



# Environmental Education Forum

## Review 2005-2009

*In the last four years the Environmental Education Forum has come of age, and began to realise its full potential. From its launch in 1996 it had been core funded by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA and its predecessor the Environment and Heritage Service, EHS) to allow a basic level of activity. Over the years it had developed a Newsletter, held meetings and conferences, and developed the concept and content of 'ESD Days' for trainee teachers.*

*In November 2005 the Forum was granted contract funding from NIEA which allowed the employment of a full time Coordinator. Activity levels increased impressively in both quantity and quality. The number of members increased. The profile of the Forum rose significantly with both statutory and voluntary sectors. Northern Ireland took the lead throughout the UK in promoting Education for Sustainable Development and Environmental Education. Publications, events and conferences assisted members to do their work better and promoted that work to others in the education world. A website was developed to promote members and encourage networking. ESD Days were expanded to reach all trainee teachers in Northern Ireland. ESD Resource Guides promoting Forum members were produced and distributed to every school in Northern Ireland to encourage active uptake of ESD and EE services. The EEF Coordinator assisted members and statutory bodies to develop and encourage ESD and EE delivery. As new structures for education were coming into force in early 2010 the EEF was poised to play a major role in promoting environmental and sustainable development education and truly sustainable schools within these new structures.*

*In October 2009 funding from the NIEA was abruptly withdrawn from the Forum as part of major governmental spending cuts. The full time Coordinator lost his job and the Forum is back to relying on one part time staff member and no funding for delivery. This will have grave consequences for the future of the EEF and its work, but the Management Committee is firmly committed to the survival of the Forum's work and ensuring that a service is retained to assist members and promote ESD and EE in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland Environment Link has serviced and supported the Forum since the early 1990s and will continue to provide support to the extent possible.*

*This document provides a review of the Forum's achievements over the past four years. It is a testimony to what can be done with a relatively small financial investment supported by a very large amount of commitment from a broad spectrum of educators. The Forum and its work will continue, thought modified to fit its new financial constraints.*

***In four years, from November 2005 to October 2009  
The Environmental Education Forum has:***

***97 EEF members - a net increase of 18***

***Published:***

***17 issues of LEEF Newsletter, 33,000 printed documents***

***15,000 ESD Resource Guides***

***40 monthly E-Bulletins distributed to 265 people***

***EEF pages in 40 issues of NIEL News/re:Source***

***over 100,000 website visits***

***Events:***

***8 Conferences, average attendance 55 delegates***

***8 Forum Meetings, average attendance 14***

***3 Training Days, average attendance 30***

***20 Management meetings held, average attendance 8 members***

***Outreach:***

***29 ESD days delivered - 2230 student teachers trained***

***15 sessions for Extended Schools Programme - 450 teachers from 212  
schools in 5 ELBs***

***Liaison and documents distributed to over 1800 youth groups***

***Liaison and documents distributed to over 2000 pre-school groups***

***8 presentations given & 30 conferences attended;***

***17 working groups or advisory bodies***

***Represented at 36 events***

***39 Applications for NIEA grant aid received, reviewed, processed and  
discussed***

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# OUTPUTS

## PUBLICATIONS

### LEEF Newsletter

The **LEEF** Newsletter - *Lines from the Environmental Education Forum* - had been a prime output of the Forum for many years, but was limited to a small, photocopied publication aimed at members. From 2005 it changed in size and scope, moving ultimately to a document of 12 pages plus a 'supplement' aimed at schoolteachers with eight pages of resources and case studies for use in the classroom. At first, three issues were produced each year during the three school terms, but very quickly two additional issues were identified one aimed at the pre-school sector and the other at the youth sector. The Autumn, Winter and Spring editions were sent to every Primary, Post Primary, Special and Independent School in Northern Ireland. The Youth Service issue was sent to 3,000 youth groups and the Pre School issue was sent to 2,000 'early years' groups.

Each school **LEEF** had a central theme, with the other issues summarizing the themes for the year in a way appropriate for the audience. Main themes covered included waste free classroom, coasts in the curriculum, accreditation schemes, woodlands, SENSational environments, climate change, environmental art, learning outside the classroom, freshwater, growing school grounds and transport.

**LEEF** also includes information on activities and events of and for EEF members, funding opportunities and news on the work of the EEF itself.

The length of **LEEF** grew over time from an eight page newsletter with a four page supplement to a 12 page newsletter with an eight page supplement. In 2009 funding restrictions meant that printing could no longer be afforded and it was determined to produce the document in electronic form (PDF) only and distribute it via email. This was done for the final edition of 2009, for which a complete database of contacts for every school in Northern Ireland was compiled. Electronic distribution will be much more difficult for the youth and pre-school sectors as email contacts are much more difficult to obtain and keep up to date, but we were investigating ways to reach these audiences.



The development and distribution of **LEEF** over this period was carried out with help from a variety of agencies and organisations. Much time and energy was put into networking and liaising with these groups in order to secure an effective and reliable route of distributing the newsletters to the formal and non-formal education sectors.

The school issues of the newsletters were sent to every primary, post primary, special and independent school in Northern Ireland via the Education and Library Boards (ELB's).

The Youth issues of **LEEF** were sent to youth groups through the four main uniformed youth organisations (Girls Brigade, Boys Brigade, Scouts and Girl Guides), the youth advisors in each of the ELB's and the youth Curriculum Development Unit (CDU).

The Pre-School issues of **LEEF** were sent to nursery schools, nursery units within primary schools, and independent playgroups and nurseries through the early year's advisors in the ELB's and NIPPA (now called Early Years).

## LEEF Editions 2006-2009

### 2006

- 3.1 **Waste Free Classroom** (Schools) x2000 copies – Distributed in January
- 3.2 **Coasts in the Curriculum** (Schools) x2000 copies – Distributed in April / May
- 3.3 **Environment After- Schools** (Youth) x3000 copies - Distributed in Sept / Oct
- 4.1 **ESD in the Revised Curriculum** (Schools) x2000 copies – Distributed in Sept / Oct

### 2007

- 4.2 **Woodlands and Forestry** (Schools) x2000 copies – Distributed in January
- 4.3 **SENsational Environments** (Schools) x2000 copies – Distributed in April / May
- 4.4 **Youth and the Environment** (Youth) x3000 copies – Distributed in Sept / Oct
- 5.1 **Climate Change** (Schools) x2000 copies – Distributed in Oct
- 5.2 **Early Years Environment** (Pre School) x2000 copies Distributed in Nov

### 2008

- 5.3 **Environmental Art** (Schools) x2000 copies - Distributed in Jan
- 5.4 **Transport** (Schools) x2000 copies – Distributed in May
- 5.5 **Eco Youth** (Youth) x3000 copies – Distributed in Sept / Oct
- 6.1 **Learning outside the Classroom** (Schools) x2000 copies - Distributed in Sept / Oct
- 6.2 **Little LEEF** (Pre School) x2000 copies Distributed in November

### 2009

- 6.3 **Freshwater** (Schools) x2000 copies - Distributed in May
- 7.1 **Growing School Grounds** (Schools) Electronic - Distributed in October

***In four years: 17 issues, 33,000 printed documents***

## ESD Resource Guide

In 2005 Queen's University Belfast conducted a Mapping Survey on Environmental Education funded by the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS, predecessor of the NIEA). Among its recommendations was: *There needs to be a more 'joined-up' approach towards contacting schools who are confused by information coming from individual organizations.* The EEF Management Committee decided therefore to develop a resource guide as a way of bringing together in one publication all EEF members, their programmes, resources, contact details and curriculum work. The document would provide information in a single place to allow teachers and other educators an easy avenue into the resources on offer, including printed materials, classroom visits, places to visit and sites for and advice on field work.

In October 2006 the first edition was produced, with 5,000 hard copies printed and sent to every school, and a majority of youth groups and early year's groups, in Northern Ireland.

Copies were also provided to 1,500 student teachers and all EEF members. They were also distributed at conferences, EEF and member events, and training days.



In September 2008 a revised document was published and 10,000 hard copies were produced. Two copies were sent to every school (one for a named teacher, followed up with a personal copy for the head of World around Us at Primary level and Head of Geography at Post Primary level). They are also sent to youth groups and pre-school playgroups and nurseries. They were also distributed at ESD days at Universities to student teachers, given to all EEF members and were distributed at conferences and at other EEF and member events, and training days. The document was also used to facilitate and support training for ESD for in-service teachers through statutory agencies such as CASS, CCEA and the ELB's.

As with the **LEEF** Newsletter the distribution the ESD Resource Guide documents was carried out with the cooperation of a variety of agencies and organisations to ensure an efficient and cost effective means of getting the document to groups and individuals where it could be used effectively.

***In four years: 17 issues, 33,000 printed documents***

## **E-Bulletin**

The E-Bulletin grew out of a need to keep EEF members informed and up to date about developments in environmental education on a more frequent basis than could be achieved with the LEEF Newsletter. Other organisations bulletins were studied and it was decided that the EEF should develop an e-bulletin of its own to be distributed roughly every month.

The first of these was sent out to members in early 2006 and consisted of a series of bullet points on articles of interest such as policy news, resources, events, training and members' news. The format of the bulletin was revamped early in 2008 to make it more user-friendly and extensive. This involved sub-dividing the Bulletin into sections of interest, including:

- News from the EEF
- Environmental Education News
- Resources
- Training & Events
- Funding
- Job Opportunities
- Join the Forum / Membership



From January 2009 the e-bulletin was sent to all members as a PDF document attached to an e-mail. All of the articles and sections within the bulletin were hyperlinked for ease of access and all external links are checked to make sure that they are active at time of publication.

The quality and length of the bulletin has increased dramatically over the past four years as has the number of people receiving the bulletin on a monthly basis. In 2009 this number stood at approximately 300 individuals from member groups as well as other non-members who wished to receive the bulletin.

***In four years: 40 E-Bulletins distributed to 265 people monthly***

## NIEL News / re:Source

NI Environment Link produces its own monthly members' newsletter (called **NIEL News** until October 2009) containing environmental news and information. This is distributed to over 100 NIEL members plus governmental contacts in all Departments and other individuals. It was decided in mid-2006 that a one page digest of EEF and environmental education news should be included in this Newsletter, in order that a wider audience could become aware of the work of the Forum and to provide opportunities to promote the work of EEF members.



Over the years many EEF and member events such as conferences and training days, have been included in the 'News from the EEF' section, as well as many other topical and interesting articles on competitions, schools and youth work, changes in policy and curriculum, environmental education awards, global dimension links, funding opportunities and much more.

In October 2009 **NIEL News** underwent an extensive revamp and became **re:Source**. The publication moved to being a more web-based 'bulletin' to subscribers. The EEF page remains an important part of the publication and continues to keep NIEL members up to date with the activities of the Forum every month.

***In four years: EEF pages in 40 issues of NIEL News/re:Source***

## Website

Updating the EEF website was a major priority for 2006. The existing site had become seriously out of date and an extensive overhaul was planned. The website's main functions are as a means of informing members and as a promotional tool.

The new website was developed and went live in March 2006 ([www.eefni.org.uk](http://www.eefni.org.uk)). It contained a number of sections, including:

- **Home Page** with introduction text, flash Animation, latest 5 news articles, featured events and an option to sign up to the newsletter.
- **An About Us** Section with a mission and aims section, management committee and milestones.
- **An Activities** Section with all the current activities that the EEF is involved in such as networking, conferences, ESD days, LEEF, meetings and training.
- **A Member's** Section which contains an interactive database of members of the Environmental Education Forum. Each entry contains Organisation Name, Organisation Category, Organisation Status, Contact Name, Address, Telephone, Fax, E-mail, Website and Organisation Description.
- **A Links Page** which contains links to websites and organisations associated with the Environmental Education Forum. Each Link contains the Link Name, Link Image, Link Category and URL. Links can be browsed via link categories and can be managed through the content management system.

- **Join Us Page** which is a static page of information on member benefits with a link to an online form for joining the Forum.
- **A Documents** page which contains strategic plans, minutes from meetings and annual reports.
- **Publications** page which holds all of the **LEEF** Newsletters and ESD Resource Guides as well as any other documents of interest to members.
- **The Conference Proceedings Page** has the Forum's conference reports, plus speaker presentation, programmes and agendas etc.
- **News, Events, Training** and **Facilities and Services** pages completed the website.

Statistics for 2009 are:

<b>Average visits per month:</b>	<b>2,550</b>
<b>Average hits per month:</b>	<b>17,231</b>

A new website is currently being developed and it is anticipated that it will go live from February 2010. The content management system will be simple to use and the new Website, plus E-bulletins, will form the major resource for members.

***In four years: over 100,000 website visits***

## EEF Leaflet



A new EEF leaflet was designed and printed in 2006 after the Forum had been re-launched. 1000 copies of the new leaflet were produced. It includes information on the core aims and mission of the Forum, its history and some previous activities and events, as well as benefits of membership and an application form to apply for membership status.

These leaflets have been used for promotion and publicity of the Forum at a variety of member and non-member events as well as for sending out to potential members in a membership pack.

## EEF Member Pack and Folder

In conjunction with the above EEF leaflet, a new folder was produced and printed in 2006. This was printed with the EEF logo on the front cover, mission statement on the inside, and contact details and website address on the back cover.



2000 copies were produced. Folders are used to send out membership information to potential EEF members to hold the 'information pack' for ESD day student teachers and for Extended Schools training days to provide teachers with information on EEF, and for conference packs.

The New Member Pack always contained a variety of information to help potential members decide if membership of the Forum was right for them. This included an introductory letter about the work of the EEF, a membership booklet, membership leaflet with application form, facilities and services leaflet, three editions of LEEF and a copy of the ESD Resource Guide. These packs were sent out to all potential members, be they voluntary groups, statutory agencies or interested individuals.

# EVENTS

## Conferences

The Forum holds two conferences per year to explore topical aspects of environmental education and education for sustainable development. Conferences are open to all members and interested groups and individuals. Reports are produced on these meetings and distributed to EEF members and placed on the website. Major public conferences are held every two years, which investigate significant aspects in the field and promote the effective delivery of environmental education and education for sustainable development.

From the period 2006 – 2009 the EEF ran eight conferences for members on a variety of themes. From 2008 the EEF tried to move more towards training combined with a conference approach. This proved to be a very successful method of engaging with member groups, reflected in the numbers attending such days which averaged 49 in 2006 and 2007 but climbed to 60 in 2008 and 2009.

### 2006

**Re-launch of Forum** attended by **70 delegates** at **St Columb's Park House**. January.

The purpose of the day was to bring together groups, both statutory and voluntary, and those working in the field of environmental education to look at, discuss and explore the opportunities presented by the introduction of the new Northern Ireland Curriculum. The day aimed to put into context the role that the Forum can play in helping its members to deliver environmental education and education for sustainable development, and help teachers and students make positive contributions to their environment in order to help take the vision of a sustainable society forward.



**'Are we doing any good'** attended by **60 delegates** at **Lough Neagh Discovery Centre Oxford Island**. October.



The purpose of the conference was to bring together groups, both statutory and voluntary, and those working in the field of environmental education to look at, discuss and explore how we can evaluate the long-term impact of environmental education provision.

There were three outcomes for the day:

- ✓ Identify ways in which Forum members can assess the impacts of their programmes
- ✓ Identify ways to look at long term impacts of ESD awareness in the revised curriculum
- ✓ How do we take the lessons learnt in the classroom and make sure that they are put into practise at home in order to positively impact upon the environment now!

### 2007

**'Making the Links'** attended by **35 delegates** at **Antrim Board Centre**. April.

The purpose of the conference was to bring together groups from the Development and Environmental Education sectors, to look at and explore the links and connections between the Sectors. There were three outcomes for the day:

- ✓ Identify ways in which the two sectors of EE and DE have interconnected work
- ✓ Review good practice examples from both sectors and identify potential joint areas of work for the future
- ✓ Through the afternoon workshops develop real, tangible examples of classroom / school lesson plans that can be used by educators from both the environmental and development sectors.



**'From the Periphery to the Mainstream'** attended by **32 delegates** at **Clifton House, Belfast**. October.

The purpose of the conference was to look at the progress and development of the EEF over the past 12 years and to see what sectors need to be re-engaged with the work of the Forum. There were three expected outcomes for the day:

- ✓ Review of the progress made by the EEF and ESD in the past 12 years,
- ✓ Look at and examine the main emerging themes that have come to the fore during this time,
- ✓ To identify and discuss current challenges and future areas of work for the Forum.



## 2008

**'Youth and the Environment'** attended by **49 delegates** at **Lorne House Holywood**. February.

The purpose of the conference was to learn about the structure and remit of both Northern Ireland's and the Republic of Ireland's Youth Services, to discover how environmental education and sustainable development are embedded into the work of the Youth Service and find out what opportunities are available for our sector as environmental educators to support this work through our programmes.



**'Learning outside the Classroom'** attended by **52 delegates** at **Share Centre Lisnaskea**. September.

The purpose of the conference was threefold to:

- ✓ Provide EEF members with the opportunity to keep up to date with essential requirements needed to run a successful environmental education programme, including the new 'quality' badge for providers, updating of POCVA legislation and policy and practice requirements for educational visits,
- ✓ Review good practice examples from the sector and local schools, sharing ideas on what works and the problems encountered,
- ✓ Preparing the sector and schools for the challenges that lie ahead.



## 2009

'Working Together' attended by **72 delegates** at **Pump House, Science Park Belfast**. February.

The purposes of the conference were to:

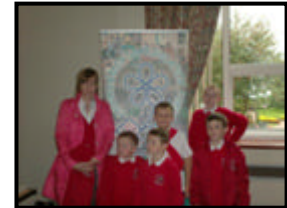
- ✓ Provide an opportunity for delivery partners to input into the future development of Eco-Schools,
- ✓ Embed an understanding of the importance of measuring the impacts (Economic, Social & Environmental) of our work,
- ✓ Building capacity to support schools studying the global perspective.
- ✓ Equip delegates with ideas on successful engagement with the post-primary sector.



'Growing School Grounds' attended by **65 delegates** at **Greenmount College**. October.

The purposes of the day were to:

- ✓ Hear from the RSPB about the process of gaining the Learning outside the Classroom Quality Badge,
- ✓ Hear how Global Action Plan's 'Appetite for Action' programme can demonstrate the impact of food production both locally and globally,
- ✓ Learn how the Playtrail, Derry connects classroom to community.
- ✓ See good practice from Ballycraigy PS, Ulster Wildlife Trust's Make Space for Nature work and on the ground at Greenmount.



***In four years: 8 Conferences, average attendance 55 delegates***

## Forum Meetings / Training Days

Before 2006 the Forum held periodic meetings (originally called Environmental Officers Group and targeted at the delivery of EE and ESD) so that members could have the opportunity to meet and network together. These were held five times per year and were a way of allowing member groups and individuals to convene and discuss relevant issues and topics pertaining to environmental education and education for sustainable development.

Over the years different formats were introduced to keep meetings fresh and interesting. In most meetings a special discussion item was placed on the agenda, as well as dealing with business and updating members of each others' work and activities. This format had varying degrees of success with some meetings being better attended by members than others.

In 2006 it was decided to carry on these 'EOG' meetings and rename these 'Forum meetings'.

## 2006

There were five Forum meetings held and the **average attendance was 14 members**.

- **February:** themes included re-launch of Forum, Forum dates for 2006 and ESD Resource Guide.
- **April:** themes included **LEEF**, EEF Grant Programme and presentation by BBC Breathing Places.
- **June:** themes included **LEEF**, ESD Days, Conference, Breathing Places and EHS Grants.
- **September:** themes included **LEEF**, ESD Days, Conference, Breathing Places and EHS Grants.
- **December:** themes will include themes and dates for 2007 meetings, ESD days and funding streams.

## 2007

During 2007 it was decided to scale back the Forum meetings as the turnout from members for the previous year had been disappointing. The emphasis moved more towards training which it was hoped would help increase attendance and make the meetings more useful and tangible for members. Three such meeting meetings / training days held this year:

- **January: Peatlands Park**, AGM & Forum Meeting. Presentations on 'Disability & the Environment', using the environment as a development vehicle for disadvantaged adults and children. Attended by 14 members.
- **March: Kilbroney Centre**, workshops were run by member organisations to demonstrate techniques resources and share ideas. Attended by 25 members.
- **August: National Trust Divis**. A training day was held to look at an overview of the revised curriculum and examine how EE and DE will play an integral role in helping to deliver some of the key themes of the curriculum through ESD. Attended by 52 members.

A planned trip to Dublin to visit Eco-Unesco and ENFO in May had to be cancelled due to lack of member interest. The average attendance for those meetings that took place was 39 members, a significant increase on 2006.

In addition to the above meetings an extra event was organised and carried out at the request of members. John Johnson of the group 80:20 had been a guest speaker at the EEF April conference on 'Making the Links'. His presentation on the development and use of identity boxes, a method used to engage people both young and old on issues in their communities had so interested the assembled delegates that they had asked the Forum to organise a one-off workshop with John to expand upon the technique. The event took place at the University of Ulster and was attended by 10 members.

## 2008

In 2008 the Forum 'meetings' were officially discontinued in favour of placing a greater emphasis on training, following consultation with members on what they wanted from the Forum. Forum meetings and training were combined with the conferences to give the members a more enjoyable and useful experience when coming together.

***In two years: 8 Forum Meetings, average attendance 14 and  
3 Training Days, average attendance 30***

## **OUTREACH AND NETWORKING**

The EEF is primarily a networking organisation which acts as a conduit to facilitate information provision to and between its members. However, due to the fact that the Forum never had a full time officer in post until January 2006 this crucial aspect of the work of the EEF had not been fully developed.

Since the Forum's re-launch in late 2005 these outreach and networking elements have increased dramatically to such an extent that there have been and remain many real benefits to the environmental education sector.

A huge amount of time has been spent on liaising and networking with member organisations, non-member groups, and other relevant sectors. By promoting the Forum's activities and the benefits which it provides the Forum's reputation and status as an integral facet of the environmental education sector in Northern Ireland became established. This groundwork was crucial in providing a firm base from which the EEF could move forward and develop. Networking has been ongoing with all members – especially those that have been Forum members but inactive in EEF activities. The EEF Coordinator has been active over the past four years in attending conferences, member's events and training days in order to network with agencies and procure new members.

The true extent and benefit of this area of the Forum's work must not be underestimated and has largely been responsible for a much more united and joined up environmental education sector in Northern Ireland. At the same time, it remains a very difficult area of work to quantify in terms of benefits to a wide range of organisations and sectors, although these 'behind the scenes' activities have been crucial to the success of the Forum in recent years.

### **Conferences**

As well as the EEF running eight of its own very successful conferences, the EEF Co-ordinator was present at many other member and non-member conferences. In four years, over 30 different conferences were attended, the majority being in Northern Ireland, but there were also several visits to the Republic of Ireland and England. The EEF Co-ordinator was invited to speak at eight of these events including two ESD conferences in Dublin in 2007 and 2009, a 6<sup>th</sup> form science conference in Newcastle and several teacher training conferences at St Mary's college in Belfast. In addition, the Co-ordinator facilitated workshops and seminars at these and other conferences during this time.

***In four years: 30 conference attended; 8 presentations given***

### **Working Groups**

Another very valuable service provided by the Co-ordinator over the past four years was to bring expertise and knowledge of the sector to member and non-member groups through a variety of working groups, advisory bodies or committees. Often the co-ordinator would be invited to join one of these bodies in order to help make connections; give advice on EE / ESD matters and to bring a more joined up and coordinated approach.

Over the period from 2005-2009 the Co-ordinator sat on 17 of these groups, these include:

#### **Development of Member Education Programmes**

- The National Trust

- Loughs Agency – Vital Signs
- Eco Schools Committee
- Forest Schools Committee
- Baglady Productions
- Children in Crossfire Advisory Group
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Education Programme

#### **Strategic bodies**

- PEPG Waste Communications Forum
- CADA Development Education Group
- NI Biodiversity Group (NIBG)
- Biodiversity Forum Officers Group
- Dungannon & South Tyrone Council LBAP Advisory Group
- Envirocentre group

***In four years: 17 working groups or advisory bodies***

#### **Representation at Events**

Along with attending conferences and sitting on working groups, the EEF Co-ordinator also spent a huge amount of time and effort in attending other member and non-member events. This again had a major positive impact on the sector as a whole by continuing to help the joining up of member organisations' work, demonstrating and promoting the value of a partnership approach and promoting the work the Forum whilst procuring new members.

In four years the co-ordinator attended or provided input to 40 member events, including

#### **Judging at competitions**

- Environmental Youth Speak Award
- Eco-Unesco Young Environmentalist Awards
- Action Renewables Green Teacher of the Year Award
- British Council Climate Change Competition

#### **Launch Events**

- Outdoor Learning Manifesto
- CCEA Eco World Website
- Speedwell Trust Strategic Plan
- Translink Biodiversity Action Plan
- NI Environment Agency
- St Mary's Online Global Course
- RSPB Sustainable Schools Strategy
- Leave No Trace Ireland
- NI Archeology Forum
- Belfast Harbour Commission education programme

#### **Training**

- CCEA Staff Training
- CCEA Vocational Course Training
- SELB Teacher Training on ESD
- GDSNI Inset Training Day

- GSNI 6<sup>th</sup> Form Training
- YEA Twilight Sessions

### **Projects**

- RSPB / W5 Schools ASSI Project
- Woodland Trust – schools project
- Opportunity Europe – Eco Schools
- BBC Breathing Places Events

### **Interview panels**

- Action Renewables Education Officers

### **Other Activities**

- Working with CDU re: development of regular article into newsletter
- Development of CPD at Belfast Metropolitan College
- Support to Schools in developing environmental projects
- Attending launch of various schools projects such as outdoor classrooms
- Liaison with IKEA re overview of EE / ESD in Northern Ireland
- Attendance at and helping out at Balmoral Show 2008 / 2009
- Attendance at NIEA Sustainable Ireland Awards
- Input into Bryson Charitable Group Charter Mark Assessment
- Acting as tutor to Queens University student re dissertation on ESD in NI
- Attendance and assistance at NIEL events and conferences
- Working with DFP to source groups for Children in Need event at Stormont

***In four years: Represented at 36 events***

# EEF AUDIENCES

## MEMBERS

### Membership

The EEF is its members. Without these organisations, agencies, and individuals there would be no Forum. Over the years the Forum has had many varied and diverse groups as members and has always included government education and environmental bodies, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and third level education. A list of members at November 2009 is provided in Appendix 1.

In January 2006 the number of EEF members stood at 80. Not all of these members however were actively engaged with the network, were attending events run by the EEF or other member groups and indeed were not fully gaining the benefit of being part of the joined up approach that is the ethos of EEF. Early in 2006 therefore the Co-ordinator commenced an intense and time consuming membership drive that would continue for the entire four years that he was in post and became the cornerstone of the success of the EEF in recent years.

The Co-ordinator made a concerted and sustained effort in those early days to visit and talk to the vast majority of EEF member groups, travelling all over the country to 'sell' the concept of the new and re-invigorated EEF and to procure new members by explaining the benefits of membership and of being an active and involved part of the network.

### 2006

In 2006 this hard work yielded 15 new members, including some of the bigger players in the environmental education field in Northern Ireland such as Action Renewables, Alliance Youth Works, Ecos Centre, Eco-UNESCO, Lough's Agency and the Woodland Trust.

Three members also left the Forum in 2006, these being Ballymoney Borough Council, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (due to the fact that they no education programme running at the time) and the Historic Buildings Council.

### 2007

In 2007 this membership drive continued and again the efforts and energies of the EEF Co-ordinator saw another eight new members join the Forum including Baglady Productions, Children in Crossfire, Creggan Country Park, Sustrans, Water NI, Weeks Environmental and W5. Only one member left the Forum that year, Kilcranny House due to the fact that their environmental education programme had stopped.

### 2008

In 2008 three members joined the Forum including Any Bright Ideas, Kilcranny House and the Share Centre. A decision was made by the management committee to remove members from non payment of fees - 10 members either left the Forum or were removed from database for this reason.

### 2009

2009 proved to be one of the most successful years at attracting new members to the Forum. 12 members joined, including the Consumer Council, NIFSA, Dogs Trust, Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust, 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, CAFRE and the British Council. Two members left or were removed from database for non payment of fees.

***In four years: total 97 members - a net increase of 18 members***

## **Membership Survey**

Like all organisations it is imperative that the EEF keeps abreast of its members' needs. Over the past four years the Forum has undergone an intense period of development and growth. In 2009 it was decided that the time had come to reflect and review the role of the Forum.

A membership survey was sent to all members in order to assess the effectiveness of the Forum's work and to see what members require and desire from their EEF. All 97 members were sent the survey but just 28 replies were received.

### **Feedback Summary**

The main points of the feedback summary were that members saw the Forum as a useful entity that provided lots of helpful advice and support with programmes, advertising events and with funding applications. The support and opportunities offered by EEF were seen as invaluable within a large organization as it keeps people in touch with other organisations and offers the chance to share ideas and receive training and experience that they would otherwise not get. The professional balanced advice given by the EEF ensures people always get accurate, relevant and clear information. The survey results indicated that there were areas where members' think some improvement is required, but there was an overall high level of satisfaction with EEF performance and agreement that it fulfills a vital function.

### **Activities that have improved in the last year included:**

- Information sharing (Networking),
- Liaison and co-operation with development organisations,
- ESD days have a more global element,
- Newsletter (LEEF),
- Themed conferences/training days,
- Resource Guide,
- Advice on funding,
- E-bulletin,
- Conferences,
- Using resources outside Belfast,
- Support for an organisation during it's restructuring,
- Larger network of contact now involved with EEF.

### **Activities the EEF Should Concentrate on in the Future included:**

- LEEF, E-bulletins, Conferences,
- Continue to provide conferences with cutting edge issues for Northern Ireland. As monitoring and standards of provision come under greater scrutiny, might the EEF work with NIEA to develop and disseminate guidance etc. on these issues of interest to all,
- More collaboration between global dimension and Environmental Education,
- More educational work on climate change,
- Greater advocacy work on sustainable development.

### **Improvements you would like to see in the EEF's activities:**

- Requires greater financial security and independence to enhance its work in advocacy and education,
- Continued use of rural resources,

- Further development of the conferences which are excellent but could be even more powerful with international speakers and input,
- Annual training days for Environmental organisations whose education officers are not teachers so they are up to date with any additions/developments within the curriculum and stay in touch with curriculum lesson plans etc.
- Provision of regular review of wider education policy would be helpful as a context for promoting ESD.

In conclusion it was agreed that the EEF is fulfilling an integral and crucial role in helping to co-ordinate the sector and provide opportunities for members to develop their work. There is also room for expansion into new areas and scope to take the Forum on to new levels pending funding and resourcing issues. The survey results have certainly given the EEF food for thought on the work they carry out for their members.

## TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

### University Teacher Training ESD Days

For many years the EEF has run 'Environment Days'/ 'Education for Sustainable Development' at some of Northern Ireland's teacher training colleges. These are delivered by EEF member groups, and are aimed at trainee teachers and PGCE students. The Days consist of a series of workshops in which the leaders demonstrate best practice in delivery of EE / ESD through various aspects of the curriculum. In 2006 the name of these days was changed from 'Local and Global Environment Days' to 'ESD' days in order to fit in with Education for Sustainable Development being a component of the revised curriculum.

The number of Universities benefiting from the running of these days has increased with Stranmillis University College coming on board in 2006 and further days being introduced at the University of Ulster in Coleraine. From 2007 we believe that all trainee teachers have had the opportunity to attend one of these days through their University Course.

#### 2006

January	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Key Stage 3&4	x20 teachers
March	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Key Stage 1&2	x50 teachers
Oct. & Dec	St Mary's College Belfast	Key Stage 1&2	x250 teachers
November	Queens University Belfast	Key Stage 3&4	x150 teachers
Oct. & Dec	Stranmillis College Belfast	Key Stage 1&2	x160 teachers

#### Total for 2006: 6 Days at 4 Universities – 630 teachers trained

#### 2007

January	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Key Stage 3&4	x16 teachers
January	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Input into Global Dimension	x30 teachers
March	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Key Stage 1&2	x50 teachers
March	Stranmillis College Belfast	Science Afternoon	x30 teachers
Oct, Nov & Dec	Stranmillis College Belfast	Key Stage 1&2	x135 teachers
November	Queens University Belfast	Key Stage 3&4	x150 teachers
December	St Mary's College Belfast	Key Stage 1&2	x150 teachers

#### Total for 2007: 9 Days at 4 Universities – 560 teachers trained

## 2008

January	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Key Stage 3&4	x16 teachers
January	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Input into Global Dimension	x75 teachers
March	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Key Stage 1&2	x50 teachers
Oct. & Nov	Stranmillis College Belfast	Key Stage 1&2	x100 teachers
November	Queens University Belfast	Key Stage 3&4	x150 teachers
December	St Mary's College Belfast	Key Stage 1&2	x140 teachers

**Total for 2008: 7 Days at 4 Universities – 540 teachers trained**

## 2009

January	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Key Stage 3&4	x16 teachers
January	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Input into Global Dimension	x75 teachers
March	Uni. of Ulster Coleraine	Key Stage 1&2	x50 teachers
Oct. & Nov	Stranmillis College Belfast	Key Stage 1&2	x100 teachers
November	Queens University Belfast	Key Stage 3&4	x140 teachers
December	St Mary's College Belfast	Key Stage 1&2	x120 teachers

**Total for 2009: 7 Days at 4 Universities – 500 teachers trained**

***In four years: 29 ESD days delivered - 2230 student teachers trained***

## Extended Schools Programme

The Extended Schools (ES) programme is targeted at reducing deprivation and improving the life chances of children and young people who have limited access to current services, particularly from deprived and disadvantaged areas. Launched in May 2006, around £30 million of funding has been provided through the Extended Schools programme over the last three years allowing those schools serving areas of the highest social disadvantage to provide for a wide range of services or activities outside of the traditional school day to help meet the needs of pupils, their families and the wider community.

The Extended Schools programme aims to support learning and healthy lifestyles, raising school standards while engaging schools with their local community and connecting people with local services. The diverse menu of activities on offer includes breakfast or homework clubs, sport, art, drama, ICT and many other innovative programmes including those aimed at encouraging parental, family and community engagement.

The EEF Co-ordinator was invited to attend a variety of training sessions being run by the Education & Library Boards in order to give the attending teachers an idea of the support networks and resources available for them to engage in environmental projects as part of one or more of the five high level outcomes of the project, namely:

- Being Healthy,
- Enjoying, Learning and Achieving,
- Living in Safety and with Stability,
- Experiencing Economic and Environmental Well-Being,
- Contributing Positively to Community and Society.

Since 2007, the Co-ordinator attended 15 such sessions and spoke to 450 teachers from 212 schools in the Belfast, Southern, South Eastern, Western and North Eastern Education and Library Board areas.

*In four years: 15 sessions, 450 teachers from 212 schools in 5 ELBs*

## INFORMAL EDUCATION

Over the course of the four years of this review, the EEF Co-ordinator spent much time networking with a range of sectors with which the Forum had not previously been in contact. The Forum had historically worked closely with the formal education sector but had had little contact with informal groups.

In 2006, when the youth edition of the LEEF newsletter 'Environment After Schools' was being developed, initial approaches were made to a variety of youth sector organisations in order to develop links with them as a means of distributing the publication to individual groups and youth workers on the ground. All of the organisations approached agreed to send out the newsletter free of charge to their respective groups, these being:

Girls Brigade:	300 Groups
Boys Brigade:	400 Groups
Scouts:	500 Groups
Girl Guides:	500 Groups
Catholic Guides of Ireland:	40 Groups
Scouting Ireland:	60 Groups

This relationship grew over the years to become a very solid part of the Forum's work. The above organisations also helped to distribute the next two issues of the youth LEEF and the ESD Resource Guide which in its second print run had been colour key coded to help youth workers source environmental groups who have programmes targeted at the youth sector. A very successful EEF conference was also run at the Girl Guides Headquarters at Lorne House in February 2008. The outcomes of this event were to learn about the structure and remit of both Northern Ireland's and the Republic of Ireland's youth services, to discover how environmental and sustainable development education are embedded into the work of the youth service and discover what opportunities are available for the EEF members as environmental educators to support this work through their programmes.

An excellent working relationship was also forged with the Youth Advisors in each of the five Education and Library Boards with many of these individuals attending EEF events and conferences over the years and facilitating the distribution of **LEEF** and the **ESD Resource Guide** to groups in their ELB areas.

The EEF Co-ordinator also worked closely with the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) based at the NEELB at the Antrim Board Centre and worked with the team there to identify the best way to help youth groups introduce environmental education projects to their work. The CDU also kindly help to distribute **LEEF** and the **Resource Guide** to youth groups not already covered by the other organisations mentioned above.

Another area of 'informal' education that the EEF worked with was the pre-school sector. Again this came about due to the development of an 'Early Years' issue of the **LEEF** newsletter in 2007. The Co-ordinator built up good links with Early Years – the organisation for pre-school groups, Playboard and the Early Years Advisors in the five ELB's. All of these helped to distribute **LEEF** and the **Resource Guide** to their respective networks.

***In four years: Liaison and documents distributed to over 1800 youth groups***

## **PRE-SCHOOL**

The importance of targeting children at a very young age to encourage their environmental interest is clearly recognized and the Forum developed a special edition of its newsletter **LEEF** targeted at pre-school age children. Special editions were sent to nursery schools, nursery units within primary schools, and independent playgroups and nurseries through the early years advisors in the ELBs and NIPPA (now called Early Years) in 2007 and 2008. The **LEEFs** selected some relevant articles and activities from other **LEEF** issues and revised them to be appropriate for the under fives. Developing the partnership with these groups has been very useful, but the continuation of this work using only web-based materials may be very difficult in practice. A database of addresses has been compiled but there are very few email addresses available; it was therefore decided that it would not be possible to produce a pre-school **LEEF** in 2009.

***In four years: Liaison and documents distributed to over 2000 pre-school groups***

## **NIEA**

### **Natural Heritage Grant Programme**

Discussions took place in 2005 and 2006 with the then EHS as to the possibility of the EEF providing advice and assistance to applicants to the Natural Heritage Grants Programme (NHGP). This was agreed by the Forum Management Committee. Applicants to the programme were required to submit their applications for comment by EEF prior to assessment. A form was produced by the EEF Co-ordinator for each application detailing the strengths and weaknesses of the application and suggesting ways in which the project could be improved to increase chances of success.

The applications were then discussed at a specially convened Management Committee meeting; reports were written up with comments and suggestions added and returned to applicants to assist their final application. A follow up courtesy phone call was then made to each of the applicants to further assist the process.

Feedback from members and non-member groups was very positive and indicated that the process was a worthwhile and useful exercise which enabled them to focus on the gaps and overlaps of EE provision and look at potential sharing of programmes with other agencies.

Any comments or suggestions from applicants on how to improve the process were accepted, written up and then fed back to the NIEA Natural Heritage Grants Team for implementation in future years. Many of the recommendations were implemented.

A page of advice notes was also produced and sent to all EEF members in order to give some general advice on filling in application forms and the NHGP in particular.

***In four years: 39 Applications received, reviewed, processed and discussed***

# MANAGEMENT

## Management Committee

Since 2006 the Management Committee of the EEF has been made out of 15 individuals from a variety of different sectors, all bringing their combined knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm to help develop the Forum and oversee the work of the co-ordinator.

The composition of the Committee was set under the terms of a contract drawn up in 2005 between the then Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) and Northern Ireland Environment Link who had been servicing the EEF since its inception in 1996, and who had won the contract to act as the secretariat of the EEF for the lifetime of the contract (three years initially with the option of two further rolling years). Under these terms the Committee are there to "Oversee the affairs of the Forum".

The membership of the management committee was made up of the following:

- One representative appointed from the EHS / NIEA
- One representative appointed from DOE Policy Group/ OFMDFM
- One representative appointed from DENI
- One representative appointed from CCEA
- Two representatives appointed from the Education & Library Boards
- One representative appointed from Business
- Five representatives appointed from the NGO / Voluntary sector
- Two representatives appointed from the District Councils
- One representative appointed from Third Level Education sector

Under the contract terms the Officers of the Forum are to be elected from the Management Committee and comprise a Chair and Vice Chair who are eligible to offer themselves for re-election each year.

Any meeting of the committee must reach a quorum of the Chair or Vice Chair plus five members in order to make any executive decisions. Members of the Committee are expected to attend at least 4/5ths of the meeting held each year.

Over the past four years several members of the Committee have stood down from their duties for various reasons and new members have been invited to stand for election. The Chair and Vice Chair plus all others members of the committee are officially re-elected at the annual AGM held in February.

### 2006

Five management committee meetings held with an average attendance of eleven members per meeting.

### 2007

Five management committee meetings held with an average attendance of eight members per meeting.

### 2008

Four management committee meetings held with an average attendance of eight members per meeting.

## 2009

Six management committee meetings held with an average attendance of seven members per meeting.

***In four years: 20 meetings held, average attendance 8 members***

### Management Committee Membership 2006 -2009

2006	2007	2008	2009
Vivien Kelly (Chair) (SELB)	Vivien Kelly (Chair) (SELB)	Vivien Kelly (Chair) (SELB)	Vivien Kelly (SELB)
Liz Wallace (WELB)	Liz Wallace (WELB)	Liz Wallace (WELB)	Liz Wallace (WELB)
Anne Hayes (EHS)	Anne Hayes (EHS)	Anne Hayes (NIEA)	Anne Hayes (NIEA)
Margaret McMullan (CCEA)	Margaret McMullan (CCEA)	Margaret McMullan (CCEA)	Margaret McMullan (CCEA)
Colette Murphy (QUB)	Colette Murphy (QUB)	Colette Murphy (QUB)	Colette Murphy (QUB)
Graeme McKimm (Business in the Community)	Graeme McKimm (Business in the Community)	Graeme McKimm (Business in the Community)	Graeme McKimm (Business in the Community)
Emma Meredith (WWT)	Emma Meredith (WWT)	-	-
Catherine Gleave (RSPB)	Catherine Gleave (RSPB)	Catherine Gleave (RSPB)	Catherine Gleave (Vice-Chair) (RSPB)
Robert Scott (Belfast City Council)	Robert Scott (Belfast City Council)	Robert Scott (Belfast City Council)	Robert Scott (Belfast City Council)
Ian Cole (TIDY NI)	Ian Cole (Vice-Chair) (TIDY NI)	Ian Cole (Vice-Chair) (TIDY NI)	-
Stephen McCloskey (CGE)	Stephen McCloskey (CGE)	Stephen McCloskey (CGE)	Stephen McCloskey (CGE)
Conor Canning (Derry City Council)	Gerry Kelly (DENI)	Gerry Kelly (DENI)	Gerry Kelly (DENI)
Rob Lynas (DOE)	-	-	-
James Cuthbert (DENI)	James Cuthbert (DENI)	-	-
Annie Mullan (Vice- Chair) (UWT)	-	-	-
-	Andrew McLawrence (Ards Borough Council)	Andrew McLawrence (Ards Borough Council)	
-	John Bradley (OFMDFM)	John Bradley (OFMDFM)	John Bradley (OFMDFM)
-	George Blackwood (National Trust)	George Blackwood (National Trust)	-
	Cathy Bradshaw (UWT)	Cathy Bradshaw (UWT)	Sharon Carroll (UWT)
-	-	Alyn Jones (Kilbroney Centre)	Alyn Jones (Chair) (Kilbroney Centre)
-	-	-	Stephen Livingstone (CCEA)
-	-	-	Tony Scullion (DENI)
			Brona Moffett (National Trust)
-	-	-	Nora McQuaid (GDSNI)
-	-	-	Patrick McShane (Newry & Moure Council)
-	-	-	Sue Christie (NIEL)

## Finances

Funding for the Forum comes primarily from NIEA/EHS grant aid with contributions from the members through their subscriptions. It is managed by Northern Ireland Environment Link through a contract.

### Income

10 months

	Total 2006	Total 2007	Total 2008	Total 2009
-	-			
SUBSCRIPTIONS	2572	3546.37	3018.43	3005
CONTRACT INCOME	34900	49133	50000	41667
OTHER ACTIVITIES INCOME		220	150	100
GRANT AID ACTIVITIES		0	0	0
NI Water Sponsorship				250
	<b>37472</b>	<b>52899.37</b>	<b>53168.43</b>	<b>45022</b>

### Expenditure

EVENTS	1195	2095.6	1924.59	2254.34
PUBLICATIONS	1142	7651.38	8586.99	4897.24
POSTAGE		441.71	3687.34	1876.75
SALARIES Coordinator	21194	15350.19	16622.1	17496.57
SALARIES Assistant			5808.03	5073.12
PAYE & NIC		7244.05	9715.88	9211.10
ADDITIONAL STAFF	11991	14000		
SUPERVISION		2250	2250	1500
ADMIN SUPPORT			1500	1312.5
TRAVEL & TRAINING	515	603.15	1056.56	1423.2
WEBSITE		500	0	345
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (website)		0	0	0
OVERHEADS	1200	2400	2400	2000
	<b>37237</b>	<b>52536.08</b>	<b>53551.49</b>	<b>47389.81</b>

### Income-Expenditure

**235                      363.29                      -383.06                      -2367.81**

## Strategic Plan

The Forum Management Committee, facilitated by the Co-ordinator and assisted by EHS developed a Strategic Plan during 2006 which has formed the basis for Forum activities. It has been periodically updated and additional activities have been added as the opportunities arose. Performance against the Plan and contract has been monitored by EHS/NIEA at four or six monthly intervals to ensure delivery of objectives. It has been agreed by both the Committee and the EHS/NIEA that the Forum has been performing well above the level anticipated and that outputs had increased significantly beyond that envisaged originally, a fact which was greatly welcomed and much credit for which was given to the Co-ordinator and his Administrative Assistant who has also contributed greatly to outputs.

## EEF Contract, Staff and Funding

Northern Ireland Environment Link has been servicing the Forum and its forerunners since the early 1990s. EHS/NIEA has funded the Forum since 1996 when it was formally launched, initially through grant aid to NIEL. A NIEL staff member was assigned part-time to service the Forum, producing publications, arranging events and providing support to the Committee.

In the 2004 EHS/NIEA in consultation with the Management Committee determined that the best way forward was to let a contract for servicing the Forum; this was devised and went out to tender in the spring of 2005. NIEL was awarded the contract in late summer 2005, advertised for a Co-ordinator to carry out the work, and Andy Griggs was appointed from 1 November 2005. In parallel the Forum Management Committee took on a more formal structure and role. As well as the Co-ordinator NIEL was to provide additional staff support for administrative functions, staff management and financial affairs.

NIEL's contract for the Forum covered basic service delivery and it was anticipated that additional grant aid would be provided by the EHS/NIEA to cover direct costs such as printing and events. Unfortunately this did not come to pass and these costs have had to be absorbed into core costs. EHS/NIEA has been extremely helpful in facilitating delivery of these outputs, providing printing, venues and other assistance free of charge, which has been of great benefit to the Forum and for which we are very grateful. They were also able to increase the core contract to cover such outputs and the additional support staff required for the Forum from 2007. A request to increase this further for the 2009 year was unsuccessful, and led to some decrease in outputs, specifically the inability to continue printing **LEEF**. Although commercial sponsorship was not a route the Forum wished to pursue, the final 'printed' LEEF did receive sponsorship from the NI Water Service, for which we are also very grateful. The initial contract was for a period of three years with an option for extension for two additional periods of one year. The Forum was investigating additional and alternative funding sources with a view to the end of this contract in October 2010. However, due to government funding cuts the second year of the extension was dropped with about 10 days notice in late October 2009, leading to enforced redundancy for the Co-ordinator. As employers of record NIEL shouldered the costs of this and extended the contract for two months to end December to enable the Co-ordinator to complete existing commitments and help in the transition arrangements for the Forum.

The original contract was for delivery of specific outputs and covered the direct costs of delivery plus the salary and on-costs for the Co-ordinator and some additional support staff time through NIEL. As the Forum's success grew it became apparent that significantly more staff time was required to deliver the enhanced outputs. Iona Meyer, one of the Administrative Officers at NIEL, has been working well over 50% of her time on the EEF from 2007. Her work has contributed significantly to the success of the Forum, and she has been a

true partner with the Co-ordinator in delivering Forum outputs, liaising with members and allowing additional outreach work to be undertaken by the Co-ordinator as she took on more of the office based work, especially on publications and events. Iona will continue her secretariat role for the Forum as part of her NIEL duties, but this will obviously mean a significant decrease in overall Forum outputs as we move from very nearly two full time staff to between 25% and 50% of one staff member. A basic service; concentrating on the website, E-bulletins, LEEF and member liaison; will be maintained. The Management Committee requested NIEL to continue with the proposed major revision of the EEF website and the NIEL Executive Committee agreed to fund this. The new site will be more interactive, easier to maintain and provide a major focus for interaction with EEF members with less staff time needed. It is planned that the new site will be operational from February/March 2010.

EEF members contribute to the running costs of the Forum through their subscriptions. The subscription structure has been revised over the years to be more reflective of members' needs, benefits and resources. Overall subscriptions contribute around £3000 per annum and there is little likelihood that members could significantly increase this contribution.

It was always the aim of the Forum to diversify its sources of funding and the Co-ordinator, Chairman, EHS/NIEA representatives and NIEL Director spent much time considering and investigating various options. The vulnerability of the Forum to a single funder has long been recognized, and this was borne out with the abrupt termination of funding when NIEA needed to make significant in-year savings. Unfortunately despite much effort the options for additional funding are not promising. Any funding from the Department of Education or its delivery bodies seems highly unlikely; the Forum has been repeatedly told that as long as the funding for schools is as difficult as it is there will be no money for 'extras' such as the Forum. Commercial sponsorship is very difficult for the Forum as this could be seen to conflict with its members' interests. Efforts to discuss funding the OFMDFM which has charge of sustainable development have not been fruitful, largely due to the delays in delivering a Sustainable Development Strategy for NI. Until the local authorities are fully reorganized after the RPA revisions funding from them is unlikely, although in the longer term this is a possible source of funding. The current vulnerability of the Forum in straddling the remits of at least three Departments (each of whom is unwilling to fund something that could be seen as belonging to another) may in the longer term become a strength.

## Future for the Forum

The coming years will be financially difficult for both governmental and voluntary organizations in Northern Ireland. The need for and benefits of the Forum are acknowledged and will be missed. The foundation which has been laid is strong, and continuing at least a minimal level of service to members and other audiences should enable the Forum's good work not to be lost and its role to become recognized and funded in the future. The need for the Forum's work has never been greater; the Management Committee will continue to work towards its goals and endeavor to prove it to funding bodies.

The situation for similar bodies in other countries of the UK has also been somewhat erratic with funding and continuity difficulties. For a time Northern Ireland was at the forefront with a fully funded Forum which was the envy and model for the others. Now, however, that situation is sadly no longer the case, with strong bodies in England and Scotland. Working to help delivery of the environmental and sustainable development aspects of the curriculum and helping to bring a coordinated voice to the sector.

At a time when education in all aspects of sustainable development and the environment really needs to be taking a major place in schools and communities it is very sad that the Forum will not be at full strength to help in this delivery. We now have sustainable development and global education as acknowledged and valued components of the curriculum, due in no small part to the efforts of the Forum and its members over the years. Delivery, within the still evolving new structures, will require support and integration, roles for which the Forum is ideally suited. The Forum's Management Committee is working to keep the Forum active, to adapt it to the current situation and demands and to promote its messages of environmental education, education for sustainable development and integration of the 'sustainable school' as a leader within communities in response to the challenges of climate change, the recession and the social, environmental, political and economic consequences currently facing Northern Ireland.

The Forum is currently developing its procedures. Members will be involved in determining the future activities of the Forum through meetings. A new website is being developed to provide a focus for its work. The E-Bulletins are being continued as the major communication mechanism, in conjunction with the Website. LEEF bulletins will continue for schools, but will only be in electronic copies. Outreach and membership assistance will need to be seriously curtailed. New partnerships and liaison will be developed and new funding opportunities sought.

At a time when the need for the Forum's work is greater than ever, it cannot be allowed to disappear due to governmental financial constraints. However, its activities will of necessity be significantly curtailed.

# Appendix

## Forum Membership November 2009

2 <sup>nd</sup> Chance Rehabilitation Centre	Action Renewables
An Creggan Visitor Centre	Any Bright Ideas
Ards Borough Council	ARENA Network
Armagh City & District Council	Baglady Productions
Banbridge District Council	Belfast City Council ( <i>Community Awareness</i> )
Belfast City Council ( <i>Conservation</i> )	Belfast City Council ( <i>Waste Management</i> )
Belfast Education & Library Board	Belfast Harbour Commission
Belfast Zoological Gardens	Bernadette Clarke
Boys Brigade	British Council
Bryson Charitable Group	CAFRE
Carnfunnock Country Park	Castlereagh Borough Council
Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	Centre for Global Education
Children in Crossfire	Coleraine Borough Council
Colin Glen Trust	Conservation Through Fishing
Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland	Council for Curriculum Examination & Assessment
Countryside Access & Activities Network	Craigavon Borough Council
Creggan Country Park	Department of Education
Derry City Council	Dogs Trust Ballymena
Down District Council	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
Eco-Schools	Eco-UNESCO
Esdille Lappin	Exploris
Fermanagh District Council	Field Studies Council
Forest Service	Global Dimension in Schools NI
Groundwork Northern Ireland	Historical Monuments Council
Isabel Hood	International Tree Foundation
Irish Hare Initiative	Jim Saunders
Kilbroney Centre	Killowen Outdoor Education Centre
Kilcranny House	Lagan Valley Regional Park
Limavady Borough Council	Lough Neagh Discovery Centre
Loughs Agency	Magherafelt District Council
Magilligan Field Centre	Marble Arch Caves
Mourne Heritage Trust	Newry & Mourne District Council
North Eastern Education & Library Board	NI Council for Integrated Education
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	NI Forest Schools Association
Northern Ireland Tourist Board	NI Water
RSPB	Saint Patrick Centre
School of Education (QUB)	Scout Association
Share Centre	South Eastern Education & Library Board
Southern Education & Library Board	Speedwell Trust
St Mary's College	Stamp, Anna
Stranmillis University College	Suffolk & Lenadoon Interface Group
Sustainable Development Commission NI	Sustrans
Talnoy Avian Care Trust	The Consumer Council
The National Trust	Ulster American Folk Park
Ulster Museum	Ulster Wildlife Trust
University of Ulster	W5
Weeks Environmental	Western Education & Library Board
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust	Woodland Trust
WWF NI	