

ADDENDUM TO THE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN SRI LANKA

A Framework for Action

CHAPTER REPORT - 14



EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND TRAINING

**Biodiversity Secretariat
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources**

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**CHAPTER REPORT ON
EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND TRAINING
(TASK FORCE NO-13)**

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Introduction

Education, public awareness and training is an instrument to bridge the interests of relevant stakeholders and the public at large about the importance and content of biodiversity, which should preferably be part of a mix of education and communication instruments for engaging society in biodiversity conservation.

The lack of the awareness in society of the importance and relevance of biological diversity to everyday life is a major constraint, which must be overcome if the goals of the convention are to be met. Efforts to conserve biological diversity cannot succeed without the understanding and support of the general public. Public education and awareness should therefore be an integral part of the specific actions and activities carried out under the convention. Public education activities are different from the technical training that is required by professional to manage biodiversity. Education is a long-term process of developing an individual's capacities and way of thinking. Article 13 of the Convention highlights the importance of public education and awareness to increase general understandings of the meaning of biodiversity through formal and informal education, development of education programmes and improvements of public awareness in the area of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and establishment of bilateral links between governments to provide technical assistance and possibilities of interchange and training for teachers and students.

Consideration of measures for the implementation of Article 13 recognizes the importance of public education, and awareness as

central instruments to achieve the convention's goals and to ensure effective implementation of the Convention at the national level and also need for capacity building for this area. The conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity includes social issues, which require cultural understanding and sensitivity. The diverse needs of people and their differing perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, interests, values and understanding in respect of the goals of the convention, and that public education and awareness on biological diversity is most effective when it occurs in a social context that is meaningful to a specific audience. It also recognizes the role of the public media and non-traditional means of communication in information dissemination and awareness raising. It is noted that the important role of non-government organizations in developing and disseminating information on biological diversity, especially in reaching out to marginalized groups who have a significant role to play in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

General constraints

1. Lack of proper resource to initiate training and awareness programmes
2. Dearth of opportunities for revenue earning in the field of biodiversity and lack of suitable employment in the field for graduates
3. Poor link between training centres (NIE, schools, universities) and biodiversity conservation agencies (CEA, Forests Department, Botanical Gardens, national and international agencies)
4. Lack of interdisciplinary aspects in the biodiversity education
5. Dearth of well experienced senior teachers/trainers in institutions (teachers' training centres) dealing with biodiversity.

6. Inadequate knowledge of teachers and curriculum developers on national legislation related to biodiversity and, regional and global conventions on biodiversity management
7. Inadequate funding for training in specific areas of biodiversity, taxonomy and utilization of genetic resources etc.
8. Lack of opportunities for students and teachers to present reports on project related to biodiversity
9. Inadequate documented information on NGOs and other awareness agencies related to biodiversity
10. Lack of documented information on local biodiversity for teachers and trainers for field and practical studies
11. Inadequate training opportunities and dearth of up to date knowledge for teachers and personnel of in this field and inadequate access to collect new information for students (school, university) teachers on biodiversity (internet, books and journals)
12. The subject areas are not usually fully taken care of by the existing curricula. Some areas are largely under represented. A similar situation could be observed in relation to the sectors as well as ecosystems. Forest biodiversity is usually well covered in the existing curricula while sectors such as bio industry or cultural biodiversity are largely undistinguished. Similarly forest ecosystems attract the main focus while other ecosystems get only lip service.

Gaps in the 1999 BCAP in relation to Education, Awareness and Training

1. Lack of attention on encouraging university students to study biological sciences, especially subjects such as taxonomy by expanding job opportunities related to biodiversity
2. Absence of a comprehensive section on revision of curriculum of education in order to make sure all aspects of biodiversity to be covered by formal education at all levels and lack of interdisciplinary aspect in education in biodiversity education. For eg. economics, ethics, industrial application related biodiversity
3. Inadequate attention on training in curriculum developers, policy makers related to biodiversity conservation
4. Lack of clear strategy to develop infra-structural facilities in training centres and some schools. These centres require more resource materials (books and videos)
5. Inadequate focus on carrying out awareness programmes producing posters, guidebooks, on environmental awareness. It is essential to distribute these materials in bookshops throughout the country for anyone to obtain at price
6. Recent initiative in introducing biodiversity as a subject in new A/L curriculum was a major achievement since 1999. However proper resource and materials for teaching this subject is lacking
7. Inadequate attention on the “ecosystem function” aspect of biodiversity. This is useful in understanding more complex interrelation between biodiversity and the functional benefits obtained by humans.

Actions/ Recommendations for Education, Awareness and Training

Actions/ Recommendation	Leading agencies
Review curriculum in order to make sure that all aspect of biodiversity to be covered by formal education at all levels and implement biodiversity core course for all disciplines at the university	UGC, MTE, Universities
Organize and enhancing suitable policies for training programme for teachers, trainers, curriculum developers and policy makers with emphasis on field training using Biodiversity manuals. Include economic aspect and industrial uses of Biodiversity into teaching	NIE, ME, MENR
Documenting all NGOs already established related to Biodiversity	BS
Promote environmental clubs in the schools and establishing new clubs to enhance knowledge on Biodiversity	NIE, ME, Schools
Provide opportunities to publish Biodiversity related materials collected by schools at national level	ME, NIE,
Start new diploma programme on Biodiversity for NGOs, media personnel	MENR, Universities

Actions/ Recommendation	Leading agencies
Develop and adopt policies for interacting and actively participating among Biodiversity related institutes and education institutes	MENR, BS, Universities, Botanic Gardens, Zoological Gardens, Museum
Expand the revenue earning in the Biodiversity sector by promoting sustainable utilization of Biodiversity resources and provide Biodiversity related employment for graduates	MENR, UGC
Link between education and conservation need to be explicitly established in order to justify the conservation education	MENR, ME
Establish a list of education and communication networks in Biodiversity contact addresses, including indigenous groups, prepare a list of education and communications experts, organizations and networks (governmental; non-governmental, indigenous, religious, sectoral-business and industry, agriculture, forests, tourism; media);	BS, MENR, NGOs
Establish institutes of specialization. These could be implemented at different levels (seminars, workshops, courses, post-grades), for the formation of communicators (journalists, publicists, executives in	MENR, IUCN, Universities, CEA

Actions/ Recommendation	Leading agencies
<p>communication, etc.). Also for the training of teachers of different levels and other professionals in the various activities.</p>	
<p>Promote the importance of awareness with regard to education, by means of capacity building of teachers and extension agents in Biological diversity; including the thematic areas of Biodiversity at all levels of the educational systems either official or private at national, regional or international levels</p>	<p>BS, MENR</p>
<p>Promote and support all the institutions of communication and participation of the public to extend the message on the issues of Biological diversity from national governments to the sectors most involved in the thematic areas of biological diversity;</p>	<p>MENR</p>
<p>Support through the CBD national focal points, the local projects on Biodiversity, with reference to capacity-building and public awareness;</p>	<p>BS</p>
<p>Prepare manuals, brochures, booklets to support the capacity-building efforts and increase public awareness on biological diversity;</p>	<p>BS, MENR</p>

Actions/ Recommendation	Leading agencies
Review the communication, education and public-awareness dimensions of existing and new cross-cutting issues and thematic areas, and specifically those priorities and action plans established in the Strategic Plan for the Convention;	MENR
Promote Biodiversity-related communication, education and public-awareness activities across multilateral environmental agreements and programmes	MENR
Promote capacity-building for communication, education and public awareness at the regional level in cooperation with IUCN and others	MENR, BS, IUCN, NGOs
Under represented subject areas of Biodiversity need to be given appropriate consideration in school and university curricula	BS, ME

- BS - Biodiversity Secretariat
- CEA - Central Environmental Authority
- NIE - National Institute of Education
- IUCN - World Conservation Union
- ME - Ministry of Education
- MENR - Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources
- MTE - Ministry of Tertiary Education
- UGC - University Grant Commission

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