

Guidance for the Preparation of National Launches and Activities of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

Context

Many countries have expressed interest in a national launch of the DESD, following the International Launch. Countries are requesting UNESCO to give them some guidance. The following provides some “guidance” and suggestions for national launches and some activities of the UNDESD.

Main points

General setting up of DESD Committees

- Set up at three different interdependent levels: national – regional (including regional agencies) – international
- Take into account the political structure of countries (federal or centralised)
- Ensure good coordination between national and regional committees

National Committee

- Call upon all stakeholders of society: institutions / local representatives / private sector / NGOs & associations / faith-based organisations
- Ensure an efficient balance between all stakeholders in order to take into account the complexity of issues for society related to sustainable development
- Need to include the various UN agencies, based on their presence in the country

Setting up the National Committee

- Take into account already existing committees for other international initiatives
- Need to link up and complement with the Education for All and UN Literacy Decade initiatives
- Look into the links and possible partnerships with national EFA and Literacy committees
- Ensure strengthening of the links between Education for All, Literacy, Education for Sustainable Development, Millennium Goals

Choice and Role of the President of the National Committee

- Choice based on national and international recognition of the person’s action for education and sustainable development, and his/her proven ability to manage large-scale projects
- Gives more personal visibility to the Decade at national level
- Acts as a discussion leader and facilitator, in order to federate decisions on ESD initiatives at national level.

Regional Committee

- Coordination on a regional level: readjustment / evaluation of programmes
- Regional level mobilises actors at the national level
- Has a triple role: coordination/ synergy / emulation between partners with often comparable situations at regional level
- Composed of the Presidents of the National committees
- Need to include regional bodies (Development banks, regional cooperation organisations...)

International Committee

- Incorporates both bottom-up and top-down approaches
- Small size for efficiency reasons (max. 15 members) from regional committees
- Facilitates information gathering from regional to global level
- Looks after monitoring and evaluation
- Liaison with the UN and UNESCO

Elements / key areas of Sustainable Development

- 3 pillars reaffirmed at the Johannesburg Summit: Environment / Society / Economics
- Culture: Predetermines the way issues / questions of education for sustainable development are dealt with in the specific context of each country
- Culture must be taken into account in any ESD analysis and programmes.
- Need to stress the importance of a global approach to education for sustainable development to underline the links between the various elements
- Call upon opinion leaders (journalists, decision makers, media figures...) to relay information, sensitize and mobilize in favour of sustainable development.
- Local relays such as local mayors and media should not be neglected because their proximity makes it possible for the message to be of great effectiveness.

Partnerships

- The challenges of sustainable development are difficult and complex and require all types of partnerships. There is a need for co-operation and collaboration from the grass roots level upwards, as well as for new and creative forms of partnership.
- National committees need to mobilize and create national synergy around ESD.
- Two main aspects: development of a strategy / identification of partners
- Encourage the participation of the different Ministries (Education, Environment, Health, etc.), associations and NGOs, private sector, press and media, faith-based organizations, UNESCO Clubs and Associated Schools, etc...
- Understand the concept of education as life-long learning and in a multitude of learning contexts
- Differentiate between partnerships based on non-profit interests (public sector and associations) and those based on shared profits (private sector)

Preparatory work before the National Launch

- Use the International Implementation Scheme for the Decade and the regional plans for the Decade to provide the main guiding principles for launch activities
- Different levels that interrelate and interact: Local – national – regional – international in a global approach
- Need for mobilisation, awareness raising, increased understanding prior to the launch of the Decade
- Work should be done by a team dedicated to getting regional organisations on board
- Implementation: assessment of already existing initiatives – expert research – analysis (concrete approach focused on the global nature of ESD)
- Formulate concrete proposals for the launch / for the Decade
- Identify and call upon opinion leaders and opinion relays in the country
- Preparation of short key message(s) needed

Concrete activities

- Make use of / strengthen existing concrete activities (Sustainable Development Week, International Days, ...)

- Use all types of activities to mobilize, involve and empower:
 - √ Education sector, schools, informal sector
 - √ Youth
 - √ Environment and health sectors
 - √ Associations and NGOs
 - √ Artistic and creative milieu
 - √ Journalists, media officers and media decision makers
 - √ Private sector
 - √ Local communities (through community centres, and other places of learning and exchanges)

National Launch

Launch events at national, regional or international levels should demonstrate the objectives of the Decade by being learning events in themselves, such as an international assembly of educators, youth, children and community leaders, or practical learning-by-doing events addressing sustainable development in the local context.

- International Launch: March 2005
- **National Launch: April–May 2005**
- Use existing twinning partnerships at all levels to reinforce the global dimension of the initiative
- Take into account national specificities
- Venue: move from the local level to the capital (a week dedicated to the launch)
- Possible coordination of activities at a regional level

Events

- Focus on current key national ESD developments
- Make use of all possible means: sport, TV, radio, music, theater, others
- Identify other platforms and regional events (seminars, round tables, etc) to help promote and launch the Decade
- Use national / local media (in particular those targeting youth, women) + regular contacts with media, mobilise known individuals and personalities
- Set annual dates to celebrate ESD at national level (assessment / evaluation of progress / readjustment of actions)

National websites

- National websites with a common layout and table of contents, interconnected with each other and the UNESCO DESD site
- National websites as showcases of ESD in countries
- National websites offer the opportunity to connect local and national programmes to the wider international arena
- Use the logo of the Decade to create a common visual identity
- Common table of contents suggested to countries

National websites: Possible table of contents (for more details see Annex: National DESD website template)

- √ **Preparations, follow-up of the Decade**
- √ **Events, important meetings**
- √ **Actors / stakeholders**
- √ **Networks / partnerships**

- √ **Initiatives / projects**
- √ **Materials / Tools**
- √ **Useful selected websites**

Activities after the National Launch

- Need to be clear on the role, responsibilities and expected results of the different stakeholders
- From the launch, need to have a clear idea of the development of the Decade (ways to measure progress made/goals achieved)
- Keep the programme flexible : The world will not be the same in ten years time
- Ensure synergy between the different agencies and actors
- Each country can choose, if it wants, themes for the different years of the Decade. In order to maintain visibility and momentum throughout the Decade, a specific theme could be selected for each year, around which events at different levels can be organised. Possible themes include:
 - √ Sustainable consumption;
 - √ Cultural diversity;
 - √ Health and quality of life;
 - √ Water and energy;
 - √ Biosphere reserves as places of learning;
 - √ World heritage sites as places of learning;
 - √ ESD in the knowledge society;
 - √ Citizen participation and good governance;
 - √ Poverty reduction and sustainable development projects;
 - √ Intergenerational justice and ethics.

Principles of national DESD implementation

At national level, implementation of the DESD is essentially a collaborative process among all the stakeholders. The following sets of questions provide a framework for starting that process – they are of course indicative given the wide variety of national situations. The questions follow the direction of this plan, and are intended to lead to concrete actions.

Initiating partnership and action

- Establish who the stakeholders are and hold initial consultations.
- Identify the multi-stakeholder body at national level, which will take responsibility for the coordination of DESD promotion and facilitation and ensure its link to EFA process.
- Assess the financial needs of implementing ESD during the decade and identify sources of funding including existing programmes and funds. Set up financial mechanisms to cover support to governmental and non-governmental initiatives, if necessary.
- Hold consultations in development of a DESD plan or strengthening existing education plans to reflect commitment to ESD, including identification of the key national issues in sustainable development and of key messages for public awareness raising, and set national DESD objectives.
- Draw up a communication and advocacy plan with attention to the range and nature of target audiences.
- Undertake a baseline study to establish how far ESD is already integrated into educational initiatives and what these are/where these are.
- Examine the national legal and institutional framework, including an assessment of how local governance structures and processes will facilitate or inhibit broad participation in planning and implementation at that level.

- Develop a framework for cooperation, across government departments, with civil society, private sector and NGOs – at national and local levels.

Implementing ESD

- Develop plans for ongoing work to promote public awareness and participation: messages, media, materials.
- Launch a public awareness campaign and facilitate regular input to the media on DESD issues.
- Initiate scenario development sketching out a number of scenarios of what high-quality ESD would look like, for instance in schools of different kinds, in adult learning circles, within a range of development programmes, in different geographical and socio-cultural contexts, in the framework of different subject areas. Such scenarios will be a resource for local discussion of how ESD can best be put into effect.
- Examine and adapt initial and in-service training for educators, facilitators and teachers to include ESD approaches.
- Examine and adapt curricula in schools and non-formal settings to include ESD approaches.
- Provide a framework for local non formal groups to combine learning and practical application in sustainable development.
- Initiate planning at city/municipal/district level, with the possibility of specific demonstration projects. These will aim to enable citizens to learn through good practice, and thus to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. These projects would therefore be of limited duration and have specific targets: numbers of participating individuals, commercial firms and households, and target dates. Examples of possible projects include:
 - Cleanup, greening, improving and preserving the environment for wild animals, preservation of old town streets, protection of cultural heritage, etc. carried out by citizens' groups and corporate groups in their own specific localities.
 - Promotion of clean energy, reuse and recycling of products, securing biodiversity, promoting environmental education, etc. carried out by citizens' groups, taking into consideration the importance and impact of their activities on more extensive geographical areas and eventually on the global environment.
 - Environmental management activities such as reducing environmentally unfriendly wastes from individuals, households and corporate groups carried out by these individuals, households and corporate groups themselves.

Evaluating ESD

- In cooperation with stakeholder groups, determine what aspects of the DESD should be monitored, and how the resulting information will be analysed and used.
- Establish measurable indicators and monitoring processes, based on the nationally established DESD objectives.
- Draw up a detailed plan as to what data will be collected nationally and locally, who will be responsible to collect and collate them, when this will happen and who forwards/responds to UN.

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