

**From:** "Margaret Robertson" <M.Robertson@latrobe.edu.au>  
**Subject:** **IGU\_CGE Commission December Newsletter**  
**Date:** December 20, 2007 7:25:17 PM CST  
**To:** "Margaret Robertson" <M.Robertson@latrobe.edu.au>

---

Dear Colleagues

Please find below the December newsletter for the IGU-Commission for Geographic Education.

Best wishes for the festive season,

Margaret Robertson

(Executive Secretary)

IGU-COMMISSION FOR GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

DECEMBER 2007 NEWSLETTER

Web site: <http://igu-cge.tamu.edu/>

For IGU updates check the Home of Geography website <http://www.homeofgeography.org/>

#### CONTENTS

1. Chair's report: Lex Chalmers (Chair)
2. TUNIS 2008
3. Olympiad 2007 – update
4. Conference links
5. GISAS report
6. Publications
7. Other news from our colleagues

#### 1. CHAIR'S REPORT: LEX CHALMERS

1. Rod Gerber. Most of you will have seen the messages about the passing of Rod Gerber. At the meeting in Lucerne we heard that Rod was gravely ill, and he was very much in our thoughts and good wishes at this time. Sadly, Rod sank quite quickly and we learned from Margaret that he had died on 22 August. John Lidstone circulated a thoughtful and poignant eulogy, we received a note of condolence from José Luis Palacio-Prieto (president IGU) and the next issue of IRGEE will carry a formal tribute to this wonderful colleague. I note that he could be trusted for a thoughtful response and good advice, and he supported the chair and Commission wholeheartedly.

2. Activities in 2007. Many of you have participated in the various meetings and other activities that have been taking place in 2006 – 2007. These activities will be noted in our report to the Executive at the end of the year, and will form part of the report for the Commission 2004–2008. There have been four meetings in the last 15 months that have carried the imprint of the Commission and should be formally noted in our report.

\* The regional symposium on Changes in Geographical Education: Past Present and Future (Brisbane, August 2006). The symposium was organised by John Lidstone, and produced a 500 page proceedings volume that has been lodged at the Home of Geography. The Commission Symposium ran ahead of the Regional Conference. A three day field trip to Mackay was organised, and Joop van der Schee prepared and delivered a very successful Olympiad in association with the Commission.

\* The regional conference on Changing Geographies: Innovative Curricula (London, April 10–12, 2007). The Conference was organized by the British Sub-Committee of the CGE (Chaired by Simon Catling) and co-ordinated with HERODOT (Co-ordinator Karl Donert). It produced a 387+xvi page Proceedings volume that has been lodged at the Home of Geography. There were 85

attendees and 55 papers were presented. A Fieldtrip to the London Olympic 2012 site (led by Bob Digby) was organized for some 45 participants. Its focus was on the issues of urban regeneration and the impact of major national reconstruction. The key outcomes were: sharing a wide range of research papers on geographical education from primary school to higher and continuing education; a healthy increase in participants in the CGE regional conference from central and eastern Europe; the initiation of new contacts and networks among geography educators; and a sense of the changes within and affecting geography education and of the opportunities these provide for innovation.

\* The regional symposium on Geographical Views on Education for Sustainable Development (Lucerne, 29–31 July, 2007). The symposium was organised by Sibylle Reinfried, Yvonne Schleicher and Armin Rempfler, and produced a 250 page special edition volume that has been lodged at the Home of Geography. There were 90 attendees, and 35 papers presented. The key outcomes were discussion of what geography can contribute to education for sustainable development (ESD) by research, education, professional development and best-practice accomplishments and how new strategies concerning ESD can be implemented in schools.

At the Symposium the Lucerne Declaration on Geographical Education for Sustainable Development was discussed and proclaimed. The declaration recommends principles and practices on which effective ESD in Geographical Education should be based. The Lucerne Declaration can be seen as an attempt to reach of consensus and cooperation concerning ESD in Geographical Education among commission members and delegates from all over the world.

A field trip to the Alps of Central Switzerland (Cantons Uri and Valais) was organised, with a focus on Issues of Sustainable Development in High Mountain Areas. Fieldtrip participants gained an in depth insight into problems concerning sustainable development in a densely populated high mountain region. The issues addressed sustainable transportation, sustainable tourism, sustainable energy production, natural disaster prevention such as avalanches, rock falls and land slides, flooding, changes related to global climate change such as the thawing of the Alpine glaciers.

\* The international Forum on Regional Centres of Excellence and Education for Sustainable Development (Beijing, 15–16 August, 2007). The symposium was organised by Wang Min and produced a 309 page proceedings that will be lodged at the Home of Geography. There were about 80 attendees, and 30 papers presented. A local afternoon field trip was organised, with some colleagues taking the opportunity to visit the Great Wall at the conclusion of the formal meeting.

For information, provisional offers have been received for conferences of the new Commission; these include meetings in Moscow and Japan. I also propose a research meeting in Auckland or Rotorua (New Zealand) in late November 2008, and this will act as a follow up to the activities we organise in Tunis.

3. Lucerne Declaration and the Charter. The history of the request made at the Glasgow plenary session is well known. The Commission was asked to look at the 1992 Charter and rework it to address contemporary issues in teaching and learning Geography. This process was initiated in 2005, but we reached the point in the April meeting at the IoE (London) in April where there was clearly no universal mandate for undertaking this review. I will report this to the IGU General Assembly in Tunis, and will hope to have made a start on the request made by the British Sub-Committee for a statement on Geography's Mission and Purpose in Education for the 21st Century.

The history of the Lucerne Declaration and its importance within the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is also well known. Sibylle Reinfried accepted the role as the commissioner charged with managing the first draft of the statement, and this was available for circulation ahead of the Commission meeting in Lucerne in July 2007. Submissions were received and wide-ranging discussions took place in formal and informal meetings in Lucerne. Written feedback from meetings in Lucerne and Beijing was provided by conference delegates, and the writing collective of Sibylle, Yvonne Schleicher and Hartwich Haubrig produced the text that is now available on the Commission website. The first of the translations is already available, and seven languages (French, Italian, German, Portuguese, Korean and Chinese) should be provided by Christmas. Ahead of the Tunis Congress, the Declaration is to be promoted through all Commissions and National Committees. The aim is to use geographers internationally to promote the Declaration as widely as possible. The IGU General Assembly will ratify the Declaration after discussion and a formal vote at Tunis. Sibylle has been invited to make the formal presentation at Tunis, and José Luis Palacio-Prieto will chair the session of the plenary.

I would like to express my thanks to those involved in the activities of the last 18 months; so many people have made substantial contributions. I will draft our annual report, circulate it to members of the Steering Committee and submit it to the Executive at the end of January. Much of the detail included in this Newsletter will appear, and we will also include a financial statement and summary membership report.

In the meantime, I trust you all have a peaceful and restorative break at the end of a busy year. With best wishes,  
Lex Chalmers, Chair  
Commission on Geographical Education

## 2. TUNIS CONGRESS MEETING IN 2008

Commission members and corresponding members have received notice from the Organising Committee of the 2008 IGU Congress. For those of you who need to check the details, Ali Toumi has advised that the site is

[www.igc-tunis2008.com](http://www.igc-tunis2008.com)

Early concerns have been expressed on two fronts. The first is the cost of registration, and the risk that this may seriously affect the numbers we can expect to have for a CGE programme within the Congress. The Chair reported our concerns to both the Secretary General and President of the IGU, and argued for a registration fee of no more than 400E. The Executive will discuss the registration fee in a later December meeting (with the aim of having it reduced). They have undertaken to let us know if the Organising Committee has a change of heart.

The second matter is our ability to structure a programme within the Congress. Discussions have taken place with colleagues in the International Network for Learning and Teaching Geography, and there may be prospects of working with Herodot to co-ordinate offerings.

The structure proposed by the Organisers is (a) Tunis Special Sessions (TSS, already apparently limited to eight?), (b) Technical Sessions Thematic (TST, now numbering 66, with only TST.A.54 looking anything like the geographies of education), (c) Tunis Commissions of the IGU (TC04.12 is Geographical Education). There are also Poster opportunities and seven workshops (for which extra payment is required). The three GIS ones are French/English, the pedagogy one is in French only.

Detail for the submission of abstracts is provided; these go to the Scientific Committee. On Tuesday pm until Friday am the organisation of commission sessions is based on 90 minute blocks, with four fifteen minute oral presentations followed by 20 minutes of discussion. One option is that both Commission people and participants from the INLT and Herodot should specify presentation in the TC04.12 option, and that we ask the organisers for blocks in geographical education in the following structure:

- (a) priority for two back to back sessions on Wednesday and Thursday mornings (ie 8:00–9:30am and 9:30–11:00). This will allow sixteen papers in four sessions in total.
- (b) three sessions on Friday morning (ie 8:00–9:30am, 9:30–11:00am and 11:00am until 12:30). This will allow us twelve more papers in three sessions.
- (c) three sessions on Tuesday afternoon (ie 14:00–15:30, 15:30–17:00 and 17:00 until 18:30). This will also allow twelve further papers in three sessions.

While we could have themes for as many as ten sessions and forty papers  $\{(4+3+3) * 4\}$ , we may have some themes that occupy two sessions. When the Commission on Geographical Education discussed themes in July this year, we came up with the following:

1. Geographical education and cultural dialogues
2. Learning beyond the classroom in Geography
3. Communications technologies in geographical education
4. Best practice in geographical education
5. Geography and "sense of place"
6. Teacher education; principles and practice
7. Curricula for effective geographical education
8. Education for Sustainable development

Members of the Commission have also started to talk about a paper based (refereed) proceedings based on the sort of template used at our Lucerne meeting (up to 3000 words); Sarah has offered to work with a small editorial team. The format used for the Lucerne papers may become the standard. In the view of the meeting, a proceedings is an essential component of any Commission meeting, as attendance is often tied to presentation of a paper.

The Chair consulted the Steering Group, and then asked the Organising Committee if this format would be acceptable. In the next couple of weeks we should advertise a format for the preparation of papers that extends the requirements for abstracts advised by the Congress Organising Committee. The Commission would also welcome comment on paper based proceedings, followed by the registration of papers on the website two years after the conference.

The Chair reports on Tunis as a venue: I spent five days in Tunis in April this year, and I provide some comments below that might be helpful. I suggest that language is not a great problem; I managed with very limited French as most people had a reasonable level of English (apart from the marche central and medina). Personal safety is also no more threatened than in any urban area; we moved around extensively on foot and on the TGM (railway). Taxis are cheap, but we were bullied about fares more than once, despite what was on the meter.

Accommodation is an issue; my April 2007 preference was for a downtown hotel, and the Abu Nawas was excellent and not expensive, but it is not on offer in August 2008. The prices quoted are much more than we paid. If you are inclined to work through the dozens of internet re-sellers, you may be able to pick up a package (European out and back) flight and hotel for the same price that you will end up paying through the Congress site. My August 2008 preference would be for the hotels removed from the city (sadly), as the three star hotels are accurately rated – some of the rooms we saw were a little stale and unappealing. On the other hand the Garmmarth and La Marsa hotels were spacious, close to Le Kram, light, modern and on the beach front – check their web sites. The Organisers offer minibuses and the TGM is not far away. The Le Kram venue is impressive, and it seems from the documentation that our hosts will be providing a high level of support and activities for registrants; Le Kram is a very, very big facility.

More on field trips later, but look to walk as much of Carthage as possible, and don't miss the Bardo. I suppose the Medina is a must as well, especially if this is something you have not experienced before. Sidi Bou Said is a nice tourist trap, and I am looking for a day trip to Bizerte, and perhaps an overnigher to El Jem, Sousse and Monastir.

Lex Chalmers  
For the Steering Committee

### 3. INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHY OLYMPIAD TUNIS 2008

The next International Geography Olympiad will be held in Carthage, Tunisia, from August 7 to 12, 2008 in conjunction with the congress of the International Geographical Union. We expect many teams from all over the world.

The 2008 Olympiad will be hosted by the Tunisian Association of Geographers. Preparations are running. Any support from colleagues who want to help to make draft assignments is very welcome.

Students must be selected through a national geography competition. The official language of the Olympiad is English. Under the heading 'What is GeoOlympiad' of [www.geoolympiad.org](http://www.geoolympiad.org) you will find the statutes with a lot of information about the International Geography Olympiad.

Important information about the 2008 Olympiad like a draft programme, application forms and deadlines can be found at [www.geoolympiad.org](http://www.geoolympiad.org) under the heading 2008 Tunisia.

For questions and reactions please send an email to [j.vanderschee@ond.vu.nl](mailto:j.vanderschee@ond.vu.nl)

Merry Christmas and a happy 2008!

Joop van der Schee  
Co-chair of the IGU Task Force for the Olympiad  
Onderwijscentrum VU  
De Boelelaan 1105  
1081 HV Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
Tel. +31 20 5989213

Check the Home of Geography website for updates <http://www.homeofgeography.org/>

### 4. CONFERENCES

#### 4.1 The 31st IGC, Tunisie, 2008

For details see [http://www.agt.org.tn/Cong2008\\_fr.htm](http://www.agt.org.tn/Cong2008_fr.htm)

#### 4.2 HERODOT Conference: Future Prospects in Geography Liverpool

September 2008

(Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008). Note Our TP2 Group: Geography for the 21st century is launching the GEOCUBE at the Liverpool conference, an on-line tool promoting geography [www.herodot.net](http://www.herodot.net) anyone interested in submitting text to be included on this site should contact Maria Attard the group leader [maria.attard@um.edu.mt](mailto:maria.attard@um.edu.mt) for further details and topics....

#### 4.3 Workshop: Introduction to Geoinformation, Albena, Bugaria.

16th June 2008

### 5. GISAS REPORT

GISAS (Geographical Information Systems Applications for Schools) was a project funded by the European Commission. The GISAS project started in 2003. The co-ordinator of the project was the Department of Geography, University of Helsinki, Finland. The aim of the project was to develop ways in which geographical information systems (GIS) are applied to secondary school education. Research has largely been concentrated on making use of GIS for scientific purposes and in various social spheres,

and less emphasis has been placed on GIS research and development in education.

The GISAS project focused on water quality of local rivers in the vicinity of the partner schools in different countries. The schools were collecting, analysing and visualising local GIS data and, for the most part, testing and developing new applications of this technology in the classrooms. Teachers and students of the partner schools tested the GIS applications in their lessons and reported on the applicability of these products in education. The pilot schools were in close cooperation with the universities and with each other.

Innovative learning tools allowed the students to create their own databases or access to existing digital databases of different scale from local to European. GIS skills can support the education of active citizens, sustainable development and communication and media skills required in the information society.

<http://www.oph.fi/english/page.asp?path=447,5372,30670>

The evaluation of the project has been carried out by the active members of IGU Commission of Geographical Education.

Lea Houtsonen  
lea.houtsonen@oph.fi

## 6. PUBLICATIONS

6.1 IRGEE – our flagship journal continues into its ...year. Full details for manuscript submission are available at <http://www.multilingual-matters.net/irgee/>

6.2 Robertson, M. (Ed) (2007) Geographical perspectives on sustainable development: Networking local area partnerships with teachers and young scientists – a case study approach. Camberwell: ACER Press. 238 pages. ISBN 9780 864314383. See <http://shop.acer.edu.au/acer-shop/product/A3048BK>

Note: This book is the outcome of an IGU and IGU-CGE initiative. It contains chapter from colleagues located in 10 developing countries.

6.3 Copies of the Regional symposium on Geographical Views on Education for Sustainable Development (Lucerne, 29–31 July, 2007) Proceedings cost 20.– Euros (plus postage) and can be ordered from Prof. Yvonne Schleicher ([schleicher@ph-weingarten.de](mailto:schleicher@ph-weingarten.de)).

6.4 Research in Geographic Education: Research in Geographic Education (RGE) is currently soliciting manuscripts for upcoming issues of the journal. RGE is an international peer-reviewed journal of research published by the Gilbert M. Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education at Texas State University – San Please consult the journal's website for more information: <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~ldechano/rge/rge.htm>

6.5 The issue No. 4/2007 of the German Journal of Geographaphy Education will be published in English very soon. It includes reviewed papers of the International Geoscience Education Conference which took place in Bayreuth in September 2006. Copies can be ordered from: [stefanie.zecha@ku-eichstaett.de](mailto:stefanie.zecha@ku-eichstaett.de) The Association for Geographical Education in German translated the German Educational Standards in Geography for the Intermediate School Certificate into English. They are available on the Association's website: <http://www1.ku-eichstaett.de/hp/Englisch/index.html>

## 7 OTHER NEWS FROM OUR COLLEAGUES

7.1 Congratulations Professor Joop van der Schee: The Royal Dutch Geography Society appointed Joop van der Schee (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) for 5 years as professor for Geography in Education to promote geography teaching in primary and secondary education in the Netherlands. The location of his chair is at the Free University in Amsterdam. The main tasks of this professorship is to build a bridge between academic geography and school geography and to stimulate the development of geography teaching in primary and secondary education. At November 2th, 2007 Joop van der Schee started his professorship with a lecture about learning with GIS. In his lecture Joop stated that GIS combined with fieldwork and geographical knowledge is the way to put geography on the map and show the strength of geography for society.

7.2 CONFERENCE REPORT: Regional symposium on Geographical Views on Education for Sustainable Development (Lucerne, 29–31 July, 2007). The symposium and the follow-up field trip were organised by Sibylle Reinfried, Yvonne Schleicher and Armin Rempfler, and produced a 250 page special edition volume (Symposium Proceedings). There were 90 attendees, and 35 papers presented. The follow-up field trip to the Alps of Central Switzerland (Cantons Uri and Valais) focused on Issues of Sustainable Development in High Mountain Areas – The Example of the Swiss Alps. The Symposiums stimulated the discussion of what geography can contribute to education for sustainable development (ESD) by research, education, professional development and best-practice accomplishments and how new strategies concerning ESD can be implemented in the schools. The Symposium also helped to improve and to strengthen the international network of educators in geography all over the world. At the Symposium the Lucerne Declaration on Geographical Education for Sustainable Development was discussed and

proclaimed. The Declaration recommends principles and practices on which effective ESD in Geographical Education should be based.

The field trip provided in depth insights into problems concerning sustainable development in a densely populated high mountain region – the Swiss Alps. The issues addressed sustainable transportation, sustainable tourism, sustainable energy production, natural disaster prevention such as avalanches, rock falls and land slides, flooding, changes related to global climate change such as the thawing of the Alpine glaciers and the permafrost soils as well as the impact of global warming in tourist resort below 1600 m. The program consisted of visits to typical places enriched by expert talks focusing on specific aspects of certain problems in question.

The Declaration is available for download on the Commission's Website and on <http://www1.ku-eichstaett.de/hp/> -> Dokumente. Copies of the Symposium Proceedings cost 20.- Euros (plus postage) and can be ordered from Prof. Yvonne Schleicher ([schleicher@ph-weingarten.de](mailto:schleicher@ph-weingarten.de)).

7.3 The Association for Geographical Education in Germany published example exercises linked to the German Educational Standards or the Intermediate School Certificate. To give teachers an idea of how to work according to the standards and to reach the competencies the standards are aiming at, the Association created example exercises for classroom teaching. A brochure including these example exercises is available in German on the Association's website: <http://www1.ku-eichstaett.de/hp/>; download: Broschüre Bildungsstandards Geographie mit Aufgabenbeispielen (4. Auflage 2007).

-----  
Margaret Robertson, PhD  
Professor of Education  
Assoc. Dean Research, Faculty of Education  
La Trobe University  
Bundoora, Victoria 3086, AUSTRALIA  
Tel: +61 3 9479 5616  
Fax: +61 3 9479 3070  
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/educationalstudies/staff/robertson.htm>