

Mainstreaming Environment and
Sustainability in African Universities:

Stories of Change

Edited and supported by: Heila Lotz-Sisitka, Gitile Naituli,
Amanda Hlengwa, Mike Ward, Ayobami Salami, Akpezi Ogbuigwe,
Mahesh Pradhan, Marie Neeser and Sanne Lauriks



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- Chapter 4: Rethinking Forestry and Natural Resources Higher Education in Ethiopia: An Education for Sustainable Development Perspective (Gessesse Dessie & Merfese Tadesse)
- Chapter 13: Education For Sustainable Development: The Case Of Masinde Muliro University Of Science And Technology (MMUST) (Patricia Kariaga, Mary Goretti Kariaga & Vitalis Ogemah)
- Chapter 15: Sustainability Issues In The Geography Curriculum For An Undergraduate Programme: The Case Of Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia (Aklilu Dalelo)

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Stars in the Night

- Akpezi Ogbuigwe -

It was Night Time
No one could dispute that.
The report was in
Our global challenges included:
Climate change
Loss of ecosystem services (including rapid coastal ecosystem degradation)
Threats to food security and water
Deforestation
Loss of biodiversity
Land and water degradation
Deterioration of fisheries
Waste management crises
Increasing poverty
Insecurity / wars
The Millennium Development Goals were at risk of not being met...
It seemed the sustainability dream was lost!
That was 2002 in Johannesburg.
The world had gathered again to review the sustainability scorecard and strategise for the future...

No one knew that that gathering was going to be like none other
It was going to give birth to a baby called The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
What a mouthful but what a delightful child!

Then inconspicuously, stars began to burst out of the night
In all continents you could see the stars in the night
Africa was not left out
The stars burst out in their zillions
From the United Nations office in Nairobi
To Southern Africa, East Africa, West Africa, The Horn of Africa, Central Africa, North Africa
You could see the MESA stars decorating the night
Shooting out stars to the global community...

It's now 10 years, the stars are still replicating themselves

Let them shine forth in their host
Let them shine brighter and brighter
Let them fill the dark night
For no night remains night when overtaken by stars

Akpezi Ogbuigwe
November 2014

PART A: Orienting Papers

Chapter 1: Introducing the UNEP Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities Partnership Programme

Mahesh Pradhan, Brian M. Waswala-Olewe and Mariam Ayombi

(United Nations Environment Programme)

Abstract

The chapter provides an overview of the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities Partnership (MESA). The partnership was established to strengthen capacity development and environmental innovation through practical education, training and networking in African universities through Education for Sustainable Development initiatives. The MESA partnership, supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) since 2004, was developed via three phases over the period of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, culminating in this Monograph on 'Stories of Change', and the development of the Africa Environmental Education and Training Action Plan for 2015-2024. MESA universities have contributed to the development of this Action Plan, and also paved the way for the establishment of the Global Universities Partnership for Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), which now has 500 partner universities, including the 90 from the MESA network. This allows MESA universities to be linked into a global universities network focusing on the mainstreaming of environment and sustainability into universities.

Introduction

Africa faces a myriad of challenges that impact negatively on the environment (UNEP, 2002, 2006, 2012a). These challenges include: increased climate change vulnerability; desertification of arid areas; deforestation (massive land clearance for agriculture and fuelwood); rapid urbanisation (particularly in coastal areas and proliferation of informal settlements); decline of biological resources (habitat loss, overharvesting of selected resources, and illegal activities); degradation of coastal and marine habitats (pollution, overharvesting of resources, inappropriate development in the coastal zone, poor inland land management, and oil pollution).

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