

11th Global RCE Conference: Education for the Sustainable Development Goals
7-9 December, 2018, Cebu, the Philippines



Introductory Session
The Global RCE Network – Achievements and Ambitions
7 December, 2018, Cebu, the Philippines

Presenter: Dr. Philip Vaughter (UNU-IAS)

Dr. Vaughter presented on the progress and achievements of the RCE (Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD) Network over the past year. He began with a summary of the four Regional meetings conducted throughout the year, and noted in addition to Regional meetings, that we are seeing National meetings take place in Germany, Britain, Japan, and South Korea. The year also included thematic RCE meetings (a panel at the International Association of Universities 2018 International Conference where four RCEs discussed how universities can engage with communities), as well as an Asia-Pacific Youth Virtual Conference held in Sydney, Australia.

Updates for each region were then presented, starting with Africa. A new President (from RCE Buea) and Vice President (from RCE Eswatini) were chosen at the 8th African Regional Meeting held in Zomba, Malawi, from 8-10 August, 2018. Items discussed at the meeting included the development of a journal on ESD, a push to engage more with UN offices on the continent, as well as efforts to foster more effective communication amongst the network e.g. creation of a Whatsapp group. IPBES also held a training session at the regional meeting for the second time. It was also noted that Africa holds the highest proportion of RCEs reporting by region, and that a good regional spread is covered. Dr. Vaughter urged those who have not reported to send in their projects so that their good work could be promoted.

Next was an update on the Americas, with the 7th Americas Regional Meeting held in Posadas, Argentina from 25-27 October, 2018 bringing over 300 participants together, the largest to date, along with strong engagement with UN offices in the region, with many representatives present. A workshop was conducted on regional priorities, resulting in four that were agreed to among participants. An exciting development included RCE Georgetown receiving two prestigious grants to support their activities on climate change education. Looking at reporting from the region, it was noted this was quite high, and overall there was good communication with the Secretariat at the Global RCE Service Centre.

Asia-Pacific's 11th RCE Meeting was held from 25-27 September, 2018 in Sydney, Australia, with the first Asia-Pacific Youth Virtual Summit, organised by youth, being held a day before, on 24 September, 2018. Representation at the virtual summit around the Pacific

basin was high, and it was found that communication works well regionally due to time zones. Other exciting developments included RCE Tongyeong holding its 10th ESD Forum on 7 November, 2018, engagement with IPBES at the regional meeting, and the recent launch of a publication on 'Good Practices for ESD', which focuses on case studies from Japan by RCEs in the country. Also noted was the existence of an action plan for the Asia-Pacific region that works with communities, schools, youth and higher education. In terms of reporting, Southeast Asia and Japan tend to report regularly.

Europe's Regional Meeting 2018, held 28-31 August, 2018 in Vannes, France, was the largest European regional meeting to date, which also included participation from RCE Hangzhou, who are working closely with RCE Nuremberg and RCE Ruhr, a great example of cross-continental cooperation. At the meeting, there was a workshop on regional priorities in which four were identified and agreed to. Highlights included two RCEs in the region being awarded EU Erasmus grants (RCE Crete and RCE Euroregion Tyrol). In addition, RCE Nuremberg and RCE Skane are working with their national governments on a number of programmes. With regards to reporting in this region, it was seen that reporting is up this year, with only a few RCEs that the Global RCE Service Centre has not heard from.

Dr. Vaughter then provided an update on the global development of the RCE network. The First RCE Thematic Conference was held in Okayama, Japan, from 5-7 December, 2017, and focused on a number of themes (biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable consumption and production), hence a number of goals. The feedback received from the RCE community was that they wanted to work on all SDGs, therefore the 11th Global RCE Conference held in 2018 shifted to exploring all goals. In terms of publications, the RCE brochure has been updated and is available on the RCE portal online, whilst two case study publications were also published in the past year; one on universities and communities, and another one on health. Dr. Vaughter then shared a summary of the global partners the RCE network is working with or connected to, including UNESCO (and its Partner Network), UNEP (member of UN Climate Alliance), and IPBES.

An update was also given on developments on the RCE Portal, including the launch of new-look RCE profiles, as well as an update to the annual reporting process, to make it easier for RCEs to report on their projects. The new RCE profiles are broken into sections, enabling RCEs to find contacts, have their projects listed, and update their contact information in one place. The value of the new profiles is that information is clearer, whilst RCE activities can be highlighted in a more interesting and visual way. Previous reporting was lengthy and emphasised structural governance, but this change focuses more on displaying projects, communicating what RCEs are doing, and allows users to directly view RCE projects from any given profile page. The new pages also serve to highlight communication and social channels, including Facebook pages, Twitter handles, and contact details, which RCEs can easily update by sending in completed templates. Mr. Vaughter urged RCEs to

keep their profiles up-to-date so that their successes with education and the lessons learned could be shared with the network.

It was also announced that the open call for hosting Regional RCE meetings was open, earlier than previous years in response to feedback, and that any interested RCEs are encouraged to apply.

The session concluded with Dr. Vaughter presenting ESD research that had been conducted on education levels addressed in journal articles on ESD during the period 1999-2018. It found overwhelmingly that the literature available is focused on Higher Education, with less focus on other actors in the education field. This presents the need for more engagement across sectors moving forward.