

ENSI ANNUAL REPORT 2005

Approved by the Annual General Meeting 2006

Introduction

2005 has been a remarkable year for ENSI – a year of new partnerships and change. The cornerstone of our work during 2005 has been the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (UN DESD 2005- 2014), the UNECE strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and other regional strategies to implement ESD. This has resulted in new Institutional partnerships for ENSI and new challenges at international, regional and national level.

2005 also marked for ENSI the end of the EU funded SEED project on environmental education and school development, culminating in a number of valuable publications and tools, and ventures new, through a commitment to regionalise ENSI and become a truly global organisation. After 20 years of innovation and action research in the field of environmental education, the demand to ‘go public’, to extend our outreach to both educators and to policy shapers has never been greater.

This annual report is intended to give you a brief overview of our work during 2005. For more detailed information you are invited to visit the ENSI website at www.ensi.org, or contact the ENSI secretariat at secretariat@ensi.org

Please note that this report focuses on ENSI’s work at international and regional level. Extensive work has also taken place in ENSI member countries and national reports are available on the website.

Günther Pfaffenwimer
ENSI President

ENSI Milestones in 2005

The International ESD Conference in Esbjerg, May 2005, Building Capacity and Empowerment through Education for Sustainable Development

This major event was organised by the Danish Ministry of Education, the Austrian Ministry of Education, the Danish University of Education, the European Network SEED on Environmental Education and School Development, and ENSI as its umbrella body.

The goals of the Conference, held at the University College of West Jutland in Esbjerg, Denmark, were to optimise the impact of the start of the UNESCO-led UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, DESD (2005-2014) in national education systems, and to advance on educational approaches to ESD. The conference offered fresh thinking; some bold recommendations and raised key questions for national planning, implementation and evaluation strategies and the quality of ESD. It brought together some of the key global players –political and research-based - advancing Education for Sustainable Development.

Crucially, the Conference framed the wider context – the educational, sustainability and equity challenges of the Millennium Development Goals, Inclusive Education and Education for All. Discussions highlighted the need for an interdisciplinary and holistic approach. ENSI and SEED discussed UNESCO's aspirations in the context of DESD. This will also enhance the policy impact and outreach of both networks to a whole range of stakeholders within the global community of quality education and Education for Sustainable Development. The Conference, as one UNESCO representative speaker highlighted, epitomised what the Decade is really about.

Another important area addressed by participants was that of new partnerships, particularly in the corporate sector, where the sustainability agenda is building momentum both in local businesses and also through international initiatives like to the UN Global Compact and the World Economic Forum. The economic tenet of ESD, alongside the social, environmental and cultural was widely acknowledged at the meeting, with emphasis on the primary role of educationalists to bridge these areas.

With these perspectives, this conference contributed to new energy, commitment and partnership to drive the ESD agenda, to tackle some of the fundamental questions, and to advance our work internationally, regionally and locally. The conference report is an important reference document for further discussion and debate, and a potentially influential policy tool. ENSI is encouraging its wide dissemination and critique as one of the first written contributions to the UN DESD.

ENSI linked its Annual General Meeting to the Esbjerg Conference and this took place on the beautiful Island of Fano, off the Danish coast. The key outcomes of this meeting are noted in the relevant sections of this report.

The European Meeting in Helsinki, September 2005 – celebrating the outcomes of SEED and reflecting on future COMENIUS work

The final meeting of SEED, ENSI's European project focusing on Environmental Education and School Development took place in Helsinki in September 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to finalise SEED report. It was also a key opportunity to take stock of the plethora of valuable materials emerging out of SEED, and look at dissemination strategies. The ENSI website is linked with the SEED website, compiling all the reports and documents available. Four key products should however be highlighted, as they were intrinsically linked with ENSI's own work programme, specifically:

The report from the Conference '**Building Capacity and Empowerment through Education for Sustainable Development**', Esbjerg, May 2005, as mentioned above.

Quality Criteria for ESD schools, Guidelines to enhance the quality of ESD: This publication targets schools and educational authorities engaged in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). It presents a proposal for a *non-exhaustive* list of 'quality criteria' to be used as a starting point for reflections, debates and further

development regarding future work on ESD among educational officials, teachers, headmasters, parents, and students. It will be available in 11 languages.

The quality criteria described above grew out of the results of a **comparative research study on quality criteria**, and a comprehensive report is now available. This report is based on information collected from 13 country reports on implicit and explicit criteria guiding Eco-schools' development processes in whole school plans, inspired by Environmental Education values and principles. By analysing trends and divergences in the reports, the publication focuses on identifying the visions of the future world that are embedded in the Eco-schools' programmes and what conceptualisation of learning-teaching processes and school development can be identified in this work.

In the area of teacher education, Regula Kyburz-Graber, Paul Hart, Peter Posch and Ian Robottom have written a new book. The book addresses **Reflective Teaching in Teacher Education. Learning from Case Studies of Environmental Education**.

The ENSI Executive Committee Meeting in Solothurn, November 2005 – new departures and transitions

During the executive meeting, Geir Endregard, Norwegian Institute for Air Research and Astrid Sandas gave a presentation on the Environmental Education Network in Norway, an educational web base ESD tool, and an international 'prototype' in English, based on ENSI research and philosophy, www.sustain.no. This will be a core instrument for a new ICT ESD project and other aspects of ENSI's knowledge management.

The importance of COMENIUS exchange opportunities as expressed during the Helsinki Seminar was reiterated, and it was agreed that the continuity of thematic seminars and workshops should be a priority for ENSI during the coming years. Particular thanks were given to Johannes Tschapka, responsible for the coordination of SEED for his work of the past three years. It was agreed that a major COMENIUS III application would be submitted during 2006, and Norway offered to lead on the coordination of this work.

The Committee discussed at length the three new research projects to be launched at the beginning of 2006, and project leaders gave an overview of the project goals, timelines and budgetary requirements. These are described more fully under the section 'new research opportunities' in this report.

Policy orientation - ENSI working with the Institutions

A major theme for ENSI in 2005 has been to secure UNESCO as an umbrella partner, in relation to the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development, following the decision of OECD –CERI to suspend the system of working with decentralised secretariats such as ENSI by the end of 2004.

The President received an encouraging response from UNESCO following an initial letter requesting partnership. Two meetings in UNESCO Headquarters Paris involving the ENSI president and secretariat, and one meeting in Bangkok followed, and these

were important opportunities to explore ENSI's potential contribution to the Decade and to operationalise our partnership in practical terms.

Through its outreach work, ENSI has been present at the majority of DESD launch events throughout the course of 2005. We are seen 'de facto', as a partner in the framework of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development and enjoy a good exchange of information with the DESD secretariat in Paris.

It is clear however that our modus operandi with UNESCO is very different from the working relationship with OECD CERI in previous times, where OECD-CERI played an umbrella role, and ENSI was a decentralised, rather than independent network.

In parallel, ENSI has been working towards closer partnership with other Institutions such as the UN Economic Commission for Europe (that covers 55 member states across the northern hemisphere), and their ESD strategy and implementation. The UNECE secretariat responsible for this is based in Geneva. Three ENSI coordinators were present in a national capacity at UNECE high-level meeting on the ESD strategy and implementation (Günther Pfaffenwimmer, Astrid Sandas and Willy Sleurs) in Vilnius, Lithuania, in March 2005. ENSI has been invited as observer to the UNECE steering group on ESD. Christine Affolter, ENSI Vice President and Nicola Bedlington, Secretariat participated in the first steering group meeting in December 2005. ENSI has also been invited to take part in a 'bureau' that has been set up to support the UNECE secretariat in the implementation of the strategy and particularly the roadmap towards the Belgrade Ministerial "Environment for Europe " Conference to be held in October 2007. Michela Mayer, ENSI expert from Italy, was nominated to participate in a UNECE task force developing indicators linked to the implementation of the UNECE strategy on ESD, and managed a ongoing consultation process with the ENSI membership on the draft indicators.

Early in 2005, a meeting took place with ENSI contact person at OECD-CERI, Janet Looney, in which the President and secretariat participated. Several areas of potential future 'project specific' cooperation were identified and it is clear that ENSI will continue to enjoy regular contact with OECD-CERI in the future. OECD-CERI has also sent a support letter to UNESCO, reiterating ENSI's unique role in the framework of ESD.

With regard to UNEP, a regional cooperation has been agreed in relation to ENSI's potential contribution to the Carpathian Convention and its articles on education and awareness raising. Once the Convention has been ratified, in 2006, a 'mapping exercise' will mark the start of a concerted programme of activities in this region using ENSI / SEED experience and expertise.

Specific policy work has also taken place with the European Union Education Directorate in relation to an initiative on Core Competences, where ENSI was invited to submit proposals relating to ESD. More general 'consultation' response letters have been sent to the European Commission regarding its Strategy on Sustainable Development, and proposals around the next EU research and development programme, where ENSI has reiterated the primary role of ESD and school development.

With the support of Ton Remmers and his team at SLO, Netherlands, ENSI submitted an EU application for core funding to the European Union that was rejected because of very strict application of the eligibility criteria, as ENSI is not an officially constituted European entity. Despite this, the application process itself was valuable, in clarifying further our work programme for 2006 and establishing much closer positive relations with the EU department responsible for this area of funding and European association and network relations.

The above work during 2005, all of which is on-going, demonstrates that ENSI rather than focussing exclusively on one institutional partnership, as important as that is, has a strong and growing relationship with a whole range of other Institutions, as an independent network advancing research, innovation and policy in the sphere of education for sustainable development

ENSI's Strategic Planning Process in 2005

The ENSI membership engaged in an intensive strategic planning process in 2005 that began at the Annual General Meeting in Esbjerg using the Planning Web Concept (Cuming 1995) and culminated at the end of the year following a two-stage consultation process. The outcome – a five -year strategic plan provides a clear blueprint for the ENSI membership and newcomers on the strategic direction and goals of the organization over the next five years in terms of innovation and research outputs and dissemination, policy impact and organizational development.

It will also become an important flagship for ENSI for external ESD stakeholders to learn about ENSI and where opportunities exist for cooperation and collaboration.

The document will be reviewed on an annual basis and revised in accordance with internal and external developments and achievements in the framework of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development.

ENSI's Core Business - New Research Priorities and Opportunities

During and since the last AGM in 2005 a number of international research priorities were identified that reflect ENSI's role as an avant garde organisation focussed on research and development. It was agreed to work specifically on three key areas of development:

- Quality criteria and ESD Conceptualisation,
- Teacher Education, through the EU funded project, CSCT on core competences for teachers working on ESD, and the follow up to the case study book on teacher education,
- Information, Communication Technology and ESD, in knowledge building and knowledge management.

International project groups have been formed and this work will be advanced in 2006.

As mentioned earlier, 2005 marked the end of the SEED project. Alongside the international research initiatives described above emphasis will be placed during 2006 on a major EU COMENIUS project focussing on ESD and mainstreaming ESD across all EU education projects. Countries eligible to become direct partners are EU member states, EEA countries, Switzerland and the Western Balkans.

ENSI - Growing the membership

During 2005, the Netherlands and France have become members of ENSI again, taking the number of formal members to 14 countries, and there is an active involvement of a further 10 countries in ENSI's work. Sweden has decided to withdraw its membership for the moment.

Expressions of interest have been received for a number of countries to participate in ENSI (China, India, Japan, Korea, Malta, Thailand, countries in the Caucasus) and the secretariat is also working towards former member countries joining ENSI again (Canada, England, New Zealand, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain). The President and secretariat are in communication with many of these countries to try to advance this, with the support of ENSI experts who have particular links. An explanatory memorandum for new members was produced at the beginning of 2005 to support this process, and an important dimension of the strategic plan is to develop the membership in a realistic way and to link this to the regionalization process.

ENSI structures at regional level - towards a truly global organization

Important discussion has taken place regarding ENSI's global structure and perceived weaknesses regarding its European dominance. This was addressed in the Annual General Meeting in 2005, where it was agreed that ENSI should develop a regional structure, starting in the first instance with a European Region and an Asian Pacific Region. It was highlighted that this process must be managed extremely carefully and there would be the need for more rather than fewer international meetings to foster synergies and global identity. Australian representatives committed to explore this further to pursue the practical implementation of regionalisation. The ENSI executive committee meeting will take place in Perth, Australia in October 2006, where regionalisation will be further advanced.

ENSI Going Public -Representation at external meetings during 2005

Representation at external meetings is an important component of ENSI's work and a key opportunity to share innovation and research outcomes with specific target groups. All of the meetings outlined below resulted in new membership opportunities and/or new cooperation. Reports on each meeting are available from the secretariat.

January – India

Syd Smith, Australia represented ENSI at an International DESD Conference Ahmedabad, India

May – Denmark

Günther Pfaffenwimmer, ENSI President and Cam McKenzie, Australia held a meeting with the President and secretariat of the Foundation for Environmental Education, FEE based in Copenhagen.

September – Lithuania, Italy, France

Reiner Mathar, ENSI Treasurer participated in the European Environmental Conference, CEE, in Lithuania

ENSI was well represented at the World Environmental Education Conference in Torino, Italy and many ENSI International experts and friends were present. Soren Breiting (Dk) gave a presentation on the quality criteria research and publication.

Günther Pfaffenwimmer, ENSI President represented ENSI in a 'Mountains' Regions conference in France.

November -Georgia

Willy Sleurs (B) represented ENSI at a REC Caucasus Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia

ENSI's knowledge management and communications

Much emphasis has been placed during 2005 on improving in internal and external communications systems for ENSI. At bi-weekly internal mailing reaches approximately 50 ENSI members or experts linked to ENSI.

The new website www.ensi.org was launched in April 2005 and is updated with news and information every two months. The website provides scope for members to share materials and publications on ESD.

A wider mailing list has also been established that includes both political representatives officials and experts involved in ESD at some level – to whom ad hoc mailing are sent alerting them to news, information and materials featured on the website.

ENSI now has its own email address: secretariat@ensi.org

ENSI's Secretariat

Nicola Bedlington was appointed as head of the ENSI secretariat in Switzerland and took up post officially at the beginning of October 2004. The secretariat post is funded through the federal office for the environment, forestry and landscape (BUWAL) until 30 September 2006. Christine Affolter, as Vice President of ENSI works in close cooperation with the secretariat.

In addition to the developments outlined in this report, Nicola Bedlington worked closely with members at national level in 2005 to undertake preparatory and planning work,

visiting Austria twice, Denmark twice, Finland twice, the Netherlands and Norway, and attending the World Environmental Education Congress in Torino, Italy, where she met a large cross section of ENSI's experts and friends from beyond Europe.

An important decision took place at the ENSI Annual General Meeting to create a long-term secretariat post 2006, and move away from the arrangement to move the secretariat every two years. Significant efforts have been undertaken by the membership and the secretariat during 2005 to achieve this goal, however this is very much work in progress.

Conclusions

ENSI and its members have achieved much during 2005. The closure of the SEED project and the transition of knowledge and contacts went smoothly. And there is excellent feedback on the materials and tools that SEED has produced. ENSI's status with key Institutional partners is high and there is a good level of exchange on both policy and programmatic levels. Extensive planning work has taken place that will lead the network forward in the coming years – importantly, the five year strategic plan and concrete international research and innovation projects – ENSI's core business and its niche in the world of ESD. A process of regionalization has been agreed and initiated with Australia playing a lead role in establishing ENSI Asia Pacific, and hosting, for the first time, an ENSI executive committee in Perth in late 2006. A long-term secretariat, as a central 'hub' for ENSI and its work is a common goal for the ENSI membership, and will be addressed as a matter of urgency in early 2006. As ENSI celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2006, it embraces a new era of development and growth in the framework of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and a commitment to engage a new generation of researchers, to support those pioneers who have shaped ENSI over the last 20 years.