Greetings from UNESCO Bangkok,

The ESD Unit at UNESCO Bangkok is pleased to share with you the progress, developments and upcoming events for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) in the Asia and Pacific Region. We are now five years into the Decade, and with the success of the recent World Conference on ESD in Bonn, Germany, we look forward to moving into the second half of the Decade with enhanced cooperation and additional strategies that help us use ESD to confront emerging global challenges.

We continue to invite our past and future ESD partners to submit brief information on their ESD projects or activities for review to include in future updates. We are also continually updating our database of ESD partners and kindly encourage you to submit your details. Please see page 13 for more information.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Education for Sustainable Development Unit
UNESCO Bangkok

“...A decade into the 21st century, the world faces substantial, complex and interlinked development and lifestyle challenges and problems. The challenges arise from values that have created unsustainable societies. The challenges are interlinked, and their resolution requires stronger political commitment and decisive action. We have the knowledge, technology and skills available to turn the situation around. We now need to mobilise our potential to make use of all opportunities and improving action and change.”

Article 2, Bonn Declaration, UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, Bonn, Germany, 31 March-2 April 2009

DESD Update: Progress in Asia & the Pacific
IN FOCUS

Member States Adopt Bonn Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development

The ESD Unit at UNESCO Bangkok participated in the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Bonn, Germany, which was held from 31 March to 2 April 2009 and was organized by UNESCO and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO. The conference brought together nearly 900 participants – including over 50 ministers and deputy ministers – to exchange best practices on Education for Sustainable Development and implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN-DESD) from all world regions. Ms. Annette Schavan, German Federal Minister of Education and Research, opened the conference alongside Mr. Nicholas Burnett, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, who delivered a speech on behalf of Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura. Ms. Graça Machel, former Minister of Education and Culture of Mozambique, gave a keynote presentation and Her Royal Highness Queen Rania of Jordan sent a message by video to the opening ceremony.

Key objectives of the conference included: (1) highlighting the relevance of ESD to all of education; (2) promoting international exchange on ESD, especially between the North and the South; (3) carrying out a stock-taking of the implementation of the UN-DESD; and (4) developing strategies for the way ahead.

In addition, participants discussed regional, national, and cultural differences as well as challenges in the implementation of the UN-DESD. At the end of the conference, Member States adopted a declaration, referred to as The Bonn Declaration, reflecting the debates and proposing guidelines for the implementation of the UN-DESD in its second half.

For more information on the conference or to read The Bonn Declaration, please visit the conference’s website at http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/home.html.

For more information contact:
Mr. Derek Elias, Chief, Education for Sustainable Unit, UNESCO Bangkok
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Creating Sustainability Mindsets: Toolkit launch in Sri Lanka

MAS Holdings Ltd., a Sri Lanka-based apparel manufacturing company and UNESCO Bangkok’s private sector ESD partner, piloted the “Creating Sustainability Mindsets” toolkit from the 5th -6th of June, 2009, in conjunction with the MAS Holdings Eco GO Beyond Schools Sustainable Development Leadership Camp. A total of 55 students and 51 teachers from 28 rural schools from various districts in Sri Lanka actively participated in the one and a half day workshop, held at the MAS Institute of Management and Technology in Thulhiriya.

Students were taken through the sustainable development priorities section, specifically looking into issues like Food Security and Climate Change, whilst engaging in the worksheet activities provided. In celebration of the UN World Environment Day (June 5th), the students took part in planting trees at the MAS Fabric Park in Thulhiriya. Each school was then given a copy of the toolkit and asked to replicate the lessons in their schools and to provide feedback on curriculum integration and adaptation.

This interactive toolkit is at its pilot stage and is currently available in Sinhala and English, with hopes to be translated into more Asia-Pacific languages. The pilot toolkit contains six different sections: ESD concepts; Asia-Pacific priorities (such as climate change and food security); project development (to encourage independent learning and action oriented thinking); partnerships (engaging in traditional and non-traditional partners within the public and private sector); and Corporate Responsibility.

As communities in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world continue to be affected by global issues which range from climate change to gender inequality, the Asia-Pacific needs all governments, businesses, communities and generations to work together to address these pressing issues. This toolkit attempts to create a mindset and learning environment for users to understand sustainable development in both their local and global contexts, and to take ownership and prompt action towards a sustainable future.

For more information on the ESD Toolkit, please email: esd@unescobkk.org.

ESD OUTLOOK

The Forgotten Priority: Promoting Gender Equality in ESD

On 2 April 2009, a side event organized by UNESCO Bangkok entitled “The Forgotten Priority: Promoting Gender Equality in ESD” was held as part of the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Bonn, Germany. The event was a forum where participants discussed the recent activities, best practices, and challenges, and suggested recommendations in promoting gender equality in ESD. The focus of the discussions centered on the need to highlight synergies between gender equality and sustainability at the policy level and in educational practices. Participants stated that the connection between gender and sustainability, in many cases, is vague and/or transversal. Questions about the role of cultural and social values and whether the promotion
of gender equality should be “in ESD” or “through ESD” were also raised in the discussions. Overall, the participants shared the opinion that increased gender equality needs to be an inherent objective for educational initiatives that aim to increase global sustainability. Further, the participants agreed upon the opinion that gender is not sufficiently addressed within the DESD or in the current ESD discourse.

To address the questions and comments raised by the discussions, the participants recommended several action plans to be implemented at the national and local level, which include:

- raising awareness on gender roles and their impact as early as possible, starting preferably in early childhood education, so as to sensitize students’ later learning experiences;
- mainstreaming gender into ESD at all levels of education, especially into teacher training, teacher in-service training, and university lecturer training;
- and linking gender issues in ESD with the wider social context, including topics such as ethnicity, socio-cultural background, and race.

Based on the presented outcomes of the side event, it can be stated that the participants’ contributions correspond with the statement in the Bonn Declaration that recognized “gender equality, with special reference to participation of women and girls in education, [as] critical for enabling development and sustainability.” The outcomes indicate that collective action is needed to ensure greater gender equality through ESD.


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**Water School for a Living Yangtze Project China**

A project to save China’s river Yangtze another initiative that went on show as part of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Bonn, Germany, from 31 March - 2 April. *Water School for a Living Yangtze* is part of the International Water School Program sponsored by Austria’s Swarovski Company and involves children and communities in restoring the ecological integrity of China’s most famous river in a sustainable way.

Covering an area of 1.8 million square kilometres the Yangtze River Basin is a life source for much of China’s population, as well as many rare and endemic species such as the giant panda, black-necked crane and the snow leopard. Population pressure and rapid economic development have rapidly turned the river into a depository for 60 per cent of the country’s pollution, making it the single largest source of pollution in the Pacific Ocean, according to Shangri-la Institute for Sustainable Communities (SISC), a Chinese non-governmental organization.

Primary school student Sun Yao in southwest China’s Sichuan Province has lived alongside Baicao River, a tributary of the Yangtze, all his life. The Baicao River provides drinking water to the 6,600 inhabitants of Piankou Town, Beichuan County, which was among the most severely damaged during the May 2008 Wenchuan earthquake that claimed more than 80,000 lives.

Source: UNESCO Courier
Sun Yao and classmates became concerned about the foul-smelling “rubbish mountains” along the 10-km river, piles of polyfoams, cupboard cups, food scraps, medical needles and tubes, and plastic bags. They joined the project, which is supervised by the SISC with the Chinese Ministry of Education and UNESCO as partners, in the Spring of 2008. Children at Piankou Central Primary School began to monitor water quality and preliminary tests showed it had already been severely polluted. Based on further investigations in and around Piankou Town, Sun and his classmates put forward a proposal to re-arrange the 15 dustbins along the two major streets “in a more scientific way” and establish a rubbish disposal system.

To their great surprise, the town government approved their proposal, and a sewage treatment plant based on the scientific principles of a biological wetland is also under discussion. The students also sent out questionnaires to the communities of Piankou, and 89 per cent of the respondents said it was necessary to treat the river pollution.

“The value of this project lies in its integrated model that involves the communities over a broad spectrum, instead of a technical solution targeting a minor issue. We encourage the process of learning by doing, so that a tangible change in mindsets and behaviour will impact the policy-making of government, which promotes wider public participation in long-term environmental protection,” says Dorjie, SISC programme coordinator. (Source: UNESCO Courier)

For more information on this project, please visit UNESCO Beijing’s website: http://www.unesco.org/beijing-new/.

**RECENT EVENTS**

**UNESCO-ASP “YES4ESD” Seminar, 27-28 April 2009, Calapan City, Mindoro Oriental, Philippines**

The UNESCO-Associated Schools Project conducted a two-day seminar workshop in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro on April 27-28, 2009. Dubbed Youth and Educators Seminar for Education for Sustainable Development (YES4ESD), the event successfully enlisted the direct participation of a variety of institutions that have been active or are interested in becoming active in the promotion of UNESCO’s ideals and programs. It also revived the involvement of most of the UNESCO-ASP member schools, coordinators and youth chapters.

The activity effectively employed a good mix of academic institutions: local city and provincial colleges, private colleges, public and private elementary schools, a science high school, and international schools. A total of 96 delegates (51 educators and 45 youth leaders) from 30 schools present during the event all expressed their interest to become agents in the promotion of ESD.

Dr. Valenzuela, a native Oriental Mindoro, discussed the aims of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN-DES), as well as the Philippine Philosophy of Education, which seeks to advance many of the same ideals and goals as ESD. Lastly, she talked about the overall goals of ESD for the MOE/DepED to improve basic education, reorient existing education to address sustainable development, develop public understanding and awareness, and provide training for all sectors of the society.
The delegates were enthusiastic and hopeful with the restoration of a system that involves more schools—public, private and special types—from all over the country. They were also optimistic in the leadership of the newly-appointed national coordinator, who like many of them, rose from the ranks of the ASPNet program and thus has a clear idea of what the project is truly about, and how it can be maximized for the benefit of the communities where they came from, many of which truly in need of assistance.

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ESD Coordination and Capacity Building Workshop – Tehran Cluster, 28-30 April 2009, Tehran, Iran

The ESD Coordination and Capacity Building Workshop for UNESCO Tehran Cluster countries held in Tehran, Iran was the sixth Asia-Pacific regional workshop, sponsored by the Japanese Funds-In-Trust, to assist UNESCO Member States in building additional capacity for ESD leadership and coordination at the national level. Over twenty participants, including senior level ministerial representatives and representatives from civil society participated in the event from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

Workshop discussions acknowledged several key needs required to move ESD forward in the Tehran Cluster, especially the need for national level ESD training and capacity building to increase ownership for the DESD in the wake of the World Conference on ESD held in Bonn, Germany in March/April. As a starting point, the importance of educational planning and linking it to qualitative indicators was emphasized in order for ESD to better respond to local needs and priorities through, for example, relevant curriculum content. To support such change in the Tehran Cluster, ESD efforts can now shift from advocacy to concrete actions, including the sharing of common tools which use creative teaching and learning methodologies to ensure that important messages for enhancing education quality are accessible at all levels.

For more information contact:
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The World Civic Forum 2009: Building Our Humanitarian Planet

The World Civic Forum (WCF) 2009: “Building Our Humanitarian Planet” organized by Kyung Hee University and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) was held on 5-8 May 2009 in Seoul, South Korea. The WCF is an ongoing global forum that promotes and facilitates collaborations between academia, international organizations, civil society, governments, businesses, and the media to address the current challenges that face the globe. WCF’s mission in each forum is to produce global norms and principles, declarations, and action plans to tackle the world’s greatest challenges.

The key themes of the WCF 2009 were (1) Civic Values for Global Justice, (2) Civic Engagement in Public and Global Governance, and (3) Civic Action for the Global Agenda Including Climate Change. UNESCO was one of several institutional partners of the forum. Derek Elias, Chief of Unit in ESD at UNESCO Bangkok, presented “Education for Sustainable Development and Meeting Global Challenges” at the forum, in which he debriefed forum participants on the current challenges facing ESD and the mission of UNESCO Bangkok ESD Unit in the Asia-Pacific. The forum provided important feedback on potential future interventions for climate change and ESD, which are currently under review. Overall, WCF 2009 was an exciting venue to meet with actors from all sectors to discuss the challenges facing ESD today.

For more information, please visit the WCF 2009 website at http://www.wcf2009.org/

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New MIT Study Shows Global Warming Could be Double Previous Estimates

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the United States have concluded that the Earth is projected to be twice as warmer than previous estimates by 2100 without proper intervention. The lead author of the study, Andrei Sokolov, and his team (Ronald Prinn, Peter H. Stone, Chris E. Forest, Sergey Paltsev, Adam Schlosser, Stephanie Dutkiewicz, John Reilly, Marcus Sarofim, Chien Wang, Mort Webster, D. Kicklighter, B. Felzer, and Henry D. Jacoby) used a detailed computer simulation known as the MIT Integrated Global System Model to determine probabilistic projections in the Earth’s climate change from 1861 to 2100. The MIT model is unique in that it is the only model that includes extensive detail in possible scenarios of human interactions.
and activities (i.e. the association between economic development and energy usage in different countries).

The study found that the median probability of surface warming is 5.2 degrees Celsius by 2100 (90% probabilistic range of 3.5 to 7.4 degrees) compared to 2.4 degrees, which was projected using the same model with less robustness in a 2003 study. The authors of the study stress the importance in their findings in planning appropriate interventions. The research team also state the projections of the study may actually be conservative because the model does not factor in other feedbacks such as the melting of permafrost in the arctic that could release greenhouse gases that can further increase the severity of the situation.

The MIT study signifies the importance of promoting education in sustainable development to ensure a secure and prosperous future for the entire globe.

The study can be accessed via: http://ams.allenpress.com/perlserv/?request=get-abstract&doi=10.1175/2009JCLI2863.1

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**Promoting Gender Equality in Education through Photo Contest**

The Photo Contest 2009 on Promoting Gender Equality in Education was launched on 17 April, 2009. The APPEAL unit at UNESCO Bangkok has been organizing this contest over the past three years, and this year the contest is being jointly organized with the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) East Asia and Pacific and South Asia. Apart from this, the contest is also extended to the ASP Net (Associated Schools Project Network) within the region.

The theme of this year’s contest is “Reversing Realities: Seeking Gender Equality in Education.” Gender equality requires equal opportunities for both sexes to attend school, but beyond access, it also includes equality in the learning process, in learning outcomes, and in job opportunities and earnings for both sexes. Despite overall progress in education enrolment, many regional countries are far from achieving gender equality in education - a goal that goes beyond gender parity and access to education. Gender equality also includes equality in the quality of education received, and in teaching and learning processes (gender equality in education), as well as in the opportunities available through education (gender equality through education). This year’s contest theme focuses on the experiences in which disparities are reversed, and in which equality is achieved through education.
13 contest winners will receive official certificates of merit. The winning photographs will also be featured in the UNESCO Bangkok and UNGEI (EAP and SA) combined “Gender in Education Calendar 2010”, which is to be distributed widely throughout Asia and beyond. The winning photographs will also be posted on the organizers’ respective websites.

The contest details are available on the link below:
http://www.unescobkk.org/education/appeal/programme-themes/gender/


The 13th UNESCO-APEID International Conference, in conjunction with the World Bank-KERIS High Level Seminar on ICT in Education, emphasizes the powerful role ICT can play in changing the way we teach and learn. This Conference will provide a forum to explore, identify and synergize innovative approaches for harnessing the potential of ICT to increase the reach and quality of education.

The organizers – the Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) of UNESCO in Bangkok, the National Commission of the People’s Republic of China for UNESCO, the World Bank and the Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS) – invite papers on the following topics:

- Developing ICT in Education Policies and National Master Plans
- Promoting Effective Management and Applications of ICT in Schools
- Improving Quality and Efficiency of Higher Education through ICT
- Enhancing Innovations in Open and Distance Learning
- Preparing the Next Generation of Teachers
- Using ICT to Promote Literacy and Life-long Learning
- Monitoring and Measuring Impact of ICT in Education

Submit English abstracts, no longer than 200 words, on forms available from the Conference website at http://www.unescobkk.org/education/apeid/conference/china by 1 August 2009.

COMING UP NEXT

Addressing Challenges and Opportunities for Rural Youth Employment in Asia, 17-19 August 2009, Chiang Mai
The promotion of education, training and decent work to address poverty among rural youth and their communities is firmly placed within the global commitment towards poverty reduction, in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is also in line with the mandates of three specialized agencies of the United Nations, FAO, ILO and UNESCO which have jointly undertaken the study on the topic “Addressing Challenges and Opportunities for Rural Youth Employment in Asia” – a study in three countries, namely Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The workshop will be an event to launch the synthesis report and an event where all the stakeholders – the countries at national level, the civil society groups active in regards to rural youth at national and regional/international levels and the UN agencies and others related organizations – to discuss the findings and implications of them. The key findings are such as the need to improve policy coordination, strengthening formal education and training and, promoting employment and income generation options.

For more information on the workshop, please email: esd@unescobkk.org

IASC Education Cluster: Regional Capacity Development of Ministries of Education training, 5-9 October 2009, UNESCO Bangkok

Internationally there has been increasing recognition that it is essential to strengthen preparedness and technical capacity mechanism to respond to humanitarian emergencies. As a result the UN’s Interagency Standing Committee for the UN Humanitarian Reform process created a “Cluster Approach”. Since its formation in November 2006, the Education Cluster led jointly by UNICEF and Save the Children Alliance, has made considerable progress in gaining recognition for education as an important sector in emergencies and during humanitarian response; however, there is still much to be done, especially in building capacities at all levels, including education actors within Ministry Departments.

In view of this, UNESCO, in joint collaboration with UNICEF, is organizing a training on “Interagency Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Education Cluster: Regional Capacity Development of Ministries of Education.” The training will be rolled out at national and sub-national levels and will include Heads of Departments, Permanent Secretaries and other senior level education staff from disaster-prone countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The main objectives of the training are to:

- Ensure that ministries of education are better able to advocate for education in emergencies as a life-saving and life-sustaining imperative;
- Ensure that ministry of education representatives have greater capacities to lead and be equal partners with the international humanitarian community, especially through the IASC Education Cluster;
- Improve ministerial understanding of international frameworks and their ability to implement disaster risk reduction preparedness and response activities within the national education system; and
- Develop ministerial abilities to advocate for needed resources to improve the capacity of the education system to cope with and prevent future disasters.
With the hope that this training will effectively strengthen the capacity of the ministries of education in the Asia-Pacific region, the trainers (UNESCO and UNICEF disaster focal points) will be trained and provided materials by UNESCO IIEP Paris.

For more information on the training, please email: esd@unescobkk.org

PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS

Indigenous Knowledge and Disaster Risk Reduction: From Practice to Policy

Book Editors: Rajib Shaw (Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto Univ., Sakyoku, Kyoto, Japan), Anshu Sharma (SEEDS, New Delhi, India) and Yukiko Takeuchi (Kyoto Univ., Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto, Japan)

Book Description:
Indigenous Knowledge (IK) has been practiced in communities over time. There is news after major disasters on how IK has been effective in the protection of the lives and properties of people and communities. Some IK has been orally transmitted, and some are documented by local organizations sporadically. People and communities have developed their coping mechanisms over time, which is reflected in the form of IK. While many organizations recognize the importance of IK for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), there have been few systematic studies that analyze the principles of IK and its applicability to the modern context. This unique book is one of the first attempts of systematic study of IK in DRR. The key challenge will start after the publication of this book: to make it a useful reference material for decision making, research, implementation, and documentation. The target audience of the book consists of professionals, practitioners, researchers, and graduate students in the related field.

To receive 40% off, order online at www.novapublishers.com, promotion code: Leaf40

ESD Currents

As the first half of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development reaches its midway point, it is perhaps timely to pause and reflect upon our collective efforts, to strengthen and continue to forge interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral linkages which are so critical to the future of mainstreaming ESD throughout the education sector. ESD Currents: Changing Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific is a publication which consists of a collection of articles prepared by many collaborators in the region and intends to provide a snapshot of action-oriented activities under the widening umbrella of ESD. The publication shares lessons learned best practices as well as reflections upon challenges and future possibilities for ESD in the Asia-Pacific, in hopes to stimulate discussion.
for all players as to what the latter half of the ESD Decade will look like and in what direction we are headed. (Published March, 2009)

All UNESCO Bangkok ESD Publications can be accessed and easily downloaded from our website: http://www.unescobkk.org/education/esd/resources/publications/.

**Welcoming DESD Updates and Contributions**

UNESCO Bangkok invites all partners in education to share their examples of ESD in action, including information about programmes, activities or resources, to include in future DESD updates or on the UNESCO Bangkok website.

Kindly submit examples based on the following criteria to esd@unescobkk.org by September 2nd 2009.

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By contributing examples, you give UNESCO Bangkok permission to share information with proper acknowledgment through future updates and the UNESCO Bangkok website. All submissions must be accepted by the Director of UNESCO Bangkok for inclusion.

**ESD Unit Database**

The Education for Sustainable Development Unit at UNESCO Bangkok is continually updating its ESD contact database.

As a current partner in ESD, we would be pleased if you could update your contact information through the link below:
As always, we will continue to use your contact information for internal purposes only, such as sharing information on recent ESD-related activities and upcoming events in the Asia-Pacific through our quarterly newsletter.

With thanks,
The UNESCO Bangkok ESD Unit