

Abstract

Giber Å Gruppe is a scouting group within the Danish Scouting Association and in 2015 their new scout house was completed. The house has a very clear green and sustainable profile, focusing on improved insulation, energy-efficient appliances, water-saving systems, solar panels and systems for recycling.

With financial support from and cooperation with Elforsk, an energy research programme under Dansk Energy, the scouts have completed a project of 4-6 months, with the aim of taking the 'green' aspects of the building a step further and trying to educate, change habits and incorporating green thinking in the scouts via their weekly activities in and around the house.

The scouts have been working with very diverse projects, aimed at different age groups, such as producing electricity from a primitive wind turbine, BioLite stoves, solar panels or from potatoes, lemons etc., visiting recycling and biogas plants, exploring various uses of recycled materials in their everyday lives, producing their own biogas, growing their own vegetables and studying origins and transport costs of supermarket produce, tree-planting, vegetarian cooking and much more.

A way of supporting these activities has been the 'Green information wall' in the centre of the house which has played an important role in the communication of these ideas and principles to the children. Via posters and an I-pad they have been able to follow and monitor the production of energy from the solar panels of the house, as well as the energy used in the house on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. This has significantly increased their awareness of how energy is produced and used, and their understanding of how much energy is consumed by various appliances.

Qualitative interviews as well as quantitative surveys conducted in cooperation with Living Strategy Consulting conclude that the overall knowledge about energy and the environment has increased markedly in the children. The scouts and their guides have been very satisfied with the project and the way it has given them tools to pursue a focus on the environment and clean energy in their future activities with the children.

Articles about the project and its effects have been published in three different magazines, both for the general public and for scouts in particular. The project has strengthened the belief that scouts can make a great difference when it comes to educating future generations about energy, sustainability, the environment and our use of the earth's resources – all of which are deeply compatible with the scouting values they are trying to promote.