

NICE-Mail

News and Information about Consumer Education

July 2004

No. 21



**CONFERENCE
REPORT**

Using, choosing
or creating
the future?



THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE CONSUMER CITIZENSHIP NETWORK

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Greetings from the NICE-Mail Coordinator!

News and information about consumer education for 10 years. It was September 1993 in Stockholm, when Consumer Educators met at the “European Conference for Consumer Education in Schools” and took the initiative to form “the European Consumer Educators Network” (ENCE). Consumer Educators Network’s newsletter was called NICE-Mail. Ever since the first edition published in June 1994, NICE-Mail has been distributed twice a year to the participants of the European Network of Consumer Educators in English and Spanish. It can also be found from the Internet www.norden.org/nicemail

What is European Network of Consumer Educators?

The objectives of the European Network of Consumer Educators are;

- to exchange experiences between consumer educators
- to further develop consumer education
- to represent and lobby for consumer education at the European level and, if necessary, on the international level.

Who are the participants?

Consumer educators within consumer organizations, curriculum development agencies, national ministries, teacher organizations, teacher training institutes and universities are all welcome to join.

The benefits of being an ENCE participant

Membership in the Network is free of charge. For the present, the Nordic countries finance the production and distribution of the newsletter. The Spanish version has been made possible with the assistance of the European School of Consumers in Santander, Spain. All the participants are expected to contribute their experiences regularly through the NICE-Mail. The means of communication is English.

The future of the NICE-Mail-magazine?

Times change, and so must NICE-Mail. Due to financial pressures, the NICE Mail newsletter will be published in the future only on the internet as an online edition. Internet communication provides the possibilities of developing network cooperation. I am sure all of you participants have many ideas as to how NICE-Mail should develop and what the contents of the newsletter should be in the future. Please share your ideas with me. There are no idle comments!

In this NICE-Mail newsletter we focus on the contributions from the Consumer Citizenship Conference in Paris on March 1-2-2004. The next issue in the fall will concentrate among other things, on sponsoring in the schools.

To share your consumer education experiences and new ideas for the network please contact the editor and coordinator of the NICE-Mail Leena Heinilä.

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Using, choosing or creating the future?

The first international conference of the Consumer Citizenship Network. Responsible lifestyle choices, increased ecological awareness and just distribution of resources were central themes of the first international conference of the Consumer Citizenship Network which was held 1-2 March 2004 at UNESCO in Paris, France. 165 participants from 33 countries came together to look more closely at how the individual in his/her role as a consumer as well as a citizen, can contribute to global solidarity and sustainable consumption.

THE CONFERENCE WAS the first annual conference of the Consumer Citizenship Network, an Erasmus 3. thematic network whose goal is to stimulate dialogue between researchers, educators and civil society as well as strengthen cooperation in relation to value education, civic training, and environmental and consumer education. The Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN) is an interdisciplinary network of educators and researchers from 29 countries and includes UNESCO and UNEP and international citizenship and consumer organizations.

At the conference speakers from India, England, Norway and Scotland contributed to the main focus points of the conference which were:

- **Rethinking extravagance**
– consumption patterns in light of global disparities.
- **Revising responsibilities**
– value-based education as a tool.
- **Reviewing accountability**
– participatory democracy in a commercialized world.
- **Reshaping cooperation**
– co-producing and sharing of teaching materials and learning methods in a global network.

Conference content summary

Presentations and discussions at the conference emphasized the need for a comprehensive review of the fundamental values directing lifestyle choices.

What do individuals want – and why? What does improved life quality mean and how can this be achieved with reduced use of resources? The presentations and discussions concurred as to the pressing need for changes in present consumption patterns in light of global disparities and environmental impacts. Such changes require accurate and accessible information, alternative products, and the ability and willingness to withstand commercial pressure. Systematic, cohesive value-based education was recommended as one of several necessary tools for helping individuals better understand their responsibilities as consumer citizens. During the conference a variety of methods such as service learning, scenarios, cases, and future workshops were discussed.

The 45 papers which were presented at the conference described research and development work on topics such as: consumer rights and responsibilities,

food safety, the challenges of the information society, social and environmental impacts of production and consumption patterns, educational approaches to consumer citizenship, etc. These workshop presentations were related to the conference themes which were:

- How can the consumer citizen deal with the ethical challenges of prosperity?
- How can the media and ICT be constructive tools for the consumer citizen?
- What are the consumer citizen's rights and responsibilities as regards food, transport, housing, energy use and personal finances?
- What contributions can the European consumer citizen make towards the eradication of poverty in the world?
- How can awareness and social involvement be stimulated in the consumer citizen?



Participants at the Consumer Citizenship Conference, March 2004.

Conference coordination

The conference was organised by The Consumer Citizenship Network, coordinated by the Hedmark University College, Norway and hosted by UNESCO. The conference was made possible with the support of the European Community in the framework of the Socrates programme and the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and Norwegian Ministry of Education. The conference chair was Victoria W. Thoresen of Hedmark University College, Norway; the conference manager was Dag Tangen of Hedmark University College, Norway; and the conference coordinator Julia Heiss, of UNESCO, Paris, France. The content of the conference and the conference reports do not necessarily reflect the position of the European Community, nor do they involve any responsibility on the part of the European Community.

Consumer Citizenship

The Consumer Citizenship Network is based upon the following working definition of consumer citizenship:

"Consumer Citizenship is when the individual, in his/her role as a consumer, actively participates in developing and improving society by considering ethical issues, diversity of perspectives, global processes and fu-

ture conditions. It involves taking responsibility on a global as well as regional, national and local scale when securing one's own personal needs and well-being."

The Network seeks to accomplish what United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan has so clearly explained: "The academic and NGO (non-governmental organisation) communities also have vital roles to play in achieving sustainable consumption. On the one hand, research is needed to better grasp the technical and sociological aspects of the issues at hand. On the other, NGO advocates provide clarity and forcefulness required to sustain a thorough debate. Together they can inform and inspire the whole debate on sustainable consumption."

U.N. Decade for education for sustainable development

The cooperation upon which the CCN Network is based also provides a valuable forum for contributions to the coming United Nations Decade for education for sustainable development. Education for sustainable development has been clearly defined as education concerned with the social and economic aspects of development as well as the environmental aspects. Consumer citizenship education deals specifically with these dimensions.

Will more money make us happier?

This is the question addressed by the Norwegian Deputy Minister, Hans Olav Syversen as he opened the Consumer Citizenship Network Conference in Paris in March 2004. Syversen said, referring to State of the World Report 2004, published by World Watch Institute, "If a person is very poor, there is no doubt that greater income can improve his or her life. But once the basics are secured, well-being does not necessarily correlate with wealth... Growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) often is a leading priority, under the assumption that wealth secured is well-being delivered. Yet undue emphasis on generating wealth, particularly by encouraging heavy consumption, may be yielding disappointing returns. Overall quality of life is suffering in some of the world's richest nations as people experience greater stress and time pressures and less satisfying social relationships, and as the natural environment shows more and more signs of distress." Syversen continued by pointing out the need to redefine prosperity to emphasize a higher quality of life – rather than the mere accumulation of goods.

At the CCN conference Hans Olav Syversen, presented the YouthXChange project which is directed by UNEP and UNESCO with a 50 000 euro contribution to the project's teacher training initiatives. The University College of Hedmark supplemented this with the invitation to use the college's facilities for the planned teacher training course on sustainable consumption to be held in March 2005.

NICE-Mail coverage

This NICE-Mail issue will provide a summary of some of the CCN conference workshops and their contributions on the following fields: consumer education in teaching and school curriculum development and ethical aspects on consumer education. A more complete publication of the CCN conference proceedings will be available in September. More information about CCN can be gotten at www.hihm.no/concit or by writing to ccn@hihm.no.



Participants at the Consumer Citizenship Conference, March 2004.

Concerns of consumer citizens

A wide variety of topics connected to consumer citizenship were discussed at the Consumer Citizenship Network Conference. The following is a summary of the main issues which were dealt with. It is not a collective statement made by the participants of the conference but rather a reflection of the priorities voiced at the conference and registered by the conference chair, Victoria W. Thoresen. Each subject is mentioned first in terms of a vital concern and then in view of changes needed on the macro scale of social and political innovations and secondly in view of reforms considered necessary in education.

1. It is a vital concern that the basic values of society – honesty, integrity, compassion, moderation, justice, freedom and peace be safeguarded against the dominance of greed, fraud, excess and violence.

To do so, there is a pressing need for:

- a) greater commitment by governments, producers and media to codes of ethical standards.
- b) a continually updated political and private discourse as to how production and consumption can constructively contribute to sustainable development.
- c) more complete and easily understood information about risks and consequences.
- d) education based upon: scientific search for truth, respect for human dignity and learning to live together.
- e) education containing a core-curriculum of value education.

2. It is a vital concern that central economic concepts be redefined so as to be based on sustainability perspectives rather than purely monetary perspectives.

To do so, there is a pressing need for:

- a) recognition of the fact that economy is about how we choose to use limited physical and human resources.
- b) legislation which allows increased productivity to be rewarded with increased leisure time rather than only increased purchasing power.
- c) education which presents functional economy as a valid alternative to consumption economy.

3. It is a vital concern that individual choices support economic and social development throughout the world rather than marginalize or limit the opportunities of citizens in other societies.

To do so, there is a pressing need for:

- a) international regulations and con-

trols to secure employment rights in all countries.

- b) easier public access to indexing of companies and products/services in terms of their social, economic and ecological scores on a “sustainable development index” (similar to the United Nations Development Program’s Human Development index).
- c) cooperative, participatory learning and use of case studies.
- d) close interaction between schools and parents and the local community
- e) education which includes reflection on needs and desires.
- f) education which fosters creativity and innovation.

4. It is a vital concern that, in view of the steadily increasing expansion of market driven advertising, the right of the citizen to “commercial free zones” should be upheld.

To do so there is a pressing need for:

- a) a general social consensus as to the value of natural and cultural areas free from audio, visual or other forms of advertising.
- b) legislation that limits commercialization of public spaces such as schools, libraries, hospitals and other social institutions.
- c) parents and teachers to clarify for children the psychological affects of advertising particularly as regards sex and violence.

5. It is a vital concern that individual’s health and safety be supported by commercial lifestyle choices rather than be endangered by market stimulated habits.

To do so, there is a pressing need for:

- a) greater market and media focus on role models which promote lifestyles characterized by, among other things, environmental awareness, limited

sugar consumption, sufficient time for sleeping and abstinence from addictive drugs.

- b) legislation which restricts marketing directed at young children, forbids advertising of tobacco and intensifies penalties for drug trafficking.
- c) schools which focus on systematic personal and collective growth processes.
- d) schools which provide incentives and rewards for teachers and students maintaining healthy lifestyles.

6. It is a vital concern that the financial stability of the individual consumer be protected against overextension and dependency.

To do so there is a pressing need for:

- a) upfront risk assessment information from marketers (increased transparency).
- b) removal of slot/game machines from general public places to enclosed areas and the monitoring of age and conditions of those who use them.
- c) counselling for youth about financial liquidity, liability and accountability, particularly in relation to e-commerce.

7. It is a vital concern of the consumer citizen that the topsoil degradation be controlled and limited.

To do so there is a pressing need for:

- a) widespread information about the consequences of personal consumption on topsoil degradation.
- b) citizen (and local community-based) initiatives which reduce topsoil pollution.
- c) schools providing opportunities where pupils and students can learn by experience how to care for the environment – specifically air, water and topsoil.

Controversial issues and approaches

Consumer citizenship addresses controversial issues. The CCN conference proved to be an opportunity for constructive consultation on diverse issues from a multitude of points of view in an atmosphere of positive cooperation.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS at the Consumer Citizenship Network Conference March 2004 challenged participants to consider consumer citizenship issues from the perspectives of ethics, environmental impact and didactical innovativeness.

Professor **Bedrich Moldan**, Director of the Charles University Environmental Center in Prague and chairman of the U.N. Commission of Sustainable Development from 2000-2001 and vice-chairman from 1993-1994 posed the question of whether or not global disparities actually exist and if they matter. Moldan went on to explain that the parameters of life satisfaction are culturally given and vary over throughout the world. What really matters, Moldan claimed, was the pressure consumption exerts on the environment. The environmental load is given by the volume of materials taken from nature and the volume of wastes released back into nature. It is the carrying capacity of an area in relation to the environmental load which must be considered. Moldan maintained that the solution is to decouple consumption from the environmental load. Doing so would involve transparent social decisions and active citizenship based on the precautionary principle that involves all stakeholders. These decisions must be based on sustainability science, relevant information and democratic principles.

Sherif Rushdy of the NGO *Principles in Action* has been the educational advisor for the New Era Development Institute in India and contributed to the Indian National Integrated Value Education Program for teacher trainers. Rushdy maintained in his keynote speech that the global crisis faced by mankind today is due to fundamental shortcomings of the materialistic view of life and that we are in need of a paradigm shift if we seriously wish to bring about individual and social transformation to ensure the growth of a new global civilization characterized by qualities of justice, good governance, generosity and caring, a civilization reflective of the coming of age of the entire human race, based on the principle of the oneness of mankind. Rushdy continued by explaining that the material and spiritual dimensions of human existence must be interwoven into a common coherent framework and that science and religion, the two forces of civilization, must be reconciled and work in harmony as complementary knowledge systems guiding the development of mankind. A direct curriculum of value education, was what Rushdy suggested, reinforcing core themes in all subjects and including personal and collective growth processes, involvement of parents and the community, role modeling by the teachers, an appropriate environment and management

of the school and systematic value-based evaluation of teachers, students and the school.

Professor **Bart J. McGettrick**, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Glasgow, Scotland and well known for his work in connection with citizenship education, emphasized that we need to move from a culture of individualism to a culture of participation; and from a culture of accountability to a culture of responsibility. There exists the need to look at transformative changes in our society led by a concern for values, and not a concern for the kind of accountability which is determined externally, and which carries with it in its wake issues of pressure, blame, tension, compliance and conformity. McGettrick claimed that social systems do not exist merely to support economic values or "the commercialised world". Internal accountability and an overt sense of responsibility can be developed in societies which are characterized by hope and justice for all. This is dependent on the capacity for self-reflection and self-development which leads to "discerned information" not merely measured data. It also includes the ethos of democratic participation.

Åke Bjørke, Information Officer of GRID-Arendal, an organisation working with UNEP and responsible for the pedagogy, development and running of online courses at the Global Virtual



Bedrich Moldan



Sherif Rushdy



Bart J. McGettrick



Åke Bjørke

University, associated to the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo, provided the conference with a keynote speech focusing on the didactics of consumer citizenship education. Bjørke described the benefits of interactive educational approaches to questions of sustainable development and consumer issues. By showing the data available through several online sources such as www.globalis.no. Bjørke emphasized the importance of access to updated information which is easily understood and is presented in a simple but comprehensive manner.

Conference presentations

The following is a list of the presentations which were made at the conference and which will be available in the published conference proceedings. Abstracts of the presentations are available on the Consumer Citizenship Network website www.hihm.no/concit

Ethical Challenges

- a) Nadezda Klabusayova and Marie Mikusova
The educational process and standards creation in relation to lifestyle of the 21st century.
- b) Jørgen Juul Jensen, Jette Benn and Margaret Jepson
Consumption in everyday life – a question of ethical challenges and responsible action?
- c) Jarmila Tkacikova
Ethical dilemma as a challenge, new consumer status and modern euro consumerism.

Life Quality and Wellbeing

- a) Luisa Ferreira da Silva
The good life, wealth and health - What does well being mean for you?
- b) Vilja Dislere
Consumer citizenship for life quality in Latvia.
- c) Fani Uzunova and Kiril Georgiev
Values on quality of life and personal responsibility for ethical consumption – a challenge to education for winning the sustainable future.

Lifestyles

- a) Guido Ipsen
Semiotics of consumption – signs of consumer identity.
- b) Ilze Liepina
Students attitudes to future.



Participants at the Consumer Citizenship Conference, March 2004.

- c) Liga Danilanae
Values and their meaning in formation of consumer's life style.

The Socialization of Consumers

- a) Leena Graeffe and Taina Männistö
Ensuring childhood in consuming society.
- b) Velta Lubkina
Socialization in the new consumer formation.
- c) Jolanta Gora
Understanding consumer citizenship through learning clusters.

Aspects of life

- a) Urszula Marchlewics
Transforming knowledge of FP6 also in relation to other EU Programmes, mainly Socrates/Eramus into sustainable development and towards knowledge-based society.
- c) Anu Toots
Can social security erode solidarity? Experience from Estonian welfare reforms.
- d) Mike Kitson
A review of some current and recent current and recent networks and collaborative projects in consumer education and citizenship.
- e) Inese Jurgena and Alida Samusevica
The Role of Cross-cultural Education in the Development of Student's Cultural Identity as a Moral Value.

The Information Society

- a) Nelly Bencheva
Modern media of training the young

people – challenges of the information society.

- b) Barbara Mazur
The right to privacy and modern methods of communication.
- c) Henk Goovaerts
Working with a staged plan in value-based education.

Rights and Responsibilities

- a) Laura Terragni
Making choices of ethical consumption: factors that can affect patterns of political consumerism besides specific consumers attitudes and orientations.
- b) Thor Ø. Jensen
Questioning the link between rights and obligations.
- c) Pia Valota
Who really is the "consumer" and what are the consumer's responsibilities?
- d) Marino Melissano
The consumer protection in Europe.

Global Solidarity

- a) Jørgen Klein
Global solidarity or global apartheid? The environmental footprints of uneven global consumption.
- b) Herminia Pedro
What contributions can the European consumer citizen make towards the eradication of poverty in the world?
- c) Dana Volkunova
Realizing survey among students at

Involvement

- a) Michael Joris
Internationalisation in education.
- b) Kiril Georgiev and Fani Uzunova
Grasping the future – challenges for social involvement.
- c) Peter Gnielczyk
Debt prevention – a future workshop.
- d) Alida Samusevica, Inga Samusevica and Inese Jurgena
Formation of Citizenship in Multicultural Society.
- e) Annamaria Formentini
Cases as tools to create sustainable awareness.
- f) Gustavo Moral Alvarez
Getting actively involved. Proposals of scenarios and practical workshops.
- g) Alcina Dourado
Two (and a half) experiences concerning the consumers education.

Economic Perspectives

- a) Lazlo Borbas and Richard Szabo
Consumer citizen's rights as elements of the competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises.
- b) Natasa Vrcon Tratar and Suzana Sedmaki
Marketing messages overload.

Curriculum

- a) Sue Bailey
The conceptual mapping of Consumer Sciences in the United Kingdom in Higher Education in relation to Consumer Citizenship.



Participants at the Consumer Citizenship Conference, March 2004.

- b) Kaija Turrki
Consumer-citizenship education in the comprehensive school in Finland – comparisons between the curricula in 1994 and 2004.
- c) Arthur Lyon Dahl
Science and values as complementary foundations for consumer citizenship.

Teaching Methodologies

- a) Nedjalka Georgieva, Todorka Atanasova, Bistra Vassileva, Violeta Dimitrova and Violeta Peteva
Social awareness and responsibility: An assessment and recommendations for teaching methodologies.
- b) Z. Chehlova and N. Linde
The problems of developing readiness for self-implementation in a secondary school. Adolescent in Latvia.

Science and Society

- a) Joanna Kostecka
Preservation of soil fauna biodiversity – still undervalued in education for sustainable development.
- b) Stoyan Tanchev, Tsvetko V. Prokopov and Tsveta Luizova-Horeva
Food Safety.



Participants at the Consumer Citizenship Conference, March 2004.

CCN activities, publications and plans

THE CONSUMER CITIZENSHIP

Network (CCN) is an interdisciplinary network of educators and researchers who share an interest in how the individual's role as a consumer can contribute constructively to sustainable development and mutual solidarity. The participants develop interdisciplinary approaches to central issues dealing with the balance between material and non-material well-being and how one can translate ethical values into everyday practice through conscientious participation in the market.

Countries have diverse socio-economic histories and meet the present market-induced dilemmas in different ways. The network provides opportunities to learn from each other's experience. The CCN is based upon the principle of discourse and cooperative learning. Participants share their work, discuss its merits and weaknesses and assist in developing approaches and materials. Up-to-date scientific research is essential for the practicing of consumer citizenship and the network deals with the challenge of how institutions of higher education transfer knowledge, skills and values. The social change implied in the ever more widely used term "sustainability transition" depends upon environmental sciences incorporating social and economic dimensions into their research and teaching. It involves bringing the results of research within the reach of teachers, students and the citizens in general so that the results can motivate modifications in attitudes and behavior. To do so, universities and teacher trainers are faced with the challenge of using participatory, active learning connecting daily life experience to more complicated and often theoretical considerations. Use of new information and communication technologies is also a part of the didactical approaches to consumer citizenship which the network is seeking to develop.

Annual conferences and meetings

The CCN is a three-year Erasmus 3. thematic network project which began in October 2003. The CCN has now held its first annual conference in Paris in March 2004. The proceedings of the conference will be published and summaries are available on the CCN website. The second annual CCN conference will be in Bratislava, Slovakia 27-28, May 2005. Winter 2004, CCN the steering group, the thematic groups, the editorial committee and the conference committee will meet to further the details of the CCN workplan.

Curriculum Surveys

In order to be able to indicate for educational authorities as well as students and colleagues the scope of teaching dealing with consumer citizenship topics, the CCN is compiling a survey of courses offered by partner institutions. This will not give a totally comprehensive picture of consumer citizenship education in each partner country, but will provide examples of how various institutions have chosen to approach the issue. The goal of this work is not only to see what is being done but also to gain insight into which areas are not covered by present courses. In this way it may be possible to focus further development work on those areas which are least represented.

Teaching/learning guidelines

CCN has evolved from a number of European projects. These projects have prepared guidelines and prototype curriculum. There is an expressed need for these as well as more extensive guidelines to assist educators in dealing with the many varied subjects which consumer citizenship encompasses. CCNs teaching/learning guidelines shall include a general section giving advice on a) the value- based foundation of

consumer citizenship education b) the importance of consumer citizenship as a part of the United Nations decade for education for sustainable development c) relationships to other established subjects d) connections with cross-curricular themes e) methodology (age-related approaches, participatory activities, group work, experiment work, case studies, scenarios, service teaching, etc) f) information acquisition and handling g) risk analysis.

Website developments

The Consumer Citizenship Network Web site is functioning and undergoing continuous improvement. A page with links to other relevant sites is being developed. An academic reference library database is also under construction and contributions can be sent to the Core Unit (ccn@hihm.no) at any time. The member site (intranet) with information specifically for CCN partners has been established using the Class Fronter system.

CCN thematic groups

The Network maintains five thematic groups which secure a balance between the reflective aspects of the network and the pragmatic ones. The groups are:

1) Ethical challenges :

How can the consumer citizen deal with the ethical challenges of prosperity?

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: value-based education, character building, fair trade initiatives, sustainable lifestyle initiatives, transparency and accountability, and collective vision.

2) The information society:

How can the media and ICT be constructive tools for the consumer citizen?

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: commercial influences on youth and children, the acquiring and handling of information as a consumer citizen, how complex concepts can be made accessible and understandable for

young people, e-commerce, and marketing.

3) Rights and responsibilities:

What are the consumer citizen's rights and responsibilities as regards food, transport, housing, energy use and personal finances?

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: the impacts (social and ecological) of production and consumption and how the consumer citizen can prevent or change them. Other related topics might be: industrial ecology, lifestyle modifications, financial literacy, and community initiatives.

4) Global solidarity:

What contributions can the European consumer citizen make towards the eradication of poverty in the world?

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: North/South issues, industrial poverty, resource management, economic systems, and civic action.

5) Involvement:

How can awareness and social involvement be stimulated in the consumer citizen?

This group deals with subjects concerning e.g.: use of case-studies, active learning, scenarios for the future, and training of communication skills, conflict resolution skills and change management.

CCN second application

March 1, 2003 was the final deadline for submission of the renewal application for Erasmus 3. thematic networks. CCN sent in its application for funding for its second project year 2004-5. One of the most significant development in the plans for CCNs second year is the proposed cooperation with the European Tuning project. For more information about Tuning see: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/educ/tuning/tuning_en.html

The synergy anticipated between CCN and Tuning is expected to result in the following outputs:

- mapping teaching practice in relation to consumer citizenship
- identifying and discussing the most important generic competences related to degree programs which include consumer citizenship
- identifying and discussing the most important subject specific competences related to consumer citizenship
- clarifying the learning outcomes of consumer citizenship education.

TOPACE 2004

The Tower Person Award for Consumer Educators in Europe 2004 (TOPACE) has been awarded to Ass. Professor Victoria W. Thoresen from the University College of Hedmark/ Norway on the occasion of the First International Conference of the Consumer Citizenship Network on the first of March 2004 at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

TOPACE is awarded every year in order to

- appreciate the commitment of distinguished consumer educators
- foster the promotion and performance of consumer education
- improve the quality of consumer education
- motivate european and international cooperation

The Jury (Grada Hellman, Nieves Alvarez Martin, Heiko Steffens) has decided to present the award to Victoria W. Thoresen this year. The following eulogy was addressed to the laureat in presence of the CCN members and distinguished representatives of ministries, universities, consumer organisations, UNEP and UNESCO.

Victoria W. Thoresen

After her first performance at the Conference of Consumer Educators in Santander/Spain (1999) Victoria W. Thoresen, Hedmark University College, Norway, has become one of the most productive promoters of Consumer Education in Europe. The TOPACE Jury has evaluated and acknowledged her outstanding achievements and unanimously decided to award Ms. Thoresen for her merits. By elaborating its links to citizenship and by emphasising interdisciplinary approaches she has provided a sustainable momentum to the modernisation of Consumer Education.

Victoria W. Thoresen's merits encompass the initiation, active involvement in and coordination of:

- the Project "Focus on Consumer Education" (Consumer Council of Norway 2000 – 2003)
- the Nordic Projects on Consumer Education (2002 – 2005)
- the Project "Developing Consumer Citizenship" (EU-COMENIUS 2001 – 2004)
- the Project „Consumer Citizenship Network“ (EU-ERASMUS since Oct. 2003).

Furthermore she has contributed to numerous International Congresses and Conferences on Consumer and Civic Education.



Reflection, responsibility and service

The Comenius 2.1 project: *Developing Consumer Citizenship* is in its final phase. After two years of developing courses, websites, teaching guidelines and a prototype curriculum, the project participants are now preparing national dissemination seminars. This article describes the project's progress and the results of the third international gathering of the project.

THE THREE-YEAR COMENIUS 2.1 project: "Consumer education and teacher training: developing consumer citizenship" is sponsored by the European Commission's Socrates program and has as its main objective to further cooperation between European countries in the field of consumer education in the context of citizenship development on the level of compulsory initial teacher training as well as graduate teacher training. The project has had three international gatherings of all the participants, first in April 2002 in Hamar, Norway; second in Lisbon, Portugal in May 2003 and the third international meeting held at UNESCO in Paris, the 27-28 February 2004. The central themes at these meetings were: learning to reflect, to take responsibility and to serve others. Between the gatherings the project partners have worked both with improving the present definition of consumer citizenship as well as creating learning materials and curriculum guidelines for consumer citizenship education in schools and in teacher training.

Involved in the project are institutions from England, Portugal, Lithuania, Estonia, Iceland, Sweden and Norway. The project participants are from universities and teacher training colleges, national educational authorities and national consumer organizations. The Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network is also a part of the project which is coordinated by the University College of Hedmark, Norway. The reason for the diverse composition of partner participants has been to strengthen cooperation between those in the realm

of academics and those representing civil society.

Consumer Citizenship stresses critical awareness

The Developing Consumer Citizenship project, has worked on creating an efficient and practical definition of consumer citizenship which functions both in respect to translations and in relation to specific target groups such as politicians, school authorities, teachers, students and parents.) The following is a revised definition of the consumer citizen:

"A consumer citizen is an individual who makes choices based on ethical, social, economic and ecological considerations. The consumer citizen actively contributes to the maintenance of just and sustainable development by caring and acting responsibly on family, national and global levels."

The Millennium Goals and consumer citizenship

The present interdependency of the global community has resulted in the fact

that "all countries pay the price of global injustices" as U.N. secretary general, Kofi Annans has stated. The shared challenges of social, economic and environmental developments of the past decades have created the need for shared responses on the part of individuals, governments, businesses and organizations. Consumer citizenship emphasizes individual responsibility in a collective context. As the UNDP Human Development Report of 2002 states: "People are not only the beneficiaries of economic and social progress, they are also its agents, both as individuals and by making common causes with others." This, however, does not exonerate government authorities from creating legislation to protect consumers and the environment. Consumer citizenship is about knowing when one's individual choices can have an influence and when legislation and collective action is required.

Consumer + civic + environmental education = consumer citizenship education

There is a documented need for consumer education which concentrates not only on the rights of consumers but also



Discussion at the Paris meeting February 2004 amongst some of the participants.

motivates students to assume the responsibilities of being critical, aware consumers. Learning how to acquire, sort and reflect on product information, as well as on the individual and collective consequences of our consumer habits, are increasingly necessary skills for action-competence in today's society. Consumer citizenship education attempts to integrate focal issues of civic education, consumer education and environmental education to "empowering" students and teachers to be active citizens who make deliberate, well-informed choices. This results in an interdisciplinary approach in tune with education for sustainable development which consists of social, economic and environmental dimensions. It also allows for use of a wide variety of teaching and learning methodologies.

Developing Consumer Citizenship Education around Europe

Teaching materials for consumer citizenship education which have been developed by the project have been revised after consultation at the international project meetings and tested in the respective countries. In addition, the following activities have taken place. In Portugal courses are now available on the teacher training level about consumer citizenship education. Materials for use by teachers in primary schools and a website in English and Portuguese are being created for the exchange of experiences, evaluation and suggestions. In Lithuania consumer education has been incorporated in teacher training courses on the levels of both Bachelors and Masters degrees. Translation of a handbook for consumer education in the Baltic countries is being made and will be available on the University website. Consumer citizenship topics are being integrated into the revised secondary school curriculum in Lithuania as well. In Estonia the final national examinations for civic courses have included questions related to consumer citizenship. In Sweden courses for in-service teacher training have been prepared and efforts are being made to include consumer citizenship in education for sustainable development. The 2004 edition of the World Watch Insti-

tute Report, which is about consumption, has proven to be a useful tool in connection with these initiatives. In Norway the national emphasis has been on preparing plans of action related to increased awareness about commercial pressure on children. A revision of the national curriculum for compulsory schools is being made in Norway and work is being done to have consumer citizenship education included. In Iceland the project participants are working with the Ministry of Education to identify the extent to which consumer citizenship education is at present taught, particularly in teacher training.

Curriculum contents

Consumer Citizenship is a broad subject area and can easily be either ignored because it is seen as a part of all subjects or be spread so thinly between subjects that it becomes a superficial presentation of general topics. To avoid these dilemmas, the project has concentrated on developing a prototype curriculum which can provide a framework for consumer citizenship education. The project has experienced that the participants agree about the importance of using methodological approaches which encourage students to take an active role in the learning process. There was also clear consensus about the positive value of putting theory into perspective by connecting it directly to the daily life experiences of students and teachers. In addition, the need to avoid moralizing and pessimistic declarations when teaching consumer citizenship was emphasized.

During the first phases of the project materials and reports on the following topics were developed: life skills,

wants and needs, ethics and consumption, decision making, information technology, product and personal safety, consumer rights and legislation, personal finances, environmental footprints and consumption (environmental catastrophes), media and advertising, health and nutrition/food safety, lifestyles, identity, accountability, poverty, branding, primary age children's understanding of economics and consumption, consumer citizenship – global democracy in a global context, empowering the consumer – the political consumer, consumer citizenship and sustainable development, consumer history, change management, fair trade, science and the consumer, psychology and the consumer, and service learning.

The process of finding a common form for a prototype curriculum which could be used in a variety of school systems was more difficult. One curriculum structure, based on attitudes, knowledge and skills, was presented and discussed. Another manner of formulating the curriculum was also considered. This used the concepts of generic and subject specific competences and learning outcomes. The final prototype curriculum will be available in the last project report to be published in the fall of 2004.

For more information:

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ITALY

Tools for sustainable consumption

Awareness and social involvement can be stimulated in the consumer citizen by looking at cases of success stories and best practices as tools to promote sustainable behavior.

THE UNDERLYING assumption and the driving concepts of this paper are connected with the SSA EMUDE (*Emerging User Demands for Sustainable Solutions*) under the European Community's 6th Framework Program and with the collaboration between Milano Politecnico and UNEP DTIE.

The use of cases has been widely recognized throughout academia but lately also among companies and international organizations. More than ever, cases are seen as effective tools to communicate and to facilitate the growth and spread of good practices. Their potentiality in bridging the positive message of successful initiatives, projects or behaviour is substantiated by their role as models and examples for replication.

This is particularly true when we talk about sustainable consumption related to citizenship.

The starting assumption that the consumer citizen might gain awareness

on sustainable consumption by looking at existing cases originates from the idea of extrapolating promising signals that society emits, reinforcing them and giving them visibility. Thus, a collection of visions about how sustainable patterns of consumption could be, can become a powerful tool for consumer citizens who want to change their lifestyle towards a more sustainable one. In other words, a set of stories of how people so far have been innovative and moved towards more sustainable behaviour or towards practices that can be promising for sustainable development.

An example of collection of stories and cases can be made according to specific functions of daily activities, which have been clustered in the following categories:

- Food: how/what to eat?
- Things: how to manage the household?
- Energy: how to provide energy?

- Work: how to work and study?
- Mobility: how to get around?
- Green: how to manage plants and trees in town?

These function-oriented themes delineate a platform where success stories of everyday life and sustainable behaviours are collected and show how people are moving towards sustainability. And they do such within the scope of the social learning process that the transition towards sustainability is calling for. For more information on the use of scenarios and case studies contact:

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HUNGARY

Consumer citizen's rights

Teaching about consumer citizenship must take into consideration the processes and systems connected to the present market economy. One of the important stakeholders in the economy is entrepreneurs owning small and medium-sized enterprises. Should special conditions be made for SME's so that they can also uphold consumer rights without losing competitive advantage? The research described here looks at such questions.

TRANSITION TO MARKET economy brought fierce competition to the socialist type of monopolized markets. The liberalization of the formerly state controlled imports made this even more intense. Within a few years a whole spectrum of the possible actors appeared on the Hungarian markets – from self employed entrepreneurs to multi-

national companies, from small retail shops to hypermarkets. Parallel with this process there is also a significant change in the minds of the consumer citizens and entrepreneurs.

The research presented in brief here was carried out at the Budapest Polytechnic 2002-2003, and analyzes the impact of the new law for the Protection

of Consumers on the consumer citizen's behaviour and at the same time on the competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME).

Perhaps it is quite unusual to speak about the competitiveness of SME's in the context of consumer citizen's rights, but according to the results of this research it has relevance. The SME's have

to keep up with the multinational companies by fulfilling the same conditions, but this puts an enormous burden on their shoulders. More than 70% of the owners of SME's who responded to questions about the effects of consumer rights regulations on the competitiveness of their businesses, complained about the unbearable difficulties the necessity of meeting the requirements of the Law of Protection of Consumers. Taking the accession to the EU into consideration they are even more pessimistic. The respondents maintain, that particularly for food producers, the rules are not for the protection of the consumers, but just against the small companies.

Evaluation of Consumer Protection in Hungary

Consumer protection regulations form an independent system in conformity with the continuously changing demands. The regulations deal with the basic obligations of the manufacturers and distributors of goods and services, rights of the consumers, they contain the official procedures and the possibilities for the solution of disputes.

In Hungary the most important legal source of regulation is Act on Consumer Protection (Act CLV.1997). Consumers' interests are also protected by the rules on Competition Law, which involves a ban on unfair competition. Even The Criminal Code protects the interests of customers by stipulating warnings for the actors in business. As far as the official side of consumer protection is concerned, the highest authority in this field is the Chief Consumer Supervision. They have professional guidance and control over regional supervision offices.

Consumer protection has always been given outstanding emphasis in the European Community.

After the accession of the new member states high level of protection has to be provided for nearly half billion EU citizens. Without consumer protection the desired single market is unthinkable. The free movement of goods and services needs common legislation, the application of which is an important component of competition. Companies complying with the

consumer protection requirements may strengthen their positions on their markets, but other group of firms who are not capable to keep up with these rules may even entirely loose their markets. ITDH, the International Trade Development Agency of Hungary, defined the following actions to be taken to make enterprises competitive even in terms of consumer protection:

- knowledge of consumer protection legislation and laws
- compliance with consumer protection legislation
- production and distribution of safe goods and services
- establishment of appropriate relations with the authorities and the civil associations providing representation for consumers
- strengthened consumer protection approach within the business
- participation in training and further training on consumer protection.

Small and medium-sized enterprises and consumer protection regulations

296 entrepreneurs (owners or managers of an enterprise) were questioned and the enterprises were classified by the number of their employees according to international standards, and we did not take into consideration the annual revenue or other possible figures. In our sample the small and medium sized enterprises were overrepresented in relation to the national percentages. The majority of these enterprises had existed for more than one year but less than five years.

To the question "Does keeping the rules of the consumer protection act and other rulings create difficulties for you?" Less than ten percent stated that it does not cause problems for their enterprise. Out of those who said yes, more than 70% felt that the keeping of the rules makes serious difficulties. As to the question "In what form do these problems occur?" more than eighty percent said that the administrative procedures they have to go through cause them financial difficulties. Guaranteeing the required quality is not easy itself, but the auditing system is very complicated and costly. Most of the

entrepreneurs emphasized that equal treatment with the multinational companies is not fair. They said „We are unable to concentrate all the time on the written requirements, we have to work. We cannot employ a whole staff the task of which is to work out and maintain a system for meeting the changing requirements. It would cost us more than we earn.” Those involved in the survey were mainly micro entrepreneurs, the most of which are self employed, and feel they are not in a position to stay well informed.

Burdens

As a final conclusion, it can be stated that for small-and medium sized enterprises the task of meeting all the requirements concerning rules of consumer protection is a heavy burden. Some of the enterprises are simply unable to stay up-to-date, and for others it causes unproportionate financial difficulties. A possible solution might be if they could receive consultancy services at low prices or subsidised by the state.

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SPAIN

To talk about consumerism is to talk about responsibility

“Society nowadays is more and more selfish, only success and personal glory matter. If you can have two cars and you only have one you are a complete idiot. This is the criterion.”
(José Saramago)

School in the eye of the hurricane

School is called upon to bring about changes, to create concerns, to open new windows onto the future. Training forms part of the integral training of the person. In today's society education cannot be understood without training persons so that they may be capable of facing up to each other, getting involved with each other and acting in a critical and responsible way in the consumer society. We are dealing with lifelong learning, which contributes clear concepts, efficient procedures and positive attitudes, which bring about the appearance of habits socially in line with responsible consumerism. School and we, ourselves, teachers committed with the time in which we live, must participate in the development of the curriculum through activities which integrate into school life the current day concerns, problems and proposals affecting pupils (in relation with consumerism), in such a way that they can analyse phenomena, describe situations, look for solutions and put forward coherent alternatives with responsible consumerism.

The teaching staff must propose scenarios where science plays a part in everyday life, in which we learn learning, not only the history of each subject (mathematics, sociology, language, geography, chemistry, and so on) if not the unit of science in order to know the real situation, interpret it, propose alternatives, resolve problems.

The world revolves around consumerism. Consumerism has become the focal point of our lives. Children, the young and the old listen (we listen) to the sirens, the music by the new Pipers of Hamelin and they fall (we fall) into consumerist temptations. By

examining practical experiences in this field, in the classroom, means opting to involve the students in levels of thought and identification of processes and problem solving.

In short, we (consumers) are part of the solution; we can and must try it. We can succeed in what we aim to do (educate in an integral way) learning and teaching to consume in a responsible way, which implies backing consumerism that is at the same time ethical, critical, ecological, sustainable, socially committed and fair.

The EEC, which is the only one of its kind, focuses most of its efforts on the development of practical workshops and useful didactic material for Consumer Education. All material designed is based on practices and practical situations which promote responsible consumerism and sustainable development.

Approaches and strategies are promoted so as to provide consumer-citizens with clear concepts, efficient procedures and responsible attitudes in such a way that they feel involved, critical and socially committed towards the environment surrounding them.

We promote various kinds of didactic activities in schools and education centres.

Curriculum development projects

These projects are relevant throughout the school year and affect the whole school (or various classes). The teaching staff are motivated to develop these projects in Infant Education (3-6 years), Primary (6-12) Secondary (12-16), Bachillerato (School leaving certificate) and Professional Training (from 16 onwards) and Adult Education (Life-

long learning). Over the last 9 years the ESC has been promoting projects in schools and education centres that would come under the category of “ECO-CONSUMERISM” and have been widely acclaimed. The projects run along the following lines:

- Wide, multi-sensorial observation of the milieu.
- Identification of environmental problems and responsibilities.
- Anticipation of the consequences of actions undertaken.
- Role plays and games involving comparative analysis.
- Scenarios and basic laboratory experiments, where students analyse phenomena and possible alternatives in order to solve the problems detected.
- Conclusions are drawn and diffused via effective, didactic, and entertaining methods.
- Action is taken.

The following projects are being carried out following this strategy plan:

- “Ecology around the home”, Special Education Centre “Pintor Martín Sáez”. Development of an integrated training plan concerning ecological responsibility. The process:
 - Observation of behaviour and phenomena (saving energy in the education centre, use of waste paper baskets and containers for different kinds of waste products, etc).
 - Identification of problems, launching informative campaigns offering alternatives, ... (use of school radio).
 - Practical selection of waste items and use of the appropriate containers.
 - Re-using and making use of un-

wanted articles (in art, as ornaments, making toys, recycling paper, soap-making, and so on).

– School greenhouse with ecological growing techniques.

- “The Talking Rubbish Bin” which talks about our consumer habits. Gerardo Diego Primary School – a demonstrative and educational project introducing its pupils to the real situation. The process used:
 - Commented reading of a story with the same title as the project.
 - Observation of the milieu, examination of objects thrown away that can be reused or recycled. Field trips in order to generate new activities. Asking the question “Why...?” and providing answers.
 - Multiple considerations on “buying rubbish”.
 - Comparison and classification of items in terms of ecological cost, raw materials, conversion cost, possibilities of reuse and recycling, the waste these items produce, etc.
 - Analysis of the different ways of obtaining products, polluting, reducing the consumer chain and unnecessary spending and waste.
 - Comparative analysis, seeking relations, constructing processes. Conclusions.
 - Proposal of action to be taken on the milieu.

Groups of young researchers

We have been able to create groups of young researchers in and outside the classroom. Some of these groups have carried out rigorous studies that have deservedly won national and international awards.

- “Consumerism and energy” carried out by students from the Leonardo Torres Quevedo Secondary School, which planned, developed drew conclusions and proposed actions concerning the level of consumer awareness of the kind of energy they use, what they consider to be most suitable, where information can be obtained and how to act. The group carried out a wide amount of documentary research, produced useful didactic material to teach about the

different kinds of energy, their domestic use and the possible consequences on the environment. The process:

- Design and development of field research; design of objectives, hypothesis, choice of the scope of the sample, production of a questionnaire, training the interviewers, carrying out the questionnaire, processing the information, getting results, passing on the results, action proposals and proposals for consumer information.
- Design and development of a complete process of documentary research: deciding on the study method, reading and in certain cases translation and summarising of texts, organisation of texts in charts and synoptic graphs, diffusion of results via leaflets and a practical didactic exhibition.

The group presented their work and conclusions at a school event, participated in a debating competition on the subject and was awarded a prize for the work carried out.

Field research trips

These kinds of activities propose observation activities concerning specific phenomena and demonstrative methods that help participants to find out about phenomena, surrounding spheres and negative methods for the environment. For example:

- “Tracing a river”, as its name suggests, this activity consists in analysing the same parameters (of visual observation, analysis and population surveys) at different points of the path of a river from its source to where it meets the sea. The process was as follows:
 - Observation of the vegetation of the surrounding area (types, the aspect they present) colour of the water, rubbish in and around the river, activity (factories, human activity, nearby settlements, etc).
 - Carrying out simple tests in order to measure: the speed of the water, presence of foam, particles in suspension, temperature, acidity, etc.
 - Identification of the life in the river and analysis of the bio-indicators for contamination.

– Surveys focussing on the inhabitants of the river area

– Observation of the evolution of the parameters, to see if they bear any relation with the activity of each zone.

– Identifying responsibilities, proposing alternatives and acting consequently.

Practical workshops

At the ESC we have designed and published an infinite number of practical workshops on consumerism, a good deal of which focus on Ecology. For instance, “The four “R”s” “Selecting rubbish” “Square rubbish” “Black points” “Paper and cardboard recycling” “Packets, Packaging and other items” “Reusing and recycling” “Sprays, detergents and other household products” “Looking at plastic” “Clean play” “Sounds and noises” “The water battle” “stain removers” “The river” “buying ecologically!” etc, etc. One of the most loved and most innovatory activities of the ESC, as far as we, and our visitors are concerned, are the interactive workshops and the permanent exhibition. There are three exhibits that deserve a special mention:

- “Acid rain” a practical demonstration of its effects on plants: the process is as follows:
 - Three identical plants (we use small perishable plants).
 - Each is watered in a different way: one with non-contaminated water; another with a product made up 50% of non-contaminated water and the other 50% with a highly acidic product (vinegar); the third plant is watered with vinegar only.
 - Observation of the results: we can see the difference.
 - “Soil contamination”, a practical demonstration of its effect on white carnations. The process was as follows:
 - We need: two groups of white carnations cut to leave a long stem
 - Two tall recipients; one with only water and the other with coloured water.
 - We leave the plants for a time and then observe the result. We will see that the carnations in the recipient

with coloured water are tinged with colour. This can happen with the foodstuffs we consume.

- “The plastic rings for binding drink tins” a practical demonstration of how to dispose of them.
 - Take a pair of scissors and cut the binders up into little pieces.
 - The ideal situation would be not to consume these type of products or to be able to throw the waste into a recipient for recycling.
 - Plastic demonstration of the effect of not cutting up the rings.
 - A debate on the possible alternatives.

Other play activities

- Games, dramatisations, sketches, making toys, making exhibitions of pictures made from waste material;

setting up an exhibition; doing a photographic safari; finding jokes, making up stories; writing songs, poems and so on.

And in the end what matters is to take action

Training, information, play activities are not and should not be a mere matter of decoration or a simple way of drawing our attention to the phenomena that create environmental problems. It is also necessary in each process, in each type of activity, in each didactic resource to include strategies that motivate the consumers into taking personal action (helping them choose to buy and live with ecological issues in mind) and group action, influencing decisions, making a stand against contaminating phenomena, and becoming socially

committed towards the environment. Simply being aware is not enough if no action is taken.

To sum up, we (as consumers) are part of the solution; we can and ought to try to solve problems, to give alternatives to prevent situations and above all not to be kept in the dark.

We can achieve what we set out to achieve (that is teaching in an integrated way) learning and teaching how to consume in a responsible way, which means betting on consumerism that is ethical, critical, ecological, sustainable, socially committed and fair.

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FINLAND

Safeguarding childhood in the consumer society

Commercially motivated efforts to influence minors have been constantly increasing and younger and younger age groups are becoming the focus of marketing. There is nowadays a tendency to see children as small adults with purchasing power. Although children possess an amazing technical dexterity, they are not adults when it comes to maturity for decision making. Children do not understand irony, understand messages in a concrete way, and learn behavioural models directly from advertising. The importance of minors as a consumer group is beginning to be understood to a growing degree and new forms of marketing with specifically them in mind are being developed.

THERE IS unanimity in our society on the following principles:

- it is important to keep advertising distinct from other material
- parents have a duty and a right to bring up their children,
- minors are not comparable to adults as decision makers,
- some material is unsuitable for children.

From the perspectives of both advertising and consumer education, protecting childhood is a very challenging sector. In Finland we have already gained practical experience, for example in the debate surrounding the Consumer

Ombudsman's “Children and Marketing Guidelines”, how many questions such matters as discussing age can give rise to.

Is traditional consumer education enough?

According to the traditional view of consumer education, schools must, with due regard to the child's level of development and maturity and taking the other goals of the curriculum into consideration, give pupils the kind of knowledge that will ensure that young school-leavers:

- are able to use resources sensibly and manage their own financial affairs,
- are able to guard their rights and know their duty as consumers,
- are able to deal with commercial attempts to influence them,
- are able to appraise the impacts of their own lifestyle and consumption on the environment and production/consumption from a global perspective,
- are able to choose and prepare nourishing and environment-compatible food and do their home chores sensibly,

- are able to evaluate the safety and quality of products and make use of product information.

In addition: "The objectives of consumer education at school are to educate independent, discriminating and informed consumers. Schools must equip the student with knowledge and insight into the conditions of being a consumer in a complex, multi-faceted society by providing basic knowledge in such areas as consumer law, personal finances, economics, advertising and commercial persuasion, consumption and the environment, global resources, housing, clothing, prices and quality, diet and health. They should contribute to making pupils aware of the influences they are exposed to with respect to lifestyles, consumer habits, values and attitudes."

In the background to this traditional thinking is a young person who encounters commercial information associated with marketing and identity formation as a teenager. In reality, children encounter marketing already before they reach school age. New thinking on marketing has brought a tendency to see children as small adults with purchasing power. Although children possess an amazing technical dexterity, they are not adults when it comes to maturity for decision making. They do not understand irony, understand messages in a concrete way, and learn behavioural models directly from advertising.

A need for uniformity and identification with a peer group as well as adoption of norms are part and parcel of childhood. A large proportion of children become socialised in groups of the same age and sex. In these groups, consumption and possessions play an important role in the achievement of status. A child learns to know itself by comparing itself with its peers. The changes that are taking place in the market require children to acquire, at an ever-younger age, an ability to act sensibly in the market. The gullibility associated with a child's development, on the one hand, and social pressure, on the other, put children in difficult situations of choice. Adults have a responsibility to help children see other alternative ways of gaining acceptance. Without the intervention of whoever is responsible the child's upbringing, there

is a danger that commercial persuasion can excessively influence the development of its identity. There is a need for new thinking, in which childhood, youth, parenthood, citizenship and adulthood are viewed as a totality from the perspective of consumption and sustainable development.

Partnership in child-raising

The new plan for early childhood education and care refers to "partnership in child-raising." By this is meant a conscious commitment on the part of parents and personnel to work together in supporting the child's growth, development and learning at an early stage. This presupposes mutual trust, equality and respect for each other. Parents have the primary right and responsibility to raise their children and know them best. Personnel have the professional knowledge and competence their training has given them as well as a responsibility to put in place the prerequisites for partnership in child-raising and cooperation on a basis of equality.

Interaction between the home and school child-raising communities and cooperation to support the child's all-round healthy growth and good learning are also emphasised in the teaching plan. Interaction with the home increases teachers' understanding of children and helps them plan and implement teaching. Guardians have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and education of children and adolescents. The school supports homes in their task of child raising and assumes responsibility for the child's upbringing and education as members of the school community. The school must cooperate with guardians in a way that enables them to contribute to supporting the child's goal-oriented learning and school attendance. The goal of upbringing for which responsibility is shared is to work towards providing favourable conditions in which children can learn, security and wellbeing at school. Cooperation between home and school takes place on the level of both the community and the individual. This requires teachers to take the initiative in cooperation and calls for both discussion of and the provision

of information on the rights and duties of guardians, teachers and pupils. The starting point in cooperation must be mutual respect and equality.

Their roles as educators and social actors feature prominently in the work of teachers. Education no longer takes place in the classroom only. Teachers are required to possess a competence broader than what they need to teach a narrow substantive subject. The importance of consumer competence is heightened, because everyday problems and dealing with them come up in the context of cooperation.

Case: Experiences of encountering the learning contents of consumer education and social work in the training of kindergarten teachers

The importance of service coordination in their cooperation with parents is emphasised in the training that kindergarten teachers receive. It is important that trainees are made aware of their official responsibilities and play their part in encouraging parents to take active roles.

In training kindergarten teachers, consumer citizenship can be discussed at the interface between consumer education and social work. In our own case, the totality is approached by imagining the trainees themselves as consumers and looking at their own knowledge and skills in this capacity, as well as where they can obtain information. It is not possible in the course of a brief visit to repeat the content of the necessary skill, but students do get an idea of the diversity of competences that a consumer needs, such as the following central ones: Skilled consumers are individuals who think analytically and take a critical view of consumption. They must understand matters relating to quality, price, service, resources, the environment and ethics. They must be informed about economics so as to be able to understand economic and global problems as well as the linkages between work and money, production, consumption, saving and lifestyle. They must also internalise how one's choice of lifestyle, new knowledge and technology are changing consumer habits and how these changes affect the home and the

environment. They must also understand the criteria for rational choices as consumers as well as how the modern marketing mechanism and sales techniques function and the ways in which they influence markets.

We also discuss how teachers must be able to integrate this knowledge into their everyday actions. The lecture introduces six sub-sectors of consumer education and goes on to a discussion of consumer citizenship as a seventh dimension.

An important part of the studies concerns central methods of implementing consumer education, how to work with pre-school children when the subject involved is such an abstract one as consumption. The starting point in work is to explain the phenomena in a child's everyday life and to deal with experiences and feelings. Central matters are media literacy, the importance of toys in status formation and discussing it with the child. We also discuss suitable methods of consumer and citizenship education.

After the visit, the trainees wrote their reflections on what they had learnt, and this was included in their portfolios. The trainees found the theme new and positively surprising. Thanks to the visit, interest in doing a final paper on a consumer-related theme has increased.

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GERMANY

Debt prevention – A Future workshop

Where and how does today's youth learn money management? How can they be steered towards coping with potential debt creation?

SCHOOLCHILDREN MUST learn and experience considerably more in education about money matters than simply receiving information about the credit business, instalment payments, insurance, etc., since the competence and skills that are required go above and beyond cognitive learning alone. What is required above all is meditation of a conscious awareness of their own desires and wishes for the future, which are all too often associated with (the acquisition of) material good,

An important component of the activities related to (teaching) an preventing debt creation is to track and bring light the associations between possessing and desiring material goods. After all, goods and possessions are utilized to make the individual's life more comfortable and to gain recognition from society. Consumer goods satisfy wishes and desires, serve a certain social purpose, and last but not least, also function as rewards and affirmation. As such, strong emotions are associated with consumer goods, and this emotional charge is frequently overlooked in educational programmes for youth. Yet, it is precisely these hopes and desires for a comfortable and secure future that determine our actions.

Advertising has captured these associations and addresses itself especially to this emotionality when seeking to arouse an interest and desire for certain products. Recognizing this process and experiencing it in oneself is an important component in the future on debt prevention. Saint d'Exupéry pinpointed this when he wrote:

"If you want to build a ship, call upon people not to draw up plans and build the ship, but teach them to desire the experience of the wide open seas."

This appeal to freedom and self-determination has been answered in the flood of advertisement for consumer goods and manipulated to serve the purposes of the advertisers. The dream factory has always known the answer when young people seek to conquer the world and gain recognition, and it is adept at connecting these desires with their products' image.

Debt creation is also related to possessing things and displaying them to others, either to be on a part with them or to distinguish oneself from them. In today's consumer society conspicuous consumption and the associated social status-seeking are so predominant that debt creation is taken for granted. The ease of obtaining credit favours this situation.

If an educational programme on the subject of debt prevention is to succeed, it must not overlook these associated factors. In our search for a suitable method by which to offer students the means to develop an awareness of their attitudes towards consumption and to share and increase their knowledge in a group setting, we came across Robert Jungk's concept of a future workshop. In numerous workshops we were guided by Jungk's thought that "there is more knowledge in everyone that he is aware of; what is important is to bring this **treasure** to light."

We wanted to depart from the method of **preaching** to students and have found a method in the future workshop concept that enables students to develop greater self-awareness and to involve them in the learning and acting process more meaningfully so that they may approach new areas of learning more independently.

We have expanded on the model of

the future workshop through information blocks that have thus created a sort of learning workshop. The differentiated methods in the individual learning phases are designed to enable students to recognize now the importance of issues and problems that may only arise much later in their daily lives. In implementing methods that are presented as a game, they are motivated to deal with issues that, if taught in a traditional sense, would come off rather awkwardly.

The future workshop of debt prevention contains methodological game components and information building blocks structured into four work phases. In the *Orientation phase* participants' expectations of the workshop are noted, and their attitudes to the specific issue of debt prevention are compared with the current programme design.

In the *second phase*, the so-called *Awareness phase*, we approach the issues in order to gain new knowledge and, through group work games, to look at the subject of debt from all aspects. In the discussion of household expenses it is absolutely necessary to deal with the topic of advertisement. Again, students will work out results and experiences interactively. Our work has demonstrated that this method contributes significantly to building the motivation that is vital in the later phases of the future workshop. The students' latent knowledge and attitudes towards advertisement are brought to the fore and applied in creative role-plays. Participants, in small working groups, have a choice of media through which they may execute their given task, such as making a video, creating a skit, compiling a photo collage, or producing a talk show. The given task may be to create a loan shark's TV commercial, to enact a sales excursion during which peddlers sell their wares, or to rouse interest with a talk show or photo collage with the aid of newspaper ads or radio spots. The individual working groups are given specific assignments and detailed instructions, although the actual work procedure is left to their own discretion. It has been shown that by investigating how a professional advertising agency actually works students gain valuable knowledge.

It is an important goal of consumer pedagogy to empower youth to assess

advertisement critically so as to establish an independent viewpoint within society. In the foreground of these activities, it is necessary to work intensively on watching and analysing advertising on television and in the print media to see what conscious means are implemented that lead consumers to obtain goods that they might otherwise not necessarily purchase.

In the information components **Youth Marketing in Credit Institutions, Children and Advertisement, Debt, and Insurance**, important details are transmitted in brief that crop up again in the method elements significant to the games of **Creditpoly** and **Insurance poker**. The **Creditpoly** and **Insurance poker** games are based on the structure of the well-known conventional games in that one throws the dice, cards are drawn that tell you if fate will wrap you up in more debt or if fortune will bring sudden windfall. Students learn something about the causes of debt creation through these games. In **Insurance poker** they learn something about sensible and non-sensible insurance policies in a given case. Both games are, however, only simulations and cannot as such wholly recreate reality. In the **Creditpoly** game the individual groups must pay careful attention that the rules are obeyed, but it is nevertheless foreseeable that debt creation may cause frustration in some students. The emotional aspects of being indebted must be omitted from discussions that follow up on the games. More in-depth information building blocks are part and parcel of these games.

We are grateful of the German Caritas Organization in Freiburg for providing us with the video **Cash for Kids** as a case study. We highly recommend that the video be shown to the whole classroom in its entire 9-minute length. The film shows impressively how closely debt creation and friendship and love are connected. We know from the reality of debt counselling that this is indeed often the case. In the follow-up discussion to the video, or as the case maybe, in the reading of the film transcript, it should be made clear to students what commitments they are taking on if they act as the guarantor of a loan.

The two game elements **Downward Spiral Scenario** and **Dream Life** come

closure to the awareness phase and as a sort of pedagogical climax. For one, students are confronted with the fictitious scenario of a household that is (heavily) indebted. They are then encouraged to design a coping strategy for an imaginary person. At the end of the work in the **Downward Spiral Scenario** they are asked to present their own personal **Dream Life** in terms of how they envision their lives at 20, 25, 30, ... 65 years of age, in terms of career and family. The paradoxes which emerge between the individual and fictitious ideal lives and the scenarios will be significant again for later activities in the future workshops.

In the Fantasy Phase the issue of future quality of life is investigated in various ways in order to uncover the associations between personal consumer behaviour and the notion of quality of life.

In the card game **What do you need to be happy?** we have come up with similar results in past workshops; that is that despite students' awareness that the future workshop is about the relationship of spending behaviour and debt creation (the desire to possess), the answer cards often contain the following responses: "My happiness is largely dependent on my having friends and my mother and father having more time and paying more attention to me." Other non-material things such as **staying healthy** and **safe environment** were and are often mentioned. It is interesting to note that students have a definite sense that the potential to have and possess is not the only key to happiness in life. Why it is that the material is so often in the foreground is a question that must be investigated together with the students. Various key questions are meant to get to the bottom of the matter in the group discussions.

Students are encouraged to deal with their visions and hopes for the future by means of the guided fantasy

Voyage on the **Dream Ship**. Students sit in a circle and listen to the account of a dream journey and allow images to take in their minds. At the end of the dream journey they are each asked to draw their dream on a sheet of paper, either in detail or with a few symbols, as they please. The pictures allow them to express and define their desires via a

medium other than language. In pair discussions the students talk about their visions and then provide feedback to the whole group. Results are compiled.

From the contradictions resulting in the awareness phase and the fantasy phase we move to the *Implementation phase* and try to look for ways to realize these dreams in real life. It is part of the learning process to become aware of varying viewpoints through role plays, to practice reactance, to discuss controversial viewpoints and to take the first steps to putting what has been learned into practice. The role plays contain a general description of a situation and the roles for the various players. The following situations are enacted: a visit to a loan shark, buying a new suit that may be too expensive, what to do if someone shows up at the door and wants to sell a subscription. There is also a **Less is More** scenario where lifestyle and the associated expenses to maintain it are discussed. Another vital component is gathering on-site information such as at a bank or savings and loan institution where pertinent questions that have been worked out beforehand are asked.

It is important to keep in mind that the procedure to be followed in a future workshop ought to be flexible in what that materials and game elements be utilized by the teacher as a sort of toolbox from which he uses and applies his instruments to fit the knowledge level of the students involved. The methods have been tried and tested in various workshops and, as such, have proven useful for both classroom instruction and teacher training in the future. It would, of course, be fruitful to envision the future workshop taking place over the course of a few scheduled project days since it becomes rather more difficult if there are only two or three-hour time blocks allotted for it. As the future workshop relies heavily on visualisation. E.g., poster work, a concentrated time block would be better enable students to pick up where they left off.

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NEWS ITEMS

NORDIC

Teaching material for consumer education Nordic Competition

In 2004, Iceland will lead Nordic co-operation under the theme "Nordic Resources". One of the activities that will take place this year is a Nordic competition for teaching material for consumer education. The project is sponsored by The Nordic Council of Ministers.

The object is to seek proposals for teaching material to be used in consumer education in primary or secondary schools in the Nordic countries.

Precondition

- The teaching material should follow some of the goals in the Tema-Nord paper *Consumer Education in the Nordic countries* (Tema-Nord, 2000: 599, <http://www.norden.org>)
- The teaching material needs to be suitable for teaching in all the Nordic countries, must cover minimum 30 teaching hours and have an accompanying teaching plan.
- It would be desirable if the material draws attention to the Nordic resources.

Who is eligible to enter?

- Individuals, groups, institutions (e.g. schools), societies and organizations, publishing- and other companies.
- The participant(s) must be a resident in one of the Nordic countries.

Where to send the entries and in what format?

- The entries can be in various formats e.g. written or visual, but all the text and a spoken word must be in one of the Nordic languages.
- The entries should be sent to the chairman of one of the five national judging panels.

Submission deadline

- The entries should be received by the chairmen of the national judging panels no later than December 31st 2004.

Selection of winner(s)

- Each of the five national judging panels will pick one entry representing their respective countries.
- A Pan-Nordic panel evaluates the five entries put forward by the national panels and picks one for the prize.

The prize

- The prize is 100.000 NOK

Presentation of the prize

- The prize will be presented to the winner(s) at the Nordic Council's Session in Reykjavik November 2005.

Further information.

- <http://vefir.khi.is/ney/>. The project coordinator Thorlakur Helgason can also give further information thorlakur@khi.is

FINLAND

GALAKTORI – A game about life, choices and packages from Armenia

The Consumer Agency has released an on-line computer game called Galaktori. It can be played in Finnish, Swedish and English at www.galaktori.fi. The game world is linked to young people's life but adults can also play. The game was produced by Valve Group Oy.

Galaktori is based on a sci-fi scenario and the goal is to collect enough energy to open the Book of the Seven Wisdoms. Players can collect energy by making the right choices, most of which concern consumer decisions. They can also practice the kind of situations people run into all the time. Every day we make dozens of choices and decisions that influence our own life, the market, the environment and even the use of child labour in distant countries.

Legislation concerning consumer trade is meant to ensure that people can buy goods and services safely and with adequate information. In practice consumers need information and advice on consumer trade rules and procedures when things go wrong.

Municipal consumer advisers receive about 100,000 enquiries a year and help resolve over 65,000 disputes between consumers and traders.

Information is needed on both sides. Many consumers falsely believe that they are entitled to cancel a transaction whether or not goods are defective. Few people are aware that if something is wrong with a product, the trader always has the right to repair or replace it, and cancelling the transaction is only a last resort. Then again many traders may say that they do not need to repair defects if the guarantee has run out, which is not true.

Galaktori received an honorary mention in the Grand One digital media competition in the category Best Consumer Campaign. According to the jury, "The game has succeeded in turning a dull subject and a lot of information into an alluring concept. The well scripted and detailed theme follows a format which suits the target group. The presentation is sure to keep players' interest alive." More information on the competition is available in Finnish at www.rekaksois.com/grandone.

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FILMJAM 2004

– The theme year on films for children and youth

This year Koulukinoyhdistys (Skolbio, The School & Cinema Association) which is a co-organization of seventeen different film organizations is in charge of co-ordinating FILMJAM 2004 – the theme year on films for children and youth. This was initiated by The Ministry of Education. Children's culture is an important emphasis of the Ministry at the moment, and that's why developing and strengthening the status of films for children has been brought up. The theme year's protector is the Minister of Culture, Ms Tanja Karpela.

Events and projects are being carried out by both the film field and schools. The programme consists of more than fifty events organized all over Finland. There will be seminars, festivals, visits by filmmakers, film presentations, video workshops, and, of course, film events at schools.

One important objective is to encourage children themselves to make video films and analyze the contents of what they see. Koulukinoyhdistys is also trying to affect the status of media education within teacher training. Through the Koulukino system pupils and teachers can attend reduced-price cinema during the school day. It also produces learning material on the Internet for certain recommended films. The problem in Finland is that media education is not recognized as a teaching subject, and it too often stays unnoticed in schools.

It is also important to bring together all sectors of media education. There is a need for a co-operation network in order to enhance the education further. By making all these children's film and media education issues and events public, discussion is provoked about the importance of the subject and making marginal activities stand out.

*For more information please contact the Executive Director Outi Freese
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ENGLAND

Reviewing some current and recent projects

Consumer education and citizenship are both priority themes in the EU Socrates programmes, and recently several EU funded complementary networks and collaborative projects have been established. The Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN Erasmus 3 funding) is the largest network with 125 partners for 29 countries and has membership and operational links with the (Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe) (CICE Erasmus 3) and Developing Consumer Citizenship (DCC Comenius 2) networks.

In consumer education, the Euro-module in Consumer Education, (Erasmus CDM) and the Consumer Education for Adults project (CEA, Grundtvig 1 funded) were completed on 2001 and 2003 respectively and outputs (handbooks, training modules and CDROMs) are available for teacher educators. The Grundtvig 4 Consumer Education for Adults project Network (CEAN) started in October 2003, has 21 full partners from 14 countries and draws on the experience of these previous projects. A proposal has been submitted for a Comenius 3 Consumer education Thematic Network, which if accepted will start in October 2004.

Projects to produce consumer education resources, translated and adapted for the EU countries have been funded by the EU DG SANCO (Health and Consumer Protection Directorate). These include DOLCETA which will produce on-line consumer education tools for adults with modules in consumer rights and personal finance in 15 countries and 11 languages and Education des Jeunes au Budget which will produce a CD ROM on personal finances for young adults in 8 languages.

These are international projects, but there are good national resources as well. In the United Kingdom the Askcedric web site has extensive consumer education resources for schools and has recently received UK government funding to develop consumer education materials for adults.

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A handbook of consumer education for adults empowering consumers: educated choices

Consumer Education for Adults A GRUNDTVIG 1 Project partners from seven countries and active in different spheres of lifelong-learning, adult education, higher education, national and regional consumer organisations, and business have been industrious by editing a book on Empowering Consumers: Educated Choices.

The handbook addresses issues like a citizenship and consumer policy, consumer psychology, values and behaviour, consumer education and its topics, key questions and examples of good practice. Also consumer education for adults is issued, its design, implementation and evaluation of courses and different approaches to consumer education for adults in European countries.

*For more information please contact
www.pabw.at/cea*

ITALY

CTRRCE – An association to educate consumers

CTRRCE www.ctrce.it is an independent association founded in 1995. It is a consumer protection centre and at the same time it operates as a permanent education agency. The centre works in cooperation with National and European consumer associations in the fields of consumer education, national and European law, health and nutrition education, environmental education, product safety and legislation on public and financial services.

Staff within CTRRCE have expertise in a wide range of issues concerning consumer education and in particular consumer rights and responsibilities, legal advice, nutrition, labelling, life quality and consumption awareness. CTRRCE is involved as a project partner in the Erasmus 3 project Consumer Citizenship Network and in the CEAN (Consumer Education for Adults Network) Erasmus Program. Further, it runs projects co-financed by the European Commission on Labelling (Etichettinform, www.etichettinform.net) and Consumers Online Education (www.educonsumer.net). The CTRRCE also coordinates projects jointly with local and national governmental institutions, runs educational activities in schools, organizes seminars, advises consumers on legal issues and publish booklets and guidelines on consumption's topics.

Both web-sites are also available in English. Teacher can find useful information at www.educonsumer.net that they could use in class to teach kids about consumption

and safety. Soon will be ready a cd-rom presenting the outcomes of the Edu-consumer Online School Of Consumption to be distributed in schools and directly to teachers and whoever would ask for it. For further info please contact us at the following address: info@ctrnce.it

CYPRUS

Food Labeling: A project for adult Consumer Education

There are many adult consumers who think they have experiences on how to buy, they are working late and they do not have enough time to spend with the children and family or they have social obligation. Having this in mind and after observation, we decided to work for the year 2003-2004 on the project "Food Labeling"

The project

Do the consumers in Cyprus read and understand the meaning of the information given on food labeling?

Are the consumers conscious enough so as to feel the need acquire useful knowledge?

Every housewife wants to prepare healthy and tasty meal for the family with the least possible expense.

Could the fact make her responsible enough so as to care to acquire simple and practical knowledge from the science of nutrition?

Do the consumers study the labels on the foodstuffs and do they understand their meaning? Do they know the meaning of the word "protein" or "saturated" and "unsaturated" fat "carbohydrates" "vitamins" and their relationship to good health?

Do they know the chemical additives, their meaning on the label with an E and a number? For example E120 and their nutritive value, health and economy?

Objectives: To enable consumers to acquire the right stance as to the purchase of products, especially foodstuff and set their priorities right. To be able to protect themselves, to demand their rights and fulfill their obligations.

Curriculum development: Knowledge disseminated by the subjects, the buying of goods, the promotion of attitudes and skills that are needed in every day life.

All these constitute a kaleidoscope of subjects for which information and education is required.

The subjects: 26 subjects are planned for the Academic Year 2003-2004. Lectures are given continuously once a week

Nutrition Education: – Food values, such as protein, carbohydrates, calories, vitamins, minerals, and fiber over weight.

Foodstuffs: – Fruit, vegetables, bread, milk, fish, meat. The water we drink, cereals,

organic products, chemical additives in food.

Activities: – The right way to buy. Reading the label on food. Expiry dates, Priorities, family budget, consumer rights and obligations.

Laws: – Commercial subscription law. The law about foodstuffs, the law about safety of foodstuffs. Food hygiene.

A person responsible for the project is Stavroula Iacovou. She is responsible for the Adult Consumer Education of the Cyprus Consumers Association.

'Health related behaviors as consumer activities' project

The project 'Health-related behaviors as consumer activities' was proposed and implemented by the Cyprus Consumer Association. The main co-operators and supporters of the project were the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus and the filming studio 'Weaving mill'. The project started on the 2nd of April and ended on the 30th of June.

The aim of the project was to promote a healthy lifestyle through a positive 'image', shared among young consumers. Within the area of health promotion, smoking, eating, drinking alcohol and exercise are classified as health-related behaviors and tend to be presented as the key elements in preventing disease or securing health. They are considered significant either as 'health-impairing habits' or 'health-protective behaviors'. Yet, these health practices may be health-related but they are not necessarily health directed. Disconnecting these four behaviors from the significance they have in the health promotion area we can also see them as 'consumer' activities, in the sense that they are charged with symbolic meanings through the marketing and advertising business.

The project is linked with both classifications of smoking, eating, drinking alcohol and exercise, as health-related behaviors and as consumer activities. The conception of health-related behaviors as consumer activities highlights the capacity of consumer products and activities to carry meanings, which express a particular way of living and thus a particular culture. This project aims at giving the opportunity to young people to share their day-to-day experiences with the symbolic meanings of smoking, eating, drinking alcohol and exercise. Nearly all health education projects fail to recognize the consumer manifestation of health-related behaviors and their significance in young people's choices. Moreover, the orientation of the project towards the cultural consumption of health-related behaviors is of particular importance in Cyprus which has coped with an extensive

consumer development during the last 30 years.

The ultimate goal of the project was the development of a video 'advertisement' that would promote a healthy lifestyle. The project started by sending an announcement to all primary schools in Nicosia in order to identify four suitable groups - composed of four students and a teacher - to take part in the competition. The selection was based on evaluating an advertisement submitted by the groups.

The selected schools attended a filming workshop whose purpose was to offer students and teachers a brief course on advertising techniques and health-related issues. In this workshop, the participants had the opportunity to "play" with the images attributed to consumer products, appreciate the fact that advertising and marketing have a strong influence on some people's choices and behaviours, and understand that the language used in advertising can be interpreted in different ways by different people and in different contexts. Moreover, the participants had the opportunity to discuss health as a resource of life and not only as the absence of disease; was the goal to migrate from the mechanistic, biomedical approach to health. In this framework, young people were asked to develop their own films in which a healthy lifestyle is projected as a youngish, enjoyable lifestyle rather than as a boring lifestyle full of don'ts.

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EUROPE

European Research into Consumer Affairs



Product safety – advice on how to prevent accidents

In the European Union (EU) there are 80,000 deaths and 40 million medically treated injuries every year due to home and leisure accidents. This is at least twice as many deaths as occur on the roads in the EU and 14 times the number of deaths in the workplace.

With the help of co-financing from EU Commission DG SanCo, European Research into Consumer Affairs has researched and collected data on home and leisure accidents to produce easy-to-understand advice to consumers about how to prevent such accidents in the home and garden and when enjoying water activities. This advice, together with information about EU legislation on product safety and what consumers' rights mean in practice, is now

available on the Internet at www.net-consumers.org. At present the information is in English, German, and French.

INTERNATIONAL



UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

UNESCO and education for sustainable development A world that needs to change, so that we start learning to live together sustainable

Sustainable development is basically about learning. Over past centuries we have tended to live unsustainably, wasting or destroying as we went along, thus creating the social and environmental problems we must now address. We have to learn our way out of the dilemma. We have to learn to live sustainable.

Education for sustainability is a holistic concept which sees education as everybody's business and for which all sectors of society are responsible and from which all benefit.

An exciting international consensus emerged following the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, reinforced at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg that *education is central to achieving sustainable development*.

In December 2002, the UN General Assembly established a UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and designated UNESCO as the lead agency to promote it. This is an important opportunity for all partners to:

Recognise that "education" here is not just formal schooling. It embraces a wide range of learning experiences and programmes.

Understand that it concerns not only education, but also health, culture, environment, natural resources, planning, agriculture, commerce, and many other issues.

Promote an education that is relevant to key problems of everyday life, that empowers people to exercise their rights, and that cultivates good citizenship locally, nationally and globally.

As the Lead Agency for the *Decade*, UNESCO is required to:

Develop an international implementation scheme to be submitted to the next UN General Assembly in September 2004 by consulting with the United Nations, and other international organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations, youth and other stakeholders.

Provide recommendations for governments on how to rethink education in order to obtain greater understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural sustainability of our planet.

The ultimate objective of the Decade is to mobilize everyone to ensure that education for sustainable development is implemented in thousands of local situations and integrated into different learning approaches. To find out more, visit Special UNESCO website (www.unesco.org/education/desd) currently in English, French and Spanish. This website is constantly evolving with the inputs from partners, practitioners, and colleagues in the fields of Education, Science, Social Science, Culture, Communication and Public information.

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European Network of Consumer Educators

OBJECTIVES

1. To exchange experiences between consumer Educators
2. To further develop Consumer Education
3. To represent and lobby for Consumer Education at the European level and if necessary at the International level.

PARTICIPANTS LEVEL

Consumer Educators within Consumer Organizations, Curriculum Development Agencies, Ministries, Teacher Organizations and Teacher Training Institutes are all welcome to join. The Network is not aimed at teacher level as such.

GEOGRAPHICAL

The Network is firstly aimed at the interest of participants of Western European countries. But others interested in receiving the newsletter can join and will be regularly invited to share their experiences.

LANGUAGE

The means of communication is English.

SUPPORT GROUP

A support group is formed for the establishment of the Network. It consists of Karen Ingrid Lund Nielsen from Denmark, Eli Karlsen from Norway, Taina Männistö from Finland and Marianne Öberg from Sweden.

CONSEQUENCES OF BEING A PARTICIPANT

Financially: To join the Network is free of charge. For the present, the Nordic countries are prepared to finance the production and distribution of the newsletter.

Morally: To contribute your experiences regularly.

European Network of Consumer Educators is a project supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Government of Cantabria (Directorate General of Consumer Affairs)

