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RCE Bulletin

R C E A N D E S D N E W S

Last reminder: 4th International RCE Conference and 5th WEEC in Montreal

The 4th International RCE Conference will be hosted by RCE Montreal (Québec-Canada), from 13-15 May 2009, back-to-back with the Fifth World Environmental Education Congress (5th WEEC).

The call for papers for the 5th WEEC resulted in submissions from interested people from over 122 countries. The on-line registration service is up and running. All information can be found on the **Registration and accommodation** section of the 5WEEC website: <http://www.5weec.uqam.ca>

Register now for the 4th International RCE Conference!

This annual meeting will take place at the Biosphère, the architectural masterpiece of Expo 67. With its thematic halls and its interactive exhibits, this museum aims to make its many visitors aware of the importance and the protection of the environment. (<http://biosphere.ec.gc.ca>).

Building on previous meetings and a survey completed by RCEs, the organising committee of the Conference has developed a programme and activities jointly with the Global RCE Service Centre. All information related to the conference and the registration form is available at www.ias.unu.edu/efsd/rceconference2009.

Participants requiring a visa to come to Canada must proceed as soon as possible; requirements and application forms can be found at www.goingtocanada.gc.ca.

RCE Montreal and partners look forward to welcoming their colleagues at the conference.

For more information

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ESDA open symposium in Tokyo

An open symposium on the role of universities in the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development in Africa (ESDA) was held on 27 February 2009 at UNU in Tokyo, Japan.

The symposium was convened by the UNU-IAS and the newly established United Nations University-Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP) to discuss the challenges the African continent faces in higher education. The event was supported by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE).

The symposium comprised two sessions on sustainability challenges in Africa and ESD in Africa.

In the first session, Karl Harmsen, Director of the United Nations Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA) gave an overview on poverty, land use and productivity and climate change in Africa, concluding that poverty alleviation is key to addressing sustainable development issues.

Speaking on land degradation issues, Prof. Robert Abaidoo from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana, stated that focusing on institutional and human capacity building, emphasis on participatory approaches to development and reducing information costs through technology are some solutions to the problem.

Dr. Ademola Braimoh, Executive Director of the Global Land Project, Hokkaido University, introduced the sustainability challenge of urbanisation and explained that the current search for sustainability places a new focus on the role of universities as knowledge institutions. He stated that universities must reorient themselves to disseminate appropriate knowledge to communities while providing strong examples of urban planning education.

Other topics presented in the session included climate change, peace and security, poverty and health and science and technology.

In the second session, Prof. Rob O'Donoghue from the Rhodes University, South Africa, argued for the need to revisit the concept of core competencies in ESD in Africa, particularly focusing on sustainability practices in the context of poverty, vulnerability, and risk. He also discussed how ESD could be situated in RCEs so that there are tangible benefits.

In other presentations, Atsumu Iwai, Senior Specialist for International Cooperation at MEXT talked about the Ministry's initiative to formulate practical international cooperation models utilising the knowledge of universities in relation to DESD, and to convene ESD symposia. The International Cooperation Initiative is distinctive in that it takes a practical approach and is shaped as an equal collaboration among universities in Japan and in developing countries. One example of this is the utilisation of community learning centres to develop education models from the perspective of ESD in food, nutrition, and health in Zambia, with the Okayama University in Japan.

Eri Nakajima, the Deputy Director of the Office of Environmental Education at the Ministry of the Environment of Japan presented the Ministry's Environmental Leadership Initiatives for Asian Sustainability (ELIAS) in Higher Education. In her talk, Eri Nakajima stated that in addressing the challenges for developing effective human resources, the Ministry recognises that collaboration among universities, businesses, government organisations, and NGOs is important.

In conclusion, Prof. Masafumi Nagao, Coordinator of UNU's ESDA project said that the initiative is based on continuous consultation with African and Japanese stakeholders. The aim of ESDA is to find appropriate mechanisms between the UNU, Japanese and African universities to set up joint graduate training on ESD. In the meantime, three working groups, one focusing on agriculture and rural development, another on community-based initiatives for sustainable development in urban areas, and the third on mining management and energy resources, have been identified.

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Seven new RCEs

The Ubuntu Committee of Peers for RCEs held its third meeting on 17 October 2008 at UNESCO, Paris. At the meeting, the committee reviewed twenty-one proposals to establish RCEs and recommended six of these for acknowledgement.

The six RCEs are Cairo, Egypt; Bangalore, India; Delhi, India; East Kalimantan, Indonesia; Northern Mindanao, Philippines; and Yorkshire and Humberside, UK.

In February this year, another new RCE was acknowledged for the Porto Metropolitan Area, Portugal, bringing the total number of RCEs worldwide to sixty-two.

For more information
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World Conference on ESD

The UNU delegation to the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (31 March – 2 April 2009, Bonn, Germany) included Rector Konrad Osterwalder and members of the UNU-IAS ESD team (Yoshihiro Natori, Zinaida Fadeeva and Yoko Mochizuki).

The UNU-IAS team organised three events in relation to the Conference. The event on 1 April, a special session on RCEs, was held at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and attended by more than forty-five participants, including representatives of fourteen RCEs and three RCE candidates. The event showcased the rich diversity of RCEs in terms of geographic regions, challenges they face and activities they carry out to address these challenges.

UNU-IAS was also responsible for one of the twenty-two official workshops of the conference. Yoko Mochizuki coordinated a workshop on Higher Education and Research with Prof. Rosalyn McKeown of Portland State University on the morning of 2 April. Workshop participants shared the current status, lessons learnt and the way forward for higher education for sustainable development.

The third event organised by UNU-IAS with SWEDESD and the International Association of Universities (IAU) was a closed strategic meeting on competencies and capabilities of higher education institutions for SD and ESD. The meeting, held at the UN Campus in Bonn on 3 April, focused on the concepts of core competencies and capabilities, institutional changes necessary to bring these forward, the strategy required for developing intellectual capital and practice in the area and international partnerships of HEIs to promote ESD.

The conference concluded by adopting the Bonn Declaration. In the section entitled "A Call for Action", the Declaration identifies the need for developed and developing countries, civil society and international organisations to make efforts to: "identify and support schools, universities and other higher education and research institutions, education centres and education networks that could serve as centres of expertise and innovation to develop and share knowledge, and create resources for ESD; and explore the potential of specific geographical and bioregional sites which can serve as spatially defined 'laboratories' for ESD." This recognises the UNU's RCE initiative as an important mechanism to promote ESD.



The strategic meeting on 3 April

The declaration also refers to a need to strive to “encourage and enhance scientific excellence, research and new knowledge development for ESD through the involvement of higher education institutions and research networks in ESD”. This supports the higher education networks for sustainability, including ProSPER.Net (Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network: a network of eighteen higher education institutions in the Asia-Pacific region) created under the auspices of UNU-IAS.

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RCE Sudbury’s Snowflakes initiative

A community project to create metal fabricated snowflakes to illuminate the City of Greater Sudbury, Canada during the holiday season was implemented by RCE Sudbury and partners to create employment opportunities to women from the local domestic violence centre. The project identified local merchants who would be interested in purchasing the products which utilise energy efficient light bulbs that last at least five years.

The Snowflake project also acted as a tool to build relationships with community partners while addressing social inclusion and economic development with minimal environmental impact.

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Roundtable on health and ESD

A roundtable discussion on health and ESD was held on 15 January 2009 at the Yokohama National University, Japan, with the participation of six Asian RCEs—Cebu, Chubu, Kitakyushu, Greater Sendai, Penang and Yokohama, to build on previous discussions of the RCE thematic group on health. The roundtable aimed to identify potential areas for collaborative actions in the Asia-Pacific region.

The event was organised by UNU-IAS in collaboration with the Yokohama National University and the Japanese

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

Participants had four suggestions for collaborative actions:

- MEXT could assist RCEs in providing funding for Japanese universities for collaborations with counterparts in developing countries in Asia and Africa.
- Focus should be on policy work in the area of migration of health professionals.
- Furthering traditional knowledge could be a focal topic for future RCE linkages.
- ProSPER.Net and summer schools can act as agents in carrying out these initiatives.

Fifteen RCEs are currently members of the thematic network on ESD and health.

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Meeting of Asian RCE youth leaders

A meeting of ESD Asian RCE youth leaders was organised by RCE Greater Sendai, Japan on 9 and 10 February 2009. The work of eight Asian RCEs—Delhi, Tongyeong, Kitakyushu, Okayama, Hyogo-Kobe, Yokohama, Chubu and Greater Sendai—was presented on the first day. Group discussions on the second day addressed such topics as sustaining youth activities after current students graduate, what university students can do to develop networks among RCEs, the benefits of youth networking and how to actualise these networks.

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Agriculture workshop in Oeste, Portugal

RCE CREIAS-OESTE organised a workshop on biodiversity and water in agriculture in Cadaval, Portugal earlier this year.

The workshop was jointly organised by several members of RCE CREIAS-Oeste including APAS, a regional Farmers’ Association; COTHN, a centre of applied research for agriculture; and CEIFA, member of the Steering Committee of CREIAS-Oeste.

The programme consisted of two main panels—biodiversity and water—each with a variety of presentations by recognised experts, and an open discussion space after each panel. About one hundred people participated in the event, most of them local farmers (mainly fruit producers) and representatives of regional public and private institutions involved in agriculture.



Participants at the workshop

Oeste is an important agricultural region in the country and cultivates livestock, vegetables and fruits.

At the event speakers stressed the importance of local fauna for agricultural productivity. Participants agreed that the use of herbicides and pesticides in the region should be reduced and that pest-control products should target specific species. Despite well-spread knowledge about the negative impacts of excessive chemical use in agriculture and the advantages of integrated biological approaches, most farmers still use environmentally harmful techniques in rodent and pest control in the belief that environmentally friendly ones may decrease yield. However, there is awareness that changes are needed.

The next session focused on the use of water in agriculture. Traditionally, vegetables and fruits (e.g., tomato, wine, olives, pears, etc.) were produced in Oeste with almost no irrigation. This has changed in the last few decades, and agriculture in the entire country is dependent on irrigation techniques which are often inefficient. The government has now introduced a water tax to reduce water use in agriculture.

The lively discussion on the topic at the workshop showed that there is still a long way to go in convincing people about the real scarcity of water. Although climate change is expected to make water scarcity more acute farmers in the region continue to call for free access to water.

In spite of the controversial topics discussed at the workshop, participants found the event enriching as it focused on real challenges faced by agriculture and pointed out alternative techniques to make it sustainable.

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RCE Montreal at AMERICANA 2009

Two members of the Executive Committee of RCE Montreal, André Champoux and Danielle Lussier, presented the RCE network and their own RCE at AMERICANA 2009, the International Environmental Technology Trade Show and Conference, organised by RÉSEAU Environnement, held in Montreal from 17-19 March 2009.

Champoux and Lussier's presentation focused on the concept of RCEs in the Canadian and Montreal context and the concept of ecocitizenship.

Created in 1995 and presented biennially, AMERICANA is recognised as one of the leading events of its kind in North America. More than 10,000 participants, 400 exhibitors and 175 speakers from Quebec and across Canada, Europe, South, North and Central America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia attend this event.

AMERICANA is a platform to promote technical, scientific and commercial exchanges and is a forum for the exchange of knowledge and practical experiences providing economic and environmental solutions.

Lectures, workshops, round tables, technology exhibitions and case studies explore a wide range of topics such as life-cycle analysis, biofuels and bioproducts, environmental management and sustainable development, as well as drinking water, wastewater, solid waste, soil and ground-water, air and climate change. This eighth edition focused on sustainable transportation, a topic of major concern among the members of the public, decision-makers and politicians alike.

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First General Assembly meeting of RCE Cairo

The first General Assembly meeting of RCE Cairo, that took place on 29 December 2008, saw intensive discussions between stakeholders on topics ranging from farmers' training on biodynamic agriculture and the publishing of Arabic books on ESD to the establishment of a virtual environment for web-based knowledge exchange.

A Steering Committee for the next three years was elected on the day.

The RCE's current activities include the implementation of a 1.3 million euro EU-funded project entitled University Chair of Innovation, that aims to bridge the gap between universities and industrial institutions in the Mediterranean region. The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and eleven other European and Mediterranean institutions are involved in the project.

For More Information
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RCE Saskatchewan shares mobilisation experience

In the two years since its acknowledgement, RCE Saskatchewan has endeavoured to build upon existing systems and capacities of its individual and organisational members. "Having organisational partners providing support on the basis of their respective interest and expertise increases partner ownership of projects, partner visibility, and overall project success. At the same time, the lack of reliance on a single partner ensures the integrity and autonomy of the RCE structure. This enhances the RCE's freedom to engage in various forms of advocacy and promotion related to its ESD objectives."

Learn more about how the RCE has worked with its individual and organisational members in Lyle Benko and Roger Petry's article "RCE Saskatchewan: Building an RCE as a Collaborative and Engaged Regionally Distributed Network", now available on the RCE experiences page at www.ias.unu.edu/efsd.

The full article may also be requested from
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RCE Kyrgyzstan launched

RCE Kyrgyzstan, acknowledged in May 2007, was launched on 3 March 2009 with financial support from the U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan.

So far, the RCE has conducted two trainings for educators and decision-makers on principles for integrating SD and ESD in the educational system, one in December 2008 and another on 2-3 March 2009. A training manual on the topic has also been published. So far sixty people have been trained. RCE Kyrgyzstan is planning to follow up on this activity and organise a team of trainers who would continue to educate local communities on ESD principles.



Training for educators and decision-makers

For more information
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Dialogue on natural disaster preparedness in Yogyakarta

On 7 January 2009, RCE Yogyakarta, in cooperation with Tim Teknis Nasional (National Technical Team) held a dialogue on natural disaster preparedness. The dialogue held through the project "Sustaining partnerships for a resilient community through the development of a Centre of Excellence in participatory disaster risk reduction" (SIAP CEPAT project), aimed to promote safer communities and sustainable development through disaster reduction.

A large number of NGOs based in Yogyakarta participated in the event which addressed various topics related to disaster management—preparedness, mitigation, emergency response, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The SIAP CEPAT project covers the disaster-prone region of Yogyakarta and Central Java and is looking at strengthening the capacity of the local community and government in disaster management. It is expected that, through the project, consolidated knowledge generated from the 2006 earthquake in the region will help establish a Centre of Excellence in disaster risk reduction. The project will also facilitate the development of institutional mechanisms for risk reduction; build capacity; and design a programme for comprehensive risk management taking into account post-disaster assessment, public health and emergency management, land-use planning, disaster-resistant construction, relief response and rehabilitation.

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RCEs at UNESCO's 12th APEID Conference

The 12th Asia-Pacific Programme of Education Innovation for Development (APEID) Conference, organised by UNESCO from 24-26 March 2009 in Nonthaburi, Thailand, saw close to 2,000 participants. The opening was presided over by the Prime Minister of Thailand.

UNU-IAS organised two paper-presentation sessions on the Role of RCEs in Teacher Education, and a workshop session on Teacher Training on Climate Change: Teaching that Can Shift Lifestyles. These sessions were held under the conference's subtheme on Reorienting Teacher Education for Sustainable Development.

At the start of the paper-presentation sessions, UNU-IAS gave an overview of the UNU strategy on ESD and RCEs. RCE Tongyeong (Republic of Korea) presented three papers on promoting awareness on sustainable societies through development and implementation of ESD, on effective implementation of ESD through English as second

language, and on values education through the Clean Plate Movement as an example of a practical approach to ESD. RCE Greater Sendai (Japan) presented two papers on teacher training for ESD, and on an ESD programme for primary schools in the Greater Sendai area. RCE Kodagu (India) presented a paper on ESD in fragile areas, and RCE Trang (Thailand) on Green Markets in Trang as implemented by the municipality and a school. A representative of RCE East Midlands (UK) was the resource person and facilitator for the workshop on Climate Change.

The contributions of UNU-IAS and RCEs were acknowledged by UNESCO at the closing ceremony.

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RCE Rhine-Meuse organises sustainability congress

RCE Rhine-Meuse, with partners, organised a provincial congress with the motto "Sustainability Pays off", on 28 January 2009. Over 300 visitors from the Dutch province of Limburg and the bordering Euregion participated in twenty-two interesting workshops spread through the day.

The goal of this event was to provide the public with inspiring workshops in combination with an info-market. The aim was to inform an audience of public servants about existing sustainable technologies that are regionally available, and about exciting and tangible sustainable initiatives that may act as pilot activities.

Discussions at the congress addressed the fact that current sustainability practice is innovative and concrete, and that there is sufficient public awareness on the need for sustainability. As a consequence there are a number of grassroots initiatives and available technologies. Governments should therefore accommodate rather than legislate.

Topics covered in the workshops included Sustainable Public Procurement, Climate Friendly Entrepreneurship, Cradle 2 Cradle, Reduce-Reuse-Recycle, Sustainable Building, and Corporate Social Responsibility. Due to its success, RCE Rhine-Meuse and partners are planning to organise such an event biennially; consensus is that the next event should be aimed at youth.

For more information
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RCE Lucknow releases poster for World Wetlands Day

An educational poster on the Dudhwa National Park, developed by RCE Lucknow, was launched by students on the occasion of World Wetlands Day on 2 February 2009. The poster, in Hindi, outlines information on the park, its importance, threats and conservation solutions. The event was organised in a school located in the buffer zone of the national park where Tharus, a marginalised indigenous group, are the predominant community.



Students launch a poster on Dudhwa national park

About 250 students from two schools took part in the event during which a poster and slogan writing competition were held. The programme was organised in association with the WWF Terai Arc Landscape office and the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department.

RCE Lucknow works closely with communities and the Department of Forests in conserving the biodiversity of Dudhwa.

For more information
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Call for RCE applications

UNU is now calling for applications for new RCEs. Those organisations who are interested in initiating the RCE process and applying for RCE status are requested to send expressions of interest to UNU-IAS by **15 April 2009**.

Interested organisations are then requested to submit an application and an application summary by **15 June 2009**.

The Secretariat will communicate with the applicants in July and August, so that applications can be developed in time for the Ubuntu Committee Meeting in the last quarter of this year.

Contact: Global RCE Service Centre, UNU-IAS
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New coordinator joins RCE Severn

Carol Rabbette joined RCE Severn team as coordinator at the beginning of March 2009. With a number of years' experience of working in the field of sustainability in local government, Carol's last post was sustainability adviser for Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucestershire, England. Carol works closely with Professor Daniella Tilbury, Director of RCE Severn and Seek Pang, RCE Severn administrator. She can be contacted at rcesevern@glos.ac.uk.

European RCE meeting report now available

A report on the meeting of European RCEs held at the University of Limerick, Ireland, is now available.

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Call for papers for ESD Journal

CEE (Centre for Environment Education), India requests RCEs to submit case studies for its peer-reviewed Journal of Education for Sustainable Development (JESD). The bi-annual journal is published in English.

Contact: jesd@ceeindia.org
www.ceeindia.org/cee/callpaper.html

5th World Environmental Education Congress

Montreal, Canada, 10-14 May 2009

The call for papers for the 5th WEEC resulted in submissions from interested people from over 122 countries. Eight workshops, organised jointly by representatives from various RCEs will be part of the 5th WEEC.

All information can be found on the 5WEEC website.
<http://www.5weec.uqam.ca/>

4th International RCE Conference

Montreal, Canada, 13-15 May 2009

The next annual International RCE Conference will be hosted by RCE Montreal, Canada, and will take place in the Biosphère (<http://biosphere.ec.gc.ca>), the symbol of Expo 67.

The conference will have continental meetings, a panel

discussion on ESD and current issues, meetings on strategies and operations and capacity building workshops, and ESD thematic meetings.

All information related to the conference and the registration form is available at www.ias.unu.edu/efsd/rceconference2009.

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Green Olympiad

New Delhi, India, 26 September 2009

The Green Olympiad is an annual international environmental examination conducted for middle and senior school students by TERI (the Energy and Resources Institute). Supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India, this culminates in the TERRAQUIZ, the first environmental quiz programme for school students telecast on television.

Participants come from India and abroad, and students from grades 8 to 10 can participate. Deadline for registration is 7 August 2009, and the examination will be held on 26 September.

For more information, www.teriin.org/olympiad.
Contact: kahlonl@teri.res.in

Third European Fair on ESD

Hamburg, Germany, 28-30 October 2009

RCE Hamburg and the region are organising the Third European Fair on ESD this year. The theme of the fair is to be Renewable Energy and Climate Change: Thematic Challenges to European Schools and Universities.

A meeting of European RCEs engaged in energy and climate issues may be hosted on the occasion.

The aims of the event are to:

- provide European organisations with an opportunity to present their work on education with a focus on renewable energy and climate issues;
- foster the exchange of information, ideas and experiences;
- discuss methodological approaches and projects which aim to integrate the topic of renewable energy and climate change in the curriculum of schools and universities; and
- introduce European RCEs, discuss their activities in the field of renewable energy and climate change, and explore possibilities for cooperation.

Deadline for registration is 30 June 2009.

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