

## Geoscience Information for Teachers (GIFT) Workshops of the European Geoscience Union General Assembly

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GIFT workshops are a two-and-a-half-day teacher enhancement workshops organized by the EGU Committee on Education and held in conjunction with the EGU annual General Assembly in Vienna, and also elsewhere in the world usually associated with large geoscience conferences. The program of each workshop focuses on a different general theme each year. Past themes have included, for example, “The solar system and beyond”, “Mineral Resources”, “Our changing Planet”, “Natural Hazards”, “Water” and “Evolution and Biodiversity”. These workshops combine scientific presentations on current research in the Earth and Space Sciences, given by prominent scientists, with hands-on, inquiry-based activities that can be used by the teachers in their classrooms to explain related scientific principles or topics. Participating teachers are also invited to present their own classroom activities to their colleagues, even when not directly related to the current program.

The main objective of these workshops is to communicate first-hand scientific information to teachers in primary and secondary schools, significantly shortening the time between discovery and textbook. The GIFT workshop provides the teachers with materials that can be directly incorporated into their classroom, as well as those of their colleagues at home institutions. In addition, the full immersion of science teachers in a truly scientific context (EGU General Assemblies) and the direct contact with leading geoscientists stimulates curiosity towards research that the teachers can transmit to their pupils.

In addition to their scientific content, the GIFT workshops are of high societal value. The value of bringing teachers from many nations together includes the potential for networking and collaborations, the sharing of experiences and an awareness of science education as it is presented in other countries.

Since 2003, the EGU GIFT workshops have brought together more than 800 teachers from more than 25 nations. At all previous EGU GIFT workshops teachers mingled with others from outside their own country and informally interacted with the scientists, providing a venue for rich dialogue for all participants. The dialogues often included ideas about learning, presentation of science content and curriculum.

Programs and presentations of past GIFT workshops, with some available with Web streaming, are available at: <http://www.egu.eu/education/gift/workshops/>