

Issue 33

EARTH FOCUS

One Planet - One Community

TOURISM



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The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO/OMT)

is a specialized agency of the United Nations and the leading international organization in the field of tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how.

UNWTO plays a central and decisive role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, paying particular attention to the interests of developing countries.

The Organization encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, with a view to ensuring that member countries, tourist destinations and businesses maximize the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism and fully reap its benefits, while minimizing its negative social and environmental impacts.

Its membership includes 157 countries and territories and more than 300 Affiliate Members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

Direct actions that strengthen and support the efforts of National Tourism Administrations are carried out by UNWTO's regional representatives (Africa, the Americas, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and South Asia) based at the Headquarters in Madrid.

UNWTO is committed to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, geared toward reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development.

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editor@earthfocus.org

Be sure to include your name, age, and country!

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Editor



Climate Change and Travel Go “Carbon Neutral”

So now we know for sure that the world's climate is changing. And it's all because of global warming – the earth and the sea are getting hotter, the polar ice is melting and the oceans are slowly getting higher. And this means our weather patterns are shifting - some countries are getting heat waves, some are seeing hurricanes and mighty storms and many are experiencing flooding at one end of the scale and droughts at the other.

Thanks to many years of worldwide scientific research coordinated by the United Nations we can be certain that the way in which human beings use energy is the basic cause of this problem. By burning fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – to run our businesses, drive our transport and live our lifestyles, we are pumping too many greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere. These form a blanket that makes the planet warmer than it should be for the kind of balance that nature itself produces.

This has now become so serious that it is affecting farming and what people eat, it is changing business and how people work and it is disrupting leisure and how people spend their free time. In short it is affecting all our lifestyles – and it will slowly but surely get worse not better – unless we do something about it: and unless we start now.

Just as the United Nations, the world body for governments has been monitoring this global problem by coordinating the work of scientists, it's now leading the charge for solutions and an agreed approach by countries to reduce collective use of energy that creates greenhouse gas.

Obviously this is not easy because it takes a long time to change. Rich countries who presently cause the most greenhouse gas – particularly in North America and Europe - have energy use patterns that are much higher than poor countries and don't want to give up the lifestyles they have become used to. Emerging countries who are increasingly creating greenhouse gas – particularly big economies like China, India and Brazil – don't want to stop their own modernization progress. And poor countries who make little greenhouse gas – particularly in Africa and small island states – don't want to pay yet again for solving problems they didn't create. They also don't want the world to take

its eye off the war on poverty that they committed to fight with the Millennium Development Goals.

If this were the only challenge, it would be complicated enough, but in fact what we are talking about is for each and every one of us on the planet to change our lifestyles in some way or other. The way we use appliances, the way we shop, the way we heat or air condition our homes, the way we relax, the way we travel and so on: anything that burns energy. We need to reduce our use of energy generating carbon in any way possible.

The UN Secretary General has been given the task of bringing all these different points of view together and of creating a roadmap to take us from the present crisis situation to a time in the future which brings us back again to a new natural balance. Most experts believe that can be done by 2050 and they also believe that the sacrifices we will all have to make – individuals, communities, corporations and countries will be far smaller if we all start now. The longer we wait the more difficult it will become. This is why I am writing to you from the UN World Tourism Organization. We are presently crafting our small but important part of Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon's worldwide plan – updating our 2003 climate change guidance at major conferences in Davos, London and Cartagena this year.

We want to lead the drive to make sure that we all travel in a way that contributes to the global solution. For countries that means developing policies to encourage more rational carbon use by incentives for good behavior and penalties for bad. For companies it means adapting to change, lowering impacts and using new technology. And for tourists it means reducing carbon use or balancing it with special programmes to take carbon out of the system to cover the amount we put in.

So in the end you too can play your part. Next time you are taking a holiday, or your parents or family members are taking a business trip just mention the words “carbon neutral”.* It's a small price to pay for all our futures.

Professor Lipman has been involved with different aspects of travel and tourism and has been very active in promoting awareness to sustainability in this industry over the years.

Professor Geoffrey Lipman
Griffith University, Australia.
Assistant Secretary General
United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

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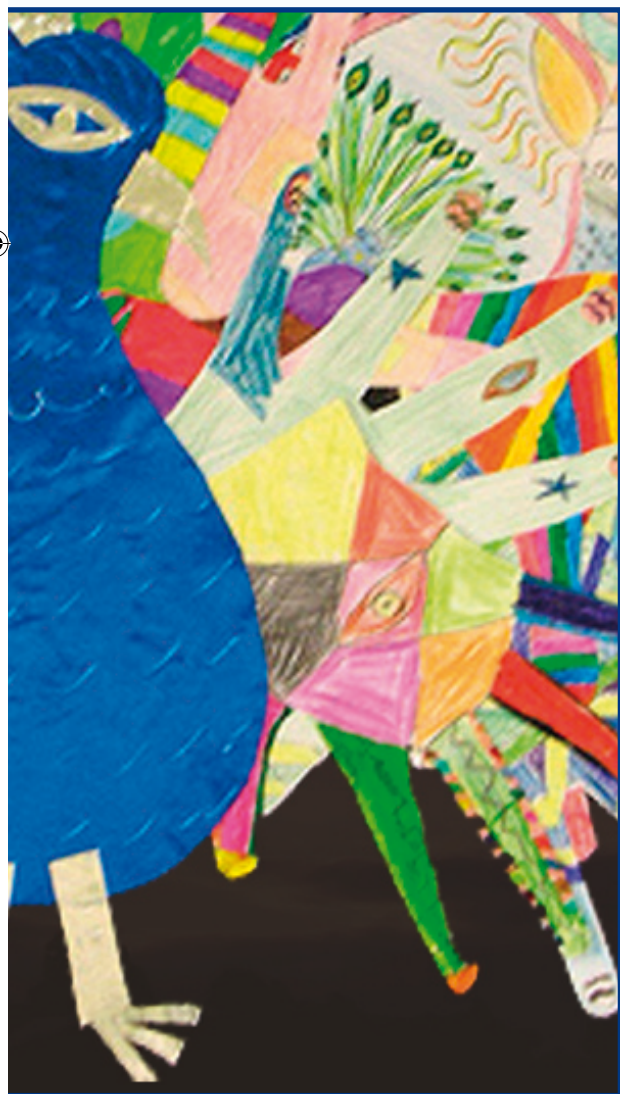
**Climate Change and Travel:
go “Carbon Neutral”**



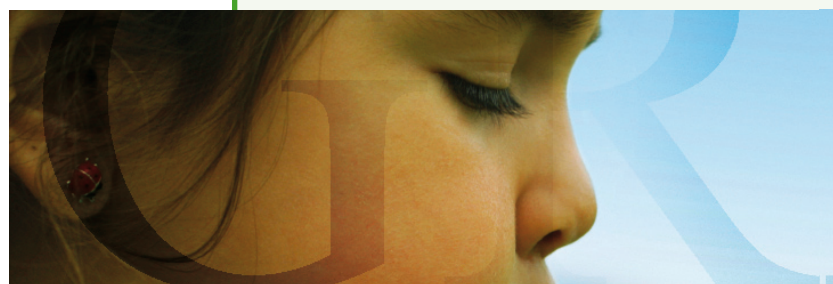
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We all have an ideal destination, whether it's relaxing on a sunny beach, an active expedition participating in winter activities on snow-covered mountains, or it could be the experience of discovering a new culture and exploring the surrounding local environment. Endless Choices! The colossal tourist industry presents us with so many possibilities! Tourism, being the focus of this edition of Earth Focus, is overwhelmingly interlinked with the intricate processes of globalisation from the economic to the socio-cultural and increasingly the environmental.



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With the increasing knowledge of environmental and social problems existing globally today the need for direct, practical action to combat these often human induced catastrophes has never been as urgent.



The Impact of Tourism on TAIWAN

Tourism plays only a small part in the national income for Taiwan. However, that does not mean that Taiwan does not invest in it. In fact, Taiwan has a variety of attractions from one of the most unique coastlines to the highest building in the world and some good hydrothermal springs.

With all these attractions, how come Taiwan does not depend on their tourist income? The answer might be due to the false management of the government. The Taiwanese government has not taken the issue of tourism seriously until recently. They may have promoted internal tourism well (inside Taiwan), but there is no focus on foreigners' international credibility. This can be easily seen by the lack of non-English information on web sites and the inadequate public transportation between the airport and resorts.

So is tourism going to be more important in the future? The response is definitely yes. The government wants to promote international tourism in Taiwan and they are doing it. Some rural areas have turned into urban towns because of their tourist attractions, more hotels are being built everywhere, and Taipei has certainly become a big city known for its fine food.

On the other hand, there are some disadvantages in encouraging international tourism: some obvious examples are the erosion of culture, since most tourists are Chinese, Chinese is being spoken more commonly, therefore the traditional language, Taiwanese, is starting to disappear, it has even become "uncivilised" to speak Taiwanese in Taipei! The other disadvantage is population control as the standard of living in Taiwan is high quality, some tourists stay on. This foreign influx has caused big problems, such as an increase in unemployment and the fall in social security.

Although introducing international tourism can create many problems, it is still being encouraged. The main reason is due to the profits it brings. As a developing country, the flow of capital is essential to ensure that the nation keeps growing for a healthy economy. Thus, tourism will play a more important part of Taiwan's national income in the future.

Sanford Chang

15, Taiwan, College du Lemman, Geneva, Switzerland



Bali is one of 17,508 Indonesian islands and was named by Spaniards as 'Avalon' in the 14th century. Balinese are Hindu Buddhist people who have a very profound, ancient culture. The population of Bali is around 3,000,000 and yet 2,000,000 foreign tourists and 1,500,000 Indonesian tourists visit every year. This is 1.166 times the permanent population.

Tourism has seriously affected the Balinese culture, it has brought in the new idea of dance and many Balinese have been assumed as gentle, open people but this is how they treat those assumed of a greater/higher place in the feudal system. Although tourism is seen to have helped the Balinese, it is full of disadvantages because the money is not going to the country but to large companies elsewhere and the Balinese have become dependant on tourism.

This island is known as paradise but has a large concentration of hospitals, bars and restaurants, not really what you expect to find in paradise. Sadly, Bali has become a brand image and a space of imagination caused by the holiday companies who are describing and showing Bali as

'paradise' in their promotional videos. This only scratches the surface of Bali and underneath worse is happening. The island was once a great island known as paradise but now, although still called paradise, it is a place of underlying violence, money laundering, drugs and prostitution. And the great culture that is still thriving is not being respected as it should be.

It strongly appears that globalization and tourism have had a negative impact on Bali's culture/population. This is shown by the fact that an ancient old culture is being less respected and soon it is likely that the younger generation will copy this attitude and this culture could be lost. As for the population, it has gone into the tourist/entertainment department and if the tourists were for some reason to leave it is shocking to think of the consequences it could bring and, as

said previously, there is a lot of money laundering, drugs, prostitution and violence which is not good for a land that has been living so peacefully for many many years.

Liam Fahy,
15, United Kingdom, La Grande
Boissière, Geneva, Switzerland



AIDS in Botswana

With a population of fewer than 2 million, HIV/AIDS is killing thousands of people every year. This causes concern for a lot of people. HIV/AIDS was first reported in Botswana in 1985 and since then has increased. Approximately 270,000 people were diagnosed with the virus in 2005.

Many concerns have been rising as to why this virus is increasing. The worst problems that have arisen are prostitution and rape cases. With rape cases many victims are left with the scar of having HIV/AIDS and left with children they will not be able to take care of. Prostitution in Botswana is increasing and with this the spread of the disease increases rapidly. The government is now sending police around to patrol and to try and prevent anything that could occur.

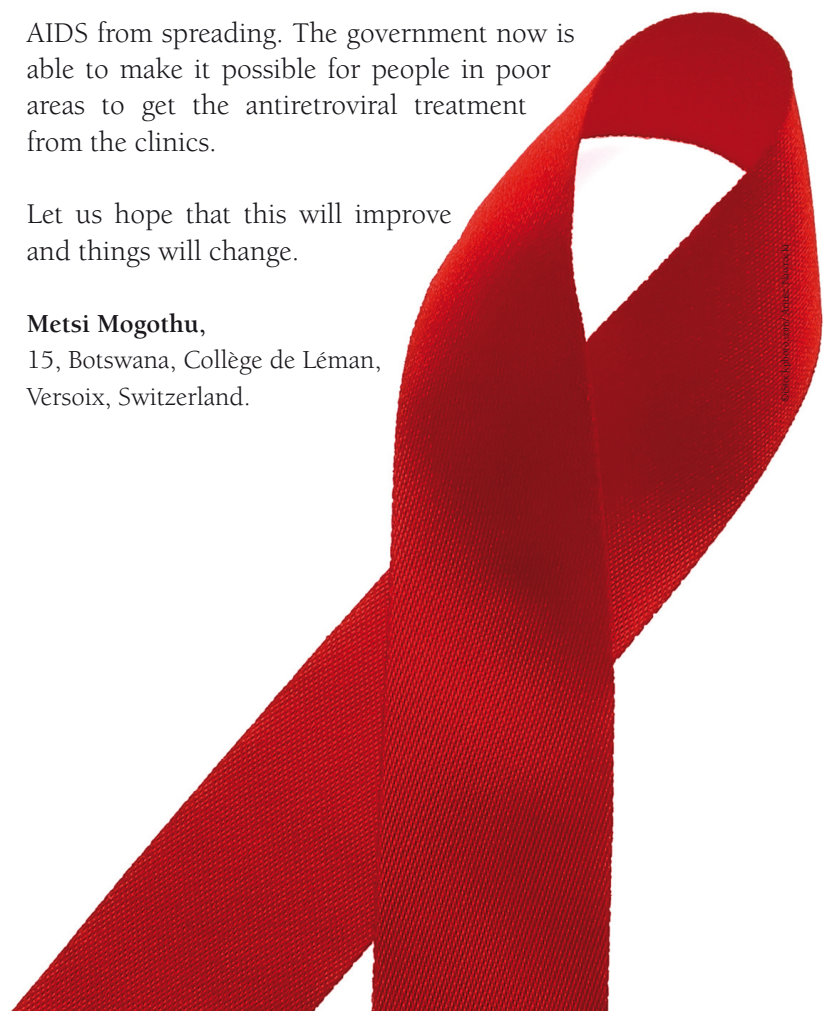
Many children are abandoned or placed in orphanages. There are many that even carry the virus. The government has collaborated with organisations that help in the prevention and help people fight the virus. Botswana has started programmes where people can go to clinics and be tested for free. They also offer counselling. The government has started teaching children in schools about the virus and the ways of prevention.

Campaigns have started around the world to stop HIV/

AIDS from spreading. The government now is able to make it possible for people in poor areas to get the antiretroviral treatment from the clinics.

Let us hope that this will improve and things will change.

Metsi Mogothu,
15, Botswana, Collège de Léman,
Versoix, Switzerland.







TOURISM

- Eco-Tourism: It's aim is to protect both the built and natural environment by promoting sustainable practices, benefiting the local population both socially and economically.
(Source: Geography an integrated Approach - David Waugh)
- Services linked to tourism: Transport, catering, construction, black market and insurance...How many more can you think of?
- 80% of travellers expenditures go into the hotels, airlines and international companies where the headquarters are mostly found in a developed western country.
(Source: Planet Geography- Stephen Codrington)
- Top tourist destinations in the developed world: France, Spain, and Italy.
- Top tourist destinations in developing world: Mexico, China, and Turkey
- In 2006 tourism increased by 6%, that is more than 15 million tourist arrivals in one year!
(Source: <http://www.un.org/>)
- Each year, around 5,000 hectares of land (vision an area about half the size of Paris) is cleared for golf courses, each of which usually consume more than 2.3 million litres of water every single day.
(Source: www.wwf.org.uk)
- There's over 1 million people who live under the flight paths of Heathrow airport and many have to tolerate a plane flying over every 45 seconds.

Destination EARTH

We all have an ideal destination, whether it's relaxing on a sunny beach, an active expedition participating in winter activities on snow-covered mountains, or it could be the experience of discovering a new culture and exploring the surrounding local environment. Endless Choices! The colossal tourist industry presents us with so many possibilities! Tourism, being the focus of this edition of Earth Focus, is overwhelmingly interlinked with the intricate processes of globalisation from the economic to the socio-cultural and increasingly the environmental. Globalisation and tourism effects everything from the erosion or commodification of a culture, the promotion of a healthy economy, a greater use of scarce non-renewable resources, dependency, the increase in global transport especially that of the aviation industry and the increase of

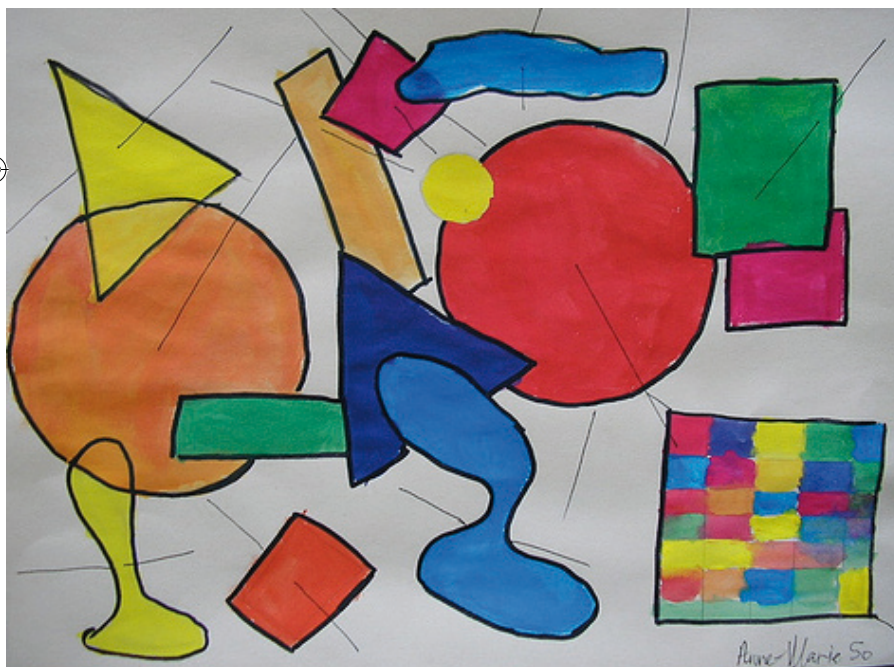
of the highest contributors to climate change and in this edition of Earth Focus we must think holistically about how different factors and services are interlinked with tourism. Does that mean we should be questioning our chosen type of transport to reach our tourist destination and should we be questioning how our holiday choices affect the size of our ecological footprint? As was stated before, the tourist industry gives us an influx of choices but we must act as active global citizens and decipher which choices are the least destructive.

The articles presented in this edition give a wide range of arguments, opinions and personal perspectives on both the advantages and disadvantages of tourism. Specific country case-studies, for example we will be looking at Bali, Taiwan and Bulgaria, are often written from the perspective of a national, holding and maintaining specific cultural ties which will help us analyse the impacts of tourism on specific localities and countries.

Tourism, it is argued, opens up the doors for developing nations who want to expand on their industry and boost foreign exchange and investment in the world market. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) study on the positive impacts of tourism understand that tourism can generate income and help the growth in peripheral industries by increasing employment and infrastructure investment. UNWTO sites that tourism supports 7% of worldwide workers (1 in 15) and that worldwide arrivals reached 842 million in 2006, representing a 4.6% year on year growth. Although, as one student points out, this economic situation often causes dependency and it is actually the developed nations who benefit from the growth, for they receive the revenue from the building of often environmentally unsound

Western-owned hotels and services. In the case of Bali, Liam Fahy states, *"the money is not going to the country but to large companies elsewhere and the Balinese have become dependant on tourism."*

Hopefully in this edition the arguments surrounding tourism, the growth of the detrimental externalities of the transport industry, and the growing awareness of ecological and sustainable forms of tourism will help us appreciate the different impacts tourism has globally. This will enable us to make our own judgements about our previous trips as tourists and will diligently make us, as informed individuals, plan a more sustainable option for our future tourist adventures!



understanding and acceptance of diverse world cultures. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines tourists as those who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited." Thinking back, have you fallen under the definition of what constitutes a tourist? If so, have you thought about the consequences of being a tourist? That you partook in one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy?

Within the tourism industry, the transport sector plays an influential role. Non-sustainable forms of transport are one

Tourism AND Aviation



Trains, planes and automobiles! Walking, hitchhiking and cycling! The role of transport seems inescapable in our daily lives which is worrying because of its major contribution to the increase in carbon emissions. The escalation in technologies and new modes of transport has now made the world seem like a smaller more compact place! The tourist industry relies on certain modes of transport, especially that of the aviation industry. The aviation industry is now considered the world's fastest growing source of carbon dioxide emissions. The organisation Hacan Clearskies (www.hacan.org.uk) states that, "World-wide aviation is currently responsible for 3% of the emissions that contribute to climate change. Over the coming decades that is expected to rise to 15%." The Hacan Clearskies organisation also report that "Aviation is so damaging to the climate that jetting off to Sydney for a holiday produces the same amount of CO₂ as a mini driving around the earth 640 times!" Yikes! What a startling statistic!

Sadly, this destructive form of transport has direct consequences on the very places that rely on tourism, these places often being the developing world located in the global South. The *UN World Tourism Organisation* recognized at their *Conference on Climate Change* that the problem of climate change threatens the livelihood of many coastal zones and small islands because of sea-level rises, beach erosion and changes in seasonal patterns. Mountainous regions are being directly altered by the melting of glaciers, and spells of warmer weather lessening snowfall, this has a direct connection with the diminishment of winter sports that so importantly supply revenue to local economies.

Now that some facts and figures have been presented, I feel it is crucial that we think and plan how to reach our desired destination in the most environmentally friendly way. Just remember, getting there can be the most creative and exciting part of the trip! Trains and buses are great modes of transport especially if you are travelling in continental Europe.

Seat61 (www.seat61.com) a site promoting more sustainable modes of transport proclaims, "*the environmental benefit of taking the train instead of flying is probably much greater than 90%. Airlines emit their CO₂ directly into the upper atmosphere, where it does over twice the damage (in fact, an estimated 2.7 times the damage) of the same quantity of CO₂ emitted at ground level.*"

So, why not ride a bike! Take a walk! Why not visit local areas, we are often strangers in our own countries! All I am asking you to do is think outside the box and explore the possibilities!

Below are listed a few websites that provide further info on aviation and some that may help you make your trip a more sustainable experience:

<http://www.seat61.com/>
<http://www.greenskies.org/>
<http://www.hacan.org.uk/>
www.planestupid.com
<http://www.wwf.org>
<http://www.ibike.org/>

Youth Editor

Tourism, pros and cons



Positive

- 1 Brings money
- 2 Helps to discover new cultures
- 3 Meet different people
- 4 Shopping
- 5 Skiing
- 6 Reunions
- 7 Language awareness
- 8 Eco-holidays
- 9 Employment for local people
- 10 Monuments – visits and conservation of
- 11 Companies to organise travel
- 11 Festivals
- 12 Broadens horizons
- 13 Learn new sports
- 14 Secondary residences



Negatives

- 1 Overcrowding
- 2 Terrorism threats
- 3 Uses too many natural resources
- 4 Danger of epidemics (SARS), Avian 'flu, etc.
- 5 Too many imports, especially food
- 6 Tourists can bring behavior that is unacceptable to the habits of the host country
- 7 Nudism becomes acceptable
- 8 Encourages the sex trade as in Thailand

Some difficulties for the traveler

1. More and more regulations
2. No liquids – only in small quantities
3. Airplanes that are delayed or too full
4. Stress of traveling

Our class had more to say about the negative points of tourism. There were also many positive things but if you are going somewhere not many people think about all the negative things tourism brings because they are having such a good time. Tourism can harm the local populations customs, like being nude on a beach. I think most people like going to warm places. I love going to Germany for shopping.

Alexandra Clarke

15, Australia, Collège du Léman, Versoix, Switzerland.

Tourism In the USA

Tourism in the States is very popular especially in New York. I happen to live an hour away from there, which is New Jersey. People usually travel to New York for shopping, parties, theatre and food. It is less expensive for shopping for clothes and it has every style of clothes you are looking for. They have great clubs and people in America are generally nice so it is very easy to make friends and go to parties. They also have great musicals and theatre shows such as "Lion King" and many more. People tend to love the food in the United States. Maybe not the Europeans because they think that it is high in cholesterol and nasty, but actually its just people eating too much of it because they like it so much! There is every type of food: Chinese, Italian, the choices are endless. A lot of people come to New York because it is an easy flight (direct). The language is easy because we speak English. New York has every type of season so during summer, winter, fall and spring there are different festivals and activities going on. They have many sports in the United States so people could try new things. There are a lot of good things that happen in the States, but also some bad ones, like terrorism. Many are scared to come to the U.S. because of what happened in the past (9/11).

If people prefer to go skiing for winter sports it is really the place to go. It is quite expensive to go to a places like Colorado and there are too many people on the mountains. It takes one hour just to go from the lift and back. Since there are a lot of people in New York you are not really

relaxed because it is not calm like going to the beach, it is a very active place. You have all kinds of choice so it really depends on what you like best!

One thing that bothers me a lot is that so many people from different countries come and buy clothes like American Eagle, Abercrombie and Fitch, Delias and so on. This bothers me because it is not special anymore for the people who are really from there and you don't even have to travel nowadays to America to get these clothes, you can just order it over the Internet. But, the worst thing of all is that a lot of people insult the States about everything and then you see them wearing clothes from there and eating American culture food. At the moment one does hear criticims of the US, perhaps it's because people don't really know Americans personally.

When I look around in the place that I live, I realize that it is actually the home to many different skin colours and origins, so lots of people do respect the US and want to live in our country, is it because there are good opportunities, nice people, it's fun and the clothes are cheaper?

Overall I love traveling back to the States because I really like New Jersey and the people. I like seeing the difference between Switzerland and America and, there is a big difference.

Taylor Curry, 17

United States of America, Collège du Léman, Versoix, Switzerland.



Tourism in

Venezuela

I am sure you have always wanted to visit paradise, well I have the solution for you, come visit Venezuela and your dreams will come true. This is a beautiful country full of people and Latino American beauty, its capital is Caracas, not a very touristy place. In the surrounding countryside there are islands, the Amazon rainforest, the sea and natural sites that are very interesting. One of the positive things of Venezuela is the climate, where it is warm all year long. There are a lot of beautiful places in Venezuela, one of them is Loz Roques with lots of little islands, really pretty islands with crystalline water and white sands, plenty of sun, delicious food (fish, arepas, cazon.) There are amazing hotels where you can have an awesome time with friends and family. If you do not like the beach you can go to the south of the country to La Gran Sabana this is an amazing place in the middle of the wild where you can experience what it is like to be surrounded by wild plants (tall trees, colourful flowers) and wild animals (jaguars, monkeys), I can tell you that you will have fun. If nature is not what you like then there is Caracas the capital of the country. There are some really good luxury hotels, delicious restaurants all around the city and malls like El Tolon and Los Naranjos. There are also lots of nightclubs for those who are looking for a real party. There is not one night in Caracas when there are not parties going on!

I know everything sounds great but if you want to go I have to warn you about the insecurity in Caracas, especially for those who have money but do not let this ruin your fun because tourists usually have high security. I can assure you that it will be really hard for something horrible to happen to you. I would like to keep telling you how amazing that Caribbean country is but I must finish here by saying, "If you ever have the chance to go Venezuela – go – don't miss it!"

Valentina Castillo, 16, Venezuela
Collège du Léman, Versoix, Switzerland.

Australia

Australia is widely known for sunny beaches and excellent surfing. Most of the year it is very hot. There are vast deserts. It has very good clothing with lots of imports from Europe and Asia. In some parts of Australia, there is very good skiing and snowboarding. Many people visit Australia to go into the forests and do ecological projects because the countryside is not very polluted. Australia has a surprisingly small population for such a large country but it can be very busy in most of the cities. Australia does not have a particular tradition or culture, apart from the Aborigine, the indigenous people and their history. Towards the middle of the country, it is less populated and around the edge there are beautiful beaches.
Come to Australia!!

Alexandra Clarke, 16, Australia, Collège du Léman
Versoix, Switzerland.

Hawaii

Hawaii also known as the "Island of Paradise," is infested with tourists, Tourists from all over the world, all year long. Hawaii is a chain of islands with a warm breezy tropical climate that is a great attraction for tourists. Along with its climate, our cool soft sandy beaches are a wonderful attraction for residents and tourists. The coast is built up of buildings and shops and more tourist activities. Which is a terrific thing for our economy but it ruins the resident population's feeling of home and destroys our natural resources. The beachfront is developed with high-rise buildings. Oahu is one of the islands of Hawaii that attracts the most tourists and is more developed than the other islands. It is the most modern island. Honolulu is the capital and principal city where all the hotels, shops, tourists and malls are. It is also known as 'downtown'. Hawaiian nationals usually do not live downtown because it is a tourist environment. They usually live on the other side of the island or outside of Honolulu where it is calmer and the environment has been preserved. A tourist's point of view of Hawaii is completely different from a resident's point of view. For a tourist "Hawaii" is what they have seen in movies and T.V. programmes, with calm romantic sunset beaches, and Tiki huts. They think it is a paradise on earth where they can go and do whatever they want and are careless about the resident population and of the environment. They introduce non-indigenous animals that upset the ecological balance. They pollute and destroy our fresh clean beaches and the air. They can be very careless about our homes, they bring in many different types of cultures and do not seem to respect the native culture. Hawaiian culture is dying out and our monarchy ended because of invaders from North America. Now residents try to teach their children about the native culture to preserve it. Every school has a study period called "Hawaiiana studies". There is even a school where only Hawaiian children can attend. They are trying to preserve our native culture and not let it disappear.

Emi Sasakaw, 18, U.S.A. – Hawaii
Collège du Léman, Versoix, Switzerland.

Finland

Tourism has become an important part of the economy for some countries. In my home country, Finland, tourism is popular, but not too popular, to make it an over crowded-place. Many people from Asian countries tour Finland, as it is quite different from their home countries.

The Finnish climate is mostly snowy. This allows people to ski, have snowball fights, go sleighing and enjoy winter landscapes. It can be wet, but the wetness seems to give a fresh scent to the air.

In Finland there are many historical things to see. Most of these are part of our Scandinavian history. For example Finland was first occupied by Sweden for 900 years, then for 100 years by Russia and Finland is now just emerging. Therefore, people unfamiliar with this history can learn new things.

Special events have been held, and new ones are to be held as well, for example in 2005 the World's Athletic Competition (WAE) was held here. Also in 2007, the Eurovision song contest will be hosted in Finland.

There are negative aspects about Finland as well. Drinking is a major problem in Finland. Many teens already start drinking at 12. This has a bad influence on visiting tourists, as they could get addicted themselves. Tourists might even end up being stalked by a group of drunken Finnish people, who do not even know what they are doing. Smoking has also increased in Finland and there are many smoke filled places.

There are a large variety of different shopping items for adults, but for teens and children, there is not a wide choice and variety. For teens, clothes are mostly sold only with the grunge or Goth style. For children, clothes are not special and are easily available from other countries. There are also many teens who like the Goth style. If this frightens you, Finland is not the best holiday destination.

Although Finland has negative aspects, there are more positive ones. Also, the negative facts can be ignored, if you really put your mind to it. It is quite a safe country, and it should be visited and enjoyed.

Eerika Rasijeff, 16, Finland, Russia
Collège du Léman, Versoix, Switzerland.

Mexico

Tourism is one of the main activities of certain regions in Mexico. It affects society in many different ways and has a profound impact on the social, cultural and economic life of our country. It is true tourism can bring many economic profits, but people are starting to damage some natural resources by building over them. The deterioration of our surroundings began when men started making use of the natural resources for their own over-exploitative benefit. This interaction between humans and nature is starting to be a worry, as it is starting to become a relationship of aggression. People must become conscious about what is happening and start working on a solution to preserve and protect nature but at the same time do something that benefits tourism as well.

Tourism must be handled well to help the impact that damages the environment. It must be organised and planned by professionals and locals, who have a serious concern with environmental means. They have to find the way to diminish the amount of waste generated in tourist centres, avoid damaging nature when constructing new infrastructures and control the use of potable water in a rational form and try to recycle it. If the government and tourism authorities work together to solve all these situations against natural resources, the country will have more benefits for both tourism and nature.

Martha Martinez, 16, Mexico
Collège du Léman, Versoix, Switzerland.

Russia

Every second person you ask "what does Russia mean to you?", the answer will be – "Bears, vodka, balalaikas and permanent winter," but not every Russian has seen a bear not every Russian drinks vodka without stopping, balalaikas can be seen only in museums and actually it is not so cold the entire year!

Russia is the birthplace of such geniuses as Pushkin, Dostoevskii, Tolstoy and Tchaikovsky, their exclusive work will never be forgotten. There is no other place in the world that has such beautiful and exclusive museums as Russia has, especially in Moscow (Kremlin and Tzetiakovskii gallery) and St. Petersburg (Petzgoff and Ezmitage).

A lot of tourists decide to visit Kamchatka, because there is the very nice Gaizer Valley, also the very popular lake Baikal that offers the "gold ring ship trip."

The best preference of the Russian tourists is the summer trip to the seaside of the Black Sea. That is because it is very beautiful, the weather is hot and the price of the trip is not expensive. The problem is that the Russian Federation is much bigger than other countries are, so it is very difficult to explain everything that it has, so everyone has to experience it for themselves.

Yulia Davidenko, 16, Russia, Collège du Léman, Versoix, Switzerland



Rila Monastery

You want to spend your summer holidays in a nice, hot place by the sea? Do you want to spend a sporting winter holiday in the fresh air of high mountains with the sun reflecting on the white snow? Or you just want to visit interesting places and discover a new culture, traditions and horizons? Then Bulgaria is the perfect place to satisfy your wishes! Bulgaria has its good points which people appreciate, most of them are material such as hotels, monuments, beaches, shops and so on. But a side that people ignore most of the time is the economy of the country and its many inside problems related to tourism and visitors. The multiple hotels welcome tourist who are satisfied to sleep in such nice places and the employed people of the hotels are satisfied to earn money. Unfortunately there are not enough people to fill up the hotels. The only hotels full every day are on the coast of the Black sea, during a short period of 2-3 months. A lot of people come to spend holidays in Bulgaria because of the cheap prices. Of course, for tourists cheap prices

are an advantage that will stimulate the tourism to increase. An increase of tourism means more pollution a greater use of natural resources, change of culture, people become familiar with foreign languages. Can you imagine that people from Western Europe become familiar with foreign languages? Can you imagine that people from Western Europe come to Bulgaria to buy huge quantities of cheap alcohol and tobacco? Although, tourism worldwide is considered a factor of pollution and problems in the country, for people in Bulgaria, tourism is one very good solution to earn money. Today, Bulgaria is being modernized trying to look like the countries in Western Europe. Bulgaria is a very poor country and I hope its entry in the European Union (EU) will be a positive chance for Bulgarians and the start of something new...

Violeta Gantchera,

17, Bulgaria, Collège du Léman, Versoix, Switzerland.

The cliffs at Black Sea shore near Kamen Bryag vilage



Morocco

At the end of May last year I was lucky enough to go to

Morocco with a group of students from the International School of Geneva. First we

flew to a place called Ouzazarte. We stayed the night there with our really nice guide called Sidi. The next day we left in the afternoon and by bus. The journey was rather long but the scenery was very interesting indeed. By the time we got to Zagora it was dark and everybody was tired so we stayed in a hotel and we went to sleep straight away. The next morning we woke up really early because our guide said we were going to go on some camels into the Sahara Desert to stay with the Berbers. We each had our own camel. It was great fun – we rode them for 6 hours! The temperature was 43° C (109° F) and in the summer it gets to between 50° and 60° C (122 ° F to 140° F) in the Sahara. When we got there the only thing you see was sand everywhere sand, sand, sand. On the way, we saw a lot of buildings and houses made from something that



looked like mud, I was really quite surprised. It was really amazing that they had the lovely tents out just for us. The Berbers had prepared lunch

for us and then we went to slide down a sand mountain, it was fun. I so enjoyed it when the night came as the fire was lit and the people danced around it, their own religious dance. They also taught us how to make bread from wheat they grow in the area. First they dig a hole, they put hot rocks in it then they leave the bread for a while to cook. We had this bread – it was delicious.

Edward McKenzie Gorton,

10, Scotland, Les Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.





With the increasing knowledge of environmental and social problems existing globally today the need for direct, practical action to combat these often human induced catastrophes has never been as urgent.



Concerned and apprehensive global citizens are witnessing the terrifying pressures of over-exploitation and consumption and the distancing and destruction of our intrinsic relationship with our natural environment. This is being witnessed through such worrying processes as deforestation and climate change, and the destruction of local public spaces. Not only has the natural world been prone to deterioration but the social situation has seemingly disintegrated through increasing inequalities and the easy violation of basic human rights. As alarmed and attentive citizens of the world and readers of Earth Focus I'm guessing many of you are asking how we can, as

individuals through local initiatives, improve our lifestyles to promote a more sustainable and equitable world. We often feel that our individual actions are insignificant because of the growing immensity of the situation but schemes like that of the *Green Map System* (www.greenmap.org) will help put our ideas and concerns into action! Phew!

The Earth Focus Foundation is working with Green Map to introduce this initiative to the area of Switzerland, known as Swiss Romande. We have been working with students from primary to university and with the municipal council and residents of the Commune of Grand-Saconnex for the



first project to join the five hundred other green maps in fifty countries. If you should wish further information please contact the Editor of Earth Focus.

As Nandita, a year 8 student of Geneva explains, Green Mapping is a “*global, eco-cultural movement developed by local knowledge, action and responsibility.*” She illustrates that “*Green Maps are meant to chart the environmental and cultural aspects of any chosen local area. The Green Map system developed in 1995 is now active in hundreds of cities, villages and neighbourhoods in over 50 counties.*” The Green Map System has a shared visual language that can be understood universally through a collaboratively designed set of icons representing the different kinds of green sites and cultural resources. Mapmakers (of all ages) are producing unique, regionally flavoured images that fulfil local needs, yet are globally connected. Below are shown two symbols that are commonly found on a Green Map:



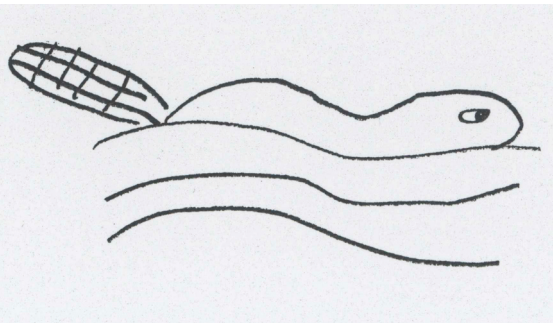
Recycling



Community Center

The Green Map allows individuals to locate prime areas and facilities such as bike paths, green spaces, organic/fair trade outlets, recycling centres and community associations allowing a more environmentally accessible lifestyle that will hopefully improve our relationship with our local community. Student Yann Stefan explains that, “*Green maps don’t just point out the environmentally pleasing areas and facilities but they also display areas with serious health hazards, such as major pollution zones and smog infected areas, or a particularly dangerous and noisy road.*” By pinpointing the destructive hopefully the community can work harder to clean up unsafe and environmentally unsound activities that will promote the goal of a more sustainable community for current and future generations.

The objective of the Green Map permits both new and old citizens and tourists to prosper and live more culturally and environmentally within a given urban or rural setting, this should be easily aided by the clear and concrete information found on the maps. The Green Map system allows the concept of sustainable development to be easily implemented into our daily life, which will hopefully augment community cohesion promoting further positive equitable development allowing us to rehabilitate our intrinsic relationship with our local environment. The map can provide the local area with a beneficial decision-making tool to further the policies of sustainable development and Agenda 21 (www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21). As two year 8 students of Geneva impressively point out, “*The green map can show how the environment has changed over a period of time. For example, you plot a green map and it has seven recycling points and then you look at the green map of the same area several years later and there are ten recycling spots, this illustrates that the area has become more environmentally friendly.*”



In the following articles we will be able to understand how the practical implementation and construction of the Green Map is an advantageous education and learning tool for students of all ages. This is achieved by making students more sensitive to local sustainable development issues. These examples of hardworking students highlight the Green Map as an education tool that should be further expanded upon globally within diverse institutions.



Green Map of Grand-Saconnex

The busy year 8 students of the International School of Geneva, Switzerland (Campus des Nations) took on the exhilarating challenge of helping design the Green Map of their local area, the commune of Grand-Saconnex. The community of Grand-Saconnex is one of the 45 communes of Geneva with around 10,400 habitants. It has many sites which are common to any other commune in Geneva as well as some which set it apart from the rest such as Palexpo, a convention centre owned by the State of Geneva with at least 102,000 square metres of exhibition space. The aim of the Green Map project and the involvement of the youth was to integrate students and the new population into the local area by teaching them about the need for equitable and sustainable facilities and development projects. By being practically involved in the construction of the map local initiatives were extended to more people.

The year 8 geography students were able to explore their surrounding school area improving their mapping skills by vividly surveying their environmental and cultural landmarks. The student Nandita clearly annotates the structure of their task, *"we took pictures and notes on any cultural or environmental aspect that might be of interest for our project. We used base maps of the specific areas we were charting and used the Green Map icons to indicate our findings on the map. Along with every icon we used, we took photographs that showed the different things we found and we later added captions describing the photograph and the purpose of the chosen object or place. One lesson was entirely devoted to a trip to Palexpo where we learnt about the many things they do to help the environment and how the waste from their numerous exhibitions and conferences are dealt with. We learnt about their recycling programme and were actually taken to where all the action happens!"* Becky and Signe of class 8i explain that, *"On the first day of our project we visited a nearby park and marked all the sites we saw, including a skate park. To display the skate park on our map we used this icon:*



It represents children's play areas."

They thought that the most important sites to mark where the recycling points for they state, *"One of the most important sites was the recycling centre.*



In this centre you can bring plastic and glass bottles, as well as paper and cardboard. We used this symbol to represent it:



All of us really enjoyed doing this project and we encourage others to do the same, and hope that our map will be useful for the promotion of sustainable development in the area of Grand Saconnex." Their experience with the construction and development of the map demonstrates that many students are already concerned with locating facilities that promote environmentally friendly practices, this is exposed by their emphasis on the noteworthiness of marking the recycling point.



By participating in the project the students really feel that they are personally, as individuals, making a contribution to their local community. A sense of cohesion, thoughtfulness and creativity develops both through the imaginative process of developing new icons for their specific community and by the practical force of actually participating and taking direct and transparent action. A student named Yann writes, "We learned how much information there actually is to write about in a given area, and how immensely interesting it is. We learned also how important it is to look after what we cherish in the environment, and how we must respect the concepts of sustainable development." The students were able to discover the significance of taking local action and how this affects the bigger picture. By taking small but meaningful steps a more prosperous and compassionate relationship with our environment can be recognized. In conclusion as a student excitingly communicates, *"The Green Mapping movement is an important element in our global mission of raising worldwide awareness on ecological issues and it is helping to create a path for the modern world to become a "greener environment!"*"



Arboretum Aubonne Green Map Project

The students of College du Lemman in the Geneva region of Switzerland were able to take an excursion to a beautiful and serene arboretum found in the valley of Aubonne. An arboretum is a nature park where trees and plants are grown for study and educational purposes. One student described the Arboretum of Aubonne as a, “*little piece of tranquil paradise, a park in Aubonne a quiet Swiss village in the foothills of the Jura overlooking the Lake Geneva.*”



The aim of this trip was for the class to create a Green Map, to explore and familiarise themselves with the arboretum and communicate their findings with a larger public which was achieved by the finalisation of the anticipated Map.

A student named Maha explains, “*All grade 9 classes were ready to go and discover the beautiful nature of Aubonne Arboretum. We were divided into several groups and each individual was given a specific role. There was a person in control of the map as we were walking they marked and stuck the signs on our map. Photographers, who took pictures of the beautiful views and plants we saw. And we, the journalists, wrote what we encountered and achieved.*” The photo below shows the students working on their specific roles.

By each pupil having a specific role the students were given a sense of responsibility that allowed for better group work and dynamics. The students were able to meet together at the end and elaborate on the successes and failures of their visit, especially by studying their choice of icons and their data collected. They were also asked to discuss their feelings about Green Mapping and to show how each icon and the specific information collected related to the concept of sustainable development. The discussion among the hardworking students was the preliminary action needed to collaborate their findings enabling the motivated young people to return to their classroom and work on creating the much desired Green Map of the Aubonne Arboretum. After all their hard and determined work a Green Map was created with the concrete Green Map icons, photos of the stunning arboretum and examples of their accomplished hard work. As can be understood the students had a lot on their hands, what a challenge!!

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Patrick writes that the main purpose of the Green Map for him is that, *“we will be giving the future visitors an accurate account of what features to look for throughout their visit and how they can relate it to sustainable development.”* Another student felt, *“we learned about nature’s beauty and why it must be preserved. At times it can be risky and we must be cautious of it. We learned that as it rains water insects, such as snails, and slugs come out, and birds hide in trees.”* This shows that students on their trip not only were taught about the process of green mapping but were able to closely observe nature and further develop their relationship with it. This is crucial in implementing the need

for conservation and lasting environmental protection locally and globally in our present chaotic world.

As a symbolic step to preserve and maintain the beauties and essentialities of nature some students

enthusiastically returned to the Arboretum and were able to plant and begin the nurturing of a healthy tree. This gesture brought the students closer to their present environment by leaving behind a piece of new life which can represent all the hard and worthwhile work they have



What is Sustainable Development?

The United Nations 1987 Brundtland Commission defines sustainable development as *“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”* Sustainable development should take into account the spheres of the environment, the economy and social structures and institutions. It is concerned with the exhaustion of natural resources and the continuous deterioration of our precious ecosystems. It is also concerned with the absence or violation of our preliminary rights that are needed to promote the ideals of sustainability. This is often caused by the growing discrepancy between the rich and the poor which is related to the uneven distribution of wealth.

Sustainable development approaches these immense issues by addressing the needs of “weak actors” by having solidarity with and towards other communities (whatever the geographical region) and future generations. It also makes certain that the speed at which natural and renewable resources are used doesn’t exceed the speed of their regeneration and by making sure the quantity of pollution and waste generated doesn’t exceed the quantity the earth can absorb. The concept of sustainable development has created awareness among activists, politicians and students like yourself. It is a different way of thinking and acting that attempts to reconcile economic performance with social aims and environmental preservation. This notion is needed to be understood immediately because preservation and ethical thought need to be put in place for both the present and the future.

Green Map in Zürich

This Green Map was put together by the primary school students and their teacher Mr. Graham Gardner of the Inter-Community School of Zurich, Switzerland. This is an amusing and creative way of sharing with new students how to get around their campus and promoting sustainable development issues.





The Great Barrier Reef

This article will hopefully encourage us to remember the fragility of our lively ecosystems, if we want to preserve beautiful destinations like the Barrier Reefs we must open our consciousness and awareness of the deteriorating surrounding life. Adventurous divers and ocean voyagers, please be aware...

The Great Barrier Reef is the biggest in the world. It is 348km². It is so big that it can be seen from space but the corals that make up the reef cannot be seen by the naked eye. The different sizes and shapes of the corals spread along tens of thousands of kilometres. This is not only a reef but it's a hideout for hundreds and thousands of sea creatures. The Barrier Reef has more than 2000 separate reefs and is located in very calm water. The wind changes the reef and makes it into lots of different shaped islands. Sea turtles lay their eggs on these islands and they lay about 100 in one go.

That's a lot of eggs, they are around the size of ping-pong balls. After around six or seven weeks baby turtles come out and head immediately to sea but only about 1 in 100 live to old age for they often get eaten by predators.

Creatures of the ocean must learn to camouflage themselves in order to survive. There are some species who can camouflage themselves in one second, and to any colour,

for any surface! There are even some fish who act like stones.

Clown fish protect themselves by living in stinging corals, they are covered in a slime which protects them from the sting of the coral.

Some shrimp use their jaw to hit their prey (usually small crabs) and to break their shell enabling them to receive the delicious crab meat.

In the centre of the reef there are 70 little islands which are not quite tropical and which don't have palm trees but eucalyptus trees. On one of these islands there is a

magnificent beach called "The White Heaven" and it is one of the top 10 beaches of the world. On those islands there are also 100 000 square kilometres of forest full of wonderful animals. Some trees on the island are 450 years old.

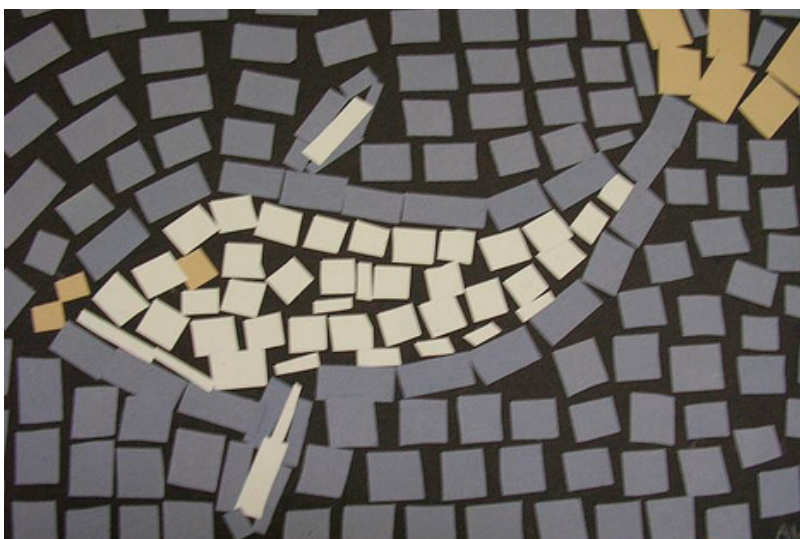
Mangrove trees grow on the island and on the reefs. They live in salt waters and their roots rise up from the

ground. They keep the water clean and they lift up their roots so that they can breathe.

The Great Barrier reef and it's islands are home to diverse wildlife, so we must learn about them and protect them!

Victor Oliynk, 11, Russia

Institut International de Lancy, Geneva, Switzerland



Pink coral from the Great barrier reef

Millennium Goals in



In 2000, the United Nations made eight Millennium Development Goals for developing countries. All these goals are set to be achieved by the year 2015.

Indonesia is one of the developing countries in this world located in Southeast Asia. It is a republic and is currently governed by Susilo Bambang. With a population of over 200 million, it is the world's fourth most populated country and also the most populated Muslim nation. Indonesia is hoping to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Millennium development goal number one is **to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty**. The poverty rate of Indonesia is about 18.2% of the population.¹ In most of the small villages many of the people are still struggling with hunger and poverty. One way to solve this conflict is to increase the literacy rate for both female and male and then this will lead to having more people employed in secondary or tertiary sectors where people earn more money than what they earn in the primary sector.

The second goal is **achieving universal primary education**. Indonesia's literacy rate is quite high. The public expenditure on education is about 0.9% of the total GDP.² The literacy rate of adults is about 90.4% and the youth literacy rate is about 98.7%.³ So I can say that this goal has been achieved in Indonesia.

The third goal which is **to promote gender equality and empower women's rights** is talking about having the equality of gender and equalize the population of literate women and employed women. The main reason why this is one of the difficult goals to achieve is because men have more power in Indonesia's culture and tradition so it might

be hard to change this over night. The adult literacy rate of women is 86.8%⁴ and for men it is 94%⁵. But I don't think this is the biggest problem to be achieved out of all the goals because for example Megawati was the first female president of Indonesia.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth goals are all connected to health issues and include:

- **Reducing infant mortality rate among children under five**
- **Reducing maternal health issues**
- **To combat AIDS/HIV, malaria and other diseases**

Infant mortality rate among children under five is improving. In 2000 it was 48 per 1000 live births whilst in 2004 was 38,4 per 1000 live births.⁶ Maternal health in Indonesia does not seem to be excellent because while giving birth and after giving birth women are not handled with proper care in hospitals; instead some of them prefer to do it in their house with a midwife. Combating AIDS/HIV is another goal to be achieved here in Indonesia, because unfortunately needles are being shared a lot. According



to the data collected in year 2005, about 170,000 people in Indonesia from age 15-49 have HIV/AIDS.⁷ To stop the increase of HIV/AIDS around Indonesia or even possibly around the world is to spread the awareness of it to the people.

The seventh goal is **to ensure environmental sustainability**. Reducing by half the proportion of people who do not have access to safe drinking water and reversing environmental losses. Not many people in Indonesia have access to safe and clean water. According to the data collected in year 2004, about 23% of the population do not have access to clean water.⁸ A country like Indonesia has plenty of natural resources though it may not be handled properly, for example the destruction of forests is a major problem.

The last eighth goal is **to develop global partnership for development** and is something that Indonesia is working on. In 2005 exports of goods and services are 37.7%⁹ of GDP and the imports of goods and services are 32.6%¹⁰ of GDP. Indonesia made improvements and is an ASEAN member.

Basically Indonesia is a developing country that has achieved some of the Millennium Developing Goals but has more to achieve. It is a country that is on its way to achieving these goals. I hope in the targeted year 2015, all the countries would achieve all these important eight Millennium Development Goals.

Jihe,

15; Social Studies; Grade 9 Bandung
International School, Indonesia

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9. Ibid
10. Ibid

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We are very fortunate that we have food, shelter, loving parents and importantly, an education. A lot of children in India can't go to school. They have to stay home and work. Some families in India don't have a roof over their head or enough to eat so children do not have the "luxury" of going to school. We just got lucky.

Much of the problem of poverty in India is related to education. It is like a circle, if people don't have an education then they don't make very much money and

others are starving and unable to get an education. If the money spent to shoot a rocket into space went to feeding and educating people in India and other poor areas, we could educate thousands and enable them to better feed and take care of themselves.

While the situation in India is poor, some good things have happened. The number of children attending school has gone up since the time of India's independence in 1951 from 12.3 million to 113.8 million in 2001. Literacy rates



Dusty local street life in a small village in Rajasthan, India

because they don't have very much money they cannot go to school because they are working just to survive.

The literacy rate in India is defined by the number of people over the age of 15 that can read and write. The literacy rate in India is 59.5%. The percentage of men who can read and write is 70.2%. The number is much lower for women at 48.3%. Most girls do not go to school. For the children who do go to school many drop out by the 5th year. Of India's 700,00 rural schools only one in six have toilets. This deters children from going to school and remaining.

I believe our society is spending too much money on things that or not important. We are sending spacecrafts out while

and the importance of education are improving, but there's still a long way to go.

Our world can and should do more to help the poor in India and elsewhere. We are really lucky, we are not begging for money or working as children. We have a warm house and enough to eat. We need to find a way to encourage people to donate money to those who don't have as much. If we could help many of these families and children improve their level of education then they could support themselves and the horrible cycle would not continue. We can do better.

Ellen Cook, 12, American
Institut International de Lancy, Geneva, Switzerland

Poverty

it kills but what are we doing about it?

Poverty is taking the world by storm and whether you live in a castle in Europe or a hut in Africa it affects you. But why is it increasing and not decreasing? Why are countries coming together to try and stop it when it is only growing bigger? The answer is greed. A few hundred millionaires now own as much wealth as the worlds poorest two and a half billion. So why is half the world getting richer when the other half are living in dirt and probably eating it too?



- suffering countries
- Sponsor a child
- Fundraise and donate the profit you make
- Donate some of your old clothes that do not fit you anymore

The people in Africa that live in poverty do not expect to live to forty but if someone in a more developed country died at forty then people would say that he was way too young to die. People that live in developed countries expect to have a house to live in and food to eat but all people that live in poverty expect is dirt and if they are lucky enough a hut and semi-clean water. Because of these circumstances it is expected that just under half of the world's population will start to die out over the next hundred years or so.

Almost half of the world's population live on just \$2 a day. **That is around 3 billion people!** The child on the top was born into poverty and would be lucky if he lives until he is five let alone ten years old. But poverty is a lot more than hunger and lack of shelter. Disease is another important aspect of poverty. Did you know that 2.2 million children die each year because they have not been immunised. So if you think about it we could save over 2 million children each year just by sending over some of the free injections that we as teenagers take advantage of everyday. As teenagers most of us expect to go home to at least one parent but 15 million children in this world do not because they have been orphaned due to their parents dying of HIV/AIDS. There are these simple things and more that we take for granted and it is the lack of these things that causes a child to die every three seconds.

So what can we do about it? Well there is the possibility of donating billions of dollars. But if you do not have billions of dollars there are still ways in which you can help out. You could do one of the following things:

- Donate tins of food that could be shipped over to

“Speak up and shout out because if it is to be then it is up to me!”

Did you know it costs NZ\$56 (US\$39/CHF48) to feed one child for a year? So if everyone donated enough money then think how many kids we could save! These children on the bottom are living in poverty and their families cannot afford to send them to school so they will never learn to read and write. Unfortunately, they are still too young to start working so there families cannot earn any extra money and the kids just sit around all day and complain from hunger. But all of the staggering figures you have read throughout this article do not stop there. Nearly one billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their name. That is one in every six adults

and one in every five children. 1.3 billion people have no access to clean water so they either die of disease or malnutrition. 3 billion people have no access to sanitation and 2 billion do not have access to electricity. These figures have been decreased over the

past three to five years but now they are starting to creep up again.

It is feeding time for the children on the bottom and they do not expect to get more than a spoonful of rice because they live in a country that is in absolute poverty. So while more than ¾ of England have a turkey roast on Christmas all these children get is a handful of clean water, rice and maybe some vegetables that have been saved from the last harvest.

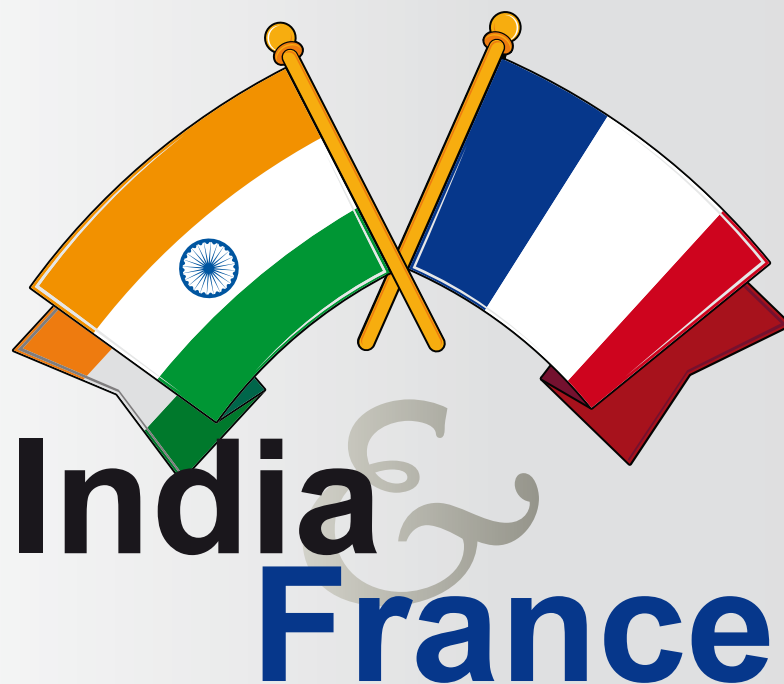
So after you have read this article at least 100 children would have died and you will probably just forget all about it, but it only takes one person to make a difference and then it becomes a chain reaction. So do not let these kids and their families continue living in disease and starve to death, make a difference to the world because poverty

needs to be stopped or it will end up stopping us.

Speak up and shout out because if it is to be then it is up to me!



Caylee Dyer, 14, New Zealand, Collège du Léman, Switzerland



Development is defined as a measure of the wealth and economic growth of a country. Previously, this was calculated using Gross National Product (GNP) per capita but the United Nations suggested the Human Development Index (HDI), which determines the development of a country using more indicators than just wealth. This comparison of India and France uses a similar method used to measure the HDI of a country in as much as it assesses the development of both countries using different indicators.

There is a significant contrast between the two countries in terms of wealth. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, or GNP, is the measurement of a country's wealth; the total value of goods produced and services provided by a country in a given year divided by the population of the country. France has a higher GDP with over \$22,000 per capita in comparison to less than \$2,000 found in India.

India has a high annual birth rate, almost double that of France. However, life expectancy for both countries also holds a stark contrast. In India people live on average to around 65 years whereas in France the life expectancy is on average about 80 years. This shows that despite a higher birth rate, the Indian population suffers from short life expectancy, portraying France as the more developed country in this case.

Education is a factor of the HDI used to measure the development of countries. The Literacy rate gives a rather accurate presentation of the educational standards of a country. In the case of India and France, France has a higher literacy rate. Less than 60% of the Indian population is literate, and yet France can claim over 96%. This is a rather firm indicator that India is still a developing country.

The amount of passenger vehicles used in France is far higher than in India. Although not a common and sometimes not a very clear indicator, these statistics demonstrate a more

advanced transportation system and reflects a higher level of technological development in France.

The economy is a rather significant indicator of a country's development. India's economy is focused more on agriculture, perhaps due to their environment and more substantial lifestyle, whereas France has a higher percentage of services and industry. These all give a clear presentation that India is still a developing country.

Development is something we often use to classify countries, but it is something that continues to change over time. Using the data gathered here, comparing the wealth, health, education, transportation and economy of both countries, it is not difficult to conclude that France is a more developed country than the developing nation of India.

Rohanna Nilsson (13 years old)
Alexandra Dunbar (14 years old)
Social Studies
Bandung International School
Indonesia



POLLUTION !

In the wake of the current and perceived consequences of the powerful force of climate change and pollution, the fears and reactions of the youth are reflected in this sombre narrative piece of writing. It illustrates the urgency for abrupt action needed to preserve the beauty of our natural environment.

The sun beat down on my head through the thick layer of dark orange clouds above. The heat was, as usual, unbearable and I knew that if I hadn't been wearing my new 'freezinsulator,' I would have probably fainted by now. I looked around at the people walking by and I guessed that behind the different coloured breathing masks of all shapes and sizes all eyes were jealousy fixed on me. I quickened my pace, not out of fear, but out of guilt. Not everyone had the means to buy themselves a freezinsulator of high quality.

Once home I opened the door, got into the air-tight cabin, and took off my gas mask. I walked into the living room where I found my Grandfather staring at a photograph. I glanced over his shoulder and saw a beautiful landscape of green grass, trees and clear glasslike water. In the background were a group of children playing merrily in the sun.

"What is that place grandpa?" I asked, unable to believe that such a place could exist, "Is it heaven?"

"No son, it was Earth... a long time ago..." he whispered.

A single tear rolled down his cheek, and he said in a voice filled with regret and sorrow, "It was beautiful..."

Michael Vela, 13, American/Japanese and Alex Marland, 12, French

Institut International de Lancy, Geneva, Switzerland

Artwork by IB student, International School of Geneva - LGB

OCEAN - POLLUTION

Ocean pollution isn't good for the environment.

It's a huge problem. A lot of organizations work to tackle it but not enough people are interested. The pollution of the sea is defined as the harmful entry of chemicals or particles into water. There are three different types of ocean pollution: chemical pollution, bacterial pollution and thermal pollution. Oil spills are a dramatic example of chemical pollution. An oil spill is the unintentional release of liquid petroleum hydrocarbon. Sixty million gallons of oil end up in the ocean every year. That's a lot of oil! The oil "glues" birds' feathers together, clogs fishes gills, and blocks out sunlight (making it harder for plants underwater to go through photosynthesis.)

On March 24th 1989, the Exxon Valdez oil tanker departed the Valdez oil terminal and struck Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound spilling an estimated 10.8 million gallons

of oil and creating a massive environmental disaster. Only 7 of the 26 monitored species and resources have recovered to pre-spill health and numbers.

One major problem with chemical pollution is that plankton can take in the toxins, making the plankton themselves toxic. Fish then eat the plankton and the quantity of toxin is magnified throughout the food chain.

The second type of pollution is bacterial. Bacteria are unicellular micro-organisms, they often come to the ocean in sewage. The problem is that fish catch infections and die. This pollution can also be a problem for humans. As many as 1.5 million people are sickened by bacterial pollution on Southern California beaches each year, resulting in millions of dollars in public health care costs.

Thermal pollution is a temperature change in the ocean. The most common cause is the use of water as a coolant by factories. The increase in temperature can decrease the oxygen and kill fish and also increase algal growth.

As you can see, ocean pollution is a big problem! We need to be aware and start making changes to reduce the damage we are causing!

Michael Sanchez, 13,

Institut International de Lancy, Geneva, Switzerland





SUSTAINABLE ENERGY EUROPE

2005-2008



Campaigning to Change the Landscape of Energy

Climate change. Sustainable energy. Global warming.

Carbon dioxide. Renewable sources. It is hard to get through the day without hearing about the importance of protecting our environment and saving energy.

The European Union is serious about changing the landscape of energy in Europe. The recent announcement that by 2020 the EU commits to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent from 1990 levels, and to ensure that 20 percent of the EU's power comes from renewable energy, will mean real changes in the coming years for European citizens. The targets are significant: by contrast, today only six percent of European power comes from renewable energy.

Co-operation with European citizens is at the heart of this proposal: only with the help of the public will the goals be met. The European Commission, recognising that the world's energy problem is directly related to the demand for energy, has developed a multi-year public education

campaign to help citizens across the 27 Member States to adopt energy savings patterns and better understand what they can do on an individual level to turn to sustainable energy sources. Called "Sustainable Energy Europe" the campaign gathers partner programmes and activities under one umbrella to help citizens better understand renewable energy and make changes in their consumption of energy. This includes improving energy efficiency, turning to clean transport choices and using alternative fuels.

It is hoped that Sustainable Energy Europe will act as a catalyst for the continued development, promotion and market adoption of sustainable energy technology and behaviour. Sustainable energy combines the efficient use of energy with the recourse to renewable energy sources, such as wind power, solar energy, geothermal power and biomass. The idea behind renewable sources is that, unlike fossil fuels, they are not depleted as humans use them; rather, their power is "harnessed."

The International School of Brussels (ISB) was invited by the European Commission to become the first school awarded the title of 'Campaign Associate' in acknowledgement of its contribution to, and promotion of, the key messages of the Sustainable Energy Campaign.

For more information about Sustainable Energy Europe and how you can get involved, visit www.sustenergy.org



The panel for the Environmental Day at the International School of Brussels:

Mr. K. Bartlett, Director of the International School of Brussels - Mr. Ballesteros Torres, Representative - European Commission - Miss Lydia Gray, Student, International School of Brussels - Miss Karyn Medcalf, Student, International School of Brussels - Mr. Bensley, Toyota Europe - Ms. Labbri, WWF, Belgium - Mr. A. Simons, Unilever Foods - Ms. Gruendig, Exxonmobil - Mr. Nikolaas Backelmans, Exxonmobil

ISB's Environmental Day March 14th, 2007

It may seem that all the media has to talk about lately

is the subject of global warming and environmental crisis. However, it is rather shocking that much of the youth population is still blind to this fact. To respond to this lack of awareness, the International School of Brussels (ISB), in cooperation with many large companies and organizations, hosted its first Environmental Day on March 14th.

The International School of Brussels is currently the only school in Belgium to have been awarded the first Eco-dynamic star from the Brussels Environmental Agency. The school is situated in the Sonian Forest (Forêt de Soignes), allowing students to explore and learn firsthand of the environment. Nearly all school publications are printed using vegetal ink and on recycled paper. Finally, ISB also acts as a 'Campaign Associate' for the Sustainable Energy Europe 2005 – 2008 Campaign, furthering its commitment to global issues. It is an unprecedented campaign aimed at ensuring greater public awareness, understanding and support for the intelligent use and production of energy in Europe. At the heart of this initiative is a simple conviction that, to achieve the Campaign goals, all sections of society need to get involved and that, together, we can make a difference and reduce the levels of CO₂ emissions that lead to climate change. The International School of Brussels (ISB) was invited by the European Commission to become the first school awarded the title of 'Campaign Associate' in acknowledgement of its contribution to, and promotion of, the key messages of the Campaign

The Environmental Day, although occurring a month after, was inspired by the 2007 EU Sustainable Energy Week, organized by the European Commission. The day commenced with the showing of Al-Gore's documentary: *An Inconvenient Truth*. The film opened the eyes of many of the students of the school and prompted interest and action. The film was followed with various workshops and activities. These educated students on various aspects of the environment and the issues which the world faces.

Students could be seen driving through town in a Toyota hybrid car, planting trees on campus, building bird houses, and much more. Some of the included seminars were on bio food, renewable and natural energy, cutting heating loss, and recycled materials.

The day ended with a panel discussion which represented a variety of groups. The panel included Kevin Bartlett, director of ISB and the council for International Schools; Karyn Medcalf and Lydia Gray as student representatives; Pedro Ballesteros Torres from the European Commission; environmental conservation organizations and representatives from the automobile and oil industries.

The discussion helped tie up any questions students may have had from the day. Mostly, however, the panel highlighted how different companies can have conflicting ideas on global issues. All members of the panel admitted there are problems with the environment, but the magnitude of these problems and the direction with which society should take to solve them differed

between various groups – mainly the environmental agencies and the oil companies. "We hear a lot of things in the press and in the media about the environment and about the companies involved in destroying and saving it," said 11th grade student representative to the panel, Lydia Gray, "However, we never know what is true. It was really nice to be able to participate in a situation where we, the students, could ask the questions, and get straight answers from a direct source."

The day in general provided a means for students to feel involved in the environment. It is a common misconception that one person cannot make a difference. With participation in the Environmental Day, it became clear that global issues are the responsibility of every inhabitant of the earth and that we must work together both to educate ourselves and others to help save the earth.

<http://www.isb.be>

By Rachel Chapman, 17

United Kingdom. International School of Brussels, Belgium.





Animal Action



About 24,000 species are endangered today, and the number just keeps on growing.

It's about time for us to react!

Causes of endangerment

There are many reasons that can cause a particular species to become endangered. For example, habitat destruction through deforestation and the introduction of exotic species. Of course, pollution, disease, as well as reproduction problems are factors we can't forget. Most of the causes of endangerment are achieved because of human activity to increase their own benefits.

Endangered species and profiles

The Giant Panda: Mainly endangered because its population is severely fragmented and its subpopulations consist of about 250 mature adults, although their habitat keeps on declining.

The Elephant: There has been at least a 50% reduction of the elephant population over the last few generations. Humans were taking their ivory from their tusks. Fortunately, hunting elephants nowadays is banned however this hasn't stopped elephants from disappearing little by little.

The Wild Common Carp: The overall population of the carp has declined by 80% and this was done incredibly fast. Its habitat is threatened by the introduction of pollutants and parasites



Ways YOU can help endangered species

In order to preserve all these animals in danger, governments are taking measures for it, but everyone can do a little to help!

For instance, we can already respect the wild life code. When it says no hunting, people must respect this code. Recycling and reusing also helps protecting nature, therefore protecting those animals and their habitat.

Loic Defouset, 14, USA

Roy Di, 14, China

Institut International de Lancy, Geneva, Switzerland.

Poems on Water

BLACK EYES

Life is water; water is Life.
Black eyes hope; bone dry skin.
Life can't cope; soul so thin.

Picture now a boy of young and tender age
Sprawled still across a desert plain.
His village slumps; and silence reigns.

How long since they last felt the heady rush of Life?
Too long, it seems, the trees are bent
In their twisting, thirsting, ailment.

And when had Life last fallen from the sky?
Eons, no doubt, dry earth laments
As people mourn the senseless deaths.
The people who said, "Dead, we're all dead,"
When summer rains refused to come,
When dust and dry became to some,
Eternal companions of their lives.

And Life would drip down from his eyes,
A dismal flow; a beggar's farce
That would so damn an innocent heart,
To such glaring glow of searing sun.

His time, he knew, was nearly done
But bundled in the Mother's arms,
He struggled 'gainst this fate so cruel
As to herald him the chosen one.

Yet of his village, hope was held by none.
How could they hope? The blinding sun
Laid all to waste, to orphan him
To the whims of dry and dusty winds

And a hundred thousand grains of sand
on which to rest,
A hundred thousand specks of thirst
to yearn for flesh
And Life-drenched blood.
It's plain to see
His life was just not meant to be.

Yet fought he did; in silent plea.
Black eyes turn skywards.

Flash of light; clap of sound.
Drop by drop; rain falls down.

Cascading life o'er tips of grey clouds
To veil his dead world in wondrous shroud
And ribbon down twixt eddying breaths
Of angels singing salvation's song.

A drop for every life-hood shorn,
A drop for every grain of sand,
A drop for every ounce of hope,
A drop to save the dying land.

And a single drop to meld with
Lifeless tears in his eyes.
The boy lies so still amidst the rain's refrain,

Black eyes shut; and all falls silent again.

How many must follow?

Author: Bayu Pangestu (16 Years)
Malaysian Illustration by Julian
Tschollar (16 Years) - German

WATER ... OUR FIRST AND LAST DESIRE

Water ... our first and last desire
Water ... necessary for survival,
Water ... our most precious resource,
Water... an amenity so many abuse,
Water... can neither be created nor destroyed,
Water can overcome hunger,
can overcome disease, can overcome poverty,
Water... is the lifeblood of a community,

Giving clean water to a poverty stricken
community is like giving a blood transfusion to a dying man.

Water... means new potential,
new hope of a better tomorrow,

Water... the gift of life.

Riya Sood, Indian, International School of
Geneva, Chataigneraie, 17 years old)



« POEMS IN A POCKET »

Water & Poetry,

Dr. Mary K. Weed,

Founder, Harmony Editions

Promoting Young Talent

A bilingual collection of student poems
by 7 to 18 year olds resolve the
problems of water in the world.

Earth Focus... the next step!

We are in the process of gathering articles for the 34th edition of the Earth Focus magazine and would be grateful for students in your school to contribute to this project.

Looking for articles falling under the topic 'Schools and Students,' we hope to receive a wide variety of ideas as well as different interpretations of the topic.

We are also looking forward to building programmes for student volunteer work in the future, and would be interested to hear what schools and their students have done so far in this area (referred to as the CAS programme in the International Baccalaureate) as well as what they would like to do.

The published magazine is circulated to schools and our subscribers worldwide; this, we hope, is a good motivator for students. Teachers are encouraged to allow time for the creation of such contributions and could even incorporate

coursework into the article writing. Students of all ages are asked to participate by creating pieces which they would like published and we invite your school to become an active member of the Earth Focus Foundation and Earth Focus Magazine by sending us the articles, pictures, drawings and ideas put forward by your students.

As well as the magazine, Earth Focus Foundation organizes various activities includes: debates, exchanges and competitions in which we hope you would also like to participate. As Earth Focus is a youth based foundation, we have enclosed a similar request addressed to your students and would like to find a representative from the student body to take on the role of being the liaison between your school and Earth Focus in the upcoming projects.

For more information please contact either:

**Nicola Spafford Furey at nicola@earthfocus.org or
Cristie McMurray at Cristiejanemcm@yahoo.com**

All articles should be sent to:

editor@earthfocus.org

in Word format/programme. By postal mail please send to :
Earth Focus C.P. 3006, 1211 Geneva 3, Switzerland (mark if you wish your material to be returned to you). Please add name, age, country of origin and school.

Pictures and drawings should be in JPG (in the highest resolution), if included in your text please also send separately. Please no plagiarism and all information and illustrations used from the net should be acknowledged in the footnotes.



Earth Focus... the next step!

Earth Focus would like to ask your assistance in contributing to the upcoming edition of its youth-based magazine.

The title is 'Schools and Students' and we are looking for both a variety of ideas and different interpretations of the topic. Students of all ages are invited to participate by submitting articles, drawings, pictures or ideas on the given topic or any subject you would like to share with young people worldwide.

In the future we hope to build student volunteer work programmes and would be very interested to see what your school and students have done in this area (known as the CAS in the International Baccalaureate) as well as what you would like to do. After carrying out an activity or expressing an admirable goal, the schools and students write reports, take photos, draw pictures or share ideas on such experiences which are then published in the magazine and shared with schools throughout the world. The Foundation is also working towards organising visits to Geneva, student exchanges, various debates, competitions and many more activities, so we look forward to your future active participation in these exciting new ventures.

As the projects are student orientated, we would like to ask a representative of your student body to take on the role of being the contact between the school and Earth Focus Foundation.

For more information please contact either:

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Cristie McMurray at Cristiejanemcm@yahoo.com**

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www.educapoles.org

Greenhouse gas, polar ice, renewable energy...

Does this ring a bell? No?! Then it's time you visit the Educapoles website!

You will find all kinds of tools (flash animations, pictures, videos, games, fairy tales, competitions...) that deal with polar regions and climate change.

