



Case study 2

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR THE BLACK SEA

The case

The modern environmental crisis of the Black Sea ecosystem that began in the middle of previous century initiated the necessity of sustainable environmental education and raising awareness about the problems for local population, authorities, key persons and wider public. Development of ecological consciousness of people should start from childhood that is why the most important educational work is targeted to pupils and students.

Local population of the north-western part of the Black Sea region has a very low level of understanding of the state and status of natural resources that surround them. The civil society doesn't possess the legal aspects for use and management of Black Sea resources. Therefore, the significant role in distribution of information regarding environmental degradation in the north-western part of the Black Sea coast and sustainable ways of solving the problems an environmental educational campaign plays.

The change process

Creation and functioning of the Regional Center of Popularization of Ecological Knowledge in Odessa State Environmental University is an example of successful cooperation between NGOs and government in the context of best practices of environmental management in the Black Sea region. Pupils, students, teachers, lecturers, representatives of local authorities and decision-makers are involved in organization of ECOcamps, ECOforums and ECOfestivals.

Whichever event (conference, seminar, competition, exhibition) especially for the northern districts of the region are an essential educational event for teachers and students. Youth Environmental Center named by V. I. Vernadsky always offers modern approaches for teaching and methods for monitoring of natural resources. These approaches and methods are used not only by leading educational institutions of Ukraine, but are basic in the EU, Britain and the USA. Every time we identify which knowledge is needed to be disclosed that allows us to plan further action.



Information and education campaigns have their history. Recently they have become more regular and systematic because of the anthropogenic pressure intensified as a result of unregulated issues of land



ownership and wasteful use of natural resources.

In order to build the civil society and to form ecological culture and ideology during last three years the basin contests "Colors of the Dniester" and "Fountain of Hope" (Dniester and Southern Bug region, respectively) were conducted within Basin environmental information and education campaigns.

The campaigns provide an opportunity to work with students, teachers, farmers, local authorities in the field of management of coastal protection strips, preservation of landscape and biotic diversity, restoration of natural sources of drinking water. Such campaigns generally assist in providing of environmental knowledge bases.

A new tradition of the campaigns is holding of environmental "readings", conferences. Their aim is to spread knowledge about the history and development of scientific directions in ecology, biology, geography, about the role of outstanding scientists. The regular events are become the meetings with environmental protection facilities, who besides the presentation of valuable natural ecosystems have possibility to communicate with prospective employees of their institutions. For campaigns Internet resources and close cooperation with mass-media is used.

Training seminars, comprehensive environmental expeditions, creative concepts, round tables, consultations with stakeholders are the tools that we use during the campaigns.

During the campaign the following tasks are carried out:



- civil society is involved in practical nature conservation activities in the basins of the Dniester and the Juzhny (Southern) Bug, the Danube rivers;
- the formation of environmental culture and consciousness of local population is fulfilled;
- deepening of special environmental knowledge of pupils, students takes place;
- an information about the careful use of water and other natural resources and their impact on human health is distributed among wider public to raise of awareness about these issues;
- an information about European legislation and its implementation (or elements) in the modern environmental Ukrainian legislation is distributed.

The outcome

Joint cooperation of Regional Center of Popularization of Ecological Knowledge and Youth Environmental Center named by V. I. Vernadsky covers the South of Ukraine and annually invites about 100 thousand people to participate in environmental actions. Among the organizations that are actively involved in informational campaigns there are: Black Sea NGO Network, National Ecocenter of Ukraine (Nikolaev, Odessa Branches), NGO "MAMA-86 Odessa, NGO "Renaissance" (Tatarbunari), Wetlands International, «Bukvitsa", International Environmental Association of River Keepers



«Eco-TIRAS», Odessa State Environmental University, Chernivtsi Regional socio-environmental youth association, NGO «Ecospectrum», Lviv Regional Production Department for Water Management, Black Sea State University and others.

Marine and river expeditions ("TiGriDof"(2004), "Tiligulsky Ptahosvit"(2005), "Blue Ribbons of Ukraine" (2006), "Zadunayska Sich (2007), "Medobory-2008") are organized. Scientific research work with pupils and students is carried out in 10 directions: hydroecology, hydrobiology, hydrochemistry, entomology, ornithology, malacology, ichthyology, botany, etc.

With participation of leading experts, scientists, public figures seminars and trainings (Regional business-game "How I see the Black Sea Shore» (2006), personal growth training "Four Steps to Happiness" (2008), scientific practical seminar "Nizhnednestrovsky National Park with the eye of the young" (2009), scientific practical seminar «Theory and Practice of Social Communications» (2010), «The Problems of Integrated Management of Uzhny Bug River in Odessa Region» (2010)), festivals («Thinking about the Earth» 2000-2005, «Marine Fairy» 2006, 2007) are held.



In the framework of the partnership extensive publishing is carried out. Thousands of copies of environmental posters, bulletin "Ekologichna Skrinka", scientific papers, manuals, popular scientific and literary publications are published annually. The web-site of television project is working: www.ecotv.se-ua.net.

Lessons learned

The cooperation of the Youth Ecocentre with Odessa State Environmental University is the example of Public Society development, environmental democracy, environmental education and Black Sea nature protection. A positive experience of that activity allows to involve students in work for nature conservation, widen their outlook for environment consciousness, and gain the experience in experimental work during complex ecological expeditions, environmental conferences, actions and other events. This experience should be distributed, multiplied and used by other environmental NGOs and High Schools.