



**CHALMERS**  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG



**8<sup>TH</sup> WEEC** Planet and People  
- how can they develop together?

**GOTHENBURG 2015**

**8th WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION  
CONGRESS  
- WEEC 2015 -**

Gothenburg, June 29-July 2, 2015

<http://weec2015.org/>



**CHALMERS**  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG



## Contents

1. Invitation from the Chair of IAP .....	3
2. Invitation from Permanent Secretariat .....	4
3. The Congress .....	5
What is WEEC? .....	5
When and where will WEEC take place? .....	5
Who organizes WEEC? .....	5
Who should come to WEEC? .....	6
4. Themes .....	7
Main theme .....	7
Sub-themes .....	7
1. Taking Children seriously in addressing global challenges .....	7
2. Reclaiming sense of place in the digital age .....	7
3. Environmental education and poverty reduction .....	7
4. Learning in vital coalitions for green cities .....	8
5. (Re) emerging concepts for environmental stewardship and sustainability .....	8
6. Mind the gap! Moving from awareness to action .....	9
7. Assessing environmental and sustainability education in times of accountability .....	9
8. Beyond the green economy: educating and learning for green jobs in a green society .....	9
9. New perspectives on research in environmental and sustainability education .....	10
10. Educational policy development for environment & sustainability .....	10
11. Education and learning for climate change adaptation and resilience .....	10
5. Meeting possibilities during the congress: .....	11
6. Draft Programme .....	12
7. Abstract Submission .....	13
8. Registration .....	13
9. WEEC in Social Media .....	13
10. Welcome to Gothenburg! .....	14
11. Previous WEECs .....	15
11. Contact Information .....	17
Organizers .....	17
Congress Secretariat .....	17
Local Organizing Committee .....	17
12. Centre for Environment and Sustainability, GMV .....	18

# 1. Invitation from the Chair of IAP

2015 marks the year in which the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development will have ended and during which the field of environmental education (EE) will be fast approaching its fiftieth anniversary. When considering the state of the Planet today we can only conclude that despite some patchy progress in certain parts of the world, the overall picture remains rather grim as humanity is facing continued loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, runaway climate change, and increased toxicity of our waters, air, soils and bodies.

When looking at the state of the People we can see that many people across the globe have become wealthier with access to consumer goods, ICT and, increasingly, to education. However, even today there are close to one billion people without access to clean drinking water and without access to fair and meaningful jobs. One billion people are currently malnourished while another one billion is overweight or even obese. Abuse of power, inequality and marginalization remain prevalent. When considering the triple bottom line of People, Planet and Profit over the last 50 years we can only conclude that the ‘P’ of profit has done dramatically better than the other two Ps. 50 years of EE and 10+ years of ESD, not to mention related educational approaches, have had some effect, but too little yet, on enabling a transition from ‘doing the things we do better and more efficiently’ to ‘doing better things’.

One of the things that may have changed is the interest of the private sector in environment and sustainability. Although policy-makers welcome the interest of the corporate world and the private sector in environmental and, particularly, sustainability education, educators are cautious in embracing this interest as they fear that people and planet are being hijacked by narrow commercial interests. In the end it is not the green economy but the green society that matters, a society in which people and planet are served by the economy and not the other way around. The same holds true for education. Education, training and (life) long learning are increasingly being re-oriented to the world-of-work in order to serve short-term economic interests. In the process, education and learning designed with people and planet in mind are at risk of being squeezed out. Fortunately there are growing niches both in education and the world of business where alternative educational and economic models with people and planet in mind are being designed and implemented.

With the state of people and planet under continued pressure and threats and the urgency to respond to global sustainability challenges greater than ever, WEEC 2015 will revisit, reconsider and re-imagine the role of education and learning in finding ways for people – young and old – and planet to develop in greater harmony.

Welcome to Gothenburg to continue the discussion,

*Professor Arjen Wals,*

*Chair of the International Advisory Panel of WEEC2015*



## 2. Invitation from Permanent Secretariat

As Secretary-General of the WEEC Permanent Secretariat, it is with a great pleasure that I invite scholars, researchers, educators, teachers, institutions involved in the environmental education as well as NGOs, and all the people interested to attend the 8<sup>th</sup> World Environmental Congress on June 2015 at Goteborg.

The WEEC congresses have taken periodically place since 2003 and have represented an important moment to share and continue the work we are all carrying forward towards a more sustainable future.

The WEECs are the most important occasion for collecting all public and private actors of the environmental education and the sole international network we are engaged in enhancing.

As Arjen Wals stresses, there are challenges concerning people, planet and profit. These challenges include measuring each of them and profit has always seemed to be favoured.

That's the reason why from our point of view, next year at the 8<sup>th</sup> WEEC planet and people will be focused, which deserve much more attention from all of us.

Improving the relationship among people and social cohesion is strictly linked with the care for the territory where we live. In the same way the protection of environment and the respect of human beings, as well as of other species, promotes a more equal distribution of wealth and social justice.

Our concern towards environment and sustainability should move finally from awareness to sustainable life styles also to face the emergence of climate change and other environmental dangers and calamities thanks to resilience.

The education and involvement of children is one of the most important targets, because young people, with their creativity and imagination, represent the linking between the present and the future particularly in a period of deep change.

As extreme and wide poverty doesn't help to improve the already difficult relationship between people and environment, we are strongly engaged in research to overcome, together with the need of water and food, cultural and digital divide.

The city of Goteborg has always shown a strong commitment in environmental sustainability, so have done the two Universities of the town which will be hosting the event.

I wish and welcome a broad participation from all five continents and I hope you will all join the 8<sup>th</sup> World Environment Education Congress and the network.

Mario Salomone

*Secretary-General WEEC Permanent Secretariat*



## 3. The Congress



8<sup>TH</sup> WEEC Planet and People  
- how can they develop together?

GOTHENBURG 2015

### What is WEEC?

World Environmental Education Congress – WEEC – is an international congress addressing education for environment and sustainable development. The congress is the meeting point for everyone working with education for environment and sustainable development or which have an interest in the field.

### When and where will WEEC take place?

WEEC 2015 is the 8<sup>th</sup> congress and will take place in Gothenburg, Sweden, between the 29 of June and 2 of July 2015. Plenary sessions will take place in the Concert Hall and parallel sessions, side-events and symposium will take place in surrounding University premises.

### Who organizes WEEC?

University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology will through the Centre for Environment and Sustainability be hosting the congress together with the WEEC permanent secretariat, with the support of MCI Group.

## Who should come to WEEC?

The congress is an international meeting point for everyone working with education for environment and sustainable development or which have an interest in the field. WEEC 2015 is as such an opportunity to learn more about the latest in environmental and sustainability education, to discuss with people from all over the world, to share your own work and to learn from others. We are expecting participants from a wide range of countries. Are you maybe a researcher, educator, student, decision-maker, NGO or media working with or having an interest in education for environment and sustainable development, or are you just curious? Welcome!

Are you interested in sharing your research or sharing good examples regarding education for environment and sustainable development? Perhaps you work with an interesting education model which you would like to share through for example a workshop? In that case we recommend you to submit an abstract by the 19 of December, 2014. The registration for the congress opens on the 15 of November, 2014.

Examples of participants:

- Researchers and educators at universities
- Teachers teaching all ages
- Students
- Folk high-schools
- Local, regional and national government agencies, municipalities
- Officials from international organizations
- NGOs
- Managers of parks and protected areas
- Private companies who are interested in environmental and sustainability issues and in education
- Media/press

The congress will discuss the role and importance of education for environment and sustainability **at all levels**; both in **higher education** and for **lower ages**.

Two main categories of abstracts can be submitted: academic abstracts and practitioner abstracts. As such, practitioner abstracts could be a description for example of a teaching model regarding environment and sustainability.

# 4. Themes

## Main theme

Planet and People – how can they develop together?

## Sub-themes

### **1. Taking Children seriously in addressing global challenges**

We only have one planet, it's simple, it's the only one we have, and we have got to look after it. But when we explore 'People and Planet and how they can develop together', what people are we talking about? In this strand we focus on the young both as victims, heirs and catalyst and agents of change: not only the children growing up in affluence but also those growing up in poverty. How can we create spaces for them to become fully self-actualized members of society who can ably and meaningfully contribute to a transition towards a more sustainable world in which People and Planet develop together?

### **2. Reclaiming sense of place in the digital age**

Place-based approaches emphasizing the importance of place and place-based identity in determining our relations with the planet are on the rise across the globe. The focus on place and identity is timely as the complexity and uncertainty brought on by globalization and the rapid pace of technological and social change resulting in enormous cultural shifts which include a search for meaning and affiliation in locally defined identities. Although there are some who are worried about the 'disconnect' between people and place that results from a pre-occupation with and dependency on information and communication technologies, there are also those who see the use of ICTs as a way to reconnect people and places. There are numerous examples of citizens monitoring changes in the environment (e.g. changing bird migration patterns, changing quality of water, soil and air, changes in biodiversity) using GIS, cell phones, and specially designed monitoring apps. This strand explores the opportunities for reconnecting people and planet locally in a rapidly changing world.

### **3. Environmental education and poverty reduction**

As the millennium development goals are being replaced by sustainable development goals and there appears to be a shift from 'education for all' to 'quality education for all', an important question is: what is the role of EE in reducing poverty? Already in 1975 (Belgrade

Charter on EE) and 1977 (Tbilisi Declaration) EE was assigned a role in overcoming inequality and questioning unsustainable economic models to help alleviate poverty. But what has EE done concretely since? And why has reducing inequity and poverty been under-emphasized in the DESD? As poor people around the world are disproportionately affected by the impact of climate change, mining, resource depletion, loss of food and nutrition security, and so on, environmental and sustainability educators need to look for ways to engage multiple stakeholders (schools, communities, governments, private sector and civil society organizations) in strategies to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods. In this strand we look for researched practices from around the world that seek to do so.

## **4. Learning in vital coalitions for green cities**

Transition towns, eco-villages, urban agriculture, green schools with edible school gardens, are becoming more and more mainstream and widespread. These initiatives all require forms of joint learning with sometimes unlikely partners. Organizing such learning, also referred to as multi-stakeholder social learning, requires a new role for environmental and sustainability educators and policy-makers. A new task might be: brokering and supporting vital coalitions that are both energizing and generative in engaging citizens, including children and youth, meaningfully in greening urban areas in order to contribute to local food security, health and ecological stewardship. This thematic strand explores these emerging and expanding initiatives from a learning perspective: What kind of learning is taking place? Who is learning? How can such learning be supported? What is the impact of these coalitions on the learners themselves, the organisations they represent and the community they seek to improve?

## **5. (Re) emerging concepts for environmental stewardship and sustainability**

Since the birth of environmental education in the sixties of the last century emphasis has been placed on systems thinking and a more holistic approach to problem solving or situation improvement. Over the years many learning activities and curricula have been developed by environmental educators but still the challenge of enabling people to see connections, relationships and interdependencies, is as big as back then but the urgency to so is greater than ever. In meeting this challenge there are calls for re-discovering and utilizing indigenous ways of knowing but at the same time there are new concepts such as bio-mimicry, cradle to cradle and life cycle analysis that show promise in strengthening integral thinking and design. In this strands the educational potential of old, new and blended ways of ‘thinking the earth whole’ is explored.

## **6. Mind the gap! Moving from awareness to action**

Early EE was informed by insights from behaviourist social psychology suggesting that an increase in environmental awareness would lead to more responsible environmental behaviour. This assumed linearity between increasing knowledge-growing-awareness and changing-behaviour has shown to be weak. Attitude-behaviour models have since then been revised to include a number of additional factors and feedback loops. Just providing information, raising awareness and changing attitudes apparently is not enough to change people's behaviour. But still policy-makers and donors want 'evidence' that education leads to a change in behaviour and improved environmental quality. In this thematic strand we revisit the 'gap' by exploring new behavioural models and new forms of 'evidence' taking a critical look at projects and approaches that successfully influence and/or change behaviour.

## **7. Assessing environmental and sustainability education in times of accountability**

In this thematic strand the focus is on assessment of learners in school settings (K-12 and vocational education). In many countries there is a call for climbing the rankings and excelling in math, science and languages (cfr. the Pisa rankings). This often leads to a focus on the testing of 'universal' knowledge. At the same time schools – in their own context – need to pay attention to sustainability, health, citizenship, arts and humanities while preparing learners for a rapidly changing world and workplace. These claims seem to be competing with one another. How can environmental and sustainability education navigate this force field? Are there alternative ways of assessing learners that provide more space for meaningful learning around real/authentic issues?

## **8. Beyond the green economy: educating and learning for green jobs in a green society**

Driven perhaps by mostly economic interests and technological innovations, companies and governments are beginning to re-orient themselves to what is commonly referred to as the 'green economy' and its related 'green skills' and 'green jobs'. The demand for a workforce that is capable to work in such an economy is on the rise and (vocational) schools are responding by re-orienting their curricula. From an environmental and sustainability perspective it is important to critically follow this trend in order to make sure that the P for People and the P for Planet receive at least as much attention as the P for Profit or Prosperity. In this thematic strand we invite participants to discuss the role of environmental and sustainability education at the interface between school and community and the world of work.

## **9. New perspectives on research in environmental and sustainability education**

The increased attention to ‘engagement’ in environmental learning has resulted in a greater focus on the agency of citizens, young and old, and their active participation in all phases of learning and inquiry. Positioning citizens in such roles is consistent with calls for treating all people as responsible agents capable of participating in changing and improving their circumstances. Doing so is considered crucial as the complexity and seemingly overwhelming nature of sustainability issues can easily lead to negativity and action paralysis. This is why some environmental education researchers emphasize not only the intellectual engagement of people in socio-ecological issues, but also their emotional engagement. For environmental education research to contribute to citizen engagement in socio-ecological-environmental issues, forms of civically engaged scholarship with appropriate research methodologies and methods are needed urgently. In this thematic strand participants are encouraged to share, reflect on and discuss emergent perspectives on research in environmental and sustainability education.

## **10. Educational policy development for environment & sustainability**

Communities, schools and universities are affected by a number of educational policies that are not always consistent with one another and offer varying opportunities for addressing environment and sustainability in a meaningful way. This strand investigates existing and new policies and innovations that offer the most promise for enabling educational change for a more sustainable future, including in relation to educational institutions’ approaches to curriculum, research, facilities operations, governance, and broader engagement with community and place.

## **11. Education and learning for climate change adaptation and resilience**

Communities, both urban and rural, are experiencing the impacts of climate change in sometimes subtle (e.g. the shifting of seasons, change of bird migration patterns) and not so subtle (e.g. flooding, droughts) ways. How can education and learning help communities adapt to these impacts and become more resilient in their response? How do communities strengthen their capacities for social resilience, reduced vulnerability and an integral risk management? Or should the focus be on ‘adaptation’ and ‘resilience’ reflecting the inevitability of climate change while de-emphasising climate change mitigation or prevention?

## 5. Meeting possibilities during the congress:

- Plenary sessions and debates with keynote speakers
- Parallel sessions where the submitted abstracts will be presented by oral presentations, workshops or round tables.
- In addition, there will during the congress be an ongoing poster exhibition with the accepted poster abstracts where each author will be assigned a time slot for presentation of the poster.
- 
- There will also be an exhibition where you can show your work during the whole congress. For this option, please contact: [info@weec2015.org](mailto:info@weec2015.org)
- NGO forum where NGOs will present their programs, projects, and productions. A space with a table will be offered to each NGO for a three hour period, where presenters will interact with Congress participants.
- During the congress, there will also be symposium possibilities where the interested will be in charge of the topic and participant arrangement while the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) can provide the facilities. This will need to be communicated with the LOC in advance through the e-mail: [loc@gmv.gu.se](mailto:loc@gmv.gu.se)
- Outside of the congress there will be the possibilities of arranging a side event. Also for this, the LOC can provide the facilities why this will need to be communicated with the LOC in advance through the e-mail: [loc@gmv.gu.se](mailto:loc@gmv.gu.se)

# 6. Draft Programme

	Sunday 28 June	Monday 29 June	Tuesday 30 June	Wednesday 1 July	Thursday 2 July	Friday 3 July
09:00-10:00		Registration opens at 09:00  Pre-meetings	Plenary	Plenary	Parallel sessions	Post-meetings Excursion
10:30-12:30			Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	Closing plenary	
13:30-15:30	Pre-meetings	Opening session	Plenary	Plenary	Post-meetings Excursion	
16:00-18:00		Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions		
Evening		City Reception		Congress Dinner		

*Please note that this programme may be subject to change.*

## 7. Abstract Submission

We welcome you to submit your abstract(s) for WEEC 2015 by the latest December 19, 2014.

For more information and to submit an abstract, please consult the congress webpage: <http://weec2015.org/abstractsubmission/>. Please, before submitting the abstracts, do take time to read through the themes, presentation formats, abstract submission guidelines and abstract review criteria, all to be found on this page.

Abstracts may be submitted in English, French or Spanish. The **presentation formats** are: **Oral Papers, Poster Presentations, Round Table Papers, and Workshops.**

The abstract submission will be open until **December 19, 2014**. The authors will get information of the acceptance status of their abstract(s) on **February 15, 2015**.

## 8. Registration

In order to register for the congress, please find instructions on the webpage:

Deadline for Early Bird is on **March 31, 2015**.

## 9. WEEC in Social Media



[WEEC2015 on Twitter](#)



facebook

[WEEC2015 on Facebook](#)

## 10. Welcome to Gothenburg!

Welcome to Gothenburg, a city on the Swedish west coast at the mouth of Göta river and just inside a marvellous archipelago. Gothenburg was founded in 1621 and through the years has grown to a city with 550 000 inhabitants; the second largest city in Sweden. It encompasses the largest harbour in Scandinavia with a yearly tonnage of almost 40 million tons. Two universities are situated within the city, University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology with almost 50000 students together. Gothenburg is proud of its new opera house and its concert hall. It has a lively and diverse theatrical, music and exhibitions scene.



For many years Gothenburg and its inhabitants have been actively engaged in issues and activities related to the environment, sustainable development and a sustainable future. The two universities are conducting cutting edge research and education around these issues. Every year, the city of Gothenburg awards a substantial environmental prize and so does Volvo AB. Many of the world's environmental and sustainability leaders are among the laureates.

University of Gothenburg has an internationally renowned Faculty of Education. It is the home of leading educational researchers such as Ference Marton and Roger Säljö.

Over the years Gothenburg has become a multicultural habitat enriched by immigrants from all parts of the world.

People across the world are aware of the urgent need to change social, economic, cultural and environmental pathways if humanity is to enjoy a sustainable future. Education, learning and understanding are essential conditions and means to engage in this necessary transformation and change.



We are sure that this congress will help in setting major steps in the right direction.

Picture credits: Göran Assner/imagebank.sweden.se

# 11. Previous WEECs



## 7th WEEC – 2013 – Marrakech, Morocco

- *Cities & rural, Areas in search of harmony*



## 6th WEEC – 2011 – Brisbane, Australia

- *Explore, experience, educate*



## 5th WEEC – 2009 – Montréal, Canada

- *Earth, our common home*



## 4th WEEC – 2007 – Durban, South Africa

- *Learning in a changing world*



## 3rd WEEC – 2005 – Torino, Italy

- *Educational paths towards sustainability*



## 2nd WEEC – 2004 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

- *Building a possible future*



## 1st WEEC – 2003 – Espinho, Portugal

- *Strategies for a sustainable future*

# 11. Contact Information

## Organizers

The host for this congress will be the [Centre for Environment and Sustainability, GMV](#), at [University of Gothenburg](#) and [Chalmers University of Technology](#).

Co-organizer is the WEEC Permanent Secretariat, c/o Istituto per l'Ambiente e l'Educazione Scholé Futuro ONLUS, Strada del Nobile 89, 10131, Torino, Italy, phone: +39 011 4366522, email: [secretariat@environmental-education.org](mailto:secretariat@environmental-education.org), web: [www.environmental-education.org](http://www.environmental-education.org)

## Congress Secretariat

MCI Scandinavia, Phone: + 46 8 5465 1500

For questions regarding the abstract submission: [abstracts@mci-group.com](mailto:abstracts@mci-group.com)

For other matters: [info@weec2015.org](mailto:info@weec2015.org)

## Local Organizing Committee

If you want to get in contact with the Local Organizing Committee for discussing a symposium or side event, please e-mail at: [loc@gmv.gu.se](mailto:loc@gmv.gu.se)

Note that this e-mail is *only for discussing symposiums or side-events*.

For further information, please consult the [webpage](#).



## 12. Centre for Environment and Sustainability, GMV

The Centre for Environment and Sustainability, GMV, in Gothenburg, Sweden is a network organisation at Chalmers University of Technology and University of Gothenburg. We promote research and education for sustainable development.

GMV creates and encourages research projects and multidisciplinary initiatives. Co-operation with the business community in western Sweden as well as the provision of information and education to the general public are part of GMV's brief. Both research and training are firmly founded in existing scientific disciplines.

For more information, please see the [webpage](#).

