Greetings from UNESCO Bangkok,

Welcome to the latest edition of the ESD newsletter from UNESCO Bangkok. With COP 15 fast approaching, we are pleased to bring you an issue featuring a number of articles on the topic of climate change from our partners in the Asia and Pacific Region, as well as stories of good ESD practice in the context of formal education and features on recent events.

We hope that you will find this newsletter a useful platform for the sharing of good practice, and that it acts as a further step towards building collaboration between partners in the region.

As always, we welcome present and potential ESD partners to submit brief information on their ESD projects and activities for potential inclusion in future updates. Please see the final page for submission details.

Many thanks for your continued support!
Education for Sustainable Development Unit
UNESCO Bangkok
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on the road to COP15...

Education for Sustainable Development and Climate Change

There is now agreement among even sceptics and those trying to avoid facing the reality, that human induced climate change is affecting the earth’s ecosystem and will one day result in pushing all living things on earth, including human beings, to extinction. There is no doubt that greenhouse emissions caused mainly by human activity are pushing global temperatures up and causing an increased unpredictability in weather patterns and natural disasters. The debate about how to deal with the effects of climate change is simultaneously heating up. The 15th COP of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009 is just around the corner, amidst hopes for agreements that will put a cap on temperature increases.

The IPPC has repeatedly stated in its Assessments Reports, that globally we must limit our CO2 emissions, and move towards low carbon economies and lifestyles. To do this and to achieve a target of keeping the global mean temperature increase to 2°C, requires global negotiations that can contribute to a new international agreement on combating climate change for the post 2012 period. Key to such an agreement is the amount by which nations are prepared to cut their CO2 emissions and within what timeframe.

Member states are negotiating for their quota or contribution of waste gases that can be accommodated in the global atmospheric commons, and trying to cut up the common property of the earth’s ecosystem in a property rights discourse of nation states. Citizens are gradually waking up and saying ‘No!’ This earth and the atmospheric commons belong to all of humankind, we will either commit collective suicide through our non-cooperation or save the earth and its inhabitants if we can learn to cooperate and work together. It is as a result of such thinking that in countries like Britain, movements such as 10-10, which aims to cut carbon emissions by ten percent by 2010, are growing.

History has shown that governments, however good their intentions are, cannot achieve any meaningful and desired objectives or change. At the heart of change, both nationally and globally, has been citizens. Ask the women’s movement, the environmental and ecological movement, the movements for workers rights, the list is endless.

In all these movements for change, there has been a key role for awareness building, knowledge and education. There is a tendency to dismiss such interventions as ‘soft’ while diplomacy, negotiations and treaty making are seen as ‘hard’. That is why, since the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) was launched at Johannesberg, the response and the enthusiasm for it has been at best lukewarm. While we are now into the mid-decade of the UNDESD, it is becoming clear that to deal with planetary phenomena such as climate change, Education for Sustainable Development is central. Environment Education may have given us the awareness and knowledge of the environment but ESD does more. Especially in the context of the climate change realities confronting us, it shows that not only change is possible but also that transformation is the key to achieving the changes that are needed to address climate change.

The links between addressing climate change and the role of Education for Sustainable Development are myriad and manifold. We have to seize the opportunities, make the connections and ensure a future for our children, our children’s children, and for all transient beings with whom we share our planetary ecosystem.

Lawrence Surendra

For more on COP15 visit:
www.cop15.dk

“This earth and the atmospheric commons belong to all of humankind”
IIIEP/UNESCO Regional Capacity Development with Ministries of Education Workshop on Disaster Preparedness, October 12-14, 2009

In recognition of the importance of planning education in emergency situations and for disaster preparedness, UNESCO Bangkok and UNESCO’s International Institute for Education Planning (IIIEP), as well as its partners in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Humanitarian Education Cluster, have initiated a capacity development process in order to strengthen preparedness and response activities within the field of education. At a programmatic level, UNICEF and Save the Children are collectively implementing a regional training of trainers programme for front-line responders (i.e. those who will immediately respond if an emergency strikes) which will be then be rolled-out at national and sub-national levels.

As part of the initiative, UNESCO Bangkok’s ESD unit, with support from IIIEP, was invited to lead the capacity development workshop with senior education Ministry officials at the regional level from six countries: Bangladesh, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This IIIEP-UNESCO Regional Capacity Development Workshop for Ministries of Education for the Humanitarian Education Cluster is a state of the art training on humanitarian response to enhance the Ministry officials’ capacity to best support disaster risk reduction and emergency response activities within the education sector of the UN’s humanitarian mechanism.
UNESCO Updates

Climate Change Education Seminar

The UNESCO International Seminar on Climate Change Education was held from 27 to 29 July 2009 in Paris. It focused on the role of education in addressing climate change, linking the local, regional and global contexts with particular emphasis on the challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The objectives of the Seminar were to:

- promote the effective integration of climate change education into educational programmes and school curricula;
- mobilize support for teacher training on climate change education;
- enhance the exchange of experiences and good practices on climate change education among ministries, teachers, practitioners and young people;
- identify opportunities for using various networks (such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, World Heritage sites, biosphere reserves and the International Hydrological Programme networks) to encourage local field-based education on climate change; and
- identify learning materials and good practices on climate change education and enhance their dissemination via ICT and other means.

Priority areas for action by UNESCO and its partners were identified as: review of existing educational policy and curricula and reorient them to include climate change education along with education for sustainable development; review and make an inventory of existing tools, materials and practices in teaching and learning climate change, address quality assurance and standard setting in climate change education and enhance networking and cooperation for action on climate change education among all stakeholders, in particular through engaging communities that are most vulnerable to climate change impacts and youth.

Mobile Training Team Workshop

Reorienting Teacher Education Programmes to Address Sustainability

The Mobile Training Team (MTT) Reorienting Teacher Education Programmes to Incorporate Education for Sustainable Development Project was established to mainstream sustainability into the formal school systems by equipping pre-service teachers with appropriate sustainability knowledge, perspectives, methods and values, with the support of the Japanese Funds-in-Trust.

A regional workshop took place in June 2009 in Thailand, engaging policy makers and teacher educators from the region. One objective was to promote action research to document 'good practices' of curriculum development, pedagogical approaches and institutional policies.

During the workshop, participants developed action plans for follow-up activities at the national-level. Furthermore, UNESCO issued a call for project proposals on action research and capacity building on issues related to sustainability. Selected projects are expected to deliver their results by December 2009.
"Schools can make a difference!"

ASPnet Good Practice Development Project in Achieving MDGs through ESD in Asia and the Pacific Region

This 2009 UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) is designed to promote Education for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific region by encouraging teachers to develop and share sound educational practices and methods so that they can contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The project is jointly organized by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU), UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet) and sponsored by UNDP and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Korea. KNCU has selected nine winners of the 2009 ESD/MDG Good Practices. The nine are:

1) Saara Suib, Indonesia: Students' Peer Tutoring: Promoting Hygienic Life and Children Healthcare among School-kids
2) Hari Prasetyo, Indonesia: “Al Izzah Youth Community Service: An environmental project aiming to save the protected area in Mt. Holimun, West Java”
3) Ayesha Saqib, Pakistan: Protecting biodiversity and clean environment for sustainable development
4) Jibabil Nasreen, Pakistan: Peace and ESD Education Programme
5) Haye-Seon Park, Republic of Korea: Youth MDGs
6) P.M. Kalubowila, Sri Lanka: Cultural diversity and develop harmony in the Sri Lankan society through school
7) R.M.M. Ratnayake, Sri Lanka: Equal Nutritious Breakfast
8) Gulnara Zayniddinova, Uzbekistan: Water and Natural Resources Management
9) Sufiya Dekhkanova, Uzbekistan: Creating an Oasis in the Desert

KNCU held the Asia-Pacific ASPnet Forum on ESD & MDGs on 24 – 27 October in Korea. The forum aimed to serve as a venue to share and evaluate selected good practices and explore the feasibility of appropriate modification and application of individual cases in the context of different countries in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, one of the objectives was that participants, including ASPnet national coordinators in the region, would develop inter-regional ASPnet partnership projects to promote ESD in the region.
in focus: GERES

Collaborating for Change

An Integrated Approach to Climate Solidarity; the GERES Vision

The reality of climate change is not in question anymore and makes headlines both in developed and developing countries. However, the flagship concepts used to drive our civilization to safety fall short of redefining development; “mitigation” and “adaptation” fail to carry any kind of idealism that would foster the complete paradigm shift that is needed. In the 1970s, UNESCO supported the concept of a “Learning Society” as an alternative to the “Consumption Society” in which we now live. This concept is the dogma underlying GERES’ training and education activities in climate change.

GERES has developed an integrated approach to climate solidarity, the elements of which are found in the structure of GERES’ Climate Change Unit (CCU). At its creation in 2006, CCU’s original purpose was to sell the carbon credits generated by GERES’ sustainable development projects. Its mission has grown over time, and now involves 5 work streams: CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) project development, Climate Change Awareness, Carbon Auditing, Capacity Building, and Nexus. The latter, Nexus, is a new alliance of like-minded NGOs and corporations, led by GERES, aimed at using carbon finance to reduce poverty, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, improve human health and conserve biodiversity in a sustainable manner.

GERES’ approach in regards to heavy polluters is twofold: first, through its auditing activity, the CCU raises client awareness about climate change, measures their carbon footprint, and develops practical recommendations to foster effective and durable emissions reductions. Among the advice delivered to ensure long term success is the creation of an internal “green team”, a group of employees from various departments in charge of leading behavioral change among the staff in order to ensure that CCU recommendations are effectively carried out (raising AC temperature, turning off electrical devices when not in use, waste recycling, etc).

At the same time, CCU is conducting a general climate change awareness program involving an average of 20 presentations on Climate Change per year to targeted audiences such as employees of government offices, companies and NGOs.

CCU manager Minh Cuong LeQuan is taking particular interest in sharing knowledge about Climate Change challenges and transferring GERES’ experiences on CDM project development. These are the objectives driving the capacity building activities developed by CCU in Cambodia, which adapts its services according to the needs of its distinctive beneficiaries.

For field NGOs and social enterprises, GERES designed a 6 day training session, intended to share with them the insights of a development oriented CDM project and guide them through the steps to access carbon financing. The training is based on the principle of action-research: the issues and problems tackled are the ones faced by the GERES teams in their day-to-day work, for which they have found efficient methods of response.

In order to support participation from developing country NGOs, GERES has designed a distinctive fee system intended to promote solidarity, with participants with more purchasing power, such as for-profit companies or international agencies, subsidizing lower fees for nonprofits.

In the medium term, Minh’s objective is to develop these various training and educational activities while intensifying hand-in-hand collaboration with NGOs from developing countries facing similar challenges. As he says, the stakes are too important, and the challenges too high to be faced separately.
Feature: Food for Thought

Education in Crisis...

The role of education in light of the economic crisis

During a lecture that I attended earlier this year, an educational sociologist predicted that the present economic crisis would trigger development which would diminish the impact of neo-liberalism and increase the significance of education for individuals and nation states, not only with increasing unemployment in mind. Looking back, maybe half a year later, I have started to doubt if the financial crisis has actually lead to a structural reassessment of economic premises and principles, which we have grown to see as indisputable paths for national development and improvement of social standards. I would like to argue, however, with current global educational methodologies in mind, that this might be a suitable time to review the contribution of education to our personal and societal development, and not simply state education’s generic importance (as has been done so many times before...).

To use the commonly shared language that has shaped our conception of educational institutions and their services, we, as ‘customers’, might, in acknowledgement of possible unemployment, ask ourselves what value added products education is currently capable of providing. I therefore see the increasing amount of emerging and often less-than-scientific products in, for example, Self-Development literature and New-Age influenced seminars as an indicator of a lacking values dimension in the current educational services provided.

The ongoing economic and approaching environmental crisis, I argue, invites us to reconsider educational outcomes by being opportunistic and applying unconventional criteria to what should be accepted as the status quo. By this I mean that we, as professionals active in the field of educational development, need to address the effects of commonly shared practices in education and how these practices are intrinsic to the personal and systemic crises we are facing. To come back to the sociologist’s prognosis of increased significance of education, I would like to assume that many of us long for education that enables us to experience rewards and fellowship beyond financial magnitude, especially since we are in the face of economic uncertainties and are capable of seeing the limitations by which we define ‘purpose’, ‘advancement’ and ‘development’.

Finally, I hope that future educational services will strengthen the capacities of children to face personal and developmental crises by integrating a more holistic approach to accepted dimensions of personal development, including a focus on areas such as social and environmental attentiveness integrated into a less restrictive curriculum. Education for sustainable development, currently struggling to define its role in education systems, might, if seen as a critical reassessment of educational practices, become a beacon guiding towards a value-added and less frightening future.
Regional News

Higher Education Update

Advanced International Training Programme on ESD for Higher Education

Almost 30 representatives for higher level education institutes of seven Asian countries, spent two weeks in August at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, for the Asia regional workshop of the Advanced International Training Programme on Education for Sustainable Development for Higher Education. This comprised the fourth of five phases of the nine month programme. Targeting Asian and African higher level institutions, the programme’s overall objective is to promote the exchange of ESD knowledge and experiences in the higher education sector. In the second phase of the programme, African and Asian participants spent three weeks in Sweden in May, exchanging information with Swedish universities and ESD actors.

At the core of the programme is the participants’ development of change projects in the field of ESD. These can be innovations in teaching, research or university policy and management, to be implemented in the participants’ home institutions. Examples of the Asian participants’ change projects include the development of a pilot training programme on ESD for in-service teachers (Ministry of Environment, Cambodia), incorporating ESD into the resource management course in the agribusiness management curricular program (Central Mindanao University, Philippines), Enhancement of Research-based Learning Strategy & Design of Environmental Geology for Sustainable Development (Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia), and others.

Funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the programme builds on the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainable Development in African Universities (MESA) Partnership Project. It also links to the Regional Universities Consortium (RUC) and ProsperNET in Asia. This initiative is a collaborative venture involving UNEP, UNESCO and other partners. The programme is implemented by Ramboll Natura AB (Sweden), together with WESSA (South Africa), Asian Institute of Technology (Thailand) and Strathmore University (Kenya).

2009 HYCU International Conference

The 2009 HYCU International Conference, entitled International Collaboration for ESD and Lifelong Education, was held on June 24-25, 2009 in Hanyang Cyber University in Seoul, Korea. The HYCU Sustainable Development Institute hosted the conference in order to spread socially responsible education and to actualize international cooperation by building networks with foreign universities in the pursuit of ESD. The conference was sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Environment Republic of Korea, and the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.

For more information on the International Training Programme on ESD for Higher Education please see the link to International Training Programmes at:
http://www.sida.se/English/

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“Promoting exchange of ESD knowledge and experiences”
in focus: Youth

Asia-Europe Co-operation in Voluntary Service - VolunAET

Asia-Europe Young Volunteers Exchange
Intercultural Approaches to Environmental Sustainability

The Asia-Europe Young Volunteers Exchange themed Intercultural Approaches to Environmental Sustainability was co-organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) together with the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS). This year’s Volunteers Exchange project reached its eighth edition and tackled the key themes of environment and sustainability. The exchange took place from the 21st of August to the 4th of September 2009 in Singburi, Thailand.

During its 13 day programme, the exchange brought together twenty-three participants, 15 from Asia and eight from Europe, in order to familiarise themselves with environmental issues, share existing knowledge and experience in the field and improve existing practices within the respective voluntary service organisations and their projects.

Following the same format as last year’s project, the exchange was structured in three phases – beginning with training, followed by field trips and ending with final evaluations. The exchange was conducted through a non-formal educational approach, providing participants with several educational tools and methodology that they may be able to use in the future, with their own projects.

During the first week of training, members of the ESD Unit at UNESCO Bangkok were invited to provide a general overview of the holistic nature of ESD and how environmental sustainability is but one pillar within a larger sphere of ‘sustainable development’, as well some thought exercises on gender mainstreaming in education projects.

One of the innovative elements of this year’s exchange was the training methodology, aimed at providing participants with theoretical and practical learning experiences (knowledge, skills and attitude oriented), and the connections and links between the different educational tools that participants practised.

Thus, during the training phase, participants received theoretical inputs and also experienced several non-formal educational tools, such as Environmental Scan, Forum Theatre and Venn Diagrams. After having experienced and understood how these tools work in a safe training environment, participants had the opportunity to put them into practice in Singburi and, later on, in the local communities that hosted them during their field trips.

They performed environmental scans in each of the visited communities in the different provinces of Thailand and in Cambodia, identifying several environmental challenges such as: water shortage, waste mismanagement, eco-friendly agricultural practices, the use of traditional knowledge in dealing with environmental issues and proposed solutions to these issues.

During the final evaluation participants shared the findings and the results of their field trips. At the same time, a last set of tools – project planning and open space technology – enabled them to immediately implement the knowledge they acquired during the previous phases of the exchange and to create projects that were meant to tackle the identified environmental challenges. All projects had an educational component (e.g. including educational sessions with the local communities regarding garbage disposal, effect of garbage on environment and the local agriculture, etc.) and were meant to involve all age groups from the local communities, thus ensuring their sustainability.

For further information regarding the Asia-Europe Young Volunteers Exchange and its outcomes please contact Mr. Francesco Volpini at:\ncivs@unesco.org.
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in focus: Green Growth Initiatives
A holistic approach to sustainable livelihoods

Green Growth Capacity Development Programme

ESCAP's (UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) Environment and Development Division (EDD) is currently undertaking education efforts through its Green Growth Capacity Development Programme.

The Green Growth Capacity Development programme recognizes the poor as key stakeholders in the development process and encourages the use of participatory assessments designed to include the concerns of vulnerable women and men in the policy planning and implementation cycle. The Green Growth initiative has adopted a sustainable livelihoods approach, which allows it to work towards win-win solutions: addressing the environment and natural resource-use in ways that create opportunities for the poor to participate more fully in the economy and society.

Since the endorsement of Green Growth at the 5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in 2005, the EDD has continuously promoted the approach at policy dialogues, seminars, and workshops, and also at the recent Regional Workshop on Education for Sustainable Consumption in China, Japan and Republic of Korea, in Beijing, China from 16-18 July 2009. At the workshop, Lead Programme Consultant Simon Hoiberg Olsen explained the Green Growth Approach to participants from China, the Republic of Korea and Japan, emphasizing the important task that EDD is carrying out in the promotion of Green Growth.

Considering the impacts of the triple financial, fuel and food crisis, Mr. Hoiberg identified the overlapping and interlinked nature of the problems we are facing and suggested that we must be careful to recognize that attempts to find solutions in one area can quickly lead to problems in other sectors, such as the uptake of biofuels and the resulting spike in food prices. He identified many of the challenges that exist with the current growth model, but also argued that we must recognize the numerous opportunities that are arising for progression towards a more sustainable society.

Mr. Simon Hoiberg suggested that in forming a solution to these challenges, the concept of Green Growth promotes a paradigm shift in our development approaches away from mere quantity towards qualitative indicators of growth. In this light, the EDD at ESCAP is working to advance Green Growth through a holistic and multi-sectoral approach involving stakeholders from many different ministries.

Mr. Hoiberg also explained that EDD is cooperating closely with the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth (SINGG) programme in Korea. This work is based on four main strategies: policy forums, a leadership programme, pilot projects and networking. Mr. Hoiberg explained his own work in establishing the Green Growth Capacity Development Programme. The methodology for this programme is based on a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), a holistic approach that aims to emphasize the cross-sectoral linkages necessary to effectively cope with the challenges that developing countries are facing in terms of unifying environmental conservation, social progress and economic growth. Mr. Hoiberg further underlined the four paths to Green Growth that UNESCO are promoting: the greening of business and markets; sustainable consumption and production; sustainable infrastructure; and green tax and budget reform. In conclusion, he explained how Education for Green Growth can be linked closely with ESC, emphasizing that the issues regarding the greening of economies can be integrated into university curricula, and that governments can raise awareness on these issues with the public at large thereby increasing public acceptance of new regulations towards green growth.

ESCAP and the delegate from Regional Help Desk for Sustainable Consumption and Production in Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Martin Schweighofer, also proposed the possibility to establish another Marrakech taskforce on ESD, lead by China. While this was perceived as a great idea, it came with a warning that such initiative should be implemented quickly to be included in the 10YFP on SCP.

For more information on ESCAP's Green Growth Capacity Development Programme please visit:
http://www.greengrowth.org/capacity_building/capacity.asp

"Recognizing the poor as key stakeholders in the development process"
Regional News
Member State Updates...

Japan

The Japan Council on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD-J), a Japanese NGO in collaboration with NGOs from other 6 Asian countries, documented the existing ESD efforts in the civil society from 2006-2008, under Asia Good ESD Practice Project (AGEPP). Over 30 cases were reported and many of the case summaries were translated into the 6 Asian national languages. They are now available to be downloaded from the AGEPP website: www.agepp.net/

The case topics cover a variety of fields, including agriculture, poverty, women, children, disability, public health, micro finance, indigenous cultures, tourism, urbanization, rural community development, 3R, agro-forestry etc. Many of them highlight the new knowledge creation processes towards sustainability - integrating the expertise and indigenous knowledge available, and seek to emphasize the key role of NGOs as a facilitator in the implementation and integration processes.

Based on the AGEPP documentation, ESD-J also published “Handbook for ESD in Asia” that briefly introduces the 12 selected cases with very vivid pictures. The Handbook is also available to be downloaded from AGEPP website in English, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian and Japanese.

For further information, please contact Fumiko Noguchi, the ESD-J coordinator: fumiko@esd-j.org

Korea


To celebrate the establishment of the Committee, a commemorative ESD forum will be held in October to mobilize national political will, reaffirm concerned multi-stakeholders’ commitment to ESD, and seek ways to move ESD further from the margins into the center of education. The forum will serve as a launching event for the second half of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Korea.

Iran

According to Article 50 of the I.R. of Iran’s Constitution, safeguarding the environment is a public duty and every legal and real identity organization is obliged to protect the environment. Since civilians are considered real assets in a civil society, the more educated and qualified the civilians are the more improved will our assets be. Therefore, providing Environmental Education for children and adolescents is the key to promote the knowledge of environmental protection for the families.

Viewing the approach of Environmental Education, Tehran Municipality took the initiative and launched the “Green School Plan” for a number of school districts (regions 1, 2 and 19 of Tehran) and considered Soodeh Educational Centre (with a premises equipped with IMS system) as the pilot districts which will later promote this centre as a model Green School for other educational centres.

The educational centre of Soodeh not only includes a curriculum based on infrastructural topics such as energy consumption model in the building, water consumption, waste water issues and recycling of the waste, but also its curriculum has an “environment research hour/lesson” designed by the Environmental Education experts in order for presentation of the material in the field.

Soodeh is constructed in an area of 5650 Sq m, in 6 stories and is equipped with several laboratories, one research lab and one computer site.
Regional News

...Member State Updates

New Zealand

This month Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand (SANZ) and the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO launched a publication that outlines the way forward for sustainable living beyond current international best practices such as reduce, reuse and recycle, and minimising the human “footprint”.

Entitled “Strong Sustainability for New Zealand: principles and scenarios”, the publication is a foundation resource for the New Zealand DESD programme. It proposes ways of living that give priority to the ecological values needed to sustain the natural systems and resource systems and economies rely on. It was launched to New Zealand media at a press conference in Wellington on September 3rd, 2009.

The scenarios proposed by SANZ in the paper are the result of a think tank of well-respected experts in many different fields, who came together to identify solutions for how human civilisation can survive, by becoming truly sustainable as a functioning part of earth’s ecosystems.

The chair of SANZ and editor of the publication, Dr Wayne Cartwright, said that through their research the think tank concluded that current sustainability practices all add up to being no better than ‘less damaging’ than previous practices.

“We have labelled the current Triple Bottom Line approach to sustainability as “Weak Sustainability” because we continue to experience climate change, economic recession, environmental degradation, human inequality and social breakdown while implementing the TBL model,” Dr Cartwright said. He commented further that most of the UNDESD efforts around the world are based on the TBL model and so have relatively limited scope. “The New Zealand approach to DESD appears to be the only one that is founded on the principles of strong sustainability,” he said.

“What we’re aiming for in human civilisation is to survive, is the rejuvenation of the earth’s falling ecosystems – this involves an approach that we have labelled ‘Strong Sustainability. Achieving Strong Sustainability requires a realisation that the world’s approach to economics is the main culprit for the degradation of our planet, and an understanding that economic growth cannot continue indefinitely.”

The pathway to ‘Strong Sustainability’ and scenarios demonstrating how society will operate when ‘Strong Sustainability’ is achieved are described in the paper – Dr Cartwright said it is hoped that the publication will help to start New Zealand on its journey towards becoming truly sustainable through education – both formal and within the community.

Strong Sustainability: Principles and Scenarios can be viewed online at www.phase2.org.

Australia

In April this year, the Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garrett MP, released Living Sustainably, the Australian Government’s National Action Plan for Education for Sustainability.

The plan, which was developed through community consultation, sets out how to equip Australians with the knowledge and skills to achieve their environmental, economic and social aspirations and to ensure that they are pursued in harmony with each other. It recognises that if sustainability is to be achieved, actions need to go beyond formal education and engage a variety of sectors.

The plan identifies priority actions against four strategies:
1. Demonstrating Australian Government leadership
2. Reorienting education systems to sustainability
3. Fostering sustainability in business and industry
4. Harnessing community spirit to act.

The Australian Government will work with the newly constituted National Council on Education for Sustainability (which advises on national needs and priorities) and the National Education for Sustainability Network (which has representatives from Australian and state/territory government environment and education portfolios) to implement actions within the plan. It will establish partnerships within and between the government, industry and community sectors to ensure progress on a national scale.

For more information, please see the plan which is available at www.environment.gov.au/education/nap.
Adapting to Change in Academia

LEAPing towards excellence in SEA higher education administration

Fourteen higher education administrators in Southeast Asia convened for a three-day forum titled “Leadership Excellence for Academe Program in Southeast Asia (LEAP SEA)” held in SEARCA, Los Baños, Laguna on 20-22 May 2009.

The forum aimed to provide a venue for sharing significant new knowledge about leadership in and management of higher education, especially those in agriculture. LEAP SEA is an improvement of the Advanced Higher Education Administrator Development (AHEAD) Course, which was implemented by SEARCA from 1993 to 2003 and had 937 training alumni. ADEPTI is the acronym of the Southeast Asian Legislation for Higher Education Administrators, which was organized by the regional higher education administration institutions in other areas of the world.

Through its enhanced version, LEAP SEA, it is hoped that new experiences and knowledge will be continuously shared through systematically organized scholarly accounts published as a book of cases for general circulation.

Dr. Felix Librera, forum coordinator and professor at the UP Open University, said that there is a need to adopt appropriate approaches to knowledge sharing such as the use of e-platform. However, he emphasized that experience-based learning through the construction of case studies about unique problems and solutions that executives have experienced is equally important. For this, executives have to convene; otherwise, experiences will practically remain to themselves.

The LEAP SEA executive forum was divided into five discussion themes including: 1) Environment of Higher Education in Agriculture, 2) Contextualizing Higher Education in Agriculture in the New Millennium, 3) Strategic Management for Higher Education Institutions in Agriculture and Forestry, 4) Learning Organizations and Total Quality Management: Focus on Higher Education Institutions in Agriculture and Forestry, and 5) Enhancing and Sustaining Standards and Assessment in Higher Education in Agriculture and Forestry.

According to Dr. Yavaprabhas, Director of the SEAMEO Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (RIHED), change and diversity sum up higher education administration in Southeast Asia. Thirty years ago, higher education was only for the elite and prioritized the male population. Over the years, the massification of higher education occurred resulting to an increase in the number of institutions offering higher education not only in SEA but everywhere. Along with the increasing number of institutions is a question on the quality of higher education offered.

He further explained, “Changes happen very rapidly. Academia has to adapt – this may mean curriculum change at least every five years or a fusion program/mix of everything may also prove useful.” He also said that in the years to come, the sets of skills needed by the society could change. Thus, apart from examining students’ learning, there is also a continuous need to retrain educators/faculty to keep academic programs relevant.

Conclusively, all experts agreed that education evolves and different ways of managing higher education arise over time. They enumerated some future directions that higher education institutions should look into, including:

- Financial resource generation: Instead of relying on old sources of funds, strategists must generate new funds from the private sector alongside public sector funding.
- Faculty development, retooling or retraining: This is to ensure that what the faculty teach is still relevant and concurrently answers the society’s needs.
- Organizational restructuring: Many education models have been applied in different parts of the world; it is the administrators’ role to review what will work best under the contexts of SEAsian higher education institutions.
- Program Revision: Both content and delivery may need to be changed in order to be more effective.
Rural Youth Employment: A joint study by FAO, ILO and UNESCO

The ILO, FAO and UNESCO recently launched a joint study of three country case studies: the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, in a workshop on Addressing Challenges and Opportunities for Rural Youth Employment in Asia in Chiang Mai on 17-19 August 2009.

The purpose of the study was to identify key employment challenges for rural youth as a means to contribute to poverty reduction. The ILO, FAO, and UNESCO picked three countries (Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines), and conducted field studies to provide a deeper look into the local issues confronting the unemployed rural youth in each country, and came up with specific policy recommendations for countries in the region to consider and implement when addressing the issue of rural youth employment and poverty.

The joint study provided a glimpse into larger problems that exist within and amongst countries that affect rural youth employment opportunities. The individual field studies provided an in-depth understanding of the national context, however when juxtaposed to each other, one can identify patterns and trends of what is happening at the regional level. The individual studies and recommendations provide ties to regional issues and problems, where our collective efforts are needed. While the study specifically focused on only three countries, the collective inputs from the workshop will add data from other countries in the region who were not included in the study in order to improve our understanding of the broader issue.
The Big Ask is a Europe-wide initiative by Friends of the Earth, calling on the governments of 18 countries to commit to reducing their carbon emissions by at least 40% by 2020. Spurred on by the victorious campaign in the UK, which resulted in the historic introduction of legally binding targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 80% by 2050, the Big Ask is empowering the general public to realize that it is possible to influence the decisions made by both their national governments and the European Union.

The campaign also demands that European countries contribute their fair share of funds to enable developing countries to tackle and adapt to the consequences of climate change. October 29th will see the international launch of the ‘Big Ask Again’ video clip, which was filmed 100 days ahead of the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen this October. 10,000 people took part in a Bollywood style dance on a Belgian beach, for a film directed by the award winning Nic Balthazar.

To find out more visit:
www.thebigask.com
Announcements

ESD in action

Research project: “Sustainability in Higher Education in the Asia-Pacific: Developments, Challenges, and Prospects”

A research project focusing on sustainability efforts and developments in higher education within and across selected Asia-Pacific countries is in progress.

This research is themed around 3 key areas, as indicated in the title: ‘Developments’: the collection features contributions from countries across the Asia-Pacific, showing how sustainability is realized in a variety of HE policy contexts. It is expected that these initiatives will have developed in tandem with regional or national efforts (for example the UN Decade in Education for Sustainable Development (UN DESD)) rather than as ‘fringe’ or ‘marginal’ projects.

‘Challenges’: it is recognized that sustainability and Education for Sustainability (EFS) are complex and multidimensional agendas, and contributors are invited to make connections to the challenges arising within HE in their different national contexts. The contributions are intended to be more analytical than descriptive examples which provide reflections on models adopted or developed to advance academic thinking, as well as providing learning opportunities for those working on sustainability initiatives in other countries.

‘Prospects’: the articles in this collection are intended to indicate valuable pathways for future efforts in the UN DESD and beyond its conclusion in 2014. Contributors are asked to reflect on the potential and anticipated impact of the initiatives being presented, and their likely legacy over time.

The main part of the project outcome will be published as a special section of an international journal.

For further information on this project or for details on when it will be published, please visit www.rikkyo.ac.jp/research/laboratory/ESD/ or www.glos.ac.uk/RESEARCH/IRIS/.

OzonAction Education Pack for Schools

UNEP, UNESCO and WHO have collaborated to produce an education pack that provides teachers with a stimulating and practical curricula resource that can be used in the classroom to educate students about the protective and important role of the ozone layer.

The pack contains interactive learning activities that develop students’ knowledge, skills and understanding of staying safe in the sun. Accompanying the pack is the website www.ozzyozzone.org which features further teaching and learning tools. Visit www.rism.ac.th to see how one school in Thailand has embraced these packs.
We want to know about YOU...

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 December 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: http://creator.roho.com/mcantele/ESD-Contact-Database/form/23/ or email us your updated contact information at: esd@unescobkk.org.

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