

# **INFORMAL COUNTRY REPORT (Armenia)**

## **Questionnaire for 2014 informal country reporting on the implementation of the priority action areas**

The educational system of Armenia is in the stage of reforms and is involved in certain international processes. With the support of the World Bank and some other donor organizations, reforms are going on in the public education sector by introducing innovative educational standards and programs, applying interactive methods of teaching, formulating new assessment system, as well as providing new progressive and supportive learning atmosphere. Public education sector has become a priority being basis to prepare children for life and further professional-orientated education. The public education sector has passed on 12-year educational system and a lot of works are being done to input a new model of school and to ensure a high-quality education.

### ***1. Priority action area (a) to promote the introduction of ESD into teacher education: Advances made and challenges encountered since the eighth Steering Committee meeting in March 2013***

1. According to the RA education development for 2011-2015 some of the directions in the Education Development State Programme of the Republic of Armenia are: raising the quality of pedagogical education, its effectiveness, efficiency as well as the status of pedagogical process. The content of the pedagogical educational will be in compliance with the requirements of the modern education. Scientific researches in the field of pedagogy are directed at raising the effectiveness of the reforms made in education. Cooperation between schools and teacher education institutions is improving, effective standards and mechanisms are being developed to encourage the educators.

2. The effectiveness of the teachers training has increased. A number of procedures for training and certification of the pedagogical staff have been adopted. In all the regions of Armenia continuing trainings of pedagogical staff are being carried out, which will ensure the 5 -year training cycle of the pedagogical staff: In 2012, 13533 teachers or 33% of the total number of teachers were involved in teachers staff trainings.

A training system for the vocational education training and handicraft field specialists has been introduced.

Due to the implementation of the additional and continuing RA Education Program Strategy for 2013-2017 it is expected to increase the efficiency of the training among the specialists from education departments, educational institutions and other stakeholders for professional capacity

building and improvement of professional skills.

As changes of standards and programs are being carried out in high and secondary schools, the key topics of Education for Sustainable Development will be involved in the subjects of Natural and Social Sciences as well as in the teachers' training courses.

The above mentioned is considered to be an advance made in the programs focused on reforming and reconstructing of education. Teachers trained in this program will carry out a number of activities and will produce educational materials, using a new teaching technologies. The presented training programs will be continued and will ensure the enrollment of the topics on SD .

**3.** The topic “Education for Sustainable Development” as a complex educational process is not taught as there are no relevant teacher trainers, curricula, materials and needed financing. Meanwhile in “The Law of Education” there is a note on the “mutual agreement between public education and other educational programs”.

- Since 2012 a Department of "Ecological and Sustainable Development" has been located in Armenian State Pedagogical University. "Sustainable Development: Theory and Practice" course is taught in all the faculties of the University. In 2013 a manual on "Sustainable development and global processes and Armenia" for students and educators was published by means of UNDP support.
- One of the National Research Programmes "Teaching Ecological Problems through Usage of New Educational Technologies" has been supported by the State Budget since 2013. This programme is working to increase the competences of educators in Education for Sustainable Development. It is necessary to apply new educational technologies which will enable to present main environmental issues, which are constantly changing at local, regional and sub-regional level. As a result, teachers will draft methodical instructions to improve the quality of education, which will include the key environmental topics by the usage of the new technique in the scope of the strategy of ESD. The usage of the project technology will enable the learners to gain new knowledge, form special abilities and skills to be oriented in different situations and carry out research works at a global level. During the implementation, the project technology will be tested at different educational levels. It will be carried out and analyzed by learners and teachers.
- During October-November 2013, the UNESCO Chair on “Education for Sustainable Development” together with the National Institute of Education of RA and Environmental Education Center of "ATP" Charitable Foundation within the framework of scientific programme "Teaching Ecological Problems through Usage of New Educational Technologies" carried out three-phases training courses and seminars for teachers in 3 regional training centers of Armenia.

***II. Priority action area (b) to ensure that there is an ESD school plan in every school by 2015: Advances made and challenges encountered since the eighth Steering Committee meeting in March 2013***

1. The topics are involved in different subject areas: Natural Sciences and Social Sciences courses in all the stages of education to provide humanism, priority of national and international values, human life and health assurance, free and comprehensive development of an individual, emphasizing the importance of political consciousness, respect to an individual and human rights, dignity, patriotism, hard-working, responsibility, tolerance and formulation of ecological viewpoint.

“The Law of Education” (July 10, 2009) defines the state standard on the basis of which the subject programs have been formed. Some courses have been input to provide a comprehensive development of an individual and knowledge of qualified application. They are “Civic Education”, “Basis of Economy”, “Human Rights”, “Life Skills”, “Ecology”, etc.

In the frame of school component the following subjects have been recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science of RA: **“Ecology”, “Environment Protection”, “Usage of Energy and Resources, “Farming”, “Life Skills”, “Applied Economy”, “Logic”, “Psychology”, “Aesthetics”, “Morality”**. In some topics all the critical issues of sustainable development have been involved. In order to provide effective teaching of the above-mentioned subjects the experts of National Institute of Education are developing curricula for different stages of schooling.

2.3. Events which take place in the framework of formal and informal education on the above mentioned items are presented.

- In the framework of 2013-2014 ESD programme of Mkhitar Sebastaci Educational Complex (Educomplex) a necessity to continue educational activity as well as to solve and develop unfinished, outstanding problems of the previous stages has been revealed.

They especially marked a media learning area, multilingual site <http://www.mskh.am/am/search/node/2013%20ecotour>, subsite, pages, media library in four languages "Dpir" teacher's magazine, "Lusastgh" and "Heraditak" teenager's magazines, individual learning blogs for educators and learners of the preschool "Partez" magazine, "Digitech 2014".

In the above mentioned site ([www.mskh.am](http://www.mskh.am)) events, initiatives, projects, materials and resources, as well as guidelines, award scheme, training for learners of all age groups on **SD / ESD** topics are presented.

In 2013 they carried out an Ecotour. The Ecotour was held on April 26-30. The teams from the high and middle schools of the Educomplex as well as guest teams from Lori, villages Martiros and Khndzorut of Vayots Dzor, Shushi, Gavar and also learners from school 98 in Tbilisi took part in Ecotour: totally 150 learners of 21 teams and 4 individual participants.

All the necessary conditions were provided for the participants of the Ecotour. They had all the technical means to present their works. The jury evaluated the participants' knowledge,

the seriousness of their attitude towards their work, the way of introducing their work, the usage of digital means, the detailed consideration of different matters and solutions to them, the ability to work in teams and the ability to be helpful to each other. During the Ecotour the participants were able not only to present and discuss their works but also carry out some ecological projects: the teams visited the preservations and national parks in Armenia, took part in the project "The School is a Garden". Ecotour will be carried out in 2014 as well. The objectives of Ecotour 2014 will be the followings:

- a/ Drawing the attention of the society to ecological problems,
- b/ Solution of the ecological problems with educational projects,
- c/ founding an Ecotour library,
- d/ prudent, polite and patriot citizens taking care of the environment and making it interesting and attractive.

The participants of Ecotour 2014 will be public school and college students and teachers from Armenia, Artsakh, Georgia and other countries. Supporters of the Ecotour are the Ministry of Education and Science of RA and the Ministry of Nature Protection of RA.

**Official site:** [www.ecotourmskh.blogspot.com](http://www.ecotourmskh.blogspot.com)

- Since 2012 Armenia has joined UNESCO/IITE Pilot Project “Learning for the Future” (UNESCO ASPnet on the Way towards a School of the Future”). Partners supporting or involved in the Project are National Commission for UNESCO of RA, Ministry of Education and Science of RA, UNESCO Chair on “ESD”. Three Armenian UNESCO associated schools are involved in “Learning For the Future” pilot project. Those schools implemented a distance learning methods to learn the most important problem for Sustainable Development in the Republic of Armenia (Problems of Lake Sevan) through the usage of a new informational technology network. Each school investigated problems relating to environmental, cultural or historical aspect of Lake Sevan. This topic was involved as an additional program for study. Teachers implement this interactive method of teaching 4 times in a month in different classes. During the lessons they show a slideshow on a projector. It provides a direct integration of students in the process and simultaneously raise their awareness on the problem.
- “KHAZER” Ecological and Cultural NGO is being carried out the project “Installation of Solar Water Heating System in Village of Kanachut ” (supported by OSCE Office in Yerevan, Armenia), September 2013 - March 2014.  
The main objective of the project is to demonstrate efficiency as well as feasibility of the use of solar energy as an alternative energy source through the practical construction and utilization of Solar water heating system, based on sun collectors with special glass tubes, on the example of a village school for its further proliferation with purposes of ensuring environment protection, energy security and economic benefits. In the results of project implementation the school management will partially save financial resources for heating the school building in cold season, besides the teachers of both gender, as well as schoolchildren (boys and girls) will be provided by better heating conditions in winter and will have enough quantity of hot water in toilets. Also, sanitary conditions in cantina

will be improved. The sub-objective of project is providing information for teachers and schoolchildren about principles and benefits of solar energy use.

- In October 3-12, 2013 in Aghveran, Armenia “KHAZER” Ecological and Cultural NGO carried out a training course “Youth for Rivers” (supported by Latvian National Agency of Youth in Action Program of the European Commission). The main objective of the project is to equip participants with practical tools and knowledge to be able to contribute to the development and improvement of the state of European river systems. The origins of the project lie in the objectives of its organizer and partners to put efforts into making young people aware of existing environmental problems, particularly restoration of rivers ecosystems, as well as providing the knowledge and skills to properly address these issues.

### **ESD Implementation supported by UNICEF**

- **Green School(2012-2013):** The ultimate goal of the project is to develop a *caring attitude* and *sense of responsibility of schoolchildren* towards the environment, nature and cultural assets. A variety of goals was set out to achieve through the Green School project: to give knowledge, to develop skills and responsible attitudes and behavior. All this was done through an attractive and exciting way teaching children of different ages. Green School project was not only enable schools to be involved in a number of trainings, events, campaigns and competitions, but also to use the knowledge acquired in everyday life. Through the awareness raising events in the schools, the trainings for school children and teachers as well as through the additional huge recycling competition for school children all throughout Armenia the concept to run schools according to green regulations was promoted to the greater public.

**Implementing partner:** The Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets

**Participants:** 300 students and 60 teachers from Yerevan School #20, Yerevan School #59 and Noratus School #2

**Materials:** Handbook for Teaching Environment, 3000 copies distributed to all schools of Armenia.

<http://www.sunchild.org/index.php?id=176&L=0>

### ***Publications on ESD (Articles)***

- A.M.Gasparyan, G.S.Poghosyan, D.H.Grigoryan “Teaching of Climate Change through Designed Technology”, Mankavarzhutyun, Yerevan, 2013, N3, PP.47-50
- A.M.Gasparyan, G.S.Poghosyan, D.H.Grigoryan “Implementation of Ecological Education through Designed Technology”, Mankavarzhutyun, Yerevan, 2013, N3, PP.53-59.

***III. Priority action area (c) to reorient technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy: Advances made and challenges encountered since the eighth Steering Committee meeting in March 2013***

**1.2.**The present stage of Armenian social-economic development demands a professional high-quality education. The provision and accessibility of above-mentioned quality is one of the main factors of economic growth for calming down poverty and inequality.

There are a number of events implemented according to the principles of Bologna and Turin processes in the direction of improving professional development and enhancing of the training of personnel in accordance with European standards and the demands of trade market.

In the sphere of Initial Crafts and Vocational Education works have been done according to concept(2012-2016) of development of these spheres, 2009-2011 timeline and action plans of the reforms implemented in these spheres.

The strategy of Initial and Vocational Education has been approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The goals and objectives have been defined and the ways of solving them. The program initiated by UNDP is supporting the reforms going on in Initial and Vocational Education.

The British Council Armenia is implementing a program which aims at adapting the educational system to the trade market requirements. This helps to raise the effectiveness and contributes to the free movement of employees.

The Collegial governing bodies have been formulated including employers and trade unions. A National Council of Vocational Education and Training Development, which consists of the representatives of employers, trade unions and state bodies has been established.

There is also an action plan implemented by EU. That is a field-supporting programme to decrease poverty by means of reforms in Vocational and Initial Educational system.

In the frame of the budget supporting program in 12 experimental colleges the technological base has been renewed and the colleges have been rebuilt and become regional colleges.

In 2009 the Government of Armenia approved “The Concept of Social Partnership in Vocational Education” and “The Concept of Lifelong Education”.

The Republic of Armenia has been involved in Turin’s process which is implemented by European Educational Foundation since 2010. The aim is to validate the analysis of VE reforms including critical tendencies, challenges, obstacles, as well as defining successful experiments and possibilities.

In the results of reforms in Vocational Education a new list of professions is approved. New standards are also approved on the basis of which curricula are reviewed. Training of Vocational Education teachers and masters have been carried out. Almost in all the curricula and modules core subjects are included such as “Political Science and Sociology”, “Basics of Law”, “Basics of Ecology”, “Social-Protection and Problems of Extraordinary Situations”, “Basics of Economy”, “Basics of Morality and Aesthetics”, “General working Skills”.

2. The final workshop of the project on “Assistance to Raising Knowledge on Industrial Safety at Universities in Armenia” was held in Yerevan on 26 March 2013. The project implementing organization was "Eco Peace" scientific, ecological NGO from Armenia. This project was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear

Safety with means of Advisory Assistance Program for Environmental Protections in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. It was technically supervised by the German Federal Environmental Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA). The objectives of the workshop and the exercise were to discuss:

- a) The activities implemented under the project, the project outcomes;
- b) Safety of industrial processes in Armenia, assessment of emergency hazards, emergency prevention and control in EECCA countries;
- c) Making industrial safety compliant to recognized international standards, and with application of national laws and regulations;
- d) Enriching the professional knowledge of students of technical universities, increasing the level of education and exchange of experience in the given field.
- e) Developing and strengthening cooperation between universities in UNECE countries;
- f) Need for further activities, projects, possible cooperation.

3. In the framework of the project a package of documents to “ study and evaluate industrial enterprises producing hazardous materials” was produced and published for middle and high educational institutions.

#### ***IV. Implementing education for sustainable development beyond the United Nations Decade of ESD***

In 2013 the intergovernmental commission to implement processes of “Rio+20” was founded in the RA Government adjacent to the “National Council for Sustainable Development”, one out of its 11 directions is “Education for Sustainable Development”.

In 2015-2016 it is planned to hold a series of trainings (workshops) on sustainable development of international, regional and local processes for NIE (National Institute of Education) specialists as well as education policy makers and educators who are responsible for education processes in order to raise competence in “Education for Sustainable Development” .

#### **ESD Implementation supported by UNICEF**

##### **New Initiatives:**

There is an urgent need to intervene in the degradation of the environment in Armenia. Natural resources are scarce and need to be protected. Children are the future of the country and should be directly involved in the solution. Children have the potential to influence their families and communities acting as catalysts for behavioral change. Awareness raising, learning and community service is important. When learning is combined with concrete actions that trigger tangible /visible changes, the learning experience will be more profound and sustainable.

***a. Empowering Environmental Educational Network for Strengthening Environmental Governance in Armenia***

UNICEF promotes the cooperation between the Environmental Education (EE) organizations, relevant ministries and schools through enhancement of their capacities in promoting environmental activities in and around the school and supporting the development of one common approach to environmental education.

***b. Child Participation in Environmental Protection and Recycling***

Children become more aware of the fact that the protection of environment is a cross cutting issue that requires behavioral changes in their everyday life and consumption habits. They can situate themselves as a part of the problem and the solution on a local and global level. They raise awareness among their peers and the wider community by exercising their influence on the purchasing patterns of their households. The school as a whole becomes more eco-friendly, is cleaner and is the place where children learn and experience best practices in the areas of waste reduction and recycling. The school is also a place where all relevant stakeholders are gathered around these issues. Either through a “waste parliament” or in the framework of school councils, each school is expected to set up a plan to become more eco-friendly and reduce its ecological footprint.

- Each year a Cambridge Science Festival is carried out in the United States of America, Boston. In 2014 some of the UNESCO associated school of Yerevan as well as other active schools which deal with environmental issues will take part in this festival with their projects mainly focused on SD/environmental issues. UNESCO Chair on “Education for Sustainable Development” will coordinate schools’ preparation works for participation.
- In the framework of 2014-2015 ESD programme, UNESCO Chair on “Education for Sustainable Development” is very interested in taking initiatives in Armenia, moreover it is going to submit a project-proposal for UNESCO “Programme of Participation in the activities of Member States for 2014-2015”. One of the priorities UNESCO’s Participation Programme for 2014-2015 is Gender Equality, which will be one component of the project-proposal.

