

**01-2015**

## Editorial

It's an exciting time for EOE. Both the individual and organisational membership has grown substantially during the last year. The sub-groups- TEOS, the Outdoor Centres network, the Research group and Breaking Barriers- have been active and a new group formed to consider ways of lobbying governments to support outdoor education at a national and European level. Informal partnerships amongst universities and practitioners have been developed and the EOE Board continues to explore links with other European outdoor networks.

The conference in Iceland was a resounding success and arrangements are in place for further EOE conferences in Austria in 2016 and England in 2017.

On behalf of the Board I'd like to wish everyone a happy and adventurous New Year.

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## **From the Chair's Annual Report 2014.**

The mission of the European Institute ([www.eoe-network.org](http://www.eoe-network.org)) (EOE) 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 main tasks for the board have been the planning of two international seminars, supporting the MA TEOS and the Outdoor Education Centres networks and supporting the production of three publications. In addition the membership list has been overhauled and the website maintained and expanded. Two sub-networks of EOE have also been active in this period. Another sub-network, the Breaking Barriers Network is still working and preparing some new activities, although some plans for youth exchange could not be realised.

**Iceland Seminar** , *'Under the Open Sky'*, takes place in Sept. 2014 in Iceland. It has been organised in partnership with the Iceland Association of Nature and Outdoor Schools. The Board would like to thank our Icelandic colleagues, in particular Jakob Frimann Thorsteinsson, Gudmundur Arngrimmson and Björn Vilhjálmsson for their enthusiasm and energy in making this seminar a reality.

**Austria Anniversary Seminar 2016.** Board members Jochem Schirp and Peter Becker have also laid the groundwork for a 20th anniversary seminar in Salzburg, Austria in collaboration with Günter Amesburger, Susanne Lesk and Markus Gutman from the Austrian association IOA. 1996 the

Austrian alpine village Spittal was the setting for EOE's founding event and Günter was also our collaborator on that occasion and a key person in developing the idea of a European Institute as a network of academics and practitioners. It is expected that the 2016 seminar will provide a retrospective into the last 20 years of outdoor practise and relate Outdoor Learning to major issues in society and failings in the economic system.

## **Publications**

***12th European Outdoor Learning Seminar: Outdoor Learning as a means of promoting healthy and sustainable lifestyles and social inclusion for young people***". Many thanks to Steve Lenartowicz for editing the proceedings of the Derwent Hill OEC, Keswick, UK seminar now available on the EOE website in electronic form.

***13<sup>th</sup> European Outdoor Learning Seminar: Urban nature: inclusive learning through youth work and school work.*** The board is also sincerely grateful to Erik Backman for editing (with Barbara Humberstone and Chris Loynes) and arranging for the publication of the proceedings of the Stockholm Seminar due to be published in September 2014.

## **Networks**

**Erasmus Mundus MA Transcultural European Outdoor Studies.** This EU funded MA set up by Philipps University, Marburg in partnership with the University of Cumbria and the Norwegian School of Sport Science had its first

graduation ceremony in December 2013 and has now recruited its fourth cohort of 22 students starting in Sept 2014. The project currently has five years of EU funding and is hoping for an extension of a further three years.

**European Network of Outdoor Centres (ENOC).** Formed at the Derwent Hill seminar in 2012 a planning meeting was organised by Irena Kokalj in Planica, Slovenia in May 2013. A second meeting was arranged by Irmina Lachacz at Frajda in Poland in Jan 2014. A funding application is being prepared to support trainer training, job shadowing and international youth events. At the moment this network consists of a circle of 6 organisations from five countries (England, Poland, Slovenia, Finland and Germany). It is planned that after completing this first project period the network will open for cooperation with other outdoor centres.

### **Website**

The board sincerely appreciate the efforts of bsj-Marburg for their continued work and financial contribution in maintaining the EOE website. This has raised the profile of EOE leading to more membership and other enquiries. It has also enabled the Network to disseminate publications. A new section providing links to significant online outdoor education resources of interest to members has also been added.

### **Membership**

A review of the membership list has been completed. The Network currently has a

growing membership of 76 individual and 48 organisational members. The EOE principles and statement of intent has been reviewed and confirmed. Two newsletters have been produced and circulated to members and other interested people and organisations.

### **Collaboration**

Geoff Cooper attended the first conference of the [Real World Learning Network](#) in Planica, Slovenia in Nov. 2013 on behalf of the EOE Board. Links will be continued with further collaboration at their second conference in Cumbria, UK in Nov. 2014. Links with the UK '[Natural Connections](#)' and '[Learning Away](#)' projects were also made and feature on the EOE website.

The board is very grateful to the EOE sub-networks and members who through their daily efforts support disseminating the ideas and mission of the EOE-network across Europe. The interest in the work of the EOE is increasing. New members are regularly attending the network. The work of the EOE is voluntarily based. The main struggle for the board is to find the time and resources to finance the administration of the website, the Newsletter, the production of new publications, the initiation of new projects and the planning of conferences. The board is constantly looking out for new partner organisations to plan new conferences and is open for dialogue and ideas from its members on all related issues.

**Chris Loynes, Chair EOE, July 2014.**

## Board members

As a result of the elections at the Iceland conference in September the members of the new Board are: Peter Becker, Chris Loynes, Barbara Humberstone, Jari Kujala, Irena Kokalj, Geoff Cooper, Jochem Schirp and Tanja Liimatainen. At the Board meeting which followed Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt, Kaye Richards, Magda Jedrzejczyk, Jakob Thorsteinsson and Marta Jonca were co-opted to the Board.

A Board meeting is planned for February in Marburg. At the same time there will also be the opportunity to meet with the Austrian team from IOA- Günter Amesburger, Susanne Lesk and Markus Gutmann- to plan for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference to be held in Salzburg in 2016 (see Chair's Report).

## EOE Membership

Membership of EOE has steadily grown during 2014. There are now a total of 116 members which comprises 72 individual members (including researchers, teachers, social and youth workers). Institutional membership stands at 44 and this includes 20 universities and 24 members from social, environmental or youth associations. 24 countries are represented of which 21 are European.

## 2017 Conference

Mark Leather and colleagues have kindly offered to host the EOE 2017 Conference at the University of St. Mark and St. John in Plymouth, England.

## Real World Learning Network.

EOE has established links with the Real World Learning Network, a largely science-based consortium of outdoor learning providers across Europe. Their goal is to explore and share successful approaches to outdoor learning that increase action for sustainability. Like EOE, RWL believes that outdoor learning offers one of the best approaches for young people to engage with the world around them. The Network has established four working groups who are exploring a range of aspects related to the effective delivery of outdoor learning for sustainability. These aspects include: scientific understanding, transferability of learning, the learning experience, empowerment for change, values and frames. RWL has developed a model for sustainability through outdoor learning see:

[www.rwlnetwork.org](http://www.rwlnetwork.org) Richard Dawson who co-ordinates the RWL joined our EOE conference in Iceland and is keen to share ideas and practice with EOE members.



## **Iceland Seminar, September 2014.**

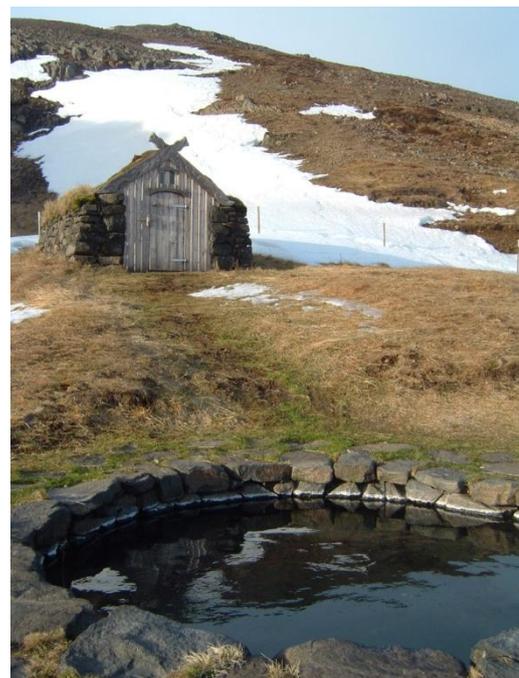
We all knew this conference was going to be exciting. The fireworks had started before our arrival when Bárðarbunga erupted in the north east of Iceland but the calm Icelandic team of Jakob, Haffi and Björn informed us that the eruption by Icelandic standards was “small and innocent”.

The seminar entitled “Under the open sky: Supporting healthy lifestyle and relationship to nature and society through outdoor engagement in youth work – a European perspective“ was hosted by the Association of Nature and Outdoor schools (SNÚ), in cooperation with EOE and The Educational Research Institute of University of Iceland. There were three interrelated themes: *Wellbeing*, *Sense of Place* and *the Dynamics of Journeying* and as usual the Seminar was a rich mixture of keynote speeches, participants’ presentations, workshops and outdoor activities . Outdoor sessions included workshops based on art, drama, story telling, mountain biking, cooking and working with early years and young people with special needs. The Seminar attracted over 80 participants from 16 countries.

The conference venue at Laugar gave a special sense of place with its association to the famous Laxdaela saga and it became clear how journeys are enriched through an understanding of landscape and culture. The hotel managers provided good accommodation and catering and created a friendly atmosphere and there were many opportunities for informal

exchanges in the hot pool and during the social evenings.

There were meetings of the sub-groups during the conference leading to initiatives and partnerships described in other sections of the newsletter. The success of the conference was evident from the final sessions: the *Outdoor Symphony of Laugar*, the summary, closing remarks and the heartfelt outdoor group farewell.



### **Research group.**

Prof. Barbara Humberstone reports that this group of 9 delegates considered suitable research projects that could be developed through the EOE network and ways of identifying funding opportunities. It was decided to establish a network of individuals with research interests in the field and Josh Bennett agreed to coordinate this. Since the conference Di Collins has offered to set up a research website linked to the main EOE site but also one that can be accessed separately.

### **Group of 17 (Felix group).**

There was a lively discussion at the AGM following a passionate plea from Felix van Ditzhuijzen for EOE to become more politically involved by lobbying on the value of outdoor learning at national and European levels. A group of 17 delegates met to consider the way forward with Jari Kujala liaising with the group on behalf of the Board. Felix will report to the next Board meeting in February 2015 with recommendations from the group. Chris Loynes has suggested a starting point could be an EOE package of information with rationale, evidence and case studies of effective outdoor learning in schools and youth work which could be used as a basis for lobbying.

### **European Network of Outdoor Centres (ENOC).**

Organisations from 5 countries are represented in the network: CSOD (Slovenia), bsj (Germany), Metsäkartano (Finland), Frajda (Poland) and Low Bank Ground/Brathay (UK). The network aims

to "promote the value of outdoor education centres for lifelong learning across Europe". The group met at Frajda in Poland in January 2014 and developed a project focussing on **aesthetics and outdoor learning** to be achieved through training the trainers, job shadowing and youth exchanges. The group were unsuccessful with their October submission for EU funding but plan to re-work their proposal for 2015.

### **Job Shadowing.**

A number of job shadowing visits have already taken place between partners in the ENOC group: Metsäkartano, bsj, CSOD and Frajda. Marta Jońca from Frajda comments on three centres she visited in Slovenia in 2014:

*"All people were very open and they wanted to show me all their work and responsibilities. I was participating with them in all kinds of activities, and I was a part of a team....The centre gave me a strong impression of celebrating every single pupil's success.... If the weather is changing- they are observing the forecast, and discussing changes to the programme with teachers".*

