

Workshop 16: Teacher education in the DESD: Review and Directions

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Conference Objective 1: To Highlight the Essential Contribution of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to All of Education and to Achieving Quality Education

Why is ESD relevant?

Participants concluded that Education for Sustainable Development is relevant with respect to teacher education in that it helps making teacher education relevant to the task of achieving sustainable development through education. Moreover, it provides a conceptual frame for identifying core competencies for teachers and teacher educators that can help to improve the quality of education. It can support the improvement of the quality of life for students and teachers in schools and their communities through its contribution to improved teacher quality and focus on community values and action. ESD also facilitates the exchange of ideas across disciplines and various institutions. It highlights basic issues to be addressed for improving the quality of education in general. Finally, ESD promotes cross-disciplinary teaching and process-driven pedagogy.

Conference Objective 2: To Promote International Exchange on ESD

What can we learn from each other?

Participants concluded that Education for Sustainable Development works better if it is implemented from the “bottom up” as well as modelled by peers. Another success criterion is that ESD is institutionalized in teacher education and training programmes and teacher education departments and institutions.

Participants underlined that the infusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is extremely helpful for ESD projects and programmes. Furthermore, learner-centred approaches work best in ESD. It was emphasised that incentives are needed to encourage the infusion and spread of ESD in institutions. Such incentives do not have to be monetary or expensive. Finally, participants highlighted that collaboration with external institutions is often very helpful.



Conference Objective 3: To Carry out a Stock-taking of DESD Implementation

What have we achieved so far, what are the lessons learnt?

Note was taken of two publications titled: *Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability*⁶; and *Good Practices in Teacher Education Institutions*⁷. Moreover, it was shared that regional networks for ESD have been established and are working on various ESD projects and programmes. It has been noted that small-scale progress in facilitating and implementing ESD is being made in several countries at different levels of organization such as through individual teaching and learning, at school / institutional levels, at Government level, through NGOs, and through consortia of academic and non-academic institutions. Examples of successes included projects in India, Jamaica, Canada, Pakistan, Cameroon, and Iraq.

Participants reported various lessons learnt from attempting to implement ESD. Several challenges were identified such as a lack of financial incentives to encourage teachers to engage in ESD and a lack of resources for teaching ESD. It was underlined that qualified teachers who can engage successfully with ESD projects are often missing. Participants underlined that the poor remuneration for teachers often leads to poor quality of teachers and low motivation among them.

Effecting the paradigm shift necessary within the discipline of teacher education to facilitate ESD remains a challenge. Further efforts also need to be made to ascertain how to integrate ESD across disciplines and across education at various levels and how to lobby for the inclusion of ESD in curriculum reforms given the various models / frameworks / theories of education competing for inclusion. Workshop participants emphasised the lack of clarity in understanding ESD as a concept. It was underlined that while seeking to clarify the concept of ESD, ways need to be found to take cultural variations in the understanding of ESD into consideration.

Conference Objective 4: To Develop Strategies for the Way Ahead

Where do we want to go from here?

Participants suggested the following critical actions:

1. Improve communication and dialogue regarding ESD locally and internationally:
 - Set up an informal international network for those interested in ESD,
 - Facilitate connectivity to strengthen inclusion of all voices speaking about ESD in local and global communities,
 - Encourage sharing of best practices and lessons learnt regarding the implementation of ESD;
2. Improve development and infusion of ESD knowledge (content and strategies) in teacher training institutions;
3. Work for stronger university commitments to ESD;
4. Call for opportunities to document reflection and reporting of work with ESD in UNESCO publications;
5. Improve research into knowledge gaps regarding the implementation of ESD;
6. Lobby for inclusion of research in development of policy / plans for ESD;
7. Include teaching of systems thinking, management of emotional processes, and values in ESD programmes;
8. Focus on creative, problem based and transformative methodology;
9. Include social learning, action oriented processes, democratic approaches and links to communities in ESD programmes;
10. Set up National Councils to develop a common agenda for ESD.

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Workshop coordinator Lorna Down discussing actions

6 UNESCO Education Sector. "Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability" Technical Paper N° 2 (2005). Download at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001433/143370E.pdf>

7 UNESCO Education Sector. "Good Practices in Teacher Education Institutions". Good Practices N°1 (2007). Download at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001524/152452eo.pdf>

