

**LIFE-LINK FRIENDSHIP-SCHOOLS
XIII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

SIGTUNA AND UPPSALA, SWEDEN 06-10 AUGUST 2007

**REPORT
INCLUDING CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



***Green School Garden
Education for Sustainability
Legacy of Carl von Linné 1707-2007***

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INTRODUCTION

Life-Link

Life-Link Friendship-Schools Programme – Life-Link, founded in Sweden 1987, is an NGO response to the cold war in the 1970-80s and also a response to youth world-wide expressing a lack of hope facing an imminent risk of a nuclear weapons holocaust and realizing an alarming environmental degradation. Life-Link today offers a peace curriculum that builds on the ethics of Care: *Care for Myself - Care for Others - Care for Nature*. Care in its wide constructing definition of taking an interest as well as to engage in healing and rehabilitation. At mostly annual international Life-Link conferences the Life-Link programme has been step by step refined. The current program has its structure since 1999, facing the new millennium. More than 500 schools in 75 countries today find inspiration by using the Life-Link Manual and peace actions guidelines. 2600 reports from schools worldwide, now introduced on the www.life-link.org “Schools&Actions”, are an inspiration for other schools. The reports can be selected and sorted out depending on what specific action you are interested to look at. The Life-Link programme builds on natural and social sciences without political or religious strings.

XIIIth international Life-Link conference.

The XIIIth international Life-Link conference 06-10 August 2007 took place in Sigtuna town in Sweden, including a one day visit to Uppsala city North of Stockholm and Sigtuna, a total of.

The theme of this conference was

Green School Garden - Sustainable Development - the 300 years Legacy of Carl von Linné

The theme connects to the Life-Link peace/care action 3:10 Green School Garden. 44 schools from 19 countries had studied and reported on this topic within a Life-Link campaign 2006-2007. 19 school delegations appointed for the conference reported their schools' Peace and Sport actions at the conference in plenary and poster sessions.

Results from sessions, workshops and a social programme are summarized in this report. It is with great satisfaction that Life-Link expresses thanks to all old and new partners and staff joining this cross-cultural collaborative endeavour!

OPENING CEREMONY AT SIGTUNASKOLAN HUMANISTISKA LÄROVERKET, (SSHL)

WELCOME AND OPENING ADDRESSES 06 AUGUST

Life-Link Deputy Chairperson, University Student Ms Margarita Medvedeva, stressed the importance of youth participation in the Life-Link program and in society decision-making.

SSHL Director Mr Kent Edberg, welcomed the Life-Link conferences back to Sigtuna. The most recent three conferences have taken place Bratislava, Moscow and Alexandria. In 1987 Life-Link had its birthplace at SSHL Sigtuna. The Hiroshima day was a most appropriate day for this conference to start.

Life-Link chairperson and founder, Dr Hans Levander, reminded of the day 6 August, the Hiroshima Day 62 years ago. The International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War founded 1980 was one of the Life-Link roots. Abolition of war must be a goal. Sweden now ranked as No 7 among “peaceful countries” in the world was discussed, (www.visionofhumanity.com), as well as the Life-Link concept and ethics of Care.

Mr Peder Palmstierna, Teacher Natural Sciences, Life-Link conference Executive Director.

What is Nature and what is Culture

An introduction into the Green School Garden theme and the Care for Nature ethics. The interrelation between Nature and Culture was reflected on.

Inauguration of the conference Schools’ Poster Session

Each participating school brought posters and information material that was nicely exhibited during the whole conference in the entrance hall of the lecturing building. Photos from each one of the posters are available on the www.life-link.org/gallery . The poster session was inaugurated in the presence of representatives from six Embassies in Stockholm.

GREETINGS TO THE CONFERENCE

Chile. Schools in Arica region

A greeting from Life-Link schools in Arica, and information about several activities carried out at our schools.

Georgia. Rustavi School, Rustavi.

This invited school regrets that it could not come to the conference but “We wish the conference to be successful and we are sure it will be as always. I’d like to embrace each of you and tell you: love each other, respect each other, appraise each other.”

Ghana. Saviour Experimental School

The school has planned for a year to participate at the conference, but was finally not give visa to come. The school and principal Mrs Felicia Annor, express their greeting for a most successful conference, and want to create a national Ghana Life-Link institute or centre within their school premises.

Korean Anti-Nuke Peace Physicians, Pyongyang, Korea DPR

A congratulation message including: We, the Korean Anti-Nukes Peace Physician (KANPP) would like to extend our warmest congratulations to all participants of the Life-Link Program international conference. (Life-Link has visited Pyongyang, and one school is connected to the Life-Link program).

SCHOOLS PRESENTATIONS IN PLENARY AND POSTER SESSIONS

Summary of Schools presentations by students and teachers at the Life-Link conference in Sigtuna Sweden 6-10 August

Session #1

Katedralskolan, Uppsala Sweden

1300 students with students from 25 countries. Exchange program with 21 countries in the Life-Link spirit. Language courses involving 13 countries, “sign”-language included. Among the activities was mentioned: Linnaeus project and studies of the tree Theobroma. A Religious diversity program involving 60 students with reflections around old and current religions; “all religions are the same!”, “did God create Man, or has Man created God”. An appreciated role game on Climate Change has been performed.

It can be mentioned that one former student at Katedralskolan was Mr Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary General at the United Nations 1953-1961.

USO-School Jaipur, India

Some of the topics discussed by Mrs Laxmi Saxena, Director of Informal Education in the Jaipur region, were:

Programs for Green School Garden, World Heritage, Definitions of Culture for Peace, the Life-Link Care for Yourself-Others-Nature thinking. Workshops have been performed at schools on the theme: Peaceful use of Atomic Energy, and HIV-AIDS. Water Day 22 March activities have been performed.

A planting program was presented where students have a follow up and caring responsibility for the plants or trees, each one for a specific road in their community.

Gamal Abdelnaser School, Giza, Egypt.

900 students. This school joined the Life-Link program after successful contact with the Life-Link international conference in Alexandria 2005. The quote from Margarete Mead is highlighted at this school and at 5 schools in the nearby region: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Themes discussed are *No to Terrorism*, and the Life-Link Care ethics. The school will be more involved in the Life-Link programme.

Amman BaccaLaureate School, Amman, Jordan

The school has been in contact with the Life-Link programme for some years, finding a connection between the school’s CAS program and the Life-Link program. The Green School Garden project has inspired students at the school, and flower planting and tree planting has taken place.

Other peace actions have taken place within the Creativity-Action-Service IB program such as: Animal protection, Orphans day, Art Expression and Peace, and Society projects. The ancient city of Petra was mentioned, now one of the recently selected “seven new wonders of the world”.

School No 98, Saint Petersburg, Russia

The school will participate in its small steps to save their city to future generations. A Model United Nations General Assembly role game in Rome was described. Students have participated at a Youth Masters Program on environmental protection and sustainability. Green School Garden activities take place at a local garden and a local lake, and the school

has participated in a Comenius program including schools from six countries. Finally the school expressed a slogan: “We are making bridges to the future! (In the city of bridges!)”

Session #2

Ukraine. Lugansk Specialised School No 36

The school, founded in 1966, now have 1345 students, 46 classes, 107 teachers, this year celebrates 15 years in contact with the Life-Link program. This presentation included information about the Chernobyl nuclear power-station fire 1986 with devastating effects on nature and society.

The school is specialized in English, and specific topics are highlighted weekly. Several Life-Link inspired projects carried out at the school were mentioned, a RRR action with collection of 30 tons of paper included. The present E-mail address is: school36@cci.lg.ua

Iran IR. Soodeh Educational Complex.

Joined Life-Link in 2005. Students presented 15 performed Life-Link actions including UNESCO and Model United Nations role game, Tree planting and RRR activities.

A message from many students in Iran IR was brought to the conference and a future Life-Link campaign was proposed: *Smile for Peace*.

Russia. Moscow School 1411

The school promotes a Healthy way of Life, English teaching and learning, Intellectual scientist, Peacemakers club, “Spring” family club, School council “Co-participation” The report included several activities building on Life-Link and UN values such as Drawing contests, Self-confidence, 8 activities within Sport club “Olympio”, Moscow youth festival, Visit to China, Meeting with Moscow Mayor J Lushkov, etc.

Sweden. Jan Fridégard Bildningscenter, Bålsta.

The school with 600 pupils recently joined the Life-Link program. There is no outdoor schoolyard at this school, but the indoor areas include green-house and flower arrangements. An anti-harassment program builds on contacts with “Friends” an NGO. A jogging program is promoted at the school “skol-joggen”.

Iran IR. Soroush Educational Complex for Boys.

The school has a deep concern for the ongoing environmental pollution, not least in the megacity Tehran. A proactive, preventive attitude is dominating. A extensive program on polluting factors in Tehran has been designed in 4 phases:

- Fact-finding. 2155 polluting factors in Tehran were listed, and categorized into 156 unique factors in 11 categories.
- Presentations. The polluting factors have been presented to authorities, specifically to the Mayor of Tehran. The Mayor’s reaction was positive.
- Solutions; A committee will be formed with the aim to come up with solutions to the polluting situation/s.
- Taking Actions; Concrete actions must take place as soon as possible.

Session #3

Montenegro. Gymnasium Stojan Cerovic, Niksic.

Green School Campaign actions were well presented at the poster. 9th of May 2007. Planting actions. The school garden was nice and clean. Some actions were presented: A social action visiting children without parents, resulting in smiles etc, A Clean Up action in town, Healthy habits. The school has 5000 students.

Russia. Moscow school 1414.

Life-Link school since 2004 with 350 students. Since 1950 the school includes a separate school garden “annex” Chiveriyev in the outskirts of Moscow. This important “nature school”, used for biology, chemistry learning etc, was the appreciated venue for the Life-Link conference 2004. Clean up campaigns take place. Peace Day 21 September is observed. The school has international exchange programs. “We want to make our Planet a Green School Garden for all.”

Sweden. Sigtuna Skolan Humanistiska Läroverket SSKL

The presentation started with the school students’ song “Time is here”. SSKL has 600 students, 400 live at the school, a boarding school. The school ethics and basic values are in harmony with the Life-Link Care thinking. Students group Ace of Hearts work for Care for Others. Culture, R-R-R, weekly Clean up, and exchange programs are performed. Life-Link activities at our school have varied over time. The Green School Garden action included planting of spring flowers.

Egypt. El Riada School, Alexandria

In contact with Life-Link since the Life-Link conference in Alexandria 2005. Many Care activities are performed like Sports Day, IEARN “Good Doers”, Charity work supported by NSG bank, International Healthy Day, School Garden with competitions and making the garden beautiful, Marathon Walk 40 km collecting donations, etc.

Sierra Leone. Youth Movement for Peace & No-Violence (YMPNV)

The organization formed in 1996 approaches schools and youth to promote peace. Some of the concrete and down to earth actions taking place are: Tree planting 24000 trees in and around Freetown, Human Rights training, Planting cassava to feed 1500 people, Donation of material to schools including Life-Link manual, Non-violence training, Campaigns for non-violent election campaigns and elections facing the ongoing political elections in Sierra Leone.

(Comment: the Elections in August were performed in a peaceful manner! Congratulations! /HL)

Argentina. Escuela de Ensananza Media No 432. Rosario

A committed teacher represented the school at this conference. The school has integrated the Life-Link ethics and some of the proposed actions at different grades into the schools curriculum. Such as Human Rights, Society problems on violence, Water etc. The school now invites to the next Life-Link conference in Rosario August 2008. Theme: Culture of Care instead of a Culture of Violence. (more information will soon be introduced on www.life-link.org)

Extra reports from some of the schools planning to come, but not present at the conference.

Georgia. School No 24, Rustavi

The school has since several years been in close contact with the Life-Link program and participated at Life-Link conferences. Due to embassies administration trouble, visa were not ready in time for departure from Tblisi! Sadness and we are all sorry!

The school sent greetings and poem for the conference – (poem at the end of this report).

Ghana. Saviour Experimental School Complex, Accra

This school has recently joined the Life-Link program. Due to late visa refusal the school sent their speech and photos for this conference report. Greetings were transferred to the conference delegates. Four actions were reported (also introduced on www.life-link.org Schools&Actions): Green School Garden, Culture of Peace, The Rights of the Child, Sexually transmitted diseases – AIDS. The school is ready to take on an active promotion of the Life-Link program in Ghana, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

Serbia. Jovan Jovanovic Zmaj, Serbia

Due to lack of funding, this school could not find the means for travel expenditures. Sorry! The school, situated in North of Serbia, is active in the Life-Link program.

PRESENTATIONS BY PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

UNESCO ASP-net program

presented by Educational Assistant Mrs Hadeel Talli from UNESCO regional office Amman, Jordan.

An overview of the Associated Schools was given. 8000 schools (preschool to upper secondary schools) in 177 countries are connected to this program. 450 of these schools are from 17 of the 22 countries with Arab culture. A motto for the ASP schools is *Think Globally and Act Locally* which is in harmony with the spirit of Life-Link. ASP stresses “Quality education for all”.

The ASP program builds on four themes

- United Nations values, connecting to world concerns.
- Human Rights, including democracy and tolerance.
- Intercultural Learning, also including the World Heritage program.
- Education for Sustainable Development.

The presentation discussed the perspectives of a proposed collaboration and one year pilot project involving 50 UNESCO ASP schools in Arabic countries and 50 Life-Link schools worldwide.

An Albert Einstein quote: “Peace can only be kept by understanding, not by force.”

Bibliotheca Alexandrina

An NGO representative, student at the Faculty of Law Alexandria University, made an historical overview of Egyptian peace treaties. The NGO has links to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina that is in favour of a Youth program promoting the UNESCO Culture for Peace.

Society for Chemical Weapons Victims Support, SCWVS.

SCWVS is an NGO dealing with more than 90000 victims in Iran since the chemical warfare attacks on Iran in the 1980-s. SCWVS has initiated a peace museum in Tehran, and now promotes the Life-Link program, and also the contacts with IPPNW (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Nobel Peace Prize 1985)

WORKSHOPS

How to learn from Nature - Sustainability

The starting-point for this workshop was the 300 years celebration of the Swedish botanist and researcher Carl von Linné born in 1707. Carl von Linné's life 1707-1778 and thinking on the classification of nature based on sexual systems was discussed in plenary and in field studies around the conference venue. A one day visit to nearby Uppsala City included the Linneus Botanical garden and the Linneus summerhouse. The concept of Sustainability was explained and discussed.

Life-Link Programme – background, basics, visions, website

Mr Andrei Neculau, former Life-Link school student from Romania, now university student made a presentation on his personal experiences from joining the Life-Link staff and website responsibilities. The basic structures and resources from the www.life-link.org were highlighted stressing the “School-page” and Action reporting parts of the website.

Clean Up the World – action at the conference venue and nearby surroundings

The Life-Link program includes a proposed action: Clean Up the World (action 3:03), that connects to the Clean Up the World program coordinated from Sidney Australia. The conference delegates performed a one hour workshop and action connected to a specific campaign on Clean Up around the Baltic Sea in August 2007 that was highlighted from a Polish NGO. The conference participants picked papers, metal cans, plastics, some batteries and sorted out these “resources” at the SSSL recycling station. In the dorm kitchen and at the dining hall, trash, compost and “waste” were also separated into different boxes. The Life-Link RRR (Reduce-Reuse-Recycle) action 3:05 was recommended at participating schools.

UNESCO ASP-net and Life-Link Friendship-Schools joint project 2007-2008

A separate workshop dealt with the planning of a forthcoming Life-Link & UNESCO pilot project at 50 schools in Arab countries + 50 schools around the world. This project will include one Life-Link action on Culture of Care – Culture for Peace in October 2007, and a second Life-Link action Water for Life in March 2008. Specific information and guidelines will soon appear on www.life-link.org.

UNESCO Culture for Peace Decade 2001-2010, Youth Advisors

A two hours discussion took place with two of the Youth Advisors connected to the UNESCO Culture for Peace Decade 2001-2010. The Life-Link program with schools worldwide performing peace/care actions at and around their schools is formally part of the UNESCO Culture for Peace Decade.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL PROGRAMME

Ice breaking session

The first evening the delegate learnt more about the names from ice braking games.

6 August Hiroshima – Nagasaki ceremony and A Child is Born photo presentation

A summary of the medical effects of Atom bombs exploded over Hiroshima 6 August and Nagasaki 9 August 1945 was presented by Dr Hans Levander, member IPPNW (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War).

In the evening the delegates joined a Lantern light ceremony in the Rosengarden of SigtunaStiftelsen, close to the conference venue.

In the late evening Dr Levander made a powerpoint presentation A Child is Born, the wonders of the development of an early child, based on the famous photos taken by Swedish scientific photographer Mr Lennart Nilsson.

Cultural Evening Event

Participating school delegations presented something special from their different cultures, such as dances, sweets, joyful games etc. The photos in the conference photo gallery tell more than words.

An Uppsala Cultural and Historical day

Connected to the Carl von Linné theme and program in Uppsala city, delegates could visit cultural and historical places in Uppsala such as the Uppsala Peace Museum, the Dag Hammarskjöld (UN Secretary General 1953-1961) graveyard, The Martin Luther King square, the Life-Link office at Uppsala Science Park formerly a military officers high school, the Uppsala Cathedral with traditions in ecumenical meetings.

Daily sport and physical activity events

The conference venue invited participants to free activities such as swimming in the nearby lake Mälaren, walking, jogging, etc.

CONFERENCE STATISTICS – SUMMARY

Participants

- 22 Schools and Educational Institutes from 11 countries
- 58 participants including 30 students, 20 teachers/educators, 8 lecturers and staff
- Visiting diplomats from six of the Stockholm embassies

To be mentioned: 3 schools from three additional countries; These schools had to withdraw from participation for different reasons.

Activities

- 19 schools' plenary sessions and poster sessions
- 6 Plenary lectures on themes related to Peace and Environmental Sustainability
- 5 Workshops
- 1 Cultural/multicultural evening event
- Opening and Closing sessions attended by embassy diplomats

- 4 Sport – Get on the Move activities
- Several informal meetings between delegates
- Media coverage
- Transports – how many? Thanks!

Social Program

- Uppsala Day (Linnéan Gardens, Cathedral, Peace monuments, Uppsala Peace Museum, Visit to the Life-Link office and international headquarters)
- Meals and food. 16 meals + Fruits/Juice at breaks. A total amount of more than 800 portions served.

CONCLUSIONS

- **A Life-Link Friendship-Schools XIII international youth and schools peace conference with 58 delegates from 11 countries**, has taken place in Sigtuna town and Uppsala City in Sweden 06-10 August 2007
- **The conference theme Green School Garden – Sustainability – Legacy of Carl von Linné**
- **The goals** set up for this conference were to a high degree reached:
 - **Schools reported** on their performed peace actions inspired by the Life-Link program, in plenary and poster sessions.
 - **The Green School Garden campaign 206-2007 was formally concluded.** 44 schools worldwide have participated and sent study form reports. Results will be introduced on the www.life-link.org
 - **The peace dimensions of Care for Nature and Sustainability** were discussed
 - **The conference delegates** gained an intercultural experience.
 - **During lectures and visits participating delegates learnt about the thinking and life of Swedish Botanist Carl von Linné who lived 1707-1778**
 - **The topic of Clean Up the World** was highlighted with a one hours Clean Up action at and around the conference venue.
 - **A forthcoming UNESCO ASP-net and Life-Link Friendship-Schools joint project** was discussed and will be further promoted
- **A Life-Link Friendship-Schools conference plays in important role for confidence building across borders, making a contribution to Common Security.** The conference opening and closing ceremonies were attended by diplomats from embassies learning about this dimension of the Life-Link program.
- **Life-Link conference/s 2008** is planned for Argentina. Rosario community offers to hold a conference. Conference theme: *From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Care*
- **Life-Link conferences** might also take place in India and Iran IR, including teacher training dimensions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the conference delegates returning home after this conference:

- **When back home, slowly “digest” all conference information and impressions** from formal and informal meetings. Be aware that your friends at home do not have your theoretical and emotional experience, and that your pals and colleagues for different reasons might not be as enthusiastic as you are now.
- **Keep up with your actions and reporting to www.life-link.org !** We understand that the Life-Link programme is useful in triggering youth and schools to initiate and perform local peace actions!
- **Spread the Life-Link message** to other schools that you are in contact with.

Advices and Reflections for future work and conferences.

- **Inform the Headmasters / Principals at participating Life-Link schools**, through a letter of appreciation, that the delegation has highly enriched the meeting. .
- **At future Life-Link conferences, involve local schools**
- **Focus on the conference topic.**
- **Contacts and resources within the UNESCO Associated Schools Programme** could be consulted when planning for future conferences and peace campaigns.

SOME REACTIONS - EVALUATION

An evaluation form was filled in by 27 of the 50 delegates. High scores (well above 4 out of maximum 5) were given to the practical arrangements, the contents, and specifically for the personal experience from the conference (4.7!).

Most valuable advices on how to make future conferences more focused and interactive have been listed by the Life-Link staff.

ECONOMICAL SUPPORT, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THANKS !

- Swedish Ministry for Foreign Relations – Folke Bernadotte Academy
- Life-Link Friendship-Schools Association members
- Uppsala County Governance
- Individual conference delegates and families in support of local Life-Link actions, travel expenditures and conference fees.
- Schools and local sponsors supporting the conference delegates
- Volunteers
- Anna & Oscar Ekman foundation connected to the Sigtuna School

PHOTOS

A selection from hundreds of wonderful photos introduced on the Life-Link website www.life-link.org/gallery Thank you for contributions!

POEM

Children Learn What They Live

*If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
As a child lives with fear, he learns to be apprehensive.
If a child lives with pity, he learns to feel sorry for himself.
When a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with jealousy, he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with encouragement, he learns to be confident.
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns how to be patient.
If a child lives with praise, he learns to be appreciative.
If a child lives with acceptance, he learns to love.
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with fairness, he learns what justice is.
If a child lives with honesty, he learns what truth is.
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith in himself and those around him.
If a child lives with friendliness, he learns the world is a nice place in which to live.*

What is your child living?

Dorothy L. Law
(sent from Rustavi School No 24, Georgia)

