



NEWSLETTER

September/October 2010



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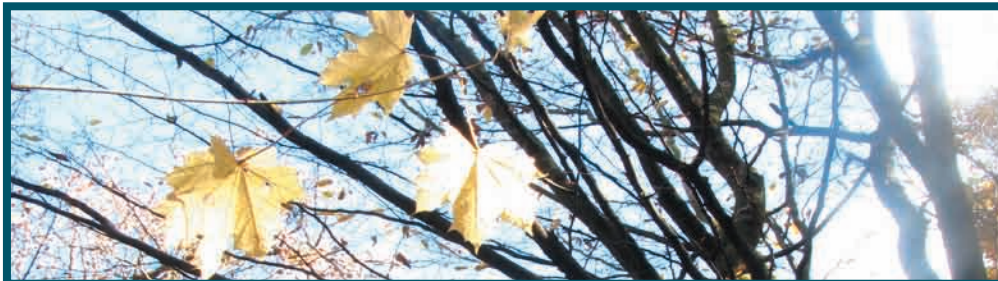
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**Editorial team:**

Gosia Zubowicz, Gemma Tracey, Paulina Piasecka

Editorial

Dear YEE Newsletter readers,

Welcome to the Autumn edition of your YEE Newsletter. As I write this editorial, I glance out the window of my home here in London and admire the trees that line my street. Over recent weeks their leaves have been turning from bright greens to lush shades of orange, red and gold, and slowly drifting from the branches down to the ground. I love this season because of these wonderful colours and also because of the rich variety of fruit and vegetables that are available. Each week I have been enjoying the rich harvest of apples, pears, pumpkins and other treats that are available at my local market. And the harvest is also visible within Youth and Environment Europe.

As you read this Newsletter, you will see that after many months of hard work and planning (and some worry and stress too, of course!) YEE and its Member Organizations have been reaping a rich harvest of projects and achievements.

Thanks to the training course "Youth Ambassadors for Sustainable Living", the participants are now acting as ambassadors for the environment back in their home countries.

In September, OA PTTK from Poland held a youth exchange where participants shared the games they use with children and young people to educate them about

environmental issues. I would highly recommend that you take a look at the wonderful booklet which is the outcome of this project – Games for Nature. Hopefully it will provide you with inspiration as you plan your projects for 2011.

And when you read the article about the Forest Welcome Home Training course held this autumn in Poland, you will see how participating in a YEE project can reap the reward of new friendships.

So, as we head into the winter, the days become colder and our trees ever more bare, have a think about what work you will do over the next few months to ensure that we can enjoy a rich YEE harvest again next year. Perhaps you will be inspired by the dynamic activities of OPE. Or maybe you will think about planning a clean-up activity in your neighbourhood, just like Stepanavan Youth Centre did?

I hope you enjoy this newsletter, and if you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for future articles then please get in touch with me or Gosia.

Good luck with your work this autumn!

Gemma Tracey

YEE Publications and Promotion Officer
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Training Course

"Youth Ambassadors for Sustainable Living. Renewable Energy and Climate Change Dimensions" Ukraine, July 2010

From 17th to 23rd of July, 2010 the city of Pavlograd had the honour to welcome guests for a training course, organized by the YEE in cooperation with the Youth Environmental League of Prydniprovya (MELP) – a Ukrainian NGO, which is an active partner in many events organized by YEE and its members. The training course was named "Youth Ambassadors for Sustainable Living. Renewable Energy and Climate Change Dimensions".

The training course was devoted to the topic of climate change and renewable energy sources. Three specially invited experts currently working in the sphere of environmental protection gave the participants lots of interesting and useful information on these issues. Hopefully all those who participated in the training course will manage to put into practice all the knowledge they gained to become real "ambassadors" in the sphere of environmental protection, climate change and renewable energy.

The organizers of the training tried to do their best in order to make the event not only useful, but also interesting. One of the ways they did this was by using a variety of working methods in the program of the training. Therefore, among a range of lectures, brainstorming, discussions etc. there were some outdoor sessions, where the participants had an opportunity to enjoy the traditional Ukrainian way of life, Ukrainian culture, traditions, customs and so on. During one of these sessions all the participants travelled to a nearby village, where one of the members of the hosting organization MELP is running his own agricultural complex, using sustainable technologies and patterns, such as windmills, compostable toilets, waste recycling equipments etc. As well as having the opportunity to see all these things, the participants were also able to put questions about facilities, equipment or construction directly to the people who run the farm.

In the framework of another outdoor session the group moved to a local pine forest where we held a discussion on the legal aspect of climate change and renewable energy sources. It was also an occasion to enjoy spending time together, to share experience gained and hopefully to



set up new contacts which will be useful in future activities.

The final session of the training course focused on best practices, with participants from various NGOs sharing their experience with others. The participants especially enjoyed this session because they heard a lot of new stories about how their colleagues from different organizations in different countries are fighting for environment, how they are dealing with the same issues and challenges. People were also able to share interesting

examples of their organizations' activities.

In a nutshell, I would like to say, that in spite of some obstacles which occurred while the team from MELP were running the training course, I was happy to be a part of a preparatory team, to contribute to the training preparation, to participate in its sessions and to meet my friends and new fellows at yet another environmental event organized by the YEE in cooperation with the Youth Environmental League of Prydniprovya. Hopefully the participants and organizers will retain good memories of the event and a positive impact on the environment will be the training course's outcome.

Kyrylo Ilviev
(MELP, Ukraine)

Comments from participants

"The training course "Youth Ambassadors for Sustainable Living" permitted the participants a clear perspective on the possibilities and difficulties for young environmentalists in Ukraine. As well as global climate change politics and local developments in the sector of renewable energies, the participants got to know the true promise of the unmatched hospitality of this country."

Anne Kollien, Germany

"This TC was a chance to get to know a charming country, rich in warm and welcoming people. The sessions were very interesting, and the workshops a great way to learn and put into practice what we were learning while having fun at the same time!"

I got more in depth on topics I had already focused on, like climate change, and I learned a lot about how sustainability can actually be implemented in urban areas, thanks to the case studies presented by the trainers. One thing is for sure: a good ambassador for sustainability must stay updated about what's going on!"

Francesco Ballone, Italy

Training Course was funded by the European Youth Foundation - the Council of Europe.



Youth Exchange 'Learning from each other - games of environmental education' Poland, September 2010

The Youth Exchange 'Learning from each other - games of environmental education' took place in September 2010 in Polish mountains and lasted 7 days. The project was organised by OA PTTK from Poland and supported by YEE. It involved 5 organisations from various European countries working in the field of youth and environmental work, especially environmental education. The youth exchange was planned for 25 participants (4 young people and one group leader from each country: Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Poland). Participants used the principle of 'learning from each other' to exchange ideas, experience and best practices from environmental educa-

tion through workshops prepared by each of the participating organisations. Each day one participating organisation made a presentation and ran practical workshops using the method 'learning by doing' which works really well for presenting games and activities from environmental education. During these activities each organisation presented its best practises, the most effective methods they use in their work with youth (for example: environmental and educative games, various outdoor activities). The aim was to transmit the most successful and inventive practises to other organisations and to improve and vary the everyday work of the youth NGOs.



Photo: Marcin Pycia

My experience at the youth exchange 'Learning from each other'

The youth exchange participants got together in the small mountain village of Piwniczna Zdroj in Poland. For 7 days participants from Poland, Czech Republic, Spain, Portugal and Bulgaria shared their environmental ideas and games.

The aim of the project was to learn more about nature, environment and methods of organising environmental games through exchanging experience and sharing methods. The whole project was planned so that it was created through the contributions of each participant. Groups brought their experiences from their own events, games and methods which they use for non-formal learning in their organisations. Each organisation had a one-day slot for sharing their knowledge and experience.

Our – Czech – group consisted of 4 females and 1 male. We did not know each other very well so we planned most of our programme via email. We all had lots of relevant experience thanks to the many events organized by our sending organisation Hnutí Brontosaurus and we tried to run our activities in spirit of Hnutí Brontosaurus. We prepared some games to get to know each other, some short games (ice-breakers and energisers), discussions, and creative activities. Our favourite game (and the other participants' favourite also!) was Round Discussion. Participants were so delighted with de-

bating about interesting topics with others that we had to create new themes to make this activity longer! (Check page 8 to read the description of this game.)

'Trash story' was also a very successful game. It enabled participants to be creative and to use lots of different presentation methods (comics, theatre, photo-story, poetry, video, songs etc.)

The Czech group was naturally quite stressed but during the day they gained self-confidence and could lead the activities without worrying so much. As it turned out, they enjoyed the day in the role of leader better than in the role of participant. Their own success at leading provided them with lots of motivation for the rest of the youth exchange.

During the evaluation at the end of the exchange, our Czech group was able to express their feelings about the whole event. They spoke about the difference between the environmental behaviors of several groups. Though we participated in an environmentally focused project, some participants did not respect the basic environmental rules. In one of our activities we discussed about the waste in our lives and ways to change this, but sometimes we saw the waste of energy, food and material by other participants. I hope that the discussions, a movie 'Home' and indeed the whole project showed them other ways of living.

ROUND TALK	
Aim of the game:	to present and share opinions about the environment and environmental problems
Location:	indoor/outdoor
Number of players:	12–50
Age of players:	over 12
Preparation time:	10 minutes
Materials needed:	pieces of paper with environmental topics (deforestation, climate change, global warming, genetic engineering, overpopulation, water and air pollution, resource depletion, waste, etc.)
Length of activity:	1–2 hours
Description:	

Players are split into two groups of similar size and create two circles – an outside circle and an inside circle. Participants in the circles sit facing each other. Each participant has one person facing them to have a discussion with. Pairs speak on the given topic for a limited time (time depends on both the age of the players and the themes being discussed – 2 to 5 minutes). After the end of every topic players change their pairs – participants in both circles circulate to the right side and on the signal (stop!) they stop in front of another player and in this way form a new pair to discuss a new theme.

The game presented by Czech group during the youth exchange 'Learning from each other'. It is a part of the booklet 'Games for Nature'.

For Czech participants it was inspiring event in many ways. If I had to summarize the exchange I would say that it gave me a lot of new knowledge about other cultures and countries. It was a very interesting event for me. I could practice foreign languages and got to know new things about nature and ecology. And I also met a lot of great people who I am still in touch with. I would like to go to a similar exchange again, said Andrea Kuběnová in her review.

The exchange in Poland was a really nice experience. I met lots of new people from all over Europe, and I made new friendships, I got to know new languages, people, and information about their country. And I could also visit Poland but it is a pity that we did not spend more time in the nature and we did not get to know Poland more. I learned a little bit about ecological problems and how each country can improve the environment, wrote Kristýna Mencová, other Czech

participant.

Results of the exchange were not only memories and pictures but also a great and useful booklet full of environmental games and activities! This booklet was created by the Polish team (led by Monika Kotulak) from the games, which the several national teams prepared for the project. I hope it will be inspiring also for other organisations and youth workers.

Generally, the project was from my point of view successful and my thanks go to Monika Kotulak and her team; especially I would like to thank Antek for

helping our participant Martina who unfortunately had an eye accident.

I hope that the next part of 'Learning from each other', which is being organized in spring 2011 in the Czech Republic by Hnutí Brontosaurus will bring participants just as many good experiences!

Kristina Studená,

(Hnutí Brontosaurus, Czech Republic)

www.modrykamen.brontosaurus.cz

www.brontosaurus.cz

To reach as many organisations as possible with the results of this project, a booklet '**Games for Nature. Environmental education through the eyes of young people**' has been prepared with all the games and activities from the youth exchange. YEE and OA PTTK hope that this booklet will give you inspiration for your **work with children in nature**.

You can download it here:

- www.yeenet.eu/images/stories/pdf_books/GAMES_FOR_NATURE.pdf

More information about the booklet:

- www.yeenet.eu/index.php/news/435-yee-publication-games-for-nature



Education and Culture DG

'Youth in Action' Programme

The youth exchange 'Learning from each other' and the booklet 'Games for Nature' were funded by Youth in Action Programme, the European Commission.

Let's make our organizations more eco-friendly! Environmental management – brilliant tools for making better use of nature resources

What does environmental management tell you? Maybe you have heard something about environmental management systems ISO 14001 and EMAS? Maybe you thought it was too difficult for you and too serious for your organization?

Now you have the chance to learn more about environmental management in an interesting and easy way. Youth and Environment Europe is running a long-term project called simply **“Environmental Audit”**. The project consists of three stages:

• Stage 1

This first part of the project has already happened. It was a training course designed to teach participants what exactly environmental audit is and inform them about the easiest tools to conduct audits in their own organizations. You can read more about it later in this article.

• Stage 2

We are now in the second very important stage of our project. Participants from the training course have been given the task of spreading their knowledge from the training in their own countries. This could be an eco-mapping of their organization (finding environmental impacts and marking it on a map) or promoting environmental audits within

the business world, NGOs and government. Local events are also a good idea. Most of the international teams are going to prepare workshops and information days about the topic in their home cities and countries. We hope for support from local professionals, consultancies and government.

• Stage 3

Third stage is also important. We plan to hold an evaluation meeting in March, at the end of the project. It is going to be a great opportunity to share our experiences and to celebrate and share our achievements.



How did it all begin?

“The idea for the project came to my mind in response to my own observations at YEE events. During YEE activities we use a lot of nature resources. We travel from one part of Europe to the other, sometimes using less environmentally friendly modes of travel like planes. During our meetings we also use a lot of paper, markers, energy, water etc. The main aim of this project is to have a closer look at our practices and improve our environmental policies” explained Anne Kollien, Environmental Audit project coordinator.

Training course in Czech Republic

The training course “Environmental Audit” took place from September 16th - 22nd in a beautiful Buddhist eco-farm called “Padma farma” in Bela u Jevicka village, Czech Republic. Participants came from different corners of Europe: Czech Republic, Poland, Germany, Macedonia and Albania. It gave us a great opportunity for comparing environmental situations in our different homelands.

During the training we learned about procedures in environmental audits, the meaning and assumptions of environmental standardization. We can be proud that we managed to read and analyze the entire ISO 14001 and EMAS regulation text. It looked “scary” at the beginning. The text is written in professional



language and many of the phrases had to be explained for us.

‘The devil is not so black as he is painted’ as we found out later. Thanks to our trainer, Jürgen Paeger, who used appropriate methods of non-formal education we quickly understood exactly what the texts were talking about. Then we had an opportunity to put our new knowledge into practice. We created a map of the conference building and the surroundings. We walked around the eco-centre acting like real professionals, asking questions and searching for all deficiencies which have an impact on the environment. The exercise was appreciated by all participants and showed us that even in a place like an eco-centre you can still find things that can be improved.

After being well trained we felt more self-confident and started to discuss our own projects. The organizers thought about it as well. They prepared a cycle of workshops focused on project



management and working with media. We learned how to start a campaign, what is the difference between an article for websites, magazines and an advertisement. Some of us had also an opportunity to test ourselves in an improvised TV interview. We also made a short activity – we were pretending that we were on the meeting with potential business client.

The training course was very fruitful and the proof is in the detailed action plans prepared by participants. We are looking forward to the implementation of their fascinating projects in their countries.

Paulina Piasecka
(YEE EVS volunteer)

Resources:

- www.padmafarma.cz/en/
- Check our website to stay updated about Environmental Audit project: <http://www.yeenet.eu/index.php/projects/yee-completed-projects/388-tc-environmental-audit>
- Check out our photogallery: www.yeenet.eu/index.php/photogallery/view/28

You can also take an active part in our project!

We are searching for organizations, institutions and companies which would like to cooperate with us. We can train you in environmental management, show you “how it works”, tell you “how can you profit from that”, and provide you with all the necessary information for a further certified audit.

Comments from a participant

“It was a very profitable training course, I think not only for me but for all participants. I have learned a lot of new things in general and especially about our environment. The topic was very interesting, very relevant and the way the training was organized was not stressful, and helped us to understand everything better and to cooperate easily with each other. We felt a positive atmosphere around us, so we were free to express our ideas, to exchange our opinions and in this way our ideas developed. We laughed and we learned at the same time. Everybody was engaged in doing good work. I want to spread as much as possible my new knowledge about environmental auditing in my country.”

Lira Hakani,
(EDEN Center, Albania)

What is an environmental audit?

It is a clever method that helps organizations and companies:

- to find what else can be done to reduce their negative impact on the environment
- to plan and implement environmental improvements
- to assure their clients and members that they care about environment and put strong effort to decrease impact on environment
- to run enterprises according to environmental law and good practices
- to get an ISO certificate
- to make workers more environmentally conscious

More info can be found here:

- Ecomapping/EMASeasy: <http://www.emas-easy.eu>
- EMAS regulation: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm): go to “EMAS documents”.
- ISO 14001: The text of ISO 14001 must be purchased from your national standard organisation or at the ISO website www.iso.ch
- EMAS helpdesk: ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/toolkit/index.htm), a library of environmental statements (ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/es_library/index_en.htm) and a link to national competent bodies (“useful links, ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/tools/links_en.htm).
- Ecomapping/EMASeasy: A brochure explaining this approach to EMS can be downloaded in 20 languages at <http://www.emas-easy.eu/> (registration required).

The project ‘Environmental Audit’ is funded by Europe for Citizens Programme, the European Commission.



‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme

Training Course 'Forest - Welcome Home' Bieszczady Mountains, Poland, 27 Sept – 3 Oct 2010

"Forest – Welcome Home" was a TC organised by OA PTTK and YEE in Bieszczady National Park in south-eastern Poland in September 2010. 25 participants (youth workers, trainers, facilitators, volunteers from environmental organisations) from countries throughout Europe, such as Czech Republic, Portugal, Spain, UK, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia and Poland participated in educational workshops aiming to train and exchange knowledge and practice working with children and young people on the topic of the forest ecosystem.

The project focused on learning about forest education methodologies and educational tools for making projects and activities. Its aim was to promote high-quality youth events and training in the field of environmental education connected especially with the forest. There was a lot of interaction between participants and, thanks to the fact that all participants are experienced in this field, there were con-

stant exchanges of knowledge and experience.

During workshops and activities, participants were trained in topics including environmental education, forest biodiversity, sensory forest experiences, sustainable mountain hut management, as well as creative methods of exploring and getting to know the forest ecosystem. Furthermore, special emphasis was put on looking at the forest from a cultural perspective (personal experiences related to forests and stories regarding their heritage and customs). There was also space for workshops regarding project management and open spaces so as to develop new ideas for further projects and creativity in our work with young people.

Overall, the aim of this project was to show participants how to teach children and youth about the importance of the forest habitat, as well as how to protect it, feel comfortable in it, and take responsibility for what occurs there.



My story of the training course "Forest - Welcome Home"

I received an e-mail from 'Look East-Wild Earth' asking if I would like to go to the Polish Mountains to do an international training course as a Forest Educator where I could share my experience and knowledge of forest education while learning from others about forest culture and education. I replied immediately with enthusiasm as I had dreamed of visiting the mountain forests of Poland, which are much older and richer in bio-diversity than any in the UK.

One month later I found myself standing outside Krakow railway station with Sarah (my colleague from the UK) as pairs of people from Latvia, Romania, Portugal, Spain, Czech Republic, and Poland gathered in the same spot. We travelled to Bieszczady National park, to the small village of Zatwarnica.

The next morning we had our first sight of the forest and meadow with its huge range of flora and fauna, trees starting to show autumn colours and magnificent panoramic views of the high rolling hills.

The day was lead by Richard from the UK. He introduced a series of exercises designed to show how the environment can be discovered using all of the 5 senses separately: sight, sound, feel, smell, and taste. After this we learned about risk assessments and then built shelters from branches, twigs and leaves that were around us. The day continued with fire-



lighting, NGO 'speed dating' (to find out about each others' projects) and designing the ideal eco-hostel.

Each evening there was a session allowing the groups to present slide shows about their countries nature and the projects people were involved in. The first evening culminated with a film about the land artist Andy Goldsworthy. Another was an international evening in which people brought food and drink from their own countries.

The second day was led by Ryszard from Poland and focused our attention on the culture of the forest and emphasised how co-dependant everything is in nature. We again went up into the forest and made land art installations, spent time quietly with chosen trees, and walking silently to absorb the feeling of the forest. The afternoon gave the opportunity for each national group to perform a play about the forest

representing our own cultures. The UK team did 'The Lorax' by Dr. Seuss, which was very enjoyable to do! Each session was started with a game to warm us up or build a good atmosphere; I will certainly use many of these in the U.K. with children and young people.

Forest Schools were the theme of the third day, a popular way of teaching young people in the UK through play in the forest. These aroused a lot of interest from the other groups, and this was followed by photography and making mud face sculptures to put onto the trees. Later we followed the tracks of a wolf to the carcass of a deer. This was my high point of the week as we do not have wolves in the UK, so I had not seen such a thing before!

The following day we visited an eco-ranch with log cabins, solar power, beaver ponds and wild (but very friendly) ponies, a fascinating example of how farms can be run. We then visited an orthodox church (which used to be typical of the area), the museum and went on a hike up to the top of one of the highest hills in the region. Clouds obscured the view, but we did find our first snow of the season! Our return was greeted by the howling of wolves from somewhere across the road from the hotel.

On the final day we were introduced to the work of Youth in Action and how it can benefit us in our work. After some final exercises on the hillside we started

to evaluate and analyse the course and provide feedback for the week.

Then, suddenly, it was all over. After an early start, following a night walk, bonfire and late final party, we were back at Krakow station ... and all the new friends parted company in the same spot where we had met just one week earlier. It was a hugely enjoyable course: intense, very informative, long days with hardly a minute wasted, very tightly structured, a great chance to meet people from different countries and see how people work in an intercultural context. Some people found the introduction to vegetarian food challenging; others found how one country's opportunity to re-introduce lost species was another country's problem (e.g. beavers in Latvia), but these led to interesting debates in the evenings.

David Petty



Comments from participants

"Forest Welcome Home was a great concept for a project and joined together perfectly 2 of my great loves: forest education and the Carpathian Mountains. The setting, participants and passion of the other trainers was inspiring and made me want to set off around the region in search of more people doing great environmental education. Despite having to prepare sites and walk routes from 6.30 most mornings and then doing 16 hour days, with plenty of coordinators meetings to fill the breaks, it didn't feel like work. I left invigorated and very keen to do more sharing of knowledge and experience in this part of the world. So a plea to all YEE partners - keep the great ideas for forest related projects coming and maybe we will meet in the woods someday."

Richard Irvine (trainer in the TC "Forest - Welcome Home", U.K.)

"In a short comment, I would like to say that it was an amazing and extremely rich experience. I know that you already know this, but it seriously improved me both professionally and personally by developing different and new points of view. It also made me learn so many different methods and techniques that I will definitely use in the future. In fact, this TC was a kind of inspiration for new projects and it really helped me to understand how to accomplish them. Apart from all the workshops and activities, I loved to get to know each one of the participants and their countries' cultural and natural heritage."

Lúcia Cardoso de Sousa (OPE, Portugal)

"The training course "Forest - Welcome Home" is the best environmental project I have ever participated in. Perfect organization of the project, good selection of participants, fantastic trainers and most important - all activities of the project I can now use in my work with my NGO's target group."

Girts Baranovskis (Ja visapkart, Latvia)



'Youth in Action' Programme

The training course 'Forest - Welcome Home' was funded by Youth in Action Programme, the European Commission.

Garbage Clean-up and Awareness Action Stepanavan, Armenia August 12, 2010

Stepanavan Youth Center (SYC) organized a Garbage Clean-up and Awareness Action in Stepanavan. This action was initiated and coordinated by two SYC-volunteers: Zara Meliksetyan and An Lambert (EVS volunteer from Belgium). The aim of this day was to educate children about the importance of environmental care and the focus was on garbage disposal, and more specifically littering. Fifteen children from Zangak Social Center in Vanadzor and eight children from the local community in Stepanavan took part in the activity.



We provided the children with information and theory about the problems of garbage and litter by holding discussions and organizing hands-on activities.

First the children participated in several activities that encouraged them to think about habits in Armenian society

and their own current behavior regarding the disposal of garbage.

The first activity involved matching



the drawing of an item of garbage with the estimated time for decomposition when exposed to air and light. This activity encouraged the children to think about, and discuss among each other, factors that influence the time for decomposition such as organic versus non-organic origin. It also stimulated them to reflect on the consequences of littering objects made of different types of materials. For example, a newspaper decomposes faster than a car tire so the impact of littering a car tire is more serious.

In the next activity children had to look for words related to caring for the environment in a word search puzzle. The goal of this activity was that the children have a (first) encounter with these words

and if they don't know them, they can ask for an explanation about them.

The third activity was a discussion about several statements about garbage and littering by means of an agree/disagree-method. The children had to decide if they agreed or disagreed, and show this decision physically by standing on either the left or right side of a line on the ground. After the children had decided, some of them were asked to explain why they agreed or disagreed.

One of the questions was whether or not it would be a good idea to introduce a fine for littering. All the children agreed to this because they thought that if you get a fine once, you won't do it again. Another statement was about animals eating garbage because they find it on the streets. Most children realized that this is dangerous and unhealthy for the animals.

After this rather theoretical approach to the subject, we then held a garbage



clean-up in Stepanavan in an area close to Dzoraget river. Unfortunately there was a lot more garbage than could be collected during the time of this action. All the children were involved in collecting the garbage and one boy even decided to focus on collecting metal. Afterwards most children said that the clean-up was fun and that they would have liked to do it longer.

An Lambert
(EVS at SYC, Armenia)



Environmental Dynamics

Environmental dynamics is one of the activities that O.P.E. (Organization for the Promotion of Ecoclubs in Portugal) organizes. The youngsters from O.P.E. try to act within their own community using different kinds of dynamics to inform people about environmental problems, such as: street theatre, recycling workshops, summer camps in nature, composting fairs, biodiversity photo contests, and more!



At the moment, O.P.E. is made up of 17 Ecoclubs in Portugal. An Ecoclub is an informal group of young people that are active in the community, with the aim

of improving the quality of life of fellow citizens and protecting the environment.



One of this groups is called Ecoclub of Formiga. It was established in 2006 and has 20 volunteers. These youngsters organised several dynamic activities, including Eco Ciclo Paper. This activity was organised in the center of the city of Ermesinde in Portugal and involved 50 people. The participants were divided into teams, and given a map. They then followed a bike route through the historical and cultural places of the city. They made a few stops where they had to answer questions and implement tasks about the environment and the city. This event tried to encourage people to use healthier and more ecological ways of transport. It was a day when each participant could

take some exercise, find out more about the city and think about the environmental problems inside the community.



Another dynamic activity, which involved 30 participants, was the Vila Beatriz environmental games. During one day the inhabitants of Valongo city could take part in different traditional games made with reused trash and environmental workshops (photo nature, ecological painting). The activity was held in a public garden where people could spend some lovely time in the fresh air.

For O.P.E. these kind of activities are



very important for the community because people can learn and have fun at the same time, and in this way we can see people's behaviour towards the environment changing for better.

Daniela Carneiro
(Ecoclub of Formiga, Portugal)



Photos by: Ecoclub of Formiga

Calling all young Irish environmentalists! Registration open for ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards 2011

Registration is now open for Ireland's most exciting environmental awards programme for young people, the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards. The Awards recognise and reward the achievements of young people in environmental protection and are open to any group of young people, aged 10-18, who want to take action on key environmental issues such as climate change, energy, waste, biodiversity, transport and more.

"Last year's awards saw some excellent environmental projects from all across Ireland - from bug hotels to green transport campaigns, and even an ECO-fashion show and gig awareness raising extravaganza! We are looking forward

to more great projects this year. Through these innovative projects young people are taking action and raising awareness about climate change and other important environmental issues" said Elaine Nevin, National Director of ECO-UNESCO.

Each May, ECO-UNESCO, Ireland's environmental education and youth organisation, hosts the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards Showcase and Awards Ceremony to honour the outstanding green achievements of young people from youth groups and schools across Ireland and Northern Ireland. The National Showcase, open to the public, attracts hundreds of young people who get an opportunity to show their environmental project work.



"The young participants of the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards programme concretely show what it means to act as agents of positive change and make a difference", commented Walter Erdelen, UNESCO Assistant Secretary General for Natural Sciences in a special message of support to the young environmentalists.

Participants in ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards have

until February 2011 to complete their project in one of nine categories including climate change, biodiversity, energy, waste and transport. Once registered, ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards groups can avail themselves of ECO-UNESCO's advice and support as their projects progress. Registration for ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards 2011 closes at the end of November 2010.

Teachers and youth leaders can register groups of 2-20 young people at www.ecounesco.ie

or by contacting ECO-UNESCO at +353 1 6625491, info@ecounesco.ie. To get a look back at the journey to the ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards 2010, read our On the Road blog at <http://ecounesco.wordpress.com>

If you are interested in entering this competition don't forget these **key dates**:

Registration Deadline: November 26th 2010

Project Submission Deadline: February 25th 2011

National Showcase & Awards Ceremony: May 11th 2011

Economics and Ecology

I was one of the lucky people to participate in the youth exchange “Learning From Each Other” which took place in September in Piwniczna Zdrój, Poland. The story I am going to tell in this article is one of an economics student who was eager to begin his studies.

I have always been interested in economics. Sentences such as “The Economist forecasts that real GDP of China will expand by 9.9 % in 2010” have always fascinated me. I have always kept a careful eye on the complex social decisions that – to a large extent – have continuously reflected the way we consider the world in which we live.

It has always beguiled me how one decision can cause an apparent increase in people’s wellbeing while also bringing about a decrease in criminality, social aggression and many other highly complex social trends. I used to accept things that I read and heard about economics in a rather “automatic” manner. I did not have any reason to doubt the information I was receiving.

There was one point during the youth exchange when we were discussing the concept of sustainable growth and we were all confronted with new ideas. It was a real “aha!” moment for me, and

I started to wonder: “well, what is GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in reality?”

As a student of economics, I was well aware of the exact definition of GDP (a measure of a country’s overall economic output: it is the market value of all final goods and services made within the borders of a country in a year) and the methodology that is used to track this indicator of a country’s economic wellbeing.

In the past, I tended to consider GDP to be an adequate tracker of the welfare of people, but later on, I got interested in Ecological Economics, and I became aware of the fact that we are actually degrading our own planet in order to get “wealthier”. I started reading about the issue, and about the “paradox” of GDP specifically, posing questions such as:

- Are we able to achieve economic growth without harming and degrading our planet?
- Isn’t nature the most precious thing there is, after all?
- Can changing an indicator such as GDP also change the way we see things?

It is a simple fact, however, that GDP takes into account factors that do not have anything to do with the “welfare of a society”, such as the economic boost that happens after a military invasion, for instance, and skips, on the other hand some

very important factors, such as voluntary work, or “domestic labour” (e.g. panting vegetables and fruits in your garden).

GDP does not take into account whether an activity is harmful to nature or not, and one has to recognize, therefore, the ambivalence with which many academic economists approach the criticism of the GDP “indicator”: They accept it, but they deny its relevance.

This is perhaps not surprising since there is currently no alternative indicator, which is accepted internationally and extensively used. There are, however, several alternative systems that do include the environmental factor: the System of Environmental and Economic Accounts “SEEA” (UN et al., 2003) being the most prominent example. Also, according to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report (2005), the essential role that the varied services provided by the complex functioning of the ecosystem play in human welfare. Surprisingly, most of this is

not currently reflected in the market.

I believe that this issue is of extreme importance and complexity. If you are interested in the subject, I have included references to several academic works and articles which provide more information about the paradox I am attempting to illustrate.

In conclusion, I believe that the shortcomings of the GDP indicator reflect the way we consider nature in almost all our economic decisions. The youth exchange ‘Learning From Each Other’ has opened a door to this issue which I, personally, was not aware of before. My participation in this project has encouraged me to think in a different manner. I can safely say it has widened my perspective about the issue because I consider it to be such an experience of high value, I am happy to share it here with you.

Raduan Al-Kheir

Recommended reading:

- Michael Common and Sigrid Stagl. Ecological Economics an introduction. USA: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Jeroen C.J.M. van den Bergh. The GDP paradox. Journal of Economic Psychology 30 (2009) 117–135.
- Eva Horváthová. Does environmental performance affect financial performance? A meta-analysis. Ecological Economics 70 (2010) 52–59
- John Talberth and Alok K. Bohara. Economic openness and green GDP. Ecological Economics 58 (2006) 743– 758

Support ELIANT for freedom of choice

If you have never heard about anthroposophy, I would advise you to read and learn more about it. This term can indeed be applied to various people, fields and initiatives (whether they use the word themselves or not). Since, in my opinion, it is impossible to give a thorough explanation of it in a few lines, in this article I aim to give a short and personal introduction to this approach to life.

What is anthroposophy?

Anthroposophy is a philosophy founded by Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian philosopher and esotericist who lived at the crossroads of the 19th and 20th centuries. The key idea of anthroposophy is to develop our knowledge and understanding of inner life and spirituality and their connections with our scientific knowledge of the world. Anthroposophy emerged as a reaction towards the development of scientific methodologies, which it was believed ignored the spiritual dimensions of life. It can therefore be seen as a bridge between science and spirituality.

According to French botanist Jean-Marie Pelt, "Anthroposophy fits together with the continuation of Goethe and ho-

listic ways of thinking which consider things in their wholeness, and not by segmenting them."

As with all philosophies, it is extremely important to take a broad approach to anthroposophy, in order to understand what is at stake. Indeed, we cannot limit this concept to one person or one movement.

Sadly, I believe that this is the approach taken by opponents of anthroposophy, who, for example, have accused Rudolf Steiner of racism and have claimed that people who follow this way of life are members of a sect. Rather than addressing these polemics from the past, it seems more important to understand the possibilities offered by this approach and the motivations ELIANT has to develop a legal framework for applied anthroposophy.

What is ELIANT?

According to the website of the organisation (www.eliant.eu), "ELIANT - European Alliance of Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy - is working to ensure, in view of growing European integration, that legislative framework conditions are

The initiative from **ELIANT** got already more than 940,000 signatures and only 60,000 signatures are still needed to send it to the European Commission. It is not clear yet what the EU will do with citizen initiatives, but for sure there is nothing to loose.

You can sign it too: www.eliant.eu

created to safeguard the various aspects of applied anthroposophy, including education, nutrition and agriculture, special needs (curative) education and social therapy, medicine and therapeutic disciplines."

Anthroposophy can indeed be applied to many fields, following the same way of thinking to each topic without separating it from the whole. For example in the field of agriculture, this means that the anthroposophist approach encourages biodynamic agriculture (a method of organic farming that treats farms as unified and individual organisms, emphasizing balancing the holistic development and interrelationship of the soil, plants, and animals as a self-nourishing system without external inputs). As for medicine, this approach mainly supports the use of alternative medicine, and the combination of different kinds of medical knowledge.

ELIANT's concern is that in the European Union today, the pressure of strong lobbies (e.g. pharmaceutical, chemical and agricultural) has led to legislation which threatens the possibilities offered by anthroposophy. For instance, Directive 96/5/CE from the European Commission makes it compulsory to use artificial vitamins in food for babies. While this Directive (like many others) is supposed

to preserve our health, ELIANT believes that it mainly aims to preserve the financial profits of big corporations.

This is the main aim of ELIANT: to preserve our freedom of choice. Some people trust that companies, including multinational ones, will protect our health and environment, but we consider that having choice about these issues is the most important.

Therefore ELIANT aims to use Article 11, Clause 4 of the Lisbon Treaty, which states that 1 million Union citizens from a considerable number of member states can "take the initiative and require the Commission to submit proposals on issues for which, in the view of those groups, the EU should enact legislation". The petition from Avaaz and Greenpeace about GMO managed to achieve one million signatures and ELIANT believes that it is time to show that European citizens are not resigned to accepting unchallenged the views from multinational companies, and want to make their own decisions.

We want to choose our education, our food, our medicine; we want to choose the way we live!

Marko Thull

What do you think? If you have an opinion about this, or any other article in this Newsletter, then get in touch by emailing: promoandpublications@yeenet.eu

Call for partners

YEE organizes:
International campaign

Schools go for a **Green** Europe

We are searching for 2 EU partners for an eco-campaign run at 6 schools of 6 partner countries.

July 2011 – July 2012

Goal of the campaign:

raising awareness about sustainable lifestyle in Europe

Expectations from the partners:

- create a team of 2 responsible people experienced in eco-issues
- connect with 1 school where you will run the campaign
 - attend 1 preparatory and 1 evaluation meeting

Contact us:

Kristy Ondrejova: ok@email.cz

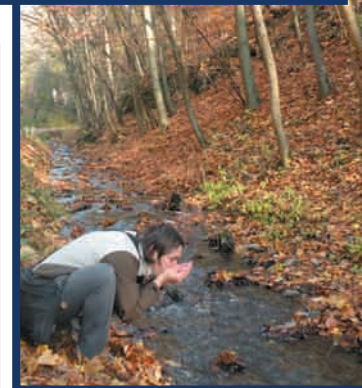
Deadline:

1.12.2010



Water - Its importance in pictures

YEE aims to link the protection of the environment with the defence of human rights and with increasing public awareness of this relationship by creating the photo exhibition “Water - Its importance in pictures”. The exhibition will be published on our website, on www.sunnycampaign.net and a physical exhibition will travel from country to country: currently the plan is for it to visit Armenia, Albania and Czech Republic.



Project “Water – Its importance in pictures” was funded by the European Youth Foundation – the Council of Europe.

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**YEE Newsletter was published with the financial
support of the European Youth Foundation
and Lifelong Learning Programme.**



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Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

"This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."