Chapter 1

Building Community Resilience Through Environmental Education: A Local Response to Climate Change

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ABSTRACT

The call for collaborative efforts to respond to climate change is heeded through bilateral and multilateral agreements. The UN Sustainable Development Goals bears testimony to the call. Environmental education is one of the vehicles to raise awareness, understanding, and assessment of sustainable development goals at a community level to build resilience for sustainability. Environmental education enhances the accomplishment of the key competencies for sustainability. Climate change is a complex environmental problem that is not only naturally induced, but made more stressful by anthropocentric capabilities in the quest for a better lifestyle. Although climate change causes and impacts are known, its mitigation strategies are compounded by human wants at the expense of their own sustainable survival. This chapter explores ways of building sustainable development in communities. Environmental education is a core development strategy in local communities against the adverse impact of climate change, especially in vulnerable areas.

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Building Community Resilience Through Environmental Education

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is recognized by international and regional organisations such as the United Nations and its organs as a global problem dominating social, economic and environmental discourses. Its adaptation and mitigation strategies are a matter of local and global discourses. The impacts of climate change are calling for international attention and collaborative efforts through multilateral and bilateral agreements. It is a complex environmental problem that is not only naturally induced but made more stressful by anthropocentric capabilities in the quest for better lifestyles. Although climate change causes and impacts are known, its mitigation strategies are compounded by anthropogenic drive at the expense of their own sustainable survival. Human beings continue to explore different new knowledge and technologies that has negative impact on the resources and adding substances to the atmosphere causing increased temperatures and varied climatic conditions. Although mitigation and adaptation approaches and strategies are attempted, there are far exceeded by the damages caused and human induced constraints to succeed in their implementation. If climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies are compromised, it could affect the implementation and achievement of sustainable development goals. Climate change education, could be one of the vital tools through environmental education to enhance both adaptation and mitigation capabilities. Environmental education could be viewed as a vital tool for building local community resilience to climate change. Education for Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2017), goal 4 in particular, could enhance resilience to the impact of climate change at different levels including local community. Quality and relevant education is capable of fostering the creation of capabilities and appropriate knowledge and skills to enable local communities to adapt to climate change. It can help communities re-consider their contribution to damages associated with climate change regardless of their geographical position or wealth. Education is capable of enhancing the knowledge, skills to adapt, and to establish a greater responsibility especially in more vulnerable location such as those in Africa. Climate change awareness could be promoted through action-oriented policy implementation at local levels. This could be at local community, or school levels.

The focus of this chapter would be at local community level. Insights are drawn from different parts of the world where empirical evidence demonstrated the role of education to promote community resilience. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how environmental education could enhance community climate change awareness to achieve sustainability. It draws from education and climate change literature to make suggestions for local community-based environmental education programme that would promote climate change awareness. It also makes reference to SDG
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