

## **Training Local Teachers about Caspian Environmental Issues MEG-IR01-04**

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**Grant Budget:** USD 2,800

**Objective of the Project:**

To develop a two-day training workshop for biology and science teachers on the environmental problems of the Caspian Sea in the coastal areas of Iran

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**Background and Problem Statement**

Environmental Education is very weakly developed in schools in Iran and although many teachers, especially of biology, geography and geology do their best, they need more knowledge and information to do teach environmental education effectively. There are chances in the curriculum to do more environmental education. In High School Geography courses, students are expected to study the Gilan province and a good text book has been written for this course. The text book includes some pages about environmental problems of the province. The Department of Environment in Gilan has also just established a Wetland Education Centre.

**Goals and Objectives**

- Develop a two day training course for teachers about the problems of the Caspian in the Gilan province and Province environmental problems.
- Develop some additional materials for the Gilan Province course that can be used by environment related science teachers. These materials will include different activities to the traditional classroom approach. They will be student centred and will include some that can be done outside the classroom with their pupils.
- Teach this training course from the Wetland Education Centre. The first day of the training course will concentrate on presentations about the problems of the Caspian. The second day will give teachers new ideas about how to teach about the Caspian and environmental problems.
- Then the teachers will use their new information and knowledge in their lessons. They will also be able to bring their pupils to the Wetland Education Centre to see some of the Caspian Sea problems at first hand.
- We shall review the effect of our project by sending a questionnaire to the teachers who come on the course asking them how they have used the materials and the knowledge they received and whether they have brought students to the wetland education centre.

It is proposed to train up to 100 environment related science teachers. Each teacher will be expected to attend a two day training event. The aim of the project is to give environment related science teacher more knowledge and understanding about the problems of the Caspian Sea. The content of

the course will cover all the priority areas of the MEG, but we shall focus on specifically local Gilan issues and issues that the young people that teachers teach can do something about themselves. We shall concentrate on biodiversity and pollution.

**Implemented project activities:**

Environmental Education is very weakly developed in schools in Iran and although many teachers, especially of biology, geography and geology do their best, they need more knowledge and information to do teach environmental education effectively. There are chances in the curriculum to do more environmental education. In High School Geography courses, students are expected to study the Gilan province and a good text book has been written for this course. The text book includes some pages about environmental problems of the province. The Department of Environment in Gilan has also just established a Wetland Education Centre.

Brochures were prepared especially for those workshops and were given to teachers and participants in the workshops. Also some of the brochures were sent to the related organizations and NGOs. Organizations and offices related with program were contacted, including Education Organization (Somesara, Anzali and Rasht offices) and schools and high schools, Department of Environment Conservation Organization, Promotion and Education Undersecretary of Guilan Jihad Agriculture Organization, Municipality, local city or village councils, pedagogy centers, technology and career education organization and NGOs. The grantee corresponded with local centers of above organization and offices. For implementation of prospected programs, an educational team was established. This team consists of environment graduated experts. For more reliable programming and implementation of this program, a consultant committee was also established. This committee has two kinds of sessions. Firstly programming and prospect of environment educational procedures for teachers and secondly study of rectitude and validity of program implementation.

Equipments used in this environment educational program were divided in two parts namely, purchased and rented equipments. Purchased equipments were including A4 paper, pen, ribbon, internet service account, make of educational assistance equipments such as wood pieces using in environmental plays, colored strings, cardboard, diskette and CD, whiteboard and marker, reception equipments, copying, printing, telephone and fax. Rented equipments were including video projector, computer, multimedia systems, boats, binocular, lifesaving equipments, microscope and desks and chairs.

In the conducted five programs, teachers participated in program and some of the local decision makers including local council members and education responsible of related organizations, were transferred to Selkeh by bus and had a tour in Anzali wetland by motorboats and rowboats. Until December 2005, three workshops were conducted. First workshop was a justification program that had a notable participation of Geography, Biology and Sciences teachers. That successful program persuaded teachers to participate in the future programs. Some prepared guide brochures and posters were given to them. Brochures were “Anzali wetland migrant bird’s guide”, “Guilan trees recognition guide” and “Guilan shellfish recognition guide”.

In second and third workshops, some specialized information presented by educational team of program and experts invited from department of environment conservation. Connected with those workshops, some tours were implemented including visits of pilot sites and introduction of wetland and its environmental potentials and problems to teachers and the ways of use of wetland potentials as a resource for student’s education in field of geography, biology and sciences lessons.

Meanwhile, some environmental games including food chain game, food network game, camouflage game and energy pyramid game were played with teachers in order to education of some environmental principles to them and transfer of those principles to students. Explanation of the

games, objects and procedures are available. In brief, the following activities have been conducted in this project:

- A Wetland Expert Team was established;
- Scientific materials for the workshops were prepared;
- Three two-day training workshops were conducted for teachers on the environmental issues of the Caspian Sea with the cooperation of Gilan Department of the Environment and the Wetland Educational Center;
- 45 biology and science teachers in three separate groups attended the training workshops. Lectures and materials on ecosystem, wetland, migrating birds, energy levels and food chain were provided during the workshop.
- A tour of the Anzali Wetland on motorboats was conducted for the same group of participants and the characteristics and importance of wetland birds were explained with the use of binoculars in order to observe their actual environmental status. During the tour, water samples were taken from the wetland in order to measure their COD and see the microscopic creatures in laboratory. During the training course, additional materials and new teaching techniques different from the traditional classroom approaches were provided to the teachers.
- The grantee conducted the fourth and fifth workshops for teachers on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2006 at Selkeh education center in Anzali International Wetland. Also, two additional programs were implemented for teachers with the assistance of Guilan Department of the Environment and Dr. James Hindson from FSC and Dr. Malcom from WWT.

The duration of the project was extended to receive and process the teachers questionnaires and prepare the final report.