



Science and Sustainability through Outdoor Learning

Conference Report

Real World Learning Network
Plancia Outdoor Centre
Slovenia
27 – 30 November 2013



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



1. Introduction to the Conference

The second Real World Learning Network conference took place at Planica in Slovenia, November 2013. More than ninety people gathered from fifteen countries to explore science and sustainability in outdoor learning.

Outdoor learning is widespread across Europe taking the form of science through to sensory based learning. The conference explored how to deliver successful outdoor education. Through keynote speakers, workshops and discussion we explored two key areas in outdoor education: effective teaching approaches and how to assess learning. In doing so we asked ourselves:

- Which teaching approaches are most effective?
- How can we provide better outdoor education?
- How do we know if we are being successful?
- What criteria should we measure ourselves by?
- Is assessment relevant?

Participants took part in workshops around the two key conference themes of: developing competencies for sustainable change; and understanding fundamental concepts of science and sustainability through outdoor learning. Keynote speakers added external views to challenge and inspire, and also to raise key questions during the workshop sessions. The workshops were delivered by the RWL Working Groups.

Conference participants were also encouraged to present their own workshops.

In this report you will find the detailed results of the workshops as well as keynote speakers and details of the participants.

What is the Real World Learning Network?

How do we learn about the world around us? Can we deliver better learning using the outdoors? How can science help to change behaviours towards a more sustainable world? These are just some of the questions that the Real World Learning Network is exploring.

The Real World Learning Network is a consortium of outdoor learning providers across Europe. Our goal is to explore and share successful approaches to outdoor learning that increase action for sustainable development. We believe that outdoor learning offers one of the best approaches for young people to engage with the world around them, and provide a stimulating context to explore how we can all contribute to a more sustainable present and future.



2. Real World Learning and Quality

2.1 Introduction

Real World Learning, Outdoor Learning, Learning outside the Classroom: Nobody will deny the importance of learning through experience in real life. But how can outdoor providers and teachers prove this importance? How can they know if they “have done it well” when being outside with students?

These are the core questions of one of the four working groups in the Real World Learning Network project. The working group focusses on the providers of Real World Learning – to support them to deliver “good” education and to help teachers with identifying those providers.

The educational programmes and activities should aim at action for sustainability or at least at a behavioural change in the everyday life of the students. Therefore the working group analyses existing quality criteria and indicators in Europe and will develop a set of European Real World Learning quality criteria and guidelines for providers and teachers to enhance their existing educational programmes or to develop new ones.

At the conference Michela Mayer from Italy started with some general reflections of quality in education for sustainable development and the understanding of quality by the ENSI network, *UNECE ESD Indicators experts group* and *PISA Science experts groups*. In the following workshop session different national models of assessment and quality criteria were presented and discussed in comparison to the first draft of RWL Quality Criteria. After that Anthony Thomas from UK focused on the “Quality badge” of the British Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) and worked with its criteria and indicators on some RWL examples by the German project “Out of School” in the second workshop session of the day. This project was introduced by Jasson Jakovides from Fields Agency. The first conference day ended with a lively fish bowl discussion.

2.2 Towards sustainable action. - The importance of a sustainable tool for reflection

Keynote speech by Michela Mayer

Michela Mayer is a member of the Italian UNESCO commission for the Decade of ESD. She is responsible for research in the Italian National Institute for the Evaluation of the Educational System and involved in international projects related to EE and ESD, with a special focus on evaluation. This speech concerns an overall analysis about the concepts of Assessment & Learning, based on studies of the *ENSI network*, *UNECE ESD Indicators experts group* and *PISA Science experts groups*. Michela Mayer is a member of all three working groups and networks.

Why do we need a reflection on the quality of our ESD Education?

In the last twenty years the concepts of EE and ESD have changed a lot: the awareness of the limits of our knowledge, of the unpredictability of future development both in education and in the physical environment, forces us to evaluate as accurately as possible what we are trying to do for SD but also for ESD. The Development of a Sustainable Society should be seen as a continuous learning process, and ESD is an instrument that should be consistent with the complex and dynamic nature of the changes required.

A culture of complexity and participation requires an evaluation that takes into account this complexity: an evaluation that gives up the illusion of scientism and goes beyond the idea of ‘assessment’, keeping instead the idea of an evaluation as a ‘non neutral process of assigning values’.

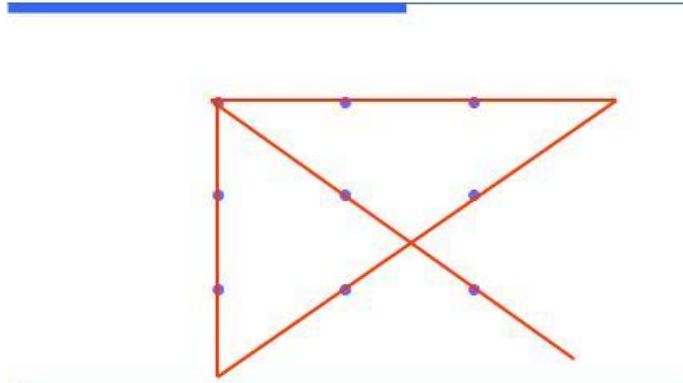
One way to frame ESD is to consider ESD as an “Education to Change”.

We have to teach how to change, and because the way we change depends on our point of view and on the way we see the world, we must learn how to change our point of view.

A possible example to show what we mean is the “Nine dots exercise”: it shows us how our implicit way to frame a problem will influence the solution, and suggests possible ways of thinking outside our frames.

Change exercise:

take a piece of paper and draw 9 points as in the figure below. Try to connect these 9 points together using 4 line segments and without raising the pencil from the paper: where a line ends, another must start.



What changes do we need?

Using this example we can reflect together on two different kinds of changes:

-“Changes 1” are changes within a frame composed of a set of implicit or explicit rules. These changes are the ones we face every day, as our efforts for a less unsustainable society (reduce wastes, reduce energy consumption) without changing the rules of competitions and of private use of resources that cause the situation;

-“Changes 2” are changes of frames, of ‘paradigms’, of world visions. In order to solve the exercise, we need a “Change 2” as well as we need a “Change 2” if we want really transform our society.

In common life we often use frames of references that are implicit, which means that we are unconsciously immersed in them. The changes required by our Unsustainable ‘Risk Society’ are not something like a problem-solving activity but are changes that involve the conscious and unconscious rules that frame our behaviours.

What does this mean for the quality in ESD processes?

Quality is a cultural and value based characteristic, that depends on our unconscious frames; it is related to emotions and perceptions and not only to facts.

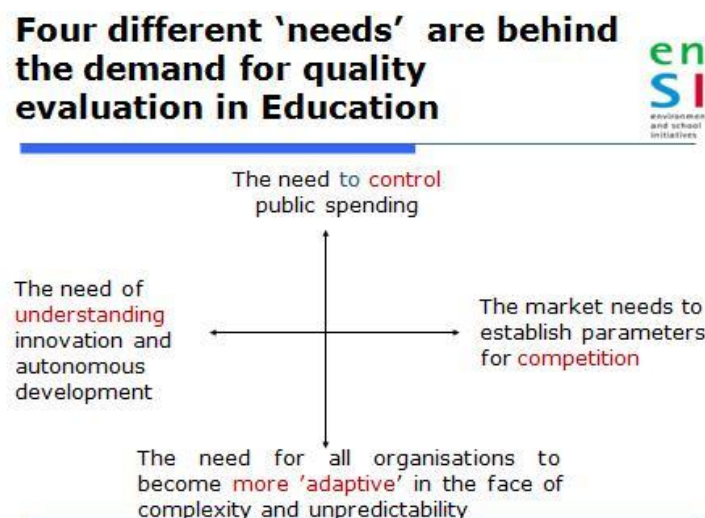
Quality and quantity are not in contrast, but quality cannot be reduced to numbers. We can distinguish a ‘static quality’, that means good performance in defined standards – i.e. what we are

able to do – and a ‘dynamic quality’, related to the attempts to do something that has not been done before, where no standards are fixed and there is space for creativity.

We must admit that, in Education, quality is more related to ‘processes’ than to ‘products’, and that educational processes cannot be captured in strict standards. Dynamic qualities are what we need to improve. ESD needs stable groundwork as well as dynamic qualities.

Four different forces have shaped the recent rapid growth for quality demand in Educational evaluation (Norris, 1998):

- The need to control public spending
- The need to establish parameters for ‘a market competition’ between educational offers
- The somehow ‘opposite needs’ to understand and support educational innovation and autonomous development in the direction of becoming more ‘inclusive’, of guaranteeing more ‘equity’, of developing ‘participation’;
- The need for educational institutions to become ‘more adaptive’ in face of the complexity of Real World.



This means that educational evaluation could be either considered as a way to better sell our own work or as a way to reflect upon our work and to improve its quality (or both).

What kind of Educational Evaluation do we need?

We can distinguish the various approaches to evaluation according to the different paradigms on which they are based. Each paradigm correspond to a ‘frame’, to a vision of the world, to what we consider ‘important, legitimate, and reasonable’ in our ESD practices (Liriakou and Flogaitis, 2000). Three main ‘paradigms’ could be distinguished in international educational evaluation:

- A Positivist Approach, where object of evaluation are facts and outcomes, to be compared with established criteria and objectives operationally defined. Evaluation is mainly a ‘measurement’ that guarantees objectivity, and the evaluator is a ‘technical expert’. In this approach, still the most used in Educational Evaluation, everything can be measured and quality should be expressed through numbers;
- A Relativistic, or Interpretative, Approach, where objective reality is denied, and the evaluator aims at bringing out, through dialogue and observations, the different points of view about the educational processes at stake. The evaluator’s role is the one of a ‘neutral

negotiator' in order to reach a consensus on the scope and the meaning of the evaluation. Methods are qualitative and, within this approach, nothing can be measured.

- A Socio-critical Approach, that tries to integrate the extreme positions of the first two paradigms, to take care of both: results and processes. In this paradigm, an objective reality does exist but is perceived in different ways according to social and cultural circumstances. Methods are both qualitative and quantitative and the evaluation's aim is to 'bring to light' the different points of view in order to achieve substantial changes. The evaluator considers him/herself as a social agent of change, participating in the processes, not being neutral but impartial.

	Positivistic	Intepretative	Socio-critical
The object of evaluation	Results	Educational processes and relations between the various agents involved	Educational processes, relations and results
Judgement type	Fact judgements based on established criteria and/or objectives	Negotiated and agreed value judgements	Judgements about values based on negotiated criteria
Methods	Quantitative	Qualitative	Qualitative and quantitative
Evaluator characteristics	Objectivity	Neutrality	Impartiality
Evaluation plan	Pre-established	Responsive	Participatory
Key words	Measure, control, forecast	Describe, interpret	Bring to light, change

Liriakou and Flogaitis, 2000

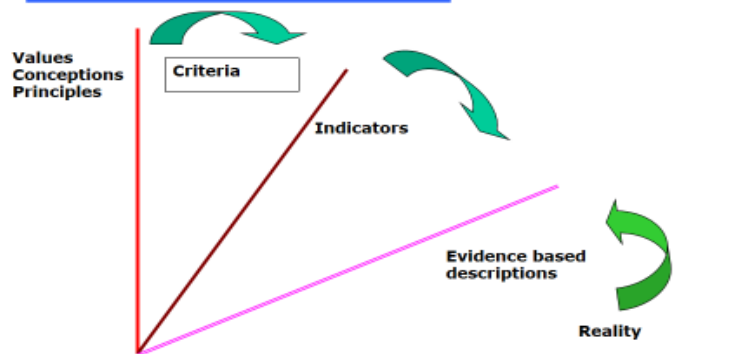
This last approach is the one that seems the more consistent with the ESD aims and methods, and could be used both for an internal quality enhancement - becoming a tool for self-evaluation – and for a reflection on the processes and on the achievements, using explicit negotiated criteria to establish quality areas.

How do we build a quality criteria system?

Quality Criteria are already largely used in ESD: in some cases the criteria have been negotiated, starting by the implicit criteria used to define priorities; in many others these criteria are 'given' by educational authorities or by 'certification' brands (Quality Badges...). Quality criteria then can be used with different meanings within the above mentioned paradigms: they can be confused with numerical indicators and refer to standardised procedures or can be merged in the socio critical paradigm, refer to basic values, world visions and utopias, and summarise, and in some way specify a 'sustainability education philosophy'.

In the socio-critical paradigm a quality criteria system could work as a bridge connecting a set of shared values and general principles to reality through indicators and descriptions based on evidence.

Quality Criteria and Quality Indicators as bridges



Such a system does not establish a set of standards but only thresholds. Quality criteria are open to ongoing debate and participation, start from the top, from a definition of common principles, but at the same time are built from the bottom, integrating different experiences.

Quality Criteria for ESD-Schools.

As an example of how a system of quality criteria could be established, I want to present a proposal prepared within a Comenius project – the SEED project - for evaluating the schools involved as a whole in a change toward sustainability. The point of departure has been a research on the situation of the ‘whole school approach’ to Environmental Education and to Education for Sustainability in Europe, in Australia and in South Korea. The title of the book reporting the research is: *ECO-schools: trends and divergences. A comparative study on ECO-school development processes in 13 countries*, by Mogensen and Mayer, and could be downloaded from the web site of the ENSI network: www.ensi.org

The research has involved 13 countries - Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Spain (Catalonia), Sweden, Australia and Korea – and covered three main stages:

- A collection of national reports identifying implicit and explicit criteria used to guide, support or award Eco-Schools incorporating principles and actions for sustainability in whole school plans;
- A research report presenting a comparative analysis, the national reports and the case studies collected;
- The identification of a set of quality criteria for ESD-school Development emerging from the research report and the case studies.

Using the ‘scenarios’ methodology, 3 main scenarios emerged from the research, each one connected with the vision, the image, that schools explicitly or implicitly follow in order to become an ESD school. The 3 main scenarios emerging, described in the slide, have different diffusion: while the first one is the more diffused among secondary schools and national certification programs, the second one is often practiced by primary schools or schools connected with conservationist programs. The third one, the social dialogue oriented scenario, is the less diffused, but the one that tries to take care of important values as the ones of participation and critical thinking.

3 main scenarios for the development of ESD schools



What images of sustainable futures?	Science and technique driven future	New relation with nature driven future	Social change driven future
What images of the teaching-learning processes?	Teaching as transfer of correct information and strategies	Learning as an individual challenge, teaching as a facilitation process	Learning as a social process, teaching as introduction in a democratic dialogue
What images of School Development?	School as an 'ecological' enterprise	School as a family	School as an educational research community

Of course, none of the scenarios is 'the right one', and the mixture of the three, with a relative growth of the third one, should be envisaged by the schools interested in ESD.

As a conclusion of the research, and in order to help the schools in the process of reflection on their actions for planning changes consistent with a sustainable future, a set of Quality Criteria has been identified, using three different value based visions as 'compasses' indicating the directions to take:

- a vision of Environmental Education as oriented toward Sustainable Development, where environmental problems are seen as mainly cultural and social problems, embedded in a culture of complexity, focused on action competence – not on behaviour modifications - and on the construction of 'g-local knowledge' through action. In this vision, students' participation is a crucial element to take care of.
- a vision of School Development inspired by the 'OECD Schooling Scenarios' (Schooling for the future project), rejecting the "maintaining the Status Quo scenarios" and the 'de-schooling scenarios', in favour of the "re-schooling scenarios", where schools evolve as Core Social Centres in their own communities and become Focused Learning Organisations.
- a vision of Quality, and of the evaluation of Quality, as a complex concept to be used within the socio-critical paradigm, without reducing quality to quantity.

The aim of the quality criteria booklet (Breiting, Mayer and Mogensen, *Quality criteria for ESD-Schools*, published in 18 languages, separately from the research book, and downloadable from the same website: www.ensi.org) was to offer a tool for facilitating discussions within the school to clarify the main aims and changes, and to develop the schools' own list of quality criteria, adapted to the schools' own situation and the schools' plans.

In this process, 3 groups/categories of criteria have been identified:

- Quality criteria regarding the quality of teaching and learning processes
- Quality criteria regarding the school policy and organisation
- Quality criteria regarding the schools' external relations

Each group is divided in smaller areas, and for each of them a short example of a school practice, inspired by the research case studies, is presented first, followed by a short description of the area – the rationale that guides the proposal – and by a number of criteria/indicators. Criteria and areas are

partly overlapping, and this is consistent with the many mechanism at play in a complex process as the ESD orientation of a whole school.

To have an idea of the areas covered, we mention:

- in “The quality of teaching and learning processes” group, rationales and criteria are offered for the areas of “teaching-learning approach”, “visible outcomes”, “perspectives for the future”, “culture of complexity”, “critical thinking and the language of possibility”, “value clarification”, “action-based perspective”, “participation”, “content matter”.
- In “The quality of school policy and organization” group, rationales and criteria are offered for the areas of “school policy and planning”, “school climate”, “school management” and “reflection and evaluation of ESD initiatives”.
- Finally, in “The Quality of school’s external relations” group, rationales and criteria are offered for the areas of “community cooperation” and of “networking and partnerships”.

The proposal we made was not considered as a ‘list to follow ’; as we wrote, no quality criteria should “*be accepted without a serious discussion and decision among the important stakeholders of the school*”. For this reason, we ended each list of criteria concluding each area with ‘open dots’, inviting the readers to add or to revise the ones proposed.

The importance of building a Quality Criteria System

When a Quality Criteria system is built on the basis of concrete research and reflections and with the participation of stakeholders, it is an instrument that summarizes and specifies a shared ‘philosophy’ for ESD. But, in order to be really a frame of reference and a binding element for the members of the System, it must be jointly constructed and accepted by all the participants.

To be consistent with the uncertainty that is at the basis of the research for sustainability, ‘quality criteria’ list should always be considered as non-exhaustive and open to development, and be used mainly as starting points for reflections, debates and further development.

Other Quality Criteria Models and proposals

Quality evaluation has become a main focus in ESD, nationally and internationally:

- Quality Indicators have been developed by an Expert group for the *UNECE strategy for the implementation of DESD*;
- European initiatives and WGs has been dedicated to quality evaluation, as for example the WG in the *ESD European Conference in Vienna in 2006*;
- a program on Monitoring and Assessing Progress During the DESD in the Asia Pacific Region using Quality Indicators, has been developed by *UNESCO with IUCN-CEC & Mcquirie Un. of Sidney*;
- in different countries, regional or national initiatives has been launched, looking for Quality Criteria. In Italy an *Inter-Regional Proposal for Regional EE Quality Evaluation (To learn how to see ourselves)* has been built.

The *UNECE strategy indicators* has to be applied to a Macro/Regional level (Europe and North America) and refers to a common, well defined and internationally discussed strategy for ESD, www.unece.org. The indicators are strictly related to the strategy objectives, and try to reflect both the process, and the outcomes, including long-term effects of ESD. The assessment cannot be made by using a single indicator, but can only be produced after considering the set of indicators.

Another example of the use of criteria and indicators comes from: *A Quick Guide to developing ESD Indicators*, for monitoring and assessing progresses during the DESD in the Asia Pacific Region. Three main kinds of indicators have been proposed:

- Status Indicators: assess variables that determine the position or standing of ESD in a country. Baseline indicator types belong to this category.
- Facilitative Indicators: assess variables that assist, support or encourage engagement with ESD. Context, process, and learning indicator types belong to this category.
- Effect Indicators: assess variables relating to initial, medium and long-term achievements during the DESD. Outputs, outcomes, impact and performance indicators belong to this category.

The *Italian proposal*, that will be presented in detail during the WS offered by Elisa Chiesa, is an attempt to build a common frame, orienting the different Italian regions for establishing criteria to certificate and support ESD and EE initiatives and centres, including outdoor education centres. The proposal is based on a national research, and is organized on a matrix of 'functions/criteria'. While functions include 'education', 'training', 'support and facilitation', 'communication and information', 'research and evaluation', 'management and networking', the criteria are strongly based on 'values', as it is possible to see on the slide that follow.



Finally, I want to conclude this speech reporting the final statement of the WG working on quality evaluation during the European Conference on ESD, held in Vienna on March 2006:

- Education Quality is related more to 'processes' than to 'products'. Educational processes cannot be captured in strict standards.
- ESD asks for a mind shift about what is needed in quality evaluation, from 'accountability' to evidence based quality development.
- We accept that 'numbers' are often not meaningful, other ways of evaluation such as 'examples', good practices, descriptions are more underpinning the evolving concepts of ESD.
- ESD will contribute to the changes of behaviors needed for SD. It is an important component of the complex approach that is needed but that cannot be evaluated by the attained changes.
- The outcomes of ESD is 'education as such': more critical thinker, more action competences.

2.3 Quality criteria and assessment models in Europe

Identifying quality criteria for RWL which emphasize the uniqueness and added value of RWL compared to learning inside classrooms

Following Michela Mayer's introduction we proceeded with the first workshop session of the day: The presentation of quality criteria and assessment models of the different RWL partner countries. In the workshops the criteria and indicators of the national models were explained and compared to the working group's draft of five RWL criteria. The target was to improve the RWL criteria with the help of the participants expertise. At the conference seven workshops have taken place:

Elisa Chiesa, the Italian member of working group "Quality" in the RWL project presented the quality aspects of the "Information and Education for Sustainability (INFEAS) System".

Tomáš Kažmierski, Czech member of the working group introduced the "System of Eco-Centres Certification" together with the Czech expert Jan Činčera, who presented "Goals and Indicators for Environmental Education". Virag Suhajda and György Tóth from Hungary talked about "The impacts of environmental education as seen by teachers - regarding skill building and attitudes, results from an EU-project".

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge was introduced by Sally Thompson from United Kingdom. Angelika Schichtel, the German working group member presented the certification of "Official Projects of the German UN-Decade for Education for Sustainable Development" and the German expert Thorsten Ludwig talked of Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation. Andrej Šorgo from Slovenia described the position of environmental education in Slovenian schools.

In the workshops they all worked on the first draft of a European set of Real World Learning Quality criteria. You will find the five criteria named below followed by the description of main characteristics of the national models and the workshop results.

2.3.1 Quality criteria for contemporary real world learning- first draft

Focussing on the providers of Real World Learning the working group "quality" developed a draft of criteria which should support the providers to deliver education that aims at action for sustainability or at least at a behavioural change in the everyday life of the students. The criteria should also help teachers with identifying those providers:

1. The provider encourages first-hand experiences, using different methods within a broad variety of natural and cultural learning sites from different areas of life.
2. The provider uses frames connected to intrinsic values as supporting metaphors to overcome mental barriers in a transparent and responsible way.
3. The provider connects learners to the resource by provoking and raising curiosity, and by facilitating participation in an atmosphere of self-directed learning.
4. The provider encourages links between frames, topics and the everyday life of learners, inviting them to question their own attitudes.
5. The provider illustrates the ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimension of different topics as well as their relevance for global justice for now and for future generations.

These five criteria were given to each workshop group on a poster where they could put their remarks and feedback on. The target of the discussion was to involve providers and experts which

attended the conference to get their feedback for developing the RWL criteria. As questions for the discussion were proposed:

- What does not fit/is not enough described in detail?
- What is missing/is too much?
- Are there contradictions?
- What do we want to achieve mainly through RWL?
- What is the quality - or are the quality criteria - that characterize the RWL, or even how we can describe, observe, collect, the data showing quality of the processes of RWL?
- Focus on providers: which criteria and certification focuses on providers of RWL and outdoor education in your country? How can they deliver 'good' RWL and prove it?
- What do teachers need to leave the classroom?

2.3.2 *WORKSHOP 1: Quality in the INFEAS SYSTEM - InFormation and EducAtion for Sustainability* *Elisa Chiesa, Italy*

INFEAS means in Italian *Informazione ed Educazione alla Sostenibilità*, that is Information and Education for sustainability. Only recently Italy has included the letter "s" to mention sustainability and fit better with the EU recommendations to the social and economic life as well as environmental aspects.

The INFEAS system concerns a national concerted approach both at national and local level (Regions) to integrate planning and the financial aspects into activities for sustainability. This System works at local level through the "Centres for Environmental Education" regional network.

Since 2005 and afterwards, some Regions proposed evaluation indicators of environmental education and the quality of the processes launched throughout the INFEAS System. In particular, the first national document *To learn how to see ourselves - A proposal of quality indicators for regional systems of environmental education* (by Stefano Beccastrini, Giovanni Borgarello, Rodolfo Lewanski and Michela Mayer) was a starting point, a proposal for a reflection process on their own ESD systems and the possibilities of improving them, according to common guidelines, shared benchmarks and with a proposal of indicators that each regional system would be able to develop independently for their ESD Centers. The regions have been open to the processes of evaluation, according to the strategies for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development of the United Nations sponsored and coordinated by UNESCO.

With a matrix of Functions and Criteria, this model has tried to evaluate Quality into EEC.

CRITERIA	Give focus on the subject / s and facilitate the development of competence, autonomy and responsibility	Identification and use of the complexity of the learning and of the Environment (interdependence, evolutionary processes, limits, risks)	Attention to Local and Global	Change-oriented approach (flexible, able to face the uncertainty)	Integration Development (about knowledge, methodologies, politics) and Common Work approach for Sense-construction and Participation
FUNCTIONS					
Education					
Training					
Promoting & support to local development activities					
Information & Communication					
Research & Evaluation					
Coordination					

AT MACRO AND MICRO LEVEL THERE ARE DIFFERENT QUALITY INDICATORS AND MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTORS

The first paper “To Learn how to see ourselves” was followed by other models with regional emphasis for the Regions of Basilicata, Liguria, Lombardy, Sicily, Umbria, Sardinia, Tuscany and Veneto.

The problem of how to evaluate and assess the quality of an educational process has been certainly perceived as crucial both in the school system and for the environmental education and sustainability providers.

Some Italian regions (such as Lombardy, Piemonte and Emilia-Romagna) proposed a potential Quality System to monitoring the ESD activities and setting up the minimum requirements, most of all for the ESD centres.

Now, much remains to be done. It’s important to well address the questions of how to evaluate the various methods to assess the Outdoor Learning activities, both in school and in the providers’ centres.

In conclusion, it seems to have to organize a common system of the Quality approaches into the different regional INFEAS System, starting from the common point that, by now, it’s more widespread an ex-post evaluation model.



Presentation of INFEAS

INFEAS & the RWL Quality Criteria

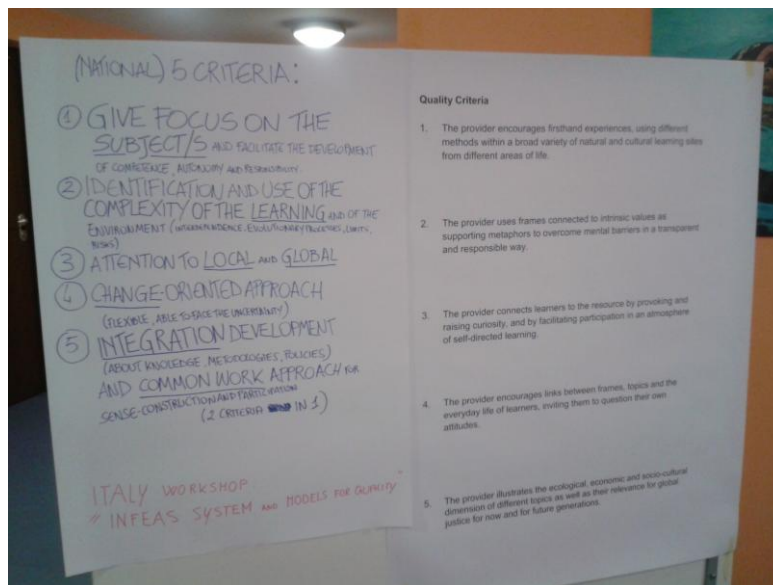
After the introduction of our system of EEC network and its quality models (focused on the “To learn how to see ourselves” model, practical examples with a matrix of functions and criteria) we continued in the workshop with the following steps:

- Discussion: Discussing about how to match our national criteria for RWL activities and the given criteria proposed.
- Reflection: It has emerged that it was necessary to deepen the concepts of the outdoor and real world learning activities.
- Activity 1: stressing key-word into the Italian proposal.
- Activity 2: finding out and comparing with given criteria .
- Activity 3: identifying highlights and key-concept from given criteria
- Final activity: matching between the two proposals: use of post-it for identifying connections with a model and the other.
- Post-Discussion: missing and strengthens of the Quality criteria identified as such.
- Core Results:
 - Each Italian Criteria could be included into the RWL Criteria delivered, in different proportions (for example last RWL Criteria include all Italian Criteria, the others fit in different ways).
 - Over the POST-DISCUSSION time the group has mostly discussed about values: it has to stress that a value-oriented approach works perfectly to evaluate Quality.
 - Therefore, we have discussed about the word “frame”, because the backward-meaning is not very clear.
 - It has been stressed to include the “love for nature” into the “third” given criteria, an essential statement which gives quality for RWL activity.

Notes of workshop participants:

- Participants asked for focusing on methodologies of how evaluate activities (tools and approaches)
- Important to split Criteria into several groups, depending on the target (children, teenagers- adults or just providers).

- Participants wondered if it is the correct way to go directly to the criteria and not to the mental processes to follow, to define them.



Matching two different lists of Criteria (on the left side the Italian proposal, on the right side the five RWL criteria)

2.3.3 WORKSHOP 2: National Accreditation Schemes by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom Sally Thompson, United Kingdom

Both of the following accreditation schemes are managed by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC), a national charity in the UK. CLOtC exists to promote learning outside the classroom and aims for every child in the UK to have access to learning in the real world as an essential part of their education and development.

The LOtC Quality Badge is a national accreditation scheme aimed at providers of learning outside the classroom (LOtC) of all kinds. The award was developed by the UK government in response to consultation that revealed schools and teachers were confused by how to select a provider offering good quality education and managing risk effectively. The award was launched in October 2008. The first awards were made in February 2009.

The main aim of the LOtC Quality Badge is to facilitate access to good quality learning outside the classroom for all children, and does this in two ways: by working with and supporting providers to help increase the quality of provision; and by reassuring teachers about the quality and safety of what providers offer, therefore making it more likely that they will undertake visits.

The LOtC Quality Badge assessment is based on six sets of indicators, with guidance provided to applicants on what each indicator addresses. The headings of these sets of indicators are:

1. The provider has a process in place to assist users to plan the learning experience effectively;
2. The provider provides accurate information about its offer;



3. The provider provides activities or experiences which meet learner needs;
4. The provider reviews the experience and acts upon feedback;
5. The provider meets the needs of users; and
6. The provider has safety management processes in place to manage risk effectively.

These indicators look at the structure and processes the provider has in place to ensure that they are offering quality learning experiences. They are not intended to dictate how a provider should work with children.

The application and assessment process is a combination of self-evaluation form, desktop audit and on-site inspection by specialist assessors. The proportion of applicants which receive an inspection visit is determined by the kind of activities they offer.

The accreditation is valid for two years, after which the organisation must renew their award with a new application to ensure that the same standards still apply. There is no higher or lower standard, the bar is set at 'good' for all types of LOtC provider.

More information on the LOtC Quality Badge can be found at <http://lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/home>
LOtC Mark is aimed at schools and other educational establishments. This award was developed by CLOtC in response to many enquiries from schools regarding gaining accreditation for their LOtC practice. One of CLOtC's main aims as an organisation is to encourage schools and teachers to make LOtC an everyday part of teaching, to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to access education in a way that makes sense to them. LOtC Mark is intended to recognise good LOtC provision in schools, but equally to support schools in developing their LOtC practice. This is a new accreditation, but has been well received by schools. Feedback suggests that schools are finding it to be a very useful framework.

LOtC Mark was developed by CLOtC using the same framework as the LOtC Quality Badge. In the same way, it is process based, looking at the structures in place in a school to ensure the quality of LOtC experiences, and integration into the curriculum. The headings of the six sets of criteria are:

1. The organisation has a stated commitment to providing and developing learning outside the classroom experiences for all pupils;
2. The organisation plans learning effectively;
3. The organisation makes good use of all available resources in designing and delivering LOtC;
4. The organisation effectively monitors and evaluates the impact of LOtC;
5. The organisation manages risk and the perception of risk effectively; and
6. The organisation is actively engaged in promoting the benefits of LOtC.



As with the LOtC Quality Badge, the criteria are not intended to be prescriptive; schools will have their own ways of meeting each indicator and it is important that they are free to do this in whatever way suits the needs of their students.

There are three progressive levels to the criteria: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Schools can choose to work through the levels, or apply for Silver or Gold immediately if they are already confident that their LOTC provision is excellent.

At LOTC Mark Bronze & Silver level, application is by self-evaluation form and evidence portfolio, which is audited before the award is made. A percentage of successful applicants are then selected for an on-site inspection visit. The award is valid for two years after which time the school must reapply to maintain their accredited status.

At LOTC Mark Gold level, application is by self-evaluation form and each applicant will receive an on-site inspection. At this level the award is valid for four years, although the school must submit an annual declaration that nothing substantial has changed in their LOTC practice since the initial application.

More information on LOTC Mark can be found at: <http://www.lotc.org.uk/lotc-accreditations/lotc-mark/>

LOTC Mark & the RWL Quality Criteria

After Sally's presentation about the history and structure of LOTC Mark, the group then looked at each set of criteria in turn and discussed the practical applications and implications of each point. The discussion then turned to the 5 proposed Real World Learning Project Quality Criteria. There was general agreement that the language used is problematic, and needs to be made considerably more straightforward. Once the meaning of each criterion had been deciphered, the group agreed with the aims of each but felt that the criteria don't go far enough. After discussion, the group proposed the following additions to the criteria:

1. There was strong agreement that encouraging and supporting participants to learn to manage risk is vital. It is impossible to connect to the natural world without encountering risk, and if children are never exposed to risk they will never learn to manage it. The aim should be to train children to become aware of risk without being afraid of it, and to make informed decisions based on their own judgement.
2. A requirement for learners to develop skills for living as well as acquire knowledge and understanding.
3. Providers should use evidence based methods and pedagogy.

2.3.4 WORKSHOP 3: System of certification of organizations operating in the field of environmental education in the Czech Republic Jan Činčera and Tomáš Kažmierski, Czech Republic

There were given two presentations concerning goals and objectives at national level and system of certification of organisations in a field of environmental education.

The presentation by Jan Činčera included:

- Structure of goals and objectives and mutual circumstances with evaluation, certification and guidelines
- Process of objectives development overview
- Description of differences between goals, competencies and aims in environmental education

- Goals and indicators at national level
- Using the goals in programmes and strategies

The presentation by Tomáš Kažmierski included:

- Basic background about establishing, initiating and cooperation at the beginning of the process of development the national criteria for certification
- Aims of the certification system and identifying the target group – providers of EE
- Main types of criteria including admission ones and another to use in organization assessment process
- Detailed description of the main criteria, which are focused on several areas: Programmes, Programme staff, Management, Eco-friendly operation

Main characteristics of the Czech system of certification	
Is it a quality badge, quality mark, certificate or a list of criteria?	The assessment model includes certification process based on criteria focusing on 4 areas of providers in a field of environmental education. The awarded organisations can use a special badge which shows that they were successful in the certification process and they provide well-quality services in EE.
Name of the certification	<p>SYSTÉM CERTIFIKACE ORGANIZACÍ PŮSOBÍCÍCH V OBLASTI ENVIRONMENTÁLNÍHO VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ V ČESKÉ REPUBLICĚ</p> <p>(SYSTEM OF CERTIFICATION OF ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC)</p> <p>not available on internet in full version, short information on website of organisation which developed it is here: http://www.pavucina-sev.cz/?idm=99</p>
Available in other languages?	English, not available on internet, in disposal only in Czech team of RWL project
Year of first publishing / History of development	<p>The certification system was established in the years 2011 – 2013; not publishing in full version so far.</p> <p>The criteria was set up because of improving motivation educational organisations to reflect on and enhance the quality of their activities, as identifying the main factors affecting the quality and strengthening organisations as partners of other educational organisations and partners. There were involved NGOs – providers, state institutions (Ministry of Environment) and external experts.</p>
Who developed the model / list?	The system was initiated by Ministry of the Environment and created by Pavucina – Association of environmental education organisations in the CR (providers).
Who is the certification / criteria to aim at?	Providers of environmental education programmes and services
What are main criteria /	<p>1) Programmes</p> <p>1.1 PROGRAMMES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE TARGET GROUP</p>

categories / areas of assessment?	<p>1.2 PROGRAMME METHODOLOGY 1.3 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT 1.4 SAFETY AND LIABILITY 1.5 ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMMES' SUCCESS</p> <p>2) Programme staff 2.1. SUPPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAMME STAFF</p> <p>3) Management 3.1 VISION AND MISSION 3.2 PLANNING AND EVALUATION 3.3 OPENNESS AND COMMUNICATION</p> <p>4) Eco-friendly operation of providers 4.1 PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPERATION</p>
What are the sub-criteria?	Included in the list above
Target areas	Included in the list above
Who is doing the certification process? Who is assessing?	<p>The administrator (Pavucina – Association of environmental education organisations in the CR) shall ensure the inspection of the formal requirements and completeness of the application and selection of auditors (external experts). The administrator addresses all auditors offering to audit the applying organization. Auditors who are interested in performing the audit and do not have a conflict of interest apply for the audit.</p> <p>Using a random mechanism (drawing lots) two auditors will be assigned to the certification applicant. The administrator shall notify the organization applying for certification about the selection of the auditors together with their contact information. The audit is designed as one day process and on-site investigation. The auditors carry out interviews with the applicant's authorized personnel and verify the fulfilment of the required criteria. The auditors write a auditor's report. Afterwards there can be granted the certificates for a period of 2 years to organizations that have been certified for the first time, and for a period of 4 years to organizations that have earned the certificate repeatedly.</p>
Connected to European standards?	existing evaluation methods, standards of NAAEE (USA), CAF method
Connected to ESD processes? Which ones? Where & how long is the certificate running	<p>Not connected directly with ESD processes at national and regional level. Now there are 10 organisations which was certified in pilot phase. Information about percentage of market are not available.</p>

Standards	No
Costs	Applicant should pay for assesment process (about 500 - 700 EUR per each) – this is not clarified so far.
Process of assessment	There are several levels of assessments – in 1st on the organisation provide self-assessment of their relevance to the certification criteria, afterwards the auditors visit the provider and check the criteria fulfillment and at the end they recommend to administrator and Certifiocation Board if they would award or reject the application.

Czech system of certification & the RWL Quality Criteria

All suggested criteria of WG 1 were appreciated. But there were following recommendations:

- To change something to be more common for using in most of the EU countries
 - To clarify a meaning of some words
 - to add something
1. The provider encourages firsthand experiences, using different methods within a broad variety of natural and cultural learning sites from different areas of life.
 - *firsthand experiences – to change this to be more clear*
 - *natural and cultural sites – Can there be used any relevant sites selecting by provider without specific rules?*
 2. The provider uses frames connected to intrinsic values as supporting metaphors to overcome mental barriers in a transparent and responsible way.
 - *What does it mean intrinsic values? This criteria could be more understandable in meanings of words.*
 - *Is somewhere defined what the mental barriers are?*
 3. The provider connects learners to the resource by provoking and raising curiosity, and by facilitating participation in an atmosphere of self-directed learning.
 - *No recommendations to improve it*
 4. The provider encourages links between frames, topics and the everyday life of learners, inviting them to question their own attitudes.
 - *No recommendations to improve it*
 5. The provider illustrates the ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimension of different topics as well as their relevance for global justice for now and for future generations.
 - *The word „illustrates“ should be replaced by „leads discussion and interactive approach on“ .*

2.3.5 WORKSHOP 4: Official Project for the UN-Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
Angelika Schichtel, Germany

The overall target of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is to implement sustainable development principles in education throughout the world. This can only be achieved by involving all stakeholders and by making best practice visible. In Germany the National Committee for the UN Decade awards recognition to official Decade Projects to make examples of good practice visible and create models worthy of imitation for other projects. Recognition is given to

- Official German Projects of the UN Decade
- Contributions to the UN Decade
- Cities and Local Authorities of the UN Decade
- Official Measures of the UN Decade

In the workshop we focused on the quality criteria of the projects.

Main Characteristics for the Official German Projects of the UN-Decade	
Quality badge, mark, certificate, list of criteria	In the assessment and certification process successful and innovative projects in Education for Sustainable Development have the opportunity to apply for recognition as an "Official German Project for the UN Decade" to the jury of the National Committee.
Name of the certification	"Official German Project for the UN Decade" www.bne-portal.de
Available in other languages?	Some general information about the implementation of the UN-Decade in Germany are available in English, but not the quality criteria.
Year of first publishing	2005
History of development	In 2002 the United Nations (UN) proclaimed the years 2005 to 2014 the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. International initiatives intend to help embed the principles of sustainable development in all parts of education worldwide.
Who developed the model / list?	The German Commission for UNESCO appointed the National Committee, the Chairperson of the Committee and a Secretariat UN Decade of ESD. These bodies with their different working groups developed the criteria and indicators and certification process. The work is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.
Who is the certification / criteria to aim at?	Every organization who is providing educational activities on ESD (Environmental Education Centres, Schools, Universities, Companies, Kindergartens etc.)
What are main criteria of assessment? <i>No authorized</i>	1. The project understands education in terms of ESD and communicates competences that are required for the active creation of a livable present and future. The project refers to the sustainability dimensions of economy, ecology and society. Desirable are references to those aspects of sustainable

<p><i>translation! Only for use at the conference.</i></p>	<p>development which concern participation, cultural diversity and international agreement.</p> <p>2. Giving statements, concerning the outside presence, the number of persons who are currently reached with the project, as well as the number of persons wanting to be reached in the future. The project has at least one regional reach.</p> <p>3. The project will lead to at least one concrete result or product. The expected positive effects for sustainable development (e.g. awareness-raising, resource conservation) must be described ("Good practice on site").</p> <p>4. The reference to at least two of the four strategic objectives of the National Action Plan must be met:</p> <p>a. Development and consolidation of the activities and transfer of good practice, to build width: in a defined area the project develops exemplary examples of good practice.</p> <p>b. Networking of stakeholders in education for sustainable development: the project at least connects two actors to form a strategic alliance with one another.</p> <p>c. Improving public awareness of education for sustainable development: The project should, in a clearly described radius and with a clearly chosen target group, lead to an improvement of the perception of ESD and also of sustainability.</p> <p>d. Strengthening international co-operations: The project promotes international co-operations in the context of ESD, with at least one international partner.</p> <p>5. The project must be connected to a website, which also makes it clear that a) education for sustainable development is central, and b) what competences the participants / learners can acquire in the project. Terms such as "environmental education", "Global Learning", "nature experiential education", "developmental education" or "health education", "consumer education" are not sufficient.</p>
<p>What are the indicators?</p>	<p>There are 23 indicators, specifying the criteria (only available in German).</p>
<p>Target areas of the criteria?</p>	<p>pedagogical approach of the project, methods applied, three dimensions of sustainable development involved</p>
<p>Who is doing the certification process? Who is assessing?</p>	<p>A jury of the German National Committee for the UN Decade decides on the approval of the projects by paperbased applications.</p>
<p>Where & how long is the certificate running</p>	<p>The recognition is a national one and given for two years. Each project can re-apply if it shows significant development in the pedagogical approach. More than 1.800 Official Decade Projects and 21 municipalities have already received this recognition since the beginning of the Decade.</p>
<p>Costs</p>	<p>no</p>

Official German Projects of the UN-Decade & the RWL Quality Criteria

All five RWL criteria were appreciated and it was agreed that they are not in any contradiction to the ESD criteria above. It was recommended to explain and define several terms in detail for example in accompanying sub-criteria. Workshop participants were asked to put dots to the criteria poster to emphasize the criteria they think most important and describing the uniqueness of RWL. See the recommendations in the list below:

1. The provider encourages first-hand experiences, using different methods within a broad variety of natural and cultural learning sites from different areas of life.
 - The criteria got two dots.
 - Add “a broad variety of natural and cultural learning sites AND SITUATIONS”.
2. The provider uses frames connected to intrinsic values as supporting metaphors to overcome mental barriers in a transparent and responsible way.
 - No dots.
 - Describe the term “frames” – do they mean “mental frames”?
 - Replace “to overcome mental barriers” by “develop different perspectives”
3. The provider connects learners to the resource by provoking and raising curiosity, and by facilitating participation in an atmosphere of self-directed learning.
 - The criteria got three dots!
4. The provider encourages links between frames, topics and the everyday life of learners, inviting them to question their own attitudes.
 - The criteria got one dot.
5. The provider illustrates the ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimension of different topics as well as their relevance for global justice for now and for future generations.
 - The criteria got two dots.
 - Replace “illustrates” by “encourages debates or awareness of contradiction.
 - Add “and link to the future, develop ideas of sustainable development.

2.3.6 WORKSHOP 5: Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation Thorsten Ludwig, Germany

The Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation have been developed since 2003. In 2010-2012 there has been a pilot phase in the “ParcInterp” project (ParcInterp links education for sustainable development and the interpretation of protected landscapes with the help of staff on site.



Interpretation is established, world-wide, as a process for involving people in understanding the significance of our natural and cultural heritage. In Germany, since 2004, staff of protected areas have been able to gain the EUROPARC Certificate for Heritage Interpretation. ParcInterp’s goal was it to set new standards for assessing the achievement of heritage interpretation and the qualifications of park rangers.) An implementation study followed in 2013.

Target groups are protected area administrations and staff. The quality standards focus on visitor-related environmental education. They include 4 qualities, 20 standards, 80 criteria at different competence levels. The evaluation took place in co-operation with the University for Sustainable

Development in Eberswalde, Germany. Up to now there are 33 certified interpreters and 2 certified trainers.

An English version of the quality standards can be found at: [Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation - An Extract from the ParcInterp Trainer Manual](#), Ludwig, Thorsten (2012), Werleshausen: Bildungswerk interpretation - 28 pages, 718 kB

Quality Standards in Heritage Interpretation & the RWL Quality Criteria

All suggested criteria were appreciated. But there were some recommendations

- a) to cancel something
 - b) to put something on the second level
 - c) to leave something on the first level but specify it on the second
 - d) to change something
 - e) to add something
6. The provider encourages firsthand experiences, using different methods within a broad variety of natural and cultural learning sites from different areas of life.
- c) firsthand experiences using different senses
7. The provider uses frames connected to intrinsic values as supporting metaphors to overcome mental barriers in a transparent and responsible way.

Criteria 2 was generally seen to be difficult to communicate without understanding its background.

- a) Even ‚frames‘ or ‚supporting metaphors‘ might be dispensable.
 - d) ‚Frames‘ was seen as a technical term which is not clear and might more be described to be understood by everyone; ParcInterp is using the term ‚themes‘ - but this would also not be clear without any explanation.
8. The provider connects learners to the resource by provoking and raising curiosity, and by facilitating participation in an atmosphere of self-directed learning.
- c) ‚Participation‘ should be completed on a second level by something like ‚including different (ages) needs and learning styles‘
 - d) The term ‚resource‘ should be replaced by ‚natural and cultural learning sites (like criteria 1)‘.
9. The provider encourages links between frames, topics and the everyday life of learners, inviting them to question their own attitudes.
- c) ‚Everyday life of learners‘ should be explained on the second level, because it meant different things to people from different countries.
 - d) Regarding the term ‚frames‘ see remark at criteria 2.
 - e) ‚to question their own attitudes‘ should be completed by something like ‚and to take action‘.

10. The provider illustrates the ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimension of different topics as well as their relevance for global justice for now and for future generations.

d) ‚illustrates‘ should be replaced by ‚tries to encourage a dialogue about‘. ‚tries to‘ because not any topic might allow to use all those ‚subcriteria‘.

2.3.7 WORKSHOP 6: The impacts of environmental education as seen by teachers – regarding skill building and attitudes *Virag Suhajda and György Tóth, Hungary*

In the first part of the workshop we were talking about the Carbon Detectives EU-project which was running in 10 countries from 2009 to 2011 (in connection with an evaluation process, developing indicators and quality criteria)¹.

The project had two-level target groups: Partners of international cooperation and schools implementing EE projects. The aims of the project were to evaluate the impact at an international, at school and at personal level. The evaluation included a program and implementation theory, underlying assumptions as well as skills and attitudes developed (of teachers and of pupils). The tools applied were document analysis, quality interviews with teachers and partners, focus groups with pupils, questionnaires with teachers and graphic analysers.

In several cases environmental (and other EU-funded) project asks for an external evaluator for evaluating the project activities and incomes. This is closely a requirement by the European Union, as a way to provide external feedback for both the partners and the funder EU. During this workshop we got to know the main process of the evaluation of the ten-country Carbon Detectives project, and the main relevant findings concerning evaluation and project development.

However already the “externality” of the evaluator can be questioned when they are directly hired by (and therefore report to) one of the partners, and through the years of the project the evaluator becomes part of the project dynamics. According to system dynamics studies, there is no such thing, as an observator, as even an observator has an impact on the behaviour of the system – and the role of an evaluator is much more than of an observator. According to socio-cultural paradigm described by Ms Mayer earlier in the conference, the role of an evaluator is to provide support by his/her feedback, and help the development of the process.

Also several times the very existence of an evaluator distorts the results: the people (such as providers or teachers) would like to show their bests. The evaluator also often find herself (himself) in the situation, where her presence is a feedback for the teacher that “yes, you are important, yes, we do listen to you”. This is an important role, but leads to further distortions.

During the external evaluation process the first step is to analyse the “program and implementation theories” – what is the mechanism of change targeted by the projects, and what actions shall deliver this change? What are the basic assumptions behind the project and are they realistic? We discussed the issue of indicators, and the drive of competition in increasing the indicators for getting the funding, meanwhile pushing down the budget for the same reason – leading to a low-budget, high

¹ **Referred bibliography:**

Atkisson, Alan: Sustainability is for Everyone, ISIS Academy, 2013, e-book (on “small and big” sustainability)
Ballard, David (2005): Using learning processes to promote change for sustainable development, in Action Research (Special Issue on Change for Sustainable Development), Volume 3 Issue 2, June 2005, by Sage Publications Ltd (on building the feeling of agency)
Weiss, Carol H.: Evaluation: Methods for Studying Programmes and Policies, Second Edition, Prentice Hall, 1998 (on programme and implementation theories)
“Dixit” game

indicator situation, that usually means lower quality. This dynamics is coming from the funding system that needs to change to avoid it.

As the next step there was a good discussion on the tools used for evaluation. Most things, and usually the most important things, cannot really be measured. Quality can rather be grabbed by personal interviews, discussions, or (even more with kids) by metaphors, pictures. Actually we also used a metaphor game with pictures of the “Dixit” game for our further discussion on our attitude towards evaluation and the need for evaluation. We also talked about how much long-term attitude change research would be needed as a contrast to a one-moment analysis that is available by evaluation budget. You cannot really grab change in a moment, you have to see a longer process - and if you ask about it from the teacher or the provider, they are naturally biased.

The discussion also turned towards quality issues of environmental education processes. We all agreed that they are aimed at a change of deeper attitudes, and to develop the feeling of ‘agency’ – that ‘I am responsible and I am able to do something’. Children very often understand the problems, and see that they need to be changed, but they feel powerless. There is a difference between “small” and “big” sustainability, and we have to show it. As educators our role is not only to show the big global level problems, but provide the case for the local level, where there are possibilities of change and the individual has tools for it. We have to increase the curiosity and make a connection to everyday life of the children.

Evaluation of Carbon Detectives Project & the RWL Quality Criteria

Ideas and comments inspired by the different experiences/presentation:

- Indicators
- Sometimes indicators are not fit enough to the evaluation process. They are too high or too low or the quality of them are not enough good.
- What to evaluate?
- Does it have to be something quantifiable? (Supporters need that, but it’s not enough good for us!) How can we measure the unquantifiable things like attitude changes?
- → The good quality for the participants makes not only short-term changes but also long-term changes too! So one quality criteria should be around this topic.
- Evaluation process
- How can we skip the evaluator’s influence on the results? The presence of the evaluator may effect mistakes in the results. The result may won’t be real, because those who are evaluated may show how they want to be seen.
- If the evaluators are employed by those who need to be evaluated can cause errors.
- The needs and opportunities are so different! From young people to adults, from each country to another one!
- So a good quality provider provides range variety of programmes, activities, etc. by the skilled and competent staff, equipments, tools, etc. in most part of a year!
- The provider should involve the „customers“ into a topic by global and local thinking too! The provider should be able to raise curiosity! Has to make connection between everyday’s life and sustainability.

After the workshop period the conference participants came together again and presented the workshop results to each other.

In the afternoon two more keynote speeches followed. Anthony Thomas from the British Council for Learning Outside the Classroom talked about the development of an accreditation framework and presented to all the quality badge and mark Sally Thompson has dealt with in the morning workshop. Jasson Jakovides from the German communication agency Fields Corporate Responsibility brought the very practical approach to the audience about how to realize co-operation between schools and real world learning sites like a supermarket, mosque, cemetery or bookbindery.

2.4 Real World Learning – a quality product? - The political and practical journey to an accreditation framework in the UK.

Anthony Thomas, United Kingdom

Anthony Thomas has worked for 37 years in the field of learning outside the classroom with 25 years as the Chief Executive of the Field Studies Council and now board member of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. He has been instrumental in establishing quality criteria for outdoor learning in the UK, and led outdoor education workshops in Slovenia, Slovakia, Serbia, Hungary, Poland, India and China.

The journey to an accreditation framework in the UK is a tale of two threads. The first concerns the development of an entitlement to LOfC – how can we increase access to meaningful LOfC for all children and young people? The second concerns the development of the LOfC (Learning Outside the Classroom) Quality Badge to evaluate and increase the quality of LOfC.



What is the quality of our teaching and learning? This is something that was not asked 10 years ago – the emphasis was on safety, negligence and litigation. We also didn't ask about assessment. We didn't ask about teaching styles or methods. What about independent learning? We weren't very good at this either.

Slovenia is very forward thinking in that an entitlement to meaningful learning outside the classroom is the right of every child. This entitlement isn't part of the educational legislation in the England, with the exception of a statutory requirement for fieldwork in geography. This has a negative impact on the experience of learning outside for young people.

Research in 2002 found that a number of barriers to taking children outside the classroom were cited by teachers. These included:

- Fear of accidents and litigation
- Low status of learning outside the classroom
- Defensive attitudes of some teaching unions
- Cost as a barrier to some students/groups
- Crowded and prescriptive curriculum
- Lack of recognition by Senior Management in schools that the benefits of LOfC outweigh the costs

All of these factors prompted the development of the Real World Learning Campaign, launched in 2003. This was a partnership of five major environmental organisations with one main aim: to lobby all political parties to make a commitment to LOfC.

The projected outcome of the campaign was to get a commitment from each of the main political parties that LOtC would be included in their manifestos ahead of the May 2005 general election. In this it succeeded, with every major UK political party embracing the Real World Learning agenda, especially 'an entitlement for all to learning in the natural environment.'

Post-election, the government reinforced their commitment to LOtC with the launch of the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto in 2006. The aims of the manifesto were to:

- Act as a statement of common intent that will make better use of our individual and collective resources.
- Encourage more widespread use of educational opportunities outside the classroom.
- Inspire schools and those organisations that support learning outside the classroom to provide high-quality experiences for all young people.
- Set out a shared agenda for future activity, which recognises that real progress will depend on the co-operation and collaboration of all signatories.
- Make it easier for more organisations and individuals to see how they can best contribute.
- Inform the development of government policy.
- Call on others in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to work in partnership with us to deliver our aims.

As part of delivering these aims, further research was carried out into barriers to LOtC. One of the major findings of this research was the confusion felt by teachers around how to identify safe and effective provision of LOtC, which led to the development of the LOtC Quality Badge.

The accreditation was developed by a partnership of organisations, though managed by an independent project manager from an international auditing company, KPMG. During the development of the accreditation process there was a lot of hysteria regarding health and safety, and litigation. The UK press were particularly unhelpful here and often contributed to an atmosphere of fear around undertaking any activity out of the classroom. Concern was further raised by at least one of the teachers' professional organisations giving advice to its members not to take children out of the classroom. Real World Learning Campaign members, and other interested parties, were more interested in examining the quality of learning.



This led to plenty of healthy debate amongst stakeholders as to the purpose and structure of the accreditation being developed. Eventually an accreditation framework was agreed upon which placed equal emphasis on the quality of education and the effective management of risk. The LOtC Quality Badge was piloted nationwide, and formally launched in October 2008. The first LOtC Quality Badge awards were made in February 2009.

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) was launched in April 2009, as an independent charity. CLOtC took over the management and development of the LOtC Quality Badge, as well as responsibility for delivering the aims of the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto. The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom ensures safety and rigorous standards in LOtC provision by:

- Maintaining stringent criteria and processes in awarding the LOtC Quality Badge, self-regulated by the industry which spans 10 sectors from sacred spaces to adventurous activities and expeditions overseas

- Developing the LOtC Quality Badge package, reacting to industry demand
- Pushing up the quality of the provision, gradually raising the accreditation standard.

Since 2009 the LOtC Quality Badge has been continuously developing to ensure that all kinds of LOtC providers are able to benefit from the accreditation. This has been a learning process, and CLOtC now works with a wide number of partner organisations to ensure that rigorous standards are maintained, and that the quality of provision is being progressively raised.

It is now 5 years since the launch of LOtC Quality Badge, which is I think a good opportunity to take stock of what we have achieved, and what we are still working towards.

What has been achieved?

1. A reduction in bureaucracy, particularly around health & safety
2. A raised profile for LOtC nationally
3. The support of the majority of local and national inspection services
4. An improvement in the quality of provision being offered
5. Providers can use language familiar to teachers and youth workers – improved communication
6. The success of LOtC Quality Badge has led to the development of LOtC Mark – an accreditation for schools recognising and supporting the development of excellence in LOtC.

What are we still working towards?

1. There hasn't yet been any hard evidence of an increase in participation in LOtC
2. A significant proportion of senior managers in schools are still unconvinced of the benefits of LOtC
3. We haven't yet reached all teachers with the message that LOtC offers significant learning opportunities, as well as being fun!

CLOtC and its partners continue to work towards increasing access to meaningful LOtC for all children and young people. The key to its success lies in effective and collaborative partnership working, an approach which is crucial to influencing the education agenda Europe-wide.

2.5 The initiative “Out of School” – just learning in the real world

Jasson Jakovides, Germany

Jasson Jakovides has long-standing experiences in areas such as corporate communications as well as campaigning in socially relevant range of topics. His central focus point lies with the “translation” of questions dealing with social responsibility and value orientation into campaigning formats in addition to popularizing the thought of sustainability in economy and public. He studied economics and politics. Jasson Jakovides is a member of the German national committee that is part of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and lecturer at the Alice Solomon University, Berlin.

The initiative “Out of School” was presented by Jasson Jakovides from the German communication agency “Fields Corporate Responsibility”. The idea of the project reflects very much the idea of Real World Learning which is defined as learning outside the classroom – in natural, rural or urban surroundings, in wilderness, parks and gardens where you can see the sky as well as in companies, plants and institutional buildings. „Out of School“, in cooperation with all-day schools, aims to give children between the ages of eight to ten the possibility to rediscover places of their every-day living environments. Through qualified pedagogical embedding, these places and their special aspects will be explored in an active manner.



Mal woanders lernen

©FIELDS

These investigations offer the opportunity, to realistically experience learning contents and thereby gain long-lasting learning experiences. In its initial launching phase the pilot project “Out of School” was addressed to schools in Cologne in Germany. The project’s framework, however, is flexible and adaptable. “Out of School” is ought to be implemented in a gradual manner in all of Germany.

Underprivileged children – the main target group

Young people who live in social hot spots quite seldom leave their own district. They do not know their city even they do not know many places of interest by their own experience. In general the findings of Fields agency are identical to what sciences have to say about this matter. The main problems in many inner city hot spots are lack of employment, increasing poverty and a lack of education. With obvious consequences for this city’s youth: the words lack of perspective, isolation and disconnection are not just simply catch-phrases for these kids but are part of their realities that are sometimes very evident and sometimes not immediately obvious.

In fact: social heritage robs more and more children and adolescents of the chance to participate in cultural and social developments and economic wealth. This also has severe consequences for the public welfare system: Isolation weakens the self-confidence of each individual, increases feelings and emotions of inferiority and can lead to collective scenarios of threat that could possibly weaken the democratic community as a whole.

Fields believes in approval, participation and positive prospects to be the keys for the creation of personal futures of each individual child or adolescent. A high level of education secures an economic future – the kids’ future as well as our own. The individual strengthening of children secures democracy and social solidarity.

Taking the chance in educational system changes

The educational system not only in Germany is facing new and demanding challenges by the advancement of new technology and growing changes in family life. People are experiencing the growing focus that is placed on gaining key competences in a society that is based on knowledge and increasingly inter-connected.

By definition of the OECD education consist of a great process of developing one’s personality. For learning experiences in schools this means to support the children’s worldly, cultural and social perspectives. It is the federal government’s strategy in Germany to remodel schools to places where

all can experience their surroundings. Schools should inform about practical knowledge that helps young people to live a life based on an autonomous behavior as well as social interaction.

One of the consequences that educational policies draw from that is the remodeling of normal schools to all-day schools. This concept aims to turn schools more into a place of adventure and hands-on experiences. High-quality all-day schools focus on individual strengths and self-dependence and convey the joy learning can be. More and more all-day schools cooperate with other educational institutions and are open for extra-curricular concepts and experiences of learning.

The Goals of „Out of School“

The goals of the “Out of School“ project team are:

- to establish and strengthen out-of-school learning locations within the context of all-day schools as a complement to school studying
- to support the acquirement of learning experiences that encourage competency
- to open early access to new modes of learning to children from social hot-spots
- open access to new experiences and thereby convey a self-dependent handling of locations and matters in real life
- to convey practical knowledge to children that enables them to act autonomously
- to create a space that helps in gaining a goal-oriented reflection on one’s own actions based on social roles through interactions with others
- to accompany subject contents with concrete experiences
- to offer to all-day schools a program that integrates high-quality learning objectives in everyday life at school
- to encourage the implementation of the so called “Bildungslandschaften” (learning landscapes), a set of different educational offers and opportunities in local or regional areas.

Methodical framework of „Out of School“

The methodical framework of „Out of School“ aims for:

- active examination with real-life locations and matters
- studying that stimulates competence
- interdisciplinary studying in cooperation with various out-of-school on-site partners
- based on experience and activity-oriented modes of learning
 - play and learn
 - explore, investigate, experiment
 - produce and use
 - fantasize and design
 - working with others

„Out of School“- Structure

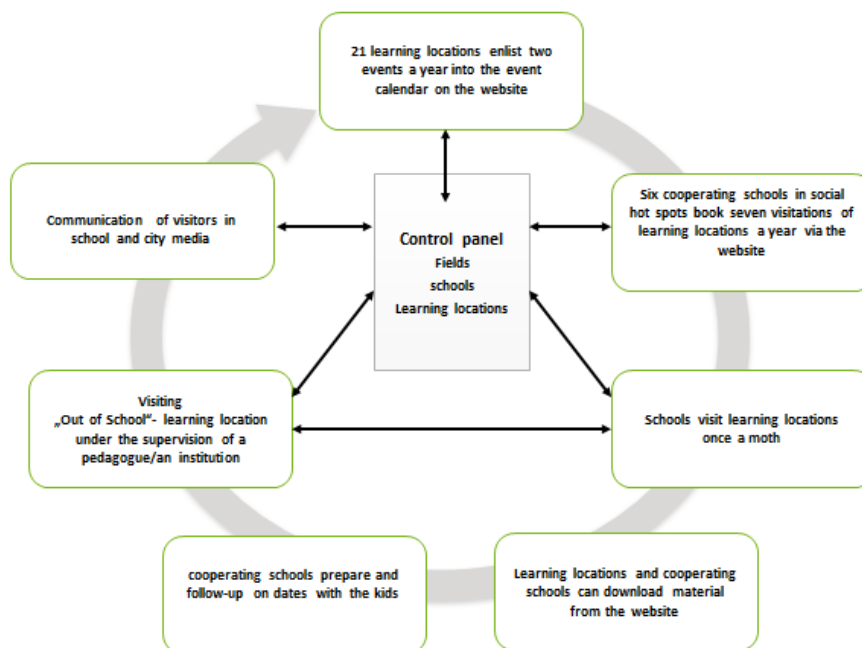
From the very beginning Fields thought of the communications aspect, developed a corporate design and created the learning materials. The website is designed in a way that cooperating schools and locations can participate in the further developments of “Out of School“. The plan was for this project to be a growing and decentralized system.

Fields is generally responsible for the concept, the pedagogic ideas and development. In Cologne, they have a control panel consisting of a few of Fields people and people from cooperating schools

and locations. This course of action is also planned for future cities. It is their job to coordinate dates, locations as well as the pedagogical supervision. Additionally, they coordinate the connection of other schools, locations and educational institutes in Cologne. They also work on the further development of all necessary materials.

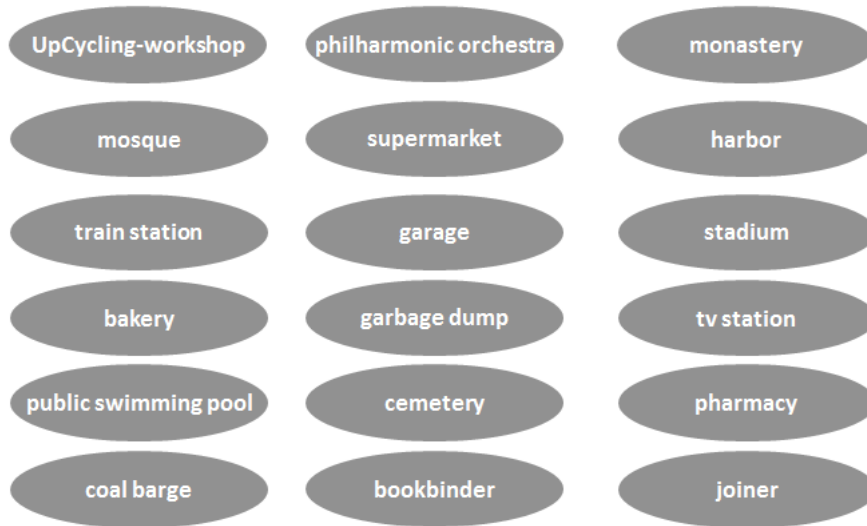
At the beginning there were 6 schools and 21 learning locations. Schools and participating locations were encouraged to participate in the creation of the materials. It was important for Fields to **involve** all parties in this project in the communication activities. That also means that most of the time they are present at press conferences, awards shows and other events. Of course, they are also given credit in any press release, and so on.

How “Out of School” worked in its first year Course of Action



Assortment of recent and future learning locations

These are recent and future learning locations that Out of School has worked with 2013 and plans to include in the program 2014:



© 2011 FIELDS

Fields tries to connect each location with a higher overlaying topic:

- The monastery for example: Why would a religious person join a monastery? What is life like there?
- Or the cemetery: It is about rituals about life and death.
- At the supermarket they ask the questions: How do goods get into the shelves, how are prices made, what is fair trade?
- The upcycling workshop is all about the worth of things.
- The car workshop deals with repairing things instead of throwing them away.
- At the shoemakers' we talk about caring and longevity of things.

But also in the bigger locations, like the TV station, they always talk about topics that explain our daily life and broaden the kids' horizons. So in this case, it is the difference between fact/reality and fiction: The kids run in front of a blue screen when an alley is portrayed behind them. All of a sudden it looks like as if they were running along this alley in the streets. One can almost hear their brains working!

Summary: Basic points of „Out of School“ implemented in Cologne, Germany

Basics

In total, there are 21 learning locations in Cologne. The locations offer two dates per school year. In the beginning, this results in 42 extracurricular dates at the learning locations.

This is offered to 6 primary schools. Each school can book up to 7 dates a school year. With the additional preparing and post-processing of each visit, a whole school year can be filled.

City districts

The city districts the schools are situated in are “social hot spots” in Cologne fitting the typical criteria: high unemployment rate, high number of migrants, relatively high level of poverty and social conflicts. The locations are situated all over the city.

Rules

The number of students is limited to 15 kids per location. Otherwise an activity-oriented learning experience, for example in a small bakery is not reasonable.

It is only possible for them to book one date a month, so that there is enough time for preparation and post-processing. Dates are booked via internet.

For the schools, the offer is free of charge. The learning locations will not receive any money. Initially Fields thought of a cooperation contract with the locations. However, in the first year the cooperation was based on mutual trust. And it has paid off. If someone wants or has to quit the program, not even contracts will be helpful.

Basic pattern of learning experience

- 1. week: introduction of the topic
- 2. week: visit locations
- 3. post-processing especially with regards to content
- 4. post-processing especially with regards to content

Learning Material



Out of School offers basic materials schools can use as an orientation for the design of the learning experiences. It is not obligatory to use them. The materials are individually fitted for each location.

The materials are made in cooperation with all locations, so that they really fit to and follow the visitations. In some cases pedagogues of the schools were involved in the development of them.

Some of the learning materials have been translated into English for the Real World Learning Network. You will find them on the project website www.rwlnetwork.org.

The website www.out-of-school.org (only in German) contains information regarding the initiative, participating schools and locations. It offers a booking system for activities, downloads for learning materials, reports and accounts.

Assessment/Quality check

The aspect, how much of the original concept could be translated into life practice, is now being evaluated by the University for Sustainable Development in Eberswalde, Germany. The results of this study will be released in the spring of 2014.