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Photo Fabio Cito

# **The Meadows and Wood-pastures Project:**

## **Letter to a Butterfly**

Maria Huhmarniemi,

Hugo Peña Lagos and

Kaisa J. Raatikainen

## Dear butterfly,

In ISEAS 2019, we created an art-based environmental education project, where local 5th graders from Svartå school took part in. Our topic was meadows and wood-pastures and the threatened biodiversity dependent on these habitats. We walked a lot in the idyllic rural landscape of Mustio and discussed about our project's topic and its aims. Surrounded by nature, we saw it in many different lights, from a scorching summer sun to the duskiness of the night.

On the first day of the intervention week we came to the countryside school, and met the pupils. We came all way from Lapland, Berlin and Jyväskylä. On the first day, we learned about various kinds of flower meadows and the biodiverse agricultural ecosystems in the Finnish countryside.



Next day, we went to the Bryggars farm and met cows and horses. We observed flower seeds: we saw different ways for seeds to travel. We understood, that for you, butterfly, the flowers are important. We also painted pictures of the seeds, and had fun while playing on the field with bales.

In the middle of the week we went to an abandoned meadow. Many flowers had blossomed there this summer - maybe you had been there too. It is a kind of nature that is under a threat to disappear. We heard about loss of diversity. We also saw a caterpillar that will become a moth later. Maybe it was your cousin?

We learned how to move in a sensitive way on the stony ground of the

**A better future; a world where diversity is appreciated and humans would not drive other species into extinction.**



Photo Fabio Cito

meadow. Then, we closed our eyes, and listened the nature around us. We felt connected to nature while lying on our backs against the rocky surface of the calcareous meadow, listening to the sounds around us and watching the sway of grass in the wind. We felt joy, affection, and sensitiveness. There was peaceful energy in the interaction among our team, the school kids, and the participants of the ISEAS symposium.

During ISEAS, we were first playing joyfully, but then we also learnt sensitivity: to be quiet together, to

sense by our hands. We felt joy. We felt more connected to the place and each other. We also learnt to trust each other. We felt the stone, different kinds of sensations with plants, and fragility of the nature.

We learnt that we humans are connected with nature and that we interact. The connection between people and nature has to be built, it is not something that just emerges by itself. A person can be so detached from nature that s/he forgets the existence of nature. In that case nature is left meaningless. Relationship to



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nature is not built solely on knowledge. It is built also through doing, experiencing, sensing. Being open.

We also learned that biodiversity is important and it has to be cared for. Humans can do good things for nature. We can spread meadow plant seeds and take care of meadows; let the grass grow wild and flowers to blossom and shed seed.

In the end of ISEAS, we thought what kinds of gifts we would like to give to nature. Our gifts were:

- Respect

- To be active — to act — to support biodiversity of nature.

- A better future; a world where diversity is appreciated and humans would not drive other species into extinction.

During the intervention, we crafted crowns that had dry plants and seeds on them. These crowns are symbols for human power: we have the power to care for nature. In our final intervention, we placed the crowns on the ground of the school yard, and planted flower seeds there. For you and the other butterflies to have a space to live in.

