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Application to UNU-IAS for consideration of

WEST SWEDEN

to become a regional centre of expertise (RCE) on education for sustainable development (ESD)

Vision statement

In 2015 we envision a broad, deep and complex network connecting actors from all over the region collaborating to diminish our ecological footprint, increase social well fare and find economic tools that support these aims. We have a well functioning ICT communication and an established research centre. As a result from innovative encounters and increasing action competence among participants, we see several unexpected and self organised projects/activities with multi source funding. All partners are having a strong feeling of agency and commitment in transformative actions.

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CONTENTS

PAGE 3. INTRODUCTION

PAGE 4. GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

PAGE 9. REGIONAL CHALLENGES

TALK – WALK

URBAN – RURAL

HEGEMONIC – INTERCULTURAL

FORMAL – INFORMAL – NON-FORMAL

CONTEMPORARY ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

– SUSTAINABLE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

TRACES OF ECOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMICAL

PERSPECTIVES IN OUR RCE CHALLENGES

PAGE 16. PROCESS OF RCE DEVELOPMENT

PAGE 16. RCE VISION AND OBJECTIVES

THE PURPOSE OF RCE SWEDEN

PAGE 17. LONG TERM OBJECTIVES AND SHORT TERM ACTIVITIES FOR A
RCE WEST SWEDEN

PAGE 18. SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES/ACTIVITIES AND GOALS/INDICATORS

PAGE 21. STRATEGIES AND SCENARIOS

PAGE 22. M&E

PAGE 22. TIME LINE PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION TO RCE

PAGE 23. GOVERNANCE/MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

PAGE 23. RESOURCES AND COMMITMENT

PAGE 24. COLLABORATION AMONG STAKE HOLDERS

PAGE 24. ON-GOING ACTIVITIES

PAGE 25. EXAMPLES OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

This is an application from the south west of Sweden. We refer to our centre as Polycentric, a phrase that strongly relates to our vision, as stated above, of a broad, deep and complex network connecting actors from all over the region. The main focus for RCE West Sweden is communicating and networking between previously discrete sections of the community in order to learn from each other and become innovative and action competent. We have emphasised the importance of increasing flows between formal, non- formal and informal learning. Within the region we have a long tradition of working within the ESD field and are confident that we would have substantial findings to share in an international RCE context. The reason for the regional scope -Västra Götaland (West Sweden) - is that it has an established identity; it is big enough to have great variety and small enough to enable close connections.

The formal institutions within the region have served as champions in the international ESD discussion as statements such as *the Gothenburg Recommendations* demonstrate. The region is also represented in a UNESCO publication launched at the Rio +20 with a model for network based learning for SD, linking formal, in-formal and non formal ESD actors. The non-formal learning, also referred to as folkbildning (bildung) once played, and hopefully again, will play an important transformative role in our society. Currently 22% of the population is engaged in this kind of education, while 13% attend university studies. This venerable people's movements in Sweden, committed to women's rights, decent work conditions, religious freedom, etc, dates back more than a hundred years. It has felt impatient with formal institutions that it thinks have not done enough to bring about the changes they sought.. Today a societal transformation towards more sustainable ecological, social and economical futures is the most challenging task for all actors and a lot more needs to be done in West Sweden as well as in the rest of the world. We strive for a combination of know how, formal as well as informal, old as well as inventive and newborn, theoretical as well as practical. Thus we seek to integrate local educational traditions with innovative leaning and enterprise, balancing continuity with transformation.

We (all the partners) intend to work close to praxis and everyday life with a holistic approach to innovation and the complexity that characterises the current global sustainability context. RCE West Sweden will function as a vehicle and vessel for emerging actions and the sharing and dissemination of experiences.

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

Västra Götaland **short facts**

- 1.5 million inhabitants.
- 49 municipalities.
- 300 km long and 250 km wide.
- The largest city is Gothenburg (Göteborg).
- The region has the largest port in Scandinavia.
- Sweden's leading region for industry and transportation.

Västra Götaland region is a county in the south west of Sweden, in this application referred as to as RCE West Sweden. Map 1.



Map 1: Location of the region of west Sweden referred to as RCE West Sweden.

The county was established January 1st 1999, consists of 49 autonomous municipalities (Map 2) and a land area of 24 000 km². The municipalities vary in size, both regarding inhabitants (from 4 700 in Dals-Ed to 520 000 in Gothenburg) and land area (from Öckerö 26 km² to Ulricehamn 1046 km²) thus representing some of the smallest as well as some the largest municipalities in Sweden. The region is characterized by being very well organized and well structured. That is both beneficial and disadvantageous because the tradition of the professional organization is part of the beneficial service mentality but it can sometimes cause entrepreneurial setbacks, both inside and outside the existing structures.



Map 2: The 49 municipalities of the RCE West Sweden.

The geography of the region is characterized by great variety. Off the West coast lies the straight of Skagerrak, in addition there are both ocean and lake coast lines and one of Europe's largest lakes (Vänern) with an extensive archipelago along with a huge number of small lakes and streams. The water abundance is a typical characteristic of the region. 51% of the region is covered with forest, 23% is used for agriculture, while 7% is dedicated to urban and peri-urban use.

Environment

Water is prominent and appears in a variety of ways, throughout the region. Water is of great practical and cultural value to us. Water flows across administrative boundaries and moves in the global cycles bringing people together geographically and over time. This has also a strong symbolic value and it is perhaps the element that is most frequently used in artistic expressions. This water is a factor that attracts tourists and residents. This attraction leads to high costs of both private houses and apartments. The presence of water varies greatly. In some areas there is a shortage of the water supply for both drinking and irrigation during parts of the year. Elsewhere there is a flooding problem which is likely to be more prominent due to global warming.

In Västra Götaland there are four national parks; Djurö, Tiveden, Tresticklan and Kosterhavets national park. A national park is a large, connected area of a certain type of landscape that is protected in its natural state. National parks are the strongest form of protection in Sweden.

Nature reserves are the most common form of protected natural areas, and they can be created to conserve biodiversity, for maintaining and preserving valuable natural environments or to meet the need of areas for outdoor recreation. Culture reserves are a similar form of protection, and such may be formed to protect valuable cultural landscape areas. There are 445 nature reserves within the region.

Natura 2000 is a network of valuable natural areas within the EU. The purpose is to protect species and habitats that are of common interest to EU countries.

In Västra Götaland we have 409 Natura 2000 areas and there are more to come, especially marine ones. All in all the area covered by Natura 2000 reserves in the region is:

- 2440 km²
- 28 % land
- 34 % freshwater
- 38 % seawater

Shoreline is defined as areas along the coast, lakes and rivers in Sweden and extends 100 meters inland and far out into the water. In sensitive locations shoreline protection extends up to 300 meters.

In the region, as well in the rest of Sweden, we have a rather unique right of public access to nature including privately owned areas. The general rule of the right of public access is "Do not disturb - do not destroy". The right of public access even applies to nature reserves, but may be limited by various regulations.

Industry

The region has a tradition of both large, strong manufacturing industries and small scale local industries. The large scale, often international, industries are located in a few urban centres in the region, initially located where the available water could be used for power production. Although no longer depending on local water power

generation many of the industrialized areas are still supporting active industries. Historically the development of these industries took place in parallel to the development of the municipalities, for good and bad. Despite the centralized large scale industries there are still a range of active small scale industries flourishing in the region. The activity and diversity of these small scale industries is an important aspect of the proposed RCE West Sweden. Finally of note, employment is also moving from manufacturing industries to service occupations for many of the inhabitants in the region.

Demography

More than 1.5 million people, 17% of the Swedish population, live in the region. Approximately 130 nationalities are represented. Although no longer driven by further large scale industrialization the urban areas are still growing while many small and medium-sized municipalities decrease in population.

The average life expectancy is 83.3 years for women and 79.4 years for men. The population in the region is aging, especially in the rural areas and in small cities. Currently 18.3% of the population is 65 years or older. The high life expectancy and aging population means there is a growing financial pressure and need for societal support. At the same time we see a growing number of voluntary activities and many retired people are healthy, alert and have great potential to become actors in the work toward a more sustainable future of the region.

Mobility

With the development of an efficient infrastructure in the region the possibility to commute efficiently grows. The largest commuting flows are seen from the municipalities surrounding regional urban centres. In some municipalities 50% of the labour is commuting to work outside the municipality. The municipalities attracting most workers have between 20 and 25% of the work force commuting from surrounding municipalities. Almost all commuting takes place within the region. In total only 1 % of the labour is commuting to the region from other parts of Sweden, Norway or Denmark. Approximately 3.2% of the population in the region was unemployed in 2010. The disposable income per inhabitant was 172 000 SEK in 2009.

There are also a large number of people travelling as tourists in the area. As mentioned above, this leads to inflated house prices in the region as well as problems to do with seasonal overcrowding of certain attractive areas. Some municipalities are overburdened by these tourism flows, while others are more or less unexplored.

Many of the inhabitants in the region undertake an annual holiday trip to places far away, more or less on the other side of the globe. At the same time the municipalities and private actors invest heavily to attract foreign guests to the region.

Regional Commitment to Sustainability

One of the largest concentrations of Swedish environmental and sustainability

research and education is found in the region. West Sweden is a region where a lot has been done already to achieve sustainable development.

The region has a well developed multi stakeholder vision “The Good Life” that speaks a lot about sustainable development in all aspects. This vision was adopted in 2006 and it provides a clear direction for the transformation of the region. The implications for a RCE West Sweden are that there is already a positive and supportive context from which to leverage change and transformation and develop a raft of ESD strategies across the region. This means that there are good options for regional financing of activities and projects within a RCE West Sweden.

The vision “*The good life*” talks about regional sustainable development in:

Three dimensions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>economic</i> - <i>social</i> - <i>environmental</i>
Four general perspectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The cohesive region</i> - <i>Equality</i> - <i>Integration</i> - <i>Internationalisation</i>
Five focus areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vigorous and sustainable trade and industry - A leading position in competence and knowledge development - Infrastructure and communications of a high standard - A leading cultural region - Good health

More details of the vision is given in this document:

http://www.vgregion.se/upload/Regionkanslierna/regionutveckling/RUSEN/Vision_VG_eng_09.pdf

In the region five test arenas have been established focusing the following five dimensions of SD; secure sustainable urban development, marine and maritime environments, transportation, green chemistry and life science.

To turn the entire West Sweden into a Regional Centre of Expertise could be a lever to further these initiatives. We would like to stress that the measures of RCE West Sweden are to complement and augment an already active and committed SD environment.

REGIONAL CHALLENGES

“There are a number of local barriers to effective ESD planning and implementation. Along with the lack of public awareness and general understanding of (E)SD principles and processes by local elected officials, staff and other stakeholders in the region, one of the most often-identified obstacles is traditional institutional structures that are too vertically segmented and compartmentalized for the cross-cutting and holistic nature of ESD.”

Yoko Mochizuki and Zinaida Fadeeva (2008) ‘RCEs an overview’ International Journal of Sustainable Development in Higher Education, Volume 9, Issue 4, (p 377)

This resonates very well with the situation in our region. Our efforts will focus on bridging the gaps that are a result of compartmentalization as well as segmentation. Through a series of stakeholder engagements we have gathered a set of central and recurring themes. These themes are presented in the following sections in the form of direct quotations from these meetings. As identifying challenges is part of the process we expect this list to expand.

Identified regional challenges - GAPS

In the preparation of the RCE West Sweden application a series of ‘mobilisation workshops’ were held. These workshops identified a set of ‘Gaps’ that stakeholders felt constrained the SD agenda. In summary these gaps are represented below.

Talk - Walk
Urban - Rural
Hegemonic - Intercultural
Formal – Informal/ Non- formal
Contemporary ecological footprint – Sustainable ecological footprint

Each gap is a challenge but also an opportunity for ESD. RCE West Sweden will seek to create a climate of engagement around these gaps, aiming not to close them but to work between them as they are understood as dualities between which communities and individuals live their lives. In this sense the mission of RCE West Sweden is to enable and empower through practical engagement with the possibilities of creative social learning around these gaps.

The gap between **“talk and walk”** is relevant to all the identified gaps. We have a lot of well formulated policies and documents but we need more actions, experiments and social innovations. Working with transformative learning, as we interpret it, dares us to be inventive, not just regarding the content level but perhaps mostly the *how* level. How we will organize and perform learning for Sustainable Development in relation to RCE West Sweden is crucial.

In order to further this performative dimension of SD we aim to work from the known to the unknown, dealing with normative issues of immediate and local concern to participants, working through processes of collaborative co-creation to transformative results. The following diagram captures this vision.



The gaps “urban - rural” and “formal - informal - non- formal” are examples of areas where over- bridging is the aim. This contrasts with the gaps “hegemonic - intercultural” and “contemporary footprint - sustainable footprint” which are areas where the aims of RCE West Sweden has a direction (from – to).

The most challenging gap is probably in the deep conflict(s) between narrow economic growth and planetary consciousness. Given consumption over shoot and the difficulty for people, secure in their current life styles, to embrace sustainability it is hard to motivate them to engage in transformative action. This static condition is reinforced by an economic discourse which narrowly focuses on growth (defined in economic terms) and it seem to be the only bench mark for development into the future.

The following sections are reflective of how stakeholders perceive the Gaps.

TALK - WALK

It is easy to talk but to put things into practice is another matter as participants noted:

“The Swedish former prime minister made huge effort to raise interest in the subject. While at the same time neglecting his own forests, from a sustainability perspective. How to trigger the impulse to interconnect inner and outer? Difficult without the existential aspect ... When you can make money on something all other aspects fade away”

“At a meeting during the conference Stockholm+40; some "emeritus professors" like Emin Tengström talked to young students and told them - do not let the same things happen the coming 40 years. Most of the environmental problems that were described 40 years ago are still there. We know a little more about the details but we have not solved the problems.”

“There are also gaps between knowledge defined and produced in an unsustainable culture and actions competences needed for sustainable futures.”

“We can do so much. You know so much. We know what needs to change, yet we do not do that. We pretend - we live in two different worlds. We can not continue like

this. Business as usual. I am annoyed with this.”

URBAN - RURAL

At the moment there is a strong focus on urban perspectives in sustainability ventures, too strong according to people who attended our mobilization meetings. The urbanization curve is often extrapolated into the future as a fact without any further problematisation. The dialogue among participants in the mobilisation process listed perspectives of interdependence and the need for alternative scenarios that should be considered in our strategic sustainability efforts. We do not know what sustainable developments look like, but we do know that we are dependent on rural and primary production, clean water, pollinators etc.

“We have very good options to be a self-supporting region, particularly with respect to food, energy and water.”

“I feel a frustration over the huge slumbering potential in rural areas. We have no idea what climate change can cause. Which population flows will follow? We have no idea what West Sweden area will be needed for! We are so trapped in the present. We think in very narrow confines.”

“Rural areas rapidly lose expertise and infrastructure for food production. In the municipality we are in right now, the number of animal farms is decreasing and in the current situation it is less than a handful of dairy farms in this local municipality. This area is highly suitable for meat and milk production. It's so quick to destroy that which takes extremely long to build.”

“Cultivation, plants and food are great places for conversation about sustainability - it works really good! Pigs and cultures both goals and means to communicate.”

“In practice, the city is fed by the countryside now. The city has no proper self-sufficiency.”

The city dwellers realize (when you participate in farming projects) is that you honour and respect the facts and close plot - must have a relationship to the land, the natural resource base.”

“Urban Agriculture: cultivation and dense human settlements. Remarkably large areas of cities are unproductive, but can be filled with useful activities such as farming.”

“We need a Rural Embassy for mobilization. The question is important. We begin to grow in the city and establish a market and then relocate/expand into rural areas.”

“A few years ago, we started so called green integration in the region. The starting point is the lack of manpower in rural areas while there is a surplus in the city. In particular, among the many of the "new Swedes" have a high competence in the green industry. To this was connected also health perspective, that people feel good and better by the "Green integration" even on a personal level.”

FORMAL – INFORMAL – NON-FORMAL

During these discussions a need to acknowledge a greater plurality in skills was expressed.

“Today we most often associate learning with activities that occur in various educational institutions, from kindergarten to university (formal education). Sometimes it also includes general education (non-formal education). The learning that takes place in the rest of society (informal) is too seldom mentioned.”

“We are quickly losing knowledge and skills that are often associated with craft in various forms. This expertise is essential to maintain: first, to understand the past, but also of the humble realization that we do not know what skills we will need in the future. The greater richness and diversity of skills, the greater readiness and resilience to unforeseen chain of events.”

“Craft also stands for the unique, the exclusive. After a time of almost unbridled consumption is a burgeoning desire for quality and intrinsic stories. How can we "save" the knowledge and meet up with a growing need?”

“We have lost two generations of craftsmanship.”

“We have a long textile history in the region and today you can see an exciting mix of hand craft/art and textile high tech. You take agricultural land to produce things that nobody wants. How much water has gone into the production of garments and other textile products? We try to be very creative to make new and unique stuff from waste materials. We are weaving water perspective into the context of textile.”

“Craft and other practical skills are not very highly valued and not considered as important for a sustainable development from educational or financial institutions point of view.”

HEGEMONIC – INTERCULTURAL

We spotted a need for new forms for meetings and interactions that allow diversity; recognising the importance of other perspectives. We would like to stress that diversity is wished for as long as it is a result of empowerment and emancipation. Groups of people are pushed to socio-economic margins by ruling systems and adjustments to market forces. Some examples are a decreased mental health especially among young women and unemployed. Unemployment is increasing mostly among immigrants and young people and the labour market is still very segregated (both gender and ethnic).

"It differs ten years in your expected lifespan if you come from Bergsjön or Saltholmen (two parts of Gothenburg, the biggest city in West Sweden)."

"The Swedish National Agency for Education's reports expressed concern over the development. According to the report, Sweden is one of the countries that have gone furthest in the market adaptation of schools. Swedish schools are becoming less equal. Students' socio-economic background is becoming increasingly important, as

we no longer have an equal education - this is undemocratic. Those who have power determine knowledge agenda and the rules of the epistemic game. Some people are in a position of power to formulate the agenda. We need to create alternative knowledge paradigms - democratic ones through a democratic education.”

“It is expected (from government etc.) that things should happen in Dalsland and other rural areas though there are no local arenas for meetings. One always has to play away from home. We accept to go to Gothenburg or Stockholm, but they are of so little use for everyday network.”

“It is important to name your reality. If I describe you in a certain way, you will eventually see yourself from my perspective; discourses are not just descriptive, they are productive. I see this as a form of violence; imposing certain knowledge perspective on people. This stimulates cognitive resistance. Creating new forms of pictures and give people and students means to describe and create their own reality; alternative discourses to the dominant hegemonic discourse. Hegemonic knowledge is not democratic. Hegemonic culture can be based on consent. The hidden infrastructure of knowledge: When ideas are repeated again and again over time, they become part of the tacit knowledge; operate beyond our consciousness. Marginalization: There are increasing gaps between well-educated and school dropouts.”

“How can communities turn into the arenas of democracy they have the potential to be? What skills are needed for the creation of sustainable development?”

“In order to achieve sustainable development we need to organize ourselves in new structures. Many organizations have difficulties to survive in its old form. Formal structures are often too rigid and intractable to be a driving force.”

“Network structures crashes sometimes with the mechanisms of more traditional organizational structures.”

“Could this RCE be an experiment and example of another form of structure in that it may grow organically? How can we share the leadership? In such a model the transparency is crucial; that communication is visible and accessible.”

“The link to interculturalism is to me very obvious when we must be humble to knowledge that is relevant to the SD as well in the margin and peripheral parts.”

“University West was formed in 1990 on the initiative of the local community. Several other Universities were initiated by the government, but here we have a clear bottom-up approach. We are proud and happy about that; working locally and regionally with international collaborations. There are clear connections. Not focusing on the nation but to the local and link it to other local and regional contexts in the global arena. Live and work in the local context but also exchanging with other contexts via the Internet or other media.”

“I have been working around the world and I can say: we in economically well-developed countries think we have the best management and leadership. But what about the Incas, Nigeria, Aikido - don't we have something to learn?”

"We must all be owners of the question of SD. How to get there?"

CONTEMPORARY FOOTPRINT AND SUSTAINABLE FOOTPRINT

The themes that emerged during the mobilisation meetings seldom addressed ecological challenges as such since ecological unsustainability and exaggerated footprints is the obvious starting point to all participants. Many (all?) environmental damages including climate change are the results of our lifestyles and over consumption. The discussions as well as the RCE West Sweden focus on how-questions like: "How can we learn together and transform dysfunctional patterns of thinking and acting in society?"

Most of the ongoing projects among the stakeholders aim to decrease the ecological footprint which is useful and clear indicator of SD progress and we are convinced that the project that will emerge from RCE processes will have the same objectives and results.

In West Sweden there are two regional instances dealing directly with environmental issues. The County Administrative Board has responsibility for environmental monitoring, permissions, nature preservation, agricultural issues etc. They work hands on with national and regional environmental objectives.

The County Administrative Board has the mandate to coordinate regional efforts in order to achieve Sweden's environmental objectives.

The Swedish Parliament has decided on a comprehensive environmental policy for a sustainable Sweden. The overall objective for the environmental policy is to hand over to the next generation a society in which the major environmental problems in Sweden have been resolved, without causing greater environmental and health problems outside of Sweden's borders. In addition to the generation objective there are 16 national environmental quality objectives with specifications and milestones. The County Administrative Board plays a coordinating role in the regional work with the environmental objectives. We are working together with municipalities, the business community, voluntary organisations and other stakeholders to ensure that the environmental objectives will be reflected in the county and that the environment will become better. We are also following up how the environmental work is progressing. Such follow up work feeds directly into our short and long term indicators.

The 16 national environmental quality objectives

1. Limited climate impact
2. Fresh air
3. Natural acidification only
4. Non-toxic environment
5. Protective ozone layer
6. Safe radiation environment
7. No over fertilisation
8. Living lakes and waterways
9. Groundwater of good quality
10. The seas in balance and a living coast and archipelago
11. Vibrant wetlands
12. Living forests
13. A richly cultivated landscape
14. Magnificent mountain environments
15. A good built environment
16. A rich plant and animal life

To investigate and continuously monitor the state of the environment is an important part of the County Administrative Board's management of the environment. The results are used, inter alia, to monitor progress with environmental goals as well as to identify new threats to the environment.

The other instance is Region West Sweden (Västra Götalandsregionen in Swedish) which focuses on promoting and developing the market for:

- energy-efficient building, including passive houses.
- bioenergy such as solar energy and wind power.
- Biofuel; biogas and hydrogen in particular.
- the environmental performance of shipping.
- use of sustainable and considerate design
- organic and regionally produced food.

As mentioned earlier West Sweden are active in establishing five test arenas concerning SD; secure sustainable urban development, marine and maritime environments, transportation, green chemistry and life science.

The goal is for Västra Götaland to be independent of fossil energy by 2030.

TRACES OF ECOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES IN OUR REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Ecological perspectives are most obvious in “urban -rural” and “contemporary footprint - sustainable footprint”. Social perspectives appear mostly in “hegemonic - intercultural” and “formal - informal - non-formal” while economic perspectives are inter-woven very clearly into all the gaps.

PROCESS OF RCE DEVELOPMENT

As the decade of Education for Sustainable Development is running towards an end, in order not to lose momentum we decided to apply even though the mobilization period was relatively short. On the other hand we consider the mobilization process as such to be a core activity in running the RCE West Sweden – the mobilization will not end by submitting this application. We do notice a broad interest and eagerness to be a part in the RCE and to start the process.

At this stage there are rather few formal schools among the partners and we consider that as a weakness in this application. On the other hand we are well aware of this and are planning to invite schools in the beginning of next semester.

So far, our main focus has been on adult education (non-formal and informal), higher education and network structures. Some of our meetings are referred to on the blog <http://rcevast.wordpress.com> We would also like to refer to our annual Summer Seminars on “Interculturality and Sustainability” since 2006 as well as to envisioning workshops on Sustainable futures that we have been running in the region since Agenda 21 twenty years back. In these processes thousands of inhabitants have participated and we found that their perspectives are very much aligned with the aims of RCE West Sweden.

RCE VISION AND OBJECTIVES

In 2015 we envision a broad, deep and complex network connecting actors from all over the region. We have a well functioning ICT communication platform and an established research centre. As a result of innovative encounters and increasing action competence among participants, we anticipate several unexpected and self organised projects/activities with multi source funding. All partners having a strong feeling of agency and commitment to transformative action.

One of the core principles is based on creating flows, meeting venues and linking the projects and activities already in progress and to stimulate new initiatives and innovations.

THE PURPOSE OF A RCE WEST SWEDEN

- ✘ gathering experiences and lessons to raise the starting point for new initiatives, and create greater consistency with regional vision and goals (also influencing those)
- ✘ to link new and existing initiatives to create larger and stronger networks (also with global nodes) to achieve synergies and innovations across different projects and activities
- ✘ identify, highlight and develop skills and competence across the region
- ✘ to raise ambitions for strong sustainability
- ✘ to focus on R&D with an emphasis on interactive action research and a scientific approach throughout the process that will involve all stakeholders

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES (*italics*) AND SHORT TERM ACTIVITIES FOR A RCE WEST SWEDEN:

- ✘ *an increased number of educational institutions that work proactively with ESD*
 - invite all formal education institutions (from primary schools to universities) in the region to become RCE partners

- ✘ *a minimized distance between research and practical application in terms of strong SD*
 - offer every stakeholder and emerging project a 2 days “Learning for Change”*- workshop (L4C). This is a form of action research where participants explore and learn from their own experiences and present the results in a form (patterns) so that others can learn from them as well. These workshops are also examples of assessment and dissemination workshops that we will run
 - longitudinal study to measure new flows

- ✘ *collected and developed both the excellence and breadth skills (includes visibility and dissemination of existing, but more or less invisible skills)*
 - RCE partners are strongly encouraged to contribute to RCE website and clearly describe their findings in their annual reports
 - visiting RCE partners/projects/activities and describing/writing about them on the web and in publications

- ✘ *collaboration on strong sustainable development also in all its complexity not always split into different dimensions or topics*
- ✘ *horizontal learning network that bridges the informal, non-formal and formal learning structures including various companies and institutions (both existing and additional)*
- ✘ *meeting arenas for actors of varied backgrounds and field of activity for exchange, learning and innovation (existing and new)*
- ✘ *fruitful dynamic between theory and practice, city and country; inside and outside, etc.*
- ✘ *syntheses and synergies between different activities through coordination and communication locally, regionally and globally*
 - arranging four annual meeting where all RCE stakeholders (and potential partners) are invited. All partners are supposed to attend at least one such meeting every year.
 - all meetings will be documented and published on the RCE web site

- ✘ *bridging of recurrent structural barriers*
 - arranging workshops to identify barriers and strategies
 - initiating meetings with authorities and permit organisations etc.
 - arranging financing workshops in order to guide projects in fundraising and/or innovative and sustainable financing models

- ✘ *demonstrations-/test arenas for small-scale sustainable solutions (existing and new)*

- Some examples: urban farming/city growing, bee keeping institute, Gogol project, a fourth voluntary year in secondary school working practically with S.D.

▫ *collective experience that is made available web-based*

- L4C workshops

▫ *enhance enjoyment of and desire for change*

- encouraging RCE partners to perform happenings, public events and celebrations

▫ *participating projects are made visible*

- all partners presented on the RCE web site and with links to resp. site
- presentations and information via mass media

*Learning for change workshop (L4C) is a set of tools that has emerge over several years as a result of collaboration between researchers and practitioners working with learning for sustainable development. The aim has been to improve the effectiveness of learning from experience; both from own and from others. It all started out from shared frustration about that new projects seemed to “reinvent the wheel” over and over again.

L4C can be used in multi project workshop as well as in single project workshop. We have found L4C workshops very efficient for learning and assessment.

Short term objectives/activities and goals/indicators

2012

- Information and an invitation to all primary and secondary schools in West Sweden
Goal: At least five schools willing to work proactively with ESD in relation to RCE and become mentors for other schools.
- Invite all RCE partners (at this point) to a preparation meeting in November.
Goal: Participation from at least 20 stakeholders.
Each stakeholder becoming an ambassador; inviting and involving new partners from respective networks.
- Run a L4C workshop from previous experiences from working with (E)SD
Goal: To make the learning tangible and have an example of L4C in the region (December).
- Start an ICT (research group) in order to set up a communication vehicle for the RCE.
Goal: Involvement of both researchers and practitioners.

- Communication with mass media to prepare for as many channels as possible to tell/write/show steps towards sustainability and invite people to join in.
Goal: Informal dialogue with some well spread newspapers each part of the region.
- Projects participating in RCE are made visible
Goal: Keep the blog vital and informative until we got a better communication vehicle as an outcome from the ICT group. The web sites will tell about the partners and link to their own sites.

2013

In case of approval:

- Start meeting for a research group to follow the RCE
Goal: Representatives from all universities in West Sweden plus some informal/non-formal research interested participants as well.
- Kick- off activities around the region
Goal: Print flyers with RCE information and invitation.
Cooperation with already active partners to arrange local and engaging events about RCE West Sweden including local media.
- International and Intercultural Summer Seminar (prel. theme “Growing Edge”)
Goal: Participation from regional partners, other RCE:s and other international networks.
- Four network seminars in the region (partners are supposed to attend at least at one seminar per year)
Goal: Every meeting leading to at least five new cooperations/projects and ten new partners.
- Evaluation and dissemination – Learning for Change Workshop(s)
Goal: At least one single project workshop and one multi project workshop per year.
- Arranging seminars to overcome structural barriers when it is asked for
Goal: Identifying barriers and strategies
Solution focused meetings with authorities, permit organisations etc.
Guide projects in fund raising and/or innovative and sustainable financing models.
- First annual report from all partners - feeding into the web, mass media and research
Goal: Reports from at least 80% of the partners.

- Outreaching visits to projects/activities
Goal: Visiting and reporting from at least five projects every year.

- Report to UNU
Goal: Deliver a summarised report at the end of the year.

2014

- International and Intercultural Summer Seminar
Goal: Participation from at least twice as many regional partners as previous year.
Feedback from researcher to partners and stakeholders.

- Four network seminars in the region (partners are supposed to attend at least at one seminar per year)
Goal: Every meeting leading to at least ten new cooperations/projects and twenty new partners.

- Evaluation and dissemination – Learning for Change Workshop(s)
Goal: At least two single project workshop and two multi project workshop per year.

- Arranging seminars to overcome structural barriers when it is asked for
Goal: Identifying barriers and strategies.
Solution focused meetings with authorities, permit organisations etc.
Guide projects in fund raising and/or innovative and sustainable financing models.

- Second annual report from all partners - feeding into the web, mass media and research
Goal: Reports from at least 80% of the partners.

- Outreaching visits to projects/activities
Goal: Visiting and reporting from at least five projects every year.

- Report to UNU
Goal: Deliver a summarised report at the end of the year.

2015

- Assessment and evaluation of RCE West Sweden
Goal: Internal workshops.
External audits.

- Next steps...

Goal: Innovative planning seminars for further ESD/RCE activities with broad engagement from all stakeholders.

- International and intercultural Summer Seminar

Goal: Broad participation from regional partners and other RCE:s.

Celebrating RCE achievements.

STRATEGIES AND SCENARIOS

The role of RCE West Sweden is very much to be a vehicle and a vessel for emerging activities. We do know a lot of things, but we do not know what a sustainable development looks like. We consider “not to know” as an important competence in order to maintain openness and humbleness in the RCE. At network meetings we will provide the pedagogy and structures that invite openness, creativity, dialogue and actions using methods and tools like Open Space, Envisioning, Drama, Coaching, L4C/Pattern Labs, Action planning etc. We will encourage generosity and ‘theft of ideas’ such as by rewarding those who give and take the most.

Interactive research is integrated in the RCE activities and experimenting and exploring and even playing is an attitude that permeates the process.

In short terms one could say that the main focus for RCE West Sweden would be

- holding space for network meetings, workshops and seminars (intercultural processes) where the goal is that everyone should have the experience of “playing on their home pitch”
- providing ICT solutions in order to support creativity and innovation
- evaluation and dissemination
- interactive research
- working with mass media
- receive and collate annual reports from RCE partners
- communication with UNU and other RCE:s

Our growing networks will consist of three types of actors:

- established sustainability actors
- actors who do not consider them selves sustainability actors even though that is what they are
- sustainability actors emerging from transformative learning processes

All three categories will have representatives from formal, non-formal and informal contexts.

M&E

The outcomes from the emerging organic network structures we are not able to foresee. We are confident that there will be quite many innovative, transformative activities and projects arising. We will also stimulate sharing of structured and established programs to decreased use of resources among partners. The timeline presented on pages 18 – 21 shows the overarching RCE measures and the following timeline shows some of the activities that the varying stakeholders will pursue. One of our core objectives is that this list of activities will be in constant growth. We intend to have a third timeline as well, showing joint activities among partners as they emerge along the process.

TIME LINE PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION TO RCE

2012

Setting up a Centre for ESD at University West
Starting The Gogol project on economic sustainability
The first edible forest will be planted (first steps)
Outdoor education - in an intercultural context in relation to Intercultural Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Futures. Primary Schools
Schoolyard gardens Primary Schools

2013

Initiate a work integrated university teacher pedagogy program based on Intercultural Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Futures (see below) approaching both formal, non-formal and informal teachers/coordinators.
The course Intercultural Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Futures starts in formal, non-formal and informal contexts.
The second edible forest will be planted (first steps) and expansion of the first forest
Outdoor education - in an intercultural context in relation to Intercultural Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Futures. Primary Schools.
Schoolyard gardens Primary Schools.

2014

Start of teacher/coordinator pedagogy programme.
The Intercultural Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Futures course goes on and develops over time.
Expansion of the edible forests.
Outdoor education - in an intercultural context in relation to Intercultural Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Futures. Primary Schools.
Schoolyard gardens Primary Schools.

2015

...

GOVERNANCE/MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Our ambition is to keep RCE administration on a minimum level, yet still to keep quality and continuity. The management of the overarching RCE activities will be dealt with by key stakeholders. The key stakeholders are the Studyorganisation Vuxenskolan: Miriam Sannum, University West: Åse Eliason Bjurström, GMV: Johan Boman and Ulf Andersson and Vingaland: Michael Roqvist.

The administrative centre will be based at Studyorganisation Vuxenskolan and coordinated by Miriam Sannum.

If this application is accepted RCE West Sweden will form a steering group consisting of different stakeholders.

Our main focus is on learning for and from actions and we will let self organisation be an important management principle as projects and activities emerge. Transparency in the process is therefore crucial and the ICT communication will be an important vehicle.

We have started to form an international reference group for our work in order to enable intercultural perspectives and a critical eye on the measures of RCE West Sweden. This far Dr. Marcus Bussey from University of Sunshine Coast in Australia, Leonel Cerruto from Kawsay and the indigenous pluriversity in Bolivia, Prof. Olena Pometun, Head of the Social Science Education Laboratory and Teachers for Democracy and Partnership, Ukraine and Dr. Mercy Merembe Ntangaare at Uganda National Cultural Centre and Makerere University, Uganda are invited. They have been participating in several Summer Seminars and have showed great interest in our work.

We would also like to establish peer exchange with other RCEs to take advantage of gained experiences.

RESOURCES AND COMMITMENT

Most of the activities, at least initially, will be financed by participating partners. The non-formal study organisation of Vuxenskolan has an existing and effective infrastructure for arranging all practical issues around network meetings, seminars, workshop, study circles and non-formal courses. The Universities has the infrastructure to arrange courses. Vuxenskolan will spend approximately 150% of full time work on RCE West Sweden (organising meetings, facilitating workshops, documenting meetings and visits, action research, making annual reports), University West at least 60% (ICT, facilitating workshops, research) and Centre of Environment and Sustainability, GMV 30% (coordination of research and research funding). Every stakeholder has committed their time to take part in at least one common workshop, act proactively with learning for SD and to leave an annual report as a minimum.

As new projects and activities emerge they will find funding in every special case. We will also experiment with innovative ways of running projects and activities. Social enterprises, different cooperative forms etc. Some of our partners are into different

organising tools as tools for financing.

The administrative region has funding sources for sustainability projects to support emerging projects. We have good prospects to look for funding also for the RCE.

COLLABORATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

This application is partly growing out from an intense and long term collaboration between the University West and the non-formal study association Vuxenskolan. Along the way several other stakeholders have connected and we can already see RCE cluster groups forming. The Higher Education in the region has an ongoing dialogue and here we hope to enhance ESD questions. The non-formal adult educations collaborates in several sustainability projects.

Collaboration is both the vision and objective of RCE West Sweden.

ON-GOING ACTIVITIES

University of Gothenburg

The University has an active environmental management system, certified by EMAS and ISO14001 (www.mls.adm.gu.se/sustainability/) with a University-wide objective to increase the integration of sustainable development into education. This is an ongoing process with seminars, work shops, eco-labelling and yearly evaluation.

University of Gothenburg in cooperation with Chalmers University of Technology and University West

Since 2002 there has been a ten week Case Study in Sustainable Development every year. Urban and regional development or technology implementation is often complex real-world problems that are not satisfactorily dealt with by the classical disciplines. Transdisciplinarity can be considered as a method for organising sustainability learning. Transdisciplinary work differs from disciplinary and interdisciplinary as it requires participants to go beyond science. In transdisciplinary projects, students and teachers have to incorporate values and knowledge from society into scientific activities and project work. Joint problem solving among science, technology, and society are crucial parts of the Case Study.

Chalmers University of Technology

Chalmers Learning Centre (<http://www.chalmers.se/clc/EN/>) focuses on scientific learning for a sustainable development. Based on Chalmers' vision – Chalmers for a sustainable future –the Learning Centre gathers knowledge of the learning processes within the scientific area. Within the Learning Centre education, research and collaboration are carried out.

Chalmers Learning Centre is a platform for different groups and activities with the aim of improving learning for the students and teachers at Chalmers, pupils and teachers in schools as well as for others.

Centre for Environment and Sustainability, GMV,
<http://www.chalmers.se/gmv/EN/>

GMV has succeeded in establishing a platform for interdisciplinary research projects and researchers at Chalmers University of Technology and University of Gothenburg. The GMV research network is the largest gathering of environmental scientists in Sweden comprising almost 500 members from all faculties at both universities and about 500 representatives from industry, local authorities and other environmental organisations. Together they form an important catalyst for interdisciplinary collaboration in the field of environmental studies and sustainable development. GMV also hosts a national network, Higher Education for Sustainable Development, HU2, (www.hu2.se) with 125 teachers. The network arranges two meetings per year and also has some projects.

EXAMPLES OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES

University West

The planned activities described are the ones that immediately relate to the ambitions expressed in the RCE West Sweden.

Establishing a Centre for Learning for Sustainable Development. The centre will enhance the collaborations between existing ESD champions at University West and develop and promote ESD related learning.

The Centre will also focus on developing new means for network communication in ESD context. A study on lessons learnt in regard to internal and external communication within existing RCEs is planned.

Conduct Intercultural Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development in an extended network setting. The course/network is described in the chapter “Weaving Pedagogies of Possibility” that was presented in the UNESCO publication *Learning for Sustainability in times of accelerating change* launched at RIO+20. This is a transformative form of learning that is a co-operation between formal and informal agents in ESD.

Continue to offer Summer Seminars on the theme Interculturality and Sustainability, which started in 2006.

Design a work-integrated course that will be offered to all the teachers in HEIs in the Västra Götaland region. The course aims to develop RCE related competence needed in order to work in trans-structural and intercultural networks. This course will be developed in close co-operation with other HEI in the region as well as coordinators for informal ESD-learning.

Promote and encourage a research platform in relation to the measures in the RCE West Sweden.

Using drama and theatre in ESD

The Gogol project investigates how drama can serve as a catalyst to stimulate a global-local discussion on the subject of economical sustainability. The play the Government Inspector will be staged in five continents and will be followed by drama workshops and an ICT mediated discussion. A regional theatre, study-organizations as well as formal education and researchers will be involved in the project.

Planned activities for Vingaland

We are planning to establish edible forest gardens on three locations in the city of Trollhättan in order to show one way of growing food in the city. One patch of land is owned by the city of Trollhättan. Another one, between two high-risers, owned by the council of estates agencies. The areas where we are planting forest gardens are considered problematic, with a lot of segregation problems. The tenants are mostly immigrants from all over the world. We have so far not been very good at letting immigrants into Swedish society nor have we taken good care of the opportunity to let other cultures enrich the society. We want to invite the tenants in establishing the forest gardens. We also want to invite the tenants to join courses in organic farming and permaculture.

This is one way to integrate the tenants with each other and in society as such. This is also a way to acknowledge the big areas in the city that are currently only consuming energy and transform them into places producing good, healthy food, biodiversity, social integration and beauty.

Centre of Environment and Sustainability, GMV

The centre has applied to host the World Environmental Education Congress in 2015. The theme of this Congress will be Learning for Sustainable Development in pre-school, school and higher education as well as life long learning. The RCE will be involved in the final planning.

University of Gothenburg

The University will on November 15, 2012, have a workshop on “Teacher Education for Sustainable Development” with The Adlerbert Research Foundation’s guest professor Arjen Wals, Wageningen University, The Netherlands. Invitation will be sent to the RCE.

Universities in West Sweden and the Region

The Universities of West Sweden and the Region of West Sweden are hosts for the conference NU2012 (<http://www.nu2012.se/>) “Learning Without Limits”. Sweden's largest forum on the development of higher education, in teaching and learning in higher education and university-level pedagogical research and development. The conference will be held on 17-19 October 2012 in Gothenburg. NU2012 is the conference where we discuss topical, critical and forward-looking issues – especially for teachers interested in university education, researchers, students and other interested parties. In the era of open, international and increasingly ICT-based knowledge and educational environments we are challenged by questions about the borderless learning. How do we create sustainable higher education system? Is it possible to share resources and interact to a greater extent in higher education? How do we ensure that students can change their own learning environments in order to improve learning? How do we meet new demands for knowledge and competence requirements? What we traditionally tied up our programs and courses around – a college campus, teachers, literature, procedures, examinations, professions – is under transformation. In what ways should educational development and quality assurance support this development? The conference has eight tracks. One of the tracks will be “Learning for sustainable development – green, limitless, free?”