

Regional Centres of Expertise

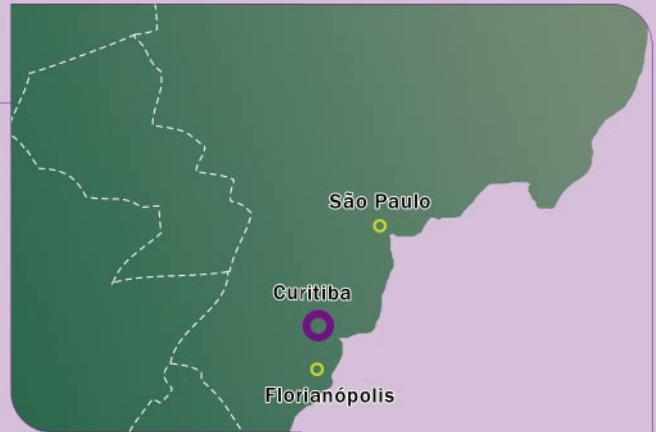
on education for sustainable development

RCE CURITIBA-PARANÁ

The region

The geographical scope of RCE Curitiba is the State of Paraná, a fertile region located in southern Brazil. The cultural and educational initiatives of the region's 8 major cities contrast strongly with the poverty, illiteracy and crime in the surrounding areas where the favelas or shanty towns are located. The population of Curitiba is a little over 1.5 million. This number increases to 2.7 million when the surrounding municipalities are taken into consideration.

A variety of ecosystems can be seen in the State of Paraná. The Atlantic rainforest, which has one of the highest levels of biodiversity in Brazil, runs through the area.



Regional challenges

Although the State of Paraná is a leader in grain production, the majority of its population lacks quality education, jobs, shelter, food, security and health services. Sustainability does not carry the same connotations in Brazil as it does in Europe or North America. For the poverty-afflicted communities in Brazil, sustainability means having sufficient food, shelter and access to health services. All these depend on employment, which in turn requires education and skills.

Regional role

Community programs on environmental awareness that were implemented by the local government about 20 years ago made Curitiba the ecological capital of Paraná. But in recent years many of the programs have been discontinued and environmental education is no longer a priority in the state and federal government policy. At this time, the development of an RCE will motivate interaction among prominent people from different institutions, summing up knowledge and strategies for empowering educators and stakeholders to activate a network for ESD. This network would promote quality education in parallel to skills training through professional training programs for all sectors.

Resources devoted to education and research are gradually shrinking in Paraná, and the majority of researchers and educators have little motivation due to low salaries and poor working conditions. RCE Curitiba plans to work in cooperation with government agencies and national associations to empower educators, and encourage them to develop appropriate educational curricula and programs, and to insert trans-disciplinary strategies for ESD in courses and schools. This strengthening of ESD activities at higher education institutions in close collaboration with the local community, industries and government will generate a synergy capable of moving forward RCE Curitiba-Paraná's projects for regional sustainable development.

Decision-making structure

RCE Curitiba-Paraná has a managing committee of five administrative members with decision-making powers. The steering committee is composed of representatives of various organizations, who will also act as project co-ordinators. There will also be affiliate members who would collaborate for special projects and programs.

IGUAÇU FALLS



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Goals of the RCE

The main targets of the RCE are to,

- promote exchange of ESD information and experiences,
- facilitate cooperation between different levels of education,
- assist in developing and implementing ESD programs in all sectors of society,
- facilitate effective management of resources, and
- raise awareness on the importance of ESD.

Objectives

- Identify existing education projects and develop partnerships to activate integrated actions for sustainable development
- Promote access to basic professional training and education in SD most needed in the regional context
- Offer training for all levels of society and develop transdisciplinary methods and tools to improve that training
- Elaborate didactic materials to raise awareness on the importance of training and the essential role of ESD to move toward a sustainable future
- Integrate local sustainability challenges into the information and education flow of formal, informal and non-formal education in the whole region.

Organizations involved

Several university researchers and professors, environmental NGOs, representatives of local business enterprises, government officials, civic associations, specialists in environmental protection, educators and students are involved in the development of RCE Curitiba-Paraná.

Universities such as Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR), Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná (PUC-PR), Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná (UTFPR), UNIFAE-Centro Universitário, Universidade Estadual de Maringá; government officials working in education and natural resources management from the municipality of Curitiba and from the state of Paraná; business enterprises such as Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (SENAI), which includes the Federação das Indústrias do Paraná (FIEP); regional associations of agriculture, science and technology such

as EMBRAPA-Florestas; and non-governmental organizations such as Academia Paranaense de Doutores para o Desenvolvimento (APDD), Instituto de Promoção do Desenvolvimento (IPD), Instituto Brasileiro de Qualidade e Produtividade (IBQP), Instituto Tecnopole Maringá (ITM), DesignÊRE and Fundação Araucária are all stakeholders of RCE Curitiba-Paraná.

Activities

The RCE's priority is to develop efficient ESD strategies to reduce specific social, economic and environmental problems, and to improve the quality of life. Short-term activities identified are:

- complementing traditional curricula with training for university students and elementary school teachers to enable them to become trainers on ESD,
- offering guidance and professional training to students to enable them to gain initial employment, and
- developing educational materials incorporating university research results to increase community awareness and to encourage active participation of citizens in health, environment, economic and social issues.

Some long-term activities are:

- identifying existing projects and examples of good practice among educational institutions and integrating these into curricula and regional community training initiatives,
- facilitating cooperation among universities, industries and government to organize new training programs for all sectors,
- creating an online database of all major stakeholders and their activities in the state of Paraná to promote interactions for ESD and for developing innovative training programs and products,
- raising awareness and understanding of SD among all people living and working in the State of Paraná,
- promoting environmental awareness and professional training for sustainability through courses that will enable people of all ages to learn enough to be employable, and
- organizing a high-level dialogue, between representatives from various segments of society, on adapting the concept and practices of sustainable development to the cultural context of the region, and on incorporating innovations and the latest achievements of science and technology.

For more information

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