

# Communities in Action Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development

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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Institute  
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# Acknowledgements

As national governments and their partners discuss international development goals for 2030, hopes for sustainable development are high. There is a growing recognition that community-based learning spaces not only make a major contribution to educating people young and old, but also help strengthen the bonds of trust necessary for building a sustainable society.

This publication builds on two international events that took place during the final year of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. These events enabled participants to share community learning centres' practices in building links between schools, communities and societies, and in facilitating intergenerational learning and participation in actions for sustainable development. The *Jakarta Statement: Nurturing a Care, Fair and Share Society through CLCs* and the *Okayama Commitment 2014: Promoting ESD beyond DESD through Community-Based Learning* crystallize the commitments made by participants. The purpose of this handbook is to provide ideas on translating these commitments into concrete policies and practices that can be implemented all over the world.

This handbook is not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of current global developments in community-based learning for sustainable development. Rather, by focusing on selected representative examples from around the world, it aims to help readers reflect on six action principles and four policy support mechanisms. It is also hoped that readers will find ideas for their own daily work in the many innovative and effective practices revealed in these case studies.

We are grateful to the organizations discussed in this handbook for sharing their insights, experiences and photographs. Special thanks are due also to the authors of the individual case studies – Kiichi Oyasu (Bangladesh), Andrée de Ridder Vieira and his colleagues (Brazil) and Ella Yulaelawati (Indonesia) – and to Jennie Teasdale from Australia for suggesting the Okayama muscat grape as a metaphor. The handbook is the result of a collaborative writing process guided by a concept drawn by Robbie Guevara from the *Okayama Commitment 2014*. Part 1 was written mostly by Fumiko Noguchi, Part 2 by Fumiko Noguchi and Rika Yorozu, and Part 3 by Robbie Guevara. During the writing process, the authors benefited from constructive comments made by participants of the Regional Community Learning Centre Conference on the Role of CLC for Intergenerational Learning Focusing on the Elderly (Chiang Mai, February 2015) and by UNESCO colleagues, in particular Ulrike Hanemann, Yoko Mochizuki and Kiichi Oyasu.

We look forward to the continued development of community-based learning institutions as places where people feel safe to debate, to learn across generations and to participate in sustainable development actions. Let us put lifelong learning within reach for all.

Arne Carlsen  
Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)

# Message from the Mayor of Okayama City

I would like to express my sincere congratulations on the publication of *Communities in Action: Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development*.

Since Okayama region was acknowledged by the United Nations University as a Regional Centre of Expertise on ESD, a wide range of ESD activities (such as environmental conservation) have been conducted at local level through collaboration with over 200 organizations, including citizens' groups, universities and municipalities. ESD promotion in Okayama City has been internationally recognized as the 'ESD Okayama Model'. It is characterized by a variety of programmes and projects conducted by multiple stakeholders, such as schools, universities and businesses, that use professional coordinators to enable networking beyond sectoral and area boundaries. ESD programmes based at *Kominkan* (the Japanese equivalent of community learning centres) are in place in each junior high school area and are affiliated with the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network.

The *Kominkan*-CLC International Conference on ESD (Community-Based Human Development for a Sustainable Society) was held in October 2014 in Okayama City in conjunction with the UNESCO World Conference on ESD. Nearly 700 participants from twenty-nine countries gathered together for the conference, including learners, managers of *Kominkan* and CLCs, and

government representatives. Good practices of non-formal ESD based at *Kominkan* and CLCs were shared, and their role and future perspectives as community-based learning places were discussed. The main outcome of the conference was the *Okayama Commitment 2014: Promoting ESD beyond DESD through Community-Based Learning*. The warm and friendly nature of the communication between participants and citizens at five *Kominkan*, the venue of the thematic sessions, was acknowledged by all concerned.

Based on ten years' experience of ESD projects and the success of the conference, Okayama City will continue to contribute to realizing a sustainable society. I hope this handbook will give readers inspiration for ESD promotion through lifelong learning institutions such as *Kominkan* and CLCs.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to all those who contributed to the conference. I would very much appreciate your cooperation regarding the promotion of ESD and global networking beyond borders in the future.

Masao Omori  
Mayor of Okayama City

# Acronym list

ACCU	Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (Japan)
CLCs	Community learning centres
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EFA	Education for All
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESD-J	Japan Council on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (Namibia)
EXPRO	Community-based Non-formal Livelihood Skills Training for Youth and Adults in Selected Regions of Ethiopia
GAP	Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PILCD	People's Initiative for Learning and Community Development (Philippines)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SP	State Environmental Education Policy (Brazil)
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDESD	United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# Introduction

## The purpose of the handbook

This handbook aims to be a basic informative guide for national and municipal government officers and those who work with community learning centres (CLCs) and other community organizations. Its purpose is to develop stronger partnerships to enhance community-based Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Stronger partnerships contribute to advancing ESD at the community level through non-formal and informal learning opportunities, with the ultimate aim of achieving sustainable development.

Over 700 participants, including community educators, researchers, and representatives from governments, United Nations agencies and development organizations, gathered together for the *Kominkan-CLC International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development*, held in Okayama-City, Japan from 9 to 12 October 2014. Participants discussed how to sustain and promote ESD through community-based learning, drawing on their rich experience of working together with local communities. The main outcome of the Conference is the *Okayama Commitment 2014: Promoting ESD beyond DESD through Community-Based Learning*, a document that celebrates the significant contributions of community-based learning during the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) and identifies commitments to continue to advance ESD practice. (See Annex for the full text of the *Okayama Commitment*.)

The *Okayama Commitment 2014* is the framework for this handbook. The handbook aims to ensure that the *Okayama Commitment 2014* does not become a static document, but continues to serve as a reference for professionals engaged in community-based ESD in order to realize the goals of sustainable development for 2030 which will be agreed by the world community in 2015.

## The structure of the handbook

The handbook consists of three parts: global picture, case studies and summary.

Part 1 introduces the readers to the underlying concepts and policy frameworks that inform the practice of community-based ESD. It answers the following key questions.

- (1) What is sustainable development?
- (2) What is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)?
- (3) Why is a community-based approach important for sustainable development and ESD?
- (4) How does community-based ESD link with the current global debates on Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD?
- (5) What are community learning centres (CLCs)/ community organizations, and what do they do?

Part 2 expands on the concepts and frameworks in Part 1 by providing short practice and policy case studies which describe a wide range of community-based ESD practices and identify the policy mechanisms that support these education initiatives across the world. The community-based cases were selected based on six thematic issues highlighted in the *Okayama Commitment 2014*, namely:

- i) Environmental conservation
- ii) Disaster risk reduction (DRR)
- iii) Income generation, entrepreneurship, community development
- iv) Cultural diversity and dialogue, intergenerational exchange
- v) Literacy
- vi) Empowerment

The eight ESD cases, from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mali, Philippines and Slovenia illustrate 'good' community-based ESD practices. Each case study includes a brief description of the CLCs/community organizations involved, the learners/participants, the specific ESD issue addressed, and the results achieved. They include links to more in-depth case studies and reports.

The four policy cases, from Brazil, Indonesia, Japan and Namibia, describe what national and municipal governments can do to facilitate 'good' community-based ESD. The policy cases also identify challenges to policy implementation and how these have been overcome. These cases illustrate the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in addressing complex issues in sustainable development.

Part 3 concludes with a summary of the six action principles that characterize 'good' community-based ESD practice and four support mechanisms that identify how national and municipal policymakers can actively support CLCs/community organizations involved in advancing ESD.

## The muscat grape metaphor

The muscat grape is used in the handbook as a metaphor for the key action principles and supporting mechanisms which have been identified from the experiences shared by many educators at the Okayama Conference. Each cluster is made up of grape berries that represent one of the six action principles, namely: responding, engaging, enabling, embedding, sustaining and transforming ourselves. The four policy support mechanisms are: providing resources, networking/partnership, capacity-building and content development.

The muscat grape is an appropriate metaphor because it is grown in many regions of the world. But more significantly, it represents two international documents related to education and learning for sustainable community development. First, muscat grapes are a major agricultural product of Okayama, where the ESD conference was hosted and the Okayama Commitment 2014 was endorsed. Second, the muscat grape also symbolizes the response of educators to the global education frameworks on EFA illustrated in Box 1 (page 15). The Muscat Agreement was adopted at the conclusion of the Global Education for All Meeting in Oman in May 2014 as the proposal of the education community to the UN Secretary General regarding the Sustainable Development Goals.

As you read through the different case studies in the handbook, you will see how the cases are practicing action principles and the kind of policy support they benefit from. When the practices are functioning in an integrated manner, they are able to build capacities and knowledge to tackle specific ESD issues with their participants.

**Figure 1:**  
**Action principles and support mechanisms**





Cover page of the Jakarta Statement: Nurturing a Care, Fair and Share Society through CLCs



Discussing the process of drafting the Okayama Commitment

# Part 1

## Global frameworks and local practices

### Towards the Sustainable Development Goals and Education 2030 Agenda

#### **Sustainable development – seeking the alternative path**

Modernization and rapid economic development have brought tremendous benefits to many people, including wealth, information and convenience. Advancements in ICT have enhanced democratic processes in many parts of the world and medical science has improved many health problems. However, these developments have also caused what is arguably the largest set of crises that humans have ever faced: climate change, loss of biodiversity, human rights violations, extreme urbanization, pollution, the widening gap between rich and poor, and violent conflicts. Global debates to seek an alternative direction have given rise to the concept of sustainable development, which is defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43).

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, popularly known as the Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was the first international conference where governments, private sectors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from both developed and developing countries prioritized these key problems and discussed how solutions to them could be integrated into their practice. UNCED adopted Agenda 21, a comprehensive action plan endorsed by all stakeholders (including local governments) covering every area in which human beings impact on the environment. Children and youth, women, NGOs, local authorities, business and industry, workers, indigenous peoples, their communities, and farmers were identified as major groups of stakeholders. In the two decades since UNCED, sustainable development has become both a global and a local movement.

#### **ESD – education as a key driving force for sustainable development**

Focusing on the significant role of education in empowering people to achieve sustainable development, educators have attempted to implement a number of sustainable development initiatives over the years from global to the local grass roots level. Their efforts have resulted in the emergence of the field called Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

ESD inspires people to actively participate in the creation of ‘a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive social transformation’ (UNESCO, 2005, p. 6). ESD covers the full range of human activities in order to equip learners with the relevant knowledge, skills and values for sustainable development. At the same time, education is transformed to allow learning to take place beyond traditional educational institutions (UNESCO, 2012, p. 3).

ESD has its roots in two educational movements that have arisen since the establishment of the United Nations. One is the Education for All (EFA) movement, which aims to expand basic education in order to build strong foundations for lifelong learning. The efforts of the EFA movement have been informed at national and international levels by the Dakar Framework for Action based on the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All in 1990 and aligned with the education goal in the Millennium Development Goals, both of which address the educational goals for achieving sustainable development. The second root of ESD is the movement for environmental education which began in the 1960s. Environmental educators have developed innovative approaches and methods in their daily educational practices in order to solve environmental problems. As the field of environmental education grew, it incorporated the debate around sustainable development. Environmental education critically challenged the existing education

paradigms that have contributed to reproducing unsustainable systems and practices. The scope of environmental education also shifted from proposing solutions for environmental problems to achieving sustainable development, underpinned by an understanding of the interrelatedness of environmental issues with social, economic, political and cultural factors. The Earth Summit, which articulated the role of education in achieving sustainable development in Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992), sought to bring these two educational movements together into one dynamic educational movement for sustainable development: ESD.

### **UNDESD – mobilizing multiple stakeholders to achieve sustainable development through education**

The educational movement for sustainable development led to the establishment of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD). The UNDESD, which ran between 2005 and 2014 and was coordinated by UNESCO, provided opportunities for many stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, private sector, researchers and UN organizations, to participate in the implementation of educational actions for achieving sustainable development.

In November 2014, the conclusion of the UNDESD was marked by the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Japan. The Aichi-Nagoya Declaration from this conference celebrated the achievements of the Decade, making a commitment to the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD ‘through inclusive quality education and lifelong learning via formal, non-formal and informal settings.’<sup>1</sup> This concept of lifelong learning for sustainable development is carried forward to the global 2030 education agenda and its framework for action.

## **Challenges to ESD**

During the UNDESD, concepts and methods were actively debated by both researchers and practitioners. Policies for ESD promotion were

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1 Beyond the global educational community, UNDESD has also gained greater recognition for the importance of education in global policy platforms such as the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and the G8 Summit.

developed by many countries, and ESD good practices and models were presented. One can argue that the dialogue of policy, research and practice contributed to the advancement of ESD, especially within formal education (UNESCO, 2014c; UNESCO, 2012b). However, despite attempts by many stakeholders,<sup>2</sup> the contribution of community organizations to ESD often went unrecognized. This is partly due to differences in the understanding of the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development is a ‘fluid concept’ (IISD, 2010, p. 6) which has been interpreted in numerous ways. Most interpretations of the concept can be categorized as either ‘technological’ or ‘ecological’ (Orr, 1992). The technological approach to sustainable development focuses on maintaining current socio-economic growth whilst minimizing negative environmental impacts through new technologies and legal frameworks. This approach is therefore essentially top-down: according to it, sustainable development is driven by experts and by scientific and technological advancement. The ecological approach, by contrast, argues that a social transformation of current socio-economic systems is needed, incorporating both expert technology-based scientific knowledge *and* local and indigenous knowledge.<sup>3</sup> This approach therefore requires societal collaboration driven by the efforts of both experts and ordinary citizens.

Both approaches are needed for achieving sustainable development. A number of global initiatives have been launched with the objective of integrating the ecological and technological approaches to sustainable development, for example via the creation of new forms of governance and collaborative projects involving multiple stakeholders.<sup>4</sup> Yet various factors, including political instability and socio-economic pressure, have made integration of these two

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2 Several projects were conducted with the aim of promoting a community-based approach to ESD through non-formal and informal education. These include ‘Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD’ by the United Nations University covering all world regions; ‘Innovation Programme for ESD’ by ACCU; ‘Asia NGO Network on ESD’ by ESD-J; and ‘City governments that educate’ by the Paulo Freire Institute, Sao Paulo.

3 ‘The difference between traditional [or local] and indigenous people’s communities is that indigenous peoples’ communities, despite the pressure to integrate within the larger society of the national states of which they are a part, still have their own distinct cultures. Local communities, on the other hand, usually do not have a cultural identity that sets them apart from the larger society, or a least not to the same extent as in the case of indigenous peoples’ communities’ (Viergever, 1999, p. 335).

4 Examples include the Earth System Governance Project (<http://www.earthsystemgovernance.org>) and Future Earth Project (<http://www.futureearth.org>).

approaches challenging. Knowledge from the technological approach tends to be recognized and valued, whereas the ecological approach often goes unrecognized and underappreciated in policy discourses.

Similar relations were observed in the interpretation and implementation of ESD. 'Sustainable development' is often understood as referring chiefly or solely to environmental conservation, whilst 'education' is interpreted in the narrow sense of structured curriculum-based teaching by experts such as school teachers and professors in higher education institutions. As a result, ESD policy discourse at national level often gave greater attention to stakeholders in the formal education community (in schools, higher education institutions and ministries of education) and less attention to those who are involved in non-formal or informal learning.

It is important to remember that, while schools have become major players in ESD, some children, youth and adults still remain unreached by schools, especially those from marginalized and disadvantaged sectors of society. However, there is a lot of scope for further advancing ESD in the lifelong and lifewide educational spectrum. Sustainable development relates to all humans and involves all aspects of our lives; learning must therefore be part of a lifelong process (UNESCO, 2005, p. 6). The role of non-formal and informal education needs to be recognized and collaboration with formal education strengthened for the benefit of students and community members alike.

ESD is a dynamic movement that challenges and reorients education by going beyond its existing framework. The Delors Report (UNESCO, 1996) identified four pillars that continue to be relevant today: 'learning to know', 'learning to do', 'learning to live together' and 'learning to be'. A fifth pillar, 'learning to transform', can be added to address sustainable development. These learning processes need to happen at all stages of life and through all forms of education, formal, non-formal and informal. Educators and practitioners who provide non-formal and informal education therefore have a significant role to play in advancing ESD.

How can we overcome the current conceptual and practical challenges to ESD and make it possible for diverse individuals and institutions to journey together to achieve sustainable development?

## Local communities – the foundation of sustainable development

Local communities hold the key to addressing this conceptual challenge. Greater acknowledgment of the contribution of local communities to education will allow these communities to contribute more effectively to achieving sustainable development. In fact, the adoption of Agenda 21 has resulted in the formulation of Local Agenda 21 by more than 6000 local authorities (UN, 2012, p. 6). Local community is recognized as one of five priority areas for the further advancement of ESD beyond 2015 (UNESCO, 2014b).

'Local community' is often narrowly understood as referring to a particular geographic region or location governed by a local government administrative unit. In reality, it is much more than that: it is a living entity that involves the interaction of people with their local environment. Sustainable development is ultimately about the issues that everyone needs to tackle in their daily life at the local community level: pollution, consumption, natural resource scarcity, poverty, discrimination, safe water, food and shelter. Sustainability issues are interlinked in complex ways. Everyone is affected by these issues directly or indirectly, either as the cause, the victim or at times both. The journey to achieving sustainable development therefore has to involve the participation of as many stakeholders as possible. In particular, the voices of politically, socially, economically and culturally marginalized people need to be heard and responded to. They are the ones who suffer the most from these problems, which often result in their further marginalization. The marginalized are the hardest hit by developmental problems and the least resilient to the major conflicts and crises which are often caused by rapid development. These tend to exacerbate their situation further, since the accumulated deprivation of education, health and livelihood prevents them from responding to problems in order to improve their situation.

How can everyone on Earth participate in the global effort to achieve sustainable development, building a sense of ownership of development problems without marginalizing either present or future generations of human beings or other species?

There are two reasons why the community-based approach to ESD is important. Firstly, local community empowerment provides the foundation for sustainable development. Learning enables local people to take direct and practical action to tackle the problems that they face in

this changing and globalizing world. Learning also helps people gain new knowledge and skills to improve their lives in a sustainable way, such as eco-friendly farming and fishing skills, understanding diverse values, beliefs and customs, and addressing social and economic inequalities. Learning empowers local people to make informed judgements that can potentially lead to transformative actions. By developing greater shared ownership of their community's future, learning enables them to proactively participate in the development of their own local communities while also responding to global issues.

Secondly, a local community approach to ESD helps local people to re-identify, re-evaluate and further develop local and indigenous knowledge. Local and indigenous knowledge is based on the wisdom of local communities which is relevant in addressing changes in their natural environment. It is holistic; it encompasses social, cultural, political and economic systems. However, in certain contexts this knowledge has been regarded as inferior to, or simply replaced by, modern knowledge. Community-based ESD approaches can provide opportunities to revisit and reclaim local/indigenous knowledge and wisdom and to rediscover what they can contribute to achieving sustainable development.

#### **According to the Okayama Commitment:**

Multifaceted approaches are necessary in ESD, which responds to issues with complex causes and outcomes. ESD involves a holistic approach which embraces the dynamic interaction and complementarity of traditional wisdom and modern knowledge. It takes account of changes in urban and rural environments, and promotes skills development and forms of learning which emphasize ownership, participation and empowerment.

### **CLCs and community organizations as key players for ESD**

Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and other community organizations play a central role in the empowerment of the local community through education. These terms are inclusive of all organizations that deliver community education and learning activities, ranging from government and both educational and non-educational NGOs to private individuals and companies with the cooperation of community

members. These activities cover all forms of education, formal, non-formal and informal, for people of all ages and from diverse cultural, economic, social and ethnic backgrounds. One of the main characteristics of CLCs and community organizations is that they have a commitment and capacity to provide learning opportunities for socially, economically and culturally marginalized people in their locality.

Some CLCs and community organizations provide alternative equivalency education at primary and secondary level, including youth and adult literacy and numeracy programmes and space for group learning and self-studies, especially for people with special needs (students with disabilities, school drop-outs and non-native speakers). Other organizations organize lifelong learning activities that proactively respond to the expressed needs of local community members, such as capacity building programmes for life skills and livelihood or protection of cultural heritage. These are often conducted via relatively unstructured and informal hands-on training activities (farming, craft work, and environmental conservation), providing a space for peer counselling and for people with common issues and interests to gather together. The programmes constitute open and safe spaces for intergenerational dialogue and learning involving schoolchildren, young people and adults.

#### **According to the Okayama Commitment:**

Institutions, which facilitate community-based learning, provide the space to talk about their concerns, raise people's awareness, motivate them to respond and establish ownership of their responses, and support them in sharing their hopes for a more sustainable society, as a:

1. PLACE (Participation, Learning, Action, Creation and Empathy)
2. Bridge between formal, non-formal and informal education
3. Provider of inclusive and flexible education to socially marginalized peoples
4. Facilitator of relevant and responsive learning
5. Catalyst of innovative and effective learning
6. Weaver of intergenerational and multidisciplinary knowledge and cultural diversity
7. Capacity builder of community education professionals
8. Hub engaging and empowering individuals

## Box 1: Connection between community-based ESD and international initiatives

During the UNDESD (2005-2014), effort was made to establish linkages between ESD and major global education frameworks such as Education for All (EFA), Literacy Education, Lifelong Learning and Global Citizenship Education (UNESCO, 2014d). These dialogues at local, national and international level inspired some community educators to improve their educational practices by applying the underlying concepts of ESD.

The *Okayama Commitment 2014* was informed by the experiences of CLCs and other community organizations that actively practised the concepts and actions set out in the UNDESD and related global priorities on sustainable development and education. EFA was developed to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. EFA shares with ESD a commitment to quality education and education as a human right (Wade and Parker, 2008). As the UNDESD concluded in 2014 and the commitment period of EFA concludes in 2015, UNESCO has recognized that 'since its launch in 2000, the existing EFA agenda has helped to drive remarkable progress, but some critical areas remain unaddressed and progress has slowed in recent years. EFA will remain an "unfinished agenda"' (UNESCO, 2015, p. 3).

The Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD (UNESCO, 2014b) is designed to sustain the gains from the UNDESD. More specifically, the GAP aims to 'generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development'. Five priority areas have been identified: (i) advance policy, (ii) transforming the learning and training environment, (iii) building capacities of educators and trainers, (iv) empowering and mobilizing youth, and (v) accelerating sustainable solutions at local level. Local communities are the key driving force to advance GAP by developing realistic, creative and collaborative solutions.

The Muscat Agreement (UNESCO, 2014a) proposed that the overarching education goal after 2015 should be to 'ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030'. The Open Working Group (UNGA, 2014) likewise proposed to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all', which has been recommended by the UN Secretary General as one of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A detailed study of both the GAP and the education goal within the Sustainable Development Goals indicates a shared commitment to a rethinking of education across all levels, promoting quality education for the attainment of a sustainable society. The Okayama Commitment recognizes that community-based learning has a key role in 'rethinking education to build inclusive and sustainable learning societies'. A key element of this rethinking is the commitment that 'Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all must have a central place in national education and development systems as part of the agendas of Education for All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)', and the recognition that these commitments must be 'carried out collaboratively with all providers and stakeholders in national learning and education systems to achieve ESD and the broader goals of Sustainable Development'.



**Responding**

**Sustaining**

**Transforming**

**Engaging**

**Enabling**

**Embedding**

# Practice

## Part 2

# Community-based ESD practices and policy case studies

The challenges of applying the ESD concepts and frameworks described in Part I are illustrated in this section through case studies in educational policy and practice. Part 2 aims to help CLCs/ community organizations and government agencies learn how they can effectively strengthen partnerships in order to advance community-based ESD.

The section on practice case studies below introduces six community-based ESD practices. Each case study describes how a CLC/ community organization worked with their learners/participants to address a specific ESD issue. The policy case studies introduce four policy cases that describe what national and municipal governments have done to support 'good' community-based ESD. They discuss the policy challenges they faced and how they overcame these challenges.

### Practice case studies

Cases of successful community-based ESD were selected from various parts of the world in order to provide examples. These good practice case studies cover the six thematic issues highlighted in the *Okayama Commitments*, namely:

- Environmental conservation
- Disaster risk reduction (DRR)
- Income generation, entrepreneurship, community development
- Cultural diversity and dialogue, intergenerational exchange
- Literacy
- Empowerment

The experiences of each of the case studies are described using the following outline, informed by the different aspects identified in the *Okayama Commitment 2014*:

- Programme name
- Responsible organization(s) and partners
- Primary participants
- Timeframe
- ESD issues tackled
- ESD capacities and knowledge developed
- Results and impacts observed

- Major action principles and support mechanisms
- Links for further information

Each case study concludes by identifying the specific action principles and the policy support mechanism that facilitated the implementation of this good ESD practice. The six action principles and the four policy support mechanisms were identified based on the numerous case studies that were examined from those presented at the *Kominkan-CLC International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development*.

The six action principles, which are explained in detail in Part 3 of the handbook, are:

- Responding to emergent local community issues that impact on achieving sustainable development
- Engaging with different key players to respond effectively to the issues identified
- Enabling all those who seek solutions to sustainability issues to contribute actively to finding them
- Embedding the principles and practices of ESD in daily life
- Sustaining changes and achievements beyond short-term project timelines
- Transforming ourselves, our practices and policies towards a more sustainable future

The four policy support mechanisms, also described in detail in Part 3, are:

- Providing resources
- Networking/partnership
- Capacity-building
- Content development

However, not all of the eight ESD cases presented (from Japan, the Philippines, India, Mali, Slovenia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Ethiopia) were shared at the *Kominkan-CLC* conference. We have added a few case studies to provide geographical and thematic balance. It is important to note that, whenever possible, we have tried our best to use the same words that the CLCs/community organizations used to describe their ESD practice.



© Okayama City, Japan

## Japan

Community members mobilized for water quality survey

### Okayama Kyoyama ESD Environment Project

#### ESD theme

Environmental conservation

#### Responsible organization(s) and partners

Kyoyama *Kominkan*, local primary and secondary schools, and Okayama City

#### Primary participants

Local primary and secondary schoolchildren

#### Timeframe

Ongoing since 2002

#### ESD issues tackled

The Kyoyama District in Okayama City, located in Western Japan, has many irrigation streams that draw water from the river that runs through the district. The economic development processes that increased after World War II polluted many of these streams through waste water disposal.

#### ESD capacities and knowledge developed

Okayama Kyoyama ESD Environmental Project provided opportunities for local primary and secondary schoolchildren to understand, re-think and re-establish the relationship between human life and the local natural environment. The project started by conducting small-scale environmental conservation and learning activities involving the local streams and rivers, such as a local ecological study, a water quality survey and cleaning of the water bodies.

The strength of the project is its use of democratic inter-generational learning principles. The design and implementation of environmental conservation activities were guided by the principles identified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child: children are not helpless but have rights and responsibilities appropriate to their stage of development (United Nations, 1989). Thus, many activities conducted by the project were led by children in Kyoyama who were encouraged to participate actively in each stage of the project, including



*Children presenting their wishes for a clean environment during the Kyoyama ESD Festival*



*High school student participant conveying KEEP recommendations to city mayor*

the planning, implementing and reporting of each activity. Older children and adults from schools, universities, IT companies, local government and media were also involved and provided the necessary technical and logistical support.

### Results and impact observed

The engagement of a variety of stakeholders helped the children to understand the various different perspectives involved in studying human-water relationships. Diverse activities were conducted, such as an interview with the local elders, an international exchange programme with overseas schools, policy advocacy, urban design, and participation in national and international conferences. The children's activities transformed the attitudes of the local adults and prepared them to engage in collective community actions.

The local women's group, the community council, local businesses and the elders' group established the Kyoyama ESD Promotion Council in 2005 in order to advance Okayama Kyoyama ESD environmental project as a long-term community effort. The core objective of searching for a better relationship between humans and nature has been embedded in an inclusive and participatory manner into all the actions and learning activities conducted by the community. The numbers of people and organizations engaged in ESD activities have increased. The environmental conservation activities have also deepened the quality of the learning activities by incorporating related themes, such as local traditional culture, childrearing, disability, and community development.

Since 2005, the Kyoyama ESD Promotion Council and Kyoyama Kominkan have organized the Kyoyama ESD Festival every year in cooperation with different organizations. The festival provides local people from children to the elderly with an opportunity to exhibit their ESD activities and to discuss together the sustainable future of Kyoyama district.

### Major action principles and support mechanisms

Okayama Kyoyama ESD Environmental Project **responded** to the environmental problems experienced by the local community in the process of development. The project successfully **embedded** the key principles of ESD, such as participation, rights, local autonomy and environmental conservation, into all the activities it developed.

A stable financial commitment to *Kominkan* by the national and local government underpinned by the Japanese Social Education Act allows the *Kominkan* to **engage** with the local community in a sustainable and flexible manner (see Japan Policy Case Study for more information). Kyoyama Kominkan has played a significant role in **providing the resources** for the activities, including space, equipment and staff to coordinate activities and facilitate discussions.

The schools, Kominkan and NGOs formed partnerships and worked together to decide on the content, methods and targets of the ESD activities.

### For further information:

- Okayama Kyoyama ESD Commission website
- Noguchi, 2006.
- Ren Men Men website



© PILCD, The Philippines

# Philippines

*Community members of Pasdong working together clearing the farmland*

## Disaster Risk Reduction Functional Literacy Project

### ESD theme

Disaster risk reduction

### Responsible organization(s) and partners

People's Initiative for Learning and Community Development (PILCD) in partnership with the international medical NGO *Première Urgence*

### Primary participants

Marginalized group of people in the local community of the landslide-affected area

### Timeframe

2009 - ongoing

### ESD issues tackled

The devastation following the Typhoon Pepeng (Parma) in October 2009 exposed the vulnerability of the farming communities in Benguet Province to rain-induced landslides. The Benguet Province, which lies on top of the Cordillera Mountains in Northern Philippines, shares a high incidence of educational disadvantage due to poverty and the remoteness of schools from villages. The Cordillera region

was ranked 27th among 530 regions and provinces in Southeast Asia on a Climate Change Vulnerability Map (Yusuf and Francisco, 2009) prepared by the Economy and Environment Programme for Southeast Asia. Natural disasters require an immediate response, especially when lives are at stake.

### ESD capacities and knowledge developed

PILCD initiated a post-disaster livelihood project which evolved in April 2011 into a functional literacy project with a disaster risk prevention and reduction focus. The project was both community-based (aiming to strengthen local disaster risk reduction councils through strong community participation) and school-based (mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) education in the curriculum of the Alternative Learning System. The project specifically addressed (1) the lack of access to information about DRR and corresponding learning opportunities; (2) the low level of functional literacy and education which significantly affects local people's knowledge, skills and attitudes as regards understanding and dealing with disasters; (3) the lack of skills on disaster preparedness and responsiveness; and (4) the absence of DRR plans at the local village level.

### Results and impact observed

Alternative Learning System and community learners have increased awareness of the nature and impacts of disasters and their relation to climate change and the environment. They recognize how DRR education can be an engaging entry point to understand and develop resilience to disasters in a climate changing world, and how it can play a key role in developing life skills that can save lives and bring hope to those who have to live with the consequences of disasters. More importantly, experience also shows how the local response to disasters through DRR education can begin to demand a rethink of the values, behaviour and lifestyles at the global level that have led to the human-induced phenomenon of climate change, threatening the sustainability of the planet Earth itself.

Individual and household participants increased their ability to prepare and respond to disasters. Alternative Learning System mobile teachers and service providers gained skills in integrating disaster risk reduction in their lesson plans. The local government units achieved better organizational and logistical capacities in building their community's resilience to hazards and disasters, resulting in better coordination and cooperation between community members and local officials.

### Major action principles and support mechanisms

PILCD **responds** to specific issues such as literacy, life skills and disaster risk reduction in its activities. Its strength lies in **engaging** with and building the resilience of communities vulnerable to natural disasters. The project has **enabled** participants to reduce their vulnerabilities by strengthening their capacity to deal with disasters. It has also helped to **develop the capabilities** of the local administrative authorities to work with the vulnerable community.

The government's permission to use the school facilities to implement the project is one kind of resource support. PILCD and the local government **worked together** to develop the project contents as well as administrative logistics.

### For further information:

- Mapa, 2012
- PILCD website
- Première Urgence website
- Philippines Department of Education Alternative Learning System website

*Community members doing hazard mapping*



© PILCD, The Philippines



© Fumiko Noguchi

## India

*Eco-enterprise women's group making ghee*

### GRAM NIDHI (Village Treasures)

#### ESD theme

Income Generation, Entrepreneurship, Community Development

#### Responsible organization(s) and partners

Centre for Environment Education, India, Narmada Trust, and commercial banks

#### Primary participants

Socially marginalized groups such as landless farmers and underprivileged and/or poor rural people, particularly women

#### Timeframe

1998 – ongoing

#### ESD issues tackled

Microfinance has become one popular approach to alleviating poverty in rural communities in developing countries. However, it can also become another financial burden if it does not bring long-term sustainable benefit to the community in terms of stronger social capital, wise use of natural resources and profitable

income. Empowerment is the key to helping communities go beyond the merely financial benefits of microfinance and achieving sustainable community development.

Education can play a significant role in this process. With modernization in agriculture, water-intensive cash crops like cotton are now widely grown in this drought-prone semi-arid area. The high input cost of pesticides and fertilizers increases the financial burden on already poverty-stricken farmers, resulting in a vicious cycle involving the loss of biodiversity, the degradation of natural resources and the loss of livelihood.

#### ESD capacities and knowledge developed

Through *Gram Nidhi*, meaning village treasures in Hindi, in all 25 project villages of Gujarat, up to 20 socially marginalized villagers united to form small groups to develop eco-enterprise projects in four sectors (agriculture, animal husbandry, agro-processing and marketing) and earn some small savings. Once a project was developed, it was screened for potential economic viability by the eco-enterprise committee under Gram Nidhi.

The Centre for Environmental Education supported these groups by providing relevant educational and learning opportunities on sustainable farming, financing and marketing. It also provided meeting facilitation and consultation services, linking the villagers with relevant stakeholders (government, unions, banks, marketing organizations and consumers).

### Results and impact observed

The participants developed their skills in communicating with diverse people and increased their capacity to plan their own lives. Other people's attitudes towards them were also transformed as a result of the project. *Gram Nidhi* resulted in a transformation of the economic system from mass consumption to small-scale but sustainable production and consumption based on a high-quality face-to-face network within the local community. The change in India's investment policy in the 1990s allowed financial firms to provide some small scale funding to the unemployed women's groups, based on the initial amount they deposited.

### Major action principles and support mechanisms

*Gram Nidhi* successfully **embedded** a more holistic approach to learning within the very specific micro-finance project. Capacities of socially marginalized women were enhanced so that they could design their own eco-enterprise project and carry out their business successfully and sustainably. They were empowered through the project to develop confidence and independence which they had previously lacked.



*Mandala made by a women's group with locally grown agricultural products*



*A farmer couple showing their indigenous cows purchased with microfinance credit*

*Gram Nidhi* activities have resulted in positive **transformation** of the local communities. The socially marginalized people have developed pride in themselves and their communities by re-evaluating local knowledge and re-establishing the community network.

Recent changes in national investment policy mandating businesses to invest 2% of their profits in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities have facilitated **mobilization of financial resources**. These policies have obliged banks and corporations to engage sustainably with *Gram Nidhi*. However, the biggest challenge that the Centre for Environmental Education has faced is that there are hardly any funds available to support activities by NGOs which aim to turn poor rural people into entrepreneurs. These activities are conducted under the rubric of informal education and are not recognized as education within the governmental policy framework.

### For further information:

- Savalia, 2006
- Centre for Environment Education (CEE) India website

A similar case study is also available in Prihantoro, 2006.



© Jeunesse et développement, Mali

# Mali

*Learning by observing local production of soap*

## VITAL Lifelong Learning Villages

### ESD theme

Income generation, entrepreneurship and community development

### Responsible organization(s) and partners

Jeunesse et Développement with support from British Embassy, Stromme Foundation, Mali Development Group, Methodist Relief and Development Fund and DVV International.

### Primary participants

Women and men participating in nineteen Reflect circles in rural areas in Mali.

Multiple actors are participating at community level: village authorities, local development services, elected representatives, the project team and various resource persons.

### Timeframe

2010 onwards

### ESD issues tackled

According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2014, Mali has one of highest multi-dimensional poverty rates in the world. This reflects deprivation in health, education and living standards. Since 1993, Mali has been undergoing a large-scale process of decentralization aimed at bringing about cohesive and sustainable development. Local institutions for community development have been established, but efficient running of these institutions has been impeded by a number of constraints, such as high illiteracy, lack of experience in managing and evaluating community projects, newly elected local councillors' inexperience with managing public affairs, unavailability of national and local community development data, lack of government support for rural development, and the spread of HIV/AIDS and associated stigma. Collaborative learning and action by local community members needs to be improved and reactivated in order to find solutions at community level. Food security has also become a serious issue threatening rural livelihoods.

## ESD capacities and knowledge developed

Jeunesse et Développement is a non-governmental organization which aims to enable young adults to play an active part in development. One of its main focuses is on the use and dissemination of the Reflect method. In Mali, Jeunesse et Développement organized a preliminary consultation process with community members and partners to identify themes for community education and development. Three project strands were selected: literacy, vocational training and civic education.

Vocational training and learning circles were established in the villages. Each circle consisted of thirty members and met two to three times a week. Under the guidance of trained community facilitators, members practised Reflect and Stepping Stones methods. Reflect combines the tools and techniques of participatory research with communication techniques that follow the philosophy of Paulo Freire. Stepping Stones is a communication and training tool based on participatory methods, which was developed to address the vulnerability of young people and women with regard to decisions about their sexuality.

Each circle featured literacy learning modules and handouts which included theory and practical knowledge on the selected vocational training area, and civic education. For example, literacy skills modules on the theme of maize production featured information on the history, future possibilities and legal context of maize production, as well as tips on marketing and how to conduct market surveys.

## Results and impact observed

Holding practice agricultural demonstrations in open fields with the participation of circle members and villagers meant that the whole village observed and benefited from the demonstration. When circle members practised new agricultural techniques to increase production, such as composting technique, non-participating villagers also observed and applied them.

Of the 314 circle members who took literacy assessment, the majority achieved advanced literacy levels (120 women and 41 men). In monetary terms, villagers made substantial profit by producing and selling local soap and dyed clothes and by increasing their maize production.



*Circle member practicing numeracy*

In addition to learning literacy and vocational skills, circle members learned community management skills and started to play key roles in local decision-making.

## Major action principles and support mechanisms

VITAL has **responded** to local community participants' urgent need for better literacy and income generation skills. In order to motivate different community stakeholders to take a more proactive role in tackling local issues, Jeunesse et Développement **engaged** with various partner organizations during project development, implementation and monitoring. The project **developed participants' skills** in problem identification, decision-making, management and community mobilization.

**Multiple stakeholders**, especially traditional leaders, locally elected leaders and local government officials, participated in the development and implementation process. They increased their commitments regarding **resource mobilization** and allocation and transferred their knowledge and expertise to the circle participants. Jeunesse et Développement's main role was as a provider of technical advice and support. Facilitators were recruited from the local community and trained to conduct the activities using participatory approaches. Organizing a prize for the best VITAL circle encouraged individual learning circles to redouble their efforts and to learn from each other's experiences. Sustainable financing of activities remains an issue, however.

## For further information:

- Jeunesse et Développement website
- Pamoja West Africa, 2012, pp. 25-26
- UIL LitBase, Community Development Programme website



© Koper Folk High School, Slovenia

# Slovenia

*Training session for adult educators organized by the Koper Folk High School*

## When Abroad Becomes Home

### ESD Theme

Cultural Diversity and Dialogue, Intergenerational Exchange

### Responsible organization and partners

The Koper Folk High School coordinated the project with the partnership of the Employment Service of Slovenia, the Koper Social Work Centre and the Koper Administrative Unit

### Participants

Refugee women from Kosovo to Slovenia in Koper, a city in Slovenia

### Timeframe

2008 – 2009

### ESD issues tackled

There is a common perception that ESD is mainly about environmental issues. However, civil war, economic crisis, natural disaster and family difficulties all impact on sustainable development. All of these issues can push people to leave their hometown and move to new places, like the experiences of war refugees and environmental refugees. They become immigrants or asylum seekers and have to go through a very hard process to adapt to a totally new world, becoming familiar with the local economy, public administration, education, lifestyle, values and language. Slovenia accepted several thousand refugees and their families who suffered as a result of the Kosovo War in the late 1990s. After 2006 many women from Kosovo migrated to the Littoral-Carst Region to join their husbands who were migrants in Slovenia. Most of these women had little education and spoke only Albanian.

### **ESD capacities and knowledge developed**

The Koper Folk High School developed an educational programme to respond to the needs of the Kosovo refugee women. Individual learning plans were developed for each of the women, including modules on the local language, administrative system, society, culture, employment, school system, and ICT literacy. Two cultural mediators who spoke Albanian and knew the culture of the women's homeland were arranged to support the participants in order to make their learning process more effective. They were present during the learning activities and accompanied the women through the public administrative process, translating the relevant learning materials and official forms where necessary.

### **Results and impact observed**

The participants became familiar with the government administrative system in the Koper area, including how to fill in the forms for government services. They also learnt about the employment system in Slovenia by visiting institutions such as the Social Work Centre and Employment Service of Slovenia. This enabled them to find work opportunities and open their own bank accounts. The learning activities also covered ICT literacy, cultural exchange between Slovenia and Kosovo and the school system in Slovenia, helping the women to assist their children at school. Learning how to use the public transportation system gave them the

confidence to visit places on their own. All these activities helped the women to settle into their new surroundings feeling secure and not isolated.

### **Major action principles and support mechanisms**

This case features community-based learning and education which proactively **responded** to the social and cultural needs of new immigrant women who may otherwise have stayed at home and faced isolation. The programme effectively **engaged** with the target women by designing tailored learning plans to support their independence in their new environment.

The Koper Folk High School developed learning contents and trained the cultural mediators in collaboration with relevant administrative units, schools and governmental organizations responsible for employment and social work. The project owes its success to **funding** provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, European Union, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

### **For further information**

- Vrečer, 2012
- Koper Folk High School website
- Lavrnja and Klapan, 2003



© Kadazandusun Language Foundation, Malaysia

# Malaysia

*Literacy workshop in Togudon village*

## Moyog Family Literacy Project

### ESD theme

Cultural Diversity and Dialogue, Intergenerational Exchange

### Responsible organization(s) and partners

Kadazandusun Language Foundation and PACOS (Partners of Community Organizations in Sabah) Trust in partnership with Sabah State Education Department and Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

### Primary participants

Local women who were illiterate in Tagudon Village

### Timeframe

2006 – 2008

### ESD issues tackled

Indigenous languages play an important role in conveying knowledge and wisdom that may help local people live more sustainably within their communities. The Kadazandusun people represent the largest indigenous group in Sabah, Malaysia. Due to the predominance of Malay and English in the modern education system, intended to advance economic development, speakers of the Kadazandusun languages, especially women, are becoming marginalized and their local cultures are vanishing. This problem has led to an indigenous cultural revitalization movement in Kadazandusun. The Moyog Family Literacy Project was launched as part of this movement by the Kadazandusun Language Foundation.

### ESD capacities and knowledge developed

The Moyog Family Literacy Project conducted diverse activities, including providing literacy education for the target groups and publishing a textbook based on their knowledge of forest conservation and sustainable use of land and water resources, which has been passed

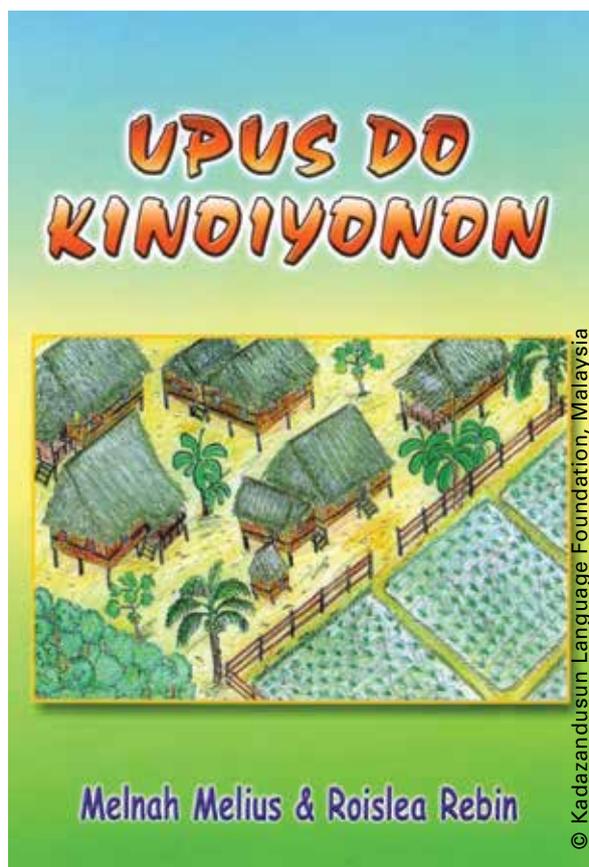
down orally through the generations. The project started with literacy classes and writing workshops in participants' native languages. As a result, the participants developed literacy skills. At the same time, the foundation's educators explained to participants that their indigenous knowledge regarding the natural environment is important and valuable, and that passing it on to future generations is itself a form of ESD. Eleven volumes of picture books were written by the participants and subsequently published, based on participants' experiences and the folk stories they knew about the local natural environment.

### Results and impact observed

The picture books have become important learning resources for local children and adults, helping them to regain contact with indigenous knowledge and beliefs about the natural environment and sustainable use of resources. The books were distributed at local libraries and community learning centres with the cooperation of the Sabah State Education Department. The books have also been used as learning materials for the environmental conservation activities and workshops organized by Kadazandusun Language Foundation and PACOS Trust.

### Major action principles and support mechanisms

The project successfully identified the local indigenous knowledge system as the key ESD principle and **embedded** it into the literacy learning activities. The learning activities **enabled** participants to gain literacy skills in their mother tongue, to re-evaluate their life experience as indigenous peoples and to transmit their knowledge and beliefs to the wider community. Writing afforded the participants an opportunity to rediscover the values of their traditional practices and to reevaluate their indigenous identity. Kadazandusun people were empowered to think about and seek the future of their communities based on their own inherited cultural values. Through this project, indigenous knowledge and beliefs were sustained and revitalized.



*One of eleven picture books produced by participants*

In addition to **financial support** for the workshops and publication by ACCU, the Malaysian State Government made a significant contribution to help sustain the life of the published books. With the support of the Sabah State Education Department, the books have been used for pre-service teacher training and community educator training courses on local environmental conservation activities in Kadazandusun.

### For further information:

- Kadazandusun Language Foundation website
- PACOS Trust website
- Lasimbang, 2012
- ACCU Innovation programme for ESD website



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## Bangladesh

*Women learning literacy in Chitagong Hill Districts*

### Ganokendra and community learning centres

#### ESD theme

Literacy

#### Responsible organization(s) and partners

Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) under Ministry of Primary and Mass Education  
BRAC, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Friends in Village Development in Bangladesh (FIVDB) and RDRS

#### Primary participants

Out-of-schoolchildren, youths and adults living in marginalized rural communities, particularly women

#### Timeframe

Ongoing since the 1990s

#### ESD issues tackled

Bangladesh achieved 97 per cent primary education enrolment by 2013. However, over 21 per cent of students do not complete the five-year primary education cycle. Whilst adult literacy has improved over the years, according to a survey conducted in 2010, the literacy rate of the 15+ population is still only 59.8 per cent.

The continued prevalence of illiteracy in the country is due to a number of socio-economic factors, including high levels of poverty and low levels of development, which prevent many people from gaining access to basic education. Illiteracy is both a cause and a consequence of underdevelopment, not only economically but also socially, culturally and environmentally.

A number of national initiatives for basic literacy were undertaken under the EFA National Plan of Action 1992-2000 and 2003-2015, focusing on reading, writing and numeracy skills (3Rs) through short term courses and campaigns. It was assumed that these courses would help learners to sustain their literacy skills and apply them for socio-economic gains, but in fact many learners relapsed into illiteracy, especially adults making their living from subsistence farming.

#### ESD capacities and knowledge developed

Community-based learning centres have been initiated mainly by NGOs in Bangladesh in order to link literacy activities with skills training for youth and adults to promote sustainable socio-economic development. Dhaka Ahsania Mission and BRAC have operated *Ganokendra* (people's centres in Bangali) since the 1990s; FIVDB and RDRS initiated CLCs in the northern part of

the country in the 2000s. Initially designed as literacy and skills training centres, these centres later expanded their functions to become multi-functional community learning and development centres where learners can participate in various activities on themes such as income generation, early childhood care, health and sanitation in addition to basic literacy classes. These additional activities help learners to use and sustain their literacy skills. For example, income generation programmes demand not just technical skills but also good marketing skills and life skills, including the 3Rs. Various social functions which incorporate literacy skills are also organized, such as writing competitions, popular theatre and cultural shows and wall magazines. Since a CLC is a small infrastructure set up at village level, networking with other centres and organizations of government, NGOs and the private sector is important to ensure quality service delivery which responds to local needs.

### Results and impact observed

Literacy education programmes for adults in CLCs have been expanded from the basic 3Rs to become a tool for learners' empowerment, integrating need-based life skills and livelihood development activities. The development of literacy skills creates a foundation for lifelong and self-motivated learning. This was enhanced during the project by the use of learning materials such as newspapers and books in a

*Safeguarding and promoting local traditional culture in CLC*



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library, community wall magazines covering local news, and internet services for accessing web-based information.

Literacy activities featuring topics such as poverty, infrastructure, health, sanitation and the environment allowed learners to engage in dialogues with community members and initiate actions to tackle social issues. The process of acquiring literacy skills and engaging in dialogue about community issues raised learners' awareness of their right to social services. With the help of CLC facilitators, community members were able to negotiate with local government to ensure service delivery as their entitlement. Literacy activities which are linked with the daily reality of people's lives through CLCs have therefore demonstrated high potential to make people think, act, collaborate and mobilize their communities to create a more sustainable society.

### Major action principles and support mechanisms

This case illustrates how literacy skills are **embedded** in community development activities, **responding** to the needs of learners and community members through a multi-functional community-based learning centre. The **engagement** of community members as owners and main players in a bottom-up process is key to sustaining the initiatives.

The Non-Formal Education Act of 2014 recommends the establishment of CLC networks to sustain the literate environment in communities. BNFE is currently working on consolidating NGO experiences of CLCs in order to develop national strategies for community-based learning networks for a sustainable society. At the community level, **networking** with local stakeholders in government, NGOs and the private sector is crucial to mobilize financial and human resources and help update knowledge and skills to cope with a rapidly changing society.

### For further information:

- BRAC website
- UIL LitBase website
- UNESCO Dhaka, 2014



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# Ethiopia

*Recording participants' contributions to the group saving*

## Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme

### Key theme

Empowerment

### Responsible organization(s) and partners

Lead sponsoring agencies: DVV International and the Federal Ministry of Education

Donor agency: the Royal Netherlands Embassy to Ethiopia (RNE)

Grassroots Implementing Partners: Clusters of partners at community, district and regional levels with technical committees comprising experts from education, agriculture and rural development, technical and vocational education and training, trade and industry, micro and small-scale enterprises and women, children and youth affairs from the Ethiopian government and local NGOs.

### Primary Participants

Over 31,000 poor and (semi-)illiterate women with low skills in the informal economy, most of whom live in rural areas in selected districts of six out of the eleven regions of Ethiopia.

### Timeframe

2008-2012

### ESD issues and background

Compared with other African countries the pace of poverty reduction in Ethiopia has been impressive, with the share of people living in poverty reduced by one third to 30 per cent by 2011. Still, the World Bank reports that 37 million people remain poor and that the very poorest have become even poorer (2015). Literacy skills among adults (age 15 and over) are a significant issue, with 57 per cent male and 41 per cent female literacy (UIS estimation for 2015). Adult literacy education, livelihood skills training and entrepreneurship support do exist, but are generally provided as separate programmes by different providers.

### **ESD solutions (capacities and knowledge)**

Evolving from a Community-Based Non-Formal Livelihood Skills Training for Youth and Adults Programme (EXPRO [Sandhaas, 2005]) initiated by DVV International in 2002, the Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme focused on piloting and developing a replicable model to integrate functional adult literacy education, livelihood/non-formal vocational skills training and entrepreneurial support. Groups of twenty-five women formed IWEP circles and began to take literacy classes using the functional adult literacy (FAL) or Reflect approach. They also started group saving to complement the IWEP Women's Entrepreneurship Fund. The women learned technical skills which were identified through simple market assessment and their own expressed wishes and preferences. Skills training involved mainly practical on-farm activities conducted by agriculture and technical and vocational education and training experts.

To support women starting small businesses, Business Development Support Services (BDS) provided monthly advice on basic business skills, whilst the Fund provided start-up capital.

### **Results and impact observed**

By the end of the programme the majority of the women's groups were registered as cooperatives, which enabled them to access public and private funds. A few have continued operating in their preferred income generating activities (IGA). The model has been applied in the Integrated Functional Adult Education (IFAE) programme by the Federal Ministry of Education and incorporated in the Learning for Life: Master Plan for Adult Education in Ethiopia 2010/11 – 2019/2020. Many of the Community Facilitators who were trained under the programme are active in leading the women's groups; some are employed by the IFAE Programme.

Major changes have occurred in the lives of most of the women participants as a result of the programme. They are successfully running businesses, generating income and saving money. Improvements in their livelihood and life skills are borne out by children continuing their education, bigger houses and health awareness and other visible benefits. Many women's groups are still active two years after the programme ended.

### **Major action principles and support mechanisms**

The programme **engaged** multiple stakeholders across various sectors of government and civil society around activities **responding** to the needs of women's groups. This facilitated the basic skills training and business support to be **embedded** within the existing government programme.

Women's groups are **sustained** and members continue to support each other in transforming themselves for a better life. Aside from improvement in their current livelihoods, the fact that children are now encouraged to continue their education is an example of the programme's potential to **transform** the future of children and communities.

Government and NGOs have worked together to identify key principles and activities and to develop curriculum content and methods. The programme fostered **partnership** across sectors horizontally and vertically by working together through the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation stages. Active learning was practised throughout the programme by women participants and providers.

### **For further information:**

- Belete, 2014
- GIZ and Ministry of Education of Ethiopia, 2011
- UIL LitBase website

**Providing  
resources**

**Networking/  
partnership**

**Capacity  
building**

**Content  
development**



# Policy

Photo top row left © Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust, Namibia  
Photo top row middle © Instituto Supereco, Brazil  
Photo top row right © Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia  
Photo middle row left © Instituto Supereco, Brazil  
Photo middle row right © Kunitachi City  
Photo lower © Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust, Namibia



Adults enjoy reading an educational book



Community working on a biogas plant in Caraguatatuba

## Policy case studies

Policy case studies were selected from Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, and Namibia to provide examples of policies that have supported community-based ESD conducted by CLCs and other community organizations. The case studies may hopefully inspire both policymakers and local community educators to work in partnership to conduct community-based ESD more effectively.

These policy case studies also illustrate how integrating top-down and bottom up approaches in both policy and practice can effectively lead to positive outcomes. They identify how policymakers in National or Local Government have provided the necessary **policy support** for practitioners in community-based institutions - either through: (a) **providing resources** (e.g. financial, material, human, infrastructure); (b) establishing **networking/partnership** opportunities for engaging in dialogue and strengthening partnerships (e.g. organizing

forums, creating programmes, etc.); (c) providing **capacity-building** opportunities (e.g. training for policymakers, staff and community members); and (d) assisting in **content development** through identifying and prioritizing the specific issues faced (e.g. entry points for learning and action).

Each of these policy support mechanisms are highlighted in bold text in the following case studies to help illustrate how they contribute to advancing community-based ESD practice. The following case studies were edited from stories written by individuals who were directly involved. However, as the Namibia case study illustrates, having a policy alone does not result in achieving the aims of community-based ESD. It is important to establish the set of mechanisms detailed above, together with a strong commitment from all institutions involved (not just government agencies).



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## Brazil

*Local school teacher discussing water supply system in the São Francisco River Basin*

### **Policy Cases for Environmental Education based on the Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility**

*Andrée de Ridder Vieira, Moema Viezzer and Silvia Weel of Supereco Institute, and Monica Simons, Environmental Education Center of Guarulhos*

To achieve sustainable social and environmental transformation in the context of local community development, it is necessary to put in place public policies that support the participation of and partnership between communities, schools, governments, civil society organizations and the private sector.

In Brazil, there are many policies that support sustainability. Among the most significant for this case study are the following: National Environmental Education Policy (Ministry of Environment, Law #.9795 / 1999) and its state and local policies; National Water Resources Plan (National Water Resources Council - Law # 9.433 / 1997) and its state and local policies; and the Brazilian Agenda 21, completed in 2002 and coordinated by the Commission for Sustainable Development Policies and National Agenda 21 with the involvement of about 40,000 people from all over Brazil. There is also the Collective Educators Program for

Sustainable Territories and the Ministry of the Environment - Management Council of the National Environmental Education Policy, which focuses on training popular environmental educators to empower communities.

This case study is based on 20 years of strategic **partnership** between the Environmental Education Centre of Guarulhos and the Supereco Institute of Education for Sustainability. In 2005, the 'Planning our landscape - Biodiversity Corridor of Serra do Mar' programme conducted by the Supereco Institute utilized environmental education and educational communication as strategic tools for mobilization. These tools were complemented by **network building** and shared management of the Biodiversity Corridor of Serra do Mar and its watersheds, and the strengthening of public policies for local development.

In addition, the methodological processes of the Supereco Institute were supported by the following policy guidelines: the sixteen principles of the Treaty of Environmental Education for Sustainable

Societies and Global Responsibility, the National Policy for Environmental Education, the State Environmental Education Policy (SP), the National Water Resources Plan and the Basin Plan of the

North Coast of São Paulo, the Municipal Sanitation Plans in northern coastal state environmental education policy, Agenda 21 coastal north of SP, the Environmental Education Program for Formal Education watershed of northern SP coastline, the New Forest Code and the Support Program for Sustainable Tourism Development of the North Coast of SP.

These policies have helped the Supereco Institute to achieve significant results, such as:

- supporting the use of collaborative and participatory processes and the coordination of networks of people and institutions
- inclusion of Edu-communication tools to link environmental education with communication and expand the scope to reach the global media
- creation of specialized teaching materials tailored to Brazil's current situation
- training of environmental educators to deliver interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary environmental education in schools in Brazil
- strengthening popular educators to work in their communities, aligned with the objectives of the Collective Educators' Program Environmental recovery
- recovery of water and forests using integrated management strategies for watersheds and biodiversity corridors with direct community participation in task forces, workshops and courses
- the participation of Supereco teams in all local boards that integrate and influence local public policies.

We have already trained more than 10,500 peer leaders, 1.5 million children and young people, and 900,000 direct participants in social and environmental interventions.

In 2013, lessons learned from the 'Planning our landscape' programme were replicated in the 'Weaving Waters' project. This project was sponsored by Petrobras through the Petrobras Environmental Programme, and was developed in partnership with the Institute Educa Brazil, the River Basins' Committee, Municipalities of Caraguatatuba and São Sebastião, Institute Treat Brazil, Environmental Education Centre of Guarulhos, Made in Forest and Entrepreneurial Brazilian Women's Organization. The objective of the project was to improve the quality of the Water Supply System in Porto Novo - São Francisco and to help conserve the Juqueriquerê River Basin and the São Francisco River Basin, which were both identified by the River Basins' Committee as critical environments requiring urgent action.

The environmental education programme involved six different projects all exploring different dimensions (e.g. policy, history and culture) and functions (e.g. social, health and tourism) of water. Across all projects, the 'learning by doing' methodology, combined with participatory action research, helped to resolve conflicts and facilitate local transformation. These same methods supported the awareness raising, training and mobilization of local actors, and the establishment of a network involving partnerships between individuals and groups with diverse experiences. All these resulted in a number of field studies, workshops for key actors, reforestations and community task forces, diagnostic studies and participatory production of materials. More than 2000 people have been directly involved in working groups, including social and environmental managers, and over a million are involved through indirect actions.

**Capacity building** of these working groups through information sharing and participatory planning has improved the effectiveness of the Watershed Plan. Furthermore, these learning processes have contributed to **strengthening public policies** by embedding a 'systemic view' in the management of the biodiversity of both the forest and water resources, resulting in a more integrated approach to the projects conducted by the local groups for the sustainable development of the northern coast of São Paulo State. To ensure the integration of the participatory community-based process within the technical project team, two community groups called 'Continuous Cycle' were created and trained, which resulted in establishing a network for the shared management of the river basin.

The methodology of the 'Weaving Waters' project has enormous potential for replication and adaptation, enhancing environmental education and social mobilization as strategic pathways towards sustainability in the region. The project has strengthened the local communities for better local environmental management and empowered residents to promote significant change. Residents have contributed to the recovery of springs and riparian forests and have adopted various sustainable practices which use alternative, eco-efficient technologies to improve the community's quality of life, such as the setting up of rainwater harvesting tanks and alternative sewage treatment plants.

**For further information:**

Program 'Planning our landscape' with 'Weaving Waters' project (<https://pt-br.facebook.com/ProjetoTecendoasAguas>) and (<http://radiosupereco.com/>)



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## Indonesia

*New model of CLC in shopping malls in urban areas called 'Learning Lounge'*

### Supporting CLCs through a Partnership Approach<sup>5</sup>

*by Ella Yulaelawati, Secretary, Directorate General of Early Childhood Education, Non-Formal and Informal Education, Ministry of Education and Culture*

In Indonesia we have achieved tremendous progress in education at the national level. However, disparities still occur along the lines of province, geographic conditions, gender and socio-economic status. Addressing these disparities is a huge challenge for the fourth most populous country in the world with a population of 244.8 million, 300 ethnic groups, 680 dialects, nearly 70 million school-age children and more than 200,000 schools. However, we are committed to achieving equity and quality in education in order to achieve the social, economic and environmental goals of sustainable development.

To address these challenges, Indonesia applies lifelong learning principles, especially in non-formal and informal education. The focus

is on 'learning how to learn' from cradle to grave. The implementation of ESD in CLCs has generally been divided into two types: ESD as an independent programme, such as batik painting using natural materials (indigo and coffee skin), and ESD providing supplementary information, such as preparing learning materials about the dangers of burning forests in Sumatra and Kalimantan.

We use a **partnership approach** for ESD, engaging various sectors, most especially the CLCs and other non-formal education units, such as Smart Houses and Learning Lounges. In this partnership approach we utilize all forms of community-based initiatives, awareness-raising and training in order to bring about synergy between formal, non-formal and informal education. The government provides support in terms of regulation, financing, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation, and facilitation for further partnership.

First is **regulation**. Law Number 20, 2003 on the National Education System, Non-Formal and Informal Education makes provision for the substitution, addition and complementing of formal education through community-based approaches. In addition, Ministerial Decree Number 81, 2013 regulates the establishment of Non-Formal Education Units; Number 84, 2014

<sup>5</sup> This case study is a revised version of 'Local Communities in Action: The Role of Community Learning Centers for Sustainable Development', which was delivered during the World Conference on ESD in Nagoya in November 2014.

regulates the establishment of Early Childhood Education Units; and Number 129, 2014 regulates homeschooling. These regulations strengthen the role of CLCs to implement Law Number 32, 2009 on Environmental Protection and Management, which aims to ensure ecosystem sustainability and environmentally sound development.

Second is **financing**. The national strategic plan for education includes financial support for CLCs to implement programmes including early childhood education, adult literacy, equivalency education, life skills, and entrepreneurship education. Furthermore, the government provides incentives for early childhood education teachers who are not civil servants, and for non-formal education tutors. The government also provides competitive funding for capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, supervision, and an accreditation and award system.

As regards ESD, the most important task of the government and policymakers is to plan the budget and formulate achievement indicators. While we have allocated a specific budget item for ESD implementation since 2012, more recent commitments, like the Muscat Agreement adopted in Oman in May 2014, established a target that by the age of 15 individuals should possess knowledge, attitudes and competences regarding ESD. Achieving this target will require more resources. Therefore, we are taking an initiative to ensure that a budget for ESD implementation is included in the national strategic plan 2015-2019 for non-formal education.

Third is **partnership**. The government recognizes that communities play a pivotal role in ESD as both the subject and the object of national development. In building and strengthening this partnership, it is acknowledged that CLCs are established 'from, by and for community'. This kind of strong community participation and ownership contributes to increasing the quality of life of people with low literacy levels and poor life skills.

The government also assists in establishing CLC forums at national, provincial and district/city levels, aimed at developing strong, effective and sustainable networking among CLCs in Indonesia. Furthermore, the forums are an opportunity for CLCs to formulate and advocate public policy recommendations that are relevant to their needs.

At the international level, the Indonesian government has demonstrated its commitment to mutual collaboration and cooperation by hosting five international seminars for and about CLCs since 2012. The most recent was the International Seminar on Empowering Community Learning Centres in Enhancing Learning Society through Education for Sustainable Development in September 2014, with 107 participants from fourteen Asian countries. The main output was the *Jakarta Statement* that reaffirms the pivotal role of community-based learning as part of lifelong learning.

*Indonesia's partnership to promote ESD, from Fasli Jalal's keynote speech in the Okayama Conference, October 2014.*





## Japan

Many Kominkan have a large kitchen to organize cooking classes

Japan has strong **legal frameworks** and decentralized delivery which has supported the promotion of community-based learning over the past sixty years. The loss of lives, poverty, hunger and devastation after World War II motivated educators and people to work together to expand the provision of community education and learning in Japan. Their strong ambition led to the establishment of *Kominkan* (community learning centres) and enactment of the Social Education Act in 1949, which defines the roles and responsibilities of national and local governments, *Kominkan* and specialists. This act was revised in 2008 to include family education in addition to the ongoing governmental support for *Kominkan* and after-school activities for children and youth.

The government issued a decree in 1946 encouraging municipalities to establish *Kominkan*. The intention was to develop individuals who understand their role in society, who appreciate their own value as human beings, and who can and will go beyond self-interest to contribute to the public good (Hontama, 2003). Numbering more than secondary schools, the *Kominkan* are run in accessible locations and provide courses and activities at little or no cost to the users. *Kominkan* play a significant role in society by **facilitating networks and partnerships** among

a diverse range of community stakeholders, local administration, formal education institutions and community-based organizations and associations. Public opinion indicates that *Kominkan* and community centres are ranked first among community centres in Japan, above schools and places of worship (Hiroi, 2008).

A Law Concerning the Establishment of Implementation Systems and Other Measures for the Promotion of Lifelong Learning was enacted in 1990. This law introduced for the first time the role of the private sector in the planning and provision of lifelong learning. At the municipal level, this law and the revised Social Education Act are interpreted and implemented differently, which has resulted in differences in the quantity and quality of education that *Kominkan* provide.

For example, *Kominkan* in Iida City are set up at three administration levels: one City Community Centre coordinates and supports 20 Regional Community Centres and 103 Branch Community Centres. Their activities are planned and organized following the 'Four Operational Principles' developed by Iida City *Kominkan* in 1978. The key words of these principles are community-orientation, equity in government support, voluntary resident participation and autonomous management of centres. Local

governance and autonomy are strengthened through community members' engagement in the Branch Community Centres, which are fully managed by community members.

*Kominkan* are not the same across the country. Some *Kominkan* have applied the concept of education for sustainable development in their learning and development activities. The backgrounds of the personnel working in *Kominkan* are diverse: *Kominkan* in Okayama City are managed largely by certified social education specialists with years of experience, while *Kominkan* in Iida City are managed by young local government officials learning to work with community leaders and citizens. Some other *Kominkan* suffer from a lack of commitment by the local government and people, resulting in a decline in the vitality of activities and participation. The situation has worsened in some areas due to mergers of local governments and transfers of supervision from education to local administration.

The national government is making efforts to fill this gap between local governments and to improve and revitalize the activities of the *Kominkan*. ESD is given priority in the national education programme. In line with this, several national workshops and seminars for *Kominkan* stakeholders were organized around the theme of ESD with support from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Through these activities, good practices and ESD issues tackled by local

communities were shared and the contributions of *Kominkan* in advancing sustainable community development were identified.

In terms of **professional development**, there are national certification courses for social education leaders and specialists. The National Association of *Kominkan* publishes a monthly professional magazine and a Practical Social Education Research Center and numerous voluntarily organized reflection circles exist among community education practitioners in different parts of Japan. Cross-fertilization of professional experiences among different types of community-based learning organizations such as libraries, private providers, Higher Education's community extension services, museums and others has been recommended on a number of occasions.

To foster innovation, the Ministry is providing **financial support** to innovative project activities designed to engage the younger generation (schoolchildren and young people not in employment or education), which are proposed and trialled by *Kominkan*.

**More information:**

- Iwasa, 2010
- Maruyama, 2011
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan, 2010
- Yang and Yorozu, 2015



*Intergenerational learning activities*



© Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust, Namibia

## Namibia

### *Environmental education for children*

Namibia has a long history of community-based learning and development. The National Literacy Programme launched in 1992 targets out-of-school youth and disadvantaged adults, including people with disabilities, across the country. Over 80 per cent of learners enrolled in the programme achieve a pass in the national examination for literacy (Namibia MOE, 2008). The implementation of the programme is decentralized and communities are expected to participate in the planning, directing, monitoring and recruitment of learners and evaluation (UIL Litbase). With strong governmental commitment, the literacy rate has increased by 20% in twenty years (UNESCO, 2013).

In this context, the National Policy on Adult Learning was endorsed in 2003, which made Namibia the only African country other than Kenya with a **government policy** on adult education. This policy aims to contribute to: (i) economic growth and development; (2) equitable social development and poverty reduction; (3) sustainable environmental development; (4) participatory democratic development; and (5) personal development and empowerment (Walters, Yang and Roslander, 2014, p. 33). It also **secures the funding** for adult basic education activities in the country and mandates

the establishment of the National Council on Adult Learning. The Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) was established in 2005 to strengthen related **policies and institutional frameworks** to ensure equal access to high-quality, responsive adult education.

Namibia's constitution states that all citizens have a right to education. This statement is mirrored in the Ministry of Education which has a Department of Lifelong Learning overseeing adult literacy, skills training, library and HIV/AIDS education. The Directorate of Adult Education under this department has a mandate to provide opportunities for adults in Namibia to acquire knowledge, skills and positive attitudes, in order to participate in socio-economic activities and improve their quality of life. The main objectives of this directorate are to:

- Provide access to Adult Education programmes
- Provide relevant sources of information through the Community Learning and Development Centres
- Provide entrepreneurial skills for self-development

- Provide relevant and multi-level learning activities and link these to adults' daily and socio-economic needs
- Develop programmes to facilitate parent education to increase understanding and knowledge of childhood development (family literacy programme)
- Review DAE progress and setbacks in order to enhance its activities
- Strengthen the policy and legal framework for Lifelong Learning – ETSIP
- Improve equity and access to high quality lifelong learning opportunities – ETSIP

In spite of inclusive and interdisciplinary laws and policies, community-based learning in Namibia has been challenged by the scale of the socio-economic problems of the country, including leadership change, high unemployment and weakness in planning implementation and budget allocation.

The Ministry of Education has promoted Community Learning and Development Centres and Community Skills Development Centres as spaces for youth and adults to develop and implement inclusive, interdisciplinary and life-long learning approaches. In recent years, the government has set up Regional Study Resource Centres and provided the Community Learning and Development Centres with IT equipment and connections to ensure equitable access to quality lifelong learning. Empowering community is also adopted as a viable strategy in other government sectors. Several government and civil society programmes have been implemented to develop

community links, such as community radios and cultural industry training through community organizations. Many of these community-based learning activities have been implemented by linking literacy education with activities that respond to the socio-economic needs and problems of the local community, such as cultural and environmental conservation, income-generation and micro-finance.

Those who complete the National Literacy Programme and aspire to continue to the Adult Upper Primary Education Programme often face difficulties in understanding the course materials written in English. The Directorate is currently revising the curriculum and materials to make them better linked with learners' skills needs.

**Strengthening partnerships and networks** is recognized as a key strategy to promote lifelong learning in Namibia. Like in many other countries, efforts to improve adult education are fragmented. The Adult Learning Council envisaged in the National Policy on Adult Learning could play a coordinating role among the government, civil society and private sectors to raise the profile of community-based learning. For this to happen, political commitment to lifelong learning needs to be revitalized and sustained in Namibia and the wider international community.

**For further information:**

- Ministry of Education, Namibia, 2008
- Ministry of Education, Namibia. n.d.
- Shaleyfu, 2012

## Part 3

# Summary of action principles and policy support mechanisms for community-based ESD

The *Okayama Commitment 2014* is not intended as a checklist of generic solutions. It is important to acknowledge that the commitments were identified based on case studies that were collected throughout the UNDESD, some of which were presented during the *Kominkan-CLC International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development* in Okayama in October 2014. As with any community-based initiative, educational responses at the community level will vary relative to context. Applying the commitments endorsed in the *Okayama Commitment 2014* will involve good educational practice, but, as the case studies have illustrated, it will also involve formulating policies and mechanisms that can support CLCs and other community organizations to advance these educational practices. While it is important to underscore the reciprocal relationship between community-based learning practice and policy, it is even more important to acknowledge that both are guided by a shared vision of sustainable development (Figure 1).

The Okayama Commitment reaffirmed the vision of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development that encouraged people to actively participate in the creation of *'a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation'* (UNESCO, 2005, p. 6).

However, for community-based learning to contribute to the broader ESD vision, it must contribute to a rethinking and transformation of the whole education system. This acknowledges the need to work with, rather than against, the tensions identified in the introduction, using both top-down and bottom-up approaches and integrating formal, non-formal and informal education. It is not about selecting one approach or one educational context over another, but about recognizing the potential contribution that both approaches and all educational contexts can make in different community settings.

This process of rethinking and transforming education is informed by the need for ESD to respond to the rapidly changing context of our societies. The demands of the information revolution in a period of global integration require more frequent renewal of knowledge and skills and new ways of learning throughout life.

Instead of trying to remember all commitments, we have identified six action principles from the community-based ESD experiences that contributed to the formulation of the *Okayama Commitments 2014*. These six action principles are interrelated and interdependent and are unified by a common vision (Figure 2).

An appreciation of each of these dimensions will help to illustrate the ways in which CLCs and other community organizations can practise the Okayama Commitments 2014, not as individual independent actions, but as holistic and transformative practices. Institutions that have effectively facilitated community-based ESD have demonstrated combinations of these six

**Figure 1: Shared vision**



**Figure 2: Action principles towards shared vision**



dimensions (responding, engaging, embedding, enabling, sustaining and transforming) in the actions they have undertaken in pursuit of the goal of a sustainable future. All six action principles are illustrated in varying combinations in the case studies described above. It is important to note that most of the action principles could not exist independently of the others, in particular with regard to effective community-based ESD practice. Each of the action principles are briefly summarized below.

**Responding:** Organizations that facilitate community-based learning are often at the forefront of responding, in a timely manner, to emerging issues or problems experienced by local communities. This has resulted in ESD often being characterized by the specific environmental issue/problem that is being addressed. Hence ESD can take the form of responding to pollution of waterways from waste water disposal in the Kyoyama District (pp. 18–19), disaster risk education in Benguet (pp. 20–21) or forced migration due to conflict in Kosovo (pp. 26–27).

This responsive character that directly addresses the identified issue/problem or the visible symptom is only the entry point for learning.

ESD is not limited to addressing the symptoms of the specific issue/problem at hand, but rather helps to develop an understanding of the complex and interconnected nature of its causes and potential effects, as well as the appropriate response. Education that responds only to the symptoms can be described as reactive, whilst education that attempts to establish links and identify more holistic and comprehensive solutions can be described as more responsive.

So while it was important for the People’s Initiative for Learning and Community Development (pp. 20–21) to respond to the impact of the disaster, it was equally important that they address the literacy needs of the community members, if they were to effectively contribute to long-term positive change in the local communities and not be limited to responding to one disaster after another. This is very similar to the situation that *Jeunesse et Développement* faced in addressing the literacy needs of the communities in order to respond more effectively to their food security needs (pp. 24–25). Community learning centres in Bangladesh and lifelong learning villages in Mali are working to address poverty through adult literacy programmes in a similar way (pp. 30–31).

**Engaging:** Community-based ESD acknowledges that the complex nature of the issues at stake requires engaging with different disciplines and knowledge systems in order to identify comprehensive and long-term solutions. Furthermore, ESD acknowledges the inter-relationships between the environmental, social, economic, political and cultural dimensions of society at local and global levels. Engaging these different disciplines and perspectives productively requires that we work in partnership with different key players both within and outside the immediate communities, as illustrated in the Mali case study (pp. 24–25) where the NGO engaged with a number of implementing agencies. This involves recognition that there will often be more than one perspective involved. Allowing different generations, sectors and cultures to actively contribute their own knowledge and ways of learning is vital to finding sustainable solutions. This may also involve recognizing and harvesting the contribution that different educational systems (formal, non-formal and informal) make towards achieving the vision of a sustainable future.

However, community-based learning needs to acknowledge that not everyone has equal access to these different knowledge systems. Often it is the very groups who are most vulnerable to the issues at stake who most urgently need to be engaged in working towards solutions. This was often illustrated in the case studies above, specifically with the marginalized communities in Bangladesh (pp. 30–31). Therefore, there is an explicit need for organizations that facilitate community-based learning and action to engage with socially marginalized or minority groups and facilitate their empowerment by providing educational activities and spaces to learn with the local community members. This calls for working and learning in partnership with each other.

**Enabling:** The holistic, partnership-based approach to learning for a sustainable future requires ongoing capacity-building of both the local communities and the institutions that conduct community-based learning. It acknowledges and addresses the dynamic context of change often experienced directly by local communities. In order to achieve sustainability in this rapidly changing context, we need to rethink our notion of basic literacy, starting with language policy. The language policy within the formal education system in countries like Malaysia and others have limited the capacity of indigenous peoples to learn and share their own stories. By developing reading materials in indigenous languages, the Kadazandusum

Language Foundation successfully enabled schoolchildren to learn indigenous languages and knowledge, thereby sustaining their oral history (pp. 28–29) as a stepping stone to engaging with the formal education system.

While reading, writing and arithmetic will continue to be essential, new knowledge and skills, such as using technology, will gain importance in most contexts. However, the most important basic skill will continue to be individuals' and institutions' capacity for ongoing learning.

**Embedding:** It is not sufficient for organizations that facilitate community-based learning to merely respond to problems by engaging across generations, sectors or disciplines. The ESD framework and approach needs to be embedded within all aspects of education and work, if long-term and sustainable change is to be achieved. One example is how Gram Nidhi in India successfully embedded a more holistic approach to learning within a micro-finance project (p.22–23).

ESD is not another subject to be studied, but rather a way of learning and living that recognizes the complexity and interrelatedness of issues/problems and the need for working together, not just to respond to specific issues, but to contribute to attaining the vision of an equitable and sustainable future. This involves embedding a new way of thinking, learning and working together in the institutions that facilitate ESD.

**Sustaining:** ESD is a long-term process of change that will need to be sustained in order for the institutions that facilitate community-based learning to survive and flourish. The Kadazandusun Language Foundation in Malaysia was able to sustain the indigenous knowledge project after the funding had run out, and even managed to extend the influence of the project beyond their immediate communities (pp. 28–29). However, it is not only the projects or institutions that need to be sustained but the communities that are the sites and the hosts of these institutions. There are material needs (physical infrastructure, human and financial resources). However, there are also intangible needs (e.g. relationships and the spiritual factors often attributed to nature) that can be served by the very communities being sustained.

**Transforming:** The challenge of ESD for institutions that conduct community-based learning involves not just changes to the way we learn or the way we live, but a complete transformation of the social, economic, political

and cultural systems that have contributed to the issues that we are trying to address. Part of this transformation will require that we embrace the new ways of teaching and learning that have been made available by new technologies. Part of this transformation is also in the way we work. The Gram Nidhi activities (pp.22–23) in Gujarat facilitated positive transformation by helping socially marginalized people to rediscover pride in their own local knowledge and to strengthen themselves by re-establishing the community people’s network. The Ethiopia story (pp. 32–33)

illustrated how education transformed the lives of the women themselves and their families and community.

To complete the picture, the Okayama Commitment clearly outlines that the six interrelated action principles require ongoing support in order to achieve the long-term vision of ESD, which can be provided through policy mechanisms. Each of the ESD practice case studies have identified specific policy support mechanisms that contributed to their successes.

**Figure 3: Six action principles and four policy support mechanisms**



**Providing resources** seems to be the most common support mechanism identified in the case studies. However, it was also evident that these resources were material, human and infrastructural as well as financial. All the above policy case studies identify an example of resources, often facilitated by a policy guideline that allocates these resources to local community organizations. However, the public resources available to education, more specifically to non-formal community education, are increasingly declining. The second support mechanism is therefore essential to expand contribution to these resources.

The second most common support mechanism is the provision of **partnership and networking opportunities** that often facilitate sharing of the available resources and mutual learning among institutions and people working for the same group of target participants. A range of such partnerships were identified in all the case studies above. While we may often identify partnerships between similar institutions, such as civil society organizations and community groups, it is important to begin to foster partnerships across non-traditional partners, such as universities and community groups, research institutions and non-governmental agencies, and governments with the private sector. However, it is also important to remember that partnerships are about more than just sharing resources: they also rest on a shared vision of sustainable development.

**Ongoing capacity-building**, through training courses and workshops, was one mechanism that facilitated development of new knowledge and skills. While often perceived as something that needs to be provided to the local community members, a number of the case studies specifically identified a need for greater capacity-building among policymakers, community organizations and community education professionals and practitioners themselves.

Finally, **content development** concerns the support provided by policy to assist community organizations in identifying the relevant issues or entry points for engagement. While these are often made clear by the immediate problem experienced, like poverty, pollution, HIV-AIDS or conflict, the experienced educator will often see links between these obvious issues and other related issues that can be present within the communities.

Each of the policy case studies identified relevant mechanisms, like policy regulation, strengthening partnerships, and providing resources in Indonesia; establishing policy frameworks and providing institutional resources for *Kominkan* in Japan; and multiple policy mechanisms at global, state and local levels, ongoing capacity-building of mentors and working with the private sector and civil society organizations in Brazil. The Namibia case study identifies how policy can assist in providing institutional frameworks that were essential in building the capacity of the local educators. However, this case study also reminds us that good policies are still embedded in the prevailing context which impacts on how successful they can be.

This handbook has identified six action principles and four policy support mechanisms that advance community-based learning for sustainable development. These principles and support mechanisms were drawn from the many community-based ESD practices conducted during the Decade of ESD and enshrined in the commitments endorsed by the participants of the *Kominkan*-CLC International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development held in Okayama City, Japan in October 2014. We hope that you have found seeds of new ideas that will motivate you to revisit current policies and critically reflect on how these policies have been supportive of the six action principles that assist community-based learning organizations in advancing ESD. Plant these new seeds and we look forward to sharing your harvest as we all continue to learn to transform both our education and our society to achieve a sustainable future.



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# ANNEX

## OKAYAMA COMMITMENT 2014

### Promoting ESD beyond DESD through Community-Based Learning



We, over 650 participants representing learners, facilitators and managers of *Kominkan* (Community Learning Centres in Japan) and Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and other institutions that promote community-based learning, governments, civil society organisations, United Nations (UN) agencies, development partners, members of academia, the private sector and media from 29 countries, who have gathered in Okayama City, Japan from 9 to 12 October 2014 at the *Kominkan*-CLC International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) – “Community-Based Human Development for Sustainable Society” – commit to continuing and expanding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) through community-based learning.

Okayama City is a place where several exchanges have already taken place between *Kominkan* and Community Learning Centres during the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD), including the *Kominkan* Summit in Okayama in 2007; moreover, support for *Kominkan* and community-based learning has a long history in Japan.

In recognition of the principles of ESD, we have actively participated in an open and transparent process of drafting these commitments and share in the ownership of this outcome.

#### 1. Our Commitments

Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all must have a central place in national education and development systems as part of the agendas of Education for All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Rethinking education to build inclusive and sustainable learning societies should give a key role to community-based learning. Community-based learning through *Kominkan*-CLCs and similar mechanisms needs to be carried out collaboratively with all providers and stakeholders in national learning and education systems to achieve ESD and the broader goals of Sustainable Development.

Therefore, in our respective individual and collective capacities, we commit to the following actions:

1. Develop greater awareness of and advocacy for the significance of ESD in *Kominkan*-CLCs and the roles of *Kominkan*-CLCs in promoting ESD;
2. Work together to improve and maintain strategic alliances between and among communities and stakeholders to develop a community of practice which addresses Sustainable Development challenges in local and global contexts;
3. Ensure the development of effective and functioning *Kominkan*-CLCs through ongoing professional and institutional capacity development in order to help build the confidence of communities as active participants in the development process;
4. Advance the innovative practices of ESD to ensure effective contributions to Sustainable Development through continuous documentation and research, acknowledging the need to be responsive to the changing needs of society;
5. Support and share good ESD practices through establishing resource centres and networks, especially with sister *Kominkan*-CLCs, in the context of lifelong learning for all (children, youth, adults, the elderly, the disadvantaged, etc.);

6. Empower communities to promote education on climate change, bio-diversity, food and nutrition security, resilience and disaster risk reduction management informed by the principles of ESD;
7. Nurture learning spaces which promote freedom of expression and develop skills in conflict resolution towards attaining a peaceful society;
8. Promote literacy by providing flexible and relevant learning opportunities for indigenous peoples, the differently abled, and other marginalised people in the community;
9. Develop the capacities of youth for employability, life skills and citizenship, and encourage youth leadership in *Kominkan-CLC* activities, providing greater sustainability and stability from generation to generation;
10. Give priority to girls and women to reduce gender gaps in literacy and build safe environments within families and the society and ensure equal participation of women and men in development processes;
11. Assist communities in securing material, financial and technical support to identify issues and develop solutions to create sustainable communities which value and respect diversity of culture and life;
12. Engage policy makers to contribute to the development of comprehensive and clear policies acknowledging bottom-up and top-down approaches which support *Kominkan-CLC*-based activities;
13. Mobilise funding and technical resources from communities, corporations and local, national and international sources;
14. Urge governments, policy makers, international agencies and private sectors to support *Kominkan* and *CLC*-based activities which tackle local, national, regional and global challenges through ESD; and
15. Continue to collaborate with existing and emerging networks, such as the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), UNITWIN/ UNESCO Chairs Programme etc., which share our commitment to ESD.

The job is not done with the adoption of the SDGs and new EFA goals and the related targets and indicators. We assert that we will continue to pursue our commitments in the post-2015 era with determination and vigour, uphold the principles and support the practices of learning for community-based sustainable human development through *Kominkan-CLCs*. The roles and contributions identified in this Commitment will guide our action.

We commit to continuing and advancing ESD beyond DESD.

## 2. Context

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) as a Response to the Crisis of Sustainability

We are facing an urgent crisis of sustainability. The DESD International Implementation Scheme has inspired people to actively participate in the creation of ‘a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behavior and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation.’

The realisation of a sustainable society requires that the interlocking elements of the social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions be recognised and addressed. The recent increase in conflicts has significantly weakened the bonds of trust necessary to establish the foundations of a sustainable society.

### Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

ESD acknowledges and celebrates all forms of education and learning: formal, non-formal, informal and incidental in the context of life-long and life-wide learning for all. Non-formal education and community-based learning provides opportunities for children, youth and adults to transform themselves and their communities through their individual and collective actions.

Multi-faceted approaches are necessary in ESD, which responds to issues with complex causes and outcomes. ESD involves a holistic approach which embraces the dynamic interaction and complementarity of traditional wisdom and modern knowledge, the changes in urban and rural environments, and skills development and learning which value ownership, citizenship, participation and empowerment.

### **The Focus of the *Kominkan-CLC* International Conference on ESD**

Community-based learning institutions provide opportunities for individuals and communities to develop literacy, numeracy, life skills and livelihood skills necessary to establish connections and responses to global and local issues.

Institutions which facilitate community-based learning, such as *Kominkan-CLCs*, provide the space to talk about their concerns, raise people's awareness, motivate them to respond and establish ownership of their responses, and support them in sharing their hopes for a more sustainable society.

*Kominkan-CLCs* are unique in their role as meaningful platforms to promote and achieve the vision of ESD through multi-stakeholder, collective and inclusive approaches.

### **3. Roles and Contributions of Institutions which Facilitate Community-Based Learning**

#### **Roles and Contributions in General**

Institutions which facilitate community-based learning, such as *Kominkan-CLCs* and other similar organisations all over the world, have made significant contributions towards attaining the vision of sustainable societies during the DESD:

1. As a "PLACE" for advancing ESD by promoting Participation, Learning, Action, Creation and Empathy, where people acknowledge and recognise each other, helping community members transition from non-participation to full commitment;
2. As a bridge between formal, non-formal and informal education by engaging community networks, schools and higher education institutions, administrative bodies and corporate sectors;
3. As a provider of inclusive and flexible education for hard-to-reach and disadvantaged children, youth and adults, providing second chance-education [sic] opportunities;
4. As a facilitator of relevant and responsive learning approaches incorporating folk and indigenous knowledge and local history as a springboard for planning and action;
5. As a catalyst of innovative and effective learning which makes use of technologies including mass media, social media, Internet and other digital technologies;
6. As a weaver of intergenerational and multidisciplinary knowledge and cultural diversity contributing to peace and social cohesion, promoting mutual recognition of different positions and views;
7. As a capacity builder of community education professionals who can inspire learners to become lifelong learners; and
8. As a hub which engages and empowers individuals by changing their mindset from thinking and acting for themselves to working for the benefits of the wider community.

#### **Roles and Contributions in Specific Fields**

During the DESD, a number of critical cross-cutting issues such as peace, human rights and equity have influenced and will continue to inform our commitments. These include ensuring peaceful and harmonious communities by promoting understanding between diverse peoples; reducing inequalities; protecting and advancing human rights; and addressing the deprivation of communities by creating learning opportunities to respond to poverty alleviation, lack of employment, health, and food and nutrition security.

We have been actively engaged in the following fields and wish to underscore the important roles and contributions which have been achieved:

##### **1. Environmental Conservation**

We have supported citizens' learning informed by the history and wisdom of our ancestors and lessons learnt from responding to environmental destruction. Furthermore, a collaborative science-based process has empowered some communities to achieve environmental sustainability.

##### **2. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**

We have developed and maintained communities' resilience against natural and human-induced disasters through relevant learning and cultivating human relationships anchored on selflessness, empathy and mutual-help.

### **3. Income Generation, Entrepreneurship, Community Development**

We have played a crucial role in the economic development of communities by promoting social enterprises supportive of self-sufficiency.

We have served as a catalyst in harnessing human potential to participate in productive community enterprises, improving the well-being of families with greater ability to solve local issues and challenges.

### **4. Cultural Diversity and Dialogue, Intergenerational Exchange**

We have facilitated empowerment of communities through intergenerational, inter-sectoral and intercultural learning for all. We have supported communities in discovering, sustaining and creating culture for the public value, while respecting diversity in gender, age, ethnicity, religion and languages. We have gathered local and indigenous wisdom and resources and utilised them for mutual learning.

### **5. Literacy**

We have provided literacy learning opportunities as a human right to equip everyone with the basic knowledge and skills necessary for a productive livelihood and the improvement of community well-being. We have opened spaces for creativity and at the same time pushed for new learning frontiers to make ESD universal. Technology, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in literacy, has added significant new momentum to *Kominkan*-CLCs.

### **6. Empowerment**

We have realised that different communities have different needs. Therefore we have created a comprehensive network system of stakeholders to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups, whose self-esteem is thus continuously built, making them active participants in the development process and ensuring their rights to decent life and gender equality.

### **7. Policy Making, Management and Capacity Development**

Policy support for community-based learning has been ensured in some countries to develop a platform of community dialogues, networking and resource mobilisation. We have created learning communities which promote autonomous actions and reaffirm local values and practices from the ESD perspective and developed capacities of community-based learning professionals and learners.

We acknowledge the achievements of previous regional and global events, such as the *Jakarta Statement: Nurturing a Care, Fair and Share Society through CLCs* adopted in September 2014.

We will use this Commitment as an opportunity to engage learners, managers and governments in a dialogue towards developing concrete policies and actions.

We will engage with local, national and international forums which will contribute to the formulation of the Post-2015 Development and Education Agenda, to underscore the vital importance of community-based learning for sustainable human development. More specifically, we see the forthcoming global conferences as opportunities for advocacy and re-affirmation of our commitment to ESD: the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan in November 2014, the UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan in March 2015, the World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea in May 2015 and the UN-facilitated discussions in the lead-up to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015.

We would like to thank Okayama City, the Executive Committee for Kominkan-CLC Conference, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) as organisers and UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok), UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Science (UNESCO Jakarta), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), National *Kominkan* Association as co-organisers and all the other institutions and people who worked to organise this Conference.

We would especially like to express our appreciation to the citizens and Kominkan of Okayama City for their warm hospitality.

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Participants of the *Kominkan*-CLC International Conference on ESD

# About the authors

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This handbook identifies principles and policy mechanisms to advance community-based learning for sustainable development, based on the commitments endorsed by the participants of the Kominkan-CLC International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, which was held in Okayama City, Japan, in October 2014. To inform policymakers and practitioners new to this field, the handbook clarifies the international vision and goals for sustainable development and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and identifies the potential contributions of community-based learning centres and organizations. It documents both policy and practice from different regions and concludes with a summary of principles and policy support mechanisms.

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