

Doing it & Telling it

School children as EE teachers for pre-school age children

Russia

Place: A private EE centre (Laboratory for Optimization of Nature Exploitation – LONE) and public kindergartens at Pushchino in the Moscow region.

Target groups: Pre-school age children (3-6), school children (9-15), kindergarten teachers.

Introduction: In the face of serious environmental problems such as pollution, soil degradation, waste disposal etc., as well as the low level of public awareness of such problems, Dr. Konstantin Aslanidi, biophysics from the Pushchino Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences set up the LONE to process and implement some realistic low-cost projects in formal and non-formal EE based on the IEEP objectives.

Objectives:

- To stimulate active participation of pre-school and school age children for the protection and preservation of their local environment;
- To help kindergarten teachers integrate EE in their everyday activities; and
- To promote the study of EE materials by students and teachers.

Resources: Grants from the Government Science and Engineering Program “Ecology of Russia” (1992) and the Federal Program “Russia’s Ecological Safety” (1993-94) as well as resources from the LONE.

Methodology: In the initial phase of the project several manuals for the kindergarten teachers were produced by scientists. Children who previously participated in LONE projects were acquainted thoroughly with the special kindergarten conditions. In the second phase training was provided to all kindergarten teachers who volunteered to participate in the project as well as for 20 school children selected during practical courses, lectures and seminars. In the third phase, under the guidance of the teachers and scientists, the school children devised their own local EE activities for the specific categories: 1. *The LONE guide*: lessons, games and practical activities for a kindergarten children’s group accompanied by a teacher; 2. *The night kindergarten*: lessons, games and practical activities for 1-3 hours in the evening for 1-3 kindergarten children accompanied by their parents; and 3. *The kindergarten helper*: a month of daily work in summer for a specific kindergarten group.

Evaluation: Leading experts in EE from Russia, U.K. and U.S.A. who visited the Pushchino center acknowledged the efficiency of the innovation of this work.

Results: The project helped all participants acquire useful knowledge, skills and experience in solving environmental and social problems as well as motivation to get further information on EE. It was specially noticed that emotive interactions between the participants of different age-groups helped create a cheerful and unstrained atmosphere in which all the resources of the environment were effectively used to teach and nurse the children.

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