

Environmental education for better future of the Black Sea

The case

Environmental education and public awareness in Georgia are tightly linked with the latest developments taking place after the Rose revolution. Today environmental issues remain to popular and often we witness public discussions about them. In other words, we may state that public awareness on environmental problems in Georgia has been developed. As to environmental education, it is still in an early state of development. The difficulties



facing environmental education in Georgia may be the absence of experience and traditions, the old stereotyped public mentality, recently past acute political and economical crisis that made environmental issues look less important.

The change process

A large-scale environmental education program is run by the WWF Office in Georgia. This program includes training of environmental educators through special courses organised in western centres, e.g., Certificate Course in Environmental Education (CCEE) at Jordanhill College, Strathclyde University, and Glasgow, UK. Ten Georgians attended this course and many of them are already certified. Other important blocks of the pointed program are: establishment of environmental education centres in Georgia, teachers training and up-grading, publications, organising summer schools, etc.

Local NGOs also contribute to environmental education in Georgia. NGO “Gaia”, Marine Association “Poseidoni”, CENN, Black Sea Eco-Academy and Caucasus Green Area may be a good example of such contribution, as its principal type of activity is participation in public education.

Georgian NGOs are actively participating in the program through public education and awareness raising activities regarding the environmental problems of the Black Sea and the coastal zone. It should be noted that participating NGOs are closely interacting with each other and additionally attract local groups from coastal regions of the country.

The Tbilisi Public Relations Centre is regularly informing the audience on major programme events through media (press, radio and TV).

The Georgia Youth Eco-Movement has organised summer study sessions and coordinated meetings for coastal environmental youth groups, published a brochure on Kolkheti wetlands.

The “Poseidon” Marine Association has produced a documentary, describing the coastal environmental problems and ways of resolving them.

“Aieti” Association is publishing and widely distributing a special newspaper, highlighting the wide spectrum of coastal issues (with potential to develop into the newsletter of the country's shaping ICZM network); Bio-Monitoring Association educates coastal communities on threats from chemical pollutants, entering the Black Sea waters and on what communities can do to minimise the pollution; non-governmental radio "Green Wave" is trying to reach coastal regions through the broadcasting of FM-band programs with discussions on coastal environmental issues.



As was mentioned above, projects run in Georgia dedicated to environmental education and awareness rising are financed by several international organisations and/or diplomatic bodies. Majority of these projects are implemented with active involvement of the population of Black Sea coastline.

The NGO Caucasus Green Area has been engaged in environmental education from 2003 to these days in AR of

Adjara. School children, teachers and principals take part in the implementation of the projects run by it.

Since 2003 the Union cooperates with the Ministries of Environment Protection and Municipalities of Kobuleti and Batumi.

In 2003 -2010 the following activities were arranged and carried out in the cities of Black Sea Coastal Zone of Georgia by Caucasus Green Area:

- Arrangement of photo and paintings competition and arrangement of an exhibition;
- Painting on asphalt with the participation of students of the Youths Centre;
- Arrangement of students conference on Black Sea topics;
- Environmental films at Green Cafe;
- Round-table with the participation of stakeholders - local governance bodies, Inspection of Environmental protection, professors and teachers, students, doctors and others;
- Arrangement of a meeting with the students of secondary schools and the teachers of biology and chemistry;
- Arrangement of beach clean-up.

- Presentation at international conferences of the activities carried out in Georgia dedicated to the Black Sea Day;
- Publishing and distribution of materials prepared by the Black Sea Commission;
- Highlighting the Black Sea Day by the central and local mass-media

The outcome

Implemented projects by Caucasus Green Area, union are:

- UNOPS/GEF Black Sea Recovery Project - development of education study pack on Black Sea issues for school teachers;
 1. Preparation of subsidiary document in the Georgian language on the Black Sea for secondary school teachers of biology, chemistry, physics and geography;
 2. Agreement of the final version of the document with the Ministry of Education and Science;
 3. Training of the teachers of biology and chemistry;
 4. Document dissemination in schools;
 5. Awareness raising campaign at the 15 secondary schools of Batumi.
- 2006-2007 UNOPS/GEF project: Black Sea environmental problems awareness raising and development of information channels for key stakeholders;
 - Identification of stakeholders of the Black Sea protection issues;
 - Arrangement of a meeting of the key stakeholders;
 - Translation and presentation of the Black Sea Protection Action Plan;
 - Formation of 9 social groups (schoolchildren, students, teachers, women, farmers, scientists, representatives of environmental bodies, hotel owners and doctors) in the Black Sea coastal zone for the purpose of the solution of the Black Sea issues.
- 2008 Project “Inventory of the illegal landfills in Kobuleti and raising public awareness through involvement of school pupils” in the framework of the MATRA LWM GEO project “Promoting community involvement in local waste management in the Poti-Batumi Black Sea coastal region in Georgia”.
 - Inventory of illegal land fields in Kobuleti with the participation of 200 schoolchildren from 5 secondary schools in cooperation with the Adjara Environment Protection Service;
 - Production of paper bags and T-shirts;
 - Arrangement of cleaning measure, painting exhibition, sports games and competitions;
 - Arrangement of actions against the use of plastic bags.
- 2008 Awareness raising campaign in schools of Kvemo-Kartli region on waste management issues with the cooperation of the Scouts of Georgia
 - Preparation of specific teaching material, presentation and questionnaires on the management of wastes;
 - Training of 10th-11th grade schoolchildren in 5 secondary schools of the cities of Rustavi, Gardabani, Marneuli and Tetritskaro;

- Arrangement of a competition for awareness raising for the demonstration of the secondary use of hand-made objects;
- Arrangement of school action - the most clean school;
- Arrangement of an exhibition of secondary use objects and hand-made objects;
- Awarding the schoolchildren-winners;
- Preparation of a Statement for municipalities with the purpose of settling the wastes problem.
- 2008 (November-December) UNDP/MOE awareness raising campaign against cutting fir-trees for a New Year.
 - Preparation of special advertisement banners against the cutting the fir-trees for New Year and their placing in the streets of Tbilisi during one month;
 - Creation of advertising video against the fir-trees cut and organising its broadcast on TV “Rustavi2” during ten days;
 - Presentation of advertising video in secondary schools and carrying out an awareness raising campaign after which special monitoring groups were created at schools for the purpose of revealing the cases of illegal trade in fir-trees.
- 2009 (May-June) UNDP/MOE awareness raising campaign marking World Environment Day, 5th June.
 - Arrangement of a rock-concert in Vake Park;
 - Arrangement of a cycle race;
 - Advertising of paper bags in supermarket Goodwill and their distribution;
 - Arrangement of highlighting by mass-media;
 - Organising a fancy-dress staging on the Republic Square;
 - Arrangement of flower exhibition;
 - Organising on Chavchavadze avenue a march with the participation of schoolchildren in advertising musical automobiles;
 - Arrangement of a special reception party in Muza;
 - Preparation of banners, billboards, costumes, leaflets, t-shirts, diplomas, invitations and other advertising materials and their distribution.



The Caucasus Green Area has created eco-clubs in the 25 secondary schools of Batumi and Kobuleti, Adjara AR. The members of abovementioned eco-clubs are actively involved in Environmental Education and awareness rising projects implemented by several NGOs, state and international organisation.



Lessons learned

The most important thing being developed within the above projects is the improved civil convictions and preparedness of future generations for integration into civil society. Knowledge and skills acquired by them is a prerequisite to sustainable development of the country. They gain experience from environmental projects of cooperating with both, the government and the NGOs and share their knowledge with parents, relatives and friends. Interest in environmental issues, and what is also important, the public desire to become involved in decision-making deepens too. It is desirable to further these activities for the development of environmental education projects in Black Sea regional framework to ensure the increase of sustainability, importance and scale of them.