

WELCOME DELEGATES!



Welcome all delegates to the Third Global Environmental Youth Convention. The International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics at Lund University is proud to be the originator of this innovative program for environmental education and youth action. Most of you have completed a comprehensive distance learning program before attending the GEYC and the international exchange of ideas and experiences will continue in Alexandria as the first step in the Young Masters' role as youth ambassadors for sustainable development.

It is the passion and ideas of youth that truly have the power to change the world. We hope that you will take full advantage of this opportunity to provide input to world leaders, as the work in the Knowledge Cafes will result in an Alexandria Declaration to be distributed to decision makers around the world.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our co-organizers the Arab Academy of Science and Technology, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the Swedish Institute and the Ministry for Environmental Affairs in Egypt, as this convention could not have taken place without their vision and support. I especially wish to thank Prof. Dr. Gamal Mukhtar, Prof. Dr. Ismail Serageldin, and H.E. Minister of State for Environment, who joined me in welcoming you during the opening session.

This convention would also not have taken place without the tireless efforts of Prof. Dr. Kamal T. Ewida, Prof. Dr. Salah Soliman, Ambassador Dr. Magdy Hefny, Mrs. Laila Dewidar, Ms. Ingrid Sandstrom, Dr. Gihan Mosad and all their colleagues, as well as the sponsors, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sweden and the dedicated team of students in the organizing group.

Prof. Dr. Thomas B. Johansson
Director, IIIIEE at Lund University

International Diaries

In this section of the GEYC Newsletter delegates from different countries will share their experiences and impressions from the convention.

HUNGARY

Third time around...

I have been a mentor at Vajda Janos Gimnazium in Kezthely, Hungary since the first Young Masters Program and this is the third time I have the privilege to attend a Global Environmental Youth Convention. Among my many fond memories of the previous conventions is the Water Ceremony in Lund (2000), where students from around the world (accompanied by the mystical water-music and surrounded by 100 flags in the university park) filled a bowl with water samples brought from home to symbolize how interdependent we are when it comes to protecting the environment. From Torino I remember the feeling of people from five continents singing and dancing together among the high mountains of the Alps, as well as the glorious sight of the descending of flags on the walls of a medieval fortress during the Earth Ceremony. I hope that the students who attend GEYC 2004 can enjoy the same enchanting atmosphere and experience.

The former students of ours, who have taken part of the GEYC in Lund and Torino, still feel very connected to its aims and are still ready to work to promote sustainable development. The program has been a precious aid for the whole school by providing environmental education, as well as providing a push for students to improve their computer skills and knowledge in English language. The Hungarian students this year are full of expectations to meet young people from all over the world at GEYC 2004. They want to find out how students in other countries have approached their environmental problems, as well as learn more about different cultures.

My students believe that when a great number of students from around the world come together to share issues and discuss solutions, these efforts must touch government leaders and help stop the destruction of our world. You will all work together during the convention with the clear aim to generate recommendations that can then be passed on to the decision makers when we get back home. You will also have many fond memories and great friendships that will last you a lifetime. So do take full advantage of this opportunity. Listen to the presentations and be active in the discussions. Get to know people from different countries and have fun together. Together we can save the world.

Adrienne Gyulassy
Vajda Janos Gimnazium in Keszthely, Hungary



This years Hungarian students in full costume

SWEDEN

First Impressions...

When we arrived in Alexandria it was 2 A.M. and we were all very tired after a loooong day of traveling. Though we were tired, we still noticed all the people who were still outside enjoying themselves along the beach. This was very different from Sweden: the whole family downtown at 2 A.M. on a Thursday night! The traffic was almost at a stand still and while some drivers were obviously aspiring to be race car drivers, others were obviously trying to get into the Guinness Book of World Records by trying to cram as many people as possible into a small car! We finally arrived at the hostel and then realized the classic packing problem had occurred – a toothbrush was missing...

The next day we woke up very early and had breakfast. The meal was OK, but very different from Sweden. After breakfast we changed rooms, were introduced to some Egyptian mentors and received necessary practical information. Then we had nothing to do until lunch. After lunch we had the opportunity to go to the beach by bus together with the Polish and Hungarian students who had also arrived early. We had a great time at the beach and the people were very friendly, but some stared at us like we were monkeys...

Johanna Karlson and Frida Wannerberger from Tunaskolan in Lund, Sweden



The Lucia girls from Sweden during the Gala Evening



Disco dancing to ABBA song

MEXICO

Transforming lives around the world...

Friendship, knowledge, culture, fun, interaction, tolerance, learning, leadership, exchange of ideas, traditions, music and candy...

These are just a few of the things that describe our experience during day one of GEYC. An impressive landscape complemented by the sound of the waves from the Mediterranean Sea, a place full of history and people who are willing to share their different ideas, cultures and projects. But everyone has a common objective in mind: TAKING CARE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT.

Every moment has brought a new and exciting experience into our lives. Interacting with other young people like us from all over the world and being guided by experts in the area has been a unique opportunity.

It has been just one day and yet, we feel that our perception of the world has changed, has widened, because we are now open not only to our local reality. It is true that we hold a great responsibility in our hands, but the results that we can achieve encourage us to keep working and giving our best as we will come back home and spread this vision of YOUTH COMMITMENT TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENT.

Velissa Verastegui and Elsa Reyes, Mexico



Preparing name tags and making flags...



The Mexican girls dancing during the Gala Evening



EGYPT

The work behind the scenes...

The GEYC that we have been awaiting for a long time now – preparing, working, searching and stressing – has finally started. But the most wonderful, yet exhausting days were those just before the convention started – the so called “The organizing days”. These days didn’t start a week ago, as we have been preparing for the convention since the very start of the Young Masters course as we knew that Egypt would be hosting GEYC 2004!

All the team have worked with great passion to prepare every single detail, so that the hands of youth would make a print on this convention that carries our name! We had several tasks to be done and so little time, because some of the materials didn’t arrive until a few hours before the start of the convention. The delegate bags had to be packed, the flags had to be glued, the movie had to be made, organizing accommodation at the hostels as well as transportation and meals. Finally the managing of the convention itself, a hard, yet fascinating task that could not be realized without great teamwork.

As you can see in the pictures we all worked really hard, yet hardly a moment went by without hearing cheers and laughs all around – at meal times and when working – we were trying to make every single minute fruitful and with a big smile on your face any difficulties that might face us there is a big difference, because it was about US and not ME the whole time! Some were preparing name tags, some were at the Academy to facilitate the accommodation, others were arranging the multimedia presentations. Still others were packing the bags in a round motion where some people were sitting on the floor with different things to put in the bags, while others moving around to fill it. Some others worked on name tags and printing programs. So finally we were ready to join with you for the opening session on Saturday – tired, but full of expectations!

The organizing team

Learning about energy and sustainable development

Energy is required for almost all human activities – for heating our homes, for cooking, for transportation, for industry, for our computers etc. For centuries we have been taking it for granted, but in his keynote speech Prof. Johansson emphasized the need for sustainable energy. The current patterns and growth of energy production and consumption are not sustainable and contribute to several of the main environmental issues facing humanity, i.e. climate change and air pollution.

Improving on energy efficiency and relying more on renewable energy sources is the answer to move towards sustainable energy, as “the energy that reaches the earth from the sun is ten thousands times the entire earth population uses, so if we can only learn to efficiently use 1/1000 part of that energy we would be home free.”

One third of people in the world today have no access to electricity, another one third rely on unreliable sources. Around 2 billion people still use traditional cooking methods (open fires with firewood or dung), which exposes them to indoor air pollution which inhaled has the equivalent effect of smoking 3 cigarette packs a day!

We can no longer hide our heads in the sand about this issue as action is needed now to preserve the earth – which we did not inherit from our fathers, but have borrowed from our children!



In the future perhaps every house will have a solar panel!

Candid Camera



The President of the Arab Academy of Science and Technology, the Swedish Ambassador, and Minister of Environmental Affairs with Prof. Thomas B. Johansson



Flags of participating countries at the Alexandria Library



Birgitta Nordén in her Swedish folk costume

Thanks to our sponsors!



