

Workshop Title: In increasing climate change and environmental crisis, what is the role of Environmental Education (in EiE?)

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Main issues, questions discussed:

We discussed whether and when environmental education is relevant and can be included in Education in Emergency. We agreed that it is increasingly important to raise awareness about environmental disasters and climate change crisis through introducing environmental education in schools.

We identified two main differences between including environmental education in a situation prior a crisis (Preparedness) and after a crisis (EiE).

In Preparedness, environmental education can help in preparation and resilience in environmental crisis. These are the elements that we identified as relevant:

- Assessment on what it is relevant for the specific context
- How to react and why
- Look at Nature-based solutions to avoid disasters
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation solutions
- Land management
- Water management
- Etc.

Tools that could be introduced, also based on previous projects of the group participants, are:

- Games (i.e. climate change football game)
- Guiding children to designing maps to evacuate in case of a typhoon. The maps are then discussed in class with teachers and peers, and even shared with families, who are also benefitting from the learning

After a Crisis situation.

We discussed that introducing environmental education in a crisis situation may be more complicated as it may be seen as less relevant in EiE. However, we discuss ways where environmental education may be included in emergency response situations of an environmental emergency:

Children safe spaces: the children can be supported by the teachers to support their emotional and wellbeing. For example, in a Safe space environment after the typhoon happening in Ecuador: 6-10 years old could talk about what happened under the supervision, guidance and care of teachers of the Safe Space.

In their supportive talking in the Safe Spaces, children can discuss about about climate change, and rationalise some of the fears, becoming aware and understanding where the crisis comes from, identify the problems (i.e. looking a flooding as a consequence of climate change).

We also discussed whether Environmental education in Preparedness or in Crisis should be part of the curriculum (including in all the subjects) or should belong to extra-curricular activities (having extra time to prepare for the crisis by understanding environmental issues).

What it is needed – Teachers' education and readiness

We identified different ways that would help teachers to be involved in environmental education in preparedness. Teachers' education, from humanitarian response to development and rebuilding, should also include:

- Including environmental education in the teachers' education (this would anyway depending on the context and the country' environmental problems and risks)
- Specific Professional development
- Specific community of practice
- Situation assessment of the specific context (environmental and educational)

Challenges

We identified several challenges to include environmental education to EiE:

- Systems are different so it would be very difficult to identify common guidelines, approaches and tools
- Teachers are not specialised and some may not be prone, interested, committed
- Cultural specificity: the more problem we take into education the more challenges may create: from education only focussing on academic, on focussing on the 'whole child'-child-centred approach and well-being
- Curricula, Tools and materials should be revised and developed

Conclusions:

Although environmental education may sound not important in EiE, it is very relevant for environmental and climate change crisis. It may be more relevant for Preparedness and less for after crisis situation. It is very context specific, being environmental issues context specific too. Teachers need support for learning, approaches and tools. It may be very impactful if integrated into the curriculum (example including problem related to climate change problems in maths: statistics in the appearance of increasing numbers of Typhoons, flooding, etc.). New material and tools should be developed. Work with networks that already exist should be fostered, and more coordination should be happening with existing

specialists in the world. Material and curricula should be adapted and revisited to include environmental education to be use in preparedness of environmental crisis

Do you have any concrete recommendations? (to yourself, to participants, to RECI, to other actors?)

Sensibilisation of the importance of preparedness for environmental and climate change crisis in school. Funds for projects may come from institutions like Swiss Re, Swiss Re Foundation, Zurich Foundation, Insurance industry?