RCE Project Trends during the Global Action Programme on ESD (2015-2019)

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Introduction

A total of 479 projects conducted by RCEs, across 46 countries across the world during the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development were analysed between 2015 to 2019.

479
Projects conducted

46
Countries across the world

SDGs
As all RCE activities are focused around education, all projects were tied to SDG 4 (Quality Education), specifically Target 4.7 on Education for Sustainable Development.

The ESD initiatives created by RCEs during the GAP span the full 17 SDGs, however they particularly focused on:

SDG 13 (Climate Action);
SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production); and
SDG 15 (Life on Land).
Target Audience

RCE projects were conducted in a wide range of educational settings, targeting a variety of audiences including non-formal/informal community and youth education, as well as formal school systems across primary, secondary, and higher education.

- **65%** had a community education component
- **40%** had a higher education component
- **36%** had a non-formal/informal youth education component

### RCE projects of Global RCE Network by level of educational setting (2015-2019)

![Chart showing the distribution of RCE projects by level of educational setting.](chart.png)

Note: n>479 as one project could have multiple audiences. For example, a project that began in a primary school may have a second phase where the students then educate the community.)
GAP Priority Action Areas
Over half (54%) of RCE projects in the Global RCE Network conducted over the period of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, had a focus on GAP Priority Action Area #5 – Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level. (Note: n>479 as one project could target multiple Priority Action Areas. For example, a project that had a teacher-training component – Priority Action Area 3 – could also have a community education component – Priority Action Area 5).

Leading Institution
In the majority of projects, 54% of RCE projects were led by higher education institutions.
Themes
RCE projects were conducted across a wide range of themes:

38% of RCE projects had a curriculum component, therefore other educators could take the project and adapt it to their own classes and communities.

29% of RCE projects had a traditional knowledge component, where knowledge from Indigenous peoples was incorporated into the learning.

Ecosystem
The majority of RCE projects had an urban environment setting. However, RCE projects also took place in other environments, such as agricultural, fresh water, and forest environments.

(Note: n=479 as one project could include multiple ecosystem settings. For example, a project that was taught in an urban setting might have also brought learners to a wetlands setting to show the link between freshwater supply and demand for human populations.)
Americas

During the GAP, RCEs in the Americas worked on a total of 163 projects from across 7 countries in the region.

SDGs
The ESD initiatives in this region were particularly focused on SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being).

Target Audience
RCE projects were conducted in a wide range of educational settings, targeting a variety of audiences including non-formal/informal community and youth education, as well as formal school systems across primary, secondary, and higher education.

77% had a community education component

50% had a higher education component

31% had a non-formal/informal youth education component

RCE projects of the Americas by level of educational setting (2015-2019)

(Note: n>163 as one project could have multiple audiences. For example, a project that began in a primary school may have a second phase where the students then educate the community).
GAP Priority Action Areas

80% of RCE projects in the Americas during the GAP had a focus on GAP Priority Action Area #5 – Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level.

RCE projects of the Americas by GAP Priority Action Area (2015-2019)

(Note: n=163 as one project could target multiple Priority Action Areas. For example, a project that had a teacher-training component – Priority Action Area 3 – could also have a community education component – Priority Action Area 5).

Leading Institution

Over half (60%) of RCE projects in the Americas during the GAP were led by higher education institutions.

RCE projects of the Americas by leading institution (2015-2019)
Within Europe, a total of **70** projects across **16** countries in Europe were analysed from RCEs in this region of the world between 2015 and 2019.

**SDGs**
The ESD initiatives in this region were particularly focused on SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

**Target Audience**
RCE projects were conducted in a wide range of educational settings, targeting a variety of audiences including non-formal/informal community and youth education, as well as formal school systems across primary, secondary, and higher education. Europe was the one region of the world where the majority of RCE projects were conducted in higher education settings, not community settings.

- **56%** had a higher education component
- **54%** had a community education component
- **39%** had a non-formal/informal youth education component

(Note: n>70 as one project could have multiple audiences. For example, a project that began in a primary school may have a second phase where the students then educate the community.)
GAP Priority Action Areas
While community education (GAP Priority Action Area 5 – Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level) still played a predominant role in the European RCEs during the GAP, nearly half (47%) of RCE projects in Europe during the GAP had a focus on GAP Priority Action Area #3 – Teacher Training.

RCE projects of Europe by GAP Priority Action Area (2015-2019)

(Note: n>70 as one project could target multiple Priority Action Areas. For example, a project that had a teacher-training component – Priority Action Area 3 – could also have a community education component – Priority Action Area 5).

Leading Institution
Less than half (46%) of RCE projects in Europe during the GAP were led by higher education institutions. However, 10% of RCE projects were led by city governments.
During the GAP, RCEs in the Asia-Pacific worked on a total of 167 projects across 13 countries in the region, with 66 from Malaysia, 34 from India and 20 from Australia.

SDGs
The ESD initiatives in this region were particularly focused on SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

Target Audience
RCE projects were conducted in a wide range of educational settings, targeting diverse audiences including non-formal and informal local communities, schools, and youth education.

RCE projects of the Asia-Pacific by level of educational setting (2015-2019)

27% had a community education component
32% had a primary and secondary education component
16% had a non-formal/informal youth component

These activities are often conducted by connecting different educational modes and settings such as formal education and local community development.

GAP Priority Action Areas
RCEs in the Asia-Pacific had a focus on GAP Priority Action Areas 2-5 evenly, around 20% each. This indicates RCEs in this region take a community-based approach to their activities linking different educational settings and working with diverse stakeholders.

(Note: n=167, as one project could have multiple audiences. Some activities may have been conducted by connecting different educational modes and settings, overarching formal, non-formal education and informal education through action-oriented activities, and connecting school, university and community organisations.)
Leading Institution

Over half (56%) of RCE projects during the GAP were led by higher education institutions (this indicates higher education in this region is a key actor for ESD within local communities).

Youth is a key target audience – Combining formal, informal and non-formal education projects shows that over half (53%) of RCE projects during the GAP generally had a youth focus.

9% of RCE activities in the Asia-Pacific were implemented by city governments.
Africa & Middle East

Within the region of Africa & the Middle East, a total of 79 projects across 10 countries were analysed, with 29 from Nigeria and 18 from Kenya.

SDGs
The ESD initiatives in this region were particularly focused on SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 1 (No Poverty). SDG 15 and SDG 1 characterise the sustainability challenges in Africa, including desertification and deforestation that closely link to both causes and results of poverty.

Target Audience
RCE projects were conducted in a wide range of educational settings, targeting diverse audiences including non-formal/informal education and local community development activities, schools, universities, TVET, teacher education and youth education. This is a similar pattern to the Asia-Pacific region.

25% had a community education component

There is a strong youth focus (combining formal, non-formal and informal education projects shows that over half (57%) of RCE projects during the GAP generally had a youth focus).

RCE projects of Africa by level of educational setting (2015-2019)

(Note: n=79 as one project could have multiple audiences, for example, a project that took place in a local community setting may also be a part of teacher training curriculum).
GAP Priority Action Areas
The youth and local community focus in this region are also reflected in high concentration when viewing the GAP Priority Action Areas RCEs tagged during the GAP, including **GAP Priority Action Area 4 (Empowering and mobilizing youth)** and **GAP Priority Action Area 5 (Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level)**.

**RCE Projects of Africa by GAP Priority Action Area (2015-2019)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Action Area</th>
<th>2015-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area 1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 4</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: n>79 as one project could target multiple Priority Action Areas. For example, a project that had a teacher-training component – Priority Action Area 3 – could also have a community education component – Priority Action Area 5).

**Leading Institution**

52% of RCE projects during the GAP were led by **NGOs**, with **higher education institutions** the second major leading organisation in RCEs in this region (44%).
GAP Priority Action Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Action Area 1</th>
<th>Advancing policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority Action Area 2</td>
<td>Transforming learning and training environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Action Area 3</td>
<td>Building capacities of educators and trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Action Area 4</td>
<td>Empowering and mobilizing youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Action Area 5</td>
<td>Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

- **The Role of Higher Education in ESD Initiatives:** The data shows that higher education institutions took a lead in many ESD activities by linking curriculum to solutions for the sustainability challenges within local communities, and by mobilising diverse stakeholders for implementation.

- **Regional activity patterns are unique,** as each region, country, and city are influenced by socio-cultural, economic and environmental challenges that are unique to their context. However, some activity patterns are similar – most RCE projects linked formal to non-formal education.

- **The majority of RCE projects focused on Climate Action (SDG 13),** indicating the urgent necessity of community-based learning and actions for mitigation and adaptation of this global challenge.

- Not only was **youth a key target audience** that was prioritised in over half of RCE projects, they were also some of the most active participants of the projects – from planning through to implementation. The governance to facilitate the proactive participation and learning of youths is key to the success of ESD moving forward in implementing local solutions to global sustainability challenges.

The projects conducted by RCEs throughout the **Global Action Programme (GAP)** on ESD have highlighted the areas and initiatives undertaken for transformative learning at the local level in pursuit of sustainable development, by utilising the sustainable development capacities, expertise, and resources found within the Global RCE Network.
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