

# The 2025 Okayama Declaration:

## RCEs' Collective Commitment for Sustainable Futures

### Preamble

1. We, the representatives of Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCEs) acknowledged by the United Nations University, together with the Global RCE Service Centre, the Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the RCEs, and local, national and international organizations, convened at the 14<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference in Okayama, Japan, from 21 to 23 October 2025. On this occasion, we adopt *The 2025 Okayama Declaration: RCEs' Collective Commitment for Sustainable Futures*, celebrating two decades of collective action, innovation and partnership for education for sustainable development (ESD) while reaffirming our commitment to harnessing ESD as a transformative force for societal change.
2. We recognize that humanity faces urgent and interconnected global challenges, including climate change, rapid biodiversity loss, pollution, resource depletion, social inequality and pressure of rapid technological change, all of which pose significant threats to human and planetary well-being. These crises call for systemic and holistic responses. ESD plays a unique role in equipping individuals and communities with the capacity to respond to such challenges with responsibility, creativity and resilience.
3. We acknowledge the need to realign RCE priorities with emerging global frameworks and initiatives, including *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, *Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development*, *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*, the *Greening Education Partnership*, *Youth Declaration on Transforming Education* and the *Pact for the Future*. RCEs are uniquely positioned to translate these global commitments into locally relevant and culturally appropriate actions.



4. We reaffirm the importance of prior commitments, including the [Ubuntu Declaration](#) (2002), the [Tongyeong Declaration](#) (2012) and the [Okayama Declaration on RCE and ESD Beyond 2014](#) (2024). Guided by the [Roadmap for the RCE Community 2021-2030](#) and the [ESD for 2030](#), these declarations and frameworks continue to inspire our vision and strengthen our resolve to embed sustainability values across education systems, communities and livelihoods.
5. We emphasize that community-based learning through multi-stakeholder partnerships lies at the heart of the RCE mission. By embracing global aspirations and intertwining academic research with local realities, Indigenous wisdom and cultural traditions, RCEs foster inclusive, participatory and action-oriented learning ecosystems. Through these efforts, RCEs empower communities to articulate priorities and generate context-specific solutions that exemplify the transformative power of ESD in practice.

## Vision and Value

6. We envision a just, inclusive and sustainable future where everyone thrives and actively contributes, ensuring no one is left behind in shaping society. To realize this vision, we advance ESD, fostering lifelong and life-wide learning that strengthens futures thinking, critical reflection and collective action for the well-being of all people and planetary health.
7. In pursuit of this vision, we uphold the core values enshrined in the [UN Charter](#) and the [RCE Guiding Principles](#), including respecting fundamental human rights, social justice, peaceful co-existence among people of different cultures, languages and social systems, respect for nature, and freedom of expression and inquiry. Guided by these values, we promote research-informed ESD practices where RCE members maintain mutual respect in both intra- and inter-RCE communication, engagement and collaboration.



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## Pathways to Action

In response to the advancement of international frameworks and the interconnected emerging challenges, we identify five Priority Areas of Action to renew our commitment and foster systemic solutions across social, cultural, ecological and political dimensions.

### Priority Area 1: Positioning ESD as a Catalyst for Systemic and Social Transformation

8. We commit to advancing ESD across formal, non-formal and informal education, reformulating curricula towards learning to live together in harmony with the planet and with one another beyond classrooms and throughout life. We pledge to foster ESD that empowers agency and democratic participation, cultivates green skills essential for a just transition to a post-carbon economy, nurtures global citizenship along with intercultural competencies and embraces the principles of ecological interdependence. We recognize the collective role of all stakeholders as knowledge producers and key actors in transforming education and society with empathy and compassion.

### Priority Area 2: Advancing Knowledge Exchange and Local Solutions through Partnership

9. We reaffirm working collaboratively and cooperatively through multi-stakeholder partnerships as the core value of the RCE network. Through interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration among governments, academia, civil society, the private sector, youth and local communities, RCEs continue to co-create ESD knowledge, upscale local solutions and integrate Indigenous and diverse epistemologies, and community-driven practices in respectful dialogue with scientific research. Engagements must respect spirituality and Indigenous and other distinctive social, cultural and governance systems. This enables innovative solutions that are both cutting edge and culturally grounded, while ensuring equitable recognition of contributions and shared benefits.

### Priority Area 3: Empowering and Mobilizing Youth Leadership

10. We commit to centering youth as co-creators of knowledge and action in shaping the futures that will be theirs. We institutionalize meaningful and inclusive youth participation



in decision-making, throughout planning, implementation and evaluation of ESD initiatives. We foster mutual understanding, trust, and respect and call for dedicated support, mentorship, intergenerational collaboration and other structural mechanisms. These efforts empower youth leadership and ensure genuine and equal opportunities for capacity building, moving beyond tokenism and breaking barriers to their full and sustained engagement.

#### **Priority Area 4: Ensuring Equity, Inclusion and Justice**

11. We recognize that equity, inclusion and justice in and through education are imperative for sustainable development and peaceful, just societies. Grounded in universal human rights, RCEs commit to addressing systemic barriers that marginalize women, girls, persons with disabilities, displaced populations, local communities, Indigenous peoples and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, ensuring their full and meaningful participation in all aspects of education and sustainability. By fostering inclusive learning environments and supporting community-led initiatives that advance social, environmental and cultural justice, we strive for resilient futures where all individuals can contribute and thrive.

#### **Priority Area 5: Harnessing Digital Transformation for Lifelong and Life-wide ESD**

12. We recognize the potential of inclusive, responsible and purposeful use of digital technologies to reimagine ESD to become lifelong and life-wide learning for all. We support open, accessible and secure platforms and educational resources that expand opportunities for all while reaffirming that digital tools must complement, never replace, community-based and experiential learning practices. We remain mindful of associated health, environmental and ethical risks of such emerging technologies including artificial intelligence and commit to fostering critical digital literacy that enables learners to understand politics of digital space and navigate the digital ecosystem.



## Scaling and Strengthening the RCE Network

13. To maximize our collective impact, the global network of RCEs will strengthen the interconnectedness constituting a global learning space on ESD among RCEs and with wider communities and ecosystems based on the philosophy of Ubuntu. This vibrant global learning commons will foster multi-directional knowledge exchange, collaborative action, intergenerational solidarity and context-specific initiatives shaped by deep questioning and communities' needs and priorities. Strengthened regional collaboration will build shared values and capacity, fostering joint responses to pressing challenges. RCEs also commit to engaging policymakers to mainstream ESD into education policies, ensuring governance remains participatory, transparent and responsive to diverse regional contexts. Through these efforts, RCEs will demonstrate their contribution to strengthening North-South relations, providing a balanced approach to ecological, economic and social priorities.

## Conclusion

14. *The 2025 Okayama Declaration: RCEs' Collective Commitment for Sustainable Futures* represents a reinvigorated collective commitment to advancing ESD as a catalyst for transformation. It highlights our dedication to multi-stakeholder partnerships, intergenerational collaboration, knowledge co-creation, youth empowerment, equity and inclusion and responsible digital innovation, all of which underpin our efforts to foster resilient and sustainable societies built upon cultural and epistemic diversity, as well as democratic participation.

15. This Declaration marks our collective commitment to ensure education and learning remain at the forefront of global efforts for peace and sustainability. These commitments will be realized through bold, inclusive and accountable action, ensuring that the Declaration serves as an impetus for shaping our shared future together.



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