



Tropentag, September 18-20, 2019, Kassel

“Filling gaps and removing traps
for sustainable resource management”

Conditions and Potentials for Education for Sustainable Development in Primary Schools in North-East Madagascar

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Abstract

Madagascar is a biodiversity hotspot with many endemic species. This makes the country's natural habitats especially worth protecting. However, the growing population, rising demand for natural resources and destructive agricultural practices result in a burden on the resting primary forest. In order to meet the demands of present and future generations while also protecting the biodiversity, sensitizing the local population for biodiversity-related values and sustainable land use is indispensable and can be realised through education.

In Madagascar, where most children only graduate from primary school, the integration of Sustainable Development (SD) related content is especially relevant for primary level. Obstacles in the Malagasy education system are manifold: Insufficient financial support causes bad conditions of school buildings and lack of school equipment. Also, many primary school teachers did not attend professional pedagogical training and are therefore highly underqualified and the official school curriculum is described as outdated as it hardly contains locally relevant topics.

The project “Competencies for rural Madagascar” aims at assessing the leverage points of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Malagasy primary schools. It is part of the transdisciplinary joint project Diversity Turn that investigates sustainable land use in vanilla farming in the SAVA-region in northeast Madagascar. The project has three foci:

1. Conditions of primary education in the SAVA-region
2. Curricular prerequisites for ESD in Madagascar
3. Prerequisites of primary school teachers in the SAVA region regarding ESD issues

Findings from a quantitative study about the school structure in $N = \text{ca. } 120$ schools based on the international studies TIMSS (2011/2015), PIRLS (2011) and PASEC (2014) as well as preliminary results of a quantitative teacher study ($N = 302$) about SD-related knowledge will be presented and discussed. Within the scope of transdisciplinary research, the potential use of the results by local stakeholders to promote ESD in primary education will be pointed out.

Keywords: Education for Sustainable Development, Madagascar , Primary Education