



Higher Education-Driven Initiatives

13:00-15:00, 23 November 2016

Moderator: Zinaida Fadeeva (UNU-IAS)

Co-Facilitator: Kiran Chhokar (Regional Adviser Asia Pacific) and Hilligje Van't Land (IAU)

Rapporteur: Mirza Medina Rodríguez (RCE Borderlands México-USA)

Discussion Points

1) Co-engaging of HE-institutions with Communities

The methodology for co-engaging of higher education institutions with the community was discussed at the beginning of the session. Each participant briefly explained how they co-engaged their institution with the community and the issues addressed when this occurred such as the community needs and its ethnic considerations. The discussion focused on efforts to have effective voluntary work and engage the institution in community work. One example by Rob O'Donoghue showed that the university felt the RCE's had more engagement with the community. This in turn had led to a Course Based Activation Strategy in which courses were given in order to engage the university more. Course participants received diplomas in order to increase satisfaction and motivation to join. Materials such as videos and books were also developed. Some participants signaled that there was a general lack of awareness on Sustainable Development from the institution. Participants then discussed who was engaging in Sustainable Development. In some regions it appeared to be the community itself in others it was the institution or even only the students of the institution.

2) Organizational Settings

The fact that material was being developed from best practices was important. It also seemed that certification of some sort was a good incentive for more community engagement. By sharing this knowledge, it created community learning networks. Dzulkifi Razak (IAU) suggested that should the university lack awareness on the importance of SD, engagement by the themselves can often be just as effective, as shown in the University of Malaysia. Another point of discussion was the emphasis on teaching and promoting ESD by practice not theory with three major elements:

- 1) Voluntarism
- 2) Working in multi-disciplinary teams with students and teachers
- 3) The solution and research methodology should be well documented

Other RCEs from India, Sweden and México gave more examples of ESD co-engagement. There seemed to be a general lack of awareness of SD in these countries. In Nigeria there was little interaction between the students and the institution. In Zomba, Kenya, the Philippines and China the government authorities and other institutions were helpful and gave support to SD initiatives.

Zinaida Fadeeva (UNU-IAS) highlighted an example of a successful outcome in Lithuania in regards to the Local Solutions in Alternative Food System and stressed the importance of the needs analysis. The research among philosophers and sociologists identified the for which later ESD experts were invited to provide a solution. The community was engaged, they were doing better financially, they all felt they had an exciting activity and it brought them together as a whole. Overall there was a resolution on the importance of documenting and finding co- engagement strategies as well as sharing the documented outcomes with the RCE Secretariat and with other RCEs.