

REPORT BY HUNGARY

Education for Sustainable Development – developments in Hungary

- The UN ECE Strategy as well as the UNESCO International Implementation Scheme has been **translated into Hungarian**; the Strategy is posted on the web;
- The UNESCO Hungarian National Commission prepared a **proposal on the UN Decade on ESD** for the Ministry of Culture and Education summarizing the tasks and necessary steps for the implementation of the Decade;
- A **project committee** to coordinate the work on the UN Decade has been established in the Ministry of Education and Culture under the auspices of the State Secretary;
- The **World Council of Hungarian Professors** offered its co-operation and assistance in the implementation;
- The largest district in Budapest started a **long-term program on ESD** involving the educational institutions and other stakeholders of the whole district.

Planned activities of the UNESCO Hungarian National Commission:

- establishment of the **ESD Coordination Committee** under the UNESCO Hungarian National Commission;
 - **national web site on ESD** collecting all kind of information on the UN Decade;
 - elaboration of a **project evaluation system**, work out criteria and publishing them on the web.
- The **National Strategy on Sustainable Development** has been approved by the Government in June 2007. It contains a horizontal priority area on education with emphasis on ESD, stating that themes and values of sustainability must be presented more prominently in the contents and different forms of education. Sustainability must become a fundamental requirement. Spreading and developing knowledge concerning all aspects of sustainability is a crucial requirement in preschool education, in the school system, in post-gradual education and in-service training and also in education outside the school system. The Strategy proposes concrete measures to achieve these goals through education (holistic and practice-oriented approach, global education, non-formal and informal activities of learning, culture education, education for sustainable consumption).
 - There is a long-term **co-operation agreement** between the Hungarian Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Education and Culture. Both ministries put special emphasis on the generalization of the principles of sustainable development, knowledge, means and methods required to build citizen's behaviour responsible for the future.
 - We extended the environmental education in the pre-school education through developing the **Green Kindergarten Network**. The Ministry of Environment and Water together with the Ministry of Education and Culture invite applications every year to gain the Green Kindergarten title. 109 kindergartens won in 2007 and another 107 kindergartens applied this year.

- The **Hungarian Eco-school Network**, which is part of the international network since the year 2000 helps the schools putting emphasis on education for sustainable development by means of information provision, in-service trainings and events. The annual applications for gaining the Eco-school title is open for all Hungarian educational institutions. 272 institutions have got the Eco-school title in Hungary fulfilling the eco-school criteria.
- The **Forest School Programme** is a six-year national programme to support field education. It was initiated jointly by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Environment and Water, the Ministry for Children, Youth and Sports and the Prime Minister's Office. The Forest School Programme is to be realized in turn-time, in a natural environment (forest, field, lakeshore) offering educational, learning opportunity. In terms of contents and curricula, the teaching process is closely and integrally linked to the natural, man-made and socio-cultural environment of the chosen location. Its prime educational task is to develop healthy, unified behavioural capabilities that are in harmony with nature and the environment, and promote socialization rooted in community activities.

Our aim is to ensure the condition that all pupils have the opportunity to attend forest school at least once during their primary education. An Inter-ministerial Committee have been established to implement the Programme. The high-standard forest school service providers are basic requirements for the successful forest school programme. A database of the 76 forest school service providers (agencies) having the qualification and recommended forest school trade-mark: the woodpecker is available on the web.

Activities of the **Hungarian Society for Environmental Education:**



- „**Greening schools**” programme with publication, accredited in-service teacher trainings, consultancy through the web site;
- 3rd enlarged edition of the **National Strategy on Environmental Education** – elaborated by the civil organization – is based on ESD. Its four hundred proposals urges all layers and aspects of the society to approach sustainability;
- **Campaign on sustainable development** is starting soon.

The most important fields of action – knowledge base (TB)

(TB-1) Research and development concerning sustainability - including state funded projects - must be placed on firm foundations, they must be strengthened and supported, and research activities must be coordinated. A domestic research strategy must be elaborated and incorporated in domestic strategies. Firm foundations must be created for monitoring systems as well.

(TB-2) Scientific results must be linked to **social knowledge**. Important and relevant information should be made available in a form making it possible for members of society to understand it.

(TB-3) Themes and values of sustainability must be presented more prominently in the contents and forms of education. Sustainability must become a fundamental requirement in order to enable accommodation of new knowledge and to help people find their way around under changing social and economic conditions. Spreading and developing knowledge concerning all aspects of sustainability is a crucial requirement (preschool education, education in the schooling system, training, education and extension training outside the schooling system, culture, dissemination of knowledge, and publication of books).

(TB-4) The spreading of a *holistic and practice-oriented* form of education should be accelerated and it must be incorporated in day-to-day practices (a schooling system based on analytical knowledge, fragmented into 'subjects' is not really suitable for bringing up a society having a systemic approach). Practical knowledge of 'life', methods of conflict management and global knowledge should be given more emphasis in education and instruction. Education should lead to exploring relationships between problems and to authentic presentation of solutions.

(TB-5) A programme based on a holistic approach has to be introduced in the Hungarian public education system - affecting the entire structure of education and training - that would comprise the teaching of development improvement and human rights, education towards peace and prevention of conflicts, intercultural education and environmental education (so-called **global education**). Such education and instruction of young people should be started in the pre-school age, for this is the only way to develop commitment that will be a dominant motive later on. Global education prepares people for democratic and responsible citizenship in line with the global dimensions of sustainable development.

(TB-6) *Supporting the non-formal and informal activities* of learning is crucial, where cultural public institutions may also play an important role. Informal learning at the work place creates values for both the employer and the employee. In the framework of the process of informal learning about sustainability, the activities carried out by the media towards enhancing economic, social, and environmental awareness should be strengthened and the media should be assisted in conveying the system of values relating to sustainable development.

(TB-7) To raise general levels of *culture/education* and to improve the quality of cultural socialisation, there is a need for improved access to basic cultural services through developing community spaces and cultural infrastructure; furthermore, the role of culture and community activities in education and training needs to be strengthened.

(TB-8) To *develop responsible behaviour of citizens*, the role of self-teaching and self-improvement must be strengthened. Publicly accessible knowledge must be enhanced and its transfer must be improved.

(TB-9) *Attitudes concerning production and consumption must be altered*, and culture and knowledge intensive consumption should be encouraged instead of material and energy intensive activities.

Eco schools - as experimental centres of future generations to a better world

Within the framework of the OECD-ENSI Network the Hungarian Eco-school system is a network of schools. The National Institute for Public Education is the co-ordinating institute. The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry for Environment support the network with own budget and expertise.

The network has 208 school members with approx 90.000 pupils and 9.000 teacher. The initial intention of the network was to spread the idea of sustainability in education. The concept of "Eco" in "Eco-schools" is supposed to refer to both ecological and economic principles and points to the aim of the network to reconcile ecological and economic interests. All fields of school life are concerned with the aspect of sustainability. Civic education and participatory democracy are considered as vital aspects of the philosophy of Eco-schools. To become an Eco-school the school

has to apply for the Ministries. They have to develop their working plans following the Eco-school criteria system which consists of 52 criteria with 90 sub-criteria regarding to the following area of the school-life:

A: General Aims (4 criteria)

1. A survey is made of school activities and their impact on the environment
2. The school develops a workplan to reach the Eco-school criteria
3. The school has connection to a national environmental education group
4. The image of school shows the commitment of the school to the values of sustainability

B: Teaching and learning (8 criteria)

The main points of these criteria are: project work, activity of the pupils, diversity of methods, continuous development of methods.

C: Human resources- inner relationships (11 criteria)

The main points of these criteria are: environmental awareness, democracy, in-service trainings.

D: Activities beside teaching and learning: (8 criteria)

The main points of these criteria are: activities regarding to sustainability: camps, campaigns, school media.

E: Social relationships (5 criteria)

The main points of these criteria are: links to the local community, other schools, international networks.

F: Physical environment (8 criteria)

The main points of these criteria are: conservation and protection of the natural and built environment of the school.

G: Operation of the school (8 criteria)

The main point of these criteria are: environment friendly, and saving resource use, care of health.

The coordinating institution organises meetings, has created a web-site, providing up-to-date news about tenders, foreign outlook and data bases. It supports the links between the green NGO's and the schools to deepen the idea of sustainability in the schools everyday life. The members' work is also supported via action research and pedagogical-psychological research providing theoretical basis of the pedagogy of sustainability.

The main strengths of the Hungarian Eco-school network are that this initiative links research, governance and pedagogical development on a solid international basis. This wide range of professional input are combined with a holistic approach of sustainability, so the network helps its member schools to develop their work in any field of sustainability as well as in educational as in technical issues. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Environment have developed a common Environmental Educational Concept.

Eco-school network system gives a professional framework for schools to develop and implement their own sustainability projects. In this way with this system is very cost-effective because the central investment generates a lot of local projects based on local resources.

“Classrooms reaching the skies” – The Forest School Program

"The Forest School is a specific learning and educational organizational unit that builds on the features of a particular environment. It refers to a learning arrangement comprising an uninterrupted period of several consecutive days during school time, outside the boundaries of the headquarters of the organizing educational institution that aims at exploiting the

interactive, grass-roots initiative, two-ways co-operation of the learners in the educational process. In terms of contents and curricula, the teaching process is closely and integrally linked to the natural, artificial (built-by-humans) and socio-cultural environment of the chosen location. Its prime educational task is to develop healthy, unified behavioural capabilities that are in harmony with nature and the environment, and promote socialization rooted in community activities."

The Program is organised off-location of the organising educational institute, despite its name not necessarily in a forest, as a forest school may equally well operate on a lakeshore, in a grassland habitat or even in a municipal environment.

The two most important target groups of the programme are the institutions of public education – in particular primary schools – and the organisations providing forest schools services.

The programme was supported and lead in cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Environment and Water.

The Program supported about 100 forest school locations, 1000 teachers, and 100000 pupils.

After many years of development and growing interest of different stakeholders, the programme was officially launched in 2003 with the intention of a 6-year long continuous developmental process financed by the ministries.

Schools can apply for funds to the Ministry of Education. Calls for application are managed by the Fund Management Directorate, which is a background body of the Ministry of Education.

In 2003 and 2004 the Forest School Program spent approximately 1.000.000 € to support the forest schooling of primary school attendees.

It is a fundamental goal of the Program to promote contact building between the different players of forest schooling with respect to schools, forest school providers, organizers of trainings linked to forest schooling and providers of expert services related to forest schooling.

The creation and operation of forest school networks is facilitated by internet mailing lists, joint events, workshops and consulting. It is important that on the longer run each network should have regional and sub-regional partners too, so that the local issues can be resolved and the tasks can be performed on the spot without the involvement of the national centres.

The main objectives of the Forest School Programme are:

- To establish the appropriate professional background for forest schooling in public education, in particular in primary schools;
- To create the group of service providers that is able to ensure forest school programs with the expected quality, and at the same time is also suitable to provide other services of environmental education and eco-tourism;
- To create the appropriate information and communication background for forest schooling;
- To establish those funding conditions that allow every child of primary school age to visit a forest school away from home at least once during his/her studies.

The essential point of forest schooling is nothing else than learning, just like in the case of conventional classroom teaching. Forest schooling is an integral part of the pedagogical program of the educational institution, a part that serves to implement the objectives of the local curricula during school-time. However, the methods, tools and subjects of teaching and learning in a forest school differ from those familiar from classrooms. The subject of learning is focused around revealing and understanding the relationship between man and environment. Knowledge transfer is driven by the curiosity and absorbing attitude of the children. While normally learning any subject is related to a textbook or a learning aid, a forest school offers the process and tools of direct, self-explanatory learning. The active participation in the learning process considered as a live experience is placed higher than information acquisition. The Forest School Programme provides a scene for social learning, and promotes intellectual and community development. The process of obtaining knowledge is essentially based on co-operative learning techniques and the application of the project methodology. The premises of the forest school can be interpreted simultaneously as a real and a virtual, symbolic environment, an observation which is in favour of the methods of dramatic pedagogy. In the forest school, there is no clear-cut boundary between learning and free time.

The experience of forest schooling does not belong to children alone, its outcome has an impact on the entire school community. The children open up, exposing their hidden sides. The teachers get a chance to perform under less formal circumstances, which allows them to adopt a new methodology and empowers them to use more creative methods of organized teaching. Those values and experience that are learned and obtained in the forest school by both teachers and children are taken home. If the school community succeeds in sharing these feelings with each other and incorporate them into the school program and toolkit, then it can be able to set a trend along which new initiatives can be built in the future. This may contribute to improving the working atmosphere and can positively influence the attitude of the parents and the school funding agencies about the institution.

The Program is based and built on a wide range of interest groups of society. Institutions of public education, their operators, civil organizations, plus both the governmental and entrepreneurial sectors got involved in this domain of education.