

EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE REGIONAL WORKSHOP OF THE MEDPAN NETWORK

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Environmental education and awareness raising
in Marine Protected Areas
of the Mediterranean

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WORKSHOP REPORT

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1 CONTEXT

As part of the 2010-2012 Action Strategy, MedPAN organizes each year a regional thematic workshop for MPA managers, in order to pool and share the experiences of each MPA. The topic of the 2011 Experience-Sharing Workshop was the *Environmental Education and Awareness-Raising in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas*.

By Environmental Education & Awareness-Raising, we mean all the activities aimed at introducing the environment and its issues and helping people understand them, through activities and/or educational tools that MPA managers (or their partners) conduct and develop, within or around the MPA, on the terrestrial and marine environment, for the general public (tourists and local populations) and schools as well as for socio-professional groups and local decision-makers, in order to raise awareness of natural environment conservation and human and economic challenges.

Further projects related to this topic will come into being in 2012. In 2011, the MedPAN Organization carried out a first inventory of the existing experiences and tools developed by the Mediterranean MPAs regarding Environmental Education and Awareness-Raising - they will be used to feed an online platform developed in 2012. Besides, the Organization also produced in 2011 the directory of the Mediterranean stakeholders, with contact details of the organizations working on environmental education and awareness-raising in the marine environment; this directory will be available on the new MedPAN website at the beginning of 2012 (www.medpan.org).

2 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & AWARENESS-RAISING IN MEDITERRANEAN MPAs

In 2011, the MedPAN Organization started to list all the environmental education-related activities and tools developed by the managers of marine and coastal protected areas in the Mediterranean.

2.1 Aim of the inventory

This inventory was mainly aimed at:

- Producing a status report on the environmental education and awareness-raising practices in the Mediterranean MPAs. Information was collected using a questionnaire, to provide an overview of the:
 - management organizations that offer (or not) environmental education and awareness-raising activities in the Mediterranean,
 - educational activities proposed,
 - teaching tools developed,
 - or environmental education structures working with management bodies.

- Helping the MedPAN Organization develop different projects related to this topic:
 - decide on the main topics of the MedPAN 2011 regional experience-sharing workshop,
 - create a space on the future MedPAN website to gather all the freely accessible resources available that the organizations want to share with the MedPAN Network;
 - update the MedPAN Network directory (available soon on the MedPAN website)

2.2 Key components of the Mediterranean Status Report

The MedPAN Organization received answers from 50 Mediterranean organizations (MPA managers or partners leading environmental education actions)

General observation shows that most management organizations develop - directly or with partners (organizations...) - activities related to environmental education and awareness-raising (about 93 % of the structures which answered the questionnaire, *see Figure 1*).

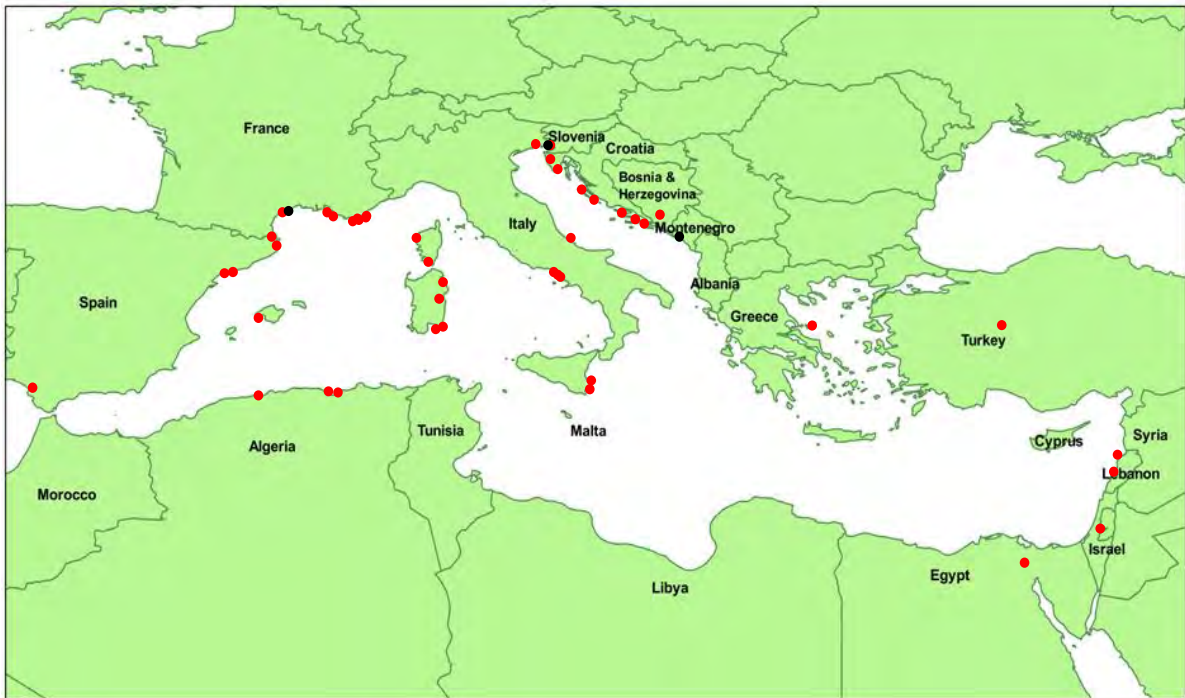


Figure 1: Map of the organizations developing environmental education and awareness-raising activities (based on the questionnaire developed by MedPAN in 2011)

74% of these structures have been initiating educational activities for over 5 years, for 1 to 5 years for 24% of them, and for less than one year for approximately 2% of them.

The topics addressed in the educational and awareness-raising activities are adapted to the context of each MPA. Several topics were specifically targeted in the questionnaire, in order to collect information on "emerging" topics: 91% of the structures communicate on the pressures on the environment, 69% on MPA reserve-effect, 67% on invasive species and only 39% on climate change. Further topics are also addressed; most commonly: the marine and terrestrial biodiversity, threatened species and spaces, sustainable development, pollutions, etc.

The questionnaire revealed that the structures actively participate in environmental education and awareness-raising through educational activities and using different tools. All the activities were divided into three main categories, which cover a wide range of existing activities:

- 78% of the organizations have been initiating (directly or with partners) leisure and nature interpretation activities within the MPA:
 - outdoor sport (diving, snorkeling, underwater trails, kayaking, etc.),
 - observation (whale/bird/sea-watching, etc.),
 - reception centers (nature observatory, visitor centre, interpretive centre, etc.),
- 65% of the organizations have been initiating (directly or with partners) activities related to MPA heritage discovery: natural, historical, archaeological, cultural, artistic, social activities, etc.
- 28% of the organizations use the MPA (directly or with partners) as a place to demonstrate innovative activities: management of alternative energy sources (use of clean energy, hybrid boat, etc.), tools for conservation (artificial reef, ecological moorings, etc.), others (onboard/underwater camera, 3D visit, etc.)

The environmental education and awareness-raising actions conducted are aimed at different target groups according to the organizations. Some of them decided to focus their actions towards a particular target group while other organizations try to reach a very diverse range of people. Schools are the principal target for the organizations surveyed (31%), then local populations (21%), tourists (20%), socio-professional groups (11%) and with less than 10%: local decision-makers, disabled public and the category “others”.

Educational tools are essential resources for educational and awareness-raising actions. Over 84% of organizations surveyed are developing or have developed educational tools for environmental education and awareness-raising.

These structures actively promote partnerships: about 64% with tourism professionals (restaurants, hotels, campsites, travel agencies, etc.) and 45% with environmental education organizations.

The detailed [detailed report](#) of this questionnaire is available on the MedPAN website.

3 REGIONAL EXPERIENCE-SHARING WORKSHOP

The *MedPAN 2011 Experience-Sharing Workshop* was held from 27 to 29 November 2011, in Vodice (Croatia), in partnership with Kornati National Park and WWF Italy / Miramare Marine Protected Area, with the support of the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas.

During 3 days, this event brought nearly 115 participants together, who shared experiences on a specific topic: *Environmental Education and Awareness-Raising* in the Mediterranean MPAs.

On Sunday 27 November, the Experience-Sharing Workshop started with a field trip in the Kornati National Park (visit of the archipelago islands and the future visitor center of the National Park), which was the opportunity to initiate the exchanges in a relaxed atmosphere.

The workshop officially opened on Monday 28 November, in the presence of Mrs. Kornelija Pintarić (Director of Nature Protection Directorate - Croatian Ministry of Culture), Mrs. Branka Juričev Martinčev (Mayor of Vodice), Mrs. Souha El Asmi (Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas), Mr Neven Baus (Director of Kornati National Park), Mrs. Milena Tempesta (WWF Italy / Miramare Marine Protected Area) and Mrs. Purificació Canals (Chairwoman of the MedPAN Organization).

3.1 Objectives

This year, the idea consisted in building the workshop on speeches representing - as much as possible - the diversity of environmental education and awareness-raising practices in the Mediterranean Basin.

One of the main objectives of the 2011 Workshop was to create a dynamic exchange between speakers and participants, in a more productive and participative manner. This workshop was built around a forum that allowed every participant to promote their experiences on 17 presentation stands. The panel of speakers consisted of MPA managers and Environmental Education organizations working on the terrestrial and marine environment. They all had the opportunity to share their tools, actions or projects and to expose new perspectives to improve the environmental education practices in the Mediterranean.

The objectives of the workshop were multiple:

1. Bring together MPA managers and environmental education organizations around a theme that is relevant for Mediterranean MPAs,
2. Provide an overview of environmental education and awareness-raising experiences in the marine and coastal protected areas of the Mediterranean,
3. Promote interesting, unique or innovative experiences or projects set up by management bodies or environmental education organizations, in the Mediterranean basin, but also in other parts of the world,
4. Promote productive and participative exchanges between speakers and participants,
5. Learn from the successes and failures of the projects presented,
6. Facilitate the networking of stakeholders to promote future exchanges.

The forum offered favorable conditions for sharing and listening since each stand was attended by a limited number of participants, as well as a dynamic and free framework with rotating stand sessions - letting the participants decide which presentations they would attend.

3.2 Forum

The participants could choose to attend several presentations with different *targets* (schools, local populations, socio-professional groups, tourists, ...), different *topics* (marine and terrestrial biodiversity, marine conservation, climate change, marine debris, citizen participation, ...) as well as different *tools and activities* (environmental education centres, underwater trails, educational stays, training, dives, educational projects, ...).

During two days, the 17 speakers had the time and opportunity to present their experience twice to small groups of participants.

The presentation topics were the following:

- Sensitization and educational projects on marine debris - *Manuela Gaspardo, WWF Italy / Miramare MPA*
- Environmental Education for Sustainable Development - College students dive in Port-Cros- *Franck Alary, Port-Cros National Park*
- Educate to adapt to Climate Change - *Malika Ihrachen, AESVT Morocco*
- European Schools for a Living Planet- *Barbara Tauscher, WWF Austria*

- Training workshops for environmental educators- *Marc Mari, Diputacio de Girona*
- Environmental education in Taza National Park: from the land to the sea - *Nadia Ramdane, Taza-Jijel National Park*
- Awareness-raising campaign with local fishermen and local government for consensus and cooperation on the creation of a MPA on the island of Milos - *Basil Tselentis, Marine Sciences Laboratory / Piraeus University*
- Liberamente: educational projects with prisoners - *Vincenzo Incontro, Plemmirio MPA*
- Linking Biodiversity, Food and Territory : the educational project of the Capo Carbonara MPA - *Bruno Paliaga, Capo Carbonara MPA - Municipality of Villasimius*
- Public use and environmental education in Cabrera National Park - *Jorge Moreno Perez, Cabrera National Park*
- From Conflict to Conservation: Converting former military structures into educational centres - *Peter Mackelworth, Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation*
- Creation and galvanization of an environmental education and interpretation centre in Al Hoceima National Park - *Abdel Hamid Tawfik, RODPAL*
- The Cap d'Agde Underwater Trails and Virtual visit of a diving site - *Renaud Dupuy de la Grandrive, MPA "Cap d'Agde Posidonia", Natura 2000 site / ADENA*
- Environmental education and citizen participation in the marine areas of Andalusia - *Ricardo de Casto, Regional Ministry for Environment of Andalusia*
- Citizen Observatory for underwater landscapes in the Mediterranean - Ecozem platform - *Carole Danfossy, CPIE Côte Provençale*
- Discovery of coastal and marine environment through several-day educational stays – Activity "Underwater camera" - *Jean-Baptiste d'Angeli, Corsica Regional Nature Park / Casa Marina*
- Marine Conservation Education and Communication, an NGO perspective - *Zrinka Jakl, Sunce*

The 2011 Regional Experience-sharing Workshop [presentations and documents](#) are available on the MedPAN website.

3.3 Final Recommendations resulting from the Workshop

Basically, the terrestrial and marine biodiversity or the physicochemical processes of an environment are components that cannot be directly managed by humans... There are no actual borders or regulations. However, even though it is hard to take action in this matter, it is possible to directly act on the uses and human behaviors that impact the environment or to deal with the causes of these impacts.

This is why environmental education and awareness-raising turn out to be so important nowadays. It consists of actual key actions conducted in or around Marine Protected Areas in order to meet one priority objective: the protection and conservation of the environment.

These environmental education and awareness-raising actions are aimed at various targets, various initiatives are taken in various contexts, and various tools and materials are used. As revealed during the MedPAN 2011 Experience-Sharing Workshop on Environmental Education and Awareness-Raising (27-29 November, in Vodice, Croatia), there are similarities between the actions conducted in the Mediterranean MPAs, but there is also much to share, to be able to adapt and replicate, and to enhance and innovate. Experience-sharing is essential to spare the managers' valuable time. The MedPAN Experience-Sharing Workshop is the opportunity for the stakeholders to share experiences, to exchange, to establish new contacts and to propose and develop new projects.

3.3.1 Key messages

All the presentations, as well as the dynamic exchanges held during or after the workshop, led to the formulation of various **key messages and ideas**:

CONCEPT OF PLEASURE

- Keep in mind the 3P approach: Pleasure, Perception and Peace. Any environmental education and awareness-raising activity must be pleasant and enjoyable experiences.
- It is important to adopt a recreational approach (schoolish approaches should be avoided) and diversify the means used to communicate the key messages.

- It is not relevant to directly involve the audience in the conservation, especially when they are not initially interested in this matter. It is important to create new relations; people that shared a pleasant experience might come back and be more open to key messages.
- Inspire people and draw their attention during the environmental education and awareness-raising activities.
- Make participation become a form of education: people directly involved in the projects, draw more satisfaction, and generally better remember the information.

IDENTITY TO THE TERRITORY

- Integrate the idea of territory and culture in the messages related to biodiversity conservation.
- Use and address topics relevant for the people and close to their personal interests. For instance: food - especially old recipes - illustrating the change of biodiversity (and the losses: some species that used to be found do not longer exist) Introduce the concept of labeling for some terrestrial and marine products.
- Daily life and quality of life: start working on these aspects in order to reach "ordinary" people and initiate a change in mentality.
- Our responsibility is to teach young generations the good consumption practices - highlight what must be done or avoided and explain why.
- Collaborate with the private sector which has an influence on the current consumption modes and join the "Responsible Citizen" movement.
- When creating new education and communication tools, it is important to include all the current perspectives: not only conservation, but also culture, history, etc. Messages must be exhaustive to reach a large public.
- The MPA does not have real physical borders, we need to think beyond and work for a better integration of coastal areas, adjacent territories, etc. It would therefore be easier to justify the relevance of MPAs.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING

- Involving the stakeholders of one environment (schools, local populations, socio-economic groups, etc.) in some activities could be a two-way education and awareness-raising method. These activities benefit the public and the managers, which could also learn a lot from these users.

- Consider the citizen as a particularly well-aware observer of his/her territory.
- Citizenship/participative sciences: involve adults and children in scientific surveys.
- Consider the citizen data as additional information for scientific research: these data are valuable in spite of the possible margin of error regarding their reliability (ex. very useful perception data).
- Produce reliable and valuable scientific data that can be used by scientists but also by local communities (data made accessible and usable).
- Involve local populations in actual projects, especially when they are not initially convinced (ex. build an environmental-education center). This could secure the project, involving a feeling of appropriation and therefore a respectful attitude toward the project; it could even make people stand up for it.
- Involve the local populations in educational and awareness-raising projects from the beginning, all along the implementation and until the evaluation.
- Children that have been long involved in an educational programme would have a solid experience.

AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIONS AIMED AT THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT STAKEHOLDERS

- Invest time to exchange with the key stakeholders (fishers and local authorities) - most of them are already aware of environmental issues - and progressively obtain their support.
- Combine efforts to reach an important target - still inappropriately approached today: the decision-makers, a very important group in terms of protection of the environment.
- Use the media to reach the local decision-makers and policy-makers.
- Find the appropriate balance between obtaining the support of well-established legal structures (but also the policy-makers) and the environmental education and awareness-raising actions, to avoid using essentially restrictive measures.
- The support of functional legal structures is a key to develop long-term and sustainable actions.
- Adopt a strategic approach to transmit messages instead of relying on opportunities (ex. financial opportunities) or easiness (ex. it is hard to reach the fishers, so we just don't do it...)
- Clearly define the objectives and implications of the educational project. Visual tools are very welcome when presenting a project (ex.: use 3D tools), especially when the support of partners is required (local populations, decision-makers, donors...).

- Administrative complexities: make them as easy as possible - choose the most understandable ways.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is essential to establish priorities, to study the feasibility of the environmental education and awareness-raising projects, and the available means (financial, human means...). To refer to a recommendation from the previous MedPAN 2005 Workshop, as part of the INTERREG III C - MEDPAN programme on "*Education and Communication in the MPAs*" (May 2005, Miramare, Italy): "A MPA strategy regarding education and awareness-raising, [...] should always be based on a detailed analysis of the needs in terms of environmental education of the different target groups as well as on partnerships with organizations that are already active in this field."

Experience-sharing is necessary: exchanges on common points, differences, strong points, weak points, etc. It all helps progress more efficiently and save time.

The work of the manager is subject to changes. One objective is to manage to work efficiently in order to change the behaviors. It is important to work with our head, our heart and using our hands; in other words, people need to be in action, but with emotion, pleasure and reason.

Action efficiency is generally hard to evaluate. The results of these actions are not necessarily immediately manifest; it can take time before being able to evaluate and understand them. In some countries, which have been investing much effort in awareness-raising actions for decades, the impacts of these actions just start to be noticed.

Finally, initiatives should be taken regarding environmental education and awareness-raising: MPAs could be used to support social reintegration (ex: prisoners, children in difficulty, etc.), experiences existing out of the MPAs or related to the land could be adapted, we could communicate on transverse topics (ex: climate change, etc.), involve local users (ex: fishers, divers, etc.), find ways to reach local decision-makers and communicate the messages, etc. It is also important to use new technology tools (facebook, twitter, applications, 3D, CDs, etc.) to communicate the messages more efficiently, or to reach a wider range of targets.

3.3.2 MedPAN Network and Environmental Education and Awareness-Raising

There are many similarities between the Mediterranean MPAs in terms of activities offered, topics addressed, targeted groups and tools used. The MedPAN Network must help create a connection between the structures and promote the pooling of projects - locally and regionally - related to this MPA central topic.

The projects to be conducted by the MedPAN Network in 2012 are the following:

- A general inventory of the environmental education and awareness-raising practices in the Mediterranean MPAs was produced in 2011. The objective is now to extend this inventory to all the managers of marine and coastal protected areas and their partners in the Mediterranean.
- The creation of a MedPAN platform used to exchange experiences and educational tools is currently being studied. It could be used to search and/or post educational content. The interest is to create a space containing all the resources available and freely accessible that the organizations have decided to share with MPA managers.
- The update of the directory of the Mediterranean stakeholders, with the contact details of the organizations working on environmental education and awareness-raising in the marine environment.

Beyond these projects, the MedPAN Network could develop a regional strategy and common tools to improve the environmental education practices in the MPAs, for different target groups: young people, general public, socio-professional groups but also the decision-makers (at the local, national and regional level...).

As regards awareness-raising actions towards the decision-makers at the Network level, we could consider adopting a common strategy to reach them, with for instance, key steps or activities that the managers could reproduce in the Network and adapt to each local and national context.

As regards the training of MPA managers and their partners - clearly lacking an environmental education component, the MedPAN Network (the Organization and the members and partners of the Network) could handle this problem and propose a permanent training on Environmental Education (see experience of "*Across the Water*" programme - *WWF Sun School*).

This recommendation must be linked with the study jointly conducted by the RAC/SPA, the MedPAN Organization and WWF MedPO on the design of a permanent capacity-building process for MPA managers, which could include as a priority topic the environmental education and awareness-raising.

Finally, Environmental Education must not be neglected in Mediterranean MPA management; indeed, in MPA management plans, the educational, awareness-raising and communication aspects are generally left out or minimized compared with other conservation challenges. They barely appear as priority topics. However, these aspects can be really important and useful for raising the local decision-makers' awareness and obtaining their support for the general management of a MPA. The evaluation of MPA management efficiency could include an indicator related to the existence of an environmental education programme (this was highlighted in the study on the evaluation of MPA management efficiency as part of the MedPAN North Project).