

## Water—What children think

EcoAnimation is one of only six UK projects supported by the EU's new LIFE+ programme (2007-2013), the European fund for the environment.

The project is co-funded by the LIFE+ Information and Communication strand which aims to disseminate information and raise the profile of environmental issues.

118 projects proposals were received by the European Commission under this strand from organizations across Europe, 11 European projects were funded in total.

<http://ec.europa.eu/life>



### Get in touch..

We are interested in hearing from all kinds of organizations with an interest in EcoAnimation. In particular broadcasters, schools and educators.

Please send through your ideas, thoughts and expressions of interest to [sian@bs-europa.eu](mailto:sian@bs-europa.eu)

We also encourage you to forward our Eco-Alerts to your colleagues and contacts .

Equally if you prefer not to receive future Eco-Alerts, please let us know.

Back in March 2009 in our first edition of Eco-Alert we introduced you to EcoAnimation, an exciting new European animation project that will co-produce a strand of an animation series for children on water conservation. This co-production is the first of its kind in Europe and is based upon the research and support of independent international experts and feedback from focus groups of children in 5 European countries.

Since then our team has been working hard to gather the views of children from Belgium, Bulgaria, Ireland, Italy and Poland on their animation preferences and of course the all important issue of water. We gathered the views of focus groups of 484 7 and 8 year olds in total. Here are some highlights from our evaluation report:

#### *Perceptions of water as a natural resource*

- Most of children surveyed understand that water is something natural however one third of the children thought that water was man made
- 98% of the children understood that water is part of a big ecosystem that includes all living creatures - human beings, animals and plants -and that we all need water to live
- That said, many children (77%) did not know the extent of which water is needed and used in our daily lives (e.g. for industrial purposes, agriculture), etc...

#### *Awareness of their own use of water*

- The majority of children think that they are responsible water consumers and are under the impression that they use as much water as they need..
- Most of children are aware that some little actions (e.g. turning the tap off when they apply soap) can help to save water, although whether they do this or not is not clear..
- Less than half of the children believe that water pollution affects humans and only a handful were aware of the effect of water pollution on other living creatures

These and other results have now been used (along with the input of our experts from WWF) to come up with concepts and story lines for the water conservation strand of our exciting new animation series My Friend Boo. More about this on the next page...



### Key Messages

EcoAnimation is very fortunate to be working with leading international conservation experts WWF—The World Wide Fund for Nature, to help ensure that the story lines of our water conservation strand are on message and scientifically sound. Our animators have worked their magic with their help to develop stories and concepts that are educational but a lot of fun too! Here is a summary of their key messages:

- We and many plants and animals depend on water for our survival. We need to take care of this finite resource and use it better in our daily lives
- Water pollution can damage the natural environment and have a negative impact on health. We can help stop this in many different ways.
- We need to use water efficiently, both at home and in our environment (e.g. In agriculture).
- We cannot make water. We need give space back to rivers, protect and restore large areas of wetland and floodplains and ensure that enough water is left in the natural environment so nature can perform its magic..

## Introducing the Water Conservation Strand of My Friend Boo and the Magical Carousel

Over the past 3 months our animation team have been working with some of the best in the business to develop the water conservation strand for 'My Friend Boo'.

The show has been produced by Welsh independent producer Griffilms, characters were created by Curtis Jobling, who has worked on kids series such as Bob The Builder™ and Frankenstein's Cat. The series was written by British comics writer, Ian Carney, who also writes for children's cartoon series Bob the Builder™, the Hoobs and Emmy –winning series The Cramp Twins.



### About the Series

Meet eight year old Ben, his boisterous little sister Lucy and Ben's best friend Jaq. Three regular kids who one day bring to life a magical little toy called Boo and discover a gateway to a whole world of adventure hidden away in their attic....

Boo is a fast-talking adventurer with incredible magical powers. He's kind, funny, smart, a little bit mysterious and...he's also a toy dog who comes to life!

Together with his magical carousel Boo takes the children on extraordinary journeys and totally amazing adventures that help the three young explorers to learn lessons about some important issues whilst of course having lots of fun!

My Friend Boo is a fast-paced animated adventure-comedy series. The aim of the series is to make younger audiences aware that they can make a difference to the world and to give them the motivation to become responsible citizens by changing their habits and encouraging their families and friends to do the same.

### About the Water Conservation Strand

Each episode in our water conservation strand will take our group of friends on a new and totally amazing adventure to magical places and far away worlds, helping them to understand some of today's most important conservation issues ...

The kids meet a rather talkative vole called Victoria whose riverbank home has been abandoned by animals and humans because a local factory isn't taking care of its waste. They travel to the weird and wonderful planet Klexus, where inhabitants have drained the local lake to water their fruit trees. And they take a ride down a river bank to have a look at the "bigger picture" and see the negatives effects that farming and dam-building can have on local wildlife.

The concept, story lines and scripts now finalized, the series will be ready for broadcast in April 2010.

### Hot off the Press

Talks have already begun with European broadcasters who are interested in adding the series to their catalogue of children's programmes for 2010 and 2011. We have been speaking to broadcasters across Europe for example Minimax, the leading regional kids channel in Central and Eastern Europe and broadcasters including British commercial free-to-air broadcaster ITV and TV network Nickelodeon have all expressed interest in the project.

### More Boo?

The EcoAnimation project is part of a wider public policy campaign to help educate European children about some of the most important global issues of today.

The project along with two others, have co-produced the My Friend Boo series, all under the patronage of the European Commission. The result is 3 fantastic strands of the series on Water Conservation, Energy and Healthy lifestyles which will be broadcast on screens across Europe from 2010.

This is a totally new approach to public policy communication and one that we believe will help to modernize future communications to children and their families on even more important issues, inspiring them to engage and to act..

We are working on a number of new concepts for animation and the use of new media to communicate on a range of issues including immigration, entrepreneurship, and sexual education and addiction.

See [www.animate-eu.com](http://www.animate-eu.com) for more information and contact [lugi@bs-europa.eu](mailto:lugi@bs-europa.eu) for more inspiring ideas..

The views expressed in Eco-Alert are purely the authors' own and do not reflect the views of the European Commission

## Find out more...

More details about EcoAnimation can be found on [www.animate-eu.com/eco](http://www.animate-eu.com/eco)

See how the series develops on [www.myfriendboo.com](http://www.myfriendboo.com)

Follow our tweets on <http://twitter.com/animateEU>

Contact Siân Hughes - [sian@bs-europa.eu](mailto:sian@bs-europa.eu)