Mohammed Tafraouti

Environment has been a part of the Moroccan educational curricula for decades, which has contributed to the formation of a new generation that has efficiently led environmental work at the governmental and civil levels. Morocco now has a national charter for education, which includes “the acquisition of principles for health protection, preservation of natural resources, and the discovery of basic concepts, systems and techniques applicable to the direct natural, social and cultural environment of the student”.

The Charter of Sustainable Environmental Development called for the need to create specializations in the field of environment and sustainable development, stressing that environmental conservation should be integrated into the knowledge systems and the practical and behavioral knowledge provided within these systems and programs. There are now many examples of environmental concepts that have been integrated into textbooks used at Moroccan secondary and elementary schools:

The textbook “History and Geography Manar” used in the first year of the Baccalaureate program, includes a chapter that explains the concept of sustainable development and examines the characteristics of the biosphere, natural resources and the requirements of urban and rural development. It also covers water and desertification issues in the Arab world, within the framework of sustainability.

The second year of the Baccalaureate program’s English course is partly devoted to sustainable development. Students are introduced to the vocabulary used in environmental care plans and international development goals. This section includes many activities and exercises that integrate the concepts of sustainable development into language teaching, which allows the students to improve their language skills while simultaneously learning about sustainable development.

The book “Al Mukhtar in Arabic Language”, for the first year of secondary preparatory level, includes a section on natural balance and environmental protection. The Arabic language textbook for third year elementary students addresses the theme of population, environment and health.

The French language book for the fifth elementary level uses a selection of expressive environmental images. The book includes three texts in a special environmental section entitled “Encounter with Nature”, covering a range of environmental information through a text on “Living Nature” and a poem on nature by Paul Verlaine, entitled “After Three Years”. It also includes a text entitled “Underwater Explosion” designed to teach writing techniques by describing nature scenes.

The Arabic language book for fourth elementary students includes a chapter on “Natural Balance and Environmental Protection”, with texts dealing with pollution and humans and the environment.

Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection

The efforts of the Ministry of Education are supplemented by the work of civil society organizations at various levels. The Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection supports many activities and programs targeting young people, especially through the Eco-Schools program it sponsors. In 2014, the Foundation launched a digital environmental platform aimed at nurturing an emerging environmental culture, raising awareness and promoting environmentally friendly behavior. The digital platform equips school children with the necessary tools to acquire basic information about various environmental concepts, independently and interactively, through tests, fun games, and drawings. In the first phase, it focuses on the topics of energy and climate, especially renewable energy and efficiency, in the second it deals with water, and in the third phase it addresses the air quality and climate change. The foundation also produced an Eco-Schools Guide, which present the program’s various aspects and guides schools on using the portal.

The Moroccan program is similar to AFED Ecoschool (www.afed-ecoschool.org), the environmental
education program launched by the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) in 1999. The AFED program comprises a comprehensive guide to environmental knowledge and activities, and a digital platform available to students and schools throughout the Arab world. Local editions of the AFED educational guide were published in several Arab countries including Algeria, Syria and the UAE.

Environmental Education at Universities

Most Moroccan universities have also incorporated the environment into their programs:

At Mohamed V University in Rabat, one of the oldest universities in Morocco, environment and development issues are taught at many faculties. The Faculty of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences offers a Master’s program in Environment and Sustainable Development. Environmental and sustainable development subjects also overlap in the Master’s programs in Geography, at the water, waste, coastal areas, biodiversity, energy, climate change and local development levels. The Center for Doctoral Studies includes a research body that focuses on education and communication in the fields of population and environment and development, where environment and sustainable development are integrated into subjects dealing with environmental citizenship and education for sustainable development.

Within a period of three years at the Earth and Life Sciences Department at the Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech, students have extensive exposure to environmental fields of learning. The curriculum covers topics including the adaptation of organisms to environmental factors, population dynamics, international environmental conventions and global impacts on social management. The two-year master’s program covers overall ecosystems management including continental water systems, biological conservation, engineering and industrial environment management, sanitation engineering and environmental management.

At the slopes of the Atlas Mountains, Al Akhawayn University in Ifran covers issues of sustainable development from different perspectives, ranging from environmental chemistry to environmental biology, in its Master of Science in Sustainable Energy Management.

Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University in Fez covers the various components of environment and sustainable development among a variety of disciplines including chemistry, biology and earth sciences. The university also conducts research on water and solid and industrial waste management. The Center for Excellence in Water, Environment and Sustainable Development was established at this university, with research teams working in the fields of functional ecology, geographic resources, renewable energies and intelligent systems, pathology and biomedicine. The university is also preparing a multidisciplinary masters program named Conservation of the Environment for Sustainable Development, which will be the first of its kind in Morocco.

The students of the Sociology Department at the at the University of Ibn Zahr in Agadir are offered a course entitled Environment and Development, which tackles the topics in question from the perspective of social philosophy, the theoretical trends of environmental sociology and applied models on environment and development in Morocco.

A Graduate Institute for Sustainable Development, founded by a group of Moroccan and Canadian researchers, called the Research and Sustainable Development Group, Morocco-Canada. The institute specializes in water sciences, environment and sustainable development, and offers a Master’s degree in Water Sciences, Resource Management and Organization Management.