



WATER IS LIFE

By Nicole Novoa Castañeda (undergraduate FIGRI student)

How do you know we are making a difference in the life of the planet? There are many examples of how contributing to saving the planet's water will help vulnerable areas like Africa or deserts, which don't have this resource.

That's why I support the idea of "International World Water Day", because it is an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. And there are more initiatives organized by various people, who have the intention of helping the planet: more and more, people are thinking about the future of the world.

All of these initiatives have compelling reasons because water is essential for the lives of everyone. Furthermore, and contrary to the past, our newly developed society has become indifferent to this miracle of life. Our natural heritage (rivers, seas and oceans) has been exploited, mistreated and contaminated.

You just need to open your eyes and see the planet suffering. That's the moment when you will begin to work with the effort of all the people who are worried about this situation.

Let's help!!!



Welcome to the eighth issue of Ink, the Externado University's English magazine.

This time, we have a very special issue. In order to celebrate the anniversaries of the Externado and the FIGRI faculty, we've made this a special theme issue on the subject of water, forests and the environment generally. We hope that you enjoy the contents of this magazine. Please remember that contributions for the next Ink are welcome.

Enjoy!
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The idea of Ink is to display pieces of writing, in English, by members of the Externado community. As the idea is to maintain authors' originality as far as possible, you may find some minor mistakes in the articles.

the Power of Youth in a Responsible Way With the Environment



An environmental event in the University

By Vanessa Licht (undergraduate FIGRI student)

This special event on the 18th of February 2010 was about an NGO that works in Chocó, trying to protect the rainforest. The NGO's goals are to reduce carbon emissions and to aid reforestation.

The organisation has chosen to work in Chocó because it is a biodiversity hotspot which has 833 species of birds, 180 species of mammals and 430 species of amphibians.

It helps about 2,000 families by teaching them how to create incomes, for example by planting a special herb that is in high demand in the USA.

Unfortunately, there are some companies that represent a stumbling block for the NGO. However, the organisation is determined to achieve its objectives:



- Defending people's territory
- Recognising people's rights
- Improving governance
- Allowing national and international support
- Encouraging investment in infrastructure
- Increasing production

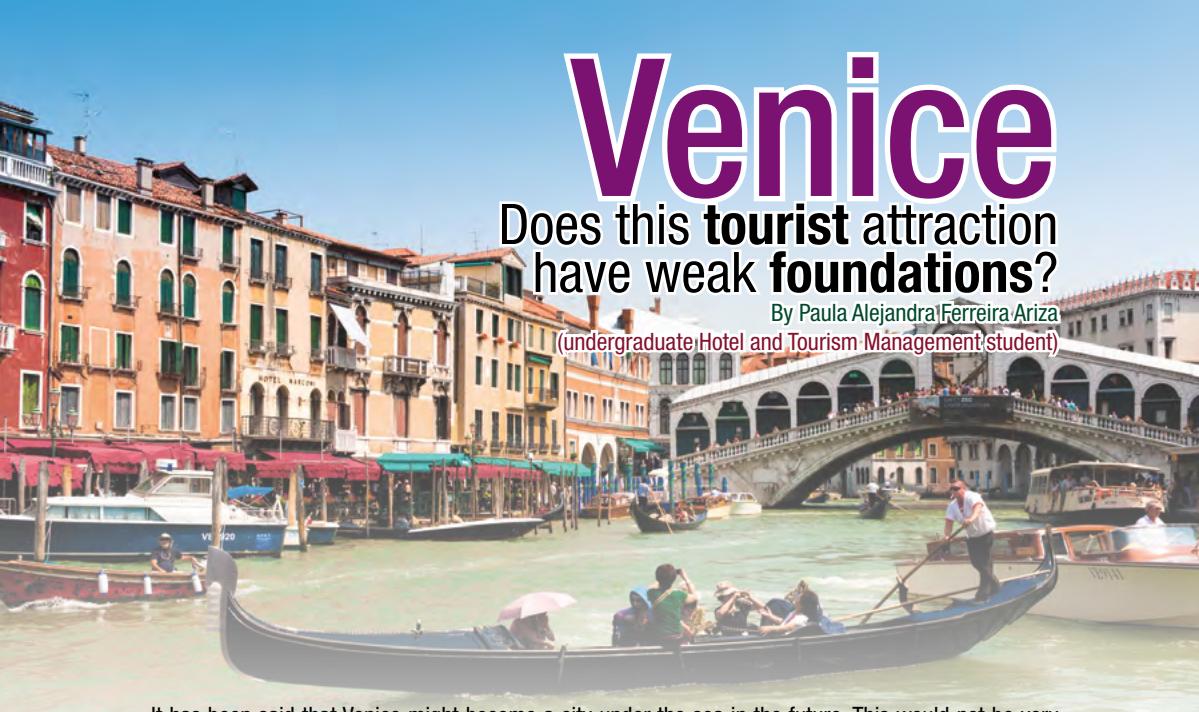
By Lizeth Prieto Florez
(undergraduate Accountancy student)

Nowadays, the world is facing global warming as a consequence of the human race's development. Everybody says that perhaps in less than 50 years, the earth we know won't have enough resources to supply humanity. People are waiting for a miracle, but no one does anything about it. We should stop thinking and talking; "More acting, less speaking".

The new generations are in charge of the human race's future, because if adults don't do anything, then WE have to do something NOW. Plant for the Planet is an incredible organization that was founded by a 13 year old German child called Félix Finkbeiner who is promoting the reforestation of almost a billion trees around the world. This organization is followed by a thousand children and young people who are tired of adults that just talk and talk. So the objective is to plant trees to decrease CO₂ emissions and be responsible with the environment.

"STOP TALKING, START PLANTING!" If you want to be part of this project or know more about it, go to www.plant-for-the-planet.org to help make a real change. Do those little everyday things, such as recycling, and talk to your friends, family and teachers about how to make the world a better and cleaner place, because those little everyday things can make a huge difference in the big picture.

Remember, 2011 is the international year of forests.



Venice

Does this tourist attraction have weak foundations?

By Paula Alejandra Ferreira Ariza
(undergraduate Hotel and Tourism Management student)

It has been said that Venice might become a city under the sea in the future. This would not be very good for a city which was a great commercial centre and has been an inspiration for singers, painters and writers. For example there is "The Merchant of Venice" by William Shakespeare.

The square of San Marcos joins some monuments and special places for the city, such as the 'Campanile', where people can have a panoramic view of the city, the 'Piazzetta' which gives access to the canal and others like the Basilica of San Marcos and the clock tower next to it.

The fact that the Italian city is a key point for trade means that factories have polluted the Lagoon of Venice. This is very different from the past, when it was so important to take care of it that whoever damaged it would have their eye removed and their hand would be amputated as a punishment.

According to studies, the salty water filters into the cracks of the walls and after a time, the salt crumbles the rock. Added to this, the islands on which Venice was built are made of mud and also, it is at sea level and in the summer the tide rises twice a day.

Chain C Mei and Andrea Rinaldo, who are hydraulic professors, set out with the idea to build autonomous doors along the canal that would raise and would stop the tide flow. The hatches move with compressed air and they are fixed at the bottom of the Lagoon. When tides are foreseen, the compressed air will expel the water out of the hatches and will raise them; that will create a wall with independent segments capable of controlling a tide of up to 3 meters.

It is a project that is still being debated. However, it might save Venice for approximately 100 years, which is time that could be used to move industry.

This city is definitely charming, and its unusualness makes it highly desired by tourists. As an administrator of tourism and hotel companies, I can contribute to warning tourists about the situation but as a promoter of sustainable tourism I can give guidelines for the opportune use of it and probably help to remove this threat.



Discover, Donate and Save

By Laura Vargas Crespo (undergraduate Accountancy student)

Global Warming is an everyday issue talked about in society; however, the world's population is not fully aware of the existing problems that animals are facing.

Remarkable channels like National Geographic and Discovery have created incredible documentaries about animals and nature in recent years, in order to generate environmental awareness around the world and show how many species are becoming extinct.

But how are these different from the documentaries made before? This project has been created to collect funds, so that it would be able to put together an organization that protects animals' lives.

If you're interested in animals, and how to make a difference facing this daily issue on our planet, you can go to

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ7SvK7w1xA>

and watch how we are losing spectacular species, and just by watching this video you can make a big change.

Run away from the city escape to the forest

By Juan David León Méndez (undergraduate FiGRI student)
& Jeisson Marin (undergraduate Business Administration student)

Sometimes, life in the city can become really stressful. People tend to dismiss stress, and they suffer the consequences of doing so.

Consider going out for a breath of fresh air. If you live in Bogotá, take a day to visit La Calera, a beautiful town located on the top of the hills that overlook the city. Furthermore, the forests that surround the little town are stunning; there you can find natural pine forests. Their magnificent scent fills the air, and their branches fall gently to the soil, which gets covered by the soft and aromatic branches.

Take time to fill your lungs with such pure air; your body and your mind will thank you. As you do this, you'll feel how the stress fades away and the quiet of nature calms your soul.

The Other Side of the Coin

By Daniel Mauricio Ruiz Morales
(undergraduate FiGRI student)

Imagine for a moment that you are a rabbit. When you are growing up, you have got it all. You are with your family and you're blissful. But, for a strange reason, you are taken to a laboratory. You don't know anything. You don't know anybody. Although you want to be free like you were on the farm, you can't be, because you are in a small cage and there are many people watching you. Suddenly, a man with a white coat takes you and injects you with a white liquid. Immediately, your eyesight becomes fuzzy and you can't breathe. After a few minutes, you are dead.

This story happens every day, in almost every country. This is because there are people who experiment on animals with beauty products. For example, some perfumes, shampoos, hair dyes and creams are experimented on animals. They are killed for a big factory. However, that isn't the biggest problem; the thing is that people don't think about this or think that it isn't their problem. Despite this, it's unfair that innocent animals are used in these experiments.

It's time that we become aware of this, and look carefully at the products that we use every day, because maybe they use animals in their research process. For that reason, you have to look on the web or in newspapers about what is happening in the world. You shouldn't use these products just because they're healthy for your body; you have to look at the other side of the coin.



Our future... Our reality...



By Yerald Felipe Ortega Ramírez
(undergraduate FIGRI student)

Today I woke up without hope... again. The days are black and desolate; it seems like yesterday when my grandmother told me stories about her past, what the world was like before the age of robots, and how she could enjoy the bright colors and great environment... Which are now gone.

Grandmother spoke of "trees"... and said they grew on the land. That's crazy! I never dreamed that things could grow in the ground; now everything is cement. The government has forbidden us from talking about those green times, so many don't know about our past, as if to hide something terrible committed by man.

I've been investigating, but I only found empty pages and testimonies of the few who knew and lived at the time of the water. I still cannot believe that the liquid was clear and abundant and you could take it, could use it for many things, and people used it without thinking; it's so vital now.

Countries generate wars for a few liters of water, so it's essential. Nations have decided to sacrifice themselves for the last territories even with this valuable item. I just heard some news that talk about bombings and scientists who have failed in their attempts to create alternative sources of life. But time is running out.

Gone are those ideas about traveling to other planets in search of water and life; we recently discovered that one of them was inhabited by another race that one day left their world before they disappeared completely. Could it be that history is repeating itself? Why make the same mistakes?

This was how I got into the basement of my house, and I was there for hours thinking about how to improve what others have failed to do. So I found a book full of dust and something old; this was a photo album with the name "Ecology". Perhaps it was the striking photos, the colors of the places so vivid and fresh. I didn't understand why they weren't gray like today; they were green and beautiful, big and spectacular. These photos were like a stream, one that allowed me to discover the reason why life on my world would never be the same again. The cause of so much misery had made sense at last: the hand of man.

After the beautiful photographs, notes were written in a very strange handwriting; I could barely understand what they said. But there was a phrase, the most powerful of all: "What was once God... His own work destroyed... The man killed on Earth condemned to an eternity of tireless struggle".

Everything made more sense; man had destroyed the ecosystem, guided by the ambitions of power and money. It was political chaos that led to inevitable disaster. Yesterday I dreamed of a world like before, where we'd not have to wear oxygen mask to walk in the street, not lock ourselves away half the day for fear of this terrible phenomenon, the enemy of us all: the sunlight. Now it just burns and kills if we are exposed to it for too long.

I cannot understand, and I cannot explain it. Why did past generations let the world end? Why didn't they do something about it? Why didn't they think about their children, grandchildren and descendants? Where were the "powerful people" helping us to avoid this future so black? Where were the "enlightened people" to create solutions to the dilemma?

Global warming - pollution from all sources - mistakes weigh on our future and remind us of the power of nature. Gold? Dollars? Luxuries? They're not important now, because all that matters is to have a few drops of water each month to survive. I'd give anything to return to the past, and understand how people lived in that golden age where water wasn't a privilege but was wasted. When I finished looking at the album, I found a note saying "I hope you read this; the world has found a way out of suffering because famine is coming, all because of chronic diseases when we don't care what we have in 2050"

This story could become a reality unless we change our habits and ways of behaving with the environment. We need to realize the importance of preserving our species and implement measures for taking care of water sources. In Colombia, thankfully we can enjoy diverse flora and fauna, and perhaps in the near future we can benefit from our resources. However, before we think about the benefits, like everyone else does, we must think about not ending up in a gray world, without color, where water is an unattainable privilege. If we don't change the way we think, to reason, to contemplate our situation, the consequences will be tragic.

Have you ever imagined a world without water?

Is Water Cheap?



By Andrés Felipe Gómez
(undergraduate Business Administration student)

Are we lucky because we live in Colombia? I would say that we are, but it probably won't be forever, and it depends on how we take care of the environment and how we use natural resources like water.

From my experience and what I've seen, I can tell you that in other countries water is overpriced, because they're aware of the current situation. And even if you don't believe it, a little bottle of water is often more expensive than a can of coke in these places. If you go to a restaurant in London, you can expect to pay about £15 for a litre of water. But if you ask for some spirits, you can get about 3 cocktails for the same £15.

So, anytime that you buy a bottle of water, think about the cost of it, and not just the money in your pocket. It's important to think about the cost for the environment.

By Angélica Pinto (undergraduate FIGRI student),
Angie Moreno (undergraduate FIGRI student)
& Romain Guitet (undergraduate FIGRI student)

Are you aware that water and life are strongly related? If water disappeared, life on earth wouldn't be possible anymore. Indeed, the water cycle is the basis of every living organism. That's why our water consumption is at stake in our daily lives to preserve this fundamental resource.

Tips to save water at home:

When you brush your teeth, think about switching off the water.
Always prefer a shower rather than taking a bath.
Try to stay in the shower for less than 10 minutes.
Make sure the tap is completely turned off.

How can we save water at home?



Are You Drinking Enough Water?

By Johana Novoa, Giselle Cala & Mónica Bautista (undergraduate FIGRI students)

Water is a very important element in our lives and makes up 70% of our bodies.

If you don't drink water you will feel tired and you won't be able to do the activities you like doing. You can't work for a long time, you can't go to the gym and if you have children, you can't play with them.

For this reason, we should drink enough water to do all the activities in the day. First of all, we have to know that our bodies need ten glasses or two litres of water each day, because this contributes to being healthier. Also, if you like drinking coffee or dark drinks like Coca Cola or black tea, maybe you will need more water in your organism because this type of drink dehydrates your body and you will probably lose energy.

Another benefit of water is that it makes you look beautiful, because your skin becomes clearer and softer. You can see that if you drink ten glasses of water a day for ten days, you will feel another kind of energy in your life and you will probably feel different and you will see that people will see you in a different way.

Finally, if you drink as much water as your body needs, you can do your daily activities without problems, and you will feel and look better.



By Daniel Felipe Ramírez Benavides
(undergraduate FIGRI student)

What a precious liquid water is!
Water is all around us,
It is in the forest, it is in the mountains,
It is in the ground, it is in the sky,
It is deep inside our hearts,
It is essential to live, to breathe, to eat,
It's the most valuable thing in life.
What would life be without it?
Life, simply, couldn't be.



Water

The FIGRI English Area has its own website! You can find a variety of different things on the site, such as events and notices, exercises to improve your English, and even teacher profiles, so it's a really good idea to be familiar with this new tool that's been made especially for you!

Go to www.uexternado.edu.co/englishlink and have a look around!