

Create and Support RCEs

1. Conduct a survey in your region to identify (1) local problems, (2) local priorities, and (3) existing capacity in relation to the objectives of DESD.
2. Identify interested parties and strategies to bring them together to build a vision for an RCE in your region.
3. Determine potential governance structure of an RCE. Who will be major initiators and promoters of the RCE in your region?
4. Outline prospective actions to implement an RCE in your region.

For more information on RCEs in general, contact the RCE Service Centre:

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The Education for Sustainable Development (EfSD) programme of UNU-IAS aims to develop the capacity of the public at large, and decision makers in particular, to integrate ESD components into national development planning and implementation by the end of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014). This involves:

- advocacy and dissemination of ESD and DESD principles
- promotion of regional centres of expertise on ESD
- strengthening ESD activities of higher education institutions
- developing on-line learning for ESD, and
- training teachers and trainers on ESD.

The United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) is a global think tank whose mission is "advancing knowledge and promoting learning for policymaking to meet the challenges of sustainable development". UNU-IAS undertakes research and postgraduate education to identify and address strategic issues of concern for all humankind, for governments and decision makers and, particularly, for developing countries.

The Institute convenes expertise from disciplines such as economics, law, social and natural sciences to better understand and contribute creative solutions to pressing global concerns, with research focused on the following areas:

- Biodiplomacy,
- Sustainable Development Governance,
- Science Policy for Sustainable Development,
- Education for Sustainable Development, and
- Ecosystems and People

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future. The four major thrusts of ESD are:

- public awareness and understanding
- access to quality basic education
- reorienting existing education
- training programmes for all sectors

Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE)

An RCE is a network of existing formal, non-formal and informal education organizations, mobilized to deliver ESD to a regional community.

A network of RCEs worldwide will constitute the Global Learning Space for Sustainable Development. RCEs aspire to achieve the goals of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014), by translating its global objectives into the context of the local community in which it operates.

Core elements of an RCE

An RCE should have four elements:

1. Governance - addressing issues of RCE management and leadership
2. Collaboration - addressing the engagement of actors from all levels of formal, non-formal and informal education in RCE activities
3. Research and development - addressing the role of research and its inclusion in RCE activities, as well as contributing to the design of strategies for collaborative activities, including those with other RCEs
4. Transformative education - contributing to the transformation of the current education and training systems to satisfy ambitions of the region regarding sustainable living and livelihood.



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Regional Centres of Expertise

on Education for Sustainable Development



RCE stakeholders

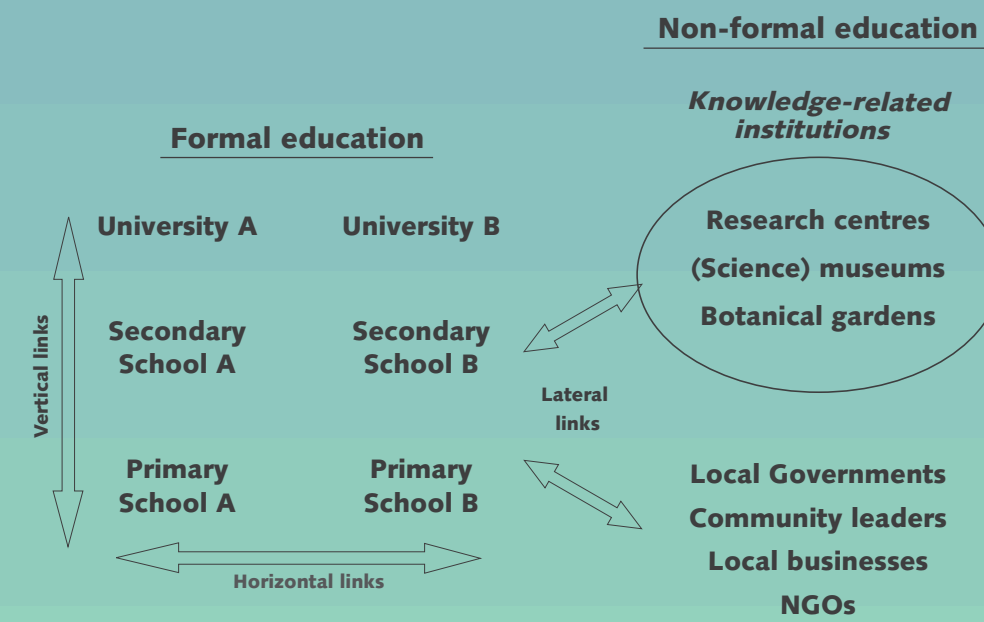
An RCE involves:

- actors in the formal and non-formal education sectors (school teachers, professors at higher education institutions, researchers and environmental NGOs),
- providers of content for ESD (scientists, researchers, museums, zoos, botanical gardens),
- supporters of the delivery of ESD (local government officials, representatives of local enterprises, volunteers, media people, and any other civic associations or individuals who work in spheres of sustainable development such as economic growth, social development, and environmental protection), and,
- students and learners at all levels.

Functions of an RCE

RCEs bring together institutions at the regional/local level to jointly promote ESD. They build innovative platforms to share information and experiences and to promote dialogue among regional/local stakeholders through partnerships for sustainable development. RCEs create a local/regional knowledge base to support ESD actors, and promote four major goals of ESD in a resource-effective manner. These four goals are to,

1. **re-orient education towards SD**, covering existing programmes/subjects from the point of ESD and designing an integrated SD curricula. ESD programmes are tailored to address issues and local context of the community in which they operate;
2. **increase access to quality education** that is most needed in the regional context;
3. **deliver trainers' training programmes** and to develop methodologies and learning materials for them;
4. **lead advocacy and awareness raising efforts** to raise public awareness about the importance of educators and the essential role of ESD in achieving a sustainable future. RCEs promote the long-term goals of ESD, such as environmental stewardship, social justice, and improvement of the quality of life.



Pilot RCEs around the world

RCE Barcelona

RCE Barcelona was created to act as a focal point for the promotion of new initiatives and to co-ordinate regional actors in sustainable development. Its vision is to become a centre of reference and leadership on sustainability, and to generate innovative projects, programmes and initiatives in the areas of learning and research. Maximizing research and development in sustainability, contributing to the effective transfer of knowledge between universities and society, particularly the private sector, organizing local initiatives as part of a global network to share knowledge and know-how, and reinforcing learning across different levels of formal teaching are among the objectives of RCE Barcelona. The Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) and Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección de Empresas (ESADE) are the focal points of this RCE.

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Greater Sendai RCE

Activities of the Greater Sendai RCE cover urban Sendai district, the rural town of Tajiri and the fisheries city of Kesennuma in the Tohoku region located in northeastern Japan. The long-term objective of this RCE is to practice Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) based on regional characteristics. Specific activities include promoting nature conservation and reduction of wastes in the urban area of Sendai and wetland conservation and regional development based on wet-paddy rice agriculture in Tajiri town where the Kabukuri Marsh, a Ramsar candidate site and wild goose habitat is located. Activities in the Kesennuma region will focus on the marine environment. Environmental education and eco-tourism will be promoted here. The Greater Sendai RCE has several actors from the formal, non-formal and informal education sectors, and is organized by the twenty representatives of the three regions and the Miyagi University of Education (MUE).

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RCE Okayama

RCE Okayama currently engages in ESD activities in Okayama City, Japan, but plans to expand its activities to the surrounding areas. The RCE aims to create a community where people study, think and act together to establish a sustainable society. Although the focus of the RCE will remain the coverage of ESD projects on environmental education and education for inter-cultural understanding, other relevant issues may also be addressed in the future. Representatives from formal, non-formal and informal educational institutions, civil society organizations, NGOs and municipalities are involved in this RCE.

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RCE Pacific

Covering the Pacific Island countries including Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia, the RCE Pacific brings together universities, NGOs, governmental authorities and the private sector to educate, train and raise awareness for sustainable development. Enhancing the capacity of Pacific islanders to understand and manage their environment, economy and social life in a sustainable way; incorporating local, traditional and indigenous knowledge into the curricula; enhancing community awareness and participation in the management of natural resources; and helping create knowledge societies through improved skill development and knowledge management are among the RCE's long-term goals. The RCE is run by the University of South Pacific (USP) owned by 12 Pacific Island countries.

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RCE Penang

The RCE for Penang island and the northern region of Malaysia aims to develop understanding of sustainable development, and to introduce it into educational content and practices. The RCE also aspires to create conditions, including policies, which facilitate the introduction of sustainable development into decision making. Universiti Sains Malaysia, the leader of this RCE, works with formal education institutions, the ministries of education and environment, municipal bodies and development authorities to achieve its goal. An initial activity of the RCE was an extensive base-line study on existing sustainable development learning activities and the organizational capacity of the entities involved in them. The study then related the information to challenges identified for sustainable development in Penang, followed by discussions among stakeholders to identify solutions.

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RCE Rhine-Meuse+

This RCE works in the region on the border of Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, with an objective to integrate sustainable development knowledge into formal education and into the flow of knowledge between knowledge institutions, companies, NGOs and authorities, particularly in the urban context. By doing so, the RCE aims to facilitate the mainstreaming of knowledge on sustainable development into regional decision-making. Its partners are universities in all three countries along with a number of organizations representing non-formal and informal education sectors in Germany and the Netherlands. Among the first activities of the RCE are developing a post-Master's programme in sustainable development and raising awareness of school children over the age of 8 years on sustainable development. The RCE is led by the Open University of Netherlands.

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RCE Toronto

With an expected doubling of its population from three to six million over the next fifteen years, Toronto, one of Canada's largest cities, faces challenges of absorbing culturally diverse populations, and that of creating jobs and housing for three million people while managing the environmental and social consequences at large. RCE Toronto's vision is to transform the Greater Toronto region to a sustainability-oriented society by improving the quality of public education, public awareness, and training. The RCE, under the leadership of Toronto Zoo, partners with government agencies, the corporate sector, and formal educational institutions including the Toronto District School Board and York University. Among the RCE's goals are facilitating community participation in local sustainability issues, and promoting sustainable production and consumption.

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