



## **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development**

8<sup>th</sup> meeting, 21 March 2013

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### **Information Paper 2**

#### **CAREC Narrative Report on the project “Building capacity for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and strengthening the coordination between relevant stakeholders”<sup>\*</sup>**

Prepared by CAREC

<sup>\*</sup>This document was not formally edited.

## *Background*

According to the agreement between UNECE and CAREC, CAREC in cooperation and with the support of UNECE, Swiss Government and the OSCE Centre in Astana organised and conducted the Central Asian workshop on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) on 28-30 of June 2012 in CAREC, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

It was the second UNECE sub-regional workshop on ESD conducted by CAREC for the five Central Asian (CA) countries. The first workshop was successfully organized by UNECE and CAREC in June 2010 in the CAREC headquarters and provided assistance to the CA countries in the preparation of the first mandatory reporting under the UNECE Strategy for ESD in 2010 according to the set of indicators for ESD developed by the UNECE Expert Group on indicators for ESD.

The second workshop which was organized in 2012 aimed at addressing challenges faced by the Central Asian countries in implementing the Strategy, as identified by the Environmental Performance Reviews. The Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) that were carried out in recent years in Central Asia (Uzbekistan 2010, Kyrgyzstan 2009, and Kazakhstan 2008) provide a vital insight into the implementation status of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development. While compiling achievements and ongoing activities, the EPRs moreover define the main challenge of the concerned country in advancing the implementation of ESD. The concerned Central Asian countries share one main challenge in implementing the UNECE Strategy for ESD - that is establishing a coordination mechanism. The EPRs carried out in Uzbekistan (2010), in Kazakhstan (2009), and Kyrgyzstan (2008) all include only one main recommendation concerning ESD and uniformly address the insufficient coordination between governmental departments and other stakeholders. In addition, the first mandatory implementation reporting revealed that National Action Plans for ESD had not been finalized in the Central Asian countries. The finalization of national action plans, i.e. the putting in place of policy frameworks that support the implementation of ESD is an important requisite for the implementation of phase III, which focuses on practical implementation of ESD. Therefore, there is a need to finalize the work that has been done in phase I and II in the Central Asian countries on developing national action plans for ESD is of utmost importance.

The CA countries at the Steering Committee (SC) Meeting on ESD in 2011 asked assistance of the UNECE SC members in finalizing the National reports on ESD and integration of the UNECE document on Educators' competences for ESD into national education systems of CA countries. Following the request of the Steering Committee voiced at its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Group has developed a set of Competences in ESD as well as recommendations for policy makers. The lack of competences had been identified as a frequent bottleneck for the implementation of the Strategy at the Belgrade Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in 2007. In addition to developing set of educator competences for ESD, the UNECE Expert Group also developed training materials on those competences. The 2012 workshop on ESD in Central Asia piloted those training materials.

Following the request of the Steering Committee for ESD, a 3-day workshop in Almaty, Kazakhstan, was organized supporting the CA countries to address the needs identified above. The workshop targeted national Focal Points for ESD from Ministries of Education and of Environment. Moreover one NGO representative from each country and teachers training institutions were invited as well representatives of relevant international organizations (UNESCO country offices, OSCE), and universities.

**The objectives of the workshop included the following**

- (a) Strengthen capacity for finalizing national action plans for ESD;
- (b) Increase the cooperation and coordination between relevant governmental departments as well as the coordination between governmental departments and other relevant stakeholders (including education institutions, NGOs and international organisations who actively implement ESD in formal, non-formal and in-formal education in Central Asia;
- (c) Strengthen capacity for adapting educator competences in ESD as developed by the ECE Expert Group for ESD.

**The target groups of the project**

- The CA countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan NFPs on ESD from the CA countries' Ministries of Education and Environmental protection;
- Environmental NGOs from the above mentioned countries;
- Teacher training institutions;
- Universities and academia.

**Organizers and partners**

The following organizations contributed to the organization of the workshop: UNECE with support of the Swiss Government, CAREC, and OSCE Centres in Astana and Bishkek.

**Workshop facilitators**

UNECE experts in ESD: Ms. Laima Galkute from Lithuania and Ms. Zinaida Fadeeva from UNU/IAS, kindly agreed to moderate the discussions of the workshop.

### *Implementation of the workshop*

CAREC provided the necessary support to the process of planning and facilitating the workshop, where it was needed. The workshop was organized in a very opened and democratic manner, which gave to participants opportunities for participation and making their inputs into the meeting a success. Good combination of presentations and group work was central to the fruitful discussions and workshop results.

The workshop had three main objectives:

- (a) Strengthen capacity for finalizing national action plans for ESD;
- (b) Increase the cooperation and coordination between relevant governmental departments as well as the coordination between governmental departments and other relevant stakeholders (including education institutions, NGOs and international organisations who actively implement ESD in formal, non-formal and in-formal education in Central Asia;
- (c) Strengthen capacity for adapting educator competences in ESD as developed by the ECE Expert Group for ESD.

During the introductory sessions the main messages of the participants of the workshop were the following:

- The professional level of Central Asian experts was notably grown.
- It was stated that the OSCE supports the cooperation on trans-boundary and transnational issues. As for cooperation with the UNECE, the OSCE conducted a meeting on Access to Justice with the help of the UNECE and it hope for further cooperation.
- Particular attention was paid to involvement of all stakeholders at political level and cooperation of experts at regional level.
- It was underlined that the ESD issues are actively promoting in all CA countries due participation in the UNECE ESD process and support of partners in the sub-region, namely by the OSCE Centres in Astana and Bishkek.

Two key issues of the CA workshop on ESD were specifically emphasized:

- how to promote ESD at the political level; and
- how to promote the competences on ESD in Central Asia and integrate the SD issues in the educational processes at regional levels.

Subsequently, the following working groups were formed:

- Group 1 – ministries of environmental protection;
- Group 2 – ministries of education
- Group 3 – NGOs
- Group 4 – teacher training institutions (TTI)
- Group 5 – Schools
- Groups 6-7 – Universities
- Group 8 - OSCE Centers in Astana and Bishkek (in collaboration)

Key outcome messages of the discussion included:

- In past our previous discussions were concentrated on how to switch the ESD coordinating role from the Ministry of Environmental Protection to the Ministry of Education;
- Now we focused on cooperation and coordination on ESD in Central Asia region; we need to have an outlook on the entire set of levels involved in the ESD activity;
- Competences for ESD at all levels, including governmental officials, educators and others, shall be incorporated to build the educational process. The key issues regarding competences shall be emphasized.

### **Session 1-A. “National Plan for ESD: Challenges and Opportunities”**

- Presentation/Report of Kazakhstan by Botagoz Shaimardanova
- Presentation /Report of Kyrgyz Republic by Zhyldyz Duishenova
- Presentation/Report of the Republic of Tajikistan by Sulkhya Sadykova and Sayfidin Davlatov Presentation/Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan by Hasan Tursunov
- Presentation/Report of Turkmenistan by Kristina Kolesnikova

The main messages of the presentations were the following:

- Unavailability of the National plan, a coordinating body, and the interagency/inter-ministerial coordination as a process;
- Unavailability of the mechanisms of how to solve the problem shall be worked out;
- An expert group engaged in lobbying the interests of the CAREC and ESD shall be created;
- The existing institutions in the countries of Central Asia shall be employed for solving the problem (competence-based approach plus new international dialogue platform (IGSDC, CSD), expert groups in ministries, National Commissions, committees on various subjects of SD).
- The promotion of ESD is finally a subject to higher education as any professional must go through the higher educational institution before gets the profession therefore our task is to base the proper competence for ESD;
- In each higher institution we need to set up a Council on quality of education or ESD; the Council shall be in charge of evaluation of program in terms of ESD competences and the demands of employers;
- The first problem pertains to the understanding of ESD by universities: each higher institution understands the ESD concept by its own way;
- It is IMPORTANT to understand the ESD strategies and mechanisms. Crucially essential is personal features of educator, to which extent the educator is competent. In Kazakhstan a new regulation shall be introduced in 2013 according to which all universities shall be subject to national accreditation in terms of international standards (Dublin descriptors);
- Already a number of universities have been reduced due to educational criteria incompliance. No any higher institution shall operate without passing above said accreditation;

- We believe that the UNECE Strategy for ESD is more suitable to Kazakhstan as it is more adapted to our real conditions. The proposed solution - to unify the higher education schools in terms of ESD requirements;
- Ministries of education themselves must initiate ESD promoting at the high level;
- There is no inter-ministerial coordination;
- Lack of awareness on ESD:
  - National coordination centers for ESD shall be established;
  - Working group with the status equivalent to the level of the state approved by this coordination center shall be created;
  - Action plan of coordination center shall be drawn out;
  - Minimum standard of education shall be worked out for all levels of education;
  - Monitoring over the level of awareness and competence shall be implemented;
  - Seminars and workshops shall be conducted and training courses manuals shall be designed.

#### Conclusions and further steps:

- We need to set up Coordination Councils for ESD in CA countries; based on the analysis of trends we rather need to draw up an Action plan for Coordination Council then the National plan for ESD.
- We need to concentrate our efforts on secondary education. Only educators attended ESD training shall be eligible to participate in completion for teacher position in such schools.
- It is necessary to making emphasis on quality of education.
- The concept of continuous environmental education needs to be updated and renamed to the concept of ESD.
- It is necessary to set up a national team of coaches to promote the ESD. Benefits: national team of ESD coaches will facilitate the promotion of ESD concept; coaches may be NNOs, university professors, instructors and youth leaders.
- The alternative way for ESD promotion is establishment of resource centers.
- ESD shall be implemented applying the principle of continuous education at all level starting from pre-school till higher education.
- Unified form of accounting reports, descriptive reports, indicators, criteria for ESD is very important in our country.
- Unification has no any relation to the ESD mechanisms. Each country, higher education school, will employ their own mechanisms to implement ESD, and therefore there is no any opportunity to unification;
- In our country there is no common understanding of ESD among the population, the citizens. In this regard it is important to raise public awareness at all levels. We can work in this direction by organizing various actions, competitions under the auspices of this task. It is easier to work employing informal way of communication.
- There is a linkage gap between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Nature Protection in promotion of ESD that needs to be filled up.

- It is essentially important to have the CAREC office in Turkmenistan which will be engaged in promotion, collection and dissemination of good international experience in ESD.

Work in groups: the Groups were working on the following questions:

- Identifying the 2 or 3 key problems in your country;
- How disadvantage/problem can be used as advantage - what you could do at your level to solve the problem?

## **Session 1-B. “Coordinating mechanism for ESD: current situation at national level”**

### **Group 1 - Kazakhstan:**

There are three gaps, lack of:

- National plan for ESD;
- Coordinating Body;
- Coordination Mechanism

### **Group 2 – Kyrgyzstan:**

Lack of:

- involvement of businesses as stakeholders and
- integration of ESD principles in secondary education.

### **Group 3 – Tajikistan:**

Lack of:

- Inter-agency coordination between education and environmental protection;
- involvement of Committee of Environmental Protection, NGO, the system of CFD.

### **Group 4 – Turkmenistan:**

Lack of:

- coordination and competence of educators;
- Solution: involvement of young people, including alumni of the CA Leadership Program on Environment for Sustainable Development (UNEP, CAREC, AIT, RRC.UNEP, Government of Norway, 2010-2013).

### **Group 5 – Uzbekistan:**

Lack of

- coordination, capacity building;
- Solution: create a team of trainers, resource center, conduct trainings.

### **Group 6 - Higher Education:**

- There is a need for the introduction of ESD in a system of accreditation of educational institutions.

## **Session 2 “Stakeholder’ analysis”**

In case of Kazakhstan - involvement of business is crucial but how to cooperate with business for ESD is a question. In case of Kyrgyzstan, how to work within the “Green Bridge Initiative”?

Definition of stakeholder categories - is an important step in the stakeholders’ analysis.

Zinaida Fadeeva presented a table of stakeholders identified per categories:

1. formally responsible;
2. representing the interests of different parties;
3. influential parties;
4. depending parties;
5. position strengthening parties.

## **Session 3 “Clarifying the role of ESD and ESD competency of educators in social change”** *(please see the Annexes 11-17)*

- There were made two presentations by Laima Galkute - competences and educators,
- Discussions conducted,
- Comments of participants received.

## **Session 4 “Determination of the driving forces and barriers in the promotion of competencies for ESD”** *(please see the Annexes 11-17)*

- Presentation by Tatiana Shakirova on UNECE educators’ competences for ESD made in Toronto in May 2012.
- Discussions,
- Comments of participants.

Zinaida Fadeeva - the tasks:

- identification of urgent and priority projects for each country;
- introduction of individual projects through stakeholders analysis;
- consideration of mechanism for coordination.

## **Session 5 “Plans for the Future”** *(please see the Annexes 11-17)*

3 steps for work in national groups:

- Choose three main ideas - three specific actions from the previous discussions;
- Conduct stakeholder analysis and identify the type of interaction with and between them (financial, legal, administrative, informative, training, knowledge carrier, expertise, etc.)
- Analyze and build up synergies.

## **Development of recommendations and proposals for follow-up activities:**

After conducting the sub-regional workshop CAREC implemented the next work on promotion of the workshop results widely in Central Asia and follow-up activities:

- Discussed with participants the issue of promotion of the workshop’ results widely in Central Asia.



- In order to meet the CA countries' needs CAREC discussed with participants opportunities for conducting national workshops on ESD as the follow-up activities.
- Prepared and delivered appropriate letters of appreciation to all CA countries' ministries of Education and Environmental Protection with information of the workshop results.
- Discussed with UNECE and the workshop' moderators of opportunities for conducting national workshops on ESD as the follow-up activities.

After these discussions UNECE Secretariat asked the official national focal points for ESD to reconfirm their intention to host national workshops under the UNECE Strategy in written form.

There was not sufficient funding available for fully financing national workshops in 2012. In order to support them in raising funds for such workshops, UNECE expected that the CA counties will resend this message accordingly.

UNECE hopes that CA countries need to move on from the sub–regional to the national level and will do everything in order to receive support and conduct national workshops with the participation of UNECE and these moderators in 2013.

**List of Annexes:**

1. CAREC ToR
2. Grant proposal and agreement with CAREC
3. List of participants
4. Agenda
5. UNECE welcome speech?
6. Minutes of Meeting
7. Session 1 Summary
8. Session 1-A National plans for ESD summary
9. Press-releases
10. Feedbacks of participants during the workshop
11. Annexes 11-17 – feedbacks/materials developed by the countries after the workshop