



# NEWSLETTER

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**November/December 2009**

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Dear readers and YEE-ers,

We are approaching the end of the year. Have you achieved what you set out to do in 2009? Having goals is important in all areas of life but we all know they can sometimes be hard to achieve - we loose focus, interest or feel it's too hard. But really, reaching a goal is all about setting the intention to achieve it, believing you can, and breaking it down into manageable steps. Whenever you want to start a network or a coalition, there is always a fundamental tension. People may want to collaborate, and they may see that together they could achieve much more. At the same time, most people value their independence and their individual interests will often come first.

How to build a network that will



take the most of what each of us has to offer? Every day many of us would like to respond in some way to what's happening around us but for a variety of reasons we don't. We may feel, rightly or wrongly, that we have no time, no resources, no power, or no impact (why bother, it won't make a difference anyway). We may not know where to start, what to do or who to work with. We may be afraid of failure, ridicule, meetings and committees, wasting our time, getting depressed... This gap between intention and action applies not only to individuals but also to organisations of every kind. Many cities, schools, businesses, museums and hospitals, to name just a few, would be willing to participate in a local initiative or help a similar organisation in another country but for their own set of reasons - including the simplest one - that no one has asked them - they often do not.

Think of some effective networks you know: the Web, the global postal and telephone systems, all the people who play or follow your favourite sport... These networks are ubiquitous, predictable and useful. The best among

them are also decentralized, adaptable and creative. Most important, to achieve all this, they are held together by a name, some goals and few rules - just enough and no more.

Our environmental problems, on the other hand, have no respect for man-made borders and it is better to tackle all of them - climate change, for example, or pollution and deforestation - in the cooperation. This is what we're doing. Connect with others, and share skills, ideas and resources! Connect people, organisations and resources in every possible way! Find good ideas wherever they are and distribute them as widely as possible. It requires setting aside the time to do it and then doing

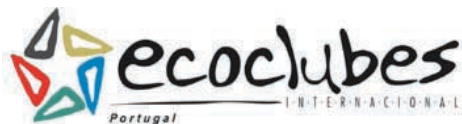
it. Not any single one of us has to, or possibly can save the world, but together in some sort of concert, with all of us working where we see work to be done, the world will change. And this is what Youth and Environment tries to do. I choose to believe we will do what is required. Act! Organize! Assemble! Oppose! Resist! Find a place, a cause, a group, a friend and start, today, now and continue!

In this Newsletter you can find articles from people and organisations that also believe in it and try to change something.

Gjoko Zoroski  
(DEM, Macedonia)  
YEE Publications Officer



## Ecoclubs, spaces of youth participation



[www.ecoclubes.org](http://www.ecoclubes.org)

Ecoclubs were born in Argentina, in 1992, established by a group of students who sought to raise awareness of the waste separation. The very positive results of their actions, either in the activism of young people, or in the improvement of the life quality of communities, resulted in the multiplication of these Ecoclubs in the following years and consolidated them as organisations that bring young people together from all over the world. At the end of 2008, there were 450 Ecoclubs, distributed in 32 countries, involving more than 14,000 people, composing International Network of Ecoclubs (INE).

Ecoclubs are spaces of and for youth participation, led by young people themselves, working on strategies and actions to promote better quality of life in their communities and contribute to sustainable development by applying the motto “think globally, act locally”.

The philosophy and methodology of Ecoclubs arrived to Europe in 2004 and formalised in the first Ecoclub of Vila Decans

(Region of Barcelona, Spain). Only one year later, the first group in Portugal was formed, in Mindelo (Northern Region of Portugal).

At the moment, there are seventeen Ecoclubs in Europe: eight are active, three are in restructuration, four are new Ecoclubs and two unfortunately inactive.

The National Network of Ecoclubes (NNE) and the Organization for the Promotion of Ecoclubes (OPE) have been working to encourage the creation of new Ecoclubes and support existing ones in its consolidation and integration into the the International Network of Ecoclubs (INE).

### Functional organisation of Ecoclubes in Portugal and in the world

In each country there is a National Promoter, a President and a network of Ecoclubs. In 2007, a youth organisation was founded that represents the National Network of Ecoclubes, the Organization for the Promotion of Ecoclubs (OPE), which is responsible for organising national activities, coordinating

**OPE - Organization for the Promotion of Ecoclubes in Portugal is a new associated member of Youth and Environment Europe, since the Annual Meeting 2009.**

the organisation of events, fundraising of activities for national activities and establishing partnership with news organisations.

The National Network of Ecoclubes NNE is constituted by all Ecoclubs, composed by children and young people between 10 and 25 years. All Ecoclubes have one or more facilitators (aged over 25 years) whose function is to support young people in their work, conveying their experience and promoting the autonomy and creativity of the members. The subjects are defined locally by each Ecoclube, taking into consideration the process of the public participation (e.g. forums, surveys) to order to align better activities to local needs and resources.

Internally, each Ecoclub elects its positions in order to facilitate the division of tasks. In turn, each President of an Ecoclub elects by voting the National President, young person under 25 years old, who heads

the Council of Presidents.

The decision-making power is on the NNE, through two Councils of Presidents and Facilitator's, they prepare proposals and reviews and decide about the direction of the movement. The OPE's role is to create conditions for easy and quick organisation of the national activities.

In each country there are representatives of local and national Ecoclubs elected, which represent them in the organs of the International Network of Ecoclubs (INE), the Consultative Council (composed of all National Promoters) or the Directive Council (composed by all National Presidents). Each Council meets annually to set the direction of international the movement.

The INE, is located in Buenos Aires (Argentina) and has similar functions as OPE in Portugal.

## The annual national activities

### Environmental manifestation ‘Rafts in the river’

The action had already three editions, in June each year and had gradually involved more people, inside and outside of the Ecoclubs (from 60 youth in 2007 to 200 young people in 2009). About 31 rafts and more than 200 people sailed down the Douro River on 27 and 28 June, on rafts built with reused materials. Phrases of ecological awareness are placed on sails : recycling is to live, enjoy flowers, clean a river, etc.. This year's edition, like before had two main objectives: to foster unity among Ecoclubs, to promote networking and collaboration between youth associations, especially in the region. The activity was funded by LIPOR.







## National Meeting of Ecoclubs

It is held every year, already for 4 years. The aims of the meeting are: to create a space for training, exchange of experiences and build affective links between young people in the network.

From 4th to 9th of September the IV National Meeting of Ecoclubs was held in Felgueiras (Porto, Northern Portugal) and attended by 30 young Ecoclubs. During these 5 days, they had the opportunity to clean rivers and natural beauty of the neighbourhood Jagueiros, raising awareness of the local population to the problem of river pollution, and to practice geocaching and others several games.



## National Assembly of Presidents

It takes place each year in December. The aim is to create a space for youth leaders to discuss and evaluate the activities of the year, on the one hand, and to plan national activities which may be follow-ups and develop creativity for new proposals to involve more young people in the environmental issues.

National activities are supported financially by LIPOR - Intermunicipal Waste Management of the Great Oporto. ([http://www.lipor.pt/default.asp?SqlPage=default\\_EN](http://www.lipor.pt/default.asp?SqlPage=default_EN) - English site)

In addition, the NNE through a partnership made between the OPE and a Institute Intervir Mais of a High School of Biotechnology of Portuguese Catholic University made a project that had supported the consolidation of groups and greater monitoring of their activities. (<http://jovensambienteecidadania.wordpress.com> - Blog in Portuguese)

## Plans for national activities in 2010

- Organization of Environmental Manifestation (June)
  - Making a film about the movement and activities of Ecoclubes (until July)
  - Composting Festival (July)
  - Organization of the Fifth National Meeting of Ecoclubs (September)
  - Progress with the preparation of a promotional DVD of Ecoclubs (end 2010)
  - National Assembly of Presidents and Vices (December)
- In addition to national activities, the Ecoclubs at local level, through participatory methodology, will continue to work on environmental issues they consider important in their communities. The main topics covered so far are: water, forest and waste.

## Concrete examples of local activities of Ecoclubs

### WATER

#### *Campaign door to door on water and oils*

The Ecoclube Salta Fronteiras joined the AMI campaign in the collection of used cooking oil. In May, young people went door to door to raise awareness of Vila Verde community about the importance of this activity: not only the environment, and the water pollution but also for combating poverty. The youth visited 20 homes and the majority of people pledged to cooperate with the initiative.



### WASTE

#### *Workshops in schools and restaurants on home composting*

The restaurant "Tita" (Vila Nova de Gaia, Oporto region) opened its doors in April, to carry Ecoclubinos awareness to its customers at lunch time. This session was made through a story telling about composting, presented by the youth to 36 customers of the restaurant. At the end of the action, people received a leaflet about how to do composting.



### FOREST

#### *Pedippaper and cicloppaper the forest and biodiversity*

In April, the "Ecoclube de Paranhos" organised a peddipaper on the topic of environment and biodiversity at their school. There were around 560 young people from school involved.

In the same month, the first Eco-Ciclopapper took place, organized by "Ecoclube da Formiga", with a partnership and sponsorship of LIPOR and UNICER. Eleven teams were participating. During the course, participants had to answer questions and perform 5 experiments. The rapport and team spirit have marked this first edition that joined different generations.



Inquiry inside the movement is a constant demand for a way that allows all people to review, to find themselves. The change of these young people into more autonomous responsible persons by the practice and participation is a result that adults can feel and confirm.

awareness in local communities, although day by day Ecoclubs find more and more friends, Earth friends, and step by step the stream that polluted rivers will be transformed into a purifying and regenerating power flow of places and people.

Sónia Vieira

There's still a lot to be done to raise

Revised by Susana Freitas and Ana Lopes

## **AEPGA** **Association for the Study and** **Protection of the Asinine Cattle**

### **Who we are**

The AEPGA - Association for the Study and Protection of the Asinine Cattle is a non-governmental association (NGO) with non-profit purposes, which was established in May 2001. Its main objective is the protection and promotion of the Asinine Cattle, in particular the autochthon race of asinine of Terras de Miranda – Miranda's Donkey.

The association congregates creators and admirers of these cattle and contributes to the genetic improvement and creation of an animal set with similar characteristics, which presently survives in the area Planalto Mirandês in Portugal, representing the first autochthon race of asinine of Portugal.



The AEPGA aims to preserve and manage this autochthon race, with the purpose to save a genetic, ecological and cultural patrimony unique for our country.

The organisation intends to initiate actions in order to change the image of donkeys, contribute to the recovery of its population and the growth of a developmental model that respects and preserves the priceless natural and cultural patrimony of the North-East Transmontano region.

### **The objectives of the association**

- To support the owners of the only autochthon donkey breed registered in Portugal up to now, in terms of technical and bureaucratic advisory.
- To induce the reproduction of the Miranda's donkey breed, in order to get animals with the maximum genetic characteristic load possible of this race.
- To join and collaborate with national and foreign organizations, which have similar meaningful purposes as the Association for Study and Protection of the Asinine Cattle.
- To maintain the main lines of work and collaborate with the official departments

and the researchers connected to the sector, namely in respect to technical and financial support.

- To execute the Plan of Animal Improvement approved by the Direcção Geral de Medicina Veterinária (General Service of Veterinary Medicine), elaborating and keeping the Zoo-technical Registry and the respective Book of the Miranda donkey breed. This is done with the technical advisory and the support of the main board of the Serviço Nacional Coudélico (National Equestrian Service).



and other events involving the Miranda's Donkey Race.

### **Our activities**

To realize its main objective, to save the Miranda's Asinine Race from extinction, the association works day-by-day with the local population, creators and admirers of this race, by giving veterinarian support and helping in the management of the asinine population and its varieties that remains on the Planalto Mirandês.

The AEPGA also supports scientific studies, didactic and procreative activities in the most varied areas of the knowledge: Anthropology, Veterinary Medicine, Special Education, Environmental Education, Ecotourism, etc.

We try to conjugate the maximum of different subjects, in the effort to recuperate a unique patrimony that is a part of all of us. In the time of its disappearance, our society will be dramatically affected and will become more underprivileged, in cultural and biodiversity level.



- To promote the acceptance and the execution by the associates (owners of the Miranda donkey breeds) of the zoo-technical and sanitary measures regulated by the competent services.
- To promote and collaborate in the spreading of the Miranda's donkey breed through the accomplishment of expositions, cultural and ecotourism activities, therapeutic use of the donkey, actions



# NGOs PRESENTATIONS

The AEPGA is also involved in the promotion and organisation of lectures and workshops about the donkeys (alimentation, sanitary and reproductive issues, behaviour) and try to divulgate the animal production techniques, near the farmers in order to increase the Miranda's Donkey population.

In the same time, the Association participates in markets, expositions and competitions; organises veterinary workshops concerning the donkey, Asinotherapy (Asinomediação) formation; makes environmental education activities in the schools and other institutions, as well animation in the holiday's period for young people.

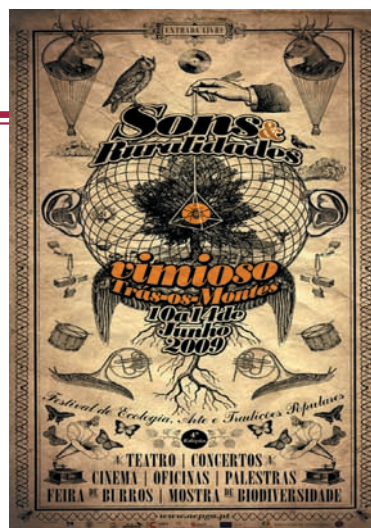
The Donkeys Markets/Expositions/Competitions intend to affirm this species as a revival initiative of old traditions and to continue to call attention for the danger

of extinguishing of the only Recognized Race of Asinine in Portugal – Miranda's Donkey.

## Sustainable touristic and cultural events

The main objective of these events is to preserve the culture and musical traditions, like the Pauliteiros - traditional dancers that perform their dances in the company of local bag-pipers players.

The AEPGA proposes strolls with a donkey to discover the nature and the traditional villages of the area of Planalto Mirandês, Natural Park of International Douro and the Valley of the River Sabor. More than a transport animal, ideal to carry bags and knapsacks, the donkey is the traveller's company, in the adventure of discovering the region. The traveller quickly understands the friendly relation



# NGOs PRESENTATIONS



that can be established between himself and its new fellow traveller. The donkey walks slowly, at a speed of 3-4 km per hour and is able to make about 15 km per day. It is the ideal rhythm especially for the children. There are two different types of strolls: Strolls of Long Duration (more than one day) and Strolls of Short Duration (2, 3 hours).

The association also promotes innumerable tourist-cultural events during the year, like the “L Burro e L Gueiteiro” along the fields and old paths in the area Terras de Miranda, already seventh edition, and “Por Terras D’El Rei”, a donkeys expedition between Atenor and the Castle of Algosó, that next year will have its fifth edition. The stroll along the Planalto Mirandês is guided through old paths between old stone walls and green fields. The leisurely walk is rich in cultural events and concerts throughout the 3 days of festival.

Workshops and cultural interventions are a constant throughout the stroll, the same as the friendly environment and the moments of rest, the traditional festivity by the sound of the regional musical instruments. The stroll offers the opportunity to try traditional games, the gastronomy of the region, musical instruments and traditional dances and much more.

## Therapy attended by Asinine (TAA)

The Asinotherapy or Therapy Attended by Asinine is one equestrian practice that uses the donkey as therapeutically instrument. The donkey is an animal used as co-therapist, thanks to its qualities, such as: docile temperament, animal patient, intelligent, endowed with an excellent memory, robust, slow and with safe movements. One of the prime objectives of the Asinotherapy technique is to offer to the people with special necessities a space of sensorial enrichment as a therapeutically and pedagogical occupation of the free time.

[www.aepga.pt](http://www.aepga.pt)

## Is Europe moving towards sustainability? CEEweb Annual Meeting



CEEweb Annual Meeting took place 15-17 October 2009 in Buda hills. 30 persons from member countries came to discuss about activities for the following year and situation in previous months.

The beginning of my trip wasn't very lucky because my train came late and then I had a problem to reach our meeting point. But finally me and my friend representing OA PTTK, we managed to join the meeting during discussion about EU-level environmental policy.

First day was dedicated to the mentioned policy. First part (about which I only read) was the presentation about sustainable policy and how this kind of policy can assure biodiversity conservation, how to face challenges and create the policy respond. After lunch the group started to prepare our position about post-2010 biodiversity conservation policy. As the core element of CEEweb policy is addressing the root causes of the only seemingly sectoral problems, we tried to reveal the interlinkages between the different issues. For instance, we tried to examine what kind of drivers are behind biodiversity loss or urbanization. And finally, it turned out that the drivers are the same, e.g consumerism, the values of the society (material values are much more significant than the value

of nature) or the sectoral institutional system, etc. In the light of CEEweb holistic approach, we tried to develop common sub-targets which CEEweb should promote and also how we should influence on national, EU and international level the policy. At the end of the first day ex-president of CEEweb Ivan Gyulai presented us his idea of Draft Climate Law in Hungary and main elements of holistic biodiversity policy which didn't meet our understanding but raised a very interesting and stormy discussion.

Next day was full of new ideas. We split into few working groups, which discussed previous activities and planned new ones for the next year. As in the previous year, there will be the following working groups: CITES WG, Natura 2000 WG, Rural Development WG and Sustainable tourism WG. We had a discussion whether we want to set up a new working group, working in climate change field. Unfortunately, there were not enough interested organisations. But few of us, including me, wanted to take part in projects of this group. Then we went for a short excursion near our hostel, on Buda hills. Even more interesting than nature and views was getting to know each others' organisations, field of work, developing new common

ideas, talking about each others' views and plans. For instance, I met Horatiu from Romania, who will be a trainer in my TC 'Forest Welcome Home' next year and he works on sustainable mountain huts management with which I want to deal during next two years and write my master's thesis about. Then Polish team spoke with Veronika Kiss from CEEweb office, how to plan and organise biodiversity picnic in the spring time in Poland. The excursion gave us power to discuss our newly developed ideas on projects and working plan for each working group and also next year's working plan for the whole organisation, which was approved the next day. The end of this day was also very nice. We tasted our national food and drinks which we brought from our countries and of course again discussed our plans and ideas!

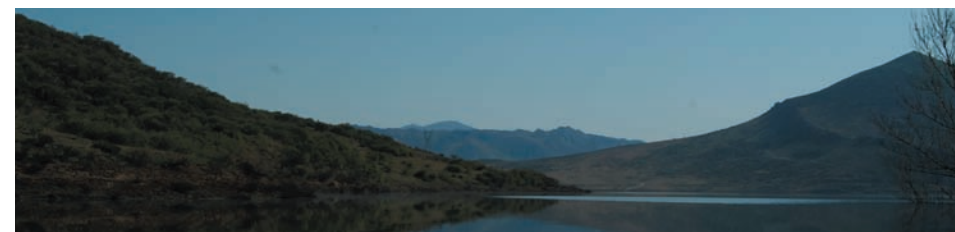
The third and last day was the most official one. We voted on new members of the Board and the International Advisory Committee. Zsófia Fábíán from Nimfea, from Hungary, Tamás Papp from Romania and Nerijus Zableckis from Lithuania were elected as members of the Board and International Advisory Committee. After

the withdrawal of memberships of organisations who have not paid the membership fee for three years, the adoption of the CEEweb Work Programme for 2010 and discussion about other issues, we closed the Annual Meeting.

It was my second AM in my life, the first one was YEE Annual Meeting in Spain few months before, during which I became YEE Board member. I'm happy that after CEEWEB AM I don't have any new function :) Of course except for the old one – being focal point for Poland. I saw two similar but in the same time different organisations. I saw how they work and which problems they are facing. I met representatives of their member organisations, board and staff in the office. I read their working plan. Now I am familiar with them as my partners and co-operators. It is worth to go to the next AM of any organisation which you co-operate with, just to meet the real people.

Monika Kotulak  
(PTTK, Poland)  
YEE Member Organisations Officer

**For more information please contact:**  
Veronika Kiss, [kiss@ceeweb.org](mailto:kiss@ceeweb.org)



## COMEM - Council of Members of Youth Forum Jeunesse

Youth Forum Jeunesse is a network of non-governmental youth organisations whose main aim is to represent the opinion of young people on various issues in different spheres, such as environmental protection, democracy, human rights, migration, etc. and to achieve the principals proclaimed in various European conventions, agreements and so on. COMEM - Council of Members is the main bi-annual event of the platform where MOs have an excellent opportunity to meet together for the following purposes: 1) to make evaluation of the work which has been done in the period between meetings; 2) to share experience gained in the process of work on various topics and issues; 3) to discuss various themes; 4) to work over documentation of the organisation with the purpose of its improvement; 5) to create various working groups in order to give an opportunity to organisations to work together on the topics they are interested in and other important issues.

This time COMEM took place from November 13th to 14th in a picturesque Italian city Torino, which is going to receive the right to bear the name of the European capital next year. More than 90 participants from international organisations and national councils stayed in one of the local hotels with a wonderful

mountainous view from the windows. The venue of the meeting was a cosy conference room in the local polytechnic university (the second biggest one in Italy after Roman one). The agenda of the meeting foresaw two working days so that each one was devoted to specific theme or topic. The first day included general roll-call to define the number of available MOs, report from President Tine Radinja and Secretary General Guiseppe Porcaro about progress of the organisation and about plans that are going to be realized during the period till the next COMEM in half



a year. After that participants were able to evaluate financial report presented by members of Bureau, put questions about it and give their comments. Then there was a very interesting lecture on the topic of human rights, presented by specially-invited guests from Torino University, Italian government, European Parliament and Torino local self-government bodies. In the working groups devoted to various problems, which were formed in the second half of the day, participants had the opportunity to discuss these issues and problems, to share experience with each other, to express their points of view on them. The following working groups were proposed for participants to take part in: 1) Evaluation of Statutory Bodies; 2) Democracy; 3) E-Society; 4) Democracy and others. With the fruitful work of these working groups. the first working day was finished and participants came back to the hotel to have traditional Italian dinner ;)

The second working day was more loaded, because it was the day of working in various thematic squares, organised by MOs and, besides, it was also the day of voting on different questions and issues which had not been discussed before. So the first half of the day was devoted to the work in thematic squares, where participants could discuss various topics, share experience with each other and propose steps to solve any key problem. After lunch the time of voting came. There

were lots of important questions about which the decisions had to be taken. For example, there were some issues on the Secretary General post, a language issue, statutory bodies' issue, membership issue and many others.

Fortunately, by the end of the evening all the issues were solved, decisions taken and participants were invited to take part in the round table which central topic was "Torino-the capital of Europe 2010". It was the last event foreseen by the agenda as a part of COMEM of YFJ 2009.

Putting it into a few words, I can conclude that the meeting was successful and all the tasks that were put beforehand were achieved. Personally, it was a big experience for me. Representing YEE for the first time in the event of such a scale, I managed to get to know more about organisation which YEE is a member of, to participate in discussions on different topics, to take part in the decision-making process on varied issues on behalf of YEE and to set up new contacts with the representatives of various MOs, which could be useful for YEE.

Hope the next COMEM, which will be held from April 23rd to 24th 2010 will be as interesting and fruitful as this one.

Kyrylo Ivliev  
(MELP, Ukraine)  
External Relations Officer and  
Vice-Chair Person of YEE



## International group visits UK to learn about 'EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY' and ECO-CENTRES

An international group of 15 environmental educators visited the UK from 1st-8th September 2009 to learn about 'education for sustainability' and practical demonstration eco-centres. The group, representing NGOs and environmental organisations from Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Portugal, together with British participants and coordinators, spent 3 days in Bristol and 4 days in mid-Wales.

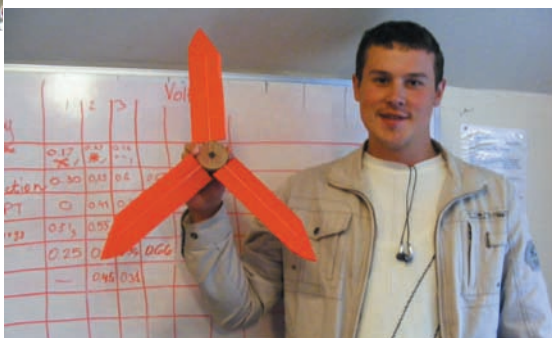


In Bristol, they visited community environmental projects including the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), St Werburgh's City Farm, and met with representatives of Bristol Transition Towns and Permaculture projects, to learn about practical ways of engaging local communities in environmental issues.

In Wales, the group stayed at the Centre for Alternative Technology, a leading eco-centre near Machynlleth, where they learnt about ways to educate young people

and the public about renewable energy and climate change, including practical workshops on wind power, eco-footprinting, and talks from CAT staff on their 'Zero Carbon Britain' strategy and on how the centre was established.

Many of the participants are interested in establishing their own demonstration eco-centre in their own country, to engage with children and local communities on the important issues of climate change, peak oil, renewable energy and eco-building, and therefore had a specific interest in finding out about the work of CAT and the way the centre is run. Several of the



participants, including those from Slovakia and Russia, have already begun work on an eco centre project, while others are involved in education about energy issues and climate change and wish to develop practical eco-centre projects in the future to support better understanding of these issues.

The group also spent a day in the woods with leaders from Forest School Wales, learning about the forest school approach to learning and trying out practical forest school activities such as bushcraft and carving, and held an intercultural evening where food, drink, dance and music from the various participating countries was shared and enjoyed.

It is hoped that participants gained inspiration and ideas from the projects and organisations they visit in the UK, to help them move forward with their ambitions at home. They also shared information about their own work and their own cultures, giving the UK participants a perspective on environmental issues very different to

our own and an insight into little-known cultures such as those from the Caucasus region.

The training course was coordinated by Look East Wild Earth, with the support of the Youth and Environment Europe. It was funded by the European Youth in Action Programme with the support of the British Council. Participants came from a wide range of organisations including the Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (Georgia); Siberian Eco Centre based in Novosibirsk, Russia; and Sosna, an eco-centre in Slovakia.

### Contact

Katy Harris, [info@lookeast.org.uk](mailto:info@lookeast.org.uk)

**Look East Wild Earth is a UK-based registered charity and company making links between environmental initiatives in the UK, Russia and Eastern Europe.**  
[www.lookeast.org.uk](http://www.lookeast.org.uk)

### Useful links

Look East Wild Earth – [www.lookeast.org.uk](http://www.lookeast.org.uk)  
 Youth and Environment Europe – [www.yeenet.eu](http://www.yeenet.eu)  
 European Youth in Action Programme – [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm)  
 Centre for Alternative Technology – <http://www.cat.org.uk>  
 Forest School Wales – <http://www.forestschoolwales.org.uk/>  
 BTCV – <http://www2.btcv.org.uk/display/treelifecentre>  
 St Werburgh's City Farm and Youth Projects <http://www.swcityfarm.org.uk/>  
 Transition Towns – <http://www.transitiontowns.org/>  
 Permaculture Association – <http://www.permaculture.org.uk/>  
 Green House music studio – <http://bristolgreenhouse.co.uk/>  
 Bicyclette Sustainable Events project – <http://www.myspace.com/projectbicyclette>  
 Caucasus Environmental NGO Network – <http://www.cenn.org/>  
 Siberian Environmental Centre – <http://www.sibecocenter.ru/en/index.htm>  
 Sosna Eco Centre, Slovakia – <http://www.sosna.sk/>

## What did I learn in the UK on Education for Sustainability? Impressions of the participant of TC on Sustainable development

I went to the UK to be in the centre of the ecological transition once more. I was curious to see Bristol again, after three years when I went there the first time, to see its progress in becoming an environmentally friendly city and its atmosphere – a living promenade by floating harbour, bars, parks, markets... Even more I was curious to see the Centre for Alternative Technology, a famous “leading eco-centre” where I expected to see in reality things that I only heard about.

### How to involve local people

In Bristol, things were familiar to me. I saw a girl that last time educated our group in “community planning and involving techniques” and I could appreciate the progress that nowadays young mum did in her work and in her private life, too.



She guided us through several projects of abandoned community lands transformed into community gardens where local people can come and grow their food and flowers. It was there, in St Werburgh's City Farm where I learnt few years ago how important it is to involve local people in any change you want to initiate, make and keep. This time we focused more on projects themselves and their relation to climate change mitigation. I asked what the best strategy to attract peoples' attention for such kind of issues was.

“We start with serious data that make people shocked and scared. But we don't kick them out in this state and we ask them what they think that they can do to change the situation. Later we make them think in more cooperative way on what we could do together. And we continue with



more practical steps that can lead to organic farming, trees planting or renewable energy systems installation,” said Jane, the trainer.

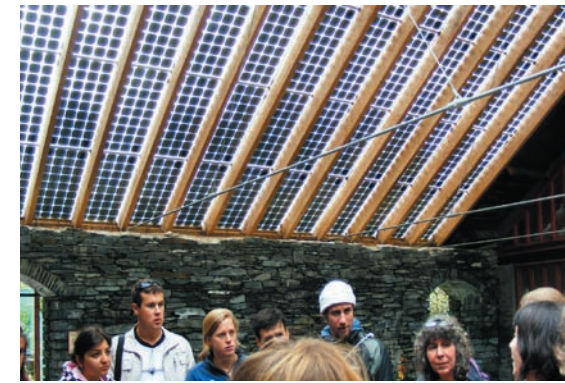
### How to create eco-conditions

In the second part of our training we went to see the “ideal” ecological settlement, known well as CAT. In the middle of forests, up on the hill of former stone mine, well placed next to the stream water, the Centre of Alternative Technology welcomes its visitors. There are thousands of people coming every year to discover naturally based alternatives to our deformed and destroyed lives, to get inspiration in house construction, energy generation and storage, in water and waste management, in organic gardening, composting, hand craft making, etc.

We've got an opportunity to live in such eco-conditions. Eco-cabins built in the time of early settlement in the beginning of 70's were environmentally and socially friendly. The water, PV cells and wind turbine generated electricity, wooden stove made the house comfortable, all waste was separated and toilets were connected to root water treatment, so no organic mass was wasted.

We went around the Centre, we spoke with and listened to local staff, we made and shaped our models of wind mills and we learnt and experienced education for

sustainability. In CAT the emphasis is put on visual component connected with voices and tactile attractions. Visitors move freely around all the area but they can come for short- or long-term courses led by trainers too. They can learn to build eco-houses with a mud, hemp, lime, wood and natural colours for example. At the end of the year the new WISE building is going to be opened, a great passive house with walls made from hemp-crete (hemp and lime mixture), educational spaces and



24 rooms mainly for students coming to “explore, in practical terms, the complex interactions between land-use, energy, food production, buildings, transport, waste management and all aspects of human society”.

### How to speak and teach about sustainability

The complexity of sustainability, its many aspects, pillars and faces were well reflected in our international group. We



had an opportunity to learn about different understandings of sustainability from each other as an integral part of the training. Issues important for one participant can have less importance for the other that deals with different challenges in the country. What I tried to call for was the overall understanding of its benefits. Doesn't matter in what state my country is and what are my priorities, we all humans share basic elements that all of us need to be able to live "comfortably": clean air, fresh water, fertile and healthy land that gives us food and materials for our houses, means of transport, work, etc. And we need to live in peace and harmony together with other beings – humans, animals – to form and express ourselves freely...

#### How sustainability concept can change our life

Sustainability concepts answer these needs by focusing on environmental limits of the Earth, our impact on it and try to design settlements and processes that

bring us back to the living cycle and back to our local societies. It is keen to enrich our lives with indigenous substances, such as solidarity or original fruit trees. It encourages us to work together, to re-establish in many places broken relations with our neighbours and relatives, in order to become less dependent in fulfilling our needs, so less vulnerable to oil, money or other crisis, and less responsible for them. Concrete steps that we have to do are naturally different, unique. But we can learn from each other. And I am dreaming about the state when we will go to visit each other without shame for CO2 emissions that we released, we will sit together in the garden under the tree, all fertilised with local "wastes" coming from plants, animals and us, drink local fresh water from the fountain or spring, and talk, sing and enjoy the richness and heavenliness of the world.

Michal Ruman  
(Konopa, Czech Republic)  
YEE Coordination Officer



## NGOs and climate change policy

Greenhouse gas emission per capita in Central Asia (CA) countries, especially in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are quite low compared with the world average. In spite of that, the region is already suffering from the serious consequences of climate change, such as glaciers melting, desertification expand, increase of annual average temperatures, change in precipitation, often extreme weather periods (heavy hails, droughts), as well as more intensive nature disasters related to climate and weather conditions. All these factors negatively affect nature resources and ecosystems, human health and long-term economic and social development of the region in general. That is why, in spite of geographical, social and economic differences between the countries, adaptation to climate change becomes a key issue for the region.

Public environmental organisations in Central Asia have been involved in the climate change projects for several years. The biggest part of implemented projects was devoted to environmental education and education for sustainable development, introducing energy saving technologies and renewable energy sources. So far, only within last few years, NGOs became more active and visible in the field of climate change policies development on the national level.

Tajikistan's experience can be interesting in this case. In 2008 in Tajikistan NGOs Network on climate change was created. Within the Network an electronic mailing list is operating, where its members can discuss climate change issues, national climate change programs and plans, activities of local and international organisations in this area. Twice a month an electronic newsletter is produced and disseminated among the members of the Network. Together with the Network, the NGO debate club started its periodical meetings (once a month), where active local environmental NGOs gather. The Club aims to be a platform for wide dialogue among stakeholders on various nature protection and environmental policies development issues. The specific focus of the debate club is climate change problems.

The Network has already organised a national level conference on public participation in climate change issues. Both, the national focal point for UNFCCC and the head of the Center for climate change and ozone layer participated in the conference. As main outcomes the recommendation on climate change policy for the related ministries and government were prepared and developed by the participants.

With the support from WECF and Christian Aid few representatives of Tajik environmental NGOs got the opportunity



to participate in international negotiation rounds in Poznan (December 2008) and in Bonn (April and June 2009). The informal meeting with the official delegates was organised to develop further cooperation on the national level.

These days the Tajikistan NGO Network on climate change plans to continue to conduct informal meetings with official delegates to discuss positions and the possibility to include NGO representatives in official delegation. There is also an initiative to develop further a joint public awareness campaign on climate change. The Debate club of ecological NGOs proposed to work on detail recommendations on climate change adaptation for each key sector of the national economy.

### As NGOs we believe that:

- Participation in Kyoto protocol governments of CA countries have to be seen not only as opportunities to attract funds and investments, but also as possibilities to take further efforts on GHG emission reduction even with partly financial and technical support and assistance from the developed countries.
- Governments of CA countries have to develop and approve their own national action plans on climate change, where energy efficiency technologies and renewable energy alternatives have to become key priorities. Governments shall also take the responsibility to provide enough funds for implantation of such plans.

- Programs and actions on mitigation and adaptation of climate change have to be included in programs and strategies of socio-economical development. The inter-sectors and inter-agencies integration and coordination have to be further improved.
- Technologies transfer has to be combined with transfer of knowledge and skills to local specialists and development production and maintenance service on local level.
- Process of the development and implementation of the national policies on climate change issues have to be transparent and open for interested stakeholders. Governments should organize wide consultations with public and NGOs and take into account recommendations and positions in the decision making process.

Timur Idrisov  
(‘Little Earth’, Tajikistan)

**For more information please contact:**  
Timur Idrisov, “Little Earth”  
forearth@yandex.ru



Conference “Climate change and public participation” which took place in Dushanbe in February this year.

## Climate change week in Georgia



Climate change, global warming and the greenhouse effect refer to the same global environmental problem. It will have significant impacts on every nation on the planet. Increasing climate-related catastrophes such as drought, floods, storm surges, heat waves and wild fires were frequently experienced by many countries during the past few decades. These events may be largely attributed to climate change and could possibly lead to irreversible changes in the Earth’s ecosystems.

### Bicycle Critical Mass - Tbilisi, Georgia for Climate Week, October 26, 2009

On October 26th, cyclists, walkers and skaters gathered by SAEM Georgia Youth EcoMovement and other environmental NGOs, met near the Philharmonic theatre in Tbilisi to parade down Rustaveli street. It was a part of the Climate Week combined with the ‘Tbilisoba’ or Tbilisi’s day

- a yearly traditional celebration.

A huge inflatable earth was carried by teenagers and a girl on a skateboard. The police was making sure the road was closed and safe for the parade. It was a nice event and it was great to see all the cyclists on the street - something that two years ago was unthinkable. Now it seems that cycling is not only becoming acceptable but popular in Tbilisi.

With the help of local NGOs, Tbilisi office of SAEM managed to gather people from different places of Tbilisi through the media network and enthusiastic volunteers. We managed to spread the information in the schools of Tbilisi which played a big role in public participation in our project against Climate Change.

This project was organized without any financial support and only based on enthusiasm and wish to change something in the mind of people leaving in or visiting Tbilisi. This project aimed to show that sometimes it is better to drive bicycle or skateboard than pollute air and damage environment.

Dmitri Kopitov  
(SAEM Georgia Youth EcoMovement)

**Critical mass** movements exist all over the planet: the first one was held in September 1992 in San Francisco, USA. The biggest event of this kind took place in April 2008 in Budapest, Hungary, with a total amount of 80.000 activists participating. Do you also want to “conquer” the streets with your bicycle? Insert the term “critical mass” in your search engine and look for tours taking place close to your place. Or start a movement like that in your hometown yourself!



## Oak tree reforestation in León (Spain)



On November 14th, a group of volunteers met to make a forest restoration in a village near León. The voluntary work was organised by the Environmental Organisation Oro Verde.

This activity is the result of an agreement between the company Aquagest S.A. and the Environmental Organisation Oro Verde. The company Aquagest S.A. made a commitment to compensate the CO2 emissions to the atmosphere which were produced in the application process to be in charge of the water supply management of León.

15 volunteers with the help of the mayor of Llanos de Alba village planted around 80 Oak trees (*Quercus sp.*) which

will be controlled and replanted in case some of them won't survive.

In the past our organisation arranged other voluntary works, training courses and environmental education courses financed by the Castilla and León government and the Youth in Action program. This is an opportunity for young people in León to take part in active actions. The main target group of these projects is university students studying in León. In fact for the future we have in mind to work with the Green Office of the University of León.

Alejandro Martinez, Marta Callejo  
(Oro Verde, Spain)



## Let's keep our national values

Nearly 50 young volunteers from FYCA, Armenia took part in the action called "Let's keep our national values" which was held in historical Red Hill (Karmir Blur) on September 19th. The objective of the project was to preserve historical monuments, appreciate them, to deepen participants' knowledge on the Armenian history, to promote the interaction, exchange of experience and information between participants, to create an opportunity for developing and implementing new projects among youth, to promote the co-operation with governmental institutions.

The action was devoted to the 18th anniversary of the Armenian independence and it was implemented within the framework of the events of FYCA's tenth anniversary. The project was put into reality under the patronage of the president of Parliament of Armenia H. Abrahamyan. Also materials from Shengavit community were sent. Having all this support, students made a start.

The majority of the students came to the Red Hill for the first time. Taking this fact into account, the information provided by the director of the Red Hill museum A. Piliposyan was very instructive. The Hill has more than 2000 years of antiquity. In ancient times it was called Teishebanie and it was devoted to the

God of the same name. During one of the sieges the castle was burnt and collapsed, leaving an enormous number of materials for the exploration for next generations. The first archeological investigations have been conducted since 1930s. During excavations numerous statues, jugs, house supplies and even human bones were disclosed. One part of the excavated material is still kept in the hill while another part is being exposed in the Hermitage and in the museum of the Red Hill.

After the introduction, the youngsters were divided into groups and worked for a couple of hours. The FYCA president Atom Mkhitarian announced that the action had a constant agenda. "I think the action was a success. It means that we will not limit ourselves by only the Red Hill. We intend to implement such kind of activities in other historical places and for that we expect governmental support", said FYCA president.

And the youngest FYCA members, seven years old Arina and four years old Aren, were cleaning the area being absolutely sure that their job was a big deal and that it definitely wasn't just a drop in the ocean.

Gayane Asatryan  
(FYCA, Armenia)



## The ecological little pig: Building with straw bale

Once upon a time there were three little pigs. The time came for them to leave home and seek their fortunes. Before they left, their mother told them: Whatever you do, do it the best you can because that's the way to get along in the world.



The first little pig built its house out of straw because it was the easiest thing to do. The second little pig built its house out of sticks. The third little pig built its house out of bricks.

Who was the most ecological and made the best choice for the world?

Have you heard about straw-bale buildings? Building with straw? Isn't it dangerous? Won't you have problems with mice or other animals? Won't it get burnt?

### Benefits of building with straw

Straw is a renewable material that grows fast and is biodegradable. The straw

bales are easy to modify, flexible, long-lasting, easy to protect and keep in good conditions. It does neither require complicated tools, nor other expenses and not even qualified personal. In many parts of the world it has been shown that the basic methods of this type of construction can be learnt in a two days workshop! The straw building (in case it is self-constructed) can cost around 20% of a normal house costs, if it is constructed by a company the prize can reach 60% of a normal house.

### Energy efficiency

The isolation is measured by the resistance value to the heat (R). Bigger the value is, better isolation there will be. The wood has a value R-1, the brick R-0.2, a straw-bale has a value R-50 and the plaster covering the straw-bale increase this value further. Besides that, the straw-bale has a big acoustic resistance that makes the inside space empty from the outside noise.

### Straw-bale is a natural material

Each year millions of tones of straw bales are burned all around the world. This creates a lot of CO, CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>3</sub> that are released to the atmosphere and the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced from this burning is, in some countries, bigger than the amount from power plants.

### Fire resistance

A standard construction has 20 minutes fire resistance, a building with straw has three times more resistance, due to the fact that bales are compacted and have not got air inside. One example of it can be if you burn a paper - check what happens if you burn the telephone book! It will not burn easily. So the same principle is the one for straw-bale: the lack of the air inside of walls will result in the fact that the straw will not burn easily.

In the USA a straw-bale wall is used as well as a wall against fire with a clay cover.



Using straw-bale for construction will reduce the amount of emissions to the atmosphere and help to stop the global warming. It will reduce the destruction of forests due to the use of the straw as a building material.

### Structural stability

The capacity of one material to come back to the same shape after being under pressure in a short period of time is called elasticity. The trials done by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in the 80s shows that after being under 16 kilos of pressure (the considered breaking point) the straw-bale resists this pressure and after that recover the shape without being deformed. This makes the construction with straw-bale quite suitable for regions where the earthquakes are often. The most of the strength of the earthquake will be absorbed by the walls of straw, instead of transferring it to the roof, like in the conventional constructions.



### Durability

There are still constructions done with straw from 1800, in Europe we can find constructions done with straw from 1900 and they are still in good conditions. You just need basic maintenance to keep the good quality of your construction.

So if it is so good, if it has so many advantages why constructors don't build with straw?



The reasons for that are many:

- First of all, it needs a demand from the society to build with it and so far it doesn't exist so old methods are used.
- If all the constructors will build with straw, the prize and the amount of straw will not be enough to provide to all the companies and the prize of the straw will rise
- A change of mentality is needed in the society because not many people see straw bale as a construction material.
- The straw walls need a bit of care few times per year from the owners - many people are not eager to do it.
- It is quite hard, if not impossible, to build a block house with straw and in cities where the prize of land is too expensive, a normal house is not providing the companies with profit.

#### Different ways to build your house with straw:

- "Load bearing" or "Nebraska-style" technique: Load bearing is an easy method of building a house, the bales may actually provide the structural support for the building.

- "Infill" or "non-load bearing" technique: Alternately, bale buildings can have a structural frame of other materials, usually lumber or timber-frame, with bales simply serving as insulation. This technique is used in northern regions and/or in wet climates. In northern regions, the potential snow-loading can exceed the strength of the bale walls.

Alberto Mogio Perez  
YEE Secretary General

#### Resources:

Just write 'straw bale building' in a web searcher and you will have a lot of information.

<http://www.thelaststraw.org/>  
<http://www.strawbalecentral.com/>  
<http://www.greenhomebuilding.com/strawbale.htm>



Pictures from the website: [www.casasdepaja.org](http://www.casasdepaja.org)

### 'Environmental' City - Masdar

Dubai has few resources so it imports all the materials, Dubai has no farmlands so it imports all the food. It has a big potential of solar energy but makes few use of it. Dubai hasn't got water but has enough money to invest in desalination of water. It is a country where the impossible becomes possible: building artificial islands, ski resources in the middle of the desert... Nothing seems so far from the nature than Dubai, consuming the petrol to build a state.

In the middle of this environmental madness, a city is being constructed. The city is becoming a reference for designing future cities due to the aim to have zero carbon emissions and zero waste. One city that is planned without cars, without waste, reusing all the water till maximum, creates its own food grown locally.

The first phase of the eight year project begun in 2006, the entire project will eventually house around 50,000 people and 1.500 businesses supplying environmentally friendly products.

The project has been hailed by its developers as one in which commercial and residential entities will blend with each other to create a totally harmonious environment, where all lighting and air conditioning systems will be powered by a 40 to 60 megawatt solar power plants, a 20 megawatt wind farm, as well as geothermal and hydrogen based power. Additional photo voltaic solar panels will be installed on the roofs of many buildings, which is expected to increase the megawatts from solar energy to 130 megawatts.

Virtually everything used and consumed by Masdar City's inhabitants, including water, food products and other items, will be recyclable as much as possible, including waste.

The food will come from greenhouses situated as close as possible to minimize the use of cooling for the transportation and the transport.

The city will be enclosed by walls to keep out the hot desert winds and all walkways will be shaded and designed to take



Pictures of Dubai from the website: [www.sxc.hu](http://www.sxc.hu)



advantage of cooling breezes.

No cars will be allowed in a six square km area around Masdar. The workers and residents will use carbon-free transportation, magnetic transportation. These transports will move through magnetic camps without a need to use huge quantities of energy.

If you look at it with another approach, the city is not that ecologically friendly because of the use of the materials. Thousands of workers are going to Dubai to work, increasing the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> while travelling there. All the materials are imported to construct the city, the use of natural materials lack by their inexistence.

Masdar, a city of contrasts that is far from being a perfect environmental city,

at least includes new ways of thinking - zero carbon emissions, full recycling system, renewable energy use, no car use.

Another interested thought from one blog that I read is the following one:

“If the residents of the United Arab Emirates were given a choice - spend \$22 billion on creating an environmental model for 50,000 future residents who will live on six square kilometers or use \$22 billion to provide basic recycling services, affordable solar panels for every household and effective measures to cut exhaust emissions that would benefit the almost 5 million current residents living on 83,000 square kilometers - what option would they choose?”

Alberto Mogio Perez  
YEE Secretary General

#### For more information check:

[www.masdaruae.com/experiencingtheemirates.blogspot.com/2008/02/masdar-model-city-is-environmental.html](http://www.masdaruae.com/experiencingtheemirates.blogspot.com/2008/02/masdar-model-city-is-environmental.html)

## Call for partners for the Youth Exchange 'Learning from each other'

**Title:** Learning from each other – the Youth Exchange on games from environmental education

**Type of the project:** Youth Exchange

**Organiser:** PTTK, Cracow, Poland

**Participants:** From each organisation 4 participants (16-25) plus one group leader

**Contact person:** Monika Kotulak, [kotulak.m@gmail.com](mailto:kotulak.m@gmail.com)

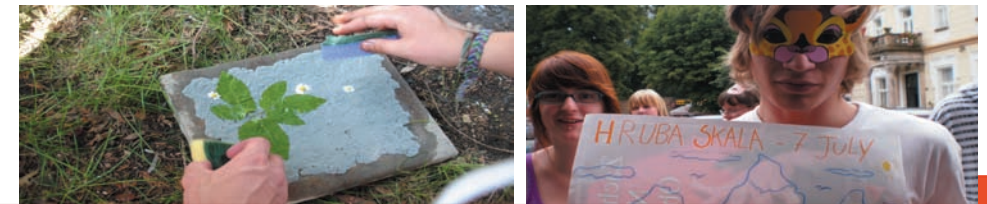
**The Youth Exchange 'Learning from each other' will take place in September 2009 in Polish mountains and will last 7 days. It will involve 6 organizations from different European countries who work in the field of youth and environmental work, especially environmental education.**

The youth exchange is projected for 30 participants (4 young people and one group leader from each country). We would like to exchange ideas, experience and best practices through workshops prepared by each of the organisations taking part in the project, using the method 'learning by doing'. The aim is to transmit the most successful and inventive practices to other organisations and to improve and to vary the everyday work of the youth NGOs. The follow-up of the project will be the creation of a booklet with (environmental) games presented during the youth exchange.

The project 'Learning from each other' is based on the idea of exchanging knowledge and experience between youth environmental organisations by practical workshops. We believe that the method of experiencing things will work really well with environmental games that participants will remember better after trying them. We will meet among youth environmental organisations to practice skills that are interesting for all of us because of field of work/interest and we will try to show how to put gained skills into the daily work so that the enthusiasm after the youth exchange would be used for the continuation of the project in their own organisations.

The Youth Exchange is a second round of the project organised by Czech Member Organisation of YEE, Konopa. The project was really successful so Polish organisation decided to organise the similar project but with different focus. If you want to know more about the first edition of 'Learning from each other' in 2009 you can check YEE website: [www.yeenet.eu](http://www.yeenet.eu) and in the section Publications download YEE Newsletter July/August.

If you would like to take part in the youth exchange, write short motivation letter and send it with Part III to Monika Kotulak: [kotulak.m@gmail.com](mailto:kotulak.m@gmail.com)



Pictures taken during the Youth Exchange 'Learning from each other' in June 2009.

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**YEE Office  
Toulcův Dvůr  
Kubátova 1/32  
102 00 Praha 10 - Hostivár  
Czech Republic**

**[www.yeenet.eu](http://www.yeenet.eu)  
[yee@yeenet.eu](mailto:yee@yeenet.eu)**

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