

# 10<sup>th</sup> Global RCE 2016 Conference Summary

– by Paul Stinson

*\*Note: This is a United Nations-affiliated project filled with acronyms, so I have provided a key at the end of the document*

In November 2016, the 10<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference was held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Paul Stinson was invited to attend as a representative of RCE Saskatchewan and a teacher from the Sun West School Division. Most of the attendees were from university faculties or policy makers, although there was also a youth contingent. Only one other public school teacher was in attendance, and only one participant was from Saskatchewan.

The conference was held at multiple venues, primarily at the [Universitas Gadjad Mada](#). There was also a [field trip day](#) with multiple sites to visit. I was able to participate in the river restoration project of the Code River, which passes through the city of about 400 000, and a sustainable tourism project at Pentingsari on the slope of Mt. Merapi, an active volcano. Both projects involved the cooperation of multiple stakeholders, benefits for participants, and demonstrate the benefit of coordinated efforts between volunteers, government officials, and organizations like RCEs.

About 50 countries were represented at this Global RCE Conference, including some of the prospective candidates applying for RCE status. One such group was the proposed Borderlands RCE, a trans-national organization along the US-Mexico border. Different RCEs focus on issues specific to their region, but there are core similarities of concerns, such as clean air and water, addressing poverty, and education to promote positive change.

I attended a session on Capacity Building for Educators, and the role of RCEs in providing space for collaborative learning strategies. RCEs were challenged to look at their core capabilities, and develop concrete collective actions. Efforts in this area support transformative collective education (GAP Priority Action 3), and should also reflect the goal of engaging communities.



Code River, Yogyakarta, Indonesia



Garbage caught in a tree along a river outside of Yogyakarta

Another session I attended was on Supporting Policy Development. Although I was unsure how engaging a two hour discussion on policy development would be, it was quite interesting and informative, thanks to the enthusiasm of the presenter, Carolina Lopez. It was also interesting to hear how the relationship between RCEs and governments varied from country to country. Participants were encouraged by RCE SK's progress in working with government on policy, as some countries have no communication between the RCE and government. Finland and Indonesia were two countries that enjoyed productive partnerships between RCEs and government.

One thing that became clear to me from interactions with other delegates was that RCE-SK has earned a respected place in this network. Global RCE organizers voiced appreciation of RCE SK's prompt and detailed submissions (less than 50% of RCEs have up to date online profiles), and other RCEs value the research and work done by RCE SK over the years. As tends to happen, the reputation is better known internationally than at home. Saskatchewan is fortunate to be part of such an RCE network, and I look forward to seeing our province better position itself as a model of sustainable development with the support of organizations like RCE SK.

Thank you to UNU-IAS, RCE SK, SWSD, and SaskOutdoors for their support and financial assistance to attend this special event.



#### **Additional Links**

10<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference 2016 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia [<http://rce.ugm.ac.id/>]

Global RCE Portal [<http://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/>]

RCE SK [<http://www.saskrce.ca/>]

#### **Acronyms**

RCE: Regional Centre of Expertise

RCE SK: Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development in Saskatchewan

ESD: Education for Sustainable Development

GAP: Global Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO)

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals (approved by the UN for 2015-2030)

UNU: United Nations University (headquartered in Tokyo)

RCE on ESD: Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development, a UNU initiative

UNU-IAS: United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability



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