

Science Celebration in Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam

The British Council in Vietnam organised four days of ZeroCarbonCity activities in Ho Chi Min City this week, January 11-14th, 2006. I naively expected temperatures similar to Hanoi in December but was surprised to be hit by the mid 30s in HCMC.



...testing speed reactions...

The flying three-day visit started with a workshop for local teachers interested in Science Across the World and this focused on children carrying out cultural investigations to exchange with partners in other countries.



Teachers were presented with a variety of techniques for carrying out survey work in the class as well as background information on the Science Across programme and being offered the chance to sign up to the network free of charge and add to the 15 schools already registered in the programme in Vietnam and also perhaps make use of the 7 packs translated into the Vietnamese language.



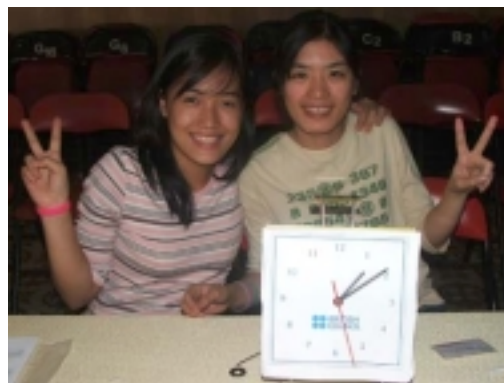
...Shaun Waller, Dir BC Vietnam, opens the Science Days...

I like to think of myself as a bit of a linguist but my ambitions with Vietnamese were given a rude awakening with its 6 tones, goodness knows what my attempts sounded like. Still, I met plenty of encouragement and I learnt the very useful Vietnamese phrases for glue, cellotape, scissors and screwdriver!

A team of student volunteers from the Department of Foreign Trade lended invaluable help to the Science Celebration days for over 600 16-22 year-old school and university from HCMC.



... volunteers getting in some practice...



I wasn't sure how this age group would react to the awareness raising science activities we had to offer from MUTR - Middlesex University Teaching Resources (www.mutr.co.uk), but the imagination and creativity was amongst the most impressive I've met in the 6 countries I've helped to run these workshops.



The British Council provided some great prizes (bright yellow WWF raincoats, essential for riding your moped in the rain!) for the best and all of the participants were presented with climate change t-shirts and wrist bands as well as information on the ZCC campaign in Vietnam.



...there were clocks of all shapes, sizes, colours and themes, and gismos like a flying trash collector travelling the world by solar power, windmills, planes, boats, cars and wind turbines decorated with climate themes...

Famous Vietnamese scientist professor Le Huy Ba gave a talk to the student crowd on the implications of Climate Change globally as well as for the citizens of Vietnam and asked students to think carefully about their own role in combatting climate change.



...concentrated listening to Dr Ba's talk on climate change...



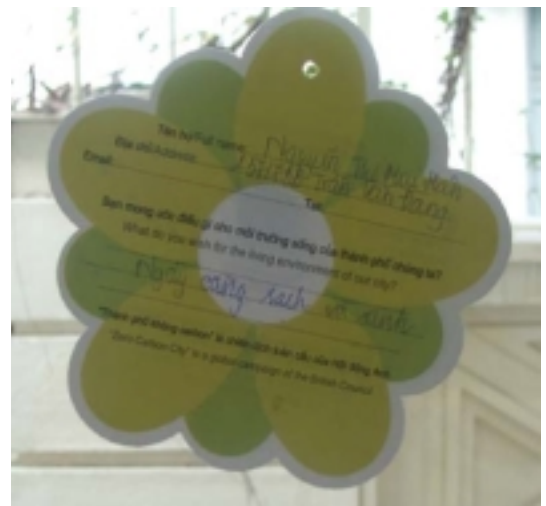
...prize giving...



The ZCC exhibition was well situated close by in one of the HCMC gardens and the British Council office came up with a wonderful idea of 'flower wishes' where participants could write their hopes and dreams for environmental future of their city.

...the ZCC Exhibition in central HCMC...

...a wish for the climate in Vietnam...



These few days are part of the British Council's world-wide ZeroCarbonCity campaign and follows on from similar activities held in Hanoi in December.

I'd like to wish all of my helpers many thanks, and to the British Council for their excellent coordination and also to the many many students for all of their enthusiasm and hard work, and for making the whole thing great fun!

... the team...



Next stop Mexico City!

Best wishes
Keith

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