WWF

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



CAMEROON
STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was introduced in Cameroon in 2011, but the actual field implementation commenced in 2012, focusing on nine pilot schools in the Bakossi Landscape that cuts across the Littoral and South West Regions of the country.

Adoption of Whole School Approach

Eight out of the nine ESD pilot schools in the Bakossi Landscape have made considerable progress in the adoption of a whole school approach. All nine pilot schools have worked hard on their school estates: eco-friendly income generating activities are in operation, beautification of the compounds is visible, education corners are emerging with maps and geometric shapes on grass lawns, school paths are being improved, school toilets have been built and school libraries are now enriched with ESD materials. All the pilot schools have Learners' Participation Platforms which means that students/pupils are now involved in some decision-making in the schools. All the schools have complete LORETs (Locally Relevant Themes) and teachers are gradually adopting participatory teaching approaches.

Empowering the youth

Five youth clusters have been created and trained in the Bakossi, and they have produced cluster business plans. They have also organised themselves for an environmental campaign to address a waste management issue near the hotel where they lodged in Nkongsamba. Also, as a demonstration of the skills acquired from their training in environmental advocacy, the youth were engaged in a mock public debate on two key environmental issues – deforestation and poaching – with an impressive impact on the audience.

210 youths from the 10 regions of Cameroon participated in a conference on the Theme: *Youth, Leadership and Sustainable Development*, organized by WWF, Cameroon's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education presided at the conference also attended by representatives of four other government Ministries. The conference promoted frank debates as youth confronted decision makers with issues of unemployment and environmental justice issues. It was recommended at the conference that issues of sustainable development be integrated in the Cameroon government's Youth Welfare Plan.

BACKGROUND

In a country plagued by rising environmental problems and characterized by the quest for rapid economic gains, there was a need for a form of education that would raise awareness about consequences, develop problem-solving skills, inculcate responsible attitudes and provide motivation for responsible citizenship and collective action.

The effort has entailed general community sensitization, involvement with education policy-makers and curriculum development developers, capacity building of a Core Team of Trainers, and logistical support for the implementation of initiatives in the pilot schools.

Learners, teachers, head teachers, parents and education authorities at divisional, regional and national levels have been very supportive of our ESD initiative. Each of these targets/stakeholders understand the contribution of ESD in achieving sustainable development, as well as the relevance of sustainable development in an era of growing challenges and uncertainties.

"ESD is for all so that all will have enough and forever. The impact of ESD is not limited to schools, but it is felt in the wider community."

Enombe G. Kome, teacher,
Government Bilingual High School Bangem

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

"To equip people with knowledge of and skills in sustainable development, making them more competent and confident while at the same time increasing their opportunities for leading healthy and productive lives in harmony with nature and with concern for social values, gender equity and cultural diversity."

UNECE



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING ESD

- The pilot schools need more support for fuller development in the various thematic areas of the Whole School Approach
- There is a strong need for strengthening the partnerships between the pilot schools and their host communities for a shared vision in the formulation and implementation of sustainable solutions
- There is a need for follow-up of the curriculum re-orientation process to ensure adequate integration of proposed innovations
- Adequate emphasis should be placed on self-assessment by pilot schools for participatory analysis, collective reflection, concrete planning, and innovation for guaranteed development into ESD Model Schools
- Education authorities and stakeholders from partner ministries should be further encouraged to carry out visits to evaluate our ESD activities in the field and report results to their ministers directly

Green entrepreneurship

Of the nine eco-friendly income generating activities currently being run in the pilot schools, two stand out – poultry in Government High School Muambong and in Government School Mbulle.

Government Bilingual High School Muambong is already serving as a clearing-house for table birds and chicks for production of table birds and eggs. Several pilot schools now depend on this school for chicks, and the women of the village buy table birds which they process into chicken pepper soup. Government School Mbulle has also impacted the community by supplying women with table birds for chicken pepper soup. The overall impact on these two communities is that most people now prefer chicken pepper soup to bushmeat pepper soup, which used to be a traditional delicacy.

Community involvement for wider impact

Ecole Publique de Nsoung and Government High School Bangem provide excellent examples of school-community partnerships, with some parents providing spaces within their compounds for the establishment of the school piggery and poultry yard for the purpose of security. In Nsoung, parents have been providing additional training support to their children in caring for the pigs and in general piggery management.

This kind of response is in recognition of the role the school plays or can play in community transformation through the useful education given to children who grow up to become informed decision-makers, wise resource users, and, therefore, responsible members of the community. By developing ESD best practices, such as those mentioned above, which are eventually adopted by the host and surrounding communities, the ESD pilot schools play a critically important role in paving the way for the sustainable development of these communities.

ESD policy and curriculum development

WWF Cameroon has achieved quite much in the area of ESD policy and curriculum development, but not without challenges. We confronted the problem of having to show authorizations from the Government to win the support of some head teachers, as well as some local and regional education authorities. We had to do a lot of top-level advocacy, indirectly through the Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, and directly by opening up a useful dialogue with the Ministries of Basic and Secondary Education, with the dual aim of obtaining written authorizations and achieving curriculum re-orientation.

After two successful ESD policy workshops, we now have not only authorizations to implement ESD, but also letters of encouragement to carry on with our initiative from these two education ministries.

WWF

Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

panda.org

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