

Regional Centres of Expertise

on education for sustainable development

RCE MUNICH

The region

Munich, in southern Germany, has a population of 1.3 million that goes up to 2.5 million when the surrounding cities, towns and villages are taken into account. The area has easy access to clean and abundant water resources, pre-alpine lakes and mixed forests.

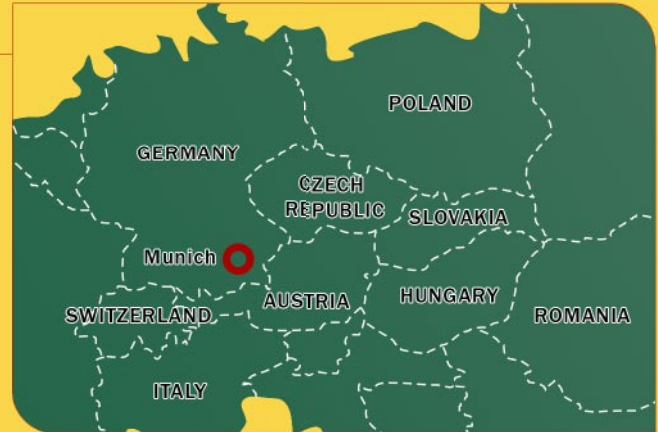


Munich is one of the strongest cities in the country economically, and leads in employment figures. The city has the second largest concentration of publishing and media houses after New York. Another growing branch is the production, storage, processing and dissemination of knowledge. With 14 universities and colleges and 90,000 students, Munich and its surrounding region represents one of Germany's leading centres of higher education. Munich has also been voted by citizens as a modern and safe city highly prized for its leisure and sports facilities.

Regional challenges

Munich city's planners are now noting unwanted results of the city's growth. For example, half a million people commute everyday to Munich but pay taxes to their home communities, leaving the city to deal with the high cost of maintaining infrastructure. Munich's ecological footprint is also not a sustainable one.

Munich has at its disposal many organizations and networks active in the sphere of sustainable development. These organizations aim to extend their knowledge beyond their immediate environments and to promote changes in behaviour, for which they have evolved a comprehensive range of educational programs. However, these programs often fail to have the desired success and impact for a variety of reasons. Small-scale supporting organizations often struggle to maintain the continuity of programs due to material or structural limitations. Programs often suffer from too little marketing, or they are not correctly targeted or the structure of the supporting organization prevents the appropriate implementation. Many educational programs are strong in terms of content but do not manage to convey this content to the target groups in the right language. Some of the programs pay too little attention to the fact that ESD is not simply the cognitive transfer of knowledge but must be linked to the acquisition of core proficiencies. In the final analysis, the existing programs simply do not reach a large proportion of the population.



Regional role

Based on limitations of current educational programs, the following profile has been developed for the RCE project.

The RCE will

- provide a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience between education providers,
- disseminate information about existing courses and programs,
- integrate and improve (where necessary) the quality and quantity of programmes,
- improve the public profile of education providers and raise awareness among consumers, thereby stimulating demand for ESD,
- advice education providers on the structural foundations of ESD,
- promote new projects through networking and cooperation, and
- accentuate individual 'lighthouse' projects to demonstrate practical case studies to the network.

A FUTURISTIC PHOTO OF MUNICH FOLLOWING CLIMATE CHANGE

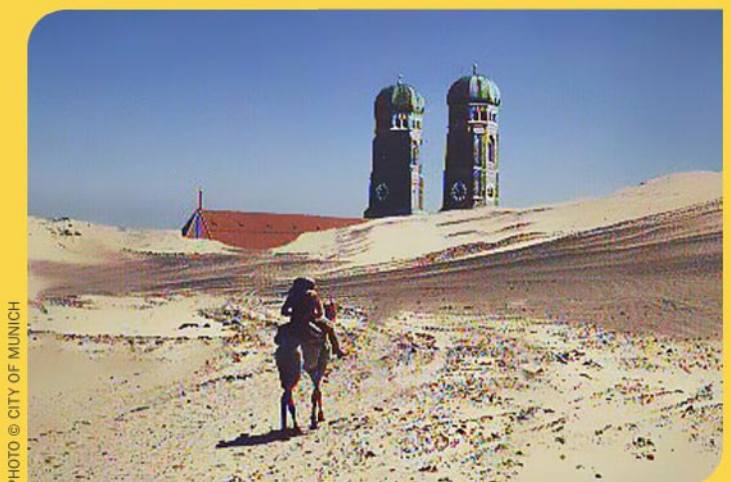


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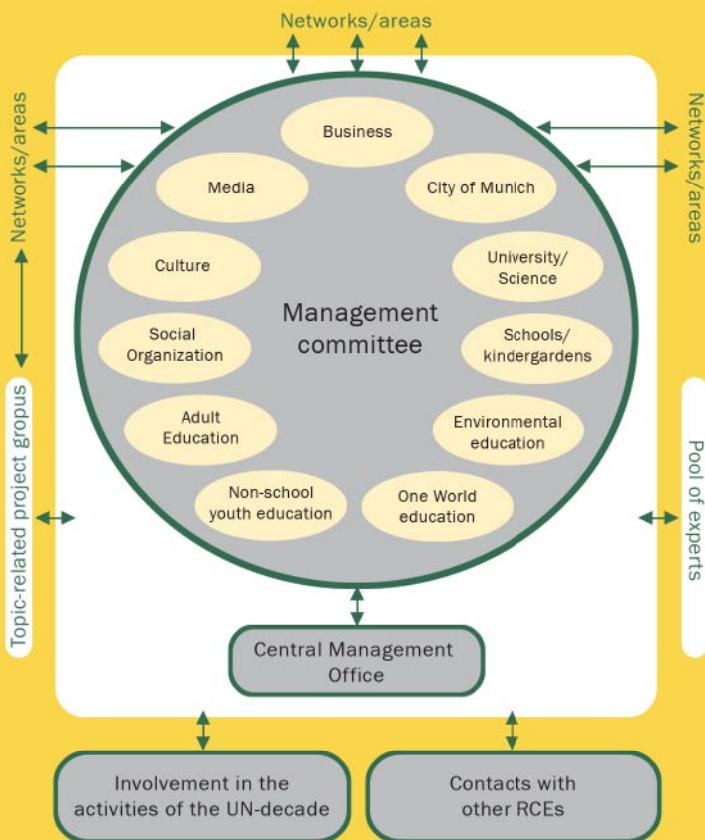
Goals of the RCE

The main objective of RCE Munich is to establish ESD as a core component of standard educational courses and programs offered by the various education providers in Munich.

Other objectives include:

- reaching various levels of public life in order to raise awareness of the importance of sustainability as a principle in everyday life, and foster public awareness at the economic and political levels,
- encouraging citizens to adopt sustainability into their daily lives,
- incorporating sustainability objectives in the education and training sectors,
- promoting the RCE among all actors engaged in sustainability issues,
- offering attractive opportunities to include members of the Munich civic community who are interested in sustainability but not yet active on the issue, and
- raising the profile of ESD as an issue of public discourse.

Decision-making structure



Structure of the RCE in Munich

Organizations involved

The Office of the Mayor at the Municipality of Munich has acted as a coordinating body for the RCE. The City of Munich's Department of Education, the Department of Social Science and the Department of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology at the Munich University of Applied Sciences, the Munich Adult Education Center, the Catholic Adult Education Center, the International Sustainable Development Institute, the Local Agenda 21 Office (based in the Department of Health & Environment of the City of Munich), the Community Foundation for a Sustainable Munich, the Center for Ecological Education, the NPO Eco Project, the Environmental Education Network of Munich, and the Quality Assurance Program for Environmental and Sustainability Education are all involved in the RCE. In addition, inter-regional networks such as the Working Committee for Nature and Environmental Education, the Plankstetten Circle for Environmental Education, the North-South Forum of Munich, the Munich Education Offensive for Global Teaching, the One World Network of Bavaria, Schools for One World – Bavaria are also involved. Social organisations that are part of the RCE are Department of Social Affairs of the City of Munich, the Munich City Youth Ring, the Association of Welfare Organizations in Munich, the Munich Funnel – an association of independent organizations involved in social work, the Social Policy Discourse in Munich, while businesses include the HypoVereinsbank, Osram – one of the two largest manufacturers of lighting in the world, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and the Munich CSR Initiative.

Activities

Some activities foreseen by the RCE Munich are:

- a sustainability audit in schools,
- developing extension education which will involve the skills of various stakeholders from the business sector, environmental and One World education, while at the same time creating an underlying basic understanding of ESD, and
- encouraging 'School Companies', an opportunity for students to learn about business responsibilities that integrate sustainability.

In the long term, the RCE plans to:

- implement the ESD action plan through integrated and interdisciplinary collaboration,
- market ESD intensively, and
- expand international ESD networks.

For more information

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