

ARC/KOEE Education for Sustainable Development resource and training workshop, Nairobi, Kenya, March 4-11, 2012

Workshop report

Background:

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) and Kenya Organisation for Environmental Education (KOEE), in partnership, held a resource development and training workshop in Nairobi. This followed the baseline research for the project and began the formal development of an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) resource as part of an ongoing project to mainstreaming religious values into faith schools to promote ESD. This workshop included mapping curriculum plug-in points and identifying associated religious values and core text, as well as training 32 teachers and 12 faith representatives in ESD and eco-schools.



Aims and objectives

The workshop aimed to begin the development of an ESD curriculum for Christian and Muslim schools with religious values and wisdom mainstreamed. Begin the development of primary learning and teaching guide for Christian and Muslim schools on education for sustainable development with mainstreamed religious values and wisdom. Promote Eco Schools as a strategy for implementing education for sustainable development. Identify potential schools to become demonstration centers of eco-schools micro-projects. Finally, it aimed to enhance network and partnership formation for information sharing and dissemination.

1. Design/Structure and management

The workshop lasted 7 days and covered, reporting and discussion on the baseline research, mapping of religious values to ESD, field trip to selected schools, resource development, action planning and network building sessions.

2. Community Participation

Who are the stakeholders and how are they included?

The workshop had 44 participants including teachers, both classroom and in administrative roles, faith representatives in charge of education representing the 32 schools and the 5 faith groups involved in the trial. The MoE Kenya and National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) representing the support of the Kenyan Government authorities gave presentations. Representatives from UNICEF, the Catholic University of East Africa, the Methodist University, Kenyatta University, WWF US and Aqua for All, presented and attended.

3. Integration

How were modern techniques, traditions, theology and organization/government strategies integrated?

The workshop and the development of the toolkit have been influenced by the UNESCO supported initiative of Education for Sustainable Development and the UN Earth Charter. It is in line with the MoE Kenya's Provisions of Education Act for

mainstreaming religious values into ESD and is supported by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). The workshop promoted Eco-Schools as a strategy for implementation of Environmental Education, which is a worldwide schools movement promoted by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). As well as including a wide network of faith groups, largely from Kenya but also representatives from 7 faith groups in other Sub-Saharan African nations. Integration was done using ESD and the Earth Charter as a starting point and mapping associated religious values to the principles. Supporting religious texts were then identified.

4. Adaptability

How is this workshop adaptable to another country?

Faith representatives from non-Kenyan partners were included in the Kenyan workshop in order to ensure adaptability of the toolkit and broader project in to their countries. It was found during the process of this workshop that the faith values and many of the environmental issues are common to all of the partners' situations.

Going into this project it was thought that two versions of the toolkit would be produced as an outcome, one for Christian schools and one for Islamic schools. As a result of the preliminary baseline survey and discussions at the workshop, the possibility of creating one combined version was raised. The overwhelming feeling in the group was that Christianity and Islam share values about the environment and this resource could help build religious understanding and collaboration between faiths in schools. The nature of the project therefore adapted during the workshop in response to the research and to the participants convictions.



5. Gender and Inclusion

In what way is the workshop inclusive?

Transportation, accommodation, food and all materials were provided ensuring all that were invited could financially afford to attend.

The accommodation and conference facilities were accessible. Provisions were made for needs of different faith groups. The methods of workshop delivery, discussion groups and group working, were designed so that all participants could contribute to the wider programme.

6. Sustainability

How was this workshop environmentally, socially and economically sustainable?

Economically – The venue was financially affordable at a local level. The inclusion of government bodies and faith groups encourages the incorporation of long-term support for this project within their strategy and plans.

Environmentally – Food was provided from the venue's gardens, and water bottles were reused.

Socially – All stakeholders in the project have been included through the reach of the workshop. Government ministries and faith groups were included in order to impact on government and civil society policy and structures.

Follow up

Since the workshop KOEE has visited the 9 selected micro-project schools, supporting them to assess their environmental issues and possible micro-project focus. The ARC education network list has been disseminated and education competition has been launched.

The ARC Education and Water project manager will visit Kenya in May 2012, visit selected schools to assess uptake of ESD by teachers trained and meet with faith representatives to assess progress of network development. This trip will also include a visit to ARC's faith partner BAKWATA in Tanzania to discuss how the ESD project will develop in Tanzania, as well as field visits to the Jane Goodhall Institute's Roots and Shoots projects in Tanzania to share learning and explore possible partnerships on environmental education projects with faith groups in Tanzania.