



Public Issues, Methodist Church, Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa NZ

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NAME OF SUBMISSION: Environmental Education for Sustainability

Introduction

This submission on *Advancing Environmental Education* provides supplementary material to that of the on-line feedback questions.

An on-line submission was made by Public Issues of the Methodist Church. The material provided below, is supplementary to the Public Issues submission.

The information here draws on expertise from several organizations working in the field of Education for Sustainable Development.¹

Public Issues of the Methodist Church is interested in Education as part of the wider commitments to social and environmental and climate justice. Along with the church's interests in public issues of education, the church has a big interest in theological education and an interest as providers and partners in education initiatives in communities. The transformative impetus of Environmental Education for Sustainability (EEFS) is relevant to formal sectors of education, to non-formal education and to life-long learning. The Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa is committed to ecological sustainability and responsibility for sound environmental stewardship. We are pleased to encourage the initiative to refresh Education provision and policy to reflect these attributes. In this submission we include a section on values as a contribution to the EEFS framework.

Advancing Environmental Education is a valuable reference document for the church's own initiatives in education, as it encompasses attributes such as inclusive education, equity of access, cultural knowledge, intergenerational justice and knowledge development to support transitions relevant to climate change.

The framework set out in *Advancing Environmental Education*, encompasses stakeholder collaboration, community engagement, transdisciplinarity, and the need for investment, along with contextual priorities for Aotearoa New Zealand such as working with and supporting Kaitiakitanga and whakawhanaungatanga. The whole of system approach echoes that of Te Ao Māori with systems of localized governance for sustainability with resource use constrained by their regenerative capacity. Clearly the engagement and contributions of kohanga reo, kura and wananga are significant for the framework and for policy development.

¹ Toimata Foundation, Environment and Conservation Organizations, NZ National Commission for UNESCO and Advisor on Global Citizenship Education, Response Trust, Maori and Pacific Studies, University of Waikato, the UNU Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Societies.

In the context of the Pacific region of Aotearoa New Zealand and our population of Pacific Peoples it is important to include reference to Pacific Peoples and their knowledge in the EEFS programme. Indeed, Pacific churches and communities are significant contributors to education programmes in churches and wider communities.

The *Advancing Environmental Education* framework is well aligned with international guidelines for education, mobilized through the Global Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development (GAP), the Paris Agreement, and Sustainable development Goals. This submission highlights the need for a road map for policy development in Aotearoa-NZ, with clarification of investments to be made, both in terms of people, capability development and funds.

There is gathering momentum for ESD and Global Citizenship Education (GCE) to support transitions to sustainability and low carbon economy through the Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Action Programme, and the COP21 Paris Agreement. The orientation for transitions requires new epistemologies with interdisciplinary research to address complex issues, institutional transformation, curricula design, school programmes, professional development for teachers and teacher training.

Note: Original text in the *Advancing Environmental Education* document is copied in this submission, with bullet points, and comments underlined and marked with *asterix.

2.0 Key submission points

Re Preamble/purpose:

This Strategy will:

- Refresh the 1998 national strategy for environmental education. Strengthen collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders.
- Prioritise coordination and whole community approaches, grow understanding and action for the environment **and support young people** leading sustainable practice

Comments on The National Strategy:

- a. The NZ curriculum Framework allows for policy development on EEFS and the *Advancing Environmental Education* initiative is timely and very welcome.

Clearly the proposals in *Advancing Environmental Education* are in line with policy action on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the GAP and Higher Education. These are high level guidelines for programmes to re-orient education to meet the promises of sustainability.

Global Action Programme, Nagoya Declaration on Higher Education, and Sustainable Development Goals feature the responsibility of Education to provide an enabling environment for transitions to sustainable societies. They include the need for learning 'values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation'.

Examples include:

Global Action Programme

ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future

generations, while respecting cultural diversity. (GAP p. 12)

Educators and trainers are powerful agents of change for delivering the educational response to sustainable development. But for them to help usher in the transition to a sustainable society, they must first acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. (GAP Priority Area 3)

Nagoya Declaration on Higher Education

2.1 Recognizing and scaling up the accomplishments of the UN DESD, taking into account experiences and lessons learnt, and continuing the successful initiatives that have been developed throughout the Decade and, more specifically, since Rio+20; setting new goals that support a realignment of economic, social, cultural, environmental and educational frameworks in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); contributing to the development of the post-2015 frameworks, establishing new strategic partnerships as required; and supporting assessment and reporting processes to ensure capacity development, transparency and continuous enhancement of activities.

2.2 Recognizing the crucial role and responsibility of higher education institutions to develop students and all types of learners into critical and creative thinkers and professionals to acquire relevant competences and capabilities for future-oriented innovation in order to find solutions to complex, transdisciplinary and transboundary issues, and to foster understanding and practice of collective values and principles that guide attitudes and transformations, respecting the environmental limits of our planet, through education, training, research and outreach activities.

(Article 2. Nagoya Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development)

Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goal Four, Quality Education on Inclusive and equitable quality education, lifelong learning opportunities for all and ethics, and Goal Thirteen enjoin us to urgent action on climate change. As science opens our understanding of human impact on planetary ecosystems, we are compelled to take account of human ethics as part of the sustainability agenda, as expressed the aspirations of the SDG's.

Article 12 of the Paris Agreement

Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement.

Laudato Si

Lastly we include reference to Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si* which expresses a world view and ethics as touchstones for eco-justice and climate change:

The problem is that we still lack the culture needed to confront this crisis. We lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths and meeting the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice towards coming generations. The establishment of a legal framework which can set clear boundaries and ensure the protection of ecosystems has become indispensable; otherwise, the new power

structures based on the techno-economic paradigm may overwhelm not only our politics but also freedom and justice. (Laudato Si p. 53)

Comments for Action:

A. The 2014 Conference on Higher Education identified 3 practical action points:

1. Importance of leadership: educate leaders regarding ESD; bring leaders on board for tackling issues at stake; provide leaders with convincing tools.
2. Bring all academic and administrative staff on board; build up patience, trust and support.
3. Work with everyone, especially the staff and students.

B. Global Action Programme identifies Five GAP priority action areas:

1. advancing policy – which highlights an [enabling environment for ESD to bring about systemic change](#)
2. transforming learning and training environments
3. building the capacities of educators and trainers
4. empowering and mobilizing youth
5. accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level.

We would like to see an Action Plan or Road Map developed for each of these areas with the Role of EEFS integrated into them.

b. Comment

We welcome recognition of sustainability and the name to reflect this EEFS

It would also be timely at this point to take account of the significant mobilization of Global Citizenship Education, both in NZ and globally. Generally education for sustainable development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education include national identity and contextual issues along with awareness of environmental impacts of development, qualities of critical thinking, connection to people in other parts of the world and other life situations, and developing knowledge of how global markets impact on local economies, products and prices. These wider attributes may sit in tension with the orientation of education towards individual and national interests, and the liberal world-view which underpins education in a country such as New Zealand.

The knowledge systems of liberal education, for all their ideals, are part of an industrial system that is destroying the earth systems that sustain life as we know it (Royal, C. 2003²). In a context of climate destabilization, growing social inequity, migration, biodiversity depletion and resource exploitation new forms of knowledge are required to address these complex and interdependent issues. This is the basis for the need for transformative principles which are different from the conventional democratic ideals of the individual and society and which are the basis for liberal, Deweyan ideals of a 'common life' (Harris, R. 2009³). Transformative principles include attention to public good, common resources, new forms of accountability, global governance.

² Royal, Te Ahukaramu C. (Ed.) (2003) *The Woven Universe. Edited Writings of Revd. Māori Marsden*. New Zealand

³ Harris, R. (2009) 'The Historical Contribution of AVE to Social Sustainability in Australia.' In Willis, P. et al (eds) *Rethinking Work and Learning. Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects*. Pp. DOI 10. Springer Science+Business Media.

Thus it is important for the 'refreshing' of EEFs to include global issues of climate change, migration, social inequity, war and peace. We recommend that the Steering Group consult with leaders of this interest, including church leaders working in this field, NZ National Commission for UNESCO; the NZ Centre for Global Studies; the Centre for Education for Global Studies, Waikato University.

- c. There are indications in the discussion document of the links between environment, economy and global issues - and we underscore that environmental education alone is insufficient as it needs skilled recognition of links to global issues, impacts of global impacts and interdependence of peoples, biodiversity, and ecosystems.
- d. Given the recognition of the complex relation between environment, education, and economy we recommend that representatives of MBEI and Treasury be added to the Steering Committee. Te Puni Kokiri and Ministry Pacific Affairs would be relevant. The involvement of Local government is important.

Comment on Values

It is appropriate to include a few points on values.

The Church is not an isolated institution. In the Methodist work on justice, we emphasise collaboration with communities, academics, central and local government, Unions and business. An example is the collaboration between community groups, Unions, Churches to achieve a 'Living Wage'.

The Church has an interest in re-orienting education in its many forms and levels, and producing resources and ways of learning that develop our world views towards care for integral ecology and the wider social systems to correspond with this. Pope Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Si* provides a remarkable reference for contemporary church thinking.

The encyclical laments the destruction of the earth and the economic systems that allow extreme degradation. At the same time it is a song of praise for 'integral ecology' - the 'woven universe' (Royal 2003), and the wonder of the way everything is interconnected and the need to integrate social and environmental issues:

We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental....to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (*Laudato Si*)

This points to the perspective of global interdependence – and the widely held appreciation that we share one planet earth, our common home, our sister to mention Pope Francis' term of endearment.

Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor...A true "ecological debt" exists, particularly between the global north and south, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment, and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time. (*Laudato Si* p. 15)

A leading advocate of Global Citizenship Education, Pierre Calame shows why education should be at the forefront of our concerns.

Our current education model is too often based on separating things instead of connecting them: separating thought and action; separating different fields of knowledge; separating

values from techniques; separating abstract knowledge from knowledge formed through experience; separating the past, present and future (2015)

Knowledge for a climate challenged world is about synthesis, about joining and attending to deep integrity – integral ecology. An integral approach to issues is to bring the all encompassing matters of environment, ecology and climate into all decision-making, and including these in areas of traditionally strong church interests such as child poverty and housing and income levels.

While values are often articulated in reference to rights we highlight responsibility as an ethical orientation to meet the issues of the 21st Century (Martin, B. 2016)⁴ Responsibility, as the foundation of community, is part of theological tradition, and comes into fresh focus for the paradigm shift underlying transitions to zero carbon economies. It is a reference for accountability and governance at all scales: at national, regional and global levels.

Relational values and accountability for the human use of resources are both held within the notion of Responsibility. Public good and accountability are associated with the new order of industrialized societies, re-orientated towards stewardship of the planet and the interwoven integrity of all forms of life.

In the context of neo-liberal globalization, and many cases of corporates, we see that economic power has become disassociated from public good responsibility. The reach of globalization is decoupled from social justice – which is the basis of sustainable societies and peace. These are the large scale issues of ethics and transformation for climate responsibility that Global Citizenship Education seeks to address. We refer to a *Declaration for Responsibility in an interdependent world*, (www.methodist.org.nz/public_questions_network/pi_resources) which includes these articles:

- Individual human beings and everyone together have a shared responsibility to others, to close and distant communities, and to the planet, proportionately to their assets, power and knowledge.
- Responsibility involves taking into account the immediate or deferred effects of all acts, preventing or offsetting their damages whether or not they were perpetrated voluntarily, and inclusive of effects on subjects of law, all biota and ecosystems. It applies to all fields of human activity and to all scales of time and space.
- In reaching decisions about short-term priorities, evaluation of long-term consequences must concur with ethical priorities of justice and inter- generational environmental stewardship, taking into account both risks and uncertainties.
- The full potential of knowledge and is achieved through valuing different knowledge systems and ways of knowing, including indigenous knowledge, sharing them, and applying them in the service of unifying solidarity and a pluralistic culture of peace.

Pope Francis presents a theological basis for human responsibility with stewardship of natural resources, respect for the integrity and divinity of nature itself, and equitable distribution of natural resources between all people:

Christians in their turn “realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith”. Responsibility for God’s earth

^{4 4} Martin, B. (2016) ‘Integral Ecology. Responsibility and Churches’. Paper for *Christian Conference of Asia* meeting on Climate Justice. Medan, Indonesia.

means that human beings, endowed with intelligence, must respect the laws of nature and the delicate equilibria existing between the creatures of this world, for “he commanded and they were created” (Laudato Si, p.68)

We note that major environmental sectors are giving increasing attention to the faith and spirituality dimensions of environmental commitments, including in education. The contributions of religion and spirituality communities was a theme at the recent International Union for the Conservation of Nature Congress.⁵ Indigenous knowledge includes spirituality as part of an integrated approach to sustainability.

Vision

Comment: Needs to have commitment dimension in the Vision such as:

* Suggested vision

Policy with strategic programmes in place to ensure that all NZers have the opportunity and support to be innovative and engaged in work together for social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability with climate and intergenerational justice.

The core strategies are appropriate:

- a collaborative approach to EEfS
- active community engagement in all environmental domains (air, freshwater, land, marine, atmosphere and climate).
- guide investment decisions

A strategy for achieving these needs to be identified. The 4 areas for promoting the vision are appropriate: they need to be substantiated with a policy pathway and investment of resources , of people and funds, for effectiveness.

Comments

Training:

Training in EEfS needs to be developed to ensure that both environment and sustainability are included? As noted, we include Global Citizenship Education.

Develop a plan for Teacher Education and Professional Development for teachers . How will access to Professional Development be ensured ? A 2014 study of ESD in New Zealand⁶ found no professional development opportunities in the field of ESD advertized in the Education Gazette.

Co-ordination and Community Engagement

Achieving collaboration and community engagement are core strategies for ESD which require facilitators or co-ordinators to make these collaborations effective and sustainable.

Comments on Proposals regarding the Role of EEfS and the 4 areas:

⁵ <https://www.iucn.org/commissions/commission-environmental-economic-and-social-policy/our-work/specialist-group-religion>

⁶ Martin, B (2014) ‘Review of Education for Sustainable Development in Aotearoa New Zealand’. New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO.

These guiding principles need corresponding implementation plans with timeframes and strengthened purpose through notions of responsibility and participation to give effect to the Vision.

- Developing social, cultural, economic and scientific understanding through:
 - *Strengthen this by adding information on how 'Developing' will be achieved
 - *include reference to Treaty of Waitangi as a framework for partnership
- Fostering kaitiakitanga, personal responsibility, *organizational and citizenship responsibilities through:
 - *Providing an outline of steps for implementation.
 - *In the NZ context it is also appropriate to include reference to Pacific traditions of resource management and conservation.
- Enhancing whanaungatanga and collaboration through:
 - *include opportunities for:
 - a. Relationships with Marae,
 - b. Relationships with Pacific communities.
 - c. Joint activities which foster intercultural dialogue, recognition of histories, sharing of local knowledge, stories of migration. Involve kuia, kaumatua, Pacific and other cultural elders for intergenerational knowledge transfer.
- Emphasising care for our environment and life-long learning through:
 - * 'Care for Our Environment' requires substantive statements regarding quality and ecosystem integrity. There are innovations in NZ environmental practice which can be referred to. For example, Environment and Conservation Organizations making provision for interests of the environment in its own standing— such as rivers, air, by considering policy from the point of view of the environment as an integrated ecosystem.

EEFS is relevant to every sector in New Zealand

Comment. This cross sectoral integrated approach is fully in line with the GAP and other high level frameworks: Declaration on Higher Education, SDG's, Paris Agreement.

Given the comprehensive approach to EEFS outlined in the DoC Strategic paper, it is timely for the refreshed strategy to encompass more developed attention to climate education. Climate is relevant to every sector and can be readily folded in to the key points set out in this section of the strategy: science, technology, social science, arts and citizenship, achieved through collaboration and partnerships. As noted, this will require strategic points of intervention in formal education training, professional development, research and knowledge development to address complex systems issues. Relevance to every sector implies the non-formal sectors. These are ambitious aspirations that require strategic planning and investment.

Re Priority Areas 2016-2026

Priority 1: Enabling coordination of EEfS

Actions The Government will:

- ☐ provide co-ordination and strengthen networks to enhance communication between EEFS stakeholders
- ☐ encourage research and its links into practice to improve effectiveness of EEfS delivery and outcomes
- ☐ support effective evaluation and monitoring of environmental and educational outcomes of EEfS for evidence-informed decision-making.

*Comment on Actions: What is the time-frame for a strategic plan for proposed Government action?
What investments will be made?
What is the implementation Plan?

Priority 2: Growing capability and capacity in EEfS delivery

Actions The Government will:

- support development of guidelines and tools that promote effective delivery of EEfS in all sectors, which includes: central and local government; iwi; early childhood centres; schools; kura, tertiary providers; research institutes o business; NGOs o communities
- facilitate professional learning and development in effective EEfS
- support initiatives that enable ongoing growth of the EEfS sector.

*Important ambitions for all sectors. How will this be implemented? Through legislation? Through Policy? Will there be a Pilot?

Priority 3: Supporting the integration of EEfS into all sectors

Actions The Government will:

- promote engagement in EEfS across all sectors
- celebrate exemplary practice and partnerships in EEfS
- foster a connection to nature through place-based/experiential learning
- support opportunities for whole school/ECE approaches to EEfS
- encourage collaborations for EEfS within and between all sectors
- support a range of quality opportunities to ensure equity of access to EEf

*Comments:

- How will the government promote engagement with EEfS into all sectors?
- Connection to nature needs to be accompanied by appreciation of biodiversity, integrated ecosystems, and current impacts of development on biodiversity

Priority 4: Strengthening post-school pathways in sustainable practice for youth

Actions. The Government will:

- promote opportunities for EEfS in tertiary, vocational and non-formal education
- enhance employers' awareness of the benefits of employing young people with an understanding of and experience in sustainable practice
- support initiatives that empower young leaders and entrepreneurs in sustainable practice

*Comment: Very significant for development. Please provide information on how this will take place
Opportunities for EEfS in the areas outlined are in need of nation-wide implementation. The enhancement of employers engagement is a key area for implementation which needs to be given policy guidelines and investment.

Comment re Vocational Education

A 2015 study on vocational education and training⁷ showed there are several initiatives by Local Councils and by enterprises, most do not have specific agendas for sustainability. Those that do struggle with funding and with sustaining institutional links with partner organizations,

⁷ Martin B., Morrison S., and Violetti T. 'Transformative Prospects for Vocational Education and Training'. Paper available on request.

because such collaborations are outside of core business. Some sectors of the Methodist church, notably the Tongan and Samoan Synods, lead education initiatives to support young people into career pathways. Some are ongoing mentoring programmes, and others are annual events for career opportunities.

For Vocational Education there is a very effective initiative in New Plymouth where business, Chamber of Commerce, Local Government and schools have an established programme for linking students with work and training opportunities. This is a model that could contribute to a more specific strategy of enabling school programmes on EEFS to link with work and vocational training.

Research studies show the importance of continuity between school learning and skills development with economic policy. This Strategy is an excellent opportunity to build connection between EEFS education and economic policy for sustainability ('Strong Sustainability) and address the disconnect at all levels including preschool, primary and tertiary, where NCEA levels dominate and reduce capacity for teachers to develop programmes for complex problem solving and innovation in educational programmes (See Martin, Morrison, Violetti; 2015)

Conclusions

This National Strategy is extremely important and provides significant guidance appropriate to new directions in education, and which correspond with global commitments including GAP, SDG's, the Paris Agreement. This is an opportune time to develop a road map which encompasses the Paris Agreement more specifically.

There is provision for important contextual priorities for New Zealand, in particular with regards to Māori. This submission supports the identification of stronger Treaty partnership protocols.

We have elaborated a little on values –clearly an interest for churches. Further work would be appropriate, especially as values are identified in the GAP and the SDG's.

This framework provides a basis for policy development and investment. As part of this submission we request information on anticipated policy development, investment and time frames, with a strategic plan for implementation.

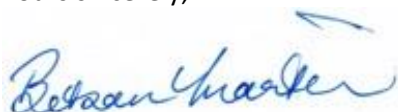
The goals for EEFS are exemplary in principle, ambitious and urgent. Environmental Education for Sustainability plans, as proposed, should be identified in each sector of education: Early Childhood, Primary, Tertiary, Vocational, as well as in the collaborator /stakeholder groups, in order to make plans for strategic transitions to achieving the goals. While each level/area needs policy appropriate suited to the sector, there needs to be coherence across the educational and stakeholder spectrum.

Consideration is needed for assessments and recognition of learning that may be of a different order than the subject categories currently provided for NCEA.

We would welcome further engagement on the proposals.

Thank you for the opportunity for making this submission

Yours sincerely,



Betsan Martin