

Regional Centres of Expertise

on education for sustainable development

RCE GUWAHATI

The region

RCE Guwahati, located in the Kamrup Metro District of Assam in northeast India, covers the Greater Guwahati City which is about 600 sq. km. in area. The RCE may expand to the whole district in the future.

Assam is not called the land of blue hills, green valleys and red rivers in vain. Vast expanses of forest, undulating hills, valleys, plains and a network of rivers are all part of the topography. Guwahati is the capital of Assam and is considered the gateway to northeast India. This is a city of hills and marshes and lies on the southern banks of the Brahmaputra, one of the largest rivers in India. Six major wetland complexes are found in the city, and on the fringes are a Ramsar site and two wildlife sanctuaries.

Economically, Guwahati plays a central role in the region and houses several government organizations and businesses. Northeast India is also home to many ethnic tribes, each with its unique language, traditions and socio-cultural heritage.

Regional challenges

Guwahati's boundaries are constantly expanding and as is typical of Indian cities, it faces several problems including poverty, loss of biodiversity, human-animal conflicts, land degradation, scarcity of drinking water, unplanned development, natural disasters, and loss of traditional know-how.

Thirty-six per cent of families in the area live below the poverty line. Population explosion and unplanned urbanization have led to biodiversity loss. Habitat destruction for human settlement, peri-urban agricultural activities, and construction of roads and railways has resulted in considerable loss of wild flora and fauna. Deforestation is another area of concern, leading to landslides and loss of human lives.



Regional role

RCE Guwahati will focus on three issues – biodiversity conservation, livelihood issues and disaster preparedness. RCE Guwahati will educate, coordinate and provide a platform to raise awareness, plan, and implement initiatives for biodiversity conservation. Since poverty has been identified as one of the major problems in the area, education for livelihood diversification, training on diversified vocations and entrepreneurship at micro level will be a major focus of RCE Guwahati in the pilot phase. The RCE will also coordinate citizens, the administration and NGOs to implement disaster mitigation and preparedness programmes.

Organizations involved

Formal education institutions

1. Guwahati University (GU)
2. Cotton College, Guwahati (CCG)
3. Lalit Chandra Bharali College (LCBC)
4. Maharshi Vidya Mandir (MVM), Shilpukhuri
5. Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA)

Non-formal education institutions

1. Assam Science Technology & Environment Council (ASTEC)
2. All India Radio, Guwahati (AIR)
3. Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE)

Civil society organizations

1. Centre for Environment Education, North Eastern Regional Cell (CEE North East)
2. Aaranyak

Goals of the RCE

RCE Guwahati will aim at achieving a partnership with national, state and local governments, and civil society organizations to optimally utilize local human and natural resources for a prosperous, disaster resistant Northeast India. To achieve this goal, RCE Guwahati has set the following objectives:

1. To build the capacity of citizens on diverse livelihood options based on the sustainable management of natural resources
2. To conduct awareness programmes for teachers, students, and civil society about the rich biodiversity of Northeast India and its sustainable management
3. To raise awareness on disaster preparedness
4. To educate stakeholders on sustainable urban development issues such as human settlement, city planning, and waste management
5. To promote the values of traditional practices

Activities

Capacity building programmes will be organized on issues related to biodiversity conservation, diversification of livelihood, human-animal conflict, disaster mitigation, and sustainable natural resource management.

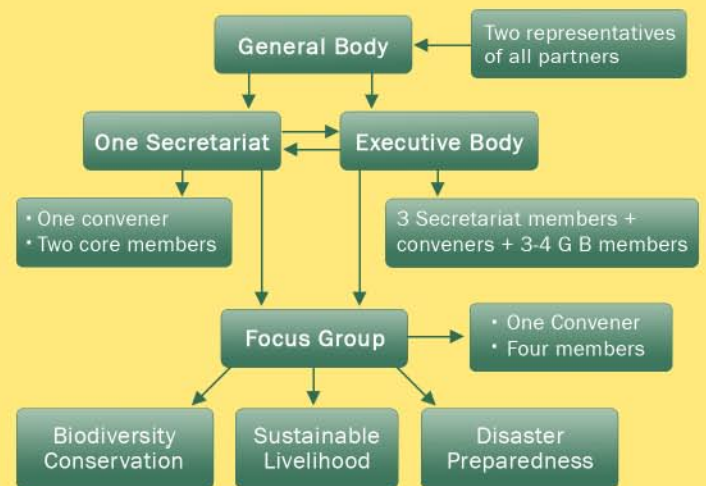
- Public awareness programmes in the form of symposia, public debates, open house discussions and street theatre will be organized.
- Policy intervention will be a key strategy to achieve the goals of sustainable development. Effective implementation of existing policies will be another focus of RCE Guwahati.
- Resource materials such as a database of available resources and organizations working on sustainable development; educational materials and curricula; a guide book on disaster preparedness; documentation of local biodiversity; an emergency preparedness manual for floods and earthquakes including maps of disaster-affected and disaster prone areas will be prepared.
- Research will be carried out to further understand the challenges and solutions for sustainable development in the area. Key experiences will be documented.

Decision-making structure

All partners will be equal members of the General Body, which will select a secretariat team for a fixed term of three years. The General Body will comprise of two representatives from each of the RCE partner organizations. New partners will be selected on the basis of the recommendation from existing partners.

The Secretariat will be composed of a convener and two core members, and will be reconstituted every three years. An executive body comprising the three secretariat members, the conveners of all focus groups and three to four members from the General Body will be created.

Each focus group will include conveners and four members of the general body. There will be three focus groups on Livelihood, Biodiversity and Disaster Preparedness.



GOLDEN LANGUR



For more information

Mr. Simanta Kalita
Programme Coordinator
CEE North East
simanta.kalita@ceeindia.org

Mr. Kaushik Krishna Saikia
Project Associate
CEE North East
Centre for Environment Education (CEE), North Eastern
Regional Cell
K.K. Bhatta Road, Chenikuthi, Guwahati-03, Assam,
INDIA
+91-361-2667382, 2665722
ceenortheast@ceeindia.org

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