



# On Changing the World

## The Way of Gaia Warriors

We dedicate this book to the innumerable beings  
that need our help

*The team of Klub Gaja*

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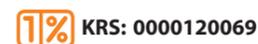
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# Introduction

It is the dark of night. A dozen people are marching towards the Vistula sources. Their guide has never been there. Guided by intuition, sure to find the way. Anxiety will not break his concentration. The dark makes the walking difficult and they have to reach the sources by sunrise...

Made it. Pitching a camp, all in silence. Questions arising in the mind: *Are the sources a goal or a signpost? Is the earth a support or in need of it?*

Walking in this way for 25 years we have become Gaia Warriors. We have been aware of our roots and experiences. We sought a sense of community and actions affirming oneness of man, Earth and all its living beings.

How do we tell the quarter-century of our shared work and quest? How will Jacek Bożek and Beata Tarnawa’s story be received by all those who actually participated in Klub Gaja events, campaigns and programs? As we looked through the hundreds of photographs, press cuttings and our own publications, we felt growing satisfaction with the work done, on par with a fear that all that has happened cannot be contained in words. There are however some things most important. and we will try to relate those in this book.

Klub Gaja would not be there without Jerzy Grotowski’s Laboratory Theatre and *The Mountain of Flame*. Klub Gaja would not be without the Council of All Beings and its creators, Joan Macy and John Seed. Klub Gaja would not be without *The Way of a Gaia Warrior*. Klub Gaja would not be without Oriental inspirations. Klub Gaja would not be without animals, rivers and trees. Most importantly, Klub Gaja would not be without people such as Wojciech Owczarz, Alicja Fober and her mother Agnieszka Fober, Błażej Sobański and his mother Halina Sobańska, Paweł Grzybowski, Dariusz Paczkowski, Jolanta Migdał, Jarosław Kasprzyk, as well as Janusz Okrzesik, Mira Stanisławska-Meysztowicz, Piotr Gliński, Radosław Gawlik. It is impossible to name all those who worked and still work for Klub Gaja. They include Joanna and Wojciech Mikler, Waclaw Kosmowski, all the youth brigade from Bujaków, Kozy and Grodziec, Marek Sulęcki, Łukasz Kuś, Remigiusz Gryt and Barbara Szczepańska, Magdalena Rudnicka, as well as Sally Naylor, Ben Burg and Barbara Romanowicz. Please receive, along with this book, our warmest gratitude.

Finally, we give thanks to the trees in Bielsko-Biała city centre, to our dogs Tao, Scratch, Ciapek and Saba, and to our horses. Most specially, to Pegaz, for the strength and teaching how never to give up!

*Jacek Bożek i Beata Tarnawa  
Wilkowice, 2013*

To me, working in Klub Gaja means tremendous diversity. Participating in happenings, running educational activities from kindergartens to high schools, staging exhibitions in all corners of Poland, keeping info stands in various places. Each day is unlike the last one and so inspiring. What is also very important to me is seeing positive results of my work – children's curiosity during educational activities or the sight of trees growing, planted with other people. All this gives meaning to what I do, empowering every day.

**Jarosław Kasprzyk,  
16 years in Klub Gaja**

I found my way to Klub Gaja through my children: Błażej keeps working with the association, Dorota was a volunteer since her primary school. Now living abroad, she is a Klub Gaja member. I never expected I would meet so many interesting people in my life or see so many interesting places. Working in Klub Gaja opened completely new possibilities before me and that's cool!

**Halina Sobańska,  
17 years in Klub Gaja**

I started to work for Klub Gaja with my head full of a young person's ideals. I wanted to change the world, to be useful, to help. Group work and community were important. I think they still are today. In spite of all daily hassle, doubts and frustrations, this work goes on inspiring me. In Klub Gaja, there's no time to fall in a rut, any day can surprise you. Here, I keep learning new things and taking up challenges, moving beyond my limitations. It's my life adventure but also hard work for a better tomorrow.

**Jolanta Migdał,  
15 years in Klub Gaja**

It's hard to describe the years of my work for Klub Gaja – the changes in me and around us, the feelings, friendships, joys and sorrows I experienced here. When deciding to work in the association, I was certain that this is where I belong, these are the people I want to work with, the community I want to build. I am still certain of that now. My work in Klub Gaja is a mix of everyday challenges, mindfulness, steadiness, sacrifice, humility, personal growth, working for others. It is about animals with their rights, the environment that needs to be protected, and people who could live better, respectful of animals and nature.

**Paweł Grzybowski,  
17 years in Klub Gaja**



To me, Klub Gaja is about ideas. Reality around us changes, people change, I will also probably pass away soon. I hope the ideas will keep traversing space, unhindered, like the sun and the moon. This is my wish.

**Beata Tarnawa,  
25 years in Klub Gaja**

I am thankful for this having happened to me. Whom am I thankful to? Everybody and everything. No exception.

**Jacek Bożek,  
Klub Gaja founder**



FREEDOM

So much has changed over the decades of my life! I was born in a Communist country, with no civil liberties, no democracy. Now as an adult, I live in a country of political, social and economic freedom. Does this mean I am free to live my ideals? I strive for this *inner freedom* every day.

My adolescence coincided with the beginning of the decline of communism. My friends and I were looking for forms that gave us a sense of freedom. Theatre was the most important one. As a teenager, I came across Jerzy Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre. I was fascinated with the idea of making theatre by evoking the deeply hidden part of man which is bound with nature. The spectator, turning into participant of a theatre event, could be part of workshops where working with one's body and voice made him unfold his own creativity. One night, during a project called *The Mountain of Flame* (involving people from around the world) I was taken by a guide to a huge forest clearing. Staying in total darkness for a few hours, my task was to sense the world around me with all my senses. In the mystery of night, for the first time in my life, I intensely felt my humanity, my helplessness against the immense universe, and freedom at the same time. I sensed I was in for a beautiful life...

Jerzy Grotowski taught people their own body expression, provoking them to think about themselves as dependent on other beings and phenomena. Participating in what he was doing was my spiritual and artistic initiation. I founded my own theatre named Workshop. I was also trying to use what I learned from mime Witold Daniec (student of Henryk Tomaszewski). My masters aroused a

The warrior sets off on his Way.  
Through a ravine,  
starting his journey.  
Eyes open. Hearing  
all voices, stepping towards  
the rising sun.

Jacek Bożek

Beata Tarnawa and Jacek Bożek,  
Earth Day, Bielsko-Biała, 1993.



Happening *The Great Comeback of the Salmon* (Adopt a River educational tour), Fish Day celebration, Hel, 2013.

Performance *A Wild River in the Heart of Europe* (The Vistula Now campaign), Warsaw, 2000.

Happening *TV News* (Beata Tarnawa and Jacek Bożek tour alongside the Vistula), Gdańsk, 1981.

Klub Gaja on educational tour *Vistula Now*, Kazimierz Dolny, 1994.





Jacek Bożek and Beata Tarnawa's visit to India, invited by Ashoka Innovators for the Public, 2003.



Jerzy Grotowski, founder of Laboratory Theatre during his journey through India, 1980.



Klub Gaja women on the sacred mountain Arunachala, India, 2010.

world hunger in me. I wanted to explore it, though I had no money. More than once, hitchhiking took me to Hungary, to Czechoslovakia. It was in Budapest that I met hippies from all around the world who lived in... caves. Buda Caves.

I was looking for my Way. Since I met Beata, we have been looking for it together.

Beata Tarnawa. She was 15 when I first met her. It was on a bridge in central Bielsko-Biała, my hometown. A river was flowing beneath. Today, a stream is flowing near our house in Wilkowiec. The house where we have brought up our two daughters, Miłoslawa and Jagoda. I have been with Beata for 35 years. Back then, as we began our life together, the river inspired our first artistic actions. We wanted to share with others things we enjoyed – theatre, love for animals, beauty of nature. We went to the Vistula banks. Wanted to explore its valley. The river captured our hearts and the places we saw at that time instilled in us a belief that we should work to protect them.

In summer 1981 our journey alongside the Vistula had to do with more than art: politics, freedom of speech. We would stop in various localities and stage happenings entitled *Dziennik telewizyjny* (TV News). On the street tarmac Beata would draw a TV screen and images flowing out, while my dance provided a commentary to the reality. People would come up, ask if we collaborated with Solidarity, sometimes they would throw some money to the hat and say they liked what we were doing. I think they too, like us, could sense the coming freedom, end of communism.



Gaia warriors in Auroville, city of the future, India, 2010.

When the martial law broke out in December 1981, I understood that politics can be really ruthless, human life is very fragile and my dreams are remote from reality. At the same time, there were positive discoveries: people were courageously organizing themselves and believing in impending change. I started to go to political and cultural meetings held in churches. Otherwise, I could only find *Tygodnik Powszechny* [a legal, moderate Catholic magazine of opinion – *translator's note*]. That civil warfare of ours made me realize that I had to act rather than passively expect freedom to come. I founded a Polish-Indian Friendship Society, organized concerts, conducted yoga classes. Through that, I saw that lots of people around were craving for new experiences and eager to know the world. I was more and more convinced that besides the things that had always been my interest – nature, animals, art – there are more important issues: human rights, democracy, freedom of speech.

In autumn 1988 I initiated an informal Gaia Anti-Stress Activity Group at the Piast residential club. Marek Musiał (who worked with Jerzy Grotowski), Andrzej Janusz Korbel (architect, cofounder of the Pracownia Architektury Żywej – Living Architecture Workshop), Jerzy Oszełda (poet and journalist), Eugeniusz Makówka (psychotherapist and musician) responded to my invitation to give classes in psychology, yoga, theatre, ecology. Our first meeting attracted hundreds of interested people! When I founded Klub Gaja soon afterwards, its name referred to the place we were first hosted, which was a residential club, a venue for culture-related meetings. Gaia – mythological name of Mother Earth – mirrored our beliefs that our planetary nature and life of all its living creatures must be cared for and protected. We talked about it in our meetings, but also about politics and Solidarity. So when we got the news that the authorities are planning to cut down some trees in the

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Collecting signatures for the petition against the tree cutting, Bielsko-Biała, 1989.

## Freedom

When reflecting on freedom, a simple intuition tells us that free acts are those which we consider good and vice versa, our good acts are those we consider free. Concepts such as goodness and freedom are mutually determined. There is a reason why one of the most famous statements of Western philosophy is this:

*There is nothing it is possible to think of anywhere in the world, or indeed anything at all outside of it, that can be held to be good without limitation, excepting only a good will.\**

This sentence was written by Immanuel Kant, whose philosophy is a consistent system of assumptions about our thinking, conceiving and knowing. Ethics ensuing from Kant's system is practical implementation of demands of reason. Essential to us, without going deep into the intricacies of Kantian philosophy, is the conclusion: free will is the foundation of ethics.

A disputatious penchant prompts one to ask: Wait a minute! No need to look far and wide to find people who purposefully and with no coercion choose to act evil, wicked and mean. Say what you like – good will, ethics, freedom etc. – but some actions are obviously evil and yet not devoid of free will.

So a question arises: what about free will that is distinct from freedom and not necessarily a good one? Here we remain radical, stating that there is no such thing as free ill will. We aren't denying reality or turning away from it. We see the evil and wrongdoings but do not believe them to be result of free choice. The evil is a form of bondage. It is laziness, neglect of self improvement, naïve

\* Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Allen W. Wood, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002.

First Klub Gaja direct action to protect nature, Bielsko-Biała, 1989.



city centre on account of their impeding construction of a bank, we decided to protest.

I wanted to climb one of the trees, as that form of protest seemed most suitable in my eyes at the time. The decision, however, was not a simple one. I knew it would mean being closely watched, even harassed, as a political opponent of the Communist state system. Deciding to take the action, I staked everything on one roll of the dice. In this way, I became an *ecological* dissident. Jurek Oszelda climbed another tree. It was March 15, 1989. A citizens' rally took place. Needless to say, Security Service officers turned up under the trees, but so did our supporters. Janusz Okrzesik, an underground regional Solidarity leader, was there, as well as Janusz Korbel and many people active in fields of culture and environment, including Wojciech Owczarz. The latter would become my closest collaborator for more than ten years to come.

As we came down after a few hours, we were immediately shoved to a police van, our identities checked. On the following day, I had a visit from Security officers. Consequences of my action could strike not just me, but also Beata or Miłka, our first daughter.

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The trees we were defending were not cut down. We managed to persuade the town authorities to change their mind. The following few months saw a historical system transformation in Poland. In June 1989 free election was to take place, for the first time after WW2. The Podbeskidzie Regional Committee of Solidarity was having interviews with parliamentary candidates. I was invited to take part in those talks, as representative of the green movement. Klub Gaja had become a recognizable group with some goals it wanted to pursue in a free country.

contentment with the status quo. This is accompanied by wrong choices, errors, mistakes, rather than free choice of the evil.

What is most important in life, in action, is their underlying assumptions, faith, foundations empowering us to deal with obstacles and carry on. The assumption of intuitiveness is not out of the blue. We trust in an intuition that tells us humans are rather good than evil. This attitude alone allows us to act in ways that are good, or free. This attitude alone makes sense if we want to participate, participated in the good, assuming that participating in the good is a matter of individual conscientious choice and not trying to coerce anyone into that participation. Finally, this attitude alone enables us to become intimate with people and animals, opening up for them, trying to understand instead of turning back. This line of thinking brings us close to an oldstanding religious concept of evil being a deficit of good. We do not attempt to solve metaphysical dilemmas of existence or non-existence of the evil. Rather, our resolutions focus on the sphere of our conduct here and now. Free choice of good action is all we need. Hence our affirming attitude to the world that allows us, as opposed to a confrontational one, to transform struggle into work, suffering into action.



*Mandala for the Earth*  
performance during the Art  
for the Earth Festival at BWA  
Galeria Bielska, Bielsko-Biala,  
2005.

Art for the Earth festival  
culminated in a symbolic  
procession across the city and  
throwing the mandala sand to  
the Biala river, Bielsko-Biala,  
2005.



*Wolność w systemie zniewolenia* (Freedom in a system of bondage), edited by Professor Aldona Jawłowska (1934-2010) and Zofia Dworakowska is, to me, an important book describing that period. Klub Gaja was among those mentioned in the introduction to the collection of interviews with such prominent figures as psychotherapist and Zen Buddhist leader Wojciech Eichelberger, writer and columnist Adam Szostkiewicz or rock singer-songwriter Lech Janerka. The Professor, researcher on alternative and environmental movements, always showed interest in Klub Gaja campaigns. We were close friends until her passing away.

Living in a free country today means creative work to me, still willing to persuade people to change their behaviour for the Earth's sake. But it is my conviction that to be free, one needs to constantly fight for it. This involves one's daily choices and faith in the other person. Thus Klub Gaja actions arise out of the belief that we cannot afford to be mere consumers. We need to be responsible as citizens and humane with animals. That is why, in our campaigns, we involve all kinds of people, no matter where they live, no matter their education, world view or age. Everything we have managed to achieve is a joint success of people involved with Klub Gaja over the 25 years. Beata did tremendous work throughout that time span. Without her, Klub Gaja would not be what it is. And it was her mother, Alfreda Tarnawa, who supported our association financially in its beginnings.

The Vistula river, where so much started, remains one of the most important issues for us. For 20 years, we repeatedly visited cities and communities located within its valley. People who come with us change but the purpose is still the same: to protect it as one of the last big European rivers that remains close to its original nature. If destroyed, such places can never be restored. Our *Teraz Wisła* (Vistula Now) campaign in 1994 was launched in reaction to



Gaia warriors in the association's first headquarters: a cellar they renovated, then an attic, Bielsko-Biala, 1993-1996.



Jacek Bożek and Wojciech Owczarz on the way to Bratislava to meet John Seed, co-author of Council of All Beings workshops, 1990.



Building the *Mandala for the Earth* in front of BWA Galeria Bielska on Klub Gaja 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with spectators and educational art workshop participants, Bielsko-Biala, 2013.

The mandala being destroyed by Klub Gaja and event participants.





Rehearsal for a paratheatrical event at Bajka. After the walk *Following Silence*, participants viewed the performance *Presentation*, Bielsko-Biala, 2003.



the planned Lower Vistula Cascade dam project. The works could have irreversibly altered the character of the Queen of Polish Rivers. We decided to go from town to town along its course, explaining to everybody why such dams would be harmful. At that time, an official *Teraz Polska* (Poland Now) campaign was launched that was to affirm the country's dynamic economic growth. As we believed that the Vistula and its catchment were amongst Poland's most important issues but understanding of and interest in their potential were lacking, we decided to name our own campaign *Teraz Wisła*.

We toured from the Vistula sources to its mouth with our volunteers and young British people (from Kirklees, a Bielsko-Biala partner borough with which we cooperated), staging happenings, holding meetings with civil society organizations, local governments, and media. Our English counterpart leader Michael O'Roarke was an irreplaceable comrade and advisor and we are still friends. The launching of the first educational Vistula Now tour inspired us to call for a daily Vistula Day (June 19<sup>th</sup>) that came to be celebrated in dozens of towns and cities. Some local governments still do.

The campaign won many awards. It was presented at Stockholm Water Week, at Kyoto Water Forum, and at Oxford University. In 2002, after 8 years of persistent campaigning, we received a written declaration from the Prime Minister's office: the Lower Vistula Cascade will not be built!

In the years that followed, the Vistula Now campaign transformed into an environmental education program *How to Save a River* and, since 2005, *Adopt a River*. Salmon has become an emblem of our recent tours for Polish rivers. In the past, the clean and patent rivers enabled it to multiple without obstacles, moving down-



Gaia warriors in the garden surrounding Bajka ("Fable") – Klub Gaja educational centre in Bielsko-Biala, 1997-2005

...and more warriors: Ciapek and Saba.

Vistula Spirit in the play *Wild River in the Heart of Europe* staged by Klub Gaja volunteers with young people from Britain during the Our Belief tour alongside the Vistula, 1998.

A delegation of Members of European Parliament meeting Polish NGO activists at Klub Gaja seat Bajka, Bielsko-Biala, 2001.



stream from its riverine birthplace to the Baltic Sea. There it grew up to come back upstream for spawning. Today, salmon is an endangered species. It has been denied chances to live as rivers were confined to concrete channels and obstructed with artificial barages. The rivers are waiting for courageous people who will inspire others with their own enthusiasm for discovering their beauty and richness.



Krystyna Wolniakowski (first on the right), German Marshall Fund director visiting Poland. She was the first one to offer funding for Klub Gaja activities, 1992.



Jacek Bożek with Ann Light of Rainforest Information Centre, Australia, during Klub Gaja first educational tour *I Am Your Mother – Earth*, 1992.



Opening of a Discover Your Park nature trail with participation of Wilkowice municipality mayor Mieczysław Rączka, Wilkowice, 2006.



Gaia warriors in the front garden of the Lecznica ("Clinic") – Klub Gaja centre (since 2005) at Wilkowice, former veterinary clinic.



*From Tree to Tree* happening during the nationwide inauguration of Klub Gaja Tree Day, Warsaw, 2009.

Audiences would take along photographs documenting several editions of the Tree Day. The photos were captioned with quotations from well known poets and writers, including that from a Czesław Miłosz poem: *And a child opens his eyes to see the tree for the first time / and as walking trees, so we see humans.*





COURAGE



One of the biggest civil disobedience demonstrations: *Dam(n) the Dam* action, Czorsztyn, 1991.

Klub Gaja supporting the *Dam(n) the Dam* action, Bielsko-Biala, 1991.



Participants of the *Dam(n) the Dam* action cleaning a nearby river, 1991.

Several decades have passed since the political breakthrough in Poland, yet I keep thinking back about it. What a unique time it was! It was clear that environmental movement had become embedded in the awareness of Polish people, but nature conservation then engaged hosts of people who were not its all-time supporters. The country surged with wave after wave of civil disobedience and rebellion around all kinds of issues, including environmental ones. Courage and determination were not in short supply. Successful protests stopped the building of Żarnowiec nuclear power station, expansion of a petroleum refinery at Czechowice-Dziedzice, construction of a coking plant at Stonava, Czech Republic (a rally in Cieszyn involved as many as 10,000 people). A popular uprising against the Czorsztyn dam on the Dunajec did not succeed but was one more place to take risks and stand up to power.

Radosław Gawlik (social activist, later Vice-Minister of Environment, now Eko-Unia chairman) was someone from whom I learned about political courage. Here are his recollections: *Without courage, there would be no transformation. My civil courage began in "Wolność i Pokój" (Freedom and Peace movement) in 1986, when I organized protests following the Chernobyl disaster, anti-power plants at Żarnowiec, against Siechnice Steelworks near Wrocław. Such protests could mean arrest from 48 hours up to 2 months. I had to tell myself: these are the causes worth being locked up for. And I told myself so. Radek and I are bound by friendship and shared ideals. Years later, our actions found recognition as we were both awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta for merits in building a civil society by RP President Bronisław Komorowski.*



The spirit of the Vistula and Klub Gaja volunteers at the Wrocław dam as BBC World News is filming the spectacle *Wild River in the Heart of Europe*, 2000.

There were rebels elsewhere, too. Among other people from Polish environmental movement, I was invited to Bergen, Norway (1990), for a preparation conference before the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. It was then that the biggest protest in that country history happened. The people demanded action with regard to climate change. Protesters were beaten by the police and set dogs at. As one of the organizers, I was mauled and beaten, too. Never before or after that did I get such a thrashing as I did during the Norwegian demo.

One year later, I went on internship to the Rainforest Information Centre in Australia (an environmental centre founded by John Seed). There, actions and demonstrations were organized to protect tropical forests in New South Wales. In the crowds of people who came, I witnessed cooperation between diverse civil society groups, including an elderly ladies society went out to defend the forests! I yearned to see such a committed civil society in Poland. When I came home, we started to plan our actions as professional public campaigns, as we organized our direct actions, happenings, press conferences, speeches, workshops, exhibitions or educational tours. Journalist contacts became important so that as many people as possible could know about our actions through newspapers, radio and TV. One meaningful event for citizens and media was Poland's first Vegetarian Congress that Klub Gaja organized. It aimed to unite the animal rights movement and demonstrate its potential. Another objective was to update its leaders on current developments in environment and animal rights worldwide (the Vegetarian Congresses, later evolved into Earth Now Congresses, invited international guests).

At that time vegetarianism was incomprehensible to people in post-Communist countries including Poland. Meat had been a



Jacek and his daughter at the demonstration against the planned coking plant in Czech Stonava, Cieszyn, 1989.



Demonstration against Żarnowiec nuclear plant, Warsaw, 1990.

Klub Gaja action *Bez atomu w naszym domu* ("No Atom at Our Home"), Bielsko-Biała, 1990.



One of the demonstrations of environmental groups in Norway before the Rio Earth Summit, 1990.



A Rainforest Information Centre information stand in Australia, 1991.

scarce good under Communism so why give it up when at last it became widely available in the market economy?! Our explanations that vegetarianism stems from a belief in animals' right to live as beings capable of feeling pain and fear were taken as eccentric, at the very least. So a leading theme at the first Vegetarian Congress was the idea of passing an Animal Protection Act in Poland. To make it possible, Klub Gaja worked with a coalition of pro-animal organizations to create a huge civil movement and public campaign under the slogan *An Animal Is Not a Thing*. We toured Poland with our happenings, exhibitions and conferences (including at the Sejm, Parliament of the Republic of Poland) encouraging people to sign a petition *Mr. Speaker, an Animal Is Not a Thing*. Our diverse informational actions were joined by other organizations and hundreds of volunteers. In this way, the Sejm was flooded with 600,000 signatures supporting the proposed Act. To their majority it was mostly important because of protecting pets. Klub Gaja, however, had also in mind farm animals and wild-life dependent on man.

Especially helpful in bringing about the Act was Janusz Okrzesik, then senator, now a university teacher. This is what he has to say about its significance: *Sure, the Act didn't make the world better overnight but the very statement that "an animal is not a thing" is an utter breakthrough and foundation for further changes, including moral ones. As well as a sign that politics, via law, can set ethical standards and protect the weak, in this case animals. After all, that is why one would go into politics at that time.*

The Animal Protection Act (Ustawa o ochronie zwierząt) that became law in 1997 was a breakthrough in approach to animals in Poland. To commemorate this, each year May 22th is celebrated as the Animal Rights Day, initiated by Klub Gaja. Two years earlier, Bielsko-Biała, as the first town in Poland, banned circus shows using live animals within the city confines. Our striving for such a local law commanded extraordinary determination because it concerned both the animal tamers community and numerous entertainment-hungry audiences. Yet we would sit in the arena blocking it and persistently chanting *Circus is fun – not for the animals*. The phrase has since become an everyman's vocabulary and the first article of the Animal Protection Act reads: *An animal, as a living being capable of suffering is not a thing*. Back in the 90's, however, to strive for animal rights was unpopular, it required courage and resolve.

In identifying current animal rights related issues and organizing relevant actions, we received great help from the Eurogroup for Animals Welfare (presently Eurogroup for Animals) and Royal So-

## Courage

Fear is a constant companion in our life. Fear reminds us about our animal nature, triggering instinctive physiological reactions accompanied by automatic fight or flight routines designed for effective protection of the organism.

Presently, when we don't need to save our lives every day, fear has become embedded in social relations, masked as stress. We get stressed, or actually frightened, about the position we put ourselves in dealing with the other. The other can be anyone, from our partner to employer to teacher or, worse, our own ego projection. We are also afraid of institutions – family, state, authority, all powers that can exert effective external pressure.

It is no accident that stress does so much damage to people today. Controlling it is considered a necessity, a precondition of effective functioning. The problem is that in combatting stress, we only scratch the surface. In this way, our struggle is doomed to a neverending series of clashes rather than a lasting victory. For under the guise of

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Klub Gaja action on behalf of circus animals, Bielsko-Biała, 1991.



Performance *Wild Beasts Tamed with Fire* at BWA Galeria Bielska, Bielsko-Biała, 1993.

One of many circus pickets, Kozy, 2000.



ciety for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals from the United Kingdom. To establish that cooperation, we were helped by volunteers Sally Naylor and Barbara Romanowicz from UK and Ben Burg from USA. Sally came to us as part of a youth exchange. She stayed... for several years. Eventually going back, she and I founded Gaia Club in England. Ben arrived through the Peace Corps (US government agency for aid to developing countries) which we approached for support.

Thousands of volunteers have worked for Klub Gaja. They were committed and courageous in giving up what is most precious – their personal time. We used it for shared painstaking actions such as defending animals that are inconspicuous and unpopular: frogs run over on roads, carp slaughtered in the street, overexploited fish species, laying hens, animals kept on farms or killed for fur (since 1994, November 25th has been celebrated as a No Fur Day, introduced by Klub Gaja). The *Fish Do Have a Voice* program informs of the problem of uncontrolled overfishing and persuades consumers to mindful choices when shopping for fish (work on a new EU fishing policy long awaited by environmental NGOs all over Europe was finally set in motion in 2013). The campaigns *Free Hen* and *Shop for Eggs with the Head On* informed about the conditions at laying hens farms, ranging from cage confinement to free grazing and explained how numbers in egg stamps is important information for the consumers concerned with protecting animals from unnecessary suffering.

Our actions make the public aware that even the simplest daily decisions, especially consumer ones have impact on animal welfare. Inflicting unnecessary suffering cannot be justified by tradition as invoked by apologists of carp killing at seasonal stalls (carp is consumed on mass scale in Poland at Christmas). It also took courage to oppose the return of a right for abattoirs to kill animals

stress, fear is concealed. It is fear that we have to face. No injunction, no imposed duty is enough to conquer it. It requires something else, a small act of personal heroism that is most simply and aptly called courage.

Courage is an ethical virtue which means it is founded on the discrimination between good and evil or – to avoid such powerful terms – between right and less right. To an animal, the answer is simple: to live is better than to die. This simple guideline causes it to fight or run. For us – animals using an advanced language – the simplicity of the guidelines must be given a broader context. The context is provided by language, enabling us to construct a concept of past and future. This causes us to live, all at once, in the past, the future, and the brief instant that we call the present. Hence the past is usually understood as a lesson to learn. Good and evil, right and wrong must result from something. We draw conclusions, raise knowledge, then there's a cut and we are already in the past, itself insecure and thus frightening. Will the magical spell of the most famous affirmation contained in the 'All will be well' slogan work?

Confronting one's fear requires courage in its sense suggested above, ie. taking the side of hope. Fear can only be conquered with



An informing rally in front of the Parliament was the beginning of the *An Animal Is Not a Thing* campaign, Warsaw, 1995.

Animal Rights Day at Kindergarten No. 74, Warsaw, 2010.

Children from Public Kindergarten of Police, West Pomerania on a farm visit, 2010.



Over 30,000 people took part in our 2-year program *Helping Animals – We Are Protecting the Climate* (concerning impact of factory farming on climate change). *Change the Climate at Your Table* was the motto of the Animal Rights Day all across the nation.

without their prior stunning. However, legal action, pro-animal coalitions lobbying and demonstrations mobilized various groups to take a stand, including the governing party leader who was moved to absolve its MPs from party discipline. The ban was upheld and the voting was followed by numerous press articles that revealed shocking details of factory farming.

Actions on behalf of unpopular and uncharismatic animals such as frogs, carp or hens are often prey to unrefined mockery and primitive jokes from anonymous internet users. So I need to find courage in me to defend not just animals but also those perceived as weaklings – local nature lovers. Those who fight for trees cut in housing estates and parks, rivers turned to refuse dumps or treated as easily accessible source of gravel, or animals whose needs are ignored.

Interventions in such cases have been everyday work of Klub Gaja right from the beginning. To solve particular problems, we look for allies and support. Honorary work of a number of lawyers and experts from chambers such as Weil, Gotshal & Manges, Warsaw and Codex, Bielsko-Biała makes it possible for us to constantly recourse to the law. Those turning to Klub Gaja for assistance get helped by Paweł Grzybowski's experience and expertise. The citizen advice unit he has been running in recent years has dealt with more than 3,000 cases and inquiries from all over Poland. Klub Gaja has repeatedly joined in administrative proceedings, representing local residents and nature protectors. To oppose environmentally harmful projects and decisions or animal abuse today requires knowledge as well as courage.

Citizens' courage in their actions for nature and animals commands our special recognition. It is expressed through our *Co-Sentience* magazine award granted to activists, artists and journalists whose actions popularize animal rights. We also award outstanding participation in our educational Tree Day and Adopt a River programs and Save Wastepaper to Save Horses action. We also recognize places and objects of special natural value and people who take care of them through our Tree of the Year and River of the Year competitions.

certainly that the course we take is right. Then the life we choose, the life in our hands can be a tool for something useful, rightful, simply speaking good.

Ancient Greeks believed that rightness of our beliefs depends on something we may call voice of the heart. We may consider all kinds of options, cases and circumstances but the ultimate impulse, the stamp of unwavering certainty comes from the heart. Such an attitude is often met with indifference, suspicion of dumbness, or patronizing judgment of naïveté at best at the time of reigning cynicism, tyranny of self-interest and short-term profit. Primacy of present-time interest is perfectly expressed in the essentially cynical adage: *Hope is the mother of fools*. But we are not cynical and may respond by quoting the much regretted Stanisław Jerzy Lec: *Yes, hope may be the mother of fools but this doesn't keep her from being a charming lover of the courageous*.

Manifestation of animal advocate organizations against slaughter without prior stunning, Warsaw, 2013.

Press conference at the Sejm (Parliament) on foie-gras geese farming, Warsaw, 1999.

Slughter without stunning mobilized cross-partisan protests in front of the Parliament, 2013.





CO-SENTIENCE

When I stand by a river, even in a big city centre, I am in awe of its power and beauty. Of the elemental enormity of the innumerable creatures that live in, around and thank to it. I can feel that! And I can feel that I am connected with it, too. This feeling is what I call co-sentience.\* Similarly, when I get into the forest I feel that I am part of it. Looking at pictures of children cuddling to trees (during our Tree Day program) makes me believe many people share this kind of experience.

Co-sentience appeals to me much more than compassion. The latter seems to suggest helping out of pity and mercy. Co-sentience, on the other hand, means trying to feel with the other and understand what he/she/it is. I met with co-sentience in Grotowski's theatre. Increasingly, I started to approach the world in that Oriental-minded way. That is why our team travelled to India twice. Klub Gaja roots can be found there. We stood side by side on the Arunachala sacred mountain (Grotowski's so important Mountain of Flame), looking out for future. In Auroville, city of future, and under Emperor Ashoka's pillar, we looked for inspiration for our work together. Yes, I was deeply influenced by Grotowski's theatre (his *Mountain Project* and the production *Apocalypsis cum Figuris*) as well as by the Council of All Beings.

John Seed, co-creator of the Council of All Beings, was in Poland in the 1990's. Poland's first Council, facilitated by him on Mt. Magurka Wilkowska, Little Beskid, inspired me and Beata to actions on

\* Polish współodczuwanie; while empathy is a closely related term, subtle differences in meaning make the author prefer this one; etymologically, empathy is 'feeling into' and compassion – 'suffering with', whereas współodczuwanie literally means 'feeling (or sensing) with' (translator's note).



Joan Macy and John Seed, the two creators of the Council of All Beings workshops, 1990.

Poland's first Council of All Beings on Magurka Wilkowska, Little Beskid, 1989.



Workshops by Joan Macy and John Seed in Hungary, 1990.



The team of Klub Gaja during a Council of All Beings at Male Ciche, Tatra, 2012.

behalf of Mother Earth. The following workshops we took part in abroad were conducted jointly by both Council founders, Joan Macy and John Seed. Let its master explain what the Council of All Being is all about:

*Joan Macy: Council of All Beings is a group ritual where participants depart from their human identities to speak on behalf of other life forms. This simple action enables spontaneous expression that seeks to deepen the awareness of our interdependence within the living organism Earth and strengthen our commitment to defend it. The ritual helps us recognize and express our world's suffering. (Dzikie Życie, December 2003/January 2004)*

The Council of All Beings allows one to deeply experience the space we live in as filled with innumerable non-human beings – and so belonging to them as well. This reflection took further my understanding of co-sentience born from working with Grotowski a few years back. When I began leading the Council of All Beings workshop myself, I realized I wanted to introduce two themes into it: building organization structures, and planning for and achieving social change. Combining the two approaches led me to create the Way of a Gaia Warrior program that was mostly implemented in Poland but also in England in the 1990's.

A warrior in my understanding is a person in service of defending the weak, rising whenever he or she is needed. One important premise of the Way was one that we should only take up working for the Earth when we are in peace with ourselves and our loved ones. The workshops, involving self improvement and work on



A story circle in England, 2000.

To see the place of the universe  
In a frightened jackdaw eye  
The depth of cause and effect  
On a grey feather  
Left on the snow  
With awareness of a cat's trail

*Jacek Bożek*

The Way of a Gaia Warrior in Bieszczady mts., 1996.





1<sup>st</sup> Vegetarian Congress at Wilkowice, 1991.

organizational structure were very flexible. I was not only encouraging nature conservation and animal protection. Rather, I tried to lead participants to discover what is most important for them to make their work and life creative and useful. The Way of a Gaia Warrior involved a moment of initiation by leading one into a space of solitude and silence. When I meet those people in various settings and places today, I am glad to see how enthusiastic they are when it comes to talking about the Way and co-sentience. The form I am offering at present is the ritual called *Following Silence* (inspired by my work with Marek Musiał of Laboratory Theatre), while the Polish Ecology Person of the Year has for many years been awarded a Gaia Warrior Shield.

The way I myself follow is the one I am shown by teachers of an ancient Tibetan Buddhist Karma Kagyu lineage and the Dalai-Lama. I listen in to kind advice of Lama Rinchen saying: *The Tibetan word for compassion (or co-sentience) – the noblest of human feelings – is ‘nying-je’, literally meaning ‘lord of the heart’. Buddhist scriptures define it as a desire to liberate others from suffering and its causes. No one expects a doctor to suffer the same illness the patient has but to be able to cure us. In the same way, compassion does not mean passive ‘suffering with’ others. We must know how to free them from their problems. For our action to be effective, our compassion must go hand in hand with wisdom, kind heart with reason. It is not just good intentions that count but also skillful action. Personally, I do not care about your beliefs but about the results of your action. And when I look at what Klub Gaja is bringing about, I feel proud to consider myself as one of its friends.*



An *Animal Is Not a Thing* exhibition was shown in several dozen places all over Poland. Here, at ZHP (scouting) regiment HQ, Ostróda, 2010.

Press conference at the Sejm concerning a ban on live horses exports, co-organized with RSPCA, 2000.



Animal Rights Day, Warsaw, 1999.

The happening on behalf of slaughter-bound horses shown in many Polish towns began with the coming of symbolic Trucks of Death, 1999.





Collecting signatures under a proposed ban on live horses slaughter-bound transports during the *Circle of Friends of Animals* educational tour, 2000

The first 250,000 signatures against the slaughter-bound horses transports we handed in to the Sejm Speaker, 2001.



Thousands of colourful Pegasus sent in by children and young people flew in at the Sejm to help us in the campaign *An Animal Is Not a Thing*. Children of the Elementary School No. 344, Warsaw, 2002.

Action at the Sejm and handing in more signatures for the petition against the horses transports that was finally endorsed by 500,000 people, 2003.

My teachers' guidance helps me preserve my own *space of freedom* but also to remain sensitive to suffering of the world, to its needs. However, other religions also speak about protecting the planet, including Christianity, appealing to most Polish people. Today it reminds about that need through the words of Pope Francis as well as parochial priests and ministers. Jan Byrt encourages nature conservation in Szczyrk, a town neighbouring Wilkowice. Rector of a local Lutheran church, he took part in the Klub Gaja Tree Day and his actions (planting trees and posting bird nesting boxes) were backed with such deep conviction that they even earned support of the great sportsman Adam Małysz!

In the actions we take, co-sentience is the guarantee of our perseverance even if the cause seems hopeless. Such was the case of the transports of animals destined to slaughter that first drew our attention out of concern for horses. In the late 1990's, about 100,000 of those animals were exported from Poland every year. They were taken to slaughterhouses, mostly in Italy. Conditions of transportation, as well as of trade in national marketplaces, were appalling. The horses were thoughtlessly exposed to torment and torture. Their basic needs were not met. They did not even have space to be! Crowded in the trucks, they trampled on one another. Many a time, they met their death even before arriving at their destination. Our campaign (run since 1999, as part of *An Animal Is Not a Thing*) raised the awareness of the general public. This led to many other organizations arising to take care of harmed horses. Our mutual efforts brought about improvements in veterinary supervision of horse transports and fairs. We collected over 500,000 signatures to the petition *On Ban of Live Slaughter-Bound*



*Horses Transports* that was brought to the Sejm. The ban was not enacted but the number of the horses exported dropped significantly.

It was co-sentience that dictated the next chapter of the story. In 2000, we saved a horse from the killing, buying out a one-and-a-half-year-old foal from a farm where horses were bred for slaughter. The saved horse's new life started with getting a new and symbolic name Pegaz (Pegasus). He is still with us, we built a stable for him at Wilkowice. A mare named White Lady has lived there, too, for a few years. Volunteers take care of the horses. My daughter Jagoda Bożek is (also as a volunteer) in charge of coordinating those young people and getting done all jobs connected with maintenance of the horses and stables. She is also the one who tells the story of Pegaz and saved horses to school groups visiting the stables.

Klub Gaja saved 54 horses over 13 years, horses that were meant to be slaughtered, as well as those that were eliminated from sports use, diseased or given over by owners who could not or would not care for them anymore. Yet this does not convey the actual scale of the endeavour. Thanks to the tireless Jolanta Migdal coordinating horse related activities at Klub Gaja (including the action *Save Wastepaper, Save Horses*), new bonds are formed between people and animals. On the one hand, there are those who successfully engage in the wastepaper collection. On the other, there are people willing to accept and provide home for horses in need. Besides horseback amateurs, they include agro-tourism farmers, equitation therapy organizations or family-based orphan-



The play *A Short Story of Pegasus that Was an Angel*, Cracow, 2001.



Volunteers with Pegaz, Wilkowice, 2002.

Karmelek, saved thanks to Klub Gaja volunteers, 2006.

Pegaz, the first horse rescued by Klub Gaja. Here with the volunteer fully responsible for his care, 2013.



Building a stable for Pegaz, Wilkowice, 2006.

Wilkowice Elementary School children in an educational class with Pegaz, 2007.



ages. One of these became home for Miriam and Heca – an inseparable couple of a pony and a donkey bought out from a circus. The long list of Klub Gaja horses includes a number of heart-moving stories. Instead of going to slaughter, Myszorka saved from a flooding was given to a farmer grieving a loss of a beloved horse. Prymulka, released from her cowshed prison, was bought out to get another chance as a recreational horse. A whole dynasty of horses saved from an abattoir death got new lives and new names: Broszka, Kropek, Tara, Rymarz... and many, many others.

The Klub Gaja's fifteenth horse was born in a place that is especially dear to us: Special Needs School Complex No. 4 in Sosnowiec. Its mother Drumla (coming from a slaughter horse breeding farm)



Lucek the foal, Klub Gaja's 50th horse, Sosnowiec, 2012.

was donated to the school by our association for equitation therapy. We did not know that Drumla was pregnant. The surprise stallion was born on Friday, 13th of July, 2012! An internet poll decided to name him Lucek. I believe him to be a good omen for the action *Save Wastepaper, Save Horses* and all the people involved in it.

Saving horses that are bound for slaughter does not solve the problem but any initiative taken up on behalf of animals also has educational importance. This kind of impact cannot be exactly measured yet I believe it to be the most important one. In 1994,

## Co-sentience

Philosophy is supposed to be a concept-inventing enterprise. Wisdom is supposed to be its reward, many believe. The first serious confrontation of a child with the world supposedly happens when he or she realizes their inability to enchant reality. This progressive disenchantment of the world is supposed to help us see things as they are.

But we want to get rid of such probabilities, to drop the conditional mode, indeed to find a magical formula. To find one single word whereby everything begins and ends. It is within this circular structure that we find a flywheel for our action, our work. In the beginning was the word. Stripped of its gospel associations, this simply means that we are aware of the power of language. The magical word is co-sentience.

Actually, the concept of co-sentience is not new. Automatically, we juxtapose it with compassion but the difference between the two makes the essence of choice of co-sentience as opposed to pity. Co-sentience essentially differs from pity in that it shuns implying hierarchy. Most of the time, we have pity on the weaker, the minor, the meagre. Our action then comes from a perceived privileged position in a top-down arrangement. Not that there is anything wrong in stepping down, lending a hand to the needy, to show mercy. On the contrary, it is quite laudable. But this course of action does not help to realize a co-sentient vision.

The basic assumption, precondition of co-sentience says: Try and imagine a world where humans do not claim the central place. Picture a world where all beings are equal simply because each of them is given the same gift of life as you. How successful we are in this attempt determines our ability to participate in a sentient community. Co-sentience is not a common form of empathy.



Klub Gaja saved 54 horses that were condemned to slaughter. Now they are well-cared and needed. We support their keep, treatment and therapy, monitoring the situation of all animals given over to adoption.

Horses rescued by Klub Gaja: Dunia, through the action *Save Wastepaper, Save Horses* and Atlanty, through *Save Cartridges, Save Horses* serve for horse-riding therapy of children at the Sosnowiec Special School Complex No. 4, 2012.





It is not a derivative of biological mechanisms, mirror neurons, any kinds of tricks of an organism having to live amongst other organisms. It is labour and trial. It is a life-long project, a spell mediated through childlike naïveté that enables one to go beyond the confines of cynicism.

The postulated co-sentient openness to other beings allows us to shed egocentrism in our dealings with other people and anthropocentrism in relation to non-human living species. If we manage to reduce the weight of our own idiom, foundations of our actions will change. We will lend a hand to those in need not because our imagination is able to place us in their position – which is the basis of sympathy, ultimately being sympathy for our own ideas of self – but because the other has an equally important place in the chain of being. The only difference is that, at THIS moment, it is he/she that needs help, not ME. This is the only outlook that allows us to lean over a shrimp, a hen, a carp no less than over a sexy panther, a sweet panda or a pensive gorilla. (Example taken from J.M. Coetzee's book *Elizabeth Costello*). This is the essence of co-sentience. The rest is just painstaking personal growth.

Klub Gaja effectively blocked Poland's first bullfighting show (at Śląski Stadium, Chorzów). More than 20 years later a popular action led to enactment of a ban on bullfighting in Spain itself (by the Catalanian Parliament in Barcelona). It is the Spanish bullfighting debates to which an influential German daily *Die Welt* (2012) compared Klub Gaja *Carp Is Still Alive* campaign. The comparison is very accurate in my opinion. The world is changing and some outmoded customs must go.



The Pegasus statue made by students with artist Waldemar Rudyk, Ziębice, 2012.



Wastepaper collection at the Comprehensive High School No. 43, Warsaw, 2011.

Students of the Hipolit Cegielski Post-Junior-High School Complex at Ziębice building the Pegasus eco-sculpture for the winner of the *Save Wastepaper, Save Horses* competition, 2012.

Our *Save Wastepaper, Save Horses* action collected nearly 3,100 tons of wastepaper (2003-2014)

The Klub Gaja team and Pegaz – the first horse saved from a slaughter-bound transport, Wilkowice, 2013.





SOLITUDE



The Vistula Day at Warsaw Old Town, 2001.



Colourful and symbolic design of Klub Gaja performances and happenings conveyed our message in simple and direct ways.



The Klub Gaja Dragon at Earth Day celebrations, Warsaw, 2001.

I was born in a moderate sized town, I live in a moderate sized community. In my open meetings with audiences of discussion panels, workshops or seminars, I emphasize where my roots are. The Beskidy Mountains. There, in solitary rambling, I find peace and restore my equipoise that might be disturbed by some turbulent events. It is in these mountains that the Vistula, queen of Polish rivers has her sources. Solitary walks to meet them strengthen and develop one's imagination...

After the spirit of rivers arose in my mind, it became the protagonist of Klub Gaja first street performance, *A Wild River in the Heart of Europe* (Vistula Now campaign). We wanted to show that man's inconsiderate actions such as dam construction will disturb the balance of the natural world... and that the Vistula Spirit may knock down the dam! (In subsequent years the spirit was aided in freeing the rivers by the red Klub Gaja dragon.) We showed the story of the wild river dozens of times, in many places across Poland, e.g. during our educational tours alongside the Vistula, Earth Day celebrations and arts festivals. We also showed it in England. Back in Poland, it was televised by BBC World News. The journalists showed us with the Włocławek dam in the background. This looked very impressive, as the performance was exquisitely prepared. Rehearsals to it (as to many other ones) were often preceded by whole rituals of preparation. Our shrieks, as impatient neighbours would say, meant we had to go out of town and into some meadows. Mowing the grass, bringing the props, mounting the stage set lasted for hours, still volunteers were not lacking.

The preparation for the *Short Story of Pegasus that Was an Angel* involved even deeper work. Its idea had to do with Klub Gaja actions against atrocious conditions in which horses were transported to slaughter. It arose a few months after we bought out the



Street performance, *A Wild River in the Heart of Europe*, Warsaw, 2000.

first horse, saving it from death. It was a poetic story of the world, Earth, man and animals. The spectators were witnessing the creation of the sun, the moon, then the man, the fish, the bird. Life unfolded harmoniously between the creatures, according to the will of God and man. We were showing that a space of unlimited possibilities engenders ideas and cooperation. The concept of passing away also arose because man is capable of destroying his most splendid creation. However, he can also wake up from the condition of destructiveness and inflicting suffering, to lend a hand to another person and start building an ark – in and outside himself.

One character in the *Short Story* (played by Paweł Grzybowski) spoke with the words of a song by Jacek Kaczmarski, Poland's most acclaimed 20<sup>th</sup> century bard (who agreed for the song passage to be used in Klub Gaja's performance): *Build the ark before the Flood...*

Pegasus that appeared on the stage towards the end of the show represented transformation and new possibilities – new ways leading to the old truth that the world is a place for man and animals to share.

The venues where the performance was shown included Cieszyn Theatre Festival, Social Communications Festival at the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, and at an international Ashoka meeting in Nidzica. *Pegasus That Was an Angel* expressed what I tried to put in action/ with Klub Gaja on a daily basis – helping the Earth. Ryszard Praszkiel (psychologist, chief

Build the ark before the Flood!  
 Summon all your strength to do it!  
 Build the ark before the Flood:  
 Even if the crowd will mock your work!  
 What's most precious needs to be salvaged  
 And after all, there is so much of it already...  
 Build the ark before the Flood!  
 Turn down any unnecessary gesture today.

*Jacek Kaczmarski\**

\* J. Kaczmarski, *Noah's Ark*, translated by Agata ("luffik"), <http://lyricstranslate.com/en/arka-noego-noahs-ark.html>, accessed on November 7, 2014 (translator's note).



A snapshot of the film *Art for the Earth*, from the performance *The Story of Pegasus that Was an Angel*, 2001.

trainer of international staff at Ashoka Innovators for the Public) commented on it: *The performance evokes metaphysics of Greek myths. There is a fate that condemns the animal-man, there is some inevitability of suffering and death. Humans, pawns in the hands of Greek gods, dance the Dance of Inevitability and the Dance of Suffering. Makes one shiver. It is on our behalf that Klub Gaja celebrates that mystery. At least, on my behalf.*

In *Living World*, a street performance we created three years later, we tried to portray the situation of rivers endangered by regulation. Fish, bird and other animal spirits joined the Spirit of Nature in fight for freedom of the river that the demon of power and money wanted to enslave. Hence the appearance of a big black Regulator puppet bringing a new river image – a black ribbon where fish skeletons were painted. That dead river is contrasted with a river that is clean and free – beautiful winding blue cloth surrounded by illustrations of fish, the moon, the sun and birds. Audiences were captured by the actors' masks, as well as their movements and music. We presented the performance during the *Nova Polska 2004* Polish Season in France. The scenery was fantastic: the sources of the Loire, river saved by the efforts of environmentalists opposing the construction of numerous dams. The following performance took place in front of the city hall in 800-years old Le Puy. We were invited to take part in the Polish Season by Adam Mickiewicz Institute that was preparing the program commissioned by Ministry of Education

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## Solitude

The reality we live in is noisy, gaudy, and constantly, sometimes aggressively stimulating. We are almost programmed to possess many things and consume huge amounts of experiences. The modern-time injunction can be summarized in one word: *MUCH!*

On a few moments' reflection, this word *much* left at the end of a sentence or, better, spoken loudly, reveals the absurdity of such attitude: much of what? At best, of everything! And what is everything? Everything means exactly as much as nothing – our contact with either is very limited, to say the least. But the *everything* wins the dialectical struggle of concepts. Transforming quantity into overwhelming mass, *everything* overwhelms us, absorbing bit by bit until we all roll on in a formless but glittery homogenous lump. Meanwhile, the infamous *nothing* remains the domain of freaky monks or incorrigible nihilists on the verge of suicide.

Street performance *The Living World* was shown during the *Nova Polska 2004* Polish Season in France.



Street performance *The Living World* at the sources of the Loire and in Le Puy town center, 2004.



and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In my press interviews at that time (as it was a big event) I repeatedly stressed that natural environment is the nation's heritage as much as its language, traditions or arts.

A few years later, Klub Gaja was faced with one more water-related theme for a performance. Alarming scientific data was coming up: 85% of world fish resources are threatened with reckless overfishing. Fish resources consumed by Europeans are now too few to replenish themselves. Too many and too fast are fish taken from oceans and seas... So we created the performance *The Gold Fish Story* and joined the OCEAN2012, an international coalition for changes in European Fishing Policy that would stop overfishing and enable fair and equitable use of healthy fisheries.

*The Gold Fish Story* presents a fish life from its birth. The heroine has a mum, a dad, her own world and life. She also meets a fisher. He is happy as long as he can fish. But a day comes when there are no more fish because the fisher always wanted more and more. No fish – no job for the fisher. The message was unambiguous: if there are no fish, there will be no fishermen. This did not prevent the play good reception at Hel where we played it both for tourists and local residents, predominantly fishers. Their initial resentment gave way to friendly feelings.

*The Gold Fish* was shown at Polish seaside as well as abroad – in Ostend, Belgium, on the occasion of the symposium on Improved Fisheries and Science Partnerships as Policy Drivers organized by the Belgian Presidency in cooperation with the European Commission and Flemish government. However, before *The Gold Fish* found its way to Ostend, it flashed its glittering attire at the Ministry of Environment. On the behalf of some environmental organizations, I was bringing the Minister a petition to defend Polish rivers, at the same time expressing our gratefulness for changing the principles of siting of small water power stations. Undersecretary Janusz Zaleski greeted our delegation with words suitable for my guise: *Your visit, Gentlemen, or perhaps School, contradicts the adage that fish have no voice for you are actually quite vocal.* Needless to say, a delegation like that had never been seen at the Ministry before.

Meanwhile I learned that working together on a performance or happening is tremendously important for team building. It consolidates the group and at the same time allows members to discover their individual potential. In very sad circumstances – just as our musician Bartłomiej Szulakowski died – our accountant

So much for jest and metaphor. In a world of the speeding lump, being alone is an unwanted, frightening condition. We are so eager to confront our own life with that of the other – whether in a relationship, at work, in family, or in a group – that once left alone, we panic. Panic in turn engenders nervousness, and eventually whole societies are marked with neurotic agitation, goading them to engage in countless absurd actions and stimulate countless nonsensical needs. Let things move, and move much!

One opportunity to leave that place of confusion is by rediscovering the value of solitude. By tearing down the curtain of boisterous “movement” and allowing oneself a clearer vision. John Gray closes his excellent *Straw Dogs* with the following sentence:

*Other animals do not need a purpose in life. A contradiction to itself, the human animal cannot do without one. Can we not think of the aim of life as being simply to see?*

Seeing is not the same as knowing. Or is it? What is the relation between the two? There is a reason why the last chapter including the words above is entitled “As It Is”. Hence a simple conclusion: to know is to see things as they are. Knowledge comes from solitary observation, from a contemplative attitude towards the world. We are not talking about scientific knowledge which often comes from experimentation, from the work of large groups. We focus more on the intuitive knowing that results from insight into reality. This is no magic, illumination or the like. Rather, it is a special kind of concentration leading to conviction. The conviction may concern reality as such but more important are its practical ramifications. To have such conviction is a must for a leader, a chief, a guide or whatever we may call such individuals. It alone implies power necessary to draw in people willing to act selflessly. Only in a group of such people can trust be



*The Gold Fish Story* played at the seal station of Gdańsk University Marine Station, Hel, 2008.

*The Gold Fish Story* in Ostend, Belgium, 2010.



Halina Sobańska discovered her new abilities. Bartek passed away all of a sudden, leaving utter emptiness for his family and for us, still the performance had to go ahead. So I said to Halinka, who was usually standing aside and silent, *Halina, you shall play*. She had never done that before. Never considered. Yet she overcame her fear and doubt to stand at the drum, alone. The show was good, and a new chapter opened in Halinka's life. I hope the audiences of our performances and happenings will remember at least two of her roles: as the Gold Fish's mother wearing her white wedding dress, and the silent woman at the Christmas table from one of our happenings on behalf of carp. At that time she was only wearing a blood-red evening dress while the cold at the Ministry of Agriculture front yard approached 20 degrees Celsius below zero!

Big and gaudy open air shows were giving us a chance to directly reach out to people with our ideas. We wanted to move the spectators in their everyday space, one they had known as fixed and unvarying. They were also important in another practical way: Environmental groups had been perceived in negative ways, their message summarily rejected. Arts were helping change that attitude. A well-made show can attract a lot of viewers, not just the declared supporters. And this is the idea of our art work that our name expressed from the very beginning: Ecological and Cultural Association.

BWA (Art Expositions Bureau) Galeria Bielska in Bielsko-Białej has been our friendly place for many years. Together, we realized a number of projects combining environmentalism with fine and performing arts. There were expositions, happenings (*Taming the Wild Beasts with Fire, A Mandala for the Earth*), conferences featuring important people like Kitty Ross, head of the Thames Festival in England.

built and interpersonal hierarchies are built naturally rather than through confrontation. Initially and finally, there is always a leader, or even better, a guru – ethymologically, the one who sweeps darkness away.

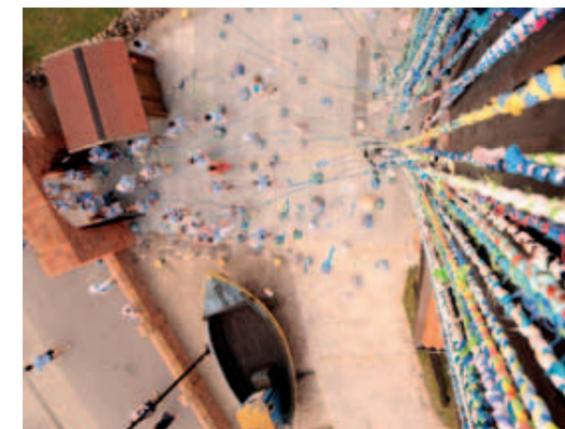


Warsaw mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz and Ministry of Environment undersecretary Beata Jaczewska joined the plait making, Warsaw, 2013.

*Rivers for the Climate, Plaits for the Rivers*, a performance made together with artist Cecylia Malik. The plaits flowed – just like rivers and streams – down the main entrance of the Palace of Culture and Science, Warsaw, 2013.

Young people weaving Plaits for the Rivers in front of the Scientific Information Centre and Academic Library (CINIiBA) in Katowice on the World Water Day, *Adapt a River* program, 2014.

The Plaits for Rivers finally made it to the Bay of Puck, flowing in from the Museum of Fishery tower. The Fish Day at Hel, *Adapt a River*, 2014.

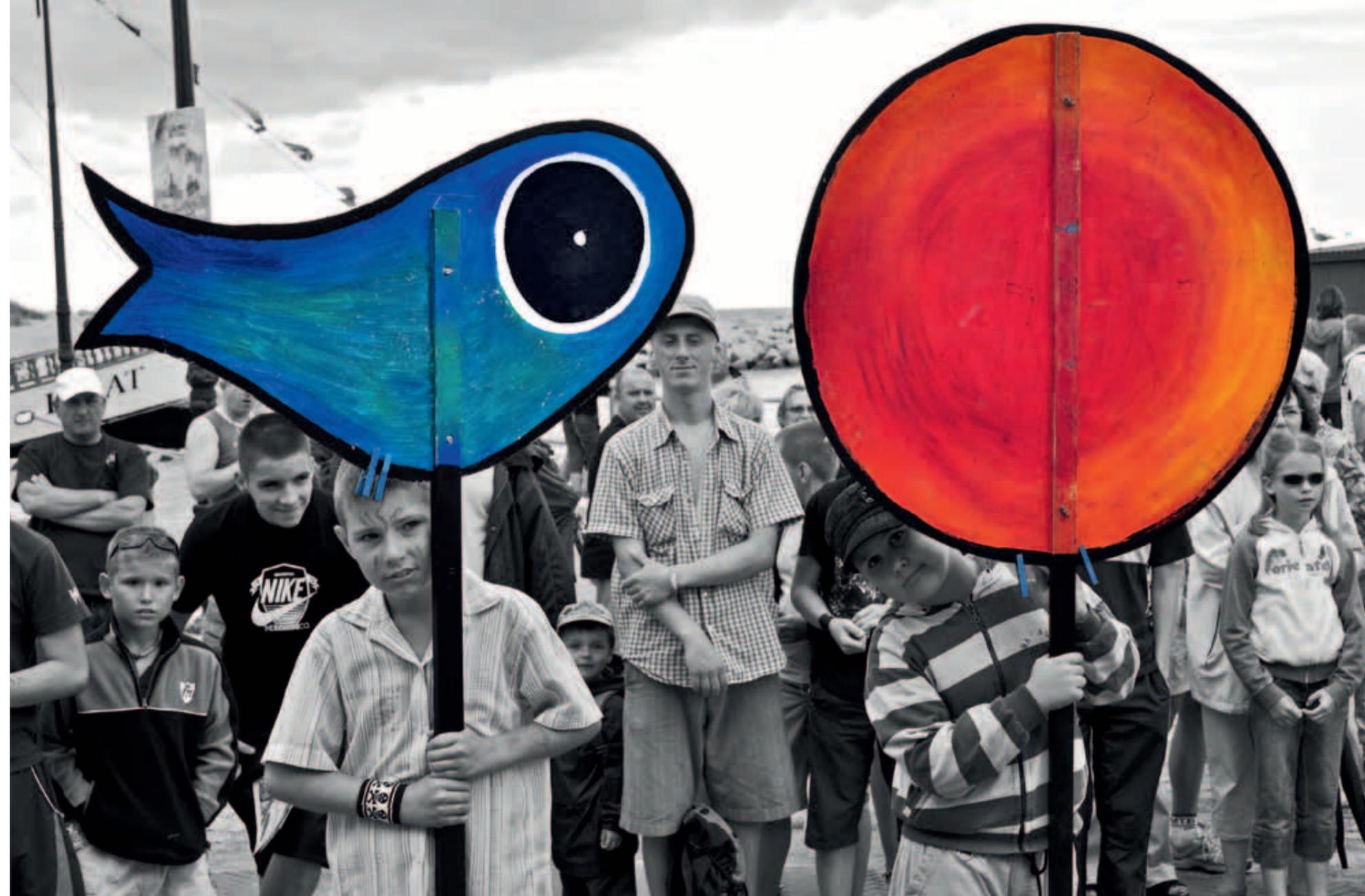


Agata Szmalczerz, director of Galeria Bielska, thus refers to our mutual projects combining arts with environmental action: *Though its message may be difficult, even painful, Klub Gaja doesn't leave the audiences with the feeling of helplessness: while highlighting the dangers, it also gives hope for change. The team leader Jacek Bożek, who practiced in Jerzy Grotowski's theatre as well as participated in tribal rituals, knows how to imbue the performance with both artistic and ritual qualities, evoking a spiritual experience.*

We also established creative cooperation with the Baniailuka puppet theatre in Bielsko-Biała. Alexander Andrzej Latawiec (1930-2010), one of its chief directors, approached us with an idea of a new interpretation of... the Red Riding Hood tale. That is how a vegetarian wolf came to being, motivated by the director's intention to come to terms with his personal history of hunting, to readmit the animals their rightful place in nature and to show the young audiences that man does not have to kill. To add



*The Great Comeback of the Salmon to the Biała Tarnowska river, happening at Grybów, 2014.*



splendour to the premiere, he arranged an exposition of a brilliant wildlife photographer Artur Tabor (1968-2010). We enjoyed cooperating with him over a long time and keep using his photos even now.

Our creativity also supported human rights actions (including the Solidarity with Tibet Day). Our program *Let the Others not be Strangers* and its accompanying activities, happenings and graffiti arts brought attention to the needs of societies and peoples living in bondage and poverty. The talented street-art practitioner Dariusz Paczkowski brought his heart and soul to this work. He never denied Klub Gaja his time, always helpful. Błażej Sobański was his

*The Gold Fish Story. The audiences themselves supported the stage set against the strong wind, Kołobrzeg, 2009.*

*Historia złotej rybki. Scenografię, którą przewracał silny wiatr, podtrzymywali sami widzowie, Kołobrzeg 2009.*

*Workshop with Daisuke Yoshimoto, Japanese butoh master at Klub Gaja centre Bajka, Bielsko-Biała, 2004.*

*Performance Restore the Balance in front of Ministry of Environment Protection, co-prepared with fringe theatre Komuna Otwock, Warsaw, 1998.*





Happening *Fish Do Have a Voice* involving school students from Limanowa county, Limanowa, 2009.



*Gold Fish* sharing a consumer guide on responsible fish shopping, Hel, 2009.



*Gold Fish* handing in the statement of position of OCEAN2012 to the EU Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Ostend, 2010.

*Gold Fish* submitting the NGO open letter on rivers to the Ministry of Environment, Warsaw, 2009.

many years companion in making graffiti on ecological, social and political themes.

The diversity of our art activities required a great deal of work. We were helped by other artists: film-maker Robert Baliński (his picture *An Animal Is Not a Thing* received honourable mention at a documentaries festival) and Daisuke Yoshimoto, Japanese butoh dance master who revealed hidden abilities of our bodies and invited us to take part in the prologue of his performance *Eros and Tanathos*. The Sound Theatre Atman released my expression for the ritual dance of the Vistula Spirit. And in our performances in front of the Sejm and Ministry of Environment, we

were repeatedly supported by Komuna Otwock, an off-theatre group.

The creativity of Klub Gaja, summarized by the *Art for the Earth* watchword, is a vehicle – a practical means and spiritual process – rather than the goal, as Jerzy Grotowski would say. What inspires my creative endeavour is the experience of solitude and memory of impermanence – and it was art that helped me overcome my weaknesses and doubts. Which were many for the leader of a group that has lasted for 25 years. The role of a founder and head of an organization that succeeds in making its ideas reality is not easy. In a sense, I am always alone, on the other hand I carry a huge burden of responsibility. If I stumble, it will be to the detriment of the group as a whole. Neither can I fall into self-righteousness and deem myself infallible. I am always forced to correct my own ways and the ways the organization works. The people must not stand still because the organization means constant growth. So their work has to be appraised with regard to the reasons why the association was formed.

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More than 10 years ago, I realized a civil society organization can have dangerous enemies. In a free Poland, myself and Klub Gaja were ruthlessly attacked by some politicians and people who for whatever reason believed they are the only ones to be right. They had no qualms about using state institutions, courts and media to suppress and humiliate those whose thinking goes against the doctrine they believe in. Deeming our activity harmful, they were determined to destroy the association at any cost. We won but the taste of victory was not sweet. I was sick, both literally and figuratively... At such times, my lifeline is arts and... awareness of impermanence. This is what helps me overcome the difficulties. Aren't they always temporary in the long haul?



The Silent March street event during the European Week Against Racism, Bielsko-Biala, 2002.

Gaia Warriors during the happening *Great Comeback of the Salmon*, Katowice, 2012.



Action to protect the unique values of the Vistula and against the river regulation, in front of the Sejm, 1999.

*The Living World* performance, the Great River Regulator, Warsaw, 2005.





ACTION

Klub Gaja is active in great many areas. Conserving nature, rescuing animals, running environmental education programs, making art to tell about the Earth's beauty as well as its problems. We try to be co-sentient – to listen in and observe closely who and what needs our action.

Our first direct action concerned protecting trees from being cut down. One year later, we actually started to plant them. And it was at the request of the City Office, after it was approached by one estate residents. The trees were already grown up and needed to be replanted to obscure the sight of a cemetery. In that action, we were helped by soldiers and... punks from Klub Autyzm in Bielsko, a venue of independent young people's artistic initiatives. That unlikely alliance – environmentalists, punks, soldiers and town officials – turned out workable. More and more plantings in my hometown followed, often joined by students of various schools and the city councillor Irena Sienicka. In 1998, we organized the action *Trees Call for Help* concerning the trees in Bielsko-Biała Stary Rynek (Old Market) that were to go in the name of modernizing the image of the place (sic!). A happening with the Green Knight and flyer distribution activated people so we were able to present the city council over 2,500 signatures from residents in favour of sparing the trees. A few years later, when genuine work started designed to restore and reshape Bielsko old town, trees proved indispensable.

The idea of the *Tree Day* was born in 2003. Its name emulated an earlier Klub Gaja project *The Vistula Day* wherein more than 100 Polish towns and cities engaged in the 1990's. The inauguration took place in Bielsko-Biała on October, 10. Renowned social activists and artists planted some trees in the newly founded Stars Park. Jerzy Owsiak, head of the Great Christmas Aid Orchestra (WOŚP) foundation, was there. This is what he had to say as we invited him to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tree Day (2012): *Just as we have a program of first aid instruction and kids take it to their hearts, so I remember similar tree planting actions from my childhood. It has remained in me, and if I hear the call 'We're planting trees', I am there. I might not come for other kinds of actions for I am distanced from that but to this kind of event – yes, because I know this is no official or poster ecology, but a real one.* Actress Julia Pietrucha, Klub Gaja Ambassador, has similar memories: *I heard about some tree planting when I was a child so it is great to be part of it now. Happily, there is so much media coverage about it now. Once the action is promoted and publicized, it will become even more fruitful.*

More than 550,000 people got involved in the Tree Day program over 2003-2013, and we planted nearly 700,000 trees.



Jurek (Jerzy) Owsiak planted a tree during the first Tree Day inauguration, Bielsko-Biała, 2003.



Youngest Tree Day participants, crèche toddlers, Limanowa, 2008.



Third Age University students and members of the Pakła Ecological and Cultural Association planting trees for peace, Międzyzrzecz, 2010.

Saving trees at Bielsko-Biała old town, 1998.



The first trees being planted together with punks and soldiers, Bielsko-Biała, 1990.



And so Klub Gaja has a 11 years history of active public education on climate change and its mitigation by encouraging tree planting and protection, theme and field classes for schools, locating monumental trees, organizing happenings, performances and public actions for trees. We want tree care to be perceived as creative activity which can be edifying for people of all ages, hence the formula of a day of celebration, invoking joy, play and sense of community.

Involving more than 550,000 people over 11 years allowed for the plantation of nearly 700,000 trees. Lasy Państwowe (National Forests) have been a Tree Day strategic partner since the beginning, providing assistance and sharing expertise. Foresters invite participants for field classes, visit schools, show how and where to plant trees, suggest appropriate tree species, and also provide seedlings free of charge. The detailed plan of Tree Day celebrations is up to their organizers and actions they take on. Such actions should help carry the Tree Day message to all kinds of people, groups, organizations, companies. What matters most is not the number of trees planted but the spreading of informa-

The Tree Day is more than planting: it also involves numerous initiatives – open air festivals and picnics, art and literary competitions, theatre performances, concerts and happenings focused on trees.



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tree Day inauguration with Barbara Labuda, junior minister from the Chancellery of the President of Poland and Mira Stanisławska-Meysztowicz, president of the Our Earth Foundation, Chojnów Forest Division, 2004.

9<sup>th</sup> Tree Day opening at Ryszard Kapuściński Trail, with presence of Alicja Kapuścińska (the writer's widow), head of the Presidential Chancellery Jacek Michałowski, and Klub Gaja Ambassadors, actors Magdalena Popławska and Bartłomiej Topa, Warsaw, 2011.



Tree Day inaugurated in Upper Silesia, in front of the Silesian Library with film director Magdalena Piekorz and author Wojciech Kuczol, Katowice, 2011.



The Karma Kamtsang Buddhist Union at Garbnik, Tree Day 2011.

An Augsburg Evangelical Lutheran parish for the Tree Day, Szczyrk, 2010.



tion on the condition of the Planet and engaging people to protect it on a daily basis. Actress Magdalena Popławska, Klub Gaja Ambassador, points out: *If we live in cities and have some trees outside our windows, let's appreciate that. Contact with nature, even when it's brief and unconscious as it were, on the way to work or school, is very important to human beings. In my life, it's tremendously important.* And Barbara Labuda (oppositionist of the pre-1989 regime, later MP and a Minister in the Chancellery of the President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, later again Ambassador of Republic of Poland to Luxembourg) who participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tree Day inauguration, now comments: *Courageous and sometimes unconventionally expressed activity of Klub Gaja, aiming at noble goals and their charismatic leader Jacek Bożek opened many Polish people's eyes to the issues of environmental protection and cruelty to animals, changing public behaviours for better. Great thanks!*

The Tree Day, inaugurated on October 10 every year, is also intended to promote peace in the world. It is with this intention that participants choose the trees they will plant. Planting trees with Klub Gaja in this way took place in 34 more countries, including Argentina, Egypt, Israel, Japan and Thailand. The Tree Day is also mentioned in the album on the UN *Billion Trees for the Planet* campaign (under patronage of Peace Noble Prize winner Wangari Maathai). Each year we update the campaign register with the number of trees planted under our Tree Day. For three years, we carried out the Tree Day with a partner from the remote Iceland, Skógræktarfélag Grindavíkur (Grindavík Forest Nursery Club). Trees are afforded special care and attention in Iceland's cold and uninviting climate, therefore the Tree Day celebration there had extraordinary significance. Our Icelandic friends go on planting trees.



Jacek Krywut, mayor of Bielsko-Biała, and Hubert Kobański, Bielsko Forest Inspector. We are discussing the 100-year-old alpinarium on Mt. Szyndzielnia, Tree Day 2011.

Wish Tree where we posted our wishes sent in by schools from all over the country, Tree Day 2007.

Koźminek Elementary School children look for ancient trees that can become nature monuments, Tree Day 2006.

Tree planting in the sensory garden of the Niegocińskie Skrzaty ("Niegocin Goblins") kindergarten, Warsaw, Tree Day 2010.

Heads of diplomatic missions at Krynki Forest Division, Tree Day 2008.



We also took the Tree Day message to Copenhagen, distributing over 10,000 certified oak seeds from Białowieża primeval forest during the COP15 Global Climate Summit. The trees were provided by the Forest Seed Production Administration (Biuro Nasiennictwa Leśnego), thanks to the National Forests support. The acorns, placed in envelopes with a planting instruction under the title *Sow the Seeds for a Good Climate*, were in much demand.

But Klub Gaja is not just about trees... Ever since our activity began, we were also concerned with rivers. It is a tough subject in Poland, in spite of rivers being our valuable natural, social and cultural heritage. We are still looking for new ways to stop the Poles turning their back on their rivers, streams, lakes and ultimately, the Baltic Sea. We have also worked to make them pro-



*Every Leaf Absorbs CO<sub>2</sub>* action during the COP19 Climate Conference in Warsaw, Tree Day 2013.



The coloured leaves decorated a tree in Bielsko-Biała city centre for a few months, Tree Day 2013. The captions say *Every Leaf Absorbs CO<sub>2</sub>*

Recycled leaves with QR code links to the web Ecological Guide in front of the Ministry of Environment, Warsaw, Tree Day 2013.

Tree planting during the COP19 Climate Conference in the Wydma Żerańska woods, Warsaw, Tree Day 2013.



Ambassadors of COP19 participating nations planting trees at the Tree Day inauguration in Warsaw, 2013.





Working together to clean up the Sikornik river united environmentalists, school students and volunteers. Bielsko-Biala, 1997.

The "Syrena" car hauled out of a stream between two housing estates, Bielsko-Biala, 1993.

By engaging almost 148,000 people in the Adopt a River program, we extended care to, or adopted (2005-2014) more than 680 rivers and water bodies in nearly 1,300 places.

tect, care for and see the potential of those places. The innovative *Vistula Now* campaign (launched in 1994 and repeatedly awarded or distinguished) found its extension in programs *How to Save a River* and *Adopt a River*. To me, adopting a river means assuming the role of its protector and promoter in local community. Rather than just cleaning up the shores and waters, it is also about observing life buzzing around it, promoting the culture of water efficiency and building partnership for rivers; as well as happenings and World Water Day celebrations which is always the opening day for our program. Each of those Klub Gaja inspired activities takes people... to the river! They turn their face



A tour alongside the Vistula including graffiti *Big Jump – Leap into the Queen* opened the *Adopt a River 2005* program.

Poland's first Big Jump. Over 100 people entered the Vistula waters in Warsaw, *Adopt a River 2005*.



Minister of Environment Marcin Korolec joined the Warsawians into the water, *Big Jump 2013*.



Limanowa county governor testing water in the Sowlina, Limanowa, *Adopt a River* 2007.



Water experiments at the Słoneczna Kraina ("Sunny Land") Non-Public Kindergarten at Łęgów, *Adopt a River* 2010.



*A Wild River in the Heart of Europe*, Earth Day, Warsaw, 2000.

Vistula Now campaign protesting at the Council of Ministers Office, Warsaw, 2000.

Seminar on the role of dams in the light of the report of the World Commission on Dams, Chancellery of the Senate, Warsaw, 2001.

to it. Opening the tap, they are aware of connecting with the river and the sea where all rivers flow in. That is why our repeated educational tours for rivers and their queen Vistula typically end at the seaside. Over the past nine years, thanks to almost 106,000 people engaging in the *Adopt a River* program, 670 rivers and other water bodies in 1050 locations were taken into care, or adopted. The program was nominated to the UE Best Practice title for environmental programs.

So I get sentimental when I think about our first actions for rivers, when it all started 25 years ago. The action was the simplest possible: cleaning up! With our volunteers, we cleaned up many



Conference at the RP Parliament *Vistula Now – The Vistula as a Pathway into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 1996.

2<sup>nd</sup> international seminar on Dams – Water – Life with guest participants from abroad including Roberto Epple, Bielsko-Biala, 2005.



A procession of humans, fish and plaits flowed along the Puck Bay shore towards the Museum of Fishery, Fish Day at Hel, *Adopt a River* 2014.



Big Jump into the Bay of Puck, Hel, *Adopt a River* 2012.



The Big Jump 2014 took place in almost 60 places around Poland. In Warsaw, Minister of Environment Maciej Grabowski and Warsaw deputy mayor Michał Olszewski joined us into the water, *Adopt a River* 2014.

nameless streams in Bielsko-Biala and around it. We also cleaned... bus stops (at night)! This we did for money which made the essential part of Klub Gaja budget at the time – besides our private monies – because the times when our programs would receive some public funding were yet to come. It bears mentioning that it was not until 5 years since the group formation that we were able to open our first office. It was created in a cellar in the centre of Bielsko-Biala, repaired by ourselves. In similar ways we prepared each subsequent Klub Gaja HQ. In Bielsko-Biala, one was at an attic in Plac Chrobrego and another, the Bajka villa at Cygański Las. In Wilkowice, it is the building of a former animal clinic.



The Bialka river, adopted by Pachy Elementary School children, *Adopt a River* 2011.

A room in Kindergarten No. 2 in Chodzież transformed into sea depths to celebrate the river festival, *Adopt a River* 2010.



The Great Comeback of the Salmon to the Biała Tarnowska happening as part of the Cracow Regional Water Management Administration and Adopt a River programs, Grybów, 2014.

That our present office (the building rented with the help of Wilkowice municipality) is located where a vet clinic was is a special punch line to the actions we have taken on behalf of animals. We have been taking them since 1990 when we arranged the first exposition on the role of animals in culture, entitled *Why?* and later presented in dozens of cities and towns in Poland. There were posters, photographs, publications, street actions, happenings and lectures. One year later, we started a campaign for animals used or rather misused in circuses, and initiated nationwide vegetarian congresses, later transformed to *Earth Now* congresses (all in all, there were nine of them). We ran the campaign *Animal Is Not a Thing* for a number of years. Our *We Help Animals* program became a formal continuation of our diverse actions for animals. Through it, many wild animals that needed quick help were saved, as in numerous cases for intervention that were reported to Klub Gaja. To name a few examples: a little bittern (the smallest of European herons) found by some property guards; a roe deer from flooded fields; a young female badger whose nest was destroyed by high water; hundreds of sand martins that nested in a building-site excavation (following a Klub Gaja intervention, the developer sus-



The Friends of the Biała Przemyska Society in Sławków assumed the care of the river in their neighbourhood. *Adopt a River* 2013.



Kromolów District Residents Council in Zawiercie adopted the Warta sources, *Adopt a river* 2013.

pended the works until the birds flew away with their young). I hope such actions leads to changes in people's behaviour towards animals.

Klub Gaja efforts with the Ministry of Environment and in expert circles related to zoos brought about/resulted in the release of two female bears, Basia and Kasia, that were kept in a tiny zoo in Leszno. They were kept in small, inadequate cages, ill-fed and exposed to constant noise. Now they live in a large area shelter in Germany. They are no longer an example of human arrogance towards animals that can be witnessed, especially by children, in that kind of zoos.

A wholly different dimension of Klub Gaja activities are those dedicated to farm animals. The scale of the problem here is enormous. A major way to alleviate it depends on right consumer choices. But the main reason why we should be looking for a systemic solution is the massive emissions of greenhouse gases from such farms. For this reason, already for a few years, Klub Gaja has run a new program *Helping Animals, We Are Protecting the Climate*. We were the first ones in Poland to bring that relation to attention when we published a Polish version of the English report *Global Warning: Climate Change and Farm Animal Welfare* (by Compassion in World Farming) highlighting aggravating impact of factory farming on climate change. When encouraging diet changes (eliminating or reducing meat consumption) we were pointing out to two particular outcomes: improving animal welfare (the fewer factory farms the more small farms providing better conditions for animals) and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Throughout the country, the program participants organized an Animal Rights Day with a motto *Change the Climate at Your Table*.



Exhibition *Shop for Eggs with the Head On* at the Earth Day, Warsaw, 2007.

## Action

Many people are habituated to frequently use the word *pragmatism* or describe their attitude as *pragmatic*, meaning effective, focused on realistic assessment of circumstances in which they act. In the world today, to act pragmatic means to do the right thing: maximize the profits, minimize the losses.

When you look into company, organizational, or agency folders you often come across statements like: *Our philosophy of action is...* or *Our philosophy of action focuses on...* We do not pay much attention to this phrase but we should because it points out to the original orientation of pragmatic action which is philosophy of truth. Yes, the origin of pragmatism was an attempt to take a stance on one of the most ancient philosophical issues: the concept of truth.

In pragmatism, utility is the criterion for truth. Propositions are true so long as they are effective. It is clearly visible in empirical sciences, where propositions and theories are postulated to be true unless and until experiential circumstances arise that refute them. To put it simply, a theory is true as long as it works. In a secularized world, we increasingly think about religions in the same way – as manmade proposition systems with their practical ramifications that allow one to live, ie. act, in certain ways. All elements bordering on metaphysics such as revealed truth are set aside.

How do we use these building blocks from the border of philosophy to outline the ideology of an environmental movement? A movement that certainly wishes to be modern, ie. effective, pragmatic, ie. utilitarian, yet at the same time old-fashioned – invoking concepts such as truth, goodness, rightness, faith. In a reality that so desperately tries to be post-ideological and intently

*Free Hen* happening. The bird of paradise was convincing children that the hen is also a bird, Warsaw, 2011.



An Eurogroup manifestation in front of the Ministry of Agriculture concerning the Animal Welfare Action Plan, Luxembourg, 2006.

Teachers and librarians of Elementary School No. 47 in Cracow organized an action *Free Hen*, 2006.



We were amongst the first Polish NGOs to go spreading information highlighting existing different kinds of hen farms and the respective egg stamps (2008). We conducted a survey in Visegrad Group nations (Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary) concerning egg sales in big retail chains. The report titled like the whole campaign *Shop for Eggs with the Head On* was published in five languages (additionally, in English). Four years later, following a years' long campaign by Eurogroup for Animals, poultry farmers in all EU countries were obliged to introduce larger cages, equipped with fittings that help the birds preserve their natural reflexes.

Supported by Stockholm based Fish Secretariat, we were able to create the program *Fish Do Have a Voice*. The meetings, lectures, consumer guides and the happening *The Gold Fish Story* were designed to make consumers aware of the fact that their choices affect the fishing targeting. The program aroused a great deal of interest. Even in the remote from the sea Limanowa county (Małopolska voivodeship) numerous schoolchildren joined in to form *a fish of human bodies*.

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Due to our activities, we have been dubbed *a special force of compassion, long distance runners or... lagged-effect teachers*. Actions of Klub Gaja certainly involve cooperation but occasionally also confrontation, particularly when it comes to helping local communities face up to their authorities' decisions or plans. It is not clear to everybody that you can act on behalf of animals and nature solely out of the conviction that it is another way of safeguarding fundamental values. Fish, frogs, hens, bushes – there is no pathos and power there, and never will be. Yet, the world is actually made of those sorts of beings.

distances itself from any philosophical assumptions, how can we admit: *Yes, we do have a guiding principle; we believe in this and this?* The task is daunting as the arguments unrelated to economic, preferably short-term, profit and loss are often weak ones, "incompatible with contemporary realities". This is why we need to go deeper and find an internal sanction for our action rather than referring to external interest-based determinants. Such an attitude requires a belief or faith that the foundation assumed will continue to show us our true north until the end.

Another question arises: these considerations lead us to affirm a certain consistency; is this consistency useful? Does it meet the pragmatic criterion?

We often meet people who assert consistency of their actions but most of the times this only means consistency in headlong striving to achieve a goal. We want to shift the emphasis to consistency expressed in being faithful to and having faith in the legitimacy of the chosen path. Our action then is not determined by the goal, which probably cannot be attained in a desirable form within a lifetime. Hence the option for a continuous path and extension of the pragmatic criterion by including faith in what is right. Sounds reckless? In the long run, only things that are right can be useful. Rightness, faith, conviction, truth – only these concepts so remote from cynicism can propel us to right and consistent action. Following this line, we come to shift the meaning of the pragmatic maxim saying that propositions are true or useful when they are effective. Sure, but more than anything else, they must be right.



First church service in animals' intention, Bielsko-Biala, 1995.

Students of the Myslowice Junior High School No. 3 preparing the happening *An Animal Is Not a Thing* for the Animal Rights Day during an art workshop, 2008.

Established by Klub Gaja in 1997, the Animal Rights Day is celebrated in many places in Poland.

The happening *An Animal Is Not a Thing* at the Silesian Library, Katowice, 2008.





COOPERATION

Klub Gaja is cemented by cooperation. Internal cooperation starts between ourselves, at the Association office. It all depends on the degree to which each one of us is willing to share about what they are up to and seek other people's advice. My advisors, besides Klub Gaja members, include Radek Gawlik, Jacek Engel, Janusz Okrzesik, Piotr Gliński, Piotr Bożek, Mira Stanisławska-Meysztowicz, Leon Zawadzki, Maria Pieniżek, Lama Rinchen and many many others.

Cooperation is one of the basic principles guiding our actions. We promote it in all our environmental education programs, campaigns and events. It is what breeds trust that is necessary to build social capital and further the common good.

After 1989, once the Poles got intoxicated with freedom and democracy, they started to act in their own self-interests. It was a hard time for Klub Gaja. We wanted to be effective and for that, cooperation with others was essential. But most companies and institutions were at the time focused on themselves and had no plans to engage in protecting values such as natural environment. Things are different today. Public debates all over the world include climate change, dwindling natural resources and resulting economic and social problems. No one can ignore such issues anymore. Klub Gaja always addresses citizens first. They are the ones who make up civil society organizations, work at work places, manage companies, teach children and young people, create art, perform all sorts of jobs. Citizens are simply everywhere! Effective civil action largely relies on group work ability, and conservationist actions prove especially successful when taking a cooperative form. Over the past 10 years, we managed to engage over 670,000 people in genuine actions for nature and animals (within programs: *Tree Day*, *Adopt a River*, *Helping Animals We Are Saving the Climate*, *Fish Do Have a Voice*). Our endeavours are the first

Previous page:  
Inaugurating 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Tree Day with Klub Gaja Ambassadors, actors Magdalena Popławska, Julia Pietrucha and Bartłomiej Topa



Tree Day in Japan, India and Austria.

Planting trees in Colombia, England and Iceland.



The Tree Day program was presented at Climate Conferences in Poznań and Copenhagen. Meeting with UN Deputy Secretary General Achim Steiner, Copenhagen, 2009.

*Let's Plant a Tree for Peace* was a rallying call for tree plantings in 34 countries of the world, in Europe, South and North America, Asia and Africa.

spark for thousands of local initiators of tree planting and protection or river care. Jolanta Migdał, coordinator of the Tree Day program and Paweł Grzybowski, coordinator of Adopt a River, maintain our contacts with them. Participants include children as well as their parents and grandparents, young people, local governments, cultural institutions, big companies and small family businesses, non-governmental and industrial organizations, religious congregations, specialized agencies and even penal establishments.

To realize programs involving dozens of thousands of participants yearly would not be possible without financial support of many other organizations and individuals. To name them all is impossible. But it is worthwhile mentioning that our civil actions were supported and appreciated by the Stefan Batory Foundation. Partners whose funding was essential for us to reach such a big scale are National Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management (NFOŚiGW) and Katowice Voivodship Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management.

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Klub Gaja programs are based on partnerships, on local, national and international levels. Tree planting, river adoption, animal protection are effective in proportion to the number of allies enlisted. People in local governments and communities are pivotal. Klub Gaja has a long record of working with the Capital City of Warsaw (yearly Tree Day inauguration, educational tours for rivers, *Partnership for the Climate* platform, happenings and events during the Climate Summit), the City of Katowice (*Cover the Rawa in Blue* project, national inauguration of the Adopt a River program on the World Day for Water, the Mariacka Street Beach during a national educational tour), the City of Bielsko-Biała (renovating a more than a century old alpinarium on the Szyndzielnia peak, initiating and participating in the creation of a sustainable development strat-



Year after year, LeasePlan company, partner of Klub Gaja, invites its employees, customers and business partners to plant trees, Tree Day, 2010.



*Plant a Good Climate*, a Klub Gaja action supported by National Forests and LeasePlan company during COP15, Copenhagen, 2009.

First trees being planted by LeasePlan employees, Tree Day 2006.



LeasePlan president Sławomir Wontrucki and Klub Gaja president Jacek Bożek during a tree planting near Warsaw, Tree Day 2010.



egy for the city, development of the Dębowiec slope), Municipality of Wilkowice (project *Discover Your Park*). We also recognize the importance of our cultural and scientific partners such as the Silesian Library, Silesian University, BWA Galeria Bielska.

The Hel Marine Station of Gdańsk University has been for many years a scientific and professional partner of our programs (*Adopt a River, Fish Do Have a Voice*). The Station team and its head Krzysztof E. Skóra, are co-organizers of our events and happenings (the Fish Day at Hel, the Europe-wide Big Jump event) as well as finals of our educational and artistic tours for Polish rivers and the Vistula, their queen.

We regard each new partner interested in cooperation with Klub Gaja as important validation of our actions and ideas. The Lease-Plan Fleet Management (Polska) company engaged in the Tree Day and offered its customers a GreenPlan service (compensating for carbon emissions). It also began to organize yearly eco-picnics (including tree planting) not only for their employees but also for business partners. Sławomir Wontrucki, Board President of Lease-Plan Fleet Management (Polska) Sp. z o. o. says: *The Tree Day message has great personal importance to me. We once used to say: 'when we're no more, woods will be there'... Hence my interest in the activity of Klub Gaja. To me, Jacek Bożek is an example of a man of passion who, with his wife Beata and a handful of activists carries on a successful struggle for nature to have a place in our hearts and minds that are so often absorbed with grand plans of its deterioration.*

The cooperation between Klub Gaja and Troton Company originated from a... press note on river adoption, read by an employee. The company is located near a uniquely beautiful river Parsęta. Search for a possible form of its protection led to the formation of the Agreement for the Parsęta, initiated by Klub Gaja. As it enlists more and more allies, the Parsęta keeps gaining guardians and protectors. Many of them meet every year during the Great Parsęta Cleanup combined with a picnic. There used to be an illegal rubbish dump near the company premises. Thanks to Troton, the place was cleaned up and planted with hundreds of trees. Troton then went on to engage in the Tree Day program.

The Klub Gaja program *Adopt a River* was appreciated by the Foundation of the PKO Bank Polski which became its strategic partner. This helped the invitation to take part in river adoption to reach even more recipients, we also were able to expand and upgrade our education and information means. Both Klub Gaja and PKO Bank Polski having native Polish origins, we joined our forces to



Great Parsęta Cleanup (including a picnic for the local community) organized by Troton Company under the Agreement for the Parsęta, Ząbrowo, 2007.

Wishes addressed to the Parsęta, 2011.

Ceremony of unveiling the Water Sign, award of the program *Adopt a River*, with mayor of Kolobrzeg Janusz Gromek and Troton CEO Jan Wolejszo, Ząbrowo 2014.



awaken citizens' sense of responsibility for the country's rivers and other water bodies.

Another important cooperation partner is a company effective in rescuing and helping animals. Green Project Company came up with the idea and is carrying out the collection *Save Cartridges, Save Horses*. And TNT Express Worldwide Poland has incessantly supported the Klub Gaja action *Save Wastepaper, Save Horses*. Up to now, the company has collected ca. 300 tons of wastepaper.

We also have examples of cooperation that aimed at preserving or legal protection of naturally valuable or attractive areas. The nature reserve *Wisła pod Zawichostem* (The Vistula near Zawichost) was formed after 3-year cooperation between Klub Gaja and Poland-wide Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP). The area natural value is outstanding on the Polish and European scales. The *Vistula Now* campaign was for several years realized in cooperation with WWF, then WWF Poland. We shared the same goal: to protect the queen of Polish rivers. So we co-organized events such as the Vistula Days or conferences on the Vistula, including those at the Chancellery of the Senate and at Bajka, centre of Klub Gaja.

From the start, Klub Gaja cooperated with foreign organizations and institutions. I was able to do an internship in USA thanks to German Marshall Fund. It was an important experience which opened new possibilities and supported Klub Gaja at the beginning of its road. Now foreign cooperation enables the Association to influence international legislations, involve Polish people in important international campaigns and keep them informed about current developments in the world. Our actions for rivers are one example. We were the world's first NGO to publish a translation of the World Commission on Dams report *Dams and Development: New guidelines for decision-making*. This was one of the reasons why Klub Gaja was admitted into the UN Dams and Development Forum, part of the Dams and Development United Nations Environment Programme.

Examples of international cooperation also include actions shared with the Eurogroup for Animals. In this way, we participated in the European initiative to vindicate the welfare of broiler chickens (our *Free Hen* being its Polish chapter) and the campaign *Let Them Fly: Ban the Import of Wild Birds*. Klub Gaja is also the Polish coordinator of a European Big Jump event. Its originator, leader of the European Rivers Network Roberto A. Epple brings Europeans together in actions that promote respect for rivers and water bodies

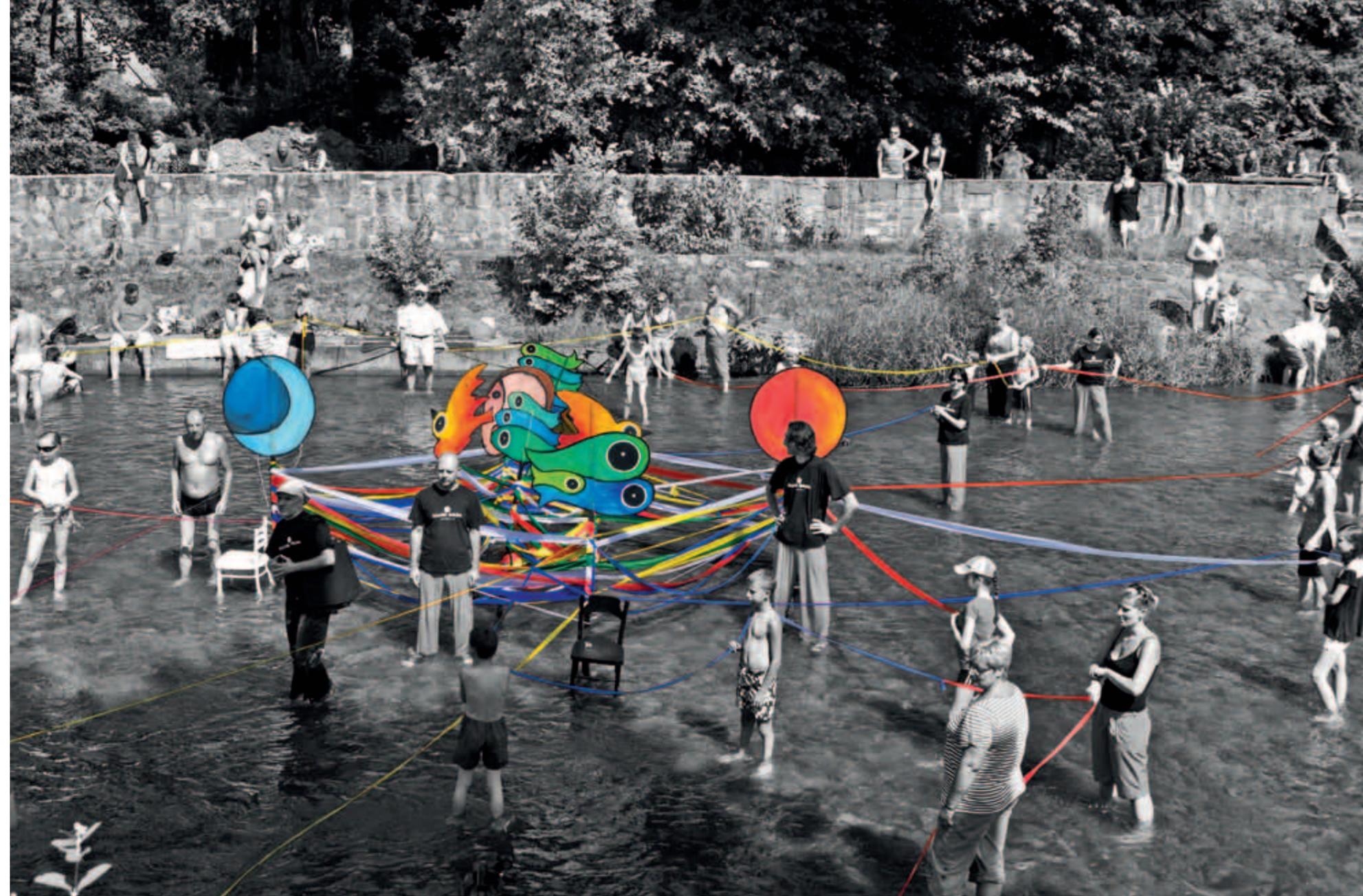
## Cooperation

Cooperation means coordinated action of a group of people towards united by a purpose. This is more or less what first comes to our minds when asked about the definition of cooperation. Someone might add forming a bond within that group. The formality of this definition makes one smile with irony. Why?

When we are asked *What are you doing?* most of the times we answer *I'm working on...* This automatic response sounds like an individualized statement, inadvertently failing to mention that *working* usually means *working together*. Why do we do that?

We ironically distance ourselves from definitions and theorizing because most of us are sure that 'I know better', an ungrounded tendency to take ourselves as the ultimate instance of our praxis. Any external influence appears threatening. We spontaneously invent *ad hoc* solutions that we value more than more extensively planned actions. Such a mode of functioning translates directly to attitude to the work environment and environment in a possibly broad sense. It hardly dawns on us/It is hard to acknowledge that the work we do results from actions of some bigger structures. Building on others' work, we work and create an outcome that we pass on. Yet we act as if we were an abstract formation independent on anybody or anything. We treat the nature in similar ways, setting ourselves apart of it instead of conceiving of ourselves in and through the nature. We act like hermetic travesties of artists relishing in their apparent independence. Such is the result of the pervasive cult of individualism displacing authentic cooperation.

The difficulty of realizing the primacy of cooperation over individualized work is not an exclusively Polish issue, yet in Poland it



Vistula Fest events and the Big Jump into the Vistula, Wisła, *Adopt a River*, 2010-2011



by organizing a yearly symbolic entry to rivers, all on the same day and at the same time.

The art of cooperation relies on looking for things that unite us and transcending oneself. I have found out that it is always worthwhile looking for a common understanding if that may lead to protecting nature, saving animals, helping people. However, as this requires an open-minded attitude, the beginning is the most difficult. I remember when a few years ago, during an event with foresters, I sang a Native American song *Earth Is My Body* and went on to recall how difficult it had been talking with them a few years back, how I had just been attacking them. To which the Bielsko Forest Inspector Hubert Kobarski, our close collaborator, replied jokingly: *We could not understand each other because Mr. Jacek was talking Indian to us!*

Are there limits of possible cooperation? Yes, there are. I will never accept abuse of animals for fun, for training, for a passion of killing, for performing tricks or preparing fancy dishes. Such was the case of a Klub Gaja action against force-feeding geese to obtain *fois gras*. We won that battle in spite of media attacks and attempts to intimidate us with secret service. I will never accept thoughtless transformation of the natural world, damaging it only because the particular plot of land is needed right here and now. Nature is being raped in ever more sophisticated ways, suffice to mention the plethora of incongruent and constantly changing regulations. The concrete and the saw are only executors' tools, the instigators are difficult to trace. Many decisions are made on the basis of short-term gains. Consequences to be borne by future generations are considered abstract. That is why, when engaging in public environmental education, we point to a need of creating an Eco-Generation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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Press conference at the Vistula shore in Warsaw with Urszula Kontowska, President of the Foundation of PKO Bank Polski, *Adopt a River*, 2013.

has a particular form. All the griping about the rudimentary nature of our so called civil society are not ungrounded. Extreme individualism, the greatest enemy of pro-civil, pro-social behaviour, has two principal sources here. The communist ideology emphasized the value of cooperation and collectivism but forceful imposition can provoke reactive rejection. This actually happened, and the Polish formed a habit of distrusting and undermining any common good, an imperative of fending for oneself. With the 1989 breakthrough, this kind of ground was superposed with a capitalistic individualism based on the myth of a self made man. It was adopted with enthusiasm bordering on religious zeal. All this meant the wish for bonding and trust was left at home, ie. in the family. Out in the world, we went armed and poised to fight.

Getting along with people is not about fighting. A confrontation avoiding attitude results from trying to adopt a perspective of the whole which could temper the individualism. We believe that our actions acquire meaning through participation in a community, environment, a precondition for our going out of home to be just leaving a home, not a fortress, going out to people, not against them, engaging in co-operation rather than mere operation.

Happening *Vistula, Queen or Gutter?* during the Big Jump in Warsaw, *Adopt a River*, 2010

A symbolic *Queue for Water*, made by children of the Toszek Public Kindergarten, *Adopt a River*, 2013.



World Water Day, testing the composition of Rawa river water with Silesian University in Katowice, *Adopt a River*, 2013.



Coming close to the end, I want to talk about my nearest and dearest ones. Beata Tarnawa is my persevering dawn-to-dusk collaborator but our two daughters also work for Klub Gaja. They took part in demonstrations, tours and performances since their childhood. Now Jagoda is taking care of two rescued horses. It is hard physical work cleaning the stable, walking the animals, bringing and carrying water, and many other activities, sometimes also dealing with the horses' illness. When necessary, Jagoda also takes care of other animals that find temporary refuge with us. Miłoslawa runs education-through-art workshops, happy to work with children. She appreciates their honest behaviours and frank speech. She tries to show them the world as comprising more than just humans. Ewa Konczal, director of Ashoka Innovators for the Public points out that children of social entrepreneurs emulate such attitudes: *Throughout more than ten years of my work with Ashoka social entrepreneurs, one of whom is Jacek Bożek, I watched their children growing up. They wanted to be themselves, rather than sons or daughters of the important innovator, the one who changes the world. Even if it was their world. After a rebel period, children of CSO leaders grow to be conscious, open-minded and even more entrepreneurial people such as Miłka and Jagoda. They are successful in changing the world, furthering, even unconsciously, their parents' mission. It is not always a Gaia Warrior mission, but always a mission to CHANGE things for BETTER.*

Of course, animals have also been and continue to be our "collaborators". The two rescued horses for which we and our volunteers built a stable are teaching us to respect hard work such as takes place in the stable (where we go when temporarily giving up office work). They also teach us co-sentience and understanding because animals with history of abuse are not easy to get on with. Ciapek, the dog, was one more member of Klub Gaja. We found him on our way back from a happening at the Sejm in December where the symbolic baby Jesus in his manger was surrounded with a display of abused animals. Though dragging a leg, he was the whole district's pet for two following years. Saba, too, bound her life with our trips. She loved travelling! We will remember her with the seat belt on, looking forward in fascination. I hope she was seeing our bright future...



Many bird species are among the animals we save, including tawny owls. A rescued owl chick fallen out of a church tower at Stara Wieś.

We gave advice to citizens almost 3,000 times in 2008-2013. Several hundred times, this involved interventions to rescue animals in danger. With our help, sick or wounded animals are treated and restored to nature.

Saving animals also means saving amphibians. They are strictly protected according to Polish law.



Our information action Let's Save Frogs began with the installation of uncommon road posts, Bielsko-Biała, 2000.

Saving frogs in the Straconka river valley, Bielsko-Biała, 2001.





CHANGE

Klub Gaja acts so as to change people's behaviour towards animals and nature as well as towards other people for better. This is the purpose of our ecological and cultural association. While our ideas are constant, our actions continue to evolve, bringing about those changes.

Years ago, vegetarians were laughed at, and so was Klub Gaja which was promoting the meatless diet for the sake of animal rights. Later, we were treated as eccentrics before finally people started to try and understand our choices. And they had reasons: their young people were going off meat!

At some point in my life, I found myself on rehabilitation holiday in a sanatorium. Of course, my diet caused some trouble to those planning meals because I was a secluded case. Among the convalescents, I met a nice lady who confessed to me her daughter was vegetarian, too. Imagine her surprise when, while talking with her daughter on the phone and mentioning my name she heard it was me and Klub Gaja that actually made her stop eating meat! Today, one in ten Polish people is off meat. This social change is driven by many motives: caring about animals, environment, but also one's own health.

Our campaign that has recently been growing in a most dynamic way and bringing about huge changes is *Jeszcze żywy KARP* (*Carp Is Still Alive*). A carp is not a thing, it can feel pain and stress. It is also the last animal in Poland and Europe to be still massively sold alive. At the time Klub Gaja began the campaign, our



Previous page: ambassadors of the *Carp Is Still Alive* campaign – actors Bartłomiej Topa, Julia Pietrucha, Magdalena Rózcicka and Magdalena Popławska.

Press conference *Carp Is Still Alive* including campaign ambassadors, Julia Pietrucha and Daniel Wieleba, Warsaw, 2012.

Klub Gaja was among those whose work led to the RP Sejm enacting the Animal Protection Act (1997). In 2009, following our proposal, the Act was amended to explicitly protect all vertebrates including fish.

Happening in Chmielna Street, Warsaw, 2012.



The carp whose lives we saved, 1999.

*Carp Is Still Alive*, Bielsko-Biala, 2002.



appeals for humane treatment of the fish were ridiculed and disregarded, even as, just prior to the beautiful Christmas time, Polish cities and towns were filled with street stands where carp were being slain and disembowelled without qualms, snow turning red with blood. Whoever wished to, could take a half-alive, gasping fish home, keep it in the tub for a few days and then kill it with their own hands, very often in an awkward manner. *This is tradition*, they kept saying. Privately, I had opposed it for a long time, in fact I released the first carp decades earlier (from my parents' tub). Every year since 1998, Klub Gaja has been organizing information actions and symbolically buying out and releasing a few carp. The problem got noticed by the media. Petitions, sent year after year (to the Chief Veterinary Surgeon, county veterinary inspectorates, the National Trade Inspectorate) finally turned effective. Veterinary and trade inspections in shops and sales points were intensified to make sure that the killing is done by well-trained sales assistants and not before the eyes of customers, especially children.

A breakthrough came with legal change. After three years' efforts, initiated by Klub Gaja, the Sejm amended the Animal Protection Act. The amended Article 2 specified that the Act protects all vertebrates including fish. This means the law regards them as animals capable of feeling pain, fear and stress. Police, veterinary inspectorates, trade inspectors as well as the farmers and traders themselves had to recognize the right of carp to be treated humanely. Three years later when, during the pre-Christmas fish sales peak, Minister of Justice reminded everybody about that responsibility, the debate on unnecessary pain inflicted on carp was rekindled. It invited support as well as mockery, but the campaign had meanwhile gained wide endorsement, including Silesian Trade Inspectorate in Katowice, and many culture and media personalities.



*Carp Is Still Alive* in Bielsko-Biala, 2004.

Press conference in front of Hala Mirowska (Warsaw major food market), 2006.

Happening *Carp Is Still Alive* in front of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farming, Warsaw, 2010.



Ambassadors of the *Carp Is Still Alive* campaign, actresses Magdalena Kumorek, Maja Ostaszewska and Magdalena Cielecka, Warsaw, 2013.



*Carp Is Still Alive* photo session featuring campaign ambassadors – actors, journalists, officials and citizens. Mother Danusia and her daughters (above) and actor Bartłomiej Topa (bottom right), Warsaw, 2013.

Ceremony of awarding the campaign *Carp Is Still Alive* in the competition Social Campaign of the Year, Warsaw, 2012.



The *Carp Is Still Alive* campaign gained momentum. The magic spell of the *This is tradition* justification was broken. It was increasingly emphasized that the custom of live carp sales, actually a legacy of the Communist time, must be done away with. The first celebrity willing to join the campaign, cook and columnist Robert Makłowicz, was soon followed by actresses Magdalena Rózcicka, Magdalena Popławska and Julia Pietrucha, actor Bartłomiej Topa, writer Olga Tokarczuk and playwright Artur Pałyga. The latter's miniature tragicomedy *Man and Carp* (read out loud in front of the Sejm and published on the website of *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily) raised a storm as it compared suffering of the carp with that of crucified Jesus.

The visual side of the campaign was suggested and designed voluntarily by the Clos Brothers copyrighting agency. We were brought together by... the fish whose image is included in the company logo as well as in the name of our campaign. The following campaign slogan *Nie baw się w kata / kup karpia w platach* (Don't play the headsman, buy your carp filleted) attracted enormous national media interest. Four actors (Rózcicka, Popławska, Pietrucha, Topa) spoke in their own voice on behalf of carp, their faces covered with carp images so that the fish mouth coincided precisely with their own. The message reached the audiences of nearly 4.5 million (by press, internet and TV). *Carp Is Still Alive* won a special award in the NGO class of the competition for *Social Campaigns 2012*. A Łódź store of the Lidl chain informed that its offering only chilled carp fillets was a direct result of the Klub Gaja action. Magdalena Rózcicka quoted in the campaign material kept saying: *Inflicting pointless suffering on animals is inhuman. Carp can really be sold in different ways, but we have to talk about it loudly.*

In many cases, behaviour change we strive at results from educational action. For Klub Gaja this means long term public campaigns including the campaign *Kupuj jajka z głową* (*Shop for Eggs with the Head On*) that effected change in consumers' egg shopping habits; the *Fish Do Have a Voice* program encourages avoiding buying endangered fish species, explaining which those are; the guide *Chroń klimat. Co Ty możesz zrobić?* (*Protect the Climate. What Can You Do?*) suggests the ways we can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by our everyday activities. We try to disseminate our material in very diverse forms (publications, exhibitions, movies, interactive animation or geocaching). However, from the beginning, Klub Gaja has recognized the great value of meeting people and talking face to face. We are still cultivating this. Talking to audiences of our happenings, we also engage them to participate in such actions. We meet people of all ages inviting them to our

## Change

Debates on change – social, cultural or in general, very often come to a point where a seemingly inevitable alternative (or disjunction in the language of formal logic) is postulated: it's either evolution or revolution. It is hard to even imagine some different ways, indeed the question arises: do any other ways exist at all?

Let us begin by assessing the truth of that disjunctive statement. Fundamental logic has it that a disjunctive proposition is true so long as one of its components is true. Is evolution true? Or maybe revolution is truer? Or are both false? Mere reference to the reductive language of logic reveals basic inadequacy of such juxtapositions. It does not help to refer to the more human, nuanced colloquial parlance. The problem lies with attempting to compare concepts taken from two incompatible fields. Revolution is a sociopolitical concept while evolution a strictly biological one. To set them together, a misleading trick is used, that is reference to the idea of progress. Revolution and evolution are supposed to be different ways of progress.

Equating those concepts is illegitimate manipulation consisting in rather crude translation of the language of technology to that of nature. We are building better and better machines, right? More and more efficient cities? More and more impressive artifacts? So we believe and want to stand by that belief. Then we transfer that belief directly to the language of nature, attributing purposefulness to it. But the basic lesson in Darwin points out to nature tossing dice rather than following a blueprint. The perfection we see in it is probably our own projection. If man were endowed with some additional sense, say of echolocation, would he be more or less perfect than he is? If the octopus, reputed for enormous intelligence,



Educational activities under the *Adopt a River* program: board game *The Perfect River*, Warsaw, 2013.

Experiments with water, salt and ice, Katowice, 2012.

Decorating eco-bags with silver salmon prints, Warsaw, 2012.



educational stands where they can learn through simple experiments, games, making prints or toys, why it is important to save water, plant trees or help animals. We carried out almost 1,000 educational activities (lectures, debates, workshops) with 30,000 participants over the last five years. Jarek Kasprzyk is the one who most often meets with school children, the biggest of our audiences. He tells them about the Association programs but also takes them on very interesting field classes. I think the children are then able to see the world differently and will share our aspiration to make it a better place.

Our message would not be so powerful without many individuals, companies and institutions supporting us honourably, free of charge. Our environmental education programs grow through massive involvement of local communities. Their reports delight us with their ingeniousness, hard work and openness in embracing cooperation as well as addressing the needs of animals and natural world. Our programs are joined by non-governmental organizations, forest inspectorates, national and local government agencies, cultural establishments and, most of all, schools and education facilities – headmasters, teachers, their students and charges, parents and grandparents of the latter. Connecting with children and young people makes great opportunity to promote concrete changes in attitudes towards nature and animals. I am no academic lecturer but I feel that by meeting young people all over Poland I spark change in their thinking and incite them to action. There are schools which have participated in Tree Days for more than 10 years (9 in *Adopt a River*), that is from the very beginning. As I watch their activities I can see local networks arising that no longer need inspiration from Klub Gaja. They are the ones that inspire. And so it should be! *It all depends on whether we are sensitive and pay attention to where and how we live. The activity of Klub Gaja inspires people to reflect. Maybe my participation in the program*

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Elementary School No. 2 at Wisła Czarne nominated the Biała Wiselka stream to the River of the Year 2013 competition.

did not live a solitary and short life, would it master the world or at least the oceans and seas? We do not know and will never know in this world. The same goes for revolution. Progress is a wishful interpretation of an event we call revolution. The supposed step forward is our wish, fulfillment of which may vary. Perhaps it is worth while looking at the original meaning of *revolution*. Latin *revolutio* means rolling backwards, returning. Is that a clue?

Our human world incessantly accelerates in its rush forward. As changes become more frequent they are less intensive. The image blurs into one big multicoloured flickering something. This something is called humanity, deluded in its belief in breaking free from what is a part of, nature. In this context, it is a revolutionary gesture to tell oneself: stop! enough! This is the change the struggle is about. You don't need to have it all, always and for now. You don't need to know everything, be one step ahead, compete all the time. Making a step back, stopping allows you to see other humans as well as the rest of the world around you. This world is no less important than you, it came to being in the same way and same circumstances. This is what is called ecological consciousness, or expanding the context, or being part of the whole. This is the change for which we are fighting, at least for the beginning.

The Tree of the Year competition reveals stories big and small. Here, residents of Białobrzegi under the oak tree Chrobry that made it to the final of Tree of the Year 2011.



will cause somebody to plant one more tree or change their thinking, says our ambassador, Bartłomiej Topa.

I am glad that business is also changing its attitude to environmental education. Medium sized and small businesses are increasingly participating in Tree Day, *Adopt a River* and *Save Wastepaper*, *Save Horses* actions. Their managers realize that ecology is becoming crucial for economy so it must not be neglected. I also believe a lot of good things are going on in local governments. When we moved to our new office in Wilkowice (2005), our neighbouring park was being driven through, despoiled and used as a dump by some of the residents. Once it was part of a regionally famous health resort! To change the situation, we started by making a description of its objects of natural interest and creating a nature trail *Discover Your Park*. With some young people, we proposed the most robust trees to be recognized as protected natural monuments. These actions prompted the Wilkowice municipality to raise funds needed to tidy up and develop the grounds. Today, the park has footpaths, benches and... people happy to walk, bike or have rest there.

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Since Poland joined the European Union, Klub Gaja has been also involved in actions to change European and consequently Polish laws. The *8 Hours* action is a chance to alleviate the suffering of slaughter-bound animals. It aims at instituting a law providing that transport to slaughter must not take longer than 8 hours. The petition to this effect was signed by over a million people throughout Europe. Klub Gaja was one of those who encouraged Polish people to get interested and give their signatures. Similarly, we acted together with the Eurogroup for Animals within the campaign *Let Them Fly: Ban the Import of Wild Birds*. The campaign was successful: the EU banned imports of birds captured at large with destination for exotic animal trade. These examples show that our civil actions lead to changes in European law.

We carried out almost 1,100 educational activities with 32,000 participants (2008-2013).



Activities on the educational trail *Discover Your Park*, Wilkowice, 2007.



Workshops for teachers, Żory, 2002.

Educational activities on the Vistula shore in Warsaw, *Adopt a River* 2012.

Our offer reaches diverse audiences. A stand and an exhibition at the Przystanek Woodstock music festival, Żary, 1999.

Klub Gaja educational programs were presented at the 6th Citizen Congress, Warsaw, 2001.



Klub Gaja has for many years been supported by the international Ashoka organization (of which I have been a member since 1997), especially by its Polish section headed by Ewa Konczal. Ashoka fellows are social innovators – those who bring about social change on at least national level. Przemysław Czajkowski, head of a Polish branch of the United Nations Development Programme, recommended me to Ashoka on account of our *Vistula Now* campaign. It raised awareness of Polish people to the fact that just as the French have their Loire and Germans their Rhine they have their Vistula that together with its catchment makes an enormous potential once the approach to it is changed. In my opinion, social change means changing the demanding attitude to a cooperative one. Let us always seek to answer the question *What are the long term consequences of my decision?* The world we live in undergoes constant changes. It is important to believe that each of us has real influence. However, one has to be persistent, to inspire others and to start with oneself.

Ewa Konczal of Ashoka summarizes our activity in this way: *All Ashoka fellows, more than 3000 of them worldwide, live for change. To Jacek and his team, changing things for better is the essence. It is their lifelong mission. After 25 years of its activity, Klub Gaja is a godfather and godmother of systemic breakthrough changes in the areas of nature and animals in Poland. Aware of the dynamics and new processes they are persistent and determined in taking ever more and more actions. For just as we find solutions to some challenges, other and new ones arise that also call for change...*

\* \* \*

Love of freedom, courage and co-sentience are with Gaia warriors every day, have been for 25 years. Sometimes we need to be alone to strengthen up and act. Sometimes we are actually doomed to be alone even when we are so willing to cooperate. Still I hope that the fruit of our work demonstrate how much we have been able to change.



Leaves used in the *Liberty Tree* happening on the occasion of 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Liberty in Krakowskie Przedmieście street in Warsaw, Tree Day 2014.

The Vistula Spirit, Warsaw, 1997.

*Be the change you want to see in the world*

*Mahatma Gandhi*



The Vistula Spirit handing the Klub Gaja book *Saving a River* to then MP (now President of Poland) Bronisław Komorowski, Warsaw, 1997.

Environmental movement leaders Radosław Gawlik of Eko-Unia and Jacek Bożek of Klub Gaja decorated with the Officer's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta for their contribution to building a civil society, Presidential Palace gardens, Warsaw, 2011.



## Klub Gaja Year by Year – selected events (recollected in part through press cuttings)

1988

### Informal Anti-Stress Activity Group Gaja

Jacek Bożek founds the informal Anti-Stress Activity Group Gaja at the residential club Piast in Bielsko-Biała. It aimed at practising deep ecology and non-compromised defense of Mother Earth. Hatha yoga classes and interpersonal trainings took place, vegetarianism, nature conservation and animal protection were promoted.

1989

### First action to protect nature

The first direct coconservationist action was taken on behalf of the trees that were to be cut in the Bielsko-Biała city centre. It was noticed by the underground periodical *Solidarność Podbeskidzia* but also by official newspapers *Kronika Beskidzka*, *Trybuna Robotnicza*. Two poplar trees saved then are still in place.

### Free election in Poland

Jacek Bożek becomes a representative of the independent *greens* and participates in the convent of Podbeskidzie Solidarity region. He has a vote in the pre-elections of Solidarity candidates for the Sejm election in June.

### First Council of All Beings in Poland

Poland's first Council of All Beings took place on the Magurka hill in Wilkowice. The workshop was run by John Seed of Rainforest Information Centre, Australia, and Patrick Anderson of Greenpeace. Many Klub Gaja associates participated.

1990

### Education for Animals

The exhibition *Why?* dedicated to the place of animals in our culture was presented in dozens of cities and towns all over Poland. It was accompanied by street actions, happenings and lectures.

### Planting first trees

We planted our first row of trees with some punks and soldiers from a special unit in Bielsko-Biała, on request of residents of a housing estate and the city authorities.

### Earth Day

We participate in the first Earth Day celebration in Bielsko-Biała. Jacek Bożek greets visitors dressed up as a wolf to represent all wildlife. Since then on, we have organized and participated in subsequent Earth Days.

1991

### Circus Is Fun – Not for the Animals

The first Klub Gaja action on behalf of circus animals took place in front of a circus from the Soviet Union. The action initiated a campaign *Circus Is Fun – Not for the Animals*. Four years later, the mayor of Bielsko-Biała introduced a local ban on entry of wild animal circuses.

### Rainforest Information Centre

Jacek Bożek leaves for a half-year internship at the Rainforest Information Centre in Australia. He participates in actions and demonstrations to protect the last surviving rainforests in New South Wales.

### No to Bullfighting

Successful blockade of Poland's first bullfighting show in Śląski Stadium, Chorzów (with activists of animal rights organizations) leading to the abandonment of the idea of further shows.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vegetarian Congress

We hold the 1st Vegetarian Congress in Wilkowice attended by people from informal animal welfare movements. The topics included vegetarianism, animal rights, and joining the work on a proposed Animal Protection Act.

1992

### No to Fur

We organize first actions in Bielsko-Biała against the wearing of fur coats.

### Registration of the Association

The informal group becomes formal by registering the Ecological and Cultural Association Klub Gaja. The founders include Jacek Bożek, Wojciech Owczarz, Alicja Fober, Błażej Sobański, Janusz Okrzesik and others.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Klub Gaja National Tour: I Am Your Mother – Earth

We go on an educational tour with Ann Light of Rainforest Information Centre, Australia, with RIC support. The program includes meetings, movie and slide shows, lectures and happenings.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Vegetarian Congress

People from West European pro-animal groups share their experiences with participants of Polish animal defense movement. Jacek Bożek conducted a workshop of his own design, *The Way of a Gaia Warrior*.



1993

### First office of Klub Gaja

After a year's preparation and renovation, we open an office in central Bielsko-Biała. During the ceremony, we grant first Klub Gaja awards to Dr. Irena Sienicka and Marek Ziąja, Bielsko-Biała councilors.

### Cleaning rivers

Together with volunteers, we began cleaning up rivers and streams in cooperation with the Bielsko-Biała city office. The money was turned to our statutory purposes.

### The Way of a Gaia Warrior and the film premiere

Thanks to the funding received for the Way of a Gaia Warrior workshop, Jacek Bożek conducts it in many places around Poland. In November, BWA Galeria Bielska holds a premiere screening of the movie *Droga Wojownika Gai (The Way of a Gaia Warrior)* directed by Michał Tarkowski.

### Wild Beasts Tamed with Fire

Continuing our actions against the training of wild animals, we organize an art event/happening *Wild Beasts Tamed with Fire* in cooperation with the Bielsko-Biała Culture Department, BWA Galeria Bielska and artist Ewa Ciepielewska.

1994

### National Campaign Vistula Now

On April 22 (Earth Day) we launched a national campaign called *Vistula Now* aiming to preserve Europe's last big river surviving in a close to natural state, to protect its biodiversity and cultural values. The campaign focused on spreading information about environmental hazards arising with the proposed Lower Vistula Cascade project.

### Against the tyre incineration plant

We run a campaign against the construction of a tyre incineration plant in central Bielsko-Biała. The happening *Tyre on Fire* takes place in front of the city office. The following year, the local government withdraws from that decision.

### An Animal Is Not a Thing exhibition

The exhibition was shown in hundreds of places in Poland over several years. It featured situations where animals were inflicted pain and killed: laboratories, fur farms, abattoirs, hunting, transports and circuses.

### The Vistula Day and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vistula Now National Education Tour

As part of our Vistula Now campaign we declared June 19<sup>th</sup> to be the Vistula Day, reviving similar celebrations from pre-WW2 time. All along

the road, from the river sources to its mouth, we arrange meetings and press conferences, forming a network with local organizations and governments, artists and media.

#### No Fur Day

We declared the No Fur Day on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Even today, actions take place all over Poland to highlight the suffering of animals used for fur production.

1995

#### The Vistula Day celebration in front of the Parliament

Our National Vistula Day rallying call is *Let's Save the Queen of our Rivers*. The celebration is opened with our happening in front of the Sejm (in cooperation with the fringe theatre Komuna Otwock), speaking out against regulation of the Vistula. A press conference featuring Wojciech Giełżyński, author of *Moja prywatna Wistuliada* (My Private Vistula Story) is held on board of a Vistula cruise.

#### National Campaign An Animal Is Not a Thing

The beginning of our national campaign An Animal Is Not a Thing was simultaneous with forming a coalition to promote the Animal Protection bill. We collected 600,000 signatures to the petition with this objective. It was the biggest environmental campaign in Poland. We took part in deliberations of Sejm commissions, organized actions, happenings, street performances and press conferences. Two years later, the campaign ended with success.

1996

#### Vistula Day in 50 Cities

We organize our Vistula Day celebration in Warsaw Plac Zamkowy (Castle Square). At the same time, celebrations took place in 50 towns in Poland.

#### The Vistula as a Pathway into 21<sup>st</sup> Century

At the Polish Parliament, we prepare the conference *The Vistula as a Pathway into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, co-organized by the Senators' Parliamentary Caucus and Liberty Union Environmental Forum. The conference focused on alternatives to the Lower Vistula Cascade project. Participants included MP's, Vistulian local government representatives, scientists and NGO's.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Poland-Wide Congress Earth Now

The Congress focused on strategy of actions leading to the enactment of the Animal Protection Act and to the planned Nieszawa dam on the Vistula. Another topic was the proposed Act on Public Benefit Organizations.

1997

#### Passing the Animal Protection Act

After two years of our campaign *An Animal Is Not a Thing*, the Parliament passed *Ustawa o ochronie zwierząt* (the Animal Protection Act). It provides that '*an animal is not a thing*'.

#### Animal Rights Day

Klub Gaja declared May 22 to be the Animal Rights Day. The date commemorates the passing of the Animal Protection Act.

#### Klub Gaja's Bajka (Fable)

The Bajka villa became Klub Gaja new headquarters. This historic building surrounded by a beautiful garden at the foot of mountains became a place important to the whole environmental movement in Poland.

#### Agenda 21

Signing an agreement concerning Agenda 21 between the Bielsko-Biała local government represented by deputy mayor Marian Antonik, a partnering county of Kirklees, England, represented by Cllr. Colin Watson, Cllr. Denis Ripley and president of Klub Gaja Jacek Bożek.

#### Innovators for the Public

Jacek Bożek was appointed as a fellow of the international organization Ashoka Innovators for the Public.

1998

#### Trees saved in Bielsko-Biała old town

Organizing the action *Trees Call Out for Help* to defend trees in the Bielsko-Biała Old Market. The happening with the Green Knight who kept guard of the trees and a flyer action led to a positive resolution. We collected and submitted over 2,500 signatures of citizens opposing the cutting.

#### Silent March

We organize Bielsko-Biała's first *Silent March* as part of the International Week against Racism. In subsequent years we would prepare lectures and concerts promoting the Week message.

#### Our Belief International Klub Gaja tour

The *Our Belief* tour with participation of our Kirklees Countryside and EnviroYouth partners and young people from England and Poland promoted the principles of sustainable development. The Vistula river and valley were presented as a case study in the many meetings with local governments and press conferences. These were complemented with street theatre performances that attracted crowds of people.



#### Youth Exchange at EXPO '98

The British Council selected the *Our Belief* youth exchange and tour organized by Klub Gaja as the best initiative of that type in the United Kingdom. On this account, it was presented at EXPO '98 in Lisbon, Portugal.

#### Eurogroup for Animals Welfare

Klub Gaja was invited to represent Poland with an observer status in the Eurogroup for Animals Welfare. Eurogroup unites the most important animal welfare organizations all over Europe that have their observers in the EU Parliament and Commissions.

#### Carp Is Still Alive Campaign

In December, Klub Gaja organized the *Carp Is Still Alive* and began a national campaign on behalf of carp sold alive.

1999

#### An Animal Is Not a Thing – No to Horse Transports

We launched an action opposing the poor conditions of transport of live animals, particularly horses. Klub Gaja campaign *Against the Transport of Live Horses to Slaughter* collected 500,000 signatures to the petition *For a Ban on Live Horses Transportation to Slaughter* that we submitted to the Sejm. It resulted in improved veterinary care during the transports and horse handling conditions in marketplaces.

#### The Narmada Action

The action of Klub Gaja at the India Embassy in support of Indian environmentalists opposing the construction of dams on the Narmada river. The Klub Gaja protest caused the embassy to be guarded by antiterrorists.

#### 9<sup>th</sup> National Congress Earth Now

The Congress was concerned with the Vistula Now campaign and variants of the Vistula management as well as possible forms of pressure on the Government and Parliament. The campaign *An Animal Is Not a Thing* and anti-horse transport actions, ie. international tour *Circle of Friends of Animals* were also discussed.

2000

#### Dams – Water – Life

The Klub Gaja Bajka centre hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> International NGO Meeting on *Dams – Water – Life*. The participants were water protection activists from all the continents.

#### A Wild River in the Heart of Europe on BBC

BBC World News televised the Klub Gaja performance *A Wild River in the Heart of Europe*. The shooting took place in Bielsko-Biała and on the Włocławek dam.

### National Educational Tour *The Circle of Friends of Animals*

With the support of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (the oldest animal welfare organization in the world), Klub Gaja organized a tour through a dozen big cities in Poland. The program included meetings, happenings and presentations of the exposition *An Animal Is Not a Thing*.

### Pegaz, the first horse rescued

We buy out the first horse from a death transport, naming him Pegaz. Today, Pegaz lives in a stable built by Klub Gaja and volunteers in Wilkowice. Volunteers are also taking care of the horse, often visited by children and adolescents.

2001

### Meeting with Members of EU Parliament

A meeting of Polish NGO's with EU MP's took place at Klub Gaja Bajka centre to talk about the Vistula. It led to the Polish government soon receiving the European Commission statement refusing to finance the dams on the Vistula.

### *An Animal Is Not a Thing* movie

The premiere screening of the Klub Gaja film *An Animal Is Not a Thing* took place. The movie received a honourable mention at a festival of environmental documentaries.

### Of Pegasus That Was an Angel

The premiere of the Klub Gaja performance *Of Pegasus That Was an Angel* took place in the Laboratory Hall of the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CSW) in Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw. It was subsequently shown in Cracow, Nidzica, Warsaw and other places.

### First 250,000 signatures for the horses

Klub Gaja and Young Environmentalists Forum of the Liberty Union co-organize an action in front of the Sejm and present the MP's with 250,000 signatures to the petition demanding change in law regarding horse transports to slaughter.

2002

### Success of the Vistula Now campaign

After eight years of the *Vistula Now* campaign, Polish government officially informed Klub Gaja about its withdrawal from the Lower Vistula Cascade project that had been revived after a 30 years pause under pressure from the hydro-engineering lobby. The construction of 7 dams would be the biggest hydro-engineering project realized in Polish history but also its great environmental and social disaster.

### Kazimierz cleaned

We cleaned up the Cracow district of Kazimierz together with the Alchemia culture club. The cooperation included presentation of Beata Tarnawa's exhibition and fixing a commemorative stone with the Klub Gaja logo.

### *All for the Earth, the Earth for All*

In May, we hosted an international meeting of young people from the Netherlands, Great Britain, Rumania and Sweden at Bajka. The program included workshops, meetings and a colourful procession through the city with the slogan *All for the Earth, the Earth for All*.

### Let Others Not Be Strangers

On the International Peace Day, Klub Gaja organized an art event in Bielsko-Biała *Let Others Not Be Strangers to Us*. Graffiti in favour of peace and preventing violence were created on a 230 metre long wall.

### *Carp Is Still Alive*

One more information action on *Carp Is Still Alive* consisted in preparing and distributing leaflets about the Animal Protection Act provisions that are violated by killing carp in the street.

2003

### Klub Gaja at the Social Communications Festival and against the war

Klub Gaja presents Beata Tarnawa's exposition and films *An Animal Is Not a Thing* and *Art for the Earth* during the Social Communications Festival that takes place at Centre for Contemporary Art (CSW) Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw. We also organized the action *Airplanes for Peace* in front of CSW Ujazdowski Castle to protest against Poland's involvement in the Iraq war.

### The Pegasus in Cieszyn and Opole

Klub Gaja stages the *Short Story of Pegasus that Was an Angel* at a theatre festival *Na Granicy* (On the Border) in Cieszyn and at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Young People's Theatres Forum *Time of Europe, Time of Theatre* in Opole.

### The Kołowrót Trail

Klub Gaja opens the Kołowrót educational trail on the grounds of Bielsko Forest Division. It was created in cooperation with Lasy Państwowe (National Forests) on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Klub Gaja.

### First Tree Day

We inaugurate the Tree Day. The Stars Park is created in the Bajka front garden. We plant the first trees with: Mira Stanisławska-Meysztowicz, president of the Our Earth Foundation; Jerzy Owskiak, head of the Great Christmas Aid Orchestra (WOŚP) foundation, musician Paweł Golec, painter Krzysztof Kokoryn and photographer Tomasz Sikora. The idea of planting and protecting trees was endorsed by over 1,000 schools and local governments.

### First *Save Wastepaper, Save Horses* action

As part of the first Tree Day edition, we also proposed the schools to engage in the action *Save Wastepaper, Save Horses*. In this way, children started to practice selective waste collection, at the same time helping horses: the money received for the wastepaper was used for buying out horses that would otherwise be slaughtered.



### *Vistula Now* in Thailand, Japan and India

The Klub Gaja campaign *Vistula Now* was presented at the conference *Rivers for Life* in Thailand and at the World Water Forum in Kyoto, as well as in India during Jacek Bożek's journey.

### Fewer horses transported

The Klub Gaja campaign concerning horses transported for slaughter resulted in the volume of the transport reduced by nearly 70%.

### *Star Circus* taken off the air

As a result of Klub Gaja intervention, Polish TV stopped emitting *Gwiezdny Cyrk* (Star Circus) that violated the law by presenting trained wild animals shows.

2004

### Stop the Regulators

On the World Day of Action Against Dams, we held a press conference and happening *Stop the Regulators* at the Old Town Culture House in Warsaw. We also filed a letter expressing such concerns to the RP Prime Minister.

### For Tibet

We took part in the picket of the Chinese Embassy in Warsaw on behalf of Tibet. Attendants included Himalaya mountaineer Reinhold Messner, Friends of Tibet Association and the Zieloni 2004 green party.

### Klub Gaja in Eurogroup for Animal Welfare

Klub Gaja became a member observer of Eurogroup for Animal Welfare in Brussels following our 6 years' work.

### *The Living World* in France

Klub Gaja and its performance *The Living World* represented Polish culture during this year's Polish Season in France *Nova Polska*. The Season was organized by Adam Mickiewicz Institute on commission from Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Tree Day: Trees for Peace

Planting trees with the intention of world peace was the guiding message of the Tree Day 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. This became a signal for schools to initiate international cooperation which started to promote the Tree Day abroad. Trees for Peace were planted in more than 10 countries including Pakistan, Ecuador, Colombia, Japan, Denmark, England and Germany.

2005

### Klub Gaja Clinic (Lecznica)

The Klub Gaja seat was moved to Wilkowice near Bielsko-Biała, surrounded with mountain ranges of Silesian Beskid and Little Beskid. The building once housed veterinary surgeries and an operation room

for big farm animals. Starting work in the authentic clinic was possible upon necessary refurbishment.

#### **Art for the Earth Festival**

The Klub Gaja arts festival took place at BWA Galeria Bielska. *Art for the Earth* comprised performances, happenings and paratheatrical activities. An accompanying exhibition showed photographs illustrating the Klub history and activities as well as Beata Tarnawa's paintings and Dariusz Paczkowski's graffiti.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> International Seminar Dams – Water – Life**

The main theme of the seminar was discussion about the future of Polish rivers and river valleys in the context of the report of the World Commission on Dams and possible projects that might arise due to European Investment Bank funding.

#### **Klub Gaja at Oxford**

We are able to present the *Vistula Now* campaign and public activities of Klub Gaja at Oxford University, England. The lecture had to do with our cooperation with Ashoka Innovators for the Public. Jacek Bożek has been an Ashoka fellow since 1997.

#### **Good Practices for Mountain Rivers**

Thanks to Klub Gaja efforts, Ministry of Environment commissioned the development of *Principles of Good Practice for Mountain Rivers*. The document features environment friendly hydro-engineering solutions.

#### **Adopt a River 1<sup>st</sup> edition and the Big Jump**

Our environmental education program *Adopt a River* begins with the Big Jump educational tour promoting thus named European action for clean and abundant rivers all over Europe. Our *Jump into the Queen* billboard graffiti is the background of press conferences in Katowice, Cracow, Warsaw, Toruń and Gdańsk.

#### **Dolina Bystrego saved**

The Bystry stream valley comprises unique riparian ash and alpine alder forest and is part of the Natura 2000 network. As a result of efforts of a coalition of NGO's including Klub Gaja, it was saved from a planned dam construction. In his refusal to permit the project, Minister of Environment cited, as one of the reasons, Klub Gaja's negative opinion.

#### **Man awarded**

The film *Człowieku ('Man')* directed by K. Kruszyńska, M. Adamiak and M. Korgól whose protagonist is the Klub Gaja founder gained a honourable mention in the documentary category of the National Independent Film Festival ILUZJE in Szczecin. The picture was also awarded a special prize for revealing the process of civil society formation at the *Okfa* National Amateur Film Competition in Konin.

#### **Art for the Earth workshops**

Invited by Barnsley Metropolitan Council, we conduct *Art for the Earth* workshops for young people in Great Britain.

#### **Free Hen campaign**

With Eurogroup for Animals, we started a campaign to improve the welfare of broiler chickens. Our Polish edition of the campaign was titled *Kurka wolna* (Free Hen).

2006

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Tree Day**

The opening of the *Tree Hugger Project – Defenders of Trees* was the highlight of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tree Day inauguration at the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw. For the first time, the inauguration also took place in Wilkowice in the south of Poland and Ząbrow in the north. 3,000 schools as well as 500 local governments and organizations were invited.

#### **Discover Your Park Educational Trail**

Klub Gaja creates a educational nature trail *Discover Your Park* in the Wilkowice municipal park. It comprises 25 facilities for children and adolescents' education activities.

#### **Amphibian safeguards**

On request of Klub Gaja, the Bielsko-Biała City Office installed fences along the Pasternik stream to prevent amphibians from entering the roadway during the period of amphibian migration.

#### **A stable for Pegaz**

With some volunteers, we built a stable for Pegaz, the first horse we saved from transport to slaughterhouse. The stable also made home for the mare Daisy and Dzikuska, a female cat. The stable is often visited by school students taking part in Klub Gaja lectures and classes.

#### **The Free Hen**

*Kurka wolna* (The Free Hen), a Klub Gaja performance was shown in Warsaw during the Earth Day celebration. It is a symbolic story of a Bird of Paradise whom man enslaved, exploited, farmed and deprived of dignity.

#### **Dams and Development, United Nations Environmental Programme**

Klub Gaja became a member of the Dams and Development Forum, part of the UNEP Dams and Development project. In this way, Klub Gaja many years work for rivers and their protection gained recognition.



2007

#### **Cistercian Landscape Compositions**

Together with residents of Rybnik, we carried out a public campaign to protect the forests surrounding the landscape park Cistercian Landscape Compositions of Rudy Wielkie.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Tree Day: UN One Billion Trees**

Tree Day joined the UN-initiated global campaign *One Billion Trees for the Planet*. Klub Gaja idea for the Polish program was officially endorsed by Achim Steiner, United Nations Deputy Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director. The Tree Day inauguration took place in Pole Mokotowskie park, Warsaw.

#### **Legal change**

In our letter to Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, we demand change in Polish legislation concerning farm fish as the cruel handling of carp during their massive pre-Christmas sales did not entail any sanctions, contrary to EU law.

#### **Wild Birds Imports Ban**

A joint campaign by Eurogroup for Animals and Klub Gaja *Let Them Fly: Ban the Import of Wild Birds* ended in success: the European Union enacted a ban on imports of wild birds captured at large with destination to exotic species trade.

2008

#### **Vistula near Zawichost reserve**

Thanks to the three-year work of Klub Gaja and All-Poland Society for the Protection of Birds, *Wisła pod Zawichostem* (The Vistula near Zawichost) wildlife reserve was created, one of the biggest bird reserves existing. It is located in the Vistula valley, its natural value outstanding in Europe.

#### **Natura 2000 in Silesian Beskid**

Due to Klub Gaja efforts, the European Commission confirmed the borders of a Natura 2000 area in the Silesian Beskid range, including the Szyndzielnia mountain where construction of skiing infrastructure was unduly planned.

#### **Adopt a River in the lead**

The *Adopt a River* program was nominated to the Best Practice title granted by the Green Spider Network of organizations and agencies appointed by the European Commission and DG Environment.

### Shop for Eggs with the Head On research project

We were the first in Poland to take up a widespread information action on hen farm types and egg labeling. We engaged in a big Polish, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian joint research project on egg sales in big commercial chains in the four countries.

2009

### Amphibians in Świętochłowice

We managed to save precious amphibian habitats in Świętochłowice, Upper Silesia. After a site inspection on request of Klub Gaja, Katowice Regional Board of Environment Protection arrested works aimed at the filling of the ponds inhabited by the strictly protected amphibians.

### Hundreds of swallows saved

Thanks to swift intervention by Klub Gaja, work was stopped at the excavation in Mosina where hundreds of sand martins nested. It was only resumed after the birds left the nests together with their young.

### Tree Day in Copenhagen

Klub Gaja took part in the COP15 accompanying events in Copenhagen. We distributed 10,000 Białowieża Forest oak seeds in front of the Copenhagen city hall. The acorns were in envelopes carrying the message *Sow the Seed for a Good Climate* and an instruction on how to plant an oak tree from a seed.

### Fish have their say

Klub Gaja started a new project *Fish Do Have a Voice*. Its objective being education on sustainable fishery and consumption, it received funding from the Citizen Initiatives Fund Operational Program and the Fisheries Secretariat.

### Fish feel pain

The Sejm of the Republic of Poland amended the Animal Protection Act, as postulated by Klub Gaja. The modified Article 2 provides that the law protects fish just as all other vertebrates that can feel pain, fear and stress. From now on, cases of live carp packed in plastic bags or kept in crowded basins can be reported e.g. to veterinary inspectorates.

### Helping animals and protecting the climate

We launch the program *Helping Animals, We Are Protecting the Climate*. Its objective is widespread education of the public concerning relation between factory farming, our consumer choices and climate change. We encourage schools to organize Animal Rights Days. We provide citizens advice. Many of the 500 consultancy cases concerned animals to be saved.

### More than 30 horses

The number of horses saved exceeded 30. New ones include Sugar, bought out from a horse meat farm; Emir nicknamed Wrymouth because of the bite defect that caused the owner to assign him for slaughter; Bangkok, a small gelding; Elstar, a.k.a. Frycek of Konin, adopted by the local government of Konin; Premiera, a mare suffering from laminitis; Kasia that was jailed in her stable; and the seriously ill Jagoda.

2010

### Animals saved from a flood

The flood that visited Poland between spring and summer surprised everybody, including animals. Klub Gaja interventions led to the rescue of a badger and a roe deer, among others. We also helped rescue a tawny owl, three swans and a swift. With our assistance, the animals were cured and returned to nature whenever they could survive on their own.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Tree Day

This year's Tree Day inauguration takes place in Warsaw Pole Mokotowskie and in the Silesian Library, Katowice. Tree Day even gains Adam Małysz, world ski jump champion who took part in the project of the Augsburg Evangelical parish in Szczyrk Salmopol to plant trees on the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation.

### Over 500 instances of citizen advice

Every year, Klub Gaja supports citizens in solving local problems concerning environment protection and animal welfare. In 2010, we provided such advice 520 times.

### Five ponds for amphibians

After two-year efforts of Klub Gaja to protect amphibian habitats, the General Directorate for National Roads and Highways had five ponds created in the area of Expressway No. 51 in Grodziec Śląski. This allowed the preservation of the common tree frog, fire-bellied toad, garlic toad, common newt and other species.

### Parsęta NATURA 2000

Together with Dygowo municipal authorities (Kołobrzeg county), we took action to get the Parsęta river basin protected under the NATURA 2000 network. We achieved change of a planned motor car rally.

### Stars against cruelty to carp

The Klub Gaja campaign *Carp Is Still Alive* was supported by columnist and cook Robert Makłowicz, as well as actresses Magdalena Rózcicka and Julia Pietrucha. The economic portal of *Gazeta Wyborcza* listed the *Carp Is Still Alive* campaign as one of the 10 most interesting public campaigns of the year 2010.



2011

### Mini-ZOO bears rescued

After Klub Gaja two years' efforts, two female bears were taken from a Leszno mini-zoo and transferred to a large area sanctuary in Germany. Klub Gaja applied to the Minister of Environment for immediate withdrawal of the Leszno zoo license already in 2009.

### 100 year-old alpinarium renovated

Klub Gaja actions and cooperation with National Forests, Polish Tourism and Sightseeing Society (PTTK) and Bielsko-Biała commune authorities led to the renovation of the 100 years old alpinarium on Szyndzielnia in Silesian Beskid mountain range. The opening inaugurated the 9<sup>th</sup> Tree Day celebration in the region.

### Attorney General defends carp

Prior to Christmas time, all Prosecutor's Offices in Poland received a circular from the Attorney General pointing out to the laws and regulations in force concerning live fish sales. He pointed out to the inhumanity of carrying live fish in dry containers, plastic sacs or baskets.

### Avalanche of carp discussions

The *Carp Is Still Alive* campaign reverberated through the media. It was supported by columnist and cook Robert Makłowicz, actresses and actors Magdalena Rózcicka, Julia Pietrucha, Magdalena Popławska, Bartłomiej Topa, as well as author Olga Tokarczuk and playwright Artur Pałyga.

### Improvement in animal welfare in EU

Klub Gaja participated in the *8 Hours* campaign for limiting the slaughter-bound live animal transportation time to the maximum of 8 hours. Throughout Europe, more than one million citizens signed up to support the action.

2012

### Silesian Park trees saved

Actions of Klub Gaja and Our Park association managed to prevent the cutting down of almost 3,400 trees in Silesian Park, Chorzów. It is the biggest park in Poland, one of the biggest in Europe. We also prevented the cutting of 77 trees in Chorzów Rose Park, 13 trees in Rybnik and a monumental 750 year-old ewe at Henryków.

### Protecting amphibians

Klub Gaja initiated public consultation concerning protection of amphibians on Bielsko-Biała greens on account of the International Military Vehicle Convention shows that were organized there. Also, as suggested by our Association, two ponds for amphibians were created in Dębowiec district where a skiing lift had been constructed.

### Black stork habitat

Efforts of Klub Gaja led to the Katowice Regional Environmental Protection Directorate establishing a strict protection zone within Bielsko Forest Division due to the occurrence of a black stork nest.

### Adopt a River on the beach in Katowice, Warsaw and Hel

As part of the *Adopt a River* program supported by the Foundation of PKO Bank Polski, an educational tour and art workshops were organized in Katowice, Warszawa and Hel (on Hel Peninsula). About 500 people joined the Big Jump action at Hel, getting into the water together in the intention of clean and abundant rivers.

### Defense of laying hens

Klub Gaja had long been involved in the Eurogroup for Animals campaign for humane laying hen farming conditions. The campaign contributed to the European Commission imposing a duty on farms to use bigger cages for battery hen, thus taking more consideration of the birds' natural needs. Since January, 2012 the new rules of laying hen farming came into effect in Poland as well.

### 50<sup>th</sup> horse saved

The foal was born on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> of July. Its mother Drumla had been meant for slaughter but Klub Gaja bought her out and transferred for equitation therapy of pupils at the Special School Complex no. 4 in Sosnowiec. Lucek, the 50<sup>th</sup> Klub Gaja horse, was born there.

### 10 years of the Tree Day

Tree Day, Klub Gaja biggest environmental education program celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary under honorary patronage of the RP President's spouse Anna Komorowska. Over the 10 years, we planted over 570,000 trees through the involvement of nearly 502,000 people. The tenth Tree Day edition was a huge success: together we planted more than 112,500 trees!

### Social change and the carp

The Klub Gaja campaign *Carp Is Still Alive* brought about actual social change. Due to the large scale actions and media campaign, consumer habits of Polish people began to change, as well as the habitual ways of selling carp. Some shops no longer offered live fish, opting for frozen fillets. The campaign had foreign media coverage, including German *Die Welt*.

2013

### A home for Klub Gaja

The RP Treasury donated a building in Wilkowice to Klub Gaja for life-long use as an organization of public benefit. It will be the new office of the Association.

### Successful vote on overfishing

Thanks to the actions of the OCEAN 2012 coalition of which Klub Gaja is a member, a vast majority of European MP's opted for fisheries restoration and against overfishing in the EU Parliament vote on a Common Fisheries Policy reform. The majority also upheld the proposal to reward sustainable and environment-friendly fishers.

### No to ritual slaughter

We took part in protest against the revocation of the ban on ritual slaughter. Under pressure of civil society organizations, scientists, artists, politicians, journalists and ordinary citizens, the Sejm rejected the governmental bill permitting slaughter without stunning. It was success for all the people who engaged in fight to uphold the ban. According to a CBOS opinion poll, 65 per cent of adult Poles were against the ritual slaughter.

### River of the Year

For the first time, we announce the River of the Year national competition. We look for initiatives that have rivers rediscovers, saved, protected or recognized as symbols of significant public or private events. The Wieprzówka river in Lesser Poland (Małopolska), particularly its fragment between Rzyki and Sułkowice became the River of the Year 2013, gaining the most votes in the internet poll.

### Poles with (Environmental) Verve

Science, medicine, environment protection, innovative business, culture and arts, design, and sports – these were the seven categories of the PKN Orlen-initiated poll *Poles with Verve* demonstrating Poland's real potential that is young people who are ingenious, passionate and perseverant in creating modern things, projects and solutions that serve the country development. Jacek Bożek, president of Klub Gaja, was appointed chairman of the jury in the environmental category.

### Kindness Pays

The Inteligo payment card *Dobro procentuje* ("Kindness Pays") is the card that helps Klub Gaja protect Polish rivers. By choosing the Ecology area, users of the card support our actions for rivers. Inteligo transfers a part of its profits on non-cash transactions to the program *Adopt a River*, of which the Foundation of PKO Bank Polski is a strategic partner.

### More than 130,000 trees planted

The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Klub Gaja Tree Day resulted in planting more than 130,000 trees! Almost 46,000 participants planted them in schoolyard gardens, parks, playgrounds, forests... In this way, people all over the country took genuine civil action for natural environment.



### 525 tons of wastepaper for the horses

196 educational establishments and 19 companies, institutions and shops joined the action *Save Wastepaper, Save Horses*. This enabled Klub Gaja to rescue more horses: Dynastia, Broszka, Maksio and Feta, and to support treatment and maintenance of 16 other stallions.

### Plaits, leaves and seeds at COP19

During the COP19 Climate Summit in Warsaw, we organized the events: *Every Leaf Absorbs CO<sub>2</sub>*, *Plant a Good Climate*, and the performance *Rivers for the Climate – Plaits for Rivers* with artist Cecylia Malik. The plaits woven throughout the Summit finally flowed down the Palace of Culture and Science. They were made by adults, children and young people alike, by city authorities, foreigners, whole families and even the Palace employees. The chairman of the previous Doha Summit was among the first ones to whom Jacek Bożek handed in an envelope with the message *Plant a Good Climate*, a seed of the Tabórz pine, and an instruction how to grow a tree from the seed.

### For the climate and cooperation

Sobieski Woods, Żerań Dune and Celestynów Forest Division were the places where 9,000 new trees were planted during the COP19 Climate Summit – exactly the number of conference delegates who arrived in Warsaw. The action was organized by the City Office which invited Ministry of Environment, National Forests and Klub Gaja to cooperate.

### 25 years of the Way of Gaia Warriors

Klub Gaja celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A piano concert of Katarzyna Musiał added splendour to the festive reunion of friends that took place just before the Tree Day. Jacek Bożek told the story of Gaia Warriors. The first edition of the book *On Changing the World: The Way of Gaia Warriors* was promoted.

### Social Campaign of the Year

The *Carp Is Still Alive* campaign gained honourable mention at the Social Campaign of the Year 2012 competition. The jury appreciated its high copyrighting level and aesthetic performance. It also pointed out to the creative involvement of actors who did not limit themselves to expressing their support but actually played roles in the campaign. The creation was prepared by the Clos Brothers copyrighting agency with actors Magdalena Rózcicka, Magdalena Popławska, Julia Pietrucha, Bartłomiej Topa, and a columnist and cook Robert Makłowicz.

2014

### 10 years of Adopt a River

President of the Republic of Poland Bronisław Komorowski assumed honourable patronage of the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of Klub Gaja *Adopt a River* program. Through the involvement of nearly 148,000 people, we adopt-

ed 688 rivers and water bodies in 1,295 places. The World Water Day celebration, an urban game and a cascade of plaits flowing down from Scientific Information Centre and Academic Library (CINIbA) and into the Rawa river in the centre of Katowice inaugurated this year's edition of the program, encouraging the Polish people to initiate more actions related to water protection and promotion of efficient water use.

#### Record-breaking BIG JUMP

Water entries under the banner of the European Big Jump initiative coordinated in Poland by Klub Gaja were organized in almost 60 places in Poland and abroad! Families, friends, associations, anglers, divers, local authorities, river lovers, even dogs and horses entered the waters. Over 1,100 people in total! They expressed their support for the cause of clean and living rivers by dipping their feet or hands in the nearest river, lake or even basin.

#### Water Signs

First Water Signs were installed on the adopted rivers Parsęta in Zambrów, Łeba in Lębork and Biała Przemsza in Sławków. They are boards carrying information of the place distance from the river sources and its waters debouchment to the Baltic Sea. The Sign is the award in the Klub Gaja *Adopt a River* program granted to those who took actions for rivers in their neighbourhood with passion and in cooperation with others.

#### Great Comeback of the Salmon to the Biała Tarnowska

How high can a salmon bounce to overcome obstacles? This is one of the many questions that children and teenagers had a chance to answer during the meeting on *Restoration of patency of the ecological corridor of Biała Tarnowska river valley*, organized by the Regional Water Management Board in Cracow with participation of Klub Gaja and attendance of more than 350 people from schools of the Grybów town and commune. The event began with shared fish stocking of the river and ended in a happening *Great Comeback of the Salmon*.

#### Antałek, the 55<sup>th</sup> horse rescued

Thanks to Klub Gaja efforts, the injured horse found a new home at Bielowicko Ranch. Antałek did not follow the suit of so many injured sports horses. When they are no longer able to take part in competitions, most of them are sold to horse traders or slaughterhouses. We were able to help Antałek thanks to the actions *Save Wastepaper*, *Save Horses* and *Save Cartridges*, *Save Horses*.

#### Plaits flowed down to the Baltic

The Fish Day at Hel featured a symbolic river, woven Plaits for Rivers, as well as fish, seals and porpoises. More than 1,000 people including German and French tourists visited our information stands. Tourists and locals took part in the event culminating in a procession down to the Museum of Fishery and a happening with artist Cecylia Malik. We organized the event in cooperation with the Marine Station of the Gdańsk University Institute of Oceanography and Hel Municipality.

#### Human Chain

Klub Gaja joined the citizens and civil society organizations that express opposition to the planned new brown coal open pit mines and appeal for development of renewable energy sources. 7,500 people from almost 30 countries formed an eight-kilometre human chain between Polish Grabice and German Kerkwitz, part of the *Stop Odkrywcę* (Stop the Pit) Human Chain.

#### 25 years of Liberty

*Tree of Liberty* is a social art action of Klub Gaja on the occasion of the 25 years of Liberty celebration under patronage of President Bronisław Komorowski. Warsawians were provided white-and-red leaves on which they wrote their reflexions, subsequently fixed to the Tree of Liberty we built in Krakowskie Przedmieście street in Warsaw. The event, a part of the 12<sup>th</sup> Tree Day, was organized in cooperation with the Capital City of Warsaw, National Forests and artist Waldemar Rudyk.

#### Magazines

15 issues of the *Gaja* quarterly

57 issues of the *Współodczuwanie* (Co-Sentience) newsletter

41 issues of the *Wisła Fax* newsletter

#### Films

*Droga Wojownika Gai* (*The Way of a Gaia Warrior*, 1993)

*Woda źródłem życia* (*Water, the Source of Life*, 1995)

*Zwierzę nie jest rzeczą* (*An Animal Is Not a Thing*, 2001)

*Sztuka dla Ziemi* (*Art for the Earth*, 2003)

*Drzewo Życzeń* (*The Wishing Tree*, 2004)

*Jak uratować rzekę* (*How to Save a River*, 2006)

*Pomagamy zwierzętom 1* (*We Help Animals 1*, 2007)

*Zaadoptuj rzekę* (*Adopt a River*, 2008)

*Święto Drzewa* (*Tree Day*, 2008)

*Pomagamy zwierzętom 2* (*We Help Animals 2*, 2008)

*Zwierzęta a klimat* (*Animals and Climate*, 2009)

*Rzeki dla ludzi i zwierząt* (*Rivers for Humans and Animals*, 2011)

#### Books

*Droga Wojownika Gai* (*The Way of a Gaia Warrior*, 1994)

*Antologia Praw Zwierząt* (*The Animal Rights Antology*, 1995)

*Jak uratować rzekę* (1997; English edition *Saving a River*, 1998)

*Widziałem jak konie płaczą* (*I Saw Horses Crying*, 2001)

*Człowiek i pies* (*Man and Dog*, 2003)

*Zapory a rozwój* (*Dams and Development*, translation of the report of the World Commission on Dams, 2003)

*Globalne ostrzeżenie – zmiany klimatyczne a dobrostan zwierząt hodowlanych*, translation of *Global Warning: Climate Change and Farm Animal Welfare*, 2009)

*Drzewo Roku 2011* (*Tree of the Year 2011*, 2011)

*Drzewo Roku 2012* (*Tree of the Year 2012*, 2012)

*Drzewo Roku 2013* (*Tree of the Year 2013*, 2013)

*Drzewo Roku 2014* (*Tree of the Year 2014*, 2014)

*O zmianianiu świata. Droga Wojowników Gai* (*On Changing the World: The Way of Gaia Warriors*, 1<sup>st</sup> Polish edition, 2013)



The workshop *Following Silence* conducted by Jacek Bożek during the Bridge Builders' Village project realized by the "Pogranicze" (Borderland) Foundation at Czesław Miłosz Manor, Krasnogruda, in 2015.

For freedom of speech, religion and thought, and for equality of all people – one mum wrote during the social art action *Tree of Liberty* commemorating the 25 years of Liberty. Participants of the Klub Gaja action wrote their reflections on leaves that were fixed to a symbolic tree, Warsaw, 2014.





[www.klubgaja.pl](http://www.klubgaja.pl)  
[www.swietodrzewa.pl](http://www.swietodrzewa.pl),  
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[www.jeszczezywykarp.pl](http://www.jeszczezywykarp.pl)

Thank you!