

Good Water Neighbors Bosnia – Brief

In 2014 EcoPeace Middle East partnered with the Centre for Ecology and Energy (CEE) in Tuzla, Bosnia, to launch a 1 year Good Water Neighbors (GWN) pilot project in the Spreca River Basin, funded by the Bosch Foundation in Germany. The Pilot focused on the GWN education component, with teachers and youth from 4 schools on both sides of the inner divide of the country (the two cantones, 'Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina' and the 'Republic of Srpska') participating in a programme designed to raise awareness of shared water and sanitation issues and the need for joint solutions.

The Spreca River - extremely polluted today by sewage, solid waste and coal mining waste - flows through both entities, and is the focus of the environmental opportunity to bring the sides together. Stakeholders were eager to learn about the GWN project and how community involvement can raise awareness of shared water resources, shared responsibilities, and the need to work together to find solutions, despite the conflict and their differences. CEE is a strong local project partner with rich experience working with youth in many environmental projects. The organization already has access and strong connections with schools in the area.

The pilot ended this month with a final event attended by EcoPeace representatives. The event was preceded by meetings between CEE, EcoPeace, and representatives of the 4 municipalities participating in the projects, mayors and / or municipal staff, held with the aim of advancing CEE's relations with the municipalities towards the next phase of the project, which is expected to incorporate work with these stakeholders on promotion of joint sanitation solutions. CEE is currently in the process of developing a 3-year project proposal, adapting EcoPeace's model of bottom up – top down environmental peacebuilding for the social, environmental, economic and cultural characteristics of the country and basin.

