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# RCE Bulletin

## A C T I V I T I E S

### Second International RCE Conference

The second International RCE Conference was held in Penang, Malaysia on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of August, 2007. About 130 people from 30 acknowledged RCEs, more than 10 RCE candidates and relevant agencies participated in this conference organized by UNU-IAS in its role of the Global RCE Service Centre and hosted by the University of Science Malaysia as RCE Penang to exchange ideas and experiences of RCEs.



*Plenary session at the conference*

Sessions on experiences of selected RCEs, on RCE networks including the RCE server currently under development, major challenges and ESD research and capacity building were some of those held. Breakout sessions on teacher training and retraining, on sustainable production and consumption and on sustainable energy use were also held during the conference. The African, Asian and European RCEs had separate meetings during the event to exchange common experiences.

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### Second Meeting of the Ubuntu Committee of Peers

The Ubuntu Committee of Peers for RCEs held its second meeting on 6 August 2007 in Penang, Malaysia. During the meeting, the committee reviewed 16 new RCE applications

and recommended 13 of these for acknowledgement, some on the condition that specified RCEs would respond to the committee's comments. The 13 RCEs are Kano and Lagos, Nigeria; Yogyakarta, Indonesia; Chubu, Japan; Hyogo-Kobe, Japan; Graz-Styria, Austria; Ireland; Samara, Russia; Creias-Oeste, Portugal; North East, UK; Montreal, Canada; Western Mexico and Greater North Central Texas, USA.

At the meeting, the Ubuntu Committee recommended all RCEs to take action on the following points.

- To develop a portfolio of RCE projects with flagship projects indicated.
- To provide detailed information on the governance structure of each RCE with names, affiliation and institutions of the members of the governing bodies.
- To pay specific attention to school-based ESD activities especially at primary and secondary schools.
- To consider the most appropriate geographical scope of their RCEs for now and in the future, so that they may initially focus on a relatively focused area such as a large city, but will gradually expand their activities to broader areas such as the wider urban region.
- To conduct and strengthen broad consultation processes among all different actual and potential (new) ESD stakeholders.

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### RCE Graz-Styria to initiate two new projects

The recently acknowledged RCE Graz-Styria is soon to initiate ADD-Life, an interactive course funded by the European Union on sustainable change processes. Both students and practitioners are eligible to participate in the course, which will be connected by video conference to Kirchbach, a rural village in Styria. Inhabitants will thus be able to participate in the lectures too.

A sustainability trail is to be created in the woods of Trofaiach, a town with a population of 8500. This project, to be carried out in cooperation with the youth centre of Trofaiach, will inform nature walkers on the UN

Millennium Development Goals, on local and global water resources, climate change, poverty alleviation and reduction of energy consumption.

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## RCE thematic groups – new developments

For the last several months the RCE community has been working on strategic areas for collaboration to bring together RCEs that are interested in developing actions within thematic areas.

During the recent RCE conference in Penang, representatives of RCEs discussed three areas – Sustainable Consumption and Production, Sustainable Use of Energy, and Teacher Education and Training. Two more themes – Sustainability & Health Education, and Education & Climate Change were initiated by RCEs following the conference. Strategies for collaboration for all of these themes are still at their early stage and the RCE thematic networks are yet to be more clearly defined.

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## Master's Programme on Sustainable Development

A group of nine European and Latin American universities have developed an international Master's Degree Programme on Sustainable Development and Management, as part of a project financed by the ALFA Programme of the European Union.

The participating universities are:

- Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, Germany (Project coordinator)
- Open Universiteit Nederland, The Netherlands
- Örebro Universitet, Sweden
- Universidad de Arte y Ciencias Sociales ARCIS, Chile
- Universidad Bolivariana, Chile
- Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Peru
- Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Xochimilco, Mexico
- Universidad Autónoma de San Luís Potosí, Mexico
- Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Argentina

Based on the materials created for this Master's programme, the Open University of the Netherlands, who is the founding institution of the RCE Rhine-Meuse, is looking for partners to adapt this material for e-learning use. Special interest lies in finding partners amongst the RCE's that are willing to collaborate in adapting the material to the local situation and to create an e-learning offer within the framework of the Open Educational

Resource concept, which implies offering it to students free of cost.

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## Encouraging young women in science

There are few women researchers in science and technology in Japan today. For this reason, from April of this year, Seishin Girls' High School, which is one of the designated schools of the Okayama ESD Project, has initiated a new educational programme called the Life Science Course that educates and encourages young women to pursue careers in science and technology.



*Students at the Life Science Course*

The course is offered for 19 credits over three years, and places an emphasis on laboratory work and field activities. Educational activities are offered with universities and technical institutions in Japan and abroad, as are lectures and practice sessions with women scientists. Interested girl students can also participate in an overseas programme with focuses on environmental issues in Borneo, Malaysia. This part of the programme has been organized with the help of the University of Malaysia in Sabah.

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## Enhancing collaboration

RCE Greater Sendai held a series of three seminars designed to allow local stakeholders to share information and experience among major sub-regions of the Region: in the urban city of Sendai (16 June), the coastal city of Kesenuma (18 June), and the rural community of Osaki-Tajiri (4 August). These seminars aimed at enhancing local stakeholders' understanding of distinctive ESD undertakings in each sub-region, and participants in the seminars were encouraged to learn from each other.

The 18 June seminar was held at Omose Elementary School as a half-day in-service teacher-training workshop on

environmental education, organized by the City Board of Education and attended by more than 100 teachers representing every elementary and junior high school in the City of Kesenuma.

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## ESD at the Sustainable City Development Conference

An International Conference on Sustainable City Development was held in Malmö, Sweden from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> September. A number of workshops on different issues relating to the topic were held, amongst them one on ESD. An additional workshop on establishing RCEs and their role in the region was held as a side event at the conference.

Participants at the event were organizations interested in setting up RCEs across Europe. Zinaida Fadeeva, UNU-IAS, explained the current status of RCEs in the world as well as the procedure for receiving RCE status. Jos Rijkers from the RCE Rhine-Meuse talked about the responsibility and cooperation with local organizations. The feedback from participants was positive and similar events will facilitate increased cooperation and information exchange between RCEs and other interested stakeholders.

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## WESSA hosts 4<sup>th</sup> WEEC

The first week of July saw over 900 environmental education practitioners from over 40 countries converging at the 4<sup>th</sup> World Environmental Education Congress in Durban at the ICC. The congress was hosted by the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) which is well known in the Southern African region as a hub for environmental education initiatives some of which have spanned over 20 years.

Mumsie Gumede, CEO of WESSA and the chair of the conference highlighted the significance of the event 'This is the first time that the World Environmental Education Congress comes to Africa, and it comes at a time when there are calls for revisiting our teaching and learning beyond the classroom. As researchers, practitioners and policy makers we need to ensure that we contribute to the values and goals of sustainability as found in the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2004 -2014) and many other international directives.'

On the last day of the conference, UNU acknowledged RCE KwaZulu Natal, where WESSA plays a role as the lead organization.

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## RCE Kyrgyzstan – first steps

In its efforts to make itself known to a larger community of stakeholders and partners, RCE Kyrgyzstan participated in two international conferences recently. One, held on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of September at the Issykul lake, was held by the National Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Education. At this event, RCE Kyrgyzstan presented its activities to over 50 scientists and professors from Central Asia.

On September 21, six sub-regional meetings on ESD were held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, with the participation of members of the Central Asian working group on environmental education and ESD.

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## International Forum on RCEs held in Beijing

The International Forum on RCEs was recently held in the Changping District of Beijing on August 15-16, 2007. This international forum was co-organized by the UNU, the International Geographical Union, the Geographical Society of China, Beijing Normal University and the Educational Committee of Changping District. Over 120 participants and representatives from 9 countries discussed challenges and further development of RCEs as well as ESD and regional development issues including basic education curricular reform, teacher's training, administration of teaching and learning for ESD, and evaluation of ESD and RCEs.

During the forum in August, Chinese geographical experts and teachers discussed the draft Lucerne Declaration on Geographical Education for Sustainable Development, which was signed on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007 and translated into Chinese. The secretary-general of Geographical Society of China, Professor Zhang Guoyou, attended the discussion session and gave his welcome address to international experts.

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## Promoting international initiatives

The Japanese National Commission for UNESCO has compiled a new list of proposals to UNESCO aimed at promoting international initiatives on DESD. In its document, the National Commission strongly recommends that UNESCO formulate a concrete picture of educational programmes on ESD that may serve as a reference at the national and sub-national levels, and then proceed to develop this image and disseminate it. Also among its



recommendations is that UNESCO develop a wide range of initiatives to promote the interest and participation of countries and individuals involved in ESD, and to promote international cooperation.

**For more information**

<http://www.mext.go.jp/english/topics/unesco/>

## Interregional Cooperation between RCEs

RCE Skåne and RCE candidate Copenhagen have teamed up to work on ESD in and for the region of Öresund. Financed by the European fund for interregional cooperation Interreg Öresund, the City of Copenhagen and the Danish Pedagogical University, Malmö University, Lund University, the Region of Skåne with the City of Malmö coordinating the project, have identified themes that the cooperation will initially cover. These include issues of food as a means for ESD, sustainable urban development and developing visions for a sustainable Öresund Region amongst school children. Although EU funding will end in spring 2008, the project is a start-up for long-lasting cooperation.

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## Sustain-Ed training in Southern Africa

90 learners at Sustain-Ed, a programme of the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) to provide accredited training courses, are almost at the end of their Environmental Education Training and Development Practice (EETDP) Learnership. This is a National Certificate, at the National Qualification Framework Level 5, the overall purpose of which is to enable learners to make a meaningful contribution to environmental change through education. The learning programme is designed around four five-day contact sessions, as well as workplace learning in the form of structured workplace assignments.

WESSA is a lead agency of RCE KwaZulu Natal.

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## ESD initiatives in Toronto

Toronto has seen several ESD initiatives lately. Skills for Energy Efficient Construction in the Toronto Region, a report describing the current training available for construction trades and building operators, identifies weaknesses in training, and makes a number of recommendations to overcome these problems in the context of the development of the market for energy efficient construction in the Greater Toronto Area. The report can be downloaded at [www.cleanairpartnership.org/pdf/skills\\_05\\_2007.pdf](http://www.cleanairpartnership.org/pdf/skills_05_2007.pdf)

Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future: Environmental Education in Ontario Schools, is a report identifying how

the Ontario education system can better provide students with the knowledge, skills, perspectives and practices they need to be environmentally responsible citizens. The report is available at

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/curriculumcouncil/shapingSchools.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/curriculumcouncil/shapingSchools.html)

Learning for a Sustainable Future has launched the Resources 4 Rethinking database providing teachers with improved access to learning resources that support ESD. All resources on [resources4rethinking.ca](http://resources4rethinking.ca) have been professionally reviewed by more than 30 teachers from across Canada.

**For more information**

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## RCE Trang launched

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August the Trang Municipality organized the public launch of RCE Trang at the Thammarin Thana Hotel. Approximately 400 participants including students, teachers and parents attended the event, which was presided over by the governor of Trang. Also as part of the launch, an exhibition on ESD was organized the next day, where schools, colleges and universities in Trang showcased their work.

RCE Trang is the first RCE to be acknowledged in Thailand.

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## Inaugural conference – RCE East Midlands

A conference on learning in the region for sustainable development was organized on 20<sup>th</sup> September to launch RCE East Midlands – the first RCE in the UK. The conference attracted about 160 delegates and explored some of the activities, challenges and opportunities facing ESD practitioners regionally, nationally and internationally. The conference included several video messages, presentations by ESD professionals, 14 workshops and 30 exhibitors. The conference also addressed Government policies and initiatives in support of ESD and global citizenship regionally, nationally and internationally; RCEs and United Nations activity; national and regional ESD activity in the UK, across the schools, FE, HE, youth, Adult and continuing education, voluntary and business sectors; and next steps for the ESD and global citizenship agenda regionally, nationally and internationally.

The full conference report and associated materials are on [www.mediamax.com/studentforcephotos](http://www.mediamax.com/studentforcephotos) and will be available at [www.rceem.org.uk](http://www.rceem.org.uk) by the end of October.

**For more information**

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### New chair of RCE Toronto

Dr. Ingrid Leman Stefanovic, Director of the Centre for Environment at the University of Toronto, has been appointed Chair of the Toronto RCE. Dr. Stefanovic's research interests include environmental philosophy and the values and assumptions affecting environmental decision making. In her role as Chair of the Toronto RCE, Dr. Stefanovic hopes to focus the Toronto RCE's efforts on enhancing ESD programs in Toronto to support implementation of the City of Toronto's Climate Change, Clean Air & Sustainable Energy Action Plan ([http://www.toronto.ca/changeisintheair/pdf/clean\\_air\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/changeisintheair/pdf/clean_air_action_plan.pdf)). The plan acknowledges the important role that public awareness will play in achieving Toronto's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets.

**More information at <http://www.toronto.ca/esd>.**

### Call for contributions to new magazine

RCE Barcelona invites contributions to its magazine Education and Sustainability, started this year to promote good practice in learning for sustainability. The magazine will be published twice a year in English, Spanish and Catalan.

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### 2007 SEAMEO-Jasper Research Award

SEAMEO, with the support of the Canadian Government, administers the annual SEAMEO-Jasper Research Award as a way to recognize exemplary research projects/studies done by Southeast Asians in selected fields. The theme for 2007 is Education for Sustainable Development: Improving Teaching and Learning for Southeast Asia's Common Future.

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### Call for contributions to the Journal of Education for Sustainable Development

CEE (Centre for Environment Education), India, launched the international, peer-reviewed Journal of Education for Sustainable Development (JESD) at the 4th World Environmental Education Congress in Durban, South Africa, on 4 July 2007. JESD encourages you to submit case studies of RCEs to share 'good practices' and 'success stories' of efforts to promote ESD at the local/regional level. The bi-annual journal is published in English.

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### Fourth International Conference on Environmental Education

Ahmedabad, India, 26-28 November 2007

The Fourth International Conference on Environmental Education – Towards A Sustainable Future – Partners for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development – will be held from 26-28 November 2007 in Ahmedabad, India. Organized by UNESCO, this conference follows the 1977 Tbilisi, 1987 Moscow and 1997 Thessaloniki Conferences. A session on RCE will be convened at this conference.

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### European RCE Meeting

Malmö, Sweden, 13-14 December 2007

RCE Skane invites a maximum of two representatives from each RCE and from RCE candidates to a meeting of European RCEs. On the agenda will be European RCEs' priorities, common links and potential collaboration among European RCEs, next RCE International Conference, and other topics

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### 11<sup>th</sup> UNESCO-APEID Conference

Bangkok, Thailand, 12-14 December 2007

The 11<sup>th</sup> UNESCO-APEID International Conference, "Reinventing Higher Education: Toward Participatory and Sustainable Development", will explore linkages among higher education, participatory development and sustainable development. The organizers invite papers on the conference sub-themes and also invite exhibitors to showcase examples of participatory and sustainable development in action.

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[www.unescobkk.org/education/apeid/conference](http://www.unescobkk.org/education/apeid/conference)

### ECO-Iguaçu-2008 Forum

Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, May 2008

RCE Curitiba-Paraná and the Municipality of Foz do Iguaçu – Paraná State invite RCE representatives to participate in the ECO-Iguaçu-2008 Forum – the First World Forum for Cities Sustainability, and to interact with Ministers and State Secretaries for the Environment from all over the world.

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