

Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development in Saskatchewan (RCE Saskatchewan)

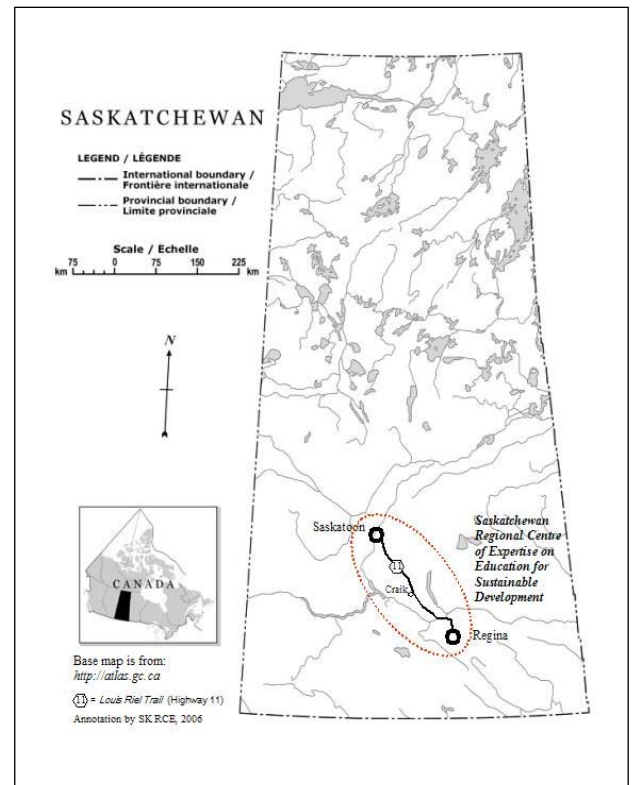
Frequently Asked Questions

What is “Sustainable Development”?

Two popular definitions of sustainable development are “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” and “improving the quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.”

What is “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)”?

ESD is an ongoing, life-long process that includes three types of education: formal education, non-formal education, and informal education. *Formal Education* includes education through the school systems from kindergarten to the end of high school as well as technical institutes, colleges and universities. *Non-formal Education* includes education, training, and public awareness that occurs through organizations outside the formal school system (such as corporate training). *Informal Education* includes educational activities occurring through the public media (for example, through news and documentaries on radio and television).



Education for Sustainable Development engages people to transform their individual and organizational activities in a way that promotes sustainable livelihoods and sustainable ways of living.

What are Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) on Education for Sustainable Development?

The Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) program is a global initiative of the United Nations University-Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS). This is part of the UNU’s contribution to help advance the U.N. “Decade of Education for Sustainable Development” (2005-2014). Higher education institutions such as universities, colleges, and technical institutes are lead organizations in the RCE initiative. RCEs also include other educational organizations, businesses, governments, non-profit and community organizations, and individuals.

What is the goal of RCEs?

The goal of RCEs is transformative education that promotes sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods in the region while sharing knowledge and insights with other RCEs around the world. Education for Sustainable Development programs are designed to be locally relevant and culturally appropriate.

What benefits do RCE participants receive?

RCEs allow local organizations engaged in Education for Sustainable Development to collaborate with one another, and also to link up with other RCEs around the world. This means collaboration among elementary schools, high schools, universities and technical institutes. Regions identify their own sustainability issues and develop educational activities that focus on these issues, which are all documented and researched. Each RCE is concerned with *environmental, social, and economic* sustainability. All three of these areas must be considered in an integrated way.

Who has participated in developing RCE Saskatchewan?

RCE Saskatchewan involves academic faculty and employees from several higher education institutions in Saskatchewan including:

- Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
- University of Regina and its federated colleges (Campion College, Luther College, and First Nations University of Canada)
- University of Saskatchewan
- Carlton Trail Regional College

Other groups that formally endorsed and/or participated in the application submitted to the United Nations University include:

- Canadian Plains Research Center, U of R
- Centre for Sustainable Communities, U of R
- City of Regina
- City of Saskatoon
- Craik Sustainable Living Project (CSLP)
- Dunlop Art Gallery
- Environment Canada
- L*A*M*B* Environmental and Educational Consulting, Inc.
- Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative (PARC)
- Regina EcoLiving Inc.
- Road Map 2020
- Royal Saskatchewan Museum
- Saskatchewan Environment
- Saskatchewan Science Centre
- SaskPower
- Town of Craik
- University of Regina Students for Sustainability (URSS)

How is RCE Saskatchewan supported?

To date, RCE Saskatchewan has relied on in-kind and financial support from a number of the above organizations, and especially the participating academic organizations. It also relies heavily on the voluntary contributions of individuals within the participating organizations as well as volunteers from the region.

When was the RCE Saskatchewan developed and formally recognized?

The proposal for RCE Saskatchewan was developed over a two-year period and involved two workshops and extensive work by the RCE steering team and subcommittees. The final version of the proposal was submitted to the United Nations University on October 15, 2006. RCE Saskatchewan was informed that it had been formally recognized by the United Nations University on January 10, 2007. Celebrations for the acknowledgment of RCE Saskatchewan took place in the city of Regina and the town of Craik on March 1, 2007, and in Saskatoon on March 2, 2007.

What is the geographic region included in RCE Saskatchewan?

The RCE region includes the corridor following Highway 11 between Regina and Saskatoon. To date it has included organizational and individual participants from the communities of Craik, Regina, and Saskatoon. Its boundaries mirror the Moist Mixed Grassland Ecoregion in Saskatchewan. The boundaries will evolve based on interest expressed from communities.

What are the issues identified by the region as a priority for Education for Sustainable Development?

The seven priority issues identified by the region include:

- climate change
- health and healthy lifestyles
- farming and local food production, consumption, and waste minimization
- reconnecting to natural prairie ecosystems
- supporting and bridging cultures for sustainable living and community building
- sustainable infrastructure including water and energy
- building sustainable communities

RCE Saskatchewan will also focus on two cross-cutting themes: (1) sustaining rural communities and (2) educational approaches for regional ESD. RCE Saskatchewan will identify and promote educational initiatives for each issue and theme along with facilitating research into these educational activities.

What other RCEs are there globally?

RCE Saskatchewan is one of 7 RCEs recognized in North America that include Toronto, Greater Sudbury, Montreal, Grand Rapids (Michigan), northern Texas, and Guadalajara (Mexico). Globally there are over 61 RCEs that include other regions seeking to be on the cutting edge of sustainability. They include RCEs in Europe (e.g., RCE Barcelona, RCE Rhine-Meuse), RCEs in Asia (e.g., RCE Okayama in Japan, RCE Penang in Malaysia), and the Middle East (e.g., RCE Jordan) among others. To learn more, please see the United Nations University RCE website:

<http://www.ias.unu.edu/research/regionalcentres.cfm>

Why is RCE Saskatchewan important for the province?

RCE Saskatchewan allows the province to formally link up with regions around the world that are on the cutting edge of sustainable development. This important networking opportunity is supported and made possible by the United Nations University. RCE Saskatchewan enables the province to identify, understand, and build on opportunities in Education for Sustainable Development at a regional level while learning from the educational experiences of others around the world. The dedicated focus of the network on research into Education for Sustainable Development recognizes the vital role education plays in the broad transformations needed for more sustainable ways of living.

How can I learn more or get involved in RCE Saskatchewan?

Please visit the RCE Saskatchewan website at www.saskrce.ca