European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning

newsletter

02-2020

Editorial.

The 2019 EOE Conference in Tralee was a great success. Delegates commented on the friendly atmosphere, good organisation, inspiring presentations and the chance to experience wild Atlantic shores.

Our network continues to grow with more members, a new website, a lively Facebook group of 750 members and partnerships being formed across Europe and beyond.

It's good to see students getting involved in EOE and ideas to help develop their own topics and networks. Interest in organising future conferences is strong and there are plans for sharing research and good practice through Webinars.

The following pages present a taste of these developments. Check out the website for more information.

Geoff Cooper, February 2020

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Contents	Page
18th EOE Conference, Ireland	2
ENOC and their "Aesthetics and Outdoor Learning" project	3
H.E. Special interest group	4
"Diverse" interests group	5
TEOS- On their ways in the world	6
Nordic Master in Friluftsliv Studies	7
Call for Papers- EOE 19th Conference, Germany	8
Future Conferences Plans for Webinars	9

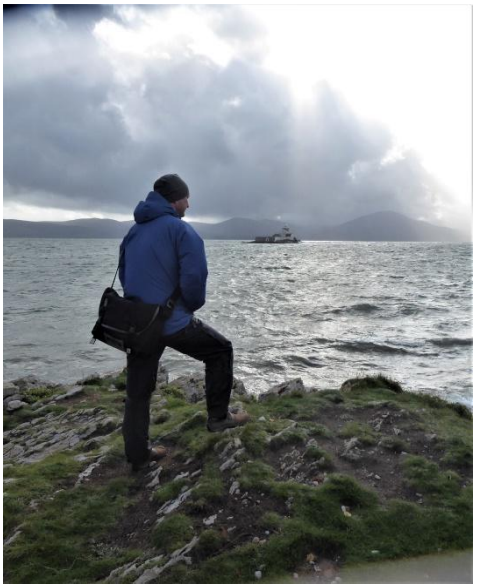
18th EOE Conference in Tralee, Ireland.

The conference on the theme of **"Diversity and Inclusion in Outdoor and Experiential Learning**" was held at the Institute of Technology, Tralee from 25-27th September 2019. As usual the delegates were from many different backgrounds and countries and appreciated the work of Tomas Aylward and team in providing an excellent programme of keynote speakers, delegate presentations, practical sessions and entertainment. It was good to see the many students and people new to EOE taking part.

Ioanna Skaltsa a Horticulturist, Landscape Designer and Interpersonal Skills Development Adviser at the Agricultural University of Athens explains her participation:

"When I joined the Facebook group of EOE Network getting in touch with Chris Loynes, just one year ago, I couldn't t imagine what a great adventure had started.
Being a mature PhD student, researching outdoor education and interpersonal skills development, I was firstly given the opportunity, to participate in an Erasmus Mobility, visiting the University of Cumbria and following one module of the MA in Outdoor and Experiential Learning. The adventure continued by giving a presentation at the 2019 EOE Conference in Tralee.
Both events gave me the opportunity to meet with academics, researchers and practitioners and to exchange ideas and good practice. It was great to meet and discuss with authors that I was following.
I felt so inspired and supported. The EOE network demonstrates the values of collaboration and sharing and I would recommend it to anyone interested in OE. I am looking forward to the 19th European Conference in 2020!"

In the photo below, Ioanna is sitting in front of the surf board.



Other photos from the Conference can be found at:
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1-VgbARIsEXT_qrsnEd_QdTtHK8R9qN5w

The European Network of Outdoor Centres (ENOC)- Special Interest Group

Good practice in the field of outdoor education is found in outdoor centres across Europe but these organisations sometimes operate in isolation. There is a need to share and disseminate their ideas, methods and expertise.

The aim of ENOC is: "**to promote the value of Outdoor Education Centres for Lifelong Learning across Europe".**

This will be achieved by:

1. Supporting outdoor education for its own value as an active, practical, co-operative and lifelong approach to learning.

2. Supporting outdoor education as a means of delivering aspects of the school curriculum.

3. Sharing philosophy and good practice across outdoor education centres.

4. Encouraging professional development through job shadowing and joint projects.

5. Understanding political and educational systems in European countries and how they influence outdoor education.

The original partners from Germany, Finland, Slovenia, UK and Poland met in Slovenia in 2013 and this led to a series of projects between partners in terms of job shadowing, youth exchanges and proposals to share and develop methodologies.

The partners applied for an Erasmus+ project on "Aesthetics and Outdoor Learning". A two year project started with a planning meeting at bsj Marburg in April 2018.

Why did we choose "Aesthetics and Outdoor Learning"?

Many European countries have experienced tighter government controls over formal education and an emphasis on business models and content-based learning. Aesthetic approaches have been side-lined. These experiences can provide different ways of learning and may appeal to young people who struggle with traditional cognitive learning. Aesthetic approaches can motivate, inspire and encourage creativity. There is a complex interplay of emotions and thoughts from being and moving in the outdoors. Sensations arise from fresh air, the wind on our faces, the smell of the earth, birdsong, the sound of running water, our heartbeat, movement of our bodies and the beauty of the landscape.

The project model.

The Kick off meeting set the scene and timetable for the project and allowed the partners to present their existing philosophy and methods and a variety of practical outdoor activities to each other.

A "Training the Trainers" meeting was held in Slovenia in October 2018 when the four partners each presented a day based on a range of activities and methodologies. This was followed by an Implementation phase when the trainers introduced the activities to young people and outdoor leaders in their own

countries. A meeting at Brathay Trust, UK in July 2019 reviewed and evaluated the implementation and made preparations for an online handbook, leaflet and webpage to disseminate the project. The ENOC team reported on the project's progress at the main EOE Conference in Tralee, Eire in September 2019. There was considerable interest from other European outdoor education centres in ENOC and in the current Aesthetics project. Two points of contact have been made to share ideas and good practice and engage more outdoor centres in ENOC's projects.

ENOC has a page on the EOE website: https://www.eoe-network.eu/enoc/ and there is also a Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/706196373082997/

The free online handbook will available this summer. It presents the theory and practice of Aesthetic Approaches in outdoor learning and represents current thinking and contributions from a range of researchers and outdoor educators.
Geoff Cooper.

Higher Education interest group: collaborative research and teaching

Many existing and new members of this long running group met at the Tralee conference. The meeting opened with a summary of previous activities before discussing ideas for new collaborative projects. The following themes emerged and have since been considered by the EOE Board.

Student engagement/projects: the number of students at the Tralee conference was applauded. Future conferences were encouraged to offer a student rate.

A student led pre-conference camp was discussed. The idea of a student led conference or pre-conference was thought by the Board to be a good idea. Universities will be approached to take the project forward. The next conference organisers have been asked to include a student rate and this has now been included in the EOE guidance notes for organisers.

Collaborative teaching: After the success of the TEOS Erasmus Mundus MA programme it is exciting to see the emergence of the Nordic collaborative Friluftsliv MA (see page 7 of this Newsletter) applying the same model. The possibility of online seminars and a shared summer school were also proposed. The Board has identified several people willing to host an online seminar and also an electronic platform that can be used for the purpose. Pilots will take place during 2020. Discussions are continuing amongst several potential partners about a shared summer school.

Promoting internships: There are many intern opportunities across Europe and many students seeking them. It was discussed whether the EOE website could host a database of opportunities. The Board took advice from universities and students who suggested that the current arrangements were working. Those with internships to offer will be encouraged to promote these on the closed Facebook group.

Special Interest Group: "Diverse" interests.

The idea to convene this group was to look out for missing topics and perhaps establish an additional special interest group in the near future. Approx. 10 participants joined this group. Four areas of interest were discussed:

1. **"People of colour and race in the outdoors"**: Minorities in European countries working in the outdoor sector (like people from Surinam in Netherlands, Turks in Germany and Indians in UK) have not been attracted to this conference. There is no network in which they could share their experiences and in which they could have a voice that is heard.

Aim: The EOE could implement a new special interest group and could distribute this information through national organisations and EOE members. Members and others could then join the next conference in Germany and discuss their topics.

2. Some of the group voted for an" **Acid free language"** in order to be respectful to people of colour and race as well as to the diversity in the outdoor sector. Some others pointed out that English is not the mother language for all and that there is a cultural diversity which could cause misunderstandings. Friendly feedback is very welcome in order to minimise misunderstandings.

3. **"Deep nature connection / sustainability as aim of outdoor adult education"** was mentioned as another possible topic. Spirituality and rituals in and with nature are a focus in some outdoor educational programmes. It was argued that it is of interest to explore the diversity of approaches in European countries.

Aim: During the next conference a workshop could be offered to explore the cultural diversity in this field. It could also be considered for a pre- or post-conference if it does not match with the conference topic.

4. **"Animal rights and outdoor education"**: Based on some presentations during the conference it was suggested to develop this issue more. It could also be a topic to be discussed at one of the next conferences.

Martin Lindner, led this session, Tralee September 2019

On Their Ways in the World: what happened to graduates from the TEOS programme?

I've often wondered what the graduates of the Erasmus Mundus MA set up by three of the universities in the EOE Network went on to do in the world. There were 112 of them from 52 countries and all the continents except Antarctica – though one graduate from Hong Kong did end up working there for several seasons! Recently, I had a chance to catch up with many of them online and find out some of their stories.

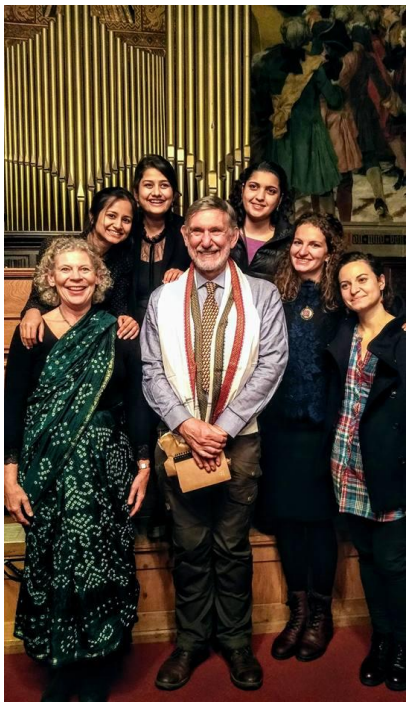
The MA was called Transcultural European Outdoor Studies (TEOS) and was taught over four semesters, one in England with the University of Cumbria, one in Norway with the Norwegian School of Sport Science and one in Germany with Marburg University. There were seven cohorts in all.

Many graduates returned to their home countries, but a significant number settled down elsewhere, especially in Norway, Germany, the USA and, surprisingly to me, China. Some were pursuing careers. Others had met partners during their studies and have begun families in their new countries. Some have simply not yet settled and are still traveling or studying in yet other parts of the world.

Many have settled into careers as teachers, therapists and social workers often with Outdoor Education as an aspect of their work. Of course, there are some unexpected pathways – musician, fisherman, dancer for example. A few have set up projects and businesses together offering adventures to others.

As one of the academics who had the privilege to work with these people it is always exciting to find out what happens afterwards. It is a pleasure to see how many of them are still in touch and how inclusive and internationalist they continue to be as the founder of the programme, Prof Peter Becker, might say - on their ways in the world.

Chris Loynes



Nordic Master in Friluftsliv Studies (Outdoor Studies) – NOFRI

This gives students the option to study educational, recreational and adventurous nature-culture relations in the three Nordic countries: Norway, Sweden and Iceland. The master's degree provides the students with the opportunity to explore the knowledge needed to lead outdoor projects and to engage in researching environmental learning, adventurous explorations, active outdoor living and well-being.

NOFRI offers two years of high quality, cross-border and cross-disciplinary studies in the cultures and practices of Nordic Friluftsliv. It is run collaboratively by The University of Southeast-Norway (coordinator), the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, The Swedish School of Sport Sciences and Health, and The University College Holar. The students will live one semester in each of the three countries and thus, experience directly the diversity and similarities between outdoor life in those countries. In the fourth semester, the students will work with one of the four partner institutions to do supervised research for their thesis.

A Master's degree in Friluftsliv Studies opens up opportunities in a wide range of employment in the private and public sectors.

NOFRI starts in the fall 2020, and the application for this first of (at least) three cohorts of international students, is open for applicants coming from the EU and the EAA countries. The application deadline for students from **EU/EAA is March 1st 2020** and from the **Nordic countries is April 15th 2020**.

Students from outside the EU/EAA can apply for a start in September 2021 – application deadline will be December 1st 2020 and formally announced later.

In the Nordic countries studying is free of charge for students coming from EU/EAA countries, however, the students pay administration fee (about 100 Euro each semester) but pay for their own accommodation and travel.

For more details about the study plan, course programme, exams etc. see the information on the website:

https://www.usn.no/english/academics/find-courses/sports-physical-education-and-outdoor-life/joint-master-in-nordic-friluftsliv-studies/

EOE 19th Conference “Childhood and Nature” 14-18th October 2020, Marburg/Germany

A Call for Papers.

The forthcoming EOE conference in 2020 will be hosted by bsj Marburg, a non-profit youth work organisation in Germany. The EOE Network is a vibrant association of practitioners and academics and this four-day conference will reflect that mix with practitioner case studies, practical workshops and academic presentations. It is a key networking event for social and youth workers, teachers and educators, students and academics from across Europe.

The conference theme is **"Childhood and Nature"**. One main focus will be to consider the educational institutions of kindergarden, school and youth welfare in their function as companions to the developmental processes of children, between the ages of three and eleven. Seen from the point of view of developmental psychology this is the phase of separation and individuation following the early symbiotic connection with the mother up to the threshold of adolescence. Moreover, it is the time of children's increasing desire to become more and more self-determined in their actions, even if these are as yet small in scope. The family still provides enough security to support this desire. At the point of starting school this striving for autonomy receives its epistemic endowment. The desire of the child to act independently is stabilised and, at the same time, fostered by an energetic habitus formation, which, in the ideal case, is characterised by curiosity and thirst for knowledge willingness to take risks, exploration drive, great powers of imagination, openness to the world, optimism and self-confidence.

Where children also have access to (more or less) open nature, their urge for autonomy can find attractive playful practice opportunities in natural places and atmospheres and with natural things. Watercourses, ponds, puddles, hedgerows, thickets, glades, trees, wild flowers, wind and storm, rain and snow, half-light and moonlight, fog and mist, the phenological year are brimful with opportunities for both boys and girls designed to foster the children's habitus of openness. Here they can search and find, observe, construct and build, climb, collect and put into order, discover and explore, prove themselves, fail, whittle, recognise and describe. They need all their senses to perceive everything they encounter in their specific details. And at the end their hearts are full to bursting with their experiences and feelings, which they have to tell and tell and tell.

This short sketch marks out the framework within which the discussions, workshops, lectures, poster presentations, forums and debates are supposed to be held. In order to fill these outlined features of the event we are looking for contributions to the following topic areas:

- about the experience potentials of natural places, things and atmospheres
- about practice forms in natural places, with things and in specific atmospheres

- about the transitions between family to kindergarden & kindergarden to school
- about nature-related family welfare work
- about practice forms in natural places with educational institutions like kindergarden, school and youthwork
- about "low-threshold" therapeutical practise forms for children in natural places

For further information & conference registration please visit www.bsj-marburg.de/eoe2020. For questions please contact eoe2020@bsj-marburg.de

The EOE Conference Venue

The venue, an outdoor centre in a wooded valley, in Weimar-Wolfshausen is about 8km south of Marburg and offers a range of facilities for seminars and workshops (in- and outdoors). You can choose between shared bedrooms in the centre or a hotel room (single or twin) in walking distance. Travel and registration information can be found of the conference`s website. Additionally, the organisation team provides a pre-conference.

Venue: https://bsj-wolfshausen.de

If you plan to attend the conference please check your timetable for a longer stay in and around Marburg. At least one seminar (for 10 participants) is scheduled for 09 to 13 October another one for 12 to 13 October. Check the conference website for news (early March):

https://www.bsj-marburg.de/eoe-2020/

Future Conferences.

Plans are underway for future EOE conferences in Portugal in 2021 and in Finland in 2022. The provisional topics for the Portugal conference will address the relationship of outdoor education to rural regeneration, community development and sustainable tourism.

EOE Webinars for Outdoor Educators in Europe (and beyond)

Not everyone can afford the cost or the time to travel to an EOE conference. The Board have often been asked if key notes and workshops can be live streamed or at least recorded and posted for others to watch. We have experimented with both, but the quality of the results and the cost of the technology has so far defeated us.

Another approach was called for! One technology some of our University members can access for free provides a way for widely scattered people to meet online for a presentation, seminar or discussion – webinars. This year, the Board have decided to try out the idea. Over the months ahead look out for news of live webinar events that you can log into to watch or join in - for free. They will be on current issues in the field and may build on themes developed at recent conferences. We will be experimenting with different approaches to presentation, a range of topics and times of day to find out what works best. We want to find out who is interested and ion what. If anyone reading this has a great idea for a webinar topic and is willing to present or lead a discussion on this please get in touch with me.

Thanks to the University of Technology Tralee, Ireland for offering to support this initiative with their technology and knowhow.

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