

Report on LERU Kids final event
23 November 2005, Museum for Natural Sciences Brussels

1. Description of activities

The final event of the LERU Kids University Initiative took place on 23 November 2005. The intention of this final event was to portray a summary of the whole LERU Kids event and to stress the European dimension of the project. This was among other things achieved by representation of different universities, the invitation of the children of the European School at Uccle and the choice of location for the event, namely the Museum for Natural Sciences, located at the heart of Brussels and close to the European institutions.

Four activities were scheduled during the afternoon with representation from different universities:

- Sci-Fun: an interactive roadshow about science from the University of Edinburgh
- Laser Light Show from the University of Milan
- Lectures: three lectures, performed by
Prof. Christoffel Waelkens (Catholic University of Leuven)
Is Pluto a planet?
Prof. Timo Vesala (University of Helsinki)
Is there any snow in Santa Claus Land in 2035?
Prof. Delphine Picamelot (ULP Strasbourg)
Satellite tracking of wild animals
- Poster exhibition and quiz: all the partner universities worked out a poster about a scientific topic on the level of the background knowledge of children, aged ten to twelve. The children were split up in small groups to solve a quiz about these posters and the best group received a prize at the end of the afternoon

150 children and 7 teachers participated in this programme. The accompanying teachers were very pleased about the programme: the topics presented supported the learning plan of science at the school very well and they could tell that the children were really fascinated by the idea that science is constantly surrounding us in every day life. Some teachers expressed explicitly their intention to use this way of 'science teaching' in their future courses.

At the end of the afternoon all children received a certificate of attendance and were granted the title of 'Junior LERU scientist'.

Please see annex I for the attendance certificate.

LERU Office fulfilled as a partner in the LERU Kids project the following tasks for the organisation of the afternoon:

- Finalising the time and date of the event

- Design of the programme and rotation of the activities
 - Communication and organising the programme with the European School Uccle
 - Equipment of the different halls at the museum
 - Collecting the posters for the quiz
 - Assigning the lecturers
 - Communicating with 10 partners about the organisation of the final event
 - Designing and printing of badges for the children
- Please see annex II for an example of the badges.**

At the evening the second part of the final event took place. This part was set up as a networking event for the partner universities to heighten the visibility of LERU as a European organisation promoting scientific awareness.

Programme of the evening:

- Speech by Kari Raivio, President of LERU and Chancellor of the University of Helsinki
- Speech by Etienne Magnien, European Commission, DG Research, Science and Society
- Speech by Peter Comba, Vice-Rector of the University of Heidelberg, as coordinator of the project
- Lecture by Timo Vesala, Professor of Physical Sciences, University of Helsinki - *Is there any snow in Santa Claus Land in 2035?* (This is the same lecture as the one given in the afternoon for the children. In this way it was shown to the guests how science can be explained to children)
- Reception
Welcome by David Livesey, Secretary-General of LERU
Exhibits of LERU Kids University activities (SciFun and Poster Exhibition)
- Presentation of the film (edited by the University of Milan) presenting a summary of the local events at the partner universities

102 guests attended the evening programme.

LERU Office fulfilled as a partner in the LERU Kids project the following tasks for the organisation of the evening programme :

- Finalising the programme of the evening
 - Contacting and scheduling of the speakers
 - Sending out the invitations: a list has been compiled and 340 invitations were sent out to the partner universities, EU Officials, representatives from research-related organisations and embassies. The invitation included an invitation letter, flyer and response form.
 - Technical support
 - Organisation of the reception
 - Set-up of the hall for the reception (exhibition of the posters)
 - Designing and printing of badges for the guests
- Please see annex III for an example of the badges.**

2. Communication and press relations

Different attributes for communication goals have been designed and distributed by LERU Office:

- **Roll-up:** LERU Office has designed a common roll-up (printed by the University of Heidelberg) that was used by the partner universities.
See annex IV for the electronic version of the roll-up
- **Flyers:** LERU Office designed a flyer to promote the LERU Kids University initiative. The electronic version of the flyer was sent on to the partner universities to use for their local event, has been distributed at the European School Uccle and was sent together with the invitation letters.
See annex V for the electronic version of the flyer
- **Website:** LERU Office created a subpage on the LERU website about the LERU Kids University with links to the webpages of the local projects and the article on the LERU Kids initiative from Cordis.
- **Press release:** Invitation to and information on the final event was sent out to the following media:
International media: The Bulletin, Cordis Wire, The Parliament Magazine, European Voice, Reuters, The Times Higher Education
National Media : Ketnet (Flemish television channel for children), VRT, De Standaard, De Morgen, Het Laatste Nieuws, Het Nieuwsblad, Metro
See annex VI for the invitation letter

A journalist from Cordis Wire attended the evening programme. An article appeared on Cordis on 24 November 2005.

See annex VII for the electronic version of the Cordis article

3. Conclusion and remarks

The final event has certainly proved the benefit of co-operative action. It has been very valuable for enhancing the contact between the universities and the European Institutions (in particular DG Research of the Commission).

Also the cooperation with the European School confirmed the European character of the initiative.

One remark however:

The most important objective of the project was to promote science by young children and to increase the awareness by parents, teachers and policymakers of the importance to awake the interest of children in science. These objectives could have been even more achieved if the final event was set-up more like a conference of a few days offering the exhibitions for the children to visit and lectures from educators and researchers for teachers and parents on how to heighten the interest of children for science. In that way two target groups would have been reached: the ones that need to keep an interest in science (the children) and the ones who have to pass on the interest in science to the children (parents, teachers,...).

Annex VIII. Photographs of the final event