



**COUNCIL OF EUROPE
EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**

***TWENTIETH COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEETING
OF THE WORKSHOPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION***

***Council of Europe Landscape Award Forum
of National Selections
5th Session 2016-2017***

**Daugavpils, Latvia
20-21 June 2018**
Study visit, 19 June 2018

WORKSHOP 3

Education of Children in Heavily Industrialised Landscapes
Elementary School in the city of Most, Czech Republic

Mrs Jana NACHTIGALOVÁ
Professor of the Elementary School of Most, Czech Republic

The elementary school, Svážná, Most (1. ZŠ Most), is the oldest and also the smallest in the city of Most. It was founded in 1953. This year we are celebrating 65 years of its activity.

The school is the only one in the Usti Region, which is a proud bearer of the title “First Grade School for Sustainable Development”, first time received back in 2005. In 2017 the school was awarded the title “School of Sustainable Development of the Ústí Region”.

On this occasion the pupils of our school gave a presentation about the transfer of the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Most. In June 2017 we celebrated the 500th anniversary of the foundation of this church. You can learn more about the history and present of this monument through the movie “Temple of Ashes Raised”.

The school is a member of the Club of Environmental Education (CEE) of the Czech Republic and also a pilot elementary school CEE as a centre of modernisation and education for sustainable development (the only one in the region). School pupils also participate in a global project, “The Globe Program”, which focuses on environmental quality in the field of meteorology, hydrology, biometry, phenology, soil science and remote sensing.

The school have also had an intensive cooperation with the Charles University in Prague, The University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem and the University of Chemical Technology in Prague.

On a long term basis, the elementary school has aimed at teaching children how to understand and deal with ecological problems as well as encouraging them to respect the exceptional history of the city of Most and the unique landscape strongly reflecting industrial activity.

Education seeks to create and develop skills and steer elementary school pupils towards understanding and individual thinking about phenomena around them and their links. For example, various activities and tasks under the topic "*Place Where We Live*" naturally awake in pupils a positive relationship with their place of residence, municipality and region and gradually develop their national sentiment and respect for their country. The emphasis is placed on practical learning about local and regional facts and pupils gaining direct experience.

The educational issues are reflected in subjects taught in the first to fifth classes of the elementary school – World around Us, Nature and Us, The Earth and Us, which are followed up by more academically conceived subjects of higher classes (Natural History, Geography, Health Education, Civic Studies). Regular lessons are enhanced with subsequent project days - such as Water Day, Earth Day and Health Day along with excursions and walks in the Most region focusing on specific topics.

Every year the school prepares a Plan for Environmental Education and Awareness Raising, within which four topics are chosen, which are discussed in almost all subjects, in the first to ninth grade. Each topic is discussed about two months. The integrated educational system concentrates on both historical and present-day issues aiming at working towards the development of practical life skills. Pupils learn to observe events and things, their mutual relations and connections, they are taught to identify them, express their ideas, findings and impressions, respond to opinions and suggestions of others and perceive the advantages and problems of the contemporary way of life. At the same time children learn a proactive approach to shaping the environment they live in and making active decisions about it.

Long-term Activities

Among other long-term projects we can enumerate: How do spruces live? Water for the municipality and The Globe Program. The projects are aimed at monitoring the environment in our immediate area.

Excursions to Nearby Locations

The school regularly organizes outdoor educational excursions (study trips) for its pupils. They are tailored to suit individual age groups and interconnect the theoretical and practical issues of the lessons taking into account the different levels of cognition and perception of the environment and the interacting phenomena by elementary school pupils. Municipality of Most organizes annual excursions to the reclaimed (recultivated) areas on the territory of our town for the oldest pupils. The most interesting and most popular excursions among the pupils are the guided tours of Ressler Forest, events held at the Matylda water area, Most Lake at the Church of the Assumption, Coal Safari in the CSA and Vršany Mines, in Most Hippodrome or visits to the reclaimed (re-cultivated) land.

Mini-arboretum

Our school began its activity in 1953. During the following years various types of species of trees and shrubs were planted in the school grounds. In addition to manifold herbs and tree species, there is a small pond with aquatic plants and a weather station.

Educational Trail

The Mini-arboretum is included on the Educational Trail route leading through the school area. Visitors to the Educational Trail can find wooden panels located near individual specimens giving a detailed description

of a particular type of tree or shrub. Furthermore, they can also fill in the work sheets freely available to visitors to the trail.

School “Geopark”

An outdoor exhibition was set up in the grounds of the school, displaying large-format carefully selected samples of rock from around the city of Most. The collection presents typical local rocks mined for further industrial use or processing and for construction activities. Such a collection does not only enhance the teaching options of the school, but also serves the general public in learning about local products of nature. At the same time it is used as a depository, because the sites, where the exhibits were extracted, will in time be flooded or reclaimed (re-cultivated). Mining areas, slag heaps (spoil tips) and the subsequently rehabilitated land are the primary phenomena shaping the local landscape. Visitors have the opportunity to obtain work sheets at our school to check their knowledge acquired by visiting our “Geopark”. Children also have the chance to play at being geologists and examine the fragments of the individual exhibits really close up.

Ressler - Suburban Recreational Forest

The elementary school is located in the immediate proximity of Ressler Forest, which provides a relaxation area for the whole city of Most. For over 20 years the school has been consulting and coordinating all of its activities in the wood with the local administrator – forester. This concerns for example, excursions into the forest with informative talks, help with planting new trees in the woods, collecting litter or organising one-day events such as those held on the occasion of “International Earth Day”. For carrying out its own “research activities” in the forest and its surroundings, for example, the evaluation of the health condition of the spruce trees, identification of small invertebrates and small vertebrates in the area and for various other phenological and zoological observations, the school gained its own piece of woodland. In the academic year of 2007/2008, the school became actively involved in the global event - “The Billion Tree Campaign” launched by the UN, and its pupils planted 300 trees in Ressler Forest. In 2013 in cooperation with the Most Municipal Forest Administration, the children planted even more trees and this part of the wood was subsequently named Resslerík. Since then, the children have been regularly checking and maintaining Resslerík as a part of their lessons. In addition, the pupils frequently help with collecting litter in the forest (e.g. on the occasion of the Clean up the Czech Republic campaign or during project days - Water Day and Earth Day). By arrangement the children have had the opportunity to observe the day-to-day duties of forest workers on several occasions. Other school activities include research around the local forest lake.

Let’s Clean up the Czech Republic

This year teachers, pupils and their parents were involved for the third time in the April event “Let’s Clean up the Czech Republic”. This year, our school became one of the organizers of this event in Most. Pupils from the 1st and 2nd grade cleaned the school grounds with their parents and some teachers. Older children went along with other teachers and parents to Ressler forest to clean it from litter left behind by irresponsible visitors. This activity leads children to realize that they are responsible for the environment they live in. At the same time, we use this event as an informal meeting of teachers and pupils’ parents.

Student Conference on Environment

Since 2008 the elementary school has been cooperating with the Club of Environmental Education in organizing the regional round of the Student Conference on Environment for elementary and secondary schools of the Ústí Region. Thanks to the very helpful attitude of the municipal authorities of the city of Most, this conference is held in the large meeting room of the Most Town Hall. The Student Conference on Environment is an opportunity for pupils of elementary and secondary schools to present their individual work dedicated to the issues of nature conservation, environmental protection and steps towards sustainable development. It represents a chance to build closer relationships with other schools of the region and create a space for mutual cooperation. It is not a competition! It is about the exchange of information, about cooperation and representation of schools in education for sustainable development. The best presentations

are subsequently recommended for the final round of the Student Conference on Environment, regularly held at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in Prague.

Permanent Exhibitions

Fair Trade – posters focusing on the topics related to the promotion of the Fair Trade movement are displayed throughout the school. The Pupils' Fair Trade Team looks after its own notice board. For several years the pupils have been supporting the education of an Indian boy, Puttetupadavil Jilson Joseph.

Furthermore, with the educational needs of children in mind as well as focusing on the general public, the school premises are home to a permanent exhibition of photographs by Mr Stanislav Štýs, zooming in on the topic of landscape transformation in North Bohemia. Presenting images comparing the same locations of the town of Most and its environs 40 and 20 years ago, the exhibition has gained immense popularity and recognition. In recent years it has been staged for example in Prague Castle, in the premises of the University of Finance and Administration in Most, Brussels and other venues. In 1996 Mr Stanislav Štýs received the Prize of the Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic, and last year, at the age of 87, he received the Medal for Merit of the First Degree from the President's hands.