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Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for sustainable development in Africa: How to design and implement an effective response through education and training systems

Sub-theme 1
Common core skills for lifelong learning and sustainable development in Africa

NATIONAL CASE STUDY
Teacher Professional Development with an Education for Sustainable Development Focus in South Africa: *Development of a Network, Curriculum Framework and Resources for Teacher Education*

by Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka (on behalf of the work team)
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Abstract

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Abstract

1. This national case study reports on the development of a national network, curriculum framework and resources for teacher education, with specific focus on the inclusion of environment and sustainability / also known as Education for Sustainable Development in the South African teacher education system. It reviews and reports on the history of environment and sustainability education in Teacher Education, and from this, the national case study begins to conceptualise a new approach to Environment and Sustainability Teacher Education within a new curriculum policy environment, and a new teacher education and development policy environment.
2. Action research case study methodology is used to document the first phase of the emergence of this network, and this report covers Phase 1 of the initiative, which covers formation of the network, review of previous practices, three conceptual development pilot studies undertaken in both in-service and pre-service teacher education environments, and a piloting of a 'Train the Trainers' or 'Educate the Teacher Educators' programme, which complements and extends the actual teacher education and development (TED) programme under development.
3. The study highlights critical insights of relevance to the shift to a content referenced curriculum in South Africa, and shows how the 'knowledge mix' which forms the foundation of the new Teacher Education Qualifications Framework can be engaged. It also highlights some features of the changing knowledge environment, and what dominant knowledge practices are in environment and sustainability related teaching and teacher education practices, opening these up for further scrutiny. It raises concerns that dominant knowledge work, while integrating a range of forms of knowledge (as is expected of the Teacher Education system under the new policy), tends to be limited by content on problems and issues for raising awareness, and fails to develop deeper conceptual depth and understanding of environment and sustainability, as issues-based knowledge dominates. Similarly, it fails to support social innovation as a response to environment and sustainability concerns, as awareness raising dominates in dominant knowledge work. The study provides a revised conceptual framework for the Teacher Development Network (TEDN) programme, with guidance on key elements necessary to take the programme forward in Phase 2.