

Regional Centres of Expertise

on education for sustainable development

RCE TONGYEONG

Geography

Located on the southern coast of the Korean peninsula, Tongyeong is a marine fisheries city of 132,866 people in an area of 240 sq km, more than a third of which is island. The 10,580ha of clear blue sea and its 192 islands have been the basis of Tongyeong's culture, history and daily living.



Regional challenges

Korea, like many Asian countries of Confucian tradition, places great value on education, and this value affects the socio-economic aspect of a small city like Tongyeong. The level of basic education is very high and enthusiastic families send their children and other family members to schools in larger cities to increase their chances of entering good universities. Providing citizens with high quality education demonstrating the values of local heritage and global insight is crucial for prosperity and for the very existence of local society.

The sea and rich cultural heritage are the basis of fisheries and tourism, the main sources of income. Hence, the challenge of protecting the environment and preserving local culture is closely related to the city's economy and sustainable development.

RCE Tongyeong's perceived role in the region

The foremost role of RCE Tongyeong is to raise public understanding and increase support for sustainable development. The term sustainable development was introduced in Tongyeong together with the RCE programme, and the first task is to promote the concept among civil servants and opinion leaders. The RCE will facilitate collaboration between diverse stakeholders by opening discussion opportunities and joining existing education programmes. This will contribute towards creating a common vision of sustainability among members of the society.

Goal of the RCE

The goal of RCE Tongyeong is to establish a foundation for an eco-city where its people are conscious of the significance of their everyday activities for a sustainable society.

Short-term objectives

- Establish a system for ESD.
- Raise public awareness on sustainable development.
- Establish good governance.
- Systematically guarantee multi-stakeholder participation.
- Train trainers to strengthen leadership for SD.

Long-term objectives

- Provide a vision for SD in Tongyeong.
- Widen understanding on the limits of ecosystems and the impacts of human action.
- Convey appreciation for local culture.
- Encourage local sustainability efforts.
- Establish Korean model of ESD.
- Function as a global model of ESD.

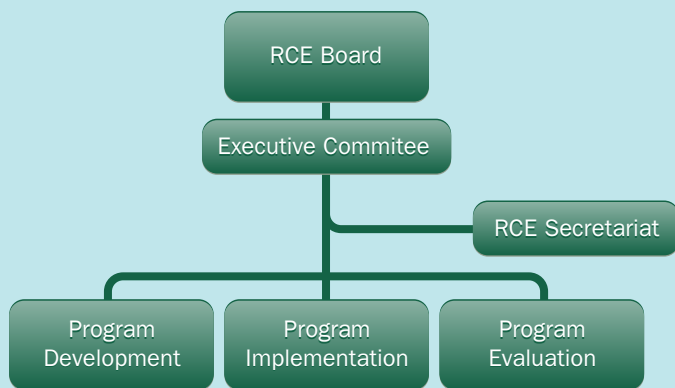
Tongyeong



Organisations involved

Initial partners of the RCE Tongyeong are the Tongyeong Municipal Government, Yonsei University and the College of Marine Sciences at the Gyeongsang National University College. Primary and secondary schools from the formal education sector are also involved. From the non-formal and informal education sector, the organisations involved in the RCE are the Marine Science Centre, Chungma Literary Centre, Tongyeong Youth Centre, YWCA, Green Tongyeong 21 (Local agenda 21 of Tongyeong), Council of Tongyeong women's groups, Hansan Newspaper and Tongyeong Office of Education. The UNU supports the RCE at the international level. Green Gyeongnam 21 (Local agenda 21 of Gyeongnam province) also supports the RCE at the provincial level, and Citizen's group to Save the Sea, Korean Federation for Environmental Movement Tongyeong, Sina Shipyard, Tongyeong Yonhap Newspaper are collaborating with RCE Tongyeong.

Decision-making structure



Activities

Following the formalisation of its decision-making structure, RCE Tongyeong will hold the official public launch of the programme by early 2006. The plans for the first year include running three elementary and secondary RCE project schools in collaboration with the local education board, educating civil servants of Tongyeong city government through a special ESD programme at Yonsei University, holding regular public fora on SD to raise awareness among opinion leaders, establishing a programme for parents on sustainable consumption, enrolling volunteers as tour guides of the local marine environment and its sustainability, and developing a comprehensive research project to map the region's environmental and cultural assets.

Readapting current formal education into ESD is one of the most important tasks of RCE Tongyeong. Gyeongsang University plans to start a new SD course which includes a student volunteer programme at the local marine centre. Volunteers would function as educators of marine sustainability for visitors. Yonsei University is also planning a special course on SD for staff of local government and private corporations from the autumn of 2006.

Achievements

Raising public awareness

Since the start of the discussion in April 2005 to adopt the RCE programme, a series of workshops, presentations and local media coverage have awakened public interest in SD and ESD. Since the official acknowledgement of the RCE in October 2005, a public official working as RCE secretariat within the Department of Planning and Audit of the Tongyeong Municipal Government, has been visiting a score of local community gatherings and public events making presentations to introduce SD, ESD and RCE.

Inducing policy change towards sustainability

There has been significant redirection of local government policy since the launch of the RCE programme. One of the most drastic redirections has been the shifting of a major city planning project towards creating sustainable urban space-making instead of widening and building roads. Many public discussions have been held by both the government and local NGOs thereby stimulating debate on SD and ESD, and demonstrating how awareness among policy makers can drive social progress towards sustainability. Moreover, since the launch of the RCE programme, the Committee of Local Agenda 21 has been planning to promote eco-villages in rural areas, and the city government has denoted 2006 as a year of Founding the Basis for Sustainable Development.

For more information

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