

*Abstract*

## Mindfulness for Individual and Planetary Health

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While effects of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) on the health and well-being of individuals are well-established, it is an open question whether MBIs can also improve planetary health, defined as the interplay between human health and the health of natural systems. We outline how MBIs might contribute to both individual and planetary health theoretically, and provide practical examples by introducing the Mindful Students Program (MSP) and the Mindful Teachers Program (MTP). Designed by the last author, the programs include various practices known from mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), mindfulness-based compassionate living (MBCL), and deep ecology. We present results from two studies, in which MSP and MTP were taught to students at Leipzig University (Study 1), and teachers from across Saxony, Germany (Study 2). The interventions spanned 12-13 sessions (1,5hrs each), with one additional half-

day long retreat. At the beginning (T1) and at the end of the course (T2) various questionnaires were administered. In Study 1, students who took part in the MSP were contrasted with students from two control groups ( $N = 505$ ; 78% female). Multilevel models revealed that, compared to both control groups, MSP participants' stress levels significantly decreased across the semester, and their mindfulness and their pro-environmental behavior increased. In our ongoing pilot study, Study 2, teachers from thirty schools take part in the MTP. Preliminary results suggest that the teachers profit from the MBI in similar ways as the students at the university. So far, participants in both studies were very satisfied with the MBI and reported very little adverse effects. The results of the studies shed light on the opportunities and challenges of MBIs in increasing both individual and planetary health.

*Keywords: mindfulness-based intervention, planetary health, well-being*