Final Report:

Sub-regional Consultation
for the Planning of the Programmatic Framework for the United Nations Decade (2005 – 2014) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
San José, Costa Rica
16 – 17 April 2013

Context

At its 190th meeting, the UNESCO Executive Council expressed its "preference towards a programmatic framework for post-2014 follow-up on the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development". The Council asked that the UNESCO Director General, "in consultation with the Member States and in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, prepare a programmatic framework proposal led by UNESCO which covers, as a minimum, the period of the next Medium-Term Strategy (2014 – 2021), addresses all levels and forms of education, is based on a global sustainable development agenda and at the same time promotes countries' strategic orientation and adhesion."

For this reason, UNESCO, the leading agency of the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), organised consultation meetings in all regions in order to gather input from different actors for the following processes:

1. To develop the monitoring and assessment final report on the Decade;

2. To build a framework for action to define follow-up on the Decade after 2014; and

3. To plan for the World Conference to be held in 2014 in Japan at the end of the Decade on Education for Sustainable Development.

These three processes are essential for successfully bringing the Decade to a close and ensuring substantial planning and follow-up beyond 2014.

Objectives and results

The sub-regional consultation for the Latin American countries had the following objective:

- *To help ensure a transparent and participatory preparation process for the post-2014 ESD programmatic framework through the collection of input from relevant actors in the Latin American Member States.*

Results:

1. Identified priority areas for post-2014 ESD activities in Latin America;

2. Identified successful regional initiatives on ESD that can be replicated and extended in the post-2014 programmatic framework;

3. Identified relevant regional partners to be involved in the post-2014 framework;

4. Received proposals the preparation of UNESCO World Conference on ESD (10-12 November 2014, Japan).

Participants

The Ministries of Education, Ministries of Environment, NGOs, and academia all participated in the sub-regional consultation. All Spanish-speaking countries and Brazil were present.

Organisers

The encounter was organised by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago) and the PNUMA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, with the support of the Costa Rican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO. The meeting was financed with funds provided to UNESCO by the Government of Japan and PNUMA.

Procedures

The meeting's programme consisted of two workdays, with the first day focused on reviewing the progress and current situation of the DESD in the region as well as the process for the final assessment of the Decade's impact. The second day aimed at collecting input for the post-2014 ESD programmatic framework. The methodology included presentations, open forums and group work. The sessions were facilitated by Astrid Hollander of OREALC/UNESCO Santiago.

The first day started off with Welcome Speeches given by the Director of the UNESCO Office for Central America, Montserrat Martell, the Secretary General of the Costa Rican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, Ana Mayela Coto Gonzalez, and the PNUMA Programme Officer, Isabel Martinez. All three provided the foundation for the discussions to be held over the two workdays and emphasised the importance of education in order to achieve sustainable development and sustainable societies, in the specific context of the Latin American region.

Following the opening ceremony, Abelardo Brenes, member of the expert group that advises the DESD monitoring and assessment process, presented the monitoring and assessment process for the Decade, with a special focus on the final process phase which will culminate in the final monitoring and assessment report to show the impact generated by the Decade. Mr. Brenes presented the different tools to be used during this final phase, including questionnaires, case studies, consultation with experts, meeting with different actors, among others. In order to review the progress achieved until now by the DESD, Astrid Hollander presented the results of the 2012 global monitoring and assessment report, highlighting the progress and best practices of the Latin American region.

(The presentations are available via the following link: http://www.orealc.cl/educaciondevelopmentsostenible/documentos/)

As a result of the discussions generated by the presentations, comments and suggestions were made on how to improve the monitoring and assessment process and on how to highlight the Latin American experience within the global context. With respect to the global process, it is recommended that the questionnaire be sent to the countries and responded to through a participatory process involving multiple actors. Since the questionnaire has its limitations and cannot reflect the richness of each country's experiences in terms of ESD and other sustainability-related education, one solution could be the creation of national reports based on the questionnaire, but with more space for reflection and the presentation of the progress and achievements made by each country, according to the specific context.

The monitoring and assessment process must revisit the initial objectives formulated for the Decade. Many of these have not yet been achieved, and they must be evaluated in order to propose new objectives for the post-2014 framework.

It is clear that there has been significant progress in the Latin American region in terms of environmental education, both in policy and in practice. There is a greater awareness of Environmental Education (EE) and ESD and in countries such as Cuba we can see the integration of EE and ESD. UNESCO recognises that the region's strong EE tradition has made it possible to continue to promote education as a key tool for attaining sustainability. For this reason the DESD monitoring and assessment process must value and visualise the significant contributions of EE and other types of education that promote sustainability "in its own right" and not as a mere sub-topic of ESD. Other approaches are mentioned such as the socio-productive community education of Bolivia, education for sustainable human development of Uruguay and education for planetary citizenship promoted by the Paulo Freire Institute in Brazil. The diversity of each of these approaches must be recognised. However, the systemic and transformational perspectives of the different types of "education" that favour sustainability are important, and not merely the denominations used.

The discussions identified some pending challenges, including involving multiple actors and creating synergy. Likewise, the participants recognised the difficulties that arose when trying to translate an international commitment such as the DESD to actions to the national level, and expressed doubts on how to evaluate the real impact of the ESD on the general public. More knowledge is required about the actions carried out within the non-formal education sector and how these experiences can be used by the formal sector. Throughout the Decade, international cooperation has driven and supported actions on ESD and related types of education; the challenge now is to follow up on and continue these with the countries' own resources.

A discussion also arose regarding ESD as a component of quality education. There is a general belief that in order to change society, the quality of education needs to be improved. ESD can contribute to this, but first there needs to be an in-depth discussion about the concept of quality education.

To follow up on the discussion, four presentations were given on best practices in education for sustainability.

- The Venezuelan Ministry of Popular Power for the Environment: "Successful experiences in the area of environmental education". Presented the regulatory framework for environmental education in Venezuela and the integration of EE in primary, secondary and higher education. It highlighted the inter-ministerial work on this issue in coordination with the Ministry of Education.

- Chilean Ministry of Education: "Sustainable Educational Communities." Presented the new "roadmap" developed by the Ministry of Education to create sustainable school communities, including six "destinations": management instruments, environmental management, inclusion, participation, healthy lifestyles, and environmental relations.

- Paulo Freire Institute, Sao Paulo: "City governments that educate." This is an initiative of the Paulo Freire Institute aimed at contributing to urban development through the identification, empowerment and mobilisation of local educational and learning spaces and opportunities, focused on the people who live and work there. This programme has promoted "planetary citizenship".

- Regional Centre of Excellence in Education for Sustainable Development (RCE Lima-Callao): "Regional Centres of Excellence in ESD". Presented the RCE model, which is a network of 80 centres around the world certified by the University of the United Nations. In the case of RCE Lima-Callao, this works with local institutions and actors and is coordinated by the Universidad Ricardo Palma in Lima. It provided concrete

examples of the work done by RCE Lima Callao and the Biodiversity and Intercultural Knowledge programme.

These presentations highlighted political-regulatory practices (Ministry of the Environment and Education), from the non-formal sector (Paulo Freire Institute) and the academic sector (the presentations can be found at the link provided above).

After the presentation of best practices, the participants worked in groups to identify the challenges faced by the implementation of ESD within the ESD framework and how these challenges were addressed. Additionally, the task also included the identification of success factors that helped push ESD forward.

Among the challenges identified are:

- Difficulties coordinating the international frameworks and (sub) national policies.
- The need to clarify/simplify the language in order to discuss ESD with diverse audiences.
- The need to expand public awareness of DESD.
- Limited access to information on best practices.
- Lack of pedagogical-methodological processes in order to but transformational education into practice.
- Absence of mechanisms to monitor public policies.
- Limited measurement and assessment of the impact of activities carried out on ESD.
- Limited inclusion and recognition of indigenous knowledge.
- The lack of participation and coordination of multiple actors, including civil society and social organisations.
- Citizen participation in the development of policies and programmes.
- Lack of resources.
- Discontinuity in the agendas – objectives changed before they are met. Near-sighted vision in public policies.
- The inclusion of ESD in initial teacher training and professional development as well as in the training of other key professionals in the educational sector.
- Difficulty in the mainstreaming of ESD in a curriculum structured around different subjects.
- Limited inclusion of ESD in higher education.

Among the success factors mentioned:

- Basing ESD on local needs and contexts in order to ensure its relevance
- Creating synergy among different actors and different "educations" (environmental education, values education, education on climate change, education for peace, etc.).
- Pursuing systemic actions with coherence and coordination among political agendas, programmes and practice.
- Pursuing an impact at the local level without forgetting the need to create national and international policies.

- Promoting a participatory, experience-based, critical and transformational pedagogy centred on people.

- Including knowledge, values and attitudes in favour of sustainability in the curriculum.

- Coordinating public policies on ESD for formal, non-formal and informal education, and their continuity despite changes in government.

- Strengthening cooperation and exchange of experiences among countries.

- Taking ESD beyond schools and including more groups among its beneficiaries (authorities, community promoters, public officials, the general public, all social actors).

- Using resources made available through international cooperation for the implementation of ESD.

The second day began with the presentation of the GUPES programme (Global Universities Partnership on the Environment and Sustainability) of PNUMA, which links more than 120 universities around the world with the objectives of promoting the integration of environmental and sustainability considerations in education and research; favouring the day-to-day environmental management of universities; as well as increasing and improving student participation in activities aimed at sustainable development inside and outside the universities (the presentation is available at the following link: http://www.orealc.cl/educaciondevelopmentsostenible/documentos/)

The majority of the second day was dedicated to the post-2014 programmatic framework for ESD. It started off with the presentation of the basic guidelines for the programmatic framework proposed by UNESCO. This is still a basic proposal expected to be developed using input from the countries (collected through questionnaires and regional consultations) and selected experts. The programmatic framework must be focused on expanding actions, include all levels and forms of education, incorporate different partners and networks, and have a key approach and objectives (see the entire presentation at the link provided above). In order to collect input from the actors and countries present, groups were formed and asked to respond to a series of questions. The questions and group responses are summarised below:

Identify areas of action that should be included in the post-2014 framework

- Develop/review public policies on ESD with concrete plans of action and monitoring and follow-up, which can continue beyond changes in government and authorities. These policies must be developed with the participation of different actors, assigning concrete roles and responsibilities.

- Promote fluent information mechanisms that guarantee that the national and international guidelines and agreements are implemented in educational practice.

- Increase and improve distribution of relevant educational materials and best practices among the countries for different educational spheres (formal and non-formal).

- Research on the ESD theoretical framework in order to better define the concept and its relation to other "educations" (e.g. environmental education).

- Define ESD educator profiles.

- Research on the impact of the application of public policies on ESD in different countries, and follow-up, monitoring and identification of successful national, community and institutional experiences.
- Research to review the philosophical, epistemological and didactic frameworks of ESD.
- Create an education that is relevant and appropriate given the community contexts, while respecting cultural traditions and customs.
- Establish International Cooperation with Entities and international agreements.
- Recognise and examine in-depth experiences in environmental, popular, and community education and education for peace and well-being, in order to value and adopt these.
- Increase and improve communication of the concept of ESD to a broader audience, beyond formal education (involving the communications media and social communicators).
- Propose regional projects or other coordination mechanisms that support the countries' initiatives and which also follow-up on and assess the countries' accomplishments, accompanied by the strengthening of capacities (human, material and financial resources).

Identify particular priorities (levels and specific types of education, specific challenges for sustainable development, etc.)

Must address all educational levels, as well as non-formal and informal education. However, priority shall be given to the following areas:

- Put "lifelong" ESD in practice and going beyond the schools to also include the (non-formal) education of youth and adults and community education.
- Include ESD in higher education (undergraduate and graduate levels) and in the universities' outreach activities.
- Prioritise the inclusion of ESD in initial teacher training and professional development, both in terms of content and pedagogy in order to promote participatory and transformational pedagogy.
- Train leaders and decision makers.
- Train professionals.
- Train social communicators.

Prioritise the challenges to sustainable development that must be highlighted in the post-2014 ESD programmatic framework (climate change, equality, water, biodiversity, poverty).

Participants mentioned that the post-2014 ESD programmatic framework must strengthen the holistic and systemic nature of ESD and not prioritise certain topics in isolation, since these may vary based on the regional, country and community context. Rather, the following challenges should be taken into consideration for the implementation of ESD:

- Education's main task is to contribute to a change in paradigm from a fragmented and reductive mind-set to an integrative mind-set that allows for the comprehension of the complexity of the social and natural phenomena that constitute us.
- Participation of civil societies, considering the inclusion of different types of knowledge.

But some groups also identified the following:

- Water, climate change, and others from an eco-systemic approach that brings us to the sustainability of the Planet.
- Protection of biodiversity.
- Agricultural ecology.
- Risk prevention and local management.
- Energy and the environment.

Identify successful ESD initiatives in the region that could be replicated / expanded in the post-2014 framework

A series of successful initiatives have been identified that could be adapted to other contexts and expanded. However, this list is not complete and requires a greater compilation of best practices.

- Chilean national ESD policy.
- Municipal environmental certification in Chile (focused on participatory land management).
- Development of didactic materials – Educating for a sustainable lifestyle and educator training (Costa Rica).
- Paulo Freire Institute: City government that educates project (among schools and communities / planetary citizenship).
- Colombia: Citizen training, coordinating different mainstream axes for sustainable development.
- Cuba: Education in disasters and local risk management, with teacher training.
- The Dominican Republic: Student eco-visits for environmental education and recreation.
- Brazil: Group of educators for the implementation of sustainable education cities and the Construction of sustainable societies.
- Guatemala: Elaboration of curricular orientation documents for climate change.
- Argentina: Environmental union training programme and certification of labour competencies.
- Ecuador: Eco-workshops, led by rural community leaders.
- Peru: National Policy on Environmental Education for Sustainable Development.
- RCE Lima Callao, Biodiversity and Intercultural Knowledge Programme. Recovery of Andean-Amazonian intercultural knowledge to improve the relevance of education and the sustainable protection of biodiversity. Developed in collaboration with GIZ and PNUMA.

Identify key partners/actors that should be involved in the post-2014 activities

- Civil Societies and NGOs
- Networks for community development
- Universities
- United Nations Agencies
- Labour Unions
- Companies
- Legislators and mayors

- School communities (teachers, parents, students, directors, administrators)
- Indigenous communities
- Artists
- City governments

Regional recommendations for the post-2014 ESD activities and programme

- Assume all forms and contributions to ESD (environmental education, education for peace, values education, intercultural education, etc.)
- Follow-up by UNESCO
- Strengthen the coordination between UNESCO and PNUMA
- Promote intercultural education, which promotes a dialogue among different types of knowledge
- Emphasise the importance of incorporating values inherent to sustainability in education. – Change the rationality of profiting to rationality based on being.
- Pursue new methodologies (pedagogical mediation) that are appropriate to the 21st century context in which we live.
- Share experiences on a more permanent basis
- Elaborate a commitment for Latin American and the Caribbean
- Stimulate the elaboration of national policies on this issue
- Create a digital platform with resources on this topic
- Use education to strengthen planetary citizenship, linking non-hegemonic globalisation with local success stories
- Align international educational policies (among themselves) with national and local policies
- Expand awareness and promotion of the Decade (make it popular) and simplify the language in order to reach everyone
- Do not frequently change the objectives until they have been fulfilled. It is important that we do not create new Decade objectives before we have met those objectives already established. It is important to stand by these objectives
- The post-2014 programmatic framework must have clear and precise objectives in order to better convince the decision makers
- Use ESD to influence current lifestyles

The last session was dedicated to the presentation of the plans for ESD World Conference to be held in Japan in November 2014, which UNESCO is organising in conjunction with the Japanese Government to mark the end of the Decade. The Conference is aimed at celebrating the actions and achievements of the DESD and to define the post-2014 agenda for ESD. The presentation included general information such as the profile of the participants, the programme components, the topics and the expected results. The meeting attendants were invited to propose possible results/additional products as well as regional events in 2013 and 2014 that could help with the planning of the World Conference.

The participants commented that there is a real interest in preparing a final document as a result of the Conference, which would be participatory and include the perspective of the

Latin American and Caribbean reality. This would require the identification of mechanisms to facilitate the participation of multiple actors.

In order to give greater visibility to the Conference, it was suggested that we invite well-known/famous people committed to educational issues and/or sustainability in order to generate interest among the communications media.

With respect to the groups that should be invited, emphasis was given to the indigenous communities which are often under-represented in global events but whose rich knowledge can be shared in the area of ESD and sustainability.

Young people represent another important group, since they are the main "recipients" of ESD. We need to ensure that their wants and needs in terms of education are taken into consideration. Ideally, events with young people should be organised by region prior to the World Conference, in order to give them ample opportunities to give their input on the design of the post-2014 ESD framework.

Because the number of participants is limited, videos could be used to record and present the experiences of organisations that cannot participate in the Conference.

In the Latin American region there will be some important events which could include preparation elements for the ESD World Conference, such as the 2014 Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education or the 7th Congress of the Mesoamerican Society for Biology and Conservation to be held in September 2013 in Havana, Cuba.

In preparation for the Conference, participants proposed that best practices and successful experiences in the region could be identified and systematised in order to be presented at the Conference, both in the fairs and the main schedule.

Final Discussion:

At the end of the meeting, before the closing words were given, the organisers once again emphasised that the current ESD processes, including both the final monitoring and the development del programmatic framework post-2014, must reflect the experience of Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as recognise the achievements of different types of education not defined as ESD but which are aimed at promoting sustainability in our society and encourage participatory and transformational education. It is recommended that before creating new objectives and goals, we should review the existing objectives of the DESD that are still valid and not yet achieved. Additionally, we need to remember the seven necessary types of knowledge for the future of education formulated by Edgar Morin and backed by UNESCO in 1999 (these are: the biases of knowledge; error and illusion; the principles of pertinent knowledge; teaching about the human condition; teaching about worldly identity; facing uncertainties; teaching about understanding; the ethics of the human gender), which are still quite applicable today and should be reflected in ESD.

It should be emphasised that UNESCO is an organisation of Member States who define their own programmes. Thus it is important that the meeting participants take the meeting results and make their comments, ideas, critiques and proposals known to UNESCO in order to ensure that their perspectives are represented in the meetings of the Member States. Within this context, we must emphasise again the need to respond to the questionnaires sent by UNESCO, in an inclusive and participatory manner, so as to guarantee that the responses are representative of the perspectives of different actors.

Acknowledgments

UNESCO would like to thank the Ministry, NGO and university representatives for their active and constructive participation in the consultation.

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We also appreciate the participation and contribution of PNUMA, which has facilitated the participation of the representatives of the Ministries of the Environment.

Finally, we would like to thank the Government of Japan for its financial support for the event.

Appendix 1: Schedule

16 April 2013		Comments
8:30 – 9:00	**Participant registration**	
9:00 – 10:00	**Opening** Welcome speeches • Montserrat Martell, Interim Director, UNESCO San José (pending confirmation) • Isabel Martinez, Representative of PNUMA • Ana Mayela Coto González, Secretary General, Costa Rican Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO Introduction • Introduction of the meeting's objectives *Astrid Hollander, OREALC/UNESCO Santiago* • Presentation of the participants	
10:00 – 10:30	**Coffee Break**	

10:30 – 12:30	**Session I: Final Assessment Final of the DESD**	
	• Progress update: Presentation of the results of the 2012 Global DESD Monitoring and Assessment Report	
	• Presentation of Phase III (monitoring and assessment)	
	• Introduction and presentation of monitoring and assessment tools, including guides for the design of a national agenda and plan for ESD research	
	Astrid Hollander, OREALC/UNESCO Santiago	
	Discussion: Latin American contributions to ESD evidence	
12:30 – 2:00	**Lunch**	

2:00 – 3:30	**Session I (cont.)**
	• Presentation of successful ESD initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean (policies, practices, research)
	• Discussion:
	  ○ Which ESD initiatives have been especially successful in the region? Why?
	  ○ Identification of success factors and challenges
		Before the meeting, the participants will be asked to share information about successful ESD initiatives, following a specific format. From the contributions received, three examples will be selected for presentation and discussion.

3:30 – 4:00	**Coffee Break**	

4:00 – 5:30	**Session I (cont.)** • Discussion: o What have been the challenged faced in the implementation of ESD within the ESD framework in the region? How were these challenges addressed? • Development of a work plan for the participation of Latin American countries in the final monitoring and assessment phase	In plenary: facilitation and guided discussion
17 April 2013		
9:00 – 10:30	**Session II: Post-2014 ESD programmatic framework** • Presentation of the basic guidelines for the post-2014 programmatic framework *Astrid Hollander, OREALC/UNESCO Santiago* • Identification of regional input to guide the post-2014 programmatic framework Group work to: o Identify areas of action that should be included in the post-2014 framework o Identify particular priorities (for example, levels and specific types of education, specific challenges to sustainable development, etc.) o Identify successful ESD initiatives in the region that could be replicated / expanded in the post-2014 framework o Identify key partners/actors that should be involved in post-2014 activities o Regional recommendations for the post-2014 ESD activities and programme	Group work

10:30 – 11:00	**Coffee Break**	
11:30 – 12:30	**Session II (cont.)** • Continued group work	
12:30 – 2:00	**Lunch**	
2:00 – 3:00	**Session II (cont.)** • Presentation of the group work results and plenary discussion	

3:00 – 4:30	**Session III:** Preparing the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development 2014
	
	• Presentation of the planning process to date
	• Discussion
	    o What activities in the region mark the way towards the conference?
	    o Regional input for the World Conference consensus document
	    o Recommendations for possible additional results/products of the World Conference	

4:30 – 5:00	**Closing** Summary and closing remarks	