

**PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT
TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY AT AN
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN HO CHI MINH
CITY, VIETNAM**

by

SHELLEY REINETTE MILSTEIN

**submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION
(with specialisation in Environmental Education)**

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR S SCHULZE

NOVEMBER 2005

Student No 34670254

I declare that *Participatory action research project to improve sustainability at an International School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam* is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

(Miss) SR Milstein

DATE

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people whose contributions and support have been invaluable:

- ◆ Prof Salomé Schulze, my supervisor, for her infallible support, encouragement and patience, as well as her expert guidance in continually identifying core meanings from my thought processes, via e-mail communication only, throughout this research period.
- ◆ The school community, especially the staff, Middle School students, administration and computer technicians in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
- ◆ Ros Brabham, Mark Exton, Janet Haigh and Judith Pilder for their help, insight and critical feedback throughout this study.
- ◆ And to My Creator for the miracles throughout the process.

Summary

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was carried out to improve educational practices and environmental sustainability in an International School in Vietnam by undertaking two cycles of PAR to determine how the school community could use paper on a more sustainable basis. The methodology included sorting paper and encouraging the reuse of paper. Practices related to computer printing, report writing and newsletter production were also investigated. Changes in the school community, in terms of accepting responsibility and demonstrating changed attitudes and behaviours, were measured.

The school community demonstrated greater awareness, increased responsibility and more action competence. Critical awareness of unsustainable practices increased. Individuals were able to effect change, but it is recommended that such actions should be institutionalised for such changes to be sustainable. Limitations and recommendations emphasise the need for continuing PAR to implement sustainability.

Key Terms:

Sustainability; recycle paper; reuse paper; International School; Vietnam; participatory action research; action competence; attitudes; behaviour; environmental policy