

Newsletter

COBWEB

Communicating
the Baltic together
1/8 December 2009

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Environmental education
Arts
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Friendship between different cultures
Telling stories about ourselves
Sustainable development

Communicating the Baltic together

text Maija Venäläinen, photo Mari von Boehm

Effective environmental communication, including awareness raising, education and outreach, is essential for promoting sustainable development. The sustainable future lies with our ability to educate children and adults to take responsibility for the common environment. The educational programmes designed for environmental communication are a critical component in supporting the learning processes needed for sustainable living as known today and for finding the ways needed for tomorrow's actions.

From the communications point of view the problem faced by the organisations that provide environmental educational programmes is being overloaded by everyday practicalities. The time and other resources needed to require, receive and discuss the latest environmental knowledge for development activities are limited.

On the other hand the research community and environmental authorities have not enough experience or motivation to transfer and communicate even existing knowledge with the environmental educators.

The project Cobweb is born from this need. It focuses in creating models for cross-border cooperation where the key actors, such as universities, museums and nature and environmental schools, are together building environmental educational programmes. Programmes which are based on the latest knowledge of environmental and sustainability issues and effective environmental communication but also touching to people's feelings and senses.

Cobweb combines the scientific approach with concrete awareness raising activity and methodology approach to a joint educational material building process with concrete outputs.

The next Cobweb Newsletter in March 2010

The Cobweb Newsletter will be released 8 times in years 2009–2011. In this number we tell how the project has begun in Finland. Next numbers will contain stories from Latvia, Estonia and Sweden.

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Cobweb happenings from September to December

Impressions gathered by Marjo Soulanto, photos Mari von Boehm & Tuovi Kurttio



The living sea and best educational practises: 70 educators had unforgettable experiences on Harakka island. (Helsinki 10.9.)

The Baltic Sea conference for experts and educators in Finland 8.–10.9.2009

“Problems – enough! Why not solutions?”

Marjukka Porvari / John Nurminen Foundation

“Climate change needs to be taken into account in ecosystem-based management and spatial planning of the Baltic Sea. – – Baltic Sea is not dead, yet.” Markku Viitasalo / Finnish Environment Institute
– Marine Research Center SYKE

“We all must eat – several times a day. Agriculture is not a type of criminality, it is vital to all of us.” Johanna Ikävalko / Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners MTK

“Assesment of environmental impacts of contaminants require both chemical analyses and biological effects.” Matti Verta / SYKE

“Artificial oxygenation is not an alternative for traditional measures aimed at reducing nutrient loads, but it may help the recovery at least in coastal scales. – – The basic and most important measure is to further strongly decrease the present nutrient loading.” Heikki Pitkänen / Marine Reseach Centre SYKE

“There is a way for us to address the chaos – maritime spatial planning.” Anita Mäkinen / WWF Finland

70 researchers and educators participated an international seminar in Finnish Environment Institute, Helsinki. The seminar was opened by the Director General Lea Kauppi and chaired by Professor Sakari Kuikka.





"Tell me about your scenarios for the clean Baltic Sea in year 2020." The Future workshop was lead by Katriina Siivonen who is an expert of methods for future research. (Hyvinkää 9.9.)



Maija Malnača: "How to develop small and cheap exhibitions indoors and outdoors? The Natural History Museum of Latvia had a seminar about the question. The environmental specialists had to do practical work preparing an exhibition model about the Baltic Sea." (Keguma district, Guest house Rezijas 28.–30.10.)



Elsa Rintala: "It's easy to share information by internet but that doesn't replace meeting each other face to face. It was nice to share thoughts and wishes about the project with Estonian colleagues." (Tuovi, Elsa, Matti and Johanna visited Tallinn and Tartu 18.–19.11.)



Walking on Suomenlinna island shores alone and then telling about it without words – relaxing and peaceful practice. (Helsinki 4.12.)

Matti Ovaska: "My attitude to the environmental facts and knowledge has already changed during the Cobweb project. Instead of traditional information I want to study how the the ecosystem services impact on our everyday life and our healthiness. In that point of view many solutions made in the name of good life and healthy economy begin to look not only old fashioned but rather insane."

About us – Cobweb people in Finland

Production group * Writer Marjo Soulanto, City of Espoo, The Nature House Villa Elfvik & Pleistoseeni – The Sustainable Development Content Production House * Graphic designers Mari von Boehm & Vappu Ormio, City of Helsinki, Harakka Nature Centre * Environmental education specialists Elsa Rintala & Johanna Sunikka, Helsinki Metropolitan Reuse Centre Ltd., & Matti Ovaska, Hyria Education Ltd. * Assistant specialists Katri Luukkonen, Nature House Villa Elfvik * Erkki Makkonen, Harakka Nature Centre

Expert group * Maija Venäläinen, Hyria Education Ltd. (Lead) * Merja Nurmela, Hyria Education Ltd. * Tuovi Kurttio / Elena Saarikallio, Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre Ltd. * Kaisa Pajanen, City of Helsinki * Riitta Pulkkinen, City of Espoo



Stories about ourselves

text Marjo Soulanto, photo Mari von Boehm

Creating stories for an movable exhibition – a blue moment in Suomenlinna island, in front of Helsinki. Mari von Boehm invited Finnish Cobweb people to visit her ateljé December 4th 2009.

Has any exhibition touched you so deeply that tears have burst into your eyes? It might easily happen when reading a novel, watching a movie or listening to the music. But in an exhibition?

When I made that question to myself I first thought: No, never. Then I remembered a certain visit to Junibacken museum in Stockholm with Finnish researchers, artists, writers and educators. We were deeply moved by the miniature world of **Astrid Lindgren's** loved children books.

But generally it seems to me that the art of exhibition is a very challenging genre of representation – especially if it concerns solving the most difficult environmental issues.

In spite of these doubts I am writing a manuscript for a new exhibition again. The subject is very dear to me: the Baltic Sea.

The movable exhibition and website in spring 2011

There's many environmental education specialists and two graphic designers in the production

group of this exhibition. So far we have studied and discussed about latest information of the Baltic Sea research. However, we have decided not to repeat all those well-known environmental problems and threats but rather tell something relevant about human life. After all, we are talking about ourselves when we are talking about the poor condition of the Baltic Sea and about the climate change.

So, how to communicate the Baltic? In all design processes it is a question about communication and interpretation and finally representation. I do hope that we could experience refreshing empowerment in this journey and learn something new about each others cultures as well.

The Cobweb project will end in spring 2011 with many new environmental educative materials in four countries and several cities – including a new kind of exhibition and a website too.

The most important intention of our work is to encourage each other and all people living in the Baltic Sea area to create a new sustainable ethos, aesthetics and lifestyle.

Communicating the Baltic

What do we create? * Workshops * Expert forums * Movable exhibitions * Museum exhibitions * Role taking website * Friendship between different cultures * Inspiration and ideas for a more sustainable lifestyle in the Baltic Sea area



The seminar week in Finland ended to several showcase workshops in historical buildings and beautiful shores of Harakka island. (Helsinki 10.9.)

After the workshop the President of Finland **Tarja Halonen** received the artifact handmade by young people of the Baltic Sea. On the same day we celebrated Harakka Nature House 20 Year Anniversary. (Helsinki 11.9.)



Partners * The Hyria Education Ltd., Finland (Lead) / **Project manager** * Ms Maija Venäläinen * City of Espoo, The Nature House Villa Elfvik, Finland * City of Helsinki, Harakka Nature Centre, Finland * Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre Ltd., Finland * City of Nynäshamn, Nynäshamn Nature School, Sweden * Institute of Geology at Tallinn, Estonia * Natural History Museum of Latvia, Riga * University of Latvia, Riga * University of Tartu, Estonia * University of Technology, Tallinn, Estonia * Tallinn Environment Department, Estonia * Tartu Environmental Education Centre, Estonia

Steering Group * **Chair** Mr Markku Loiskekoski, Hyria Education Ltd * **Other members** Ms Kaisa Pajanen, City of Helsinki * Ms Riitta Pulkkinen, City of Espoo * Ms Tuovi Kurttio, Helsinki Metropolitan Area Recycling Centre * Mr Madis Kõrvits, City of Tallinn * Mr Alvar Soesoo, Institute of Geology at Tallinn University of Tehcnology * Mr Ivar Puura, University of Tartu * Mr Robert Oetjen, Tartu Environmental Education Centre * Ms Guna Bagrade, Latvia Natural History Museum * Ms Tiina Keinänen, Representative of the Joint Technical Secretariat * Ms Taina Lommi, Representative of the State Provincial Office of Southern Finland

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