

Meeting of the European RCEs, London 22nd-23rd June 2016: Report of key points

A total of 45 people attended the meeting, with representatives from 17 RCEs. A high level of participation and engagement resulted in the following key points:

Forced migration

The issue of forced migration was important for the agenda. Alia Alzougbi of HEC Global Learning Centre (London RCE partner) shared some of the work they have been doing in schools with Syrian refugees in Jordan and British school children. A large number of RCEs are working on this issue and shared their expertise and ideas for future development. We identified potential here for RCE collaborations and these will be explored in the following months. European RCEs also discussed at length a draft position paper (prepared by Pinar Guner) on refugees and forced migration. Pinar has kindly agreed to work on a second draft which will be circulated in due course after taking account of comments at the meeting. The meeting proposed that this could be presented at the global conference for further discussion, agreement and possibly alongside a draft declaration on this subject.

RCEs - SDGs and GAP

Discussion was held on the work of RCEs in relation to the SDGs and the GAP. An excellent set of RCE posters were produced and shared. Ros Wade offered to collate poster PDFs and photos of posters to circulate round participants and share with RCE Service Centre. The meeting recommended that the RCE Global conference also include a poster conference which could lead into discussion on the link between education work of RCEs and SDGs etc.

The Global RCE conference 2016

Concern was expressed about the difficulty for most RCEs of attending this due to cost (out of the reach of most RCEs) and also due to our commitment to sustainability and the need to avoid adding to the world's greenhouse gases. At the same time RCEs would like to be part of discussions and to be involved. The feeling was also that the global conference cannot speak for the majority of European RCEs if they cannot contribute or be present in some way.

There was a strong recommendation to look into the possibility of (a) making more use of virtual conferences and discussions via skype or video conference (b) setting up on line discussions prior to the conference which would allow wider contributions

ESD skills and TVET conference

A workshop run by Glenn Strachan and Betsy King was held on skills for ESD which involved discussions and sharing of ideas and resources. A useful document produced by WWF Scotland was circulated around RCE participants.

A number of RCEs were interested in the proposal for a TVET conference and most thought it a positive idea. Jos Hermans asked for expressions of interest in hosting this proposed conference with UNESCO – colleagues are requested to let him or the RCE Service Centre know if they are interested.

Transition Town movement

Hilary Jennings of the UK Transition Town movement spoke of their work and discussed the potential for collaboration and synergy. This is a growing local and global movement which shares ESD values and objectives, linking the local with the regional. Its loose and flexible structures very much reflect and mirror those of the RCE movement. It is hoped that possible future collaborations may develop as a result of these discussions.

UNESCO

Jaya Gajparia reported back from her visit to UNESCO to see Bernard Coombes from the ESD team. The discussion focussed mainly on issues of communication and the need for mutual support. It was felt that communication should be two way and that RCEs would appreciate more communication from UNESCO about key events and issues. Ros Wade agreed to follow this up.

UNESCO would like in particular for RCEs to provide useful case studies with identifiable impact for UNESCO to use with briefing of ministers etc. They would also like to widen their expert list and to include RCE members where appropriate. Ros Wade agreed to follow this up and to ask for more detail on case study requirements as RCE Service Centre has already made available a large number of these. RW and Detlev Lindau Bank agreed to draft some criteria and circulate a request to all European RCEs to identify areas of specialisation for the purpose of making this available to UNESCO.

Contact list for European RCEs

It was noted that this list is very out of date and that many named coordinators are no longer in role anymore. Some RCEs seem to be dormant or possibly no longer functioning and it was agreed that RCE Service Centre should be asked to take some action on this. It was felt that more fragile RCEs should be offered support, perhaps by teaming up with a mentor RCE which is more established. For those RCEs which do not seem to be functioning any more, it was felt that RCE Service Centre would need to follow up and establish a process to tackle this situation. All RCEs are very different and by their nature have quite loose and flexible structures which make this a bit of a challenge. However, it was felt that some more clarity is needed over which RCEs are 'live' and part of the network and which are not.

European RCE communicator role

The meeting felt that it would be useful to have two people to act as communicators to the European RCE network. This would NOT be a representative role and there was no mandate to speak on behalf of European RCEs. Ros and Detlev agreed to take this on for the next 2 years until the next European RCE meeting. Monica suggested that an agreed outline of this role would be useful so that there was no cause for confusion about the role. See below for draft :

Draft- European RCE Communicator role description

- Not a representative role for European RCEs
- Does not replace direct communications by individual RCEs with RCE Service Centre

- Does provide regular (as appropriate) communications around the EU network to circulate events, information
- Circulates relevant information from the RCE Service Centre
- Circulates UNESCO request for expertise and case studies
- Provides an additional link with UNESCO as appropriate

Next European RCE meeting 2018 – RCE Dortmund kindly offered to host this and this was welcomed and agreed