UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Teacher Education towards Sustainability

Objective

The principle objective of the Chair is to advance education for sustainable development (ESD) globally, especially related to teacher education.

International Network of Teacher Education Institutions

The UNESCO Chair was established in 1999 to write guidelines on reorienting teacher education to address sustainability. The Chair formed an international network of 35 teacher education institutions (TEIs) from as many countries. The Chair convened biennial meetings of the International Network (IN), rotating to different UNESCO Regions. The IN members carry out action research in their respective institutions and nations. The Chair’s publications include Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability and Good Practices in Education for Sustainable Development: Teacher Education Institutions. The International Network has expanded and now involves several hundred TEIs in 60+ countries. IN members are forming regional, national and local networks to implement ESD in teacher education and the IN will be a key element in the new UNESCO Global Action Programme on ESD which will be the sequel to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

The goals for the IN are:

- To implement ESD in teacher education based on the Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability.
- To capture learning and new insights related to teacher education and ESD.
- To work more closely with ministries of education, other UNESCO and UN teacher education initiatives, and school systems to embed ESDs.
- Carry out research and write case studies to capture good practices in teacher education and ESD.
- To assist in the implementation of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD regarding TEIs.

Sustainability and Education Academy (SEdA)

The Chair is Co-Director of SEdA which works with ministries of education, faculties of education, large school districts in Canada, and leading international researchers/administrators in ESD to explore moving from “whole school” approaches to ESD towards “whole school system” approaches.

Regional Centers of Expertise

The Chair works closely with United Nations University and their Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) program. The Chairholder was part of the group that developed the RCE concept, and continues as a developer of RCEs globally. The Chairholder also sits on the UBUNTU committee that approves new RCE applications.

Research Projects

Currently there are 2 major research projects underway.

1. What is the relationship between education for sustainable development and education quality?
   - Currently researchers in 15, mainly high-scoring PISA countries are working on this question to present their findings at the UNESCO World Conference in Nagoya in November of 2014.

2. How can ESD improve the quality of education of Indigenous and marginalized youth?
   - Researchers in 14 countries are finding local schools and communities willing to alter their curricula and pedagogy to include ESD perspectives and measure the results.

Advisory Roles

The Chair continues as an advisor to a number of educational institutions regarding ESD including The National Board of Education of Finland in their rewriting of their national curricula to include ESD as a central and overarching perspective and the National Assembly of Rectors of Peru. In this advisory role the Chair usually delivers over 50 speeches in 25 countries annually to a wide variety of institutions and organizations.