



WHAT IS AN RCE?

AN RCE IS NOT A PHYSICAL CENTRE OR BUILDING, BUT RATHER A NETWORK OF INDIVIDUALS, ORGANISATIONS AND EXPERTS WHO ARE COMMITTED TO USING EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

sustainable development workshops for educators to conducting research and creating policies that focus on education for sustainable development (ESD). RCEs also work closely with universities, schools and informal learning institutions, such as museums, parks, private businesses, local governments and organisations, NGOs and the media, to ensure that sustainability issues are integrated into all formal curricula and informal learning processes.

Each RCE is regionally-based and members bring in-depth knowledge of the challenges facing their villages, towns, and cities in their regions. Each RCE's portfolio of activities is unique. RCEs work on a range of initiatives, from organising

“Since the beginning of the Decade, a number of initiatives have boosted ESD at the local level. Among the most notable is the Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) programme of the United Nations University (IAS), which has grown from zero participating local networks at the beginning of 2005 to 154 by January 2017 (United Nations University, 2017). The global RCE network has mobilized multiple stakeholders including universities, other education institutions, local authorities, NGOs and various other players at the local level during the Decade that were able to implement a variety of noteworthy sustainable solutions.”

– UNESCO, 2018

“Education must do more than produce individuals who can read, write and count. It must nurture global citizens who can rise to the challenges of the 21st century.”

– Ban Ki-moon, 2015

– UNESCO DESD Final Report (2014)

“During the Decade, RCEs have provided research on sustainable development themes, capacity-building to educators and others, as well as strategic support to the process of reorienting education systems, through communications, fundraising and engagement with policy-makers.”

THE GLOBAL RCE NETWORK AND ESD POLICY

ESD HAS BEEN FOUND TO BE THE CORE TO SOCIETAL CHANGE, THROUGH RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS, INSPIRING INNOVATION AND PROMOTING BOTH BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACROSS SECTORS.

The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the designated lead agency for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD 2005-2014), stressed the need to reorient education towards sustainability. In 2003, in response to the UN resolution on the UN DESD, the United Nations Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) developed a project on ESD and introduced the concept of RCEs. Two years later, seven RCEs were officially acknowledged and the network tripled in size in

its first year. In ten years, the network has expanded into Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe. In 2015, the UN General Assembly released the Sustainable Development Goals – a collection of 17 Goals across a wide range of social, economic, and environmental issues that need to be implemented at the local, regional, and global level to ensure sustainable development across the world. At all levels of society, RCEs play a crucial role in using education as a mechanism for implementing these goals using their local knowledge

and global reach.

The planet faces a number of sustainability challenges, from climate change and the rapid extinction of species to the necessary modification of our consumption patterns. International platforms exist to tackle each of these issues: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) mission is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally, keeping in mind action needs to happen at the local level; and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as well as the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES),

both bring scientists and policy makers together in a mission to protect the world's biota. Each of these global platforms needs to be implemented at a local level. With their official links to UN agencies, formal education institutions, and informal educators worldwide, RCEs are in an ideal position to do just that. They are highly influential policy advocates, able to test education policies individually and work collectively to bring education policy to scale and advice on future actions.

PARTNERS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The RCE network's ties to the UN remain strong. The RCE network's secretariat located at UNU-IAS is headquartered at the United Nations University building in Tokyo, Japan. The network works closely with hundreds of partners at local, regional

and international levels. Its partnership with UNESCO is among its most significant. Others include the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The RCE network also works closely with the Ubuntu Alliance, a council of educational and scientific institutions that together signed the Ubuntu Declaration at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002. Some Alliance members make up the

Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the RCEs, reviewing RCE Candidates and giving strategic advice on the development of the RCE network.

For more information about RCEs and how to become a member, please contact:

Global RCE Service Centre
Education for Sustainable Development Project, UNU-IAS
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<http://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/>

As of December 2018

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Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCEs)

RCEs IN ACTION

There are over 160 **Regional Centres of Expertise** on Education for Sustainable Development (RCEs) acknowledged worldwide.

Each RCE empowers people within its community to lead better, more sustainable lives by providing them with the information, education and tools they need to create positive social and environmental change.

By creating diverse partnerships among educators, researchers, policy-makers, scientists, youth, leaders within indigenous communities and throughout the public, as well as the private and NGO sectors, RCEs are able to provide a framework for strategic thinking and action on sustainability, thereby creating tangible improvements in their communities. Indeed partnerships are at the heart of each individual RCE and of the global RCE network.

WHAT MAKES RCEs **UNIQUE**?

RCEs **think globally**
but **act locally**.

The RCE network brings together educators from different sectors and disciplines who might not usually work together. As such, they are uniquely placed to help create solutions to sustainability challenges through dialogue, education and learning.

Through these efforts, RCEs help prepare local leaders of tomorrow with the tools and information they need to make smart and sustainable choices for the future. RCE efforts encourage innovation and new approaches to sustainable development. They translate

existing knowledge into concrete actions and empower individuals to make sustainable choices for themselves and their communities. The success each RCE achieves on the local level is brought to scale through the global RCE network.

Local knowledge, expertise and best practices are shared globally and applied successfully in other regions. RCEs also play a central role in the transfer of global technologies, knowledge, and experiences at the local level through their programmes and activities.

