

Workshop 2: Strengthening the Educational Response to Climate Change Internationally

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Overview

Ninety participants, comprised mainly of senior representatives from Government Ministries of education, environment and development, universities, intergovernmental organizations and civil society from all over the world (developed and developing countries alike) joined together to share visions, ideas and best practices in a 5-hour workshop, split over two days, which was designed to identify strategies and a practical plan of action toward scaling up the educational response to climate change.

Workshop participants stressed the urgency for large-scale investments for a transformative education, i.e. a critical values-based, integrated participatory approach which enables empowered citizens to move from learning the facts towards taking action; and this not in the margins, but in the centre of daily educational practices everywhere in the world.

Given the global urgency and political pressure of the climate change issue, the workshop participants urged UNESCO to make the development of a global strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) a priority. This was also articulated within two paragraphs of the Bonn Declaration, which was adopted at the end of the Conference:



Workshop coordinators introducing the programme

"The participants in the 2009 World ESD Conference request UNESCO, as lead agency responsible for the UN DESD [United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development], to: (...)

- f) Highlight the relevance and importance of education and training in the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 15) in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009 in consultation and co-operation with other partners.*
- g) Intensify efforts and initiatives to put climate change education higher on the international agenda, in the framework of the DESD, in the context of UNESCO's strategy for action on climate change, and as a component of UN-wide action."*

This workshop report demonstrates that:

- a community of international and intersectoral ESD and climate change stakeholders is committed to join forces in the planning, design and implementation of a large-scale plan of action;
- a first collection of directions and experiences can and should be further compiled to act as a foundation for planned activities.

Participants call for a thorough design and planning phase and accordingly urge UNESCO to establish an action-oriented task force and a rigorous multi-dimensional analysis methodology to drive the process, leading to a full-scale implementation during the second half of the DESD. Therefore:

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?

ESD must focus on the goal of reducing our global ecological footprint (and increasing our handprint by increasing our actions for sustainable development) and not just promoting quality education that perpetuates the cause of our environmental, social, cultural and economical issues in the daily real-life context.



Workshop participants

Conference Objective 2: To Promote International Exchange on ESD

What can we learn from each other?

The topic of climate change concerns us all. We can only solve the problem if we all work together at all levels and across all sectors. Many best practices exist; what is needed is an exchange of existing action and good practices to enhance the capacity of stakeholders in addressing the challenges in climate change education.

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

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

Awareness of climate change is high; open questions continue to exist on how to educate people in order to move from the awareness level to a base of empowerment, engagement and action. This calls for a close connection between high-quality educational research results and processes that empowers and transforms climate change education at all educational levels.

Conference Objective 4: To Develop Strategies for the Way Ahead

Where do we want to go from here?

Workshop participants recommended the following two paragraphs for the Bonn Declaration:

1. We recognize climate change as the most serious threat to sustainable development in our time and agree to intensify efforts in our education and training systems to address this challenge by developing and implementing a 5-year Action Plan under the umbrella of ESD.
2. (We) request the Director-General of UNESCO, in consultation and cooperation with other partners, to highlight the relevance and importance of education and training in the preparation of the UN Summit on Climate Change (COP15) in Copenhagen in December 2009.

Workshop rapporteur: Pamela Punttenney, Co-Chair of the Education Caucus for the UN Commission of Sustainable Development

