



## **Session 4: Reporting and Strategic Discussion Part I**

Chair: Mario Tabucanon (UNU-IAS)

The chair introduced the different speakers who would be reporting from session 3, region by region.

### **Africa**

- ✓ Deliberations had been based on the questions set in the last Africa meeting.
- ✓ The main aspect discussed was the concept of appreciative enquiry. All participants in this meeting felt that it was an important process to continue the self-evaluation.
- ✓ Need to leverage the input into other ongoing processes, such as the Environmental Association in South Africa.
- ✓ The participants looked into possibilities on how RCE work can be embedded into larger continental processes.
- ✓ There was some discussion on the issue of mentorship between the African RCEs and other types of collaboration.
- ✓ One of the major questions was how can the visibility of African RCEs, projects and strategies be enhanced and these activities scaled up?
- ✓ Emphasis was on strengthening the communication activities in the continent.

### **Americas**

- ✓ During the meeting, the participants updated everyone on projects and activities since the last RCE Americas meeting.
- ✓ The importance of a leadership turntable to build resilience was discussed.
- ✓ It was of essence to acknowledge all sub-regions and sub-communities.
- ✓ Emphasis should be placed on existing government policies and how RCEs can be involved.
- ✓ Practical issues of bringing organisers together had been raised as well as the value of recognition. Each RCE needed some sort of recognition process.
- ✓ Different attitudes existed regarding the power of communication and different communication channels had to be used more.
- ✓ Post – 2015: a framework or structure around GAP needed to be developed.
- ✓ Engage youth more, for example via Rotary.
- ✓ More communication with key stakeholders especially on the continental level was necessary.
- ✓ Certain sectors had been neglected, such as for example the cooperative. There was not enough engagement.



### **Asia Pacific**

- ✓ Proposal of a platform 'RCE Asia Pacific Network'.
- ✓ The RCE Asia Pacific Strategic Paper was adopted.
- ✓ Key issues raised:
  - Engage the disengaged
  - Increase the diversity of programmes
  - Use a more community-based approach
  - Develop diverse ESD models
  - Finding resources
  - Legal framework

It was suggested to overcome most of these issues with a more dynamic collaboration among the RCEs in the Asia Pacific region.

### **Europe**

- ✓ Share goals and use the support of UNU more for knowledge exchange globally, activate the existing communication channels.
- ✓ Question remains: How to involve RCEs in the global discussion?
- ✓ Collaborate across borders and continue attending the global conference.
- ✓ More transparency among the European RCEs necessary with increased peer review and sharing of ideas.
- ✓ More democratic processes
- ✓ Enhance capacity development and engage RCEs locally and globally.
- ✓ Use effective assessment methods.

### **Reflection and Comments by the Ubuntu Committee Members and Regional Advisors to the RCE Community**

#### Goolam Mohamedbhai

There was currently no institution that supported such an undertaking as the RCE network. Post-2014, expansion should continue, especially in Africa. However, consolidation and improving the quality of the network were necessary. Visibility was key. There was also some confusion in the definition of an RCE.

The nurturing period post-acknowledgement was very important especially in terms of capacity development. Some RCEs were not in a very good condition and as a network, this should not be happening. There was need for more continental coordination and some form of a continental structure.

Self-assessments were important. The experience of African RCEs should be available to the global community. A combination of peer review and self -



assessment would be best. Policy makers needed to be included in the network. There was also the linguistic issue, with only one RCE being francophone in Africa and one in Europe. More French-speaking RCEs should be encouraged.

#### Charles Hopkins

Charles Hopkins recalled the moment that Hans Van Ginkel (former Rector, UNU) had approached him, on how the sustainability component could be included in education; they looked at two groups, the educators and the ones who were aware of the sustainability issues at hand. The problem was how to get the information into the hands of the educators. The objective was to have a *Global Learning Space*, where everyone learned from one another.

Education of indigenous people was very important. Many sustainability issues arose from this. The environmental aspect was still strong but today one needed to also work from the social services perspective. In the future, the RCE Community should be the one called upon to do professional development, especially in the area of ESD. What was needed, was the network's own professional development. How should the RCEs talk about ESD so that they were the ones building a national GAP or a continental GAP? The RCE Community needed to learn how to present itself.

#### Dzul kifli Razak

Ten years ago when the network was established, no one even knew if the RCE concept would work. And here they were now working as a team. Everyone was aiming for this global learning space and one should not lose sight of this.

In Asia Pacific, one often only talked about Asia and not Pacific, although the latter was the most vulnerable region. A region however, that although so desperately was in need of close attention, was so difficult to access due to logistics and distance. In Asia, there was a very youthful population, whereby many youth could not find jobs. It was important to get the youth to think more of RCEs. The Sejahtera Project was one example of a binding concept on what RCEs were about. Assessment was crucial.

#### Jos Hermans:

RCE density in Europe was the highest but mostly in the North of Europe. This was cause for concern. Europe had the most coordinated economic policy on earth; hence most members in that region were confronted with similar issues (such as funding) and demands. This in turn has lead to a discussion of structure. How shall the European region deal together with the different challenges? One may need a different structure. According to Hans van Ginkel, structure needed to follow strategy. Hence for Europe, it may be a good idea if UNU-IAS could

leave it to the RCEs to structure themselves according to their needs and policy requirements.

Assessment was a sensitive issue; it always felt like some unknown institute was looking into one's books. That was understandable. However, the RCEs flourished during the self-assessment. He called upon the European RCEs to undergo the assessment procedure.

Challenges remained how for example one should deal with the discrepancy of numbers between the North and the South and how can one encourage new RCEs in areas where they were needed.

Mario Tabucanon closed the session by explaining that there appeared to be several similar issues across continents. Several points had been mentioned such as the importance of turning over leadership, collaboration, and to engage the disengaged. He particularly emphasized the importance of communications and the importance of GAP. During the reflections, it became clear that consolidation was necessary, as was the increased quality of actions. Further, countries not yet engaged should be involved. In the ASEAN action plan, RCEs had been mentioned, which was a great aspiration.

The floor was opened for discussion, thereby looking into thoughts on how to upscale RCE activities in the future and tackling the challenges the RCE Community faces in terms of capacity development, governance, assessment and policy engagement.

#### **Comments from the floor:**

Hans van Ginkel stated that it was time to look at different topics from different RCEs instead of looking at what was the same, especially since some topics were missing with reference to GAP.

A comment from the South Pacific: Indigenous knowledge needed to be brought together with science as the latter often dehumanized viewpoints.

Greater Dhaka: The governance structure could also be a dehumanizing factor. What was good governance? There should be more flexibility leaving it to the RCEs how they can adapt, especially since science and tradition were such important points.

RCE Minna: Engagement with policy was the key issue, no matter how good any proposal was. Having one person that was politically successful is of great importance and determined the success of the RCE.

RCE Sydney: A stop take was necessary in all perspectives – socially, culturally, environmentally and economically. Once RCE Sydney did it, 1 million of funding was generated.



RCE Greater Nairobi: In order to advance as an RCE, one needed to convince policy makers and heads of universities that there was something the RCE could do for them. Here more guidance would be helpful.

Jos Hermans: RCEs so far did not have a marketing concept; instead everyone had worked on the quality of their products with the highest integrity.

RCE Kano: Youth was so important, and has so far had been so little involved.

Charles Hopkins: Part of RCE's professional development was to understand what ESD was. One needed to focus on Higher Education with only 3 % of the world population going to university of which 80% may become decision makers of this world. One needed to understand how to promote and nurture RCEs.

Mario Tabucanon summarized the session with the following key points:

- ✓ Involvement of policy makers
- ✓ Gender issue, more females in panels and presentations
- ✓ Investment in Marketing
- ✓ Governance structure guidelines
- ✓ Youth involvement
- ✓ Focus on Higher Education