

Example of good practice	WWF Nature Academy – cooperation of schools and protected areas in Serbia
Category	Education; management
Organization	WWF Adria
Partners	5 protected areas in Serbia - Tara, Đerdap, Fruška Gora National Parks, Gornja Podunavlja special nature reserve, and Avala protected landscape
Location	5 protected areas and wider area
Country	Serbia
Form of protection	national park (NP), special nature reserve (SRP) and areas of outstanding nature (AON)
Scope of implementation (local, national)	Local
Time	2 years
People	1
Budget	50 000€
Funding	Sida
Project info	http://www.wwf.rs/wwf_u_srbiji/zasticena_podrucja_za_prirodu_i_ljude/edukacija/
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Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 protected areas with educational programmes and cooperation with 2 local schools. • 214 WWF ambassadors trained. • 59 teachers from 10 schools participated. • 1097 children included in school project activities (from 7 – 17 years) of the WWF Academy. <p>Results of the mini project WWF Ambassador:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Films and theatre performances on the topic of nature conservation • Construction of mini protected areas in the schoolyard • Design and production of promotional materials • Photo exhibit

Problem/opportunity	
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of good quality classes in nature. • Lack of educational programmes in protected areas. • Teachers have no guidelines or recommendations (curriculum, work plan) for teaching outdoors. • Most parents feel that nature excursions are not safe or cannot finance them
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing new competencies for teachers and pupils • Familiarisation with protected areas in which they live. Raising awareness of the importance of protected areas (PA) and nature conservation. • Creating cooperation between schools and PAs • Schools, teachers and older pupils become PA ambassadors.
Planning	
Pre-requisites for success	Legal: According to the Nature Protection Act, PAs should conduct educational activities in their area.
	Institutional: Interested schools and PAs with a person responsible for education. Good cooperation between project partners.
	Internal capacities: Experience in education and high motivation.
Initial idea	Based on the national assessment of the wellbeing of protected areas (PA-BAT), education was recognised by the local population in PAs as one of the potential economic values. WWF participated in designing the project.

Strategies	The Nature Protection Act states that PAs are required to conduct educational activities in their respective areas.
Partner roles	Role of the protected area – host, mentor, source of information. Cooperation with schools, presentations in schools, and participation in designing school projects.
Implementation	
Project key stages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gathering a strong team of educators 2. Familiarising the PA focal point about the WWF Nature Academy and its role 3. Starting and promoting timely competitions for the selection of schools 4. Selection of training sites (Petnica research station) 5. Establishing good cooperation with the PA and the school 6. Monthly progress monitoring of the implementation of school projects 7. Presentation of results 8. Short e-publication on the results of each generation
Budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good team of educators – €10,650 2. Launching and promoting timely competitions for the selection of schools – €500 3. Organising training sessions and final event (32 people, 9 days, accommodations, food, materials, transport) – €14,000 4. Establishing good relations with the PA and school 5. Monthly monitoring of implementation of school projects - €1000
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of PAs according to size, level of protection, number of visitors, their level of interest

- Signing a Memorandum of Cooperation with the PA and determining the focal point of the PA for education programmes
- List of criteria for school selection (in municipality in/or near to selected PA) and forming the selection committee (teachers, professors, WWF)
- Public tender for schools to apply for the WWF Academy (on WWF website, Prosvetni pregled – public education journal, Bioblog, in direct contact with schools having previous cooperation)
- 2 schools for each PA (total of 10 schools)
- Parental consent for participation of their child in the school project team, due to the public use of photo and video materials
- Selection of educators and training sites
- Drafting the WWF Academy guidebook with 5 chapters: protected areas, ecological footprint, active civil participation, project management, and working with the media
- Training teachers and 1 pupil per school (5 days, theory and field work, 6 educators). During training, participants receive the guidebook and package of didactic materials to remain at the school
- Trained teachers form project teams in each school (consisting of teachers and pupils, minimum of 2 – 5 teachers and 10 pupils)
- Project teams in cooperation with PA focal point develop the plan for the school project (developing criteria to achieve the objective of cooperation between the school and the PA)
- Implementation of project activities (from December to May) and inclusion of as many pupils as possible in the activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each project team writes the final report and submits it to WWF prior to the final event • Final event at which teachers and pupils present the PA and results of their project (4 days, evaluation of their work) • Press conference (5 pupils/ambassadors) to present results • School ambassadors become school mentors for future generations of the WWF Academy • Through the development and implementation of school projects, the project team collects the lessons learned into a “mentor box” • Organised submission of “mentor boxes” in June or September • Start of a new cycle
Stakeholders selection	Local stakeholders are the schools in the vicinity of the partner PAs. Schools from towns and rural areas included, if they have experience in implementing environmental protection activities.
Stakeholder involvement	Selected schools included in training, designing and implementing school projects, promoting the PA for which they are an ambassador (at the school and outside the school).
Vulnerable groups involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools with minority group from Novi Sad (Hungarians) and Bački Monoštor (Šokac Croatian) • Parents of children and wider families whose children are part of ambassador schools included • Schools working with disabled children were given precedence in the selection criteria. • Women were most represented as teachers in primary and secondary schools – 7 female and 3 male teachers as ambassadors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme is intended for pupils from 7 – 17 years of age. Numbers available only for project teams (teachers: 39 women, 9 men; pupils: 80 girls, 44 boys), however many more pupils from each school were involved in activities
Rights to information	Through activities and education of ambassadors, the importance of inclusion of all stakeholders was outlined. Information flow about the PA between the PA focal point and school ambassador was established and regularly strengthened by the project coordinator.
Communication	<p>Internal communication: email and telephone consultations to agree on details with focal points and ambassadors.</p> <p>Media: Online – publication of competition on the WWF website.</p> <p>Local media (contacted by schools) – radio, print, electronic, TV stations.</p> <p>PR – press releases, PAs on their websites</p> <p>Mailing list – sending to schools with previous cooperation.</p>
Climate change adaptation & mitigation	The impacts of climate change and significant of PAs in reducing and adapted to the consequences of climate change was part of the education of ambassadors.
Challenges	<p>Administrative:</p> <p>Long-term procedures</p>
	<p>With stakeholders:</p> <p>External factors that could not be controlled (during the Academy, 2 female teachers went on pregnancy leave, one took another job outside of education and did not turn over project coordination to anyone else).</p> <p>In certain periods, teachers are overburdened with regular school activities, and project dynamics were somewhat delayed.</p>
Changes	

Positive effects on environment	Better cooperation between PAs and local schools Awareness raised among children and the local population
Positive economic and social changes	Public sector (local, national): Social: School ambassadors were connected and exchanged experiences. Cooperation initiated with education sector and Education Ministry.
	Protected area manager: Social: cooperation with new schools in the vicinity with which there was not previous cooperation. PA as an education polygon for local children.
	Local population: Social: Local schools connected with nature and the PA in their vicinity. Increased awareness of the population of the importance of the protected area in their region. Education of teachers and pupils in protected areas for better nature conservation. Local residents become ambassadors of the PA.
Replication and recommendations	
Essential things to replication	Constant email and telephone contact between teachers, project coordinators and educators, to ensure ongoing motivation. Support of persons responsible for project communications (30% of work hours) was very important.
Replicated from	WWF Academy created in part according to ESFALP – European Schools for a Living Planet –WWF Austria with WWF Danube Carpathian programme. Part of this project was replicated in the project “Network of schools in protected areas” which will be carried out in 6 PAs in 3 countries of the region.

<p>Recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to coordinators involved 100%, an assistant on 50% time would be necessary • Include up to 2 teachers (and not just 1 as up to now) from each ambassador school • Organise mandatory visits of project coordinators to each ambassador school during the academic year • Larger budget for didactic materials received by the ambassador schools • Larger donations for schools (each school received €100 for material costs, this should be increased to €300) • When planning multiple generations of ambassadors, it is necessary to plan a meeting of all generations of ambassador teachers and pupils at the end of the project. • Advantage of working with teachers (grades 1-4) in WWF Academy contributes to greater inclusion of parents and grandparents to project-related activities. • Project coordinator should adapt the approach to each PA and PA focal point. • The invitation for school cooperation should not only be intended for biology teachers. The classes in nature should be interdisciplinary. • We recommend that during replication that schools working with disabled children also be included, as they can successfully participate and implement all necessary activities in line with their possibilities.
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>Perseverance of ambassador schools (teachers and pupils). One person dedicated to the project.</p>

	<p>Work plan of the WWF Academy, approaches and methods become part of the work plan for participating schools, thereby making the programme sustainable.</p>
<p>Needed policy improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database with precise number of schools in Serbia and contact persons. • Developing and better implementation of educational programmes in the PA. Designing educational content in PAs with children’s camps. A person from the PA can be an educator in the children’s camp and/or conduct animator training. • Enriching recreational class programmes with nature topics. Quality guidelines for teachers in preparing nature classes (excursions). • Communicating existing educational programmes in protected areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National – recommendations of Educational Ministry to organise excursions to PAs offering quality education programmes - Local - protected areas, municipalities • Inclusion of PA in education/curriculum at the national level, mandatory classes in nature/protected areas.
<p>Your interests</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusion of PAs in education/curriculum at the national level, mandatory classes in nature/protected areas. 2. Examples of including pupils from secondary schools in education on the values of protected areas. 3. Education of teachers (at least in local schools in vicinity of PA) about the values of nature/protected areas, and active civil participation. 4. how to react to conflicts between managers and the local community (outline solutions and possible study visits). 5. Good examples of continuous work between schools and protected areas - Škocjanske jame