

Editorial

Since our last Newsletter in May 2010 we've had two very successful conferences both well organised and in superb outdoor locations.

In September 2010 our hosts were the Centre for School and Outdoor Education (CSOD) at their Planica Centre in the Julian Alps, Slovenia. Marion Hedtke gives a delegate's view of this stimulating conference in this Newsletter.

The most recent conference was held in October 2011 at the Metsäkartano Centre in Finland. The theme was *Into the Woods: About the significance of woods and wilderness for Youth work in Europe*. It was a great opportunity for researchers, teachers, youth workers and other practitioners to share ideas and good practice and take part in practical outdoor sessions. Delegates were able to enjoy journeys into the environment on foot, by bike and by canoe.

The Newsletter includes a short reflection by John Quay, an Australian delegate on his experience of the conference.

You will also find the annual report from Kirsti Pendersen Gurholt, the chair of EOE and information on the Board's activities and projects since the last Newsletter.

Best wishes for the New Year.

Geoff Cooper.
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Annual Report

Sept 2010 – Sept 2011

The mission of the European Institute (www.eoe-network.org) is to bring together and develop networks among social and youth workers, teachers, educators, academics and students concerning Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning across Europe.

The Board of the EOE consists of Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt, Chair, Peter Becker, Vice-Chair, Jochem Schirp, Treasurer, with Andy Ashworth, Jari Kujala, Robbie Nicol, Ralf Westphal, Barbara Humberstone as board members. Magda Jedrzejczyk, Geoff Cooper and Irena Kokalj are co-opted members, and Andi Williams, Chris Loynes, Pete Higgins are corresponding members. The Board has had two meetings; in Helsinki January 2011, and in Metsäkartano June 2011 to plan the 2011 European conference.

The main task for the Board has been the planning and cooperation with the Youth Center Metsäkartano, Finland in organizing the 11th European Conference on Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning, titled *Into the Woods: About the significance of the woods and wilderness in youth work across Europe*, held in Metsäkartano October 7-10th 2011.

The Board wants to thank executive manager Jari Korkalainen and Tanja Liimatainen for their inspiring collaboration and for the time, effort, hard work and financial support which over the last two years have been put into the planning and preparations for this conference. The Board's networks and members participated in the 5th International Outdoor Education Research Conference on *Research in "friluftsliv" and outdoor education. Different places, critical perspectives and new possibilities*, held in Denmark 4-8th July 2011. The Chair of the EOE represented the Board at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the bsj-Marburg, August 19-20th 2011.

The Board is very grateful to the EOE sub-network *Breaking Barriers* finally completing a *Handbook on outdoor youth work among disabled*, and to the university-based network COMPASS for having succeeded getting funding for a joint two years master programme titled *Transcultural European Outdoor Studies*, starting in September 2011. The University of Marburg is the coordinator, working in collaboration with the University of Cumbria and Norwegian School of Outdoor Studies (www.erasmusmundus-teos.eu).

The work of the EOE is voluntarily based and interest is increasing. New members regularly attend the network. The main challenge is to find the time and resources to finance the administration of the website, produce new publications, initiate projects and to plan conferences. The Board is constantly looking for new partner organisations to organize conferences and is open for dialogue and ideas from its members on all related issues.

Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt,
Chair, European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning



Message from Tanja Liimatainen:

You will find some of the Power Point presentations from the conference at:

www.slideshare.net/metsakartano

some of the pictures taken during conference:

www.flickr.com/photos/metsakartanoyouthcentre/sets/

If you are on Facebook, you will find more pictures from EOE Facebook group:

www.facebook.com/groups/230240793690822/



2011 EOE Finland Conference Recollections

Expressed in the reserved English of Finland, the recent EOE conference was a “truly wonderful experience.” In colloquial Australian it was a “bewdy, fair dinkum.” Following the lead of Steve Bowles, I thought I’d pen a poem to help share the character of the event (although my effort is not in Steve’s league).

*Into the woods, amongst the trees
From far and wide: EOE*

*Sauna, Coffee, Beer and Wine
Tongues oiled for talking, Finnish time*

*Many people, many places
Spoke kind words with caring faces*

*Sharing experience of child and challenge
And hopes of restoring a natural balance*

*This task is great, it’s never done
But we strove together (plus one Australian)*

Thanks for making me feel so welcome as a non-European at the EOE conference. Great job Tanja and Metsäkartano, the Board, and all involved. All the best until we meet again. John Quay – University of Melbourne – jquay@unimelb.edu.au

2010 EOE Conference: “Encountering, Experiencing and Exploring Nature in Education”

A Delegate’s Perspective

The 10th annual EOE conference on the theme of “Encountering, Experiencing and Exploring Nature in Education” was held in Planica, Slovenia, in September 2011. It was organised in partnership with the Centre for School and Outdoor Education Slovenia (CSOD). Our hosts chose a spectacular landscape and location for the conference, the Olympic Sports Centre, surrounded by the mountains of the Triglav National Park.

Some 90 participants from 10 European countries and New Zealand and Australia met to exchange ideas with colleagues and learn from the mountain environment. During the welcoming speech we learnt that although Slovenia is small there is a lot of experience in outdoor education. CSOD organises outdoor activities in 23 outdoor centres in Slovenia with emphasis on natural sciences and sport as part of the extended curriculum throughout the nine years of elementary school.

All participants of the conference were enthralled by Karen Barfod’s keynote speech and it became clear that challenges in education for both teachers and students

often start at your front door. She introduced us to this year's main topic: **what importance does nature have in education and what should this education be like?** The challenge was how to relate outdoor activities to the natural sciences in secondary schools.

Then we found our own way through a wide range of lectures and opportunities to exchange experiences. The conference timetable offered us 47 lectures, 3 outdoor workshops and an excursion to a cave in the Slovenian Karst in the south of the country. The lectures were a well balanced mixture of presentations by practitioners and researchers of outdoor education and also by teachers of natural sciences from different cultural backgrounds and systems.

How do the Scandinavian countries integrate the idea of Friluftsliv in education? What can the Danish Udeskole achieve? What are examples of the German Erlebnispädagogik? What are the experiences of Forest Schools? How do chemists, biologists or mathematicians use nature to explain scientific phenomena? Are we aware of sustainability in outdoor learning? What does the Scottish question "Living wild – education, therapy or neither" mean? Have the Slovenes found the right way for education in nature in their centres? How do countries such as Iceland, Ireland, Poland, Czech Republic and Austria achieve the task of encountering, experiencing and exploring nature in outdoor education? And last but not least Who is financing this work?

These inspiring questions are high mountains to climb in this field of education, but not inaccessible. We gained much from sharing our views and gaining new ideas from across Europe.

Beside this huge theoretical input and practical programmes on outdoor education we all realised that there are some other skills that can be helpful for surviving in nature, e.g. coordinating your legs while dancing "Sieben-Schritt" and Polka or to be able to make a "poacher's flute".

A big "Thank You" to our hosts, CSOD, for organising such a successful conference.

Marion Hedtke

Head of "Querfeldein" (cross-country)

Marion designs and carries out the outdoor programme in cooperation with the Schullandheim Schloss Dreilützow in Mecklenburg, Northern Germany and organises international youth projects.

Editor's note:

You can find a collection of papers from the Slovenian conference on CSOD web site: www.csod.si/index.php?str=339

And you can see a slide show of conference photos on You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zbP9PiPm1U>



MY FOREST THAT REMAINS, DEAD AND ALIVE

*My forest is not your forest
Your forest is different.
Much different, and more,
And different to mine.*

*My forest is what is left behind
That demands attention,
Interpretation,
Living, and yet still left behind.
And your forest is much, much, more
different to mine.*

*Your forest is just a game
With a voice.
A voice that is a game,
A game
Reproduced
By nothing much at all.*

*My forest is speaking to me with no voice.
My forest is my echo
Not yours.
My forest speaks to me.
And,
To me alone.*

*My forest divides you and me.
You are dead.
I am alive,
In my forest.*

*My forest is a silent echo that bounces
back,
Bounces back.
But not to you.*

*With my forest I know myself.
I know
Know
Myself.
Myself,
Alone.
Alone I am, in my forest,
The Modern way.*

*But I know myself,
alone.
I know myself the Modern way
Alone, alone
In my forest.
Alone.*

Steve Bowles (Finland October 2011)

DEVELOPMENTS

Website

The Board discussed the need to update and improve the quality of the Institute's website. Jochem Schirp and Peter Becker offered to develop a new website which will be administered by bsj Marburg. This was agreed and it was felt that the new site needed to appeal to funders and the general public as well as members of EOE. Drafts will be distributed to the Board for comments and fund raising has started for the site.

The existing website is at:

www.eoe-network.org/Statement.htm

Future Conferences

Following discussions at Metsäkartano, some of the Board met Steve Lenartowicz at Derwent Hill Outdoor Education Centre near Keswick in the English Lake District in November to discuss possibilities for a 2012 Conference. This is still at a planning stage but it is proposed that the theme will be based around the keywords of **Youth, Health, Sustainability and Social Inclusion.**

A Conference is being planned with the co-operation of Erik Backman, Swedish School for Sport and Health Sciences, in Stockholm in 2013. It will be based on **urban outdoor adventure and learning for schools and youth work.**



*In the Woods- Practical outdoor session,
Finland Conference.*

Codes of Good Practice

There was an open and lively discussion at the Finland conference led by Peter Becker and Felix Vanditz on the value of establishing a Code of Good Practice in Outdoor Adventure and Experiential Learning for members of the Institute. As a result a working group was set up to draw up a statement of the scope, process and educational value of the Institute's work. Peter Becker has produced a paper on *The Principles of Good Practice* and the group will also consider codes of practice developed by other European outdoor learning organisations. Felix Vanditz will collate this information and a paper will be presented to our next conference.



(pictures: Metsäkartano, Finland 2011)