Education for Sustainable Consumption through the DESD

Working Group Session Coordinator: Isabella Marras, Supriya Jhunjhunwala
Workshop Number: 27
Key Speakers: Isabella Marras Julia Heiss,
Workshop facilitator: Ms. Victoria Thomas

Workshop objectives:
1. Improve understanding of Sustainable Consumption and Productions (SCP)
2. Develop a vision of what is Education for Sustainable Consumption (ESC) how ESC can contribute to a better understanding of environmental and sustainable development related challenges
3. Offer to interested participants a Youth Xchange workshop to provide participants with an example of pedagogical approach to ESC

Expected results :
1. Better understanding of ESC and of how it can be integrated in national curricula and schools programmes
2. Input on ESC to deliver to the plenary
3. Understanding of the youthxchange project and ability to deliver YXC training to pupils and to train other teachers on YXC

Target audience:
1. Representatives of ministries of Education; environment; consumer affairs.; UN DESD co-ordinators in various countries
2. Education and Sustainable Development experts
3. Major NGOs active in education and consumption
4. Business representatives engaged in sustainability and communities support
5. Secondary school teachers

Background
A ten year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production - “Marrakech Process” was launched in 2003 as an international collective effort to develop 10YFP and in (2010-2011) – Proposal 10YFP to submit, review and approve during the 18th/19th sessions of UN CSD

The main objective of the Task Force on the Education for Sustainable Consumption is to focus on the role of formal learning processes in providing knowledge, awareness and competences aimed at enabling individuals and social groups to be the key actors of change towards more sustainable consumption patterns. The Marrakech Process is an international initiative to advance the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation which calls for the development of "a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production."
According to her, ‘Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption’ was launched during the 14th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (New York, May 2006) with the objectives to develop and strengthen SCP patterns focusing on education as a tool of implementation and achieve progress in introducing SCP issues into formal curricula. The approach was that behavioral changes require the development of cultural models of reference. The MTF will work on supporting with tools and policy work such development.

As a result, there were seven task forces inaugurated in seven countries with the collaboration of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development and the UNEP; Italy taking the prerogative to establish a formal education programme by the name of "SCP and education". The Sustainable Buildings and Construction Task Force was incepted in Finland, and Germany took the initiative of founding the "Cooperation with Africa Task Force". The "Sustainable Public Procurement Task Force" (Switzerland), "Sustainable Lifestyles Task Force" (Sweden), "Sustainable Products Task Force" (UK) and the "Sustainable Tourism Task Force" (France) were to follow.

The Program 2007-2009 will have following activities:

• Close cooperation and support of main regional and international organizations in the Framework of the UN DESD
• Database of good practices and technical planner on ESC
• Draft guidelines for the inclusion of ESC in the education system
• Research on innovative approaches in ESC
• Matrix of policy options to stimulate political commitment and action and as an input to the development of the 10YFP

Summary of Proceedings

This Workshop was mix of discussions and presentations. Ms Isabella and Ms. Julia were the presenters and all other took part in the discussions facilitated by Ms. Victoria.

Ms. Isabella initiated the discussion with an introduction to the "Marrakech Task Force Education for Sustainable Consumption".

Mr. Mahesh Pradhan from UNEP insisted on the focus on Geo reporting and funding, youth and future of planet. He highlighted the bad shape that the planet was in by giving an example of reducing land per person from 8 hectare per person in 1900 to now 2 hectare per person, with diminishing prospects.

According to him - "The planet is in quite a bad shape, the pressures which we are exerting, the pressures that are been constantly exerted by the humans, and air, water and biodiversity are the main issues here. The Earth is shrinking in the terms of arable land."
According to Ms. Julia Heiss, UNESCO recognizes that "consumption lies at the heart of the debate on sustainable development. It covers people's right to live and work in a clean environment with good health and social conditions, as well as ways in which these rights can be made possible. Sustainable consumption is about finding a balance between our rights as consumers and our responsibility as citizens. It means choosing a lifestyle that limits the negative impacts on the environment and respects the right of all people to live and work in healthy conditions."

"It is recognised that many of the burning environmental problems today are man made and due to our unsustainable consumption and that a shift in our consumption and production patterns seems to be the only solution to problems as climate change. This makes ESC such an important contribution to achieving sustainable development.

A workshop held by OECD in 1998, concluded with the statement "the deepest educative process at the work in the twenties century has been the informal process of "learning to consume", and I would believe that this is still valid for the 21st century.

The participants were divided into two working groups, teachers and non-teachers; and they were assigned six topics for discussion in a number of sessions that engaged them throughout the day time. The six selected topics were:

1. Reasons for including / intensifying education for sustainable consumption in schools and other learning arena
2. Formal and non-formal educational approaches to ESC
3. Important topics to focus on, in ESC
4. Teaching methods for ESC.
5. Resources / partners needed to implement ESC in own community / school.
6. Evaluation in ESC

Each of the topics were in the form of questions under which the participants had to exercise discretion as to the priority they would place upon the multiple choices they were provided. In the first session, the reasons for including / intensifying education for sustainable consumption in schools and other learning arena were placed, and it was after some debate and discussions that consensus could be achieved. "ESC as an important dimension of social responsibility" and "ESC as a means of developing human resources and encouraging reflective, critical and active citizens" were among the topics that were selected. Similarly, other topics were discussed and working groups tried to reach consensus among themselves, and they were encouraged to amend and add to the list already provided to them.

Ms. Julia Heiss made the last presentation on youth exchange. She stressed that young people are a critical stakeholder in the global economy and will be the main actor and motor for change in the near future. According to her focus on young people is required as:
• The habit they develop now will play a decisive role in future consumption patterns.
• Their decisions as consumers exercise a growing influence on markets and lifestyles

In her presentation she referred to the UNESCO/UNEP survey ‘Is the future yours?’ which was conducted in 2000 in 24 countries. According to the survey
• Youth does not relate their shopping to environmental problems
• Major concerns: human rights, environment and health

She also provided information about website and a related guide which is a toolkit to help trainers involve young people, designed to assist youth groups, NGOs and teachers to help raise awareness of sustainable consumption (SC) and empower youth to put theory into practice.

According to her the target group for youthxchange programme are urban youth (15-18) who have access to information media and have comparable consumption patterns but, of course, anybody with access to the Internet can use YXC.

She also suggested the approach to go for youthxchange. The approach should be
• **broad and inclusive**: not always considered strictly related to SC e.g health, HR
• **bottom-up**: starting from youth daily lives,
• **accessible & appealing**: telling real stories, using concrete examples- case studies
• **strongly flexible**: conceived for both individual and collective tuition
• **user-friendly**: e.g ‘quick viewer’ search, menus & index

She also talked about the case studies and other important interested segment of youth exchange.

Overall the workshop addressed all aspects of education of sustainable consumption recognizing the need of region specific methodologies and approaches in these areas.

**Draft Recommendations**
1. ESC is recognized as a pillar of education for sustainable development because it contributes to enhance the individual's ability to manage their own life as well as responding to the challenges of the global society.
2. ESC is the part of ongoing value to debate to define the quality of life.
3. ESC should contribute to the development of social and ethical responsibility.
4. ESC should respect the importance of indigenous knowledge and alternative lifestyles.
5. ESC should contribute to the development of critical awareness and action skills and ultimately empower people to make informed choices.
6. ESC should link what is taught to daily life.
7. ESC should be taught in informal and formal learning arena
8. ESC should involve or have the support of many partners including policy makers and civil society organizations.
9. ESC should be tailored to the context: (target group, the learning situation and lifestyle options).
10. ESC should be thematic and taught in an interdisciplinary manner.
11. ESC should include reflection on why we consume.
12. ESC should promote the analysis of the consequences of our consumption choices and encourage global solidarity.
13. ESC contents should be based on well-researched information.
14. ESC should empower the learner to become active citizens.

Final Recommendations for Education for Sustainable Consumption

Considering that:
• ESC is recognized as a pillar of education for sustainable development because it contributes to enhance the individual's ability to manage their own life as well as responding to the challenges of the global society such as climate change
• ESC is the part of ongoing values debate about quality of life.
• ESC contributes to the development of citizenship through social and ethical responsibility and to a culture of peace.

Governments are urged to
• Integrate ESC in all formal and informal systems of education
• Ensure that ESC respects the importance of indigenous knowledge and alternative lifestyles.
• ESC includes intergenerational learning
• ESC learning arena themselves are models of sustainable consumption and production

Educators should ensure that:
15. ESC contributes to the development of critical awareness and action skills and ultimately empowers people to make informed choices in the market.
16. ESC links learning to daily life context
17. ESC is taught in informal and formal learning arena
18. ESC involves or has the support of many partners including policy makers and civil society organizations
19. ESC is tailored to context: (target group, the learning situation, cultural circumstances).
20. ESC priority issues cover consumer rights and responsibilities, media advertising and persuasion; international awareness and future perspectives.
21. ESC is thematic and taught in an interdisciplinary manner
22. ESC includes reflection on why we consume and understanding of consumption and production processes and systems.
23. ESC promotes the analysis of the consequences of our consumption choices and encourages global solidarity.
24. ESC contents are based on well-researched information.
25. ESC empowers the learner to become active citizens.