

Going Global Outdoors - Next Steps

by Brenda Fishwick & Gina Mullarkey

Students at Eskdale YHA enjoying the 'Community Choices' module

Outdoor Education & Field Studies

If you're a regular reader of Horizons, you may remember a piece by Anthea Stevenson in the Autumn '05 edition, 'Going Global in the Outdoors'. She was writing from the starting line of a 3 year DFID funded project – an ambitious attempt to see how outdoor educators could tackle some of the Big Questions about sustainable development, global issues and international human rights.

Almost 3 years on, the tutors who began the project, the CDEC (Cumbria Development Education Centre) team, headed up by Gina Mullarkey, are pulling together the final chapters of the project and reflecting on where and how the project has made a difference.

It's difficult to sum up all the different threads of a major project in just a few lines, but as a relative newcomer I can look at it from a slightly different angle, and say what has struck me most about 'Going Global Outdoors'.

The breadth of the project has been impressive, from pre-KS1 through to sixth formers. Perhaps the most engaging character to emerge for younger pupils has been Zogg, the hero of a Big Story book which is a must for every nursery and infant school. 'Meet Zogg' gives us a new appreciation of the amazing planet we live in, as Zogg, who hails from a world where everything has been recycled, discovers the wonders and the conundrums

of Planet Earth. The book also includes a wealth of activities for busy teachers to try out and develop.

Through simple text and appealing images the book digs deep into those questions that sum up the GGO project – what is education for sustainability? How can we draw together the economic, social and environmental elements? How can we inspire and activate 21st century citizens and affect hearts and minds?

The publications that have emerged for KS2 & KS3 (see end of article) attempt, through critical thinking, role-play and philosophy for children methodologies, to tackle these questions, and do so in a way that will not intimidate or overwhelm tutors and teachers. All the publications have been developed through planning teams, which include teachers and outdoor providers, to give real 'hands on' credibility to the resources.

The GGO project has, I think, made tremendous leaps in harnessing Outdoor & Field Study Centres into this arena. In Cumbria there is a profusion of residential & non-residential centres which do a magnificent job in building self-confidence in the outdoors and challenging young people's ideas about themselves. However these experiences can sometimes be viewed as stand-alone events without reference to the wider world. 'Outside the Box' was a well-attended conference for outdoor managers and leaders in April 2007, which looked at various ways we could seek to raise awareness, empowerment and commitment. The conference report is easy to read and appears on CDEC's website:

www.cdec.org.uk/downloads/outside_the_box.



At sixth form level, CDEC developed the 'Community Choices' module, focussing on the dilemmas and consequences of palm oil production in Indonesia. This was piloted at 2 supportive YHA venues, Eskdale and Arnside, although it could equally be used within a college setting as an icebreaker or citizenship day.

The GGO project has focussed on sustainability, and so, to be true to its values, the project itself has to be sustainable, and not just 'drop off the edge' in August 2008. So the final, and perhaps the most important part of this article is to point out where we go from here – so that this is not the end, but the beginning of a dynamic exchange of ideas.

A new website, 'Global Outdoors' is being developed to share and extend good practice among outdoor educators focussing on sustainability. With contributions being collected from across the UK, it promises to be a useful site to inspire, inform and, most importantly, to collate your ideas for tackling sustainability both in and out of the classroom. Visit the site www.globaloutdoors.co.uk to tell us what you think, or add your programme to the database. In addition, CDEC will be looking out for new avenues of funding to develop this work further, so it's a case of watch this (web) space!

As the GGO project enters a final flurry of report writing and monitoring, our team can reflect on the hundreds of young people who have considered what sustainable development really means, from supermarket consumers to indigenous peoples, and to citizens of Cumbria reaching out from this rural corner of the UK to the rest of our fragile world. ■

Author's Notes

Brenda Fishwick was Education & Events Manager for the Lake District National Park Authority (2000 -07). She now supports various Cumbria Development Education Centre projects.

Gina Mullarkey is the Senior Global Education Officer at CDEC. Previously she worked as a primary teacher and outdoor education tutor. As part of her role Gina co-ordinates the Going Global in the Outdoors Project.



Preparing to persuade the group!

Visit www.cdec.org.uk or email: office@cdec.org.uk to request a Global Education brochure

Photos: All submitted by the authors

Some support resources.....

Relevant CDEC publications

- Meet Zogg KS1 Big Book £12 plus £2.50 p&p
- Treading Lightly - Going Global in the Outdoors Activity Cards £15 + £2 p&p
- A Survival Pack for Future Citizens –booklet & CD £20 + £2.50 p&p

Relevant Professional Development Courses

- The Global Outdoor Classroom
- P4C in the Outdoors
- Please contact CDEC www.cdec.org.uk for dates



The yurt is a compelling place for a philosophical enquiry session