



11th Africa RCE Regional Meeting: It's time for Africa: Sustainability Futures
2 September 2021

The 11th African RCE Regional Meeting was held virtually on 2 September 2021, co-hosted by RCE KwaZulu-Natal and RCE Makana and Rural Eastern Cape under the theme 'It's time for Africa: Sustainability Futures'.

Full recording is available at the URL below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IctsA8Hdbkg&ab_channel=UNESCOSSST

1) Welcome and Greetings:

Dr Jim Taylor from RCE KwaZulu-Natal welcomed participants to the 11th African RCE Regional Meeting and expressed his appreciation to all those involved. Dr Taylor acknowledged the RCE network's development and mentioned that people from various networks, including the SADC REEP, Orange-Senqu, UNESCO, ASPNet and Expert-Net, attended the meeting. Then, **Mr Maletje Mponwana** expressed his excitement to participate in the meeting and gratitude to be a part of the RCE network. Finally, **Mr Preven Chetty** from RCE Makana and Rural Eastern Cape provided an overview of the RCE and its network worldwide and in Africa.

2) Opening poem by Prof Akpezi Ogbuigwe:

IT'S TIME FOR AFRICA

For most of our lives, planes traced intricate patterns across our skies
Ferrying passengers from holiday to boardroom
From meetings to mansions
On and on society chugged like the eternal locomotive
Ships and rigs dotted our oceans like a million rubber ducks in the tub of the world
Students entered schools and exited universities
From child to adult with scarcely a breath in between
We revelled in stadiums, bickered in markets, and flung our riches at shopping malls

And then there was silence
A wave of quiet swept the world
For the first time in many generations, we stopped to consider
And nature breathed a sigh of relief

In that quiet, Africa heard her own voice
The voice once lost in the clamour of external voices
Offering hurried solutions with colonial strings attached
The voice that rebounded off the walls of protectionist societies
Only in it for themselves
In the moment of silence that voice rings
Tremors of love rise up from the Earth
The rivers giggle to a tune of abundance
The mountains and meadows, flora and fauna
All join in this symphony of possibility
The wisdom of the ancients and the brilliance of the youth
Come together to weave a tapestry
The threads dyed red by war and those bleached by the tears of the poor
All woven together with respect and compassion
To create a new pattern, a new foundation
From which we can build a new garden of Africa

We chart a new path instead of laying new stone on old and broken roads
Learning from our mistakes and with respect for our soil
We find a new sustainable way
With peace, respect, creativity, and welfare of all
sustainable growth for sustainable futures
A path of trust, collaboration, and service to one and all
We as Africans will shape our land
And present our success as a gift to the world

Ring! Ring! Ring!
(From the other end a forceful voice queried)
"Yes please, who is speaking"
(The response was loud and clear)
Hello World. This is Africa.

3) Congratulatory remarks: Mr Takeo Sugii (Director, Office of Environmental Education, General Policy Division, Ministry's Secretariat, Ministry of Japan) recognised that RCE is a flagship program funded by the Japanese government and expressed his appreciation to all RCE members for their efforts to achieve a sustainable society. Furthermore, he emphasised that RCEs have strengthened partnerships at global, regional, and international levels and accelerated ESD and SDGs' actions.

4) Prof. Rob O Donoghue presented the collaboration among RCE Makana, RCE Gauteng and RCE Kwa-Zulu Natal working with heritage knowledge in informal ESD partnership. The project covers different aspects, including heritage and food, health, water and biodiversity.

He emphasised that remembering a forgotten past is valuable to understand the present and reimagine a more just and sustainable future.

5) Ms Won-Jung Byun (Senior Project Officer in the Section of ESD, UNESCO) presented the details of the roadmap of ESD for 2030, showing the global pathway for the promotion of ESD. The road map is available on UNESCO's website. She underlined that ESD was a key enabler to achieving all SDGs.

6) Dr Fumiko Noguchi (Research Fellow, UNU-IAS) provided updates for the Global RCE network. She informed about newly acknowledged RCEs, projects that won RCE awards 2020 in different categories, and regional meetings and global webinars organised online due to the pandemic. She also introduced the Roadmap for the RCE Community 2021-2030 and stressed the importance of regular reporting from RCEs to review the achievements.

7) Dr Abdul Hussaini from RCE Minna presented activities in RCE Minna and provided reflections on the 10th Africa RCE meeting held in 2020.

8) RCE roundup video message from RCE's

At the meeting, 9 African RCEs delivered video messages.

- **RCE Ogun** highlights indigenous people's capacity to tackle climate change and the role of indigenous people in raising climate change awareness. RCE Ogun focuses on the recycling of plastic cups and materials to prevent land pollution.

- **RCE Greater Yenagoa** aims to improve the quality of life of people living in the area and conducts various projects, including a youth development programme for reducing unemployment, promoting sports, sustainable living, libraries and providing scholarships.

- **RCE Minna** has continued their efforts in ESD, particularly in youth development. The RCE held celebrated for planting over 200 trees in the region.

- **RCE Greater Masaka** participated in a flagship project called the Lake Victoria Environmental Flagship Project and collaborated with various stakeholders in research and community engagement.

- **RCE Eswatini** is engaged in public awareness, community outreach and joint work on tackling local issues. For example, RCE Eswatini launched the Phatso Nawe campaign, encouraging people to use their own bags for a certain period to raise awareness of plastic waste.

- **RCE Lesotho** has grown steadily over the years, and the community has been remarkably improved since 2012, for example, through implementing innovative ESD strategies, community engagement, encouraging people to participate in hiking trails and using music to improve well-being in the community.

- **RCE Makana** engages youth in activities that make environmental problems resonate with youth. In the project, they participated in a wide range of fieldwork activities, including a river clean-up.

- **RCE Gauteng** focuses on effective implementation of ESD in water conservation, biodiversity protection and waste management and makes efforts in building an Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS).

- **RCE KwaZulu-Natal** adopts a biomonitoring approach where environmental education on river and water resources is available for local people, contributing to reducing and tackling pollution.

9) Keynote address by Distinguished Professor Heila Lotz Sisitika:

Her key messages can be found below.

Transformative learning for people and the planet is a necessity for survival and future generations. We must transform learning first if we want to transform education. There should be developing tools for engaged research, co-defining matters of concern and engagement in fertile contradictions. We must not be shy of optimal disruptions but encourage cognitive and emotional perspective shifts that potentially lead to political and socio-ecological change.

Transgressive reimagining learning processes and systems are in RCEs and Student Study Team (SST) in Africa. And the RCE stories we have heard are all doing all that. There is a need to implicitly challenge normalized cultures and practices with the many skills we have. Transdisciplinary approaches and working with others should be followed to rewrite the wrongs and strengthen the collective agency.

There is high interest in creative, critical, engaged work. We need to learn for the planet, and curriculum transformation is crucial. We depend on our biodiversity, but we are confronting massive challenges with climate change.

We must pay attention to our teachers because teachers are the most critical factor in providing quality education. There are 85 million teachers in the world teaching 23% of the entire world's population. Therefore, it is true that teachers are holding the next generation in their hands to enable a more just and sustainable planet for future generations.

The new question that is also coming up as we sit online with COVID-19 is what does E-learning mean for T-learning? And how do we make sure we are not stuck in a zoom box as we do E-learning.

10) Breakout Room Sessions: This session was led by Mr Preven Chetty. Participants were split into 7 groups of about 10 participants. Each group was given three questions to answer:

- Who are we, and what is our focus

- Our creative innovation
- How we plan to collaborate with other RCE's

A Miro board has been used as a platform for participants to share their thoughts on three questions.

The Breakout Room Session lasted for 20 minutes, and everyone returned to the plenary session for ending remarks by Prof. Akpezi Ogbuigwe and Prof. Heila Lotz Sisitka.

Please click the link below for the full recording of the 11th Africa RCE Regional Meeting and navigate yourself to the relevant hyperlinked session for review.

Full recording is available at the URL below.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lctsA8Hdbkg&ab_channel=UNESCOST

Hyperlinked Program

Time	Activity
11h00 CAT	Welcome and Greetings
11h15 CAT	Now's the Time: Africa's Sustainability Future – A Poem by Prof Akpezi Ogbuigwe
11h20 CAT	Ministry of the Environment from Japan address
11h23 CAT	RCE Minna reflections from last 10th RCE African Regional Meeting 2020
11h25 CAT	RCE Collaborations Prof. Rob. O' Donoghue
11h28 CAT	UNESCO Office- Roadmap 2030 Ms Won-Jung Byun, Why is roadmap 2030 such a special opportunity?
11h30 CAT	RCE Updates by Dr. Fumiko Noguchi , Research Fellow, UNU-IAS (Global RCE Service Centre)
11h35 to 12h30 CAT	Africa RCE Round-up Each African RCE is invited to submit a 1 minute, You-Tube style video, which addresses the following three questions Who are we and what is our key focus? Our creative innovation How we plan to collaborate with other RCE's?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCE eSwatini • RCE Gauteng • RCE Greater Yenagoa • RCE Lesotho • RCE Makana • RCE Minna • RCE Ogun • RCE Uganda
12h30 CAT	<p>Keynote Address – Prof. Heila Lotz-Sisitka – How we go beyond the limitations of the SDG’s and why the African RCE network is well placed to offer a global resurgence.</p> <p>Full recording available at the URL below. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IctsA8Hdbkg&ab_channel=UNESCOSST</p>
12h45- 13h15 CAT	DISCUSSION session
13h15 CAT	<p>Closing thoughts by Prof Akpezi Ogbuigwe</p> <p>Full recording available at the URL below. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IctsA8Hdbkg&ab_channel=UNESCOSST</p>
13h20 CAT	<p>Vote of Thanks and closing by RCE Makana & RCE KZN</p> <p>Full recording available at the URL below. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IctsA8Hdbkg&ab_channel=UNESCOSST</p>
13h30 CAT	END