

A Consultative Workshop on Education for Sustainable Development and a proposed group of Education and Communication Professionals

Background

The Rio Conference in 1992 and its follow-up event, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 put a great emphasis on an education process, which enables people to make decisions considering the ecological and socioeconomic perspectives. In this regard, the United Nations have dedicated a decade (2005 – 2014) for promotion of ESD globally.

IUCN – The World Conservation Union endorsed the UN's decade as *an initiative that supports IUCN's mission and raises the profile of its work*. In line with this global effort, IUCN Pakistan (IUCNP) decided to focus its education initiatives on ESD. Launching the Decade of ESD (DESD) in Pakistan, development of a toolkit on ESD and focus workshops in collaboration with UNESCO are the few initiatives that IUCNP has proposed to take up in 2005. In order to advocate ESD to key educators and communicators working in environment and sustainable development and have their feedback on promotion of this concept in Pakistan, a half-day consultative workshop was held on June 23, 2005 at IUCN's Karachi Office. During this event, a proposed group for education and communication professionals, *Communication and Education for Sustainable Development (CESD) Forum* was also introduced and feedback from participants was received. The purpose of this group is to provide educators, communicators and other interested people with an opportunity to discuss ideas, share interesting work and collaborate to initiate joint activities through an e-forum.

Participants

Educators and communicators from Institute for Educational Development (IED), SOCIETY, Habib Girls School, Provincial Institute for Teacher Education (PITE) Sindh, Indus Resource Centre, Dawn, The News, Geo TV, Sindh TV and relevant IUCNP staff – from ECK and the Sindh Programme - participated in the workshop

The Workshop

Mr. Hasan Akhtar Rizvi, Head, Education, Communication and Knowledge Management Group opened the session with an introduction to IUCNP and the workshop followed by the introduction of the participants. Ms. Zohra Rehmat Ali, Coordinator Environmental Education Programme made a presentation on the concept and proposed IUCNP initiatives on ESD. It was followed by a plenary discussion to seek ideas, feedback and recommendations from participants. Mr. Hasan Akhtar Rizvi made a presentation on CESD group, followed by a discussion on having suggestions and feedback from the participants.

Suggestions and Recommendations

ESD's Promotion in Pakistan

- Create awareness among public regarding environmental issues through formal and informal educational mechanisms and media;
- Influence the Ministry of Education to enrich the curriculum through integration of environment, and moreover ESD concerns;
- Assess the work done in education and communication for capacity building in environment and sustainable development. Also consider the ground realities such as support in terms of human and financial resources from national and international organisations for ESD;
- Follow-up actions must be undertaken – including the organizing of relevant and appropriate events - after the launch of DESD to carry on the momentum;

- Among the four domains of ESD i.e. **Basic Education, Reorienting Existing Education Programmes, Developing Public Awareness and Understanding of Sustainability and Training**, focus should be on the ones that can practically be implemented. The vision and strategies for these domains must be developed;
- A capacity mapping exercise must be conducted for stakeholders, educators, communicators, representatives from media houses and journalists in order to identify the potential human resource for ESD. A directory of ESD professionals could be maintained consisting of their names and other information such as expertise, current area of work and contact details;
- The government must be partnered in taking up lead on ESD Initiative in the country. In this regard, capacity building of related government officials such as those in the Ministry of Education and Environment should be built in ESD. This will help in bridging the gap between planning and implementing initiatives;
- A focus group consisting of Nazims, NGOs and other officials involved in decision-making should be formed to get their input in planning and implementing programmes on ESD as well as to influence other policymakers through their support;
- Involve pressure groups consisting of civil society organisations to advocate for environmental issues before the policymakers;
- Electronic media should be used as a powerful tool to create mass awareness on sustainable development issues. In this regard, efforts should be made to take up these messages through entertainment programmes such as stage shows, dramas and serials. This would assist in redefining current entertainment practices in the media by addressing burning issues in a subtle manner;
- Religious leaders and representatives from the corporate sector must be trained in ESD. This would help in mass awareness through religious sermons. Involvement of private sector in an effective manner will help in promoting green products in the market and channelise the corporate social responsibility's resources to address sustainable development issues.

Suggestions for the DESD Event

- The participants agreed to have a high profile media event – to launch DESD - followed by/or organised separately, a two days workshop for stakeholders including decision makers;
- Ministers (both federal and provincial), officials from BoC (Bureau of Curriculum), PITE and local government representative such as Nazims were recommended to be invited from all over the country;
- Recommendations for workshop participants also included political personalities, media people (editors, drama writers) and religious personalities from madrassahs beside formal education sector;
- Papers may be called before the workshop to be read during the event. These papers could be compiled and distributed to the workshop participants and relevant key stakeholders;
- The workshop themes could cover three major areas such as formal education (academia), non-formal (media, lawyers, businesses) and governance (parliamentarians). Brief working papers need to be developed to explain these themes for the participants. Environmental education and gender may be considered as a topic for discussion.

Suggestion for CESD Group

A concept paper on CESD was shared with the participants before the workshop. Following suggestions came from them:

- Workshop participants agreed to the title *CESD Forum*;
- Members may share publications by writers/ themselves for review by other members;
- The group needs to be focused on the issues;
- An ethical code of conduct should be followed by the members. It would be better to have moderated discussions in order to avoid unrelated information postings and to also respond to members' queries;

- Initiatives must be taken to maintain the momentum and interest of the group such as arrangement of few face to face meetings;
- Membership of this group should be individual and not organisational;
- There shouldn't be too unrealistic expectations from members as everybody is occupied with their work and would try to take out time to participate in discussions;
- Initially, the group must be animated by IUCNP.