

Sustainability Starts with Teachers celebrates Namibia's Environmental Education/ESD policy

Namibia launches the national Environmental Education (EE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policy. This is the first standalone ESD policy in the SADC region.

Sustainability Starts with Teachers is a capacity building programme for teacher and TVET educators on ESD targeting teacher educators, in 11 countries in southern Africa over four years. With funding from the Swedish Government the SST programme is responding to the fact that teacher education needs to be more adequately aligned with the SDGs, and teachers need to be supported to understand and implement Education for Sustainable Development. The aim is to strengthen implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in teacher education institutions for teachers and educators from ECCE, primary, secondary and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Special focus will be given to Sustainable Development Goal 4, which is oriented towards the achievement of educational quality within a lifelong learning framework.

Teacher and TVT educators who attended the the Sustainability Starts with Teachers national workshop in July 2019 pointed the absence of an ESD policy as the one of the major hindrances in integrating ESD in teacher education curriculum. Namibia has numerous ESD favorable policies, and the launch of the EE/ESD policy shows Namibia's endorsement of integration of SDGs in its education.

The vision of the national EE/ESD Policy is for an "educated and empowered Namibia with environmentally literate people taking responsibility and action for a sustainable future." Therefore this policy is designed to support EE and ESD in formal, non-formal and informal education processes across all sectors of the Namibian society including higher education, teacher education, technical and vocational education institutions, and general education. The policy also recognizes the Global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations and the SDGs.

To ensure successful implementation of the policy, an ESD Task Force consisting of high-level representatives from the government, private sector and non-governmental organizations will enhance policy implementation and the policy is coordinated through the National Planning Commission. Constant monitoring, evaluation and reporting should form a critical part of the process.

The SST programme definitely supports the implementation of the policy and will also benefit from it, as it is working towards integrating sustainability principles into education and training environments, with emphasis on curriculum change in teacher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training education programmes.

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