

# Regional Centres of Expertise

on education for sustainable development

## RCE PUNE

### The region

Pune City is located near Mumbai, in Maharashtra, central India. Situated between the Sahyadri mountain ranges on the west coast and the Deccan Plateau of central India, the city has a pleasant climate due to the surrounding hills. The Mula and Mutha rivers run through the area. Pune started as a small hamlet over a thousand years ago and took the shape of a city in the last couple of centuries. It has witnessed several important events of the Indian struggle for independence and social reform.

Historically, Pune has been the cultural and educational centre of Maharashtra. With the rapid growth of industry and of the service sector, Pune is also an important urban centre and an engine of growth. Pune has become the hub of the automobile industry, food processing, IT and ITES (Information Technology Enabled Services), and financial sectors. This rapid economic growth is changing the face of the city. The population of over 5.5 million continues to grow and is now spread over 800 sq. km. of urban area administered under two municipalities and three cantonment boards.

### Regional challenges

Several of the major development issues that Pune faces are common to other rapidly growing cities in India and outside. These are,

1. the inability of municipal services to keep pace with population growth,
2. expansion of municipal limits to engulf surrounding farmland,
3. lack of systems for provision of affordable housing for all and associated services, and
4. non-transparent and cumbersome systems of governance, municipal budgeting and planning.

A root cause is perhaps the lack of fora for citizens to be informed about and to participate in municipal planning, budgeting and growth policies.



### Regional role

A recent major initiative of the Government of India is the establishment of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), through which several reforms on democratic processes are expected to take place. While these reforms are driven by the central and state governments, their effective implementation requires a fair amount of work at the local level in terms of:

- mobilizing community groups to participate in deepening the democratic process,
- knowledge generation and discussions for analysis of municipal services, leading to improved management and planning, and
- ensuring that social and ecological considerations (water, ecosystems, land, air quality) find a place in the scheme of things when administering municipal services and facilitating growth.

Education for Sustainable Development is a key tool in achieving the above, and will be the focus of RCE Pune.

### Decision-making structure

The Centre for Environment Education (CEE) is currently the Secretariat of the RCE. A senior representative from each of the participating organizations will be part of the core group of the RCE. Focus groups will be set up on citizens' outreach and participation, basic education, and ESD in curricular and extra-curricular forms.

## Goals of the RCE

The vision of RCE Pune is to foster socially and ecologically sound growth using ESD as a key tool to enhance knowledge, promote responsible action and improve governance.

## Long-term objectives

- Community groups are mobilized and actively participating in city development planning and monitoring.
- Protocols for public participation are set up.
- Knowledge bases are developed and available for civic activities.
- Capacity of civic officials, political leaders, university departments, and community groups is developed to contribute to and use knowledge bases in their work.
- Basic school education in Pune has content and methods required for young students to understand sustainable urban development.
- Processes are in place to ensure that all children go to school.

A separate long-term objective is to share the experiences of Education for Sustainable Urban Development with other cities, and especially in the nearby urban areas. As the Pune Metropolitan region grows, such approaches will become key to guiding the development process.

## Organizations involved

Partners of RCE Pune include,

- Pune Municipal Corporation
- Janwani, an initiative of the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
- Waste Matters, a consortium of organizations working on improving waste management by streamlining the role of waste pickers.
- Pune University, Dept. of Education
- Pune University, Dept. of Economics
- Pune University Dept. of Environmental Science
- SNDT Women's University Dept of Adult Education
- SNDT Women's University Dept of Education
- Symbiosis College of Arts, Science and Commerce
- Symbiosis Society Law College
- National Institute of Advanced Studies in Architecture (NIASA)

## Activities

- Set up a Basic Education Focus Group – in the short term, this group will survey access, infrastructure, and enrolment, and highlight the actions required to fill the gaps in access and quality.
- Create content for citizenship and environmental education on local urban and social issues in partnership with Indradhanushya, an activity centre for children on urban environment, and develop non-formal methods of engaging children and young people working towards sustainable urban development in Pune.
- Partner with colleges to develop curricular material on sustainable development.
- Develop advocacy and orientation tools for engagement of the DP Coalition with political functionaries and industry leaders on development and sustainability issues in Pune. The DP coalition is an alliance of citizen groups and individuals working to ensure larger citizen participation.
- Develop tools for public consultation on waste management, traffic management, biodiversity conservation, and health and sanitation.
- Encourage the creation of community groups at the electoral ward level to enable discussion on civic functioning, participatory budgeting and development planning.

The RCE will also

- engage university departments in the generation of knowledge and to research issues pertaining to waste management, traffic management, biodiversity conservation, and health and sanitation, and
- partner with the Education Dept of the University of Pune and the SNDT Women's University to undertake research in basic education, particularly on quality issues.

## For more information

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