

INFORMAL COUNTRY REPORT

POLAND

Introduction of ESD into teacher education

In order to recognize the needs and expectations of teachers concerning education for sustainable development Ministry of the Environment conducted in 2012 the survey among teachers from selected schools to assess the realization level in ESD.

According to the survey comprehension of ESD, regardless of education level and type of school, is carried out firstly by associations with environmental protection. Social issues are second-rate and economic issues third-rate. One of mostly applied interpretation strategies is also defining ESD using associations connected with a “sustainable” word. ESD as an expression of values and attitudes evokes positive feelings. It is also identified as part of teacher’s work ethos.

Definitions of ESD given from respondents do not acknowledge the causal connections between such elements as man, society, economy, attitude shaping, value transmission (which are the elements of ESD) neither on global scale nor locally. Operational sphere of it is mostly reduced to simple proecological activities (e.g. garbage collection) furnished with a factual comment (e.g. air pollution data). Additionally, surveyed teachers do not acknowledge the shaping skills issue in ESD conception (raising and resolving problems, decision-making, assessment and understanding of surrounding world).

Despite the fact that more and more teachers reach for available materials on ESD, there is still great percentage of teachers who do not have awareness or technical capacity to benefit from on-line content. Internet portals on ESD offer teachers a wide variety of teaching materials such as educational resources, publications, e-learning courses, already prepared lesson scenarios, tests, interactive maps and thematic games.

Hence there is a need for ongoing support professional development of educators in ESD competences especially in understanding inter-relationships across disciplines of environment, economy, society and culture.

To meet this demand, Ministry of the Environment, organized in 2012 the open competition for non-governmental organization for preparing the packet of materials for teachers concerning education for sustainable development. Materials have been prepared in a way to promote project-based learning method. They explain the concept of sustainable development and include such topics as climate change, responsibility in local and global contexts, production and consumption patterns, environmental protection, natural resource management and biological diversity. They were prepared in a way which support cross-curricular approach.
