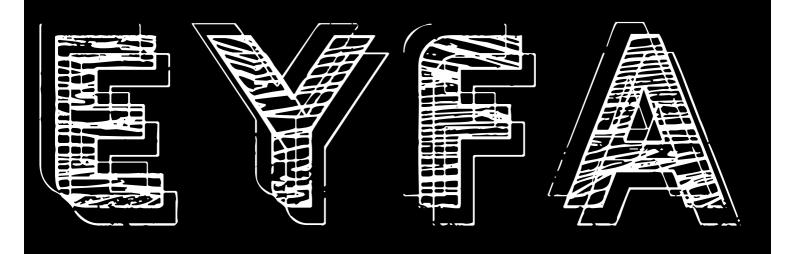
# annual report 2011





## Around the world 2011 will be remembered as a year of great change - and at EYFA as well.

Aside from marking the celebration of EYFA's 25th Anniversary, 2011 kick-started the international office's move to Berlin and pushed us to look more deeply into EYFA's role in the evolving European, and global, landscape.

As the Arab Spring spread and the Indignants movement began in Spain, some EYFA collective members started the work of setting up a new office in Berlin. Interviewing potential new collective members and local networking were the main priorities, along with trying to get a handle on an entirely new set of regulations and bureaucratic protocols. Meanwhile, other collective members remained in Amsterdam to carry on with project work and begin the process of archiving materials in preparation for the move.

In the autumn, as the Occupy movement swept through the United States and around Europe, we held our second board meeting of 2011. With so many changes set in motion, we felt it was necessary to have extra time to connect with the Board and re-evaluate our position. This led to a series of context-analysis discussions, exploring the situation of youth movements across Europe and the state of play in our focus areas of environmental justice and exclusion. To this end, we further refined and updated our priorities, laying the groundwork for further strategising on how EYFA can best support youth-led grassroots groups.

Beyond the many organisational-level developments, EYFA spent 2011 further developing our training capacities, along with supporting skills development and training throughout the network. This work was well-received and we now see this as a main focus of EYFA's work in the years to come.

In 2011 EYFA organised a youth exchange on strategies to address discrimination, as well as two skill-share/trainings in Slovenia and France. We continued our support of the mobilisation against the radical nationalist march in Warsaw and continued to partner up and support projects of network partners, old and new, including a pilot project looking to highlight the conditions of garment workers in the Philippines.

To close the year, we put together a special issue of our newsletter highlighting our 25th anniversary. Compiled with archive materials and texts from network members on their experiences with EYFA, the newsletter celebrates the many challenges and successes over the years.

2012 looks to be another exciting - and challenging - year. As we lay down roots in Berlin, we will also need to navigate Europe-wide austerity programs and all it will encompass. With more than 20% youth unemployment across Europe, tuition fees on the rise and the youth sector facing drastic cuts, there will be no shortage of things to do. Meanwhile, we'll also embark on new partnerships via the youth component of the Climate and Energy Camp in Poland and build on our commitment to developing sustainable activism via our training course in Berlin.

TO MANY MORE CHANGES AHEAD,
EYFA

#### 1. What is EYFA?

- 1.1. The EYFA story
- 1.2. What does EYFA do?
- 1.3. Who does EYFA support?
- 1.4. EYFA Vision
- 1.4.1. EYFA Objectives
- 1.4.2. EYFA Priorities
- 1.5. EYFA Structure
- 1.5.1. Decision-making
- 1.5.2. EYFA Office
- 1.5.3. EYFA Advisory Board
- 1.5.4. EYFA Network
- 1.6. Partner Organizations
- 1.7. Thanks to

#### 2. Projects

- 2.1. European Voluntary Service
- 2.1.1. Bi-lateral EVS: Art & Development
- 2.1.2. Bi-lateral EVS: Developing our skills, widening our network, strengthening our roots
- 2.1.3. Bi-lateral EVS: No Dirty Gold!
- 2.2 Projects
- 2.2.1 Participatory video project with women garment workers in the Philippines

#### 3. Meetings & Events

- 3.1. Understanding Discrimination Building Community
- 3.2. Training for Trainers
- 3.3. Think Like a Forest
- 3.4. EYFA Strategy Meetings

#### 4. Network Actions & Initiatives

- 4.1. Festival ÜBER LEBENSKUNST, Germany
- 4.2. Climate Camp, Germany
- 4.3. Nyeleni: European Forum on Food Sovereignty, Austria
- 4.4. Workshops on participatory processes, Europe
- 4.5. Noborder Camp, Bulgaria
- 4.6. Festival of Self-Organization, Serbia
- 4.7. Happendon Wood Action Camp, Scotland
- 4.8. Castor Anti-nuclear Blockade, France & Germany
- 4.9. COP17, South Africa
- 4.10. MKZ, Netherlands
- 4.11 Coal Action Scotland

#### 5. EYFA Media & Publications

- **5.1. EYFA Newsletter**
- 5.2. EYFA Website

#### 6. Financial Overview



#### 1.1. The EYFA story

EYFA (European Youth For Action) developed from a tour that was initiated by a Swedish/German group in 1986 to save the old forests in Europe: then named European Youth Forest Action. From these beginnings, EYFA has developed into a network of individuals, grassroots organisations and collectives working to transform local and international communities in their approach to environmental and social, political and economic positions. EYFA provides a platform and practical support for new radical ideas to grow into their full potential.

EYFA focuses particularly on youth initiated activities and projects. EYFA projects are mainly for young people, giving them the opportunity to act and encouraging them to be active on local and international levels. A special focus is put on providing access for groups to take part in international grassroots movements. EYFA always puts effort into including youth from all corners of the continent, with different social, geographical and cultural backgrounds.

EYFA's organisational structure consists of a Europe-wide network of grassroots groups, an office, and an advisory board.

#### 1.2. What does EYFA do?

EYFA provides a platform and practical support for new radical ideas to grow into their full potential. The international office located in Amsterdam coordinates EYFA's activities through administrative and communication functions and being the network's contact point for sharing local information.

EYFA support and encourages grassroots projects and initiatives in the following ways:

- Organising exchanges, seminars, trainings, network gatherings, projects & actions.
- Promoting innovative ways of working in the field of social and environmental activism (ie: consensus decision-making, art and activism, free and open-source software, etc).
- Disseminating call outs and information on environmental and social justice issues.
- Giving advice, knowledge and support in activities such as assisting with fundraising, application writing, planning and implementing projects and networking.

#### 1.3. Who does EYFA support?

Grassroots groups combating xenophobia, homo-, trans- and queerphobia, racism, fascism, sexism, ableism and all other forms of exploitation and injustice.

Grassroots groups promoting cultural diversity and the rights of women, LGBTIQ, indigenous, migrants and workers.

Grassroots groups combating environmental degradation, ecosystem destruction and animal exploitation and promoting biological diversity.

EYFA gives activists an international perspective, but it is very important to us that we keep our focus on the grassroots of social and ecological change. It is characteristic of EYFA that projects initiated by EYFA become independent sustainable long term projects.

#### 1.4. EYFA Vision

YFA's main aim is to encourage young people's initiative and autonomy. EYFA strives for a world based on social, environmental and economic justice, in which people feel empowered to act and raise their voices on the issues that affect their lives. EYFA works to challenge the current dominant social and economic system while developing new ways of organising our communities based on environmental and social sustainability.

Towards this we have three core objectives (Capacity Building; Civic Engagement and Participatory Processes; East-West Cooperation) and two priority areas (Environmental Justice; Exclusion) to guide us.

#### 1.4.1. EYFA Objectives

EYFA has three core objectives at the centre of everything we do:

- **Capacity building:** To help groups develop the skills and knowledge to gain access to funding, training and the tools to articulate, debate and enact their ideas.
- Civic engagement and participatory processes: To support grassroots groups to critically engage with already existing decision-making processes and politics, and also to develop egalitarian and participatory alternatives.
- **East-West cooperation:** To develop closer cooperation through joint initiatives and the sharing of ideas, histories and experiences amongst grassroots groups working in Eastern and Western Europe.

#### 1.4.2. EYFA Priorities

Over the course of EYFA's existence the network has focused its energy on a wide variety of projects all across Europe. Out of these projects patterns have emerged that point to some of EYFA's priorities. Developed by the network, office and Board, and re-evaluated each year at network strategy meetings, these priorities provide focus for EYFA's work. While we prioritise these two areas, we continue to offer support to groups whose work does not fall into one of these categories.

#### Environmental Justice

EYFA's environmental justice perspective is based on the understanding that most environmental problems are also a question of social and economic injustice. Socially sustainable and just communities go hand in hand with environmentally sound ways of living. EYFA's many climate justice, energy and environmental projects have aimed to draw the links between economic growth-obsession and the exploitation and destruction of our natural and human environment as well as excluding large populations from access to resources.

#### Exclusion

Social, cultural, institutional or individual beliefs and practices exist which privilege some human beings and exclude, by subordination and oppression others, based on attributes of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class or caste, among many other distinctions. EYFA believes that social and economic exclusion are tied into histories of patriarchy, colonialism and imperialism, as well as profit and power. These experiences have at times given rise to equally oppressive and excluding practices and policies. If we are to create a world free from hierarchy, exploitation and oppression that instead respects the autonomy and dignity of all human beings, the way these forces interact must be recognised and addressed. With our focus on supporting Eastern European groups, our current work includes many groups working to tackle issues of institutional exclusion, gender inequality, fascism, nationalism, racism and homophobia.

#### 1.5. EYFA Structure

#### 1.5.1. Decision-making

Decisions are made during different meetings throughout the year. During these meetings the following is discussed: old and new projects, focus of the network, strategies and future cooperation plans. Though we make use of on-line meetings and decision making tools, face-to-face network meetings are still highly valued and take place alongside all EYFA events.. EYFA board meetings are organized once a year at the EYFA office in Amsterdam. The board has better insight in the works of the office this way and with everything at hand it heightens practicality.

All organizational decisions are made by reaching consensus. The consensus is a decision-making process that fully utilizes the resources of a group, seeks the agreement of most participants, and resolves or mitigates the objections of the minority to achieve the most agreeable decision. Consensus is also used during all EYFA meetings, projects and events. EYFA functions on the belief that people in a group will relate to each other in a much more fair and productive way if everyone's contribution is considered and is equal to everyone else's. Consensus requires use of communication hand signals during meetings and decision making processes, and, sometimes, presence of trained facilitators and mediators.

#### 1.5.2. EYFA Office

EYFA has one international office, located in Amsterdam. The office coordinates EYFA's activities, including administrative and financial tasks, as well as the communication functions of the network. This includes producing the EYFA newsletter, acting as an information point for organisations in the network and as a communication liaison between local and international projects.

The office is organised collectively and non-hierarchically, meaning that all staff and volunteers are expected to take an equal role in day-to-day tasks and decision-making processes. From watering the plants to writing applications, tasks are shared and rotated amongst all of those in the office.

The office also acts as a 'training ground' for young people to develop various skills, such as project coordination, fundraising and bookkeeping. EYFA does not require office staff to arrive already equipped with all the necessary knowledge and experience to carry out their tasks. Rather, the goal is to be a place where young people can work to develop skills in a supportive environment, learning-by-doing. It is normal for staff and volunteers to work in the office for 1-3 years, before moving on to share their new skills with other groups and projects.

#### 1.5.3. EYFA Advisory Board

The 'Advisory Board' oversees the work of the office. The Board provides support and advice to the office – particularly in terms of strategy and finances.

Currently, there are three Board members, two of whom used to be part of the office team. In both the office and the Board, effort is made to maintain balanced representation amongst the different corners of Europe.

#### 1.5.4. EYFA Network

EYFA is a network that consists of individuals, collectives and organisations from all around Europe. There are no membership rules or fees required to join the EYFA network – EYFA is open to all current grassroots and alternative youth movements focusing on environmental, social justice and alternative economics and related issues.

The EYFA network is primarily used to share information, skills and resources. It connects groups working on similar topics around Europe, and groups wanting to share experiences or gain training from one another. The network acts as a way to connect local issues and struggles transnationally. In particular, the network works to

connect groups in east and west Europe, building solidarity amongst different regions.

The EYFA Network has two permanent working groups, Network Strategy and East-West, which help the international office in Amsterdam identify the needs of groups in the network and decide where and on what issues upcoming gatherings should focus. This ensures that EYFA consistently works towards its aims of capacity building, participatory processes and East-West networking. For each EYFA project a temporary working group is also created to support the logistics and develop the content of the project. Sometimes these groups continue working together after the project's completion.

Typically, the network has one or two meetings each year where the priorities and strategy of the network are decided upon and projects and activities are developed. Between meetings, members can stay stay in touch via mailing lists and online meetings. Like all EYFA meetings, decisions are made on a consensus basis.

#### 1.6. Partner Organizations

Belgium: Vredes Actie / France: LaRonce Collective; Radikales Cocottes – Cuisine Mobile Vegane; Labofii / Germany – Babel, Trebitz / Hungary: Védegylet (Protect the Future) / Macedonia: Movement for Social Justice / Netherlands: ASEED Europe – Amsterdam; MKZ- Amsterdam; ACU-Utrecht / Romania: Biblioteca Alternativa – Bucharest, Asociatia DIY – Timisoara / Serbia: Stani Pani Kolektiv / Slovenia: Art Center – Sredisce; Autonomous Cultural Center Metelkova – Ljubljana; A-Infoshop – Ljubljana / Spain : Eco-Dharma – Catalunya / Turkey: LAMBDA Istanbul / UK: Activist Mediation Network; Tripod Collective – Scotland; Coal Action – Scotland; Seeds For Change / Ukraine: Anti-Fascist Action – Kiev; Gender Lviv – Lviv

#### 1.7. Thanks To

We would like to thank the Council of Europe's Youth Foundation, the European Commission's Youth in Action Program, the Haella foundation, the Bundjugend Berlin and private donors for their financial support in 2011 without which it would not have been possible to carry out as many activities as we did.



#### 2.1 European Voluntary Service

#### 2.1.1. Bi-lateral EVS: Art & Development, Slovenia

A Dutch volunteer was sent to spend a year at the Art Center, in the east of Slovenia. The volunteer was involved in developing components of the program of the Art Center such as art-workshops, exhibitions, concerts, and others. The volunteer was active on all levels from communicating with the artists to promotion strategies. The volunteer was also able to develop some of his own events from scratch and finally, work on the documentary "Flexworkers in Europe."

## 2.1.2 Bi-lateral EVS: Developing our skills, widening our network, strengthening our roots, Netherlands

For almost the entire duration of 2011 EYFA was host to its own EVS volunteer from France. Our volunteer was primarily involved in the preparation and carrying out of two projects: in Slovenia, "Training for Trainers" a skill-share and training on collective, participatory processes to aid group communication and work; in France, "Think like a forest" a projects on organizing environmental or social justice campaigns by using art and creativity and concepts of perma-culture, a framework which uses the different components of a system in order for it to be sustainable and harmonious at all levels. The volunteer, then finished off 2011 by developing a newsletter on 25 years of EYFA which gave her the opportunity to learn more about the history of the organization she has spent her last year with.

#### 2.1.3. Bi-lateral EVS: No Dirty Gold!, Belgium

A young Dutch volunteer was sent to spend a year at CATAPA in Belgium. CATAPA is a Belgian movement of young people that focuses on issues related to globalisation and sustainable development. The organisation was founded in 2005 when a group of students and researchers, of whom a lot with experience in Latin America, were concerned about the serious health problems caused by open pit mining in Bolivia. In 2010, CATAPA ran its big first international campaign, around the problems caused by mining multinationals in Northern Peru. Subsequently, this was followed up with a campaign which began in 2011 focused on raising consumer awareness in the purchase of precious metals. The volunteer has spent his time working on this campaign, which continues into 2012, which has included public actoins in the Flanders region, debates on sustainable production and consumption of metals, conferences with speakers from our partner organisations, etc.

#### 2.2. Projects

## 2.2.1 Participatory video project with women garment workers in the Philippines - A story of women and underwear

In summer 2009 Triumph International closed down a lingerie factory in the Philippines and left more than 1500 women workers jobless and uncompensated. The organisation Defend Job Philippines (DJP) was set up to support the workers in their struggle for compensation and justice, new jobs and a decent life.

Together DJP and EYFA have started implementing a pilot project using participatory video and personal story-telling as tools that enable the ex-Triumph worker community in Manila to mobilise effective support for their case.

The preparatory phase, including meetings with several women workers from the community that will be involved in the project and a visit to the women's solidarity cooperative already took place in 2011, with the project itself taking place in 2012.

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## 3.1. Understanding Discrimination Building Community: Exploring Europe's Past and Present to Create Our Future Together, Slovenia

This project brought together 30 participants and 6 group leaders from Greece, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia and the UK for an 8-day programme of workshops, discussions and exchange. The project aimed to explore issues of discrimination and prejudice in past and present Europe, and to learn campaigning and community skills to create a more tolerant future. Using non-formal and popular education methods – for example role-playing, paired listening, small and large-group games, activities and discussions, and group presentations – participants shared their past and present experiences of discrimination, identified and challenged their own hidden prejudices, and developed new skills for civic-engagement from the local level through to EU policy-making. Participants also practiced some real-life community engagement by collectively organising three public evening

activities during which they were encouraged to speak with attendees about the project content and related issues.

3.2. Sharing Our Skills: A participatory 'training for

3.2. Sharing Our Skills: A participatory 'training for trainers' designed for young people who want to share skills for positive social change, Slovenia

Thirty-four young people working on social and environmental justice issues

gathered in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The aim of the project was to train them to train others back in their groups, communities and regions, on skills for organizing as grassroots groups. In order to make this happen, EYFA collaborated with longer-term Network partner the Scotland-based training collective Tripod. The main focus of the training was around consensus-decision making and facilitation skills for discussions and meetings while also looking into tools for dealing with conflict engagement and resolution, and organizing within coalitions, exploring hierarchies, privilege and oppression.

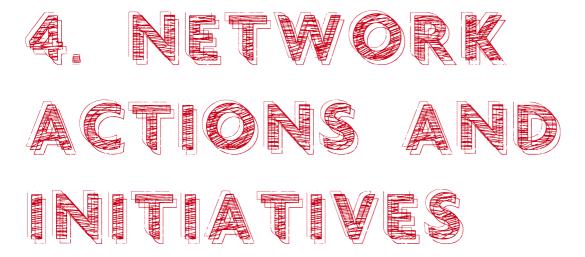
## 3.3. Think Like a Forest: Strengthening Our Roots.Building campaigns on social and environmental justice as European grassroots youth groups, France

Around 24 young participants from around Europe came together for ten days to explore grassroots organizing skills through the framework of Permaculture design. This design model that was originally developed in the context of agriculture and which relies one the three keys elements of 'earth care, people care and fair shares (generosity)'. In the case of the project the focus was on campaign-building and awareness-raising events organizing with through creativity and art, believing that change does not happen because people see more facts and figures but because they are moved and inspired by powerful ideas and dreams of what could be. The meeting was set in a self-managed camp, to the running of which the participants contributed one hour each day by helping with some of the logistical and cleaning tasks. The programme was a balanced mix of presentations, games and exercises, and hands-on practical sessions, with a significant amount of time dedicated to practical projects that were designed by the participants themselves in small groups on a variety of themes.

#### 3.4. EYFA Strategy Meetings

In 2011 the annual network meeting took place in August in Novi Sad, Serbia, during the Self-Organization Festival. Main points of discussion for network members was continuing and strengthening strategic partnerships throughout the network, and supporting local projects across the network.

In 2011 the EYFA office hosted two board meetings in Amsterdam. The meetings took place in March and October and focused on the role EYFA plays in the European context, specifically as significant struggles young people are facing (unemployment, education budget cuts) intensify.



#### 4.1. Festival ÜBER LEBENSKUNST, Germany

EYFA network and office members participated in an 11-day training on sustainable organic, grass-roots communities at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin based around the principles of perma-culture. This training provided participants with art-activism strategies and new frameworks towards the forming of environmentally sustainable and grassroots communities. The training was part of the Festival ÜBER LEBENSKUNST which took place over the entire summer.

#### 4.2. Energy and Climate Camp in Lausitz, Germany

EYFA network and office members participated in the Energy and Climate Camp in Brandenburg, Germany. The camp location was chosen because in the last decades solely in the region more than 30,000 people had to leave

136 villages to make space for the excavators that dug up new lignite mining pits. Together with the local initiatives against CO2-dumps and open-cast coal mining the Energy and Climate Camp Lausitz called for a just transition away from coal, in the understanding that it's possible to create new perspective and possibilities in time to avoid

dangerous climate catastrophe if we start changing the structures now and in the hope that Brandenburg can become a model region for energy sovereignty and renewable energies. The climate camp was a space for networking, knowledge exchange and debates as well as looking into practical actions and approaches to the problems. As a result, the camp represented a field of experimentation for a different kind of life: the fundamental features, a resource-efficient lifestyle and a grass-roots way of self-organization.

## 4.3. Nyeleni European Forum on Food Sovereignty, Austria

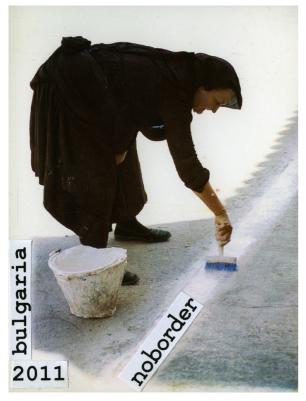
Nyeleni, the first ever European Forum on Food Sovereignty took place in Krems, Austria in August as a result of the work put in by various organizations working together for Food Souvereignty in Europe. The initiators of the Call to the Nyeleni Forum were re the European Coordination Via Campesina, Friends of the Earth Europe, the European ATTAC Network, the World March of Women, and the Internaitonal Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty. Besides creating spaces for discussion and sharing of experiences around core issues of food and agriculture, several transversal axis across themes were organized, such as a women's day on the first day of the forum and specific spaces for youth participation. The Forum was organized with participatory methods and approaches, using various methodologies and facilitation systems for it's workshops. Network members went as both participants and to support the methods used during the forum as facilitation trainers.



#### 4.5. Noborder Camp, Bulgaria

Between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> of August network members participated in the NoBorder Camp in Southern Bulgaria. The topics addressed at the camp were: The militarization of the borders; deterioration of freedom of movement across the Balkan borders; criminalization of the situation of migrants and refugees in bulgaria; hoow to organize in

ways that will better the human, social, legal, and economic condition of migrants and refugees in Bulgaria and around Europe. Hosting the Camp in Bulgaria was important as part of a wider campaign to attracting the attention of the local people, the media, and the international community towards the problems migrants and refugees face as well as rising racism and discrimination present in Bulgarian society, and across Europe.



#### 4.6. Festival of Self-Organisation, Novi Sad, Serbia

In late August, early September EYFA network members organized and participated in the Festival of Self-Organisation in Novi Sad, Serbia. The Festival took Place in the Youth and Culture Center CK13 a place in which young people have been working since its creation 5 years ago on the topics such as Self-organisation, Activism, Feminism, Antifascism, LGBTIQ and more. The festival consisted of three main segments: Do It Yourself workshops and film screenings, International Grassroots Activism weekend with presentations, workshops and discussions as well as networking and exchange amongst young people, and 5 day training on participatory processes. EYFA network and office members were directly involved in the development and running of this latter training on Consensus decision-making, Nonviolent Communication, and the Basics of organizing.

## 4.7. Happendon Wood Action Camp, Scotland

In September network members joined the Happendon Wood Action Camp to help defend the wood from destruction by Scottish Coal, and to take action in solidarity with communities in the area resisting the expansion of the coal industry in the Douglas Valley area, one of Britain's most intensive areas of fossil fuel production. Some of the demands of the camp are: a legally binding contract between surrounding communities and SRG/Scottish Coal that Happendon Wood and Long Plantation will not be open casted at any time; the protection of Happendon Wood as a local wildlife site with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) placed on the woodland.

#### 4.8. Castor Anti-nuclear Blockade, France & Germany

In November 2011 the annual Castor transport of high level radioactive waste was shipped from the plutonium factory La Hague in France to a temporary repository in Gorleben, Germany. Eleven Containers with a radioactivity equivalent to 40 Hiroshima bombs each were part of this shipment.

Every year when this transport happens thousands of people attend the demonstrations against it. In 2011 there were altogether some 30,000 activists protesting against nuclear energy, amongst which were many EYFA network members, both groups and individuals.

Already in France there was a camp organized by anti-nuclear- activists and the train had to stop due to blockades by protesters. Where the train was supposed to cross the border into Germany there was a blockade of several 100 activists on the tracks and the train had to stop for over 3 hours. Many smaller blockades along the route in Germany also caused a long delay of the transport schedule. In the Region where the temporary repository is located lots of action took place. from lock ons to sitting blockades to direct actions some 10.000 people were on the tracks an blocking the train.

#### 4.9. COP17 - Durban, South Africa

Members of the EYFA network participated as UNFCC observers during the COP17 in Durban, South Africa as well as during the Global Day of Action against Polluters.

#### 4.10. MKZ, Netherlands

Several EYFA office members continued cooking affordable meals at the "MKZ" people's kitchen, which is a part of Binnenpret social center in Amsterdam.



#### 4.11. Coal Action Scotland

In 2011 network members continued to be active in Coal Action Scotland which has as its aims challenging the advancement of coal as an energy source, informing people about the dangers posed by new coal, promoting alternatives, working with those involved, and directly challenging new coal exploitation from source to point of use. Coal Action Scotland is a grassroots collective that organises non-hierarchically against the advancement of coal as an energy source. Coal Action Scotland also aims to inform people and work with those involved through community solidarity, fund raising, action organizing, information evenings and tours, research and publications, skill-sharing, as well as international outreach.





#### 5.1. EYFA Newsletter

In 2011 the EYFA newsletters continued to be published quarterly and a "25 Years of EYFA" publication was created containing archival materials as well as stories from network members.

#### 5.2. EYFA Website

2011 saw a reinvigoration of the EYFA website through regular updates on actions and events, including articles and call-outs, which we hope to further develop and expand upon in 2012.

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