

# RCE European Meeting 2020



A two-day event for Regional Centres of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development, sharing experiences of local collaborative approaches to sustainability and climate change across Europe - linking learning with action.

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Theme: “Climate Emergency: Joined-up action”**

**Hosted by RCE East Midlands, UK.**



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# **How the conference will work**

## **Viewing Presentations in Advance**

Short pre-recorded presentations that support interactive sessions will be made available from the 16<sup>th</sup> November for online viewing. Make sure to make time to watch the relevant talks prior to sessions that you attend.

During live sessions there will be time to hear key points from presentations and to discuss the issues raised, linking to related presentations or topics.

## **Scheduled Sessions**

Our main online platform is *Blackboard Collaborate Ultra*, which is a widely-used tool for interactive webinars, and which runs through any web-based browser. To join particular sessions, attendees can click links on a one-page document that summarises the conference programme.

## **Online Discussion**

Attendees will also be sent a link to a conference Padlet page, which can be used to add comments on each session or on the conference as a whole. This can be used to share ideas on talks before scheduled sessions, to add comments during sessions or to provide feedback afterwards.

## **Time to network and meet informally**

We have worked hard to create spaces for making new acquaintances and for informal and spontaneous discussions. The breakout room function of Blackboard Collaborate will help attendees to have small group discussions. During morning coffee sessions, we will pair you up at random for serendipitous encounters with other delegates. Rooms are also available for ad hoc meetings in breaks. We also have evening social activities planned!

## **Acknowledgements**

The organising team from RCE East Midlands in the UK would like to thank the RCE Secretariat in Tokyo for their support and members of RCEs in the UK and across Europe for shaping the design of the event and for the excellent and wide-ranging contributions for the event.

# **The Programme: Day One**

## **10am to 10.30am Welcome Drinks**

This semi-facilitated session offers a chance to ensure that your audio and video are working well on our online platform 'Blackboard Collaborate Ultra' and to network and mingle informally with other attendees. You will be welcomed into our 'Welcome Room' and can then go to one of several Breakout Rooms to meet and mingle with other attendees in small groups.

Before the session, watch the three pre-recorded short welcome talks to the conference from RCE East Midlands, the RCE Secretariat in Tokyo and the Miki Kiyoka from the Japanese Ministry of the Environment.

## **10.30am to 11.45am: Climate Emergency: joined-up action**

This interactive session focuses on the conference theme, featuring a panel of contributors from across Europe involved in local collaborative climate action. Leicester City Council's Adam Clarke will provide a keynote talk, discussing Leicester's approach to tackling transport emissions and promoting cycling during the Covid-19 lockdown. Confirmed panel members: Adam Clarke (Leicester City Council); Kate Sposab (RCE Belarus); Christian Buettner (RCE Nurenberg); Laura Curtis-Moss (RCE Scotland).

## **11.45am to 12:00pm: BREAK**

## **12.00pm to 1.00pm: Open Space**

This session features four breakout discussions, each exploring a question around local collaborative approaches to sustainability put forward by attendees during the week preceding the conference.

## **1.00pm to 2.00pm LUNCH**

Breakout rooms are available for small group discussions.

## **2.00pm to 3.30pm: Parallel Workshop Sessions**

### **Session 1: SDGs Labs - joint forces between academia and business**

Led by members of RCE Vienna.

In a short opening presentation, we will introduce our project SDGs Labs and what it means to work not only across different European countries, but also with very diverse partners: in SDGs Labs we work as a team of universities, businesses and NGOs and put all our expertise together to boost the implementation of the SDGs in the European agribusiness and food production sector. After this input, we will open the discussion on how to bridge academic theory and daily business practice if we want to push the SDGs forward. International experts will be joining our panel discussion and you are welcome to pose questions to us throughout the session. To find out more about our project beforehand, check out our homepage: [www.sdgs-labs.eu](http://www.sdgs-labs.eu)

### **Session 2: Carbon and Climate Literacy – community learning on how to act on climate change**

Led by members of RCE East Midlands and Steve Cayzer, University of Bath

This session introduces training which aims to empower and inspire climate action within community settings. Carbon Literacy Training, a model developed in the UK, offers accredited learning on climate change to individuals and organisations and has been delivered by RCE East Midlands in schools and universities. Climate Literacy has been delivered at the University of Bath for all students as they start at the university. For more information on Carbon Literacy, see <https://carbonliteracy.com>

### **Session 3: Arts, Creativity, Fashion and Sustainability**

Chaired by Saja Elmishri, University of Leicester

This session explores arts-based engagement to mobilise climate action and also focuses on how university education on fashion and textiles can embed sustainability.

### *Art and Climate - Using Creativity to Understand the Crisis*

**Laura Curtis-Moss**

This offer will showcase existing artistic responses to the climate crisis and highlight best practice from projects delivering this at a variety of levels. This will include case-studies of grassroots organisations mobilizing their local communities to action. There will also be an opportunity for participants to respond creatively to the climate crisis - with a step by step guide.

### *Re-imagining the landscape of future living and learning through bio-material exploration.*

**Sabine Lettmann, Zoe Hillyard and Beth White**

MAT\_er.Lab, based in the School of Fashion and Textiles at Birmingham City University in England, is driving bio-material exploration in the West Midlands region to re-imagine the landscape of future living and learning. Providing a material-led space for open-ended cross-disciplinary 'play' it focuses on 'scavenging techniques' looking to identify and capitalise on locally generated waste. Birmingham City Council's coat of arms depicts both artist and engineer united under a single word motto - 'forward'. With links to the Birmingham Circular Economy Club, STEAMhouse and industry partners, MAT\_er.lab is responding to the climate emergency through joined up action and seeks to continue this partnership, forging a new sustainability focused chapter in Birmingham's history based on circular design principles. Material investigations – coffee leathers, egg-shell composites, jute tufted alginates, are the result of fusing craftsmanship and design thinking, stimulating debate across design disciplines to inspire new applications.

### *Sustainability approaches with Fashion and Textiles higher education*

**Carolyn Hardaker and Buddy Penfold, De Montfort University**

This short talk will share approaches to embedding sustainability issues within programmes on fashion and textiles, drawing upon experiences from De Montfort University, Leicester in the UK.

## **Session 4: Climate Emergency and Place**

**Chaired by Andrew Reeves, De Montfort University**

This session focusses on place-based climate change issues and draws upon four short pre-recorded presentations on local responses from Wales, France, Germany and Belarus. The session touches upon a range of approaches including policy, education and public engagement.

*The Well-being of Future Generations: a framework for joined-up action on climate emergency.*

**Gwenith Elias, RCE Cymru/Wales**

This talk will provide an overview of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as an ideal framework for embedding sustainability in institutions and projects. We give practical examples of how RCE Cymru is adopting the framework to address Welsh and UN goals and in particular, how our circles of interest are addressing the Climate Emergency. Discussion will provide participants with ideas on how to adapt this to their own circumstances.

*Education for Sustainable Development as a key factor of the future of a European City*

**Dr. Christian Buettner**

In March 2020, the City of Nuremberg opens its new centre for sustainable and environmental learning at an artificial lake in the city centre. The main work is information and education of all ages about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), green energy, etc. I will present about the centre and our work in the next years.

*Crowd mapping as an Efficient Tool for Citizens' Engagement in local climate Adaptation Practices*

**Kate Sposab, RCE Belarus**

The crowd mapping tool has been designed within the 'TeRRIFICA' project to engage various regional stakeholders in co-creation processes to find solutions for local climate challenges. This interactive map allows the users to create spatially located information and share suggestions for the identified negative impacts of climate issues in the region or to add remarks about climate-friendly zones for city residents. This web

mapping application is based on “learning by doing” and inclusive approaches, and thus can easily be used for educational purposes within formal or non-formal education. The ESD Association and RCE Belarus have launched a series of Climate Workshops for climate activists and young educators based on the findings of local crowd mapping and we aim to engage local citizens in decision-making concerning climate adaptation measures.

### *Climate Emergency in Brittany and after COVID 19*

**Françoise Laveuve**

According to the Global Institute for Environmental Change (GiEC), Brittany is threatened by rising water levels following global warming and the melting of glaciers. If the temperatures, and therefore the water, continue to rise, some islands could disappear, and the Breton coast will erode further, which will cause problems for the residential areas by the sea, and economic problems concerning the fishing industry, with fish moving away towards fresher waters, due to increasing warming waters. Since COVID has highlighted the relationship between the environment and climate change, this talk will discuss measures carried out in Brittany to further preserve the environment and to limit climate change.

### **3.30pm to 4.00pm: Closing Plenary**

The closing session for the day features a round-up of key points from Open Space sessions and signposts evening activities and sessions taking place on the next day.

### **6.30pm to 8pm Evening events**

#### **The King's Head: Virtual Pub.**

RCE East Midlands pub landlord Andrew Reeves invites you to grab a drink at home (alcoholic or otherwise) and join other attendees together or in breakout rooms for an informal chat. Drop-in any time during the time slot.

#### **Adam's Fruit and Nuts**

A virtual social event celebrating the fruits and nuts of the Earth hosted by Adam Cade from RCE East Midlands. Come on in for plenty of wordplay, European multicultural stuff, bring along any homemade concoctions and recipes to the screen, and, of course, some fruity drink to wash down the Brexit Blues and Covid Confinement. Bring your fruits and nuts, and anything made from them, with you. Welcome to the party. No need to wash your hands or cover your face here. We're all here on screen to celebrate the fruits of the Earth and some of the "nutcases" (sorry not very politically correct!) on this Earth.

### **A Taste of Leicester: Cooking and Conversation**

Join a cookery demonstration led by Carys Bennett from Food for a Future who be showcasing the best of sustainable vegan cuisine using locally grown ingredients. A chance to connect over food, chatting about favourite dishes and cooking styles, and to learn more about how to make plant-based meals that are delicious, nutritionally balanced and light on the earth. Surprising fact: the word 'vegan' was first coined in Leicester!

# **The Programme: Day Two**

## **9.30am to 11.30am: European RCEs in Action**

This session, chaired by Betsy King from RCE Scotland, will provide a space for updates from the Global RCE network and discussion on RCE collaboration across Europe, as well as sharing inspiring examples of practice. Activities will include plenary Q&A and small-group discussions on recent RCE practice and the challenges and opportunities posed by Covid-19.

## **11.30am to 11.45am: Break**

## **11.45am to 1.00pm RCE Practice Share 1**

Four parallel workshop sessions, providing space to discuss a topic or several thematically grouped pre-recorded contributions.

### **Session 1: Covid-19, ESD and Building Back Better**

*Vasiliki Kioupi and Ros Wade, RCE Greater London*

This workshop offers a space for RCE members to meet and discuss the impact of Covid-19 on their activities and ways forward. It will combine a panel discussion of EU RCE members and other invited speakers with breakout room small group discussion focussed on future action on ESD. This session will focus on school and university settings and is the first of a series of online workshops to take place during 2020/21.

### **Session 2: Youth Voice and Climate Action**

*Margaret Fleming, Adam Cade, Debs McCahon*

This session explores good practice in engaging young people in climate science and sustainable education. The session draws upon activities from several international networks: The Woodcraft Folk, Erasmus + European Partnerships and the WWOOF Network. The session highlights what young people wish to know, how they wish to engage and lessons learnt from climate engagement activity.

## **Session 3: Climate Justice and ESD**

**Chair TBC**

This session explores several approaches to ESD that focus upon issues of climate justice.

### *Confronting social engineering with ESD: the case of destructive mining*

**Joám Evans Pim, RCE Galicia & Montescola Foundation, Spain**

Since 2009 a surge of new mining projects has taken place across Europe after significant rise of metal prices, leading to interest in marginal deposits through so-called "low cost" mining operations. While activists have focused mostly on legal battles and public information, the mining lobby has been attempting to build a "positive" and "sustainable" image of this kind of speculative and low cost mining through social engineering and so-called "social licence to operate" (SLO) strategies. To convey this message, mining lobbies have targeted schools, with an explicit focus in conditioning youth to become uncritical and favourable to massive mining in the near future. While social opposition and awareness to destructive unsustainable mining is growing, little was being done to bring the issue into learning environments through an ESD approach. This workshop presents one such attempt led by RCE Galicia.

### *Climate Justice Education: Between Social Movement Learning and Schooling*

**Beth Christie, RCE Scotland**

This talk shares learning from a recent action research project, which examined how teachers and activists perceived the challenges to, and opportunities for, developing climate justice education within the ostensibly accommodating policy context of Learning for Sustainability in Scottish education. We were interested in how different stakeholders conceptualised climate justice, the sources of their knowledge and the potential for framing conflicts highlighted by activism as curricular resources, as well as the perceived challenges to do so. We also explored what activist constituencies and educators can learn from one another, through thinking about climate justice education, and our research suggested some high-level principles of effective climate justice

pedagogy, namely that it is centred around: Collective forms of learning for social purpose; a connection to place and community; lived experience and interests. We also found that educators identified a number of personal, professional and structural barriers to this approach. Based on this work, we recommend developing ideological awareness and analysis skills ‘upstream’ in teacher training and creating mutual learning opportunities between social movements and schools.

## **Session 4: The climate emergency: meeting the challenge of student activism in uncertain times.**

**Dr Iain Cross, St. Mary’s University. Dr Alina Congreve, Independent Researcher**

This interactive online workshop will introduce climate activism and the challenge for higher education through a combination of short talks and group activities. The workshop will draw upon recent research interviews with academics taking novel approach in subjects where climate change is not commonly taught. Participants will explore the driving forces behind these initiatives, examine the structures that underpin them, and how their own professional practices can support implementation. Participants will also undertake a review of case studies in climate change curriculum challenges in groups.

## **1.00pm to 2.00pm LUNCH**

## **2.00pm to 3.00pm: Practice Share 2**

### **Session 1: Schools, Youth, Nature Education and Sustainability**

**Chair TBC**

This session provides space to discuss three short talks focussed upon global education, nature and the climate emergency in both school and youth settings.

*Germinating Life, Cultivating a Pocket Garden*

**Cecilia Eysartier, Luis Monterubianesi, RCE Rhur, Germany**

This talk introduces the project “Germinating life. Cultivating a Pocket Garden” delivered by RCE Rhur. The project provides meaningful and experiential activities designed for children to experience the process of

seed germination, integrating science, art and nutrition. This approach offers an integrative perspective, bringing together intellectual and affective domains, and a way of seeing the seed with new eyes, through attentive observation, imagination and creativity. The program is a useful didactic resource for educational institutions, considering that the germination process is a topic included in every school's Natural Science curriculum. We have found that through this approach, children can awake a sense of wonder towards life by developing a significant engagement with nature. They marvel in amazement at the life within them; and they become more receptive of their own inner nature and connected to the outer natural world around them.

*Youth for Trees: Developing outdoor climate activities and action through trees and forests*

**Adam Cade, RCE East Midlands**

Trees are a key part of the carbon cycle playing a significant role in both climate change mitigation and adaptation. But they can also be the hook to change consumer behaviour and lifestyle. This talk will introduce trees and forests as a way of exploring the climate emergency using a range of outdoor activities, supported by online and video resources. These youth-led activities can lead from science and geography into campaigning and entrepreneurship through education for sustainable development. We can discuss the value of using trees and woodlands as a setting and context for learning about the climate emergency, as well as for general learning, wellbeing and health. We will consider how climate change can be learnt outdoors and personally how trees can fit with your professional practice as an element of the climate emergency.

*Empowering young people to bring about change*

**Debs McCahon**

Woodcraft Folk has brought together young people, youth workers, teachers and engineers to share knowledge, inspire action and influence change to address the climate emergency. Our project activities focus on climate science education, engineering solutions and young people's ability to influence change through their passion and creativity.

## **Session 2: Schools, ESD and Global Learning**

**Chaired by Betsy King, RCE Scotland**

This session draws upon two projects, 'Connecting Classrooms' and 'ESD Supervision' to explore future directions in putting sustainability issues at the heart of learning in schools across Europe.

*Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning: enabling joined-up action for a better world*

**Kirsten Leask, RCE Scotland**

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL) supports schools across the globe to collaborate locally and internationally on the big issues that shape our world. It operates across the UK and in more than 30 other countries: offering funding, free support, and resources for collaborative partnership work as well as individual and whole-school professional learning opportunities for educators. The CCGL programme in Scotland is unique in that it harnesses the expertise of several key national organisations to ensure effective delivery. A consortium, comprising RCE Scotland, the University of Edinburgh, the International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS) and the Scotland Malawi Partnership works together with the programme funders (British Council and the Department for International Development), to deliver the programme to Scottish schools; facilitating the formation of collaborative partnerships and delivering professional learning. In this talk, we'll explore the ethos of the programme and its impact on educators and learners.

*ESD Supervision 4.0 – policy making and campaigning*

**Betsy King, RCE Scotland and Detlev Lindau-Bank, RCE Oldenburger Münsterland**

'ESD Supervision' is an ERASMU's project in which RCE Scotland, Oldenburger Münsterland, Lithuania and Czech are involved. ESD SuperVision 4.0 focuses three key factors relating to the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into school curricula: 1) Capacity building for teachers and educators; 2) School development as a whole institution approach and; 3) Policy making in the sense of a

support system towards ESD in secondary schools to deliver ESD more effectively. We would like to let as many European RCEs as possible take part in this project. Together we want to collect ideas for a joint campaign with all European RCE. The aim is to make the work of the European RCE in the field of ESD and schools visible and to initiate changes in educational policy.

### **Session 3: The new COMMEET toolkit for community groups: Promoting the wellbeing of migrants and displaced persons**

**Ros Wade, RCE East London**

London RCE with COMMEET will present this new freely available 10-point toolkit which has been developed by a team of activists and academics from a wide range of countries, including Indonesia, Malta, Belgium, Iran, Turkey, Netherlands, UK. The role of ESD educators will be discussed and examples of community action will be shared. The workshop will invite feedback and suggestions for piloting the toolkit in different contexts. View the toolkit here: <https://www.commeet.org>.

### **Session 4: Key Concepts for sustainability in higher education: Systems Thinking and the SDGs**

**Chaired by Steve Martin, Change Agents UK**

This session draws upon pre-recorded short talks to explore two key concepts in sustainability in higher education (and other settings) – systems thinking and mapping contributions against the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

#### *Mapping your organisation's contribution to the UN SDGs*

**Asha Mistry, University of Leicester, RCE East Midlands, UK**

We present a new perspective on our academic contribution to the SDGs, using SDG mapping methodology that allows us to see our contributions in a new way with an international spin. Looking beyond individual organisations, we will ask you to question work towards the SDGs, discuss how academic contribution can differ around the world and whether we should change our tactics? We have developed a unique methodology that allows us to look at our academic contribution to the SDGs in a completely novel way. Instead of focussing on individual organisations, we can look at the SDGs in a collaborative way and will be

presenting interesting, and perhaps controversial, data that no one has seen before to challenge delegates to engage with the data, explore biases and assumptions and leave with new thoughts and ideas around their individual organisation and collaborative contribution to the SDGs.

### *Systems Thinking as a Threshold Concept for Sustainable Education*

**Dr Jemma Browne, Dr Matthew Jones, Dr Sandra Costa, Dawn Parke**

We are faced with interconnected sets of dilemmas associated with climate change, loss of biodiversity, social inequality and population growth. How can we begin to solve these problems when the future is unknown? Meyer and Land (2006) describe a cognitive dilemma as troublesome knowledge, 'that which 'is 'alien', or counter-intuitive or even intellectually absurd at face value'. Combining the notion of Concept Thresholds in learning with systems thinking (Sandri, 2013), this discussion explores how troublesome knowledge can be used as a transformative pedagogy with the potential to change the way future graduates think, practice and are prepared to face crises we are now experiencing.

In this talk we will identify threshold concepts in design process thinking to generate opportunities for radical change and disrupt 'business as usual' thinking and practices.

### **3.00pm to 3.30pm: Closing Plenary**

An open forum to summarise key themes and learnings from the conference and provide a chance for evaluation and reflection on the event. We will also highlight the upcoming RCE Global Conference, which will be hosted by RCE Scotland in 2021.