food
- Establish rules for sustainable procurement; thereby increase demand for sustainably and regionally produced products



### Goal 13: Climate action

- Promotion of organic agriculture
- Buying regional products
- Leading to reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with the production and transport of processed food.
- Raising guests' awareness of the connection between food and climate protection



### Goal 15: Life on land

Protect terrestrial ecosystems and promote their sustainable use

- Buying regional organic food
- Membership in the *Ökomodellregion Süd* of the State of Hesse
- Promote sustainable agriculture and food production

14 [SDGs | United Nations Association of Germany \(dgqn.de\)](https://www.dgqn.de)

# University catering figures

ORGANIC PRODUCTS FROM OUR RANGE WITH THE LARGEST PURCHASE VOLUMES IN 2019



ORGANIC potatoes, fresh **67,500 kg**

ORGANIC whole eggs **5,350 litres**



ORGANIC eggs **178,380 eggs**

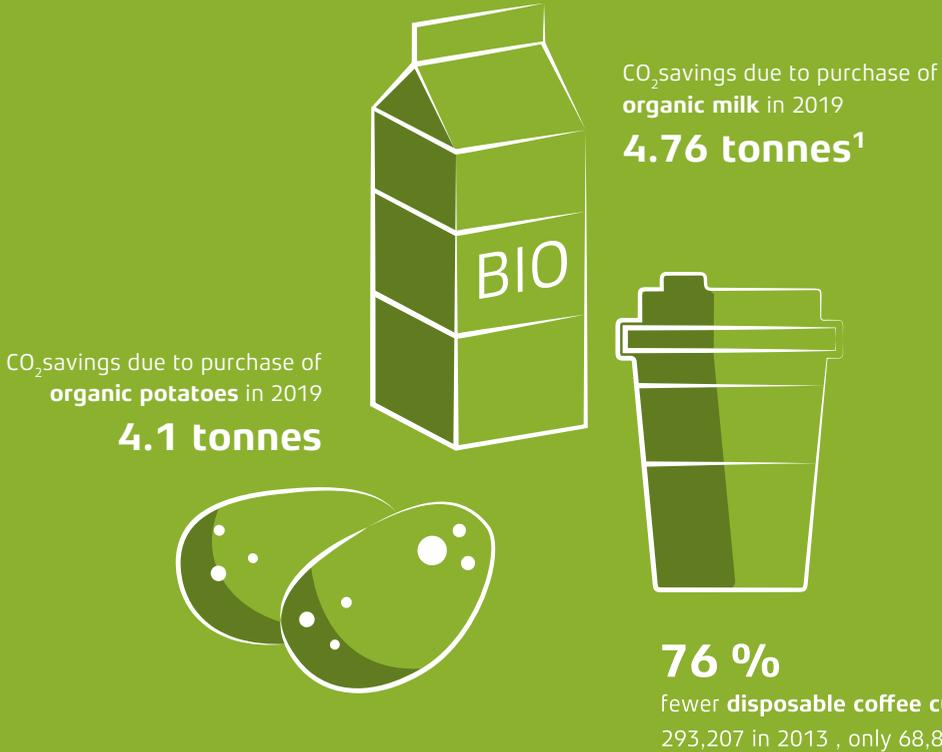


ORGANIC pasta **79,000 kg**



ORGANIC milk **80,352 litres**

ORGANIC rice **14,000 kg**



<sup>1</sup> CO<sub>2</sub>emission in the production of selected foods (de.statista.com)



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### Insights

**“I think it’s great that there is an increasing change to organic and that a relatively large share of organic food is already being offered.”**

**Leonie, bachelor student in chemistry at TU Darmstadt**

Leonie is in her 6th semester and has been active in the Lichtwiese network since her 4th semester. It is through this involvement that she has taken a closer look at the issues of university catering and sustainable catering. In the Lichtwiese canteen, which is empty

due to Corona, she spoke to stwda about her view of the catering services offered by the Studierendenwerk.

**What do you like most about the university’s catering services?**

What has struck me as particularly positively in recent years is that there are more and more vegetarian options and fewer and fewer meat-only dishes. I also like the freshly prepared rolls. I love the delicious “Studi-Stulle” with its variety of toppings because it offers a nice change from bread rolls.

### Where do you still see room for improvement?

When I changed to a vegetarian diet, I started with reducing my meat consumption and I would have liked dishes that are not necessarily meat-free, but meat-reduced. I realise that this is not easy for the canteen due to its billing system. But dishes with less meat could appeal to many people. Especially when the temperatures are high in summer, you don't always want to eat a large portion of meat. This would also help to avoid food waste.

In vegetarian dishes, it is not always necessary to replace everything with tofu. It would be great to have vegetarian-vegan dishes to which you can add meat if you like.

I frequently get feedback from vegan friends that they often only have one or two dishes to choose from and often can't even get anything because the dishes sell out quickly. Even non-vegans don't always want to eat meat and choose vegan dishes. That's why it would be great to have more meatless and vegan dishes instead of dishes containing meat.

### What is your perception of organic food in the canteen?

I think it's great that there is an increasing change to organic and that a relatively large share of organic food is already being offered. People should be made more aware that the Studierendenwerk not only has vegan-vegetarian-friendly canteens, but also takes care to use organic and regional products. The potatoes from Sonnenhof, for example, combine three great aspects: Organic, regional and an inclusion project. I've also noticed that the

canteens have completely changed to organic rice, but I'm sure many students aren't aware of that yet.

### What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of sustainable catering at the Studierendenwerk?

The first thing that comes to mind is packaging waste; this has already been reduced by putting the bread rolls on reusable trays instead of disposable cardboard bowls, so that you can now choose how you want them: on a plate or in a paper bag to take away.

What I would also welcome is the possibility to take food with you in your own containers. Then you wouldn't have any packaging waste and you wouldn't have to return a plate, you'd just have to remember to bring your own container.



### Are there any other issues you would like to address?

In the past three years, the university catering on offer has developed really positively. Unfortunately, you still have to actively seek information on sustainable catering. That's why many guests are probably not even aware of what the Studierendenwerk is already doing in terms of sustainability.

# ACCOMMODATION SERVICE

100%  
GREEN ELECTRICITY  
PURCHASED

2,604  
PLACES IN HALLS  
OF RESIDENCE<sup>2</sup>

89  
NATIONS<sup>1</sup>

98.5%  
OCCUPANCY RATE<sup>2</sup>

9  
HALLS OF RESIDENCE



64

- 1 Number of nations the residents come from, as of the end of December 2020
- 2 as of the end of December 2020



AT LEAST **15%**  
BELOW THE APPLICABLE  
RENT INDEX

19 Courtyard of the “rest” accommodation complex on Riedeselstraße

## Accommodation service

### Overview of the accommodation complexes

Currently (as of December 2020), the Studierendenwerk is operating nine accommodation complexes with a total of 2,604 places. Two more complexes are currently being built.

Students from a total of 89 nations live in the halls of residence; the share of international residents is 46 %.

The accommodation complexes offer a wide range of accommodation types at different price levels:<sup>1</sup>

- furnished or unfurnished flats
- rooms in shared flats
- family flats
- accessible accommodation

### Economic principles

The goal is to provide 10 % of all students, i.e. approx. 4,300 of the students at TU Darmstadt and h\_da, with a place to live. Therefore, the basic principle in the construction of new halls of residence is always to create affordable living space for students while complying with the legal requirements for energy-efficient construction.

Despite rising costs and high investments required to meet these obligations with regard to fire protection, building standards, or the German Energy Saving Regulation<sup>2</sup>, stwda is able to achieve this goal. The rents for places in halls of residence are at least 15 % below the applicable Darmstadt rent index. Rents do not provide any return.

### Investments in the provision of accommodation

Between December 2011 and September 2021, the number of places in halls of residence managed by the Studierendenwerk will have increased by more than 600: from 2,410 to 3,064. By autumn 2020, an additional approx. 900 places were modernised. By the end of this 10-year period, more than €100 million will have been invested in modernisation, densification, and building new, modern halls of residence.

### Additional offers of the “At home at the Studierendenwerk” concept

In addition to accommodation, stwda offers the following additional services to ensure the residents' well-being and successful community relations:

- counselling and support by trained staff members
- bilingual information for residents

<sup>1</sup> [accommodation service – studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://www.stwda.de/leistungen/unterkunft)

<sup>2</sup> [BMW | German Energy Saving Regulation, \*Energieeinsparverordnung\* \(in German\)](#)

- promotion of the community within the halls of residence through our own events department
- meeting places inside and outside the halls of residence: e.g. the beach volleyball court in the Karlshof complex and the barbecue area in the student village
- approx. 20 % accessible rooms, in accordance with legal requirements, and 28 wheelchair-accessible places in student accommodation

In addition, stwda is planning the development of the Karlshof accommodation complex by 2024:

- removing the paving in the inner courtyards and creation of new meeting areas to improve recreational quality
- areas for urban gardening and fruit trees
- wi-fi in the outdoor areas of the accommodation complexes
- at least one bicycle parking space per tenant
- conversion of car parking spaces into bicycle parking spaces
- bicycle cellars with suitable access via ramps in the new accommodation complexes

## **Family-friendly living, child care and studying**

The compatibility of studies and family requires a suitable infrastructure. In addition to providing funds for daycare places or for increasing existing group capacities and a reliable cooperation with proven and pedagogically competent providers of childcare facilities, the Studierendenwerk creates suitable conditions through the new daycare buildings presented below.

### **New hall of residence on Berliner Allee**

In September 2012, the first students moved into the 294 places in the modern LAB hall of residence. Part of the overall project is the purchase of the day care centre run by Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e. V. (ASB) in the immediate neighbourhood, on Spreestraße. The original 48 childcare places were increased by twelve places.

### **Family house with day care centre for student parents in the Karlshof**

Officially opened on 26 August 2013, the semi-detached house with 43 rooms and a day care centre is an important component of the neighbourhood concept for Darmstadt's largest student accommodation complex.

Here, renovation, modernisation and new construction, as well as the deliberate promotion of different cultures living together and the creation of improved conditions for meeting family needs, are all interwoven. The aim is to develop the entire Karlshof area into an international and child-friendly residential location for students with a village-like character.

Here, too, high priority is given to the cooperation with pedagogical professionals. The three ASB day-care groups are open daily for ten children under the age of three. The ASB receives subsidies from the Studierendenwerk for the care of students' children.

### **New wooden building and outdoor area for the Studentendorf accommodation complex, the student village**

In 2013, a new daycare centre with an outdoor area was opened. stwda paid € 640,000 towards construction and subsidises places for students' children. The parents' association was involved in planning the child-friendly wooden building, a nature-oriented retreat for the forest kindergarten group.



- 20 Berliner Allee LAB
- 21 Berliner Allee LAB
- 22 Housing block with child care centre in the Karlshof accommodation complex



23 Solar thermal system on the roof of the “rest” accommodation complex

## Ecological optimisation

With various measures, especially through **energy-efficient renovation and efficient new buildings**, stwda pursues the goal of saving emissions impacting the climate, especially in building operation. This also includes “invisible highlights” related to the ecological optimisation of the accommodation complexes; including the use of green electricity in all halls of residence and the sustainable procurement of consumables for the halls of residence according to defined criteria.

In the new buildings, the insulation of the roof and façade has been realised with recycled mineral wool instead of petroleum-based Styrofoam since 2018. This is also the preferred option for fire safety reasons.<sup>3</sup>

Between 2013 and 2019, various measures were implemented in the Karlshof accommodation complex to optimise heating energy requirements. Among other things, the central heating system was renovated by renewing system components and pipes as well as the hydraulic balancing of the entire system. As a result, the on-site combined heat and power unit (CHP), which is operated with

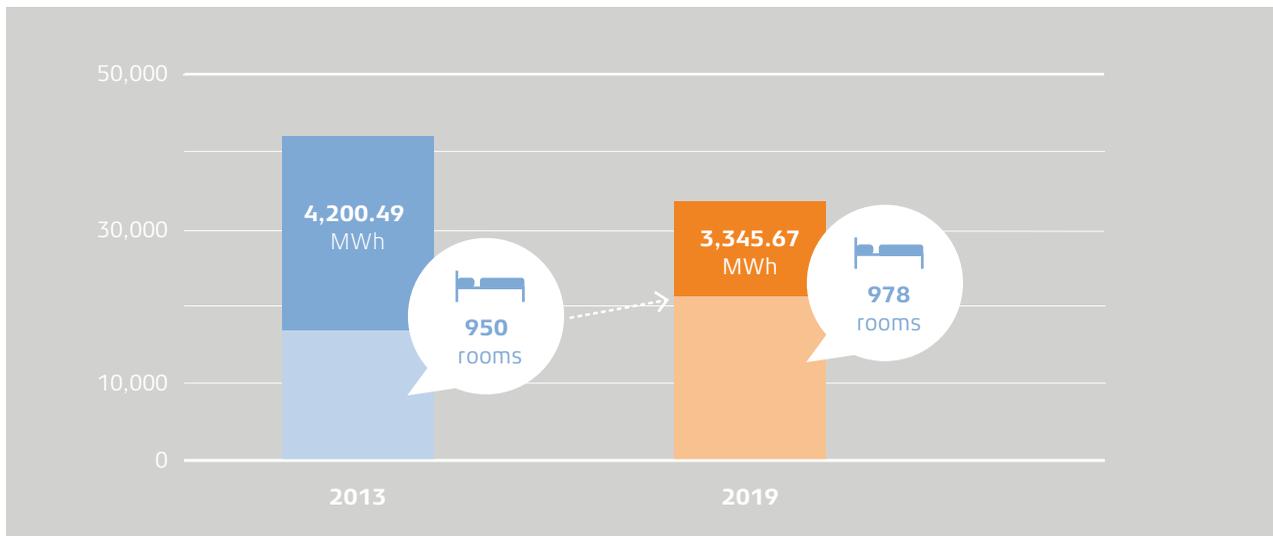
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3 [Cf: Fire Protection & Insulation \(der-daemmstoff.de\) \(in German\)](#)

natural gas by an external service provider, is now used optimally. District heating from the grid is only fed in if the CHP's output is not sufficient on cold days.

Together with the additional interior refurbishment of blocks A to D in the same period, the refurbishment of the heating centre - despite the increase of places in the hall of residence from 950 to 978 in 2019 - resulted in savings of about 20 % of the amount of heat used.

#### Development of thermal energy consumption of the Karlshof in relation to the number of beds



In addition to the Karlshof, CHP units are also in operation in the halls of residence LAB in Berliner Allee and fair in Nieder-Ramstädter-Straße. In the newest hall of residence, rest in Riedeselstraße, a solar thermal system for hot water production was installed on the flat roof. It has an area of about 160 m<sup>2</sup> and a minimum annual yield of 525 kWh per m<sup>2</sup> of its area. Especially when comparing the two halls of residence LAB and rest, which are very similar with regard to the number of places they offer and in their architectural style, the effect of the solar thermal system is clearly reflected in lower gas consumption values.

#### Comparison: energy consumption in the LAB and rest halls of residence

	Riedeselstraße	Berliner Allee
Power consumption 2019	247,698 kWh	202,178 kWh
Gas consumption 2019	581,636 kWh	1,059,039 kWh
Number of rooms	295	294
Gas consumption per head	2,084 kWh	3,602 kWh
Living space	6,333 m <sup>2</sup>	7,135 m <sup>2</sup>
Electricity supplied by CHP in 2019	–	<b>122,705 kWh</b>
Feed-in tariff 2019	–	<b>€ 6,151</b>

In 2019, a new, efficient condensing boiler was installed in the Poststraße hall of residence, reducing gas consumption by 15% compared to the old system.

### **E-mobility**

Since 2018, three e-vehicles have been acquired for the mobile craftsmen's service, which are used daily for journeys between the halls of residence as well as catering locations and the central workshop on the Stadtmitte campus. Charging points were set up for these vehicles in the Riedeselstraße accommodation complex and at the Stadtmitte and Lichtwiese canteens. The craftsmen's service also uses an e-bike.

All new vehicles bought are electrically powered vehicles.

### **Energy efficiency**

- Energy-efficient LED lighting and electrical appliances with the highest energy efficiency class were installed in all newly built or renovated halls of residence.
- All corridors, basement and common rooms were equipped with presence or motion detectors.

### **Green spaces and irrigation**

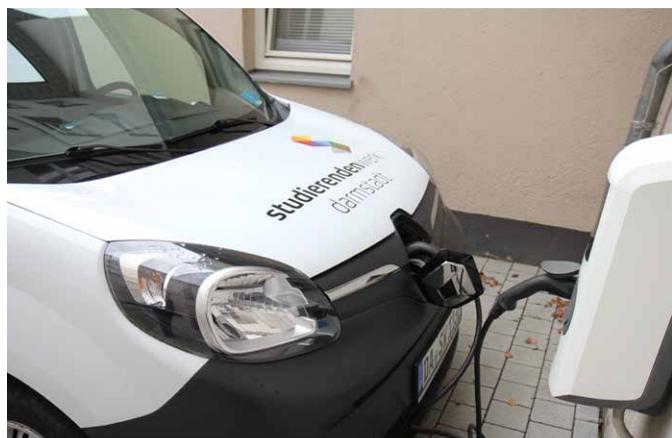
In 2019, **63 new trees were planted** on the grounds of the Karlshof accommodation complex as part of the construction project to compensate for the trees that had to be felled. During the new construction, the bed of the Molkenbach stream on the site was also renaturalised, thus contributing to the protection of biodiversity.

The construction of the new building in Nieder-Ramstädter-Straße will include the installation of a **rainwater cistern to irrigate the green areas and to supply the washing machines**, thus saving precious drinking water. In addition, **green roofs with an area of 1,600 m<sup>2</sup> will be established here**; in the new Karlshof building, an area of 468 m<sup>2</sup> will be created. This reduces wastewater discharge and provides relief for the the municipal sewer system. At the same time, flowering areas for insects are created.

In the Karlshof, the construction of wells is planned to provide eco-friendly irrigation for the outdoor facilities.

### **Waste separation**

The necessary waste containers for residual waste, paper, recyclable materials and glass are available for residents in all halls of residence. In the Karlshof and rest halls of residence, so-called "bio bins" for the disposal of organic waste were also provided until the end of 2019. However, their collection has not worked properly until now, as there was often wrongly disposed waste such as plastic bags and other waste in these bio bins. This misdirected waste had to be sorted out at considerable effort by employees of the on-site service. The solution to this problem will therefore continue to be worked on.



- 24** Inner courtyard of the “rest” accommodation complex
- 26** E-charging stations in the “rest” underground car park
- 28** Waste separation in the “rest” accommodation complex

- 25** Roof terrace of the Pallaswiesenstr.
- 27** E-vehicle for the craftsmen’s service
- 29** New plantings at Karlshof

## Insights

# “The Karlshof has become a bit of a home.”

**Anna-Katharina, bachelor student in sociology at TU Darmstadt**

Anna-Katharina is in her 4th semester of sociology at TU Darmstadt and spoke to stwda about life at the Karlshof.

### How long have you lived in the Karlshof hall of residence and where?

I've lived here since my first semester, since October 2018, in a flatshare of four.

### What is living at the Studierendenwerk like?

I feel very much at home here, but I have to admit that I was a bit sceptical at the very beginning when I came for a tour. I couldn't imagine what living together with almost 1,000 students would be like, what the noise level would be and whether people would get along with each other - not only in the shared flat, but also in the hall of residence in general. But I have found that the atmosphere is actually quite positive and I get along well with the other residents. I feel good here and it is fair to say that the Karlshof has become a bit of a home.

### What is special about living at a student hall of residence?

The Karlshof has a special atmosphere that is hard to describe. You simply feel at home. Through the Karlshof festivals, there is also the opportunity to meet the other residents; that strengthens the community. That's why it's nice to live here.

### What comes to your mind when you think of “sustainability in the halls of residence”?

I have to admit that I think it's a pity that the bio bins no longer exist. I know that waste separation wasn't working properly, but maybe it would be easier if we had our own bins to already separate the waste in the shared flats.



I realise that this would mean extra costs for the Studierendenwerk, but it would lower the threshold and make it easier to separate properly. It would also be good to have instructions on waste separation in German and English, so that everyone knows exactly how to separate waste properly. After all, the rules for separating waste are different in different countries.

Perhaps the small flowerbeds along the walkways could be put to better use. They could be planted with wildflowers for wild bees and other insects to help biodiversity.

# Accommodation service in figures

## EVENTS HELD FOR RESIDENTS

In 2019, **19 events** were organised in the nine halls of residence, some of them jointly with the halls' spokespeople, with a total of **2,238 participants**.



### Goal 11: Make cities and settlements sustainable

- Use resource-saving and climate-friendly building materials and technologies in the new construction and renovation of halls of residence.
- At the same time, affordable rents are ensured, 15 % below the current Darmstadt rent index
- Use of a solar thermal system to heat water on the roof of the “rest” hall of residence

15  
EMPLOYEES



9.8  
FULL-TIME JOBS



COUNSELLING  
AND SOCIAL  
AFFAIRS

MORE THAN 4,560  
(CONSULTATION SESSIONS)<sup>2</sup>

2 (COUNSELLING CENTRES)<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Psychological counselling centre and social counselling service
- 2 Figures in 2019 including 550 legal consultations (provided by an external lawyer)



129

DAY CARE PLACES  
SUPPORTED BY THE  
STUDIERENDENWERK

32 Impressions from the day-care centre

## Counselling and social affairs

Studierendenwerk Darmstadt provides students at TU Darmstadt and h\_da with advice & assistance<sup>1</sup> and supports them in the social issues that make up **life alongside and with their studies**. The sustainability of this work is often specific to students and staff and can hardly be expressed in figures. It concerns and results in, for example:

- helping people help themselves
- lower dropout rates and numbers of inpatient therapy or suicides
- enabling and facilitating the compatibility of studying and raising children
- compensating for disadvantages caused by a disability and/or chronic illness
- improvement of (precarious) financial or residence permit situations
- establishing networks among students
- access to the offers of support networks for students
- facilitating intercultural training, exchange, and change of perspective

**15 EMPLOYEES**

**9.8 FULL-TIME JOBS**

### Psychological counselling

The focus of the psychological counselling centre<sup>2</sup> is to offer students relief and support with their problems. This involves promoting mental health and the ability to deal with life and development issues. The free services offered by stwda range from individual conversations to counselling with partners, family members or someone close, to group offers. In group sessions on issues such as “social skills” or “procrastination”, students have the opportunity to learn from and with each other and to experience that they are not alone with their problems.

Since 2014, the psychological counselling centre has also been involved in the network for the professional integration of university dropouts in Hesse.<sup>3</sup> The counselling network helps students find the right degree programme or a suitable alternative.

Due to the pandemic, hardly any face-to-face counselling was possible in 2020. To provide a solution, digital counselling and event formats such as video meetings were introduced.

<sup>1</sup> [Counselling and social affairs – studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://www.stwda.de/counselling-and-social-affairs)

<sup>2</sup> [Psychological counselling - studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://www.stwda.de/psychological-counselling)

<sup>3</sup> [Counselling for students in doubt and dropouts in Hesse \(zweifel-am-studium.de\) \(in German\)](https://www.zweifel-am-studium.de)



## CONSULTATION SESSIONS

### Social counselling

Free and confidential social counselling at stwda can be provided in person, by e-mail, by telephone and, since 2020, also by video. The social counselling team offers individual support regarding questions about the financial issues, legal claims and residence rights, studying with children or a disability, or in personal situations of crisis. A lot of information is also provided online. In addition to one-off counselling, there is also the possibility of longer-term support if needed.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [Social counselling – studierendenwerk darmstadt.de](https://www.stwda.de/social-counselling)

Especially international students make frequent use of the counselling services. The most frequent issues are: financing, accommodation, residence rights and employment law. The social counselling centre of stwda works closely with the universities as well as municipal and external specialist agencies. This has resulted in, for example:

- continuous cooperation in various working groups of the local support network for students
- 2019: one-day symposium on “Compensation for Disadvantages / Studying with Disabilities” with the student advisory service of TU Darmstadt
- since 2018: annual “Brunch for Students with Children” with the specialist departments of both universities and the student unions
- since 2018: “Mental Strategies” seminar with a health insurance company

### Studying with children

The counselling of students with children focusses on the **compatibility of family life and studying**. In addition to the annual “Brunch for Students with Children” to help students establish networks and to present the counselling and support services, stwda offers the following services for student parents:

- creating childcare places and support for operators
- ad hoc emergency childcare places
- family flats in the student accommodation complexes
- in the canteens: parent-child rooms, tray trolleys, children’s plates, high chairs, changing tables

### Studying with disabilities and chronic illnesses

The social counselling service advises and supports students with disabilities, e.g. in asserting claims or organising everyday student life. Within stwda, disability is also taken into account in many ways: in current building projects, through the provision of online information, the marking of accessible events and through an internal checklist on “studying with disabilities”.

In order to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Hessian student and student services organisations have drawn up a joint action plan, to which stwda has also committed itself.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the Studierendenwerk is a partner in the Inclusive Universities Network in Hesse, in which scientific information is shared, and guidelines are developed and made accessible at specialist symposiums.<sup>6</sup>

### comeTOgether

**Counselling of students by students** is a preventive service offered by the social counselling service. Experienced tutors support their fellow students in finding accommodation or a job or in preparing applications for student jobs and provide initial information on scholarships.

<sup>5</sup> [Inclusion – studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://www.studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de) (in German)

<sup>6</sup> [Inclusive Universities Network Hesse](https://www.inclusive-universities-network.de)

## Insights

# “Helping people help themselves”

**Anna, bachelor student in social work plus migration and globalisation at h\_da**



**Anna spoke to stwda about her work as a student assistant in the comeTOgether (cTG) team**

### **How did you become involved with comeTOgether and what are your tasks?**

A friend who also worked there recruited me. We are students ourselves and advise fellow students on aspects of student life in Darmstadt, for example on dealing with the authorities, finding a place to live or a job. We try to work preventively. We always follow the principle “helping people help themselves”, so that the solutions we offer have a lasting effect.

### **How are staff prepared for their tasks at cTg?**

The experienced tutors provide some guidance, we can ask the social counsellors, and there are training courses. Most recently, I attended a workshop on application portfolio checks. We offer this check to help students apply for jobs and internships.

### **What are the most common issues and questions asked by students?**

Besides applications, finding a place to live in Darmstadt is a difficult issue because the market is very tight. Finding an affordable room is simply difficult. We therefore accept private offers of accommodation and pass them on to students. Another important issue is funding your studies by finding part-time jobs. With foreign students, it's also translation problems; for example, when a letter from the GEZ, the German TV licence fee collecting agency, arrives and they don't know what to do. We help with the translation and explain what to do.

### **How has the Corona pandemic changed cTg-counselling?**

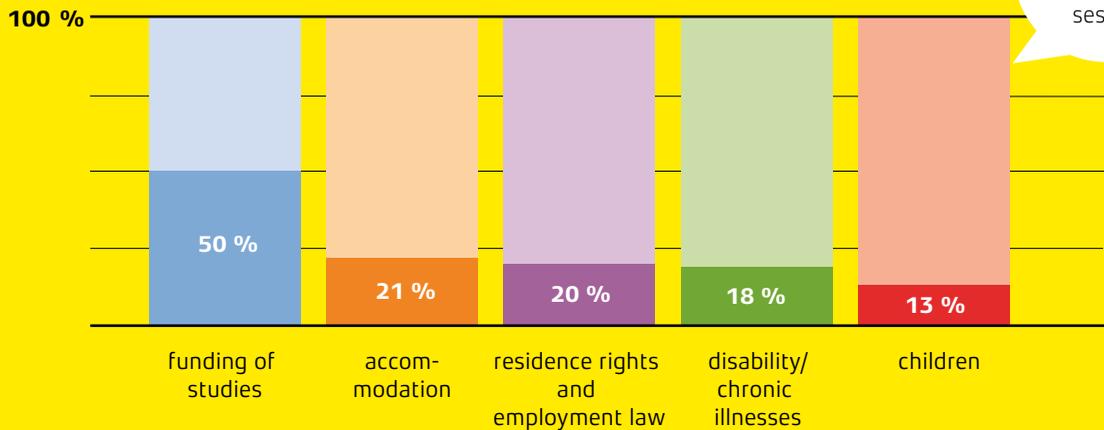
Before Corona, people came to the office and we talked face to face about what the problem was and how to solve it. Now everything is done by phone and e-mail. This makes it much more difficult to create the necessary trust. People also seem to be more reluctant to call or to phrase their own concerns in writing. In the past, students could combine their visit to the canteen with a visit to our office and look at the job offers on our jobs wall outside the office. Unfortunately, all this is no longer possible. Therefore, we now post the job offers on our website. As a next step, we also want to offer video consultations to make the contact more personal again.

# Counselling & social affairs in figures

## SOCIAL COUNSELLING:

- 59 % international students
- 45 % women receiving counselling
- 89 % multiple contacts / longer-term support

## THE MOST FREQUENT ISSUES (PERCENTAGE OF COUNSELLING CONTACTS):



### Goal 3: Good health and well-being

→ Promote the mental health of students through counselling by the psychological counselling centre and the social counselling service



### Goal 10: Reduced inequalities

→ Counselling and support of students, e.g. with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses (implementation of disadvantage compensation), or of international students for equal participation

2.38  
FULL-TIME JOBS<sup>1</sup>  
IN



INTERCULTURAL  
AFFAIRS

107  
EVENTS<sup>1</sup>

MORE THAN 5,523  
PARTICIPANTS<sup>1</sup>

1 in 2019

## Intercultural affairs

The Intercultural Affairs division is part of the Counselling and Social Affairs Department of stwda and offers students and prospective students of the universities as well as employees and trainees in the higher education sector many contact and further education opportunities in an intercultural context. Since 2019, trainees in the Counselling and Social Affairs Department have been able to work on specific intercultural projects.

The focus of Intercultural Affairs is on providing networks among students as well as training employees through workshops and events on intercultural and anti-discriminatory issues, in coordination with the HR department. In order to fulfil these tasks during the Corona pandemic, it was necessary to change the range of events to digital formats at the beginning of 2020.

If and when the opportunity arises, Intercultural Affairs applies for funding. One example is the funding stwda received from Stiftung Mercator as part of the nationwide project “Studium+M - Programme for more students with a migration background”<sup>1</sup> over a period of three and a half years, between 2015 and 2018. Through project content, such as workshops on “Does the world fit into pigeonholes - reflection on self-perception and perception of others”, stwda worked to make it possible to experience diversity as an asset; for a more open society and equal opportunities.

### Intercultural competence

In a globalised world that is growing ever closer together, “intercultural competence” is becoming an important key qualification. With workshops on conflict resolution strategies, communication, or self-perception and perception of others, stwda promotes intercultural exchange and increases the participants’ reflective ability, empathy, and tolerance of ambiguity.<sup>2</sup>

The aims of the workshops include:

- raising intercultural awareness
- recognising and questioning one’s own values and standards
- reflection on perception and communication

### Intercultural Tutor Team

The Intercultural Tutor Team (ITT) is a programme by students for students. The ITT not only offers support in everyday student life, but also organises numerous events. From one-day symposiums on issues such as “The Power of Language” or the European elections to company visits and field trips, the volunteers of the ITT ensure extensive networking with universities, the city, companies, cultural institutions and initiatives.

### Promoting cultural activities

Students who are planning an event or a cultural project can get help and advice as well as financial support from stwda.<sup>3</sup>

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1 [Studying with a migration background - studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de)

2 [Workshops – studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de)

3 [Funding for Cultural Projects – studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de)

# Intercultural Affairs in figures

	Events	Participants
<b>Total in 2019</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>&gt; 5,523</b>
<b>ITT events</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>&gt; 4,315</b>
Company visits	7	167
Leisure & culture	42	1,368
Start of the semester & info events	34	> 2,780
<b>Intercultural Affairs events (intercultural education)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1,208</b>
Workshops	5	78
Series of events	11	550
Field trips	1	60
Panel discussions	1	30
Special formats	6	490



### Goal 3: Good health and well-being

→ Promoting the social environment of students through networking, joint activities and opportunities for participation



### Goal 4: Quality education

→ Workshops for staff on issues such as sustainable development and intercultural communication



### Goal 5: Gender equality

→ Raising awareness of gender equality (women's rights, sexism and anti-feminism, care work or gender pay gap) in events and discussions, also in cooperation with external participants



### Goal 10: Reduced inequalities

→ Make staff and students more aware of discrimination, participation and inclusion in events, most recently in the "Intersectional Diversity Week" in November 2020

## Insights

# “Sustainability cannot be thought of without the intercultural component.”

stwda talked to Louisa Frenzel (LF) and Amanda Cohen (AC), staff members of the Intercultural Affairs division and coordinators of the Intercultural Tutor Team (ITT), and student trainee Dixon Wong (DW) about their work.



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### What are the tasks of the Intercultural Affairs division and the Intercultural Tutor Team?

LF: Firstly, we organise workshops and projects on intercultural communication and social justice issues; both internally and for students and interested parties. Secondly, we coordinate the ITT, which is a team of students from h\_da and TU Darmstadt and offers numerous events for students every semester, but also provides language support for dealing with authorities and help with the start of studies/semesters. In addition, we are also involved in the internationalisation of the Studierendenwerk.

To achieve this, we maintain numerous cooperations at the universities, in the city and beyond.

### What were your event highlights in 2019 and 2020?

LF: I really enjoyed the annual workshop for the stwda trainees with one day on “Communication & Biography” and one day on “Sustainability from an Intercultural Perspective”. In the sustainability workshop, for example, the trainees worked on “The Journey of my T-shirt”, discussed climate change and migration and developed personal strategies for action.

Together with cooperation partners including the student union of TU Darmstadt, we organised a theme month in 2019 titled “Politics MAKES Gender - 100 Years of Women’s Suffrage”; with lectures and workshops on women’s history and the women’s liberation movement as well as current social developments. In the same year, we organised a three-day study trip to Brussels entitled “The Right-Wing Shift in Europe”, in which students and members of Darmstadt’s migrant associations<sup>1</sup> participated.

AC: My highlights were the visit to the Oberfeld estate, an organic educational farm on the outskirts of Darmstadt, with a guided tour and workshop for the students entitled “From Grain to Bread”, and the field trip to the Sonnenhof organic farm, which supplies our canteens with potatoes and milk. The panel discussion “Giving Racism a Stage” with Staatstheater Darmstadt was another highlight in the political context.

### **How has the Corona pandemic changed your formats?**

LF: Like everyone else, we have had to change our plans and have turned our ITT programme into an online series called “Stream ITT”. Every week there is a live streamed event hosted by the tutors, e.g. on cooking, bike repair, reading circle, language learning.

AC: When everything came to a standstill in mid-March, we still wanted to be visible for the students in Darmstadt. In keeping with the motto “We’ll be there for you”, we created various small videos to provide some help. Clips were created on issues such as motivation and daily routine, job search, the digital semester, isolation and conflicts, or also staycations, with a reference to CO<sub>2</sub> savings.

### **Where do you see the link between Intercultural Affairs and sustainability?**

AC: Sustainability cannot be thought of without the intercultural component. It is always about people. The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals list many socio-political goals that we often address in our workshops, panel discussions or other formats, such as Goal 5 “Gender Equality” and Goal 10 “Reduced Inequalities”.

There is no climate justice without social justice. With our mission to make contributions to social justice, which is codified in the mission statement of stwda, we address precisely these issues in the Intercultural Affairs division.

### **You are a student trainee in the Intercultural Affairs division. What are your tasks?**

DW: I support the team in organisational tasks and in planning and organising events; but I can also contribute creatively, for example in designing posters and drawings for videos and logos. Additionally, I’m an ITT tutor. In 2019, one of the highlights was the Open Stage music event, in which I was involved as an organiser and participant.

### **How do you experience stwda as a student and as a staff member?**

DW: It was only as an employee that I found out that the Studierendenwerk is an institution in its own right that cooperates with the universities and offers the students of TU Darmstadt and h\_da a wealth of services - especially in the areas of counselling and social and intercultural affairs. My work at the stwda has had such an impact on me that I have changed to the “Pedagogy” degree programme.

<sup>1</sup> [Migrant associations: darmstadt.de](http://darmstadt.de) (in German)

# FUNDING OF STUDIES



5,696

BAFÖG APPLICATIONS  
PROCESSED IN 2019



€ 489.67

AVERAGE MONTHLY  
FUNDING

Bafög!!!  
...

Wiederantrag  
stellen nicht  
vergessen!

£25.58M



AMOUNT OF FUNDING  
GRANTED

## Funding of studies



41 Colleagues in the Student Financing Department

The Student Financing Department processes applications for training assistance funding, so-called BAföG, as well as applications for KfW student loans and, during the Corona pandemic, for tide-over funding from the federal government. This way, stwda ensures that statutory funding opportunities can be exhausted regardless of parental provision and makes an important contribution to **equal opportunities in access to university studies**.

Despite the improvements introduced in 2019 by the “26th BAföG Amendment Act”<sup>1</sup> and the increase in the number of applications thus intended, there has been a nationwide decline of 6.4% in the number of people receiving support since the winter semester 2019/2020. In 2019, expenditure on BAföG funding fell by around €84 million compared to the previous year.<sup>2</sup> In order to reverse this trend, the umbrella organisation of German student services organisations is lobbying the government to bring forward the planned reform stages.<sup>3</sup>

### Paperless office

As a rule, electronic mail received by the Student Financing Department is not printed out, but directly assigned to the electronic file. Correspondence with applicants is also sent electronically whenever possible. Official files requested in the original are not copied before being sent, but scanned and saved as a pdf file.

The goal is to introduce completely electronic files in BAföG application processing in the future, which will make paper files unnecessary in the medium term.

1 [BAföG 2019 overview \(bafog-rechner.de\) \(in German\)](#)

2 [Federal Training Assistance Act, 2019 statistics \(destatis.de\)](#)

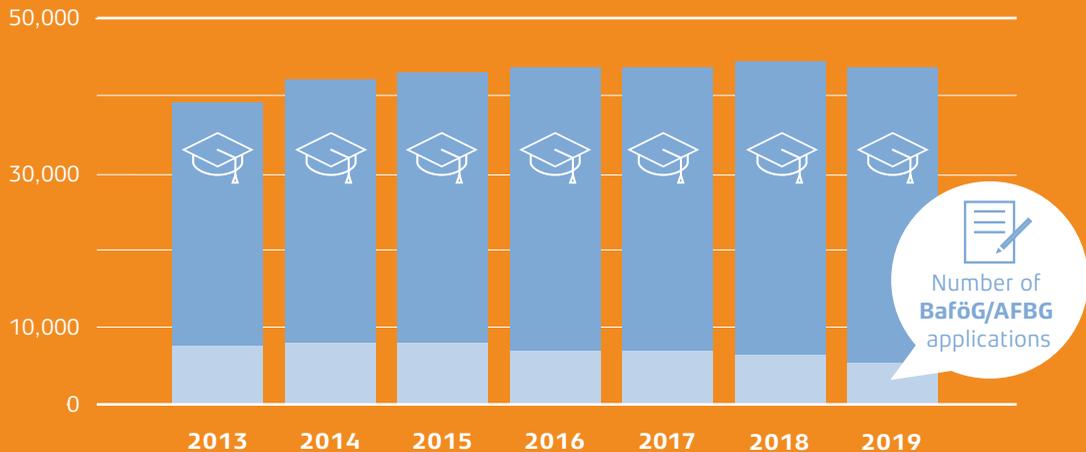
3 [Major Bafög reform called for – Wissen – Tagesspiegel \(in German\)](#)

# Funding of studies in figures

## DECREASE IN BAFÖG APPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO STUDENT NUMBERS

2009: 6,411 Bafög applications among 29,405 students

2019: 5,696 applications among approx. 44,000 students



# €84M

GERMANY-WIDE DECREASE  
IN BAFÖG FUNDING IN 2019



### Goal 10: Reduced inequalities

→ Financial counselling and support; thereby enabling access to education, regardless of the background and parents' financial resources

## Insights

# “Working during a pandemic.”

**Gülşen Arslan, employee in the Student Financing Department**



### What measures were taken in the Student Financing Department due to the pandemic?

Two groups were formed and all colleagues have the opportunity to work from home. Public opening hours have been discontinued. We can mainly be reached by e-mail and telephone. Only the legitimisation of KFW student loans still requires a personal visit.

### What were the biggest challenges?

It was challenging to implement the changes in the legal basis, some of which were made at short notice, in application processing. In addition, there were also many process changes associated with the current situation, such as the introduction of paperless files. All in all, however, the pandemic-related changeover was less complicated and easier than expected. What was very strange at the beginning has become “normal” for me personally.

# “From trainee to trainer.”

**In an interview with stwda, Ajla Zukic, administrator and training officer in the Student Financing Department, talked about her career path.**

### How did you first come to the Studierend- enwerk and can you describe your career path?

I saw the job advertisement online for an “office management assistant” trainee with a focus on “law and administration”. Via the assessment centre, the subsequent short pre-internship and thanks to my gut feeling, I finally ended up here. I started my training at the Studierendenwerk in August 2017 and completed it in January 2020. Since then, I have worked in the Student Financing Department.

### What are your tasks in the department and as a trainer?

In the Student Financing Department, I am responsible for processing BAföG applications. Our tasks include processing applications for student funding and advising students on the issue of funding their studies. In my position as a training officer, I supervise trainees who are assigned to our department. I introduce them to our service area and teach them basic skills. In addition, I am their contact person for any concerns.

## Work flows

### Sustainability in management and support processes

The goal of Studierendenwerk Darmstadt is to implement the concept of sustainability in all possible areas with the help of interdepartmental regulations.

#### Information technology

The stwda's IT department makes its contribution to sustainability in particular in procurement. The IT hardware is regularly checked for its potential for optimisation; in addition, procurement criteria for sustainable IT hardware were established in 2019.

By changing from physical to virtual servers and extending the life cycle of workstation PCs from previously five to currently six to seven years, facilitated by more powerful processors, natural resources and electricity are saved and waste is avoided.

#### Investment guidelines

The Accounting Department considers economic, ecological and social criteria when investing funds. To this end, an investment guideline has been defined which has been in effect since September 2020; its key points are:

- exclusion of investments in companies whose activities violate ethical principles
- no direct investments in companies whose business focus is in the arms and armaments industry, the alcohol or tobacco industry, pornography or child labour, or which speculate in food
- preference granted to companies with sustainability certificates

Investments in securities as part of the ZUKO lifetime working-time account (see chapter 7) are made through DekaBank, which is committed to a comprehensive sustainability strategy<sup>1</sup>. Its exclusion list for investments includes criteria such as environmental violations, armament, human rights violations and corruption; the positive list, on the other hand, includes the **promotion of renewable energies, plant modernisation aimed at CO<sub>2</sub> savings and financing of property with balanced building energy input and output**. The implementation of the strategy is reviewed by the stwda's Investment Committee with external support every two years.

### Target group-oriented corporate management: participation and cooperation

Since the discussion of values in the 1960s, "participation" has been a fundamental element of most areas of society.<sup>2</sup> Today more than ever, the successful work of stwda therefore requires close cooperation between all those involved; target group-oriented corporate values can only be achieved with the appreciation and active participation of these target groups. This is also historically significant, because it was primarily students, along with professors and business representatives,

<sup>1</sup> [Sustainable financial investment | Investment ideas \(deka.de\) \(in German\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Cf. 68 in the workplace | bpb and Political Participation | Federal Agency for Civic Education \(bpb\) \(in German\)](#)

who initiated the founding of *Studentische Wirtschaftshilfe Darmstadt e. V.*, the forerunner of today's Studierendewerk, 100 years ago.<sup>3</sup>

## Corporate values and goals: participation and dialogue

The Law on Student Services at the Universities of the State of Hesse (*Gesetz über die Studentenwerke bei den Hochschulen des Landes Hessen*) stipulates the participation of students and employees in the Administrative Board and thus ensures their participation. Through **open forms of dialogue and interactive methods**, such as surveys, workshops, interviews and group discussions, stwda strengthens the influence that students and employees have on the development of the organisation with their ideas and suggestions.

### Focus group workshop

In order to create both an ecological and customer-oriented expansion of the canteen and bistro menu, a large-scale survey on "Sustainability in the Canteen" was conducted in 2018, with more than 4,000 students participating. Based on the results of the survey, a competent and motivated team of student groups and individuals involved in the issue developed feasible proposals for implementation in a focus group workshop.

### HONEDA - Universities for Sustainable Development in Darmstadt

In order to achieve more for the common goal of sustainable development through networked activities, h\_da, TU Darmstadt and stwda as well as the student-run "University Group Sustainability" of TU Darmstadt and the "Student Initiative for Sustainable Development" of h\_da founded the HONEDA project group in 2018. As part of the jointly organised "Week of Sustainability", the project made suggestions for personal contributions to tackle the climate crisis themed "Sustainable Lifestyles Action Week" in 2019. In addition, HONEDA provided information on the CO<sub>2</sub> values of all canteen dishes during the campaign period and offered a daily "climate dish" and a "climate diary".

### "Mensa app" workshop

A random survey among students showed as early as 2017 that canteen apps that already existed but were not authorised by the Studierendewerk did not meet the students' requirements. Therefore, stwda integrated the target group into the development of a concept for a new app: In a workshop, important contents and features were defined and prioritised. The result named "Mensa Darmstadt Official" has been available since 2019.

### Azubl - trainees' newspaper for employees

Titled *Azubl*, an in-house newspaper has been published quarterly since 2014. Supported by the departments of the Studierendewerk, a team of trainees presents interesting projects, reports on environmental, intercultural and social topics, news or changes in staff.

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3 [Studentenwerk Darmstadt \(darmstadt-stadtlexikon.de\)](http://darmstadt-stadtlexikon.de) (in German)

## Conduct in compliance with the law and regulations

As a public-law institution, stwda is subject to the aforementioned “Law on Student Services at the Universities of the State of Hesse”. A corresponding annual financial statement with a management report is reviewed annually by auditors. The law also prescribes target and performance agreements with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and the Arts as well as with the universities to be served.

In order to prevent corruption, instructions for stwda employees regarding the acceptance of rewards and gifts were put into effect; compliance with these instructions is monitored by the Internal Audit staff unit. This staff unit is also responsible for the annual audit of corporate risks.

A process management system documents the regulation of all essential processes of the individual departments of the Studierendenwerk. The relevant documents are accessible to all employees via an electronic document management system.

In order to guarantee data protection in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Hessian Data Protection and Freedom of Information Act (*Hessisches Datenschutz- und Informationsfreiheitsgesetz*), the internal service instructions for handling personal data within Studierendenwerk Darmstadt are implemented in their current form.

## Employee representation and the system of authorised officers

The interests of stwda employees have been represented by a staff council for almost 60 years, which in 2020 is made up of five women and two men.

### **The main tasks of the staff council are to advise on personnel and social matters such as**

- recruitment
- changes in working hours
- conclusion of works agreements
- participation in selection processes
- assisting in discussions with staff
- introduction of new technology
- introduction of social facilities such as job tickets or lifetime working-time accounts

Works agreements are drafted and developed in regular meetings and retreats of the staff council, sometimes together with the management. The staff council often takes the initiative and proposes measures for staff.

The management informs the staff council in advance about all relevant issues affecting the staff and considers their suggestions. Binding regulations for all employees are decided between the management and the staff council through works agreements.

In addition to the staff council, stwda currently has a legally required equal opportunities representative and a representative for the severely disabled. A fire protection officer and a data protection officer advise the management on compliance with relevant legal regulations. All officers and representatives regularly take part in the training required for their work.

## Learning and growth

To ensure a high level of employee satisfaction, stwda addresses all factors that influence the working atmosphere. Traineeships or fair pay for employees are just as important as flexible working time models and a wide range of further training opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

### Employees\* in 2019, converted to full time equivalent (FTE), annual average

	Number of employees in FTE
Head office	24.7
Accommodation and facility management	28.3
University catering	136.3
Funding of studies	16.92
Counselling and social affairs incl. intercultural affairs	9.8
<b>Total number</b>	<b>217.13</b>

\* including trainees, excluding temporary staff

## The Studierendenwerk as an employer

### Vocational training

The Studierendenwerk has been a traineeship employer since 1997. Vocational training in our own organisation allows for specific preparation for our own needs. In addition, young junior staff bring valuable impulses of their generation into the organisation.

In 2019, 14 traineeships were available for “office management assistants”, “property management assistants”, “information technology assistants”, “hospitality specialists” and “system catering specialists”. Every year, four to six trainees are taken on in their first year of training.

### Fair working conditions

In accordance with an agreement with the staff council, all vacancies are advertised internally first. This has also been a successful approach for stwda when filling management positions. The Studierendenwerk pays employees according to the public service’s wage agreement for the State of Hesse (*Tarifvertrag des öffentlichen Dienstes für das Land Hessen, TV-H*).<sup>2</sup> Night or shift work is only necessary in the bakery and two university catering facilities with longer opening hours. Here, the teams follow a regular and balanced rotation of shifts. Rotations at the university catering work stations, to allow physical relief and varied work, are also made possible. Overtime hours are compensated by free time using the electronic time recording system.

<sup>1</sup> [we as employers – studierendenwerk-darmstadt.de](https://www.studierendenwerk-darmstadt.de) (in German)

<sup>2</sup> [TV-H Hessen 2020 & 2021 \(oeffentlichen-dienst.de\)](https://www.oeffentlichen-dienst.de) (in German)

### **Health management**

The task of the Workplace Health Management team, which is part of the Human Resources Department, is to question existing work processes and organisational structures of stwda employees and to change them with the aim of preventive health promotion. This approach requires the active support and cooperation of managers at all levels.

At health fairs, the Workplace Health Management employees are trained at regular intervals on topics such as nutrition, exercise and ergonomics, but also in techniques such as vein or stress measurement. The next fairs were planned for spring 2021, but had to be postponed due to the pandemic.

### **Occupational health and safety**

In regular meetings, the stwda's occupational health and safety committee analyses accidents at work or on the way to work and takes measures to improve occupational health and safety for employees.

In the years 2017 to 2019, an external occupational health and safety specialist prepared risk assessments for all workplaces at stwda. In addition, a risk assessment of mental stress at the workplace was carried out in December 2019 as part of an employee survey. This helps to identify potential and existing sources of stress and to introduce measures to make stwda's workplaces healthy in the long term.

### **Flexible working time models**

Since 2008, flexible working time models have contributed to implementing the mission statement and the organisation's goals as well as to optimising the organisation's needs. They increase employees' control over their time and simultaneously guarantee job security.

Currently, stwda offers six working time models, which are tailored to the needs of each area and the requirements of the employees.

- fixed working hours
- flexitime
- team working hours
- weekly rotation
- working in shifts
- working from home

While usually the flexitime and team working hours models are used most frequently, the current focus is on working from home due to the pandemic.

### **ZUKO future account**

The stwda lifetime working-time account, the ZUKO future account, allows the "flexible use of working time [...] to meet the personal needs" of the employees.<sup>3</sup> For example, stwda offers the possibility of paid leave during or at the end of the employment relationship; an offer that is currently being used by 69 employees, five of whom are in the release phase.

The ZUKO is an important measure to ensure a family-friendly organisation of work, the further

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**3** [ZUKO working time account - studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](https://studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de) (in German)

training of employees as well as the goals of the Workplace Health Management. In addition to time credits, parts of the gross salary can also be contributed. Saved time credits are invested in capital assets that also meet social and ecological criteria.

## Human resources development

By supporting employees in further training, stwda promotes the further development of professional, social and leadership skills. With additional opportunities for retraining, training, supervision and coaching, the Human Resources Department also offers a wide range of opportunities internally. In addition to workshops on topics such as intercultural competence, health management, labour and collective bargaining law, sustainability, leadership issues or threat management, stwda also offers English classes, data protection and IT training, as well as specific courses for training officers or university catering staff. In addition, employees attend specialist seminars and take part in conferences and trade fairs.

In-service training and courses of study, for which a qualification agreement is made between stwda and the employees, are also made possible and promoted. These can also be of interest for filling management positions internally.

### Employees\* in 2019, converted to full time equivalent (FTE), annual average

	Number of employees in FTE
Head office	24.7
Accommodation and facility management	28.3
University catering	136.3
Funding of studies	16.92
Counselling and social affairs incl. intercultural affairs	9.8
<b>Total number</b>	<b>217.13</b>

\* including trainees, excluding temporary staff

In order to tailor the offer to current staff development and training needs, the management and the staff council have introduced annual qualification discussions.

## Leadership principles

In cooperation with stwda employees, the development of leadership principles began in autumn 2018 and they were officially introduced in March 2019. The principles define the general understanding of leadership at stwda and act as a consensual guide for all managers in their daily dealings with staff.

# Our leadership principles

Developed in a joint process with management, executives and employees.

## Fairness

We make comprehensible decisions.  
We ensure that regulations are complied with.

## Honesty

Our actions are characterised by honesty.  
We acknowledge and value the achievements of our employees.  
We are constructive in our criticism.

## Communication

We communicate clearly and respectfully at all levels.  
We take an interest in our counterparts and are open to discussion.  
We inform our employees regularly and promptly about all developments relevant to them.

## Reliability

We ensure clear responsibilities.  
We are committed to our decisions and agreements.  
We stand by our employees.

## Conflict management

We recognise conflicts at an early stage and use them as an opportunity.  
We treat the points of view of those involved without prejudice.  
We manage conflicts together and promptly.

## Delegation

We trust our employees by delegating responsibility.  
We clarify the parameters and make them transparent.  
We create the necessary leeway.

## Human resources development

We support our employees in the development of their skills.  
Together we recognise the need for further training.  
We agree on suitable qualification measures and implement them appropriately.



## Closing remarks from the Managing Director

We can be proud of how Studierendenwerk Darmstadt has developed in recent years and how successfully the course has been set for the future. Currently, however, the Corona crisis is having a massive impact. In the current year, a gradual return to “normal” conditions will only be possible if vaccinations and tests are carried out in large numbers.

The Studierendenwerk assumes that students will suffer more than ever from a lack of money as a result of the pandemic. This will lead to an increase in the need for affordable accommodation, especially among international students, making it more difficult to achieve a balanced occupancy rate in the halls of residence. In addition, the expansion of digital teaching means that there are fewer students on site, which affects turnover in university catering. At the same time, a lack of financial resources reduces the willingness to spend more money on sustainably produced food. These risks can be countered by continuing to focus on attractiveness and flexibility in a sustainable catering concept and by the accommodation department expanding its “at home at the Studierendenwerk”<sup>1</sup> concept with formats that promote social interaction among students. At the same time, we want to provide information, e.g. about the true costs of conventional farming, provide incentives to try out sustainable products and attitudes, and offer opportunities for exchange and further development. Corresponding plans are underway. In this context, sustainability will play a very important role.

We can only meet challenges locally and globally - including those posed by the pandemic - if our actions are geared towards creating a world for ourselves and generations to come that uses resources wisely, offers a high quality of life and creates a future not only for our own organisation but also for the environment we have an impact on. The State of Hesse thankfully secured our work to a great extent in 2020. For the work of the Studierendenwerke, the student services organisations, the willingness of the state to continue to support us in the current year and in the long term through appropriate legal regulations and adequate subsidies is vital.

Studierendenwerk Darmstadt will continue and take measures that support its sustainable development; it is, for example, applying for the ÖKOPROFIT® award for further locations. Formats that involve students and employees will play an increasingly important role, also to meet the needs of future generations of students with an adapted range of services. Events such as the “First Intersectional Diversity Week”<sup>2</sup> or celebrations in the halls of residence - digital and / or analogue - will continue to provide food for thought and inspire exchange. In the medium term, the university’s catering products are to be sourced exclusively from sustainable farming.

I am confident that the Studierendenwerk will emerge stronger from this crisis and continue on its path with commitment and success.

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1 [accommodation service – studierendenwerk-darmstadt.de](https://studierendenwerk-darmstadt.de)

2 [InDiWo – studierendenwerk-darmstadt.de \(in German\)](https://studierendenwerk-darmstadt.de)



## Publication details

### Studierendenwerk Darmstadt

Anstalt des öffentlichen Rechts  
Alexanderstraße 4  
64283 Darmstadt  
[www.studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de](http://www.studierendenwerkdarmstadt.de)  
E-mail: [stw@stwda.de](mailto:stw@stwda.de)

### Content and project management

Ulrike Laux,  
Georg Richarz

### Editors

Detlef Gollasch,  
Ursula Lemmert,  
Christine Strauss

### Translation into English

Christine Tennie  
[www.uebersetzungen-tennie.de](http://www.uebersetzungen-tennie.de)

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dialog-plan markenagentur  
Bismarckstraße 21b  
64293 Darmstadt  
[dialog-plan.de](http://dialog-plan.de)

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Susanne Schuckmann, stwda  
**10**, 12, 27, 49

DSW  
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Thomas Cheney  
11, 46, 50, 55, 56, 57

Ursula Lemmert  
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# Environmental policy of Studierendenwerk Darmstadt<sup>1</sup>

## Foreword

On behalf of the State of Hesse, Studierendenwerk Darmstadt is responsible for the social, health, economic, and cultural promotion and support of students in Darmstadt and Dieburg.<sup>2</sup> As part of its comprehensive range of services, it sees itself as a partner to students for their studies to be successful. Studierendenwerk Darmstadt is committed to its overall social responsibility and tailors processes and structures consistently to the principles of sustainability and the common good. The environmental policy is rooted in the mission statement of the Studierendenwerk. The aim is to achieve a balance between economic, social, and ecological aspects.

## Dealing with legal regulations and promoting environmental protection

The Studierendenwerk complies with applicable laws and regulations as well as official requirements and is also committed to continuously improving operational environmental protection. An important measure to meet the obligation to pursue this environmental policy is the aspiration to be awarded the designation “*ÖKOPROFIT®-Betrieb FrankfurtRheinMain*”.<sup>3</sup>

## Public relations and participation

Successful environmental protection can only be achieved through the active involvement and participation of all stakeholders. Employees and students are therefore involved in the development and implementation of measures through regular information, surveys and workshops. In addition, the Studierendenwerk pursues a comprehensive personnel development process. Among other things, the employees are made aware of the topic of environmental protection and thus actively contribute to the pursuit of our environmental goals.

As part of its developing internal and external reporting, the Studierendenwerk will regularly present a sustainability report from 2021 onwards.

## Resource consumption

The Studierendenwerk takes into account not only the costs but also ecological and social criteria for all of its procurement, for example of services, its raw materials and supplies, and its office equipment. Through constantly optimised energy and waste management, it counteracts any resulting environmental pollution.

## Monitoring

A sustainability management system is installed as an internal control instrument. Currently, ÖKOPROFIT® and a Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC)<sup>4</sup> are used as control instruments for this purpose. Sustainability management is regularly analysed, evaluated and updated as a control loop.

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1 [Environmental policy - studierendenwerk darmstadt \(as of 26-Jan-2020\)](#)

2 [studentenwerke-hessen.de](http://studentenwerke-hessen.de)

3 [Ökoprofit | Stadt Frankfurt am Main](#)

4 The SBSC represents an internal control instrument for the implementation and review of measures and goals in the five perspectives “Sustainability and Responsibility”, “Finance”, “Customers”, “Processes” and “Learning and Growth”.

## SDGs at Studierendenwerk Darmstadt



### Derivation and implementation

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations<sup>1</sup> were established as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. "With the 2030 Agenda, the global community wants to enable a dignified life worldwide, while at the same time permanently preserving the natural foundations of life. This includes economic, ecological and social aspects. All states [every organisation, every company and every individual] are called upon to align their actions [with these goals]."<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, Studierendenwerk Darmstadt will continue to measure its actions against the SDGs in the future.

The internal measures and projects already taken contribute in particular to goals 2 to 5, 7, 10 to 13, and 15. You can find out more in chapters 3 and 5 of this sustainability report.

<sup>1</sup> [17 goals | United Nations \(unric.org\)](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)

<sup>2</sup> [Sustainability goals - Agenda 2030 \(bundesregierung.de\)](https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Pressemitteilungen/2016/09/20160916-2030-agenda.html)



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6 | "rest"



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3 | Bistro Bios



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6 | Hardtring bistro



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2 | LesBAR



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1 | Pallaswiesenstraße



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