

Environmental Communication:

Communicating Biodiversity

Communication to help protect biodiversity and promote its sustainable use is becoming increasingly important. Conventional, one-dimensional perspectives that see the environment solely as a resource provider or a biotope that needs protecting are being replaced by a holistic approach that takes account of local and cultural conditions, issues surrounding access to biodiversity and, in turn, a fair trade system between the »providers« and »beneficiaries«.

Environmental communication in the Biodiversity Convention

Article 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) appeals to the contracting states to promote understanding of the importance of, and the measures required for, the conservation of biological diversity. The CBD Programme of Work on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) serves to assist contracting parties, educators and civil society in communicating the aims of the Convention in a language that is accessible to many different groups, integrate biodiversity into the education systems in all member states to the Convention, and raise public awareness of the importance of biodiversity to humanity. Since 2006 GTZ has been a member of the Convention's CEPA informal advisory committee, where it contributes its experience in this field to the continued development of the Convention.

The contribution of GTZ

On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) GTZ supports the dissemination of knowledge and experiences relating to the conservation of biodiversity in industrialised and developing countries. For instance, at international conferences it presents approaches towards improving national environmental communication strategies, such as the production of target group-specific media (booklets and video material), that help to boost the significance of CEPA issues in other policy areas and, in turn, make them a part of national development strategies and plans.

In cooperation with other organisations GTZ also aims at raising awareness among the German public and encourages debates on the significance of biodiversity, ways to conserve it, and our shared responsibilities in doing so.

Selected approaches and communication tools

Exhibitions

GTZ has teamed up with several national and international partners and photographers to prepare various exhibitions. Awareness and understanding of biological, cultural and agricultural diversity, measures to conserve it and the role of worldwide biodiversity protection in reducing poverty are thus enhanced, with the ultimate aim of bringing about a change in perspective.

International Biodiversity Day

»GEO Biodiversity Day«, an initiative of GEO magazine supported by GTZ, is a successful cooperation enterprise. Every year on BDay, as it is known, local communities, politicians, journalists and researchers take a close look at the flora and fauna that exist in a certain region. There are also several events on biodiversity, food security and poverty reduction, as well as on the future potential uses of biodiversity and the equitable distribution of income from related sources. In keeping with the motto »You only protect what you know«, local authorities, the local population and research institutions spend the day learning more about the environment they live in.



Photo: al-Janabi

On behalf of

MDG poster toolkit

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a topic of much discussion throughout the world. The contribution of indigenous and local communities towards reaching the MDGs can now be displayed using a software program developed by GTZ and the UNDP Equator Initiative. Project goals and outcomes are described and illustrated using text, images and maps in poster format. »Markers« highlight the contribution each project is making to achieving the various MDGs. The CBD Secretariat

is now using an updated version of this software to display national biodiversity strategies. All CBD parties are called upon to produce a poster illustrating their national plans of action and strategies to reach the 2010 objective of reducing the current rate of biodiversity loss.

Educating the younger generation

Protecting the natural environment and utilising biodiversity are two practical, everyday issues that help to illustrate more complex matters such as global equality, worldwide resource consumption and poverty reduction. Understanding of these interrelationships needs to be enhanced not only in partner countries, but also in Germany. Via schools, youth associations and environmental education institutions GTZ in particular addresses the younger generation by using various instruments and media to spread the message. The series of multimedia books Sustainability has many faces illustrates examples based on experiences from GTZ projects, while offering material for curricular and extracurricular educational activities. In addition, a large number of films and video clips are broadcast on German television and on screens in underground and local train stations. Some of the materials and films were produced in cooperation with German TV channels and sponsors

Biodiversity information platform:

Networking actors, exchanging knowledge

To implement the Biodiversity Convention in international cooperation GTZ is supporting the continued development of CBD instruments. For instance, the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM), a centralised information, communication and cooperation system, is designed to promote research and technical cooperation between all countries and facilitate the exchange of and access to information and data relating to the implementation of the CBD. GTZ's programme »Implementing the Biodiversity Convention« has pro-

Biodiversity and the Biodiversity Convention

The term »biological diversity«, or »biodiversity« for short, encompasses the diversity of life on Earth, ranging from genetic diversity and diversity of species to the diversity of ecosystems. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 comprises three elements: the conservation of biological diversity, its sustainable use and the equitable sharing of benefits arising from such use. In the meantime, 190 Parties have joined the Convention. By signing the Convention, Germany has agreed not only to conserve biodiversity on its own territory but also to support developing countries in implementing necessary measures.

vided assistance in setting up a CHM in Colombia and Cameroon, which involved appointing decision-makers, identifying researchers, and setting up databases. The development of other national CHMs is being promoted through training and upgrading measures and the provision of technical equipment to National Focal Points, which function as points of contact.

Action required

- Raise awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity

and the impact of consumer behaviour on living conditions in developing countries;

- Develop concise and effective core statements that highlight the connection between everyday life and changes in global diversity;
- Produce materials and hold workshops for multipliers (train the trainers);
- Continue to develop CEPA measures to implement the Convention;
- Step up communication and awareness raising activities with regard to the third goal of the CBD in the light of international negotiations on access to genetic resources and equitable benefit-sharing.

Further Information

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity:

CEPA: www.cbd.int/cepa

Clearing-House Mechanism: www.cbd.int/chm

MDG posters: www.cbd.int/meetings/wgri-02/poster-session.shtml

World Conservation Union (IUCN),

Commission on Environment and Communication (CEC): <http://cec.wcln.org>

Equator Initiative: www.undp.org/equatorinitiative

Education server: www.conservation-development.net

International Biodiversity Action Day: www.biodiversity-day.info

MDG posters and toolkit: www.gtz.de/de/themen/umwelt-infrastruktur/umweltpolitik/14936.htm

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