

# Free Software in Education

## Changing Places?

by

Anne Østergaard

[anne@easterbridge.com](mailto:anne@easterbridge.com)

Member of The SELF Project Advisory Board.

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# Free Software in Education

Content:

1. Projects
2. Politics
3. Competition
4. Conclusion

# Free Software in Education

## Projects 1/2

At the moment we have several successful school projects:

- LinEx in Spain: [www.linex.org](http://www.linex.org)
- Skolelinux in Norway: [www.skolelinux.org](http://www.skolelinux.org)
- Debian Edu: [wiki.debian.org/DebianEdu](http://wiki.debian.org/DebianEdu)
- Projeto Software Livre, PSL-Brasil in Brazil:  
[www.cic.unb.br/docentes/pedro/trabs/freesoft5.htm](http://www.cic.unb.br/docentes/pedro/trabs/freesoft5.htm)
- AbulÉdu in France: [www.abuledu.org](http://www.abuledu.org)

# Free Software in Education

## Projects 2/2

At the moment we have several successful school projects:

- SELF: <http://selfproject.eu/>
- The SELF Platform aims to be the central platform with high quality educational and training materials about Free Software and Open Standards. It is based on world-class Free Software technologies that permit both reading and publishing free materials, and is driven by a worldwide community.
- One Laptop Per Child (OLPC): [www.laptop.org](http://www.laptop.org)
- Sugar Desktop Environment: [wiki.sugarlabs.org](http://wiki.sugarlabs.org)
- and many others!

# Free Software in Education

## Kindergarden to University

- For very young children we have GCompris
- GCompris is an educational software which propose different activities to children from 2 to 10 years old.
- So artistic and fun that you must take a look!  
<http://gcompris.net/>
- Master Degree in Libre Software: Italy, Spain Portugal, France.....
- The US and in Latin America....

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## Who do we need to convince?

There are many stakeholders:

- Schools: Students + Teachers
- Technicians, developers and maintainers
- Parents
- Politicians

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## How to Get Free Software into Primary Schools

- We need both a top down and a bottom up approach
- Top down = Decision made on the relevant political level (government, local government)
- Bottom up = Individual schools or teachers take private initiatives

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## Software – open, friendly, free, simple

- Only few students will later be able to write good source code. But the gifted ones should at least have the possibility to see how code looks like, how it works, and how it can be adapted.
- To judge quality of functionality we must be able to compare code.
- User friendliness is a key for students and teachers.
- Software for education should be free and simple.



# Free Software in Education

## Global Access and Government Approval

We need not only focus on the technical solutions.

In fact we might do better by focusing on the **global access** to Free Knowledge.

**Approval by the government** is necessary for the acceptance by administrators and users.

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## Competition – Digital Divide

- Advances in technology have revolutionized the way people live, learn and work.
- These benefits are not spread evenly around the world.
- A huge digital divide still exists.
- The United Nations are aware of the importance of including technology development as a part of a larger effort to bridge the global digital divide.

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## Competition – Free vs Proprietary

- Currently, all UN coordination happens on a national and regional scale, because there is considerable opposition to using FOSS for development coming from parts of the developed world. Most of the traditional software industry has its base in the developed world.
- There is concern that promoting FOSS could hurt this industry. From the developing countries' perspective, however, FOSS is a way to introduce **competition** in order to lower costs and expand options.

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Cape Town Open Education Declaration:

“We are on the cusp (peak) of a global revolution in teaching and learning. Educators worldwide are developing a vast pool of **educational resources** on the Internet, open and free for all to use. These educators are creating a world where each and every person on earth can **access and contribute** to the sum of all human knowledge.”

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- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- “Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”
- Media include cellphones, internet, radio, television.

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## Conclusion

Changing places? YES!

Developing countries are overtaking developed countries!

Why?

- Free Access
- All can collaborate+create+share
- Free choice of Software & Tools
- Using the FLOSS freedoms from the start

# Free Software in Education

- The use of FLOSS in education is planting the seeds of a new pedagogy where educators and learners; create, shape and evolve knowledge together, deepening their skills and understanding as they go.

# Thank you for your attention!

“Knowledge is universal,  
so is Free Software”

Anne Østergaard  
[anne@easterbridge.com](mailto:anne@easterbridge.com)

Slides available at  
[www.easterbridge.com](http://www.easterbridge.com)