

Regional Centres of Expertise

on education for sustainable development

RCE EAST MIDLANDS

The region

The East Midlands is the fourth largest English region out of nine. It is in the centre of the UK with good links to London and the South East as well as Northern regions. The region includes the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland, as well as the major urban conurbations of Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, Lincoln and Northampton. Almost half of the population of over 4 million people live in the major conurbations. However it is also a very rural region, with 40% living in villages and small towns.



Regional challenges

The East Midlands Regional Dialogue, coordinated by the Regional Assembly's Promoting Sustainable Development Group, identified five key challenges - the government to lead by example, rationalise funding streams and set priorities that reinforce and push home the sustainability agenda. It also identified the need for an extensive education and awareness campaign focusing on issues of sustainable development, and the need to communicate in an inclusive language using local examples to make sustainability issues real.

Challenges specific to the region identified by the Regional Assembly's Integrated Regional Strategy include 1) reducing inequalities in the region by combating discrimination and improving equality of access to economic opportunities, education, health and decent homes, 2) conserving and enhancing the natural environment by tackling the biodiversity deficit and enhancing the environmental infrastructure, 3) creating sustainable and healthy communities throughout the region, 4) improving economic performance and competitiveness, and 5) using natural resources more efficiently and reducing the impacts on climate change.

Regional role

The role of RCE East Midlands is to build on the work, energy and enthusiasm of many of the key regional ESD champions. It will work closely with regional and local government to introduce an education element to sustainable development policy. The RCE East Midlands will enable the region to develop the values, skills and knowledge that young people and citizens will need to create a more sustainable east midlands.

Decision-making structure

The Consultative Group will consist of representatives of all the member organisations. It will meet once or twice a year to assess, evaluate and celebrate the activities of the network and discuss future needs.

There are seven Working Groups – School education, Further education, Higher education, Adult and community education, Youth education, Business sector, Voluntary sector. They will act as the executive or operational arm of the network. They will agree terms of reference, confirm members, nominate a Chair and one other representative as part of the Management Team, as well as plan and develop activities and projects.

The Management Team will act as the strategic and accountable arm of the network. It will meet three or four times a year and consist of representatives of each of the working groups. It will ensure that the working plans reflect the vision and aim of the RCE East Midlands.

The Coordinator will report to the Management Team, acting as their representative and the link between the Management Team and the Working Groups. The administrative secretariat is currently provided in-kind by the University of Leicester.

NOTTINGHAM CITY



Goals of the RCE

The aim of the RCE is to champion ESD and global citizenship across the region.

Objectives

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

Organizations involved

The current formal membership of 36 organisations includes 8 higher education institutions, 4 government agencies, 6 local authorities and 18 other organisations. However others are expected to formally join in the near future.

Higher Education Institutions - Bishop Grosseteste College, De Montfort University, Loughborough University, Nottingham Trent University, University of Derby, University of Northampton, 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 - East Midlands Network for Global Perspectives in Schools, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, National Youth Agency, Rosliston Forestry Centre, National Institute for Adult Continuing Education.

Businesses - East Midlands Action Group on the Environment.

Further education colleges - Brooksby Melton College, Colleges –University of Leicester Network, East Midlands Further Education Council. Tresham Institute, Wyggeston, Leicester College 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, Lincolnshire County Council

Voluntary organisations - Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Global Education Derby, Groundwork East Midlands, Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire, Groundwork North Northamptonshire, Leicester Masaya Link Group, Skillshare International, StudentForce for Sustainability.

Activities

The RCE's activities are currently led by the eight Working Groups and the Management Group.

- Establishing a website with information, advice and news about ESD in the region.
- Organising an inaugural conference on ESD regional networks with Ministerial support.
- Mapping ESD regional activity in formal and informal education.
- 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.
- Promoting ESD at an annual regional showcase.
- Promoting education related to low carbon solutions and sustainable farming and food, related to key regional events.
- Defining the business case for ESD and introducing ESD to new and updated regional policies.
- Promoting the DfES Sustainable Schools Framework to regional schools.
- Promoting the Learning and Skills Council policy to regional FE colleges and lifelong learning centres.
- Promoting the Higher Education Funding Council of England policy on ESD to regional universities.

Achievements

- Collaborated with other regional ESD groups in the UK to share experiences, approaches, structures and to justify more government funding.
- Worked with the UK Higher Education Academy to organise a conference promoting ESD collaboration within and between universities in the region and to promote links with the wider community, as a pilot for other UK regions.
- Awarded £50K from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) over two years to promote sustainable schools.
- Set up seven working groups to develop project ideas, partnerships with other European RCEs and funding bids.

For more information

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For more information on Education for Sustainable Development and the RCE Initiative, contact the Global RCE Service Centre at rceservicecentre@ias.unu.edu or visit www.ias.unu.edu/efsd.