



## Workshop 14

### Civil society as key players in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

**Time:** 2 April: 9.00-13.00h

**Coordinators:** Sosten Chiotha, University of Malawi; Zabariah Matali, UNESCO Reference Group for the DESD

*The United Nations once dealt only with Governments. By now we know that peace and prosperity cannot be achieved without partnership involving Governments, international organisations, the business community and civil society. In today's world, we depend on each other.*

*(Former Secretary General Kofi Annan, United Nations)*

Civil Society basically refers to organisations or institutions which are non-economic/non-profit and non-governmental in nature. They have a commitment to working in the field of socio-development issues like rural development, alleviation of poverty, nutrition and health, environment, human rights as well as other common human values.

Civil Society has been recognized as a significant partner and contributor to society. Organisations like the United Nations and the World Bank support formal associations with major civil society organisations. In fact Article 71 of the United Nations Charter establishes arrangements for UN consultations with civil society organisations.

The greatest strengths of civil society are its processes or structures which are essentially less formal. This strength allows for deliberation and discussion of multi-disciplinary views, issues and concerns which are important if it were to expand its role of creating and sharing knowledge gathered by its involvement and engagement with the communities.

#### Civil Society & ESD

Sustainable Development is a complex and evolving concept requiring learning of the relevant knowledge, tools, skills and attitudes. Such capacity building is not a monopoly of formal academic institutions only. The third estate plays an equally important role, and in some cases even more so.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development established that education is vital in promoting sustainability and a sustainable future and that it is pertinent to mobilize resources at all levels including Civil Society.

Thus, this workshop aims to:

- 1. engage participants in discussions on the pivotal role of civil society in ESD;**
- 2. challenge the participants to critically reflect on the role of civil society in capacity building for all age groups through formal, non-formal and informal learning arrangements;**

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# UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

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## Workshop Approach

There will be no formal presentations, but participants will be engaged in a small groups (10 to a group) leading to discussions in the Plenary. There will be 3 resource persons as well as the workshop coordinator facilitating the activities. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiences to enrich the discussions with practical issues reflecting the realities on the ground.

## Key Workshop Questions

- Q1.** What has been the role of civil society as a champion and catalyst for ESD?
- Q2.** How has civil society influenced mainstream academic institutions on ESD issues, for instance issues like pedagogy, content, etc.?
- Q2.** What areas of capacity building on ESD has civil society implemented on its own and in partnership with other sectors (and consider comparative advantage of each arrangement)?
- Q3.** Civil society is diverse, what have been the rallying points for ESD for scaling up and what have been points of variance requiring further stakeholder engagement (e.g. ethical /moral, ideological grey areas )?
- Q4.** What can civil society do in the next 5 years of DESD to assist in identifying and addressing the gaps between the kind of education still prevailing and that necessary for the transition to sustainable development?

## Alignment with Conference Objectives

These questions as well as the approaches used in the workshop will generate discussion around all four conference objectives:

- 1) ESD and its essential contribution to quality education
- 2) promote international exchange on ESD
- 3) carry out stock-taking of DESD implementation
- 4) develop strategies for the way ahead.

## Expected Outcomes:

- A greater appreciation of civil society as a catalyst and champion of ESD.
- Accept that civil society is diverse and that the diversity offers greater value for ESD if properly harnessed.
- Identify newer opportunities from shared experience for civil society to scale up in its implementation of ESD

## Programme

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| 9.00  | Welcome & Brief Introduction   |
| 9.15  | Ice-breaking & Experience-sharing<br><br>(Participants will share their experiences in their own group, with a focus on “Lessons Learnt” and “Challenges” that they face in engaging communities/stakeholders on ESD. Each group will appoint a representative to capture the sharing and compile “common issues/concerns”). |
| 9.45  | Carousel Exercise – 3 groups tackle questions 1 – 3.   |
| 10.30 | Break  |
| 11.30 | Groups (3) tackle question 4 and present to plenary  |
| 12.00 | Plenary presentations by 3 groups on question 4  |
| 12.30 | Workshop rapporteur presents main workshop outcomes to be reported by the Cluster rapporteur to the main conference.   |
| 1.00  | End  |