



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Promoting Sub-Regional Education for Sustainable Development in South-East Asia

Region

Five Cluster Countries, namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Timor Leste.

Partners

National and local governments; inter-governmental agencies; universities and research institutions; NGOs; educational and professional networks.

General Objectives

To help the governments of the cluster countries to plan and manage their education sectors by developing national capacities to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into education sector-wide policies and strategies, as part of global efforts to strengthen ESD.

Duration

2010 - 2011

Estimated Budget

USD 130,000

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BACKGROUND

Due to the growing concern about environmental issues, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has an important role to play in educating people how to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable environment. ESD is a concept that goes far beyond environmental education. It is the educational process of achieving human development (the three pillars of human development: economic growth, social development and environmental protection) in an inclusive, equitable and secure manner. It thus includes education for poverty alleviation, human rights, gender equality, cultural diversity, international understanding, peace and many more.

Education is the primary agent of transformation towards sustainable development, increasing people's capacities to transform their vision for society into reality. ESD teaches individuals how to make decisions that consider the long-term future of the economy, ecology and equity of all communities. ESD addresses interrelated social, economic, environmental and cultural issues with a future perspective.

The aims of ESD are: 1) to improve the quality of teaching and learning; 2) to empower learners to make a difference; and 3) to take action in the world towards positive change. Schools therefore have an important role to play in developing ESD projects. Unfortunately, there are various constraints at the implementation level, such as a lack of tools to undertake ESD, a limited budget allocation for ESD and a lack of documented policy related to ESD in most countries.

UNESCO Office, Jakarta, focuses on five cluster countries, helping their governments to plan and manage the education sector by enhancing national capacities to integrate sustainable development issues and practices into all types and levels of education.



THE FIVE CLUSTER COUNTRIES OF UNESCO OFFICE, JAKARTA

UNESCO Office, Jakarta, serves as both the Regional Science Bureau for Asia and as the cluster office for Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Timor Leste. As the cluster office, the UNESCO office covers the implementation of all major programmes and mandates by UNESCO in these five countries. For activities on ESD, the cluster office also cooperates directly with the Bangkok Regional Bureau for Education. The cluster office also coordinates activities with the UNESCO National Commissions (NatComs) in these five countries. The five cluster countries of UNESCO Office, Jakarta, are characterized by their diversity:

- ◆ **Economic growth:** There are different levels of development and economic status among the five countries. Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia stand out for the higher levels of development that the two countries have achieved.
- ◆ **Poverty:** The highest poverty gap ratios are found in the least developed countries, confirming that the pockets of extreme poverty are concentrated among the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Poverty remains a persistent challenge for Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor Leste. One of the highest poverty gap ratios in the Asia Pacific region is in Timor Leste (29%) (ADB, 2009).
- ◆ **Illiteracy:** Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are amongst the countries in South-East Asia with the highest literacy rates—above 90%—of all the sub-regions in the Asia Pacific region. However, the adult literacy rate for Timor Leste is 65%, lower than the rest of the countries (UNESCAP, 2009).

The five countries represented by the Jakarta cluster office share commonalities based on the Malay culture. The education systems in these five countries have all experienced improvements over the past several decades. ESD is being implemented to different levels in each country. Strong efforts have been made in both Indonesia and Malaysia to incorporate ESD into the national



curriculum. In Timor Leste and Brunei Darussalam, educational reform has been a major priority and ESD is recognized as an opportunity to enhance the overall quality of education.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

UNESCO Office, Jakarta, in cooperation with UNESCO Bangkok, developed a *Strategic Roadmap for Developing Green Schools Action Projects*. The Strategic Roadmap looks into developing green schools in Indonesia that are 'green' in terms of curriculum, learning environment, facilities and the overall mainstreaming of ESD. The development of the green schools programme is placed in the context of wider national sustainable development issues, as well as that of the overall thrust of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD). The programme is designed to enrich current practices and entails having a Certification and Award system for meritorious schools that met the ESD criteria.

UNESCO Office, Jakarta also participated as a resource in the Regional Research Workshop on Integrating Education for Sustainable Development Concepts in Southeast Asian Social Studies Secondary Education Curriculums, organized by the SEAMEO INNOTECH Regional Education Program (SIREP), in Manila, the Philippines, on 28-30 April 2010. The purpose of this workshop was to map the context, issues and country-specific agendas related to ESD and to determine its scope in the social studies secondary education curriculums of SEAMEO member countries.

UNESCO Office, Jakarta organized the first Sub-regional Country Report Meeting on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in South-East Asia on 27–28 September 2010 in Jakarta. The meeting brought together about 40 national ESD coordinators and focal points from the five cluster countries of UNESCO Office, Jakarta, as well as ESD experts and representatives from government, academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other relevant institutions that are implementing the ESD programme. Several national participants from Indonesian government offices and institutions also attended, as did experts from IGES Japan, the University of Nagoya, UNICEF Indonesia and UNESCO Bangkok.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

1. A Sub-regional ESD/Climate Change Education (CCE) Cooperation Strategy;
2. A Sub-regional ESD/CCE National Policy Guidelines in South-East Asia;
3. ESD/CCE country reports;
4. ESD/CCE brochures/leaflets/publication materials;
5. ESD/CCE website on the UNESCO Office, Jakarta website;
6. Development of a strategic roadmap of Green School Projects;
7. All materials accessible for downloading from the UNESCO Office, Jakarta website.