Science on Stage: gathering momentum

Science on Stage Austria

I was lucky enough to attend the Science on Stage Austria event as a member of the jury. After two days, my head was in a whirl: how to compare a primary school's 7 km scale model of the Solar System – complete with a rucksack full of experiments for the children to perform on each 'planet' – with a project in which secondary-school students developed experiments to explain the physics of music to younger children? And how should we judge those against some impressive original research into the effects of diet on health, performed by students at an agricultural secondary school? Only nine projects could be selected to attend the European teaching festival in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2011[w1] – and it wasn't an easy choice for the eight scientists, educators, and members of the Austrian education ministry who made up the jury.

All the 41 projects presented were wonderful; all represented inspiration and hard work by teachers and students alike. There were ideas for measuring your mass (not your weight), getting a feel for food webs (with the help of some cuddly toys), investigating the beauty of polarisation, or using Excel to model predator and prey populations; there were also plays, demonstrations and hands-on experiments. From all over Austria, 180 teachers and students came to Linz on 25-26 February 2010 to share their enthusiasm for science, to swap ideas and to gain inspiration for their teaching. Another success for Science on Stage.

For more details, including the winning projects, visit the Science on Stage Austria website[w2].

Science on Stage Belgium

Where could you take a virtual trip to Mars, learn how to build a 'green' battery, or discover the physics of music? Again, at Science on Stage – this time in Belgium, where on 27 February 2010, 140 teachers, inspectors and other participants converged on Ukkel for the Playful Science 4 event.

Images courtesy of Science on Stage Austria

Many of the national Science on Stage organisations are already beginning to select which teachers from their countries will attend the European teaching festival in 2011. **Eleanor Hayes** reports on the Austrian and Belgian events.

The day was full with a programme of teachers and university scientists demonstrating the delights of science. For those who preferred something hands-on, there were plenty of activities: you could test for yourself whether film stunts obey the laws of physics, run a gel electrophoresis and calculate the size of a DNA fragment, or try out a solar-powered water pump from Mauritania.

To learn more, visit the Science on Stage Belgium website[w3].

Web references

w1 – The national Science on Stage events culminate in a European teaching festival every two years, the next one being in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 16-19 April 2011. To learn more about Science on Stage and find your national contact, see the Science on Stage Europe website: www.science-on-stage.eu

w2 – More information about Science on Stage Austria is available here: www.scienceonstage.at

w3 – To find out more about Science on Stage Belgium, see: www.scienceonstage.be

w4 – Science Center Netzwerk connects interactive science centre activities throughout Austria. See: www.science-center-net.at

Resources

All previous *Science in School* articles about the Science on Stage activities can be viewed here: www.scienceinschool.org/sons

Dr Eleanor Hayes is the Editor-in-Chief of *Science in School*. She studied zoology at the University of Oxford, UK, and completed a PhD in insect ecology. Eleanor then spent some time working in university administration before moving to Germany and into science publishing, initially for a bioinformatics company and then for a learned society. In 2005 she moved to the European Molecular Biology Laboratory to launch *Science in School*.