

EUDEC Newsletter

WITH SPECIAL CONFERENCE-PREVIEW SECTION



IDEC@EUDEC 2011, Devon, England



A brief introduction ...

This year, the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) and European Democratic Education Conference (EUDEC) will be combined into a single, exciting event, hosted and organised by [Sands School](#) in Devon, England.

For EUDEC members the event will begin two days early with the organisation's Annual General Meeting (3-5 July). The actual conference will take place from 6-13 July, with open space and some scheduled workshops. A special Public Session will be offered on the weekend of 9-10 July, with seminars and workshops for the general public.

The organisers anticipate up to 500 participants, mainly students, staff members and families from democratic schools around the world, along with teachers-in-training, academics and other fans of democratic education. We hope to see you there!

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IDEC@EUDEC 2011

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The Sands Steering Group

Registration news

By Chloe Duff

Registration opened on the 8th December, and since then we have had people registering from Germany, the Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Austria, the U.S., Norway, the U.K., Italy and Israel.

We have had a lot of group enquiries as well, and it looks as though there are going to be quite a few school groups coming for their school camp, which is really exciting news. If you would like to bring a group, contact Chloe to find out about possible group discounts available - cduff@eudec.org

To get the early-bird fee you need to register and pay **before the 31st January 2011**, so be sure to get your registrations in before then and receive the big discounts available!

If you are one of the first 100 people to register you will be entered into a **free raffle** with prizes including a wine and cheese tast-

ing tour at the beautiful Sharpham Vineyard in Devon, a hand-knitted woollen scarf (knitted by me) and a EUDEC T-shirt. If you get your [registration](#) in soon you could still make the first 100!

On a personal note, it is really exciting for me every morning waking up and checking to see who else has registered and getting all the messages from people excited to find out about the conference and booking their places. If you have any questions or need any help or assistance with booking, get in touch, and we will do what we can to help. Really looking forward to meeting you all here in the summer.



Chloe Duff
Conference Coordinator
IDEC@EUDEC 2011

IDEC@EUDEC 2011



Fee scale and discounts

Fees

Early-bird (pay by 31st January 2011):

Adults: £339.90

Students: £236.90

Children 6 and under: free

Middle Fee: (pay by 30th April 2011):

Adults: £391.40

Students: £262.65

Children 6 and under: free

Late Fee: (pay by 1st July 2011):

Adults: £442.90

Students: £288.40

Children 6 and under: free

The fees include conference entry, registration pack, 3 meals a day starting with dinner on the 5th July and ending with breakfast on the 14th, refreshments in between workshops, use of the extensive grounds of the venue including adventure playgrounds, sports courts, picnic areas and much more.

Support for People from Low-income Backgrounds

We are committed to doing everything we can to help support people from low-income backgrounds attend the event. If you would like to attend the conference but are having problems with the fees, please email [Chloe Duff](#), and if we can help you we will. All enquiries will be kept strictly confidential.

Large Group Discounts

If you are coming in a big group there may be the possibility of a discount. Please email [Chloe Duff](#) for more information on group discounts.

Green Discounts – If you travel to the conference without flying, you will receive a 5% discount. You may choose to donate this discount to help people from low-income backgrounds attend the conference.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Venue and accommodation

The Venue and Meeting Rooms

The [River Dart Country Park](#) is a big country estate turned adventure park, on the edge of Dartmoor in the southwest of England. Set in 90 acres of parkland and wood, with lakes and the River Dart flow-



ing through it, the River Dart Country Park is an exciting and beautiful venue for people of all ages. The large meeting rooms in the main house and the use of a large marquee, yurts and other big tents will provide us with all the space we need for a wide variety of talks and workshops running throughout the 8 days. The adventure playgrounds, games room, shop, bar and restaurant, camping fields with toilets and showers will provide us with all the extra facilities needed to make sure there is something for everyone.



Accommodation

Most conference participants will be bringing their own tents and camping in one of the large on-site campgrounds. For those who cannot bring their own tent but would still like to camp, space is available in four-man tents. A small extra charge of £10 per person or £40 for a whole tent will be taken for this accommodation option. **You will need to bring your own sleeping bag!**



If you would like to stay in one of the luxury guest rooms in the main house of the venue, there will be an additional charge of £80 per night for a twin or double room and £120 per night for a family suit (twin/double bed with 2 bunk beds). If you book one of these rooms you are obliged to take the room for the full duration of the conference. To book a room in the main house please email:

accommodation2011@eudec.org

We have also made contact with local **hotels and bed & breakfasts** in the area, and if you tell them you are an IDEC@EUDEC Conference delegate and will be staying with them for the duration of the conference, discounts are available. Mention that the conference is at the River Dart Country Park. It is advisable to book early as Devon is a popular holiday area, and hotels and bed and breakfasts can get booked up early. See [links here](#) for information about booking and prices.

What's happening when

The Conference

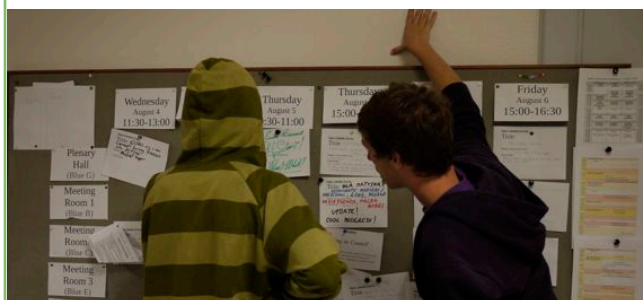
Arrival: 5 July

Departure: 14 July

Conference: 6-13 July

Open to: the worldwide democratic education community

The main conference programme will start with welcoming speeches and announcements followed by the start of workshops, talks and open-space sessions.



Open-space sessions are when there are allocated time slots in meeting rooms and any participant can sign up to run their own workshop, talk or presentation. Open-space sessions are a very popular aspect of IDECs, and many regular IDEC-goers say they are a vital part of a successful conference. We plan to have themes on some of the days for people to base their workshops on.

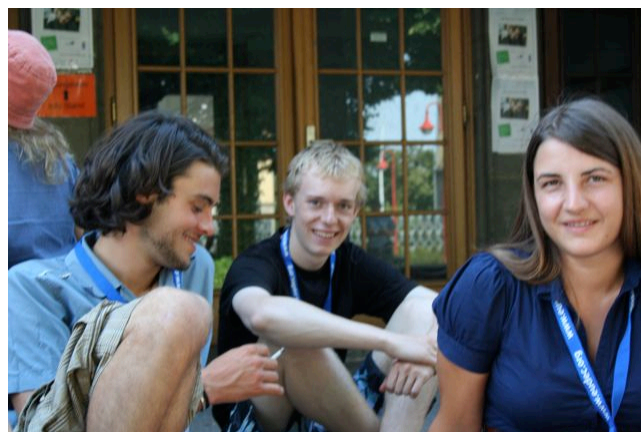


In addition to open space, there will be some **planned talks and workshops** about democratic education and related topics. Scheduled workshops and talks will be announced soon.

We also plan to have a day of **trips and activities** both on and off site. This will be a chance for all participants to take a day to relax, explore the region or visit a local



attraction. There will be a variety of trips on offer in the local area, including walking on Dartmoor, a trip to the historic town of Totnes and a coastal walk. More trips will be announced soon.



The conference will come to an end on the evening of the 13th July, and we plan to have closing speeches, a lovely meal and a fun evening together. Breakfast will be served on the 14th July followed by good-byes and departures until next year.

In addition to the events of each day, there will be social activities on offer each evening for all participants including live music and much more.

What's happening when

The EUDEC AGM

Arrival: 3 July

AGM: 4-5 July

Open to: members of EUDEC

EUDEC (the [European Democratic Education Community](#)) is a non-profit organisation whose members include schools (28), start-up groups (12), organisations (2) and individuals (160+) from 23 countries.



Every year EUDEC's members meet for a general meeting, which includes plenary sessions, elections of officers, open-space workshops and a lot of informal exchange.

This is where EUDEC, as an organisation, gets its direction and inspiration and where members connect, share ideas and work together to plan co-operative programmes and projects.



Food and accommodation for the AGM are included in the price of the conference, and attendance is open to all members of EUDEC, including individual members as well as students, staff members and families from member schools, start-ups and organisations.

If you are not yet a member of EUDEC and would like to join, more information and online membership forms are available on the [EUDEC website](#).

IDEDEC@EUDEC 2011

The Public Session

Workshops and seminars: 9-10 July

Open to: the general public

[IDEDEC@EUDEC](#) will be working in partnership with the [Phoenix Education Trust](#) (a UK charity) to host a two-day public conference called *Democracy in Education: An International Conference*.

We will be inviting people who work in education, teachers, students, trainee teachers, parents, children and anyone with an interest in education, to come together, learn about democratic education and explore education generally.

Over the course of the two days, there will be a number of timetabled keynote speakers, lectures and workshops which will look at the spectrum of democratic practice that is currently occurring in schools across the UK.

The aim of the public conference is to highlight the value of democratic education and look at a variety of models that illus-

trate the ways in which schools can promote and take forward democratic education in practice.



In addition to workshops from EUDEC members there will also be workshops from students and teachers in the UK state school sector, as well as student-led workshops that encourage and enable young people to develop the skills needed to take an active part in democratic participation.



Exciting extras

As well as talks, workshops and presentations about democratic education, we have been seeking out exciting and interesting workshops and activities to have on offer during the IDEC@EUDEC Conference, and this is the confirmed list so far. Keep a look out on the conference website for more activities and workshops as they come in: www.ideceudec.org

Dance Workshops – Anna Leatherdale of the [Phoenix Education Trust](#) has very kindly offered to run some exciting dance workshops in Bollywood Dance, Line Dancing and Mexican Dance.

Canoeing on the River Dart – Steve Hoare, art teacher at [Sands School](#), has offered to take people canoeing down the River Dart. This is a really amazing opportunity to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the local area.



Theatre Performances – Meryl Duff, Drama teacher at Sands School and some groups of students are working on a few big theatre productions to be performed on the main stage at the IDEC@EUDEC Conference. These will be really impressive performances with students of mixed ages, and we are all looking forward to them.

Art Exhibition – Steve Hoare, art teacher at Sands School is preparing a big art exhibition with artwork from current and ex-Sands students. The quality of the artwork produced at Sands is something quite ex-

traordinary, and this will be an exhibition to remember.

Computer-game Programming Workshop – Marko Koskinen of [Phoenix School](#) in Finland has offered to run a computer-game programming workshop that will run throughout the IDEC@EUDEC Conference in the IT room at Sands School. Participants will have the chance to work on programming a game over a few different workshop spaces with the aim of creating a final product by the end of the conference.

English Pub Quiz – People can come together in teams to take part in a traditional English pub quiz with prizes available for the winning teams.

Arts and Crafts Tent – We plan to have an arts and crafts tent open each day for participants to come and use and get creative. There will be some planned arts and crafts workshops running in the tent at various times throughout the conference.

Capture the Flag – Big games of Capture the Flag (a EUDEC tradition dating back to 2008) will be organised at different times on the grounds of the conference venue for those who want to play an exciting game and release some energy!



If you have an idea for a workshop, game, performance or any activity you would like to organise, get in touch with Chloe cduff@eudec.org and if we have the facilities we will add your activity to the list.



Devon, England

By Chloe Duff

The [IDEC@EUDEC 2011](#) is being held in Ashburton, Devon, in the southwest of England. Devon is the country's third largest county, but despite its size, it is easy to reach all areas of Devon and enjoy its landscapes, traditions and culture. There are areas of Devon where sea, moor, farmland and town can be seen from the same spot.

Devon is scattered with picturesque villages and towns, two buzzing cities and glorious beaches and landscapes. With two national parks, two coastlines, 33,000 miles of hedgerow and many well-maintained gardens and fields, there is always a view to catch the eye.

North Devon offers miles of golden beaches dramatic cliffs and deep winding lanes. South Devon offers wonderful beaches, plus historic towns and river estuaries and is home to an abundance of wildlife and boats. In Dartmoor you will find the breathtaking ancient landscape of the moors and the beautiful, peaceful countryside scenery.

If you would like to find out more about the attractions on offer in Devon you can visit the Devon tourist board website: www.visitdevon.co.uk

[Chloe Duff](#)

Conference
Coordinator

[IDEC@EUDEC 2011](#)



IDEC@EUDEC 2011



Germany: New documentary film

By Margarete Hentze



In April 2010 filming began for the German documentary film *DOING NOTHING ALL DAY* at the IDEC in Israel. This phase of filming was financed by the school-start-up organisation Sudbury München eV., along with private funds and donations and copious hours of volunteer work.



Numerous individuals from the democratic-education movement were interviewed, including Yaakov Hecht, former director of the Institute for Democratic Education in Tel Aviv and co-founder of the Democratic School of Hadera, the Sappir family, co-founders of the Sudbury School of Jerusalem and Andreas Hinz, professor for inclusion at the University of Halle, Germany. Graduates, students and staff members introduced our protagonist, Mona, to their schools in Kanaf, Jerusalem and Hadera and spoke with her about the advantages and disadvantages of their schools.

In this way, we hope to create a dialog between documentary material and subjective images that inspires the viewer to action.

I would like to invite all of you to get involved by choosing a topic, such as freedom,

solidarity, responsibility, educational rights, equality, individuality, diversity, age-mixing etc., and express your views on film in 2.5 minutes or less. How you do it is completely up to you. Anything is possible.

There will be several Super8 workshops over the course of this project. Appropriate footage will be included in the documentary. All other footage shall be shown in an exhibition. Please [contact me](#) if you would like to get involved.



The education strike organised by school and university students in Munich in June 2010 provided us with powerful material for the opening of the film. Since the demands of students are rarely heard by politicians, their only alternative is to make their voices heard in public. In front of the camera, they formulate their criticism, their recommendations for change and their needs. These issues will be addressed in greater depth later in the film through interviews and discussions.

The initiative of the school and university students at the Education Camp in Munich was not limited to their criticism of the existing system. They also organised seminars and workshops in which they gave examples of educational alternatives. Many of the principles discussed here have been applied in democratic education for decades. These principles shall form the basis for the film. We hope to show the student's perspective, both in the film content and directly through the associated participation project, in which students, artists, educational activists and film-makers are invited to contribute a short Super8 film about a principle of democratic education.

Continued on next page ➤



The second phase of filming shall take place in various democratic schools in Germany. Contacts have already been made with the Kapriole Freiburg, the Bildungsschule Harzberg and the Neue Schule Hamburg.

Along with independently operated schools, we would like to investigate where and in what context pioneering teachers in state-run schools are introducing democratic structures in order to allow for self-directed learning.



Additional interviews are planned with interdisciplinary experts such as neurobiologist Gerald Hüther, educational reformist Otto Herz, educational scientist Tanja Pütz, educational researcher Wolfgang Edelstein, paediatricians and representatives of industry.

We also hope to be able to finance some shootings at the IDEC@EUDEC 2011, at Sands School and at Summerhill.

The goal of this project is to make an artistically inspiring contribution to the current debate on the educational system in Germany that provides a view of free forms of learning, thereby enriching the current debate on the possibility of democratic education. There is an ever-growing feeling among educators, even within the classical education system, that change is necessary. Therefore, we shall place special emphasis on small-scale experimentation in state schools and the successful application of open structures of learning.

We look forward to hearing your ideas and feedback. To follow the progress of this project, find more information or send us your ideas, you are invited to use the film blog:

<http://doingnothingallday.wordpress.com/>

If you have questions or additional conceptual proposals, just send an email to mhentze@eudec.org.

Financial support has come from:

EUDEC e.V. and EUDEC Deutschland
Eine Schule für Alle e.V.
Omnibus für mehr Demokratie gGmbH
Sudbury München e.V.
and several private donors.

Donations of any size are highly appreciated. If you would like to make a contribution, please use the donation account of EUDEC and write "documentary" in the reference line.

Donations in Germany are tax deductible, and the bank statement serves as a tax receipt for donations up to €100.

Bank account for donations:

GLS Gemeinschaftsbank e.G.
Account owner: EUDEC e.V.
Account no.: 1109558600
Sort code (BLZ): 43060967
BIC/Swift: GENO DE M 1 GLS
IBAN: DE43430609671109558600

Reference: documentary



For more information:

www.margaretehentze.de

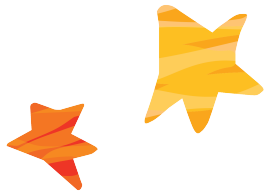


News from Italy

Upcoming Events

On **January 23** the core members of the Italian Network for Libertarian Education will meet in Bologna. A central point on the agenda is whether the time is right to form a national EUDEC chapter; other points are the organisation of a national meeting next spring and to discuss our "manifesto". There will be about 20 people from all over Italy, some of whom are involved in new school(ing) projects; others are already one step ahead with "operational" schools.

On **January 29**, the Roman working group, supported by a speech by well-known EUDEC member Francesco Codello, will hold a meeting in Rome to present the concepts of democratic education to a broad public.



Progress on Book

On this occasion I would like to thank all those that have answered—or have promised to answer—the survey questions for the Italian book on democratic education that I am co-authoring with Francesco Codello. With your collaboration, the project is slowly taking form.

The book should be published and available this spring, ready for the next national meeting on libertarian education.

We will keep you informed!



Irene Stella, founder of [MUKTI](#), a democratic school-founding group in Italy

New schools open in Berlin and Ghent

Demokratische Schule X, Berlin

By Martin Wilke

On 1 December 2010 a new democratic school opened in Berlin, Germany:

[Demokratische Schule X](#), located in Heiligensee in the northwest of Berlin, has 22 students from 5 to 16 years of age.

The school was founded by EUDEC member organisation Demokratische Bildung Berlin e.V. Two of the founders and staff members, Jochen Benz and Martin Wilke, are members of the council of [EUDEC Deutschland](#).



Sudbury School Gent, Ghent

By Maaïke Eggermont

The [Sudbury School Gent](#) opened its doors on 1 September 2010 with 10 students and 5 staff members.

It is a school for 4 to 19 year olds based on the Sudbury Valley School. The school is run democratically by the school meeting, and students decide for themselves how they will fill their day. After three months it's amazing to see how much responsibility the teenagers are taking on and how thoughtfully they deal with difficult decisions.



No curriculum, ever

By Michael Sappir

Originally posted on [Michael's Blog](#)
([German translation](#) available)

I'd like to share some thoughts about why democratic schools should not have even a little bit of curriculum or mandatory guidance. Imposing even a single mandatory class, even just a mentorship or a morning meeting, is disrespectful towards students, and signals that the school does not take self-directed learning seriously. Sometimes, motivated by fear, parents attack this notion, demanding more guidance and railroading to make sure their children get where they want them to go. Every school responds in a different way. Only a clear "no" — the typical Sudbury response — makes sense, especially considering what democratic schools are for.

People, especially parents, always ask why the school can't guide its students a little more actively. It is not that the guidance itself is a bad idea — in fact, I would say it's vital that guidance be available in the school to those who feel they need it. But forcing guidance on students, even "just a little", even just implicitly, by making some form of educational activity mandatory, is a signal of distrust. It's saying, "we trust you to decide what to do with your time, so long as we have some influence on it", or in other words, "we trust you entirely, except that we actually don't". It's not only a mixed signal, it's implicitly disrespectful, patronizing and demeaning — even if the guidance itself is presented by people who are respectful towards the students, and even if it's done in a respectful way.

Schools should strive to produce graduates who are independent, creative, know how to manage their own time, and know how to plan out their own path towards their own goals. For this, the message must be crystal clear: we trust you to make your own choices. This is not part of what a Sudbury School does — it's what the entire project is about. The opposite message, that there's a standard "right" way to do things, is already on offer at every traditional school and from almost every person who ever went to one. Any student today is exposed to that message more than enough, even if they attend a school that is different. We do not need to

do anything to integrate it in democratic schools, because the students' families and hometown(s) already do that for us, whether we like it or not. Our mission is different. As person-centered schools, our job is to trust the students entirely.

Having a curriculum is bad, and not only when it's mandatory. It is not better to "merely" encourage students to pursue some course of activity. When it is mandatory, at least everyone knows what's going on, at least it is transparent. When you don't force it but only make it clear that it is better, or that it is expected, or that it is the right thing to do, it's no less distrustful, but you're also endangering the relationship of trust between staff and students, giving students every reason to be cautious about the staff. Why trust someone with some external agenda, with some plans for what you're supposed to do? Is that the kind of person you will want to turn to when you have questions? Is that the kind of person you will turn to when you need help? When you need someone trustworthy to talk about difficult issues with? The staff at Sudbury Jerusalem are the kind of person you would turn to, and I think a big part of this is that when they think you should do something, they just say so, and you know that's just their own personal opinion. They're not there to guide you, but they do offer advice when you need it (or when they feel like it), and they can kind of be guides when that's what you need. To this day I still trust them like family. It's not that staff should be forbidden from offering guidance, it's that it should never be their job to offer unsolicited guidance in order to educate people. When that's your job, you're not someone to trust. Just look at traditional schools....

[Read more>](#)



Michael Sappir, linguistics undergrad at the University of Leipzig, a graduate and proponent of Sudbury schools and Council Chairman of EUDEC.



Learning with "Competency Grids"

By Daniel Hunziker

Democratic schools are distinguished by the fact that their students are free to learn what, when, how and with whom they choose. This means, however, that many schools come in conflict with government regulations requiring students to follow a certain curriculum and meet state-defined educational objectives. This is the case here, in Switzerland, where it is not possible to run a school without demonstrating how you are meeting state learning objectives in the form of clear documentation. As a solution, some democratic schools here have started using Competency Grids as a way to satisfy state requirements without sacrificing our principles of self-directed learning.

The idea for Competency Grids comes from the European Language Portfolio, which organises language competencies into a grid, where the various areas of competency, like speaking, reading and writing, are formulated vertically, and difficulty levels from elementary to advanced, horizontally. By assessing the current skill-levels of a student, an overview of existing competencies can be created.

Over the past several years, this Competency Grid system has been further developed by many schools, in various other subject areas, helping answer the increasing demand for a more personalised approach to the needs, interests and learning tempos of individual children. These schools are finding that, with the knowledge of where a learner

stands within a set of basic objectives, it is possible to allow learners to pursue educational objectives when and how they choose and at their own pace.

The big advantage for democratic schools is obvious: If Competency Grids are available for all students, with a transparent overview of their current skill levels, the government offices can be shown that the students are working toward state-required learning objectives.

Two EUDEC member schools in Switzerland, [imPuls Schule](#) in Wädenswil and the [Lernstatt](#) in Gerlafingen, have been working with competency grids for several years now. Our experience has been positive: Young people use the grids to help guide them in their preparations for further studies or vocational training in their profession of choice. At the same time, students can choose whether or not to work with Competency Grids and are free to follow their own interests. My experience has been that students feel empowered by these grids as self-directed learning tools and are grateful to have a basis for identifying what learning content must be achieved for attaining their career goals.

For more information on Competency Grids: www.kompetenzraster-netzwerk.com



Daniel Hunziker, staff member, [imPuls Schule](#), Switzerland



eudec european democratic
education community

EUDEC is a non-profit organisation that promotes democratic education in Europe.

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