



Integrating Environmental Education into Pohnpei's Primary School Curriculum



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While environmental education has been designated as a component of Pohnpei's curriculum, it has never been made an instructional priority in the classroom. Because of this, Pohnpei's citizens have only minimal knowledge about their environment and the impacts of their actions on it. Pohnpei is faced with a number of environmental issues from the upland forest down to the coral reef. Deforestation and sedimentation effects on Pohnpei's drinking water are significant. Coastal water pollution, dredging, and over-fishing are other problems that Pohnpei is currently facing. CSP sees the need to provide local teachers with tools that will integrate environmental education into the current curriculum in order to educate kids about the issues we have and possible solutions to help mitigate these issues. CSP is dedicated to filling that gap and providing a sustainable system of environmental education in Pohnpei's primary schools.

CSP has developed an Environmental Resource and Activity Book (ERAB) for grades 1 through 8. The ERAB contains a resource guide for teachers, as well as activities that integrate information about Pohnpei's environment into curriculum subject areas. ERAB activities incorporate language arts, math, reading comprehension, visual arts, and science to enable teachers to cover environmental subject matter without creating increased curriculum requirements. About 30 percent of the activities deal with water and waste management. Through discussions with teachers and the Department of Education, it has been deemed impractical to try to teach environmental education as a new subject area. With this in mind, CSP designed the ERAB with environmental lessons and activities that will compliment

various subject areas in the existing school curriculum. The objectives of the ERAB project are:

1. To provide resources to teachers that will complement their curricula with messages of environmental awareness without creating new burdens and work demands.
2. To develop in the youth an awareness and understanding of the environment and ecology of Pohnpei, fostering a sense of stewardship towards environmental protection.
3. To collect local teachers' input for the ERAB and to produce a final draft for printing.
4. To train teachers in the use of the ERAB within the classroom in order to integrate environmental education into their current curricula.

In the spring of 2006, CSP formed a task force of education professionals from the Department of Education and local teaching staff, to edit and produce a final draft of the ERAB. Participating teachers introduced some of the activities into their classrooms at a level that matched the abilities of the students. This process was followed by a series of teacher trainings in the summer of 2006 to introduce the ERAB to teachers and provide them with the opportunity to practice using the activities. The teachers participated in role-playing and practiced using the activities and lessons. The three training sessions were divided by grade levels: (1) for teachers of grades 1-3; (2) for teachers of grades 4-6; and (3) for teachers of grades 7-8.

