

Powered by Nature 2013



BETTER IN
THE DARK...

Stories and ideas for

- Awards and competitions
- Creative challenge workshops
- Social media campaigns
on energy, nature and other sustainability issues

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About this report

This report tells the story of the first year of the programme and includes inspiration and ideas for those that want to engage more people in their work on sustainability, be it through social media, through participatory processes or by reaching out to new audiences. It serves both as a project report and as a guidance document for others.

We believe

The Earth is blessed with energy in abundance. In just one minute, the sun alone supplies it with 1,000 times more than humanity needs.

Energy is what made our evolution possible. In thousands of years, humans have discovered many different ways to harvest the energy provided by nature. We learned to use the power of the wind, the heat of the sun, the waves of the ocean. We learned to burn ancient plant matter, left in the ground for thousands of years, as fossil fuels, and we learned about the consequences of doing so.

Today, we have plentiful access to alternatives, be they renewables, muscle power or just human efficiency and creativity.

It's time to explore new ways to address energy challenges, get people involved across borders and work together to build awareness and effect change.

It's time to be powered by nature.

Introduction

Powered by Nature is an award programme for European students to co-create a social media campaign on energy and nature. It was launched by the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication and the Alcoa Foundation in 2013.

As a project focussing on youth, communication and energy, Powered by Nature has three distinct elements:

1. A competition for communications students across Europe to submit ideas for social media campaigns on energy and nature;
2. A creative challenge workshop during which the winners of the award jointly develop and implement a campaign based on their ideas; and
3. The resulting social media campaign that connects young people in Europe for a change towards sustainable lifestyles.

Main results

Powered by Nature taps into the creativity and innovative capacity of a group of young people to find and implement new approaches to communicating about energy and nature. The project workshop demonstrated that a diverse group can create tangible results very quickly in an atmosphere of trust and creative freedom.

The workshop resulted in a prototype of a social media campaign (“Better in the dark”). In less than 24 hours, the group created website, messaging, social media platforms and an animated video and presented the campaign to the public. While the campaign got some traction on social media, it did not generate a lot of responses due to unclear messaging and user interfaces.

The project showed how a rapid prototyping approach as used by Powered by Nature can quickly and cost-effectively generate and test communications approaches to energy and nature.



The Powered by Nature Award

The Story

In February 2013, Powered by Nature issued an invitation to communications students in Europe who are excited about nature and the use of social media for sustainability to sketch an idea for a communications campaign to help build awareness on future energy needs, uses and sources.

In addition to a targeted email list and direct outreach to universities, the project team used Facebook and Twitter to raise awareness of the programme.

Applicants described their idea in no more than 300 words (or, alternatively, a video of 60 seconds), by answering the following questions:

- Which issue would you address?
- What action do you want your audience to take?
- How are you motivating them to take this step?
- What do you hope to achieve?

Jury members individually assessed the pre-screened and anonymized set of applications:

- How relevant is the idea to the award theme “Powered by Nature”?
- How effective is the message and the connection with the audience?
- How innovative is the idea?
- Would you recommend inviting this candidate to the award workshop?

In a conference call on 11 June 2013, they jointly determined six winning applications.



Members of the Jury

- Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- Tómas Már Sigurðsson, President, Alcoa European Region and Alcoa Global Primary Products Europe;
- Juliane Zeidler, Chair of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication; and
- Ed Gillespie, Director and Co-Founder of Futerra Sustainability Communications.

Timeline

January	Development of award criteria and application form
February	Launch of Powered by Nature
March	Outreach to universities
April	Additional social media outreach
May	Extension of application deadline
June	Selection of winners

Tools used

Website	Wordpress.com
Social Media	Facebook.com
	Twitter.com
Online Forms	Jotform.com
Project Management	Drive.google.com

I have reviewed all the applications carefully and I believe that all ideas presented by the applicants are very good and would very well contribute to raising awareness of natural solutions to energy.

– Julia Marton-Lefèvre,
IUCN Director-General

“I always loved green issues and social media. This was a great chance to put these two under the same hat.”

– Enikő Toth, Hungary

POWERED BY NATURE



1 SEP Nature is...better in the dark!

A new social media campaign, launched as a result of the **Powered by Nature Awards**, encourages people to turn off their lights and turn on their screens. With cheeky humor and simple graphics, the campaign “Better in the Dark” invites community contributions to the question: What things are better in the dark?



ABOUT
Powered by Nature is an award programme for European students to re-create a social media campaign on energy and nature. [Read more](#)

- RECENT POSTS**
- Nature is...better in the dark! 04/06/2013
 - Day 5: The big Thank You edition. 30/06/2013
 - Day 4: 3, 2, 1... Launch! 29/06/2013
 - Day 3: Better in the Dark. 08/06/2013
 - Day 2: The wild campaign ideas 07/06/2013

TWITTER UPDATES

@HalfFrankDread: They say some places are better in the dark... halfFrankDread 1 month ago

We stop #electricityinblack bit.ly/5kldpwp 1 month ago

@LancasterSilkham: I think I became 1 day...

30 AUG Day 5: The big Thank You edition.



beginning – as the old proverb says. Finally, the workshop is done, there are still a plenty of tasks to do in order to make “Better in the Dark” a success.

We’re working on more material and designing new videos, applying materials, calls for articles shall be added. We are on the roll now to make this work.

29 AUG Day 4: 3, 2, 1.... Launch!

Finally the big day has come! We present to you “Better in the dark”! We believe that things are better in the dark – and we’re not only talking about the bedrooms. When the lights are out, we continue to run around to shops, schools, hotels and more. Finally, we see the stars and wonder to the world, to nature and



Powered by Nature is open for students who are excited about nature and the use of communications and social media for

THE AWARD
from each country and you, all when travel

Lessons learnt

The call for applications was promoted on various websites and social media channels. Like many other award schemes, which have difficulties in their first years, the number of applications to Powered by Nature was not to the full content of the organizers, despite great dissemination efforts. The following can be good tips for future attempts.

Make it worthwhile

This does not have to be a problem if you are clear on the objectives of your award. Think of it on three levels:

- What is the purpose of the award? How does the award fit into your organization's programme and needs? Which problem does it solve?
- What's in it for them? Why would someone put in the effort to make a meaningful contribution? Money is usually not the most effective motivator.
- Are you creating an award mainly for the publicity and access to new audiences? If yes, other mechanisms might be more suitable.

"I had some difficulty understanding what was expected and meant by 'powered by nature'."

– Christina Franc, Canada

If you have an idea for an award that is meaningful for both your organization and for participants – go ahead, and don't worry too much about the number of applications in the first round. Aim for

an application that does not require too much work while giving you meaningful information to select the best candidates for your purpose. It takes a while to establish a good scheme.

Spread the word

While promoting Powered by Nature 2013, we relied on contacting universities and professors directly. This was tedious and often ineffective.

A lot more momentum built once we started using social media strategically, for example with Facebook Ads.

When you are planning an award scheme, consider the strength of your current links with the target audience. If it's a new audience for you, you might consider partnering with the relevant network organization or (student) association.



The Creative Challenge Workshop

The Story

Powered by Nature invited the seven award winners (and three additional participants) to come together for an intense week of creative collaboration and play in Starnmeer, the Netherlands, during which they refined, implemented and integrated the best aspects of their ideas into a joint campaign – to be launched on the final day.

Three weeks before the workshop, we opened an online community for all participants to share their campaign ideas, get to know each other and acquaint themselves with the latest thinking on energy, nature and sustainability communications. In addition, we invited external experts to provide input during three webinars.

"The location was really good. We ate bio every night. It's important to be an example in the first place, to walk the talk and show others that it's possible."

– Laura Vanweydeveld, UK

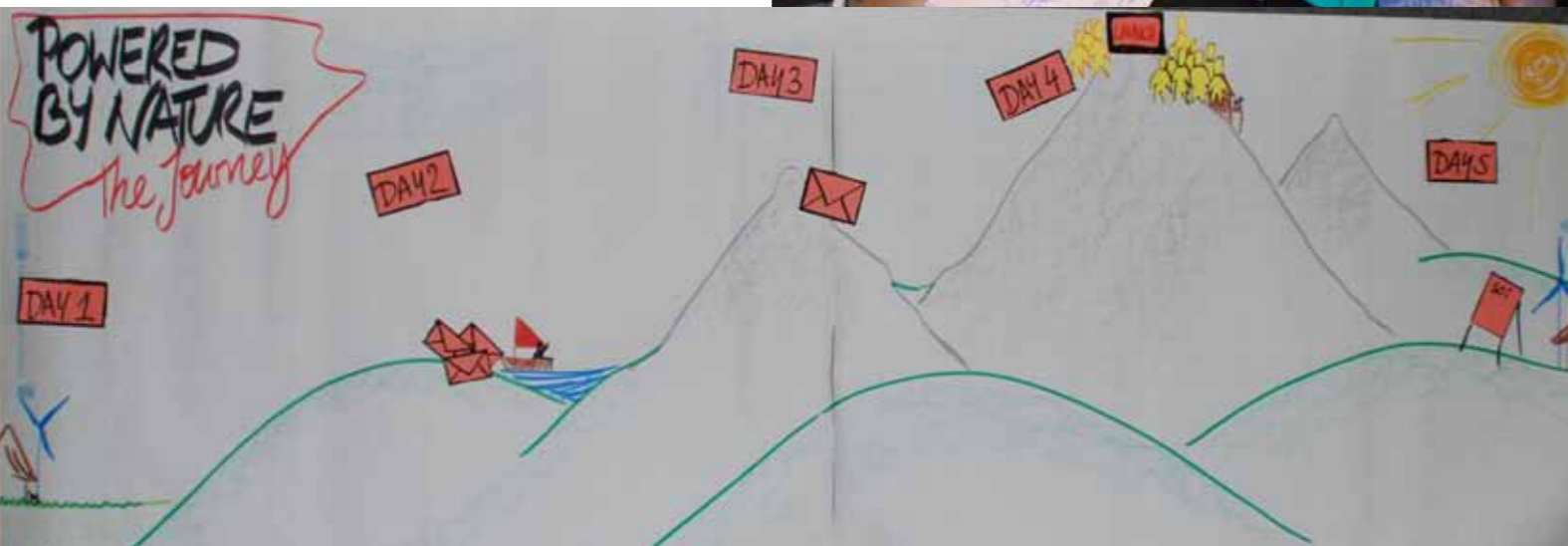
The workshop took place at the Buitenwerkplaats, an architect-restored polder farm just north of Amsterdam. The venue provided the perfect backdrop of nature, art and innovation for our work.

“I really enjoyed the atmosphere during the workshop: it was fun all the while we did a great, serious job. We had a great time together, we helped each other and learned from each other”

– Rita Bernáth, Hungary

The workshop itself used three prototyping and feedback phases. Participants first presented their individual campaign ideas (refined since the original application) and gave each other feedback. They then combined elements and ideas into three new campaign sketches. This time, they invited an external group of experts and supporters to provide feedback by the next morning (by email,

blog comment or skype). Based on this feedback, the group decided to implement the campaign concept “Better in the Dark”. Within 24 hours of this decision, small groups had created an animated video, a website, social media profiles and written the content for these platforms. After a public launch webinar, the participants received their certificates of participation from IUCN CEC and Alcoa Foundation.



Agenda - Creative Challenge Workshop

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Check in	Check in	Check in	Check in
	Practice: Giving feedback	Questions for experts	Expert feedback via Skype (1x30')	Next steps
	Individual pitches (9x8') with feedback	Expert feedback via Skype (3x30')	Campaign implementation: animation, copy-writing, presentation	Learning review and feedback
	Collection of useful elements of campaigns	Group decision and brainstorming: Which campaign?		Closing activity
			Lunch	
	Working groups to create new campaign sketches	Action planning: who does what?	Dress rehearsal for launch	Departure
	Presentation of campaign sketches	Campaign implementation: messaging, visual identity, framework	Public launch webinar	
Arrival	Check out		Celebration	
			Check out	
			Dinner	
Welcome and introductions	Email to sounding board	Check out	Powered by Nature Award Dinner in Amsterdam	
Contributions and expectations	Boat tour through nature reserve Eilandspolder	Email to sounding board		
Vision and values for the workshop	BBQ	Implementation ctd.		
Check out				

Tools used

Online Community	Ning.com
Webinars	Webex.com
Blog	Ning.com
Shared documents	Drive.google.com
Live feedback	Skype.com

External experts

- Prof. Paul Ekins (UCL Institute for Sustainable Resources)
- Oliver Lawder (Futerra)
- Richard O'Rourke (Utiylx)
- George Strakhov (Tribal DDB)

Lessons learnt

The Powered by Nature Workshop had an ambitious objective: design, create and launch a social media campaign on energy and nature within 72 hours from arrival.

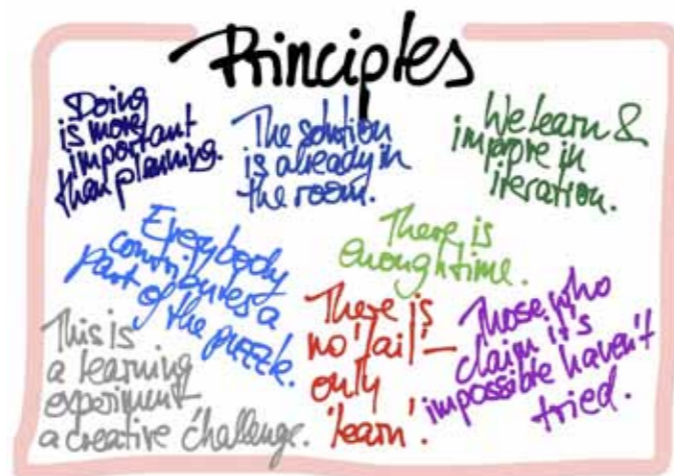
Make it about ‘we’

This might sound impossible at first, and the facilitation team thus deliberately chose to create the conditions where trust is possible. This included a reality distortion field. We used phrases like “the solution is already in the room”, “there is enough time”, “doing is more important than planning” and ‘there is no failure – there is only learning’.

In addition, we asked the group to define their own mission and values for their time together.

Mission: *To connect people through a social media campaign for a change towards a more sustainable lifestyle.*

Values: *Bold and diverse, honest and respectful, playful and above all, green.*



Work with place and environment

Creativity, inspiration and a connection to nature – these were some of the qualities we wanted to see during the workshop. The Buitenwerkplaats offered us beautiful outdoor spaces, big skies and purposefully designed workshop rooms.

“For me, the turning point was when we went out to clear our heads and ended up taking the decision on our campaign in the fresh air near the trampoline.”

– Christina Franc, Canada

A boat excursion to the nearby nature reserve Eilandspolder in the dusk allowed for more connection with nature and might have influenced the final campaign choice.

To celebrate the achievements of the week, all participants were shuttled to Amsterdam after the launch of the campaign – in a vintage limousine. The entire steering committee of the project was there to celebrate with them over dinner.



“The absolute highlight for me was the lovely evening on the 29th, with the awesome stretched taxi!”

– Amy Gallagher, UK

Involve others: Online, offline, wherever

Powered by Nature wanted to build on the expertise and experience of IUCN’s Commission on Education and Communication without imposing on the co-creation process of the participants.

We thus invited a group of about 50 people to accompany us virtually, receive emails of our progress, send us feedback and celebrate the launch together in a webinar. In total, we received 16 pieces of feedback, most of it thoughtful and substantive.

In addition, we had arranged for live feedback from four experts on Wednesday and Thursday.

“I learned a lot from our guest speakers. I found the suggestions about creating a successful campaign most useful”

– Amy Gallagher, UK

Permission to experiment

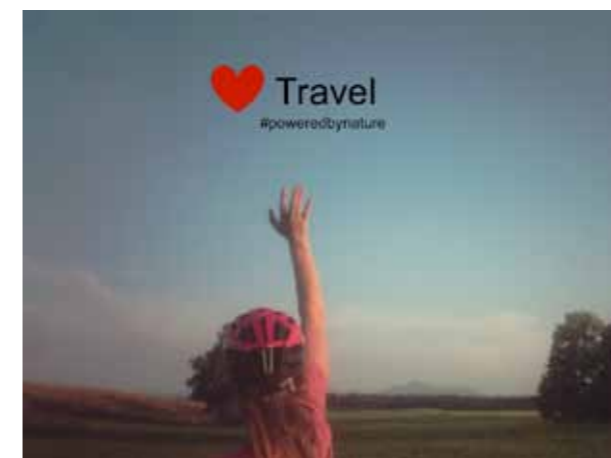
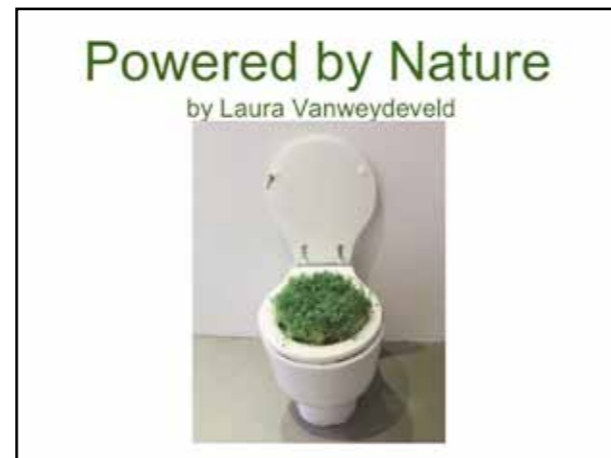
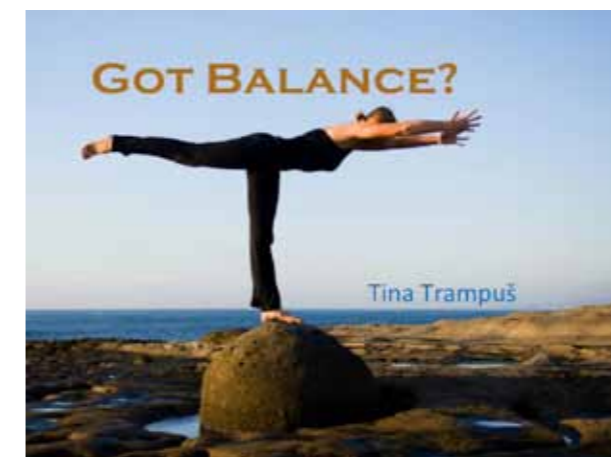
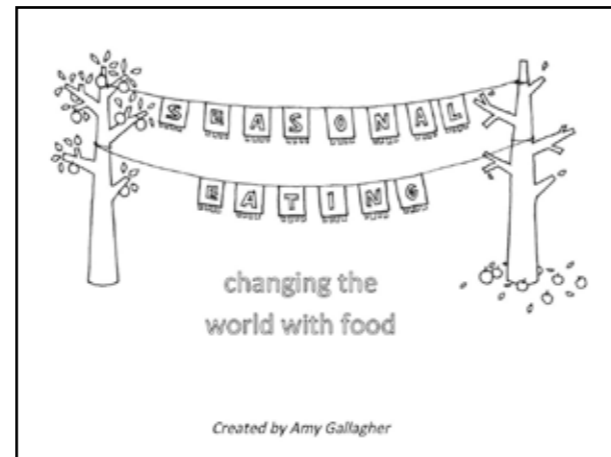
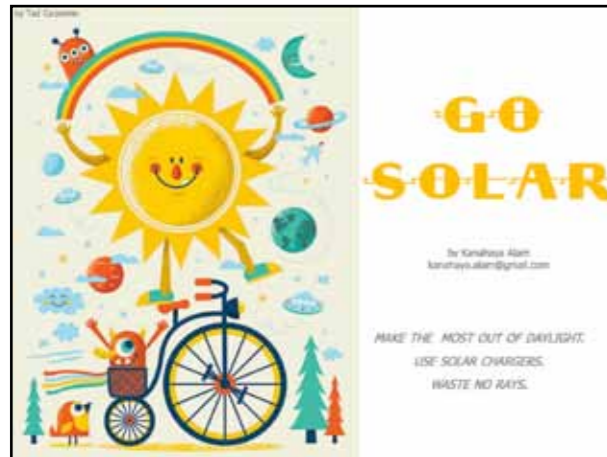
If you want to run your own creative challenge workshop, give yourself permission to experiment. Here are a few things you might nevertheless want to avoid:

- 1. A homogeneous group.** To come up with new ideas and to implement them, you’ll need a multitude of skills and experiences.
- 2. An external sign-off process.** The group will feel disempowered when an external force stops their creativity mid-way.
- 3. A non-negotiable deliverable.** While it is likely that the group will deliver, they might decide to work on other things that they consider more important.



Campaign Sketches

Before the participants settled on the campaign proposal for “Better in the Dark”, they created twelve proposals for a possible social media campaign. Each proposal included the name of the proposed campaign, details on the target group and its motivation, a clear call for action and an outline for the choreography and success indicators of the campaign.



Useful Elements for Social Media Campaigns

Collected on 27 August, using the feedback on participants' campaign proposals.

Messenger Show hidden truths Walk the talk Experiment on yourself Mix art and science	Audience Focus on moments you make a change / start a new life Get to people before they settle on a lifestyle Focus on a small group first Address people outside the classic green audience	Action Have a clear call to action, make it affordable and realistic Tap into existing habits and passions Connect to daily activities (e.g. food) Address habits Find a clear, simple call to action	Communication Bring lightness and laughter to the start Tell stories Use facts and statistics Use your senses Find a connecting element (e.g. the sun) Have a clear name of the campaign Be interactive Exaggerate stereotypes Use visuals Play on words Demonstrate how the green solution is the richer solution (adventure...) Use humour and sarcasm
Impact Strengthen the local economy Use health as an angle Connect to the local urban context Connect at a deeper level	Implementation Have a week-by-week schedule Integrate multiple platforms Validate impact and audience scientifically Make it easy to access without computers Have a clear operational strategy Use innovative, new kinds of social media Use a layered content approach (or user journey) Measure the impact and show it in public Focus on the main social media outlets Create an extendable database with crowd-sourced information Measure behaviours Connect to real-life events & workshops	Motivation Make it a practical, educational resource Make it easy Tap into a common need (WIFM) Play! Tap into a competitive spirit Solve problems for the user (e.g. recipes) Issue a challenge, make progress easily measurable Make sustainable techniques fun Use the aversion to waste and loss as a motivator Make it useful for a long time Gamify real life Provide useful information	
Identity Bring aliens and superheroes into your campaign Create a sense of community Make it personal Make your audience the hero (e.g. human powers) Use framing and identity (e.g. travellers vs. tourists) Make it (sound) normal			

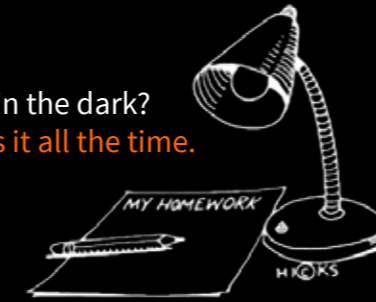


Do flowers smell better in the dark?
Take a walk on the wild side.

Afraid of the dark?
Store the sunlight.



Can't work in the dark?
Nature does it all the time.



Want to read in the dark?
Try it in Braille.



What turns me on?
Turn off the TV and find out.



"We were all attracted to the 'better in the dark' concept as it's simple, intriguing and fun. And can indeed lead to some 'buzz' when executed well."

– Jasper van Zon, Alcoa Foundation

BETTER IN THE DARK

Lessons learnt

Social media is a great tool for sustainability communications: as opposed to many other tools, it's cheap and it allows us to gather instant feedback on the success of our communications.

During the first six weeks of its existence, "Better in the Dark" gathered more than 350 likes on Facebook (see: Facts and figures). After an initial peak at the launch, the campaign continued to spread slowly, in line with campaign activity.

Will your audience like it?

"Better in the dark" worked as a great hook, invoking curiosity and the inadvertent giggle. The campaign worked on two levels: references to the bedroom or scary movies were followed by the realization that all other senses are heightened in the dark – and that the dark thus allows for a deeper connection with self and nature. This was a definite plus. At the same time, we noticed a very low response on the accompanying Facebook Ad.

Will it motivate them to take action?

This probably had to do with the call for action of the campaign. The campaign invited a playful exploration of the theme and called for additional suggestions that would then be implemented as animated videos or memes for the campaign.

"Better in the dark" failed to answer why its target audience should participate – what's in it for them? Other campaign proposals pointed to possible solutions: a community of stargazers, for example, or a nicely packaged newsletter with practical

information on life on the dark side. We also considered competitive or gamified elements like a counter for the number of hours "in the dark". These elements could have been part of a more complete implementation of the campaign.

Keep it simple, stupid

Many environmental campaigns make the mistake of being unnecessarily complicated. There is no



need to provide all information during the first impression. A good idea is to think of a user journey – what will happen after she has shown interest for the first time? How will you keep her engaged? How can you slowly draw her closer? How can you build on her needs and feedback?

"Better in the dark", in contrast, was simple: one idea, many ways to implement it.

Tools used

Social Media	Facebook.com Twitter.com
Website	Wordpress (self-hosted)
Videos	YouTube.com

Facts and Figures

Objective	To establish an award for young, active and creative European communication students, who have the ability to take a leading role in raising awareness for the benefits of energy efficiency									
Milestones	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start of Award Promotion (January 2013) 2. Selection of Award Winners (June 2013) 3. Workshop with Award Winners (August 2013) 4. Decision on Lessons Learned and Future Award Schemes (November 2013) 									
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop award criteria • Promote award • Establish selection committee • Evaluate applications and select winners • Communicate award winners • Workshop and award ceremony • Evaluation of outcomes 									
Indicators	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Number of people reached through campaign</td> <td>> 100.000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of actions taken in response to campaign</td> <td>Ca. 100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of hours donated by environmental communicators</td> <td>> 150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quality of the learning experience</td> <td>+++</td> </tr> </table>		Number of people reached through campaign	> 100.000	Number of actions taken in response to campaign	Ca. 100	Number of hours donated by environmental communicators	> 150	Quality of the learning experience	+++
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Quality of the learning experience	+++									

About

Partner organizations



The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) is a global network driving change for sustainability. More than 1,000 members volunteer their professional expertise in learning, knowledge management and strategic communication to achieve IUCN's vision: 'a just world that values and conserves nature'. The CEC network promotes the importance of the role of communication, education and public awareness in the implementation of the environmental conventions. It brings together best practices, shares innovations and offers expert advice to sustainable development and conservation initiatives. CEC is a key partner for the Convention on Biological Diversity to make people aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably. The IUCN European Union Representative Office supported the CEC in implementing this project.

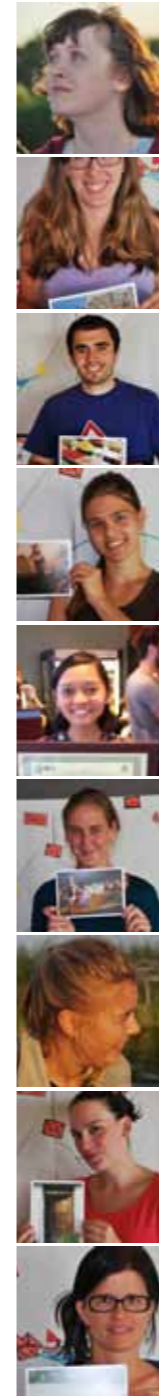
For more information, follow @IUCN_CEC on Twitter and visit www.iucn.org/cec.



Alcoa Foundation is one of the largest corporate foundations in the U.S., with assets of approximately US\$460 million. Founded 60 years ago, Alcoa Foundation has invested more than US\$570 million since 1952. In 2012, Alcoa Foundation contributed more than US\$21 million to nonprofit organisations throughout the world, building innovative partnerships to improve the environment and educate tomorrow's leaders for careers in manufacturing and engineering. The work of Alcoa Foundation is further enhanced by Alcoa's thousands of employee volunteers who share their talents and time to make a difference in the communities where Alcoa operates. In 2012, a record 60 percent of Alcoa employees took part in more than 1,050 events across 24 countries, through the company's signature Month of Service programme, benefiting more than 450,000 people and 2,050 nonprofit organisations.

For more information, follow @AlcoaFoundation on Twitter and visit www.alcoafoundation.com.

Participants



The participants of the 2013 Powered by Nature Workshop were:

Amy Gallagher, fearless illustrator and creative mind behind the Better in the Dark videos (London, UK)

Christina Franc, wielder of the project plan and lover of yellow cars (Quebec, Canada)

Diogo Veríssimo*, resident environmental scientist and monitoring manager (Lisbon, Portugal)

Enikő Tóth, marketing manager for good (Budapest, Hungary)

Kana Alam, tireless virtual contributor and source of feedback (London, UK)

Lara Emde*, the lady that tamed WordPress for us (Brussels, Belgium)

Laura Vanweydeveld, creative mind and focused like a laser beam on the video (concept and execution) (London, UK)

Rita Bernáth, the social media maven that was never short of a giggle (Székesfehérvár, Hungary)

Tina Trampuš*, writer and seeker of hidden humour (Izola, Slovenia)

* invited participant

Team



Project coordinator: Wiebke Herding (ON:SUBJECT Communications, Amsterdam)

Lead Facilitator: Edward Kellow (Kellow Learning, London)

The Steering Committee of Powered by Nature 2013 consisted of Jasper van Zon (Alcoa Foundation, Frits Hesselink (IUCN CEC), Chantal van Ham and Liza Drius (both IUCN EU Representative Office).

We'd also like to thank Tamar Berger and Daniel Jason Binks for their help in promoting the Powered by Nature Awards 2013.

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Powered by Nature is an award programme for European students to co-create a social media campaign on energy and nature. It is jointly organized by the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication in cooperation with the IUCN European Union Representative Office and the Alcoa Foundation. The award winners participated in a 5-day retreat on 26-30 August 2013 in Starnmeer, the Netherlands during which they co-created and launched the social media campaign “Better in the Dark”.

www.powered-by-nature.org

