

11TH ASIA-PACIFIC RCE REGIONAL MEETING



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

ASIA-PACIFIC RCE REGIONAL MEETING AND SYMPOSIUM

MAINSTREAMING THE SDGS: EDUCATION AND IMPACT

25-27 SEPTEMBER 2018



WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY



REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
ON EDUCATION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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11TH ASIA-PACIFIC RCE REGIONAL MEETING REPORT

25 – 27 September 2018
Parramatta, Australia

SUMMARY

RCE Greater Western Sydney (RCE-GWS) and Western Sydney University's [Learning Transformations](#) hosted the 11th Asia-Pacific RCE Regional Meeting (A-P RCE Meeting) in Parramatta on 25 September 2018. This was held in conjunction with the Symposium 'Mainstreaming the SDGs: Impact and Education' on 26 September and commenced with the first Asia-Pacific Youth Virtual Summit held on 24 September 'Youth for the Goals: Climate Action and Life Below Water' as part of the first Youth SDG Challenge 2018. Field trip visits followed on 27 September to Sydney Olympic Park (Smart and Green Cities) and the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment EucFACE Experiment and Brewongle Environment Education Centre (Climate Change and Culture). This event is an initiative of the University's [21st Century Curriculum Renewal Project](#), which supports our cross-disciplinary flagship sustainability work.

The 3.5 day event was attended by 91 participants, including 18 Asia-Pacific RCEs and two candidate RCEs, representatives from the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, UNU-IAS, UNESCO, local RCE Greater Western Sydney community partners, as well as Western Sydney University academics and students.



DAY 0 – YOUTH VIRTUAL SUMMIT (Monday, 24 September)

This year's gathering commenced with the 1st Asia-Pacific RCE Virtual Youth Summit – as celebration for the conclusion of the SDG Youth Challenge 'Youth for the Goals' focussing on Goal 13 Climate Action and Goal 14 Life Below Water – moderated by Ms Brittany Hardiman, RCE Greater Western Sydney, and Ms Emmy Rusadi, RCE Yogyakarta, Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Leaders. Virtual presentations were given from nine youth representatives - Australia (RCE GWS, RCE Gippsland, RCE Tasmania), India (RCE Delhi), Malaysia (RCE Central Semenanjung and UNSECO World Youth Foundation), Indonesia (RCE Yogyakarta), South Korea (RCE Tongyeong), and Vietnam (UNESCO ESD Youth). SDG Challenge projects that were shared during this session ranged from art installations, beach clean ups, conservation camps & youth and school summits – all with a focus on education for sustainable development.

DAY 1 – ASIA-PACIFIC RCE REGIONAL MEETING (TUESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER)

OPENING ADDRESS

The 11th Asia-Pacific RCE Meeting was formally opened and moderated by Mr Damien Feneley, Principal of Grose View Public School and RCE Greater Western Sydney member. A traditional Welcome to Country was delivered by Uncle Greg Simms, as part of the Western Sydney University Elders on Campus program to welcome visitors to their traditional land.

Western Sydney University's Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover welcomed the participants to Sydney and gave the first opening remarks giving context to the University, our RCE, and region. Professor Glover acknowledged the countries (India, Japan, China, Malaysia, South Korea, Philippines and Australia) in attendance and that this is the first in the Pacific region. He also acknowledged that the event is an initiative of the University's 21st Century Curriculum Transformations Project.

Following this were welcoming addresses, extending a warm welcome and gratitude to all the participants from Dr Hiroaki Takiguchi, Project Director, ESD Programme, UNU-IAS and Dr Kumi Tashiro, Deputy Director, Office of Environmental Education, Ministry's Secretariat, Ministry of the Environment, Japan. Both also thanked Western Sydney University and RCE Greater Western Sydney for hosting the event.

Followed by the opening remarks, the participants were asked to give a brief introduction about themselves and their RCEs.

INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS

The introductory session was moderated by Professor Mario Tabucanon, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, UNU-IAS.

During this session Ms. Monmi Barua gave a brief summary of the 10th Asia-Pacific RCE Meeting hosted by RCE Delhi, India from 2 - 4 November 2018. Ms. Barua noted that the key outcomes from the 10th meeting were the A-P RCE coordinating committee formed, presentations were given by RCE members to update on collaborative projects, break-out sessions were held to review the A-P RCE Action Plans and discussions were held regarding GAP, Multi-stakeholder ESD Assessment, and communication. As part of the proceedings RCE Delhi also hosted the Symposium on Sustainable



Development Goals: from Goals to Action themed around SDG 12, SDG 13, and SDG 14 & SDG 15, with a crosscutting approach of SDG 4.7 on Education for Sustainable Development, focusing on implementation methodologies and challenges for the SDGs in a number of case study presentations. The field trips were well-received, with a tour of TERI research facilities and a heritage walk around Lodhi Gardens.

Following this Professor Tabucanon provided an update on progress of the Global RCE network for 2017-2018 on behalf of UNU-IAS. His presentation discussed the development of the RCE Network from 2005 to now, gave an overview of RCE-related activities implemented since 2017 on a global level, highlighted some of the important communication platforms available to members including Facebook, the e-bulletin and RCE publications, and also looked at the strategic directions and strategy using the roadmap for the RCE Community and the progress of GAP on ESD.

Ms Ushio Miura, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Bangkok also provided an update on the Asia-Pacific Post-GAP (Global Action Programme) commitment. As the GAP commitment ends in 2019, a Technical Consultation on the Future of ESD was held on 9-10 July 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. To build a post-GAP vision, a draft position paper has been prepared and will be reviewed by stakeholders for their feedback through a series of consultations. This position paper will be available soon for online consultation which RCE members are encouraged to view. From the Asia-Pacific discussion the following points were found: common aspirations across different sub-regional groups e.g. peace, diversity, happiness, balance, inclusivity; emphases placed across groups on community and family, traditional and indigenous knowledge and wisdom, cultural heritage as opportunities for advancing ESD; and common challenges: limited resources, weak institutional and leadership capacities, lack of coordination and cooperation among different stakeholders.

LIGHTNING PRESENTATIONS

Each RCE participant was given the opportunity to present a quick, targeted snapshot of an RCE initiative or project in five minutes or less using ONLY one PowerPoint slide. These presentations laid the foundations for continued conversations and collaborations across the next 2.5 days. Participants from 14 RCEs presented looking at one initiative that addressed a regional challenge, what educational strategy the RCE did to address the challenge, and how the initiative linked to the SDGs.

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

Three break-out sessions were held to foster collaboration, further developing the Asia-Pacific working group action plans and project. Below is a summary of each.

Stream 1: Higher Education

Facilitated by: Dr Brenda Dobia (RCE GWS)

Rapporteur: Dr Brenda Dobia

Attendance: Prof Mario Tabucanon (UNU-IAS) , Dr Kiran Chhokar (RCE regional advisor), Dr David Wright (WSU), Ms Caroline Allen (WSU Academy), Ms Vicky Reinier (WSU Student Rep), Prof Kwang Soo Choi and RCE Tongyeong colleagues, RCE Central Semenanjung

There was a small number of participants in this session and most had not attended an RCE meeting previously. Discussion of issues generated several excellent ideas. Not all were allocated to specific



people to follow up. The key issues discussed clustered around i) the difficulty of engaging with the scope of the SDGs and the need to ground actions in local places and concerns, ii) supporting engagement of students and community partners, and iii) effective pedagogies for teaching the SDGs and involving students in related research.

The following issues were identified.

1. University Leadership should work with local leaders to localise SDGs.

The participants felt that universities needed to do more than sign up to the SDGs, and in particular that they could be more actively engaged with RCE partners in determining and acting on local needs in alignment with the SDGs rather than being driven by big business agendas.

2. Student leadership to localise and make their voices heard.

Student leaders discussed difficulties they had encountered in being taken seriously by the university administration due to the power differential. They noted the tendency of the university to only be interested in tokenistic involvement of students on committees, rather than real involvement in decision making. One way to address this is for students to come together to identify action priorities they wish to put to the university executive.

3. Promote greater engagement of students with RCE partners.

This will help to enable both localisation of the SDGs and hands-on learning for students.

4. Research grants tied to SDGs with focus on community projects.

This is recommended as a tangible way for universities to demonstrate active and meaningful engagement with their local RCE network. Universities involved in the RCE network should be required to formally report on their efforts in this regard to UNU.

5. Include SDG elements into existing grant criteria.

This is a further practical step to embed the SDGs in the work of universities.

6. Engage with local and traditional knowledge holders in teaching and research and have them set the agenda.

This was a further recommendation to promote university engagement with their local networks, and especially to promote respectful and meaningful engagement with traditional knowledge holders around agendas that are important to them.

7. Systems thinking is fundamental to ESD. The SDGs are indivisible and must be seen as interrelated.

There was a discussion about pedagogy in relation to the SDGs. Participants expressed concern that the suite of SDGs were too easily seen as separate agendas for different areas, and that this did not promote interdisciplinarity or an understanding of the links between the different SDGs. If students and educators approach the SDGs in this way it is likely that linear solutions will be advocated that do not take account of systemic issues and may lead to undesirable outcomes (e.g., promoting employment to address SDG 8 without considering how the nature of the particular form of employment impacts on other aspects of sustainability).

8. Exemplars of teaching SDGs.

It was noted that effective teaching of the SDGs requires an understanding of ESD principles and how to apply them. Exemplars would be advantageous as a way of supporting educators who are new to the field.

**9. Credit for student projects around the SDGs.**

It is important to provide opportunities for hands-on, student-initiated learning projects in relation to the SDGs. Students undertaking applied projects should be acknowledged and provided with opportunities to gain academic credit for their work, e.g. through certificates, tuition discounts, academic credit.

10. Expand student involvement in research grants.

Working with academic teams on research projects associated with the SDGs will provide further opportunities for students to gain valuable knowledge and experience.

11. Skills development for students around the SDGs.

This item emphasises the importance of practical experience to support students' skill development. It related to items 2, 3, 9 and 10 above.

Stream 2: School and Youth

Facilitated by: Prof Munirah Ghazali (RCE Penang) and Dr Abdhesh Gangwar (RCE Srinagar)

Rapporteur: Prof Munirah Ghazali

Attendance: Betsan Martin (RCE Waikato), Ms Li Shi (RCE Shangri-La), Ms Wan Lu (RCE Shangri-La), Mr Mike Bartlett (RCE GWS), Mr Steven Body (RCE GWS), Mr Damien Feneley (RCE GWS), Ms Leah Page (RCE Tasmania), Ms Miki Tsukamoto (RCE Kitakyushu), Ms Yeojin Yoon (RCE Tongyeong), Ms Jeong Hee Nam (RCE Tongyeong), Ms Monmi Barua (RCE Mumbai), Prof Dr Norzulaani Khalid (RCE Central Semenanjung), Dr Hiroaki Takiguchi (UNU-IAS)

Prof Munirah Ghazali, RCE Penang facilitated the discussion. She first informed the house about the discussion under Schools and Youth break out session during the 10th AP RCE meet in New Delhi and asked the RCEs that were present there to share the progress their RCE has made.

In the 10th AP meeting under Schools and Youth break out session issues discussed were WASH, CC, DRR and Agriculture Science Congress event conducted by RCE Trivandrum, India.

Ms. Monmi Barua, RCE Mumbai shared their work related to FLOW (Facilitate Learning on Water). The FLOW campaign is related to promoting use of safe drinking water, helping students to identify safe and unsafe drinking water, promoting sanitation and hygiene and providing resources to poor schools for maintaining sanitation and hygiene.

Abdhesh Gangwar of RCE Srinagar shared their work on WASH in Jarwal block consisting of 121 villages falling under 78 Gram Panchayats, having 234 primary schools with 700 teachers and 36,000 students covering a total population of 250,000. WASH activities were part of the project on achieving Climate Smart and Disaster Resilient Communities of RCE Srinagar supported by Give2Asia.

RCE Tongyeong (Ms. Unji Lee) shared their work on conducting International Youth Camps. They have so far in their camps had 60 youth from 12 RCEs. Through the Bridge to the World (BTW) youth camps they promote global citizenship and achieve SDGs.

RCE Iskandar shared progress of their work related to achieving low carbon economy society. They have worked on science to policy to achieve their goal.

Ms. Betsan Martin RCE Waikato, New Zealand shared their work on Climate citizenship.



Mr. Damien Feneley, RCE GWS emphasized the need of making education relevant to the programmes of the government and the department of education. School students are the change makers and able to influence their parents. There is need to adopt schools, engage with the people and mentoring them. He raised serious concern about increasing obesity amongst children. The issue is being addressed through Walking Football activity. They organise big events like competitions and sustainability fairs using bikes and vehicles to create awareness and spread the message.

Munirah again shared the work of RCE Penang regarding the video competition amongst schools. She invited all the RCEs to encourage the schools to take part in the video competition.

RCE Kitakyushu shared their work of mentoring the schools and university students and raised concern that students don't find time for ESD activities and show little interest. Munirah added that in her RCE Penang by doing environment and ESD activities students earn credits hence they take greater interest.

RCE Shangri-La shared their work related to youth and villagers adopting local rivers and work to keep them clean. The water dams constructed for electricity generation and other purposes pose local problems.

Isabel, Munirah and Betsan presented the group report in the plenary.

Stream 3: Community Engagement

Facilitated by: Dr Nanung Agus Fitriyanto

This discussion group assisted participants in increasing their understanding of the impact of ESD initiatives on communities and the geographical locations in which RCEs are embedded. RCEs differ across countries and solving sustainability issues requires context and community-based solutions. One of the major conclusions out of this discussion was that a multidisciplinary approach to ESD is needed. Likewise, priority areas need to be identified as well as the development of community-based indicators are a must and RCEs should embark on the design of methodologies that allow them to measure community impact. It was also highlighted that measuring impact is an ongoing process linked to community empowerment and collaboration strategies within the community, the RCE and across RCEs. To date various RCEs have embarked on several actions to operationalise and measure impact and move forward in this regard. Some examples are as follows:

- Identification of priority areas. Some RCEs identified agriculture, transportation and infrastructure as some of their focus areas
- Encouraging the government and private sector to empower communities and foster collaboration for the implementation of projects.
- Projects should be aligned with all stakeholders' expectations, particularly communities
- Stronger participation of civil society organisations such as NGOs, in the development and implementation of community programs
- Encouraging students to participate in the development and implementation of community projects. This can help students to learn from the community and vice versa.



- Some RCEs are embarking in the development of methodologies or adopting various approaches to measure community impact. A case in point is the RCE Chubu which is currently identifying challenges to implement SDGs. Similarly, RCE Hokkaido is embarking on the development of community indicators.

Reference source: Meeting Report on the 11th A-P RCE meeting
(Dr Hiroaki Takiguchi, Prof Mario Tabucanon, Dr Isabel B. Franco)

CLOSING SESSION

Professor Tabucanon gave the closing address for the RCE A-P Meeting, congratulating the participants on a very productive first day and highlighted the strength of our Asia-Pacific network. He reminded us of the importance of the SDGs and post-GAP and that our work together will help shape this.

DAY 2 – SYMPOSIUM ON ‘MAINSTREAMING THE SGDS: EDUCATION AND IMPACT’ (WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER)

The 11th Asia-Pacific RCE meeting was held in conjunction with the Symposium ‘Mainstreaming the SDGs: Impact and Education’. This symposium gave RCE participants the opportunity to share their case studies on the theme education and impact. The three parallel sessions focused on People (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 10 and 16), Prosperity (SDGs 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12), and Planet (SDGs 6, 13, 14 and 15).