

The Danube concerns us all

Introduction

The Danube is the second largest river in Europe after the Volga. It is 2,780 kilometres long and spans Europe from east to west. It has 120 major tributaries and many more minor ones; therefore it drains an enormous catchment area. The Danube flows through 10 countries, takes water from a further eight countries and thus connects 19 countries and 81 million people.

Great rivers like the Danube connect people and cultures. They demand exchange and debate. Further, rivers and wetland areas provide valuable services for people. The Danube and its tributaries are the lifelines of the Danube basin which must be preserved for coming generations.

The idea

One protects and values what one understands. The main concern of the Danube Box is to help people to understand the river in all its diversity and to see people as part of the ecosystem river.

The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) was established in 1998 by all the Danube states. The aim of the ICPDR is to implement the Convention on the Protection of the Danube and to support international cooperation of the Danube states.

The Danube Box was born in the context of the “Green Danube Partnership”, agreed in 2005 between The Coca-Cola Company, Coca-Cola HBC and the ICPDR. At national workshops in Serbia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia, the delegates encouraged the ICPDR to develop standardised teaching material on the Danube basin. The Danube Box is intended to support teachers throughout the Danube basin to sensitise children to the natural and cultural resources of the Danube and to raise awareness about the protection and sustainable development of this treasure. The materials are intended to be exciting and inspiring for teachers and students alike.

The teaching material

The Danube Box supports teachers in designing their teaching comprehensively and through inter-disciplinary projects. It not only contains factual and expert knowledge,

but also pictorial material, copyable worksheets, introductions to role-play, games, indoor and outdoor activities, and cultural articles (such as tales, legends and recipes). The interactive Danube journey on the CD-ROM is a motivating introduction or practical revision. Playful activities and research as well as activities inspiring enthusiasm for the beauties of nature make it possible to respond to the Danube basin with all our senses: practically, intellectually and emotionally.

The Danube Box teaching units are based on the principles, methods and teaching objectives of modern environmental teaching and education for sustainable development.

The handbook, the core of the Danube Box, consists of six chapters on the tool-box principle. One can either use one chapter on its own, or deal with several in the desired order. The activities can also be adapted to the needs of the different classes and adjusted to any teaching situation.

The individual chapters contain one to five teaching units. They consist of a brief introduction, an organisational section (giving an overview of the teaching objectives, listing the materials needed and advising on the maximum length of the activities), a more detailed description of activities (games, experiments, team work, project days in the open air), copyable worksheets and role cards each at the end of the sub-chapter, background information, “Danube articles” as additional input texts and references to the CD-ROM.

The action-based environmental education activities are largely newly developed and are based on the theme of the Danube. The game-type activities are compiled from proven and well-tested elements, some for the classroom, many for outdoors. They stimulate children to explore ecological issues that go beyond their immediate experience of nature and encourage them to analyse their personal lifestyles.

Why the whole Danube basin?

Rivers know no political borders and thus the intervention of people in the Danube basin affects all its inhabitants. So the basic principle “act together and with a sense of responsibility” is more true today than ever: the Danube basin has a common past; whether it has a sustainable future depends on the awareness of future generations.

Further information on the subject of the Danube, on the work of the ICPDR and the individual Danube countries can be found at: www.icpdr.org