



## 8<sup>TH</sup> WEEC Planet and People - how can they develop together?

# GOTHENBURG 2015

**Eighth World Environmental Education Congress**

**June 30 – July 2, 2015**

<http://weec2015.org/>

## Welcome to Gothenburg!

### Planet and People - how can they develop together?

Welcome to [Gothenburg](#), a city at the Swedish west coast at the mouth of Göta river and just inside a marvelous archipelago. Two universities are situated within the city, [University of Gothenburg](#) and [Chalmers University of Technology](#) with almost 50000 students altogether. Since many years Gothenburg and its inhabitants has been engaged in questions and activities related to the environment, sustainable development and a sustainable future. Both Universities are engaged in research and education around these issues. The Centre for Environment and Sustainability (GMV) at the University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology is one of the partners in [RCE West Sweden](#).

University of Gothenburg has one of the largest and most successful faculties of education. World leading researchers in pedagogics like profs Ference Marton and Roger Säljö have their home here and Arjen Wals is guest professor at the faculty.

We are however all aware of that we have to fight for a change of path to one directed more towards a sustainable future. We are also aware of the necessity and hurry to be able to save

WEEC2015 information for the global RCE community

the world. Education, learning and understanding is a powerful tool and to be quite clear, a necessary step in the process for a permanent change.

The Centre for Environment and Sustainability (GMV) is hosting the conference. As part of the RCE West Sweden we at GMV are convinced this conference is of interest to the RCE community. We hope many of you can join us and that this conference will be a substantial step on the way to a better understanding of environmental and sustainable education.

*Welcome!*

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### **People and planet: how can they develop together?**

2015 marks the year in which the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development will have ended and during which the field of EE will be fast approaching its fiftieth anniversary. When considering the state of the Planet today we can only conclude that despite some patchy progress in certain parts of the world, the overall picture remains rather grim as we are facing continued loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, runaway climate change, and increased toxicity in our waters, air, soils and bodies.

When looking at the state of the People we can see that many people across the globe have become wealthier with access to consumer goods, ICT and, increasingly, to education. However, even today there are close to one billion people without access to clean drinking water and access to fair and meaningful jobs. One billion people are currently malnourished while another one billion is overweight or even obese. Abuse of power, inequality and marginalization remain prevalent. When considering the triple bottom line of People, Planet and Profit over the last 50 years we can only conclude that the 'P' of profit has done dramatically better than the other two Ps. Apparently 50 years of EE and 10+ years of ESD, not to mention a number of other related educations, have not been able to halt the train of economic globalization and to enable a transition from 'doing the things we do better and more efficiently' to 'doing better things'.

Perhaps the only thing that has changed is the interest of the private sector in environment and sustainability. Although policy-makers welcome the interest of the corporate world and the private sector in environmental and, particularly, sustainability education, educators are cautious in embracing this interest as they fear that people and planet are being hijacked by profit. In the end it is not the green economy but the green society that matters, a society in which people and planet are served by the economy and not the other way around. The same holds true for education: while we are seeing education and (life) long learning being re-oriented to the world-of-work to serve economic interests, education and learning designed with people and planet in mind is at risk of being squeezed out. Fortunately there are growing niches both in education and the world of business where alternative educational and economic models with people and planet in mind are being designed and implemented.

With the state of people and planet in continued decline and the urgency to respond greater than ever, this conference revisits, reconsiders and re-imagines the role of education and learning in finding ways for people - young and old - and planet to develop in harmony.