

Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD (RCE Program) (United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies: UNU-IAS)

Background

The concept of Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was developed by the Education for Sustainable Development Programme (EfSD) of UNU-IAS in 2005, to help achieve the goals of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014) by translating global objectives into local contexts.

UNU-IAS' EfSD programme aims to develop the capacity of the public at large, and decision makers in particular, to integrate ESD components into national development planning and implementation by the end of the Decade. This involves:

- advocacy and dissemination of ESD and DESD principles
- promotion of regional centres of expertise on ESD and their networking
- strengthening ESD activities of higher education institutions
- developing on-line learning for ESD, and
- training teachers and trainers on ESD.



Yoshihiro Natori (right) and Zinaida Fadeeva

Aims

An RCE is a network of existing formal, non-formal and informal education and learning related organisations, mobilised to deliver ESD to local and regional communities. An RCE builds an innovative platform for multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary information-sharing, dialogue and collaboration for promoting ESD among regional/local stakeholders. It also creates a regional/local knowledge base to support ESD activities.

As an innovative platform for dialogue and a local knowledge base, an RCE promotes the four thrusts of ESD in a resource-effective manner. These four goals are to:

- **re-orient education** towards Sustainable Development (SD), covering existing programmes/subjects from the point of ESD and designing an integrated SD curricula;
- **increase access to quality education** that is most needed in the regional context;
- **deliver trainers' training programmes** and to develop methodologies and learning materials for them;
- **lead advocacy and awareness raising efforts** to raise public awareness about the importance of educators and the essential role of ESD in achieving a sustainable future.

RCEs promote the long-term goals of ESD, such as environmental stewardship, social justice, and improvement of the quality of life.

RCEs, both individually and collectively, aspire to achieve the goals of the UN DESD. While RCEs contribute to the Decade by translating its global objectives into the context of the local communities in which they operate, a network of RCEs worldwide is envisioned to constitute what UNU calls the 'Global Learning Space for Sustainable Development'. The Global Learning Space is an articulation of a vision of DESD put forward by UNESCO: "*a world where everyone has the*



Poster Design Competition for school students
(RCE Lucknow, India)



Volunteers help clean up oil spill
(RCE Incheon, Korea)

opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation".

Stakeholders

An RCE involves school teachers, professors at higher education institutions, local NGOs, scientists, researchers, museums, zoos, botanical gardens, local government officials, representatives of local enterprises, volunteers, media, civic associations or individuals who work in the spheres of sustainable development such as economic growth, social development, and environmental protection, students and learners at all levels.

Geographical Scope

A region in the RCE concept is seen as a part of a country having solidarity in economic, social, cultural and/or natural conditions, like Bretagne, Tohoku or Catalunya, or a cross-border areas with a similar size. The RCE's region should be sufficiently large to include various institutions such as universities, museums, zoos, botanical gardens, and more than a handful of primary and secondary schools, and small enough to make regular face-to-face communication possible.

The global RCE network

The first batch of seven RCEs was acknowledged at the UNU-UNESCO Conference on Globalization and Education for Sustainable Development (Nagoya, June 2005). Since then the RCE network has continued to expand and today there are fifty-five RCEs globally.

Each RCE implements activities in response to the challenges faced by the region in which it operates. In addition to these activities, the RCE network is also exploring strategic inter-RCE linkages, particularly on six identified themes – sustainable production and consumption, youth, health, biodiversity, e-learning and teacher training. The RCEs also develop continental networks, such as Europe, Africa, Americas and the Asia-Pacific.

The next step for RCEs both individually and collectively is to develop concrete joint activities building on the rich diversity within and across RCEs without compromising the holistic and cross-cutting nature of ESD.



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Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net)

(United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies :UNU-IAS)

Universities for ESD

Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net) is an alliance of several leading Asia-Pacific universities that have committed to work together to integrate Sustainable Development (SD) into postgraduate courses and curricula. Member institutions involved have strong education and research programmes as well as aspiring innovators in sustainable development and related fields.

An initiative of the UNU-IAS

The Education for Sustainable Development Programme at the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) works on research and capacity development to integrate components of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into curricula at all levels of education and in all sectors of the society. The creation of the ProSPER.Net alliance is an activity of this programme.

The academic and research alliance of reputed higher-education institutions in the Asia-Pacific region is an effort of UNU-IAS to bring about understanding and delivery of ESD and SD at the postgraduate level.

The network

Sixteen universities from Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand, and two regional universities in Asia and the Pacific are members of ProSPER.Net as of now.



ProSPER.Net Launching Ceremony (Sapporo, Japan, June 2008)

The list of the eighteen founding members of ProSPER.Net follows.

- RMIT University, Australia
- Tongji University, China
- TERI University, India
- Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia
- Hokkaido University, Japan
- Iwate University, Japan
- Miyagi University of Education, Japan
- Nagoya University, Japan
- Okayama University, Japan
- Rikkyo University, Japan
- Shinshu University, Japan
- University of Tokyo, Japan
- Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
- University of the Philippines, Philippines
- Yonsei University, Republic of Korea
- Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
- Asian Institute of Technology
- University of South Pacific



Activities

ProSPER.Net serves as a platform of collaboration for members to pursue postgraduate education and research on sustainable development with an emphasis on ESD. Activities of the network may include:

1. Promotion of graduate students' engagement with SD issues
2. Faculty and teacher training
3. Training of government officials
4. SD and business schools
5. Case studies on SD
6. Mapping of sustainability issues in higher education
7. Community engagement
8. Summer schools for master's and doctoral students
9. Faculty collaboration

The first joint projects of the network, funded by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, are

- Integrating sustainable development in business school curricula,
- Training of educators and researchers on sustainable development, and
- Establishing a postgraduate programme in public policy and sustainable development.

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AGEPP: Asia Good ESD Practice Project

(NPO: Japan Council on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD-J))

Outline

The Japan Council on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD-J) has appealed the significance of ESD promotion at the grass root level and the civil network for its promotion since the launce of UNDESD, and exchanged the views and opinions with NGOs in Asia.

As the first step for making our vision concrete, ESD-J launched a project, “Asia Good ESD Practice Project (AGEPP)” in 2006. AGEPP is a three-year project (2006-2008) and funded by Toyota Environmental Activities Grant Program. AGEPP aims to promote ESD in Asia and develop the ESD network for the civil society, through exploring and documenting the ESD practices that have been conducted within the Asian historical and cultural context, such as tradition, life and local knowledge.

Objectives

The objectives of AGEPP are the followings:

- Conducting two phases of research to explore 30 cases for ESD practice based on the local community;
- Documenting the ESD practices in 6 languages (English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Tagalog, Indonesian, Nepali);
- Developing the AGEPP website that has a multi-lingual database function and the sites for the AGEPP process, related ESD news and the case collected;
- Analyzing the cases and clarify the principles that can lead successful ESD activities in a local community;
- Clarify the uniqueness and perspectives of ESD practices in Asia;
- Publishing ESD handbook for the community ESD stakeholders in Asia in 6 languages; and
- Developing ESD civil network in Asia.

AGEPP Archives

- 2006**
 - *Open Call for AGEPP Partners through ESD-J website and related mailing lists and Selection
 - *AGEPP1st Meeting (Tokyo)
 - Discussed the AGEPP case format and the project direction
 - *Launched AGEPP website
 - *Collected 12 case reports
- 2007**
 - *AGEPP 2nd Meeting (Tong Yeong, Korea) and Korea ESD International Forum
 - Reviewed the case format and the project direction and discussed the utilization of AGEPP cases for the post AGEPP
 - * Visited the case report site in India (Gujarat, India)
 - * AGEPP Special Working Session (The 4th International Conference for Environmental Education (Ahmedabad, India)
 - Appealed the value of AGEPP and discussed how the Asia civil ESD network should be
 - *Collected 19 case reports
- 2008**
 - * “From Asian Civil Society to G8 Summit” International workshop and forum on the proposal to G8 summit
 - Clarify the AGEPP perspectives and drafted the proposal to Hokkaido Toyako Summit in Japan
 - * Proposal submission and press release of the Proposal to G8 Environmental Ministers Meeting and G8 Summit
 - * Appealed the value of AGEPP and the Proposal at the Civil Summit (Sapporo, Hokkaido)
 - *AGEPP 3rd Meeting (Tokyo)
 - Analysed the cases for editing the AGEPP handbook
 - * Published the AGEPP Handbook

AGEPP Cases

AGEPP has collected 31 cases from the AGEPP member countries. The topics includes agriculture, poverty eradication, women, children’s right, the disabled, public health, 3R, indigenous peoples, ecotourism, rural community revitalization, urbanisation, watershed conservation and so on.

Features & Challenges

The value, “human is a part of nature” has existed in Asia. Humans have adapted the life style in the surrounding natural settings as well as working on and utilizing the nature here. Asian people have formed the culture by trying to seek the balance between the nature and human activities. However, this kind of knowledge system that can be a cue to seek for the way of a sustainable society has been drastically vanishing in the wave of modernization and globalization.

AGEPP documented many practices to unwind and rewind the current way of life through integrating the indigenous knowledge into the activities for the future. Having the local knowledge perspective, the connectedness between human to human, human to their local community, and human to the natural environment has been re-developed. The re-development of the “connectedness” led not only the re-development of the local nature and community, but also the local residents’ empowerment.

The practice of re-evaluating the indigenous knowledge and integrating it into the community development is ESD and has resulted in the civil autonomy and the endogenous development. And, main actor of this ESD is NGO. It is crucial to promote the ESD practices based on the indigenous knowledge and integrate the value of these activities and perspectives into the ESD activities by related national, regional and international organizations

Although AGEPP ends in 2008, we assume that there are numberless of practices like AGEPP cases. It is urgently needed to develop the mechanism to support ESD practices by NGOs, and human and financial resources to strengthen the ESD civil network in Asia.

Unique Features of AGEPP

AGEPP Unique Feature 1: AGEPP Logo



Logo was designed based on yellow and green. Green comes from the rice paddy fields and yellow from ESD-J logo.

AGEPP Unique Feature 3: Participatory Meeting



During the AGEPP meeting, any keywords that participants mention are picked up, written down on the scratched paper and placed on the wall. A roll of scotch tape is finished in the two hour session. (Photo: AGEPP 2nd Meeting)

AGEPP Unique Feature 5: AGEPP case reporting format
AGEPP uses the same reporting format for all the case report so that it makes the comparison and analysis easier. The format contains the project process, management, project sustainability, method and relevant international initiatives to the activities. All the cases are about 20 pages and use many pictures.

AGEPP Unique Feature 2: All the AGEPP members are NGOs



AGEPP Member NGOs
[Indonesia] BINTARI (Bina Karta Lestari) Foundation
[Philippines] Environmental Broadcast Circle Association Inc (EBC)
[India] Centre for Environment Education (CEE)
[Nepal] National Resource Center for Non Formal Education (NRC-NFE)
[China] Friends of Nature
[Korea] Local Sustainability Alliance of Korea (LSAK)
[Taiwan] Earth Passenger
[Japan] ESD-J

AGEPP Unique Feature 4: AGEPP Multilingual Website



AGEPP web site has multilingual function that you can read the case report in English, and other 6 Asian languages. www.agepp.net/

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