

Project “Promoting nature education as efficient mean of awareness raising”



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united by borders

or “People with nature” 1st Newsletter – May 2013

Estonia-Latvia-Russia Cross Border Cooperation Programme within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007 - 2013

Cooperation for nature education

“If you want to be better: Be competitive. If you want to be the best: Be cooperative.” (unknown source)

Cooperation is the process of working or acting together. In more words cooperation is the process where individual actors work together to create a more complex, greater-than-the-sum-of-its-parts results.

Nature protection and education is both challenging and rewarding. The sum-of-what-we-have is great: our nature, our knowledge, our people. But as we want to create something greater, to be the best, we cooperate! And in the process we become better prepared for the challenge and get sweeter rewards.

Sille Talvet
People with Nature Project Coordinator

Today almost everyone in Russia, Estonia and Latvia knows that there are protected areas. But not everybody understands why they are necessary, what their values are and what exactly shall be protected. This is not an easy task. Because everything protected, prohibited or taken out of the use sounds badly and people involved in nature protection encounter a lot of misinterpretation and opposition. So what shall be done?

One of very effective and long-lasting methods is nature education. It provides knowledge about various phenomena of nature to everybody interested. It develops new skills, opens new horizons and teaches how to value it without what we would not be able to exist more than single moments.

Within this project up to the end of 2014 eleven professional partner organisations wish to unite strengths, knowledge and experience, how to do it better and more interesting. The emerging nature education centres are very crucial points for people working for nature protection to do their jobs better and to show to everyone how beautiful and indispensable our nature is.

Meldra Langenfelde
Project Manager of the Beneficiary



Project kick off meeting in Sigulda on the 26th and 27th of June 2012, photo R.Jakovljeva



Estonia – Latvia – Russia cross border cooperation programme project “Promoting nature education as efficient mean of awareness raising” or “People with nature”

Project Short Description

The overall objective of the cross-border cooperation project is to carry out common activities, to elaborate joint approaches for management of nature education centres (NECs), to make nature education more available to society and positively influence awareness of people in order to promote sustainable development of the project region. It is so necessary to show the values and functions of nature and at the same time to show the ways for further development of mankind that would save our resources to next generations.

Project Goals

The main objective of the project is to unite ideas, capacity and tools for improvement of nature education situation and so awareness of the society on sustainable development and integrated nature conservation in the project region of Estonia, Latvia and Russia.

Planned Outputs

The most visible outcomes of the project will be jointly developed modern nature education methods, study materials, as well as trained specialists in order to ensure sustainable nature education development and to inform public about the necessity of nature conservation. It is planned to develop capacity of 14 different nature education centres by ensuring more favourable conditions for successful development of them.



Hello!

My name is Hugo and I`m the mascot of the project “People with nature”.

I will tell you about project activities in Latvia, Estonia and Russia.

Main activities and first results of project

Hugo travels from Latvia...

Nature Conservation Agency

Improvement of nature education centers (NEC) is in progress in four places of Latvia – in Salacgrīva, Ķemeri, Lipuški and by Valmiera. Renovation work, improvement of NEC's close environment, purchase of furniture and office equipment, as well as development of different methodical materials have been the main project activities up to now. Conceptions of exhibitions for new NECs are ready, too.

Making of new study programs is in progress, organisation of study days is planned in the near future. Two study days have been organised – in Tukums about plants and in Viļķene about birds.

In autumn 2012 two **Biodiversity day** events were organized – Mushroom days in the Rāzna region and the Pierīga region. In both places participants could learn more about different species of fungi and to take part in different activities all day long.



Fungi day in Ķemeri national park, photo A.Pendere

From **28th February till 3rd March, 2013** the Nature Conservation Agency took part for the first time in **the fair „School 2013”** representing also other project partners from Estonia, Russia and Latvia. Employees of the Nature Conservation Agency informed about NECs in Latvia and Estonia, about their offer and possibilities for all interested people. Most visitors of the attractive nature education stand were teachers, young people, and families with children. They all could try out nature investigation activities together with the project symbol – lizard Hugo.



*Nature education activities in fair „School 2013”,
Nature Conservation Agency photo archive*

Gauja National Park Foundation

Improvement of the Nature Education Centre „Pauguri” in Līgatne Nature Trails is one of the main activities of the partner within the Project. Qualitative furniture and office equipment have been bought for NEC's rooms, so preparing of nature education materials would be enabled. In order to supplement the NEC with methodical materials, books about different nature values and cyclopaedia were bought, too. The new NEC will welcome groups of pupils, students, families with children, as well as groups of adults to provide them possibility to learn about different themes of nature.



*Nature education centre „Pauguri” in Līgatne nature trails.
Photo K.Melece*

On 23rd March 2012 in NEC “Pauguri” at the Līgatne Nature Trails **Biodiversity day event** – the Water Day – took place. Participants could learn new things about water and water bodies, as well as to participate in making of collage about the Gauja River.

Natural History Museum Support Society

On **16-17th August, 2012** seminar for nature education specialists (mostly nature guides) was held on the theme **"Interactive learning methods"** in Jaunkalsnava. Different lecturers, experts and nature education specialists gave presentations and practical workshops to show the best interactive learning methods in nature education. After the seminar participants admitted: „Seminar provided new ideas and inspiration to teach about nature more creatively and to try out new approaches in our daily work.”



Participants of seminar about interactive learning methods.
Photo: NHMSS archive

On **28th August, 2012** seminar for **"Management and improvement of NECs"** took place. In total 20 environmental educators, nature guides and enthusiasts came to this training seminar. Moderator and lecturer of this seminar was Ms. Dr. Sabine Stab – a very experienced NEC specialist from Germany.

On **7th December, 2012** seminar **„Programs for kids in nature"** including practical education tasks on preparation exciting programs in nature for pre-school and school age children was organised. Participants of the seminar received information about Project „People with nature” activities implemented by NHMSS – a presentation on the module "Soil" and movable box about owls.



Study day in Sausneja Primary school. Photo NHMSS archive

Creation of a mobile exhibition (study days` boxes) is in progress. General conception about the contents of the boxes has been elaborated. The **first two boxes about Owls and Ants have been completed** – illustrations for story about owls, pedagogical conception, time plan, and worksheets have been developed and printed. These boxes consist of nature materials, worksheets, equipment for interactive tasks for children and illustrative material about life of owls and ants that is connected to the stories for children – **„Owl’s Menarda hunting story”** and **„Lifestory of Red wood ant Rude”**.

Study days carried in schools of the project area is one of the most interesting activities in the Project. In the time period from October to December, 2012 already more than 680 children could participate in study days at their own schools in Līgatne, Andrupene, Kaunata, Sausneja, Vestiena, and Mārciena. Children were glad to have interactive lessons about owls and soil animals.

Dagda local municipality

Improvement of the nature education center has been the main activity of the partner. Purchase of furniture and equipment for the **Jaundome Manor Environmental Education Center** was organised that consisted of conference tables, 30 chairs, five equipment cabinets, a front desk and office chair, a microscope, telescope for bird watching, binoculars, as well as small equipment (beakers, magnifying glass, etc.).

Tartu Environmental Education Centre

In **June 2012** Tartu Environmental Education Centre (TEEC) organised a **competition of motivation letters** to find participants and to disseminate information about the International children camp organised in Russia. In total 19 participants took part in the competition “Why I would like to participate in an international nature camp”, and finally 10 participants were awarded with invitation to participate in the camp.

TEEC has helped to organize and participated as partner with nine children and two adults in **the international nature camp** in Pskov region, Russia. Camp took place from **23rd to 29th July, 2012**. This was an excellent possibility to gain new knowledge and to share own experiences. Feedback of all Estonian participants was very positive. Pictures of the camp can be viewed here: <http://www.teec.ee/ET/pildid/laager-venemaal-2012/>

TEEC has organized, hosted and participated in **the working group meeting** in Estonia, Tartu on **24th and 25th September, 2012** with all together 22 participants – representatives of Project partners.



Project working group meeting in Tartu. Photo K. Sogel



TEEC has also organized a 5-day **study trip** with 21 participants from **25th to 29th September, 2012**. Partners visited environmental information centres, nature parks, nature museums, regular schools, educative industry, expositions of Estonia, etc. Participants got knowledge about innovations in Estonian nature education and new inspirations for further actions. Joint discussions were carried out to collect new experiences and exchange ideas. There were also two hikes in nature, so participants could get new knowledge about nature trails' infrastructure. The main aim of the study visit was to create new cooperation possibilities for future actions, as well as to improve present partners networking.



Participants of study trip in Estonia. Photo K.Sogel.

Study days of TEEC took place on 1st November, 2012 with 25 participants from Tartu Waldorfgümnaasium (secondary school) and on 2nd November, 2012 with 25 participants from Tartu Kivilinna Gümnaasium (secondary school). The aim of the study days were to make acquaintance with the Vooremaa landscape protection area in reality and to get new knowledge about ice influence on landscape in the Ice Age Centre.



Study days in Vooremaa landscape protection area. Photo K.Sogel.

Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation

In October 2012 in total four for schoolchildren were carried out near Lake Peipsi. New quizzes and games were used during the programme called Lake Peipsi Travel Journal. All together there were 105 participants: 95 students and 10 adults. As written in the feedback form: „Children experience and learn much new and interesting during the study day, including academic knowledge and social skills” and „It’s very important for pupils to see and feel different landscapes and outcrops by themselves”.



Study day near Lake Peipsi. Photo Eeva Kirsipuu – Vadi



Study day on October 2012. Photo Eeva Kirsipuu - Vadi

In March 2013 a 2-days first-aid course for 15 participants – NEC specialists and nature guides – was carried out. For those working with children and adults it’s crucial to know how to handle critical situations when first aid is necessary. As a result of the training, everyone feels much more confident to face potential threats.



Participants of first-aid course.
Photo Eeva Kirsipuu - Vadi

Besides a creation of a **mobile box** about Lake Peipsi and **restoration of the exhibition** „Lake Peipsi Living Room” is in progress. There will be more than 10 new interactive activities in the exhibition; it will be officially opened on **5th June, 2013**. The exhibition and study box will be supported by new study programs, including working sheets.

Postcards to promote Lake Peipsi exhibition were published in **March 2013**. So everyone receiving a postcard can see how some of the fish species living in the lake look like, e.g. Peipsi smelt, vendace or weather fish. A QR-code on the back side will lead afterwards to the film clip.



NGO “Lake Peipsi Project, Pskov”

On 1st June, 2012 a round table “Possibilities of the Eco-educational center for promotion of protected areas of the Pskov region” took place in Pskov. The event allowed to present the project, its ideas and planned activities for representatives of environmental organisations, protected areas, the Natural-geographical Faculty of the Pskov State University, the Education Department of the Pskov Region, and Rosprirodnadzor (Service for Supervision in the Use of Natural Resources) of the Pskov region.

On January, 2013 a web-site “Birds of the Pskov region” was updated (<http://pskovbirds.ru>). The new web site includes systematic information in Russian and English about 218 bird species occurring in the Pskov region. This number is so high due to the fact that the Pskov region is located in the area of the White Sea – Baltic flyway, in which hundreds of thousands, and sometimes millions of birds migrate in autumn; their nesting habitats are located in areas of tundra and northern taiga.

On 12th and 13th February, 2013 the 1st Steering Committee (SC) meeting and the 2nd Working Group meeting were held in Pskov region. During the SC meeting general information of the Project was presented to the SC members. A special meeting with members of the SC and representatives of educational institutions also was organized in Pskov. During WG meeting an overview of the Project results was made. Partners also discussed management and financial issues.

On 27th March, 2013 a Biodiversity Day (Bird’s Day) was organised – participation in the Methodological marathon with school teachers. During the event a presentation of the web-site "Birds of the Pskov region" and the field guide "Birds of the Pskov region" for biology teachers of Pskov was organised.



Biodiversity day for biology teachers of Pskov.
Photo from NGO “Lake Peipsi Project, Pskov”

«Pskov regional center of the development of gifted children and youth»

In order to develop international cooperation among school age children of Estonia, Latvia and Russia in the sphere of ecological education, studying the environment with purpose of biodiversity conservation and increasing ecological sustainability of protected areas, as well as to form and develop school children skills of carrying out surveillance and field studies, developing informative and presentation materials about the protected areas of the countries participating in the Project, from 23rd to 29th July, 2012 in the territory of the Sebez National Park in the Pskov Oblast the **International Children Ecological Camp “Sebezshskoye Poozerye”** was organised. Its 30 participants were schoolchildren from Estonia, Latvia and Russia.



Final conference in the International Children Ecological Camp.
Photo «Pskov regional center of the development of gifted children and youth» archive

In order to promote active forms of schoolchildren ecological education and studying of environment a **poster** has been made: „Active forms of schoolchildren’s ecological education”.

After the **International Children Ecological Camp an international contest of creative works “PEOPLE WITH NATURE”** has been announced. The contest regulations have been sent to and published in Latvia, Estonia and Russia. Contest nominations: photography, brochure and poster. More information: www.daba.gov.lv/project



Saint-Petersburg charitable public organisation "Biologists for nature conservation"

Days of Biodiversity in the Zerkalniy Suburban Educational Centre (Leningrad region). Event was organized for students and was aimed on getting to know regional wildlife and phenological events of autumn. In total 13 schoolteachers also attended this 10-days long activity, and for them it was a training in use of local nature as a resource for the education process at schools.



Spotting the peat bog wildlife.

Photo from "Biologists for nature conservation" archive.

On 28th October, 2012 a training seminar "Nature journey to the North Coast of the Gulf of Finland" was organised for teachers and university students. The training was organised as a bus trip with numerous stops on the way from St. Petersburg to Primorsk town (150 km one way). A way partly covered by public suburban transport was chosen (or the same trip is possible when group books a bus for the whole day), and the idea was to help to active teachers to plan out-of-classroom activities for the next spring. Such long-distance tours provide an opportunity to explore large geological structures in one day; in this case the glacial landscape elements – ancient (from Last glaciacion) marine terraces, moraines, lakes and marine archipelago area – were explored.



A crowd of teachers on a coastline of the Gulf of Finland near Primorsk town.

Photo from "Biologists for nature conservation" archive.

The second training, also for teachers (on 10th February, 2013) was directed as a kick-off for the short project activity for 30 school teams on making a wildlife area "garden" in a school backyard. This mini-project for schools is being organised as a part of the "People with nature" Project, and its idea is to make a wildlife garden by a school which can be later used as a "nature tool" for teaching biology and environmental science. The main target group for the mini-project is school age children; its idea – to bring experience on working within a project activity on nature issues at school. Since the last year the Russian National Curriculum includes student's projects as element of teaching process in numerous school subjects. At the same time it is very hard to plan this activity even for teachers, thus the idea is to use scheduled trainings to support the introduction of new learning technologies in partner schools.



The beginning of the kick-off seminar for the «make a wildlife garden» short project for school teams.
Photo from "Biologists for nature conservation" archive.



In Latvia...



Nature Conservation Agency will continue improvement of the NECs and open them for visitors in the second part of the year 2013. New study days will be organized and new study programs tested together with pupils in all project regions in Latvia. Biodiversity days will be held, too.

In June Nature Conservation Agency will be glad to welcome project partners to Latvia to the third project Working Group meeting and study trip to the most attractive nature education places in Latvia – Latgale and Vidzeme regions.

Natural History Museum Support Society will go on with study days in schools in the project area in May, 2013. It is planned to visit three schools in spring, 2013.

Exhibition „Miracles in flowers” will be opened on 5th June, 2013 in the Natural History Museum of Latvia, Riga. In this exhibition stories about flowers in different aspects will be told.

Dagda local municipality will organize different activities in the Jaundome Manor Environmental Education Center in order to achieve wider public interest – interactive exhibitions will be opened, innovative educational materials made, and seminars and trainings organised.



...in Estonia...

Tartu Environmental Education Centre will organize two study days on 28th and 29th May, 2013. Participants from the Tartu Catholic School will go hiking on the Jänese hiking trail very close to Tartu. They will discover river and valley flat life, will use the new field guides.

TEEC is working on an exhibition for the new Tartu Nature House (opened in September 2013). The concept of the exhibition will be "a friendly house" where the house is considered as an organism with its history, purpose, friends, neighbours and rules.

Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation plans to finish two new short films by summer. The film clip about exhibition „Lake Peipsi living room” will show possibilities of the exposition and so shall attract more visitors. The other film clip, based on a film „A year in Lake Peipsi Region”, will focus on fishing, as well as many interesting and beautiful scenes will be presented there.



...in Russia

NGO “Lake Peipsi Project, Pskov” plans to finish work on the Virtual Museum of Lake Peipsi by the end of June 2013. Activities directed to development of modern methods of visual presentation of cultural, historical and natural heritage objects will be published on DVDs and on the Internet. The virtual museum will be provided in English and Russian.

By the end of the June a table game for children for educational purposes will be prepared. In a playful way children will be able to learn about the life cycle of smelt in the Lake Pskov. The game will be released in Russian, Latvian and Estonian.

“Pskov regional center of the development of gifted children and youth” plans to continue international cooperation among school age children of Russia, Estonia and Latvia in the sphere of ecological education. From 22nd to 27th July, 2013 a delegation of schoolchildren from the Pskov Oblast is taking part in the International Children Ecological Camp that will be organised by the Gauja National Park Foundation in the territory of Latvia.

In order to form and develop school age children skills of carrying out surveillance and field studies, three field guides are being prepared for publishing on invertebrates, water plants and birds.

State Committee of the Pskov Region on natural resource management and environment protection plans to publish the Red Data Book of the Pskov region, to purchase office equipment and equipment for NEC. During the year 2013 all the necessary information will be collected and researches will be done, so that finally the center will start to work.

Project activity calendar

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|--|--|---|---|
| May 15 and 16 Study days in Ķemeri national park, Latvia | May 20, 29. and 30 Biodiversity day about sea side in spring in the North Vidzeme, Latvia | May 21 and 29 Study days in Gauja national park, Latvia | May 22 and 24 Study days in Razna national park, Latvia |
| May 28 and 29 Study days organized by TEEC, Estonia | June 5 Opening of the exhibition „Lake Peipsi Living Room” in Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation, Estonia | June 10 Opening of the exhibition „Miracles in flowers” in the Natural History Museum of Latvia | June 10 and 11 EST-LAT-RUS Programme ANNUAL EVENT “Enjoy Hansa Route through Latvia, Estonia and Russia!”, in Sigulda, Latvia |
| June 11 till 15 Study trip in Latvia; Working Group meeting | June 15 Biodiversity day event “Meadows Day” in Ķemeri National Park, Latvia |  | July 22 till 27 International Camp for Children organised by the Gauja National Park Foundation, Latvia |

Contacts:

Ms. Sille Talvet
Project Coordinator
E-mail: sille.talvet@gravitas.ee
phone: +372 5109278

Ms. Meldra Langenfelde
Project Manager of the Beneficiary
E-mail: meldra.langenfelde@daba.gov.lv
phone: +371 29482965

Project partners:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  <p>Nature Conservation Agency Baznicas Street 7, Sigulda LV-2150, Latvia Phone: +371 67509545 daba@daba.gov.lv www.daba.gov.lv</p>  |  <p>Tartu Environmental Education Centre Lille Street 10, 51010, Tartu, Estonia Phone: +372 736 1693 teec@teec.ee www.teec.ee</p>  |  <p>Pskov regional center of the development of gifted children and youth Y. Fabrisiusa Street 24, Pskov, 180004, Russia Phone: +7 8112 661980 geniuscentr@mail.ru http://genius.pskovedu.ru</p>  |
|  <p>Gauja National Park Foundation Baznicas Street 3, Sigulda, LV-2150, Latvia Phone: +371 67800393 gnpfonds@gnpfonds.lv www.celodaba.lv</p>  |  <p>Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation Puiestee Street 71a, 51009, Tartu, Estonia Phone: +372 730 2302 tartu@ctc.ee www.ctc.ee</p>  |  <p>State committee on natural resources use and environment protection Nekrasova Street 23, Pskov, 180000, Russia Phone: +7 8112 686520 lic-k1@obladmin.pskov.ru www.priroda.pskov.ru</p>  |
|  <p>Natural History Museum Support Society K. Barona Street 4, Riga, LV -1050, Latvia Phone: +371 67356023, ldm@ldm.gov.lv www.dobasmuzejs.gov.lv</p>  |  <p>Pskov regional public organization "Lake Peipsi Project, Pskov" Sovetskaya Street 15 a, Pskov, 180000, Russia Phone: +7 8112 720688 peipsi_project@yahoo.com http://cbc-center.org</p>  |  <p>Saint-Petersburg charitable public organisation "Biologists for nature conservation" Universitetskaya emb., 7-9-11, St. Petersburg, 199034, Russia Phone: +7 812 328 9620 bfn@bfn.org.ru www.bfn.org.ru</p>  |
|  <p>Dagda local municipality Alejas Street 4, Dagda, Dagda region, LV-5674, Latvia Phone: + 371 656 81437 dome@dagda.lv http://dagda.lv</p>  |  <p>Federal State Institution "The Sebez National Park" 7 Noyabrya Street 22, Sebez, 182250, Russia Phone: +7 81140 21422 seb_park@mail.ru</p>  |  |

Prepared by Ilze Vanaga
Design and illustrations by Daiga Segliņa