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THE RETURN OF THE GAIAZINE

After a long summer break, full of **workcamps**, **projects** and **inspiring encounters**, the GaiaZine is back! In the following pages, you will find a report from SCI-Italy, an update from EEM, a story on climate change and human migrations, a call for mobilization as well as an update on the state of the climate negotiations.

The GaiaZine-team would also like to **open the newsletter** to your interests and contributions. If you have a great project and story to **share with us**, do not hesitate to send it to sci2gaia@googlegroups.com. If you would also like to hear more on any specific topic connected to "sustainable living", please let us know, and we will do our best to arrange an interview with someone having some knowledge/experience in this particular field, or collect different point of views. Gaia **investigates for you!**

THE CONCEPT OF GAIA

As promised in the last edition, a short introduction to the concept of Gaia in environmental philosophy.

The term Gaia comes from the name of the Greek goddess of the earth. It is used in recent times in reference to the **Gaia hypothesis** developed by James Lovelock. In summary, the Gaia hypothesis considers that all natural constituent elements of our **planet** (fauna, flora, but also oceans, rocks and atmosphere) are part of a **self-regulating living system**. The evolution of any living form depends for instance on the composition of the atmosphere. In other words (1) "everything is connected" and (2) the planet functions as a **living organism**. The inanimate parts of earth (rocks...) are as much part of this organism as the bark is part of the tree. Natural evolution aims at maintaining in permanence conditions necessary for life on the planet. The main consequence of this hypothesis for humans is that our species is dependent on a particular **state of equilibrium** of our planet. If we were to modify this equilibrium too strongly, we would force the planet to evolve into another state of equilibrium thanks to feedback mechanisms. And not an equilibrium necessarily as beneficial for humans than it is now.

SOUNDS FAMILIAR?

ANTARCTICA, 2050



**International Day
of Climate Action**

OCTOBER 24 2009

**Join people
all over the world
to take a stand for a
safe climate future.**

...more info at page 4

"There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self. So you have to begin there, not outside, not on other people. That comes afterward, when you've worked on your own corner." Aldous Huxley



ECO-VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT - PROJECT OF SCI ITALY

During the 2009 workcamp season SCI Italy has experimented a project that involved many of its workcamps and as a consequence, many volunteers. Considering beforehand that a workcamp can also be a tool to fully involve volunteers on some specific issues, to inform them and share some tools they can bring back home after the camp, we aimed this year to focalise on issues, inputs and reflections linked to **"Sustainable way of life"** not only during a workcamp.

Within a project coordinated by the Centro Internazionale Crocevia (www.croceviaterra.it) on which SCI Italy was partner, we offered to many volunteers an **Eco-volunteer Toolkit** and also an invitation to participation at a national research during their workcamp participation in Italy.

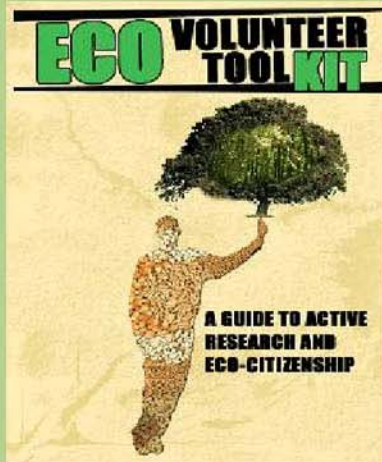
The kit was divided into two part. The first one was dedicated to information and proposition sharing to clearly give to the volunteers and citizens they are after the camp some inputs to fulfil with **consciousness and responsibility** a concrete sustainable way of life by little and concrete actions in everyday life. This first part was realized thanks to a previous great work realized by Jenni Virtanen a few years ago, the "Environmental Guide for Green Life", that we considered valid and complete.

The second part included an invitation to take part to an **active research**. The research was conducted by the volunteers on agricultural biodiversity and natural biodiversity issues in Italy with interviews of local producers and retailers. The research aimed to photograph the evolution of farming practices in recent decades; the understanding of the distortions generated by agricultural policies and **international consequences that are reflected in the life of each of us**, giving the basis for an informed choice about which type of model, through our consumer choices, we want to promote.

To receive the digital version of the Eco Volunteer Toolkit, write to: workcamps@sci-italia

SCI Italy, together with Gaia members, wishes to increment further grassroots actions on these issues, not only during workcamp activities...

Become active today, share with others everyday
and join Gaia now ;)



UPDATE FROM EEM 2009

During the EEM 2009 (which just took place in **Budapest**), a lot of discussions on topics related to Gaia took place: **sustainable living** and workcamps, a new **"green workcamps"** label, participation to the **COP15**, **local campaigns** on climate change. The most productive outcome of the meeting was the adoption by unanimity of a **RECOMMENDATION ON SUSTAINABLE LIVING ON WORKCAMPS**. The Recommendation calls all branches to promote in each of their workcamp the following four themes related to sustainable living:

- Awareness of the volunteers,
- Involvement of all actors involved in the workcamp,
- Reducing the negative impacts of materials consumption,
- Reduce, Re-use, Recycle wastes.

The Recommendation includes as example a **list of actions**, which can be taken to promote each of the themes. It also calls branches to invite their camp coordinators to report on the implementation of actions related to these themes in her/his workcamp. Our plan is to use these reports to evaluate the actions taken in the season 2010 at the next EEM and to move by **one additional step forward towards sustainable living in our workcamps**.

"Right actions for the future are the best apologies for wrong ones in the past."
Tyron Edwards

IN THE BIG WORLD



The Voice of SCI International Thematic Group on Sustainable Development and Climate Change

COP - WATCH

Less than two months are left in the intense negotiations process leading to the **Copenhagen Climate Conference (COP15)**, which is expected to deliver a global deal on mitigation and adaptation to climate change. A two weeks-long session of negotiations just ended at the beginning of this month, leaving only **one additional week of discussions** (in Barcelona, 2-6 November) before the COP15.

"MANAGING EXPECTATIONS"

The new strategy of the US administration is to "**manage expectations**". Translated in plain English this means that the government is trying to lower the expectations of the public regarding the outcome of the COP15, explaining it would not be so catastrophic if we only get a **political declaration** rather than a new legal instrument, or even **nothing at all**. The US administration has not made a single step forward since March, arguing that it cannot promise anything as long as the **Senate** has not adopted the new energy and climate legislation (which is considered "unlikely" this year). Since the **EU** has **abandoned its historic leadership in the negotiations** (when it came back on its former promises one year ago – and has not appeared very constructive since then), it seems to slowly follow the same strategy.

ELECTIONS

To finish with a more positive element, one should note that **Japan** has finally adopted a more ambitious target for the reduction of its emissions (moving from really bad to average), and **Norway** has increase its own target, becoming one of the most ambitious developed country. Both of these changes followed the election of new governments and thus highlight the role of the public opinion in shaping national policies!

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION

The 21st century has been depicted as the "Century of Environmental Refugees", a century that will be shaped by massive population movements due – mainly but not only – to climate change.



There could be 200 million of climate refugees by 2050, a UN study says.

WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL PHENOMENAE LEAD TO MIGRATION?

Events or phenomena that can lead to human migration include natural disasters (Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in 2008), gradual environmental degradation (the drying out of Lake Aral), environmental consequences of conflicts (landmines), development projects (3 Gorges Dam in China), or industrial accidents (such as the Bhopal incident). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently highlighted the role of climate change as a determining factor increasing human migration, particularly in 4 regions: **Africa, Mega-deltas, Polar regions and Small Island Developing States**.

A CLIMATE OF CONFLICT

The connection between climate change and conflicts was the main reason why the IPCC and Al Gore received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. Climate change, conflicts and human migration can be related in two different manners:

- 1) Climate change impacts on the environment --> conflict --> migration
- 2) Climate change impacts on the environment --> migration --> conflict

Researchers have identified two scenarios in environmental conflicts:

- Population growth leads to over-consumption of resources, resource degradation and finally **scarcity**, resulting in violent competition (Examples: Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti),
- The **abundance** valuable resources lead to conflict – because different groups compete to control the exploitation of these natural resources (DR Congo, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Angola, Colombia).

Hopefully in the coming months developed countries will make steps towards recognition of their **responsibility for the degradation of the health of our planet** and the international will manage to build from this a global consensus on the urgent need to address the climate crisis effectively. This is needed so that the poorest populations do not suffer an additional burden.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."
Martin Luther King

GAIA PRESENTS



The Voice of SCI International Thematic Group on Sustainable Development and Climate Change



350.org is an international campaign dedicated to building a movement to **unite the world** around solutions to the climate crisis—the solutions that justice demand. It includes more than **3500 registered actions** in more than **160 countries** around the globe.

CO₂ IN THE ATMOSPHERE



WHY 350???

350 parts per million is what many climate experts are saying is the safe upper limit for CO₂ in our atmosphere. By now the planet has **390 parts per million** CO₂ – and this number is rising by about **2 parts per million every year**.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION 24th OF OCTOBER 2009

SCI has a long tradition of **working for peace on Earth**. New threats – and among them Climate Change, identified as the main threat to peace in the coming century – are inevitably going to challenge our societies and have the potential to cause wars or massive human migrations (see previous page). Have you witnessed either of them? In the Balkans we saw thousands of refugees, and it is terrible thing for somebody, having to leave home and starting his/her life from scratch again... Of course, planet Earth should be **HOME** for everyone, but how can this be if millions of people are forced to migrate or feel their lives threatened?

So it sounds like some political phrase but to **ACT NOW** seems like the only solution. **COP15** is coming closer. Those who will go to the conference can express their concerns there. Those who do not have this opportunity should take action at home. The most important is to transmit the message in each government respectively that we can all live on **ONE PLANET**. In addition, that should be done long before conference! **350.org** is building a massive network of people and groups mobilising and planning actions on the **24th of October**, a few weeks before the Copenhagen conference (see previous page). This is one of the last chances to show that we all care where these negotiations will lead.

If you visit www.350.org, you will see that there is lot more people who are concerned than there are politicians who make decisions. It is our responsibility as citizens of world to ask them to make a change, and they can start that at **COP15**. Climatic changes are a common problem to all of us and time is running out...

ON OCTOBER 24, JOIN PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD TO TAKE A STAND FOR A SAFE CLIMATE FUTURE!

SCI FRANCE will be having a **ROMANTIC CANDLELIGHT PARTY** with volunteers after a workshop with their favorite eco-messenger in Paris, of course. **VCV SCI SERBIA** is going to make big Planet Earth and push it from 17th century fortress in Novi Sad, simulating pushing from a **TIPPING POINT**. **OWA POLAND** is planning to organize a movie night in a club in Poznan. Eco team of **SCI SRI LANKA** will organize a series of week end programs on **DEEDS** to take practical action to remove CO₂ ie. planting trees and on **WORDS** to organize awareness programs.

We would like to call you to join the campaign and to let us know about it (sci2gaia@googlegroups.com)! You can make a human banner, organize a biking action, a concert for climate, an art exhibition, facilitate workshops...

"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little."

Edmund Burke