

Education & Engagement

Environment Canada

and

**the United Nations Decade
of Education for
Sustainable Development
(2005-2014)**

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Background on the international scene

- **The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) began in 2005 and runs to 2014.**
- **UN definition of ESD includes four thrusts :**
 - **Public Awareness**
 - **Access to quality education**
 - **Reorienting teacher education**
 - **Training**
- **UN encourages Governments to consider the inclusion of measures to implement the Decade in their respective education systems and strategies.**



UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

- March 2005: High-level meeting of Environment and Education Ministries in to adopt the Economic Commission of Europe (ECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and the Vilnius Framework for its implementation. Canada adopts strategy.
- **Aim: To develop and incorporate education for sustainable development (ESD) into the formal, non-formal and informal education systems in Canada.**



The objectives of the UN ECE Strategy

More, specifically,

- To ensure that policy, regulations and operations **support ESD**;
- To **promote ESD** through formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- To **equip educators** with the competence to include SD in their teaching;
- To ensure that ESD **tools and materials** are **accessible**;
- To **promote research and development** of ESD; and **strengthen cooperation** on ESD at all levels.



Starting the UN Decade in Canada: first steps

- DFAIT-facilitated meetings in Ottawa, September and December 2004
- EC-facilitated stakeholders' meeting (March 2005): 60+, foundation work
- Co-ordination, committees: Network
- Provincial/territorial ESD working groups & National ESD Expert Council
- Regional Centres of Expertise
- Targetted & punctual initiatives



Environment Canada's Strategic Frame & UNDESD

- **Education and Engagement at Environment Canada embraces the objectives of:**
 - Accelerating behaviour change towards sustainability – short term changes in actions & purchases
 - Building skills and capacity of key sectors to integrate SD into business decisions
 - Increasing ecological literacy for the long term
 - Building a constituency of support to influence others
 - Raising the bar for how E&E done in Canada



Environment Canada's E&E Strategy: Three Key Thrusts

- **Behaviour change (research-driven)**
 - Mapping “pathways to behaviour change”
 - Aligning the diffuse efforts to three key result areas (under development)
- **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**
 - Working through partners to build a more ecologically literate Canada for the long term
- **Local restoration**
 - Capitalizing on investments made in community engagement



Education for Sustainable Development: How?

- **Increasing access to quality, curriculum-linked learning material**
 - Supporting dissemination & take up of learning resources of others
 - Reviewing (and improving) EC's educational resources
- **Accelerating uptake of SD education in the formal system**
 - Using existing p/t working groups to influence change
 - Helping educators make the case for SD education
- **Expanding existing efforts at experiential learning** (supporting NGO in delivery of “watch” programs⁸)



Environment Canada's choices re: the UN Decade

- **Supporting the establishment of p/t working groups and of the National ESD Expert Council and their actions;**
- **Collaborating in the UNU RCE initiatives;**
- **Cooperating with and capacity-building of some partner organizations in support of strategic frame; (ex: leadership clinic);**
- **Collaborating on multiple curriculum-linked education initiatives; (ESD resource database, Curriculum review);**
- **Supporting innovative training programs (SEdA);**
- **Aligning better the enabling functions that would allow EC to become more engaged and efficient at supporting ESD;** (More could be said here) ⁹

“Acts of conservation without the requisite desires and skill are futile. To create these desires and skills, and the community motive, is the task of education.”

Aldo Leopold, 1944