

AIRE EQF2 for ALL – International Solar Car Parades

Summary

Preparing the students of today for the jobs of tomorrow

By making vocational training fun, the project is providing students at risk of dropping out of education with the necessary skills to succeed in a sustainable society.

AIRE EQF2 for ALL provides at-risk students with specialised knowledge, skills and competences in the solar power sector. To provide the necessary motivation to capture their interest, the programme uses a hands-on teaching model that has the students build a real model solar car. Via a combination of training, teamwork and a work-day routine, participants present their models during a local parade, along with having the opportunity to travel to various international parades.

Trying to find a way to motivate and inspire at risk students and students with special educational needs has been an ongoing educational challenge. Providing these students with vocational training is critical to them becoming a productive member of society, but all too often they drop out due to a lack of interest.



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On the other hand, in the coming decades there will be a growing number of sustainability-related jobs. However, without providing today's students with the skills for these jobs of tomorrow, Europe could soon see itself facing a skills shortage.

Seeing an opportunity to 'kill two birds with one stone', the AIRE Network e. V. + Friedrich-List-Schule Competence Centre launched a programme aimed at making learning these important skills fun. The result is AIRE EQF2 for ALL and its international solar car parades called 'PhotoVoltAire'.

Eduardo Cabrera, AIRE project coordinator at the EU Agency of the Senate of Education, Youth and Science of the Land of Berlin, explains: 'AIRE EQF2 has managed to enthuse adolescents and adults to build up a European framework where local networks meet to pursue a whole range of objectives: trust, encouragement, new skills for new jobs, inclusion, training, widening perspectives, mutual recognition, motivation, solar energy, mobility, participation in a European team, sustainability and a clean future.'

In Berlin, where the project began, AIRE EQF2 has expanded to include five schools. Its success has attracted the attention of companies involved in the areas of e-mobility and renewable energy, with several sponsoring the construction of the cars and helping to provide financing for the car parades.

In all the partner cities, similar local parades are organised and the experiences are shared when the local partners get together in the European parades. The idea of a race was discarded in order to make sure that a competitive atmosphere would not spoil the learning environment.

As social events, the car parades have the added benefit of putting the public spotlight on a group of young people who are more used to the shadows. This public recognition of their accomplishments gives them the feeling of acknowledgement for work well done – providing another level of motivation. Furthermore, the construction of the solar cars takes place on their school's premises, attracting the attention of other students and creating important interactions between at risk students and the school at large.



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'We recognise our project in two quotes: "Instruction does much, but encouragement everything" by J.W. Goethe, and "The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you" by B.B. King', says Eduardo Cabrera.

True to their motto 'Fuelling the future with sunshine', the project has developed a curriculum for the vocational practice of renewable energies, creating a unique, EU-approved set of accepted learning outcomes. Topics include solar power cells, radio remote control, car design, electromotor, gearing, safety and data presentation. The partnership programme involving Denmark, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Turkey, Finland, Spain and Germany provides a platform that makes the international exchange of students at this European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level possible, and very often it helps them to integrate into society.

The programme is well-positioned to continue to make an impact. From these initial experiences it has issued a set of common standards and training materials available to other training institutions. More so, numerous professional training institutions have agreed on the mutual recognition of the AIRE EQF2 Diploma as the standard for renewable energy education at this EQF level.

For more information: www.taire.eu/aireeqf2 , www.aireweb.eu and <http://photovoltaire.de/>

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