1. Introduction

The Fragile Living Planet

That beautiful, warm, living object looked so fragile, so delicate, that if you touched it with a finger it would crumble and fall apart

James B. Irwin, lunar astronaut, 1930-1991 (National Space Science Data Centre)

(Source: Murray, 2011)
1. Introduction

What tensions and contradictions does this image portray?

(Source: Murray, 2011)

Local Sustainable Development Challenges

What thoughts does this picture *provoke* in your mind?
What key *words/phrases* arise from examining the car image?

(Image copyright: John Lund)
We are living in times of accelerating change …

We are facing unparalleled and complex sustainable development challenges associated with unstable and accelerated changing economic, political and social contexts.

1. Introduction

Presentation Overview

1. Introduction

2. A Multi-Stakeholder Approach to ESD Implementation: The Case of UNU RCEs

3. Sharing Case Stories from RCEs

4. Conclusion
2. A Multi-Stakeholder Approach to ESD

The Case of UNU Regional Centres of Expertise

There are 129 acknowledged RCEs as of June 2014

Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development

RCEs around the world

www.rce-network.org/
2. A Multi-Stakeholder Approach to ESD

Positioning RCEs for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Processes

**Strategic Actions**
- RCEs and the Global Learning Space
- RCEs and Capacity Development
- RCEs and Research and Development

**Thematic Actions**
- RCEs and Climate Change
- RCEs and Health
- RCEs and Higher Education
- RCEs, Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity
- RCEs, Youth and School
- RCEs, Sustainable Consumption, Production and Sustainable Livelihoods

**Assessment**

Multi-Stakeholder engagement processes in RCEs

- Search for sustainable development (SD) solutions (Research and Development)
- The pooling together of ESD capacities, expertise, resources and experiences (networked governance)
- Enable learning at individual, organisational and community levels (transformative learning processes)
- Joint implementation of priority actions and projects (Flagship Projects)
- Emphasis on developing partnerships and networks (Collaborative networks)
Underlying Theoretical Perspectives

1. Contemporary social movement theory
   - RCEs viewed as a global social movement
2. Social learning theory of change
   - RCEs understood as communities of practice
3. Theory of deliberative democracy
   - RCEs regarded as platforms for dialogue and cooperation

Source: http://sustainability.ualberta.ca/Projects/~/media/sustainability/Projects_deprecated/Documents/DOCS/DoCSToolkit_FINAL.pdf
2. A Multi-Stakeholder Approach to ESD

Deliberative engagement in RCEs

RCE ESD projects and activities embrace the significance of relationships, collaborative learning, networking, systemic thinking and the roles of diversity and flexibility in fostering sustainable communities.

A well-planned deliberation:
1. Provides participants with a thorough understanding of the complexities and trade-offs surrounding an issue.
2. Is uniquely effective at bringing together a wide variety of perspectives and incorporating them into decision-making.
3. Reshapes individual perceptions and behaviours, often transforming participants who had little prior knowledge of or engagement with an issue into passionate advocates and change agents.

(Logan McIntosh and Jeff Savage)

3. Sharing Case Stories from RCEs

Reorienting curriculum processes in schools

Reoriented curricula integrate values, principles, skills, perspectives and issues related to sustainable development at different levels of school systems.

- Development of new courses and learning materials (e.g. RCE Grand Rapids, RCE Khomas-Erongo)
- Professional development workshops for teachers (e.g. RCE British Columbia, RCE London, RCE Denmark)
- Integration of ESD into teacher training (e.g. RCE Denmark)
- Enhancing literacy and numeracy in early childhood education (e.g. RCE Khomas-Erongo)
3. Sharing Case Stories from RCEs

Application of innovative pedagogies

An ESD curriculum is grounded in collaboration and cooperative pedagogies to ensure that educators and learners work together to address local, regional and global sustainable development challenges.

- Use of **virtual** education conferences, e.g. RCE Grand Rapids has developed a virtual technology platform.
- Use of rivers as **outdoor living** and **learning laboratories** for hands-on, collaborative, participatory and project-based learning (e.g. RCE Greater Western Sydney).
- Application of **networked** and **nested collaborative action learning processes** (e.g. RCE Pune).

Improving skills and employability of learners

A transformative goal of ESD is to develop capacities for future-oriented thinking in learners and communities. RCEs are contributing to this goal through provision of integrative learning and education processes aimed at improving life skills and employability of learners.

- Integration of science education and entrepreneurship into school (e.g. RCE Rhine-Meuse).
- Strengthening national identity of the youth (e.g. RCE Yogyakarta).
- Equipping youth with ‘marketable knowledge and skills with sustainability practices’ (RCE Dhaka).
Integrating sustainability into higher education

Higher education institutions as agents of change for sustainability are tailoring their programmes and curriculum to address local issues. They are promoting practices which embrace a knowledge base that integrates environment, economy and society.

- Development of online teaching resources and methodologies (e.g. RCE Graz-Styria)
- Strategic approaches to quality enhancement in higher education (e.g. RCE Severn)

Transforming livelihoods through community engagement

As sites of transformative learning RCEs have implemented collective visions and projects aimed at transforming community livelihoods. For example, the vision of RCE Gippsland is to:

“Advance the Gippsland region as a cohesive sustainable community that is empowered and resilient in the face of environmental challenges. We will provide leadership that promotes and supports ESD throughout rural and regional Gippsland communities”.

Community engagement emphasises a two-way approach in which RCE actors and local communities collaborate to develop and apply sustainability innovations to improve livelihoods.
Community engagement and collaboration

3. Sharing Case Stories from RCEs

Engaging local communities in eco-tourism and biodiversity conservation activities (e.g. RCE Lesotho)
Bee-keeping and sustainable livelihood project (e.g. RCE Mau Ecosystem Complex)
Cultivation of mushroom as a sustainable source of livelihood (e.g. RCE Swaziland, RCE Kakamega-Western)
Promoting sustainable farming practices (e.g. RCE Greater Phnom Penh)
Community radio to share knowledge on climate adaptation strategies (e.g. RCE Zomba)
Enhanced research, dialogue and inclusive learning on ESD within local communities (e.g. RCE Okayama)
Creating sustainable neighbourhoods

RCE Grand Rapids working with a community of 2,000 residents to transform their neighbourhood by:

- Promoting collaborations & partnerships
- Applying SD best practices
- Building local resident leadership and trust
- Deep listening to community voices

There is a focus on developing an integrated urban community strategy

Community engagement in water quality monitoring

RCE KwaZulu Natal closely works with the local community around uMngeni River to regularly monitor its water quality.

This has contributed to:

- Increased monitoring, reporting and documentation as well as communication and dialogue about water quality issues
- A deeper understanding around complex water quality issues within the local community
- Improved relationships between local community and water service provider
3. Conclusion

Committed RCEs to a post 2014 ESD agenda

Multi-Stakeholder engagement processes have inspired the belief that local communities have the power and responsibility to effect positive change and improve their livelihoods.

RCEs to scale up actions on multi-stakeholder engagement processes within a post 2014 ESD agenda to:

1. Accelerate search of sustainable solutions at the local level
2. Transform learning and training environments
3. Advance policy through ESD/SD research and practice
4. Build capacities of educators and trainers
5. Empower and mobilize youth to address SD challenges

(UNESCO, 2014)

Refocusing Sustainable Development Efforts

- Use of frameworks that can make SD more appealing to politicians, scholars and citizens alike
- Increase community-engaged and policy research
- Orient SD policy towards:
  1. Human needs – moral engagement
  2. Equipping humans with capabilities
- Global SD efforts should be refocused on capabilities, needs and quality of life.