



Summary of the 15th Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting

Photo of the 15th Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting

The 15th Asia-Pacific RCE Regional Meeting - Google Drive

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NPkRu6msWpMYEQ5lwtV5epMAo8o7h6RL>

Material of the 15th Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting

[Material_the 15th AP RCE Regional Meeting.pdf](#)

Timetable of the 15th Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting

[Programmes_The 15th Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting 2023_ Revised.pdf](#)

Opening Remarks (Yeong-gi CHEON, Chairperson of RCE Tongyeong, Mayor of Tongyoeng City)

Cheon, Yeong-ki, Chairperson of RCE Tongyeong Salam Sejahtera! It is indeed an immense honor to host the 15th Asia-Pacific RCE Meeting in Tongyeong. Tongyeong, a small yet enchanting destination, is blessed with the awe-inspiring beauty of Hallyeo National Park, an archipelago of 570 magnificent islands, and a rich heritage spanning over four centuries. The city of Tongyeong is a small but beautiful place, filled with the stunning scenery of the Hallyeo National Park, 570 fantastic islands, and over 400 years of history and culture.

Tongyeong is also a center of Korean art and a tourist destination with 16 million visitors annually.

In 2005, Tongyeong made history by becoming the first Korean city and the eighth worldwide to earn the prestigious title of an RCE city. This marked Tongyeong's initial step into the world of sustainability. Over the past 18 years, our city has diligently worked to imbue the values of sustainability within its community. This concerted effort bore fruit with the establishment of the Tongyeong RCE Sejahtera Forest in 2015, and today, we are delighted to welcome you to this lush green sanctuary.

In 2009, Tongyeong had the privilege of hosting the inaugural Asia-Pacific RCE Meeting, followed by the distinguished Global RCE Meeting in 2012. These gatherings brought together luminaries in the field of sustainable development education from across the globe, who joined forces to craft a vision for the future and endorse the Tongyeong Declaration.

At that time, there were discussions about the 'Sejatra' project and the idea of establishing a center in Tongyeong as a hub for RCE in Asia-Pacific. So we named the forest 'Tongyeong RCE Sejatra Forest' and it is a great pleasure to invite the RCEs of Asia-Pacific to join us in this forest.

This meeting has been thoughtfully designed as a crucible for open discussion and the exchange of ideas, all centered around the themes of sustainability and community engagement.

Together, we will share our ideas and experiences and build stronger networks.

Opening Remarks (Jonghwi PARK, Haed of Academic Programme of Innovation and Education, UNU-IAS)

Warm Greetings from Tokyo to the 15th Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting on *"Empowering Sustainable Community through Education for Sustainable Development"*!

On behalf of the United Nations University – Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, I extend my heartfelt welcome to all participants from across Asia-Pacific and beyond. It is an honor to stand before you today, as I had the privilege of attending the Korea RCE National Meeting hosted by RCE Tongyeong in last March (2023), along with the Director of UNU-IAS. During that remarkable event, I personally witnessed the unwavering dedication and dynamic spirit of RCE Tongyeong and its stakeholders. Meeting with members representing 5 RCEs across Korea was indeed a pleasure, and I was deeply impressed by the Sejahtera Centre's magnificent facilities and the breathtaking natural surroundings.

Today's Regional Meeting marks the third time that RCE Tongyeong is hosting an international RCE meeting, following the 1st Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting in 2008 and the 7th Global RCE Conference in 2012. We express our deepest gratitude to RCE Tongyeong for their steadfast leadership and innovative initiatives, which have not only stimulated the RCE network but also generated synergies, enabling us to make a more substantial and meaningful impact.

Understanding the Crucial role of RCEs

According to the '[Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2023](#)', published by UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), our region has achieved only 14.4% of the progress towards the 17 SDGs. At the current pace, the report predicts that 90% of the SDG targets will remain unattainable by 2030 and we would need 42 more years to achieve them.

The message from this report is even more critical in two respects: first, the disappointing 14.4% progress can be attributed to a significant regressing of the Goal 13, Climate Action. Second, our region is home to 60% of the world population, rendering our contributions – whether positive or negative, disproportionately significant on the global scale.

On the flip side, as the world's most populous region, we hold the immense potential to generate a critical mass capable of steering climate action and accelerating progress towards the SDGs.

In this regard, RCEs in Asia and the Pacific serve as invaluable platforms for multi-stakeholder collaboration, empowering individuals and communities alike. RCEs continue to play a pivotal role in effecting profound societal transformations towards sustainable development. Your dedication and actions in providing lifelong learning opportunities for sustainable development not only

inspire your immediate communities but also contribute to every step forward in achieving the SDGs, extending our impact across our region and beyond.

In this momentous occasion, I am delighted to announce that the United Nations University has officially acknowledged RCE Kathmandu as a new addition to the Asia-Pacific RCE network. Congratulations and a warm welcome to the Global RCE Network! This brings the total number of RCEs worldwide to 190. Out of 190, 74 of them are located in the Asia-Pacific region, solidifying our region as the largest hub for RCE globally. As we peruse the programme for this Regional Conference, it is evident that participants will gain firsthand experiences and invaluable insights through field visits to schools, community, and islands. We also eagerly anticipate the wealth of knowledge to be shared through presentations by various RCEs and fruitful discussions in alignment with the five Priority Areas of the ESD for 2030, fostering further collaboration.

In Conclusion

In closing, I extend again my heartfelt appreciation to the host RCE, RCE members and all participants. I would also like to express our special gratitude to the Ministry of the Environment of Japan for their continuous support for the Global RCE network. Special thanks are due to the Ministry of the Environment of Korea and the Korean National Commission for UNESCO who have been great support for RCE movements in Korea. I hope that this Regional Meeting will foster dialogue and collaboration and ignite a collective determination to accelerate actions. Together, we have the power to embrace a just transition and shape a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future for people and our planet!

Lightening Session

[Lightening SEssion_the 15th AP Meeting.pdf](#)

Keynote Speech

- Dr. Eunkyung PARK, founder and honorary chairperson of RCE Tongyeong, AP Regional advisor, shared the origins of ESD and RCE, connecting them with the UN Environmental Process, Agenda 21, and the Ubuntu Alliance. She highlighted the evolution of the UN Environmental Process from UNCHE to Rio+20 and emphasized the key role played by various major

groups, such as Preamble Major Group, Women, Children & Youth, Indigenous People, Non-Governmental Organizations, Local Authorities, Trade Unions, Business & Industry, Scientific & Technological Community, and the Role of Farmers. Notably, in 1992, UNE Educator was not listed as one of the major groups. Over the next decade, education emerged as a crucial catalyst for changing values and behaviors. Dr. PARK also introduced the two tracks of RCE: as a multi-stakeholder network with an integrated concept. RCEs have contributed to making cities more sustainable, creating a significant local impact. Dr. PARK also introduced the three types of RCE: college –centered RCE: education oriented RCE based on the research work at College- good for setting edu governance, government-centered RCE , municipal as well as central. Good for policy building and its implementation and NGO-/ Research-centered RCE :project based accreditation and share the structure of RCE. RCE Service Center provides platform for resources for capacity building, guide strategic operations for better global RCE community and reinforces a clear governance mechanism to support, monitor and incentivize RCE activities.

[Major Group, ESD, Dr. Eunkyung PARK.pdf](#)

- Prof. Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, Co-chairperson of RCE Greater Gombak and IIUM Rector, shared *Sejahtera* lessons from the pandemic. *Sejahtera* initiative aims to activate vision and long-term planning to nurture a holistic human-centric and balanced leadership for a harmoniously peaceful society with dignity. It aims to support the development of the *sejahtera* framework, particularly, reaching for a holistic approach, based on its ultimate mission: to integrate the macro-microcosmic nexus of balanced leadership with universal consciousness centring on justice. It manifests values for self-leadership aligned to: 1) Humility – open to co-learning and active listening to feedback from others, 2) Mutual respect build trust and communication between team members to strengthen co-existence, 3) Balanced co-existence – balanced and realigned individual aspirations with the needs of others based on the elements of SPICES at each of the three tiers. The *Sejahtera* Academic Framework is both “old” and “new”. It is “old” in the sense that the core values and the vision and mission of the University continue to be the bedrock. It is “new” in that it weaves together the current and future major agenda while demanding each and everyone

of us - at both the individual and organisational levels - reflect on our roles and responsibilities to move the University into the future.

[Sejahtera lesson from pandemic_Prof. Dzulkifli Razak.pdf](#)

Site Visit of Byeokbang Elementary School

Byeokbang Elementary School

Welcome to Byeokbang Elementary School. I am principle Jong-guk LEE. Our school has 19 classes in elementary school and 385 students, 5 classes in kindergarten attached to it. Our School students are living bright and positive lives. and the ecological environment is well established.

~ Elementary School : Total 19 Classes, 385 Students

~ An attached kindergarten : Total 5 Classes, 75 Students

We are doing lots of ecological and sustainable practice with our student. These are the project we are doing now.

1. **Ecological Environmental Play Planning Group**

This year, it recruited an ecological environment play planning team. And it runs an ecological environment play program organized by students.

2. **Earth Day Lights Out Campaign**

Participation in the lightning event held on Earth Day was increased in connection with local and international exchange schools. And the education was strengthen by analyzing the results.

3. **An international exchange school**

Our school is engaged international exchange activities with SK-Airmerah School.

4. **Yuja-cha Classroom**

- **Introduction to the Class**

Our class focuses on two important things this year: taking care of our environment and learning about self-governance.

- **Environment**

We think it's important for kids to care about the environment. Sometimes, it's not easy to truly understand why it's essential to protect nature. So, we do fun activities like nature art, play games that teach us about nature, and go on outdoor trips to get closer to it. Then, we work on projects to help the environment. This way, we learn to love and protect nature. Have you seen these poster in our school? They are part of the "깨우기 Project" we started this year. Our project is all about reducing food waste from our school lunches. The project name "깨우기" is made up of two Korean words: "깨" and "우." In Korean, "깨" is the first word of "Clean," and "우" is the second word of "Empty." So, when we put them together, "깨우기" means "Cleaning Up and Emptying," which perfectly represents our goal to reduce food waste and keep our plates clean. We started in our class, aiming to clean our plates 100 times. We did it and even expanded it to the whole school. Many students joined, and we've counted more than 400 clean plates so far. Our school nutritionist noticed a big change too. We made a website to show our progress, and you can check it out with a QR code.

- **About Self-Governance**

At the start of the school year, our class decided on a special name for ourselves by combining words that describe the kind of class we want to be. Currently, our class name is "유자차." This name is a combination of the first words of Korean that represent freedom, respect, humor, and laid-back. Our class is like a little community. We each have different jobs, and when we face problems, we make new rules together. These jobs are important because they help our class run smoothly. We have 17 jobs like bank clerk, postman, janitor, police officer, store clerk and more. At the end of the month, we get "paychecks" in our passbooks. With that money, we can pay taxes, save extra, or buy snacks from the cafeteria. The types of snacks in the cafeteria were also decided after a class meeting. Students can even save up their taxes to have a class party. Students participate in all decision-making processes determined by the class, feel a sense of belonging and affection for the class, and actively participate in school life with a sense of ownership.

5. GCO Environment Club

Byeokbang Environment School club do lots of things about the environment.

- ***Protection of Terrestrial Ecosystems***
- ***Protection of Marine Ecosystems***
- ***Mitigating climate change***
- ***Diverse Campaign Initiatives***

The coexistence of humans and nature is an important matter that determines the life and future of mankind. We are trying to become sustainable citizens through education.

- **Lesson learned**

Rather, it should extend beyond those boundaries, encompassing real-world experiences and responsibilities. One striking example of this was the self-governance class we encountered, which consisted of 17 students. Each student had a distinct role, ranging from a police officer to a mail carrier and janitor. Notably, they received salaries and paid taxes, which were subsequently used to fund class parties. What was particularly remarkable was their dedication to sustainable practices, such as pesticide-free plant cultivation. They not only grew vegetables in class but also took them home. The insect hotel, with its diverse inhabitants on each floor, left a lasting impression.

Reflecting on this field trip, I found myself brimming with creative ideas and a newfound determination to incorporate the lessons learned into my own life. This experience underscored the power of education in fostering a sense of responsibility towards our planet. The students we encountered exuded confidence, and their artwork showcased their impressive creativity and dedication to their unique roles. This field trip served as a potent reminder that education can inspire people to protect the Earth while nurturing their individual talents and passions.

Site Visit of Seonchon Villiage

Welcome to Seonchon Village, a marine eco-conservation area. I am honored to be your presenter today, my name is Jiwook Cheol. I serve as the village chief and represent the fishing community as a leader in our village. The core values we uphold in Suncheon Village are coexistence, and our vision is peace. We have been dedicated to achieving coexistence and peace through various

initiatives since 2014. Seonchon Village is located on the eastern coast of the heart of Tongyeong. The village began to form around 300 years ago, and until the 1980s, it was home to approximately 300 residents living in around 50 households. As South Korea underwent industrialization and economic growth, the population of Seonchon Village decreased significantly. Currently, around 100 people reside in 45 households, and the village has become an aging society with over 70% of its population being over 60 years old, and there are no babies, resulting in the absence of baby cries.

Seonchon Village is very close to Tongyeong City Hall, with a straight-line distance of only 1.5 kilometers, however, city buses only come in 10 times a day, making transportation very inconvenient. There is not a single convenience store where daily necessities can be purchased, and there are no restaurants where you can have a meal. Recently, two cafes are just opened. Seonchon Village has no paddy fields due to its geographical characteristics. Life in Seonchon Village, where rice is a staple in Korea and there are no paddy fields, has been very challenging, however, Seonchon Village had a vast sea with more than three million square meters of well-preserved seaweed forest; house of marine underwater, rich in seafood even a 7-year-old child could catch sea cucumbers by the half-basketful in the ocean. This ocean makes Seochon village residents be happy. Venturing along the coastline, you will encounter rocky tidal flats, mixed tidal flats, sandy tidal flats, and pearl oyster tidal flats, making it a thriving marine ecological observatory with a high diversity of species.

The coastal waters in front of Seonchon Village began to suffer from a depletion of seafood due to overfishing by fishermen. Both land-based and marine-based pollution caused the sea to fall ill. The ocean could no longer provide seafood and village residents left this village. In March 2014, a young high school student came to the Seonchon Village. This student began picking up trash on the beach every Saturday. Following this student's lead, more high school students started joining in to clean up the beach. By 2015, the number of high school students cleaning up the beach in Seonchon Village had grown to 300, and a "High School Environmental Club" was formed in the Tongyeong. In 2017, students inspired fishermen and residents to participate in marine litter clean-up activities. Residents of Seonchon Village, who had been observing the students' activities, began rolling up their sleeves and joining in the marine litter clean-up efforts. From 2018 to 2020, the residents and fishermen of Seonchon Village actively participated in the "Clean Coastline Campaign" to clean up marine litter in their area. The Seonchon Village Women's Association,

with support from the Ministry of Environment, worked towards making Seonchon Village a "Zero Waste" community from 2019 to 2021. Members of the Seonchon Village Women's Association transformed from housewives to resource recycling educators and even extended their influence to neighboring Geoje City, becoming ambassadors of resource recycling. By applying for designation, the government officially declared the area as Marine Protected Area No. 18 on February 14, 2020, due to the efforts of Seonchon Village residents and fishermen. Residents and fishermen of Seonchon Village have taken on the role of "sea farmers," cultivating and transplanting the iconic Blue Carbon species known as "잘피 (Jalpi)" to establish underwater forests. As fishermen and residents continue to collect underwater marine litter and transplant "잘피 (Jalpi)," the Jalpi forest is gradually coming back to life. • This place is where people protect the ocean and protected by ocean.

- **Women's Association in Seonchon Village**

Before they implemented this Separate waste collection system, all villagers used to stock the waste at the beach in front of the village. however, there were a lot of problems. when storms come or when there is heavy rain, the waste often flows to the beach and the sea. In those times, there was a lot of trash on the beach. In those times, high school students visited this village to volunteer for trash picking. He learned that this community has suffered from this problem for a very long time. So, he raised the voice about this problem and contacted the city hall to improve this situation. the administration decided to build a garbage collection point for this village. At the same time, the Women's Association in this village started to care more about the Separate waste collection. All members of the association help with waste collection once a week. At the first, not all members wanted to help. however, environmental organizations explained the environmental issues to the villagers and the villagers also noticed the difference after adopting this waste collection system. Many of them feel proud of themselves and this clean and beautiful community.

Our community has been doing Separate waste collection and recycling for 7 years. I will introduce our Separate waste collection and recycling. Before disposing of the waste there, all villagers take 3 steps. first of all, empty the contents. Secondly, wash it well. and then separate the garbage. after taking all those steps, the waste is deposited to this place and sorted out by material.

1. plastics : this is the most common type of garbage. we sort out the plastic according to 5 different types, plastic bottles, normal plastics, vinyl(bainal) , styrofoam, bottles for yogurt, plastic bottle cap
2. papers: we sort out the paper according to 2 types. papers and milk pack. as for the milk packs we go to the Community Service Center to exchange it with tissue.
3. scrap metals : we separate this in 2 types. Aluminium and steel.
4. glass bottles : we separate this whether it has color or not. Furthermore, we separate the glass bottle covered by the deposit-refund system. customers pay a small deposit on a glass packaging when purchasing and get refunded after returning the empty container.

We also collect non recyclable waste like light bulbs, batteries, and cooling packs. The waste that we collect is recycled in various ways. This is one of the things that we must do for a better future. We live in a very small ocean community. We learned a lot by collecting and picking the waste from the sea. While we cannot do a lot of things as elderly people, we believe that we are the best at waste collection in Korea. I'd like to thank everyone for coming today.

- **Lesson learned**

A small group of dedicated individuals, led by the determined leader of a women's association, embarked on a challenging journey to convince the predominantly elderly residents, constituting 70% of the community, to diligently segregate their garbage and embrace recycling for a period of two years. Although the initial stages were fraught with difficulties, their unwavering efforts eventually resulted in all residents consistently gathering and recycling their waste at a designated location.

In addition, the inspiring example of a single student who commenced cleaning the beach every Saturday evolved into a remarkable movement as, after just one year, a staggering 300 students rallied to join in this noble endeavor.

These stories serve as powerful reminders that even a single individual can catalyze profound change within their own communities, highlighting the potential for impactful transformations on a small scale in the places we call home.

Good Practices

No	Name	Name of RCE	Theme
1	Dr. Hyunsoon BAE	RCE Dobong	<u>Research on the development and operation of ESD at the level of higher education</u>
2	Ms. Suyeon PARK	Ministry of Environment in Korea	Policy of Environment Education in Korea
3	Dr. Wan Zahidah Wan Zulkifle	RCE Greater Gombak	<u>DRIVING THE TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS COMMUNIVERSITY THROUGH USRAH IN ACTION</u>
4	Ms. Prum, KANG	TCS	Environment Education of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (Korea-Japan-China)
5	Dr. Zainal Abidin Bin Sanusi	RCE Greater Gombak	<u>Mainstreaming SDGs- Society as Agent of Changes (Parliamentary-based Capacity Building Project)</u>
6	Dr. Sanya Srivichian	RCE Trang	<u>(2021) Seagrass Ecosystem for Sustainable Development</u>
7	Ms. Brittany Vermeulen	RCE Greater Western Sydney	<u>Hawkesbury-Nepean Waterkeeper Alliance</u>
8	Mr. Hao Xin	RCE Hangzhou	<u>Pre-Charity Project</u>
9	Dr. Muhaideen Abdul Kader Mohamad Ikbai	RCE Greater Gombak	<u>Desa Sejahtera: Building Sejahtera Community</u>
10	Dr. Diep Thi Ngoc Tran	RCE Southern Vietnam	<u>EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AMONG YOUTH THROUGH INNOVATION ACTIVITIES</u>
11	Dr. Japareng bin Lalung	RCE Penang	<u>Empowering Students' Knowledge of Palm Oil Sustainability Via Intergenerational Online</u>

			<u>Program and Tik Tok Video Competition</u>
12	Dr. Hiroko Shibakawa	RCE Okayama	<u>The Whole-Community Approach of ESD in Minan Area of Okayama City, Japan</u>
13	Dr. Jatinder Kaur Arora	RCE Chandigarh	<u>Enhancing Adaptive Capacity of Livestock Farmers & Youth Entrepreneurs in Changing Climate Scenario</u>
14	Dr. Gangar Abdeshi	RCE Srinagar	<u>Conservation of the Mishmi Hoolock Gibbon in the human-dominated fragmented habitats in Lower Dibang Valley District</u>
15	Mr. Komini Meto	RCE MISHMI HILLS	<u>Educating for sustainability, climate and disaster resilience</u>

Workshop

- **Policy:** Currently, South Korea is experiencing a change in leadership, which is having a significant impact on its policies. To ensure the continuity of policies despite changes in administration, it is crucial to provide education on RCE (Responsible Citizenship Education) and ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) for leaders. In addition to community education, there is a need for training programs for public servants responsible for implementing policies. This will help establish a solid foundation for policies that can persist through transitions in government.
- **Learning Environment:** The transformation of the learning environment should occur on a comprehensive level. It requires collaboration in policies, research, and education across various fields.
- **Capacity of teacher:** It is also important to educate educators who can implement ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) programs. While there are small-scale programs running in Kyrgyzstan, there is a lack of ESD programs. I understand that RCE Gombak has such programs, and there is a desire to collaborate with RCE Gombak to learn from their programs and implement them in Kyrgyzstan. There is also potential for

collaboration with Mongolia and China, and Japan is providing funding and policy support in the environmental sector, which holds promise for future developments in this field. During the meetings, ideas regarding the curriculum for circular economy education were exchanged, and there were also many discussions on what kind of education could be provided to government officials. In summary, there is a recognition of the importance of educating educators in ESD, and there are ongoing efforts to collaborate with other countries and organizations, such as RCE Gombak, Mongolia, China, and Japan, to enhance ESD programs and initiatives in Kyrgyzstan. These discussions include curriculum development for circular economy education and providing education to government officials.

- **Youth:** Through collaboration on various projects, our goal is to engage in diverse activities within the local community to nurture young people. We are implementing education for sustainable development (ESD) to work towards sustainable goals and envision sustainable communities. In meetings with the youth coordinator, we discuss our education plans and showcase successful cases, emphasizing our efforts toward global leadership development. Furthermore, we are strengthening community networking to recognize the efforts of youth and young adult groups, with the expectation that it will motivate them when employment stability is ensured. We aspire to improve the local community through social initiatives and pursue international exchanges through youth projects and global education training. We are particularly planning an exchange program with Mongolia, striving for continuous development.
- **Local action:** Activities that can be undertaken at the regional level include promoting through social media, providing formal or informal educational opportunities for traditional knowledge and wisdom, addressing policies related to greenwashing, consumerism, and food mileage, and strengthening partnerships with groups such as NGOs, CSOs, businesses, and local governments. Possible issues that may arise in this context include differing needs and wants among stakeholders, potential difficulties in the formulation and execution of policies, and discussions about the sustainability of projects.

Priority Action Area 2: Learning Environments

Priority Action Area 5: Local Level Action

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

① Collaboration

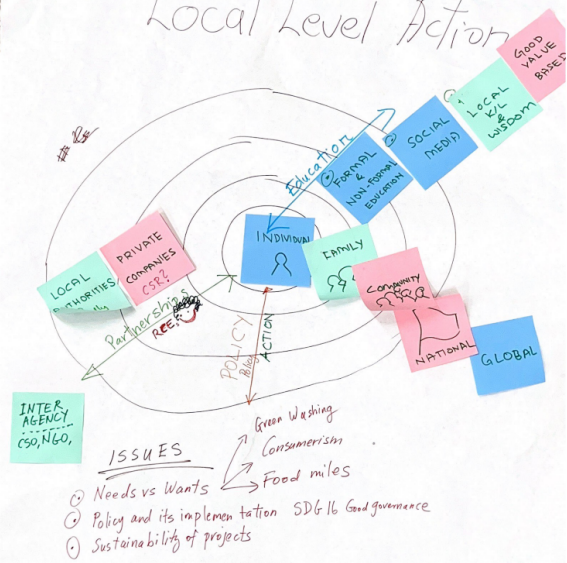
- Research Project
- Publication
 - ↳ Case Studies
 - ↳ Policy Brief
 - ↳ RCE Website (Run by UNU-IAS)
 - www.rcenetwork.org
- Compilation of Good Practices

② 'Leading Change Towards ESD'

- RCE Greater Gombak
 - Case Studies of Good Practices in Utsah in Action with UNU-IAS Input (Multi-stakeholders publication)
 - RCE GKL as jurors for University in Action Symposium

- ③ Hans Sidel Foundation
 - talks / online meetings with RCE Hangzhou

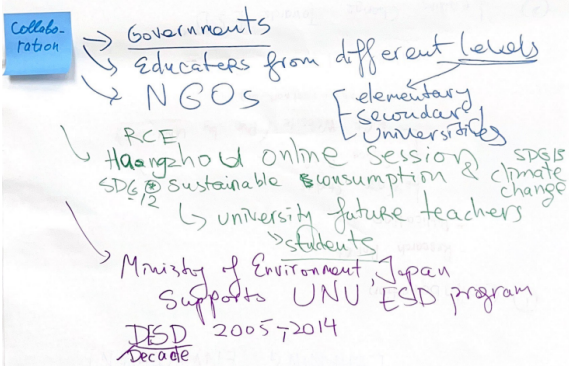
Local Level Action



Priority Action area 3: Building the capacities of educators

Capacity Building

Questions
How do you / RCE accelerate & promote ESD capacity Building?



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~~To T~~ trainer of
- Training of Trainers (TOT) on ESD

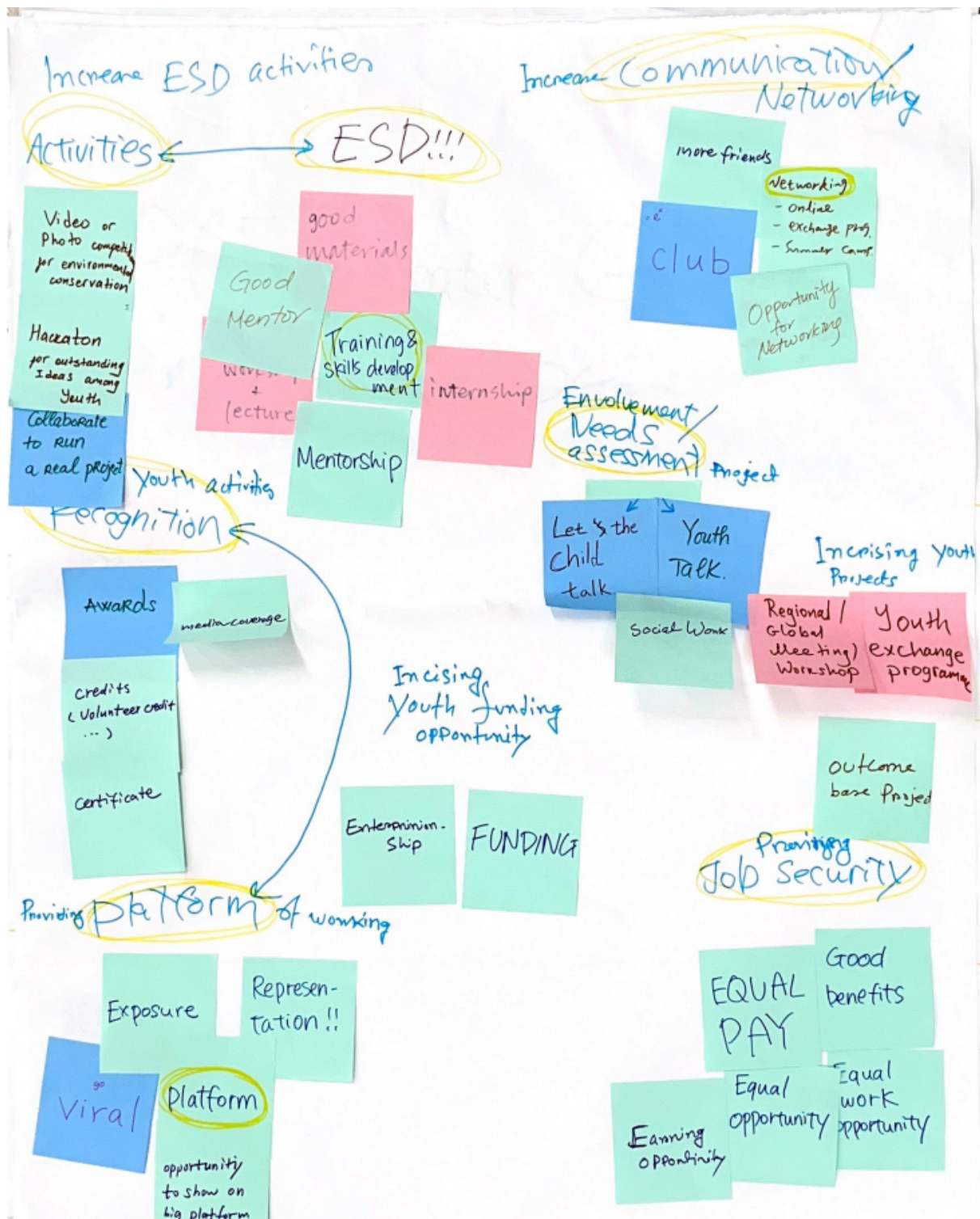
- Learning from RCEs (experienced people)
- "Teachers' multiplier"
- Contact UNESCO offices in Regions / countries

Collaborations
New cooperation extend Korea, Japan, China program on building capacities.

Other comments
Exchanging Educators Students

- Needs:
- Resource person Knowledgeable
 - Grants, money, sponsors
 - Qualified educators

Priority Action Area 4: Youth



Site Visit of Golli Island

Story of KimJeongnam, Teacher of Golli Island

After a long career (35 years of service in the Republic of Korea Navy), I retired and settled in a rural village for a peaceful life. Among the elderly residents of

Dangpo Village where I settled, there were individuals who didn't know how to read or write in Korean but had a strong desire to learn. I realized that I had been a beneficiary of education throughout my life, and teaching Korean to these elderly citizens was a way for me to give back to society. So, I obtained a teaching qualification and put up a sign that read "Dangpo Literacy Classroom" at my house, where I started teaching them Korean.

Dangpo Village holds historical significance as it is designated as Cultural Property No. 65, and it is also the place where Admiral Yi Sun-shin set sail for the Battle of Hansan Island, a historic naval battle victory. Although it was a challenging task for the elderly to learn Korean, they embarked on this journey with me, weaving their life stories and the history of our village into their learning experience. They expressed their life struggles in writing using the Korean they had learned, and their stories became a lifelong learning journey, continuing to this day. Additionally, we tried our hand at processing local agricultural and seafood products to create specialty goods that could be helpful in our daily lives.

After two years had passed, and as we entered our third year, I found it increasingly challenging to handle everything on my own. That's when I reached out to the REC Foundation for assistance. With the foundation's support, our learning activities continued, and we even published a small storybook containing the village's stories.

Learning continues to this day. Lifelong literacy education has become active in five neighboring villages, contributing to reducing the illiteracy rate among the elderly. The transformation in the lives of the elderly has led to a happier daily life, and they often say, "Volunteering has opened our eyes," showing interest in everything and using smartphones to explore the world. These individuals have carried the pain of illiteracy deep within themselves, making their thirst for education even more remarkable.

The start of learning on Golli Island is as thrilling as the beginning in Dangpo Village. Each learner's journey is an opportunity to unlock the unspoken pains hidden within them. Although Golli Island is close to the mainland, it has preserved its natural beauty, making it a place where the elderly can find spiritual healing through learning. Even in their 80s, their passion for learning assures us that age is just a number. Despite starting late, they have become an educational hub as vital as the mainland, and we earnestly hope that education will lead to healthier and happier lives.

Interview with Jeongnam Kim, Teacher of the literacy school

I attribute it to Tongyeong RCE. Eight years ago, when I moved to a rural village and discovered that some elderly residents didn't know how to read or write in Korean, I began volunteering in the village. It was during this time that RCE initiated the "Mobile Korean Classroom" program, which I joined. Starting in Dangpho Village, it expanded to neighboring villages, including Kwan-u, Jonghwa, Shinbong, and Dal-a. The individuals who initially joined the program have continued their learning journey and graduated from the elementary level this year. RCE has connected adult literacy education to Golli- Island. There are six members, three in the elementary basics level and the other three graduated from elementary school. Their proficiency levels in Korean basics vary. Some are starting from scratch, while others can read but find writing challenging. The learners are so enthusiastic. They progress from basics to reading and eventually writing diary. Those who have graduated from elementary school read poems by the writer Kyeong-ri PARK; is the late Korean writer, one of the most beloved writers among Koreans. They write their thoughts about Kyeong-ri PARK's work and share their own compositions. Additionally, they engage in simple English lessons according to the curriculum. Education is urgently needed to facilitate diverse learning opportunities. I believe that if facilities are established, our elderly residents can experience a more joyful life on the island through various educational activities.

Interview with Students

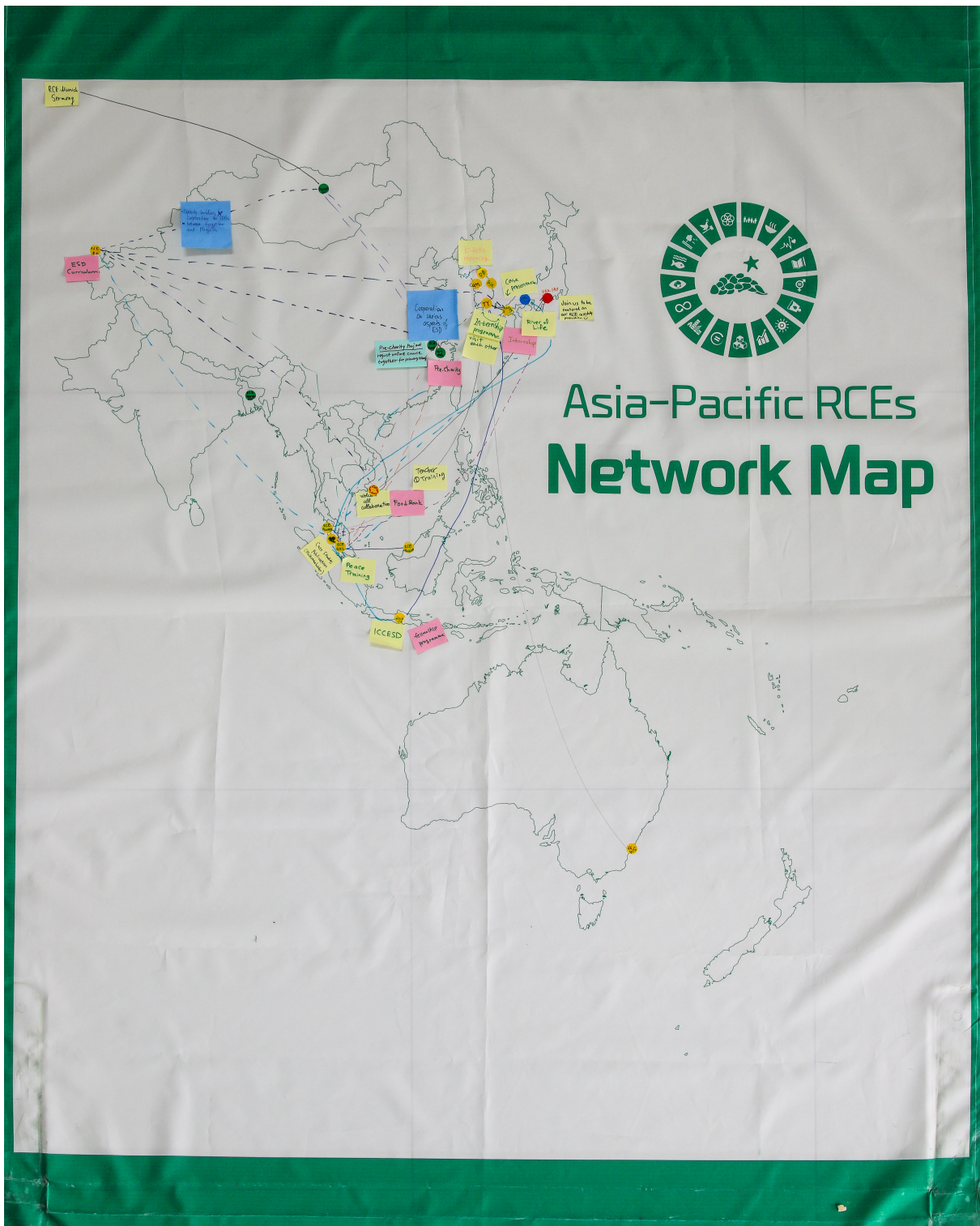
- Deockyeon Kim : I always wanted to learn Korean, but nobody around me was learning it, and I felt guilty doing it alone. However, as soon as I started studying, everyone in the neighborhood wanted to join. I'm so grateful that we're all learning together, and gradually, I'm finding happiness in understanding the essence of the Korean language. I'm always thankful to our teacher, and I want to keep working hard.
- Jong-e Lee : I was born on Golli Island and have lived here my whole life. I could barely read Korean, let alone write, so I practiced writing little by little. Learning Korean with the teacher made writing easier, and although consonants are still challenging, I write diaries everyday and stories from the past. The teacher guides me in correcting them. I dropped out of school in the second grade.
- Oh-keum Kim : I graduated from elementary school, but my learning journey stopped there. My entire life has been filled with just work, and it feels very regretful. Reading Kyeong-ri Park's poems, sharing stories, and writing are moments of reflection on my life.

- Yeongsuk Kim : I know Korean, but I want to learn English and classical Chinese. I'm studying basic English and starting from the basics with classical Chinese. Reading poems and sharing stories from our lives is a joyful time.

Lesson learned

In addition, the inspiring example of a single student who commenced cleaning the beach every Saturday evolved into a remarkable movement as, after just one year, a staggering 300 students rallied to join in this noble endeavor. These stories serve as powerful reminders that even a single individual can catalyze profound change within their own communities, highlighting the potential for impactful transformations on a small scale in the places we call home.

Asia-Pacific RCEs Network Map



Survey of the 15th Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting

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* Indicates required question

On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied were you with the 15th Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting

1 2 3 4 5
Very Dissatisfied ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Very Satisfied

Which aspects of the conference did you find most valuable? (Select all that apply)

