



GEYC Newsletter

WELL DONE DELEGATES!



Alexandria Declaration

Adopted at GEYC 2004
in Alexandria
on September 15, 2004

The high standard of the projects presented and the following discussion in each of the knowledge cafés has been truly remarkable during the conference. The spirit of international friendship and cooperation at the convention has also been outstanding. The expectations have been surpassed in all areas. You have all shown that you do not only have the passion and ideas of youth, but also the commitment and knowledge needed to turn your ideas into action. This has been your convention and you have made the most of it.

All the hard work that you have put in during the past five days have really generated results. The Alexandria Declaration has been based on the discussions and recommendations of all the knowledge cafes. The chairmen, vice chairmen and rapporteurs of the groups were invited on Monday to prepare the declaration with support from Ambassador Dr. Magdy Hefny and Ms. Ulrika Wennberg. The twelve people in the group were Abdulhady Zaidan (Jordan), Mervet Adel Mohammed Wahid (Egypt), Imtisal Zafar Chaudhary (Pakistan), Abdul Rahman Sattar (Pakistan), Rowan Mohamed Ahmed (Egypt), Aliaa Moustafa (Turkey) Mona Mahmoud Mohamed (Egypt), Sara Svanlund (Sweden), Elsa Reyes (Mexico), Maria Konus (Russia), Kenneth Ochoa (Colombia) and Tiago Morais (Spain). The text of the Alexandria Declaration is attached to this newsletter.

The declaration will now be communicated to decision-makers, business leaders and organizations around the world to inform them about your views and recommendations. However, you all play an important part in spreading the message through your daily activities. Talk to your friends and family about the convention and what you have learned. You are now all young ambassadors for environment, peace and culture. Take the lead and start to turn your ideas into action! The GEYC network will be there to inspire and support your efforts to make change happen.

Though it is always sad to say goodbye to new friends, as stated in the declaration this is only the end of the beginning...

International Diaries

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

JORDAN

The experience of a lifetime...

My impressions about the convention are very positive, in fact this was one of the most influential and interesting experiences in my life. The organizers and especially the Egyptian facilitators were extremely hospitable, helpful and kind. The people we met from the other delegations have helped us expand our horizon and create more tolerance towards other cultures. This experience has been both educating and enriching. Thank you to all those who made this whole thing come into being. (Sara Shabin)

This convention added a new experience that has had its impact in molding my personality, as this is the first time I travel outside Jordan without my parents. I also achieved a high level of environmental awareness during the courses and got to know how we harm our environment everyday without even knowing that we bite the hand that feeds us. The convention was great and well-organized. The Egyptian hosts showed us extraordinary kindness and generosity. (Muhannad Arbaji)

It is quite an experience to be in the land of ancient mysteries, Egypt. Getting introduced to the civilization of the Pharaohs was one part of the experience. Another part was the gathering of dozens of different cultures in one place. Working in favor of our nature was a new challenge for many students our age. To those who took part in creating this convention we convey our sincerest gratitude. (Abdelhadi Zaidan)

I am having the time of my life as Egypt is very beautiful and I am meeting new people, discussing various interesting new subjects, visiting new places that we have all dreamed of going to. All this combined with the kindness of the sons and daughters of the Pharaohs made this trip a dream come true. (Laith Alkurdi)

When I was at the airport I worried about this trip – very nervous and terribly scared. It is strange that that feeling went away as soon as we arrived in Egypt and found our Egyptian hosts waiting for us at the gate to take us to our bus heading for Alexandria. People have been very nice and hospitable. All greeted us kindly and accepted us among them as friends – very good friends! I will never forget Egypt for as long as I shall live, because it was the most beautiful trip I have ever been on. (Doris Qamar)



Two students from Jordan during the Gala night

JAPAN

Learning from the past...

We are really glad to have come to attend this GEYC convention in Egypt. Everyone of us had some anxiety and expectation before we came. As we thought, Egypt is a very different country compared to Japan when it comes to history, food, weather etc. It is always good to learn more about other countries. Once we started the convention, especially the Knowledge Cafes, we have found that every country has similar environmental problems. We did not have enough time to discuss deeply about each issue, but at least we have recognized how and to what extent the environment is related and connected to our lives.

We visited the Pyramids and the Pharaonic Village and saw the great traces of the ancient Egyptians and how they lived. We could see that their standard of living was simple, but also quite high. It seemed they were living in harmony with nature. Indeed, ancient Egyptians had to swear that they had not polluted the river to enter the afterworld. They might have some hints for us on how to solve our environmental problems.

Time goes fast! Today is the last day of this convention. We have met a lot of people in such a short time and had a good time with them. We will continue to learn and enjoy the rest of the convention as much as we can.

POLAND

Mini World Summit...

This is my third experience with the GEYC convention and I am happy that we have the opportunity to participate in such a great event. Always the same wonderful atmosphere with from five continents, many different countries, different colors of skin , religions and traditions – but all of them smiling, kind, helpful and friendly. It is amazing to look at “Young Masters”, students age 15-19, who have started to think as responsible adults about our nature and about sustainable development. I am proud of all the teachers and mentors who “plant the seeds of love” of our green planet in these young minds and hearts. It is amazing to observe youth during the long lectures – the way they were listening with great interest, as well as to hear their discussions and watching their presentations of their projects regarding all different types of environmental problems. All the students work are of very high standard and the same is to be said for their behavior and manner when they played, sang songs and danced together. Without any hesitation I can say that all of us have felt like a big family, with the same dream about the clean, peaceful and happy home that our planet should be.

IMPRESSIONS OF CAIRO VISIT

CHINA

Before coming to Egypt I was really eager to see the pyramids. It is one of these things you have to accomplish in your life, with all their characteristics of sacred ancient mystery. In fact, there were times when I could not help imagining all the stories which happened while the pyramids were being built.

The visit to Cairo was the day that I expected the most of during the whole convention. However, when we were sitting in the bus and the pyramids suddenly came into my sight, I did not get as excited as I had thought I would be. I do not know why exactly I felt like that, maybe it is just sad seeing so many tourists walking around the pyramids taking photos and talking. They were just breaking the tranquility and did not pay as much respect as they should, and neither did the salesmen.

In the lecture Dr. Mikael Backman delivered to us on Monday, he talked about how tourism can really change the environment. Only when I visited the pyramids did I understand the message he was trying to send. I believe that everyone should be aware of how we could have an effect the environment in both negative and positive ways. I hope we always try to do the latter.

Lin Lin, China



A tranquil view of the pyramids

GREECE

Our trip to Cairo has been a wonderful experience. As soon as we arrived to the capital of Egypt we went to visit the Pyramids. We have read about this structure – one of the seven wonders of the world, but we could not imagine that the sight of it would be so breathtaking.

The Pyramids remind us of the past, but they are also very important for the present life in Cairo. Tourists, camels and Egyptian souvenir salesmen formed a happy mixture. We were scared when we followed the group into the pyramid, but we enjoyed it as well. We took a lot of pictures to take back home to show our friends and parents.

We had our lunch at the Pharaonic Village, where young people danced Egyptian folk dances. One must have become very dizzy, as he was constantly spinning around for 15 minutes! After lunch we had a tour by boat and visited the whole village, watching people who pretended to live as in ancient Egypt. It was also a great experience

Kiki Gialama and Maria Voitsidi, Greece

PORTUGAL

The minute we saw the pyramids we did not know they would be a first test of our resistance. We actually visited the great pyramid inside! It was really tough climbing the stairs, but it was well worth it. We also visited the Solar Boat Museum and loved it too. Unfortunately we could only see the Sphinx from a distance and take some photos

We also enjoyed the visit to the Papyrus Museum, the Pharaonic Village and the planting of trees. The fieldtrip to Cairo was really wonderful, but tiring. It would also have been nice if we could have had the chance to socialize more with the Egyptian delegations.

Monica and Sara, Portugal



The Sphinx up close

TURKEY

A forest in the desert...

After a long and hard, but great day, full of museums, pyramids, tombs and trips around Cairo, we finally reached the manmade forest in the middle of the desert. As we put our feet on the ground, we looked up and stared at the beautiful display of colors at the horizon caused by the sunset. After gazing at the view for a while we headed for the area of desert where the trees were to be planted.

They had prepared holes in the desert sand filled with moist high-quality earth. Next to the holes there were little plants that we put into the soil and covered their roots up. The water for the plants is waste water that has been filtered and purified. It is brought to the forest by tankers. This is a cooperation project between China and Egypt and shows an innovative way to use wastewater to turn desert wasteland into forest.

After about half an hour our job was finished and we set off towards the bus to go back to Alexandria, thinking what a wonderful day we had...

Tara and Burcu, Turkey



Trees growing in the desert

What is next?

Change has to start with those close to you. Therefore make sure that you tell all your friends and family about the convention and what has been discussed here. Discuss the Alexandria Declaration with them and see what more you can do in your home and school.

You should also share your passion and your knowledge with those around you. Volunteer to give presentations at local schools and at meetings of the local Rotary or Business club. Contact your local newspapers, radio and other media to let them know about GEYC and your experiences in Egypt. Please send copies of any press clippings along with an English translation to Birgitta Norden, IIIIEE at Lund University.

You will be able to continue to communicate with each other via the Internet and we will be updating the website for the conference shortly with details. We know that many new friendships have been formed and we hope that you will also stay in contact with us to let us know what projects and actions you are undertaking. We also hope to see some of you come back for GEYC 2004, or become a mentor for the next group of students in the Young Masters Program.

As it says in the declaration, this is not goodbye. It is only the end of the beginning.



Students being interviewed by a reporter during GEYC 2004

Concluding thoughts...

The conference is over and all that we have to take with us is the hope that some change has been afflicted to us, a new concept, a corrected misconception, overthrowing of prejudices, and lots of friends around the world which will form a network that hopefully will expand over time to a size large enough to make a difference in our future.

The time has come to over throw old ecologically unfriendly fuels and turn to sustainable energy sources. Solar power, wind, hydrogen fuel cells, and hydropower all present clean energy, hydrocarbon fuel cells present the method to consume usual fuels but getting the CO₂ in a pure concentrated form which can be collected and disposed of in a environmentally safe manner.

Corporate responsibility, no longer can companies continue working with industries which have no or weak environmental policies, whether they are provide these industries with services or materials, or they are provided by these industries by services, the corporate responsibility demands that they pressure these industries to follow tight policies.

Ethics, new sciences require new ethics, fields like advanced IT, are only newly integrated into society, they have not yet been absorbed into the culture of societies, new ethics are needed to regulate theses activates in compliance with the goal of protecting the environment.

And last but not least, the society must listen for a change to the young people, new ideas are needed to guide us out of the abyss, perhaps this lies in the mind of youngster, awaiting acknowledgment and support.

Omar Farouk Safwat, Egypt

Thanks to our sponsors!

