



SADC REEP

Southern African communities learning together for a sustainable future

In 1993 the Southern African Development Community (SADC) initiated the development of a Regional Environmental Education Programme (REEP), and formalised this initiative in 1997 when implementation partners were secured. The overall objective of enabling environmental education practitioners in the SADC region to strengthen environmental education processes for equitable and sustainable environmental management choices guides the programme.

A range of training, materials development and networking opportunities were established, followed up with policy support work, and later by an emphasis on research and evaluation after widespread requests from practitioners in the sub-region.

The SADC Secretariat oversight and steering role helps the programme form partnerships with various environmental education and sustainable development stakeholders. The SADC REEP is recognised as an international model of best practice in environmental and sustainability education. Its implementation partners include the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), along with many other international, national and regional partners, most notably the 15 SADC governments. In 2007 the programme's contribution was recognised when it received the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa Presidential Award.

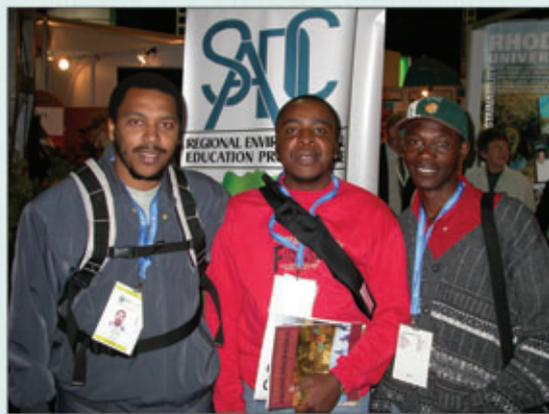
SADC REEP Programme Components

- Component 1:** Support for policy processes
- Component 2:** Materials development
- Component 3:** Networking
- Component 4:** Training
- Component 5:** Research and Evaluation

Approach

The SADC REEP and its partners have developed an approach to environmental education that supports individuals, communities and institutions in southern Africa to strengthen alternatives and capabilities that respond to critical environmental and sustainability issues and risks. Ultimately the programme seeks to strengthen socio-ecological resilience and sustainable development in the southern African region. To do this, the programme uses an inclusive, partnership and networked approach, and emphasises learning together for a sustainable future. It foregrounds transformative learning, as well as mainstreaming of environment and sustainability education into education systems





in southern Africa, within a regionalised co-operative framework.

Activities

The programme implements a number of key activities that facilitate learning together for a sustainable future:

- **Policy development** – involving policy dialogue and direction setting in policy seminars and courses
- **Training programmes** – involving professional development courses, a course development network and attachment programmes
- **Networking** – involving strengthening centres of expertise and communities of practice.
- **Materials development** – involving capacity development, low cost publishing and use of ICT.
- **Research and evaluation** – involving a research network and programme, and reflexive monitoring and evaluation.

Policy and contextual relevance

Southern Africa has many assets. It is extremely rich in biodiversity and other natural resources, with an equally rich cultural heritage and a strong sense of community. It also has many challenges.

Addressing environment and sustainability issues that threaten the future well-being of southern African people and environments is a critical development concern. Southern Africa has been identified as one of the regions that are most at

risk from the impacts of climate change and loss of ecosystem services. Approximately 70% of southern Africans live in rural areas, and depend on the natural environment for their livelihoods and food security. Most economies in the SADC region are natural resource dependent. Environment is therefore intimately linked to development, poverty alleviation and future well-being in a southern African context.

The education sector plays an important role in the sustainable development of southern Africa, since it reaches the region's young people, and can contribute directly to change at community and institutional level. The SADC Treaty and the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan include a focus on environmental education for sustainable development. The SADC Education Protocol asks for co-operation across the region in areas of teacher education, professional development of educators, knowledge exchange, and development and sharing of learning materials.

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) has noted the need for mainstreaming of environmental education and training into the education and training systems of countries in Africa. The SADC REEP activities support mainstreaming of environmental education for sustainable development into southern African countries. Through its focus on transformative learning and capabilities for socio-ecological resilience and sustainable development the SADC REEP contributes to the policy objectives of the environment and education sectors.



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SADC Regional Environmental Education Programme