

CHAPTER 23

Curriculum Development and Biodiversity

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INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is being taken to mean in the broadest sense here. Curriculum development is a complex process but can be made easier and the content updated regularly. There is need for a thorough review of existing curriculum to ensure that biodiversity/environmental issues are integrated. It is important to design the curriculum with the people, especially in the non-formal sector. These are simple guidelines that would need to be developed further. This section seeks to:

- Discuss valuing biodiversity within the formal and non-formal curriculum. What do we want to achieve in the curriculum?
- Discuss issues of the curriculum content, objective, resources and evaluation.
- Provide examples of activities on biodiversity.

CONTENT

In designing the curriculum, the content should be based on:

- building on existing courses or programmes in schools and institutions;
- continuing and emerging issues in biodiversity;
- specific contextual problem in the local area;
- gender and the environment;
- women and biodiversity;
- economic, social, political and cultural issues as well;
- traditional knowledge.

DEFINING THE OBJECTIVES

Right from the onset of developing the curriculum there needs to be a clear understanding of the terms biodiversity and education and other concepts being promoted. Activities can be designed based on the objectives such as the one used by a girl's boarding school in Uganda. The table below shows the criteria they use

--- *Capacity Building for Biodiversity Conservation* ---

for developing their objectives and implementing strategy for their school environmental education programme.

Awareness	Knowledge	Skills	Values	Participation

The aim is to have *breadth* and *depth* in the curriculum design and not only limit it to awareness, providing new knowledge, or teaching new skills or imparting a particular value or mobilising people to solve one particular problem.

Resource Materials: Resources should not be limited to written texts only. Crafts, and locally-developed materials are also effective. A common problem in developing countries is the lack of written materials and documented case studies. There is also an attitude of expecting materials from other countries. We should train people to develop good low-cost materials. People can be encouraged to produce modules, newsletters, articles and leaflets on biodiversity.

Approaches: Approaches to implementing the curriculum should be varied depending on the target group.

Examples

- Plant kit for pupils developed by St Lucia National Trust.
- Modules from Friends of the Earth, Ghana. A multi-audience module designed to be used by teachers, clubs and adult educators.
- Sample low-cost materials, e.g. leaflets, pamphlets, brochures etc.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is the process of making judgements about the effectiveness of a learning programme. It is important to develop an evaluation procedure for a programme that has been developed. There is a need to review the existing curricula in Africa to assess whether they are achieving the stated objectives of environmental education. In the environmental education status report of most countries they acknowledge the existence of environmental education in their curriculum but the teaching does not sensitise the learners to take action. How can we ensure that the curriculum design for biodiversity education will be effective?

The evaluation of the biodiversity curriculum may involve:

— *Gender and Biodiversity in Africa* —

- determining the extent to which the aims and objectives have been achieved;
- determining the extent to which the overall goals have been achieved;
- detecting useful outcomes which were not originally specified;
- determining the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the implementation of the programme.