

Press Information
Munich 03/10/2010
Education & Welfare

Siemens Stiftung launches donation of 100 experiment kits for preschools in Slovenia

Siemens Stiftung donates 100 experiment kits to Slovenian preschools – presentation of first Discovery Box to preschool in Murska Sobota – child-friendly experiments explore scientific subjects – presentation coincides with donations in other Eastern European countries

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The Siemens Stiftung is donating 100 experiment kits for preschools and kindergartens in the Pomurje region. The initiative got underway today: Ulrike Wahl from the Siemens Stiftung board of directors presented the first kit to the preschool in Murska Sobota, with Minister of Education and Sport Dr. Igor Lukšič in attendance. The so-called Discovery Box is filled to the brim with materials and instructions for performing experiments that playfully introduce children to natural phenomena. With this donation, the Siemens Stiftung is expanding its commitment to early science education to Eastern Europe.

The Siemens Stiftung's Discovery Box stimulates children's natural curiosity with 22 experiments that teach about energy, electricity, the environment and health. With support from the Siemens Regional Company in Slovenia, the preschool in Murska Sobota was chosen to receive the first Box.

At the presentation, Dr. Igor Lukšič, Minister of Education and Sport, stressed the importance of equal access to knowledge for everybody. This was especially essential in those regions that were hit hardest by the crisis, because weaker economic power could lead to social, cultural and educational exclusion. As young talents with strong technical education were scarce in Slovenia, it was vital to help the youngest minds understand and develop a close affinity for technologies at a very early stage, he also said.

"The Siemens Stiftung is committed to improving educational opportunities worldwide", says Ulrike Wahl, board member of Siemens Stiftung. "Our donation of experiment kits means that preschools in Slovenia will now have access to learning materials with which they can discover and foster young scientific talent from an early age."

Bernardka Marič, headmaster of Murska Sobota kindergarten, had this to say: "For most activities that built upon small children's curiosity, no special equipment is needed. However, we cannot neglect the importance of modern technologies in today's world. They are complex and very abstract and thus difficult to be understood and accepted by children. If we want to bring technology closer to them, we absolutely need special equipment to help the youngest ones investigate and explore basic technological concepts." CEO of Siemens d.o.o. Medeja Lončar emphasized the significance of cooperations with the private sector in such projects. She continued that companies needed well educated, creative young people to ensure constant innovations and sustainable development. Young people had more chances to acquire knowledge if they had the possibility to encounter technologies and understand them as a means to make the world a better place, she said.

Children of pre-school age are more open-minded toward natural and technological phenomena than at any subsequent age. Every day, they discover new things that they yearn to test and investigate. The Discovery Box is already being used in preschools and kindergartens in some 30 countries.

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Building upon this experience around the world, the Siemens Stiftung is now expanding its commitment to early childhood education into Eastern Europe. In 2010, the foundation will present another 100 boxes each to preschools in Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Hungary.

About the Discovery Box

The Discovery Box is really two stout wooden boxes, brim full with practically all the materials, equipment and paraphernalia that children and their teachers need to conduct 22 scientific experiments in the areas of energy, electricity, the environment and health. It contains, for example, light bulbs, electric motors, batteries, thermometers, large diagrams of the human body and perforated beakers for reconstructing small-scale water treatment plants. With this experiment kit the Siemens Stiftung also likes to provide preschool teachers with additional materials and know-how. Therefore, instruction aids for teachers are included in the form of a DVD, a fold-out booklet and topic cards in five different languages – English, German, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Playful learning

The Discovery Box not only introduces preschool children to the natural sciences. Grouping the different materials and performing and describing the various experiments also enhances the children's fine motor skills, linguistic abilities and cognitive faculties.

Who has developed the Discovery Box?

The Discovery Box was developed by Science-Lab, Germany, a pioneer in science education for young children. The boxes are built and assembled in a Caritas sheltered workshop in Germany.

Who gets the Discovery Box?

The Discovery Box is being used worldwide within closely defined regional projects on a larger scale usually together with other non-profit institutions. It is not meant for sale or for the use by individuals.

The **Siemens Stiftung** was founded in September 2008 as a charitable foundation constituted under civil law, headquartered in Munich and endowed by Siemens AG with foundation capital of Euro 390m. The Foundation thereby continues the company's over 160-year tradition of social commitment. The task of the Siemens Stiftung is to find answers to global social challenges, highlight opportunities and provide aid for self-help in emergencies. In line with the Foundation's mission the focus of its activities are social commitment, education, technology as well as arts and culture. The Siemens Stiftung's work is largely operational, i.e. it mainly initiates its own projects and implements these. Further information at www.siemens-stiftung.org.