

CHAPTER 6

Bringing together community and academic knowledge: The Eduardo Mondlane University Faculty of Education Environmental Education Club

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In 2010 a new graduate program in environmental education, the LEA (Licenciatura de Educação Ambiental) was introduced in the Faculty of Education at Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) in Maputo, Mozambique.

Based on reflective and critical learning, in line with international norms for interdisciplinary environmental education, this diploma program stimulates and develops an integrated and context-based learning experience for students.

LEA graduates are expected to become agents of intervention and change, following the general principles of curiosity, autonomy, inquisitive spirit, flexibility, openness to innovation, conflict resolution and creativity.

Eduardo Mondlane University was established in 1962 as the largest public institution for post-secondary education in Mozambique. Today, it is one of 13 public institutions in the country.

The student population grew from 2,400 in 1962 to 7,000 in 2002. In 2011, the student population reached 29,929: 27,209 undergraduate students, 1,690 masters students and 30 doctoral students. In 2006, UEM offered 23 academic degrees in 12 faculties and in 2010, 71 graduate degrees and 32 postgraduate

degrees, including two doctoral degrees.

There are now 168 students enrolled in the Environmental Education Programme (LEA).

Graduate Degree in Environmental Education

The graduate degree in environmental education is offered by the Faculty of Education. Its purpose is to develop professionals and specialists in the field of environmental education who are able to:

- Integrate environmental issues into school curricula;
- Conceive, monitor, evaluate and manage projects and programs in environmental education towards sustainable development;
- Promote and conduct research in environmental education;
- Promote socio-environmental awareness and social and environmentally sustainable development;
- Promote an understanding of national environmental policies and laws in order to encourage a critical analysis of the relationships between society, education and the environment

The Environmental Education program is four years long, or eight semesters. In addition to mandatory curricular activities, the Faculty promotes extracurricular activities which generate an academic debate based on real problems facing the country of Mozambique and, in particular, its capital city of Maputo.

Through these activities, we hope that students will gain a context for their pro-environmental actions and increase their commitment to environmental education

and to the environment itself.

This initiative has been well received by the Faculty, which motivated us to create a club: the Faculty of Education Environmental Education Club (Clube de Educação Ambiental da Faculdade de Educação -- CEAFE).

The Club's general objectives are to sensitize, coalesce and unite individuals and/or organized groups interested in promoting creative practices related to environmental education and the environment; and to encourage and promote innovative solutions and other alternatives for environmental issues.

Its specific objectives include creating and promoting environmental awareness for the development of sustainable practices for the use of natural resources; promoting good practices, habits and behaviours to find solutions to environmental issues; encouraging communities to find solutions to environmental issues of local and national import and relevance; and promoting multidisciplinary understanding and insight on environmental problems and issues.

The Environmental Education Club was created in response to the following objectives:

- To create and foment awareness of the environment, sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources;
- To spread awareness to various groups;
- To understand environmental issues using a multidisciplinary approach;
- To develop skills and abilities which will aid in the development of solutions and contribute to the resolution of environmental challenges;
- To promote best-practices and habits;

- To encourage communities to look for solutions to environmental problems at the national and local level.

The following activities have been developed and are being implemented in order to accomplish the above-mentioned objectives:

- Promote knowledge and interdisciplinary discussion of environmental issues within academia, as well as an understanding of the complexities of this subject;
- Disseminate new concepts and methodologies on environmental and resource management at the academic level;
- Organize clean-ups and environmental stewardship campaigns, actively involving students, faculty and staff;
- Disseminate environmentally correct practices, through an environmental education newspaper/newsletter;
- Develop a new environmental concept/understanding of the environmental within academia and its active participation in the improvement of waste management on campus

The Environmental Education Club and Climate Change Adaptation

Through the Climate Change Adaptation in Africa program, a joint initiative of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Environmental Education Club has developed projects and conducted research in urban and peri-

urban communities in the province Maputo with the objective of understanding the mechanisms for climate change adaptation. The Club is currently implementing a project entitled *Environmental Education at the University Eduardo Mondlane*. This project is supported by the Faculty of Education and aims at developing social models for promoting environmentally-conscious behaviour within academia.

The project is also aimed at encouraging students to look for solutions to climate change within their environment and with the help of their peers. As part of this project, students work with two civil society organizations (CSOs)—Women, Gender and Development (MUGEDE) and Environmental Justice (JA!). Through these internships, students gain understanding of practical, hands-on solutions to environmental and resource management and in turn, help to disseminate pedagogical information and methodologies for environmental education in local communities.

The Club's initiatives in its first year included beach cleanups and tree planting on the university campus. We hope that the Club will contribute to the production and dissemination of knowledge regarding environmental education; create specific programs to support extracurricular activities; encourage the exchange of ideas, experiences and projects in favour of environmental education and the environment; energize intercultural and institutional actions which may improve international collaboration for environmental defence; and promote and support activities which contribute to environmental stewardship and strengthen the concept of nature as part of our heritage.

According to CEAFE's by-laws, anyone can join CEAFE who voluntarily

wishes to become a member and who relates to environmental issues, in any form. The membership also includes the Director of the Faculty of Education, the Head of Department who manages the LEA program, LEA Course Directors, and all LEA students.

This initiative has been well received by the Faculty of Education because of the opportunity it provides students to strengthen their self-esteem and to foster a spirit of citizenship from the very start of their professional lives.

The idea of this environmental club is to give students the opportunity to link theory and practice. Through practical work outside the university, students can experience for themselves the crucial importance and value of combining community knowledge and academic knowledge.

With reference to climate change adaptation in Mozambique, the CEAFE is an organization with plenty of potential for generating effective and appropriate responses to climate change, since it is largely composed of educated, idealistic and motivated young people who have an interest in practical solutions and a great deal to offer.