

Regional Centres of Expertise

on education for sustainable development

RCE KITAKYUSHU

The region

Kitakyushu city is located in the Fukuoka prefecture at the northern tip of Kyushu Island, the westernmost of the four major islands of the Japanese archipelago. The city has a population of approximately one million and an area of 482 sq. km. RCE Kitakyushu intends to cover the whole region including Kitakyushu city and twelve municipalities. In the near future, the RCE will serve as a center for the 1.35 million residents in the 1,150 sq. km. area. The region is a gateway to other Asian countries, and its industrial and academic assets have been molded by the area's long history of tradition and culture.



Regional challenges

Kitakyushu city is aiming to transform itself into a model city of a just and sustainable society, and to become a World Capital of Sustainable Development. This vision is specified in the "Commitment of the Residents of Kitakyushu to All People, the Earth and Future Generations: Towards the Creation of a 'World Capital of Sustainable Development' – (Grand Design)" (2004).

The city, however, has two major challenges in order to achieve the goal. Firstly, not all current educational activities at schools, workplaces, and community centers are conducted with a clear understanding and awareness of the concept of sustainable development. Secondly, partnerships among organizations in different fields or even within the same field, as well as at different levels and forms of education are not well developed.

Therefore, it is of vital importance to develop a system to promote ESD, further raise public awareness on sustainable development and ESD, involve more residents in ESD-related activities, introduce ESD into current educational programs, build the capacity of organizations and individuals on ESD, enable them to put the principles mentioned in the Grand Design into concrete action, and to develop networks among related organizations while creating partnerships.

Regional role

RCE Kitakyushu will play the role of the main body for the creation of the World Capital of Sustainable Development and will gather, develop and disseminate knowledge and experiences. It will serve as the base to integrate ESD-related activities in the fields of environment, economy, social issues, and international cooperation, and to create innovative and effective means of education in the region.

KOKURA CASTLE AND STATION



Goals of the RCE

The vision of the RCE Kitakyushu encompasses the development of systems and methods of, and approaches to the promotion of ESD, as well as the sharing of knowledge and experiences with other countries. The ESD envisioned by RCE Kitakyushu is one that encourages a person's sensitivity and desire to learn, ability to think, and power to take action. This will be carried out through participatory and first-hand learning methods, rather than conventional methods of teaching and lecturing, where learners tend to be recipients and not participants. In this way, it is expected that people will be able to understand ways to be actively engaged in the creation of a just and sustainable society.

The **short-term objectives** of RCE Kitakyushu for 2006-2007 are to establish a system and plan for RCE projects, to raise awareness on ESD among citizens, and to develop human resources to conduct RCE activities.

The **mid-term objective** for 2008-2010 is to promote ESD through existing and new methods of education, by introducing ESD into current educational programs, developing new ESD model programs, building networks among related organizations and by creating partnerships.

The **long-term objective** is to realize a just and sustainable society, i.e., the World Capital of Sustainable Development. The RCE Kitakyushu will develop educational programs on ESD, promote collaboration and joint research through partnerships among participating organizations, and share and disseminate accumulated knowledge, experiences, expertise and practices both inside Japan and internationally.

Decision-making structure

The Kitakyushu ESD Council was established in September 2006 as the organization responsible for the effective management of RCE Kitakyushu. It adopts a simple structure comprising a Steering Committee, Secretariat, advisers, and members.

- The Council comprises representatives of organizations involved in the RCE. These members select a President, three Vice-Presidents, and two Managing Secretaries for the Council.



- Advisers will be appointed from among experts including those living outside the Kitakyushu region, and will be requested to provide technical support.
- The Steering Committee consists of approximately ten members headed by two Managing Secretaries. It is engaged in planning, implementation and monitoring to facilitate RCE development and activities.
- The Secretariat is located at the Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women initially, with a Secretary-General and a staff member.

Activities

Planned activities in the initial stage include:

- developing an action plan for the RCE,
- organizing study meetings on ESD and RCE among the Council members,
- organizing training workshops to foster ESD facilitators,
- establishing a database of members,
- networking among members and exchanging information on their activities,
- developing a name and logo for ESD activities in Kitakyushu,
- establishing a website for the RCE, and
- monitoring and evaluation of RCE activities.

Organizations involved

The RCE Kitakyushu comprises member organizations from various fields with a wide range of expertise, which work at different educational levels and are engaged in ESD-related activities. The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women acts as the secretariat. The RCE intends to strengthen and integrate existing collaborative networks into the RCE network, rather than creating additional networks. The major networks and member organizations are listed below.

- Environmental networks
- Business networks
- Social networks
- Networks of international cooperation
- Schools, universities, research institutes, educational organizations/facilities
- NPOs and NGOs
- Community-based organizations
- Private enterprises
- Government organizations
- Local government bodies

For more information

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