

RCE East Midlands

Inaugural conference – Learning in the Region for Sustainability: Supporting regional activity in education for sustainable development

Thursday 20th September 2007

Burleigh Court Conference Centre, Loughborough University

In association with the UNESCO-UK Committee

With funding from the DfES, the East Midlands Development Agency and Loughborough University

The United Nations leads the world in promoting sustainable development and now, as part of a 10 year programme, has acknowledged the vital role of regions in promoting sustainable development. The East Midlands is the first region in the UK to be approved by the United Nations University and UNESCO as having expertise in education for sustainable development. The partnership of East Midlands organisations is the first UK Regional Centre of Expertise for Education for Sustainable Development (RCE). Professor Hans van Ginkel, Rector of the United Nations University, based in Japan, recently awarded the formal certificate to the RCE East Midlands. There are only 34 other Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) in the world.

The RCE East Midlands Group is researching and promoting education for sustainable development and global citizenship in schools, colleges, universities as well as in youth, community and business education. This is the first year of the United Nation's Decade for Education for Sustainable Development as well as the year that the Government has published ground-breaking policies for schools, further and higher education. Governments around the world are now waking up to the real economic, security and survival values of education for responsible global citizenship and environmental stewardship.

RCE East Midlands is already promoting sustainable schools, as well as hosting the first Higher Education Academy regional conference on sustainable development. Each of the current working groups (Schools, Further education, Higher education and Youth) are developing project ideas and funding bids. The groups are also developing projects with two of the other European RCEs from Barcelona and the Rhine-Meuse.

The aim of the inaugural conference is to explore the activities, opportunities and challenges of regional networks in promoting education for sustainable development and global citizenship, using the East Midlands as a case study. The conference will showcase regional ESD activity within different educational sectors – schools, further and higher education, youth and adult and

continuing education, voluntary and business sectors. Opportunities will be explored for the development of regional policy and practice for ESD.

Speakers will include

Notes for editors:

Worldwide RCE Network

A Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) is a network of existing formal, non-formal and informal education organisations aiming to deliver education for sustainable development (ESD) to a regional or local community. RCEs aim to achieve the goals of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014), by translating its global objectives into the context of the local/regional community in which it operates. Some of the first RCEs included Barcelona (Spain), Pacific Island Countries, Penang (Malaysia), Rhine-Meuse (Germany, Netherlands and Belgium) and Toronto (Canada). More details and a full list can be seen on:

<http://www.ias.unu.edu/research/regionalcentres.cfm>

RCE East Midlands - The regional partnership to boost learning and sustainability

Sustaining the East Midlands through learning

RCE East Midlands is a regional partnership of organisations championing education for sustainable development.

The RCE East Midlands website is currently in development on www.rceem.org.uk

Vision

A regional framework for members to collaborate, research, inform, advise, promote and develop ESD activity together so that, by the end of the UN Decade for ESD in 2014,

Learning is central to the vision of sustainability in the East Midlands;

and ESD is central to education and training in all sectors.

It will:

- Ensure good leadership and management by the RCE.
- Engage actors from all levels of formal, non-formal and informal education in RCE activities.
- Include research in RCE activities, as well as the design of strategies for collaborative activities, including those with other RCEs.
- Transform the current education and training systems to satisfy the ambitions of the region regarding sustainable living and livelihoods.

Education for Sustainable Development

ESD is about developing the knowledge, skills, understanding and values to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future.

ESD is the learning needed to maintain and improve our quality of life and the quality of life for generations to come. It is about equipping individuals, communities, groups, businesses and government to live and act sustainably; as well as giving them an understanding of the environmental, social and economic issues involved. It is about preparing for the world in which we will live in the next century, and making sure that we are not found wanting. (Government's Sustainable Development Education Panel, 2000)

Learning is now being recognised as a constant and necessary feature of all our lives. Given this context, it is imperative to ensure that the world we are presently creating not only improves in quality for us now, but also is one that we shall not be ashamed to pass on to future generations.

Lifelong learning needs to be redefined as from the cradle to beyond the grave. (Learning to Last, Learning and Skills Development Agency, 2002)

- ESD includes formal and informal education, training, staff development and employment related to sustainable development.
- ESD is not just environmental, but also social and economic, and includes global citizenship.
- ESD has a central role in developing the behaviour, understanding, responsibilities, and citizenship required for sustainable communities.
- ESD is essential for a sustainable East Midlands by education for active, informed citizens and a skilled, motivated workforce as well as being essential for global citizenship.

Planned activities

Our activities are currently led by the working groups.

- Reviewing and promoting ESD activity in schools across the region.
- Developing a joint regional proposal for corporate social responsibility in the region's universities.
- Developing partnerships and projects with other RCEs, and joining the European Network of Regions on Education for Sustainability.
- Confirming our business plan for a regional event in the autumn.
- Promoting education related to low carbon solutions and sustainable farming and food, related to key regional events.
- Appointing a part-time Co-ordinator and establishing an accountable body.
- Establishing a website with information, advice and news about education for sustainable development in the region.
- Informing regional policy-makers.
- Promoting the DfES Sustainable Schools Framework to schools.
www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainable-schools
- Promoting the Learning and Skills Council policy to FE colleges and lifelong learning centres.
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2005/ourbusiness/strategy/from-here-to-sustainability-lsc-strategy-for-sustainable-development.pdf>
- Promoting the HEFCE policy on education for sustainable development to universities.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_28

Contacts

Adam Cade

Coordinator of RCE East Midlands

Chief Executive, StudentForce for Sustainability

Oakham Railway Station, Station Approach, Oakham LE15 6QT

Tel: 01572 723 419

adamcade@studentforce.org.uk

Yoshihiro Natori

Senior Fellow for EfSD Programme

United Nations University - Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)

6F, International Organizations Center, Pacifico-Yokohama

1-1-1 Minato Mirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama 220-0012, Japan

Tel: +81-45-221-2311

Fax: +81-45-221-2303

E-mail: k_suzuki@ias.unu.edu

URL: <http://www.ias.unu.edu>

Membership

All member organisations formally support the RCE East Midlands and contribute to its plans, activities and working groups. The current formal membership of 37 organisations includes 9 higher education institutions, 4 government agencies, 6 local authorities and 18 other organisations. However others are expected to formally join in the near future, and any other east midlands organisations with a professional interest in education for sustainable development are welcome to join at any time.

Working Groups

We are currently establishing up to 8 working groups:

- School s education
- Further education
- Higher education
- Adult, continuing and community education
- Youth education
- Business education
- Government policy
- Non-governmental organisations

Higher Education Institutions

Bishop Grosseteste College

De Montfort University

Loughborough University

Nottingham Trent University

University of Derby

University of Northampton

University of Nottingham

University of Leicester

University of Lincoln

Government agencies

East Midlands Development Agency

East Midlands Regional Assembly

Government Office for the East Midlands

Peak District National Park Authority

Educational Bodies

Global Education Derby

Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

National Youth Agency

StudentForce for Sustainability

Businesses

East Midlands Action Group on the Environment

Further education colleges

Brooksby Melton College
Colleges –University of Leicester Network
East Midlands Further Education Council
Leicester College
Tresham Institute
Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College

Local authorities

Derby City Council
Derbyshire County Council
Leicester City Council
Leicestershire County Council
Nottingham City Council
Nottinghamshire County Council

Schools

East Midlands Network for Global Perspectives in Schools

Voluntary organisations

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
Groundwork East Midlands
Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire
Groundwork North Northamptonshire
Leicester Masaya Link Group
Skillshare International
Rosliston Forestry Centre

Further information can be obtained from the press office by sending an e-mail to rmorgan-wood@lec.ac.uk