

## **Environmental Education for sustainable development in Georgia**

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Challenges related with environmental problems are recognized worldwide by entire international community. Environmental Education, in all its forms, is a strong tool in humanity's struggle against the mentioned challenges. While the field of environmental education was evolving, the broader concept of "sustainable development" was gaining prominence as well over the last decade. As a result, environmental education has merged with the concept of sustainable development, what does the term "education for sustainable development"?

In order to create framework program for Environmental Education "Environmental Education for Sustainable Development: Georgian National Strategy and Action Plan 2012 – 2014" was adopted by Georgian Government in May 2012.

The goal of this particular study is to create scientific basis for the implementation of the given Strategy and Action Plan.

Stakeholder meetings and rapid assessment of Environmental Awareness was carried out in 50 municipalities of Georgia at the earlier stage. The studies have shown that Environmental Awareness is quite low in Georgia. The main causes of the problems were identified. The ways of solving problems were set, including environmental education approach developed by us: Disciplinary and Spatial Distribution of Environmental Education. This means purposeful introduction of Environmental Education according to the regional priorities and professional needs. The given approach should be implemented in formal, non-formal, as well in informal education.

Introduction of Environmental Education according to the regional priorities will emphasize the knowledge and skills necessary to promote environmental sustainability within a given region (e.g. climate change adaptation and combating desertification in semi -arid zones; reduction of risk of land degradation and natural disasters or pasture management in relevant mountainous regions; wetland management in Kolkheti lowland and Javakheti, forest related problems in forested areas; biodiversity conservation in buffer zones of protected areas; proper use of pesticides in agricultural areas; air pollution in urban and industrial areas etc. ).

Introduction of Environmental Education according to the professional needs will emphasize the knowledge and skills necessary to promote environmental sustainability within a given profession (e.g. energy-efficiency in the field of architect and construction; biofarming in the field of agriculture; environmental journalism; environmental law; green economy in business sector and economy etc.)

The described approach will support present and future generation of Georgia to be equipped not only with knowledge of sustainable development issues, but also with the skills and motivation to apply this knowledge to their own actions (e.g. participation in decision making processes; sustainable management of natural resources, appropriate and timely response to local challenges, etc.).