



Summer 2007

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FORUM

Youth and the Environment

LINKING YOUTH SERVICE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Welcome to the latest issue of the LEEF Newsletter from the Environmental Education Forum targeted specifically for youth groups. This supplement is designed to be used by youth leaders to facilitate the introduction and development of environmental projects by your organisation and individual group.

Northern Ireland's youth service plays an extremely important role in supporting and encouraging young people to mature and reach their potential as valued individuals and responsible citizens. You, as youth leaders, are in a prime position to teach and inform children about the importance of being environmentally aware individuals and allowing them to gain the knowledge, and skills to lead sustainable lifestyles.

What is Sustainable Development and ESD?

Sustainable Development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable Development is the fundamental challenge that all societies face if we are to avoid long-term damage to the Earth's basic life-support systems. In response to this, UNESCO has declared 2005-2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** enables young people to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future.

Young people are a major force in bringing about change. Young people around the world inspire others with their vibrancy, motivation, foresight and unique interpretation of the world we live in. ESD calls for a lifestyle that contributes to a sustainable society. It embodies a set of values that considers sustainability as an integral part of decision-making. This is particularly relevant for youth as they bring their values, ideals and goals into the future.

How Will This Supplement Help Me?

This supplement will provide you as a leader with ways to facilitate the teaching of Education for Sustainable Development in your group. There are hands-on, practical projects to carry out and places to visit as well as links to many environmental organisations that currently have youth programmes in Northern Ireland. You will also find a range of websites and further reading resources to help you in your task of producing the next generation of sustainable citizens!

Inside this issue!

- **Get involved with an environmental award programme**
Look at how your group can get involved with the Eco-Unesco Young Environmentalist Awards Programme or the RSPB Wildlife Action and Climate Change Action Awards.
- **Using the environment to help special needs children in your group**
Details of the RSPB's 'SEEK' (Sensory Exploration and Exercise Kit) programme, giving ideas on how to use your grounds as a stimulus for your group to become interested in nature and environmental issues.
- **Visiting one of Northern Ireland's wonderful woodlands**
Showing you examples of where to take your group on a visit to experience the wonders our woodlands have to offer. See how the Scouts have been helping the Woodland Trust.
- **Information on how to be more energy efficient**
Detailing the ways in which everyone can reduce energy usage and help to make a positive contribution to tackling climate change.

If you want to make a difference and change things, make sure you take part in ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards 2008- the time is now! The Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) is an all island environmental awards programme for young people between the ages of 12 and 18.

Who can get involved?

Any young person between 12 and 18 in groups of between 2 and 25 can take part. Youth organisations, environmental groups, community groups and schools can all take part in the YEA.

Why get involved?

The YEA focuses on personal development, active participation and citizenship. It acts as an ideal framework to provide support for young people and leaders whilst exploring environmental change. Young people are encouraged to develop their own values, interests and skills through active project work, inter-disciplinary and self-directed learning.

How to get involved:

Young people can enter the junior (12-15) or senior category (16-18 yr olds) of the programme, which facilitates teams of between 2 and 25. There are some important dates to remember:

Register Now! The registration deadline is 30th Nov 2007.

You can register online at www.ecounesco.ie or contact ECO-UNESCO. When you register you are entitled to support materials to help carry out your project.

Closing Date for completed projects: 2nd March 2008.

Submit your completed project reports and supplementary materials before this date.

Showcasing and Awards Ceremony: May 2008

Shortlisted projects will be showcased and achievements celebrated at a fun day for all.



About the YEA Programme:

There is a lot of scope and numerous ways for young people to approach a YEA project. Each year hundreds of young people and leaders get involved in environmental projects like community wildlife gardening, litter picks, habitat surveys, water testing, waste and energy auditing, expressions of environmental action through music, art and drama just to name a few!

The YEA Project Themes:

Biodiversity, Energy, Water, Waste, Transport, Consumerism, Climate Change, Eco-Community Development, Eco-Art & Design, Eco-Enterprise, Eco- Technology, Cross Thematic, Other.

YOUTH GROUP CASE STUDY

Junior Eco-Art & Design – Category Winner 2007

Project Title: 'Waste Not, Want Not'

From: Ultra Violet Onyx Youth Group, Portlaoise

Leader: Ms. Jackie Stapleton



This group organised a Teen Art Exhibition entitled 'Waste Not, Want Not'.

The exhibition offered teenagers a chance to display their artwork in an exciting, non-competitive event. The exhibition offered visitors a glimpse into how young people see environmental issues in their community. The group researched waste issues on-line and took part in an ECO-UNESCO workshop on waste management. As a group they decided their venue, dates, times, duration, theme, opening night reception details, guest speakers, press releases, invitations and refreshments. There was a huge amount of organisation involved. The exhibition was held in Abbeyleix Heritage Centre and ran for a week. The exhibition included 150 entries from teenagers all across the country. Pieces included watercolours, oils, acrylics, pen, pencil, charcoal, crayon, lino printing, animation, collage and sculpture. The project was a great success and raised awareness about waste issues in a very creative way.



Wildlife Action Awards



This award scheme is all about finding out about wildlife, doing practical things to help and telling other people. Lots of things threaten our wildlife, but there are things you can do to help. It's easy to take part and achieve the awards. There's a bronze, silver and gold award divided up into four sections:

1. Finding out what's there
2. Helping wildlife
3. Being environmentally friendly
4. Spreading the word

There are 28 tasks in the award scheme and you get one point for each. However, two of the activities (making a pond and making a wildlife garden) are worth double points.

Bronze award

To get your bronze award, you need to complete six activities, including at least one from each section. You only need to do five activities if one of the activities you have chosen has double points.

Silver award

For a silver award, you need to do another six (making a total of 12), including at least two from each section.

Gold award

For a gold award, you need to do another six activities (making a total of 18), with at least three from each section.

If you would like to find out about all the activities and how to take part in the awards, send off for a Wildlife Action Awards booklet. It costs £2 and has all the information you need to take part and achieve the awards. Send your name and address, in capital letters, and a cheque for £2 to:

RSPB Wildlife Explorers, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL



Climate Action Awards

Now you can do your bit to help combat climate change. That's what our Climate Action Awards are all about. So why not send off for your free copy of the Climate Action Award Booklet and get started today by e-mailing: education@rspb.org.uk with your name, address and postcode. The booklet is full of fun ideas for helping to save the planet. You need to do six out of eleven activities (four if you are under eight years old), then tell us which ones you did by filling in one of the entry forms and sending it to us using the address on the form. We will send you some cool stickers and a certificate. The best bit is that you can then pass on your booklet to a friend to use as well! **It's true - just one little action makes a world of difference.**

About Climate Change

What's the problem?

For many years, people have gathered information about the weather in different places. This tells us what to expect at different times of year, and we call this pattern of weather the **climate**. In the past, the climate has often changed; over periods of thousands of years, large areas of the Earth have even been covered in thick ice. At other times, all the ice has melted. For the last 10,000 years in the UK, we have been somewhere in-between - some snow and ice in the winter and none at all in the summer. But today the Earth's climate is changing much more quickly than usual, and scientists agree that people are causing this.

What is the 'greenhouse effect'?

In a greenhouse, sunlight comes in through the glass and warms up the inside. The glass keeps the air inside warm, so the greenhouse stays warmer than the air outside it. Some gases in the atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, behave just like the glass of a greenhouse. The more of these gases we pump out from car exhausts and from power stations and factories, the warmer the planet gets.

How will climate change affect me?

As the climate changes, we are likely to have more storms, water shortages and floods. We expect that some species of animals and plants will be able to survive, but that many of our old favourites may be in trouble.

Please visit our website at www.rspb.org.uk for further details on the above awards programmes



“SEEK”: A Case Study

Sensory Exploration and Exercise Kit

Introduction: The Environment & Special Educational Needs

The environment can be a unique tool to help develop and benefit young people who have special needs. Individuals can be stimulated and encouraged to access learning about wildlife, conservation and the larger issues of sustainable development by introducing them to environmental issues through visual and practical activities both inside a 'group classroom' or in an outdoor learning situation. This also promises opportunities to develop self esteem, communication skills and self confidence, amongst others.

What is “SEEK”?

“SEEK” is a programme developed by the RSPB to engage children with a range of special needs to become involved with learning about the environment in a fun and innovative way. It encourages children to learn about wildlife and conservation and introduces them to environmental issues through visual and practical activities whilst exploring and exercising outdoors. “SEEK” uses activities and games designed with help from pupils and staff from four local Special Schools in Northern Ireland.

The Programme at Portmore Lough Nature Reserve

Portmore Lough is situated at the south-east corner of Lough Neagh in County Antrim, about 20 miles (32 km) from Belfast and 12 miles (19 km) from Lisburn, close to the village of Aghalee. The reserve consists of the Lough itself, the surrounding reedbeds, scrub and extensive meadows. In winter, greylag geese, whooper swans and wildfowl feed on the meadows and thousands of ducks can be seen from the hide on the edge of the Lough. In spring, skylarks and wading birds breed on the meadows and dragonflies and wild flowers abound in early summer.

The “SEEK” programme was tested at Portmore Lough, due to the site having good access and a variety of interesting habitats and species for the children to see. The children followed a wheelchair-friendly path stopping at structured activity stations along the way. The activity stations themselves allowed them to explore flight, water, habitats and alternative energy using their senses. They also experienced fun games, aimed at reinforcing learning about wildlife and conservation in an outdoor situation.



What did the leaders think of “SEEK”?

A big part of the “SEEK” project was to gather important feedback from leaders as to the benefits of using such a programme to benefit young people with special needs. They felt that it was important to bring their pupils closer to their natural surroundings and allow them to interact with nature at close quarters. They felt that the habitats station including the bird jigsaws, the pre-visits, the sensory activities and flight station, including the aerial ropeway, had been of particular benefit

What did the children think of “SEEK”?

The children liked getting close to nature, seeing the habitats and birds at the reserve itself, as well as participating in the station activities. In particular the students picked out the singing swallows in the migration game, the bird jigsaws, plane launchers, the aerial ropeway, the racing games and water station (including water-powered heron and the pump!) as being amongst their favourite activities. They were also quick to point out as well that they didn't like the cold, the chemical loos or the hay fever!

For more information on 'SEEK' please contact the RSPB on (028) 9049 1547

WONDERFUL WOODLANDS

How can my group benefit from woodlands?

Trees and woodlands are a valuable resource in Northern Ireland and are just waiting to be discovered. They are local wherever you are in the country, relevant to many youth group programmes and give children a real feeling for the natural world as well as local and global environmental issues.

Children of all ages can benefit greatly from the learning opportunities present in the woodland environment. A visit to a forest provides young people with opportunities for cross-themed learning, real outdoor experiences, enjoyment, exercise and sites to study trees and wildlife, flora and fauna, whilst allowing the children to develop personally, intellectually and socially in a natural context.

So delve in and learn more about how Northern Ireland's woodlands can help you!

Scout's Association and Woodland Trust—A Case Study

As part of the Scout's centenary celebrations, the Woodland Trust and the Scout Association have formed a partnership to provide members of the Scout movement with a number of opportunities to learn about, and engage in, woodland conservation. The initiative is part of the Trust's Tree For All campaign which aims to involve one million children in planting 12 million trees, the ultimate aim being to plant at least 100 new areas of woodland, throughout the UK.

This project is a wonderful way to reach out to young people and to encourage them to get to grips with nature. The trees planted this year will be a living, lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

'Did you ever pause to think about how helpful a tree is? It provides a nesting place for birds, shade from the sun, and protection from the rain. It discards its dead branches, providing wood for building fires and cooking food. A tree adds beauty to the countryside and to camping areas. We must admit that a tree gives a lot more than it receives. We can learn a lesson from the tree - by doing our best to always be helpful to others and by putting our fellow Scouts first and ourselves second. Remember the lesson we learn from the tree - to give others more than we receive'.
Baden Powell
Ken Gillespie: Executive Commissioner for Scouts Association, Northern Ireland

Get involved

Here are some of the ways that Scouts can get involved with the Scouts for Trees project in 2007: you can order a hedge or copse pack to plant in your local community; come along and plant trees at one of the Centenary Woods

Hedge and Copse packs

Apply for a pack of 30 trees (enough for a small copse or short length of hedge) to plant in your local area, whether it be where you meet or somewhere else in your local community that might benefit from some trees. Trees are available in the Spring and Autumn and will be delivered during November 2007. Guidance on planting and maintenance plus curriculum-linked activities are available to download from this website. There is more information at www.treeforall.org.uk/scouts

Join in with a planting event

To find out more about 'Scouts for Trees' activities or to register now for your free pack of trees visit www.treeforall.org.uk/scouts

We need your help...

In the meantime we are keen to hear from groups who may know of particular opportunities, either on campsites that have scope for large scale planting, or on land owned by others.

All you will need is an area of open ground of around approximately 5 acres in size to plant about 2000 sapling trees. This could be made up of a number of areas of open ground around the site – to plant a number of copses or indeed lengths of hedgerow.

PLACES TO VISIT

County	Forest Service	Woodland Trust	EHS
Co Antrim	<u>Glenariff Forest Park,</u> Waterfoot <u>Ballypatrick Forest,</u> Ballycastle	<u>Oakfield Glen,</u> Carrickfergus <u>Carnmoney Hill,</u> Newtownabbey	
Co Armagh	<u>Gifford Forest Park,</u> Markethill <u>The Fews Forest,</u> Newtownhamilton	<u>Canal Wood,</u> Poyntzpass <u>Daisy Hill Wood,</u> Newry	
Co Down	<u>Castlewellan Forest Park,</u> Castlewellan <u>Tollymore Forest Park,</u> Newcastle	<u>Friends of Belvoir Wood,</u> Belvoir Park <u>Glasswater Wood,</u> Crossgar	<u>Crawfordsburn Country Park,</u> Helen's Bay <u>Scrabo Country Park,</u> Newtownards
Co Fermanagh	<u>Florence Court Country Park,</u> Enniskillen <u>Castle Archdale Forest,</u> Kesh	<u>Hillview Community Woodland,</u> Enniskillen <u>Mill Race Wood,</u> Maguiresbridge	<u>Castle Archdale Country Park,</u> Irvinestown
Co L/Derry	<u>Downhill Forest,</u> <i>near</i> Castlerock <u>Glenshane Forest,</u> Dungiven	<u>Killaloo Wood,</u> Londonderry <u>Drumlamph Wood,</u> Maghera	<u>Roe Valley Country Park,</u> Limavady
Co Tyrone	<u>Parkanaur Forest Park,</u> Dungannon <u>Gortin Glen Forest Park,</u> Omagh	<u>Cullion Wood</u> Gortin <u>Cabin Wood, Killymoon,</u> Cookstown	<u>Peatlands Country Park,</u> Dungannon

This is only a small selection of woodland sites across the country. A more comprehensive list of sites in your area can be found at the relevant agencies' website addresses: -

Forest Service: www.forestserviceni.gov.uk

Woodland Trust: www.wt-woods.org.uk

Environment & Heritage Service: www.ehsni.gov.uk



Photograph courtesy of
WTPL/Rosanna Ballentine

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Energy is important. We use it every day and our lifestyles and societies rely on its constant supply. What about the impact on the environment? How will we produce energy in the future? Is there anything you can do?

Climate Change

How we live is affecting the environment. We live in a beautiful world and it is experiencing changes. Through the burning of fossil fuels to run cars and to produce electricity in power stations, greenhouse gases are being released into the atmosphere. These gases are causing Global Warming and leading to a change in the climate. Climate Change is happening and its effects are predicted to become more obvious globally through more extreme weather events, more droughts, rising in sea levels and some crops not being able to grow where they use to. We need to work to reduce our CO₂ emissions.

Resource Sustainability

Resource sustainability means using resources so that they will last into the future. The energy we use to power our TVs and lights is mainly produced by non-renewable fuels, which include coal, gas and oil – these resources will not last forever. If we continue to use these resources at the current rate we have 200 years left of coal, 60 years left of gas and 40 years left of oil. We need to plan for a more sustainable future.

Energy Security

At present our energy sources are all imported from many different parts of the world. Our oil comes from the Middle East, coal from Europe and South America and gas from Russia, Norway and Scotland. Northern Ireland is very dependent on other countries for our energy resources. We need to become more independent in order to maintain a secure energy supply.

Renewable Energy provides a solution to these energy issues. Renewable energy is pollution free, combats climate change, is locally sourced and will not run out.

What can YOU do?

Take action. You have the power to change the future – a small action, makes a difference.

- ◆ Wise up to renewable energy! Become informed about energy issues and the solutions we have for now and the future.
- ◆ Think about the energy you use and try to reduce wasting energy by becoming more energy efficient, e.g. turn lights off when you are not in the room, fill the kettle only with the amount of water you need and turn the TV off at the switch when it is not being used.
- ◆ What about your house? Talk to your parents/guardians to encourage them to make your house more energy efficient, e.g. good insulation, to use Eco-Energy (green electricity supplied by NIE) and/or install a renewable technology, e.g. wood-pellet boiler.
- ◆ What about your group? Talk to your friends and come up with a proposal with your leaders to encourage action to be taken to make your group more energy efficient, to use Eco-Energy and to install a renewable technology.

What do WE do?

Action Renewables Education Programme exists to raise awareness and inspire young people to become informed, engaged and to take action now and in the future.

- ◆ www.wiseuptorenewables.com is an educational website, including up-to-date, relevant information, teaching resources and the innovative 'Renewable Robbie' game.
- ◆ We give presentations about renewable energy and related issues. We tailor our workshops to each group and can include drama, kite-making, decision-making activities and investigations using model wind turbines and solar panels.

Action Renewables

The Innovation Centre
Northern Ireland Science Park
Queens Road
Belfast
BT3 9DT
Email: education@actionrenewables.org



Further Reading: Useful Contacts for Youth Groups

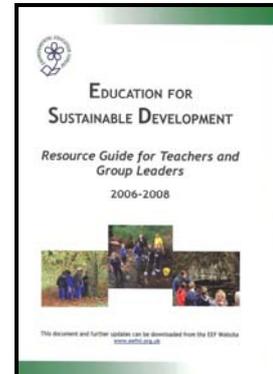
The Environmental Education Forum has produced a **Resource Guide** for use by teachers and group leaders. This document contains details of Forum members, the education programmes that they provide across Northern Ireland, and relevant contact details, e-mail and website addresses. It gives you details of how you and your group can become involved in environmental education work that will lead to your students becoming more aware of their environment, engaged with it and inspired to take action to lead more sustainable lifestyles at school, in your youth group and at home.

If you would like to receive a copy of the guide please contact:

Environmental Education Forum (EEF)
89 Loopland Drive
Belfast BT6 9DW
Tel 028 9045 5770

Copies of the guide can also be downloaded from the website at:

www.eefni.org.uk/publications



Grants and Awards for Environmental Projects

BIG LOTTERY FUNDING

For the period of 2006-2009 there is £90 million available through the **Big Lottery Fund** divided over several different grant programmes.

BIG Trust Fund

BIG Trust Fund is designed to support change in organisations in Northern Ireland's voluntary and community sector through a period of significant restructuring and rationalisation. It is a long-term investment, possibly up to ten years, to support all the changes that will need to happen to the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland. Due to be launched early 2007. See www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Awards For All

Awards for All is a joint Lottery grants scheme aimed at local communities. Bring people together and increase community activity. Awards range from £500 to £10,000 and are on going. See www.awardsforall.org.uk

Big Deal

Fund projects that help young people to make a difference in their own life and to the lives of others. The Big Deal can only make awards directly to individuals and informal groups of children and young people aged 0-25. An individual can apply for awards of £500 and a group can apply for an award between £500 and £2,500. Closing date for applications is 30 September 2009. See www.thebigdealni.com for further details.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF WILDLIFE TRUSTS—BIFFAWARDS

Biffaward funds projects which provide and improve public amenities for communities within 10 miles of a Biffa operation and projects that increase or maintain biodiversity. The small grants scheme provides grants between £250 and £5,000 for projects that enable communities to improve local amenities and to conserve wildlife and habitats. The Main Grants Scheme grants between £5,001 and £50,000 for amenity projects that provide and improve community facilities to act as mechanisms for recreation, sporting achievement, lifelong learning and community involvement.

There are no deadlines for submitting an application. For further information via www.biffaward.org email: grants@rswt.org or Tel: 0870 036 1000.



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