

New Learning for Sustainability in the Arab Region

30 August – 1 September 2007

Overview

This report details the outputs from a joint workshop hosted by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and coordinated by IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). The report provides information on the participants present, and the sessions held including reflections (which we have boxed and highlighted in blue) and follow-up from them which participants and their colleagues can take forward into their future work. CEC hopes that the network formed and the joint brain-storming and planning that took place at the workshop will strengthen the foundations already laid for positive learning for sustainability and subsequent action in the region into the future.

More information on the workshop, including the participants' information pack and many more photographs, can be found linked from <http://newlearningforsustainability.pbwiki.com/>.



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Context

The workshop's mission was to explore how formal and informal learning can better help bring about the change we must see in individuals, organizations and societies in order to improve environmental sustainability in the Arab Region and the world. To do this the organisers brought together experts and practitioners from universities, NGOs, government offices, and networks across the region to address how they can help build informal and formal learning capacities to accelerate the spread of a learning culture, and the transition into positive change and action by participants and the organisations and communities they work with.

The workshop participants heard presentations on topics from the formal education sector (including the IUCN-UNU Institute and developing e-learning resources) and the informal learning arena (including Web 2.0 and blogging), as well as taking part in the varied workshops which focused on specific aspects of learning and capacity development for participants at the workshop and to take back to their own work.

Participants explored questions like: 'How can we better support the important paradigm shift towards learner-centred pedagogy?'; 'How can we encourage and enable learners to help one another and to help 'teachers' use new information and communication technologies to improve their environmental sustainability learning experience?', and 'How can we together increase the overall impact and spread of our messages and learning for deeper engagement with environmental issues?'

Throughout the workshop, a focus was given to the Arabic language with simultaneous translation between Arabic and English, and where possible, students from the environmental sustainability learning programmes of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina were involved in the translation and general organization of the meeting to actively engage young learners in the content of the workshop.

Overview of Sessions

Session 1

Born Digital – The Bibliotheca Alexandrina Transverses the Digital Divide - Ismael Serageldin



Ismael Serageldin, Director of the Library of Alexandria, presented a 'roller-coaster journey' of the Bibliotheca, speaking of his credo - *Access to all information for all people at all times* – and the importance of honouring the past, celebrating the present and embracing the future. Responding to a world changing at incredible speed, he listed realms of initiatives the Library is undertaking, including: internet archives protecting the history of mankind; an 'Exploratorium' for hands on exploration and experiential learning; hole-in-the-wall computer projects; print-on-demand Espresso book machines; and computer simulations. 'The Digital Future is here', he said. Learners are no longer just watching and listening. Learners are now 'doing' (with assistance) and becoming co-designers. (He gave the installation of the internet archive petra-boxes as an example of this.) Institutions have to change, he asserted, embracing new technologies in the service of the environment and sustainable development.

For related publications, please see 'Born Digital: The New Bibliotheca Alexandrina', 'Inventing Our Future', and 'Reflections on Our Digital Future' – available here:

<http://www.bibalex.org/English/Publication/Publications.aspx>

Reflection: Building further on our relationships with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, how might we partner in improving new learning for sustainability in the Arab region? What are the best ways in which we can collaborate for greatest impact? - An open source catalogue of courses on environment and sustainability? Or would some other cooperation be more powerful?

Greeting from IUCN Headquarters - Julia Marton-Lefèvre

In a short video, Julia Marton-Lefèvre spoke, as Director General of the World Conservation Union and Board member of the Library of Alexandria, of her devotion to the whole area of learning and education, and wished the meeting great success.



“The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has accumulated a great deal of knowledge in its nearly sixty years of history – after all science and scientific research and knowledge are at the heart of everything that the Union tries to do. However, knowledge for knowledge’s sake is just not enough. We need to move beyond knowledge to learning to changing our behaviour in order to make the difference we need to make in order to reach sustainable development.”

Reflection: How will we work with the IUCN regional offices (in Jordan and Malaga), improving new learning to support achieving their conservation and environmental sustainability results? Where can we leverage the most impact? What opportunities can we create?

Session 2

Introduction to the workshop, its partners, its objectives and expected results - Keith Wheeler & Salah Soliman

Keith Wheeler, Chair of the World Conservation Union’s (IUCN) Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), introduced the origins of the meeting and its objectives. He explained the Commission’s theory of change – which places learning as the link between knowledge and action – and spoke of the importance the Commission places on helping facilitate the transition from learning individuals to learning organizations and learning societies for more environmental and sustainable development. He thanked Sherif Kandil – CEC Regional Chair - for the leadership taken in the region, in partnership with the Library under the leadership of Salah Soliman, and thanked participants for joining the event, coming together to share learning and generate new ideas about further action in the region. In this regard, he warmly welcomed the directors of the regional IUCN offices, Odeh Al-Jayoussi and Margarita Astralaga.



Salah Soliman of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina reinforced Keith's welcome and introduced the sessions' speakers.

Reflection: As members and friends of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication, what can we learn from one another and where can we channel our energies to best improve new learning and better link conservation and environmental sustainability knowledge and action?

Learning with Information Technologies: The Journey of IUCN - Fayez Mikhail

Fayez Mikhail, the Information Technology Manager in the World Conservation Union (IUCN), presented a brief overview of the changes in information and communication technologies that the Union has seen in the last decades. How are we connecting people? How are we moving from one-to-one to one-to-many communication to share our knowledge and learning? From filing cabinets to mega-servers; from



telegram to video-conference, huge changes have swept institutions. The means by which we work and learn with fellow staff, share our learning more widely with others, and learn from the learning of others are all changing accordingly. What have we learned? – he asked, answering that we need to learn continually and build more capacity in our institutions; that the technologies can themselves help us to learn continually and help us do our job better as well as reducing our ecological footprint; and that that technologies can indeed enable much greater communication and learning people, however they have yet to reach all regions and people with the same quality and speed of connections.

Looking to the future, we need to use ICTs to complement traditional means as they increasingly become a feature of our working and private lives, and provide even greater potential to help us achieve conservation objectives. Recommendations for institutions in the Arab Region included: weighing up the costs and benefits of internet connectivity versus more traditional means; remembering the digital divide whilst seeking innovative ways to continue to build capacities to use ICTs; and partnering to encourage the sharing of resources and the development of new ICT infrastructure for improved sharing and learning in the Arab region.

Reflection: Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are progressing rapidly, can help us learn, share our learning, learn from others and learn together. ICTs also require that we learn in order to keep up – and ever-increasing online support can help us to do so, yet building the capacity of institutions to use ICTs needs more concerted effort and resources. How will we build capacities to use ICTs and improve new learning for environmental sustainability in the region?

How can we support other NGOs in keeping up with changing technologies, and how can we do this ourselves?

Continuing Professional Development for Today's Global and Local Learners - Sherif Kandil & Michael Moss

Sherif Kandil from the Egyptian Education Reform Programme and Mike Moss the Director of the Canadian Centre for Environmental Education co-presented this session, focusing on our changing learning paradigm in which we see demand-driven, self-directed and self-paced learning. This learning now often moves a step beyond the simple accumulation of knowledge, which alone does not necessarily produce behaviour change. As individuals seek out their own learning opportunities and methods, and require now guidance on this as well as content knowledge, we see knowledge providers aiming to package their information in the most effective way they can.



The UNU-IUCN Institute is one living example of the formal education system enabling professionals to continue their learning whilst still working, and therefore fostering learning individuals for the environment in organisations around the world. Sherif and Mike shared their experiences on this and how the Institute shares knowledge across physical and structural divides.

Reflection: what evidence of this changing learning paradigm are we seeing in our formal education sectors and in NGOs or their project partners? How can these two sectors capitalise on the changes to ensure that organisations are equipped with the knowledge they need and the tools to turn it into action? What links should we create between the education sector and NGOs to foster learning professionals in learning organisations in the region? What potential is there for a UNU-IUCN Institute network in the Arab region, and how do we take next steps to creating this together?

Session 3

Shared Learning: Students helping Professors Enter the Digital Age – The case of BibAlex League of Young Masters - Salah Soliman, Ahmed Mohamed Abd El Salam El Halwagy, and Ahmed Fathy Salah Mohamed

This presentation focused on the BibAlex League of Young Masters Project and case stories on how students are helping professors enter the digital age by converting text-based material from their academic courses into animated presentations for an improved learning experience.



Students spoke of how, only a few years ago, many teachers did not know how to use technologies in the classrooms. Now it is quite different. Groups of students have been improving their class learning experience by revising the learning materials. An example given was converting drawings about the workings of an internal combustion engine into moving animation using Flash Macromedia. Having at first been the initiative of an individual student – finding it

quite a difficult project to take on alone – the student then began giving workshops to student colleagues teaching others, who then formed a team helping to animate lecture material.



In parallel, students have also been working to redesign faculty websites, adding course material to share this with one another, as well as with students in other schools. As part of this initiative, the students searched the web for pictures to replace drawings and bring courses more 'to life'.

Workgroups, in collaboration with teaching staff in the different colleges, are now being set up to help institutions in creating a new sustainable model of learning based on such learner-designed approaches.

Reflection: What can we learn from the experience of BibAlex and its League of Young Masters about improving learning materials using technologies? How might this experience from an engineering faculty be replicated in faculties dealing with environment and sustainability? (For example, animating the workings of ecosystems or the impact of dams on environmental flows and sharing these materials with others.) And How might university faculties and NGOs concerned with the environment and sustainability work with students and young innovators to improve materials for learning and help complete the knowledge to action loop?

Institutionalizing Web 2.0 for Learning in the Arab Region - Vance Stevens



Although Web 2.0 is seen by advocates as having transformational influence on educators and students, its uptake from informal to formal learning situations and education systems proceeds slowly in the Arab region. Vance Stevens identified eight aspects of the paradigm shift required for Web 2.0 acceptance, with corresponding ways that educators can act as change agents for themselves primarily, but affecting eventually their institutions as these

reflect the stakeholders changing themselves and those around them.

The eight aspects of the paradigm shift and related recommendations for educators include: (1) shifting from a didactic to a constructivist pedagogy; (2) modelling behaviour in a 'Do as I do' (not just 'Do as I say') approach; (3) applying tools used at leisure to professional practice; (4) admitting 'I don't know' and being willing to say 'Let's find out together'; (5) inculcating multi-literacies (not just print literacy); (6) focusing less on having and more on the abilities to find information (through connectivism); (7) classifying knowledge in terms of (distributed) folksonomies rather than taxonomies; (8) focusing on *pull* rather than *push* technologies.

Considering progress made and impediments preventing more rapid acceptance of Web 2.0 in Arab institutions, Vance spoke of the need for a paradigm shift in the thinking 'at the top' where the rules are currently made. Either that, or 'elements of Web 2.0 will seep up from the grassroots and some point in the future and render irrelevant mandates against the will of the masses emanating from on high'.

As regards sustainability, Vance asserts that these tools can be well applied to students and others exploring the issues – enhancing community building, raising awareness and exploring possible solutions.

Reflection: The learning paradigm is changing. Whether teaching English as a Second Language or working to improve learning about the environment and sustainability, how will we respond to the changing learning paradigm? In universities and NGOs alike, how will we create a learning 'pull', use distributed learning networks, adopt a 'do as I do approach', and again help learn for conservation and environmental action?

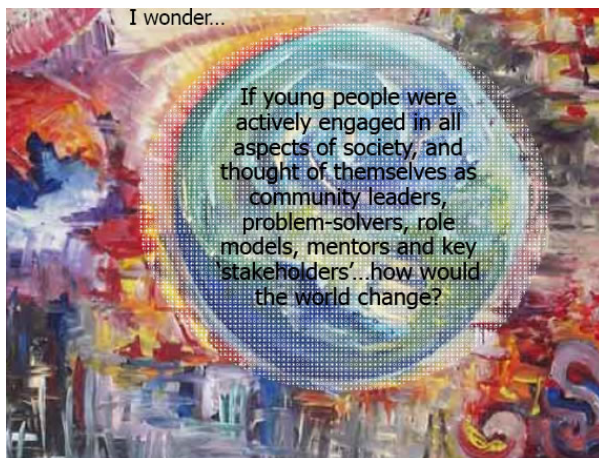
Learning Methodologies for Tomorrow: e-Learning Training for Regional Teachers - Sherif

Kandil

Sherif first explained how distance learning opportunities were growing in supply as well as by necessity in the Arab region as socio-economic factors prevented many people from pursuing full-time further education, and study abroad is increasingly difficult. He provided an overview of some universities in the Arab region and elsewhere in the world offering e-learning courses and opportunities, and explained in more detail a partnership between the Arabian Gulf University (Bahrain) and the University of Sunderland (UK) which offers a course in e-learning including focus on e-learning theory, course design and presentation. training distance learning teachers, quality assessment and control etc.

Reflection: How might we initiate further partnerships for increasing capacities within universities and other institutions for e-learning design and management? How can we expand on the developments already made by the Arabian Gulf University and the University of Sunderland in training teachers in e-learning courses? How we capitalize on the potential for e-learning amongst students and professionals in the Arab region?

TakingITGlobal: TIGed in the Arab Region? - Michael Furdyk, Dumisani Nyoni and Jennifer Corriero



Inspire, Inform, Involve. This is the tag-line of TakingITGlobal - an online community that connects youth to find inspiration, access information, get involved, and take action in their local and global communities. It's the world's most popular online community for young people interested in making a difference, with hundreds of thousands of unique visitors each month. With a highly interactive website, TIG

provides a platform for expression, connection to opportunities, and support for action. Mike, Jennifer and Dumi introduced some of these tools, suggesting how participants might use TIG to improve learning for Sustainable Development Goals (see the list of TIG tools below.)

Reflection: There are sites providing a variety of easily manageable tools to



people in universities and NGOs – sites which are successfully engaging young people who want to make a difference in their communities. One of these is TakingITGlobal (TIG) and we heard about how TIG offers a technological platform that can be used by universities and NGOs working in environment and sustainable development to connect with these young people, even offering lesson plans and games relevant to these subjects. How might we take them up on this offer?

Session 4

Blogging for the Environment in the Arab Region: The Arab Environmental Monitor - Batir Wardam

www.arabenvironment.net

Blogging is emerging as a form of new media in the Arab region carrying a high potential for positive changes. Batir, the Editor of The Arab Environmental Monitor blog, outlined some characteristics of blogging, in particular in the Arab region, and explained how the initial wave of blogs there has focused on political expressions, a 'natural consequence of decades of press restrictions'. Although environmental blogs are still not common in the Arab region, Batir explained how the

simple power of blog technology is beginning to attract professionals and practitioners from the region to use them for environmental communication. He provided some examples from the region, and described his experience as the first bilingual environmental blog in the Arab region and the potential impact of blogging on sustainability at the regional and global levels.



Reflection: Blogging as a tool. How can this be used for individual learning, team or organizational learning? How can it be used for environmental communication around the world and in the Arab region in particular? How can bloggers share their best practices and innovate to use the technology in the most effective way possible together?

Blending Formal & Informal Learning: Utilizing New Technologies in the Workplace to Connect, Interact, and Sustain Learning - Buthaina Al-Othman



Buthaina spoke of the variety of learning approaches - formal (in school systems), non-formal (organized outside of formal learning systems) and informal (from life and other people) - as well as of her application of a blended approach using new technologies to teach communication skills. Building a collaborative learning environment and connecting people to create a network for learning sustainability and professional development were key elements of the approach. Combining tools ranging from blogs and wikis, yahoo groups and skype, to del.icio.us and elluminate enabled performance support in informal and formal learning situations, whilst also having fun. New emergent learning and teaching approaches such as these, explained Buthaina, can enhance employees' learning skills, leading to positive results in terms of professional development.

Reflection: How will we use new technologies in our institutions to create and support effective learning environments, for professional development and new learning for environmental sustainability?

Leveraging Collective Intelligence: Opportunities to accelerate social and environmental innovation in the Arab Region - Menka Parekh

If the 20th century was about reducing the world into its constituent parts, reflected in our disciplines, sectors and silos, then the 21st century is about putting them back together again through different forms of collaboration – argued Menka Parekh. ‘We live in a time of opportunity and crisis’, she added, as systemic global challenges such as global warming and social cohesion are calling for new solutions, requiring innovation than supersedes and transforms the established order.



Best practice is not enough. Best practice cramps innovation. We need unusual ‘next’ practice. There is no shortage of intelligence; the problem is not capitalizing on the knowledge we already have. We need some re-imagination of the world.

Creative Collision Spaces can help. We all have narratives about the world and we all have blindspots. Networking can help expose us to these to a certain extent but it often has us interacting with the same usual suspects and leads to recycling of old ideas; networking does not take us sufficiently 'off the beaten track' and into a different framework so that we can collectively overcome these blindspots. To do this better, we need 'creative collision spaces' where we can bump into new kinds of people and hope for encounters which lead to positive serendipitous encounters.



Scenarios can also help us. We need to challenge our own hypotheses about our organizations, markets and what the future might /could look like. Using scenarios, we can get a sense of possibilities - helping us to look out for weak signals from small events. A little more 'visibility' of different worlds can have a big impact on the quality of innovation.

Rapid prototyping is another tool available. Taking a quantity over quality type approach and learning by doing is the key here, and the belief that you never really understand a system until you try to change it. Openness to failure is important. And this approach can be a refreshing antidote to more conventional prototyping which can bias against action for fear of failure.

Reflection: What are we doing and what can we do to overcome blindspots and support innovation - in order to find creative solutions to the environmental and sustainability challenges before us and learn new ways of doing things? For example, what sort of 'creative collision' spaces do we need to engage in (and perhaps provide) and are these within or beyond our universities and NGOs?

Professional Development Case Study: Arabic e-Learning Course on Integrated Coastal Zone Management for the Arab Mediterranean Countries - Hossam Allam



Hossam's presentation highlighted the results of a CEDARE – EC/SMAP partnership to implement the first Arabic E-learning course for Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The E-learning course, ArabMedopen, targets decision-makers (at local, national, regional, and international levels), policy advisors, project managers, staff and experts from international organizations and institutions, academic researchers,

students, and all others interested in coastal management in the Arab Mediterranean countries.

The presentation showed the results of the 2005 and 2006 runs, and provided information about the third 2007 run that will include new module for Sustainable Coastal Tourism in cooperation with EUCC – The coastal Union, Netherlands – Spain.

Reflection: How do we learn from our experience of 'Arabizing' e-learning courses and communication with Arab Mediterranean partners and interested groups? How do we move forward encouraging more partners into this e-learning space, and who do we want to focus on as potential partners? What have we learnt about implementation which can help others working in e-learning on different issues or in different contexts? How can we communicate that learning to others in the region?

Knowledge Marketplace

The Knowledge Marketplace ran for 2 days in the Exhibition Hall at Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Participants brought posters, materials, online displays and resources to discuss with other participants, to share their own work and learning amongst everyone there.





Session 5

How to Develop E-learning Material: First Steps Towards a New Pedagogy - Salah Soliman

This skills-building workshop will explore the pedagogical considerations involved in taking conventional learning material and converting it into e-learning material. Building on the experience of BibAlex's League of Young Masters - as introduced in the earlier presentation: *'Students Helping Professors Enter the Digital Age'* - this practical, interactive workshop will: present a short case study on learning from the process of converting conventional learning material into e-learning material; engage participants in questions about pedagogy; generate recommended considerations for people developing e-learning material; and apply this thinking to participant's own work – asking: How might you convert some of your conventional learning material into e-learning material for greater effectiveness?

Using TakingITGlobal's Virtual Classrooms as well as other TIG tools and resources -

Maged Hassam & Lizzie Crudgington



TIGed is an easy to use set of tools for those looking for innovative ways to stimulate learning about global issues – from simple, low-tech solutions to online global collaborations with others thousands of miles away, all designed to engage people in learning and creative expression.

In this workshop we experience the TIGed tools. We will set up a virtual classroom, equip it with valuable resources and populate it with learners – you! In live time you will then collaboratively explore some of the tools available by completing a series of assignments designed to guide your learning. Searching the wealth of information available, rating and reviewing learning activities, and contributing your thoughts and ideas using blogging and chat tools are just some of the highlights this workshop has in store for you. And by the time you leave, you will have some great ideas about how you can valuably use TIGed

(<http://www.takingitglobal.org/tiged/>) in the future.



Recommendations: During the workshop, participants generated the following recommendations regarding the use of TIG and TIGed for New Learning for Sustainability in the Arab Region:

- Use TIG to encourage and enable youth / students to communicate and share learning around

conservation and environmental sustainability within and across regions, and by so doing gain confidence and interest in being involved in finding solutions to pertinent issues on the ground - making them part of the solution;

- Share the latest conservation and environmental sustainability knowledge and resources from our institutions with educators and youth via TIG;
- Establish partnerships to develop educational games, contributing subject matter content and/or pedagogical expertise (for example, a simulation game on river basin management along similar lines to the existing TIGed role-playing video game 'Ayiti' about life in rural Haiti (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/tiged/projects/ayiti/about.html>);

- Submit information to TIG on opportunities for youth involvement in activities around the International Days listed in the site (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/understand/intdays/>);
- Use tools and resources on the TIG site to support and engage youth, such as in Arab regional inter-school (and perhaps also intra-school) competitions focused on a conservation and environmental sustainability issue – for example saving water. (Engage other stake holders - including concerned government agencies and relevant private sector companies - in judging the competition, providing rewards and incentives, etc.). Relevant tools might include:
 - Panorama: poetry, short stories and other writings (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/express/panorama/>)
 - Gallery: creative expression through artwork and photography (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/express/gallery/>)
 - E-discussion forums (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/action/openforums/>)
 - Blogs (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/connections/tigblogs/>);
- Add activities to the TIGed learning activities database (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/tiged/activity/>), providing educators with tools which help them and directing students to conservation, environment and sustainability knowledge and resources available from our institutions;
- Add our organizations to the TIG database of organizations (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/resources/orgs/>), with information on how young people might take action for conservation and environmental sustainability;
- Add Events (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/resources/events/>) and Publications (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/resources/toolkits/>) to the site to raise more awareness about our initiatives
- Encourage students to share their action projects with the broader TakingITGlobal community to showcase best practices and learn from each other (<http://www.takingitglobal.org/action/projects/>)
- Allocate staff time to periodically contributing advice and answers to some of the conservation and environmental sustainability questions in the TIG site;
- Raise the awareness of more youth groups about this website, including, for example, the UNEP and EC environmental youth forum;
- Publicize TIGed to the many other educational institutions in the region that could really benefit from it – providing some examples explaining how;

- Read and share with others the TIGed publication: 'Making the Connection: Best Practices in Global Education and Collaborative Technologies': http://tig.phpwebhosting.com/tiged/TIGed-MTC.pdf?bcsi_scan_EC783A0C3C997A81=0&bcsi_scan_filename=TIGed-MTC.pdf for inspiration and ideas from examples of how TIGed is already being used around the world.



F.U.N. Fair - UnWorkshop on Computer Mediated Communications Tools for Distributed Social Learning Networks - Vance Stevens

The two convergent communities of practice “Webheads in Action” and “Worldbridges” are constantly exploring new computer-mediated communications (CMC) tools for percolating knowledge through their overlapping distributed learning networks, many of which take on many properties of social networking. In this UnWorkshop (so named because it was a veritable souk of tools, activities and people), members of those communities



were invited to join us online as we explored these tools and discussed their applications for learning. The (un)workshop took place informally, without fixed agenda, in response to the direction suggested by the online participants and those present in Alexandria. Some of the spaces explored or discussed included:

- The Webheads in Action and Worldbridges Drupal portals
We were streaming from the chat room: <http://webcastacademy.net/chat>
- Skype, with a demonstration of webcasting through Worldbridges Webcast Academy
Find Vance on Skype ID vancestev; stream at: <http://www.webcastacademy.net/listen>
- Tours of Education and Boracay in Second Life, we also went to Better World, with a “guide” from the network (who was physically located in Barcelona)
- Offer friendship to Webhead Link and request teleport

- Elluminate and Alado voice and whiteboard-enabled presentation chat rooms
<http://tinyurl.com/y3eh> and <http://www.alado.net/webheads>
- Tapped In and Twitter text spaces
Join VanceS at <http://www.tappedin.org> and log in to Twitter, follow VanceS
- Wikispaces and PBWiki (Vance offered to set up a wikispace for his Virtual Strand plenary coming up between Sept 5 and 8th)
- Other interesting sites: Slideshare, Bubbleshare, Webshots, Voicethread, Flickr, Facebook, Moodle, Pageflakes

Reflections: What are some of the ways that new virtual spaces can be used for educational activities, and to help people connect and learn about sustainability, as well as reduce the resource intensiveness of meetings? How can these tools be used for blended learning, to keep the interaction up between face-to-face events and produce a space for collaboration? And how can we benefit from a guide (both physical and virtual) to help us in our own learning about tools and assist us in our experimentation processes to see what might be useful in our work as education and learning practitioners?

The future of the UNU-IUCN Institute in the Arab Region- Next Steps - Sherif Kandil, Mike Moss, Caroline Redrup

Participants in this workshop joined the Institute team in formulating the next steps needed to launch the network in the Arab region, and in identifying what is really needed to help the Institute see its true potential in linking knowledge and action across the region.

Participants from universities, the distance learning arena and non-governmental organizations attended to identify the criteria needed for a lead university in the region and to suggest which university to approach and shortlist the university network it could work with.

Reflections: How can we ensure the potential for the Institute in the region is realized and engage with the right lead university and network of universities to turn it into reality? What learning can we take from other regions' experiences and feed into the Arab region? What can the NGO sector in the region gain from the Institute and how can we encourage that?

Harnessing the power of the blogosphere and the world of wikis for professional and personal learning - IUCN Learning and Leadership Unit

This self-running session is accompanied by a clear manual taking participants through the potential for using blogs and wikis in their professional and personal lives. Participants will work in pairs on individually on computers to see the different uses of blogs and wikis, to explore the blogosphere and what fellow participants are already operating there, and will have the opportunity to set up their own blog or wiki during the session. The manual can be found on the New Learning for Sustainability wiki under 'related resources'.

Reflections: How can workshop participants use blogs and wikis in their own workplace and for personal and professional learning? What can participants learn from others' blogs and wikis that already exist?

Session 6



Carousel session – where next?

In session 6, we used the Carousel discussion technique to explore the following questions:

1. What would you like to see the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication focus on doing in the region? And how can we strengthen the network?
2. 'If e-learning courses were developed for the region, a) what should these focus on, and b) what material / expertise could you contribute?'
3. What should be the next steps after this meeting?



'What would you like to see the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication focus on doing in the region? And how can we strengthen the network?'



- Use Arabic for websites, documents and summaries
- Use local expertise and knowledge
- Promote the CEC's existence in the region (people may not know it even exists!)
- Build infrastructure - a platform for people to meet and discuss. This could be virtual or face-to-

face (see below)

- Help members build community-based CEC clubs where they can meet face-to-face (like a group in Cairo, Amman, etc. where there is a critical mass of members)
- Use Communities of Practice or Distributed Learning Networks as a potential platform
- Consider developing a Arab CEC Members Sub-Group (check the ITU Arab Members Group as a model, it has as its mission increasing the number of Arab Members)
- Explore and circulate success projects in the region (such as case studies which are packaged and distributed for sharing)
- Create a multi-media project in the Arab region with cooperation, such as a joint initiative for all members to contribute their media content to (another example was given of the BcT new Arab TV Channel which could have a monthly CEC feature)
- CEC could be a knowledge hub/clearing house for the region
- Engage regional members in global activities, as well as regional activities
- Start a 'ning' and have this group join it to share more ideas.
- Use well-known members to promote it in the region
- Encourage child-to-child education
- Help 'unstick' environmental materials from government offices and get them out to the children - information broker
- Linking up the resources from partners to the members (such as the Library of Alexandria resources and libraries, or from universities)
- Use existing environmental databases in the region to help recruit members
- Allocate a staff member in the regional offices who deal with education and learning issues to activate sharing in the region
- Identify a PR agency to help promote the network (pro-bono)
- Consider corporate sponsorship and partners in the region for support
- Add the CEC to the organizational database on Taking IT Global

'If e-learning courses were developed for the region, a) what should these focus on, and b) what material / expertise could you contribute?'

When discussing topics and issues that e-learning courses about and for the Arab region should focus on, the group decided that there are some over-riding umbrella issues that should be included in all e-learning courses:

- Environmental ethics
- Environmental issues and solutions from the past in the region (successful and unsuccessful case studies of historical local knowledge)
- Scenarios and scenario-planning

Three specific issues that the group felt should be focused on as a priority because of their importance in the region are:

- Climate change (including sustainable living and changing personal habits)
- Water management and planning
- Conflict and post-conflict environmental work (including rehabilitation and renewal of effected areas, and human displacement and subsequent environmental impact)

Other specific issues seen as important are:

- Desertification
- Natural resource use
- Petroleum issues (marine, decontamination, renewable energy opportunities)
- Sustainable consumption
- Urbanization, sustainable architecture, and green areas (e-learning for policy makers and planners)
- Coastal zone management
- Environmental Management Systems (EMS) (e.g. ISO14001)
- Community involvement in environmental issues (enabling communities)

The group also felt that integrated planning is necessary i.e. e-learning courses should clearly show the connections between *all* courses available and encourage learners to use an integrated approach in working on them, and that potential users should be involved in the design of the tools and e-learning courses at all stages, and developers should remember the 2-way flow of information that is important for new learning (learners provide knowledge as well as course developers). Good accreditation is needed for e-learning courses so employers understand the credibility of the course, and e-learning for 'trainers of trainers' should be covered especially for environmental education for children

What materials / expertise can you offer in the development of such e-learning courses?

- Waste management: Sherif Kandil, RAED network
- Climate change and sustainable livelihoods: GF Small Grants Programme
- Sustainable lifestyles, social marketing: Raed Al Nimri, UNU
- Desertification: Kuwait Institute of Science and Technology
- Conflict issues: Bibliotheca Alexandrina Institute of Peace Studies
- Environmental education: Emirates Environmental Group, Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL)
- Natural resource use: Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL)
- Academic support: University of Alexandria, Ain Shams University, Petra University, University of Jordan
- Technological support: CEDARE

'What should be the next steps after this meeting?'

The following next steps were generated by participants:

- 1) Develop, apply and share learning and ideas with colleagues and networks via all appropriate channels (including the internet!)
- 2) Develop a regional programme on learning for environmental conservation and sustainability (all participants, with leadership from the IUCN Regional Offices for West Asia (Jordan) and the Mediterranean (Malaga). Some first considerations for the programme planning process:
 - a. Circulate a summary of the event to all participants with some key recommendations (IUCN HQ staff)
 - b. Share the draft programmes of the IUCN Regional Offices (2009-2012) with participants, and from there explore where CEC can have most impact
 - c. Include in the plan documenting learning around the process of moving from knowledge to action and impact (influencing policy, etc.)
 - d. Assess what is already going on the region (scope (elearning only?) and process to be defined)
 - e. Identify, reach out to and establish cooperation with further stakeholders - including schools, universities, NGOs, media and satellite channels - and invite related individuals to CEC membership
 - f. Consider short term e-learning projects around which people can collaborate in the short term
 - g. Clearly assign roles and responsibilities
- 3) Organize annual regional meetings (at [BibAlex](#)) and initiatives, with regional leadership. Consider an event at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in October 2008, Barcelona, Spain
- 4) Research best practices in the area of developing successful, engaged communities / networks, so that we can apply this to the CEC network in the Arab region (process to be defined)
- 5) Define the processes for the above steps 1-4.



A Summary of Questions for Reflection

- 1) How might university faculties and NGOs concerned with the environment and sustainability, work with students and young innovators to use new technologies to improve materials for learning and help complete the knowledge-to-action loop? (as presented in the case of BibAlex)?
- 2) As the learning paradigm changes, how can we respond? Whether working to improve learning about the environment and sustainability in universities or NGOs, how can we use web 2.0 (such as blogging) in our institutions to create and support effective learning environments and distributed learning networks, and create a learning 'pull' for conservation and environmental action?
- 3) There are sites - such as TakingITGlobal - offering a variety of easily manageable tools to people in universities and NGOs – sites which are successfully engaging young people who want to make a difference in their communities. How might we take them up on this offer?
- 4) How might we initiate further partnerships for introducing e-learning and increasing capacities within universities and other institutions for e-learning design and management?
- 5) What are we doing and what can we do to overcome blindspots and support innovation - in order to find creative solutions to the environmental and sustainability challenges before us and learn new ways of doing things? For example, what sort of 'creative collision' spaces do we need to engage in (and perhaps provide) and are these within or beyond our universities and NGOs?
- 6) How can we continue to learn from experiences with using e-learning for environmental management in the region and take these efforts to greater scale?
- 7) How can we connect with the communities who are developing, testing and exploring the frontiers of learning with these tools, such as Webheads, etc. so that we can benefit from the learning of early adopters and help expand potential application opportunities with them (rather than having to do all of it – development, testing, assessment, etc all ourselves.)
- 8) How can the Arab region CEC members and partners continue to discuss and use these tools, and further develop the capacity of other regional actors to use them in their sustainability work?
- 9) What other questions would you add?

A Taste of Participants' Feedback

'The interesting conference in Alexandria was such a learning experience for all. I hope it will develop into concrete initiatives and projects soon!' - Bassima Khatib.

'The IUCN CEC Forum was a valuable and enlightening experience. I look forward to seeing active and engaging CEC members in the Region, and to seeing the Institute of WCLN a reality in the near future' - Odeh Al Jayyousi.

'I was fully satisfied about what I learnt from the successful meeting and would like to thank very much all of you who made it fruitful and beneficial for our knowledge. I look forward to seeing the implementation of the recommendations with some concrete actions for our region and local people in the near future. The e-learning was the important thing I got as added value to my knowledge. And I learnt how I can create my blog for sharing information plus the building a network of environmental educators in the Arab region' – Brahim Haddane.

'I'm so happy we managed to make a TakingITGlobal-IUCN connection. It fits so well in the context of what we're trying to do at TIG and the innovative push that CEC and the Learning and Leadership Unit team brings to the mission of IUCN. I've already received some emails from people who were at our presentation and I think there are very interesting collaborative opportunities emerging. We look forward to following up with IUCN on how we can work more closely together!' - Michael Furdyk, Jennifer Corriero and Dumisani Nyoni.

'I have to say this was on of the most thrilling and exciting workshops I have been to. I managed to easily stay interested all of the time – a fact not frequently achieved in other workshops' - Batir Wardam.

Presentations and Photographs

See the workshop wiki for powerpoint presentations and photographs:

<http://newlearningforsustainability.pbwiki.com/>

Sponsors

We are very grateful to the workshop sponsors.

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina

<http://www.bibalex.org/>



The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication

<http://iucn.org/cec/>



The IUCN Regional Office for West Asia / the Middle East

<http://www.iucn.org/places/wescana/>



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The IUCN Mediterranean Cooperation Centre

<http://iucn.org/places/medoffice/>



The National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD), Saudi Arabia

<http://www.ncwcd.gov.sa/>



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