



South Africa

South Africa works collaboratively with other nations in Southern Africa on environmental and sustainability education efforts. All of its provinces are involved in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to greater and lesser extents. At the local level, communities are involved in Eco-school programmes and HIV/AIDS programmes. In the larger picture, ESD is addressed through improving the overall quality of education, and professional development of educators so that the curriculum can be implemented effectively. Many organizations are responding to the UNDESD and integrating ESD into existing programs that address some of the socio-ecological challenges in Southern Africa (e.g., water, health, sanitation, food security, inappropriate development, the capacity of the government to provide services, over-consumption, and threats to biodiversity). The environmental education community has taken leadership in policy development and implementation, formal education curriculum, industrial education and training, professional development for educators, materials development, participatory learning through parks, and integrating indigenous knowledge and education.

The Publication of Lifelong Learning through a National Curriculum Framework in 1996 is the first major curriculum statement of a democratic South Africa. It emphasises the need for major changes and stresses the need to move from aims and objectives to outcomes-based education. Curriculum 2005 emphasizing these objectives was introduced into schools in 1998. The Revised Curriculum includes focus on social justice, healthy environment, human rights and inclusivity.

Projects/Initiatives

The Eco-Schools programme was launched in South Africa in 2003. The programme is managed by the Wildlife and Environment Society South Africa (WESSA), an environmental NGO, and is supported by WWF-SA. The programme has been developed in partnership with the Department of Education and is funded by Nampak, a large packaging company. Eco-Schools South Africa is part of the international Eco-Schools programme initiated by the Foundation for Environmental Education in 1994.

Brakpan Primary School, Gauteng: whole-school approach to ESD: Brakpan Primary School was awarded an Eco-School green flag. The whole school has been involved in a number of SDE projects. For example, children in grade one planted a herb garden with an ornamental vegetable garden in between. They have started a compost heap from the vegetable peels and have set up a drip irrigation to water the vegetables and herbs. There are a number of species of birds in the area. The children have encouraged them to visit the school grounds by feeding them leftover bread, fruit and lettuce. As a result, the children have had a chance to observe, draw and appreciate these different species. The school is also committed to recycling its waste. Truka, an NGO, donated three large bags for recycling paper, plastic and drinks cans. The school also collects grey water (water from the roof, gutters and outdoor basins). The water runs into a small dam with special purifying plants, before flowing down a channel and into a 'vleiland'. The school also runs an Enviroclub and is proud to record its work in the Eco-School Portfolio.