

GEEP Leadership Meetings, San Diego, CA

October 12, 13, and 15, 2015

Meeting Objectives:

- Review GEEP's history and the draft vision and mission
- Determine the specific role that the GEEP can play to strengthen EE
- Based on the vision and mission of the GEEP, discuss and develop a country-based set of key actions that will best move GEEP forward within each country represented at the meeting
- Explore and make suggestions about the best way to coordinate GEEP contributions and actions going forward
- Discuss how the website, thegeep.org, can best be used as a tool to help the GEEP accomplish its objectives in the year ahead.
- Provide opportunities for cultural exchange, networking, and learning through this GEEP meeting as well as the NAAEE conference.

Attendees: See attached contact sheet as Appendix A.

Key thoughts and next steps

- The 4th meetings of the GEEP took place in San Diego, CA from October 12 – 15th as part of the NAAEE International Conference. Environmental education leaders from 18 countries attended these meetings to share their expertise and help the core working team (EPA Taiwan, US EPA, and NAAEE) further shape the future direction of the GEEP.
- In general, participants felt that the GEEP had a critical role to play in strengthening environmental education around the world, building on the good work that is taking place in countries like Taiwan, the United States, Canada, the UK, and others.
- Participants expressed a range of helpful ideas and possible strategies for the GEEP, and confirmed the idea that there is a need for a platform that allows for a global exchange of EE-related ideas, best practices, and resources. The theme of the GEEP as being a “broker” of sorts— to connect people from a variety of sectors to the resources they need to do their work better—rose to the top. There was a strong desire to not duplicate efforts that already exist, but that the GEEP's role could be to provide a forum to showcase the great EE efforts underway around the world.
- There was strong support for GEEP filling the role of building capacity and helping to strengthen efforts that have succeeded in other countries, like national associations and networks that highlight best practice and promote professional development.
- Participants expressed a desire for the GEEP to start small, and then to continue to build over time and interest, and to not reinvent the wheel. In that regard, the suggestion to build on NAAEE's eePRO existing platform to make it more global and relevant to international participants came up several times. (Several people supported the idea of an international eePRO!) In addition, while people enjoyed the map showcased as part

of the GEEP web platform, they also suggested that we have a place for global resources to exist (e.g. UNEP, UNESCO).

- Many of the participants expressed a need for a platform that allowed for the easy exchange of ideas (whether via online webinars, resources, chats, or even in-person when possible). And related to that, participants wanted a place to highlight case studies that demonstrate successful programs and initiatives. We discussed the need for a case study / story template and to collect some case studies to highlight on the web as one next immediate step.
- While the country checklist was seen as useful, participants reflected that since countries are so different in terms of their needs and situations, we may want to develop a “country palette”—something that is flexible and more accommodating to the rich cultural and individual country needs related to EE.
- A variety of creative taglines were developed by participants, noting this idea of a ‘hub’ where EE practitioners can find a variety of resources in one place, and network and learn from each other. See Appendix B.
- GEEP membership and governance was discussed, and three key themes arose: 1) membership should be open to anyone, but the GEEPs role should be kept distinct from what other organizations are doing (e.g., WEEC, FEE, UNEP, UNESCO, or other EE associations); 2) the GEEP needs to have an organizing body or secretariat for it to continue to work and 3) more work needs to be done to further refine what it means to be part of the GEEP. In addition, the participants discussed how a network like this can be sustained over time, and that the steering group can discuss that as one of the key next steps.
- Participants also offered to help in variety of ways (each filled out commitment cards) and we will be following up with them over time.
- A number of the participants followed up with supportive notes, indicating that the GEEP has enormous potential to strengthen global EE. They also appreciate the partnership among EPA Taiwan, US EPA, and NAAEE and that it was great to see this collaboration between government agencies and NGOs. There was also much appreciation for EPA Taiwan to support this global gathering, given how much sharing and networking took place, including how to best shape the GEEP going forward.

More detailed notes:

I. Day 1: October 13, 2015

Small group task: Moving forward, and given these goals, objectives, and strategies (a one pager passed around to participants), what are some of the actions that the GEEP can take to advance EE in all our countries and globally?

- There is a need to keep exchanging experiences, best practices, and resources through the GEEP website and link to major EE outlets.
- A participant suggested the GEEP look at stories and processes and create a hub to see how people are doing things, document, and share.
- There could be an opportunity to have a flagship program – like a global internship to exchange people around the world to have the sharing happening in a tangible way.
- Someone suggested that the GEEP become a broker to connect people and places around EE
- A participant suggested that we look at models that already exist for what the GEEP might look like, including the IMF, WHO, etc., Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and OECD's Better Programme for International Student Assessment
- GEEP can help provide standards and certification for environmental educators
- GEEP membership levels could exist on multiple levels – individual (content), organizational (process), country (structure)

Small Group Task: What key challenges do we face to move the GEEP EE agenda forward?

What are some initial ideas for how to address?

- People discussed the idea of being global and asked if that was, indeed, what we really wanted.
- Who gets heard? Do indigenous people have a voice?
- What level of commitment do people need to work with the GEEP?
- Partnership and what can GEEP offer – is it larger or smaller?
 - GEEP should partner with programs and not necessarily organizations
 - Internationalize programs that already accept “GEEP” our program: help bring international practice into the program.
- Long term sustainability: how does the GEEP get support in the long-term? What is a sustainable model?
- Language issue – information has to be accessible by other nations
- Many countries have a long and strong EE tradition but may not know that they can engage with the GEEP.

Connecting Through Technology: GEEP site

Comment—There needs to be an ability to have more than one person per organization who can engage on the website—anyone from any sector who is interested. Melissa commented that this is easy to do, given the Drupal content management system in place.

Comment—Under *Resources*, maybe there needs to be some global resources that are not country-specific

Small Group Task: What can the GEEP do to build capacity?

Developing a country checklist: what kinds of activities would best demonstrate a strong EE program?

- Rather than a checklist, develop a pallet with different ideas—eg policy, funding, etc.
- Each idea area would contain a series of questions that would help countries to clarify what they really want and need and whether it is a suitable approach for their country.
- Tease out one particular idea and pilot to see if the process works and does what was intended.
- Adapt future approach based on pilot. ***A smaller group (Gus, Allen, Bill) is going to further develop this idea.***

How can the GEEP highlight best or better practice in the field? What would that look like in terms of both the content of programs and the process to develop them?

- Need for profiling programs and tell stories about the key ingredients and successes, as well as challenges and solutions. GEEP can provide a template to build those narratives around specific programs, to encourage story telling. Over time, stories will yield the critical common factors for success. Need to make it easy.
- Building on the idea of global internships, GEEP could send interns out to help build those stories.
- GEEP can act as a portal to share and access models.

How can we build on the ideas generated this morning to create and sharing or partnership network? Would would that look like (interns, air “E&E” etc)?

- What would be different than what NAAEE is already building? What’s the relationship between GEEP partnership and EE Pro? How can GEEP make EE Pro successful? Maybe find ways to regionalize. Maybe create a separate face but similar internal web structure.
- Governance is a big question—what’s the relationship between the two? How can we avoid duplication and ensure success? What’s the future? What’s the most sustainable model?
- How can GEEP be better integrated to EE Pro? Google translation? Face to face interactions? Global map? Internships? Can these things be added?

How do we build from the country up and make this grassroots approach and program modeling (to “GEEP” a program)?

- Outstanding work in EE happening at different levels all over the world. If GEEP is to increase synergy and add value, let’s not do what is already happening somewhere else. Clarify identify as facilitating role.
- Search engines are highly limited—you can get only a small amount of data but you cannot access personal knowledge and may not even know what questions to ask as a result.
- GEEP can be the entity that knows what are the right questions to ask, who are the right people to engage? Maybe GEEP can initiate some positive and common interactions.

GEEP Priorities Activity (groups were asked to develop a series of actions the GEEP can take, and then rank them; the activities with the highest ranking appear at the top of the list):

GEEP data from day 1

<u>GEEP Priorities from Tuesday Discussion</u>	<u># of votes</u>
Clarify identity and role of GEEP	13
GEEP in action: EE PRO international, Air E&E, GEEP hot topics (e.g. climate change, GEEP international policy engagement -- SDGs , GAP, etc)-- GEEP promotional branding	12
Financial sustainability of GEEP and its members	10
Identify key people (whether govt, NGO, organization) from GEEP countries	8
Have a flagship program and grand it	8
Process: leadership focus, value-add focus, quality focus (e.g. forums for creative thinking, idea generation, and problem solving)	7
Market GEEP	5
Principles: governance, membership criteria and obligations, teamwork (e.g. open source governance structure)	8
Connecting people, places, and practices	4
Develop format-- a package (of policies, practices, resources), stories from countries outlining key ingredients of success factors, on GEEP website	2
Presence: regionalization, web conferenceing, dialogue themes (e.g. GEEPx, like TEDx, face to face and online)	2
What type of partnership is the GEEP?	1
Come up with template for the sharing of best practice (e.g. storytelling narrative; lean and mean) and challenges	1
Identify key partners and synergies	1
Create domestic GEEP materials	1
Collaborative learning and sharing network and platform	1
Promotion of EE Pro through GEEP	1

Form working groups (roles and responsibilities)	
Communication and networking process to be set up between GEEP members	
Share information about env. Ed. In every country through the portal (checklist of strong EE programs)	
Professional development	
Communicate, inc. further developing website and integrating with others	
develop framework for action and \$	
Clarity vis a vis organic process	
Geep governance: who will lead vs. contribute, organizational structure, governance, funding	

II. Day 2 Meetings: October 15, 2015

Discussion 1: What is the GEEP and who are the members?

- General consensus around not duplicating efforts of groups like FEE and WEEC, but that the role that the GEEP could improve EE practice to ensure sustainability and to add value to what’s happening nationally while enhancing what’s happening internationally.
- In terms of WHO the GEEP is: Ideas ranged from the GEEP being a group of groups (an institution whose members were national groups already established in the field, including FEE, UNEP, UNESCO, WEEC, etc), to the GEEP being flexible, allowing for both government reps and other organizations to become members.
- In terms of structure, some suggested that individuals, corporations, academics, etc. could join but that they’d roll into a national group.
- Consensus seemed to be achieved around the idea that anyone should be able to join the GEEP;
- One group recommended the continued need for a Secretariat, organizing body.

Comment: Consensus seemed to be achieved around the GEEP being open to anyone who wants to join; their role, once they join, is less clear.

Discussion 2: What could the GEEP do?

- Collect EE acts in country, but allow commentary on the legislation; ie how did they come about getting to the final product, challenges to development, what had to happen to get it passed, who was engaged, once passed.
- Develop stories/ case studies template that can “travel” and be exchanged.
- Host global and regional webinars, divided into themes such as people, places, and practices, or GEEP interactions (webinars, discussion, GEEPX, etc.), GEEP Assistance (targeting challenges and obstacles), and Air E&E (look for on-the-ground meetings, etc.).
- Link to eePRO—strong desire not to reinvent the wheel (eePRO international)

CLOSING THOUGHTS:

- Next year, May 23-27, in Nairobi, UN Environmental Summit, will have a small education event; if there is clarity by then, we'd like to showcase GEEP.