



**WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL DAY
SYMPOSIUM**

**DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICAN
SCHOOLS**

Presenter: Dr. Benjamin Damoah

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, environmental issues have dominated the global conversation. This has necessitated the inclusion of environmental content in educational curricula.

***Global Response**

In response to the 1977 Tbilisi Declaration coupled with the agenda 21 Rio De Janeiro Declaration (1992) on EE, many countries around the globe have enacted and adopted education policies aimed at EE integration into the school curriculum. These countries, including New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, the USA, Brazil, China, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and South Africa, have government policies on EE.



INTRO



South Africans Response:

- in 1980 White Paper on National Environmental Policy which was published in 1989, was the first attempt to institutionalize EE.
- The EE Policy Initiative (EEPI) was established in 1992 to facilitate the collection and development of EE policy choices for schools.
- The 1996 transition from national education policy formulation to curriculum development precipitated the establishment of an EE curriculum effort.

Curriculum 2005 & the current Curriculum

- Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) in 2011, The Department of Basic Education has demonstrated a willingness to integrate EE from Grade R to Grade 12 curriculum.

*There is no structured and coordinated policy design to enhance the implementation of EE policy in schools. Individual schools have employed a non-standardised approach to incorporate EE into the school system.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The paper analyzed and navigated through the South African education system to ascertain the existence of elements that supports the effective implementation of EE policy.

METHODS

***Mixed Method Research**

***Pragmatist Paradigm**

***Triangulation Design**

Sample/Population

***175 teachers**

***10 school principals**

TOTAL:180 participants





RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Policy design

The investigation found that the EE objectives stated in the CAPS document were too broad and lacked clarity. It was discovered that the EE objective, which drives policy design, was simply listed as part of the curriculum's general objectives. There were no explicit objectives connected with the implementation of the EE policy.

Schools with a strong interest in EE have their local policy statement that directs their environmental efforts.

Individual school efforts, including recycling and gardening, were transformational programmes to help implement the EE policy. It was discovered that, aside from the primary aims and objectives of the curriculum, the CAPS document is deafeningly silent on EE policy implementation.



RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Stakeholders and their engagement

According to the study's findings, schools involved stakeholders in implementing educational policies. It was discovered that some schools engaged SGBs to create and implement environmental policies. It was found that certain schools collaborate with CSOs such as WESSA to develop environmental programmes in schools. The study found that the curriculum does not clarify the role of CSOs as stakeholders in the implementation of EE in schools, which harms policy implementation.



RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Institutional and societal context

The study discovered that the institutional structure of some schools encourages the adoption of EE policy. It was observed that some schools have a code of conduct that guides EE policy implementation. It was noticed that a lot of the schools in the townships were not establishing a favourable environment to accommodate EE policies.





RESULTS & DISCUSSION



The implementation strategy

As per the survey findings, most teachers do not understand the objectives of EE policy as outlined in the curriculum. This has impacted how the policy is applied in various schools. According to the study's findings, the CAPS document does not provide an implementation strategy that includes the mandate of policy practitioners in the curriculum. This directly influenced how EE was adopted in classrooms.

The study found that characteristics that assist the implementation of educational policies were scarcely present in the school system. This has harmed how EE policy is implemented in schools. Most teachers and principals were unfamiliar with policy design, objectives, and implementation strategy

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

There are four unavoidable variables: policy design, stakeholder engagement, the institutional and social context, and implementation strategy established in this study. The curriculum's aims and objectives for EE are too broad and unclear. The research found that elements that facilitate the implementation of educational policies were barely existent in the school system. This has affected how EE policy is implemented in schools. Most teachers and principals were dispassionately unfamiliar with the policy design, objectives, and strategies to support EE's implementation. The determinants above collaborated to make policy implementation possible at the school level.

Although the concept of EE as an integrated component is novel and excellent, curriculum developers should re-align the curriculum aims and objectives. Curriculum developers are obliged to re-examine the general aim of the national curriculum on "human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing the principles and practises of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa" , linked to Environmental Education.

Instead of mere rhetoric, the broad goal associated with environmental education should be narrowed to specifics and clarity. Environmental concerns are global and national pandemics and should be treated with the utmost curriculum attention with emphatic principles. Political will be embedded in the curriculum, not just a drive through the knee-jerk approach we have witnessed since the inception of the CAPS document in 2011





To implement environmental education school policy effectively, the Department of Basic Education should set up a Directorate for Environmental Education. The Directorate should be charged with designing a well-structured policy guideline document for Environmental Education similar to Inclusive Teaching and Learning (2010). The policy guidelines should detail specific aims and objectives, teaching and learning methodology, and assessment guidelines for the teaching and learning of environmental education as an integrated component. The policy guidelines should redefine the scope and parameters of environmental content in all subject areas in the curriculum to address the issue of imbalances of environmental themes in other disciplines. The stakeholders, SGB, CSO, and others should be stipulated in the policy guideline document. The policy guidelines should address issues of policy design and implementation strategy.



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CONTACT



dr.damoahb@icloud.com
Benjamin.Damoah@usm.edu
bdamoah@wsu.ac.za





THANK YOU

Benjamin Damoah, Ph.D.