

SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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Title: Environmental education for sustainable development in Ethiopia – how are teachers' capacities being shaped and formed?



To what extent, does education shape the minds of people and influence the behavior of people, in particular, towards sustainable development? I argue that environmental education plays a key role to teach interrelatedness of the economic, social, and environmental factors related to the sustainability of our society. Yet, some developing countries still struggle to provide quality environmental education, that ultimately could change people's behavior, thus working towards environmental sustainability. My study focuses on college students at teachers' college as they teach environmental education at the primary and secondary schools, and look into their capacities. It will explore the following two issues: (1) To what extent, were the students at teachers' college influenced and shaped by their primary and secondary school education in terms of understanding the importance of ecological and environmental conservation, and (2) how are the students at teachers' college being trained to teach environmental education? I will look at the case in Ethiopia as it is one of the least developed countries, and faces serious environmental degradation in biodiversity, and water pollution among others. Yet, the government claimed that environmental education at the primary and secondary schools has been taught based on the national curriculum, developed by the national government. This study uses analytical framework of political ecology, the semi-structured interviews for the students, faculty and staff at the Teachers' College at Bahir Dar University – one of the three accredited teachers' colleges in Ethiopia, and quantitative analysis. The study will identify the gap in the implementation of environmental education both at the primary and secondary level, and the college level, thus solutions can be proposed to improve the quality of environmental education for sustainable development. The main focus of research in this area is analysis of the curriculum, education, and its impacts on students' behavior towards sustainability. My scholarly significance includes the potential finding of the factors which influence the capacities to teach environmental issues effectively and readiness of college students who are future teachers for environmental education. Therefore, the overall outcomes and recommendations can be used both in Ethiopia and other developing countries.