

Editorial

The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) welcomes you to the first issue of its new electronic newsletter. As the United Nations Climate Change Conference takes place on December 7 to 18 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, this special issue will focus on selected climate change education activities carried out by the ASP network around the globe.

Focus

Climate Change Education

Climate change is one of the most urgent challenges of sustainable development and a key action theme in the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). ASPnet schools around the world work on Climate Change Education in order to enable students to make informed and responsible decisions, turn passive awareness into behaviour change and make sustainable behaviours a daily habit. The development of good practices and innovative educational materials in climate change education is a key element in ASPnet's strategy to meet the pressing educational needs of the future generation.



Uzbekistan: Creating an Oasis in the desert

(UNESCO/ASPnet Uzbekistan) A project to stop sand dunes moving towards a city and causing health problems is one of nine ASPnet school-based sustainable development initiatives to win awards created by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.

In 2009, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO invited UNESCO Associated Schools in the Asia-Pacific region to submit good educational practices to promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For their remarkable contributions, nine school-based projects were selected from five countries, addressing such interlinked topics as the promotion of healthcare among schoolchildren, the protection of biodiversity, diversity and the management of water and natural resources.

The ASPnet Specialized School No 1, Zarafshan, Uzbekistan, decided to take action to stop moving sand dunes coming closer to their city. The city is surrounded by desert and sandy winds cause lung and eye problems. The school decided to plant haloxylon, a desert tree with deep roots and little need of water. With the assistance of forestry workers, a haloxylon nursery was established within the school yard. Students later transferred the seedlings to a project area outside the town. Inch by inch, this project has stopped the development of the desert and weakened the powers of the sandy winds. In addition a leaflet and a school calendar with advice on daily sustainable practices help students to take responsible actions in their daily lives.

Ms Sufiya Dekhkanova, teacher and project coordinator, said: "The 2009 award was crucial for the project. As a consequence of the award and the public attention brought to the school, the project now also involves parents and local private companies."

Contact: Mrs Dilnoza KURBANOVA, ASPnet National Coordinator of Uzbekistan, unesco@natcom.ccc.uz



Denmark: ASPnet students “imagine” the future

(UNESCO/ASPnet Denmark) What does the future hold for our children 30 years from now? How can climate change be affected in a positive way? Would classmates ride a bicycle to produce energy for the school? UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet) in Denmark set off to find the answers at the National Museum of Denmark where more than 80 students presented their “Images from the future.”

The queue is long and the atmosphere festive outside the main entrance to the National Museum of Denmark in early March 2009. As the doors open students from 15 of UNESCO’s Associated Schools start streaming in, heading directly for the assembly hall. They have approximately two hours to turn the room into a “market place” with 15 stalls, where they will be presenting their views on what the future might hold for their children 30 years from now.

The 80 students and teachers are well prepared. A class, a year, a department or an entire school have developed their own “images of the future” where climate development plays a part. The “images” have been presented to the parents, the local community and the press, and the most innovative have been chosen to represent the school at the National Museum. Film, models, photos and role-playing are but some of the ways students have expressed their views.

Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark, the honorary guest of that day, remarks in her opening speech: “I am very excited to see your projects and hear which good ideas you might have that will affect climate development in a positive way. Maybe the politicians will be inspired by your work before the UN’s climate change conference in Copenhagen.”

The best teams will participate in ASPnet’s international youth conference “Common Future”, organized by the Danish ASPnet in Copenhagen in March 2010. All participants will be asked to present research on climatic issues, develop future scenarios and proposals for possible actions, based on the principle of “situation-vision-action”.

In conclusion the answer to one of the initial questions posed to the schoolchildren was easy. Yes they would be willing to ride a bicycle to produce energy for the school “if they can watch their favourite video at the same time.”

Contact: Mr Carsten SKJOLDBORG, ASPnet National Coordinator of Denmark, carsten.skjoldborg@skolekom.dk

Weblinks:

ASPnet in Denmark: www.unesco-asp.dk/

“Images from the future” project: www.unesco-asp.dk/billeder-fra-fremtiden

Common Future climate project: www.comfu.org/

Haiti: “In addressing climate change, the actions of individual students can mobilize the whole community”

(UNESCO/ASPnet) Climate change is a truly global challenge. It will impact all ecosystems and human societies. Addressing climate change requires involvement and action at local, regional and global level. Mr Dieufort Deslorges, national coordinator of the UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet) in Haiti, who attended the International Seminar on Climate Change Education at UNESCO, Paris, 27-29 July, 2009, explains how ASPnet students in his country have taken action.

How is your own country affected by climate change?

Haiti is touched at two levels. First, tropical cyclones are getting more and more frequent. While cyclones normally hit Haiti every two years, last year we experienced four serious cyclones within two weeks. At the same time, deforestation is advancing at a rapid pace: people use more wood, and there is no reforestation. As a consequence, one of the biggest cities in Haiti was completely flooded twice within four years, and inhabitants from two other cities had to be relocated.

Can education mitigate or at least decrease the effects of climate change?

Yes, it definitely can! Since 2007, the Haitian National Commission for UNESCO has been working very closely on this issue. The UNESCO Associated Schools network plays a central role in pilot-testing pedagogical material related to education for sustainable development, including climate change education. In addition, we encourage extracurricular activities on climate change education.



One of our main tasks is to sensitize all actors involved in education to climate change: school principals, students, teachers and the communities themselves.

Which activity of the UNESCO Associated Schools could be considered a good practice?

Our most visible activity is our National Youth Rally. It all started with a student committee that wanted to organise a common activity among all ASPnet students and teachers of the country. In 2007, students set off for the first rally. In 2009, ASPnet and non-ASPnet students as well as teachers from the whole country repeated the idea. They visited two cities devastated by floods. The pine forest that surrounded them had been seriously deforested by human activity. The participants started planting trees, and not only involved teachers and parents, but the local communities.

What is the way forward?

The students participating in the rallies have now taken the responsibility of replanting trees every year. This is a great example of the multiplier effect of ASPnet: a local initiative started with a small number of ASPnet students and managed to include students and communities from all over the country!

What do you expect and hope for from the International Seminar on Climate Change Education?

Our National Commission is interested in sharing the experiences of other countries and in adapting existing pedagogical materials to our local context. We are also looking for the best strategy to include local and national authorities, governmental and private partners to mobilize for climate change education. We can always learn from others and improve our activities.

Contact: Mr Dieufort DESLORGES, ASPnet National Coordinator of Haiti, natcomunescohaiti@yahoo.fr



Trinidad & Tobago: “Education is about changing minds, not passing exams”

(UNESCO/ASPnet) To prepare students for the effects of climate change tomorrow, education needs to change behaviours today and students must learn to be adaptable and open to life-long learning. Monica Regisford-Douglin, national coordinator of UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet) of Trinidad and Tobago, sheds light on the shift in mindset needed to form citizens for the future.

How is climate change challenging Trinidad and Tobago?

The country has seen rapid development and industrialization in the last two decades. This is why we now face problems of pollution, rapid urban development, traffic jams – you sometimes need two hours to get to work! People can afford all the gadgets of modern life: they have several cell phones, cars, washing machine, dryer... There is not much talk about the effects of climate change yet which will probably come a few years down the road. This requires particular efforts to sensitize the government and society about upcoming challenges.

How do you address climate change in education?

Changing mindsets is one of our major challenges. Our society is very exam-oriented and there is a huge interest in education as a vehicle to move out of poverty. People are interested in a better life, not in sustainability. First of all, we have to make teachers understand Education for Sustainable Development. Teachers should think of education in a different way: The aim of teaching and learning is to improve your life and that of your neighbours and not to pass an exam.

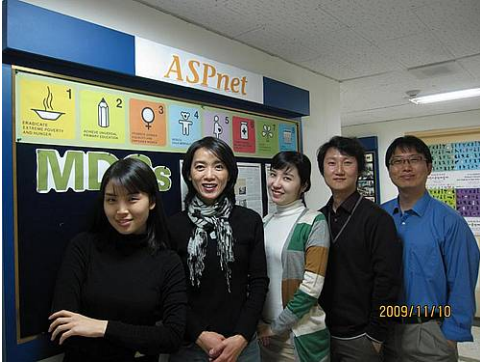
What is the role of the UNESCO Associated Schools in Trinidad and Tobago in this process?

In 2007, the National Commission started a training workshop to bring values back into the classroom and to create holistic learning communities. The training was given to 600 teachers from primary school level - values have to be taught from an early age onwards! At the same time, ASPnet schools are engaging in a series of events such as the climate change workshop in commemoration on World Environment Day (5 June) and a beach clean-up last June. We are also planning a regional meeting of the Caribbean countries. Finally, one of our major activities is “Sandwatch”. This major ASPnet flagship project started in Trinidad and Tobago in 1997 when we became aware that there was a need for coastal preservation.

What did you take away from the International Seminar on Climate Change Education?

In order to create sustainable lifestyles, our teaching must be related to education for sustainable development and based on values.

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Korea: Building a new Asian partnership project

(UNESCO/ASPnet) In 2009, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) invited UNESCO Associated Schools in the Asia-Pacific region to submit good educational practices to promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Nine school-based projects from five countries were awarded with financial support. The winning countries presented their projects during a regional Asia-Pacific ASPnet Forum on ESD/MDGs held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, 24 - 27 October 2009. This Forum brought together MDGs and ESD experts and ASPnet National Coordinators, principals and teachers. It aimed at sharing the selected good practices and at developing a new ASPnet regional partnership project to promote ESD in the region.

How did the team come up with the idea for this good practice development project?

KNCU asked itself how ESD could best be launched at the national level as it considers ASPnet to be one of the important tools to take ESD to scale. In addition, we thought it a good idea to broaden our programme from bilateral teachers' exchange programmes towards multilateral partnership projects. This creates new exchange opportunities for the Korean teachers and encourages them to initiate further international partnerships themselves, based on a common topic and on personal encounters. During this forum, we have seen that many of the participant teachers such as Korea, Pakistan and Indonesia, exchanged contact details. In addition, the good educational practices of other countries have inspired our Korean teachers to live up to the ideals of UNESCO to be part of the "global ASPnet family".

Could you describe the challenges that you faced during the project?

To make this Good Practice development project a success, we had to develop criteria and give guidance for good practices in ESD and MDGs. Good ESD projects encourage genuine student participation, deal with local issues, translate values in real life situations and welcome complexity. We also provided examples of good practices in ESD from around the world.

Another challenge was to convince the sponsor of our project, UNDP. During our project proposal they asked us how to find the participating schools and how to disseminate the good practices. Luckily, this task was easy with the global network of ASPnet at hand and the collaboration with the UNESCO National Commissions. The only difficulty was that ASPnet wasn't known to our UNDP colleagues at that time... but now they even support some of the selected projects at school level.

Why did you carry out field visits on the selected projects?

The field visits to the nine winning schools in five different countries were extremely important. We are always saying that ASPnet is a global school network, but actually we only realized during our visits that this means finding like-minded schools wherever you go, and that there are many things we can learn from other countries!

Our visits also showed the teachers that they are not alone. In fact, the selected projects need outside recognition more than the rather small financial award. For the Pakistani school, for example, it was so gratifying to see a Korean coming all the way from Korea to Pakistan. For our visit, the school invited all neighbouring schools, local authorities and NGOs, and this presence was much more encouraging than the money.

How is this project continuing?

Asia faces huge challenges such as poverty reduction, climate change and the management of limited natural resources, all of which need international cooperation for an effective solution. The international participants of the ASPnet Forum agreed to launch a new regional ASPnet partnership project on climate change education in Asia to carry on the cooperation. Detailed project contents and duration of this project will be confirmed in 2010.

Contact: ASPnet Korea, www.unesco.or.kr/eng/front/programmes/programmes_07.asp

Sandwatch: An ASPnet flagship project on coastal preservation now includes Africa

(UNESCO/ASPnet) The Sandwatch project was launched by UNESCO in 1999 as a volunteer network of primary and secondary school students and teachers. Sandwatch seeks to develop awareness of the fragile nature of the marine and coastal environment and the need to use it wisely.

The project activates an educational process through which school students and community members learn and work together. They critically evaluate the problems and conflicts facing their beach environments and develop sustainable approaches to address these issues.

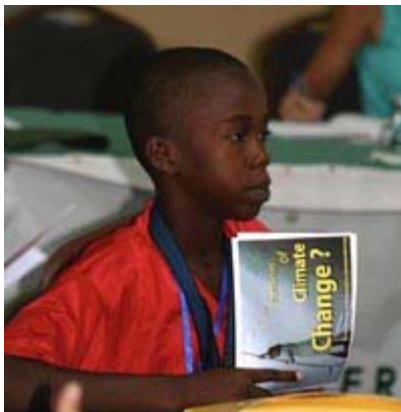
Sandwatch provides a practical 'hands-on' approach for integrating the values inherent to sustainable development into all aspects of learning. It thereby empowers citizens to act for positive environmental and social change.



Sandwatch contributes to the further implementation of the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

Weblink: www.unesco.org/en/aspnet/flagship-projects/sandwatch-project/

Review: Experts engage with climate change education at international seminar, UNESCO HQ, Paris, 27-29 July 2009



(UNESCO) *"Why do I have mangoes in July?"* was the title of one of the presentations at a three-day expert seminar on climate change education at UNESCO HQ in Paris, which brought together 60 experts in climate change, education for sustainable development and curriculum development, in particular coming from Small Islands Developing States.

"Global warming is the defining issue of our time. Sustainable development simply cannot be achieved without a stable climate," warned UNESCO's Director-General who opened the conference along with the Ambassador of Denmark to UNESCO.

Mark Richmond, Director, Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education outlined five bases of engagement with climate change issues:

- the evidence base, or how the science of climate change has major contributions to make to curricula, teaching/learning processes and advocacy for education for sustainable development
- the ethical dimension; climate change is a challenge to sustainability but also to values
- the emotional and attitudinal base; climate change issues can provide a vivid way to explore feelings about changes such as global warming
- the pedagogical base; climate change issues have an urgency, vividness and immediacy that can be a stimulus to effective teaching and learning and to the design and renewal of curricula
- the situational base; climate change is undoubtedly a global phenomenon but its impact and effects are highly situation-specific, for example in Small Island Developing States

Organized by UNESCO with the financial support of Denmark, the seminar covered such themes as climate ethics and justice and the educational challenges of understanding climate change from a gender perspective. Participants examined how climate change issues could be integrated into school curricula; addressed the issues of guidelines, learning materials and explored ways to better use networks such as UNESCO's Associated Schools and World Heritage sites to promote local field-based education.

The results of the seminar will feed into the preparations for the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen on December 7 to 18.

Upcoming Events...

14 to 16 December 2009: A joint UNESCO ASPnet-ISESCO Regional Seminar for the ASPnet National Coordinators of the Arab States, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris: "Promoting intercultural dialogue, contributing to peace and quality education"

Get ready for...



2010: International Year of Biodiversity

2010: International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures

19 to 25 April 2010: EFA Global Action Week

Selected Resources



Patrimonito mobilizes against climate change: A new cartoon for World Heritage Education

As part of the cartoon series entitled "Patrimonito's World Heritage Adventures", the new episode introduces the Great Barrier Reef, a Pacific World Heritage site since 1981. It presents the negative impact of global warming on the biological diversity of the coral reef system. Cartoon storyboards were chosen and professionally animated following a competition among ASPnet secondary school pupils. The cartoon targets students at primary and secondary school level worldwide. It is a useful teaching tool to involve young people in reflecting on the issue of climate change and its impact on World Heritage and to promote sustainable behaviors. The new episode was presented during the International Seminar on Climate Change Education at UNESCO Paris, 27-29 July 2009.

Download: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/patrimonito/>



ASPnet Second collection of good practices: ESD

Spreading ASPnet good practices is a key element of the network's strategy to contribute to promoting Quality Education in the framework of Education for All. This second collection of good practices, which targets coordinators and teachers, presents a variety of successful school-based projects, activities and approaches contributing to Education for Sustainable Development. These good practices emanate from ASPnet's 8,500 Associated Schools in 178 countries.

Download: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001812/181270e.pdf>



OzonAction Education Pack: A guide for primary school teachers

Developed by UNEP with the education expertise of UNESCO, this kit gives primary school teachers a simple yet comprehensive teaching tool to facilitate the inclusion of human and environmental issues linked to ozone reduction within the teaching curricula. It includes a guide for teachers and various teaching materials (video, cartoon, calendar, world map, game, UV-meter, etc...).

Download: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001841/184170E.pdf>

OzonAction Education Pack for Secondary Schools

This Student's Book is an integral part of the OzonAction Education Pack for Secondary Schools. It concentrates on the same issues as the Teacher's Book: ozone layer depletion, protection and the health risks of strong ultraviolet radiation.

Download: http://www.unesco.org/education/ozonaction_student_web.pdf



UNESCO and Climate Change Education

Outcomes of the UNESCO International Seminar on Climate Change Education

Download: http://climatefrontlines.org/ed_seminar_brochure.pdf

The UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change

Download: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001627/162715e.pdf>



Policy Dialogue: Education for Sustainable Development and Climate Change

Download: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001791/179122e.pdf>

UNESCO's ongoing work in ESD

Weblink: <http://www.unesco.org/en/esd/>

News infos

This newsletter highlights only a few of the large number of activities of ASPnet worldwide.
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www.unesco.org/education/asp