

RCE Engagement with Policy
Report from Global Café
5th International RCE Conference
May 20, 2010

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How as RCEs do we (can we) influence policy making?

- Educate legislators (for example, RCE briefing of recently elected political officials on ESD and RCEs)
- Develop all-party public forums during elections for candidates to present their stands on ESD and related policy areas
- Participate as RCEs in forums organized by other organizations that include politicians/policy makers
- Involve policy makers as members of RCE
- Allow politicians/policy makers to speak at RCE events on ESD topics (and later hold accountable...)

Further Areas for RCE Influence

- RCE participation in national ESD committees and high level conferences on ESD (e.g., UNESCO, BBCC network)
- Approach policy makers with ESD project ideas that fit existing policy directions of the government
- Register views/concerns to policy makers (e.g., act as an ESD think-tank for government)
- Develop own policy ideas informed by research within RCEs and integrate these into policy development processes; show how to make good ESD policy and emphasize the need for good local and regional policies
- Develop learning communities with policy makers

Further Areas for RCE Influence

- Know the environment that we want to influence; do strategic research on regional ESD issues with supporting empirical/factual evidence and interpret this data for a political audience highlighting risks of inaction; influence through examples
- Sponsor bills through the legislature (where possible) or develop model legislation for legislators to consider
- Influence regional and national ESD policy (laws guidance, regulations e.g. secondary school curriculum)
- Use the RCE to influence government owned industries (e.g., national power company moving from unsustainable to sustainable wind power production)

Informal Areas of Policy Influence

- Build friendships with public officials through social events
- Work with community leaders and those with real influence in communities on ESD policy issues
- Promote RCEs at local, state, national, and international events through RCE sponsorships (for example, local sports teams, World Cup, etc.)

Informal Areas for Policy Influence

- Create a public awareness campaign of the RCE that clearly expresses its goals, structures, and mandate for specific audiences in order to build the RCE's credibility for mass media and politicians and increase regional/grassroots participation
- Use local media to promote sustainable development to influence citizenry
- Empower stakeholders to exert pressure, for example:
 - build solidarity with other organizations with shared ESD goals and apply informal peer pressure on policy makers through the public)
 - Advocate for ESD through third party/RCE member networks (for example, student networks, faculty with academic freedom)

How do we address sensitive or problematic policy areas as an RCE?

- Bring together youth and groups lacking voice to express ideas on specific policies adversely impacting ESD as well as to identify and express alternative ESD policies
- Organise public consultations, public awareness without taking sides
- Develop special curriculum to address sensitive areas
- Connect advancing ESD to government's citizen accountability and use science as a common language with government

Further Ways to Address Sensitive Policy Areas

- Use ESD knowledge to be anticipatory/proactive to develop timely policy options
- Do own internal policy research as needed and release results in diplomatic ways/with discretion
- Involve those with relevant backgrounds to help address sensitive policy areas (for example, psychologists)
- Be financially independent/diversify funding base to not be beholden to any one organization
- Use a many-year strategy to build trust with government and to show why it needs the RCE

Sensitive Policy Areas Identified by RCEs

- Natural resource extraction (for example, tar sands, deepwater drilling)
- Sustainability issues with industrial agriculture
- Dealing with those involved in green washing or unclear/problematic terminology (for example, “green growth”)
- Land development and problems with urban sprawl or loss of land for natural habitats/wetlands or fulfillment of land claims of indigenous peoples

Further Sensitive Policy Areas

- Challenge of maintaining ethical commitments of ESD in the face of ethical relativism
- ESD policy changes that require basic changes in people's lifestyles (for example, curtailing wasting of energy)
- Demographic issues and problems with ageism, sexism, and racism
- Managing policy issues where there are ethnic and religious divisions with an RCE on specific issues
- Challenging levels and kinds of consumption that reduce/alter market sales

Further Sensitive Policy Areas

- Challenging existing educational systems and curricula (for example, those incorporating ideas disproven by science or lacking important scientific discoveries related to ESD)
- Engaging issues that challenge an RCE's own funders
- Lack of consistent government treatment in policy and programmatic engagement with RCEs (for example, due to newly elected governments or government employee transfers)
- Problems with unclear jurisdictional boundaries or externalities (for example, pollution costs paid for by others)