

**Peer Review of the Environmental Education Project (2nd Phase)**

**Final Report**

**Review Panel**

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By

Charmine Koda, Journalist (Chair)

Ranjana Saikia, Fellow & Area Convenor, Environment Education & Awareness,

The Energy and Resources Institute

**Background and Purpose:**

The Environment Education Project had terminated its activities at the end of its second phase. However with the aim of IGES to contribute to the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) beginning in 2005, the former Environmental Education Project team has developed a new proposal.

Against this background the Peer Review Panel was given the task to review the performance of the 2nd phase covering the period of 2001-2004, by doing an in-depth assessment from both academic and administrative aspects of the project and then to evaluate and to provide recommendations to the 3rd Phase Research Plan (2005-2007).

The Peer Review Panel was charged to assess the following:

The project's mission, strategies and priorities in the context of IGES' priorities and strategies

- Quality and policy relevance of the project plan
- Effectiveness and efficiency of the project management
- Quality and policy relevance of project's products
- Impact of the project on stakeholders.

- **Direction and perspective of the new research theme, topics, objectives, methodologies and needs.**

### **Approach**

The Panel reviewed the following materials produced by the project

- ✓ **2<sup>nd</sup> Phase Research Plan**
- ✓ **2<sup>nd</sup> Phase Interim Report**
- ✓ **2<sup>nd</sup> phase Final Report**
- ✓ **List of Achievements**
- ✓ **Budget.**

The following publications:

- ✓ **Environmental Education in the Asia-Pacific region: Status, Issues and Practices**
- ✓ **The Path to Success: Some Pioneering Examples of EE**
- ✓ **Making Sense of Climate Change**
- ✓ **Doing Education at Wetland Sites**
- ✓ **Education for Sustainable Development in Nepal:**

The Panel met from September 6-8, 2004 at IGES Headquarters in Hayama with the following members of the former environmental education project team:

**Prof. Osamu Abe (Former Project Leader)**

**Dr. Bishnu B. Bhandari (Former Senior Research Fellow/Current Principal Research Fellow of the FC Project)**

**Mr. Masahiro Takahashi (Former Project Manager/Current Research Associate of the LTP Project)**

**From IGES:**

**Professor. Akio Morishima (President / Chair, Board of Directors)**

**Mr. Hiroyasu Tokuda (Secretary-General)**

**Ms. Aoi Oride (Executive Secretary)**

Other observers from IGES

The panel reviewed both oral and written presentations given by the environmental education team members and the discussions that followed the presentations, and came to the following shared conclusion.

**General Assessment of Program:**

- The strengths and potentials of the Environmental Education Programme lie in the networking and partnerships that it has established with collaborators from different countries in the Asia Pacific region and future expansion of relationships.
- The TEEN (Tripartite Environment Education Network) programme among China, Korea and Japan has resulted in exchange of ideas and experiences.
- The topics selected for compilation were innovative as such documentation is not readily available in this region.
- Compilations have helped to put diverse case studies and programmes into one document thereby facilitating the reader or researcher looking for information at a glance.
- Certain chapters written by the Environmental Education Project researchers were of good standard.
- The panel's impression was that the budget was fairly large, supportive of quality work.

**Improvements suggested**

- It is desired that the target group(s) be more clearly defined in the research plan
- It is important to ensure that documents are relevant to the target group(s).
- It is essential that the quality of a product be ensured, thereby requiring analysis and thorough study of product that has been outsourced.
- The project is advised to make improvements in its focus and clarity, organization and management of its plans and activities, which may include the

option of having a full time leader who could steer the team in the right direction, and provide guidance and advice when required.

- The team may benefit from the inclusion of members drawn not only from academia but experienced persons from various relevant environmental backgrounds.

### **Review of 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase Research Plan**

- The Plan could have benefited from a clear direction and strategy as well as substantial research upon which the actions could be based.
- The project research plan states that it is “*necessary to construct a cooperative international system that promotes environmental education.*” The idea may be too farsighted and ambitious.
- The paper also states that “*it is important for IGES to show initiatives as a leading organization for environmental education,*” for which it will “*undertake action-oriented research with a view to combining ‘practice’ and ‘research’ in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase*”. Perhaps more action-oriented research was necessary to be undertaken by the group using critical and analytical assessments.
- The training programme organized in collaboration with JICA could have been more carefully reviewed and analyzed before going into the next phase. It appeared to be a stand alone activity and did not seem to blend in with other research and programmes.
- Inclusion of eco tourism model did not seem to enhance the research focus or add to its depth.

### **Suggestions**

- It is important that the plan has a clear strategy which outlines the mandate and goal(s) with concrete methodology and time schedule which the team members could refer to and follow.
- The plan could have focused on fewer activities instead of conducting a number

of activities whereby decreasing depth and quality.

### **Interim Report 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase**

- The interim report may have benefited from a careful evaluation of project progress at each stage and also assessments of inputs and contributions of individual project members.
- Based on the outcomes of the assessments the project could then have incorporated findings to fill any gaps and shortcoming to ensure maximum success of the end product.

### **Final Report – 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase**

- The project suffered due to inconsistency between the plan, interim report and the final report. The goals were not always clear and not all achieved.
- The final report redefines its mission; however, in the plan and interim reports, the mission was not clearly defined.
- The Ecotourism project did not achieve its goal of developing “*an innovative model of education for community based eco tourism*”.
- Training programme cannot be properly evaluated because the content was not submitted to the review panel. However what can be assessed is that the programme review was conducted only in the 5<sup>th</sup> year for the first time. The training does not seem to have been based on IGES research activities.
- The quantitative output for some of the documents are impressive, but more efforts could have been given to qualitative outputs including research, analysis and review.

### **Suggestions**

All relevant documents should be submitted to review panel in order to ensure that it is properly reviewed (Documents pertaining to the training programmes and eco tourism were not submitted). Therefore the panel has not been able to fully judge the process and outcome.

### **Documents/ Publications**

- The title, *Path to Success*, states some pioneering examples – yet a large number of examples were not necessarily pioneering nor innovative – to mention some: green clubs and development of common outreach material.
- A number of case studies were very similar– this may be an indicator that the content was not thoroughly researched and analyzed.
- The extent and impact of outreach has not been indicated – end users were not identified –to whom and where.
- The data that was collected and compiled did not follow a uniformed, standardized pattern.
- The criteria for selection of some collaborators and case studies were not always clear and the identity of the writers of reports and case studies were not always mentioned. Furthermore many do not indicate the titles to be able to know whether they are researchers, educators, policy makers, etc.
- Project design and methodology followed has not always been appropriate and in line with the objectives as project plan was based largely on action-oriented research and the final outcome was largely compilation of action-based case studies.

### **Suggestions**

- It is advised that documents be more thoroughly researched, targets clearly identified and materials developed strategically for target audience.
- All documents should be reviewed by independent reviewers at the tentative draft stage, to ensure quality and authenticity of content.

### **Third Phase Research Plan**

The first plan that was submitted did not meet the expected standard required for a research plan as it was too broad-based, wanting focus and strategy. The team members were requested to submit a second draft by IGES President, Professor

Morishima.

The following comments are based on the second draft:

- Research theme – ‘*Strengthening the process of partnership for education*’ – does not seem to be a theme, but rather one of the desired outcomes of the project.
- Four sets of activities have been listed each requiring intensive input of time and research. It therefore does not seem feasible to achieve this within the 2 year time frame.
- The methodology for data collection, research, analysis and implementation can be made more clear.
- It is recommended to keep the end user in mind, when developing the final product.

### **Conclusion**

- The review panel is of the opinion that IGES should contribute to the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) process.
- However the review panel advises that efforts be made to improve the plan to make it more concrete, focused and strategic.

### **Suggestions**

Considering a full time leader may be an example of options that can be taken to improve the project. The team may also benefit from the inclusion of members from various areas of environmental education.

In preparing strategic models on non-formal education for governments in the Asia-Pacific region, IGES can develop partnerships with experienced institutions/ individuals in strategically identified countries of the region.