

Session 6.2 – RCEs' Engagement with Sustainability Processes

Youth Parallel Session

13:00-15:00, 24 November 2016

Moderator: Philip Vaughter (UNU-IAS)

Co-Facilitator: Brittany Hardiman (RCE Greater Western Sydney, GWS)

Co-Facilitator: Usman Muhammad (RCE Kano)

Objective

Youth have a central role to play in the development and implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programmes if these programmes are to be effective in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) put forth in Agenda 2030. Since many ESD programmes target school systems, youth are often the intended audience for ESD, in addition to the expected practitioners once they have received this type of education. And yet youth themselves are often left out of critical discussions regarding the nature and practice of ESD.

Youth must be integrated into leadership roles and decision making processes if ESD and Sustainable Development is to be inclusive, strategic, and truly sustainable. Due to the principle of 'common but differentiated' responsibility, youth must seek to build their own capacity and resilience to deal with the challenges of a changing world, while at the same time have the skills and communication strategies necessary to engage with other generations about these generations' responsibilities for securing a sustainable future.

The Youth working group(s) of the RCEs will strategize on how best to position and support youth within the RCE community to take up an active voice within individual RCEs as well as in national RCE networks, regional RCE networks, and the Global RCE Network. Past initiatives, ongoing projects, and future directions will be discussed for the purposes of creating and sustaining the momentum of a Youth Group within and among the RCE community.

Discussion Issues

Presenters and discussants are invited to address how RCEs can better engage with youth in relation to:

1. Integrating a youth coordinator in each RCE, ensuring that youth have an active voice and are part of RCE projects
 - a. Make this a mandate for all RCEs, including candidates
 - b. Youth coordinator should be authorized to act on behalf of the RCE Youth Group for each RCE
 - c. Age range needs to be defined – youth coordinator must fall within this range
 - d. Prioritization for active roles for youth in RCE structures

2. Creating and reporting on coordination structures for Regional Youth Networks in all regions, recognizing sub-networks within the regions may be necessary for workability
 - a. All RCE Youth will be linked via the Global RCE Network – the idea is foster regional cooperation and global cooperation simultaneously
 - b. Regional coordination structures will serve to report to the Global Service Centre on youth activities in the region
3. Discussing possibilities for youth to engage with RCE activities
 - a. What projects can youth engage with in their RCE?
 - b. What Inter-RCE projects can youth participate in?
4. Seeking opportunities to synergize and communicate with other youth initiatives, including other UN platforms related to youth, e.g. Campus Ambassadors Project by UNESCO

The Youth Group will work on a Vision, Strategy, and Activity Plan for 2017 to be shared with the RCE Network.

Agenda

- Introduction
- Presentations on RCE Youth activities
- Breakout Groups
- Coordination & Communication
- Inter RCE-Youth projects
- Potential linkages
- Wrap-up

Philip Vaughter introduced the youth session by giving a brief background of the RCE Youth activities:

- Past participation with YUVA
- Global Facebook page
- Africa Facebook page
- Challenges included:
 - Time zone differences – difficult to arrange meetings and workshops
 - Language differences – non-English speakers often felt left out
 - Convergence on common projects – need direction
- Opportunities included:
 - Regional cooperation between RCEs to ease communication
 - Translation through volunteers where possible
 - Suggestions for core activities from RCEs/Secretariat

Presentation 1: Karthikeya Subburaman (RCE Chennai)

- Two streams are Youth Empowerment and Youth Engagement
- Activity: ENACT-Energy Academy to Create Renewable Transformation
 - 141 youth trained as solar technicians
 - Comic book designed for schools to raise awareness of energy conservation
 - Awareness activities in relation to solar energy at schools and colleges (863 youth)
 - Job placement sessions for those trained in renewable energy technology
- Activity: SoLVE- Social Labs + Ventures
 - Part I: Ideation – 45 minutes to discuss challenges
 - Part II: Solutions – 45 minutes to discuss inclusive solutions

Presentation 2: Usman Muhammad (RCE Kano)

- EAGLEs – working with youth empowerment and provide access to technical skills
 - Impart technical knowledge among youth
 - Attain economic autonomy
- Skill acquisition through vocational training
- One Child per Bag (OCpB) Programme
- African RCE Network has drafted an Action Plan

Presentation 3: Fabian Mateo Cardenas Rubiano (RCE Bogotá)

- Main fields of action with youth network: water, climate change, SCP, TK
- Work in three streams: training members, sustainable consumption, elementary school projects
- Goals: strengthen connection to other RCEs and other youth networks in country/region
- Ongoing projects: productive backyard, re-use shop, environmental forums

Presentation 4: Ibrahim Ibrahim (RCE Greater Portland)

- Mission: connect youth to collaborative networks that multiply in capacity, empowerment, and engagement for a sustainable future
- Projects:
 - ILoveThisPlacePDX: blog series looking at identity in Portland (Goals 4 & 10)
 - GirlUp!: organization working to empower women (Goal 5)
 - Virtual Youth Conference: environmental sustainability (Goals 7, 15, 17)
 - Taste of Sustainability: funding activity for youth network (Goals 8 & 10)
 - Culture Snap: art project on representation through photography (Goal 4)
- Goals:
 - Broaden youth network locally
 - Strengthen relations with other youth networks around the globe
 - Increase efforts to achieve other goals
 - Look for ways to expand on previous achievements

- Become more involved with local government

Presentation 5: Brittany Lee Hardiman (RCE GWS)

- In Australia, youth is classified as 15-25 years of age
- RCE GWS primarily works with high school and university students
- Youth Programmes:
 - Student enrichment programs: high school environmental programs
 - Youth eco-summit: two-day school event around sustainability & stewardship
 - Sustainable tourism: visited RCE Tongyeong to learn about ecotourism
 - Students for sustainability conference: undergraduates working with themes of food, ethics and environment (110 attendees)

Presentation 6: Emmy Yuniarti Rusadi (RCE Yogyakarta)

- Youth are able to offer unique perspectives and ideas
- Local authorities and development partners should not be afraid of engaging with youth
- Young people, including vulnerable youth, should be involved in policy making and implementation
- Projects: Stockholm solar challenge and local design challenge

Presentation 7: Sachin Satharajan (RCE Thiruvananthapuram)

- Main focal areas: TK, ecology & biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, clean technology, public health, disaster management, water conservation, and waste management
- Projects: carbon footprint estimation exercise (200 students), model UN program engaging with global environmental issues, young researchers at Indian Biodiversity Congress, children's agri-science congress

Presentation 8: Jinghong Bian (RCE Tianjin)

- Objectives: communication platform (Facebook won't work), organize summer school, develop activities around water and air governance, set up university union, develop training system, build inter-regional and global collaboration with other RCEs
- Activities: academic forum on ecological cities, creation of writings on SD/ESD and other materials, other voluntary activities on sustainable development
- Plans: develop curriculum for summer school, develop college union between different universities and regions

Presentation 9: Seol Hyeon Jung (RCE Tongyeong)

- Activities: RCE mind map, SCP workshops (up-cycling), climate change project, vegetable gardens

- Bridge to the World: an ESD youth programme aimed at developing future skills – participants set their own theme according to local issues and research the theme at the local, national, and international level; providing a youth perspective
- Announced 2017 Bridge to the World International Youth Camp that will be hosted at RCE Tongyeong at the Sejahtera Center in summer 2017

During the break-out sessions, the three groups discussed ways to coordinate and communicate in the future, as well as potential inter-RCE youth projects and other potential linkages between RCE youth.

Highlights:

- All participants felt that youth needed to be better integrated into an RCEs' structure. It was agreed that the secretariat should ask all RCEs to appoint a youth focal point
 - One possibility was to have national/regional focal points to coordinate reporting of youth networks in a given country/region
 - These could tie into a continental focal point
 - Both terms and responsibilities for focal points should be set by the Secretariat
- Youth from different RCEs could scale up action by working on a common project– the project would use ESD as a mechanism for promoting sustainable development with tangible outcomes that can be measured was emphasized (carbon reduction, water saved, trees planted, etc.)
- Youth between RCEs need a more effective way to communicate
 - Idea for regional Facebook pages was suggested (while this would not work in some nations like China, alternatives like QZone was a possibility here)
 - This could feed into the pre-existing Global Youth RCE page and Africa Youth RCE page
 - Already existing What'sApp group
 - Need for translation for communication between groups was needed sometimes, however, pages themselves can be in the language the group chooses
- Youth needed to be in communication with and integrated into the RCE that represents them – too often coordinators are not engaging with youth, or are only offering token engagement; having the secretariat ask each RCE to appoint a youth focal point would greatly assist – position could be for 1-2 years
- It would also help for each country to have youth focal point who can coordinate with other RCEs in a given nation or region.
- The terms and responsibilities for focal points should be set by the Secretariat
- Youth within the RCEs need a more effective way to communicate between one another and between RCEs themselves.

Main Action Points:

- 1) RCEs will be asked to appoint youth focal points for each RCE. The Secretariat will work with the youth network to create regional/national clusters with designated focal points and terms and conditions for the given focal points.
- 2) The Secretariat will work with youth to propose a common ESD project that RCE youth can work on for the next year across the RCE community. Presentations on this project can be tied to all regional meetings.
- 3) RCE youth are encouraged to create regional/national platforms for communication among RCEs using a common language, in addition to continued use of the Global RCE Youth Network page if it is available to them.