



Policy

Engage in and promote dialogue, set direction, and learn together for a sustainable future

The policy component of the Southern African Development Community Regional Environmental Education Programme (SADC REEP) seeks to create an enabling environment for sub-regional and national environmental education policy and to support the development of local level policy. A number of analytical and consultative studies have been conducted to establish the status quo of environmental education policy in southern Africa, and to identify key policy development issues. This has helped to provide guidance on how countries can participate in the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. A key outcome of this work has been the formation of a policy-linked partnership between the SADC Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate, the SADC Social and Human Development and Special Programmes Directorate, and the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (Windhoek and Harare cluster offices) to work together on the objectives of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development in southern Africa. The outcomes of the SADC REEP's work have been incorporated into the UNESCO Director General's report to the UN General Assembly, and in the UNESCO mid-term review of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. It is an international case example of best practice of Regional Economic Community co-operation in advancing Education for Sustainable Development. The programme has also contributed to the development of national environment and sustainability education policy in Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (amongst others), and to local level policy development work in schools and institutions.

Approach

The SADC REEP adopts an enabling approach to policy development, encouraging countries and institutions to engage in and promote dialogue on policy options, and to set direction that can help southern African communities to learn together for a sustainable future. It also supports an empowerment approach to policy work, and integrates policy issues into all of its training programmes and networking activities, so that policy becomes part of practice and vice versa. It also seeks to enhance critically reflexive engagement with policy, and uses policy for reflection and monitoring of programme activities and outcomes. It also adopts a co-operative, partnerships and harmonising approach to policy work, encouraging participating countries and organisations to seek out synergies and the 'common public good' within a co-operative regional framework.

Activities

- Development of policy dialogue materials for use in high level seminars, policy forums, and





in training and networking programmes and activities.

- Hosting of high level policy seminars to support the integration of environmental and sustainability education into educational policy processes and environmental policy processes.
- Development of capacity for participation in policy making processes, and for ensuring that policy informs practice and vice versa.
- Supporting mainstreaming of environment and sustainability education into education and development thinking, policy and systems in the SADC region.

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. Specifically it seeks to ensure policy harmonisation and synergy on matters of common concern.

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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EDUCATION and SUSTAINABILITY

SADC Regional Environmental Education Programme