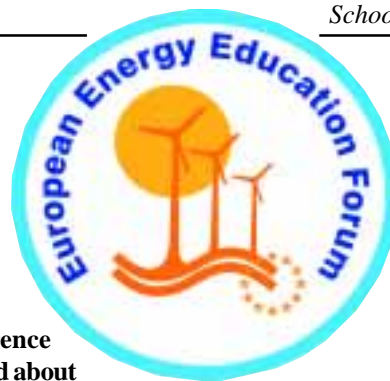


New Educational Network

A new network, the European Sustainable Energy Education Forum (ESEEF), was officially created by organisations from 10 countries at a conference in Copenhagen in December, 2000. The network aims to help teachers and students around Europe who work with sustainable energy.

A new web site (www.school4energy.net) includes interesting educational materials and web site links. All European educational organisations are welcome to join!

In the following 4 articles, we share some insights into the activities at the Conference and introduce some of the organisations that founded the network. You can also read about other organisations in our first School Theme in issue No. 29, May 2000. (Editors)



Insights at the Conference



How to teach better? Similar efforts in various languages. Curiosity and openness in the air.

By Judit Szoleczky, editor, Denmark

The participants were all directly interested in how better to teach children about sustainable energy, which would help them throughout their lives to choose environmentally conscious energy consumption.

The participants came from Denmark, France, Belgium, United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Spain, and Italy, as well as from the Baltic countries and Russia. Many of the attendees were active or former teachers who are now preparing instructional materials. The Conference provided good opportunities for open discussions.

For me, the most interesting part of the experience was learning new ideas and, at the same time, hearing about similar efforts in various countries. Because of language barriers and a lack of networking, these teachers usually do not hear about each other's efforts.

We discussed the differences and the similarities:

- How the energy and environment is integrated in the schoolbooks in different countries?
- Who decides which book to use, the teacher or the school or the ministry?
- Can a teacher choose to teach about sustainable energy, or it is decided by the headmaster?
- Can the web and internet be a useful tool in catalyse the process?
- Who can or should have access to the internet: should the list include schools, teachers, children, and/or simply everybody who wants to learn?

- What is better to have an ambitious web page, which might not work for some users or a simpler but without access problem?
- Should information be provided in English only, or also in national languages? How much work is it to translate the materials to national languages?
- How can other countries use a good idea, which is available only in Norwegian, or in Finnish? How accessible and useful is English to children and teachers in European countries outside UK?
- Can children in a kindergarten understand a wall graph showing energy consumption or fluctuations in temperature? At what age does this first become meaningful to them?
- How can simple role-playing and experiments help children to discover these concepts for themselves?
- How much and how effectively can teachers use colouring books, activity sheets, and computer games as teaching tools?
- How can we accept or not accept money from oil and gas companies to teach renewable energy or energy efficiency?

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Janus Hendrichsen (right) showed us around the Energy House. Here, Bente (left) from Norway experiments to see how much energy she can make by bicycling. As she bicycles, the lamps and television turns on...

Photos by Judit Szoleczky



The Conference was held in the Energy House of "The National Innovative Center for General Education" (SPF), which is hosting the Danish School Energy Forum.



The start of the new network marked the end of a project by the Danish School Energy Forum, (SEF). The project was supported by the EU Altener program (See article about SEF in issue No. 29). Please note: Activity sheets in English can be downloaded from the web site!

