



We hatch the scientists of the future!

Scientist Factory, or "Forskerfabrikken", is an important contributor in Norway when it comes to inspire children's interest in science. Since we held the first course in Oslo spring 2002, more than 3000 children have taken our science courses. This has been possible because our courses and strategy is easy transferable to other cities. The same could be true for other countries.



Type of organization: Non-profit organization

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Main target group: Children aged 9-13 years.

Aim:

- Give children the opportunity to engage in science and technology in their leisure time.
- Inspire children to choose higher education in science and/or technology later in life.
- Develop new strategies and methods that can be used to increase children's interest in science and technology.
- Make our resources available for our members as science centers and universities and others we cooperate with.

What is Scientist factory?

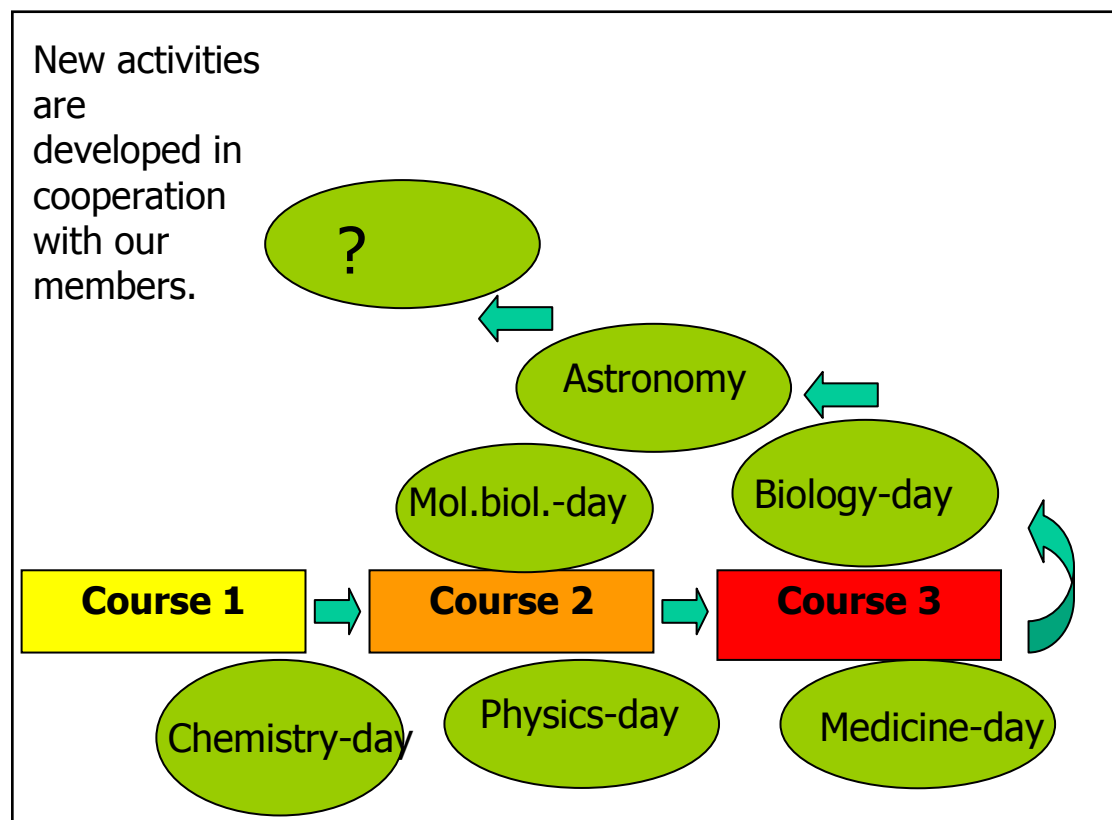
Scientist Factory is an ideal organization, financed by its members and parents sending their children to our science courses. We have also received substantial support from The Norwegian Research Council. Among our 22 members are 4 science centers, 2 universities and several faculties, institutes and organizations. In cooperation with the science centers, our courses are held in 5 districts in Norway.

We have also become a resource for Norwegian schools, developing experiments suitable for the classroom, in cooperation with our granite-member "The center for developing science education in Norwegian schools".



Our production line

To stimulate children's interest in science, we believe they need a systematic program. Hence, we have developed a "production line" containing 3 different science courses and several activity days where subjects as physics, medicine, molecular biology, chemistry and astronomy are in focus. To keep track of where our young scientist are on the production line, we have developed software which makes it possible to invite different subgroups of children to activities suitable for them.



How do we teach science?

Each science course consists of 8 hours of experimentation, distributed on 4 evenings. We have chosen experiments that activate all of our senses. Our children, taste, smell, touch, see and hear. Furthermore, they build models and are encouraged to discuss and reflect on what they are doing.



The experiments done during one evening, are varied and don't necessarily follow one theme. However, our instructors are focused on giving their students an understanding of central scientific terms, as atom, molecule, DNA, pH, etc. Although our experiments not are directly related, they give repeated experience with the meaning of such words. Molecules are in focus both when we isolate DNA from garlic, and when we make ice-cream with help of ice and salt.

Evaluations

We evaluate all of our activities. Evaluation of our science courses, show that 90% of our children wish to learn more about science. The same is true when we evaluate our activity-days. Hence, we do stimulate children's interest in science. Furthermore, both children and their parents, report that they believe our young scientists learn something by going to Scientist Factory.

In an evaluation done fall 2002, we asked children if they could imagine working with science when they grew up. The study included 28 children that had taken course 1 and 2, and 54 children who not had attended any course, but lived in the same neighborhood. The results showed that answering yes to this question was doubled in the first group (60%) compared to the last (30%). Furthermore, when we asked which



sources that had taught them about science, there was no difference with respect to TV, books, parents, museums etc.

Some years from now, we will investigate more throughoutly if Scientist Factory really stimulate children to take higher education later in life, by interviewing our participants and a matched control group, when they are about to choose higher education.