

## **Promoting teachers thinking about presenting Environment Related Activities (ERA) to primary children**

For optimal science learning to take place children need to be given activities to be engaged in doing science and to make them curious and thinking. With the introduction of the 1997 Education Reforms in Sri Lanka, the subject Environment Related Activities (ERA) was introduced to primary curriculum with the expectation of developing a “total” child with basic competencies. Until then science was taught as “beginning science.” The purpose of this study was to help primary teachers in presenting ERA to 1st and 2nd graders in multiple ways. As it is impossible to conduct workshops in all the zones, one educational zone from an educational district was selected. Ten workshops were conducted. A teacher from 1st or 2nd grade was invited from each school in the educational zone. The number of teachers participated in workshops was varied from 45 to 154. In all the workshops there was a discussion session to gather information about how they have presented the activities given in the teacher guide. Then about twelve activities were presented to them as problem-based, along with the activities that children could do for fun. They worked in small groups. The groups presented how they carried out the activity and their results, and also their reflections about what they learn by doing those activities. Their participation was observed and detailed field notes were made along with the reflections. Data gathered from different workshops were analyzed by triangulation. The teachers realized their own weaknesses by doing the activities and have changed their views about ERA. They appreciated the multiple ways in which the activities were presented and asked for more and more workshops of this nature. This suggested that they could be promoted to do an effective job with the help of continual guidance. These

teachers could be used as “seed teachers” to assist other teachers to develop professionally. Upon the request of these teachers a book on “hands-on” science is also in preparation for future use.