

01-2016

Editorial

We face a critical time in Europe in dealing with big social, economic and environmental issues. The political systems that are producing these problems have also influenced the nature of our work. This will be explored in the Institute's 30th Anniversary conference in Salzburg, Austria in September 2016 on the theme of "Changing Horizons: Challenges to Outdoor Education in Europe".

Over the last year membership has grown and partnerships flourished. A Facebook group has been set up for members to share information and plans for our 2017 Conference in Plymouth UK are under way.

One highlight of the year was the involvement of EOE members in Poland's first conference emphasising the value of outdoor and experiential learning. This and other initiatives are described in the newsletter. Contributions for future newsletters are always welcomed.

Best wishes for 2016.

Geoff Cooper

geoffcooper548@btinternet.com



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15th European Seminar.

Our 15th European Conference will be held in Salzburg from 7-11th September 2016. The first conference was held in Austria in 1996 and this celebrates the 20th anniversary of EOE. The theme is **“Changing Horizons: Challenges to Outdoor Education in Europe”** and it will address the following three main issues in the fields of early education, children and youth work, social work, school, university, therapy, adulthood, and further education:

1. Economization, Consultancy and Professionalization
2. Didactization and Experiential Learning
3. Certification, Regulation and Risk/Challenge Management

The conference organisers Susanne Lesk and Günter Amesberger have announced the call for papers and there is more information online www.eoe2016.com

The Changing World of the Outdoors.

This is the working title of a proposed EOE book to celebrate 20 years of the work of the Institute and the considerable changes that have occurred in outdoor learning during this time. Contributors from EOE will explore the impact of the socio-economic and political changes across Europe on outdoor education and comment on practical developments in the field from a range of national perspectives. The book will be edited by Barbara Humberstone, Peter Becker, Jochem Schirp and Chris Loynes and will be published in 2017.

Breaking Barriers Network.

Jochen Riehl, Nürnberg, Germany describes the background to the Breaking Barriers network: “in 1995 Prof. Werner Michl started a partnership for his students of social work with my multiple handicapped pupils which included experiential learning through the outdoors at the university for applied sciences and a bike trip, 270 kilometres along the river Danube from Linz to Vienna. As a pilot project it was evaluated and published in the book “Leben gewinnen” –translated as “intensifying life, gaining vitality”. This led to a 20 year project “Leben gewinnen”. A short evaluation of these 20 years by Prof Ralf Kuckhermann and students will be finished in time to give a tribute to “20 years of EOE”.

As a result of this project I was invited to the first meeting of EOE in Spital/Pyhrn in 1996, which evaluated our methods of non-formal education in relation to the European Union’s youth work programmes. It took five more years to improve that work and come back together in Marburg to the contact making conference in 2001 where we started the “Breaking Barriers” Network. Many experiences we could gather together led to bilateral and multilateral youth meetings, to conferences and networking meetings”.

More information on this network can be found on the EOE website.



A First for Poland

EOE Board member, Marta Jonca, helped arrange the First International Conference "EDUCATION – INNOVATION" in Szczecin, Poland in November 2015. It was organized by the Association of Social and Cultural Initiatives TWIKS, School of Active Recreation FRAJDA, Non Formal and Outdoor Education Centre, Youth Sociotherapy Centre in Ryszewko, Sławęcin's Association of Local Initiatives - NGOs cooperating in West Pomerania province.

The conference was interdisciplinary, making it a meeting place for researchers, educators and practitioners from various fields, ranging from social sciences, outdoor education and economics. There were 180 participants representing local governments, educational institutions, banks, foundations and national parks.

The value of outdoor learning was a central theme of the conference and EOE members, Beth Christie, Jakob Frímánn Þorsteinsson, Mark Leather and Chris Loynes gave presentations and practical workshops.

The conference highlighted new methods to motivate students and develop their personal and social skills. Partnerships with parents to encourage learning were also advocated.



IOERC in Cape Breton Island.

The 7th International Outdoor Education Research Conference (IOERC) will take place at Cape Breton University, Canada from 4th-8th July 2016. This is the first time the IOERC will be held in North America. The conference website: <http://www.cbu.ca/ioerc7/> now has registration, accommodation and travel information posted.

MA Transcultural European Outdoor Studies (TEOS): A European degree with an international reach

In its fifth year over 100 TEOS students current and graduated have come from 52 countries and six continents to study the outdoors in Europe. Funded by the EU Erasmus Mundus programme TEOS is led by EOE members Marburg University in partnership with the University of Cumbria and the Norwegian School of Sport Science.

The pedagogy of the programme is of as much interest as the content. Chris Loynes from the University of Cumbria recently presented a paper on behalf of the academic team at the Higher Education Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society. His blog outlines the innovative nature of the course:

<https://teachingfocusedgeesnetwork.wordpress.com/2015/11/16/creating-global-students-internationalization-of-curricula-in-higher-education/>

TEOS graduates have commented on the impact of the course and their work since graduating.

Risham Saeed, from Pakistan says:

"Being a part of TEOS was an adventurous, inspiring and dreamy journey, where I was not only introduced with new way of thinking and learning but teaching too. Most of our lectures took place outside the classroom or on the way to beautiful outdoor environments.

TEOS has awakened a desire in me to explore the local landscape. I keep planning short and long trips in my own home country and keep getting engaged in little adventures on the way. Today I look at nature differently and deeply. "

Risham Saeed



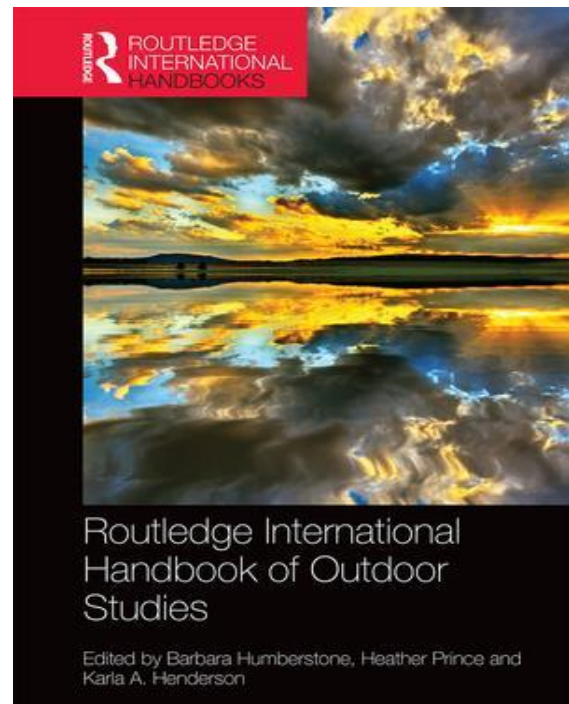
Klaudia Koci, from Albania comments:

"As a trained outdoor educator, I participate in the Balkan Lynx Recovery programme. I run peer led education programmes among young people in villages near the lynx territory. I hope to instil a passion for habitat protection among young people".

Klaudia Koci.



Routledge International Handbook of Outdoor Studies



Edited by Barbara Humberstone, Heather Prince (two familiar faces at EOE seminars) and Karla Henderson, this is the first book to survey the multi-disciplinary set of approaches that constitute the broad field of outdoor studies, including outdoor recreation, outdoor education, adventure education, environmental studies, physical culture studies and leisure studies. With perspectives on outdoor studies from a wide range of countries, it critically assesses current knowledge in outdoor studies, and identifies further opportunities for future research in this area. The handbook provides a useful foundation for any student, researcher, educator or outdoors practitioner keen to deepen their professional knowledge of the outdoors. It is pleasing to see chapters written by a selection of EOE members. For more information see:

www.routledge.com/978113878884

European Learning Syllabus for Outdoor Animators (ELESA)

A Press Release in November 2015 reported that a European syllabus for the training of Outdoor Animators (instructors in the commercial outdoor activity sector) has been developed. This is the result of a two year project involving higher education institutions and employer organisations from ten European countries. The syllabus contains 12 modules focussing on the 'soft skills' of outdoor animation and covers such topics as safety, communication, work practices and the environment. Technical skills in 16 activities (e.g. canoe, kayak, alpine skiing) are also identified. The ELESA syllabus will help to standardise training across Europe for Outdoor Animators in the fields of leisure and recreation and promote the mobility of learners and workers. For more information on the ELESA project see the project website: www.elesa-project.eu or <http://ec-oe.eu/>

European Network of Outdoor Centres

The Erasmus Plus proposal "Developing methodologies, educational resources and training for outdoor educators" submitted by the five partners from Slovenia, Poland, Germany, Finland and UK was unsuccessful. The feedback from the UK agency noted that all the criteria had been met, that the project was relevant, well designed and has great potential for dissemination. It appears that bids were oversubscribed for the funding available. The partners plan to review and re-submit their proposal for the April deadline.

Drifting It : Down The Kalevala River

Little river was descended

With a little kayak

With a darkened skylight

And the skylight helped it

Make the journey downwards

Make the downward journey

To the worlds of feeling

And the feelings helped it

And the skylight took it

From the river

From the kayak

To the skylit river

To the skylight kayak

In its journey downwards

In its downward journey

Darkened as it drifted

Drifting in the darkness.

Steve Bowles - first written in 1989, in Finland

(Now to explain any poem is idle folly. Any poetic space is well before and beyond any mere explanation. However a little bit of context does no harm. My poem was written as an English person living in Lapland and my poem was one attempt to mix my cultural heritage. The Finnish National Epic Kalevala was a huge collection of oral poetics and stories gathered up and placed into an early 1800s context by the Finn Elias Lönnrot. Then this work was seen by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow from his American heritage to inspire his Song of Hiawatha work. However

Longfellow found this Finnish connection through a German translation of Lönnrot made by the German Franz Anton Schiefner. So my small poem above is rather mixed in influence. Such is good. I say this too because such is one essential aspect of our European Institute work. Surely there is so very much to learn and to do when "mixed" up and adventuring? Drifting It is rather dynamic sometimes.)

Other Journeys.

In October 1989 I was invited to Czechoslovakia to take part in an environmental education conference organised by an environmental youth movement called "Brontosaurus" and supported by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). As I travelled back from the conference through dimly-lit Prague it was clear that the beginnings of political change were taking place in Europe. East German refugees were moving into the city on route for West Germany. Just a few weeks later the "Velvet Revolution" took place when huge non-violent demonstrations in Czechoslovakia led to the overthrow of the Communist government.

I returned to the Czech Republic this year to work with friends I had met in 1989 and took part in outdoor and environmental workshops in Zlin, in the east, and at Horni Marsov close to the Krkonoše National Park. It is clear that the exuberance following the "Velvet Revolution" has waned. We discussed Europe's current issues and how we all face another dramatic turning point in our history. On 17th November, the anniversary of the "Velvet Revolution", I travelled by train to Prague under heavy skies. The particular day, the weather and the landscape provoked these thoughts:

*The wind came at night,
Bending branches.
Apples bounced,
Bruised and bloodied
Like poppies
Onto a sorrowful earth.*

*And now, sombre clouds
Shroud the land
And distant poplars
Strike arrows
Into a cruel sky.*

*Sudden darkness,
We enter a cutting
Damp and rotting
Lit only by the ashen trunks
Of ghostly birch.*

*The Czech train trundles
From Trutnov to Prague
Stopping at forgotten stations
From a former Empire,
Where masters and mistresses,
Capped in cherry red,
Step out to salute
Our carefree passage.*

*The land is weeping on this
November morning.
The ecstasy of Velvet is no more
As fellow humans stagger
Across our cherished Europe
Driven by fear and a yearning to arrive
Their journey is no sanitised adventure
But a desperate urge to survive.*

*Tomorrow I'll travel beyond this sadness
To a world of colour and warmth,
A home, a haven, secure in comfort.
What fate has chosen this for me?
Can our good fortune not
Embrace these poor souls
Who've fled in terror
On other journeys
From the soil
They knew as home?*

Geoff Cooper.