Education for Sustainable Futures
Reforming school curricula through the integration of sustainable development concepts
The overarching goals are to enhance European educational reforms through the integration of sustainable development concepts into the curriculum, and to develop a regional ESD culture. The programme makes a direct contribution to the achievement of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, providing capacity building for the universal framework programme “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, endorsed by the UN General Assembly in September 2015.

Programme implementation includes:
• establishing a high-level expert working group with government officials;
• developing a five-year action plan based on the six pillars of the UNECE strategy;
• conducting research in order to identify national strengths and weaknesses in relation to ESD;
• adapting curricula based on research results; and
• providing educational tools, teacher training and regional networking to support the new curricula and promote ESD.

Regional results on policy reform

Kosovo*

Cross-curricular sustainable development topics, which include climate change; biodiversity; green economy; and technology, media and society, have been developed with the aim of integrating them officially into the school curriculum.

Experts from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) have developed learning outcomes for each subject field in a new draft curriculum that is currently being implemented as part of the EU approximation process. The MEST has provided direct financial support to train teachers on how to make ESD learning outcomes an integral part of their teaching; prepare a manual for teachers on how to implement the new learning outcomes; support Green Pack trainings; and develop content for Green Pack Junior.

Montenegro

Inter-subject themes and topics related to sustainable development, elaborated by the expert working group and REC experts, have been officially approved by the National Bureau of Education and made part of the primary school curriculum. Sustainable development–related inter-subject themes and topics have also been officially approved by the National Bureau of Education for pre-schools and high schools, and for general education subjects in vocational schools. Teachers are now obliged to cover climate change; green economy; human rights; environmental protection; sustainable cities and communities; biodiversity; and environment and health in their lessons.

Serbia

In partnership with a Serbian educational project funded by EuropeAid, the Serbian Ministry of Education and experts from the REC have reformed the national curriculum in primary and secondary education through the integration of sustainable development learning outcomes into each subject field. They have also developed a cutting-edge teacher-training module on ESD for 10 percent of primary and secondary schools in Serbia.

As a result of the work carried out by the REC and the Ministry of Education, environmental protection criteria have been officially included among indicators for assessing the performance of educational institutions; sustainable development principles have been officially incorporated into indicators for assessing teachers’ professional development; and the concept of environmental responsibility has been integrated into the official school curriculum.

Educational tools, teacher training, networking and ESD promotion

Kosovo*

• 1,000 copies of Green Pack have been printed, reaching approximately 240,000 students.
• 700 copies of the Green Pack Junior have been printed.
• 30 ESD trainings, most with official ministry approval, have been organised for over 870 teachers.
• A committee on ESD has been established, comprising officials from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environment, the Association of Kosovan Municipalities and the NGO community in order to promote a culture of ESD.

Montenegro
• 700 copies of Green Pack Junior Montenegro have been printed and Green Pack Junior Online has been developed, reaching around 42,000 students.
• 12 ESD trainings, most with official ministry approval, have been organised for over 360 teachers.
• Experiences have been exchanged between expert working groups.

Serbia
• A manual on new teaching and learning methods has been developed, focusing on student activities.
• “Good Practices on ESD Implementation in the New Serbian Curriculum Framework” is available online.
• 2,000 copies of “How to use the Green Pack” have been printed.
• The Green Pack has been upgraded in line with Serbian educational standards and 1,000 copies have been produced, reaching approximately 240,000 students.
• 59 ESD trainings, most with official ministry approval, have been organised for 1,800 teachers.
• An ESD training module has been developed and delivered in 41 pilot schools, involving 2,600 teachers. Some 7,500 teachers participated in an online training in direct support of the national curriculum framework.

Next steps
Over the next two years, the programme will seek to enhance and support the educational reforms currently under way as part of the EU approximation process in Kosovo* and Serbia, both of which are implementing projects to reform their primary and secondary school curricula. The programme will work together with experts from the MEST in Kosovo* to “green” this process by promoting the inclusion of an optional subject on sustainable development and by offering extensive teacher trainings on ESD and its integration into the new curricula. Teachers will also be trained on how to use Green Pack Junior in the classroom. Work will continue with the Ministry of Education in Serbia to monitor the implemented reforms and expand the scope of ESD trainings to the schools piloting the new curricula. The new curricula will have a direct influence on future generations, making our work critically important. In Montenegro, the implementation of the newly developed curriculum will continue to be facilitated through teacher trainings and additional activities.

The REC’s educational toolkits and other materials
Green Pack and Green Pack Junior are multimedia environmental education kits for use in teaching children aged between 8 and 15 about environmental protection and sustainable development.

Since 2001, the Green Pack has been implemented in 18 countries. A pan-European version of the Green Pack has also been published. Over 50,000 Green Packs have been produced, more than 40,000 teachers have been trained to use it, and some 4.5 million students have been taught using its interactive multimedia materials.

• Green Pack Online and Green Pack Junior Online, as well as other information and educational materials, are available on the website of the REC’s Educational Tools Topic Area: http://education.rec.org
• Montenegro’s official inter-subject topics on sustainable development for pre-schools, primary schools and high schools, and general education subjects in vocational schools, as well as other relevant information on ESD in Montenegro, are available at www.zzs.gov.me/rubrike/obrazovanje_odrzivi Razvoj/
• The news article “Reforming Education in the Western Balkans” can be found in Green Horizon, May 13, 2015, at www.rec.org/new.php?id=1025

Donor support for REC activities complementary to the framework programme (since 2010)

• Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea through the Italian Trust Fund: Courses for Sustainable Development (http://sdacademy.rec.org)
• Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Local Communities and Sustainable Schools
• United States Embassy: Teaching English as a Foreign Language in CEE Using the REC’s Environmental Education Materials
• United States Environmental Protection Agency: Local Community Resilience for the Sustainable Development of River Basins in South Eastern Europe (CRESSIDA) (Module 1 of the 2014 Course for Sustainability: (http://sdacademy.rec.org/courses_by_year#2014)

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.
Contacts

For more information on the programme, please contact

Brendan Duprey, PhD  Expert II Educational Tools  e-mail: bduprey@rec.org

For more information on Green Pack, Green Pack Junior and Green Steps, please contact

Kliment Mindjov  Senior Expert Educational Tools  e-mail: kmindjov@rec.org

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
2000 Szentendre  Ady Endre ut 9–11  Hungary
Tel: +36 26 504 069  Fax: +36 26 311 294  www.rec.org  education.rec.org

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER