Annual Review of the year ended September 2015

The significant activities carried out by the charitable company in order to achieve their objectives during the year were:

Completed the second 3-year project in Thailand supporting Burmese Migrant Workers' human rights and funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

Started a new project in Myanmar to support Buddhist Youth to develop sustainable livelihoods and showcase different styles of sustainable farming methods to demonstrate natural resource management and combat climate change.

Continued to raise funds to support and educate orphaned children at Kitezh Children's Community in Russia.

Further developed international connections for Kitezh with youth groups and schools in UK and USA and implemented the International Volunteers programme at Kitezh and Orion, Russia and at IPI in Kenya.

Further developed a partnership with International Peace Initiatives working with HIV/AIDS- and poverty-affected women and orphans in Kenya.

Further developed a partnership with Sky Is The Limit school and home for HIV/AIDS- and poverty-affected orphans in Uganda.
The work of Ecologia Youth Trust is driven by its vision of a world where all young people can thrive within their communities. We believe the only way to achieve this in a sustainable way, is to enable disadvantaged children and young people to realise their potential and to take an active role in promoting sustainable living in their own communities so that they can improve their lives in the long-term. Young people are the most affected by the challenges facing societies around the world. Yet they are also the best placed to find solutions to the most urgent issues affecting them. Together with our partners, we help young people to gain access to the things they need in order to fulfil their potential and become agents of change in their communities.

Projects:

**Thailand:** The final year of the project 'Promoting Human Rights, Good Governance and Accountability for Burmese Migrants and their families living and working in Thailand' was completed in December 2014. This was the second 3-year project in Thailand funded by the Big Lottery Fund to support the integration of migrant workers and their families into Thai society. The project successfully achieved its stated goals and outcomes and has made a significant difference to the rights of migrant workers from Myanmar who go to Thailand for work.

**Myanmar:** As a result of this project, Ecologia Youth Trust developed a project in Myanmar, “We Love Inle Lake” with partners of the Thai organization, SNF. Ecologia won a third grant from the Big Lottery Fund for £490,746 that included organisational development funding. This project runs for 3 years, from February 2015 – January 2018.

The Inle Lake project is a youth-led project that will work with 10 villages in Pekhon and Nyaung Shwe townships of Inle Lake, Myanmar. The project takes a holistic approach towards conservation issues of the Lake and livelihood needs of local communities.

There will be eco-farming training courses for 60 youth from target villages. The course is based on the Farmers Field School methodology and incorporates aspects of climate smart farming and eco-village design education. These youths will extend their learning and knowledge to approximately 600 local farmers through short trainings. The youth will set up demonstration plots showcasing the different styles of sustainable farming methods to suit the different terrains of the villages with study visits and field days for interested farmers to learn from the plots. The youth will initiate farmer circle meetings where local farmers interested in their approach can share and learn together.
A workshop for selected farmers will explore the role of community-based collaboration to reduce exploitation and develop models to support community sustainability. Small scale community based initiatives to support application of eco-farming techniques in target villages will be identified, and start-up funds and ongoing mentoring support will be provided to establish 10 projects, including organic compost making, savings groups, rice banks and organic pest control.

Eco-Social Enterprise training will take place for another 30 youth. Participants will identify and implement identified ESEs e.g. an eco-tourism café / shop, tomato products, water hyacinth organic fertilizer, and mushroom farming. The ESE Coordinator will mentor and support the youth to set up the enterprises.

Finally, the project will run issue-based bi-monthly forums, stakeholder meetings on Inle Natural Resource Management issues and the ‘We Love Inle Lake’ campaign to raise awareness. Case studies on NRM issues will be prepared and information disseminated through websites, social media and newsletters. Five of the most at risk villages will be identified to raise awareness and develop strategies to reduce vulnerability to adverse weather conditions. Youth leaders will be trained to raise awareness on watershed management and prepare them to lead actions to address NRM, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction.

**Russia: Kitezh Children's Community and Orion**, its sister community, continue to grow and flourish. The Kitezh School has achieved recognition from the state as an Experimental School, and has a growing reputation for excellence in education, both for orphans and for children with exceptional needs who attend the school as boarders. Kitezh has become a leading authority on therapeutic care for orphans in Russia.

The foundations for stage one of the Education Centre were laid in 2013 and school was opened on 1st September 2015. It provides 4 primary school classrooms and one secondary classroom, as well as an indoor play area. Funds from Ecologia provided the means to prepare the building for the school year, with furniture and equipment. The school has 50 pupils.

Thirty five 'Godparents' support their sponsored children at Kitezh and Orion who love to correspond with them. Sponsorship provides over £6,500 per year that allows the foster parents to pay for vacations, special needs and gifts at birthdays and Christmas.
Ecologia Youth Trust continues to develop international connections for the Kitezh Community Network. Kitezh and Orion are particularly keen to develop ongoing relationships with schools and youth groups that help to expand the minds of both Russian and foreign children as they meet and engage in creative activities together, building bridges of peace and international understanding.

Sevenoaks School, Kent, and St Paul’s Girls’ School, London, both pay an annual visit to Kitezh and Orion as their students have benefitted a great deal from their experience there. This year a student from Sevenoaks wrote: “As soon as I stepped off the bus I felt at home straight away. I have never felt more at home in any other place I have been to. I love this place and everyone here. I will do my best to return and stay for longer. But for now all I can say is thank you, thank you, thank you for such a wonderful time and the lifelong memories that will always stay with me. Kitezh will always be in my heart.”

St Paul’s Girls’ School and Sevenoaks pupils are also dedicated runners in the annual Santa Run in London in December to benefit Ecologia and Kitezh-Orion. Kitezh also hosts an annual youth group from Bainbridge Island, USA.

The friendship between other British schools and universities is steadily growing through our volunteers programme. Students from Nottingham, Bristol, Oxford and Cambridge Universities regularly spend part of their Year Abroad as volunteers at Kitezh and Orion, taking advantage of the opportunity to improve their Russian language and make a contribution to the lives of the children and adults there. In 2014-15 Kitezh and Orion hosted 45 volunteers, of whom 2 were returnees and 31 were members of school and youth groups.
Kenya: In partnership with International Peace Initiatives (IPI), Ecologia Youth Trust has supported skills trainings for 250 women living with HIV/Aids or in extreme poverty.

They have received training in detergent making, tailoring, tie-dye, catering, knitting, cosmetics and food processing. It has changed the lives of the women who previously had no means to support themselves or their children.

Ecologia is developing a child sponsorship programme for the children at Kithoka Amani Children's Home at IPI that helps to pay for school fees for the children.

Uganda: Sky Is the Limit benefitted from several small grants to provide simple lunches for its 345 pupils. Rose Mugenyi tells us that "We started providing lunch and there is change in the atmosphere at school in most of the children. Attendance has gone up as a result." Our child sponsorship programme supports the school to provide places for the children whose parents are unable to pay for school fees.

Georgia: The annual group visits to Lagushdi village in the Caucasus have proved popular amongst lovers of Georgian singing. These tours provide much needed support for the villagers to develop a sustainable lifestyle, support the disabled children in the village and encourage young people to remain in the village instead of migrating to the city.
FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy: The trustees’ reserve policy ensures that Ecologia Youth Trust maintains sufficient general fund reserves to be able to continue in ‘normal’ existence for at least three months followed by an ‘orderly’ curtailment of activities over the following three months if necessary. The policy is reviewed annually. The trustees aim to hold, therefore, between three and six months of budgeted general funds, as unrestricted funds, to reflect these legal and fiduciary obligations. The level of reserves required in the general fund is reviewed with the budget annually. As of 30 September 2015 Unrestricted Reserve stands at £41,785 which represents 45% of the total cost to run the charity for one year.

Restricted Reserve Funds: Ecologia Youth Trust holds Restricted Reserves for project funds that are carried over to the following year. On 30th September 2015 these Reserves stood at £77,800. Of this, £44,997 is held for Kitezh Children's Community until it is needed for capital projects. This reserve fund also includes an Education fund, held in trust for the children until they turn 18. The funds are released on request. A further £32,803 is held in various restricted reserve funds for other projects, including unspent funds for the Big Lottery project that are due to be spent in the next financial year.

Principal funding sources: In addition to our many individual donors, we are grateful to the following Grant Making bodies and Trusts for their support for our work:

- The Big Lottery Fund for the 'We Love Inle Lake' Project in Myanmar;
- Allan & Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust
- The Cherrill Trust
- The Cumber Family Trust
- The Damien Foundation
- The Dick Foundation
- The Douglas Heath Eves Charitable Trust
- The Evan Cornish Trust
- The Gilchrist Educational Trust
- The Paget Trust
- The Roger Vere Foundation
- The Economist Group
- Zurich Community Trust
- Baker Botts LLP, London
- The Hygeia Foundation USA.
**FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

**Myanmar:** ‘We Love Inle Lake project’ started on 1st February 2015 and will be completed in January 2018. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund, this 3-year project aims to improve the livelihoods of disadvantaged youth, while protecting the environment of the area, through sound agricultural practices that increase sustainable land use and improve resilience to climate change.

**Russia:** Kitezh Educational Centre: Foundations have been laid for Stage 2 that will provide a canteen and indoor sports facility. A concerted effort will be made to complete this by September 2016. Emphasis on Volunteering and schools programmes at Kitezh and Orion will continue and provide opportunities for youth exchanges to the UK and USA.

**Kenya:** International Peace Initiatives (IPI): We will continue to provide Skills Trainings for vulnerable mothers and young women and to support HIV-affected children and their families.

**Uganda:** Sky Is the Limit School (SITL): We are developing proposals to build new classrooms and an HIV Clinic for the school, and will support SITL to further develop self-sufficiency through enlarging their farm, providing food for the residential children and school pupils.

Through our alliance with GEN, the Global Ecovillage Network, we are able to work in partnership with small organisations in the Global South that share our values, to make positive, long-lasting changes to the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in a sustainable way.