

Regional Centres of Expertise

on education for sustainable development

RCE GREATER NAIROBI

The region

Located in central Kenya, Nairobi borders the Great Rift Valley, the Mount Kenya Highlands and the Yatta Plains. It is the capital of Kenya and acts as the hub of industrial activities, including communication and transport, for Eastern Africa. The population of Nairobi stands at about 3.2 million, with an estimated 60% living in informal settlements. These settlements occupy about 5.8% of the land area used for residential purposes, where a majority of people live in slums. The Greater Nairobi area also includes sections of the four surrounding districts of Kajiado, Machakos, Kiambu and Thika.



Regional challenges

Nairobi has some of the largest slums on the African continent. According to the latest Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (2005-2006), 46 per cent or 16.5 million of the 35.5 million population live below the poverty line. Some 19 million Kenyans live on one US dollar a day. The country continues to experience urban migration that is placing enormous pressure on urban centres, particularly Nairobi. Poverty levels are particularly high in the informal settlements. Water and sanitation facilities in the slums are scarce, and education and health care facilities are overstretched. The informal settlements are characterized by high population density (up to 63,000 persons per square kilometer) and have a history of neglect by public authorities. Other issues of concern include poor solid waste management, unaffordable and unsustainable energy resources, unsustainable urban agriculture and environmental degradation. Additionally poor health, insecurity and violence, lack of appropriate entrepreneurial skills as well as poor governance and corruption have been identified as critical issues of concern.

Regional role

The RCE for Greater Nairobi will contribute to the local learning space for sustainable development. RCE Nairobi intends to push the ESD agenda in impoverished communities of the capital city and its environs in order to mobilize stakeholders around ESD goals and concrete actions that make a difference. The RCE will serve as a model for other RCEs in Kenya.

Organizations involved

Government institutions such as the Ministry of Education and education departments from the Ministries of Sciences and Technology, Environment and Natural Resources, and of Planning, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), Department of Adult Education, Nairobi City Council, public schools, the National Museum, universities and higher education institutions such as the Kenyatta University, Kenya Science Teachers' College, University of Nairobi, Kenya Polytechnic, Catholic University of East Africa, among others are all involved in the RCE. Civil society organizations such as the Kenya Organization for Environmental Education (KOE), Umande Trust, Giraffe Center, Nature Kenya are also stakeholders. Private sector organizations such as the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kenya Association of Manufacturers and Nairobi Central Business District Association are also important stakeholders in the Greater Nairobi RCE. UNESCO, UNEP and UN-Habitat are other key partners. The RCE will also develop collaboration with other government, private sector and civil society organizations.



Goal of the RCE

The goal of RCE Greater Nairobi is to advance public awareness, education, training and capacity building to achieve sustainable development.

Short-term objectives

- Carry out a participatory needs assessment for ESD in the Greater Nairobi area to identify stakeholders, local problems, priorities and existing capacity for ESD.
- Establish networks, partnerships and a resource centre for ESD organizations.
- Identify and promote examples of good practices in ESD.

Long-term objectives

- Promote understanding and raise awareness of ESD and enhance active participation by stakeholders.
- Establish a training of trainers program in ESD for stakeholder organizations.
- Develop context-specific materials and tools for implementing ESD in the region.
- Establish a regional information system to document and disseminate best practices and deliver ESD to the local community.
- Improve the livelihood of slum dwellers in Nairobi.
- Promote sustainable urban development in Nairobi and its environs.

Decision-making structure

The Greater Nairobi RCE will be guided by a Steering Committee and run by a Coordination Team composed of representatives from government, civil society and private sector. The Coordination Team will be the structure for implementation, resource mobilization, information, communication and documentation. The Coordination Team will oversee program work in priority areas (e.g. research and innovation, curriculum review and reorientation, advocacy and public awareness) drawing on representation from government, civil society and private sector. Learning institutions, including universities, and other stakeholders will contribute to and benefit from the RCE.

Activities

Main activities cover:

- development of ESD strategy guidelines for local stakeholders;
- reorientation of curricula in learning institutions to promote ESD focusing on improving the quality of learning to address the relevant economic, social and environmental needs of communities in Nairobi;
- dialogue, networking, advocacy and promotion of public awareness on ESD including establishment of online resources for learning institutions;
- partnership-building and community action, facilitating co-operation between formal and non-formal learning institutions, civil society and private sector organizations for priority issues such as pollution, waste management, water and sanitation, housing, environmental impact assessment, poverty, and income generation;
- assessment of existing curricula, integrating ESD into learning programmes and promoting school and community action-oriented learning;
- multidisciplinary action research on ESD focusing on urban development issues;
- promotion of community-oriented projects, innovations aimed at environmental conservation, income generation and general sustainable development;
- identification of best practices and innovations in ESD and replicating them in formal and non-formal learning institutions as well as in the community;
- training and capacity-building for trainers; and
- monitoring and evaluation of the ESD learning programs and activities in the region.



Organizational Structure of RCE Greater Nairobi

For more information

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For more information on Education for Sustainable Development and the RCE Initiative, contact the Global RCE Service Centre at rceservicecentre@ias.unu.edu or visit www.ias.unu.edu/efsd.