

Four Support Systems and the Ideas of Widen School

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The discussion was focused on the how to support formal education for the development of environmental education. Discussion was conducted based on the series of presentation and the discussion of/among resource persons who attended to the International Symposium on Environmental Education. At the summary session, some approaches and principles are pointed out for the effective development of environmental education, and then support systems were categorized into four. Finally, ideas of “widen school and learning community” were shared among the participants as a result of the series of discussion.

1. Lessons learnt from the session.

Participants pointed out that some learning approaches and principles are needed when doing environmental education in formal education. The followings are the list of approaches and principles discussed among the participants.

- Enquiry Based
- Based on Participation and Practice
- Community Based
- Be Collaborative
- Respect for Heterophily as well as Homophily (Culture & Practices)
- Think Globally, Act Locally
- Be Holistic and about Connections
- Involve Everyone
- Integration
- Learn from Community
- Sense of Wonder & Exploration
- Socially / Ecologically Relevant
- Life-Long
- Partnership and Network

Learning Approaches & Principles



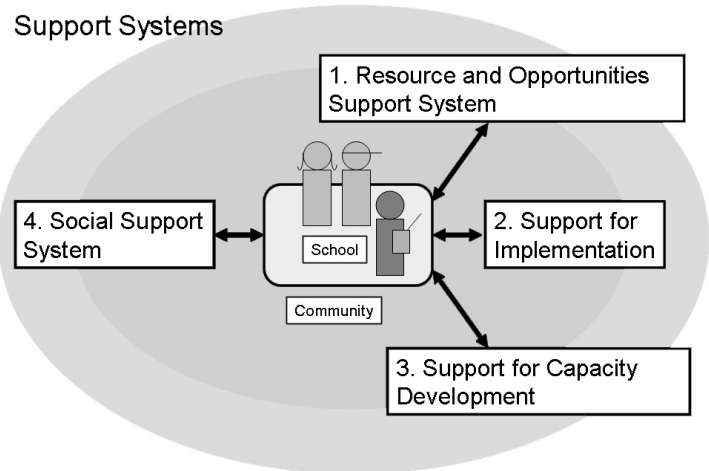
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- ☺ Reorienting Education for Sustainability...

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- Reorienting Education for Sustainability

2. Four Support Systems

Based on the some learning approaches and principles as pointed out by the participants, four support systems are raised by the chair of summary session. They are; (1) resources and opportunities support system; (2) support system for implementation; (3) support system for capacity development; and (4) social support system. The chair pointed out that 4 support systems are strongly linked together.



2-1. Resource and Opportunities Support System

“Resources and Opportunities Support System” includes (1) access to communities; (2) access to events and projects; (3) access to information; (4) access to regional and global communities; (5) access to natural areas; and (6) daily access to nature area and agricultural areas. Particularly, daily access to natural area/agricultural field and local communities are important for students to realize the local resources and values.

2-2. Support for Implementation

“Support for implementation” implies that it is important to develop contents for environmental education with three aspects; (1) education in/ from/ through the Environment which uses students’ experiences in the environment as a medium for education; (2) education about the environment, which emphasis knowledge about natural and social systems and processes; and (3) education for the environment, which has an overt agenda of values education and social change.

2.3. Support for Capacity Development

“Support for Capacity Development” includes not only individual capacity development i.e. teacher training, but also institutional capacity development. Setting school policy and rules, developing curriculum, making decision on the educational policy, managing resources, are needed for the effective development of environmental education at the school level. Inter-institutional capacity development is also important for the conduction of environmental education, such as joint implementation of environmental education, and joint research on environmental education, which can be done in cooperation with the other schools or the other stakeholders.

2.4 Social Support System

It is pointed out that “Social Support System” is also important for community development and the

conduction of environmental education at the local level. This system enables community and school to be very much involved, they are; (1) shared vision, slogan and norm; (2) shared opportunities and resources; (3) funding support system; (4) shared power and decision making, and open communication structure; (5) setting rules, mandates, action plan, agenda at the local level; and (6) managing resources and opportunities.

3. Widen School and Learning Community

Lastly, the idea “widen school and learning community” is raised by the participants. By linking with local resources (human resources, natural resources, financial resources, cultural resources), school itself is going to be widen as a center of community. For the further development of communication between school and community, Rogers (1995) suggested that “Change Agents” should provide a communication link between a resource system of some kind and a client system. Also, he mentioned that the communication relationship between the agent and client is important and that a good deal of two-way information exchange should take place. It may be expected that the function of the Change Agent has a role in making a bridge between school education and local communities. NGOs, professional educational organizations, school teachers may have a role to play in this process.

