The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the designated lead agency for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (2005-2014), stressed the need to reorient education towards sustainability. In 2003, in response to the UN resolution on the UN ESD, 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 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 bios. 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.

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 Candidatures 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 rceservicecentre@unu.edu http://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/

**PARTNERS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

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**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.

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. Each RCE’s portfolio of activities is unique.

**Global RCE Network**

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**THE 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.

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WHAT MAKES RCEs UNIQUE?

RCEs think globally but act locally.

RCEs bring 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.

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.