

Education for Sustainable Development Programme

UNU-IAS



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Institute for the Advanced Study
of Sustainability

ABOUT US

The United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) is part of the network of research and training centres within the UNU system, an agency, which in its role as the think-tank for the UN, aims to contribute, through research and capacity building, to efforts to resolve pressing global problems. UNU-IAS conducts research, postgraduate education and capacity development, both in-house and in cooperation with an interactive network of academic institutions and international organisations. The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) in 2002, based on the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Following the resolution, UNU-IAS launched the Education for Sustainable Development Programme in 2003 with funding support from the Ministry of the Environment-Japan, to contribute to the UN DESD, spanning from 2005 to 2014. The Programme focuses on advocacy and dissemination of education for sustainable development (ESD) principles, promotion of Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD (RCEs), strengthening of ESD activities of higher education institutions, and contributing to evidence-based policy dialogue through research, capacity development and strategic engagement with international processes.

GOAL OF THE PROGRAMME

The goal of the programme is to help in the creation of a Global Learning Space for sustainable development. The programme promotes research and actions to advance partnerships for ESD across geographic, knowledge and sectoral boundaries.

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

Initiatives of the ESD programme contribute to building broad ownership of DESD through articulation of the value added by each partner—especially higher education institutions and local (subnational) ESD stakeholders. Our initiatives build momentum and participation through building dynamic networks and expanding those networks throughout the DESD. The programme develops and implements research and development agendas through its two flagship initiatives: the global network of Regional Centres of Expertise in ESD and its network of higher education institutions for ESD, ProSPER.Net (Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network).

REGIONAL INITIATIVES—RCE

The ESD Programme assists in developing Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD (RCEs) all over the world. 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 RCE members bring in-depth knowledge of the challenges facing their respective regions. RCEs aspire to achieve the goals of the DESD by building an innovative platform for multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary information-sharing, dialogue and collaboration at local and global levels. Their networks include formal learning institutions, like schools and universities, as well as informal learning establishments, such as parks, museums, private enterprises, local governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations and the media. Collaborative undertakings within and across RCEs include policy work, research and development in the key thematic areas of ESD and sustainable development.

HIGHER EDUCATION—PROSPER.NET

ProSPER.Net (Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network) is a growing academic alliance for ESD in the Asia-Pacific region. It was launched with 18 founding members in 2008 and has since grown to 32 members. As a consortium of higher education institutions, ProSPER.Net implements activities and joint projects to integrate sustainability into curricula and to build and recognise research capacity in sustainable development.

COMPETENCIES AND CAPABILITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Under this initiative, we organise expert meetings and coordinate writing and other research projects to advance ESD thinking and practice, with special reference to monitoring and evaluation of ESD and development of multilevel mechanisms to enhance individuals' and institutions' capacities to respond effectively to sustainability challenges. We also engage in postgraduate teaching and curriculum development as an integral part of policy and action research on higher education for sustainable development. The ESD programme also delivers the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-Plus-Three Leadership Programme on Sustainable Production and Consumption annually to government officials, business leaders and managers from the ten ASEAN Member States and their three dialogue partners, namely China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Finally, we participate in important processes to influence ESD policy-making at the international level, such as an expert group in competencies in ESD established by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).



REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
ON EDUCATION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



ACKNOWLEDGED BY



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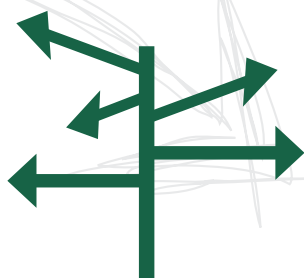
UNU-IAS has been closely collaborating with the **Ubuntu Alliance** – an alliance of the world's foremost educational and scientific institutions who are signatories of the *Ubuntu Declaration on Education, Science & Technology for Sustainable Development*. The Ubuntu Alliance aims to:

- strengthen collaboration between science and technology researchers and educators;
- better integrate science and technology into educational programmes for sustainable development; and
- strengthen cooperation between formal and non-formal education.

The Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the RCEs meets once a year to review RCE applications and recommend acknowledgement of new RCEs. UNU-IAS closely collaborates with UNESCO, the designated lead agency for the DESD, and other UN agencies through the UN Inter-Agency Committee for the DESD. In addition to RCEs and ProSPER.Net members, we also collaborate with influential research and policy-making institutions and regional organisations such as ASEAN and UNECE.

WHERE WE ARE TODAY

The Global RCE Service Centre and the ProSPER.Net Secretariat have been established at UNU-IAS to provide assistance to individual RCEs and ProSPER.Net members respectively, and to facilitate their communications, networking, and research and development activities. In the first half of the DESD, RCEs and ProSPER.Net have successfully mobilised support for the DESD and increased the visibility of ESD. As of July 2014, there are 129 RCEs around the globe and 32 ProSPER.Net members.



REGIONAL CENTRES OF EXPERTISE

- As of March 2014, there are 37 RCEs in Europe, 47 in Asia-Pacific, 26 in the Middle East and Africa, and 19 in the Americas.
- National governments, such as those of Japan, Kenya and Denmark, have recognised RCEs as an effective strategy to implement ESD. The ASEAN Environmental Education Action Plan (2008-2012) recognizes RCEs as partners.
- RCEs collaborate on key sustainability topics such as biodiversity, health, climate change, sustainable production and consumption, poverty, youth, higher education, transitional knowledge, teacher training for ESD and institutions of higher education.

PROSPER.NET

ProSPER.Net activities and joint projects include:

- Young Researchers' School on sustainable development for graduate students;
- Young Scientist Award in recognition of the outstanding work of young scientists and researchers on sustainability issues;
- Leadership Programme to develop inter-disciplinary skills to lead sustainable development initiatives;
- design of short courses and modules on social entrepreneurship skills;
- development of training materials for business schools on principles adopted by the United Nations Global Compact;
- innovative pedagogies in poverty reduction;
- e-learning programme on public policy and sustainable development practice;
- faculty training materials on sustainable development;
- development of case studies and teaching materials for business schools on biodiversity and climate change;
- integration of sustainability education into existing engineering and built environment curriculum;
- development of learning cases on sustainable production and consumption;
- creation of sustainability tool for academic institutions; and
- educational programme for sustainable development with a focus on biodiversity.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The ESD programme's researchers have published numerous articles on ESD, RCEs and ProSPER.Net in peer-reviewed academic journals, and edited special issues of the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education and a special section on RCEs in the Journal of Education for Sustainable Development.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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