

PRESS RELEASE

In the Environmental Education Center of SAŽP Dropie, students have built a rain garden

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Students from the so called „Dolný Žitný island region, in cooperation with lecturers, created a functional rain garden in the Environmental Education Center /EEC/ of the Slovak Environment Agency (SEA) Dropie. A practical demonstration of one of the adaptation measures for drought mitigation was carried out as part of a workshop for young people. This measure represents one of the deliverables of the Living Lab Dropie project.

Practical and experiential environmental education and training of a wide target group is the main mission of EEC Dropie. The center was created by the transformation of the bearded bustard rescue station in 1992, and until 2010 visitors had the opportunity to see live bustards here.

Today, EEC Dropie is the only residential center of SEA and, thanks to the project, it will be turned into a living laboratory.

„In cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment, it was possible to set up an ambitious and lively concept for the further development of the EEC Dropie by transforming it into a model center for climate change. A very important part of the project is also the support of a systematic approach to environmental education and training, the integration of practical examples of measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Within the project, we count on cooperation with schools, kindergartens, universities and municipalities," said Michal Maco, general director of SAŽP. The significance of the project will go beyond the borders of the region, the workshop for young people was able to bring together experts from various fields.

„Blue and green solutions" for the climate are being talked about more and more often. Helping the climate basically consists of two simple things: returning water and greenery to the landscape so that they are interconnected. Among the simplest and at the same time the most beautiful solutions are

rain gardens, which are actually man-made wetlands, planted with ornamental and useful plants, into which water is supplied from the roof drain." stated Mr. Szabó, lecturer of Sosna o.z.

A rain garden is a very simple, natural and effective so-called "bioretention system", which works perfectly in a private or school garden, as well as in public spaces. It is a purposefully created hollow, designed to collect rainwater from solid surfaces: roofs, sidewalks, parking lots, etc. By slowing down the runoff, the water soaks into the subsoil where it had fallen and there is no unnecessary drainage of the landscape and amplification of the effects of drought. A properly designed rain garden does not create conditions for stagnant water and mosquito breeding. By absorbing and evaporating water, it can reduce the summer heat by up to 2°C, increase air humidity and reduce the amount of allergens in the air, and at the same time it creates an island of life and shelter for many animals. Thanks to soaking, the water returns to the small water cycle.

During the workshop on building a rain garden, the students most positively perceived the fact that education was connected with practical activity. Such experiential learning in climate change adaptation measures is one of the most effective forms of learning. "Climate change is already happening. It is time to change our attitudes towards the environment. Although its reach is global, the solutions are in the hands of us - individuals. It is our responsibility to teach the young generation practical skills, thanks to which they can start changes in their families, schools and communities," concludes Katarína Vajliková, head of EEC Dropie.

Project "Climate change and environment education center in Dropie supported for additional demonstration measures and educational programs"

The Climate change and environment education centre (Living Lab) in Dropie benefits from a € 1 200 000 grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants and Norway Grants.

The project has been co-financed from the State Budget of the Slovak Republic in the amount of 180 000 €.

The aim of the project is to create a complex educational centre that shall ensure the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills needed to promote and implement climate mitigation and adaptation measures and community outreach in action. One of the most important missions of Living Lab shall be filling the gap of providing the relevant, digestible information, knowledge and skills to negotiate, plan and implement necessary mitigation and adaptation measures for relevant stakeholders on municipal level.

If you want to know more about programmes and projects financed by the EEA and Norway Grants in Slovakia, visit www.eegrants.sk or www.norwaygrants.sk .