

**Americas Continental Meeting, 7th Global RCE Conference
Tongyeong, Republic of Korea
Sunday, Sept. 23, 2012, 14:30-16:45**

Session Facilitated by: Roger Petry (RCE Saskatchewan)

Participants:

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Charles Hopkins, Ubuntu Committee Member: CHopkins@edu.yorku.ca

Anna Dirksen, UNU-IAS: dirksen@ias.unu.edu

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jon Yee, RCE Saskatchewan

- Described his work on developing a declaration for RCEs and Youth and SD and planning for its signing at next year's Global RCE Conference in Kenya

Eloy Casagrande, RCE Curitiba

- Talked about need to put cases onto the RCE Portal
- Working on green buildings certification

Kenneth Ochoa, RCE Bogota

- Discussed current capacity building programme with teachers and RCE initiatives with youth

Dawn Gaymer, RCE Grand Rapids

- Described new curriculum criteria for sustainability for teachers
- RCE GR is also advancing social responsibility with corporate partners

Emily Phillips, RCE Tantramar

- RCE is following up with councils regarding regional sustainability plans
- Working on a university course

Eduardo Sacayon, RCE Guatemala

- Described a traditional knowledge programme being implemented with teachers at the university level
- At university level, working on strategic plan for 2020; efforts are ongoing to incorporate traditional knowledge into the university and help it to establish a multicultural model

Roger Petry, Garth Pickard, Lyle Benko, RCE Saskatchewan

- Sustainability and Education Academy (SEDA) is a leadership academy that connects with partners across Canada held on June 7-8, 2012 in Regina; this has led to an outcomes document to direct future work
- RCE is also working with First Nations peoples to engage them in the 4 pillars sustainability
- University of Regina taking a leading role in bringing expertise to the NorthEast of Saskatchewan along with SIAST and the University of Saskatchewan

Charles Hopkins, Ubuntu Committee

- Has been asked to help develop RCEs in the Americas and elsewhere

- Some RCEs in the Americas are dormant (e.g. RCE North Texas and RCE Toronto) while new ones are popping up
- RCE Lima wants to host a meeting of the Americas in February 2013, around the 27th to the 1st of March and a second meeting back to back from March 2-4 on what should be done for ESD in general

2. Update on Action Items from the 6th Global RCE Conference

i. Inter-American Organization and Fostering Regular Collaboration/Knowledge-sharing

- RCE Tantramar noted their efforts to strengthen and expand their network, perhaps even by growing to become an RCE for the Maritimes as a whole
- RCE Grand Rapids noted the need to update the UNU-IAS website for individual RCEs, as well as the contact database for American RCEs
- RCE Curitiba will host a post Rio+20 conference and conduct an evaluation on what was discussed at Rio. This will be open to RCEs in the Americas and also especially Portuguese speaking RCEs, tentatively April, 2013
- RCE Lima (via Charles Hopkins) offer to host a regional conference, possibly in February 2013 (see dates above)
 - o Requests were made for a possible distance learning session or sessions
 - o Questions related to language during the meeting will need to be addressed – e.g. should there be simultaneous translation, should specific sessions be held in certain languages, should it be held in Spanish and others find ways of adapting (as Spanish-speaking colleagues do for most Continental Meetings)

ACTION POINT: UNU-IAS to send out current contact list for RCEs in the Americas and update the list to verify which members/RCEs are active

ACTION POINT: UNU-IAS to update website information for Americas RCEs

ACTION POINT: RCE Grand Rapids to host an English-speaking Americas call prior to the regional meeting in Lima (likely in November)

ACTION POINT: Charles Hopkins will contact RCE Lima to host a Spanish-speaking Americas call prior to the regional meeting in Lima (likely in November)

ACTION POINT: Charles Hopkins to circulate list of candidate RCEs from the Americas to RCE Lima-Callao and RCE Curitiba-Parana and RCE Grand Rapids to include in their invitations.

ii. Case Studies, Best Practices, and Developing a Database of Resources

- RCE Saskatchewan noted there were few Americas projects that were highlighted on the RCE Annual Reporting Website and RCEs should contribute information on at least one of their flagship initiatives
- All RCEs expressed degrees of frustration regarding the RCE Communications Portal, including: confusing nature of the homepage, lack of a searchable database of ESD/RCE projects and resources, password problems, uploading problems, no space for RCEs to post individual projects
- Suggestions were made to create or use different tools, like SharePoint, though these would need to be thought through in order to ensure that individuals from high and low bandwidth regions could access it
- It was agreed that a webmaster would be the ideal solution to the portal problems. Though there was no funding for a webmaster, there might be the opportunity to involve university students in the process

ACTION POINT: All RCEs will update the RCE Graz-Styria Annual Reporting Portal with information on at least one flagship project

ACTION POINT: All RCEs will share the contact information of the RCE member who updates the Portal with UNU-IAS (Anna) to update a list of technical contacts.

ACTION POINT: UNU-IAS to revisit the layout, purpose and use of the Portal and update all RCEs

iii. Collaboration on Specific Topics:

- **Teacher Training:** Many RCEs had teachers as a goal and there were a number of different networks that might prove useful to these RCEs, with Charles Hopkins & RCE Grand Rapids mentioning a couple in particular; RCE Curitiba has also been talking about organizing a network of faculty to move from research to education
- **Traditional Knowledge & Environmental Education:** Improving quality of education for indigenous groups should be a priority and there were suggestions as to how this might be done, such as gathering traditional knowledge and using GPS to lay this knowledge and stories on a map, surveying RCEs, creating a subgroup on ESD and Indigenous Youth, and building a bank of success stories in the area; the Chair of RCE Bogota has a particular experience in this area
- **RCE & Ministry of Education Partnerships:** Charles Hopkins noted the historical difficulty in reaching Ministries of Education and described a new two-tiered effort where in the first tier, general evidence that ESD improves the quality of education overall would be used to reach ministries and, in the second tier, further case study evidence around this issue could be gathered among RCEs

ACTION POINT: Chuck to contact RCEs for practical case studies in their regions supporting link between ESD activities and traditional educational outcomes. Chuck to also contact Eduardo regarding work with indigenous youth. Kenneth to contact Olga Bermudez regarding traditional knowledge and environmental education and provide information to Chuck.

- **Criteria for certification/standards on ESD:** It was agreed that there was no desire to create a new certification system but rather inform current criteria and provide indicator examples, competency examples, and guidance
- **RCE Portal Link for teachers:** There was the suggestion to use software like Google groups as opposed to a Portal or giving them a short list of links that would be useful, such as Learning for a Sustainable Future; in addition the idea of creating a Tools for Teachers column on the current RCE Communications Portal or sending out via e-newsletter was also discussed.
- **Communicating Americas Information:** The suggestion was made to better communicate information from the Americas either by newsletter or building out a space on the Portal that would store a database of Americas projects and programs.
- **Living learning laboratories in Communities and Neighbourhoods:**
 - o RCE Tantramar noted a community garden in their region and a local NGO that acted somewhat as a learning laboratory.

- RCE Curitiba explained their current rebuilding process and how it will soon expand from being a learning lab for green architecture to being a place with composting and waste water treatment where students could visit.
- UNESCO biospheres also serve as learning labs in many regions
- RCE Guatemala efforts include schools, local governments, university faculties, and indigenous leaders and involving them in projects around the conservation of Mayan cultural sites. A number of Mayan sites are completely abandoned and there is a high potential for schools/teachers to use these resources for learning while helping to maintain and make use of the sites, through actions such as computer mapping and conservation efforts. Resources are needed to fully implement the projects.
- RCE Bogota works has a living laboratory in zero waste communities; students go to various communities and conduct field research
- RCE Grand Rapids: Have dedicated primary/secondary schools for environmental education; food and urban market space for sustainable food production; there is also fresh water studies with faculty and teachers being taken out on boats
- **Connecting with sub-regional entities:** In response to a question on whether RCEs had designations for sub-regional entities that supported RCE work, RCE Grand Rapids noted a community sustainability partnership (CSP) in their region that acts as the umbrella organization to the RCE; efforts are underway to flip that dynamic though the challenge is that it is all organized by the city. RCE Tantramar has a Sustainable Sackville Steering Committee that acts similarly and the partnership with the RCE has proven to be a motivating factor for the committee. It might be necessary to have criteria for what projects from partners get the RCE “stamp” but this becomes a subject of concern especially if any projects might have financial or liability issues attached to them. Indeed, this was part of the problem with RCE Toronto and one of the reasons their activities stopped. RCE Curitiba has had similar experiences and has had to work around those challenges by becoming an official NGO. The RCE Global Service Centre encounters similar challenges in its efforts.
- **Connecting with business/private sector through innovation, entrepreneurship and ESD:** RCE Bogota is working with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development to understand how the companies within the group have been trying to achieve sustainable development and how the work of the RCE can support them. Charles Hopkins noted the interest RCE Lima might have in those efforts. Creating business plans that include sustainable development would also be key in the future.

ACTION POINT: RCE Grand Rapids and Charles Hopkins to send out link to relevant Education and ESD teacher networks

ACTION POINT: Charles Hopkins will send a letter out asking for success stories of projects regarding formal education and indigenous groups.

ACTION POINT: Charles Hopkins to send request to Americas RCEs for evidence regarding ESD improving quality of education overall

ACTION POINT: Charles Hopkins and RCE Grand Rapids to share information regarding certification and standards, specifically: a guide for learning outcomes (RCE GR), work going on worldwide re: indicators of schools and teacher (CH), discussions around indicators and competencies (CH)

ACTION POINT: Jonathan Yee to send a note out to RCEs asking them to identify useful links for teachers, to be distributed via newsletter, Tools for Teachers column on the RCE Communication Portal or through some other manner

ACTION POINT: RCE Grand Rapids to work on further developing the e-newsletter idea in reference to Tools for Teachers

ACTION POINT: RCE Saskatchewan and UNU-IAS to work on building out Americas RCE Communications Portal space

ACTION POINT: RCE Tantramar to send out email regarding Learning Labs existing/being established and compile this information for the portal.

ACTION POINT: RCE Bogota will contact RCE Lima to see about World Business Council collaboration at the February Americas regional meeting

ACTION POINT: RCE Bogota and RCE Grand Rapids will work together to develop a module to support management schools who want to teach how to incorporate SD in business plans

3. Wrap Up and Next Steps:

- It's worthwhile to look ahead to Africa to see how more Americas participants can be included via skype or video conferencing
- In the past, not having an official RCE email address has caused problems with credibility of communications for some. The suggestion was made to create a common RCE email address.

ACTION POINT: Jonathan Yee and RCE Grand Rapids to look into the possibility of a common RCE email address

ACTION POINT: UNU-IAS to check to see if the Africa meeting will have online access

4. Meeting Adjourned 16:45.