



RCE
Ireland

Regional Centre of Expertise for Education for Sustainable Development



 **Irish Aid**
Department of Foreign Affairs
An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha



REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
ON EDUCATION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ACKNOWLEDGED BY



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RCE – Ireland Membership

Amnesty International, Ireland
CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit
Church of Ireland College of Education
Comhar
Cultivate
DICE Project
ECO-UNESCO
Just Forests
Limerick Institute of Technology
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National University of Ireland, Galway
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St. Angela's College
Ubuntu Network
University College Cork
University College Dublin
University of Dublin
University of Limerick

Introduction

This brochure showcases some of the projects of the Members of RCE – Ireland, particularly those that highlight the links between sustainability and global development. Our aim is to draw attention to what makes Ireland’s approach to ESD distinctive compared to other country’s approaches.

What is RCE-Ireland?

The Regional Centre of Expertise - Ireland (RCE - Ireland) is an **ACTION** and **RESEARCH** network of higher education institutes, public sector bodies and NGOs.

RCE-Ireland aims to promote and support activities and research that result in effective **INTEGRATION OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** (ESD) principles and practices into formal, informal and non-formal education in Ireland.

What is an RCE?

The UN General Assembly declared 2005-2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. As part of this decade a worldwide

network of RCEs has been established to deliver education for sustainable development (ESD) to a regional/local community.

Specific thematic areas of work that RCE Ireland has identified as challenges to integration of ESD are:

- Positioning ESD within the established ‘Adjectival Educations’
- Developing the capacity of educators to engage with ESD Integrating ESD into teacher education
- Integrating ESD into Continual Professional Development of Teachers
- Addressing ESD in Vocational and Technical Subjects
- Developing the Skills to engage with Sustainable Development
- Embedding sustainable development into overloaded curricula Assessing and recording of ESD in formal and non formal education
- Linking the local and the global



These photo's are used with thanks to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

RCE-Ireland Flagship Research Project

Developing Activism through Education for Sustainable Development

RCE-Ireland is at present carrying out a research project on exploring ways of motivating young people to take personal and group action on sustainable development issues.

The aim is to investigate the integration of Development Education and Education for Sustainable Development into the post-primary curriculum through situated learning and key skills (such as group work and communication skills), to increase activism in Sustainable Development issues. Three particular teaching techniques being researched are cognitive apprenticeship, problem based learning, and knowledge building.

The project is being carried out with students and teachers in the Limerick region of Ireland. Some teachers have focused on particular sustainable development topics in Africa, such as cobalt mining in the Congo, and its impact on the local people and the environment, making the connection

between this industry and our daily use of mobile phones.

Project Outcomes:

- Advice for Irish Aid and NCCA on integration of key skills, with relevance to DE & ESD
- Publication on situated cognition, key skills and development education

Keywords:

- **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**
- **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**
- **LIFE-LONG ACTIVISM**



Comhar Sustainable Development Council



Comhar Sustainable Development Council (Comhar SDC) is a multi-stakeholder council, established in 1999, to advise the Irish Government on sustainable development. The Council's 25 members are representative of government, business, environment, community, voluntary and professional and academic sectors. Comhar SDC's advice and recommendations to Government are informed by research and evidence based policy analysis. Comhar SDC is supported by a full-time executive and secretariat. Further information is available at www.comharsdc.ie.

Comhar SDC's role in relation to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is advocating for an enhanced policy framework for ESD and promoting a wider engagement of stakeholders in ESD.

- Comhar SDC has facilitated stakeholder input into the preparation of a national action plan

on Education for Sustainable Development through the sponsorship of events and workshops.

- Comhar SDC participates on the governance committee of the RCE – ESD Ireland.
- Comhar also supports the development of media projects focusing on sustainable development through the annual Comhar Sustainable Development Media Fund.

Keywords:

- **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION**
- **POLICY ADVICE**
- **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**



Cultivate Living and Learning Centre

Cultivate aims to provide access to the knowledge and tools to cultivate sustainable lifestyles and resilient communities.

Community Powerdown Course Training for Leadership, Livelihoods and Local Resilience

The objective of this course is to nurture community leadership in sustainability and support a strategic shift towards global citizenship, ecological thinking and local resilience.

Using an active learning methodology the course utilises short presentations, case studies, games, discussions and ten specially produced short films, to engage the community of learners. The citizens of tomorrow will require such qualities as flexibility, resourcefulness, creativity, self-reliance and empathy, and the ability to participate actively and responsibly. This course is designed to help develop these qualities.

The Community Powerdown learning resources are currently being piloted in South Africa by Annie

Sugru through the Amandla Forum.

The Powerdown 'Toolkit'

A DVD ROM 'Toolkit' of learning resources has been produced for the Community Powerdown course. This includes a comprehensive 'Trainers Handbook' and the readings, short films, and additional materials for the learners.

For more information contact:
powerdown@cultivate.ie

Keywords:

- **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**
- **LIFE-LONG ACTIVISM**
- **ECOLOGICAL THINKING**



The Ubuntu Network



The Ubuntu Network view Development Education and Education for Sustainable

Development as sharing many common characteristics (Hogan and Tormey, 2008). These include:

- A common knowledge base, interdependent and unequal world
- Developing critical thinking skills
- Active and participatory learning approach, empowerment, responsibility
- An action orientation- engendering on behaviour and action for change

In keeping with many other international networks, the Ubuntu Network aims to establish a collaborative environment in which network members share and discuss knowledge and methodologies, and work together on collaborative DE/ESD based initiatives. This includes our annual Dialogue Days, which provides a unique opportunity to explore issues relating to local and global equality, justice and sustainability. The

concept is based on the development of knowledge through dialogue and exchange.

Ubuntu Network seeks to enable and support post primary teacher educators to effectively integrate Development Education (DE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their professional practice.

Membership of the Network comprises of teacher educators (lecturers, tutors, teaching practice supervisors), post-primary teachers, educational researchers and Development Education practitioners. The Network is based in the Department of Education and Professional Studies, UL and is funded by Irish Aid.

For further information go to www.ubuntu.ie or contact mags.liddy@ul.ie

Keywords:

- **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**
- **INNOVATION**
- **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION**



Just Forests



Irish Woodworkers for Africa, T/A Just Forests, is an Irish charity working to increase public awareness and critical understanding of the link between sustainable forest management, natural resource security (in particular wood), green house gas abatement and poverty reduction. We endeavor to advance public support for sustainable forestry as part of our overall project by encouraging a 'livelihood' approach to forest conservation and responsible timber sourcing that embraces economic, social, environmental, ecological and spiritual relationships.

We use Irish society's dependence on wood and the state of the world's forests to make links between 'development' and poverty with particular emphasis on African forests. Ireland imports significant amounts of tropical timber from West and Central African countries, including Cameroon, Ghana, Congo Brazzaville and Côte d'Ivoire. An estimated 25-50 acres of African forests are chopped down daily to meet Ireland's hunger for tropical hardwood-often with devastating effects on local populations. Millions of hectares of African rainforest have been lost in the last 30 years, and now logging operations

are expanding into the heart of the Congo Basin, whose rainforests are the second largest in the world after those of the Amazon.

Our educational work includes the very popular hands-on, travelling exhibition, The Wood of Life- which visits public libraries all over Ireland including Northern Ireland. Thousands of Irish school-goers interact with the exhibition annually by means of different 'activity sheets' for use by teachers and pupils at the exhibition and in the classroom.

Keywords:

- **ECOLOGICAL THINKING**
- **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**
- **LIFE-LONG ACTIVISM**

For further information go to www.justforests.org or contact us at: woodlife@justforests.org



ECO-UNESCO's Youth for Sustainable Development Peer Education Programme



ECO-UNESCO uses peer education—an innovative pedagogical technique—to empower and upskill young people in Sustainable Development and encourages them to connect the local to the global and examine links between the environment, society and economy.

ECO-UNESCO's 'Youth for Sustainable Development Peer Education Programme' provides young people with the opportunity to become peer educators and explore issues of sustainability as it relates to their own life and the world.

The ten-week long youth training programme allows young people to explore the complexities of Sustainable Development while developing their own skill-sets. As part of the programme they are encouraged to carry out an environmental action project with their peers. This can be on any environmental or sustainability theme. Those interested in further developing their skills as peer educators are invited to be part of an advanced peer training programme.

The 'Youth for Sustainable Development' programme also comprises training; seminar and conference. At the moment as part of the programme we are developing training programmes for those organisations involved in non-formal education aiming at providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills to incorporate Sustainable Development in their direct youth work and in their organisations.

The programme will also provide an opportunity for young people involved to be part of an exchange with a developing country.

ECO-UNESCO is Ireland's environmental education and youth organisation affiliated to the World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres, and Associations (WFUCA).

Keywords:

- **INNOVATION**
- **LIFE-LONG ACTIVISM**
- **HOLISTIC**



Participants from ECO-UNESCO's Youth for Sustainable Development Peer Education Programme are now ready to work with fellow youth.

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PRACTICE LIFE-LONG ACTIVISM
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