

# Regional Centres of Expertise

on education for sustainable development

## RCE BARCELONA

### Geography

RCE Barcelona is active in the region of Catalonia. However, the objective of this RCE is to increase its area of activity to the Mediterranean Pyrenees in Europe. This area includes Catalonia, Aragon, Balearic Islands, Languedoc-Roussillon and the Midi-Pyrénées.



### Regional challenges

According to the Sustainability report of Spain (2005), the main problems and challenges that this region faces are:

- Environmental pressures: CO2 emissions, energy consumption, unsustainable extraction and use of water, and urban sprawl on the coast.
- Socioeconomic imbalances when compared to the rest of the EU: Low R&D investment and innovation, low productivity, low occupational stability, high labour accident rate, low investment in education and high poverty levels.
- Unsustainable processes in the transport, fisheries and construction sectors.

Other research shows that the region is behind other European regions in corporate social responsibility and organisational sustainability issues. There is also a shortage, both in number and significance, of initiatives and policies from public, private and tertiary sectors to address key issues such as labour practices (social dialogue, equal opportunities or balancing professional and private lives), market activities (fair competition and fiscal policies), accountability (sustainability reporting, certification and auditing), identity (governance, codes of conduct or corporate values), and community involvement (stakeholder engagement).

### RCE Barcelona's perceived role in the region

RCE Barcelona was established and is led by Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) and ESADE Business School, both of which are active in the fields of learning, dissemination and research. The organisations will develop concrete and structured work programmes, such as mapping existing regional networks, initiating a benchmarking process, identifying smart practices, promoting public/private partnerships and cooperation, generating tools and initiatives to embed solutions, and contributing to the improvement of learning for sustainability initiatives in general.

RCE Barcelona has two axes in its conceptual framework – a vertical axis looking at coherence in content in all stages of formal education, and a horizontal axis looking at making ESD prevalent among all actors and stakeholders such as universities, education centres, media, NGOs and government.

Spires of La Sagrada Familia



## Goal of the RCE

The goal of RCE Barcelona is to become a centre of reference and leadership in the area of sustainability and to generate innovative projects, programmes and initiatives in the areas of learning and research for sustainable development.

## Objectives

- To redirect existing education projects and develop new curricula related to SD.
- To increase access to basic education in SD.
- To offer training for all levels of society and develop methods and tools to improve training.
- To raise awareness on the importance of trainers and the essential role of ESD in moving towards a sustainable future.

## Organisations involved

Initial partners in the RCE are the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC), which is the technical university of Catalonia, ESADE business school, the Ministry of Environment of the Regional Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya), and the City Council of Barcelona (Ajuntament de Barcelona), NGOs such as the Enginyers sense Fronteres (Engineers without borders) and Fundación Ecología y Desarrollo. Other potential partners include museums, theatres, media such as Barcelona TV or Sostenible.es, small and medium size enterprises, private and public sector companies, education centres, NGOs and civil society.

## Decision-making structure

The board of RCE Barcelona will have a representative from each core member organisation, a representative from the RCE Europe network, a representative from UNU and one from the Generalitat de Catalunya. An executive committee has representatives from ESADE, UPC, Generalitat de Catalunya and Ajuntament de Barcelona. There will also be an academic committee with two independent academics and two independent practitioners identified by the Board, as well as members from the core organisations.

## Activities

The four key activity areas for RCE Barcelona are research, training, networking and media, and assisting RCEs in Latin America. Potential projects in each of these areas are described below.

- **Research activities:** publish original research projects and works generated through other RCEs or through the network, fund at least 3 research projects each year and develop a global 10-year survey on Learning for SD.
- **Training activities:** offer international training scholarships, organise workshops on specific tools or activities identified as key, and offer a periodic open platform at which specific studies, tools and case studies may be presented and discussed.
- **Networking and media activities:** organise the Day of Innovation and Imagination for a Better World, carry out events to present ESD tools and projects at regional, European or global RCE meetings.
- **Promoting and assisting the creation of RCEs in Latin America:** utilise common platforms to share data and projects available, provide funding for activities of RCEs in Latin America in research, training and networking, and co-ordinate and develop tools, workshops and evaluation processes in Spanish for the benefit of Latin American countries.

## Achievements

RCE-Barcelona has started an initial collaboration network in the region, and a preliminary working structure has been established. Ongoing projects include a publication on leadership for sustainability, a training programme on sustainable organisations, a specific website on the DESD, setting a Science Shop on sustainability, and hosting a workshop in the autumn of 2006.

## For more information

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