Introduction

Centre for Environment Education (CEE) was established in 1984 as a Centre of Excellence in Environmental Education, supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India, in recognition of the importance of environmental education in India’s overall environment and development strategy. CEE is a national institution engaged in developing programmes and material to increase awareness and concern, leading to action, regarding the environment and sustainable development.

It has inherited the rich multidisciplinary resource base and varied experience of Nehru Foundation for Development (NFD), its parent organization, which has been promoting educational efforts since 1966 in the areas of science, nature study, health, development and environment.

Mandate

CEE’s primary objective is to improve public awareness and understanding of environmental and developmental issues with a view to promoting action for the conservation and sustainable use of nature and natural resources, leading to a better environment and a better quality of life. To this end, CEE develops innovative programmes and educational material, and builds capacity in the field of education for sustainable development. It undertakes demonstration projects in education, communication and development that endorse attitudes, strategies and technologies that are environmentally sustainable.

Strategies

From its inception, CEE’s activities and programmes have been rooted in, and guided by, certain strategies for the maximisation of quality, effectiveness and impact:

- Informing EE with state-of-the-art thinking, developments, innovations and perspectives in the areas of Environment and Sustainable Development
- Adaptability to different geographic, cultural, social and economic contexts
- Partnerships utilising complementary strengths of other organisations to avoid duplication of effort, and to network effectively for synergistic convergence of ideas and goals
- Building synergies between Government, NGOs and CEE for comprehensive impact.
- Identifying key entry points for different thrust areas, and key targets for initiating and consolidating gains to achieve a multiplier effect
- Facilitating networks at local, national and regional levels, through a number of tools such as rural dialogues, directories and newsletters as well as the electronic communications media
- Working to develop a cadre of professionals in order to improve and strengthen professionalism in the field of EE, by capacity-building individuals who in turn would infuse this professionalism into the organisations where they work, to the mutual advantage of both those organisations and CEE
- Bringing international experiences within the ambit of EE in India, so as to enhance the quality, depth and range of programmes
- Ensuring quality control and excellence in the production of all material through in house infrastructural support (studios, workshops, editorial services and printing facilities)
Organization

The Governing Council (GC) of CEE guides programmes, approves the budget and designs policy. The GC comprises of eminent persons in the fields of education, environment, communication and management, representatives of MoEF, and of the Government of Gujarat, Forests and Environment Department. It is assisted by the Standing Committee on matters relating to administrative procedures and norms. It also receives advisory support from the Finance Committee. CEE is headed by the Director who is the chief executive of a team comprising Programme, Technical and Administrative staff.

Across India, Regional Cells in the North, East, South, West, Central and North-East zones and several state offices and project offices facilitate effective coordination, monitoring and follow-up of countrywide programmes in EE. The Regional Cells, in addition to supporting core activities of the Centre, generate a wide range of new projects and initiatives in their regions.

Programmes

For more than two decades CEE’s programmes and projects have promoted sustainable development approaches and practices. The first decade focused on EE, while the second decade strengthened EE by demonstrating Environmental Action. The third, and the current decade is focusing on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a major cross-cutting issue in all the work areas.

CEE’s programmes and projects may be categorised broadly as

- those that make use of existing educational opportunities afforded by primary, secondary and tertiary school and college systems; the vast potential for awareness generation inherent in the mass media network; and the possibility of connecting people to their environment, both natural and cultural, through interpreting zoos, parks and sanctuaries, and archaeological monuments to enhance their experience.

- those innovatively focused on specific target groups; developed in response to the special requirements of groups not adequately covered by existing systems, these programmes involve an action agenda, and are aimed at decision-makers, industry, and rural and urban communities.

- those centered on capacity-building for EE including training in EE, environmental journalism, development of educational material and resources, and accessing resources and expertise through networking nationally and internationally.

The programmes continue to strengthen the linkages between education and capacity-building, policy interventions and field-based demonstration projects.

Thrust Areas

CEE’s programmes are organised around the following 21 thrust areas. As an organising principle, this helps in focusing and planning the Centre’s activities.

1. Education for Children: Develop, coordinate and conduct a number of educational programmes for school children. Using mainly a “cluster approach”, the programme reaches out to over 3000 schools across the country today.
2. **EE in Higher Education:** Recognize the need to extend EE to college students who are on the threshold of becoming active participants in society, as citizens, decision makers and leaders.

3. **Examination Systems for EE:** Research and test innovative and creative ways of measurement, monitoring and evaluation of learning.

4. **Education for Youth:** Create awareness and involve youth in formal and non-formal action projects for environmental improvement.

5. **Communicating Environment through the Media:** Optimally utilize existing and new media networks as powerful means of reaching the community at large.

6. **Experiencing Nature:** Introduce children and adults to the beauty and harmony of nature, and in the process sensitize them to the need for concern and conservation.

7. **EE through Interpretation:** Design interpretive programmes to transform the visits to zoos, national parks and other heritage sites, into exciting educational experiences.

8. **Knowledge Management for Sustainable Development:** Serve as a knowledge centre on key sustainable development issues, and as a resource base for comprehensive and relevant information.

9. **Industry Initiatives:** Work with the industrial sector to facilitate acceptance of the concept of waste minimization as a tool for sustainable growth and profits.

10. **Sustainable Rural Development:** Develop programmes for income generation and better utilization of resources, through field programmes designed specifically for rural communities.

11. **Water and Sanitation:** Provide infrastructure, educational, communication, and experiential support for developing village water supply, sanitation and hygiene systems.

12. **Sustainable Urban Development:** Facilitate exchange of ideas on urban environment and planning issues, community participation, and partnerships with local governing bodies.

13. **Waste Management:** Develop education tools and facilitate the establishment of management systems for solid as well as biomedical wastes.

14. **EE for Fragile Areas:** Demonstrate ecologically sound alternatives to support sustainable resource management in ecologically fragile areas.

15. **Biodiversity Conservation:** Coordinate education, awareness, training and networking programmes that focus on biodiversity and its conservation.

16. **Eco-tourism:** Promote tourism practices that are environmentally sustainable, economically beneficial to local communities and educational experiences for tourists.

17. **Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation:** Work on a long-term basis with communities affected by disasters, and strengthen their livelihood opportunities.

18. **Training, Networking and Capacity Building:** Offer professional and short-
term training and capacity-building in EE and sustainable development issues; Pool institutional resources and extend the reach of programmes through linkages with various agencies.

19. **Material Development:** Develop educational material for various purposes including formal education and awareness creation, appropriate to the context – print, audio visual and others.

20. **Facilitating NGO and Community Initiatives:** Support activities which demonstrate community-based, innovative, gender-sensitive and sustainable approaches.

21. **Initiatives for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development:** Promote the goal of education as the basis for a sustainable human society, through training, internships, youth programmes, consultancy and research.

22. **Research in EE and ESD:** Document, analyze and research the experiences of CEE and other organizations in EE and ESD.