

The Global Forum for Environmental Education

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GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH CONVENTION (GEYC) IN DUBAI 2006 — AN ONGOING PARTNERSHIP WITH CARETAKERS



See pages 16-17 for story about *New Alumni Council Formation*.



Caretakers of the Environment International
A global network for teachers, educators, and students

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We welcome contributions in the form of articles, poetry, art work or reports related to environmental education in the broadest sense, as long as they are at least of interest to teachers and/or students at the upper secondary school level.

Text:

Text should be in WORD format for windows or else without format in plain text or rtf. An article can have a maximum length of 750 words. Articles exceeding 750 words are subjected to editing. Footnotes should be avoided. Please accompany each article by a short summary and an address for further information. If you are unable to use a computer, we still welcome your contributions!

Tables, figures and illustrations:

Do not include tables, figures and illustrations as part of the text. Gather them together in a separate file or on paper. In the text, you can point out the approximate position of tables, figures and illustrations. We would also like to receive captions to the illustrations you send us. We always welcome pictures and photographs!

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Global Forum appears twice a year in June and in December. **Contributions for the June issue have to be received before May the 1st. Contributions for the December issue before November the 1st.**

Please send your contributions to:

E-mail: Mr. Cris Leibner (USA and the rest of the world!)
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Andrew Cox, CEI Ireland

Dear Friends,

I have been involved as a delegate, more recently as Board member and now as President, since the start of the Caretakers of the Environment Organisation.

I know many of you personally, and some I have had brief encounters with. I value everything you have told me in discussions over the years and hope that you feel that we have listened to you. I particularly want to thank those of you who have worked as Board and Council members over the years. We look forward to your continued input. I welcome the new role of Anne Marie Begg from Scotland who has been developing the role of the Council over the past year. I would also like to thank Cindy Leibner who has helped facilitate the establishment of the Alumni Council, which is reported on elsewhere in this issue. I cannot also stress enough the importance of an editor of the Global Forum magazine. Cris Leibner has a thankless task as he strives to collect material for the magazine. We all promise the earth when we meet him at the annual conference but the reality is that we too often forget!

All of us have something in common. We all realise the importance of young people in shaping our global future. We have traveled between the continents, from Murmansk in Russia to Pietermaritzberg in South Africa and Kisumu in Kenya and from Cuzco in Peru to Chicago in the United States. We have experienced the cultural diversity within Europe, as we visited Greece, Portugal, Holland, Ireland and Scotland. I personally wish to thank Antoni Salomon and his wife for hosting the last conference in Poland. Having driven up from Austria via Slovakia to join in the closing days, I received nothing but positive comments on the conference. It was a great showcase for our organisation and, most importantly the young people brought home an increased enthusiasm to continue spreading the message. We have developed our links with our

colleagues in GEYC as we visited Sweden, Italy and Dubai. We must thank Birgitta Norden not only for her tremendous work developing the online program, but also in the key role she plays in providing such valuable experiences for global youth. Now, at last, we are traveling to sample the delights of Asia as we are hosted by our friends from Hong Kong, China.

We look forward to visiting Denmark, India and Argentina over the next few years.

The theme may vary from conference to conference but some things never change. The enthusiastic video maker, the happy snapper with the camera, the young reporters with their catchy phrases, birthday girl Isabel with her notebook, Wayne and his many places to take a quick snooze, the large and vocal Portuguese delegation with their singing teachers. The list is endless....

We look forward to renewing old acquaintances but also giving young people the opportunity to make everlasting friendships. Our conference is unique as it brings young and old together to share our experiences. The long-term sustainability of our local, national, and global ecosystems is a common goal, which we all share. It may be an old message for us old timers, but it will remain a new one to many. We must remind ourselves to listen to what young people have to say and make sure it is their message that is heard. How do we do this? We need to ensure that the process that we engage in at our annual conference records what young people have to say. Also, we need to provide a process which will allow young people to publicise their common agreed message to the decision makers. I for one look forward to a harmonious conference and to meeting all of you that are able to make it to Hong Kong. We will be thinking of all those who are unable to make it and hope that you will use the Global Forum to keep us up to speed with the excellent work that you are doing in your National Branch.



Students' Own Life-experiences Constitute a Context for Knowledge Formation in the Global Classroom. — A presentation of the design of and the research on the Young Masters Program ahead of the Global Environmental Youth Convention.

by Birgitta Nordén, Director of Distance Education YMP/GEYC 1999-2006 International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics (IIIEE) and Learning Lund at Lund University, Sweden
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Youth as stakeholders outside the university challenge the academic world and offer a unique opportunity for dialogue on the role of higher institutions in an overall societal transition towards sustainable development (Nordén, 2005a). To increase the understanding of how successful learning processes could be designed and carried out as outreach at the university, the Young Masters Program (YMP) might serve as an educative example.

The YMP seems to be of great importance to the students as individuals and as members of both the local and the global society. In the YMP teenagers explore a learning environment with new ICT-mediated ways of communication including global interaction with ideas and descriptions, and the transdisciplinary approach focusing social, economic, ecological and ethic dimensions. The online communication with global meetings seems to particularly catalyse the teenagers' commitment for- and their learning process with issues such as preventive environmental management strategies within the framework of university outreach development-in a more sustainable direction (Nordén, 2005b; Nordén, 2006).

The International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics (IIIEE) at Lund University has worked with the education of young students between 14 and 18 years old in the Young Masters Program, which reached out to some 4000 students in 110 countries since the start 1999. The course is supervised by the IIIEE and free of charge. For the optimal support of the upper secondary school students during the YMP online, it is preferable to have a team of teachers of different

subjects at each school working across the disciplines as mentors to facilitate each study group (Nordén, 2005a).



Young Masters awarded certificates by Birgitta Nordén, Director of Distance Education YMP/GEYC IIIEE, Lund University, during a ceremony at the Ministry of Education in Dubai Municipality (January 2006).

The learning activities in the first part of the YMP online are about sustainability. It lays a foundation for the second part on sustainable solutions dealing with preventive environmental strategies. The students learn about biodiversity, gaining an understanding of the complexity of ecosystems and their natural balance, as well as social, economic and environmental challenges. They begin looking at their world from the perspective of sustainable development. By learning about Agenda 21, they join international efforts in planning improvements and will be able to take a stand on sustainability issues. The students share their findings from the flexible learning activities and present their result in forum discussions, chat and e-mail, and get feedback and comments from one another in varying ways. Part 2 focuses on sustainable solutions and deals with preventive environmental strategies over ten modules. The teenagers find out how various actors in society are linked together, taking into consideration the role of consumers, design for environment and product development, construction, and the total life cycle of a product in order to address sustainable development. They learn to go to the source, instead of focusing end-of-pipe solutions. In an optional Part 3 the students apply the concepts they have been learning about to real situations in their local surroundings in a project.

This also serves as a preparation for Part 4 participation for the students, who initially only communicated online. During the last part, the convention, they could meet and discuss their projects and experiences face-to-face during the Global Environmental Youth Convention (GEYC), which is arranged every second year. The first convention, GEYC 2000, took place in Lund, Sweden, and the two following conventions were in Turin, Italy, and Alexandria, Egypt, respectively. The GEYC 2006 took place in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates 9-13 December 2006. The overarching theme was "Peace and Sustainable Development". Thereafter the YMP continues towards the GEYC in Beijing 2008.



The Global Environmental Youth Convention Organization Committee meeting in Dubai, U.A.E. in January 2006. Representatives from Dubai Municipality, Egypt and IIIIEE at Lund University, Sweden.

According to the result of our Learning in the Extended University (LiEU) research of the YMP online (Hansson and Nordén, 2005), it manages to fulfill two of the proposed objectives of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). They are (1) to provide space and opportunity for refining and promoting the vision of, and transition to sustainable development - through all forms of learning and public awareness, and (2) facilitate networking, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in the ESD (UNESCO, 2005).

One strategy recognized to implement the vision of an initiative as far-reaching and broad as the ESD is the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). ICTs are "the lifeblood" as means of the basis of the "knowledge economy" in ways that fewer natural

resources are used than earlier for information transfer and use in purpose to generate wealth (Nordén & Hansson, 2006c). When accessing interactively over the web, the meaning of sustainable development within the YMP online learning becomes more useable and learner-friendly. The ICT offer new modes and new spaces of learning. Options of individual pace, assignments, feedback and interaction are offered in varying ways (Nordén, 2005b). The ESD can be widespread. Where learners have access to ICTs a global dialogue can be provided. For example isolated youth of island communities are linking worldwide via ICTs, sharing experiences and concerns, building consensus and mutual support (UNESCO, 2005).

Through the YMP online course a global network is developed within which the students work across national and cultural boundaries, boundaries that have to be met and crossed across cultural differences (Nordén & Hansson, 2006a). Different conceptions and different meanings of what are apparently similar concepts have to become the object of reflection, and this gives rise to knowledge formation (Pierce, 1934; Bateson, 1972; Hansson, 2000). The different meetings encouraged the young people to reflect more on attitudes, to realize how their own actions and the actions of other people affect the environment (Hansson, 2004). We are focusing in particular on the ways in which the meeting between the course content, the intercultural discussions and the students' own life-experiences constitute a context for knowledge formation, with emphasis on the extended classroom that is supported by the course. First of all, the students are young people meeting one another as young people do, living in a global-but single-world of youth and the problems with environmental and social challenges. Secondly they are meeting in the course, around the common issues of the environment as brought into question in the course; and thirdly they are meeting as representatives of different cultures with different assumptions and values wealth (Nordén & Hansson, 2006b). The context of learning is

particularly interesting in the diverse situations that online learners are in and the diversity that the course itself incorporates (Nordén & Hansson, 2006d).

Acknowledgements

The research of the YMP is financed by the Committee for Educational Science of the Swedish Research Council as part of the project *Learning in the Extended University* (LiEU). Professor Shirley Booth at the Centre for Learning Lund at Lund University is the project manager.

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Awards

- Birgitta Nordén:
1. Ingenjörsvetenskapsakademins (IVA) IT-pris för skolan 1997. Stockholm.
"för att med ett starkt engagemang ha bidragit till en stor skolas IT-utveckling med ett ämnesintegrerat arbetssätt där internationella projekt tydligt motiverar och utvecklar eleverna".
 2. Lunds Miljöpris 2002. *"För mångårigt och entusiastiskt arbete med att öka ungdomars miljöengagemang"*.

A POEM

by Carolin Oredsson
Student from Tunaskolan, Sweden

*Earth
You are my mother,
My home, my comfort, my nurturer.
You are life.
And still,
We insist on,
Destroying you, beating you, defeating you.
Let the blossoms bloom
And the wild things grow,
Let the rain pitter patter
And the snowflakes snow,
Let the air which is all for us,
Not be polluted by car or bus,
Let the animals roam live with ease,
So that we may, altogether, find some peace.*

If anyone would like to contact Carolin her e-mail address is:

Two_thousand_light_yrs_away
@hotmail.com

GLOBAL SHEIKH MOHAMMED VISITS ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH CONVENTION
The fourth day at the Global Environmental Youth Convention (GEYC Dubai 2006) was blessed with a visit of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai.

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The event will conclude Wednesday.

Sheikh Mohammed came to the convention venue at Etisalat Academy with Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of Dubai Executive Council.

Dr. Hanif Hassan, UAE Minister of Education, Eng. Hussain Nasser Lootah, Acting Director General of Dubai Municipality and other senior officials of the Municipality, in addition to senior managers of Etisalat were present at the venue to receive Sheikh Mohammed.

The five-day convention, a global gathering of more than 600 students in the age group of 15-18, and their teachers and mentors from over 40 countries of the world, had commenced on Saturday.

Over 120 projects were presented in the GEYC Dubai 2006, which is being organized by Dubai Municipality in co-operation with the International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics (IIIEE) at Lund University, Sweden and the Euro-Arab Cooperation Centre with the theme, Peace and Sustainable Development. More than 1,700 students had registered for the online course Young Masters Programme (YMP) on preventive environmental strategies in the "Road to GEYC Dubai 2006."

After witnessing a presentation by a team comprising of UAE girl students on the Young Masters Programme, Sheikh Mohammed mingled freely with the participating students, posed for photographs and received mementoes from them. Some even read out poems about him.

The fourth plenary session of the convention on Peace and Sustainable Development, chaired by

Eng. Raed Mohammed Al Marzouqi of Dubai Municipality, was addressed by Professor Norman Myers of the Oxford University.

The second keynote address of the day was presented by Pamela Paquin of the Society for Organizational Learning. She gave a definition on peace and the necessity for patience.

Eng. Rashed Karkain of Dubai Municipality's Environment Department gave another keynote presentation on the tasks and legalities of the Environmental Planning Unit in the Municipality.

After the last plenary session of the convention participating students left for a study visit to the Waste Water Recycling Plant of Dubai Municipality, Dubai Natural Sanctuary, Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum House and the Heritage and Diving Village.

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His highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai talked with students from Denmark and Sweden about sustainable development.



Youth listening to project presentations.

A REPORT BY TWO TEACHERS FROM ARGENTINA THAT ATTENDED GEYC IN DUBAI 2006

By Marta Barcelo and Sonia Guevara
San Martin de Tours School
Buenos Aires, Argentina

We are Marta Barcelo and Sonia Guevara, teachers in charge of the Argentinian group. We feel grateful to Birgitta Nordén and the Swedish company Skanska for having given us the possibility of exchanging opinions with people from remote places. Without their support, the chance of travelling to such a far country would have been just only an impossible dream for our students and for us. It was an unbelievable experience the one we went through. We prepared ourselves very hard to face this challenging situation. There were seven groups in the Convention and we were part of the group "Consumption and Production". We had been working hard on our project. It tackled the fact that remains of wood coming from the wood industry, were sent to a foundation in which disabled people were trained in the carpentry workshop, recycling pieces of wood to produce souvenirs, mark books or pins. In this way, this wood used in furniture manufacture, is not disposed in landfills reducing environmental impact since wood like chipboard and plywood are

assembled with a resin called urea formaldehyde, a highly pollutant gas when combined with other gases coming from waste or when released into the air. We pursued two aims in our project, reducing environmental impact and helping people to build their self esteem, feeling they are part of our society in spite of the fact they have different skills.

We cannot describe the intertwined feelings we had during the convention; emotion, mirth and responsibility because we were representing our country as we had never done before. When we were aware of the fact we had been first in our group, we could not believe our ears. We think it was a prize for everyone who contributed with our dream, Birgitta Nordén, Skanska, our school. We deeply appreciate their efforts. It is praiseworthy that people from so far away, could think about supporting and sponsoring the hard work of students from developing countries, which are not so interested in education. Unfortunately, this is a reality in our country. Education is not of great worth.

We want to end with a quote from Mahatma Ghandi "You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

ARGENTINIAN STUDENT IMPRESSIONS OF THE GEYC 2006 IN DUBAI.

By Constanza Reccia.
San MARTin de Tours School.
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Our trip to Dubai was fantastic! After a very long flight, we arrived at the airport and then we went to the academy. From the beginning, all the organizers were extremely kind to us, and made us feel very comfortable. Dubai is the most modern city I've ever seen: the buildings have strange shapes, everything is so clean, and the environment is taken into account in almost every little aspect of the place.



It was an incredible experience; not only because of the amazing country we were visiting, but also due to all the people we had the chance to know there. There were a lot of young people from all over the world, who had many different cultures, different languages and different thoughts. But all of us had the same ideas about changing things related to the environment, so it was very interesting.

We had the chance of making some new friends from countries that are far away from our home! We still continue our relationship through the internet!

The convention was great, the presentations were very complete, the multicultural events were funny and interesting, everyone had a good time during the whole convention! Personally, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Prime Minister, a very nice man who is very concerned about the environment. It was a fantastic experience and talking to him was an unexpected situation!

Finally, we were very sad at the moment we had to leave, but we are very grateful for the hospitality they gave us and for an amazing journey that we will never forget.



ARGENTINIAN STUDENT IMPRESSIONS OF THE GEYC 2006 IN DUBAI.

By Florencia Delponte, Argentina

From my point of view, the global environmental youth convention 2006 was excellent! It was very well organized, complete, with a lot of information and new things to learn. Related to the relationship with other students from other countries, in our case it was excellent, we felt really comfortable because all boys and girls wanted to take pictures with us, or of us only. And also because they talked to us in a very friendly way and that made me feel really happy.

Relating to the convention, as I said it was perfect. I very much liked the projects from other students, and it was a very good way to meet new people and new things. I learned how to protect the environment and about solutions and new ideas to be taken, it's great!

Actually, I really like the convention and I came back fascinated. I think that all was perfect, and I am very happy to have been part of it. There's only one thing that I don't like very much, and it was that it was a pity that we couldn't visit that fantastic city or to enjoy the facilities of the academy. TO SUM UP — THE CONVENTION WAS EXCELLENT!



Above - Teacher discussion

Left - Herbert from Queen Elizabeth School Old Students Association Secondary School.

KEEPING THE WORLD INFORMED

by Hjalmar Nordén 2007-03-27

The Global Youth Reporter Programme

Through the Global Environmental Youth Convention (GEYC) in Dubai, December 2006, the Global Youth Reporter Programme (GYRP) has made its comeback. Originally established in 1999 by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) in collaboration with the Reuters Foundation, the GYRPs had so far documented the GEYC 2000 in Lund, Sweden, the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Amman, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), 2002 as well as the following GEYC 2004 in Torino, Italy.

Then, as former GYRP Hjalmar Nordén was employed by Lund University to help with the upcoming GEYC 2006 in Dubai, it was time for the programme to get its reboot. Contact with The Reuters Foundation was re-established and soon enough Reuters Foundation consultants Nicholas Pythian and Roger Jeal took the bait to join in, training and working with the youth reporters covering GEYC 2006. The reporters were selected from that year's batch of the Young Masters Programme, of which GEYC is but the final part.

The Global Youth Reporter Programme is part of a long-term project to teach basic news gathering and news writing skills to students from around the globe. The goal of the project is to mobilise people - especially youth - worldwide to get involved in sustainable development issues and to help them write attractive articles on these issues in a professional manner. The GYRP newsletter, *The Sandpaper* with its motto "*Scratching away at the Surface*", kept GEYC 2006 delegates up-to-date with what was happening at the conference, and encouraged reflection over its content. The GYRP Web site did the same for families and friends back home and spread the word to the wider world beyond. Check it out for yourself at www.iiiee.lu.se/gyrp

Here follows a small excerpt from the 4th edition of the Sandpaper:



Arjen Wals

Inconvenient Questions?

Dutch university Professor Arjen Wals highlighted the importance of the untold but essential truth during his presentation to GEYC 2006 on Monday. He gave us all a motive for a little self-criticism before we go to bed at night.

Go ahead and ask yourself these questions:

- "Why do we use carton cups for our drinks, when we were all given glass-made ones at our registration?"
- "Why don't we use the stairs instead of the elevator?"
- "Do we really need the air conditioning on in our rooms?"
- Are we afraid that we will lose our cups? Are we too tired to go up one floor on foot? Or are we just being lazy?

Read the rest of Katerina Polyizou's story at <http://www.iiiee.lu.se/gyrp/>



***A GLOBAL FORUM for GLOBAL LEARNING
for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.***

ESD - a melting pot of modern education: what's in it for the teachers? by Birgitta Norden

A global forum for the teachers

During the latest Caretakers of the Environment International (CEI) conference held in Poland 2006, which successfully celebrated the 20th anniversary of the network of the CEI, the teachers put emphasis on how to improve the communication and interaction between the annual face-to-face meetings. The teachers' evaluation showed that one challenge for CEI is to find ways to enhance the possibilities for the teachers involved to cooperate through the year. According to some teachers the missing pedagogical approach and content focus were pointed out to be a weakness. The CEI needs to improve and update the frame of the activities of the organisation in order to agree with the decade of education for sustainable development (DESD), which was proclaimed by the UN to take place 2005-2014, where the social and the economic aspects of issues become of vital importance, a few teachers underlined. Many teachers mentioned that it would be of great value for the future development to share on the web before and after the conference, exchange information and start discussion panels via Internet. Uploaded booklets with short project summaries of the latest conference together with a presentation of the new theme of the next conference would be a source of inspiration and could improve the level of the knowledge formation in general. Besides that there is a need to identify ways of recruiting more teachers to get involved in the CEI activities. Efficiency, more target oriented interchanging through communication and multiplied individual learning could contribute to the development of the Caretakers networked learning fundamentally. Many teachers carefully verbalised their recommendations. Maybe it is time to reflect, rethink and reform? In our learning ambitions we could change our world toward a more

sustainable world. Or as one of the CEI teachers told: We need to reduce the gap between what we say and what we do.

We have to ask ourselves the inconvenient questions.

What's the hidden curriculum of the conference? was one of the questions posed at teachers session during the Global Environmental Youth Convention (GEYC) 2006 in Dubai, U.A.E.. During the convention Arjen Wals asked some fifty teachers that joined Caretakers' (CEI) workshop to reflect upon how linking thinking in our classrooms and trying to see how glocalization in the curriculum may appear. Arjen emphasized the importance of making the ESD relevant and meaningful by allowing differences and conflicts exposing to people new ways of thinking as necessary for learning, realizing that all learners are not all the same. Allow dissonance and make connections. Be sure of intrinsic values to Nature!

In the article "Deconstructing a Happy Meal: Food for thought" by Arjen Wals, one example of transformative learning toward a more sustainable world is shown.

Teachers' voices at the CEI session at GEYC 2006

Sustainability is everywhere. Teachers are just afraid to touch upon it, one teacher expressed.

In many countries we have a state curriculum. Therefore it is important to build in sufficient flexibility in the curriculum and open up for interpretations, so that everything concerning education for sustainable development (ESD) is the business of everybody. Make sure in whole school approach that SD (sustainable development) is important! Then more teachers would worry less. The outcome could be more of cross-curricular activities, cooperation between subject matters, and give opportunities for integration of education for sustainable development in every level at school. To make things happen, it is not enough to just have a school policy or only "talk about it"! The teachers must be given support by

school board and municipality settings. Teachers must get the opportunity to meet!

Still sharing could be difficult. How do we assess and reward working in group? A framework for facilitating ESD obviously is needed. Space has to be created for sustainability issues. The starting point must ultimately be in the content and the curriculum, followed by institutional space for negotiations involving the learners in democratic dialogues. The community linkages, and to go out of school and ask: How do you do this? are necessary. Last but not the least, a pedagogy emphasizing learning and teaching instructing how to work together across the boundaries could be facilitating sustainability.

Global Learning for Sustainable Development (GLSD)

Sustainable development (SD) is of global interest. The conference document issuing from the 1972 UN Rio de Janeiro Conference described the importance of a global partnership in order to achieve SD. How to create the extended classroom, the global classroom with online learning, and room for global learning is of central interest in SD. Institutional aspects of global cooperation in education have been considered, and the role of ICT-mediated learning has been recognized. From the learner's perspective, how knowledge is formed and how concepts are used to understand sustainability issues is an open and fundamental question in Global Learning for SD (GLSD). The open character of the relation that exists between the specific learner's perspective - coming from different continents, nations and cultures on the one hand, and the demand for shared understanding of complex knowledge, on the other, is a central issue in learning for sustainability in the global classroom.

Global Learning for Sustainable Development (GLSD) is a multidisciplinary field. Global Education (GE) and Education for Sustainability (EFS) have certain points in common. However, the former does not aim to solve SD problems through interdisciplinary reflection, and has therefore been accused of building on traditional charity concepts,

which no longer match the reality at school and only give an illusion of global social justice. The merit of GE is the widening of the perspectives on global issues. In other words, EFS takes into account the complexity of a globalised world, and integrates issues of global social justice, something that distinguishes it from traditional Environmental Education (EE). Sustainable Education (SE) could be used as a catch-all to include EE, ESD, EFS and Education for a Sustainable Future (ESF). But beyond these terms, 'sustainable education' suggests a change of paradigm and needs to mount a deeper critique and persuasion, by embracing the profound educational potential that is already influencing sustainability discourse and practice in the wider society that higher education serves referring to Stephen Sterling.

A Global Learning Space: Teachers community of practice online for ESD

Globalisation represents a growing integration of the economic, financial, political, social and cultural lives of countries, and makes the process of learning much more demanding, requiring continuous change and nurturing of knowledge formation. With increasing global needs for knowledge, the challenge is to understand the dynamics of the learning process and to disseminate knowledge and information that embody some of the best practices of ICT-mediated learning and teaching from around the world. GLSD is a multidisciplinary field. A focus on epistemological issues is arising. The content complexity contributes to constituting a new research field within the research area education for sustainable development.

Against the background of the complexity that is represented in global learning for sustainable development (GLSD), it is interesting also for the teachers to follow and to come to know more about how understanding of sustainability issues is developing in global learning settings. So, let's move on together towards a new field within the area of education for sustainable development and optimize the learning outcome from the melting pot also for the teachers. You,

as a teacher are herewith invited to a global community of learning for teachers, who take care and want to live in harmony with the environment through active participation, and are interested in online learning and teaching development and research. See you in the global learning space for online teaching development and research! For more information go to <http://www.ll.lu.se/english/network/distansl.htm> or mail birgitta.norden@ll.lu.se or birgitta.norden@iiee.lu.se

Welcome to actively participate and together create space for global learning for sustainable development- and don't forget to raise inconvenient questions!

Brenda, one of the participating Swedish teachers, summed up the teachers CEI session at the GEYC 2006 - and maybe her words could opt also for the forthcoming years, the next decade, in the CEI: You've really given us something!

EXAMPLE OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING TOWARD A MORE SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Deconstructing a Happy Meal: Food for Thought¹

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"Today we're going to study the food pyramid for healthy living!" the High School Social Science teacher Mark told his class. Mark was excited about launching a healthy food project that would enable kids to analyze their diets. He was well-prepared and had collected a number of teaching resources from government agencies, NGO's and food companies concerned with youth obesity and increasing health costs. One of

his students called out, "Food pyramids?" Why can't we go to McDonalds?" This idea got the whole class excited, but frustrated Mark. After all, he had thought of something new that was hands-on and seemed very relevant. Later that evening Mark asked himself how he could motivate his students and engage them in an exciting learning process that would teach them something about health issues. He got an idea.

The next day Mark said to his class: "Today we're going to McDonalds!" The whole class cheered. They couldn't believe it. Their teacher was actually going to take the whole class to the McDonalds at the mall across the street. "But... there's one condition. We will only buy one happy meal for the whole class." This got the students a little less excited, but they went anyway, just to get out of school. The class bought one cheeseburger happy meal back to the classroom. Mark told the class that "unfortunately we are not going to eat the happy meal; we are going to carefully study it instead." He wrote down two questions on the blackboard:

What is in it?

Where did it come from?

They first dissected the meal: a plain bread bun, a slice of melted cheese, a grilled beef burger, salt, mustard, ketchup, pickles, French fries, diet cola, and finally a nice toy.

Then Mark divided the class in six groups of four students. One group got the bread bun, another group the salted French fries, another group the diet soda, another group got the burger, and another group the accessories; ketchup, mustard and pickles and the last group got the plastic bagged happy meal toy.

¹Demonstrating a Happy Meal is a composite example based on a number of stories and ideas from critical teachers engaged with transformative learning and problem-posing-based teaching. The Happy Meal case has been presented at several international meetings on Education for sustainable Development. This version I presented at the Sustainable Development through Education Conference held in Helsinki, June 13-15, 2005.

<http://www.sykse.net/konferenssi/en/invitation.htm>

"You have the remaining social science hours of the week to answer the two questions. Next week I want a short presentation with your findings from each of the groups. You can use the internet, the school library, the telephone in my office, and, if you need to ask questions across the street at the restaurant you can do so with my permission."

This has led to a loss of crop biodiversity, making the remaining crops more vulnerable to pests and leading to an increase of pesticide use. A common response to this vulnerability is the use of genetically modified crops that are resistant to these pests. However, the students also found out that McDonalds, pressured by concerned consumers, decided not to use Monsanto's GM new leaf potato. The group's investigation led to an interesting discussion about the pro's and con's of GM-foods. Most students were not aware that they were already consuming GM-foods. In fact, the group studying the diet cola found out that the sweeteners contained GM corn. When presenting their findings students used a provocative quote from the internet to start a classroom-wide discussion:

Giant agribusiness, chemical and restaurant companies like Cargill, Monsanto and McDonalds dominate the world's food chain, building a global dependence on unhealthy and genetically dangerous products. These companies are racing to secure patents on every plant and living organism and their intensive advertising seeks to persuade the world's consumers to eat more and more sweets, snacks, burgers, and soft drinks.

Meanwhile the group investigating the happy meal toy learned some things they didn't expect to learn either. They discovered that the toys served cross-marketing purposes. Meaning that the company lures parents and their children to the restaurant where they also promote things like Disney movies. Most of the toys were made of plastic and not used by the children for a very

long time. They went back to the McDonalds and studied for how long kids played with the toy and asked parents to estimate for how long the toy would remain in use. They estimated that the effective play time would be less than 10 minutes. Perhaps the most interesting finding they got by using the Internet. They found many sites- mostly activist's sites- that suggested that the happy meal toys were made in countries using young children as laborers and forcing them to work long hours for little pay and live in crowded conditions. When McDonalds found out about this they stopped buying from these suppliers. When this group presented their results about this there were discussions about child-labor laws, children's rights, ethics of moving jobs to countries with different standards and laws. The teacher also raised the issue of the reliability of the information provided on the internet. Who put the information there? With what purpose? Is it based on fact?

The other groups too, found interesting information and points of discussion related to a happy meal (varying from beef imports, hormones in meat, clear cutting of rain forests to the sweeteners used in Diet Coke). One group was interested in figuring out how many miles a happy meal has traveled to get to the local McDonald's? They didn't get a chance to figure it out but they guessed tens of thousands of miles. The whole activity was transformative in that their view of fast food in general and of a happy meal had radically changed. Mark's new concern was, however, that even though the students learned a lot about food related sustainability issues (health, environment, equity, and economics), gathering information, presenting, critical thinking, debating, etc., the project may have resulted in a rather bleak picture of something they really used to enjoy: eating a nice juicy cheeseburger at McDonalds. He wanted the students to think about viable alternatives. So he asked the students to explore a third question:

Can we create a truly happy meal?

The same groups started thinking about alternative buns, cheese, beef, mustard, pickles, soda, and even an alternative toy. This took another week of investigations but in the end they designed a happy meal that was more organic, healthier, and socially responsible and used up less energy. They cooked the happy meal themselves in the school kitchen for all junior high students and did a taster survey which demonstrated that the meal was at least as tasty as a McDonald's happy meal. The fair trade toys they included in the meal served noble causes and were more sustainable in that they were ore durable and were better in keeping kids' interest. There was one problem: the new happy meal was far more expensive than the McDonald's version. This raised another issue in the classroom: are we willing and/or able to pay more for meals that are healthier, more equitable, have less environmental impact? Some argued that consumers should demand this kind of food so that big corporations will change their own policies and practices, making alternative foods more affordable as demand increases.

"When McDonalds, Pringles, and the other major potato buyers decided not to sell Monsanto's GM New Leaf potato... it was soon taken off the market. McDonalds and others doomed Monsanto's potato because they wanted to satisfy consumer demands. We have that power." In the U.S. Whole Foods Market, Wild Oats, and Trader Joe's announced that GMO's would be removed from their store brands. Gerber baby foods as well as scores of health food products, have similarly changed their ingredients."

Others pointed out that their parents make decisions about what to buy, since they are the ones going to the grocery store.

The deconstructing of a happy meal became a transformative learning experience for all those involved, including Mark, the teacher who himself started realizing that healthy food and sus-

tainable living are intricately linked. The happy meal brought out issues, tensions, dissonance, north-south relationships, health issues, ethics, the role of corporations, consumerism, economics, crop-biodiversity, etc. It made an ordinary activity (going to McDonalds), somewhat unordinary and raised many critical questions that demanded some serious reflection. It developed a range of competencies in the students: asking questions, finding reliable information using a variety of sources, analyzing data, presenting information, critical thinking, etc. The activity did not stop at raising awareness and developing knowledge and understanding about real world issues, but also created opportunities for self-determined changes and actions.

Earth Charter



The Earth Charter formed in the end of the 20th century...

— is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society for the 21st century. Created by the largest global consultation process ever associated with an international doctrine.

There is a website worth looking at that includes online Global Dialogue on Ethics and Climate Change and other resources.

www.EarthCharter.org

YOUTH AS SEEDS FOR CHANGE FOR A BETTER LIFE PROJECT

by 5th class of the 11th grade of Jose Gomes Ferreira High School Lisbon, Portugal

Healthy eating at school



Research has shown that young people are in general not very interested in getting involved in community matters. The aim of this project is to change this state of affairs, educate young people to become active citizens and lead them to contribute in matters that concern the

young people themselves at school and in the community. Active young people become active adults in time.

The issue was raised by the results of a previous questionnaire where there was evidence that the students at school were big consumers of food provided by the dispensing machines and many of them spent the whole morning without breakfast or any food at all.

The aim of the project **Youth as Seeds for Change for a Better Life** is to empower young people to participate in decision making in school and in different issues, mainly regarding life styles, health and the environment. The students will be engaged in activities to develop the school's community spirit and raise awareness about lifestyles, particularly junk food consumption, and ensure that the voice of the school's students is heard on issues that concern.

Following these aims, in the past 20th March 2007, 5th class of the 11th grade of José Gomes Ferreira High School, in Lisbon, organized a session for the school community, including a film and a debate related to consumerism and bad food habits, topics which were studied during the 2nd term in the English classes. The aim of this session was to alert young students to these problems. We started by showing a documentary film, *Super Size Me*, then we held a debate to let our guests express their opinions on the issue and we also prepared a little surprise for them.

Super Size Me is, as already said, a documentary film, directed by and starring Morgan Spurlock, an independent American filmmaker. It follows a 30-day

time period during which Spurlock subsists exclusively on McDonald's fast food and stops exercising regularly. The film documents this lifestyle's drastic effects on Spurlock's physical and psychological well-being and explores the fast food industry's corporate influence, including how it encourages poor nutrition for its own profit. During the film, Spurlock also experiences mood swings, sexual dysfunction, and nearly catastrophic liver damage. The driving factor for Spurlock's investigation was the increasing spread of obesity throughout U.S. society and the corresponding lawsuit brought against McDonald's on behalf of two overweight twin girls, who, it was claimed, became obese as a result of eating too much McDonald's food.

After the exhibition of the film, we started the debate and invited our guests to tell us what they thought. "Is the growing obesity the fault of those who cannot resist eating too much fast food or of the fast-food companies that attract people through unfair ways?" Some students thought it was the fault of people who cannot control themselves and resist eating junk food; others thought it was the responsibility of the companies, which use irresistible ways to charm the public, such as little toys, "super sizes" with a great price, and so on.

When the session ended, it was time for the surprise: we gave one apple to everyone who was there, as a symbol of healthy food and then we took a group photograph showing everyone happy with the apples.

And with this, we could understand the message was successfully received by all of them: we should care about what we consume and try to eat only what is best for us, and, at the same time, do regular exercise, in order to obtain a healthy lifestyle.

We hope to tell you more about our project in Hong Kong!



NEW ALUMNI COUNCIL FORMED

by Cindy Leibner

CEI Teacher Council/Alumni Council Mentor

Last summer in Poland 2006, a new Alumni Council was formed and recognized by the CEI Board. This is an idea that has been in the works since the 1980s when board members such as Isabel Abrams and Anne-Marie Beggs began to toy with the concept. Now it has finally come to fruition due to the enthusiasm and leadership qualities of the young adult alumni who sought the council's formation in 2006 and willingly volunteered to provide their time and commitment to making it a success. The possible duties of the council include creating and maintaining a student geared web page parallel to the GF and linked to it; helping student delegates process and reflect on conference experiences; organizing and editing student products for the GF; and volunteering to assist the hosts of the various annual conferences in their organizing efforts, both before and during the conference.

The five members of this Alumni Council are Ana Almeida, Ann Gray, Nick Leibner, Hjalmar Norden, and Marie Thorlacius-Ussing. Four of the five will be attending the conference in Hong Kong this July and have been providing feedback and insight to Herbert Tsoi this spring. Herbert has seized the idea of the Alumni Council very willingly and has spent many extra hours networking with these young adults, asking for and valuing their input, and willingly allowing them to arrive early and be part of the conference set-up. This is what the Alumni Council members hoped for when seeking the addition of this new council to CEI. Seeing the value of mentoring future environmental leaders, Herbert is providing the CEI Alumni Council and CEI a great service and a model that will continue, hopefully, for future annual conferences.

As the teacher council liaison and mentor for this Alumni Council, I'd like to introduce the members through their following brief biographies. As you can see, they've attended a great number of CEI conferences during their teen years and their current goals as young adults are a direct result of their valued experiences. Please look for them in Hong Kong!

Name: Ana Almeida

Country: Portugal, Age: 21

I am currently finishing my bachelor in business management at the University of Lisbon. Since January 2007 I have been living in London as a university exchange student till June 2007. Before that, from pre-school to 12th grade, I studied in a French school in Lisbon. I have always been interested in environmental issues. Since 2000 I've been an active member of Youth Group ASPEA Jovem of the NGO ASPEA, becoming in 2005 co-coordinator of this group, organizing some activities for children under 13. Fortunately, I had the opportunity in participating in several Caretakers' Conferences: South Africa (2001), Costa Rica (1999), and the Republic of Ireland & N. Ireland (1998) as a student, and in Poland (2006) as a tutor myself.

With each of the Caretakers' Conferences, I had the opportunity to learn and to have direct contact with other people from different cultures who also shared environmental concerns. It is a wonderful way to contribute in raising awareness for the ecological, social, and political issues of mankind.

It has always been a rich experience that I would like to share with other young participants of CEI. That is why I am an Alumni Council member. My participation in this new role will be a good opportunity to encourage the building of trust, friendship, and cooperation among people of different cultural backgrounds and also provide improvement for myself.



Name: Ann Gray

Country: USA, Age: 25

I am currently combining my love for the natural environment and passion for the built environment into a fulfilling career. I work in the sustainability department at Gerding Edlen, a progressive developer of green buildings, mainly urban high rises. I am also in graduate school at Portland State University where I am taking graduate classes in real estate development.



I first joined caretakers as a volunteer at the 2005 CEI conference in Salem, Oregon, USA, my hometown. I loved it so much I took a group of students to Poland the following year. I met a lot of wonderful people, made some really great connections and now I am a proud member of the Alumni Council.

I joined the Alumni Council because I saw it as a way to stay heavily involved in the Caretakers organization. I also felt it was a great opportunity to be a mentor and share my experiences, ideas, and knowledge.

Name: Nicholas Leibner
Country: U.S.A., Age: 23

I am a 2007 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in biology. During my course work, I focused on both environmental health and human health issues and the connection between the two. I believe my experiences at CEI conferences fostered this specialization in my major area of biology, and also my future career goals. CEI 1998 was my first conference. Since it was held in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland through a wonderful cooperative effort, it was an impressive conference to begin with. Understanding the global impact of local environmental issues became intriguing for me and I continued to focus study on them with projects and attendance at CEI 2000 in Sweden, CEI 2002 in Italy, and as an adult presenter at Greece 2004. In Greece, I represented Michael Fields Sustainable Agriculture Institute located in East Troy, Wisconsin.

I plan to use the inspiring experiences that CEI has given me to pursue a career in environmental health and to create unique methods of conservation to achieve the goals of CEI. I look forward to mentoring young people through the Alumni Council since I know how empowering CEI conferences can be for youth.



Name: Hjalmar Norden
Country: Sweden, Age: 23

I have a burning interest for biology. Since I took part in my first CEI conference at the age of 12, I've developed even more interest in environmental issues. I have taken part in several CEI conferences as a student, but currently I work part time at the International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics (IIIEE), helping out with their Young Masters Programme in sustainable development, as well as their Global Environmental Youth Conventions (GEYC). My biggest role at the IIIEE is the Global Youth Reporter Programme, which took place at GEYC 2006 in Dubai. I am also an active member of Amnesty International where I am helping out with their Swedish internet shop. Environmental issues and human rights aside, I am following my biggest passion which is to try to get into acting school.



Name: Marie Thorlacius-Ussing
Country: Denmark, Age: 21

At present, I am a student in Political Science at Aarhus University in Denmark. I experienced my first CEI conference in 2001 in South Africa when I was 15 years old. The conference made such a great impression on me that I just knew I couldn't go home and go "back to normal". I worked on projects and participated in conferences for the next four years. I had my last conference as a student in the Danish delegation in 2004. I continued as a teacher for two more years and next year I will go to Hong Kong as a member of the Alumni Council.

Through out my time in CEI I have gained a lot. First of all, I gained a lot of knowledge about our environment not just through my own projects but by listening to others. Secondly, I have made friends from all over the globe and learned to cooperate with people across nationality, religion and age, and also in environmental issues.

My time in CEI so far has been great and full of wonderful experiences. I can't wait to pass that on to new students at the next conference in Hong Kong.



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH CONVENTION DUBAI 2006

by Arpit Gupta Student Delegate India-7
Delhi, India

On behalf of UDISHA/India, I would like to share my experience of GEYC 2007. There were three teams from India for the GEYC-2007 this year held in Dubai.

The group represented UDISHA, a NCO which has been actively participating in the GEYC for the past four years, was India-7. The group's mentor was Mr. Rakesh Guar, the President of UDISHA, who could not attend the convention but guided us throughout. There were three teachers with us, Mrs. Shashi Jindal, Mrs. Anupama Gupta and Mrs. Ritu Jindal. The three students of this group were, Prateek, (Class IX, Delhi Public School Faridabad), Sonali Aggarwal (Class IX, Amity International School, Noida) and Arpit Gupta (Class VIII, Delhi Public School RK Puram).

All the members of India-7 visited this convention for the first time. There were over 700 student and teacher Delegates from over 48 countries. This proves that this convention must be having some big aim or else why would 700 people come here from all over the world?

The topic given to India-7 was Poverty Alleviation. There were many delegations in this group; Jordan, Russia, Turkey, Portugal and UAE. All these countries were supposed to prepare a presentation on the status of Poverty in their country and how was it being reduced. The project of India-7 was "Poverty Alleviation through Employment Generation". The project presentation of India-7 focused on what the government is doing in our country for poverty alleviation. The project was presented in quite a nice way and everyone appreciated it. The projects of other countries were also creative. For example, Portugal-8 had opened a Food Bank from where they distributed food to the poor people in their locality.

As there were 48 countries altogether, there were quite a lot of people to interact with. For

this purpose, workshops conducted so that people could interact more with each other and present their opinions. In the group of Poverty, the delegates discussed the ways and means of reducing poverty. There were lectures held every day on environmental topics. Every night, a special function was organized depicting the culture of Dubai.

One of the very special features of this convention was the stone ceremony. Each country brought a stone from their land and kept them together in a row on the stage. This function was symbolic of the unification of the countries of the world to protect the environment and to make this world a better place to live.

GEYC 2007 was another milestone in the efforts of IIIEE, Lund University, Caretakers of the Environment, Dubai Municipality and all other organizers that make the environment and the earth a better place to live. Our heartfelt thanks to the organizers for the convention held in a very professional manner and each and every delegate felt quite at home. We are looking forward to GEYC 2008 in China.



Teachers from Cameroun, Denmark, and India.



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