

UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development
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REPORT BY GEORGIA

Each country has to integrate the principles, skills, perspectives, and values related to sustainable development on each level of education. Education system can play key role in the positive changes that bring us to harmonize interconnection between humans and environment.

Following activities were carried out in Georgia for implementation of the ESD Strategy:

The National Curriculum and Assessment Center develops national curricula, designed to encourage active learning rather than mechanical transfer of knowledge. The new curricula comprises teaching and learning principles, subject educational standards and the contents of the program based on democratic and liberal values, considering the physical and psychological factors of students. Besides the information and skills, schools should enable students to develop their own vision, attitudes and approaches.

We can say that this new curricula besides the detail, modern scientific trends, methodological principles, and outcome based content includes all aspects of Sustainable development, related to sustainability in each realms – social, environmental, cultural and economic – what is important for our current and future societies. On every level for each grade of school studying this areas of knowledge are widely submitted and are represented by different subjects (science, geography, biology, chemistry, physics, economy, civic education, also in some case by humanitarian subjects). Schools will be able to provide students with a dynamic educational experience.

Our center is working together with authors to create better text books (contains both students and teachers books) according to new curricula. Our experts give them recommendations. We are piloting these books and curriculum in 100 pilot schools throughout Georgia. We also organize trainings for authors, to receive more successful study books; this year training content was how new textbooks could develop problem solving skills.

New curricula and textbooks are first piloted and then introduces in each subsequent class.

Teacher qualifications play a key role in ensuring high quality of education. Upcoming teacher examination and certification process (2009-2013) will serve as an incentive for acting teachers to improve their qualifications in accordance with contemporary standards. These standards are in preparation phase and they include the principles of ESD. Several teacher training initiatives have already taken place, but they were oriented on introduction of new methodology, and developing social and specific skills in students. We still have a problem with developing specialized training

materials and organizing trainings on ESD for teachers and also for other educators (for example for publishers, authors and etc.) and decision makers.

Preschool Standards are in preparation process and environmental attitudes are widely presented in the draft document.

On this day there are several vocational education and university modules on sustainable development. Also we work in coordination with many NGO-ss. Many of them are planning their activities after consulting our experts taking into account new curriculum, outcomes and indicators.

Another activity announced by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in the 2006 year is the school competition in Group Projects on ESD. In this competition we cooperate with the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources and REC Caucasus. The main purpose of the given project - to stimulate at schools studying the strategy of ESD was achieved. This competition becomes annual. The increasing number of participants (2000 students first year and above 4000 next year) shows the popularity of this beginning. This Competition gave us possibility to know what is familiar to the students and their teachers about the sustainable development; to help them in improving their project writing skills and extend their knowledge in the field of sustainable development.

We collaborate with the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources to reach the objectives of ESD.

In 2007, Aarhus Centre Georgia and Department of Protected Areas of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia held joint campaign. The campaign was of competition type event with the three nominations: best essay, painting and photo. Representatives of Department of protected Areas of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources, Aarhus Centre, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and NGO – “Georgian Center for the Conservation of Wildlife” made up the competition panel, the winners of the competition visited Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park where they had an opportunity to discover biodiversity of the protected area, watch movie about the park and see the Park Museum. Schoolchildren also visited Bezoar Goat tributary. This year the campaign will take place.

In the first decade of April 2008, Department of Protected Areas of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science planned teachers training from 60 schools of Georgia. Teachers of geography and biology will participate in this training.

As we mentioned above we have some success in reaching the goals of ESD, but there is no unified policy and therefore implementation process is unsystematic and mainly of one-time character. We hope that international organizations will support us in further plans. We have to continue to go forward for making our future more save, comfortable and sustainable.

Still there is a need in country in qualified, well-trained teachers for all levels of educational system and on the other hand there is a need retraining of established servants and decision-makers in the field of SD.

We are working on establishment of working group and national action plan for implementation of the strategy on ESD. It will help to move forward from local initiatives to the national policy on ESD.

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