

INTERVIEW with Kathrin Dellantonio
- Head of Corporate Partnerships at myclimate -



What does sustainability mean for you?

For me personally, sustainability means that we live in a way that does no harm to others, both now and in the future. We need to find a balance between economic, social and ecological interests. It is also clear that nowadays our lifestyle is in many aspects not sustainable at all as we live at the expense of others, both geographically and temporally.

What is the general idea behind myclimate?

myclimate was founded nearly 20 years ago by ETH students because they saw that official climate protection regulations were not enough to stop climate change. At the same time, they saw that many companies were willing to do more for climate protection on a voluntary basis. It all started with carbon offsetting, i.e. the possibility to compensate for one's emissions by paying someone else to reduce those emissions. Later, we started to also do CO2 calculations and climate protection consulting for companies as well as sensitizing for climate protection.

What is your approach to fight climate change regarding the Paris agreement?

We have two approaches: One is to reduce CO2 emissions by helping companies to calculate their CO2 emissions and defining strategies to reduce them. Also, our climate education activities help to reduce CO2 emissions by creating awareness for climate protection. The second approach is to offer the possibility to offset those emissions that we can't reduce ourselves. Offsetting is also a CO2 reduction. I simply pay somebody else to reduce the emissions on my behalf. It is also important to understand: It is not about either reducing emissions or offsetting them. We need to do both, i.e. reduce ourselves as much

emissions as we can and then offset the rest of the emissions.

In a nutshell, how does carbon offset work?

It is quite simple. On the one hand we have emissions that contribute to climate change. On the other side we have projects that reduce emissions by promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency and carbon sequestration. Those projects are financed by paying for the emissions that we want to offset. This means that with these financial means, we implement projects that would otherwise not happen. In addition to reducing CO2, the projects also contribute to the UN SDGs and therefore improve the living conditions in the project regions in many ways. They create, for example, new jobs and help to protect important ecosystems.

What are examples for climate protection projects, how does carbon offset work there?

Our project portfolio is very diverse. It includes more than 120 projects in more than 30 countries worldwide. Many projects are community based, for example [solar cookers in Madagascar](#), [smallscale biogas plant on household level in India](#), [Solarhomesystems for individual houses in Ethiopia](#) or [efficient cookstoves in Kenya](#). We also have largescale projects, for example a [biomass power plant in the Brazilian Amazon region](#) or a large [solar power plant in the Dominican Republic](#). Examples for carbon sequestration is [community reforestation in Nicaragua](#), the [mangrove restoration in Myanmar](#) or the [renaturation of moorlands in Switzerland](#).

Isn't offsetting just something to help me have a clear conscience?

We can't judge whether offsetting gives you a clear conscience or not. This is something that everybody must decide for themselves. What we can do is guarantee you that by offsetting, you make a contribution to global climate protection as well as to the implementation of the UN SDGs. By offsetting your emissions, you take the responsibility for your carbon footprint and you give those emissions a price. I am convinced that we need to have a price on all CO2 emissions if we want to reach the Paris Goals. Of course, carbon offsetting should not be seen on its own but always in combination with efforts to reduce emissions yourself. Our motto is: Do the best (to reduce your emissions) and offset the rest (i.e. the emissions that you can't reduce yet).

How do you know by what amount the projects reduce CO2 emissions?

For all projects we make an estimation about how many tons of CO2 they reduce per year. Once the project is up and running, every year an independent auditor verifies how many tons of CO2 reductions have really been achieved. Only those tons are then used for carbon offsetting.

Apart from climate protection projects, what fields of work does myclimate address?

We have two other pillars. One is Consulting & Solutions where we help companies to understand their carbon footprint and the step by step reduce it. The third focus is Climate Education where we do a lot of sensitization work in schools but more and more also for companies. We want to make people aware that with every consumption decision – and we take lots of such decisions every day, both at work and at home – we can opt for more or – hopefully not - less climate protection.