



Materials Development

Strengthen innovative practice for change, and learn together for a sustainable future

Since 1997, the Southern African Development Community Regional Environmental Education Programme (SADC REEP) materials development component has supported education practitioners to access, use and develop appropriate environmental education resource materials.

An inventory shows that more than 200 customised and contextually specific learning materials have been produced for use in environmental educational programmes in southern Africa. These materials are diverse, and their value lies in their contextually relevant design and use. In addition to this, a number of regional resources to strengthen integration, knowledge exchange and harmonisation have also been produced. Among them is a Course Development Toolkit, and guideline resources for policy and practice. Materials to support policy dialogue and direction setting have also been produced. A number of research reports sharing knowledge and new insights into environmental education theory and practice also exist. A resources database holding more than 2500 entries is held and regularly updated at the SADC REEP.

Approach

The SADC REEP adopts principles of low cost production, contextual relevance, and accessibility to guide its resource materials development component. It also adopts an

empowerment orientation that develops skills for materials development and use. The contents of the materials support transformative approaches to learning, critical and contextual engagement with environment and sustainability issues and risks, and alternatives. Materials development activities are integrated into training and attachment programmes to enable hands-on experience in materials development. The low cost, accessibility principle allows for easy adaptation of materials to suit diverse contexts and needs. Materials development includes working with information communication technologies (ICT) that strengthen wider distribution and expanded learning opportunities.

Activities

- Providing training for resource materials development through workshops,





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- attachment programmes and integration of this component into other training initiatives.
- Providing seed funding for materials development at country level.
 - Supporting the development of regional resource materials that enhance knowledge exchange and harmonisation.
 - Supporting the development and use of ICT-based resource materials.
 - Updating and maintenance of a regional resource centre and resources database, holding key environmental education resources from 15 countries in southern Africa.

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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