DESD Update:
Progress in Asia & the Pacific

Newsletter 1/2009
DESD Update: Progress in Asia & the Pacific

“ESD properly understood requires a fundamental reorientation of the purposes and tasks of education in this new century, and this means that, in due course, no aspect of educational provision will be left unaffected”

Mark Richmond, Director,
Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education, Education Sector, UNESCO

Greetings from UNESCO Bangkok,

As we approach the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, an event which will allow us to reflect on past events and help us determine the future direction of ESD, 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. This first update of the year 2009 takes us a step further toward building collaboration among all partners in education and moving ESD forward in the region in 2009 and beyond.

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 11 for more information.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Education for Sustainable Development Unit
UNESCO Bangkok

DESD AP Update: March 2009
IN FOCUS

UNESCO and Plan International Launch Partnership to Assist Natural Disaster-Prone Countries in Asia

ESD Unit UNESCO Bangkok, March 10, 2009 – UNESCO Bangkok Regional Office for Asia Pacific and Plan International Asia today announced a regional education Partnership Agreement for natural disaster-prone countries in Asia, which will launch operations in Myanmar for post-Cyclone Nargis education system recovery.

The Partnership Agreement aims to provide “significant benefits to society and communities in Asia, and especially in developing countries and those affected by natural disasters.”

As part of the Partnership Agreement, Plan International is providing US$600,000 to fully fund two capacity building projects in education and disaster risk reduction, included by UNESCO in the UN revised Flash Appeal for Myanmar’s Cyclone Nargis (2-3 May 2008). Cyclone Nargis - one of the most devastating natural disasters ever recorded - saw the people of Myanmar mourn the loss of an estimated 146,000 lives. Some 3,761 schools were damaged in the Ayeyarwady and Yangon regions, leaving 360,000 children in affected areas without safe places to learn.

Following the tragedy, UNESCO established its Myanmar Education Recovery Programme to complement and support the educational efforts of the Government of the Union of Myanmar. The first UNESCO project builds capacity of township education officials and school principals in disaster awareness and preparedness through a series of educational planning and management modules. The second project strengthens community-based education in emergencies and disaster risk reduction through training and provision of materials.

“The Partnership Agreement reflects UNESCO and Plan International’s joint efforts to complement and strengthen the educational efforts of developing countries in Asia, a region facing recurrent natural disasters,” said UNESCO Director Bangkok, Mr. Gwang-Jo Kim. “The framework of the partnership agreement illustrates the willingness of both organizations to provide an innovative response to the challenges faced by governments in Asia by developing a common strategy centred upon the objective of education for sustainable development.”

Plan International, a strong supporter of Education for All programmes, is one of the oldest and largest child-centred community development NGOs, directly supporting more than 1.5 million children and their families in 49 developing countries including 14 of the poorest countries in Asia. In Myanmar, Plan supports Cyclone Nargis emergency and recovery initiatives, especially in education through renovation and construction of schools and early childhood care and development centres, through three local NGOs partners working in the Ayeyarwady delta region.

For more information contact:
Mr. Derek Elias, Chief, Education for Sustainable Unit, UNESCO Bangkok
d.elias@unesco.org
UNESCO –MAS Holdings, Ltd. “Creating Sustainability Mindsets” Toolkit ready for piloting

In May 2008, UNESCO Bangkok entered a partnership with MAS Holdings, a Sri Lankan apparel manufacturer, to engage youth on sustainable development issues. In-school workshops have already been conducted in 30 schools in Sri Lanka, targeting over 11,000 15-18 year old students. To complement these activities, UNESCO Bangkok and MAS Holdings have been working in collaboration to develop an interactive CD-Rom toolkit to encourage students to, not only build their understanding of sustainable development, but to take it a step further and create and implement projects that address sustainable development issues and needs in their local context. The final toolkit will also include strategies for building partnerships and guiding corporate responsibility (CR) initiatives to highlight the importance of partnerships and the private sector’s role in our collective sustainable future.

Pilot Toolkit version: The pilot version of the CD-Rom includes a thorough introduction to Education for Sustainable Development and what it seeks to accomplish, as well as Asia-Pacific Priorities such as climate change and food security. A guided tutorial for students and teachers who wish to take learning into the community and engage in their own projects for sustainable development will also be included.

To participate: The UNESCO-MAS Holdings partnership is seeking interested schools and education partners to test the CD-Rom toolkit and provide feedback as a part of this dynamic endeavour.

To take part in testing the CD-Rom, please contact esd@unescobkk.org

ESD OUTLOOK

Young Ambassadors for Turtle Conservation in India

Orissa, on the eastern coast of India, plays host to hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Olive Ridley turtles each year, as they come on their annual pilgrimage to mate in its near-shore waters and nest on its pristine beaches. But over the last ten years, more than 100,000 turtle carcasses have been found washed ashore. Most of them - unfortunate victims of fishing activity.

In an effort to spread awareness about the need to conserve the turtles, the Dhamra Port Company Limited, under advice from IUCN, has launched a mass awareness campaign at and around the port site at Dhamra, which is around 220 kms from Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa state.

One of the key planks of this campaign has been “Catch ‘em young,” IUCN scientists and staff have trained local youth, who, in turn, travel to schools in remote areas – on motorbikes; sometimes, on bicycles and at times, even by country boats – and interact with students, spreading the message of turtle conservation. So far, since August 2008, more than 9000 students across nearly 50 schools have been made aware of this fascinating animal and the imperative need to ensure its survival. An on-going essay competition further internalises this
message in impressionable minds. The belief and hope is that these students will tomorrow become ambassadors for the cause of conservation – not just of the turtles, but of all that is beautiful and sublime in the world around us.

To learn more about IUCN’s work with Dhamra Port visit [www.iucn.org/india/dhamra](http://www.iucn.org/india/dhamra)

**For more information contact:**
Michael Dougherty  
Regional Communications Coordinator  
Asia Regional Office  
IUCN  
Email: michael@iucnt.org

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**RECENT EVENTS**

**Asia-Pacific Session of the International ESD Forum in Tokyo 2-5 December, 2008**

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology of Japan (MEXT), the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO (JNCA), the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), the United Nations University (UNU) and UNESCO organized an international forum on ESD in Tokyo in December.

The first day of the Forum was committed to the Asia-Pacific Region and the session was opened by Mr Sheldon Shaeffer, Director of UNESCO Bangkok. The chance to discuss ESD in the Asia-Pacific Region by those who have contributed to ESD in the region was greatly appreciated and put to good use, and the importance of the Forum in preparing for the World Conference in Bonn, Germany in March/April 2009 was evident and clearly understood by the participants. The themes debated during the session included several themes such as innovation and partnership building in ESD.

Given the proximity to the World Conference on ESD, participating Member States identified challenges, opportunities and structural solutions for the latter half of the UN Decade. Member States that participated at the regional session summarized the following objectives and challenges for the DESD implementation in the Asia-Pacific, besides those already identified during subregional capacity development workshops organized by UNESCO Bangkok with the financial support of the Japanese Funds-In-Trust:

- **Linking educational processes to reinforce each other** – Pertinent linkages identified were those between Education for All and ESD, the UNESCO Education Support Strategy documents and the education sector planning cycles and linking educational efforts for sustainable development to the larger development strategies (e.g. MDG, UNDAF, PRSP, CCA).
- **Moving towards learning societies** - Promoting ESD as a forerunner for an educational shift from knowledge societies to learning societies.
Further utilization of good practices - Sub regional fora and events, think tank processes informing the way forward, focusing on future scenarios and getting young people engaged are proving to be functional methods to be further utilized during the latter half of the decade.

Structural change of education systems towards more sustainable education – Special attention should be paid to curriculum change, school culture and teacher training, to increase the capacity of educational systems to implement the DESD.

Reorienting educational processes to correspond to ESD content – Building on the insight that ESD related values are taught rather than taught these values should be facilitated as an operational bridge between developing educational content and the process of learning. Efforts should be made to ensure the conversion of equality as a core ESD value into the process of learning, especially in regard to the improvement of gender equality such as UNEP.

Building partnerships for ESD – Increased and strengthened partnerships were given a central role in future work, especially between UNESCO and other UN agencies.

During the regional session a consensus existed that the UN DESD is a vehicle for reorientation of educational provision of the entire education sector. The pursuit of quality education for sustainable development for all, in other words, to match the human resource needs of Member States, will leave few elements of any education system unchanged.

These lessons learned, the identified obstacles and challenges, along with other insights from UNESCO Member States, will be carried to the World Conference on ESD for further elaboration and action in the region towards quality education and learning for a sustainable future.

Post-Conflict and Post-Disaster Preparedness Training

UNESCO is increasingly called upon by its Member States to provide assistance within its field of competence to support countries and communities affected by conflicts and natural disasters. The Asia-Pacific region houses several disaster prone areas in which natural disasters undermine development in developing and less developed countries.

In response to this, the Bureau of field Coordination and UNESCO Bangkok hosted on February 23-26, a Post Conflict and Post Disaster (PCPD) training, facilitating 28 participants including directors/heads of Field Office and specialists from UNESCO institutions IIEP and IBE.

The training focused on the new humanitarian cluster system emerging from the UN reform. The aim of the training workshop was to prepare participants with detailed information on elements and tools in the UN humanitarian mechanism; this
contributed to strengthening the participation and building the capacity of UNESCO Field Offices in PCPD strategic exercises.

Additionally, the workshop provided an opportunity for participants to share operational challenges that arise in PCPD situations and to discuss possible strategies for overcoming them. Participants were able to share experiences and best practices, identifying bottlenecks in PCPD situation processes and brainstorming better solutions and ideas for UNESCO preparedness and contingency planning.

The training proved to be a success, judging by the active and effective participation and contributions of the participants which has resulted in fuller understanding of UNESCO’s role in emergency and post crisis situations. The participants have successfully identified PCPD value-added activities and comparative advantages, priorities and entry points for UNESCO’s core fields of action (Education, Culture, Communication and Information, Sciences). This training further highlighted the importance of strengthening the capacity of field offices to be better equipped for PCPD situations.

Overall, the training has instigated a continuing process of PCPD development, where participants have built upon workshop tasks and have been striving towards contributing to a working framework for PCPD responses for the Asia and Pacific region.

Japanese High School Visit to UNESCO Bangkok

On February 4th, 2009, UNESCO Bangkok office hosted students and teachers from Ikeda Senior High School, which is affiliated with Osaka Kyoiku University in Japan. There were ten visitors in total, eight students between the ages of fifteen and seventeen and two teachers. They came through their exchange programme with an ASP school in Thailand.

Since 2003, Ikeda Senior High School has been developing “Asian Network between 5 countries” with the support of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO and the Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU). The four other UNESCO Associated Schools are based in Thailand, China, Republic of Korea and the Philippines. From November 13th to 18th, 2008, it successfully held an international conference called, “High School Students’ International Conference in Asia-Pacific ASPnet – Voice for Environment and Peace, ESD,” where student representatives gathered from seven countries (Thailand, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, China, Sweden, Lithuania and Japan). Students, in their first and second years of high school, are currently studying ESD through integrated studies classes. Their studies on ESD include but are not limited to environmental issues. They learn about many other global issues, as well. In the course of studying, they try to discover relationships between global issues.

During their visit to UNESCO Bangkok, they learned about various ESD topics and projects undertaken by the UNESCO Bangkok ESD office. They showed great interest in ESD and also gave their own presentation on their studies and activities on ESD.
Promoting Gender Equality in Education through Photo Contest

Emerging from the success in 2006, the APPEAL unit at UNESCO Bangkok organized a photo contest again in 2008 on the theme of, “Promoting Gender Equality in Education-what more needs to be done.” The photo contest was organized among countries which are members of the Gender in Education Network in Asia (GENIA), a network of gender focal points in Ministries of Education across Asia designed to share information and lessons on gender and education. This contest is a step towards demonstrating “gender equality in action” through the means of photos for contributing to a better understanding of what gender equality means to all of us.

The main criteria for the photo entries were to capture gender equality in action and to show how stereotypical roles of girls and boys, women and men are being challenged in schools, homes and communities in the region. This year, photo entries have been received from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Viet Nam. They were taken by students, teachers, Ministry of Education officials, development professionals, photographers etc in their home country. The final judging of the photographs took place at UNESCO Bangkok, on the basis of which thirteen photos were selected. These winning entries are featured in gender in education calendar for 2009, distributed widely throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

For more information about the photo contest and to see the calendar please visit our website at the link below:

http://www.unescobkk.org/education/appeal/programme-themes/gender/

We Can, We Will. The 2nd Annual EARCOS Global Issues Network Conference

Earth’s Hope was the theme of the first EARCOS Global Issues Network (GIN) Conference held in Beijing in April 2008. This year, youth from international schools throughout the Asia-Pacific region participated in the second Global Issues Network (GIN) Conference held at the International School of Bangkok on March 20-22. GIN is based on the ideas described by Jean Francois Rischar in his book High Noon “Twenty Global Problems, Twenty Years to Solve Them” which identifies 20 urgent global challenges such as climate change, deforestation, access to education and peace keeping. The GIN Conference brought together youth from the region to build on ideas for taking action to address these challenges.

For more information, visit the GIN 2009 website: http://www.earcos.org/gin2009/
80% REDUCTION OF CO$_2$ BY 2050. POSSIBLE?

WE COULD ALWAYS START LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME.
COMING UP NEXT

Bonn World Conference on ESD

Bonn, Germany, 31 March-2 April

The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development – Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade in Bonn, Germany will provide an opportunity to share views and exchange best practices on ESD from around the world. The conference will provide a platform for policy dialogue and advocacy on education for sustainable development and it aims to deepen collaboration among DESD stakeholders. The world conference will gather 700 participants involving UNESCO Member States, United Nations agencies, multi- and bi-lateral cooperation agencies, organizations from civil society and the private sector. Taking stock of the Decade’s implementation will help determine what impact the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DES, 2005-2014) is having and giving an opportunity to look ahead to further promoting ESD in response to emerging global challenges. The World Conference aims to draw out the relevance of ESD in education as a whole and its importance for improving the quality of education while attaining the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals.

For more information, visit the Bonn World Conference website: http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/home.html

PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS

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.
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 June 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*