5th Asia Pacific Meeting

Balikpapan, Indonesia

17 July 2012

**A summary on Asia Pacific Network of Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development**

* **In preparation for 7th Global RCE Conference**

**[PART 1] Vision**

**Ⅰ. Sejahtra Project and Asia Pacific RCE Network**

Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development(ESD) is an initiative of the United Nations University for the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. Since 2005, acknowledged RCEs have formed a global network to create a global learning space for sustainable future. Due to growing number of RCEs within Asia Pacific region, a discussion to create a regional network began in 2007, leading to organization of annual continental meeting since 2008. Now in 2012, the Asia Pacific RCEs network has expanded to 47(?) members.

After five years of regional RCEs alliance, it is necessary to keep record of our path and engage in extensive discussion about where we are heading in the future. This paper is aimed at recognizing the collaborative activities of Asia Pacific RCEs between 2007 and 2011 and raising necessary questions to be jointly answered by the community to prepare for the end of UN DESD and beyond.

**The vision of Asia Pacific RCEs Network and the Role of continental platform**

a. The Vision

“The Asia-Pacific Continental Platform is a way to build good collaboration among RCEs in our endeavors towards protecting Asian culture and way of life in order to promote sustainability.”

“The Asia-Pacific Continental Platform promotes Asian perspectives on sustainable development and ESD, based on the traditional wisdom of coexistence.”

* Quoted from 2010 Curitiba Meeting

Sejahtra Project is a joint initiative of Asia Pacific RCE network to find the alternative path towards sustainability, acknowledged by the members as existent within the unique traditional culture of Asia Pacific region with emphasis on the coexistence.

Key themes of the Sejahtra project include ‘traditional medicine & ESD’ which is unique to the region, led by RCE Penang and Yogyakarta. (….)

RCE Centre named “Sejahtra Centre” is under construction in Tongyeong, Korea as the support center of Asia Pacific RCE network. In relation to the Sejahtra Centre, RCE Tongyeong offers Sejahtra Fellowship to promote Sejahtra project through comparative research among AP RCEs performed by invited research fellow. 1st Fellowship started in 2012 and Mr. Hastanga from RCE Yogyakarta was supported in his comparative research on School ESD in Yogyakarta and Tongyeong.

Sejahtra meaning well-being and sustainability in Malay, is ….

**[PART 2] Summary of Continental Network**

**Ⅱ. Asia Pacific RCEs Network: An Overview**

As the most extensive network of RCEs covering the largest geographical area from Uzbekistan to Korea, China to the South Pacific, effort to promote a regional network of Asia Pacific RCEs began in 2007 during 2nd Global RCEs Conference in Penang, Malaysia. The informal discussion at the conference made during meeting hours at hotel lobby led to 1st Continental Conference of Asia Pacific RCEs in 2008 held in Tongyeong, Korea. Since then formal regional meeting has been held twice a year during a session at the annual global conference and at the annual continental conference hosted by a member of AP RCEs network.

In 2009(?) an organizing committee was formed based on voluntary participation for the duration of 2 years, which led to launching of the second term of organizing committee in 2010 during Curitiba Global RCEs Conference.

Despite numerous natural disasters affecting hosting countries, continental meetings have been regularly held every year since 2008.

**Ⅲ. Asia Pacific RCEs Meeting: Key outcomes**

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| --- | --- |
| Year/Venue | Key Outcomes |
| July, 2007.  2nd Global RCEs Conference,  Penang, Malaysia  (Informal Gathering) | * Need for a regional network to discuss and approach ESD issues of Asia Pacific was raised * Discussion on establishment of annual continental meeting was made |
| May, 2008.  3rd Global RCEs Conference, Barcelona, Spain |  |
| Oct, 2008  1st Asia Pacific RCEs Continental Conference,  Tongyeong, Korea | * 18 RCEs participated to discuss regional issues * Individual RCEs were invited to introduce their activities in 10-minute presentation. First formal opportunity to learn about each other. * Operational issues such as communication were introduced by UNU-IAS. |
| May 2009.  4th Global RCEs Conference,  Montreal, Canada | * Key thematic areas of interest and flagship programs of participating RCEs were located through a workshop and thematic group meetings were organized to share information * 1st term of Asia Pacific RCEs Organizing Committee(2009-2010) was launched via voluntary participation from interested RCEs.   \*Members of 1st AP Organizing Committee : RCE Chubu(Reita Furusawa), RCE Tongyeong(Won J Byun), Focal Point of Indian RCEs(Kiran Chokar), RCE Penang(Zainal Sanusi), RCE East Kalimantan(Eko ), RCE Trang(Watcharee Amplord), RCE Cebu(Kalachuchi) |
| Nov 2009.  2nd Asia Pacific RCEs Continental Conference, Delhi, India. | * 12 RCEs participated * A brief introduction of key activities of participating RCEs * Thematic discussions on climate change related issues were dealt in line with the overall theme of the conference. |
| May 2010.  5th Global RCEs Conference,  Curitiba, Brazil. | * 14 RCEs & 1 candidate participated among 28 RCEs in the region. * The vision and goal of Asia Pacific RCE network discussed * Key operational issues including facilitating effective inter-RCE and intra-RCE communication, empowering new/dormant RCEs, organizing regular skype meeting among organizing committee members were discussed * Basic criteria on deciding the host of annual continental meeting is discussed and agreed on. * 2nd term of AP Organizing Committee(2010-2011) formed, including 8 RCEs: RCE Chubu(Reita Furusawa), RCE Tongyeong(Won J Byun), RCE Penang(Zainal Sanusi/Salfarina), RCE Yogyakarata(Eko), RCE Delhi(Ranjana) RCE Lucknow(Preeti), RCE Beijing(He Yiqing), RCE Incheon(Mirinae Yoon) |
| Jan. 2011.  3rd Asia Pacific RCEs Continental Conference, Yogyakarta, Indonesia | * 11 RCEs participated among 31(?) RCEs. * A brief introduction on RCE Portal * A briefing on the current status of Asia Pacific RCEs Sejahtra Centre and eco park project from RCE Tongyeong * Yogyakarta Declaration on Biodiversity produced. |
| Nov. 2011.  4th Asia Pacific RCEs Continental Conference, Cha-am, Thailand. | * 19 RCEs participated among 34 acknowledged RCEs. * Brief factsheet of each RCEs were collected to help mutual understanding : 11 RCEs submitted(as of Nov2011) * Special session on Asia ESD Monitoring and Evaluation presented by IGES/UNU-IAS and Disaster Resilience: Experience of Tohoku Tsunami by RCE Greater Sendai * Four sub-regional groups formed for the first time. Exisiting regional/national ESD/RCEs network located to strengthen ties with current ESD activities in the region. Nation-wide RCEs networks are found to be developing in countries like Japan and Korea. * A brief discussion on achievement and challenges of AP RCE network |
| Nov. 2011  6th Global RCE Conference, Kerkrade, Netherlands |  |

**Ⅳ. Discussions and Key Outcomes**

**[1]. Thematic Discussions**

1. **Biodiversity**
2. 2010 Nagoya CBD COP10

Since 2009 RCEs Chubu, Guwahati, Penang, Yogyakarta discussed the need to prepare for 2010 Nagoya CBD COP10. RCE Chubu opened a open cyber dialogue page(<http://biodiversity-cop10.ning.com/>) and invited interested RCEs as well as related organizations and citizens to join online discussion on biodiversity. UNU and Japanese RCEs organized booth exhibition during the conference.

1. Best Practices Project

In order to promote ESD on biodiversity, participants at the biodiversity thematic group, led by RCE Guwahati discussed collecting best practices among Asia Pacific RCEs and sharing the information via poster or a booklet.

1. On-line open lecture

On-line open lecture sessions jointly organized by interested RCEs were proposed in Curitiba meeting and Chaam meeting to facilitate spread of the knowledge and expertise of RCEs on biodiversity issue to a wider audience. During Chaam meeting 2011, RCEs have volunteered to participate in the project throughout 2012, led by RCE Guwahati and Chubu.

1. Traditional Medicine and ESD

RCE Penang has been organizing annual conference on Traditional Medicine since 2009(?) to promote traditional knowledge as a part of Asian approach to ESD.

1. **Schools**
2. Online teacher training session

Indian RCEs Guwahati, Lucknow and Delhi have collaborated to organize online teacher training session on ESD.

1. RCE Bulletin Schools Edition

A special edition of RCE Bulletin on the issue of schools was proposed by AP RCEs to UNU RCE Global Service Center. However, due to lack of adequate amount of inputs, the project has been postponed in 2010.

1. ESD Stories from Schools

A project to make E-Documentation of ESD cases was proposed by RCE Beijing in 2010 Curitiba meeting. Further development is yet to be made.

1. AP ESD Material Resource Inventory on Schools

Proposed by RCE Delhi, the initiative is planned to meet the needs of schools. Further development is yet to be made.

1. Policy Approach

In order to promote ESD within formal education system, governed by Ministry of Education, RCEs raised the issue of strengthening policy approach at national level. RCEs Beijing and Srinagal especially expressed their interest in this matter.

1. **Youth**
2. YUVA(Youth Unite for Volunteer Action) Meeting on climate change

Annually organized by RCE Delhi since 2009(?), the meeting of young people within India and around the world is expanded to cover not only the youth participation from Asia Pacific RCEs but from global RCEs community. During the meeting, an RCE session is organized to promote RCEs youth network.

1. “Young Faces of the Asia Pacific” : Youth Photo Exhibition Project

A project to collect photographs of young people engaged in ESD activities within AP region and creating a moving exhibition was proposed by RCE Tongyeong in 2009 to promote youth participation in the RCEs movement. Further development is yet to be made due to lack of adequate number of participating RCEs.

1. Asia Youth…. Greater Sendai(???)
2. Bridge to the World

Bridge to the World is a program of RCE Tongyeong that trains youth and provides opportunity to visit neighboring RCEs of choice to promote youth network among RCEs.

1. **Community**
2. Website Development

A joint website on community issue was discussed during Curitiba meeting in 2010. Further development is yet to be made.

1. Student Exchange on Community Services

Student Exchange project on community services was proposed by RCEs Incheon and Yogyakarta during Curitiba meeting in 2010. The proposal is subject to further discussion due to limited resources.

1. Community based biodiversity project

Developed by RCEs Yogyakarta and Penang, the project on documenting related practices in the Asia Pacific region in the form of written materials, films, photos, videos was proposed during Curitiba meeting in 2010. In relation, RCE Yogyakarta conducted research in partnership with RCEs Penang, Tongyeong, and Chubu.

**[2]. Operational Issues**

**1. Capacity Building**

As discussed during 2010 Curitiba meeting, the capacity building needs of individual RCEs vary according to the local context. Therefore case-by-case approach is required, with help of RCE Global Service Centre and neighboring RCEs. Also the need for common platform for sharing information and stimulating joint action has been raised from the beginning of RCEs acknowledgement, for which upcoming RCEs Portal is expected to play a key role.

**2. Support for New / Dormant RCEs**

1. Dormant RCEs

During Curitiba meeting, the need for locating the status of dormant RCEs who have not responded to email correspondence was raised. RCEs Anji and South Pacific were the first group of dormant RCEs to be contacted by volunteers from neighboring RCEs or knowledgeable person. Such effort is to be regularly conducted to consolidate the regional network.

1. New RCEs

As one of the fastest growing continental community of RCEs, the task of supporting and guiding new RCEs in the Asia Pacific region was distributed among neighboring RCEs. In some cases, like in the case of Tongyeong and Ul-joo, numerous joint workshops were held to consult the establishment process.

**3. Effective Communication**

a. AP RCE emailing listing

In order to facilitate effective inter-RCE communication- an issue raised during 2010 Curitiba meeting, Asia Pacific RCEs Email List has been drafted, consisting of three contact email addresses from each RCE, including an official RCE email address. The list is being updated and modified.

1. Good Intra-RCE communication

Establishing good intra-RCE communication is recognized as a prerequisite of good inter-RCE communication. In many cases, it was found that the discussions of regional / global RCEs network do not reach the key members of individual RCEs due to language barrier and poor intra-RCE communication system. To complement the issue, 3 contact persons are listed for direct AP RCEs emailing.

1. Regular communication among organizing committee

In 2010 regular skype meetings were held among organizing committee members every two months to keep track of overall progress of action plans and thematic projects discussed at previous meetings. This was an effective means to manage the growing Asia Pacific RCEs community.

1. Facebook page

Despite various attempts made over the last few years to encourage online discussion among global RCEs, emailing remains as the only feasible option of online communication to the largest number of RCEs. To deal with this issue, during 2011 Chaam meeting, a facebook page among Asia Pacific RCEs was proposed as an easy and personal means of web-based contact, not only for the regional network but also for thematic group activities. The page is to be opened soon.

**4.Linking Existing ESD Networks**

1. Locating ESD Networks

Linking RCEs activities with existing ESD networks with the region is one of the key strategies in promoting ESD throughout Asia Pacific and empowering RCEs movement. The need for database of ESD networks was raised.

1. Sub-regional Network

A proposal to divide the region into sub-regions of geographical proximity was made to promote in-depth networking. During Chaam meeting, 2011, first sub-regional group discussion was held.

* Group A. China, Japan, Korea
* Group B. Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia
* Group C. Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, the South Pacific, Australia
* Group D. India, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh

**6. Criteria for deciding annual meeting venue**

As more than one RCE proposes to hold annual continental meetings every year, it is important to make the decision jointly and transparent among member RCEs. Hence in 2010 during Curitiba meeting, basic criteria were agreed by participants.

* Criteria 1. Diversity of Location
* Criteria 2. Preparedness of the hosting RCE

**[3]. Way ahead**

1. Developing clear vision, goal and philosophy of regional network

- Sejahtra Project : Overarching philosophy of sustainability in the context of Asia Pacific region

2. Thematic projects : concrete outcomes based on strong commitment

3. Promoting diverse opportunity to engage in regional discussion

- securing youth participation

**[PART 3] Cases of Continental collaboration**

**Cases of Asia Pacific RCE Collaboration**

<…….Cases to be filled in by RCEs………..>

e.g.> RCE Tongyeong

- Regular study tour group visits Tongyeong from RCE Kitakyushu

- Bridge to the World youth visited 9 RCEs since 2008

- Joint workshop among 3 Korean RCEs

- Students from GyeongSang National University College of Marine Sciences(ESD Model University) visited RCEs Greater Sendai, Okayama, Kitakyushu, Penang and Yogyakarta since 2007.

- College of Biology, Gadja Mada University of RCE Yogyakarta and GSNU College of Marine Sciences have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in promoting ESD in schools.