



9th Global RCE Conference

Regional Centres of
Expertise on Education
for Sustainable
Development

4-7 November 2014
Okayama, Japan



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Institute for the Advanced Study
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Foreword



The 9th Global RCE Conference in Okayama, Japan is historic in that it marked a decade of global RCE movement. The movement was launched in 2005 in response to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014). RCEs, which are acknowledged by the United Nations University with the support of the Ubuntu Alliance through its Ubuntu Committee of Peers for RCEs, are not only significant for the region in which they are geographically located, where they provide a unique opportunity to promote learning and practice for sustainable development, but are also important at the international level in creating the Global Learning Space for Sustainable Development.

The conference took stock of the achievements, opportunities and challenges of the RCE community, and also looked post-2014 on the implementation of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, as well as on aligning RCEs with international sustainable development processes including the post-2015 development agenda. The conference was special in having been one of the official Stakeholder Meetings of the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. The immense efforts of the City of Okayama and the stakeholders of RCE Okayama in hosting the 9th Global RCE Conference were gratefully acknowledged.

This booklet encapsulates the technical proceedings of the conference, featuring highlights of the RCE community development over the decade, reflecting on the lessons learned, and the progress and prospects of ESD. It also features discussions on strategic, thematic, operational and geographic issues, the policymakers' roundtable, and shows RCE engagements with international sustainability processes.

The booklet further depicts the recipients of the RCE Award, which illustrates how RCEs contribute to addressing local sustainability challenges through multi-stakeholder learning and partnerships. It reflects a decade of experience, and the RCE network stands tall to face the challenges in sustainable development and is committed to the Okayama Declaration on RCEs and ESD.

Dr. Kazuhiko Takemoto

Director

United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability

Opening

"With ten years of experience in ESD, the RCE community stands tall today with 129 RCEs facing the challenges ahead."

Kazuhiko Takemoto (*Director, UNU-IAS*) welcomed everyone to the conference.



Okayama's Mayor **Masao Omori** welcomed everyone.

"This conference is significant to review the achievements of ESD by RCEs during the UN Decade of ESD, and to discuss policy, strategies and concrete activities after the Decade to support the GAP on ESD."



"It is a great pleasure for the government of Japan to be able to provide support to UNU-IAS which runs these ESD projects."

Soichiro Seki (*Vice Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment Japan*)



Alexander Leicht (*Chief ESD Section, UNESCO*) acknowledges Japan's role in ESD and the ESD-rich culture in Okayama in particular:

"Japan has been the country that has most strongly supported UNESCO's ESD work, hence it is only fitting to host this event here in Okayama."



"The original idea behind the RCE network was to mobilize and to involve people, experts and communities."

Hans van Ginkel (*former UNU Rector*) was very pleased to see so many people actively participating in the RCE community.



Highlights



RCE Recognition Awards 2014

31 RCE projects from 27 RCEs were submitted for the 2014 RCE Recognition Award. The Global RCE Service Centre created the Award to celebrate outstanding projects on education for sustainable development (ESD) and to increase the visibility of the work of individual RCEs as well as the global RCE network. This year's Award recognizes ESD projects in five categories, underscoring the contribution of RCEs to the goals of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and UNESCO's proposal for the Global Action Programme (GAP).



Category 1:
Community Engagement Mobilising Local Innovations for SD

RCE Yogyakarta: Integrated Bio-cycle Farming System

RCE Yogyakarta: Community Empowerment Program in Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province, Indonesia: concerning to the unique local biodiversity conservation

RCE Bohol: Mangrove planting and mudcrab culture in Bool District: SD through community empowerment

RCE Greater Phnom Penh: Promoting ESD through food, agriculture and environment education in elementary schools and rural communities in Cambodia

RCE Okayama: Okayama ESD Project – Decade in Okayama ‘ESD Okayama Model’ & Release of ‘New Okayama ESD Project Fundamental Plan’

RCE Curitiba Parana: SENAI in Parana Center for sustainable solutions: increasing ESD awareness through sustainable costruction and technologies Innovation Lecture

Category 2:
Capacity Development through Environmental Learning

RCE Greater Portland: E4 Sustainability TeamWorks Team

RCE Espoo: The Gulf of Finland Year 2014

RCE Penang: Kelab Sejahtera (Sejahtera Club)

RCE Tongyeong: Clean plate movement – a new wave from the local to tourism (a voluntary basis project)

RCE Kunming: Human values – based water, sanitation and hygiene education in Kunming City

RCE Porto Metropolitan Area: FUTURE – 100.000 trees project in Porto Metropolitan Area

Category 3:
Bridging Local Knowledge and Global Perspectives on SD

RCE Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan eco-museums Initiative (SEI)

RCE Nuremberg: Koopstadt – multilateral, coherent and interdisciplinary urban development Bremen, Leipzig, Nuremberg -facing common global tasks and solving challenges together

RCE Lima-Callao: Diploma Course on biodiversity and intercultural dialogue of knowledge systems

RCE Guatemala: Mayan cities, educational wealth

RCE Kyrgyzstan: Advancing women's economic opportunities in Fergana Valley handicraft and textile supply chain

Category 4:
Youth Empowerment, Networking and Collaboration

RCE North East: Great Northern Youth Voices

RCE Kakamega Western: Youth and education for sustainability camp 2014

RCE Kano: Skill impartment among youth: Saving our future today

RCE Greater Nairobi: Kenyatta University and NEMA Ngong Waste Management Project

RCE Oldenburger Muensterland: Youth in rural areas – Regional Youth Report for the district of Vechta

RCE Yogyakarta: Development of sustainable power and water supply utilizing renewable energy resources for remote and rural areas in Indonesia through a student community services program

Category 5:
Curriculum-based Transformative Learning and Research Processes

RCE Graz-Styria: ConSus – Connecting science-society collaborations for sustainability innovations

RCE Saskatchewan: RCE K-12 Education website (www.rceed.ca)

RCE Shangri-la: Waterschool China

RCE Lucknow: ESD through mobile exhibition on biodiversitsys for sustainability innovations

RCE Grand Rapids: ESD + SD skillsets = jobs in the new economy

RCE Scotland: Communities with a common cause action learning programme

RCE Grand Rapids: Plaster Creek Steward

RCE Recognition Awards 2014: Outstanding Flagship Projects

Outstanding Flagship Projects – (Nominated projects made significant contributions to community engagement, transformative learning, youth empowerment and collaborative governance)

Name of RCE	Project Title	For its contribution to ...
RCE Yogyakarta	Community Empowerment Program in Bone Bolango Regency, Gorontalo Province, Indonesia: concerning the unique local biodiversity conservation	Community engagement and empowerment through student community services linked to ESD
RCE Bohol	Mangrove Planting and Mudcrab Culture in Bool District: Sustainable Development through Community Empowerment	Sustainable livelihoods in local communities through active involvement in project implementation and management
RCE Tongyeong	Clean plate movement – a new wave from the local to tourism (a voluntary basis project by RCE Tongyeong Informal Education Committee)	Sustainable consumption and community engagement through the 'clean plate movement'
RCE Kunming	Human Values-based Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education in Kunming City (HVBWSHE)	Capacity development for schools and communities on water and sanitation through value-based water and health initiatives
RCE Porto Metropolitan Area	FUTURE – 100.000 trees project in Porto Metropolitan Area	Capacity development and community engagement in improving and expanding native urban forests
RCE Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan Eco-museums Initiative (SEI)	Application of an eco-museums model to enable communities conserve and learn from their natural and cultural heritage
RCE Nuremberg	Koopstadt – multilateral, coherent and interdisciplinary urban development Bremen, Leipzig, Nuremberg – facing common global tasks and solving challenges together	Establishing and providing applied urban sustainable development solutions
RCE Lima-Callao	Diploma course on Biodiversity and Intercultural Dialogue of Knowledge Systems	An innovative approach to revitalization of traditional cultures and promotion of their co-evolution with modernity
RCE Kyrgyzstan	Advancing women's economic opportunities in Fergana valley handicraft and textile supply chain.	Improving economic opportunities of rural women through revival of traditional handicrafts knowledge
RCE North East	Great Northern Youth Voices	Increasing youth employability by building their confidence and sustainability skills
RCE Yogyakarta	Development of Sustainable Power and Water Supply utilizing Renewable Energy Resources for Remote and Rural Areas in Indonesia through Student Community Services Program	Providing sustainable energy and water supplies to remote areas in Indonesia through student engagement
RCE Scotland	Communities with a Common Cause Action Learning Programme	Generation of new knowledge on the role of human values in motivating action to address sustainable development
RCE Graz-Styria	ConSus – Connecting Science-Society Collaborations for Sustainability Innovations	Strengthening the connection and collaboration of higher education institutions, research and ESD practice
RCE Grand Rapids	Plaster Creek Stewards	Linking education and research initiatives with opportunities for residents to take restorative actions
RCE Okayama	Okayama ESD Project – Decade in Okayama "ESD Okayama Model" & Release of "New Okayama ESD Project Fundamental Plan"	Improving knowledge and understanding about sustainable lifestyles among people living in Okayama



Photos of Award Winning Projects

1. RCE Grand Rapids
2. RCE Porto Metropolitan Area
3. RCE Graz-Styria
4. RCE Yogyakarta-Development of Sustainable Power and Water Supply
5. RCE Kunming
6. RCE Lima-Callao
7. RCE Saskatchewan
8. RCE Yogyakarta – Community Empowerment Program
9. RCE Tongyeong
10. RCE Kyrgyzstan
11. RCE Nuremberg
12. RCE Bohol
13. RCE North East
14. RCE Okayama
15. RCE Scotland

Polymakers' Roundtable Discussion

The Global Action Programme on ESD focused on five priority action areas, the first one being 'Advancing Policy'. This area is considered a key leverage point to advance the ESD agenda beyond 2014.

The objective of the Roundtable Discussion was to share how RCEs can contribute to enable a policy environment necessary for mobilizing ESD and scaling up ESD activities. Speakers and participants were invited to address issues relevant to policy support, based on experiences at the local, national and international levels.

Okayama, Japan exemplified engagement in the promotion of ESD with the local government facilitating multi-stakeholder involvement. The 'ESD Okayama model' provided a community-based learning framework. These so called "Kominkan" are community learning centres (CLCs), hubs for ESD promotion with the involvement of local government on the policy level and academic support. Other stakeholders are the ASPnet schools commonly referred to as the UNESCO Associated Schools. In future, RCE Okayama plans to scale up concepts of ESD promotion and incorporate them into city policy.

Skåne, Sweden was a good example of how at the local level, an enabling and facilitative approach can be taken towards engagement. Their 'Learning for doing City Project' works in three dimensions, ecological, economical and social. By providing a multi stakeholder platform, they enable conditions for policy development and allow innovative ESD ideas to form. Their main objective was to bring knowledgeable citizens to work with the municipality in an open and inclusive manner, with the municipality supporting pilot projects.

Japan is a pioneer in ESD with strong national ESD policies and initiatives. The World Conference in 2014, for example, was organized by UNESCO and the Government of Japan. The Japanese Ministry of the Environment strongly supports policy actions particularly in environmental education and has implemented a policy plan for ESD beyond 2014. Since the launch of the UNDESD, the Ministry has promoted many ESD activities and beyond 2014, the Ministry will continue to promote capacity development, and initiate a collaboration and support system.



Kenya is a good model for national ESD leadership. RCEs are formally recognized as instruments of change, with the government mentoring RCEs. ESD policy is implemented in sessional papers. Future plans are to mainstream policy actions and to further develop Standard Procedures of how to implement ESD activities. The policy enabler is basically the National ESD Strategy embedded in the Kenyan Constitution. By 2030, Kenya envisions a reorientation towards ESD in policy and curricula as a mandatory requirement for the public sector.

During the discussion, a UNESCO-MGIEP delegate highlighted that the drive did not come from sustainability, but from the threat of lifestyle change, due to environmental degradation. Systemic change happens by integrating ESD into international and national policies and mainstreaming good practices. The RCE network should form links with international key players such as IPBES and the World Economic Forum. The challenge was how to enable systemic change, linking Sustainable Development to job creation, and not focusing solely on GDP but on overall human development.

A UNESCO representative cited the key findings of the UNDES final report, i.e. that the value of political leadership at all levels is a precondition for ESD, that we need to recognize the value of policy frameworks, link policy and practice, and that there is a need for an integrated approach. It was just not enough to target education policies, but to integrate Sustainable Development into education and vice versa.

A former Rector of UNU stressed the importance of the concept of subsidiarity appropriate at the local level. The representative of RCE Tongyeong referred to the strength of having a heritage, citing local policy level collaboration and the Bridge to the World project of the RCE.

The take-home messages of this session were

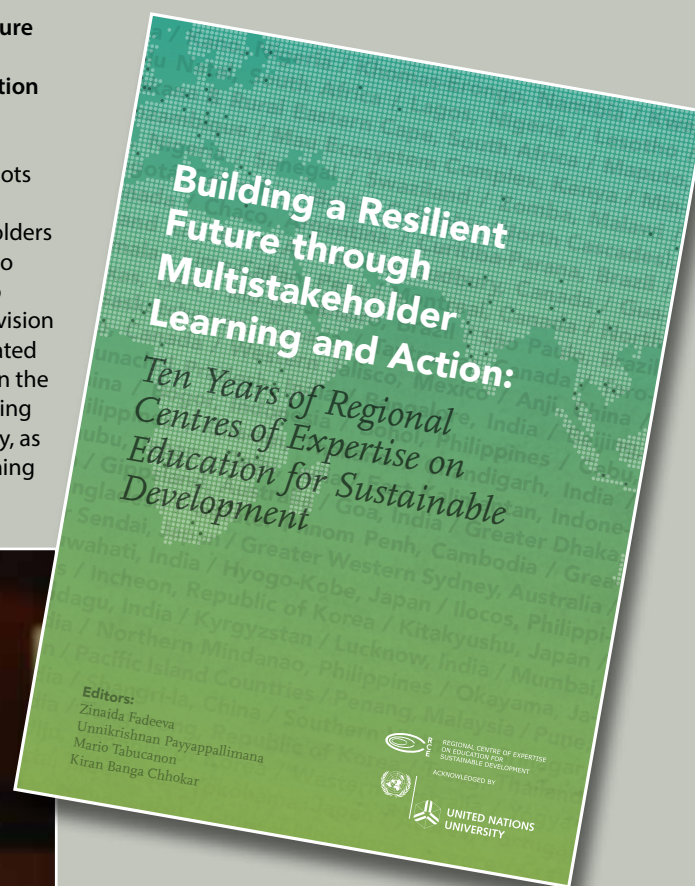
- (1) the need for political will,
- (2) university leadership,
- (3) coordinated action in line with national priorities,
- (4) leadership by example of local governments,
- (5) multiculturalism and local heritage and
- (6) to recognize that SDGs were about people and ESD.



Stocktaking: 10 years of RCE movement

The global movement of RCEs had reached a decade of existence. On the occasion of the 9th Global RCE Conference, participants celebrated the launch of a commemorative book titled **"Building a Resilient Future through Multistakeholder Learning and Action: Ten Years of Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development"**.

This publication is the tale of an extraordinary grassroots movement conceived at the turn of the century and dedicated to the proposition that unless local stakeholders work together to find and implement local solutions to local sustainable development problems, all efforts to translate global sustainable development policy and vision into local realities might be in vain. The book is dedicated to global citizens sharing the values and eager to learn the wisdom of networking in local communities in searching for sustainable development solutions and collectively, as inclusive constituent networks, providing global learning spaces on education for sustainable development.



Social Programme

Morning Field Trip to Korakuen Garden and Okayama Castle

6 November 2014

Taking a short break from vigorous discussions, participants enjoyed the morning field trip to Okayama's historical sites Korakuen Garden and Okayama Castle and the Okayama Art Project. Having breakfast and playing ping-pong against the backdrop of the castle was a particular treat.

Opening Ceremony

6 November 2014

The ESD Week kicked off with the Opening Ceremony on the evening of 6 November. Over 1,200 participants from three official stakeholder meetings – UNESCO ASPnet International ESD Event, the Youth Conference and the 9th RCE Global Conference – gathered together to enjoy cultural and music performances, speeches, and a networking dinner.

Side Event "Bridge to the Future Okayama ESD Plaza"

7 November 2014

A number of interactive side events were organized during the conference, such as a poster exhibition by RCE members and local schools, different booths, talk shows and ESD games for children. Students from local schools presented their ESD activities and inspired many participants. This also gave students a chance to learn issues about ESD around the world, and a chance to interact with ESD practitioners coming from different countries.

Excursions

8 November 2014

ESD is about mutual learning and understanding. Participants were fortunate to have learnt about the city of Okayama, its culture, history and people. Below excursions were arranged by RCE Okayama with the general support from local stakeholders.

- Trees Turn into Energy? Experience the life in Satoyama (community forests in Maniwa City)
- Environmental tour to Kagamino-cho and Yamada Bee Farm
- Thinking of the Historical Romance – Visit to Bicchu Matsuyama Castle and a project site of 'Revitalization of the tea gardens' in Takahashi City
- A day trip to Naoshima Island – A site of the new urban development with art projects
- A day trip to the Kurashiki Bikan Historical Quarter
- Okayama City Culture Zone
- A half-day trip to the Kibi-Ryonan Machikado Museum (street-corner museum)
- A half-day trip to Kibitsu Shrine in Okayama City

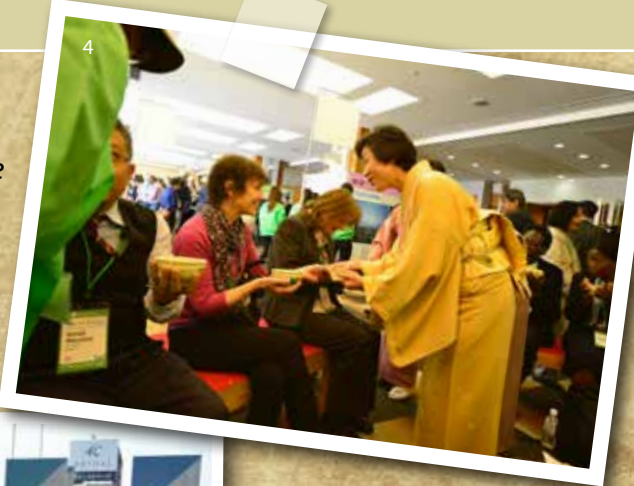
Social Programme



"This was a BONUS for me and I learned so much."



"I was thrilled to learn how motivated these students are to promote issues on ESD at their schools."



"It was an excellent idea to organize the field trip in the morning and to 'charge batteries' for the coming work day. It was a beautiful surprise!"



"Wow! So much is happening in Okayama. What a great city!"



- 1: Welcome performance of "Sankyoku"
- 2: With "Uraka" dancers
- 3: Koto player at Welcome Reception
- 4: Japanese Tea Ceremony
- 5: Exchange with future generations ("Bridge to the Future Okayama ESD Plaza")
- 6: Breakfast in front of Okayama Castle
- 7: Lunch time with local people in Okayama
- 8: ASP-net school Presentation
- 9: Exchange with future generations ("Bridge to the Future Okayama ESD Plaza")
- 10: Field Trip to Okayama Castle (ping-pong tables belonged to the Imagineering Okayama Art Project)
- 11: Koto players at Welcome Reception
- 12: Students' performance at the Opening Ceremony

Images 5, 7, 8 and 12 are courtesy of the City of Okayama

Africa and the Middle East



- 1. Buea, Cameroon
- 2. Cairo, Egypt
- 3. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- 4. Ghana
- 5. Greater Eastern Uganda
- 6. Greater Mbarara, Uganda
- 7. Greater Nairobi, Kenya
- 8. Greater Pwani, Kenya
- 9. Kakamega-Western Kenya
- 10. Mau Ecosystem Complex, Kenya
- 11. Nyanza, Kenya
- 12. Jordan
- 13. Kano, Nigeria
- 14. Minna, Nigeria
- 15. Lagos, Nigeria
- 16. Khomas-Erongo, Namibia
- 17. KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
- 18. Makana & Rural Eastern Cape, South Africa
- 19. Lesotho
- 20. Lusaka, Zambia
- 21. Maputo, Mozambique
- 22. Mutare, Zimbabwe
- 23. Harare, Zimbabwe
- 24. Senegal
- 25. Swaziland
- 26. Zomba, Malawi
- 27. Central Kenya (acknowledged in November 2014)
- 28. Mount Kenya East (acknowledged in November 2014)

RCEs in Action

With 17 RCEs and two candidate RCEs, the meeting was very well attended. Many deliberations were based on the reflections of the last 4th African RCE meeting in Namibia, two months prior to the conference. The meeting had emphasized the need for more collaboration and communication within the African network in order to strengthen and upscale ESD activities across the continent.

During the conference, one aspect of discussion was the concept of RCE assessment, in particular of appreciative enquiry. All participants felt it was an important process that needed to be continued with all African RCEs. The delegates looked into possibilities of how RCE activities can be embedded into larger more continental processes by overcoming the gap between policy and natural sciences. Emerging strategic directions of the meeting included to collectively influence ESD policy and incorporate ESD in strategic plans in and across all sectors of society,

as well as to realign RCE activities with global processes such as the SDGs.

Scaling up RCE success stories within GAP and increasing the visibility of African RCEs were other issues of discussion. The community decided to develop an online course with co-engaging capacity development material that would include the evaluation component and could be used as a reference manual for African RCEs and beyond Africa. African RCEs were encouraged to make more use of the financial opportunities available by international donor agencies that implement global agendas. It was noted that many African countries had left possible financial shares unclaimed, given by such international agencies. Consequently it was agreed that RCEs should take the lead in the processes of recovering such finances, also in order to boost their visibilities and accelerate their programmes.



Americas

1. Bogota, Colombia
2. British Columbia (North Cascades), Canada
3. Chaco, Argentina
4. Curitiba-Parana, Brazil
5. Grand Rapids, USA
6. Greater Sudbury, Canada
7. Greater Portland, USA
8. Guatemala
9. Lima-Callao, Peru
10. Mauricie/Centre-du-Québec, Canada
11. Montreal, Canada
12. North Texas, USA
13. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
14. São Paulo, Brazil
15. Saskatchewan, Canada
16. Shenandoah Valley, USA
17. Tantramar, Canada
18. Toronto, Canada
19. Western Jalisco, Mexico



RCEs in Action

Participants shared their experiences from the latest activities of the different RCEs, such as the Biodiversity and Livelihoods Project, the Virtual Youth Conference, the Eco Journal Project and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Conference in Greater Portland to name but a few.

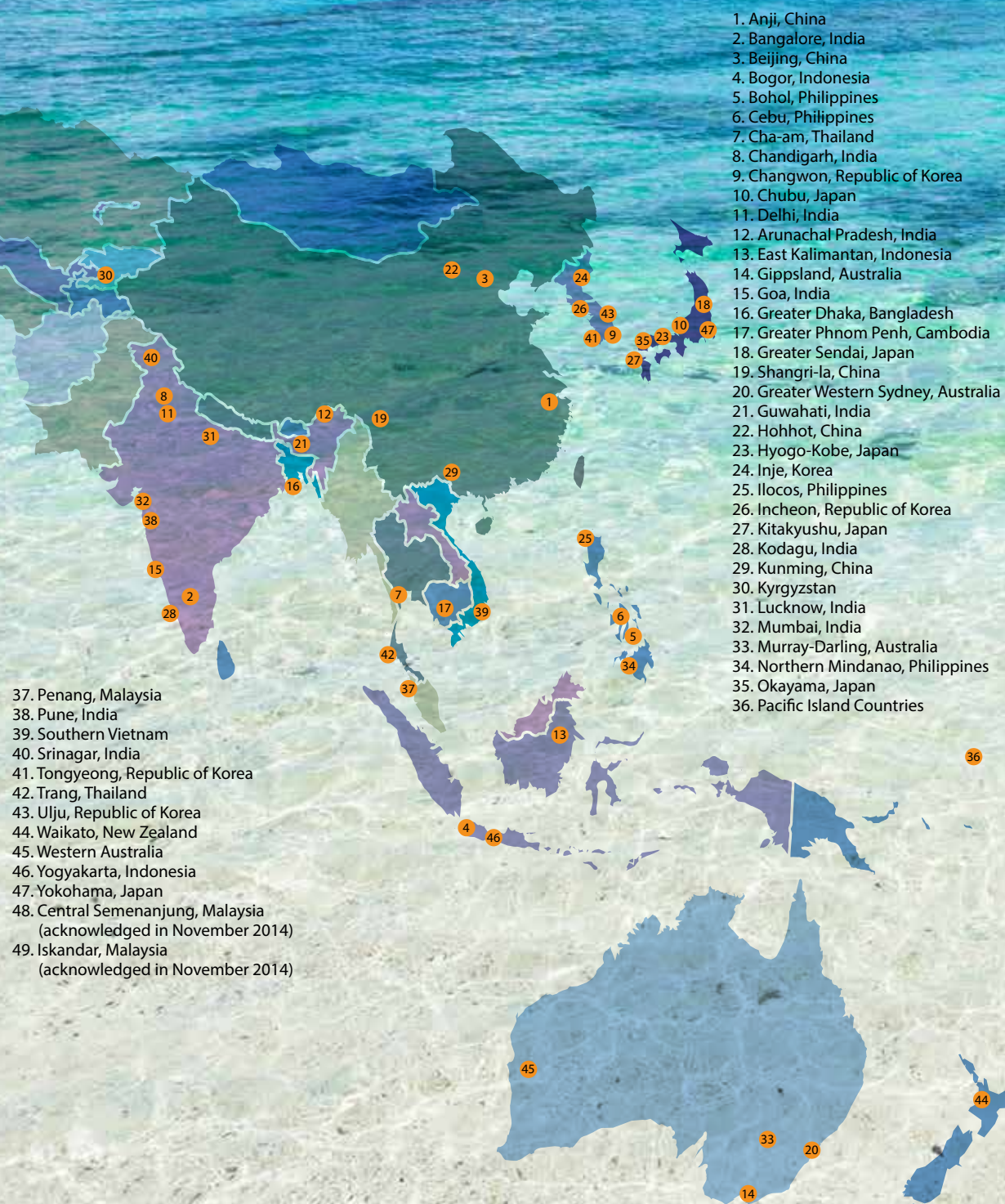
Other important and collaborative activities were discussed such as the RCE of Americas Exchange Initiative, the RCEs of the Americas Mentoring Initiative and the proposed 4th conference of the Americas in Bogotá. All delegates agreed that RCEs in the region

should focus on existing policies in order to advance ESD on the national level. The difficulty of coming together as a community due to the region's geography was raised, and the importance of leadership turnover emphasized, in order to build resilience within the RCEs.

Future plans were to engage the youth more, to increase the communication with key stakeholders on the continental level, and to develop a framework around GAP for the region. The delegates also felt that engagement in certain sectors could be strengthened such as for example the cooperative.



Asia-Pacific



RCEs in Action

Over 100 RCE members from 29 of the 49 Asia-Pacific RCEs met in Okayama to reflect on recent developments in the community and discuss a more dynamic collaboration and the post-2014 strategic direction. One of the highlights of the meeting was the adoption of the Asia-Pacific Strategic Paper 'Advancing ESD beyond 2014: Strategy for Asia-Pacific RCEs' which encapsulated the aspirations of the Asia-Pacific RCE community and served as input to the RCE Global Conference. The category of issues were aligned with, but not limited to, the priority action areas of GAP.

The participants raised several key issues, such as how to engage more stakeholders including youth, local governments, and the private sector as well as those

who are not yet familiar with ESD and/or RCEs; how to upscale the programmes and diversify ESD models, and how to better coordinate and facilitate the network of Asia-Pacific RCEs in a more structured manner.

The delegates agreed that many of these issues could be overcome by a more dynamic collaboration amongst the Asia-Pacific RCEs. Key actions that emerged from the discussion were to build capacities of various stakeholders at all levels on issues relevant to the local context; to make use of webinars, video conferencing and action-oriented research for inter-RCE collaboration; and to develop general guidelines for a more structured Organizing/Coordinating Committee for Asia-Pacific RCEs.



Europe



1. Açores, Portugal
2. Barcelona, Spain
3. Brittany, France
4. Central Macedonia, Greece
5. Creias-Oeste, Portugal
6. Crete, Greece
7. Denmark
8. Dublin
9. East Midlands, UK
10. Espoo, Finland
11. Euroregion Tyrol, Italy
12. Graz-Styria, Austria
13. Greater Manchester, UK
14. Hamburg, Germany
15. Ireland
16. London, UK
17. Middle Albania
18. Munich, Germany
19. Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
20. North East, UK
21. North Sweden

22. Nürnberg, Germany
23. Oldenburger Münsterland, Germany
24. Porto Metropolitan Area, Portugal
25. Rhine-Meuse
26. Ruhr, Germany
27. Samara, Russia
28. Scotland, UK
29. Severn, UK
30. Skåne, Sweden
31. Southern North Sea
32. Uppsala, Sweden
33. Vienna, Austria
34. Vilnius, Lithuania
35. West Sweden
36. Wales, UK
37. Yorkshire & Humberside, UK
38. Paris Seine, France
(acknowledged November 2014)*
39. Southern Black Forest, Germany
(acknowledged November 2014)

* Originally acknowledged under the name
RCE Greater Western Paris

RCEs in Action

More than half of the European RCEs were represented during the meeting as well as one RCE Candidate. With 37 RCEs in 16 countries, and four RCE Candidates, this region is one of the largest in terms of numbers of RCEs in the overall RCE network. Updates on the four national and cross-national meetings (UK, Germany, German-speaking RCEs and Northern Europe) were given, and the idea of a European RCE facebook page launched.

Different collaborative initiatives that had either been ongoing or planned were discussed such as the OPEDUCA project, ACE Wild, the CASE Project, METESD, Global Learning Cities and other. With EU funding available, RCEs demonstrated significant ability in collective fundraising around jointly identified issues.

Additional areas where RCEs in Europe could advance the sustainability agenda were identified as follows:

To fulfill capacity development needs and strategies for individual RCEs and the community, to engage with policy processes in the respective regions and on a global scale, and to assess RCE practices.

Several major action points emerged from the discussion:

1. Engage RCEs locally, nationally and globally and enhance capacity development in the different regions
2. Strengthen the collaboration and support in the region, i.e. share objectives and ideas within the community and use the support of the UNU system including existing communication channels
3. Increase the transparency within the European network and formulate ethical guidelines for the implementation of the Global Action Programme on ESD.



Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity

In Okayama, the session on Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity focused mainly on engaging with and feeding into the international sustainability policy processes such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). There were also suggestions to link with the Intergovernmental Committee of World Intellectual Property Organization and FAO programmes like 'Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Sites (GIAHS)'. RCEs Lima and Guatemala made presentations on their recently developed university level courses on biocultural diversity and their community level initiatives.

The overall objective of cooperations with international programmes would be to provide policy relevant knowledge to inform decision makers and influence the policy making process. RCEs' competence would be particularly relevant in terms of capacity building and providing data and knowledge during these processes. Initial talks with UNU-IAS on a potential collaboration with IPBES had already included discussing capacity building on policy support tools and methodologies developed and presented by IPBES.

Participants discussed the idea of global commons and how various multistakeholder processes have helped to link with different international policies. It was necessary to create policy informing capacity building programmes for universities on the national level. There was also a brief discussion on the Global Common Action Caucus which looks at inter-convention linkages. Creation of a database on various policy initiatives of the RCEs in the area of biocultural diversity was suggested.

Climate Change

In their role as learning communities and networks, RCEs are addressing the challenges of climate change using a three-pronged strategy of awareness building, capacity development, and collaboration among stakeholders. In Okayama, RCEs discussed the necessity to increase the collective impact as a network in tackling climate change via teacher education programmes and community-based research projects, thereby combining formal, informal and non-formal education. During the session, participants highlighted the importance of how to shape the communication on climate change issues. These may well have to be addressed via conversations that involve common interests such as food, water, energy, health care and indigenous knowledge systems. Finally the importance of capacity development of policymakers and the RCEs own ability to engage in climate change relevant policy initiatives were discussed, particularly in the area of leveraging resources and mobilizing these into action.

The following action items were identified:

1. Do not work in isolation, build on the RCE network instead and deepen the dialogue on regional and international issues, across sectors and RCEs, including marginalized groups.
2. Take advantage of funding opportunities, for example the Climate Change Adaptation Fund, a financial instrument under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), where every developing country can receive \$10 million or the Green Climate Fund.
3. Engage in advocacy for the implementation of Climate Action Plans
4. Invest in climate change projects that address unique regional needs and meet local aspirations.

Higher Education

During the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD 2005-2014), Higher Education Institutions (HEI) have played a central role in fostering regional action learning and research projects and productive community engagement focused on key regional social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability challenges in many parts of the world. Much research has been undertaken on how best to transform HEIs to support the education for sustainability agenda. This includes international studies of turnaround leadership for sustainability in higher education and books documenting effective practice in assuring the quality of ESD in such institutions.

RCEs have emerged as key coordinating agencies fostering this agenda, and have been used to link and leverage action supported by the resources, research, project management and teaching capabilities of their host HEI.

During the session, key lessons learnt on the transformation of HEIs to support sustainable development and to work in a productive partnership with the respective RCEs, were discussed. The following action points at the interface of education, research, policy and practice, for sustaining what had been achieved in the HE-RCE interface, were highlighted:

1. Identify a framework to classify RCE-university opportunities for collaboration, actions, research and learning
2. Undertake a stocktake of effective practice using this framework
3. Sharpen RCE's role and capabilities to influence policy in partnership with HEIs
4. Investigate the potential to develop a searchable website on
 - a. what works
 - b. ensuring success of RCE-university collaboration
 - c. how to measure success of the initiative
5. Link strategy with the UNESCO Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on ESD in order to foster a coherent, powerful change strategy.

Sustainable Consumption and Production

Sustainable Livelihoods (SL), and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) are key to making sustainability a reality. RCEs, as unique multistakeholder initiatives, can contribute in different ways to creating more sustainable consumption, production and livelihoods and therefore improving overall well-being. During the session on SCP in Okayama, participants reviewed the research and development session they had at the previous 8th Global RCE Conference in Nairobi. Short and long-term aspirations of RCEs in SCP were also elaborated, together with opportunities participants saw for RCE engagement with global processes, including the 10-Year Framework Programme on SCP, the EU Switch Programme and USAID.

RCEs, as locally organized communities, could help translate relevant global programmes down to the community level. UNU-IAS could help identify and communicate these opportunities for resource mobilization and policy engagement. It was important to find common trends in different RCEs to create synergies; engagements with the private, cooperative, and voluntary sector and also to create value. The idea of cluster conferences and the publication of a policy paper were also discussed.

Other areas of discussion included:

1. Research methodologies – developing an RCE guidebook on research methods on how to build capacity for sustainable livelihoods in a region.
2. Development and implementation of appropriate and disruptive/transformational technologies to advance the interests of the disadvantaged.
3. Research roles of RCEs in relation to traditional knowledge and livelihood

The group spent some time discussing SCP and Sustainable Vocational Schools; it listened to a presentation on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP, a global framework adopted by heads of state at Rio+20 to promote international cooperation to shift towards SCP. UNU-IAS is actively engaged in the development of the programme with RCEs helping deliver ESD to local and regional communities.

Youth

Being active agents of change, Youth can fit into, or cut across, all five GAP priority action areas, in spite of there being one GAP on ESD priority action area fully dedicated to them. A recent report indicated that there are 1.5 billion youth around the world, a large number of them from developing countries, born into a consumer-driven, unsustainable world.

Youth should be viewed as drivers of change and active participants in ESD, green growth, green economy and other global initiatives. They ought to be involved in bringing marginalized groups in developing countries into the fold of sustainable development debates, planning and implementation. Young people must therefore be part of the decision making process through RCEs, universities, schools, civil societies, and community initiatives – at the local, national and global level.

Youth groups must collaborate with other youth organizations, thereby involving RCEs that address pertinent sustainable development issues, such as climate change, biodiversity and ecosystems services, disaster risk reduction, sustainable consumption and production, gender equality and others including the development of entrepreneurship skills. The global RCE Youth network should be further strengthened and empowered to take action, bring about change and have an impact on the world around them, thereby taking forward the vision of the GAP, leading to a more sustainable world.

Capacity Development

Capacity Development in RCEs is about fostering skills, awareness, and attitudes to execute actions through multistakeholder platforms in sustainable ways, which means building structures, processes, and systems to enable governance, coordination, leadership and continuous assessment of progress. It also involves creating networks of opportunities for training, building leadership, professional development, and curriculum development, especially for university-led RCEs.

In the post ESD decade phase, the RCE network plans to engage in a focused and active manner with the international sustainability processes which necessitates specific capacities of local – global mediation as well as research and innovation.

During the discussion, the major challenges identified were resource mobilization for capacity development initiatives and intra as well as inter RCE communication to ensure viability and success of these programmes. The following three action points emerged from the discussions:

1. Enhance interdisciplinary activities, thereby share resources, expertise, best practices, show cases, and social capital between RCEs to enhance trust and relationships within the network and to build network knowledge.
2. Develop projects and common learning tools to cultivate talents and increase competencies of youth and children.
3. Assess and report on performance so that it can lead to collective impact.

Engagement with Policies

Key points in engaging with policies were (1) setting the agenda (2) formulation (3) implementation and (4) evaluation. The global RCE network was already involved in promoting international ESD processes, but there were still opportunities, where RCEs could engage with international sustainability processes. The conference participants discussed during the session how RCE engagement can be enhanced even further in the global arena. A key question that emerged during the discussion was how to mainstream the RCE concept and all agreed that closer relationships to politicians were crucial to contribute to the international sustainability agenda.

A bottom-up approach to engagement with policies was suggested, where good practices of RCEs influencing policymaking at the local level take place; many RCEs are already having these activities including RCE Okayama. Local community good practices could then serve as models for other communities and regions for local/ regional governments and other RCE stakeholders to emulate. At the national level, it would be advisable for the national government to mandate a national government agency to take a lead in promoting and coordinating RCE and ESD actions for the whole country. Thus the bottom-up approach – local, regional, national, and global levels – renders policy engagement and policymaking influence more effective. In describing the bottom-up, level-wise, as well as process-wise policy engagements of RCEs, some participants shared real examples.

RCE Assessment

The midterm of the DESD came with imperatives to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation work in RCEs into the end of the Decade. RCE evaluation has been emerging through an unfolding succession of approaches, initiated in various regions of the world. These initiatives have recently formed a hybrid evaluation tool that was piloted in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The approach was centered on the adaptive use of a framework tool for co-engaged evaluation of RCEs, and the value adding outcomes of their ESD initiatives in a local context.

Various RCEs outside of SADC had experienced different forms of evaluation such as in the form of appreciative enquiry, self evaluation or strategic evaluation. The RCEs had identified several points of interest during their respective processes of evaluation, such as for example the need for more documentation of activities, the importance to create systems of value to increase the recognition value of the RCE, the need for clear objectives as well as identifying achievements. All participants agreed that RCE assessment was a forward movement, endorsed by all RCE members, and that the evaluation process had to be implemented from a learning perspective.

Networked Governance

RCEs, as networked communities, apply governance and coordination mechanisms to capture decentralized decision making processes and allow the participation of all stakeholders. In Okayama, participants discussed processes on how to manage RCEs and to best make use of the resources available to each RCE.

The complexity of RCE governance and RCE community collaboration can take inspiration from the African Ubuntu Philosophy of community bonding and empowerment, using all the collective community knowledge, while recognizing individual competencies. Several elements of good network governance were highlighted during the session. These included to enable a more flexible and less rigid interpretation of a governance system that works well for each RCE individually, and to put emphasis on systems rather than on structures, thereby placing value on processes, contents and people involved. Governance must be inclusive, transparent, and participatory to be able to keep multiple stakeholders working together and share resources for the common good. It should also be recognized that no one governance model fits all. Local values, cultures and the pertinent needs of the region, where the RCE is located, influence the kind of governance system suitable to the respective RCE.

RCE Movement Beyond 2014

All participants agreed that awareness was not growing as fast as sustainability needs. To upscale activities and to expand the ESD concept, values had to be fostered and knowledge skills developed, linking these to ethics. Solidarity and support in the RCE network as well as the value of trust were key factors.

Three main points were identified during the session:

- 1) The necessary consolidation of RCEs into bigger clusters, thereby enhancing collaboration across countries and translate RCE expertise into a meaningful global contribution
- 2) The targeted input of the RCE network to policy change for example to GAP and other international agreements
- 3) The important contribution of RCEs to the global learning space



Okayama Declaration on RCEs and ESD Beyond 2014

The global network of Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), having met in Okayama, Japan for the 9th Global RCE Conference, reaffirm the Tongyeong Declaration and hereby declare a renewed commitment to support relevant international ESD frameworks, including the Global Action Programme on ESD, beyond the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

RCEs are designed to achieve systemic transformation by contributing to the realization of socially inclusive and equitable economies within the renewable capacity of earth and planetary systems. Seeking change at the interface of education, research, policy and practice, RCEs commit to the strategies within the priority action areas of the Global Action Programme on ESD, namely actions for advancing policy, transforming learning and training environments, building capacities of educators and trainers, empowering and mobilizing youth, and accelerating sustainable solutions at the local and regional levels, to create sustainable societies.

During the ten years of the global network, RCEs have been navigating a pathway for collective action on ESD. This approach is based on the RCE vision and implementation of contextual programmes for ESD, as well as mutual respect and support within and across continents. RCEs commit to advancing ESD through recognition and respect for indigenous and traditional knowledge. In recognition of global interdependence, RCEs will share responsibility for advancing ESD beyond borders in time and space, mindful of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The global network of RCEs acknowledges the increasing role of formal and non-formal education in ESD and the transformative contributions of RCEs during the UN DESD and beyond, and commits to accelerate, mainstream and scale up actions that empower communities and diverse stakeholders for societal change in multicultural, social, political and economic environments, with compassion and care for individuals as collective members of society. The RCEs will accomplish their mission by building up multi stakeholder networks with distinctive capacities for research and development, and having innovative and continuously evolving democratic, participatory governance systems.

In adopting this Okayama Declaration, each and every member of the global RCE community aspires to uphold the mission and ambitions of the RCE movement, and commits to contribute through operational and strategic clusters and actions to address sustainability issues at the local and continental levels, which are aimed at achieving the long-term goals of ESD, including environmental stewardship, social justice, and safeguarding the quality of all dimensions of life.

Afterword

The 9th Global RCE Conference indeed provided an effective platform to share learning experiences within the global RCE community. It is our sincere hope, that members follow the recommendations given and share from lessons learned, to implement strategies appropriate to their locality or region. RCEs are effective vehicles to effectuate transformative changes in local communities as manifested in many RCE initiatives and projects. RCEs have the potential to make contributions; but to harness such potential, RCEs must remain active in mobilizing multi stakeholders. Through RCEs, local communities can be empowered to find sustainable solutions to local problems.

The Okayama Declaration on RCEs and ESD Beyond 2014, an important outcome document of the 9th Global RCE Conference, sums it all up for moving forward. RCEs can be systemic transformers at the interface of education, research, policy and practice for sustainable development. Capitalizing on its ten years of experience and on the gains and advances of the UN Decade of ESD, the RCE

community positions itself to further commit to the implementation of the Global Action Programme on ESD and contribute to the integration of ESD into various development and education agendas.

After every global RCE conference, the challenge lies in the implementation, in following through the various recommendations and suggestions. It is therefore important that members of the RCE community do their part and only then can these actions collectively become significant and impactful contributions to creating sustainable societies.

The Global RCE Service Centre
UNU-IAS

