

Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species

Final Report

1. Basic Project Details

Project Title:	Training in Polish Botanic Gardens
Contractor:	Botanic Gardens Conservation International
Host country collaborating institute:	University Botanic Garden, Warsaw, Poland
Grant Round:	1998/99
Grant Value:	£10,960

2. Project Expenditure

Total grant expenditure: £10,960

Break down of expenditure

Staff costs
Rent, rates, heating,
lighting and cleaning
Postage, telephone, stationery
Travel and subsistence
Other (educational materials)

Total

3 Project Background/Rationale

Poland, poor in economic resources yet rich in biodiversity, is an important centre of plant diversity and endemism. Despite this, many natural areas are under threat from forest clearance and over collection. Botanic gardens in Poland are undergoing a renaissance and are increasingly playing an important role in plant conservation. The 12 botanic gardens in Poland are mainly situated in urban areas. They are important centres for providing information to the general public and running environmental education programmes. Poland has signed up the Convention on Biological Diversity and the aim of

the project was to assist Poland in meeting its obligations under Article 12 and 13 of the Convention. Staff working in arboreta and national parks were also invited to participate in the workshop.

4 Project Objectives

- raise awareness of the implications for botanic gardens and related institutions in Poland of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Caring for the Earth and Agenda 21 with regard to environmental education
- carry out a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) with participants to examine how Polish botanic gardens can develop effective environmental education programmes
- provide a forum for botanic garden staff to share experiences and exchange views on environmental education
- help develop a national botanic garden education network for Poland
- publish and distribute recommendations for the enhancement and development of environmental education in Polish botanic gardens.

The above project objectives were achieved through the five day training workshop held at the Kampinoski National Park, Poland. A lecture was given on the major international conventions and documents relevant to the environmental education work of botanic gardens and participants were asked to discuss the implications of these documents to their work. During the week there was plenty of opportunity to share experiences and exchange views on environmental education. Participants saw the benefits of meeting and expressed a desire to continue. As a result there was discussion about developing a national environmental education network. Plans are underway for the next meeting to be held in Krakov.

Participants did not carry out a SWOT analysis as originally planned. This was due to the results of the training questionnaire that was sent out prior to the workshop. Participants were more interested to learn about other aspects of botanic garden education.

The final objective to publish and distribute recommendations for the enhancement and development of environmental education in Polish botanic gardens is still in progress and will be completed shortly. BGCI is waiting to receive information from the Warsaw University Botanic Garden.

5 Project Outputs

The following output targets were specified for the project:

Training Outputs

- 6A 15-20 people to receive training in environmental education techniques
- 6B five training days to be provided

Research Outputs

- 9 Workshop recommendations to be produced for use by staff in botanic gardens

Dissemination Outputs

- 14B promotion of Darwin project at BGCI workshops and conferences
15A/B distribution of press releases to Polish newspapers
16A distribution of news releases to local community
17A/B establishment of a Polish botanic garden environmental education network and strengthening of local environmental education networks
18/19 local and national television and radio stations invited to feature the workshop

Financial Outputs

- 23 Approximately £4,500

All the above outputs have been achieved. For 6A, the number of participants exceeded the number planned for. In total, 24 people received training. Attached to this report is a list of the participants names and addresses and a copy of an article which appeared in a Polish national paper. The results of the workshop have been disseminated by the 21 institutions involved in the training through their publications (16A). BGCI has also disseminated the results of the workshop at the International diploma course on botanic garden education run during April and May 1999 and at the IV International Congress on Education in Botanic Gardens held in Thiruvananthapuram, India in November 1999 (14B). The workshop was publicised in BGCNews.

As a result of the Darwin project, BGCI has much stronger links with polish botanic gardens. This will facilitate the development of future projects in conservation and environmental education. Through organising the workshop, staff of the University of Warsaw Botanic Garden have developed good organisational skills and are keen to use them to set up future training initiatives. The Garden has also developed strong links with other botanic gardens and organisations working in environmental education.

6 Project Operation/Management

A copy of the training booklet accompanies this report. It includes a timetable for the workshop and the training materials (overheads and handouts). The English translations of the materials are included.

In September 1998, a questionnaire was sent to staff working in botanic gardens and arboreta asking them what they required from a training workshop on environmental education (see appendix). The curriculum for the workshop was developed on the basis of their responses. A flyer was subsequently sent to all botanic gardens, arboreta and national parks inviting people to attend. Participants were self-selecting. At the end of the workshop, participants were given a certificate of attendance (copy attached).

No real issues or difficulties arose in running and managing the project.

7 Project Impact

This project has helped Poland meet its obligations under Article 12 and 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In particular the training has provided staff working in botanic gardens, arboretums and national parks with the knowledge of how to set up environmental education programmes for a wide range of audiences. For example training university students in the identification, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and its components. A significant part of the course curriculum focused on interpretation and how sites can promote and encourage the understanding of the importance of, and the measures required for, the conservation of biological diversity. Following the training workshop all institutions intend to develop new environmental education programmes which will significantly help Poland meet its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Specific information on what each trainee is now doing is currently being collated and will be forwarded to the Darwin Initiative shortly. The institutions will also continue their link with BGCI. This will put them in contact with other botanic gardens around the world and help develop their educational and public awareness programmes with respect to conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity.

8 Sustainability

The Warsaw University Botanic Garden contributed human resources in-kind to the project with the director of the Garden, Hanna Werblan-Jacubiec and Marcin Zych contributing their time. The monetary value of this was approximately £4,500. While the project was designed to stand-alone, it has been a catalyst for further projects. An interpretative training course is planned for in October of 2000 in the Tatra region of Poland. This region is an important tourist destination as well as being particularly significant for conservation.

9 Outcomes in the Absence of Darwin Funding

Had Darwin funding been unavailable the project would have been delayed while funding was sought elsewhere.

10 Key Points

Key success factors

- ◆ Proceeding the workshop with a questionnaire to determine their requirements for the workshop
- ◆ Professionalism of the organisers

- ◆ Networking opportunities to share experiences and discuss issues
- ◆ High level of interest in the training by the participants
- ◆ Setting up of a Polish environmental education network
- ◆ Including people in the workshop from a variety of backgrounds working in conservation/environmental education from forests and national parks. Not restricting the workshop to only botanic gardens' staff.

Main problems/difficulties

- ◆ Working through a translator for 5 days rather than using simultaneous translation
- ◆ Training people at a range of different levels and having various degrees of experience ie some people just wanted practical ideas and games and resources and were not interested in a theoretical framework.
- ◆ Commuting to the Kampinoski National Park for lectures, and then having to commute somewhere else for lunch did not work as well as planned as it 'ate' into the workshop allotted time.

Key lessons

- ◆ It was felt generally that it would be better to hold the workshop in May or June when the weather would be more favourable and allow more activities to be run outdoors
- ◆ Participants are particularly interested in learning practical ideas and games
- ◆ Presentation ideas need to be developed to ensure that environmental education theory is communicated in a more interesting and involving manner.
- ◆ Travelling time between accommodation and the workshop venue needs to be kept to a minimum.
- ◆ It is important to proceed the workshop with a questionnaire
- ◆ There is a need to provide clear guidelines to trainers on what is expected when writing up educational material
- ◆ It is important to check out all logistical details to ensure the smooth running of the workshop
- ◆ There is a need to incorporate on-site visits into the timetable

11 Project contacts

UK staff

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Host country

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