



Autumn 2007

Volume 5, Issue 2

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FORUM

# Early Years Environment

## Early Years Environment

Welcome to the first issue of the LEEF Newsletter from the Environmental Education Forum targeted specifically for Early Years. This supplement is designed to be used by teachers and leaders to facilitate the introduction and development of environmental projects by your group at ages 3-4 years.

Introducing young children to the concepts of caring for our planet means that teachers and leaders have an opportunity to help shape children's values and attitudes towards the environment at an early age, providing them with ways which they can explore, play and learn in a fun and positive manner.

It provides children with an opportunity to make choices, develop life-long skills and an understanding and appreciation of their natural environment whilst fostering in them a desire to care for it. It also helps them to explore real problems, and make learning socially relevant, emotionally engaging, motivational and connected.

In an age where the environment and sustainability matters to all of us, there are many opportunities in early years to develop an eco-friendly nursery or playgroup and in doing so provide a range of benefits to their children, **it is after all their world; it belongs to the children, and we borrow it for a short while!**

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### What is Sustainable Development and ESD?

Sustainable Development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable Development is the fundamental challenge that all societies face if we are to avoid long-term damage to the Earth's basic life-support systems. **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** enables young people to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future.

### How Will This Supplement Help Me?

This supplement will provide you with ways to facilitate the teaching of ESD in your group. There are hands-on, practical projects to carry out, places to visit as well as links to many environmental organisations that currently have programmes in Northern Ireland. You will also find a range of websites and further reading resources to help you in your task of producing the next generation of sustainable citizens!

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### Inside this issue!

◆ **Developing a Waste Free Classroom**

Looking at how to cut down waste in your group

◆ **Information on how to be more Energy Efficient**

Detailing the ways in which everyone can reduce energy usage and help to make a positive contribution to tackling climate change.

◆ **Get involved with an Environmental Award Programme**

Look at how your group can get involved with the Eco-Schools programme, the RSPB Wildlife Action and John Muir Awards.

◆ **Using the Environment to help Special Needs Children in your group**

Details of the RSPB's 'SEEK' (Sensory Exploration and Exercise Kit) programme.

◆ **Resources and worksheets to use in the classroom and links to websites and further reading on the subjects covered.**

# WASTE FREE CLASSROOM

Every year in Northern Ireland we throw away enough waste to cover the whole country! Most of this ends up in landfills, which are costly, unsightly and could have major impacts on the environment and our health.

**It's time to Wake up to Waste!**

## A Waste Free Lunch

Plan your own packed lunch so that there is nothing to throw in the rubbish bin when you have finished. Think about how you are going to keep the food fresh and what sort of wrapping or containers you are going to use. Explain what you propose to do. You may wish to:

- Use refillable bottles or flasks rather than cans or cartons,
- Put sandwiches in a reusable container rather than a bag, cling film or foil,
- Avoid food that has lots of packaging – bring fruit or vegetables and compost the left-over cores / skins.
- You could also investigate the possibility of having a school dinner.

## Individual Pledges

Encourage the group to sign up to some individual pledges about how they are going to work towards their **Waste Free Classroom** by filling in a pledge sheet. The children should work out exactly what pledges they are going to make individually and as a class. This can be displayed in the classroom. An example is shown below.

NAME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Waste Free Lunch	School Lunch	Switch off lights	Use less paper	Recycle ink cartridges	Compost bio-degradable waste	???

When the children have all signed up to a pledge, they can each receive a certificate available to download from: [www.wakeuptowaste.org/education/resources](http://www.wakeuptowaste.org/education/resources)

## CLASS PLEDGE

### ***WE THE UNDERSIGNED WILL:***

- 1. Turn off the computer and printer when not in use.**  
When on standby, they still use as much as 85% of what they use when they are fully on!
- 2. Turn off taps in the toilets when we wash our hands.**  
If you leave the tap running, you waste up to 3 litres of water each time you wash your hands.
- 3. Ask our parents if we can walk to school.**  
Cars cause a lot of pollution – the less we use them, the better for our environment.
- 4. Keep windows and doors closed when the heating is on.**  
If it is too hot, we will turn the thermostats down.
- 5. Make sure that lights are not left on in an empty classroom and we will ask the caretaker to replace the light bulbs with energy efficient ones.**
- 6. Ask the Principal if we can get Green Electricity from Northern Ireland Electricity.**
- 7. Ensure that we minimise the amount of waste we produce by REDUCING, REUSING and RECYCLING as much as possible.**

A range of activities and downloadable resources has been designed for use to assist in the integration of waste management into teaching schedules. Ten fact sheets have been produced on waste and waste issues. Visit the EHS website at [www.ehsni.gov.uk](http://www.ehsni.gov.uk) and contains further information on the NI Waste Strategy and legislation. Other resource packs and information for both teachers and students on how to create a *Waste Free Classroom* and a *Waste Free Lunch* are also available from the website above. Visit [www.kidsagainstwaste.org](http://www.kidsagainstwaste.org) for an interactive and informative waste website for children.

# ENERGY CONSERVATION

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Energy is important. We use it every day and our lifestyles and societies rely on its constant supply. What about the impact on the environment? How will we produce energy in the future? Is there anything you can do?

## Climate Change

How we live is affecting the environment. We live in a beautiful world and it is experiencing changes. Through the burning of fossil fuels to run cars, heat our buildings and produce electricity in power stations, greenhouse gases are being released into the atmosphere. These gases are causing Global Warming. Global Warming means that the climate is getting warmer. Climate Change is happening and its effects are predicted to become more obvious globally through more extreme weather, more droughts, rising in sea levels and some crops not being able to grow where they use to! We need to work to reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## Resource Sustainability

Resource sustainability means using resources so that they will last into the future. The energy we use to power our TVs and lights is mainly produced by non-renewable fuels, including coal, gas and oil – these resources will not last forever. If we continue to use these resources at the current rate we have at most an estimated 200 years left of coal, 60 years left of gas and 40 years left of oil. We need to plan for the future be more sustainable.

## Energy Security

At present our energy sources are all imported from many different parts of the world. Our oil comes from the Middle East, coal from Europe and South America and gas from Russia, Norway and Scotland. Northern Ireland is very dependent on other countries for our energy resources. We need to become more independent in order to maintain a secure energy supply.

**Renewable Energy** provides a solution to these energy issues. Renewable energy is pollution free, combats climate change, is locally sourced and will not run out.

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## What can YOU do?

Take action. You have the power to change the future – a small action makes a difference.

- ♦ Wise up to renewable energy! Learn about energy issues and the solutions we have for now and the future.
- ♦ Think about the energy you use and try to reduce wasting energy by becoming more energy efficient, e.g. turn lights off when you are not in the room, fill the kettle only with the amount of water you need and turn off the TV off when it is not being used.
- ♦ What about your house? Talk to your parents/guardians to encourage them to make your house more energy efficient, e.g. good insulation, to use Eco-Energy (green electricity supplied by NIE) and/or install a renewable technology, e.g. wood-pellet boiler.
- ♦ What about your group? Talk to your friends and come up with a proposal with your leaders to encourage action to be taken to make your group more energy efficient, to use Eco-Energy and to install a renewable technology.

## What do WE do?

Action Renewables Education Programme exists to raise awareness and inspire young people to become informed, enthused and to take action now and in the future.

- ♦ [www.wiseuptorenewables.com](http://www.wiseuptorenewables.com) is an educational website, it includes up-to-date, relevant information, teaching resources and the innovative 'Renewable Robbie' game.
- ♦ We give presentations about renewable energy and its related issues. We tailor our workshops to each group and can include drama, kite-making, decision-making activities and investigations using model wind turbines and solar panels.

### Action Renewables

The Innovation Centre  
Northern Ireland Science Park  
Queens Road  
Belfast BT3 9DT  
Email: [education@actionrenewables.org](mailto:education@actionrenewables.org)  
Web: [www.actionrenewables.org](http://www.actionrenewables.org)



# Environmental Award Programmes

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## Eco-Schools

Eco-Schools is a recognised award scheme, rewarding and accrediting schools who have made a commitment to continuously improving their environmental performance. The aim of the Eco-Schools programme is to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of the school -both for pupils and for staff.

The Eco-Schools programme addresses the following topics within schools:

Biodiversity	Water
Litter	Transport
Waste Minimisation	Healthy Living
Energy	School Grounds



There are three levels of award. Bronze, Silver, and Green Flag. The Bronze and Silver awards are based on school self-assessment and can only be applied for through the Eco-Schools website:

[www.eco-schools.org.uk](http://www.eco-schools.org.uk)

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## RSPB Wildlife Action Awards

This award scheme is all about finding out about wildlife, doing practical things to help and telling other people. Lots of things threaten our wildlife, but there are things you can do to help. It's easy to take part and achieve the awards. There's a bronze, silver and gold award divided up into four sections:

**1. Finding out what's there 2. Helping wildlife 3. Being environmentally friendly 4. Spreading the word**

If you would like to find out about all the activities, and how to take part in the awards, send off for a Wildlife action awards booklet. It costs £2 and has all the information you need to take part and achieve the awards.



**RSPB Wildlife Explorers, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL**

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## John Muir Awards

The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme focused on wild places. This could be anywhere from a mountaintop to a city garden. It encourages the discovery and conservation of wild places in a spirit of fun, adventure and exploration. The Award is non-competitive, open to all and is the educational initiative of the John Muir Trust. There are three levels of the John Muir Award, encouraging a progressive involvement. All levels of the award are based on meeting the four challenges of Discover, Explore, Conserve and Share.

**Alliance Youth Works** runs a Camp for 12- 16 year olds at The Kilbroney Centre in Rostrevor, Co. Down. Based on the American summer camp model, it is now in its fifth year and has grown hugely. The camp is booked out every year with young people returning for fun, outdoor pursuits to build new friendships and take part in the **John Muir Award Scheme**.

### Contact Details

Alyn Jones (AYW, Environmental Education Officer at the Kilbroney Centre, Rostrevor)  
Tel: 028 7032 7817  
Email: [allianceyouthworks.org.uk](mailto:allianceyouthworks.org.uk)



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The following material has been reproduced with kind permission from the Cowgate Under 5's Centre, Edinburgh; who joined the Eco-Schools programme in 2003.

### Overview

In an age where biodiversity and sustainability matters to all of us, there are many opportunities to develop an eco-friendly nursery or playgroup and in doing so provide a range of benefits to the children. It is, after all, their world; it belongs to the children, and we borrow it for a short while!

Becoming involved in the Eco-Schools award means that teachers and leaders have an opportunity to help shape children's values and attitudes towards the environment at an early age, providing them with ways which they can explore, play and learn in a fun and positive manner. It allows opportunities to make choices, develop life-long skills and develop an understanding and appreciation of their natural environment whilst fostering in them a desire to care for it.

### Eco-Schools in my area

Board Area	Name of Group	Location
<b>BELB</b>	St Martin's Nursery School St Teresa's Nursery School	Belfast Belfast
<b>NEELB</b>	Broughshane Centre of Early Learning Muckamore Pre-School/Playgroup Ballyhenry Nursery School	Ballymena Antrim Newtownabbey
<b>SELB</b>	Downshire Nursery School St Brendan's Nursery	Banbridge Craigavon
<b>SEELB</b>	Bangor Central Nursery School Downpatrick Nursery School	Bangor Downpatrick
<b>WELB</b>	Lisnaglewin Nursery School Belmont Nursery School	Londonderry Londonderry

## Who Should be Involved?

- ◆ The Children
- ◆ The Families of the Children
- ◆ The Staff Team
- ◆ The Local Community



## How to communicate the messages

- ◆ Visit a local recycling bank with the children on a weekly basis, thus helping to communicate the message of reducing waste, whilst making the project and the group visible to the whole community.
- ◆ Mount an eco display in your hallway, displaying all current relevant information.
- ◆ Produce and send out regular newsletters and use signage throughout your building.
- ◆ Invite speakers to come and talk to the children, their parents and staff.

## Details of actual activities and topics to be studied

It is important to try and embed the eco-philosophy throughout your group. Here are some examples of how to do that taken from the Eco-Schools elements:

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### Litter

- ◆ Try to have very few **litterbins** throughout the building, but instead have several baskets positioned in the building to encourage people to sort and recycle their waste.
- ◆ Carry out a **litter survey** to see how much (if any) of a problem litter is in your grounds.
- ◆ Establish a **litter picker rota**: it is important that children within the whole group take responsibility for litter and one way to do this is to establish a rota of litter pickers. One school called their litter pickers **Garbage Gobblers** and gave them red hats.
- ◆ **Undertake a litter sort**: The litter collected during one day or throughout the week could be collected and carefully sorted into different categories. Following on from this, classes could create a **Litter Display**. The children could make a display out of the litter they have collected in one week. Inspiration for this can be found on various websites including: [www.mindfully.org/Sustainability/Trash-Garbage-Junk1apr83.htm](http://www.mindfully.org/Sustainability/Trash-Garbage-Junk1apr83.htm)

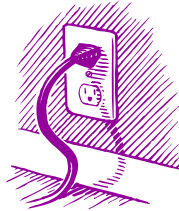
### Waste Minimisation

- ◆ Develop a **web site** to reduce the amount of paper produced for parents.
- ◆ Compost as much as possible in **compost bins** which can then feed your group's garden.
- ◆ Use **recycled materials** in as many areas as possible.
- ◆ **Record how much waste you recycle** with the intention of reducing this as a goal.
- ◆ Encourage all staff and children to use **terry towelling hand towels** thus helping to reduce your paper towel usage.



## Energy

- ◆ Try to only use **energy saving bulbs**, soft lighting, lamps etc, wherever possible.
- ◆ **Pull down blinds** or draw curtains in the evening to harness and retain heat in the building.
- ◆ Instead of using a tumble dryer, try **hanging washing up** to dry instead.
- ◆ Think about the energy you use and try to **reduce wasting energy** by becoming more energy efficient, e.g. turn lights off when you are not in the room, fill the kettle only with the amount of water you need and turn off the TV off when it is not being used.



## Water

- ◆ Place filled **plastic bottles in all our cisterns** to minimise how much water we use when flushing toilets.
- ◆ Let the children **use left over water** from their lunch to feed any plants.
- ◆ At the end of each day, empty the water from **water trays** into a **water butt** in your garden. The children can then use this to feed the plants in the garden and if you decide to set one up a vegetable patch.

## Transport

- ◆ Encourage children and parents to **use public transport, bicycles or walking** to get to and from your group.
- ◆ Organise a **'Walk to School Week'** or even better set up a **'Walking Bus'** system: visit the Sustrans website at: [www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk) for more details.
- ◆ **Take the children on local walks** to places of interest: this not only helps them to connect with the world around them but promotes exercise and healthy living.



## School Grounds and Biodiversity

- ◆ Begin to **develop a nursery garden** from a hard tarmac space to an inspirational. Encourage the children to help plant, dig, sow and be close to the garden as way of allowing them to learn by doing.
- ◆ The nursery garden should be much more than just a play area where children could 'let off steam' but more a space that has **secret and magic places** where children can dream, walk, sit, picnic, run through, touch and marvel at the colours and smell of plants and the wonders of nature.
- ◆ Biodiversity is a crucial aspect of an eco-school development plan, and the children being the most valued resource, and indeed our future, need the beauty of the natural world brought to their environment.
- ◆ Try to **engage parents** to become involved with developing a site by helping to grow flowers with their children, giving an opportunity to teach the children the names of precious flowers and to encourage their care of living things. It can also be used as a chance to broaden their knowledge of where food comes from and provide an opportunity to **eat some of what they grow**.

- ◆ Try to develop your garden in as **wildlife friendly way** as possible. Birds, butterflies and hedgehogs are becoming increasingly dependent on our gardens for places to live and feed because their own habitats are disappearing. Consider these issues when planning your garden. Aim to organise planting and garden features that would welcome wildlife. Perhaps fund raise to purchase ladybirds, lacewings and bug boxes to encourage other insects to the garden to promote the cycle of life.
- ◆ Your aim should be to **create a garden that is a play space** where children can climb, slide, swing, but more importantly create an **environment that is good for health** too – where the children can relax, read books under a pergola, listen to the soothing water from a pond, observe the wealth of birds arriving at the bird table.
- ◆ See Pages 8 & 9 of this supplement to get some great ideas on how to develop a wildlife garden.



## Hot tips for success...

- ◆ **We can all do it!**
- ◆ **Visit other settings** – after that you will realise how much you already do.
- ◆ **Visit and build a relationship with other groups** and schools in your area that have already embarked upon the Eco-Schools route: that way you can share our success stories and develop new ideas and initiatives together.
- ◆ **Develop links with the local community** and get them involved in the project. This not only help foster a sense of achievement but nurtures a sense of ownership and stewardship towards the work.

## Support for your project

Here in Northern Ireland there are 17 delivery partners along with all 26 councils helping to assist schools in the process of gaining the Eco-Schools awards and helping them work through the programme. The full list of partner contacts can be found on the website at the following address: [www.eco-schools.org.uk](http://www.eco-schools.org.uk)

Don't be afraid to call upon the variety of organisations, agencies and groups for help, guidance and advice on how to develop an Eco-Schools project in your nursery or playgroup. This may include your local Council, another Nursery / Playgroup / Primary School in your area or one of the many voluntary groups who carry out environmental education work in Northern Ireland.

## Further Reading: Useful Contacts for Early Years Groups

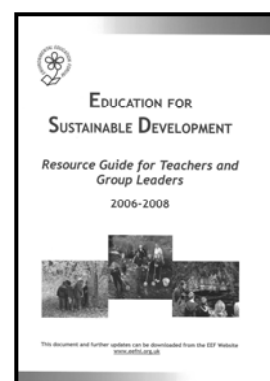
The Environmental Education Forum has produced a **Resource Guide** for use by teachers and group leaders. This document contains details of Forum members, the education programmes that they provide across Northern Ireland, and relevant contact details, e-mail and website addresses. It gives you details of how you and your group can become involved in environmental education work that will lead to your students becoming more aware of their environment, engaged with it and inspired to take action to lead more sustainable lifestyles at school, in your youth group and at home.

If you would like to receive a copy of the guide please contact:

**Environmental Education Forum (EEF)**  
**89 Loopland Drive**  
**Belfast BT6 9DW**  
**Tel 028 9045 5770**

Copies of the guide can also be downloaded from the website at:

[www.eefni.org.uk/publications](http://www.eefni.org.uk/publications)





# Wildlife Gardening

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Wildlife gardens are a fantastic way of introducing children to the theme of caring for the environment. They can provide children with an opportunity to explore real problems, and make learning socially relevant, emotionally engaging, motivational and connected. Many grounds can be improved for wildlife, even if you do not have land there is still the opportunity to erect bird or bat boxes on buildings, plant climbers along walls and fences or get creative with window boxes.

## So Why Create a Wildlife Garden?

As a variety of habitats are eroded, invaded, polluted and disappear altogether, gardens are becoming increasingly important refuges for wildlife. With a bit of 'know how' every area of ground, however small, can be developed to provide your own private nature reserve. Whether they are for herbs, flowers or vegetables, gardens have a lot to offer different wildlife species. They can provide sources of food, water, shelter and nesting materials. Wildlife gardens are an excellent environment for both leaders and children to explore various topics such as biodiversity, wildlife and conservation.

## Wildlife Garden Features

Various features and environments can be created in order to establish a wildlife garden:

- |                       |                                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Insect Garden      | 6. Bird and Bat Boxes          |
| 2. Wildflower Meadows | 7. Compost Heaps               |
| 3. Animal Refuge      | 8. Mini Woodland and Log Piles |
| 4. Trellis            | 9. Hedges                      |
| 5. Bird Feeding Areas | 10. Ponds and Marshes          |



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## General Environmental Concepts

### Peat free gardening

Natural peat bogs are fascinating wildernesses. Sadly, the last remnants are being stripped of their plants, drained, rotavated, vacuumed up and packed in plastic bags. Gardeners buy 60 per cent of the peat sold each year. This does not need to happen as there are now a range of quality peat-free composts available. Many of these are made from recycled waste. For growing seeds and pot plants there are other composts, such as a coir or composted wood waste, which give excellent results.

### Water conservation – Every drop counts!

The public demand for water rises every year. Our rivers, streams and wetlands are in danger of dying a slow death as water companies bid to extract more water. Thankfully, people are realising that water is a precious resource which should be used wisely. You can make a real difference in your school by using water with care.

- ◆ Place a water butt beneath a down pipe to collect water from guttering around your house / building.
- ◆ Use a watering-can rather than a hose-pipe.
- ◆ Mulch plants with peat-free compost to conserve moisture and suppress weeds.

### Composting

Compost heaps not only get rid of your waste and turn it into a resource you can use but they are also a great habitat for wildlife. For a successful compost heap it would be best to get the caretaker and kitchen staff involved from your group. Any green or raw vegetable waste from the grounds, kitchen, or group can be used.

Site your compost heap in a shady corner using a home-made box (well spaced wood planks) or a shop-bought compost container. You can even manage by just making a heap in a corner of the garden but waste breaks down more slowly this way. For more information see the website [www.compostguide.com](http://www.compostguide.com). **If you have limited space, you can still practice the art of compost making with a 'worm bin' in the back yard of your group. For more information on this see the website [www.wigglywigglers.co.uk](http://www.wigglywigglers.co.uk)**





# "SEEK": A Case Study

## Sensory Exploration and Exercise Kit

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### Introduction: The Environment & Special Educational Needs

The environment can be a unique tool to help develop and benefit young people who have special needs. Individuals can be stimulated and encouraged to access learning about wildlife, conservation and the larger issues of sustainable development by introducing them to environmental issues through visual and practical activities both inside a 'group classroom' or in an outdoor learning situation. By doing this opportunities are provided to develop self esteem, communication skills and self confidence, amongst others.

#### What is "SEEK"?

"SEEK" is a programme developed by the RSPB to engage children with a range of special needs to become involved with learning about the environment in a fun and innovative way. It encourages children to access learning about wildlife and conservation and introduces them to environmental issues through visual, practical activities whilst exploring and exercising outdoors. "SEEK" uses activities and games designed with help from pupils and staff from four local special schools in Northern Ireland.

#### The Programme at Portmore Lough Nature Reserve

Portmore Lough is situated at the south-east corner of Lough Neagh in County Antrim, about 20 miles (32 km) from Belfast, and 12 miles (19 km) from Lisburn, close to the village of Aghalee. The reserve consists of the Lough itself, the surrounding reedbeds, scrub and extensive meadows. In winter, greylag geese, whooper swans and wildfowl feed on the meadows and thousands of ducks can be seen from the hide on the edge of the Lough. In spring, skylarks and wading birds breed on the meadows and dragonflies and wild flowers abound in early summer.

The "SEEK" programme was tested at Portmore Lough, due to the site having good access and a variety of interesting habitats and species for the children to see. The children followed a wheelchair-friendly path stopping at structured activity stations along the way. The activity stations themselves allowed them to explore flight, water, habitats and alternative energy using their senses. They also experienced fun games, aimed at reinforcing learning about wildlife and conservation in an outdoor situation.



#### What did the leaders think of "SEEK"?

Obviously a big part of the "SEEK" project was to gather important feedback from leaders as to the benefits of using such a programme to benefit young people with special needs. They felt that it was important to bring their pupils closer to their natural surroundings and allow them to interact with nature at close quarters. They felt that the habitats station including the bird jigsaws, the pre-visits, the sensory activities and flight station, including the aerial ropeway had been of particular benefit

#### What did the children think of "SEEK"?

The children liked getting close to nature, seeing the habitats and birds at the reserve itself as well as participating in the station activities. In particular the students picked out the singing swallows in the migration game, the bird jigsaws, plane launchers, the aerial ropeway, the racing games and water station (including water-powered heron and the pump!) as being amongst their favourite activities. They were also quick to point out as well that they didn't like the cold, the chemical loos or the hay fever!

For more information on 'SEEK' please contact the RSPB on (028) 9049 1547.

## Grants and Awards for Environmental Projects

### £15 million boost for Voluntary and Community Sector

The Department for Social Development is inviting applications to a £15 million Modernisation Fund aimed at the voluntary and community sector. The aim of the Fund, part of an 18 million package, is to help the voluntary sector to modernise and prepare itself for the future. The grants available will range from £20,000 to £1.5 million and are designed to provide equipment and improve facilities.

Application forms can be downloaded from: [www.dsdni.gov.uk/modernisation-fund-capital-programme-application-form.doc](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/modernisation-fund-capital-programme-application-form.doc) or call 028 9082 9372 for more information. **The programme will be open to applications until mid October.**

### UnLtd Awards

UnLtd Millennium Award Scheme is available to **individuals 16+** throughout Northern Ireland who have the ideas and commitment to set up and run a project which will make a positive impact in their community.

UnLtd makes awards from **£500 - £5000** ten months per year with the **next panel in September 2007**. Award money is to help get projects off the ground and can be used to pay for equipment, venue hire, promotional materials etc. UnLtd is keen to hear from people who are passionate about a particular issue, such as the environment, and want to do something about it. These people could already be working for an established organisation, or a volunteer within an organisation. An UnLtd Award could be their platform to set up and run a new project which they will lead on.

For further information tel: 028 9024 4007 or email [ciarabrennan@unltd.org.uk](mailto:ciarabrennan@unltd.org.uk) Website: [www.unltd.org.uk](http://www.unltd.org.uk)

### BIG LOTTERY FUNDING

For the period of 2006-2009 there is £90 million available through the **Big Lottery Fund** divided over several different grant programmes.

### BIG Trust Fund

BIG Trust Fund is designed to support change in organisations in Northern Ireland's voluntary and community sector through a period of significant restructuring and rationalisation. It is a long-term investment, possibly up to ten years, to support all the changes that will need to happen to the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland. See [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)

### Awards For All

Awards for All is a joint Lottery grants scheme aimed at local communities. Bring people together and increase community activity. Awards range from £500 to £10,000 and are on going. See [www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk)

### Big Deal

Fund projects that help young people to make a difference in their own life and to the lives of others. The Big deal can only make awards directly to individual and informal groups of children and young people aged 0-25. An individual can apply for awards of £500 and a group can apply for an award between £500 and £2,500. Closing date for applications is 30 September 2009. See [www.thebigdealni.com](http://www.thebigdealni.com) for further details.

### ROYAL SOCIETY OF WILDLIFE TRUSTS—BIFFAWARDS

Biffaward funds projects which provide and improve public amenities for communities within 10 miles of a Biffa operation and projects that increase or maintain biodiversity. The small grants scheme provides grants between £250 and £5,000 for projects that enable communities to improve local amenities and to conserve wildlife and habitats. The Main Grants Scheme grants between £5,001 and £50,000 for amenity projects that provide and improve community facilities to act as mechanisms for recreation, sporting achievement, lifelong learning and community involvement.



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