

# Regional Centres of Expertise

on education for sustainable development

 REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERTISE  
ON EDUCATION FOR  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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## RCEs in Africa

### Education for Sustainable Development

UNESCO's brief on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) defines it as "a dynamic concept that encompasses a new vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future". The overall aim of ESD is to empower citizens to act for positive environmental and social change, implying a participatory and action-oriented approach.

### Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE)

An RCE is a network of existing formal, non-formal and informal education and learning-related organisations, mobilised to deliver ESD at local and regional (sub-national) levels. RCEs aspire to achieve the goals of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014), by translating its global objectives into the context of the local communities in which they operate.

The core elements of an RCE are governance, collaboration with actors from all levels of formal, non-formal and informal education, research and development, and contributing to the transformation of education to reflect the principles of sustainable development. As of April 2008, there were fifty-five RCEs globally, of which ten are in Africa.

#### RCE Ghana

*Acknowledged in June 2005*

RCE Ghana expects to play a major role in spearheading advocacy initiatives to change the educational framework, so that graduates at all levels are capable of ensuring sustainability in the region.

Some planned activities of RCE Ghana include developing a strategic plan and a policy framework within the general framework of ESD, and creating a network to promote information exchange and collaboration between NGOs, government institutions and academic organisations.

RCE Ghana's secretariat is based at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi.

#### RCE Greater Nairobi, Kenya

*Acknowledged in June 2007*

According to the Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey, 2005-2006, 46 per cent or 16.5 million of the 35.5 million population in the country lives below the poverty line. RCE Greater Nairobi aims to push the ESD agenda in impoverished communities of the capital city.

RCE Greater Nairobi works on developing ESD strategy guidelines for local stakeholders, reorienting curricula in learning institutions to promote ESD, and partnership-building and community action on the priority issues of pollution, waste management, water and sanitation, housing, environmental impact assessment, poverty and income generation.

RCE Greater Nairobi's main contact is based at the civil society organisation Kenya Organisation for Environment Education (KOEI).



#### RCE Zomba, Malawi

*Acknowledged in March 2008*

RCE Zomba's vision is to create a society that is socially responsible, economically viable and environmentally sound. A few of the RCE's objectives are:

- to promote ESD networking and collaboration
- to advocate for policy change
- to re-orient education for sustainable development
- to develop low-cost and accessible ESD learning materials, among others.

Two activities that the RCE plans to work on are a reforestation project in a forest reserve and a waste management initiative in schools.

The Chair of the RCE's Steering Committee is based at the University of Malawi.

#### RCE Maputo, Mozambique

*Acknowledged in March 2008*

RCE Maputo's vision is the creation of a society imbued with social and cultural values as well as scientific knowledge that support sustainable principles of development. Some objectives of the RCE in the short term are to research and make an inventory of local innovative sustainable practices, promote ESD training courses, harmonise modules on Environment Education (EE) and ESD, and to develop ESD learning materials.

The RCE plans to organise training courses for primary and secondary school teachers, for students, and for NGOs. The RCE will also research ESD programme and curriculum development, and develop a database on innovative and best practices on EE and ESD.

The Eduardo Mondlane University is the key partner of RCE Maputo.

## RCE Kano, Nigeria

*Acknowledged in March 2008*

The long-term goal of RCE Kano is to support learning for poverty eradication and combating environmental degradation.

The RCE will partner with the Kano state government and two universities for research and development. The potential of genetically modified crops to boost production and to balance production and consumption, and the factors leading to poverty, their dimension and solutions, are potential research topics identified by the RCE.

In its plans, the RCE includes the formation of environment clubs and associations in secondary and tertiary education institutions, and encouraging discussion on ESD and poverty alleviation in all informal social or administrative gatherings.

## RCE Lagos, Nigeria

*Acknowledged in November 2007*

RCE Lagos' long-term objective is to promote education for a sustainable and healthy lifestyle rather than education geared towards employment. In the short-term, the RCE plans to supplement the lack of qualified human resources at the primary education level and explore the possibilities of reversing the trend of child labour and child trafficking in the region. Medium-term activities identified by the RCE are to broaden the base of awareness raising activities on HIV/AIDS in the region, and promoting learning to combat youth-dominated crime.

## RCE KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

*Acknowledged in January 2007*

RCE KwaZulu Natal's long-term vision is to develop partnerships and build capacity for promoting public participation in environment conservation through education. The RCE manages and coordinates the South African Development Community's (SADC) Regional Environmental Education Programme in all fourteen southern African countries. The RCE is developing various policy briefs related to ESD, and a research project on poverty, health, vulnerability and the environment, with case studies from ten countries is ongoing. The RCE also assists in establishing RCEs in several southern African countries.

The RCE is supporting the Mainstreaming ESD in African Universities (MESA) initiative, in partnership with UNEP.

The NGO Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) leads the RCE.

## RCE Makana and Rural Eastern Cape, South Africa

*Acknowledged in January 2007*

RCE Makana's vision is to develop and share expertise for improved and coordinated education and training responses to issues affecting the health, well-being of people and the environment in the region. The RCE sees itself as a social learning community, building institutional and community knowledge for sustainable development in the municipality and province.

In the short-term, the RCE aims to develop courses for use in teacher education programmes, engage with and research issues affecting the quality of education and training, implement a Schools and Sustainability programme to strengthen educational quality, support educational programmes that inspire youth and that create opportunities for service learning, support accredited workplace-based learning programmes and to strengthen learning programmes that focus on biodiversity conservation, health and nutrition.

The Rhodes University acts as the lead organisation of the RCE.

## RCE Swaziland

*Acknowledged in March 2008*

The vision of RCE Swaziland is to promote and facilitate access to innovative approaches to Education for Environment and sustainable socio-economic development. The RCE plans to develop innovative methods in all sectors and at all levels of education, to review and reorient curricula with an ESD perspective and develop a resource facility for the storage of information on ESD.

The main contact for the RCE is based at the University of Swaziland.

## RCE Greater Mbarara, Uganda

*Acknowledged in March 2008*

RCE Greater Mbarara aims at promoting civic and private sector organisation partnerships and learning for sustainable livelihoods. In the long-term, the RCE's objectives are to provide ESD training and capacity building, developing ESD materials, improving the sustainable development competencies of target communities in the region, and to contribute to the realisation of a healthy and productive population by strengthening systems for improved health care.

The Mbarara University of Science and Technology is the main contact for the RCE.

## For more information

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