



2012 OLYMPICS & PARALYMPIC GAMES:

The Pod: EDF ENERGY'S PROGRAMME FOR GREENER SCHOOLS

Sector: Energy

Region: UK

Organisation: **EDF Energy** is one of the UK's largest energy companies and supplies gas and electricity to more than 5.5 million business and residential customer accounts.

Project summary: Launched in September 2008, *The Pod* is an interactive website for teachers providing free lesson plans, activities, games and information all with cross-curricular links about energy reduction and other environmental issues (water, waste, climate change, biodiversity). Through this website, the main objective for EDF Energy is to educate UK children and increase responsible knowledge and practices around energy consumption.

Context of the initiative: One of the commitments of The London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) is to make the Olympic and Paralympic Games as sustainable as possible, looking specifically *to reduce energy consumption and use high levels of energy efficiency*. Furthermore, a core value of the Games is sharing best practice and engaging the community.

As the UK's largest generator of low carbon electricity and the first sustainability partner to be announced for the London 2012 Games, EDF Energy wanted to set up an initiative which would begin the journey to a more sustainable 2012 Games whilst also linking to the company's strategy of engaging stakeholders in reducing energy consumption within their everyday lives.

The Pod is part of London 2012's 'Get Set' education programme and was developed to help EDF Energy meet its sustainability commitment of engaging 2.5 million young people in sustainability. Get Set is a UK-wide programme which offers 3-19 year olds various



opportunities to play their part in London 2012 and learn about the Games and the Olympics and Paralympic Values.¹

Overview of the initiative: Three years on, *The Pod* has over 13,607 registered schools and is continuing its founding vision to help schools across the UK make a real and measurable difference to their energy usage and carbon output, providing practical support, activities and materials for teachers. Indeed, through a 'learning journey', *The Pod* enables children to first understand the various environmental issues and then provide measurable results for their practical activities, sharing findings with the school and the wider community. Members of the network can also use London 2012 education logo and will receive priority access to exclusive London 2012 prizes and opportunities.²

Issues and challenges: One of the key challenges for a private energy company such as EDF Energy is to build credibility and trust within the schools. To overcome this challenge, valuable high quality teaching materials were developed which have enabled teachers to progressively de-mystify climate change issues. *The Pod* also deliberately formed collaborations with well-respected organisations in the environmental field such as Eco-Schools and the Eden Project. Illustrating the success of this strategy and *The Pod* itself, it was announced in March 2011 that 43%³ of all schools in England – including almost half of England's primary schools (45%),⁴ were members of *The Pod*. Gareth Wynn, Director of London 2012 Programme for the EDF Group said,

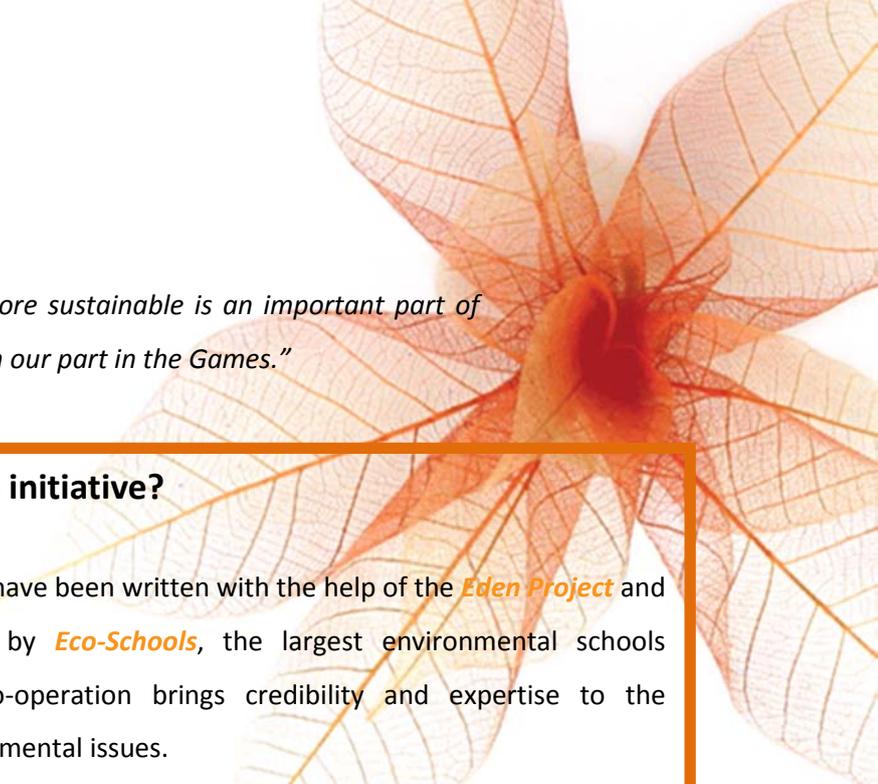
"The success of EDF Energy's Schools Programme in raising children's awareness and engagement with sustainability has far exceeded our expectations ahead of the original 2012 target, which is fantastic news. The Pod is a key part of how EDF Energy is using our partnership with London 2012 to inspire millions of people to reduce their impact on the environment. The enthusiasm that we've seen from The Pod's schools has shown the great potential that rests with the next generation, and

¹ <http://www.jointhepod.org/news-and-info/about-the-pod/locog>

² <http://www.jointhepod.org/news-and-info/about-the-pod/locog>

³ 10,568 English schools and colleges are registered with the Pod. There are 24,616 schools in England (Schools data unit, Department of Education 2010)

⁴ 7591 English primary schools are registered with the Pod. There are 16,971 maintained primary schools in England (Schools data unit, Department of Education 2010)



their commitment to become more sustainable is an important part of the legacy we want to leave from our part in the Games.”

Why did Article 13 select this initiative?

To build *The Pod*, teaching materials have been written with the help of the **Eden Project** and all activities have been endorsed by **Eco-Schools**, the largest environmental schools programme in the world. This co-operation brings credibility and expertise to the programme, covering various environmental issues.

By focusing on children, this initiative enables a better understanding of the environmental issues and values carried by the London Games 2012 from the entire UK population. However, thanks to its success and quality, *The Pod* has the potential to become a real sustainable programme because it has been decided that the online programme will go beyond the 2012 Olympics Games.

Additionally, because *The Pod* is an interactive website, it reduces paper use and enables pupils and teachers to blog about their activities and to post photos and videos to showcase their green projects. Using new technology has been one of the key successes of *The Pod*. Indeed, an interactive website is a very attractive media for the young generation and enables spread of the programme very quickly without geographical limits.

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