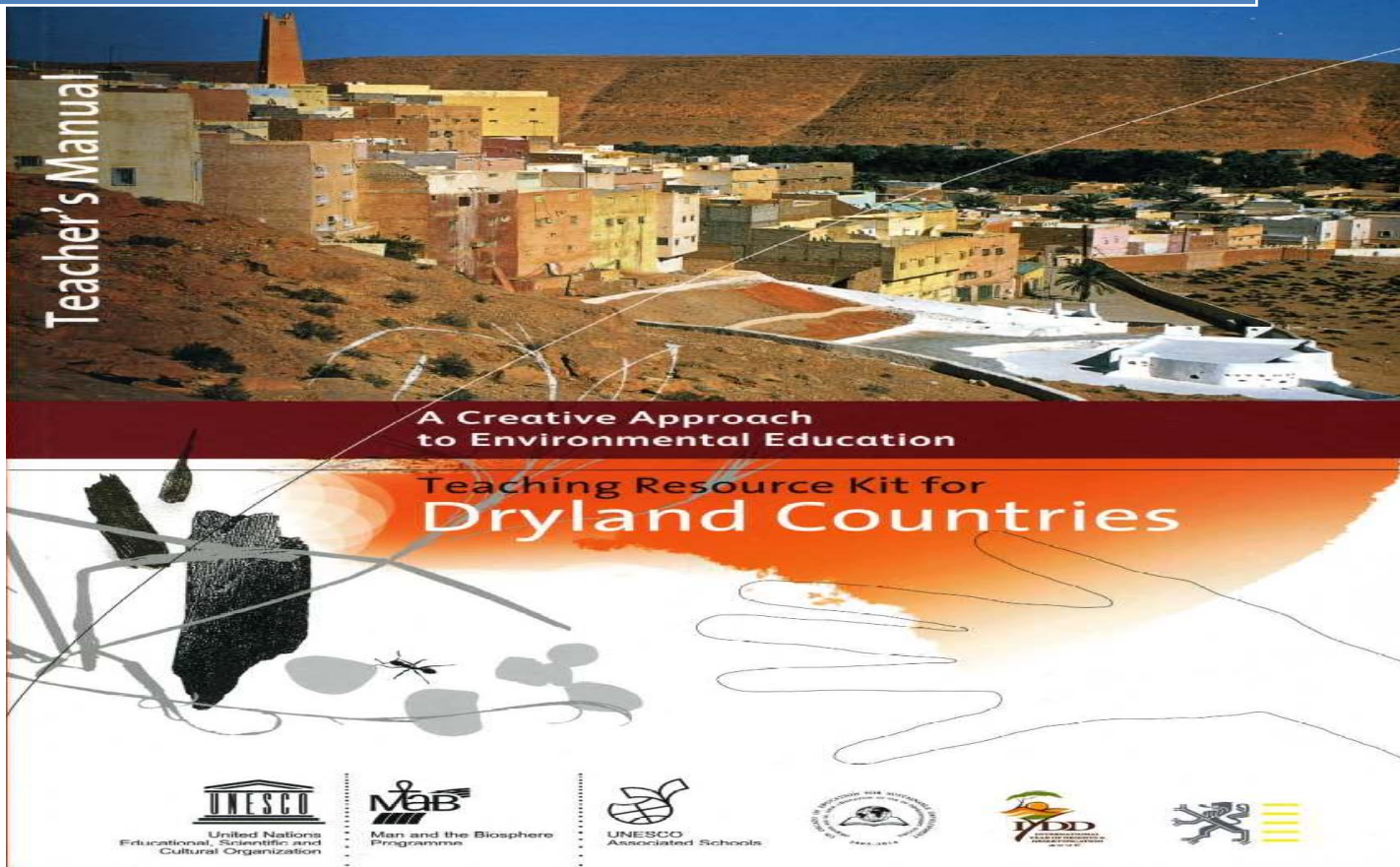


2011

First Sub regional meeting on the use of the Environment Education Kits
April 26-27, 2011
Dubai, United Arab Emirate



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Acknowledgment

The participants of The Sub-regional meeting on the use of the Environment Education Kits expressed their great appreciation for the Meeting organizers and hosting country. They would like to give special thanks and gratitude to the organizing committee, led by Dr. Mohamed Al-Aawah, Ecology and Earth Sciences Specialist, UNESCO Office Cairo. They appreciate especially the continuous encouragement given by UNESCO Regional Office for Science & Technology in Cairo.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Environmental education and awareness is important at all levels and needs to start early in order to make an impact on the consciousness of the individual. In drylands especially, educational programmes which define a pedagogical method to raise environmental awareness among pupils and to help them learn about sustainable development is one of the major instruments to empower these pupils and the population to combat desertification and support biodiversity and environmental conservation.

UNESCO, in close collaboration with the UNCCD Secretariat, has produced an **Education Kit on Combating Desertification** which was successfully launched on the occasion of UNCCD COP-5 in Geneva (Switzerland, 2001). The education kit targets primary schools of desertification-affected countries and is based on real life situations in desertification-affected States Parties worldwide. National Focal Points for the UNCCD, as well as NGOs working in the field of combating desertification, had been invited to submit case studies highlighting the causes and consequences of desertification, but also successful means of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The kit contains a series of twelve case studies which have been published in textbook form for school teachers. Moreover, the kit comes with a teacher's guide to the problems of desertification and drought, as well as information on the UNCCD, and offers various solutions for combating land degradation. A wall chart for usage in class-rooms entitled "Desertification in the World" complements the kit. The kit also contains a cartoon for children; although desertification is a very serious matter, the cartoons suggest in a playful manner several means of overcoming desertification.

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme also developed **teaching resource kits** for environmental education designed to be used in **dryland countries**. The kit was a UNESCO contribution to the 2006 International Year of Deserts and Desertification. The kit also feeds into activities developed as part of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), the promotion of which falls within UNESCO's fields of competence. It is intended for primary and secondary school teachers worldwide and are based on an innovative approach appealing to the creativity and artistic sensibilities of pupils. As educational material, the kits use a creative approach to awaken environmental knowledge through creative and thought-stimulating activities that encourage rediscovery and appreciation of the natural environment and biodiversity. Another important dimension of this approach is to bring in the very notion of sustainable development through the application of creative activities: in real-life situations and through specific exercises like creating illustrative inventories, role playing, scenario building, achieving frescoes, gardening, pupils learn to think of people as playing an integral part of the ecosystem and develop their capacity to think critically about the impact of human activities on the environment. As such, the kits are consistent with the activities developed as part of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) of which UNESCO is lead agency and feed in with the vision of education developed by the Education Sector Paper as it specifies that "pursuing sustainable development through education requires educators and learners to reflect critically on their own communities; identify non-viable elements in their lives; and explore tensions among conflicting values and goals. ESD brings a new motivation to

learning as pupils become empowered to develop and evaluate alternative visions of a sustainable future and to work to collectively fulfill these visions.”

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001808/180820a.pdf>

1.2 Main objectives

- To introduce the Educational Resource kit for teachers, policy-makers, experts and advisors in the field of education and Natural resources Conservation so as to reinforce Environment Education in their countries
- To support governments, communities and schools to develop capacity to promote environmentally sensible and sustainable solutions which will improve learning environments for children, while taking the ownership of maintaining the natural resources and restoring local environmental conditions.
- To develop guidelines for the conduct of national workshops on Environment Education
- To develop guidelines for formulation of National Action Plans
- To create new synergy among educators, teachers, curriculum developers, experts and environmental specialists.

1.3 Structure and themes

This meeting was planned to be as interactive as possible: participants are strongly encouraged to exchange views; lesson learnt and identify case studies and best practice pertaining to the workshop themes. It is expected that after the end of the meeting, each participating country through its National Commission for UNESCO will designate a national committee from different disciplines whose responsibility will be to develop plans and strategies guaranteeing the successful promotion of Environment education in the country, and to ensure the participation of all concerned ministries and civil sectors of society, including voluntary organizations and the private sector. The committee also is expected to encourage the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) in the country to take part in the experimentation of the Educational Kit.

1.4 Profile of participants

The participants of the meeting were focal points and/or experts of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), (See **Annex 1**, for List of Participants)

1.5 Expected Results

- Assess the current situation of the Environment Education of participating countries
- Promote a consensus on approaches and principles in implementing Environment Education activities
- Identify sustainable solutions for challenges in Environment Education by exchanging experience of best practice between the countries
- Enhance knowledge on the management of natural resources in dryland countries

2. The Meeting (1st Day)

2.1 Speech, Documentary Film on the Arabian Desert & overview on Meeting Objectives

Dr. Mohamed Al-Aawah, Ecology & Earth Sciences Programme Specialist at UNESCO Office in Cairo, welcomed the guests on behalf of UNESCO Office in Cairo, with his opening address in which he indicated that Environment Education is the main pillar for good Education and that the Environment Education expanded its goals to include social and economic equity and to promote this wide definition of Environment Education the UN launched the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). He also mentioned that Environment Education activities should work toward raising the awareness among students and youth for the conservation of their natural resources and protection of the environment.

The opening speech was followed by a documentary film on the Arabian Desert produced by ACSAD in collaboration with UNESCO Cairo Office and UNEP. At the end of the opening session the participants briefed on the purpose of the meeting which emphasize the need to Identify sustainable solutions for challenges in Environment Education in the Arab Region.

2.2 Experts presentations

2.2.1 UNESCO Environment Educational Kits (**Mohamed Al-Aawah- UNESCO Cairo Office**)

Dr. Al-Aawah introduced the Environmental Educational kits produced by UNESCO, both the Desertification Kit and Dryland kit to the participants by highlighting the content of the kits and a brief description of each chapter/ unit of the kits. He also explained the educational objectives behind each kit. He stressed that the kits are consistent with the activities developed as part of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development of which UNESCO is lead agency .He indicated that the best way to promote awareness for environmental issues and promote environmentally responsible behaviors is through increased access to environmental education.

2.2.2 Environment Education and water resources in dry land and desert areas (**Mustafa El-Hakim- Egypt**)

Dr. El-hakim in his presentation indicated that the Arab world is rich with various natural resources such as water resources, biodiversity and deserts. He mentioned that these resources are the secret of life, but unfortunately they are deteriorating due to their current unfair exploitation which negatively affects their sustainability. He added that Increase awareness with information about groundwater, wetlands, swamps, lakes and river basins, as they are an important and necessary requirement to manage water resources in a sustainable manner, with a focus on conducting more researches on the development of local crops that are tolerant to drought and salinity.

2.3 Working Group (Session 1)

The participants were divided into two working groups. Each group quickly examined the contents of one box and provided some suggestions of its content as follow:

A) The Cartoons Story

- Reading stories can build wide range of information and accumulate some ideas about the phenomenal and how to eliminate its effects over our lives in real story or even imaginary stories can create a generation with special interest in better environment.
- Looking for the information is a good way of active learning.
- Using local names helps the kid to live the character and act like it.
- Formulate the kind of kids thinking and expose them to the different scenarios and different options to solve the consequences of the desertification over their communities.
- The kit should include several booklets targeting different age groups and visual materials such as video or theatric play.
- Lots of information is concentrated in the story. It needed to be friendlier oriented.

B) The Poster:

- The Poster shows that almost all the world is suffering with different degrees from desertification.
- Using Cartoons might have better effects and strong influence on the kids.
- The pictures on the top of the posters don't show any human beings which indicates that manhood is far from the (Cause- Results and consequences) relationship.
- The (Before & After) pictures might have deeper effects and show how much mankind can make a difference.
- It was preferable to put some definitions on the poster to explain in a simple way some basic wording.

3. The meeting (2nd Day)

3.1 Experts Presentations

3.1.1 *Analysis of Sudanese School Curricula on Environment and Desertification in Light of UNESCO Environmental Education Curricula Guides (Altayeb Ahmed –Sudan)*

Dr. Eltayeb in his presentation indicated that Sudanese School Curricula on Environment and Desertification include six curricula in basic schools (which comprise eight years) and three curricula in secondary schools (which comprise three years). All of these contain material connected to the environment to varying degrees. He added that analysis of these curricula

reveals that almost all of them can be classified within education about the environment with very little emphasis on education for or in the environment. He then elaborated by saying that they are largely theoretical curricular and lack educational processes outside the classroom and direct contact with the environment. Except for lectures and a few visits and field trips, other teaching methods find little chance of application. Desertification- the most important environmental problem in Sudan- gets little attention.

Concerning contents and characteristics recommended by UNESCO, only awareness raising and behavior and attitudes are sparingly touched upon. UNESCO EE kits are not made use of. Teachers are not well-trained to deal with environmental issues and lack the personal commitment needed to tackle such issues

3.1.2 Environmental School and Green Economy (Amin Al-hamadi- Yemen)

Mr. Al-Hamadi in his presentation indicated that schools in the region should promote a more sustainable environment, by encouraging healthier food, proper waste management, and better use of their resources. He added that schools should establish a green environment for the students to experience and to take along with them outside the school premises. He went on to explain the objective of establishing a green environment schools and the pre condition for establishing such school.

3.1.3 Ms. Narmain Wafa of the League of Arab State briefed the participant on the LAS activities with regard to Environmental Education. She stressed on the necessity of co-operation between the UNESCO national committees and the environmental conventions focal points on the national level such as UNCCD, UNCBD, UNFCCC and all other conventions and encourages them to participate in the international relevant conferences and meetings such as the UNCCD meeting in Korea on October 2011. She also mentioned the importance of co-ordination with GEF and Global Mechanism to benefit from their experience in the Green Schools within the Green Economy matrix.

3.2 Working Group (Session 2)

The working groups also provided suggestions on activities and ways on how to introduce the kits to students and pupils and to encourage them to participate in the conservation of their natural resources through Environment Education and awareness raising.

3.3 Plenary Session (working group presentations& discussions)

During the plenary session discussions, the participants agreed addressing the working group suggestions to four actors: UNESCO, Governments, National committees and Schools. It can be summarized in the following table as follows:

Levels of Co-operation	Suggestions	To whom should be addressed	Future Vision
Regional	- Establish web-site to act as a lively platform that can be used by the national committees to explore their successful models.	UNESCO	- Create a scientific and applied platform for Future vision
	- Conduct rotating meetings for national commissions to identify the priorities and consequently set shared action plans for environmental education.		- Declare Regional Action Plan with firmed time table
	- Support the Exchange of visits among countries to benefit from the success stories (Kuwait model)		
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the National committees through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage all kinds of co-operation with all stakeholders. • Create innovative ways to activate the general Assembly of the committees. • Training opportunities for national, local cooperators, teachers and students who belong to the associated schools. • Provide technical and financial support to the national committees in order to implement environmental culture projects. 	Governments	- Strengthen the basis of effective partnership between the national commissions and UNESCO. That will give a good model to the successful relation between the national and international organizations.
	- Encourage the national committees to widen the circle of partners and stakeholders relevant to cultural environment issues.	- National committees	- Set the harmonization in ideas and practices among the international, regional and national trends in the field of cultural environment.
	- Encourage the national committees to support schools and provide them with the tools, booklets and all the educational		- Increase No. of people who have work/interest in cultural environment

	kits.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow up visits to associated schools to assure the progress and the accomplished advancement. Meanwhile, sharing in the school activities. - Set year plan for associated schools including scientific and culture activities. - Mark and celebrate a National Open Day for associated schools. - Conduct training workshops for teachers to develop their capacities. - Distribute all the educational kit on all the associated schools and all relevant institutions. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reach to a better environmental status on the national level.
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct training workshops for the local coordinators and provide them with all the kits and necessarily tools. - The necessity of co-operation with the national coordinator at the national committee to apply the education kit. 	- Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective communication on the school and local community level for better co-operation and co-ordination. - Harmonization in the outputs of the national plans.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare monitoring and Evaluation reports with an open are for the feed-back and filling gaps and better future planning. 		

3.4 The way ahead and Recommendation

Recommendations and Future perspective on Environment Education for the Arab Region :

1. UNESCO coordinates with the Arab League to promote for the establishment of regional strategy on Environment Education.
2. Initiate communication and coordination of efforts among ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, education institutions, nonprofit organization and private sector, to promote for Environment Education
3. UNESCO National Commission Coordinate and Cooperate with the environmental conventions focal points on the national level such as Focal points for UNCCD, UNCBD, UNFCCC and all other conventions to enhance Environment Education activities on national level.
4. Encourage the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) coordinator to benefit from GEF experience in the Green Schools within the Green Economy matrix.
5. Involve UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for promoting Environment Education activities in the region.
6. Endorse the Eco- Schools and the Green School models within the community and school systems.
7. Strengthen co-operation with the Arab Scouts Organizations, educational focal points and other stake holders to facilitate training trips to schools and universities and advocate to voluntarism and increase awareness on Environmental Education.
8. Conduct training workshops for teachers to develop their capacities on innovative environmental education and to identify and support opportunities to engage students in environmental action projects.
9. Strengthen co-operation with the Green Wave Initiative among schools that applies to Biodiversity Convention.

4. Annexes

4.1 Agenda

First Day (April 26,20011)

9:30-10:00	Registration
10:00 -10:45	Opening Session
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UAE National Commission • UNESCO Regional Office-Cairo • A documentary Film On the Arabian Desert
10:45-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-1:30	Presentations Session
11:00-11:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing the Educational Kits Mohamed Al-Aawah- UNESCO Cairo Office
11:45-12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Education and water resources in dry land and desert areas Mustafa El-Hakim- Egypt
12:30-1:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions
1:00-2:00	Lunch
2:00-4:00	Working Group Session 1
2:00- 4:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working groups each quickly examine the contents of the Kits, and briefly note useful new ideas or content relevant to the subject

Second Day (April27, 2011)

9:00-1:00	Presentations Session
9:00-9:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of Sudanese School Curricula on Environment and Desertification in Light of UNESCO Environmental Education Curricula Guides. Altayeb Ahmed- Sudan
9:45-10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental School and Green Economy Amin Al-hamadi- Yemen
10:30-10:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions
10:45-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-1:00	Working Group Session 2
11:00-1:00	Working group provide suggestions on activities and ways on how to introduce the kits to students and pupils and to encourage them to participate in the conservation of their natural resources.
1:00-2:00	Lunch
2:00-4:00	Plenary Session; Working group Presentation and Discussions
4:00-5:00	Recommendations and wrap up

...	Country	Nam	Email Address	Telephone	Titl
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4	Sudan	Prof. Elhag Ali Ahmed	eehag3@yahoo.com	0912397295	University Professor
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The meeting Moderator: Dr. Mohamed Al-Aawah- Ecological and Earth Sciences Programme Specialist- UNESCO Cairo Office

