



2022 – 2023

RCE Greater Atlanta Annual Report



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Abbreviations

ACRONYM	TERM
COB	Community-Based Organization
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HELC	Higher Education Learning Community
RCE	Regional Centres of Expertise
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations

01. INTRODUCTION

What is RCE Greater Atlanta?

Membership & Mission

Guiding Principles

What is RCE Greater Atlanta?

RCE Greater Atlanta is a regional multi-stakeholder network affiliated with the United Nations (UN) University, which advances the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through education and training programs and projects.

The network brings together universities and colleges from across the Greater Atlanta region with nonprofit, government, community and business partners to work on collaborative projects and programs that advance the SDGs. It is one of over 180 RCEs (Regional Centres of Expertise) worldwide, and was acknowledged by the UN University on December 18, 2017.

We approach all the SDGs from an equity and justice lens, building on Atlanta's history as the home of the Civil Rights Movement to address the region's current crippling inequities. We aim to create a new regional model for collective impact, by harnessing higher education capacity and knowledge for regional benefit – and in the process, better preparing our youth to be sustainable development changemakers, in Greater Atlanta and beyond.

RCE GREATER ATLANTA GOALS

Advance
Greater SDG
Knowledge &
Action



Model
Inclusive &
Collaborative
Community



Nurture
Strong
Youth
Leadership



Current Membership

RCE Greater Atlanta welcomes institutional, organizational, and individual stakeholders from all sectors, including higher education institutions, businesses, non-governmental organizations, community associations, and local, regional, state and federal government. All RCE partners are committed to developing and advancing a comprehensive approach to sustainable development through education and training, focused on implementing the UN SDGs across the region.



Our Mission

RCE Greater Atlanta is a network committed to leveraging educational resources for regional implementation of the global SDGs, with a focus on equity and justice. Our members, representing all sectors of community, business, government and civil society, contribute to the creation of an inclusive and collaborative community that advances SDG knowledge and action and nurtures strong youth leadership for a healthy and just region.

Our Guiding Principles



Principle 1

We build intergenerational relationships for the long term, to sustain change in the region and the world.



Principle 2

We acknowledge the disparities experienced across SDGs, regionally, as a result of our discriminatory history, and commit to advancing equity as a core network imperative.



Principle 3

We all have knowledge, skills and assets to contribute. Our RCE network provides structure to build on these gifts to work together to advance our RCE Greater Atlanta goals.



Principle 4

Each activity we do is led by members and advances their core work in unique ways by incorporating contributions from other members from different sectors, generations, and backgrounds.



Principle 5

We commit to being SDG advocates within our organizations and circles of influence, investing in our youth, and expanding the network.

02. NETWORK STRUCTURE

**Coordination & Core
Functions**

**Student Advisory
Council**

Coordination & Core Functions

RCE Greater Atlanta brings together 10 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across this large region to collaborate with government, businesses, and nonprofit and community-based organizations (CBOs) to advance Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Running this network takes a village. The multi-institutional Coordination Team was founded to collectively manage core network functions, event & project support, and student leadership development. Core network functions consist of marketing and communication, membership, global RCE network engagement, and data collection. Event & project support includes planning the quarterly meetings. Student leadership development involves programs such as the SDG Futures Fellowship and Mentorship.

As of Fall 2023, the team includes 9 staff and 9 student coordinators from 6 HEIs plus 1 community volunteer.



This coordination structure was developed in 2022 after three years of trial and error with other coordination and leadership structures, including a traditional steering committee and then what we called a “leadership circle.” What we learned from these experiences was that we didn’t need leadership as much as coordination of what one founding member termed “core network functions,” along with strong support of core activities and a group of people with strong skills and interest in “network weaving,” or connecting people and projects to each other. The coordination structure allowed us to focus on these activities, rather than on “leadership.”

Coordinators assist members to become leaders in their own projects and to advance their own goals for learning about and implementing ESD and the SDGs. Additionally, this structure aids each HEI and other RCE member organizations to approach ESD and the SDGs according to their own culture, and it encourages each institution in collaborating in their local campus and community to advance ESD. This structure also supports the student coordinators themselves in becoming educated and active in their campus communities and in the RCE overall. They take on leadership roles and become well-versed in the SDGs and ESD topics. The structure allows us to collectively take responsibility for running the network and results in a strong sense of camaraderie, shared ownership, and new ideas, all of which increases the impact of the SDGs across our region.



The objective of the Coordination Team is to establish and manage a shared structure responsible for running the foundational activities of the RCE Greater Atlanta network, including core network functions as well as signature programs, all of which advance ESD across the Greater Atlanta region. The multi-institutional team has developed a decentralized model for coordinating a large and geographically dispersed network that is well-functioning and garners broad and ongoing participation and leadership from diverse member organizations located across the region. This unique coordination structure emphasizes the decentralized nature of the network and the importance of garnering contributions from multiple HEIs and members. Each institution can produce more localized outcomes with the help of the network supporting them, and this structure fosters the sharing of knowledge and ideas from different communities, allowing them to reach and engage with more members in the Greater Atlanta region. By maintaining regular communications with each other, the staff and student coordinators ensure that the network runs smoothly, and projects are supported.

Approximately 20 students and staff have worked as staff and student coordinators since 2022. Their work impacts approximately 400 people each year, who are engaged in network events, programs, and activities.

The Coordination Team is responsible for carrying out the network's core functions, including marketing and communication, membership, global RCE network engagement, and data collection. Coordinators are also the backbone of the RCE, helping to plan our quarterly meetings and programs and nurturing participation in RCE projects. Additionally, they run and/or support the network's youth engagement programs, including the SDG Futures Fellowship and the Mentorship Program. The team is coordinated by a staff person at Georgia Institute of Technology and includes staff/student coordinators from multiple HEIs. Each HEI has an administrative unit housing the RCE and uses a common job description to hire student coordinators. Under the supervision of a graduate student, these coordinators work together to run the network and increase RCE engagement among students at their own institutions. The students meet virtually every week, and the full team meets a few times per semester. In addition to managing their own responsibilities, the students help each other problem-solve and innovate. Coordination operates in multi-directional ways, and students and staff learn to navigate and appreciate the advantages and challenges of lateral movements for social change. Greater Atlanta is a diverse place, and each HEI in the region has a unique approach to advancing the SDGs through ESD. The multi-institutional coordination structure allows each university and college to contribute its own expertise and resources to our movement for a more sustainable future.

The outcomes of our multi-institutional Coordination Team can be seen in 3 categories:



Core Network Functions

Each student coordinator is responsible for overseeing one core network function. This has resulted in strong and sustainable processes and outcomes. For example, the network has an active communications program – managed for the past 4 years by a volunteer communications specialist with a team of 2 student coordinators from Georgia Tech – that includes an extensive website (<https://rcega.org/>), active Google Group, monthly newsletter, and recently a podcast. Another example is membership, which is run by student coordinators at the University of Georgia, and includes an extensive web page with a link to a membership application, also created and now managed by the coordinator.



Event and Project Support

The student coordinators help plan and run the network's quarterly meetings, which are hosted by a different member each quarter and regularly draw between 70 and 100 people. The last meeting, held in July 2023 at a historic Black-owned funeral home that is now a community center/art gallery, brought together approximately 80 people to network and learn about the work of local organization Praise House Project, which uses the arts to ground the envisioning of sustainable futures in Black community traditions and history. The coordinators also provided crucial support in 2023 to the Mentorship Program, which was started 4 years ago by a student with a business partner but needed additional support to identify new leaders and directions. Thanks to the support of the student coordinators, the program now has two new leaders on board – both recent graduates, from two different HEIs – and a new partnership with a group of alumni focused on supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Student Leadership Development

The student coordinators have been key in providing leadership to for the SDG Futures Fellowship Program, which featured 27 students from eight HEIs in 2022-23. In summer 2022, the coordinators worked together with staff to develop the idea for this eight-month long program and write a successful grant proposal. Throughout 2022-23, the Lead Coordinator helped to run the program. In summer 2023, one Fellow transitioned to a coordinator position and played a lead role in developing the concept for year two and submitting a proposal for continued funding. She will continue working as a coordinator this academic year, helping run the program.



Student Advisory Council

Currently under development, the student advisory council for RCE Greater Atlanta will be composed of student government and student organizations at their respective institution, with 1-2 representatives from each participating organization – i.e. campus ambassadors. Current participating organizations include: Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Georgia, Georgia Gwinnett College, and Morehouse School of Medicine. Councils at Georgia State University and Kennesaw State University are in progress, and we would also like to engage Spelman College, Morehouse College, and Emory University. Student-led councils at each school come together monthly to collaborate on their campus, as well as communicate with RCE Greater Atlanta about what ways they would like to collaborate – be it through events, projects, or joining student programs offered by RCE Greater Atlanta.

This is a mutually beneficial partnership; Student Organizations get access to a multi-institutional and multi-organizational UN network, as well as the events happening throughout the network all around the greater Atlanta area. RCE Greater Atlanta gets more college-age youth engagement and a strong network to grow out of at each institution so that we can understand how to best advance ESD.



03. QUARTERLY MEETINGS

What are Quarterly Meetings?

January 2023
City of Atlanta

July 2023
Praise House Project

Quarterly Meetings

The purpose of the meetings is to bring together civic leaders, activists, educators, business leaders, researchers, students, and concerned citizens from across the Greater Atlanta area to support the region's progress toward the UN SDGs.

The goals are to:

- **update the community on what is going on with the RCE**
- **encourage the community to get engaged**
- **share a story about the host's SDG-related work**
- **foster networking and relationship-building**
- **further education about the SDGs**

The quarterly meetings provide an easy entry point for new people to get exposed to the network, and the engagement orientations and interactive nature of the meetings create friendly environments for new members to feel at home right away. They also serve to update members and the community about RCE activities and help them understand ways to get involved. Finally, these meetings often help facilitate connections among members to build relationships and collaborate on a variety of projects, including projects outside of the RCE that advance the SDGs in more dispersed ways.

Since 2018, quarterly meetings have always drawn big, intergenerational crowds, from multiple sectors. Hosting them at different members' locations has been popular, as the host gets a platform to share their work and people enjoy going to visit and learn about different sites. They are a great combination of learning, work, and sociability.

Because the RCE is a network, it is important to have regular events to bring people together to foster new and existing relationships. We want to continue engaging the community and supporting them in our goal to further education about the SDGs.

Jan 2023: City of Atlanta



**FIRST IN-
PERSON
QUARTERLY
MEETING
SINCE 2020**

The first in-person quarterly meeting since 2020 was hosted by City of Atlanta at Atlanta City Hall.

FEATURING:

- Conversation with Chandra Farley, Atlanta's new Chief Sustainability Officer
- Introducing the 2022-23 SDG Futures Fellows and their project partners
- RCE Greater Atlanta updates
- RCE Engagement Fair



100+ attendees

Jul 2023: Praise House Project

The July 2023 quarterly meeting was hosted by Praise House Project at Haugabrooks Funeral Home.



80+ ATTENDEES

FEATURING:

- RCE Engagement Orientation
- Haugabrooks Funeral Home tour and current art exhibit
- Introduction to the work of the Praise House Project and artist-activist Charmaine Minniefield
- RCE updates and networking
- Sweet Auburn Avenue Water Tower for a special program with the mural led by Charmaine Minniefield



Haugabrooks Funeral Home

Haugabrooks Funeral Home was once a funeral home in the Historic Sweet Auburn District that Mrs. Geneva Haugabrooks opened in 1929 and built into a multi-million-dollar company. It contains the legacy of Black wealth in Sweet Auburn, and it now operates as a commercial meeting space and contains an art gallery.



Praise House Project

The Praise House Project is a site-specific public art installation series by visual artist activist, Charmaine Minniefield, which honors African American histories in communities. During the July 2023 RCE quarterly meeting, Charmaine shared about her installation series the Praise House Project, and how it invites communities to examine history while encouraging historic and cultural preservation as acts of repair within the context of race, equity, and inclusion as placemaking and place-keeping.

The mural, titled “Cosmic Cypher Prayer Circle,” by Charmaine Minniefield, is a panoramic interior wall inside of the Sweet Auburn Avenue Water Tower, commissioned by the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) and sponsored by the City of Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs. The work is a play on Ring Shout, a traditional African American movement and gathering.

04. CONFERENCES

EQUINOX: UN SDGs

AGSC Symposium:
Combating Climate
Change

EQUINOX: UN SDGs

Established in March 2017 as a platform to advocate for the UN SDGs, the annual EQUINOX: UN SDGs is dedicated to the socioeconomic-ecological challenges of sustainability within the local-global framework. The initiative seeks to catalyze and advance pathways of multi-stakeholder partnership and scholarship through multidisciplinary, and multi-institutional programs such as annual symposiums, exhibitions, research forums, workshops, tours, and career events. To foster cross-pollination, team-formation, and actions on the UN SDGs, EQUINOX Week brings together institutions of higher education, professionals, policymakers, stakeholders, community members, and advocates.

In particular, the annual EQUINOX Symposium is focused on the 17 interconnected SDGs through a specific annual lens. A multi-sponsored platform with invited international, regional, and local presenters and speakers, the initiative was among one of the first symposiums in the region dedicated to the UN SDGs.

EQUINOX is a dynamic platform that brings together diverse stakeholders, including institutions of higher education, professionals, policymakers, and community members, to catalyze cross-pollination, youth leadership, and multi-stakeholder partnerships in the advocacy of the SDGs.

The week's events highlight innovative research and practices in sustainability from micro to macro scales – bringing together local, national, and international scholars, students, practitioners, and community partners. This initiative's primary activities include, but are not limited to:

- Annual EQUINOX Symposium
- Career Connections: Sustainability
- KSU Industrial Assessment Center (IAC): Approaches In Promoting Sustainable Manufacturing
- Peer Health Owls: Safe Spring Break
- CARE Services & MUST Ministries: Mobile FOOD Pantry
- Spatio-Semantic Modeling of Socio-Economic and Health Disparities
- KSU Mini Pavilion
- 3D Printing for Sustainability

RESULTS:

- **Engaging students, alumni, faculty, staff, professionals, policymakers, and community members.**
- **Catalyzing an array of multidisciplinary creative activities and discourse for advancement, scholarship, and partnerships on SDGs**

**Approximately
300
participants
and
presenters
were hosted
during the
multiple
programs of
the 6th Annual
EQUINOX Week
in March 2023**

The 6th Annual EQUINOX Symposium: UN SDGs

Session 1 Global Goals

Dr. Cecilia Martinez

Principal Advisor for Resilience and Communities, Bezos Earth Fund
Former Senior Director for Environmental Justice on Environmental Quality, White House Council

Brighton M. Kaoma

Global Director, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network – Youth Programs
Board Member, IUCN Reverse the Red & Children's Radio Foundation

Honorable Consul General Mrs. Roudelyne Nogar Jean

Consul General of Haiti, USA

Stuart Minson, PhD

Atlanta Global Studies Center, Georgia Institute of Technology

Diana Wrenn Rapp

Atlanta Global Studies Center, Georgia State University

Session 2 Community-Engaged Research

Ruthie Yow, PhD

Service Learning and Partnerships Specialist, Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain, Georgia Institute of Technology
Co-Lead, RCE Greater Atlanta Community of Practice for Community-Academic Partnerships

Erin Lebow-Skelley, MPH

Community Engagement Manager, HERCULES Exposome Research Center, Emory University
Co-Lead, RCE Greater Atlanta Community of Practice for Community-Academic Partnerships

Marlene Wolfe, PhD

Assistant Professor, Gangarosa Department of Environmental Health, Emory University

Columbus Ward

Community Representative, Peoplestown Revitalization Corporation

Sara Laudeman, AIA, LEED Green Assoc.

Architecture Research II, Cove.tool, Design Platform for Intelligent Performance

The 6th Annual EQUINOX Symposium: UN SDGs

Session 3 Interdisciplinary Practices: Ecological Pallets

Tina Freeman

President, Decatur Studio

Former Senior Curator of Photography, New Orleans Museum of Art

Dawn DeDeaux

Multimedia Artist, New Orleans

Cynthia Nourse Thompson

Director of Curatorial Affairs and Associate Professor of Art Bernard A. Zuckerman Museum of Art

Session 4 Interdisciplinary Practices: National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA)

Tulia Scott, AIA, NCARB, NOMA, LEED AP BD+C

Associate, Project Manager, Moody Nolan

Tyrone Marshall, AIA, NOMA, EDRA, LEED BD+C, Assoc. ASHRAE

Co-Director, Energy Lab, Perkins & Will

Bangseh Akuchu, AIA, NOMA

Strategist/Designer, Gensler

Wyatt Ross, CEM, LEED

Energy and Sustainability Engineer, CMTA

Chandra Farley, LEED

Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Atlanta

Founder, Good Energy Project

Pegah Zamani, PhD

Director, Research Center for Sustainable Communities (RCSC), Office of Research, KSU

Associate Professor, College of Architecture and Construction Management, KSU

AGSC Symposium: Combating Climate Change

RCE Greater Atlanta organized a conference track with two panel discussions and a roleplay simulation on the theme of “Combating Climate Change and Environmental Injustices”, bringing together faculty, students, business leaders, and community action groups, to share best practices and strategies for addressing SDG 13 through ESD and action throughout the region.

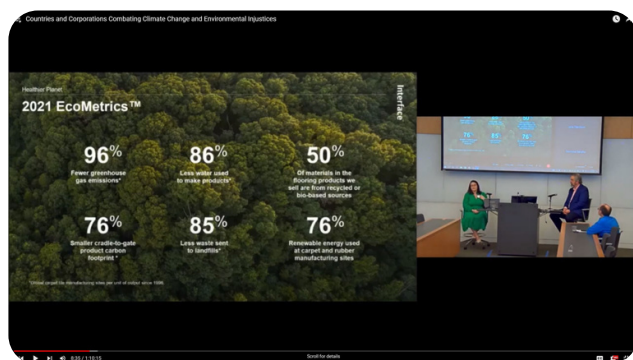
For institutions of higher education to prepare the next generation through ESD, they must train faculty, partner with community organizations and corporations, and advocate for policy change at the state and national levels. These things require knowledge-sharing, networking, and collaboration among each of these groups.



The objective of the project was to share best practices and better enable faculty to integrate awareness of and strategies for addressing SDG 13 into the learning of students in higher education, as well as to engage current students in the process.

150 attendees

RCE Greater Atlanta's Higher Education Learning Community (HELC) and Youth Network organized three sessions forming a conference track on “Combating Climate Change and Environmental Injustices” for faculty, students, and community groups, as part of a major conference, the Atlanta Global Studies Symposium 2023.



Countries and Corporations Combating Climate Change and Environmental Injustices (HELC)

This session considered the business case for sustainability, from the perspective of both countries and corporations, highlighting local-global partnerships and considering the implications for equity.

Robert Reed

Sustainable Communities Design Director, Southface

Namrata Sandhu

Co-Founder and CEO of Vaayu

Dr. Jane Davidson, FRSA

Chair of Wales Net Zero 2035

Author of [#futuregen: Lessons from a Small Country.](#)

Welsh Government Education Minister, (2000–2007), Environment Minister (2007–2011)

Dr. Liz Minné

Director, Global Sustainability, Interface



[Watch session on YouTube](#)

2

Energy Burden in Atlanta: A Roleplay Simulation (Youth Network)

The goals of the session were to introduce students to the basic concepts of energy burden and to help them consider various energy realities faced by different households and communities. The session included an exploration of smart solutions and opportunities for future engagement.

Dr. Marilyn Brown

Regents' and Brook Byers Professor of Sustainable Systems, School of Public Policy, Georgia Institute of Technology

Mark Lannaman

B.A. Journalism, Georgia State University

M.S. Global Media and Cultures, Georgia Institute of Technology

Graduate Student, Sustainable Energy and Environmental Management, Georgia Institute of Technology

3

Cities and Systems Combating Climate Change and Environmental Injustices (HELC)

This session considered the business case for sustainability, from the perspective of cities and logistical system-builders, highlighting local-global partnerships and considering the implications for equity.

Thiago Esslinger

Advisory Board Member, Kendeda Building for Innovative Sustainable Design

Georgia Institute of Technology student, Biochemistry / Earth & Atmospheric Sciences

Odetta MacLeish-White

City of Atlanta Clean Energy Board

Director of Georgia Initiatives, Center for Community Progress

Jeff Freeman

Director of Sustainability, Cimpres

Clarence Jackson

Director of Sustainable Supply Chain, Cox Conserves

Dr Luis Aguirre-Torres

Senior Advisor, Rewiring America



[Watch session on YouTube](#)

05. INITIATIVES

SDG Futures Fellowship

Community of
Practice: Community-
Academic Partnerships

Community of
Practice: Teaching with
the SDGs

RCE Newsletter

RCE Podcast Series

Equity Opportunities:
Drawdown Georgia
Solutions Project

RCE Course Series

SDG Futures Fellowship

The SDG Futures Fellowship is aimed at education about the UN SDGs, leadership, and professional development. It is a student fellowship program, co-developed and co-led by students and staff from Georgia Institute of Technology and Kennesaw State University (KSU) along with support in 2022-23 from 7 community partners:

- Greenhouse Accelerator
- Sustainable Georgia Futures
- Karmalize
- Re'Generation Movement
- City of Atlanta
- Center for Sustainable Communities
- United States Green Building Council (USGBC)

The program served as the primary youth (ages 17-29) engagement program for the RCE Greater Atlanta network in 2022- 2023. It is inspired by KSU's Distinguished SDG Ambassador Program, which fostered youth leadership and provided students with the opportunity to promote the UN SDGs in their local and campus communities.

The fellowship program uses the SDGs and the Global RCE Network as a framework for problem-based learning focused on local sustainability challenges. In addition to preparing students to pursue careers that have an impact or incorporate SDG impact into other fields of work, the program promotes long-term partnerships between fellows, community-based and nonprofit organizations, HEIs, and the RCE Greater Atlanta network.

This year-long fellowship program spanned the academic year 2022–23 and was open to college students from the 11 RCE Greater Atlanta affiliated HEIs. Students learned about sustainability challenges in and around Atlanta and around the world, and how communities can organize to tackle these issues.

The fellowship aimed to:

Educate students about the UN SDGs through a justice and equity lens

Expose students to SDG-related problems and solutions both locally and globally

Train students to advance the UN SDGs in their daily and professional lives

Help students incorporate “impact” into their definitions and pathways for career success

Seven community organizations served as project leads, all of whom have engaged in some way as part of the RCE Greater Atlanta network. The Fall 2022 semester was focused on SDG learning, with the fellows completing several learning modules as well as engaging in sessions with local community organizations, learning about their work related to specific SDGs. In the Spring 2023 semester, fellows were divided into project teams and paired with a community partner on a project related to the SDGs. Student teams presented their project deliverables at the end of the program.

The fellowship program used the SDGs and the Global RCE Network as a framework for problem-based learning focused on local sustainability challenges. In addition, it aimed to prepare the fellows for careers that have an impact or incorporate SDGs into other fields of work. Finally, it promoted long term partnerships between the fellows and community-based and nonprofit organizations. Using pre- and post-surveys, it was determined that the program was successful in increasing the fellows' knowledge of the SDGs and local sustainability challenges. However, they saw less of an impact on their thought process around having "impact" as a personal or professional goal. As such, in the second year of the program, the program will place additional emphasis on this topic. The community partners who served as project leads for the spring semester group project reported increased capacity due to the work of the student teams.

27 FELLOWS

The 27 Fellows represent a wide variety of backgrounds, coming to the program from 8 Greater Atlanta HEIs with experience in more than 20 different disciplines:

- Agnes Scott College
- Emory University
- Georgia Gwinnett College
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Georgia State University
- Kennesaw State University
- Morehouse College
- University of Georgia



FELLOWSHIP PROJECTS



Greenhouse Accelerator **Helping Entrepreneurs Create Sustainable Local Jobs**

Daniel Zhao, Jobair Hossain, Dinesh Meka

The purpose of this project was to assist the organization in growing and developing their business in sustainability and implement strategic planning to help with growth. The team sourced companies looking for initial capital in the Greater Atlanta Area, undertook due diligence to gain insights on startups and their founders, and had conversations with founders about the planning and operation of business. The goal was to advance the UN SDGs in the entrepreneurial spaces of the community.



Sustainable Georgia Futures **2023 Sankofa Community Assembly Campaign**

Suly Morel, Drew Barnes, Fatima Tarrawally, Thailer Ragland

The goal of this project was to engage in over 200 hundred house meetings throughout North Georgia: Fulton, Dekalb, & Clayton County. House meetings are a method of communication that allows for collaborative information sharing and education. The purpose of an issue assembly is that people are experts in their own lives and solutions should be led by those closest to the problem. At house meetings, the team continued to build relationships and create commitments to act together for environmental equity.



City of Atlanta Office of Resilience

Voluntary Local Review (VLR)

Chad DeWitt, Adair Garrett, Eugene Mafah, Mohena Singh, John R. Seydel

The purpose of this project was to assess the City's sustainability plans, goals, and programs including updating the City's comprehensive climate and energy plan in alignment with the UN SDGs. It was also meant to jump start and give a structure for the City of Atlanta to have a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of the progress toward advancing the SDGs. The VLR focused on 3 SDGs: SDG 7 (Affordable Clean Energy), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). The team put together a 36-page report and 10-page image-heavy summary document. The report detailed currently tracked metrics and programs addressing equity in Atlanta as related to each of the focus SDGs. It also includes future metrics as the City of Atlanta moves forward with its Climate Action plans.



US Green Building Council

USGBC Careers Website

Amani Allen-Beale, Jiaqi Chen, Lavanya Hariharan, Kathy Nguyen

The objective of this project was to refine and improve the Green Careers website to better serve professionals to find new careers in the green building industry. The team organized a focus group to gather first hand responses from college students and emerging professionals on their thoughts and experiences with the USGBC Careers website and quiz so that it can be adjusted to better suit their needs. As a result, USGBC plans to expand the Career Profile options, diversify the Career Quiz questions, add new resources to aid in career exploration and preparation, and inform the USGBC Team about strategies for outreach and networking.



Re'Generation Movement

Breaking Biases

Agnes Iwaye, Gabriela Citino, and Numaiya Hasan

The purpose of this project was to cultivate a storytelling environment with the youth diasporas of Clarkston, curate their unique narratives with respect, and maintain the three pillars of peacebuilders (Re'Imagining Peace; Re'Storying Justice; Re'Generating Movement). The goal was to break negative stereotypes that limit marginalized groups, empower their voices to elevate their experiences and identity, and ignite/stimulate youth as future advocates for peace and justice. The team created a storytelling podcast and digital archive for storytelling exchange.



Center for Sustainable Communities

Community Scale Solar Power Initiative for the Cavalier Manor Neighborhood in Portsmouth, Virginia

Abby Lauterbach, Miles Leecost, Isabel Medrano-Cervantes, Claire Patrick

This project involved a three-part plan (Design, Develop, Deploy) to bring energy democracy and local economic development through the implementation of a solar array to Cavalier Manor Neighborhood in Portsmouth, Virginia. The team maintained frequent and sustained contact with community members to better center their needs and desires, with the goal of fostering long term energy democracy. The mission was to help provide affordable, sustainable energy to the community, and the output was a comprehensive plan for solar energy, storage, and sustainability.



Karmalize

Social Media Marketing Initiative

Chandler Spaulding, Fayola Waithe, Nick Tsangarides

The purpose of this project was to raise awareness of the power consumers have to enact global change when consciously directed towards SDG-specific interests. The team wanted to target consumers who are already predisposed to one or more social causes as reflected in the SDGs. The team collaborated with the directors of Karmalize to come up with a strategy to utilize their current digital media channels and possibly expand into other areas if available to better reach these consumers. The goal was not to increase consumerism, but rather to help consumers see the vast opportunities available for them to use the power of their wallet to effect change and deliver social impact. The marketing tips the team put together included: posting interactive content, giving businesses a voice, demographic highlights, promoting discounts, location highlights, and collaboration. The team also suggested posting business spotlights and SDG education posts to engage with brands and their audience to create shoppers with more sustainable buying habits.

What is a Community of Practice?

A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE DEFINES ITSELF ALONG 3 DIMENSIONS:



What it is about

its joint enterprise as understood and continually renegotiated by its members



How it functions

the relationships of mutual engagement that bind members together into a social entity



What capability it has produced

the shared repertoire of communal resources (routines, sensibilities, artifacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time

Communities of practice also move through various stages of development characterized by different levels of interaction among the members and different kinds of activities.

Communities of practice develop around things that matter to people. As a result, their practices reflect the members' own understanding of what is important. Even when a community's actions conform to an external mandate, it is the community — not the mandate — that produces the practice. In this sense, communities of practice are self-organizing systems.

Excerpt from Etienne Wenger,
<https://thesystemsthinker.com/communities-of-practice-learning-as-a-social-system/>

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Community of Practice: Community-Academic Partnerships

This Community of Practice is focused on Community-Academic Partnerships. It was created to support stronger and more effective relationships between community partners and colleges, universities, and K-12 institutions to enable all of us to better leverage the resources and network of the RCE Greater Atlanta. The Community of Practice is structured as a learning and sharing community, drawing on the expertise of the members as well as inviting in collaborators to share their work and best practices.

Community partners have long wished for better, easier ways to engage with university partners, and university partners would like to be able to better support CBO engagement. There is also redundancy of programs and programs that aren't utilized fully because CBOs have little way of discovering those programs and resources exist. Making inroads in the areas of ease of collaborations and ease of learning about and accessing resources for CBOs is highly relevant to advancing the SDGs by drawing on the collective gifts and assets of CBO, university, and other sectoral partners.

15 - 20 PARTICIPANTS

The Community of Practice undertook a group concept mapping process in 2019 and identified five priority areas, listed below. These are in no way set in stone; as a community of practice, the priorities and goals of the group may shift as group membership and activity shifts. The most urgent group goal at this moment is that more community partners join us and add their priorities to this living list.

FIVE PRIORITY AREAS:

- **Building capacity of community partners**
- **Being/learning to be a better partner**
- **Identifying and sharing the resources in our networks**
- **Strengthening our networks**
- **Improving collaboration/coordination among HEIs**

Members are able to collaboratively execute projects and programs together, such as taking advantage of relationships forged in the Community of Practice to apply for grants through the Atlanta Global Research and Education Collaborative (AGREC) to advance community-based sustainability education initiatives.

This Community of Practice offers a powerful way to localize “partnerships for the goals,” as it brings together community partners and academic partners from multiple institutions to learn together, share best practices and undertake sustainability education and research projects together.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Community Engagement Symposium

Planned for 2023 and will include opportunities to share resources and success stories, asset mapping, and networking

A Best Practices in Community Engagement / Academic-Community Partnerships Guide

A guide to strong academic-community partnerships based on knowledge from members, as well as approaches and tools shared at the Community Engagement Symposium

Mobilizing STEM/STEAM

New hub and lab dedicated to global goals: Indian Creek Elementary School Global Goals Continuing Education Lab

Resource Inventory

Identifying and mapping assets and resources

PAST PROJECTS

Global Communities Internship Program

Internship program engaging students from five RCE member institutions to intern with three Clarkston-based refugee-facing community partners

K-12 Action Group

Advance K-12 education on the SDGs and their impact on the RCE Greater Atlanta community through an equity and justice lens

Mobilizing Science Education At Home

Distributing 23 STEM Kits and lunch boxes to students at Indian Creek Elementary School

UNA Atlanta FREE STEM Quest LIVE Show with TWIN Science & RCE Greater Atlanta K-12 Action Group



[Watch STEM Quest Show on YouTube](#)

Sustainable Coffee Talks

- The Pandemic's Impact on K-12 Education: Challenges and Opportunities After COVID-19
- International Youth Day: The Future We Want Video Campaign
- International Affairs, Atlanta Global Studies Center
- Advancing Climate Action and Social Equity
- Women's Empowerment Roundtable and Summit
- Women Leading Climate Equity and Resiliency

Community of Practice: Teaching with the SDGs

Incorporating the UN SDGs into coursework in higher education fosters critical thinking and helps students make meaningful connections between local issues and global-scale goals. It requires that students make connections between course content and important societal and environmental challenges. It also encourages the students to think deeply about how their professional work intersects with the larger world, because they learn sustainability systems-thinking skills that help them understand the environmental, social, and cultural impact of their professional practice. By using the SDGs as a teaching tool, HEIs provide students with the opportunity to understand how their learning can contribute to creating a positive impact in their communities.

The goal of this Community of Practice is to connect instructors interested in teaching with the UN SDGs. This group is open to any instructors, instructional designers, or faculty development professionals engaged in college teaching in Georgia, with the purpose of sharing resources and ideas about integrating the UN SDGs into course content.

**75
PARTICIPANTS**

Integrating the SDGs into course curricula is central to the implementation of ESD. By sharing case studies, best practices, and innovative perspectives, faculty are better positioned to achieve these goals.

Participants in the Community of Practice gained valuable knowledge through presentations, case studies, and discussions. The materials produced are available through a shared digital repository.

Following the launch event in May 2022, members of the Community of Practice met twice in Fall 2022 and twice in Spring 2023. Each meeting included a series of presentations followed by break-out and plenary discussions.

Session 1

Online Tools for Integrating the SDGs into Course Curricula

- Enroads
- Dashboards
- Virtual Reality

Session 2

Making Global and Local Connections through the SDGs

- Incorporating SDG#10 and COIL into a Japanese Upper-Level Course
- The Geography of Clothing
- Addressing SDGs in service-learning courses in Women's Studies

Session 3

Case Studies on Community-Engaged Teaching

- I Wasn't Designed for This: Community-Engaged Teaching in a Large Lecture, Foundations of Health Course
- Christianity and Sustainability: Creation Care in Congregational Ministry
- Community-Engagement in Online Courses... Can We talk?

Session 4

Strategies to Enhance and Expand Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- Faculty Learning Communities
- Toolkits
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration at the Institutional Level

RCE Newsletter



The purpose of the newsletter is to keep RCE members up to date about events happening in the network and projects that other members are working on. This fosters communication and encourages members to participate in more opportunities that are available to them. It also maintains communication between members and allows for exchange of information and opportunities for collaboration.

Each issue includes updates on important events and highlights the projects of network members. It includes Calls for Participation, Opportunities, and Resources. “Calls for Participation” are events happening in the community that members can attend. “Opportunities” are current jobs openings that may be relevant to members. “Resources” are more resources for members to learn more about RCE Greater Atlanta or get connected to the network.

**561
RECIPIENTS**

**40% (225) of
members
consistently
open the
newsletter**

12% click rate on links to articles on RCE updates and event registration

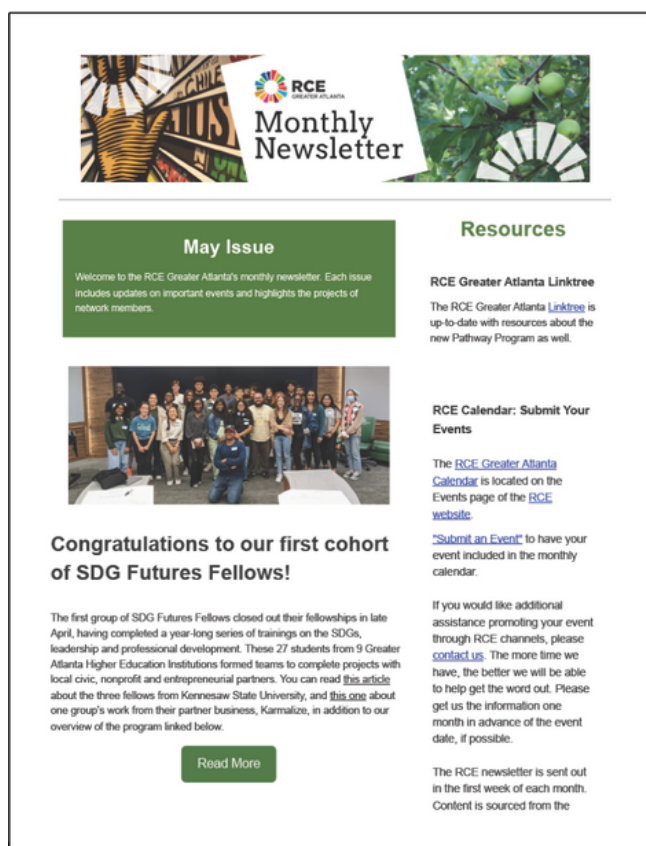
The RCE newsletter is sent out each month. Content is sourced from the RCE Google Group, but RCE Members can also send projects, events, and stories to include. A consistent style is used for the newsletter.

The newsletter updates members about events and opportunities every month, allowing members to remain connected to the network and encourage them to get more involved in opportunities. It also allows for members to share information about important events to the network and serves as a reminder about upcoming deadlines.

The newsletter is a crucial method for sharing and delivering important information within the network. It helps the network remain connected and up to

date about important events and highlights projects of network members so members can see the work that everyone is doing within the network.

The newsletter has increased promotion of important updates and valuable opportunities, because it can spread information to the network in a faster and more efficient manner, allowing more opportunities for collaboration, partnership, and connection within the RCE Greater Atlanta Network.



RCE Podcast Series

Global Goals, Greater Atlanta

Global Goals, Greater Atlanta is an interview-driven series that showcases RCE members' work to connect the 17 UN SDGs with our local community here in Greater Atlanta. The podcast highlights the multiplicity of viewpoints and approaches contained within the broad and multifaceted local network. Whether it's academic research, policy improvements, business strategies or community impacts, the podcast shares the stories of the SDGs in action in Greater Atlanta!

Global Goals, Greater Atlanta is made by:

Amal Marjani Bennett-Judge

host, producer and editor

Claire Horn

producer, editor, and guest host

Lara Bailen

editor and web intern

Adam Davis & Perrin Brady

social media interns



Follow on Spotify

1

Episode 1: Mark Lannaman, RCE Youth Engagement Coordinator

Interview with host Amal Bennett-Judge and the RCE's Youth Engagement Coordinator Mark Lannaman. Mark has a bachelor's degree in journalism from GSU and is pursuing his master's at Georgia Institute of Technology in Sustainable Energy & Environmental Management.

2

Episode 2: Felicia Davis & Illai Kenney of the HBCU Green Fund

Interview with HBCU Green Fund Founder Felicia Davis and Managing Director Illai Kenney (who also happens to be her daughter!). The HBCU Green Fund envisions a future where historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) serve as models of sustainability, promoting social, economic, and environmental justice.

3

Episode 3: EPA Administrator Daniel Blackman & Justine Lucas of The Clara Lionel Foundation

Live interview at Clark Atlanta University's School of Engineering with Justine Lucas, Executive Director of The Clara Lionel Foundation and the US Environmental Protection Agency's Administrator of Region 4, Daniel Blackman.

4

Episode 4: Adair Garrett, SDG Futures Fellow

The guest for this episode is Adair Garrett, a second-year Ph.D. student at Georgia Institute of Technology in the Transportation Systems Engineering concentration of the graduate program in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. She was chosen as one of the first cohort of the RCE Greater Atlanta's SDG Futures Fellows for 2022-23. The fellowship is aimed at education about the UN SDGs, leadership, and professional development. Adair's team worked with the City of Atlanta on developing its first Voluntary Local Review, reporting metrics showing how the city is doing on various measures of the 17 SDGs.

Equity Opportunities: Drawdown Georgia Solutions Project

The project focuses on considering and enhancing equity considerations in the design and deployment of climate action solutions. It is intended, as a start, to engage community voices especially from communities not typically “at the table”, such as those enduring the heavy energy burdens within the greater Atlanta region and farmers with limited resources due to historical inequities. In terms of solution access, there is a risk with any large-scale transition that those with limited influence or means could be overlooked or harmed by solution implementation without intentional policies and provisions to prevent this. For example, rooftop solar is one of the leading electricity generation solutions, but solar installations are typically only affordable to higher income individuals, thereby reducing benefits and even elevating costs for low-income customers.

Similarly, with respect to workforce development, the 2019 Solar Jobs Census found that only 26% of the solar workforce were women, and 73.2% of the workforce was white. Georgia ranks below national levels in terms of diversity, as women constitute only 18.9% of the solar workforce, and 76.6% of the workforce is white.



Transition to a low carbon economy has some benefits for all, but specific challenges and risks for historically underrepresented individuals and communities. This study uncovered some of these.

The overall objective of this project is to ensure equity is considered and integrated into future large-scale low carbon solutions with Drawdown Georgia providing the framework for doing so.

Other objectives include:

- Engaging equity / climate justice focused organizations and businesses on potential approaches to addressing the two specific topics noted (that tie closely to SDGs 10 and 13)
- Inspiring student-led engagement opportunities on the solutions and their intersections with equity
- Expanding RCE / university participation and interest (particularly among HBCUs) in Drawdown and related climate change initiatives
- Integrating existing approaches/tools as the Racial Equity Impact Assessment tool (REIA)

The Drawdown Georgia research team proposed 20 high impact solutions for the state of Georgia across five categories:

- **energy**
- **transportation**
- **the built environment**
- **food/agriculture**
- **forest/land use**

A sixth working group was created (“Beyond Carbon”) to focus on additional environmental considerations, equity, economic development, and public health across all solutions.

This project did a deeper dive on equity for a few of the solutions in the hopes it might inspire further such work on other solutions. In 2022, the findings were published in the Drawdown Georgia Equity Opportunities Report.

A team of roughly 15 RCE Greater Atlanta volunteers worked together to prioritize a few solutions for the focus of the report (members in two RCE action groups: Advancing Justice for All & Business Engagement). They hired one consultant to identify state-wide experts and equity stakeholders and then two consultants to focus on different solutions featured in the report, gathering challenges, opportunities, and recommendations from stakeholders.

The findings highlight barriers associated with:

- **climate action solution awareness**
- **affordability**
- **wealth inequities affecting communities with the greatest energy burden**
- **racial inequities in access to loans for capital investment**
- **gaps in rural broadband and mobility infrastructure**
- **misalignment between the requirements and processes of governmental programs and communities with the greatest need**
- **heirs' property land tenure that reflects historic racial discrimination**
- **policy, particularly with respect to scaling up solutions such as solar and conservation agriculture, as well as institutional food procurement practices that make sourcing from small farms to institutions very difficult**



Public outreach can increase awareness of and engagement in carbon reduction activities throughout Georgia communities. Participation from historically underrepresented communities in all stages of research and implementation of solutions can help to ensure that equity is a central consideration. Commitments from corporate and academic institutions can help to advance equity in the implementation of carbon solutions. Institutions can help to support focused climate and equity programming. They can also advance equity via procurement practices, workforce development opportunities, research, and education.



[Read more info on the study](#)



[Read the Drawdown Georgia Equity Opportunities Report](#)

RCE Course Series

Localizing the UN SDGs through Education, Training, and Collaboration

Universities and colleges around the world are making commitments to advance the UN SDGs through their teaching, research, operations, and partnerships. One proven model for making good on this commitment is to establish a UN-affiliated RCE network. RCEs are regional multi-stakeholder networks, grounded in higher education, that advance the SDGs through education and training. RCEs are proliferating, with over 180 networks around the world, including 27 in the Americas.

Through this learning cohort, the course series shared how RCEs bring together institutions at the regional/local level to jointly promote ESD. They build innovative platforms to share information and experiences and to promote dialogue among regional/local stakeholders through partnerships for sustainable development. They create a local/regional knowledge base to support ESD actors, and promote four major goals of ESD in a resource-effective manner. Additionally, the series introduced the “Localizing the UN SDGs through Education, Training and Regional Collaboration” course and the instructors from the different RCE networks participating from Canada and the U.S. This learning cohort provided a strong foundation for maximizing learning through case studies, project implementation, and sharing of best practices.

In collaboration with:

- RCE Georgetown, South Carolina
- RCE North Texas
- RCE Shenandoah Valley, Virginia
- RCE Puerto Rico
- RCE Saskatchewan, Canada
- The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

This virtual course included the following sessions:

Introduction to the Regional Centres of Expertise as a Model for ESD Integration

Optional pre-event networking

Food Policy Councils and Alliance as a Tool for Equitable and Resilient Food Systems

- RCE: North Texas
- Related SDGs: 2 & 11

Building Community Sustainability and Resilience through SDG Data, Dashboards, and Assessments

- RCE: Georgetown, South Carolina
- Related SDGs: All

Integrating SDGs into Higher Ed for Robust Student and Community Engagement

- RCE: Shenandoah Valley, Virginia
- Related SDGs: 4 & 17

Educating for Responsible Consumption and Production and Transformative Technologies

- RCE: Saskatchewan, Canada
- Related SDGs: 4 & 12

Building Bridges for Change

- RCE: Greater Atlanta, USA & Saskatchewan, Canada
- Related SDGs: 10 & 17

Community-based, collaborative action for sustainable natural resource management

- RCE: Puerto Rico
- Related SDGs: 4, 15, 17

Concluding Immersive Reflection

- RCE: Greater Atlanta
- Related SDGs: All

The course:

- Identified and connected those interested in SDG localization with peers from across the US and Canada
- Engaged subject-matter experts to identify promising practices and useful resources
- Identified potential areas for additional research and development
- Shared best practices

70 PARTICIPANTS

Upon completing this course, participants are able to:

- Have built relationships with peers who can continue to support their work advancing the SDGs through education and training moving forward
- Understand the importance of community/citizen-centred planning and collaborative goal setting
- Network and consult with peers around North America who can continue to support their work

By committing to the SDGs, countries pledge to pursue progress on economic, social, and environmental targets, in a balanced and integrated manner. The SDGs are cross-cutting and ambitious, and require a shift in how we work in partnership. They also push us to significantly change the level of both public and private investment in all countries.

Dissemination of information and case studies through webinar and discussions



[Watch sessions on YouTube](#)

06. PREVIEW OF YEAR AHEAD

**RCE Americas
Conference**

Mentorship Program

SDG Pathway Program

RCE Americas Conference

The 12th Americas Regional Meeting will be held in a hybrid format from 27–29 September 2023 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The meeting will be hosted by RCE Greater Atlanta under the theme 'Youth Engagement – Empowering Our Youth to Be Changemakers'. This meeting is intended to be an in-person meeting, with provisions made for a virtual option for those unable to travel to Atlanta.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT – EMPOWERING OUR YOUTH TO BE CHANGEMAKERS

Youth are the future; RCE Greater Atlanta has made youth engagement a priority since its inception. College students and young professionals from Metro Atlanta and North Georgia have formed a strong network of changemakers who engage in multiple initiatives. Students from multiple institutions share leadership and collaborate to develop and implement programs and projects with community partners. This network of engaged youth brings energy, action, and results to community projects, with their positive impact being felt by the communities they serve. In return, participating youth develop valuable skills in community-building, communication, and project management.

This meeting will provide an opportunity for RCEs in the region to showcase youth engagement and youth network activity, building on the already engaged coalition of youth across RCEs in the Americas. In addition, we will follow-up on previous conversations and actions agreed upon at the 2022 meeting related to the RCE Americas governance structure.

DETAILS

DATE/TIME: 27-29 SEPTEMBER 2023

LOCATION: HYBRID

In-person: Georgia Institute of Technology, North Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia, 30332 USA.

- Please note: in-person attendance is limited to RCE members in the Americas region.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME:

Note: The following morning sessions are open for members of the public to attend online. This program is subject to change.

- 27 September, 9:00am-12:00pm
- 28 September, 8:30am-12:00pm
- 29 September, 10:00am-12:15pm

IMPORTANT LINKS



**Tentative
Programme**



**Guidelines for In-
Person Participation**

REGISTRATIONS OPEN:
**12TH AMERICAS
REGIONAL MEETING**

27-29 SEPTEMBER 2023
ATLANTA, GEORGIA, USA



Mentorship Program

The project hopes to “lift up” students in underserved populations and help to “level the playing field” in the pursuit of post-graduation employment. Transitioning from school to employment can be traumatic, and one is not born ready to be “an employee”. Through regular discussions with executives and business leaders, our hope is to create a cohort that is more prepared for this transition, is more successful in gaining employment, and is more valuable to their employers, thereby creating a more stable employment situation for employee and employer.

The Mentorship Program connects college students in the Greater Atlanta area, especially those of color, with local business managers, non-profit executives, and academic sector leaders. The program will draw on a schematic of engagement that will prompt discussion and engagement between the Mentor and Mentee (M/M). Topics will likely include goal setting and course work, career paths, cover letters and resume writing, networking and business interaction, phone etiquette, etc. Engagement will occur monthly, on a schedule determined by the M/M, and will be entirely via phone or video conference.

**27 MENTORS + 18 MENTEES
11 PAIRINGS**

In Atlanta, there are many cultures and institutions interacting constantly. Around Georgia Institute of Technology specifically, there is a huge loss of opportunity because those students are provided opportunities constantly while many of our colleagues at surrounding universities are not. Furthermore, many community members are interested in becoming involved in Sustainable Development, but have no idea where to begin.

Sustainable Development Goal #8 is Decent Work and Economic Growth. “Sustainable economic growth will require societies to create the conditions that allow people to have quality jobs.” (The UN) The overall objective of this project, therefore, is to prepare area students for gainful employment – to create those conditions that help to offset other factors that may have hindered the achievement of such objectives in the past.

Other objectives include:

- Employer success in hiring students into full time positions
- Student leadership of the program
- Geographic expansion of the program to additional regions of the State of Georgia

SDG Pathway Program

Goal:

Targeted for Youth 18-29, the program will customize a literacy program for students of different disciplines that will educate them on how the SDGs are incorporated into their field of work.

The program will feature 6 disciplines with 3-4 SDGs each. The curriculum is self-paced and has flexible timing. There is one required introductory course, event, or slideshow.

Featuring 6 Disciplines:

- Engineering
- Liberal Arts
- Design
- Computing
- Business
- Science

The remaining Pathway will be attending events led by:

- Drawdown GA
- Truly Living Well
- WAWA
- Aftercar
- Georgia WAND
- The Lola
- High Museum
- Center for Sustainable Communities

Rewards include:

- Certificate of Completion from UN University
- A digital badge (e.g., to display on LinkedIn)
- RCE SDG Futures Fellowship acceptance for the following year
- RCE leadership positions such as Campus Ambassador or Project leads
- Permission to apply for travel scholarships to attend for RCE Americas and Global conferences

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