

— Recycle —



Loop project - National research
INTERVIEWS: Entry # 41



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Konstantinos Perikleous

completed his studies in the UK and Ireland where he obtained his BSc Environmental Sciences degree and an MSC in Biodiversity and Conservation respectively. He is a full-time education and research officer at the Cyprus Environmental Studies Centre (CESC), of the Terra Cypria Foundation. He is responsible for developing and leading courses in the fields of Ecology, Geography and Sustainable Development.

Konstantinos also takes part in ecological and monitoring research activities. He has worked in the national monitoring scheme of Cyprus rivers, by providing services on sampling benthic invertebrates. He is the project manager for a project that monitors reptiles in the national park of Akamas in an effort to enhance effective conservation actions in the region. He also participates in the LifeWithVultures project in an effort to increase awareness about the dangers of poison baits in Cyprus, how important the vultures are for Cyprus ecosystem and making conservation efforts to increase their population numbers.

WHAT recycling activities do you undertake on a regular basis?

Terra Cypria – the Cyprus Conservation Foundation is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that was officially established in 1992 as a charitable, non-profit organisation.

That means that a great deal of work done, research conducted and information given by our group of expert scientist depends, for a great part, on private donations, financial support and non-governmental funding. All the above, along with any other type of public support, are vital for the continuation of our projects.

The overall aim of this foundation is to promote environmental awareness and sustainability through pressure and environmental education, as well as through programmes that promote conservation, environmental protection and research.



Recycle team. Authorized by D.Psarros, E.Tzizis, A.Christou

In our workplace, in the offices in Limassol as well as in the Cyprus Center for Environmental Studies in the abandoned school of the village of Kritou Terra in Paphos, we utilize many recycling actions. Initially, we use a system to separate materials such as paper, glass and plastic.



Nowadays the concept of recycling is more relevant than ever and we all need to realize how important it is in the process to protect the environment. The main purpose of recycling is to reduce the damage caused to the health of all living organisms from the reckless and unorganized dumping of hazardous waste. Recycling is not an ephemeral trend of the time, but the obligation of every civilized society and every citizen who respects and values themselves and aims to improve their quality of life.

Furthermore, on a daily basis we proceed to compost the edibles that we no longer need. Compost is a biological substance that results from the composting process and really transforms the soil of the garden or field, giving extra nutrients and flavor to the fruits and vegetables we collect. Composting is at the same time a highly environmentally friendly process with excellent results in terms of plant nutrition, offering significant money savings.



It is a process in which organic waste such as leaves, grass, twigs, skins and other food residues (for examples eggshells) that may be present in our kitchen and garden, are converted through various processes and with the help of soil microorganisms in a nutrient-rich substance called compost.



It is very important that we ourselves set an example for whoever supports and follows us and prove, with our examples and actions, that we actively support the goals we have set as an organization.



HOW DID YOU INTEGRATE

knowledge or technological processes to encourage a better circularity of your work?

One of our objectives is to make tomorrow's citizens environmentally aware, we specifically aim for students of primary, secondary and tertiary education, so that they can deal responsibly with the environment and manage its natural resources for the future as well.

They will be the decision makers of tomorrow. The Centre for Environmental Studies has been in full operation since 1995, offering courses to nurseries, primary schools and Greek and anglophone secondary schools as well as higher education institutions from Cyprus and abroad. The essential part of the courses provided is field work, through which students learn via active involvement. They learn how to explore, collect and interpret environmental data and conduct their own research, in different ecosystem types of Cyprus.



Recycle team. Authorized by D.Psarros, E.Tzizis, A.Christou

One of the main tools used by participants is maps. Naturally, we needed enough paper and ink to print these maps. Of course, the maps were printed on one side of the paper and this allowed us to use the other side for other occasions. We then recycled these maps.



Snapshot from school activities with Terra Cypria, <https://www.facebook.com/terracypria/photos/>

We do the same for every piece of paper we use in our workplace. In order to avoid and prevent this phenomenon in general, however, we used other technological means.

After having converted the maps into an electronic form with the use of computers, we bought tablets where we uploaded these maps. Therefore, our students use these devices for their hiking and exploring activities.

Consequently, through the idea of recycling, we moved on to reuse and then to reduction, thus going through all the stages of the circular economy.

The idea of sustainability and circular economy permeates our every activity and it is the goal of the Terra Cypria Foundation at all levels.

Knowledge and technological processes are integrated in our daily routine in every aspect even if we mostly work outside in nature.

In addition, we tried to persuade large municipalities and communities to acquire the appropriate technological means to motivate citizens for recycling.



Earthday Awareness campaign <https://www.facebook.com/terracypria/photos/>

For example, in Ayia Napa there are machines where you put plastic bottles and get money in return. Refunds are a good incentive for recycling.

At the same time, we are trying to promote other technological means such as the Green Points where materials are divided into many species.

Unfortunately, we do not have many such points in Cyprus, although their contribution to the recycling sector is considered very important and it is something worth doing.





WHAT INNOVATIVE FUTURE

projects or objectives does it arise in relation to recycling and the potential that this has in its economic activity?

Through the procedures I have already described to you, as it is clear, the cost of sourcing materials such as paper or printer ink has been significantly reduced. Apart from that, through composting, we create fertilizer, we give it to the producers of the village who use it, they produce products from which they offer to us as well.

This also strengthens farmers who do not buy fertilizer and thus earn more. By offering the free fertilizer to the producers we have their products which they bring us, as a reward. So, the positives of the circular economy are obvious to everyone.



Snapshot of interview. Authorized by D.Psarros, E.Tzizis, A.Christou

Moreover, we are planning more and new projects. As another objective of the Terra Cypria Foundation is the implementation of programmes that contribute to the increase of knowledge about and the preservation and protection of the environment. Through our actions we aim to protect natural and semi-natural areas, and their biodiversity. We also promote sustainable agricultural practices, with the aim of a better future for both the present and future generations.

We aim for action to improve the urban environment, such as the promotion of sustainable urban mobility and the establishment and protection of existing green spaces and the minimization of urban sprawl.

Thus, we are now promoting in a new programme called “Generation KLIMACT” which is the first comprehensive training program and mobilization of young people for climate action in Cyprus. We recognise that education and increasing the awareness of the general public about the importance and value of the environment is particularly important.



Snapshot from educational activities with Cyprus Environmental Studies Center

We believe that everyone needs to participate actively to address and solve the environmental problems of our country and of the entire world. Through our continued presence in the printed and electronic media we keep our fellow citizens in touch with our activities and the latest environmental news, as well as that we suggest what they can do to support the protection of the environment.

Recycling is the first action widely accepted by many people. It is just one step for circularity and sustainability. We are working and acting for a sustainable Cyprus.

In this context, we promote active citizenship participation in decision-making, we participate in Parliamentary Committee meetings and in the Environmental Impact Assessment Committees, so further representing civil society.

We promote sustainability, both nationally and at a European level, with the aim of harmonizing the coexistence of society, the environment and the economy. We also promote transparency and we are working to promote and implement the Aarhus Convention.



At the same time, we are working on policy-making on related issues such as the promotion of Sustainable Tourism, Circular Economy, the implementation of Standardization, etc. Finally, we participate in various programs with the primary objective of achieving of our strategic goals.

RECYCLE

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is the so-called “circular economy”?

A	B	C
8%	6%	16%

2. Do you believe that a more sustainable economic system can be equally productive than the current one?

A	B	C
10%	11%	9%

3. Which of these consumer choices have you decided to implement in the last 10 years to protect the environment?

A	B	C
2%	17%	11%

4. How will the so-called “circular economy” affect the job market?

A	B	C
1%	21%	8%

5. In your work, how many strategic choices related to sustainability have been made in the last 10 years?

A	B	C
11%	10%	9%

6. Which of these 4 “Rs” is more important to ensure a better future for humanity?

A	B	C	D
3%	6%	15%	6%

7. Which of these 4 “Rs” is most present in your family’s daily life?

A	B	C	D
2%	5%	20%	3%

8. In your opinion, what link is there between technology and the “circular economy”?

A	B	C
21%	7%	2%

9. Do you think we will be able to change the way we consume so as not to affect the environment and its limited resources?

A	B	C
2%	22%	6%

10. Are you familiar with the UN 2030 Agenda or have you ever heard of SDGs?

A	B	C
18%	3%	9%

QUESTIONNAIRE

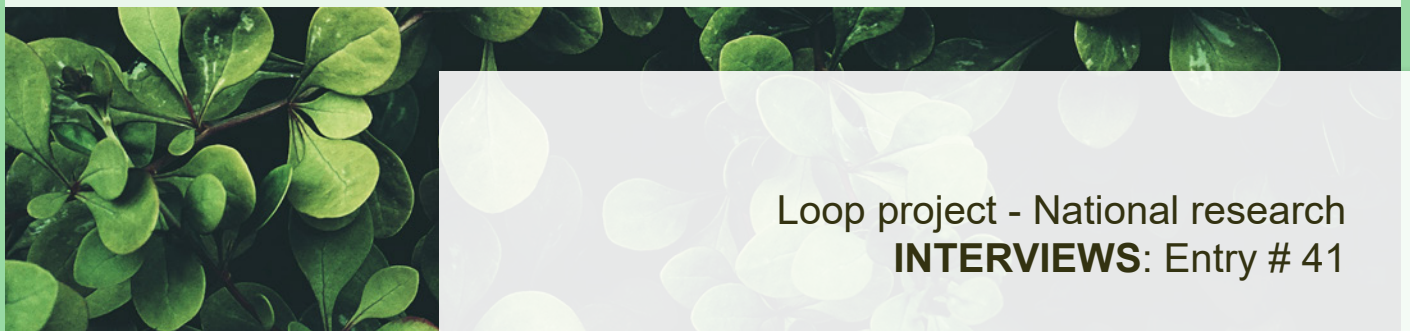
QUESTIONNAIRE

11. Do you think that the economy in the past was more sustainable than it is today?

A	B	C
12%	8%	10%

12. Which of these 3 statements do you consider the most true and important?

A	B	C
5%	23%	2%



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