SUSTAINABLE MEDITERRANEAN

Biodiversity Management and Education for Sustainable Development in Protected Areas

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The Value of Strategies and Policies to Support Education for All (EFA) and introduces the aspirations, objectives and methodologies for the promotion of Sustainable Development through formal, non-formal and informal learning. Natura 2000 sites, MAAB-Rks and other types of specially designated areas, have a status that allows them to be managed in a comprehensible, monitored way, while at the same time receiving considerable numbers of visitors, individuals and organized groups, (among which schools), who are eager to learn directly and indirectly while simultaneously enjoying the natural, cultural, tangible and intangible values of these areas.

This issue goes hand in hand with two major sources of knowledge and inspiration on the specific subject, namely the book “Education for Sustainable Development in Biosphere Reserves and other Designated Areas” and the Grundtvig Workshop “Creating Bridges: ESD in MAAB Rks and other Designated Areas” carried out in Athens, Lavrion and Amfissa (March-April 2012).

Both were initiated by MEDIES of MIO-ECSDE in close collaboration with the UNESCO Chair on SD Management and Education in the Mediterranean, the Greek National Commission for MAAB/UNESCO and UNESCO BRESCE with the involvement of quite a number of other stakeholders, organizations and individual experts.

This issue is coming out at the end of 2012, a year of particular importance and of many activities for both ESD and Biodiversity. We had major relevant international meetings and decisions/documents including, among others:
• The Thilisi’11 Conference and the Thilisi Communities (Thilisi, September 2012) http://www.thilisiplus35.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=141&lang=en&UNZKXZQg50

Furthermore, 2012 was one of the first active “overlap” years of the two UN Decades on “ESD/2005-2014” and on “Biodiversity/2011-2020” Rather few activities have focused on their combination, which could stimulate synergies and fill gaps, clarify misunderstandings and support the achievement of more coherent and comprehensive results at both ends, i.e. on ESD, on one hand and on the management of protected areas and biodiversity, on the other. This is of utmost importance as, until now, it is evident that countries and the International Community, at large, are more keen and effective in reaching consensus and making some agreements on the necessary course of action. They are at the same time however, less efficient and effective in implementing these commitments and applying on the ground the necessary transformations and measures.

In the case of the protection of biodiversity, this unfortunate fact has been clearly demonstrated in the outcomes of several reports and assessments, such as:


In view of the above, this issue focuses on the “bridges” that need to be created and supported in order to enhance ‘communication’ and foster better understanding between the various communities of educators and managers of designated areas followed by “joint and complementary action”.

Such intersectoral and interdisciplinary understanding, though necessary, is not always evident and present at the various relevant levels. Therefore, particular efforts are needed to bring together in a natural and productive way, the competent stakeholders especially at regional (e.g. Mediterranean) and local level. At the re
In conclusion, this issue demonstrates the need for all actors, from educators, Academics and local authorities to managers and national administrations, to utilize in a more systematic, comprehensive and synergistic way MAB-BRs and all other types of specially designated areas in making Education for Sustainable Development evident and interesting on the ground for learners of all ages and backgrounds. By doing that, we simultaneously enhance the efficiency of the management of specially designated areas, further develop the needed ownership by society, both at local and (in some cases equally or even more importantly) at national or international level, while promoting the importance of biodiversity and all other values accumulated harmoniously in these sites.

Furthermore, it is evident that MAB-BRs and other protected areas, offer tangible and intangible infrastructures, that could support the ESD processes far beyond the end of the UN Decade of ESD and could also benefit from the UN, EU and Mediterranean initiatives for the protection of biodiversity and also of Civil Society’s involvement in meaningful participatory activities throughout the region.

The need for protected areas and their relevance in today’s context

According to the IUCN definitions, a Protected Area (PA) is “a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.

Nigel Dudley (2008) also writes that: “Protected areas are essential to the conservation of biodiversity. These are the cornerstones of virtually all national and international conservation strategies. These areas have ceased to maintain the functioning of natural ecosystems, to act as refuges for species and to maintain ecological processes that cannot survive in most intensely managed landscapes and seascapes. Protected areas act as benchmarks against which we understand human interactions with the natural world. Today it is often the only hope we have of stopping many threatened or endangered species from extinction”.

Field Activities at Parnassus National Park

The importance of Protected Areas is highlighted in international conventions and programmes such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Heritage Convention (WHC), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the UN Law of the Sea Convention, UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and the global programme of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).

Together, these institutions and programmes form the backbone of international policy on the establishment and management of protected areas for biodiversity conservation and for the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources. It is worth mentioning here Article 6 of the International Convention on Biological Diversity, which highlights that “each Contracting Party, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities, should help to: (a) Develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes which shall reflect, inter alia, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned; and (b) Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.”

Protected Areas can be viewed as a laboratory for the application of innovative land use regulations and as places of experimentation on an alternative production model aimed at meeting social needs and shifting the control of production processes to the realm of the common. By setting the conditions for the reallocations of production and their impact on society always remain a top priority. Protected areas should also serve as areas of experimentation on democracy and democratic participation, where everyone would participate in the development of a new model of social and solidarity economy. Success stories could then be replicated beyond the limits of protected areas for the benefit of the entire society.

In every corner of the world, protected areas provide valuable services at multiple levels. PAs offer people a place to relax, get in touch with the natural world, explore their culture and cultivate their spirit. The benefits in the physical and mental wellbeing of populations throughout their contact with nature have been identified through multiple empirical, theoretical and anecdotal evidences.

Thus, Protected Areas can confidently claim to support sustainable development, especially in the fields of tourism and scientific and educational research.

The priority for the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development

UNESCO recognizes education as an essential tool for achieving sustainability. There is widespread agreement that current economic development trends are not sustainable anymore and that public awareness, education, and training will catalyse our progress towards sustainability. Beyond that however, people are struggling to reach common ground on the context of sustainable development and even more so on whether or not it is attainable. Education for Sustainability (EIS) programmes are also burdened by reservations stemming from such failure to identify common ground. In the words of UNESCO, “lack of agreement and definition has stymied efforts to move education for sustainable development (ESD) forward”.

1. Principle 8: Economic and social development is essential for ensuring a sustainable living environment for man and for creating conditions on earth that are necessary for the improvement of the quality of life. (http://www.iccp.org/Documents/Multilingual/default.asp?documentId=wparticle id=1693)


3. Dudley, N. (ed.), Guidelines for Applying Protected Areas Management Cat-


5. http://disapex.exxonjournals.org/content/1/4/7.full

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A well-shaped definition has been so far developed by UNESCO, according to which “Education for Sustainable Development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. Education for Sustainable Development means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty, property reduction, and sustainable consumption. It also requires participation in learning and teaching methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development”.

Education for Sustainable Development subsequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, developing future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative and constructive way. Education for Sustainable Development requires far-reaching changes in the way education is often practiced today. These have been described in two fundamental texts: the “UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014); The First Two Years” and the Final Document TBILISI+35, the “Tbilisi Communiqué”.

As we approach 2014, the closing year of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), the discussion to extend the Decade’s initial goals and the accomplishments. **Bringing ESD in PAs: Challenges and Barriers**

The main challenges for advancing ESD have long been identified as lack of vision and awareness. More often than not, these challenges are related to a lack of policy or funding that could catalyse progress in ESD. UNESCO has already identified the 12 issues that governments and school districts must take into consideration and overcome in order to successfully implement ESD. These are:

- **Issue 1** Increasing Awareness: ESD is Essential
- **Issue 2** Structuring and Placing ESD in the Curriculum
- **Issue 3** Linking to Existing Issues: Educational Reform and Economic Viability
- **Issue 4** Facing the Complexity of Sustainable Development Concept
- **Issue 5** Developing an ESD Program with Community Participation
- **Issue 6** Engaging Traditional Disciplines in a Trans-disciplinary Framework
- **Issue 7** Sharing the Responsibility
- **Issue 8** Building Human Capacity
- **Issue 9** Developing Financial and Material Resources
- **Issue 10** Developing Policy
- **Issue 11** Developing a Creative, Innovative, and Risk-taking Environment
- **Issue 12** Promoting Sustainability in Popular Culture

These issues have universal application and their resolution is facilitated by well founded institutional structures. In countries however where these structures are weak or missing, as is the case for most countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the development of ESD faces additional challenges.

Another issue concerns a fundamental difference between the two main groups involved in ESD, those working in remote protected areas (PAs) and ESD educators at all levels. The distinction concerns the knowledge, opportunities, quality and ESD competence and teaching methodologies. To improve the situation, the gap between the two groups needs to be bridged.

Despite all these challenges, there are also few cases of good practices on ESD in PAs. The dissemination of these kinds of experiences could indeed help upgrading the practice of ESD.

**Two groups sharing one subject**

Today, there are two main groups of professionals who provide education in the fields of the environment and sustainability. The first group includes those working in Protected Areas and the second includes educators trained on ESD. Taking into consideration the role of education in shaping our world for the future generations, we could broadly support that these two groups have a great deal of responsibility within our communities in bridging the younger generations on issues of environmental protection and sustainability.

Experience shows that these two groups share in fact a common vision. They describe it however, in different ways. The keywords used have different representations and interpretations, reaching to different philosophical, political and socio-economic approaches.

As mentioned above, the two groups have to address different target groups. Employees in Environmental Education Centres (EECs) target primarily students. Groups of adults, including teaching staff, living and working in the surrounding areas are also addressed. Employees of Information Centres in PAs address visitors, families, peasants, farmers, all kinds of workers, etc.

Another significant difference in the work of our two groups is the duration of the programmes they offer. ESD programmes offered on the spot to visitors of PAs more often than not are very short, lasting for only a few hours. On the other hand ESD programmes offered at EECs can last from half a day to even a week or more. All these differences bear a considerable effect on the programmes offered. Advantages and disadvantages apply in both cases. We strongly believe that creating a bridge between the two groups and establish a fertile dialogue could bring about final products which will be innovative and of significant impact. The idea of the Grundtvig Workshop “Creating Bridges-Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Protected Areas (PAs)” came to address this exact need.

**What is a Grundtvig Workshop?**

The Grundtvig Workshops are open to any adult citizen who is a national of or permanently residing (or registered as refugee or asylum-seeker) in one of the countries participating in the Programme, in the name of the ESD educators at all levels. The distinction concerns the knowledge, opportunities, quality and ESD competence and teaching methodologies. To improve the situation, the gap between the two groups needs to be bridged.

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**Planning for a successful workshop**

The design phase of the workshop started with the formation of a working group. Subsequently, selection criteria were agreed, a committee to evaluate the applicants was established, the call was launched, applications were received and participants selected. The workshop was held in Greece: Athens, Lavrion (Centre of Environmental Education of Lavrion and the Centre of Environmental Education of Amfissa) and Amfissa (Centre of Environmental Education).

**The Workshop**

After months of preparation, MIO-ESDIE with the support of the UNESCO Venice Office and in cooperation with the University of Athens/UNESCO Chair Network on Education and Management in the Mediterranean, the Greek UNESCO MAB Committee, the Centre of Environmental Education of Lavrion and the Centre of Environmental Education of Amfissa, held the Grundtvig EC seminar entitled “Creating Bridges - Education for Sustainable Development ESD in Designated Areas” on 26 March – 5 April 2012. The workshop took place in three separate locations in Greece: Athens, Lavrion (Centre of Environmental Education) and Amfissa (Centre of Environmental Education).

The seminar was attended by 37 participants from 17 countries, namely: Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Moldova, Portugal, Romania, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, and Turkey.

The participants were mainly personnel of UNESCO/ MAB Biosphere Reserves (RBs) and other types of designated Areas (DAs). The main topic was the integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the activities designed for visitors to the Reserves, Parks, Areas i.e. schools, adult groups, visitors, tourists, etc.

During the workshop, participants were given the opportunity to exchange experiences and good practices for the development of ESD programmes in RBs, DAs, etc. Through this workshop a “cluster” of experts with various backgrounds in the field of ESD in MAB RBs and other DAs was created.

The seminar included 17 presentations and 2 workshops. The latter focused on the practical implementation of ESD in MAB RBs and other DAs. The presentations covered a wide range of topics, from the development of ESD curricula and pedagogical approaches to the implementation of ESD in various settings, such as schools, museums, and protected areas.

The workshop began with an introduction to the Grundtvig Programme and the objectives of the seminar. The seminar was then divided into two workshops, focusing on the integration of ESD into the curriculum and the development of ESD training programmes.

The first workshop was held in Athens and the second in Lavrion. The two workshops were aimed at different groups of participants: educators and professionals working in protected areas, and the second group included educators and professionals working in educational institutions. The workshops aimed at identifying challenges and opportunities for the development of ESD in MAB RBs and other DAs.

The workshop concluded with a seminar, which offered the opportunity for participants to share their experiences and insights with others.

Planning for a successful workshop

1. Preparation phase: The preparation phase took into serious consideration the ecological footprint of the workshop, especially regarding travel and accommodation. The Sustainable Events Toolkit was prepared by MIO-ESDIE in cooperation with the European Event Network, with the guidance of the World Green Events Network, in order to ensure that the best sustainable practices were applied. In planning for the group’s transportation, every care was taken to configure the most sustainable routes to reduce carbon emissions during travel since the workshop included flights to get participants to Greece, and then visits to multiple locations within the host country. The host country’s cultural heritage was promoted through applying the principles of the “Locavorism” movement, according to which locally produced foods are consumed.

2. Planning phase: During the workshop, participants were given the opportunity to exchange experiences and good practices for the development of ESD programmes in RBs, DAs, etc. Through this workshop a “cluster” of experts with various backgrounds in the field of ESD in MAB RBs and other DAs was created.

3. Implementation phase: The implementation phase involved the dissemination of good practices on ESD in PAs. These kinds of experiences could indeed help upgrading the practice of ESD.

4. Evaluation phase: The evaluation phase involved the dissemination of good practices on ESD in PAs. These kinds of experiences could indeed help upgrading the practice of ESD.

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The Workshop's main outputs and results

- Increased knowledge on the theoretical aspects of ESD in DAs: evolution, principles and philosophy, with emphasis on Biosphere Reserves as Learning Sites.
- Increased knowledge and skills related to the Sustainable Development (SD) of DAs, and the application of ESD programmes, through various practices and tools (i.e. fieldwork, group work, hands-on, discussion techniques as well as the use of ICTs).
- Strengthened communication, cooperation and social skills through participation in group activities, including debates, negotiation and decision-making exercises, and as through the exchange of experiences on ESD in DAs. The workshop provided an ideal setting for the formation of informal relationships which will hopefully lead to the creation of an informal cluster of ESD experts with varied backgrounds committed to sustain this fruitful exchange in the future.
- Proposed joint actions on ESD. The participants worked in groups and composed six different frameworks on joint future activities for ESD in their Reserves, Sites, etc. They also proposed to identify the European and other frameworks for submitting these ideas for potential funding. It is worth mentioning that the proper management of BRs and in general of DAs requires international cooperation and in this context, the seminar contributed to the strengthening of links between Management Bodies, NGOs, Institutions, Administration (municipalities), yet another added value of the seminar.
- Increased awareness on the actions and priorities of the European DC. Communication and Education and Culture and on how to be involved.
- Increased awareness on the host country’s environment and culture as well as those of the participating Mediterranean and European countries.
- Dissemination of the new UNESCO training material: “ESD in MAB BRs and other Designated Areas in SE Europe and the Mediterranean”, a valuable tool for this line of work.
- Two immediate spin-off activities at local level with the involvement of the local government and community to promote the potential of the areas of Lavrio and Amfissa in the fields of eco-tourism in and around the Protected Areas. Furthermore, in terms of the tourism and hospitality sectors, after the workshop several local businesses followed the advice provided and developed services based on local produce to promote the cultural heritage of the region.

Review and Evaluation at multiple levels

The workshop was monitored and reviewed at multiple levels throughout its implementation. Further to the external evaluator Ms. Anna Savvopoulou (see relevant article), participants were asked to evaluate the workshop upon completion.

By the end of the training the participants filled in a questionnaire (5 point Likert scale) to assess their experience. The results were positive with 4 out of 5 participants agreeing that the workshop was “a culturally enriching experience”.

Information on the Workshop appeared in:
- MID-ECSD: The Network of Environmental NGOs: [https://www.mio-ecsd.org/members.asp]
- The active forum created for the seminar: [http://buildbridgesuseformalsheds.lefora.com]
- The Newsletter Forum for University and Culture: [http://universidadypatrimonio.net/eng/noticias/]

According to the participant responses, the main objectives of the training were reached in terms of increasing knowledge and providing capacity building on the theoretical (principles, planning) and practical aspects (application) of ESD in BRs and various types of DAs, through their active participation in all the sessions of the workshop.

Overall the majority of the participants was satisfied by the content of the training, enjoyed the selected locations, agreed with the methodology followed during the workshop and finally agreed that the workshop will actually enhance the practice of their profession.

At a national level, all participants presented the results of the workshop to their countries after returning home. In Greece and Cyprus, where MedIES has a very active presence in the field of ESD, all Environmental Education Centres and Protected Areas Management Bodies received regular updates before, during and after the workshop. Finally the local communities of Lavrio and Amylia, where the meeting was held, showed great interest and this was reflected in the ample coverage in the local media.

At the EEC of Amfissa
At the EEC of Amfissa
The Temple of Apollo at Delphi
Spreading the Word
Information about the workshop, at all stages, was disseminated broadly at a local, national, regional and international level.
MIO-ECSD shared the results of the implementation of the workshop and its results with its network of more than 100 NGOs in the Mediterranean.

For further diffusion, information was shared with similar networks in Europe. In addition, it should be noted that the National Commission of MAB – Canada had a special meeting during the Canadian Commission for UNESCO Annual General Meeting in May 2012 in Ottawa, Canada to present the results of the workshop. On this occasion the US MAB Committee was also informed and expressed a strong interest for future joint actions.

Conclusions

The experience of holding such a workshop admitted created in everyone involved a sense of satisfaction. For MIO-ECSD and MedIES the benefit of getting in touch with educators from many countries and exchanging know how and experiences was indeed substantial. Other organizing partners especially the EECs were given the opportunity to enhance their organizational capacity, strengthen their confidence in holding international workshops for adult education in the context of lifelong learning. From their part, the participants benefited from interacting, creating informal relationships, exchanging ideas, experiences and best practices.

As for the local community, it gained international experience and explored in practice the possibility of shifting the local tourism business towards more sustainable products and services. In a nutshell, the workshop succeeded in providing what was originally promised. Participants and organizers built bridges of communication, opened new channels to enhance the continuous exchange of information with peers from other countries and set the foundation for promising future cooperation.

As the need for communication, dialogue and cooperation among different social groups to promote Education for Sustainable Development in Protected Areas continues to exist we hope that there will be more similar opportunities in the future to provide such match-making workshops throughout the Mediterranean.

32. ENCOURAGE environmental, educational and other relevant ESD authority and non-governmental organisations to actively incorporate ESD into National Environmental and Education Action Plans. To this end, we commend the full utilisation of existing resources including protected areas, such as UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, for outdoor learning and research; sensitizing children and adults to the existing and emerging sustainable development challenges and equipping them with hands-on knowledge and the skills for sustainable lifestyles.

Thilisi Communications 2012
The Thilisi Communicate-Educate Today for a Sustainable Future Outcome document adopted at TBLLIS23rd Intergovernmental Conference on Environment for Sustainable Development Thilisi, 6-7 September 2012
PILLARS OF SUPPORT FOR “CREATING BRIDGES” – THE VALUE OF STRATEGIES AND POLICIES TO SUPPORT EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Key words: pillars, policies and strategies to support Education for Sustainable Development

Value: (noun), the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth or usefulness of something.

This article will explore the value of policies and strategies, both from a philosophical as well as a practical perspective. Policies are defined as instruments, which provide direction and language for the implementation of the initiatives of decision makers, be they government, quasi-government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or corporate organizations. Policies are intended to provide guidance to those executing the political will of the decision makers. Strategies are statements, which provide direction to organizations articulating a Vision, Mission, Objectives and Deliverables over time. They tend to be more inclusive and are usually seeking a long-term vision for the organization, manifested through a living document, which also has processes for renewal.

The benefit of policies and strategies is that they help to inform decision-making by providing:
• a foundation for stakeholder engagement;
• the key for developing funding perspectives;
• guidance for work plans and for evaluating outcomes;
• links to key indicators for staff feedback and performance management.

Do strategies and policies matter in today’s economic climate? How do we manage the global shift to more conservative economics and politics?

There needs to be a redefinition of the ground rules and the playing field. The politics of administrative management at all levels of government must be replaced by a culture of innovation and renewal. Many organizations have been lured into a culture of “projectionists” where the goals and objectives, not to mention the vision and mission of these organizations, take second place to the political will of decision makers. Strategies are statements, which provide direction to organizations articulating a Vision, Mission, Objectives and Deliverables over time. They tend to be more inclusive and are usually seeking a long-term vision for the organization, manifested through a living document, which also has processes for renewal.

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• guidance for work plans and for evaluating outcomes;
• links to key indicators for staff feedback and performance management.

The development of strong policy statements to guide decision-makers and strategies to support staff in delivering on these strategies will allow the organization to successfully negotiate funding, especially in times of conservative economics and politics. The strength of well-defined policies and strategies will appeal to funders who want to see clearly defined and articulated goals, objectives and most importantly deliverables that are measurable.

There needs to be a clear link between the vision of the organization and the goals and objectives. They must be full of authenticity as well as having a sense of congruence. These factors will allow for the development of meaningful and measurable outcomes.

A further experience for Canada in Creating Bridges for Education for Sustainable Development is the negotiation of the fiscal agreement and further development of the West Polesie trans-boundary biosphere reserve. This would be the first trans-boundary biosphere reserve in Europe—Ukraine, Poland and Belarus (09/11/03). As the Canadian representative, I was involved in helping to create the common policies and strategies, which the representatives from Poland, Belarus and the Ukraine could use as their negotiating positions with their respective governments.

Canada’s track record so far

The Canadian and North American experience with developing policies and strategies to support the MAB programme, began with the Canadian participation in the Commission for Environment Cooperation between Mexico, Canada and United States. The commission was established to mitigate the impacts of the North American Free Trade Agreement. This agreement had huge potential to create economic and environmental impact, especially in Mexico and Canada. In 2005 one hundred leading scientists, academics and practitioners met in San Francisco to debate, argue and collaborate to create a political and strategic framework for the joint participation of the three countries in a number of major initiatives, which would have significant impact on species at risk. One of these initiatives was the “B2B – Baja to the Bering Sea”. This initiative created a series of marine protected areas for the migrating species of orca, grey whales, stellar sea lions, sea otters and the leatherback turtles as they migrate from the Baja Peninsula to the Bering Sea. This initiative was successful, largely because each nation had an agreed upon set of policies and strategic initiatives to discuss and negotiate with their respective governments.

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Key words: pillars, policies and strategies to support Education for Sustainable Development

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The development of strong policy statements to guide decision-makers and strategies to support staff in delivering on these strategies will allow the organization to successfully negotiate funding, especially in times of conservative economics and politics. The strength of well-defined policies and strategies will appeal to funders who want to see clearly defined and articulated goals, objectives and most importantly deliverables that are measurable.

There needs to be a clear link between the vision of the organization and the goals and objectives. They must be full of authenticity as well as having a sense of congruence. These factors will allow for the development of meaningful and measurable outcomes.

A further experience for Canada in Creating Bridges for Education for Sustainable Development is the negotiation of the fiscal agreement and further development of the West Polesie trans-boundary biosphere reserve. This would be the first trans-boundary biosphere reserve in Europe—Ukraine, Poland and Belarus (09/11/03). As the Canadian representative, I was involved in helping to create the common policies and strategies, which the representatives from Poland, Belarus and the Ukraine could use as their negotiating positions with their respective governments.
In answer to his own question, Colin suggested we should work to “build living bridges”⁴. In other words, find ways to invest in projects and activities that bridge the divides between people, working to bring about sustainable development and to knit together relationships based on shared understanding. Colin explained that a social capital approach can enable us to: make visible what is currently invisible; highlight the value of human relationships; explore the quantity and quality of relationships; put numbers to soft outcomes in order to benchmark human relationships effectively; move from anecdotal to strategic and replicable; develop Action Plans to begin investing strategically in social capital to deliver positive social outcomes which can lead to more sustainable and resilient systems.

A significant outcome of Assist Social Capital’s attendance at the Grundvig workshop “Creating Bridges” is our partnership with the Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association (CBRA) who will join us in the design of a ‘Framework for Development of Social Enterprises in Biosphere Reserves’, together with UNEP Sustainable Public Procurement Initiative, Lac St-Pierre and Charlevoix Biosphere Reserves in Quebec. This initiative has recently received the backing of the Scottish Government’s International Social Enterprise Programme.

Field activity, Pumusul National Park

Key words: social capital, social networks, sustainability, resilience, learning, education

intercultural communication and “locavore” combine at a local tavern during the workshop.

³ Meghalaya’s Living Bridges (Video) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfTfj0hY8xk&feature=relat
⁴ ‘The Stockholm Memorandum’ http://www.stockholmsustainability.org/nws/social/video/generalevents/stockholmsustainability_5_40b05b02dd55e43443eb0c131.html

THE ROLE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN BUILDING A NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES IN MOLDOVA

by Dumitru DRUMEA

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Despite the fact that the creation of Biosphere Reserves in Moldova is on the agenda of public authorities, the effort is being hampered by lack of experience at both national and regional levels. Consultation meetings held throughout the country have revealed high potential for the creation of a network of Biosphere Reserves. Actually, six sites in different parts of Moldova have been shortlisted to become Biosphere Reserves. The Grundvig workshop organized in Greece in the first months of 2012 came at the right time to help Moldova move faster towards the creation of a Biosphere Reserve Network.

As the workshop helped clarify, local authorities have a central role to play in the following activities:
- The development of awareness raising materials on the functions of Biosphere Reserve areas for various target groups.
- The presentation of social and economic benefits that the creation of a Biosphere Reserve can bring to the local population.
- The implementation of field activities to engage people of all ages in the identification of the benefits of preserving biodiversity in a Biosphere Reserve.
- The exchange of views among various stakeholders on the modalities of the creation of a Biosphere Reserve and on the responsibilities of local authorities regarding the maintenance and management of such sites.

Furthermore, the exchange of experiences from the different participating countries sparked interesting discussions on the selection and application of appropriate practices in the case of a Biosphere Reserve Network in Moldova. During the workshop, a plan of research activities for the identification of the most appropriate protected areas to become Biosphere Reserves was drafted which also made specific provisions for the regional cooperation among neighboring countries that have neighboring BR areas.

The following set of immediate steps was suggested to be taken by the local authorities in Moldova:
- Management of abandoned agricultural or industrial sites for further use as historic or natural monuments.
- Selection of the most appropriate management practices for the country.
- Modalities for regional cooperation among countries in the management of Biosphere Areas.

Finally, the issue of public participation especially in combination with the preservation of biodiversity through the development of educational programmes at all levels of education was discussed and the local authorities were invited to take particular initiatives for the development of such programmes.
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THE BIOSPHERE RESERVE OF LOS ANCARES LEONESES: A LABORATORY FOR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

by Pedro María HERRERA CALVO, Env. Consultant at CAMA SL, pmaria@alternativasgama.com and Nuria ALONSO LEAL

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In 2006 Los Ancares Leoneses was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (BR), a designation awarded to sites of excellent social, natural and cultural heritage (La Reserva de la Biósfera de los Ancares Leoneses - RBALE). The overarching objective of this programme is to generate innovative ideas for the balanced development of both human populations and the environment. Biosphere Reserves are meant to be ‘laboratories for susta- 

Since 2011, Los Ancares Leoneses Biosphere Reserve has been immersed in a regeneration effort aiming to in-

In 2011 the Fundación Ciudad de la Energía (CIUDEN) joined the consortium and took up a leading role in the development. Such proposals include activities traditional and of a more social nature such as training, awareness raising, environmen-

We start by … asking

As a principle, knowledge of the local context should pro-

Then came … the proposals

Following these activities, the RBALE management team presented a set of initial proposals, which were modified and improved through numerous consultations using participatory techniques. Ideas were drawn up in a co-

From planning to action

Finally, the first spe-

Ing or beekeeping) and others of a more social nature such as training, awareness raising, environmental volunteering and land stewardship.

and to initiate an exciting project of land stewardship for the preservation of the capercaillie (type of grouse).

There is also the Scientific Committee whose major goal is to promote the scientific research applied to the territory and link it with the local knowhow. This newly established Committee is composed by top-class scien-

... and the future of the RBALE?

After all these efforts, Los Ancares Leoneses Biosphere Reserve is implementing a specific roadmap. To address its funding needs, which are accentuated by the current economic crisis, the technical team is incessantly seek-

Further information at:

www.ancaresleoneses.es

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Further information at:

www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/envi-

mon/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-pro-

gramme/

MaB Programme in Spain:

http://www.mma.es/secciones/el_ministerio/organis-

mos/oapn/oapn_mab_estatal.htm

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CENTRE DE L’ÉDUCATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE D’AMFISSA ET SES ACTIVITÉS SUR L’ÉDUCATION POUR DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE (EDD)

par Michael THEODOROPoulos
Bâti à proximité de nombreux sites qui favorisent la biodiversité, Patmos est un site archéologique de Delphes et l’oliveraie de Phocide (Site UNESCO), le golfe de Corinthe et le canal de la rivière Mornos, l’environnement humain des villes d’Amfissa et Galaxidi et de ses environs sont des champs de programmes d’action du CEE d’Amfissa. Le CEE d’Amfissa permet la visite et la participation de classes scolaires aux programmes d’une ou de plusieurs journées.

Programmes d’enseignement du CEE d’Amfissa

1. Olive: le cadeau des dieux sur la terre de Phocide
2. Les sentiers anciens géo-mythologiques – géo-environnementaux en Phocide. (La Cave Korikio Andro – Delphes – Kíra)
3. La ville et l’écosystème (Amfissa et Galaxidi)
4. Le cycle de l’eau dans les écosystèmes urbains
5. Châteaux et citadelles: le château de Salona
6. Les écosystèmes forestiers de la Phocide et leur biodiversity
7. Les plantes aromatiques et médicinales
8. Le sentier de la Gorge Reka – Gíona
9. Le golfe de Corinthe: notre petite mer
10. Le Parnassus National Park where field activities took place

Les caractéristiques pédagogiques des programmes du CEE d’Amfissa

Les programmes pédagogiques sont:
- orientés à la connaissance et à la gestion de ses environnements naturels et anthropiques (de niveau local et régional) et abordent des problèmes environnementaux de niveau national et mondial.
- adaptent le problème environnemental, les objectifs, les approches pédagogiques, la méthodologie et les principes directeurs relatifs à l’éducation à l’environnement et au développement durable.
- sont orientés vers la formulation et la tentative de résoudre de problèmes concrets liés à l’environnement.
- ont une approche multidisciplinaire.
- sont ajustés au niveau de développement cognitif des élèves (primaire - collège - lycee), des étudiants et des adultes.
- impliquent la communauté scolaire ainsi que la communauté locale.
- Nationales: Université d’Athènes, Université de Patras, MIO-ECDES/MEDIES, Université de Sterees Elladas, Département des sciences du sol de l’agriculture /Université d’Athènes, Institut technologique d’Amfissa, Chambre commerciale et industrielle de Phocide, Clubs d’alpinisme de Phocide, Associations de Femmes de Phocide, Associations et autres organismes (de journalistes, culturels, etc.) du pays qui intéressés à l’enseignement et au développement durable de Phocide et ses environs.

Matériel pédagogique

- Une bibliothèque qui dispose plus de 800 livres (pédagogiques, scientifiques, etc.) et est accessible au grand public.

Matériel numérique


Equipement de laboratoire

Le CEE d’Amfissa dispose de cinq (5) laboratoires suivants: laboratoire de l’eau et de pédologie, d’ordinateurs de la biologie, des constructions et une collection unique des plantes séchées/héritage de toute la région. Ces laboratoires s’unissent les activités d’enseignement et de recherche liées à l’éducation au développement durable et sont entièrement équipés. Parmi son équipement technique, on peut trouver des outils de photométrie WinLab, multimètre de laboratoire, pH-mètre, dix stéreoscopes, dix microscopes, vingt-cinq ordinateurs, conгélateur de plantes, balance électronique de laboratoire, une vaste collection de fossiles de la région.

Logement

Le CEE d’Amfissa peut accueillir quarante-sept (47) personnes dans son auberge.

Les activités du CEE d’Amfissa liées à l’éducation au développement durable

Parmi les activités stratégiques du CEE d’Amfissa en vue de la promotion de l’éducation à l’environnement et au développement durable se trouvent les suivantes:

- Coordinated enseignement en Éducation à l’Environnement (EE) et à l’Éducation au Développement Durable (EDD) destinés aux adultes :
- Séminaires internationaux: Residential Training Workshops on Universities and ESD, 23-24 May 2010, Amfissa Greece, The workshop “Building Bridges - Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for MAB BRs and other Designated Areas” offers capacity building to personnel of UNESCO/MAB: 2–3 April 2012, Amfissa Greece
- Séminaires nationaux et locaux: Plus de 50 séminaires destinés aux enseignants et à la communauté locale

Activités/programmes scolaires: le CEE d’Amfissa a formé plus de 12,000 élèves - primaire - collège - lyceé

Cooperations :
- Internationales: Baltic University Programme (BUP), Ambassade Française – Institut français d’Athènes (IFA), etc.

Coopérations :
- Séminaires nationaux et locaux: Plus de 50 séminaires destinés aux enseignants et à la communauté locale

Activités/programmes scolaires: le CEE d’Amfissa a formé plus de 12,000 élèves - primaire - collège - lyceé

Cooperations :
- International: Baltic University Programme (BUP), French Embassy – Institut français d’Athens (IFA), etc.

Familiarisation exercises - listening to and recording sounds in the field

Identification of plant species using guide books. Group work in the buffer zone of Parnassus National Park

The Parnassus National Park where field activities took place

© Peter Lengyel

http://www.kpeamfissas.edu.gr/
LAVRION ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE:
ESD ACTIVITIES IN AND AROUND THE SOUNION NATIONAL PARK
PROTECTED AREA

by Andreas ATHANASIOPOULOS
Head of the Lavrion EEC, andratha@sch.gr

The Environmental Education Centre (EEC) of Lavrion has a long-standing relationship with MIO-ECSCDE and especially MEDIES. The Centre is located within the Lavrion and Souinion National Park, which prides itself on its exceptional characteristics in terms of biodiversity, geology and landscape. Additionally, human presence in the area, dating back to more than 3000 years ago, has resulted in a unique man-made environment. Since its early years the EEC has worked towards providing quality Education for Sustainable Development and has thus acquired extensive experience, reflected in valuable skills and competencies. The combination of all these reasons has led to the selection of the Lavrion EEC to assist in the organization of the Grundtivg Workshop and to provide the “field of action” for one out of the three workshop days.

Keywords: Lavrion, Souinion National Park, Sustainable Development, Environmental Education Centre

Lavrion and the Souinion National Park

Lavrion is a town on the eastern side of Attica, near cape Souinion. The area’s mining past, both during the classic ages and in the 18th century, had a lasting impact on the environment. Soil pollution, a result of the mining activities, is still a major issue. Mining galleries (about 80 kilometres long), mining waste heaps and ancient ore washeries are scattered all over the place, making it dangerous and fascinating at the same time. In addition, the coastal and marine environment is of great importance due to the extended colonies of Posidonia oceanica. On top of that, geological phenomena and the rich local flora and fauna have led to the creation of the Souinion National Park, a Natura 2000 area. However, this National Park is also unique for the following reasons: It lacks a management committee, its border is not clearly defined and there are also unresolved land claims. In the absence of a governing body, the Park falls in the jurisdiction of various state or municipal institutions, with often conflicting responsibilities or contradicting actions. Consequently, other than the occasional state or EU funds, there are no organized activities yet that could finance the development or the conservation of the National Park.

PUIG CASTELLAR, AN IBERIAN SETTLEMENT IN A PROTECTED AREA IN CATALUNYA, SPAIN

by Itziar FITO EGEA
SCEA with the collaboration of Museu Torre Balldovina, Santa Coloma de Gramenet,
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The Serralada de Marina Park in Spain presents one of the best examples of preserving and promoting archeological heritage within a Protected Area. The case study of the Iberian Settlement of Puig Castellar, the archeological site within Serralada de Marina, was presented at the Grundtivg Workshop in Greece as a best practice from the Mediterranean region.

The Iberian settlement of Puig Castellar and the Serralada de Marina Park

The Iberian settlement of Puig Castellar is located in Santa Coloma de Gramenet at the top of a hill in the Serralada de Marina Park. It was inhabited from the 6th century BC until the beginning of the 2nd century BC and belonged to one of the tribes of the Iberian culture, the Laietans. It is a settlement of approximately 5,000 square meters situated in a geographically strategic position overlooking the lower part of the Besós River and the Mediterranean Sea.

The Serralada de Marina Park was created in 2002 and covers 2,096 hectares. It is located on the Serralada Litoral mountain range, which runs parallel to the Catalan coast line. The Park borders to the west with the Besós River and Collserola Natural Park and to the north-east with the Serralada Litoral Park.

This Protected Area is of particular environmental, cultural and scenic interest. However, its location, next to one of the most densely populated areas of metropolis Barcelona renders it protection far harder. Due to its geographical location, the Serralada de Marina Park is placed at the heart of the Mediterranean biogeographical area. The variety in the landscape of the area which has now become the Park has led to a great richness of species and diversity of natural systems.

To preserve we need knowledge

There have been 13 excavation campaigns undertaken by the Universitat de Barcelona in Puig Castellar. The Universitat de Barcelona organizes a practical course on field archaeology which on the spot offers students the chance to work in the settlement during the summer.

Current restoration works include the consolidation of the walls of buildings as well as the walls of the settlement, the re-pavement of streets and the rebuilding of houses using appropriate materials. Retrievable materials are being used and a reddish line allows to distinguish between old and new structures.

So far the reconstruction of a house at the settlement was completed following the Cardon Master system, to ensure that the new structures do not weigh down the existing ones.

To facilitate visitor’s navigation in the settlement, signals, informative panels and other facilities have been installed. “Flipps didàctics” is the name given to a facility built in the settlement that allows the safekeeping of different educational tools.

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Unfavourable weather conditions and other special circumstances have also been considered. Puig Castellar has been hosting an annual Iberian festival in spring since 1998, in order to increase awareness of the settlement and its significance. At the entrance of the settlement, several workshops offer the visitor the opportunity to participate in various activities and experience a trip back 2,500 years ago. A number of schools and families visit the settlement to experience being a member of the Laieitans during the week-long festival.

Introduction

In this short article, the evaluation observations and assessments regarding the implementation of this Grundtvig Workshop are summarized along the following lines:

- effectiveness of the workshop in terms of meeting its objectives;
- results of the workshop at all levels (trainees, trainers, local society, etc.);
- travel arrangements and facilities provided during the Workshop (transportation, accommodation, meals, leisure activities, etc.);
- communication among the organizing consortium, the participants and the trainers;
- sustainability of the workshop results;

The assessment was carried out after conducting interviews with the project partners, the participants and the trainers, but mainly after the distribution of a questionnaire. Findings are divided into three sub-categories: whether the workshop achieved its goals, the levels of satisfaction of the participants regarding the key aspects of the workshop content and organization, and finally, suggestions for improvement.

Results

The workshop succeeded in:

- achieving a deep, integrated and interdisciplinary training on ESD in PAs theory;
- conducting practical exercises and work on ESD in PAs;
- familiarizing the trainees with the use of Information & Communication Technologies (ICT);
- promoting the exchange of experiences, skills and good practices among participants from different countries;
- enhancing cultural enrichment (practice of a foreign language, transnational communication, interacting with the local society, etc.)

Methodology

THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE GRUNDTVIG WORKSHOP

by Anna Savvopoulou
Economy and Social Studies Teacher, Msc.,
Former Head of the Diapetsiona Environmental Education Centre /Piraeus

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Conclusion

Overall, everyone involved agreed that this workshop was an important and fruitful experience and the National Agency should definitely provide funding for similar future meetings. Some of the suggestions for improved future relevant activities were:

- Longer workshops, more training hours
- Organization of more cultural activities
- Less theoretical sessions and more practical activities,
  greater interaction with the natural environment.

The main findings of the evaluations are also presented in a schematic way.

How satisfied are you with the Workshop activities and the following aspects?

Which were the factors that motivated you to participate in this Workshop?

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A against a backdrop of increasingly dire scientific findings on accelerating climate change and thus the ever more pressing need for speedy global action to slow the process while this is still possible—a five-year window of opportunity scientists warn—10,000 national delegates, observers and journalists gathered in Doha, Qatar for the two-week 18th conference of the Contracting Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC—COP 18).

The outcome, emerging on 8 December—The Doha Climate Gateway—left no one satisfied, comments ranging from ‘modest’ (Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy) to ‘window’ (Pakistan’s lead negotiator Farukh Khan) and ‘bankrupt’, ‘betrayal’, ‘victory for the fossil fuel industry’ (NGO leaders). UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon saw it as ‘a first step’—his spokesperson saying Climate-General believes that far more needs to be done and he calls on governments, along with businesses, civil society and citizens for action on the ground”, announcing that Mr. Ban would convene a world leaders’ climate summit in mid-2014.

In fact, its results were overwhelmingly procedural, not substantive (in terms of financial and improved greenhouse gas emission targets from developed nations), while hopes that the hugely wealthy and hugely emitting Gulf states would lead by example were dashed—despite loud urging of 100 energetic members of the newly formed Arab Youth Climate Movement (their participation paid for by Qatar). Instead, Bahrain, members of the United States never ratified the Protocol, while its United States will largely determine the fate of our climate. China’s huge fleet of high-emitting coal stations is set to grow exponentially and thus its carbon dioxide emissions will almost double in 2020—this new US administration, to achieve far higher emission reductions by 2020 than under previous legislation needing Congressional approval will be constrained by opposition from a ‘climate sceptic’ Republican House of Representatives—encouraged by lobbyists enjoying colossal funding from certain fossil fuel industries and private financiers opposing climate action.

Anxiously, to key observers it is whether President Obama will approve the Keystone XL pipeline bringing oil to multiple US destinations from the massively polluting tar sands in Alberta, Canada. Canadian environmentalists from the first development of this project would generate huge CO2 emissions putting the global 1.5°C target beyond reach. However, after years of US ‘hardline’ tactics at UNFCCC, the ‘red state’ administration’s silence on the reference to climate change has given reason for hope. “We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations,” he stated and after outlining domestic actions he concluded “that is how we will preserve our planet, commanded to our care by God.” Also hopeful is the confirmation as Secretary of State of Senator John Kerry, with a long track record of climate change campaigning.

Meanwhile, funds available under bilateral aid and through several underfunded international instruments to help developing nations are a fraction of what is needed in reality: the poorest countries cannot afford it. Negotiations in adaptation policies already required, let alone prepare for future climate impacts. While developed nations claim to have delivered the $30 billion ‘Fast Start Financing’承诺 aimed at COP16 in Copenhagen in 2009, NGOs analysts and developing countries assert that most was ‘recycled’ development aid, while a considerable amount remains undisbursed. Developing nations’ demands in Doha that they be assured a bonfire a year from 2013 to 2015 were rebuffed. Instead, UK, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway together offered $6.2 billion for 2013. The Gateway promised further talks on how to start funding the Green Climate Fund decided in 2010, now headquartered in Kenya and supposed to reach $100 billion (€8 billion) by 2020.

In fact, adaptation and mitigation in developing nations have been forecast to cost several hundred billions of dollars a year by 2020 and much more in developed nations. Private capital is seen as the unavoidable complement to public money. With 16 trillion assets under its management, the recently launched Global Investor Coalition on Climate Change issued a letter to governments in mid-November stating that “current policies and insufficient action run the risk of severe impacts from climate change. We call for a new dialogue with the governments of the world’s largest economies on climate policy and the development of workable frameworks that will reduce climate risk and support low carbon investment.”

In the context of the slow moving international negotiations, the challenges facing the Mediterranean region can be seen in the findings on accelerating climate change and against a backdrop of increasingly dire scientific findings on accelerating climate change and thus the ever more pressing need for speedy global action to slow the process while this is still possible—a five-year window of opportunity scientists warn. Climate impacts are already being experienced along the coastlines of the Mediterranean countries and in the European Union. The Mediterranean is particularly vulnerable to climate change due to its geographical location, its exposure to the ocean and to the Mediterranean Sea Current (MSC), and the interconnectedness of its ecosystems. The region is also home to a large number of vulnerable populations, including those affected by conflict or displacement.

Addressing the climate crisis requires a comprehensive and integrated approach, involving not only governments and international organizations, but also local communities, businesses, and civil society. It is crucial to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy, increase resilience to climate impacts, and ensure that the most vulnerable populations are protected.

The report highlights the urgent need for a wide-ranging regional approach. This includes investing in renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and developing adaptation strategies that can reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience. It also calls for stronger international cooperation, particularly among the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) countries, to ensure that efforts are coordinated and effective.

The report recommends that the European Union (EU) and its Member States, as well as other developed countries, increase their support to developing countries and contribute to the Global Climate Fund. It also emphasizes the importance of addressing the root causes of climate change, such as deforestation and land degradation, which contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.

The Mediterranean region is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and changes in precipitation patterns. These impacts will have far-reaching consequences for the region’s economies, social stability, and environmental sustainability.

Addressing climate change in the Mediterranean region requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach that involves all stakeholders. It is crucial to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy, increase resilience to climate impacts, and ensure that the most vulnerable populations are protected. This requires strong international cooperation, particularly among the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) countries, to ensure that efforts are coordinated and effective.
The fourth Working Meeting of the Network of Mediterranean Universities for Sustainable Development focusing on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) took place in Athens (Di-
avi Acropolis Palace Hotel) on 3-4 December 2012. The meeting was organised by the University of Athens/ UNESCO Chair & Network for Sustainable Development, Management and Education in the Mediterranean (Coord-
dination and Scientific Secretariat of the Network) and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE) holding the administrative secretariat of the Network.

The meeting was attended by 15 participants from eight Mediterranean countries who reviewed the Network’s past activities and discussed all major international ESD developments putting special emphasis on the UN Rio+20 and the Thilissi 35 Conferences. Progress towards the Network’s founding goal to establish a Medi-
terranean Master Course on ESD was also reviewed.

Additionally, participants discussed the network’s future activities in terms of:

(i) joining in international initiatives, inter alia, the Rio+20 Higher Education Initiative and the EMUNI (the Euro-Mediterranean University).

(ii) Raising funds through various channels mainly by submitting proposals to the EC Life Long Learning Pro-
grame (i.e. TEMPUS, ERASMUS MUNDUS, IPs, etc.)

(iii) Opening up the network’s membership to interested higher education institutes - either public or pri-
vate. Institutes should be internationally accredited and in agreement with the Memorandum of Understanding of the Network.

(iv) Participation in upcoming meetings such as the H2020 national training on the Whole Institute Approach in Morocco (March, 2013); the regional H2020 Training on ESD in Croatia (May-June 2013); the Mediterranean Side Event on Higher Education within the 7th World Envi-
rornmental Education Congress (Marrakesh, June 2013).

The second day of the meeting was devoted to the Medi-
terranean Strategy on ESD which was reviewed and elabor-
ated by the group. During the meeting’s closing session, the participants committed to inform and encourage their countries to become active and supportive of this initiative.

The event was concluded with the duet of Leda Manthopoulou (piano) and Anna Sekedaki (flute) who played Jacques Marugg to the audience on the overarching issues of ESD and the latest developments.

During the discussion that followed, audience and speakers exchanged views on the developments and ex-
plored ways to advance educational priorities taking into consideration the modern challenges of ESD.
PARLIAMENTARIANS, JOURNALISTS AND NGOS AGREE TO WORK HAND IN HAND FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE MEDITERRANEAN

Participating countries included: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Jordan, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. The meeting was held in Athens, Greece on 22 and 23 October 2012 with the participation of more than a 120 Members of Parliament, journalists and NGOs from 22 Mediterranean countries. The two-day workshop was entitled ‘How Members of Parliament can better contribute to the effective De-pollution of the Mediterranean’ and was organized within the framework of the Horizon 2020 Capacity Building/ Mediterranean Environment Programme (www.hzanoo.net).

The workshop was opened by Prof. Stefan Schennach, Chairman of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA – UfM) who acknowledged the integrating role of Horizon 2020 in bringing together the multiple projects and initiatives currently underway in the region. Prof. Schennach highlighted the potential role of environmentally friendly policies and technologies in addressing problems of unemployment and low productivity, which are prevalent in the region.

The Coordinator of UNEP/ Mediterranean Action Plan, Ms. Maria Luisa Silva Mejias, followed suit pointing out that “In the current context of combined political and economic crises throughout the Mediterranean, the leadership of members of Parliament is essential to achieve our objectives. The main difference between the current downturn and previous ones is that it occurs in a context of increased fragility of our natural capital. Parliamentarians will be key actors in ensuring that the development strategies that will lift us from the current situation are not at the expense of our already depleted resources”.

Horizon 2020 Team Leader and MIO-ECSDE Chairman, Prof. Michael Scoullos stressed the pivotal role of MPs in encouraging Governments to coordinate their national strategies with the regional agreed priorities on environmental issues. Furthermore, he urged all participants to promote the Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean as well as the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development. Prof. Scoullos invited all countries of the Mediterranean to join the Aarhus Convention for access to environmental information and public participation.

On its second day (Tuesday 22 October 2012) the workshop was hosted by the Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection of the Hellenic Parliament and was held at the Greek Parliament. At the Parliament, the workshop was addressed by the Deputy Minister of External Affairs of Greece, Mr. Kourkoulas, the General Secretary of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment Energy and Climate Change, Ms. Evangelidou, the Heads of the Greek Delegations at the PA of the UfM and at the Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean, Mr. Gerontopoulos and Mr. Orfanos respectively, the President of the Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection, Ms. Avgirtinopoulou and numerous other MPs.

Implemented in a truly participatory mode, more than 70 participants from all the 22 participating countries took the floor to express their views, to present their national efforts regarding the priorities of Horizon 2020 and actively participate in the dialogue. Throughout the meeting participants expressed the need for increased training within the framework of Horizon 2020 in order to further enable themselves to act more effectively towards the protection of the Mediterranean environment.

A fruitful discussion, which at times culminated in a passionate debate, ensured that participants remained focused on how best to pursue environmental protection and coordinate their efforts for the Mediterranean.

By the end of the workshop participants increased their understanding of the main challenges and urgencies to be addressed in the Mediterranean and the regional frameworks, initiatives and cooperation opportunities such as Horizon 2020, the MedPartnership and SWIM. Also in an effort to address the need for policy based on sound scientific information, participants gained knowledge on the available resources and the ways these can be used throughout the process of the development and implementation of policies. In addition, they were informed of regional platforms for dialogues between Parliamentarians such as COMPSUD (Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development), which also held its 9th Meeting on the afternoon of the 23rd of October at the University of Athens.

To combine ‘business and pleasure’ and despite the heavy schedule of the meeting, participants got the chance to experience a private guided tour at the new Acropolis Museum, the Hellenic Parliament as well as the historical building of the University of Athens. At the farewell dinner hosted at the University Club they renewed their appointment for the near future.

COMPSUD gets new leadership

The 9th Annual Meeting of the Circle of Mediterranean Parliamentarians for Sustainable Development (COMPSUD) was held in Athens, Greece on 23 October 2012 on the fringes of the regional Horizon 2020 workshop and a new board was elected to serve the Circle for the next two years. The board, which was elected unanimously, is now chaired by Ms. Dionisia – Theodora Avgirtinopoulou, President of the Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection of the Hellenic Parliament. Mr. Antonio Ramos Pretto, President of the Environment Committee of the Portuguese Parliament and Mr. Mohammed Amour, Member of the Moroccan Parliament and former Minister were elected Vice Chairs.

COMPSUD was chaired by its outgoing Chair, Ms. Panariti, and the General Secretary Prof. Michael Scoullos and was attended by more than 80 Members of Parliament, journalists and NGOs from 22 Mediterranean countries. The Circle welcomed 22 new Members of Parliament from eight countries. Among other issues, the meeting discussed fundraising prospects and the organization of national trainings for MPs through which meaningful links can be made between the Circle and National Parliaments.
The Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development, is a Federation of Mediterranean Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for the Environment and Development. MIO-ECSDE acts as a technical and political platform for the intervention of NGOs in the Mediterranean scene. In cooperation with Governments, International Organizations and other socio-economic partners, MIO-ECSDE plays an active role for the protection of the environment and the sustainable development of the Mediterranean Region.

Background
MIO-ECSDE became a federation of Mediterranean NGOs in March 1996. Its roots go back to the early 80s, when the expanding Mediterranean membership of the European Community encouraged the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) to form its Mediterranean Committee supported by Elliniki Etairia (The Hellenic Society for the Protection of the Environment and the Cultural Heritage). The Mediterranean Information Office (MIO) was established in 1990 as a network of NGOs, under a joint project of EEB and Elliniki Etairia and in close collaboration with the Arab Network of Environment and Development (RAED). The continuous expansion of MIO-ECSDE’s Mediterranean NGO network and the increasing request for their representation in Mediterranean and International Fora, led to the transformation of MIO-ECSDE to its current NGO Federation status. Today it has a membership of 126 NGOs from 26 Mediterranean countries.

Our Mission
Our mission is to protect the Natural Environment (flora and fauna, biotopes, forests, coasts, natural resources, climate) and the Cultural Heritage (archaeological monuments, and traditional settlements, cities, etc.) of the Mediterranean Region. The ultimate goal of MIO-ECSDE is to promote Sustainable Development in a peaceful Mediterranean.

Major tools and methods
Major tools and methods used by MIO-ECSDE in order to achieve its objectives are the following:

- Promotion of the understanding and collaboration among the people of the Mediterranean, especially through their NGOs, between NGOs and Governments, Parliaments, Local Authorities, International Organizations and socio-economic actors of the Mediterranean Region.
- Assistance for the establishment, strengthening, cooperation and co-ordination of Mediterranean NGOs and facilitation of their efforts by ensuring the flow of information among relevant bodies.
- Promotion of education, research and study on Mediterranean issues, by facilitating collaboration between NGOs and Scientific and Academic Institutions.
- Raising of public awareness on crucial Mediterranean environmental issues, through campaigns, publications, exhibitions, public presentations, etc.