



Changing Together

Eco-Schools 1994-2019





South & Eastern Europe

Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey & Ukraine



Bosnia & Herzegovina



Social Innovation Incubator MUNJA

National Operator: Jan Z. Kulenovic



Country size: 51,209 km²

Population: 3.5 million

Highest mountain: Maglic 2,386 m

National animal: Grey wolf

Joined Eco-Schools in 2018

Number of Eco-Schools: 23

Longest river: Bosna 273 km

During the 9th century, the entire province and later kingdom took the name Bosnia, after the river Bosna.

National plant: Liliumbosniacum

One of the key coat of arms of the Kingdom of Bosnia was the plant Lilium.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Bosnia-Herzegovina has a complex educational system that is fragmented and divided into three ethnically defined curricula instead of in one national curriculum. Moreover, school system administration is divided by authority among 14 Ministries of Education: 10 cantonal, 2 other entities, 1 Brcko District and 1 national Ministry of Civil Affairs, responsible for national coordination and international cooperation in the fields of science and education.

K-12 Education

The educational system is divided into the preschool level, elementary school (grades 8-9), high school (grades 3-4) and higher/university education. Within this system, Environmental Education (EE) is not a separate subject, but a cross-curriculum topic that has certain units covered in different subjects e.g. nature & society for elementary school or later in biology. More practical work is done through eco-clubs, an extra-curricular activity designed and run by teachers without any official framework, monitoring, guidebooks or the like.

Some NGOs share EE content through workshops in schools - again without a fixed plan, procedure, certification or monitoring, which becomes a more ad hoc and improvised educational content.

Professional Development

There are no official EE programmes for teachers, nor university programmes in Bosnia-Herzegovina targeting the environment and sustainable development as primary subjects.

There is, however, the possibility for such courses through a number of NGOs or international programmes. After the war, there have been a lot of international NGO and UN programmes in the country on various topics for capacity building of schools and teachers, some of them supporting teachers in the field of EE as well.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

The Eco-Schools programme started in 2018 as an initiative from a recycling operator company called EKOPAK in cooperation with the organisation Social Innovation Incubator Munja, which has 17 years of experience in the field of youth empowerment. The programme implementation was initiated with mentorship support from the Eco-Schools programme in Slovenia, as well as the Ministry of Education, which provided recommendations for the introduction of the programme.



KEY MILESTONES

The key achievement for the organisation is the successful kickstart of the programme and involvement of 23 elementary schools in 2018. Just a few months later, the implementation of the first creative Tetra Pak competition was launched, through which 170 student works from 240 students were collected.



“It is very important that Bosnia-Herzegovina takes part in global programmes that will support Environmental Education and empower young people.”

Amela Hrbat, EKOPAK CEO, Strategic Partner

“To empower young people and to support the systematic development of Environmental Education is crucial for Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Eco-Schools programme gives even more through international cooperation and global practices.”

Jan Z. Kulenović, MUNJA Incubator Director



Social Innovation Incubator MUNJA
Skenderija 15
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NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

Funding can always be a challenge, especially in the start-up phase of the programme where one has to create awareness within and the interest of local authorities. However, the first orientation seminar for schools at which teachers and principals showed huge interest and motivation, but also a lot of experience with different creative activities in the field of Environmental Education, was a highlight for me.



ЈЕДНА ЈЕ
НАША ПЛАНЕТА ОВАЈ,
НЕМА НИ ДРУГА,
НЕМА НИ
НОВА!

БУДИМО
ДРУГАРИ, ЧУВАЈМО ЈЕ
ЗАТО, ПЛАНЕТА ЈЕ ОВА,
ДРАГОЦЈЕНО
ЗЛАТО!

Bulgaria



Bulgarian Blue Flag Movement (BBFM)

National Operator: Petya Yordanova

Country size: 110,994 km²

Population: 7.1 million

Longest river: Iskar 340 km

National animal: Lion

National plant: Rose

National tree: Oak

Joined Eco-Schools in 1995

Number of Eco-Schools: 158



Highest mountain: Rila 2,925 m

According to the legend, Rila Mountain was a woman, whose name was Rila. She married a man from the highlands against the will of her parents. The man was called Pirin. The young couple got married with no wedding ceremony, or songs or a party and without their parents' blessing. They went away and settled in an isolated place. Rila and Pirin had two kids: a boy named Iskar and a girl named Mesta. Nobody had ever heard such names before.

The father was always going hunting, and the mother was looking after the kids and the house. The two children were very naughty. All-day long they were running, fighting, yelling and were up to mischief. Every day Rila was asking Pirin to talk to the kids and to help her with their upbringing, but he did not want to listen. His main duty was to find food and clothes for his family and the rest was the obligation of the mother. One day the brother and sister got into a serious fight and Rila raised her arms to stop them and with tears in her eyes, she cursed them: "May God separate you so that you never meet or see each other again. May people be afraid and run away from you. May you live with reptiles, fish and frogs. May God turn me into stone so that I may not say a single word to you again. May I never give you any love nor be able to hug you. May the trees be my children. May my body turn into earth and rocks. May my tears turn into springs and lush rivers. And, Lord, if you really exist, please turn Pirin into a mountain as well, so that people will not laugh at him because of his naughty children."

She had hardly finished these harsh words before a bright lighting cut across the sky. A strong thunder was heard and within minutes, Rila turned into a mountain – the Rila Mountain. Pirin turned into a rock and became the Pirin Mountain. The two children turned into rivers. The girl, Mesta, being gentler, ran quietly down the hills of the mountains. The boy, Iskar, who was wild and naughty, took his turbulent waters north through the mountains, crossed the Balkan Mountain and merged waters with the Danube River that was similarly unruly and uncontrollable.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Educational reforms in Bulgaria over recent years have permitted a new and definitive Environmental Education (EE) programme to be introduced. This programme is particularly related to nature conservation; it has had an important impact on the whole secondary school curriculum and has influenced teacher training.

The problems of ecology and nature conservation are represented in the Bulgarian school curricula and included in the Cultural Educational Areas (KOO in Bulgarian): 'natural sciences and ecology' and 'geography and economics' from grades 3-12 of the secondary education. The State Educational Requirements presume inclusion of environmental and nature conservation aspects in school curricula and textbooks.

K-12 Education

The school curricula allow the inclusion of environmental problems in three ways: (1) implicit inclusion of some notions or data in the lessons; (2) explicit inclusion of concepts related to topics like hazardous substances and health; and (3) inclusion of ecology and nature conservation chapters. The complex formation of the components of ecological consciousness is derived as a strategic orientation of ecological education in the pre-school context. The formation of environmental consciousness starts already when the children are in kindergarten and this is an important component of the programme. Mastering environmentally friendly behaviour is part of the civic socialisation of the child. The EE of preschool children is a scientific direction studying the pedagogical factors for the formation of a child's environmentally friendly attitude, not only towards nature and its surrounding environment, but also to the social and psychological environment of the child.

In 2016, the Ministry of Education determined a State Education Standard for civil, health, environmental and intercultural education, which made Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) a government policy and integrated activities of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and the Ministry of Environment and Water. EE is now also integrated into the activities of a number of NGOs.

Professional Development

There are many universities and research institutes offering Masters programmes in Environmental Engineering, Environmental Sciences, or Environmental Education. There are also many environmentally-friendly courses in other departments of the faculties of Pedagogy, Natural and Applied Sciences and the faculties of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning, Social and Administrative Sciences, Geography, Biology, Sociology, Physiology, Agrarian Sciences and Aquaculture. There are courses and programmes related

to EE and ESD in the departments for training and improving teacher qualifications.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

In 1993, Bulgarian Blue Flag Movement (BBFM) was accepted as a member of FEE and started the Blue Flag programme. In 1995, the organisation started the second FEE programme - Eco-Schools, which was seen at the time as very well structured and with a lot of potential. The first Bulgarian Eco-Schools Coordinator was Iliya Shterev, one of the co-founders of BBFM, along with Eng. Simeon Mitzov and the Secretary of the organisation, Nikolina Mancheva. Bulgaria was the first country from the Eastern and Central Europe's former socialist countries to start Eco-Schools.

It started with 5 schools in the Burgas region with the collaboration of Burgas Municipality and the Regional Inspectorate of Education. Soon after the programme was implemented in Burgas, a teacher from Mihail Lakatnik School was asked to participate in the Eco-Schools National Operators and teachers meeting in Spain in 1996.

KEY MILESTONES

In 1996, Bulgaria started implementing Eco-Schools in 10 schools and kindergartens in Burgas, while in 1998, on 20 May, the first school in Bulgaria, Mihail Lakatnik School in Burgas was awarded the Green Flag. This was also the first school in Eastern and Central Europe to be awarded. In 1999, Nature Park Golden Sands became a coordinator of the programme for North-East Bulgaria, with 12 more schools and kindergartens from that region joining Eco-Schools.

2002-2004 was a period for expansion for Eco-Schools in Bulgaria. In 2004, the organisation received recognition and started a collaboration with all municipalities where Eco-Schools was implemented, and in 2006, it received recognition by the Ministry of Environment. In 2009, BBFM implemented a joint programme on active learning and energy efficiency, in collaboration with the Energy Agency of Plovdiv. In 2012-2014 the school network of Eco-Schools and Learning about Forests expanded to 127 schools. 68 Bulgarian schools participated in FEE's Litter Less Campaign in 2012-2017, 52 schools participated in the We Eat Responsibly EU funded project running in 7 Eco-Schools countries in 2015-2017, and 72 schools participate to date in FEE's The Great Plant Hunt biodiversity project.

Finally, in 2018, Mihail Lakatnik School received its 10th Green Flag award and became an ambassador school for Bulgaria.



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

Being involved in the Eco-Schools programme first as a teacher since 1996 and as a National Operator since 1998, I have followed and participated in the growth, the changes and the development of the Eco-Schools programme globally and locally. It is a world movement of dedicated NGOs, schools, teachers, students, parents and communities that has proven its sense, effect and influence on generations with its Seven-Step methodology, with the achievements and recognition of the dedication and creativity of generations of teachers, students and children from a very early age.

It is one of the best feelings to see the eagerness of the teachers from the network to get together, exchange ideas, collaborate, share materials, develop projects, create real friendships, and to be proud to work for the vision of Eco-Schools.



“The awarding of the Green Flag and the participation of Mihail Lakatnik Primary School in the Eco-Schools network was not only a recognition but also a great responsibility and challenge for the whole school community. Changes were seen in the school’s development strategy. The school environment, both interior and exterior, has been constantly changing to meet the aim of creating environmental awareness and a part of everyone - students, parents and teachers.

The Eco-Schools themes have been present in all subjects. This has been a challenge for the whole school community. Teachers, as real innovators, have created learning tasks, group activities and celebrations, which challenged the way we saw the environment, teaching children and their parents, and resisting conservative administrators. The contacts and the exchange of ideas with other Eco-Schools and the dedication of our coordinator, Petya Yordanova, helped a lot. When the followers are more, the work is more complete and pleasant, and the results inspire and rejoice.

So much has been done in these 25 years that it is hard to share all experiences. But, most importantly, we’ve managed to change the attitude of children and their parents’ towards the environment. Our first eco-students are already parents. We know that they will convey the idea with which they grew up: We have borrowed the earth from our children, and we have to leave it cleaner and richer. I believe we have contributed to raising awareness among people and changed ourselves and others in the name of the cause of preserving the beauty and richness of our wonderful planet!”

Veselina Vazharova, Director of Mihail Lakatnik Primary School



“It is amazing that the whole school has to be involved in the Eco-Schools programme and activities! This is a programme that has to be implemented by the whole school, teachers and staff community! People from the Eco-Schools network in Bulgaria know each other, they initiate meetings, they want to get together and feel like a family!”

Krasimira Askerova, Director of Nature Park Golden Sands

“Our organisation, the Bulgarian Blue Flag Movement, started its contribution to the noble mission of the Foundation for Environmental Education with the Blue Flag programme - how our Movement got its name. But ever since the Eco-Schools programme was inaugurated in Bulgaria it proved to be the flagship of our aspiration for a better future by educating the children and their teachers and parents how to live sustainably.

We, ourselves, learnt a lot and still keep on learning throughout the long journey since the foundations of the Eco-Schools programme were laid in our country in 1995. I can try to enlist some of its aspects, but only the achievements of our Eco-Schools can pin-point the real success of the programme in Bulgaria. As an educational programme, it is extremely important, because it keeps the children challenged and engaged with the environmental issues that we face daily. It keeps students committed to life-long learning, critical thinking and creativity.

The Eco-Schools programme brings knowledge and skills and social involvement to deal with the ecological challenges using the appropriate means. So we hope to continue this exciting journey because we haven’t explored enough the positive assets and impact this programme has brought to our lives.”

Stanimir Georgiev, Bulgarian Blue Flag Movement Chairman of the Board



Bulgarian Blue Flag Movement (BBFM)
1A Vail Levski str.
Pomorie 8200

Croatia

Association "Lijepa Nasa" Zagreb

National Operator: Anita Šetić



Country size: 56,594 km²

Population: 4.3 million

Longest river: Sava 562 km

Highest mountain: Dinara 1,831 m

National tree: Slavonian Oak

National plant : Iris Croatica

Joined Eco-Schools in 1998

Number of Eco-Schools: 340



National animal: Marten

In Croatia, there is no official national animal. However, the marten holds a special significance. In the Middle Ages, marten pelts were highly valued goods used as a form of payment in Slavonia, the Croatian Littoral, and Dalmatia.

The banovac, a coin struck and used between 1235 and 1384, included the image of a marten. This is one of the reasons why the Croatian word for marten, kuna, is the name of the modern Croatian currency. A marten is depicted on the obverse of the 1-, 2-, and 5- kuna coins, minted since 1993, and on the reverse of the 25- kuna commemorative coins.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Environmental Education (EE) is implemented in national legislation via the National Curriculum and Educational statute. Environmental protection in the Republic of Croatia was determined by the process of Croatia's accession to the EU.

The Environmental Protection Law is a basic legal act in the field of raising people's awareness and the level of education in environmental protection. It prescribes that the basic aims of environmental protection are achieved by developing conscience for the need to protect the environment in the upbringing and educating process. The Ministry of Environment is responsible for the development and implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, whereas the Ministry of Education is responsible for the development of guidelines for an educational programme which is in accordance with the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia.

On the basis of the Environmental Protection Law and guidelines from the National Environmental Strategy, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has enacted a national plan of activities concerning the environment, which proposes a wide span of different instruments for implementing the environmental protection policy. Education is emphasised in the national plan as the key instrument for the process of developing critical thinking on ecology issues. For example, one of the main aims of EE is connecting EE and ESD with the school programmes at all levels of the educational system.

K-12 Education

Over the past 28 years, the Croatian education system has been under reform, where the philosophies and approaches to education, as well as basic documents have been changed. One reform currently underway is called "School for life." The educational system in Croatia includes four levels; preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary/higher education. Compulsory education is 8 years (age 6 to 14). With the new reform, EE and ESD are implemented as cross-subject topics in primary and secondary schools and every teacher needs to find a way to incorporate it in their subject curriculum. In preschools (kindergartens), EE and ESD are implemented as topics through the preschools annual action plan and curriculum that educators implement in their everyday work with children.

Professional Development

Professional development programmes for EE are mostly carried out through tertiary/higher education as university programmes in natural sciences and postgraduate programmes in natural and social sciences. There is also one programme at the secondary vocational school level in which students may enrol. For educators at the preschool, primary and secondary level, the Teacher Training Agency, which is an agency of the Ministry of Education, is organising teacher training with the topic of environmental and sustainable development education. Educators are encouraged to take part in this training, but it is not compulsory.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

The implementation of the Eco-Schools programme in Croatia started in February 1998 and was supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environmental Protection. Within the first three years of existence, the Eco-Schools programme had 150 participating schools. On 14 March 2001, 20 out of 150 schools were awarded Green Flags at Croatia's first Eco-Schools promotion ceremony. In 2002, another 33 schools were awarded and over the last 19 years, all of these 150 schools have become Green Flag awarded Eco-Schools.

Also within the first three years, Association Lijepa Nasa organised numerous teacher training seminars about the Eco-Schools programme, its methodology and how to implement the programme in schools, and prepared Eco-Schools materials which were used to promote the programme in Croatia and educate teachers and local communities.

The biggest challenge for the Eco-Schools programme in Croatia is the financial costs of programme implementation and transformation of local community mindsets.

KEY MILESTONES

In 1998, the Eco-Schools programme started in Croatia, and in 2001, the first generation of Eco-Schools, 20 primary and secondary schools were awarded Green Flags. In 2005, the fifth generation of Eco-Schools, including the first special schools and in 2006, the sixth generation, including the first kindergarten, joined the programme. In 2009, the first student dorm and in 2015 the first higher education institution joined the programme, and in 2019 we count a total of 340 Eco-Schools participating in the Croatian programme.



"We understood that there is no sustainable development without Environmental Education and protection so we started to educate our students to protect the environment. We use our actions to guide our students to nourish and protect the environment. That is why we joined the Eco-Schools programme."

Primary School Fran Krsto Frankopan Osijek, Eco-team

"All schools involved in the Eco-Schools programme made a strong professional commitment to change their behaviour towards the environment. This process of change was supported by parents, environmental experts, Association Lijepa Nasa and local and national communities."

Former Minister of Education, Vladimir Strugar, at the ceremony of the first generation of Eco-Schools in Croatia

"I always emphasise the immense value of the Eco-Schools programme and that accession into this programme must be a well thought and responsible step. This is a long-term programme which is conducted with the consent and support of the local community in which a certain Eco-School is situated. The Eco-Schools status is a great accomplishment and a badge of honour for a school, a community and our country, as this programme is recognised and valued around the world."

Ante Kutle, PhD, Association "Lijepa Naša" President



Association "Lijepa Nasa" Zagreb

A: Heinzlova 6
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The Great Plant Hunt Workshop, 2018, Zagreb



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

Two of the most successful Eco-Schools projects were implemented in cooperation with companies such as Toyota Fund for Europe and MARS Wrigley Foundation that supported projects run by FEE International with financial support to the national level. This was a great example of cooperation between the civil and business sectors on the promotion of environmental protection values.

Primary School Petar Kanavelić Korčula: Earth day celebration. Children made big plastic bottle caps mosaic. Caps were collected during the whole school year with local community help. This was their attempt to raise awareness of sea plastic pollution.



Cyprus



Cyprus Marine Environment Protection Association (CYMEPA)
National Operator: Michael Ierides

Country size: 9,251 km²

Population: 1.2 million

Longest river: Pedieos 98 km

National animal: Ovis Orientalis, also known as Cyprus Mouflon (Agrino)

Joined Eco-Schools in 1996

Number of Eco-Schools: 90

Highest mountain: Mt. Olympus 1,952 m

Mount Olympus is situated in Troodos mountain, which is the biggest mountain range in Cyprus.

Research on Troodos flourished after the late 1960s when ophiolites presented fragments of ocean crust. It helped create an understanding of the construction of ocean lithosphere, the nature of the seismic layering of the oceanic crust and the magmatic, structural and hydrothermal processes at the ridges. Most importantly, it has helped with the understanding of the mechanisms associated with plate collision.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Environmental Education (EE) as a subject is only obligatory in primary education. Teachers have a binding framework which incorporates the topic.

K-12 Education

The curricular framework of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports have EE as a pillar of the school curriculum. Science was the basis for integrating EE in school life and teaching about the environment and relevant issues. In Cyprus, Eco-Schools formed the springboard for change in the National Curriculum and is still the most massively widespread programme of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Professional Development

Professional development programmes in EE have been developed solely by universities, especially at the Master's level. At present, there are no professional development initiatives developed by non-profit organisations.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

The Eco-Schools programme was introduced in Cyprus by CYMEPA and the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1996. Schools were approached to participate and two years after the programme was introduced in the country, on 19 June 1998, twelve schools were awarded the first Green Flags in Cyprus at the same time.

KEY MILESTONES

In 1997, CYMEPA began cooperation with the Pedagogical Institute to establish the contents of the major themes of the Eco-Schools programme. The biggest challenge has been and still is the financial sustainability of the programme. In 1999, the Hellenic Bank became the major sponsor of the programme.

In 2019, CYMEPA received the Award of Golden Protector on the Environment from the President of the Republic of Cyprus. The award recognises the overall contribution of CYMEPA, including its work with Eco-Schools.





“As the principal of the private school “ΤΟ ΚΡΥΦΟ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟ”, I have been involved with the Eco-Schools programme for the last 4 years. My students have benefited greatly, developed environmental attitudes and engaged in a variety of activities for the environment. I believe that by participating in the Eco-Schools programme, students have become environmentally active citizens.”

George Georgiou, Principal, ΤΟ ΚΡΥΦΟ ΣΧΟΛΕΙΟ Private School

“The Eco-Schools programme has provided a process through which all environmental activities in a school are streamlined and strategically focused on improving the school environment, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of children. In Cyprus, it is the programme of ESD with the highest participation and the greatest impact.”

Dr Demetrios Mappouras, Inspector of Secondary Education

“Eco-Schools is a well-structured programme of Education on Sustainable Development with a simple process and concrete results. In Cyprus, we are now educating the second generation of youth, as some of the early school children are now teachers in Eco-Schools. The only downside is that there is limited financial support as we cannot charge the schools, and the local authorities are not involved in the education system.”

Dr Michael Ierides, CYMEPA Secretary-General



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

CYMEPA was awarded by EU Commissioner for the Environment, Margot Wallstrom, for its achievements in the framework of the Eco-Schools programme on 27 June 2002. This was a big recognition of our work.

Cyprus Marine Environment Protection Association (CYMEPA)
CYMEPA, 8, Argyrou Droussioti Street
3041 Limassol, Cyprus



National tree: Golden Oak (*Quercus alnifolia*)

Quercus alnifolia, commonly known as the golden oak, is an evergreen oak species of Cyprus. Its common English name refers to the golden coloured lower surface of its leaves.

Quercus alnifolia belongs to the endemic flora of the island and it is confined to the igneous geological complex of Troodos Mountain.

In February 2006, the Parliament of Cyprus selected the golden oak to be the country's national tree.



Eco-Schools Montenegro



Greece

Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN)

National Operator: Theodora Polyzoidou

Country size: 131,957 km²

Population: 10.7 million

National animal: Dolphin

National tree: Olive tree

Longest river: Aliakmonas river 322 km

Joined Eco-Schools in 1994

Number of Eco-Schools: 208

Highest mountain:

Mt Olympus 2,918 m

Mount Olympus was said to have been created after the battle, known as Titanomachy, between the older gods called Titans and the younger ones called Olympians. Olympus was then considered to be the home of the victors of the battle, the twelve Olympian gods, according to ancient Greek Mythology.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Environmental Education (EE) was officially introduced in Greece with a law in 1990 for secondary education and in 1991 for primary education. The aim of EE was stated as: “for students to become aware of their relation to the natural and social environment, of the problems connected to it, and to take action so that they contribute to the general effort of dealing with them.” To meet these needs, the Ministry of Education compiled a Cross-Curricular Programme Framework of Studies in order to give directions for project implementation.

K-12 Education

EE is part of non-formal education in Greece, i.e. it is not directly prescribed by the formal K-12 curriculum compiled by the Ministry of Education. It is implemented on a voluntary basis by teachers within the following framework:

- In kindergarten, as a project/programme during formal programmes in connection to the curriculum in subjects such as greek language, math, ICT, art, etc.
- In primary school, as a project/programme in grades 1-4, during project time, i.e. teaching hours intended for cross-curricular projects. In grades 5-6, EE is introduced during formal programmes in connection to the curriculum in subjects such as greek language, math, ICT, art, geography, foreign languages, etc.
- In secondary education, e.g. in after-school clubs, with the voluntary participation of teachers and students and with parental consent.

Teachers submit their EE programme outline to the EE coordinator of each Education Directorate, and programmes are finally approved on their educational and scientific merit. Teachers have the right to choose, or co-decide with their students, their project topic in relation to the local environment, e.g. island or mountainous area, the local needs, e.g. reinforcement of the recycling process, the immediate needs that arise, e.g. forest fires, etc. Schools can become members of networks of the same EE topic in order to get support as members of communities of practice.

Professional Development

Teachers' professional development in relation to EE is conducted by coordinators of EE programmes, mainly through seminars and workshops at local or national Centres of Environmental Education. Several NGOs work in collaboration with the above structures.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

Greece has been an active member of FEE since 1992. Following a proposal by FEE, Aliko Vavouris, Blue Flag National Operator at the time, and Petros Brousalis, then Vice President of the HSPN Board of Directors, HSPN organised a presentation of the European network Eco-Schools. This presentation was attended by many delegates experienced in EE. Amongst them were Stamatis Skampardonis and Antiopi Frantzi, who undertook the responsibility to develop and coordinate the Eco-Schools network in Greece, starting in 1994.

The 1990s were the golden decade of EE in Greece. At the time, Stamatis Skampardonis was Environmental Education Officer, as well as a representative of the Ministry of Education and responsible for all EE projects. When he took up the coordination of the Eco-Schools programme, his institutional position made it easy to overcome difficulties and bureaucratic issues. In the school year of 1994-1995, a pilot phase was initiated and eight schools started implementing the programme. Four years later, on 10 January 1998, 3rd Primary School of Lavrion was awarded the first Green Flag in Greece.

KEY MILESTONES

The most important achievements of the programme are the decades of teacher training that have been achieved throughout the 25 years of programme implementation with the support of the local authorities, Environmental Education Centres, Environmental Education Officers, and the great variety of educational materials created, which have become very popular amongst teachers from all grades. These training opportunities integrated new educational methods and approaches in the Eco-Schools programme and managed to successfully involve the local communities with the environmental issues that emerged.

Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN)
20 Nikis str.
10557 Athens, Greece



“When our school was nominated as an Eco-School, its shape changed radically. It became a school open to everyone, more democratic and a place where each person takes their own path and is responsible for their actions. Through our participation in the Eco Committee, we learnt to collaborate as a union and in a more democratic manner. We carried out most of the Eco-Schools’ themes and we designed and implemented action plans. Our school totally changed. It became more attractive to students and parents, and more importantly, it became a sustainable school.”

Dimitris Loukas, Mayor of Lavrion and former Headmaster of the 3rd Primary School of Lavrion

“Our main target is for all the schools to actively participate in the network - a determining factor in creating a sustainable school. I also believe that the empowerment of Eco Committees will play a significant role in the true engagement of the whole school unit and in raising awareness within the school community and local society.”

Stamatis Skampardonis, Vice-President of the National Eco-Schools Steering Committee

Eco-Schools has been implemented in Greece with great success. This is due to the fact that the programme has managed to motivate the school community towards environmental issues which direct their own schools and local communities to cultivate a new thinking, lead to collaborative actions, promote innovation, expose schools to new knowledge and align them to international priorities and collaborations in the fields of environment and climate change. I also believe that the programme, despite its rather structured format, does provide space for initiatives at the school level, thus enhancing its potential further. Its recent link to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations demonstrates a new dimension of merit for the programme.

It is my strong belief that the programme, through its pertinent implementation in Greece, has already resulted in a new generation of citizens, more sensitive to environmental issues and more willing to undertake responsibilities in favour of the public interest. It has also resulted in more educated teachers on environmental issues, a major legacy of the programme in terms of school education in Greece. Last but not least, the role and contribution of the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature regarding the successful implementation of the programme in Greece has been pivotal.”

Professor Constantinos Cartalis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Member of the National Eco-Schools Steering Committee



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

One highlight moment that comes clear in my mind was during the Green Flag Award Ceremony in 2016, where students travelled a very long way just to take part in the ceremony!

Over the years, the challenge remains the same, and that is the expansion of the network all over the country. Our vision is to celebrate the 50 years of the programme having doubled the number of schools, as well as having made an impact on important issues humanity is faced with - such as climate change, pollution, waste and poverty - through a path that makes our students active citizens.





Italy



FEE Italia

National Operator: Andrea Rinelli



Country size: 301,340 km²

Population: 60.4 million

Longest river: Po river 652 km

Highest mountain: Monte Bianco 4,810 m

National tree: Olive tree and Oak tree

Joined Eco-Schools in 1998

Number of Eco-Schools: 329



National animal: Wolf

According to a legend, Romulus and Remus were the grandchildren of the king of Alba Longa, Numitor. Amulius, Numitor's brother, wished to be king and forbade Numitor from the land.

As Amulius was also afraid that one day Romulus or Remus could take his crown, he ordered a servant to kill the children. However, the servant was not brave enough to do it, so he decided to put the children in a basket and leave them in the river Tevere. The basket was pushed by the current, but after some time it stopped at Palatino (a place in Rome). Here the children were found and rescued by a female wolf that brought them to shepherd Faustulus, who then raised them

...



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Environmental Education (EE) is widespread in Italy. A cooperation agreement aimed at promoting EE and sustainable development in schools has been signed by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Public Education. However, no concrete results have yet emerged.

K-12 Education

Unfortunately, too little attention is paid to EE by government bodies and there is a lack of financial resources for this sector. Italy is lacking a systematic approach to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as well as to EE.

Professional Development

Recently, professional development programmes related to EE have been carried out in a few Italian universities. Other initiatives have been developed by non-profit organisations and by FEE Italy, but these projects are not spread evenly across Italy as EE is often not seen as a profitable area of work in Italy.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

The Eco-Schools programme was initiated in Italy through a pilot phase in 1998 in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region in the north of Italy.

In 1998, a group of schools were awarded the Green Flag at the same time and a year later, in the school year 1999-2000, ten Italian regions took part in the programme. The primary cause of this rapid progress was the success and positive results of the Eco-Schools pilot phase. These results, achieved thanks to the work of the then FEE Italy team, the Eco-Schools National Operator Raffaella Riccobene and the FEE Italy President Claudio Mazza (at the time President of the FEE Italy Management Committee), allowed the programme to rapidly expand to over 100 schools located across the country.

...

When Romulus and Remus grew up, they went back to Alba Longa and killed their uncle Amulius. Numitor became the king of Alba Longa, while the brothers decided to found a new town. However, Romulus and Remus started fighting on the name to be given to the town and, after a terrible quarrel, Romulus killed Remus. He then founded the town, named it "Rome" after himself, and became the first king of Rome.



KEY MILESTONES

Each year has been a milestone, because year by year new schools join the Eco-Schools programme. Municipalities have been supporting Eco-Schools' growth for many years by joining Eco Committees, as well as financially supporting local schools.

Besides the four international FEE programmes, Blue Flag, Eco-Schools, Green Key and YRE, FEE Italy also runs Green Spikes (Spighe Verdi), which is an Italian pilot sustainable development programme for rural municipalities. Green Spikes helps rural municipalities choose and develop sustainable management strategies through a voluntary certification path linked to a recognisable brand. Green Spikes can be considered the twin programme of Blue Flag for the rural environment. It includes the full participation of farmers and other stakeholders involved in the agriculture sector, public authorities and the entire community concerned. 42 municipalities received the Green Spike award in 2019. FEE Italy has involved relevant national partners in this programme, such as the Ministry for the Environment, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Tourism.

NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

It is necessary to convey that Eco-Schools is a programme intended for the whole school community, not only for a few students or teachers. The whole school community should be involved in the programme to generate positive change in the surrounding local community. This is what Eco-Schools does in Italy.

The Eco-Schools programme has seen an increment in the number of Italian schools in these 25 years. It is a method of working on sustainability that increasingly meets the teaching methodology by uniting the community around common goals and generating positive change.

FEE Italia
Via Tronto 20
00198 Rome



"The Green Flag must not only be obtained but must also be preserved. The Eco-Schools programme begins its journey by working towards a cleaner and neater city, with less waste and better use of its resources. The community can succeed in respecting the planet and living better!"

Student at School I.C. Sauro, Imperia

"The Green Flag is a recognition that enhances the prestige of our municipality and of our schools. Today, when the news on climate change dominate media and social networks, knowing that our students are committed to doing their part to protect the future of the planet encourages us adults a lot. I hope a positive awareness of the environment will grow in all our children and that young people like Greta Thunberg, who is awakening the consciences of the world on climate change, will emerge."

Otello Bergamo, Councillor for Quality and Environment of Jesolo Municipality

"When the Eco-Schools programme started in Italy in 1998, we took up a great challenge because nobody talked about Environmental Education at that time. Participating schools realised that they played a role in the growth of students, the school itself and the whole community. Strong emphasis was put on the different methodological approach of the programme. This is the fundamental basis that differentiates Eco-Schools from other sustainability projects undertaken by Italian schools."

The Eco-Schools programme starts from a self-assessment, which consists in analysing the sustainability level of the school in connection with the social and local context. After that, an action plan is linked to the curriculum and to other actions or school projects. Therefore, it is a 'political' choice of the entire school community or network of schools moving towards sustainability; it is not a single project added to others. Moreover, it presupposes a true interdisciplinary approach. We are far from the individual educational paths that are often delegated to individual teachers, within single disciplines and individual classes. To strengthen their actions, schools must demonstrate co-planning skills with the entire local community, involving students, their families and local stakeholders, with the aim to create an extended school community. Furthermore, we work with a modern and innovative approach which incorporates knowledge, tradition, and integration between theory, concrete experience and transmission of values."

To be awarded, schools must demonstrate that they have promoted a lasting virtuous change that belongs to the whole local community."

Claudio Mazza, FEE Italy President





Green Flag award 2011, Eco-Schools Slovenia

Malta



Nature Trust Malta

National Operator: Paul Pace



Country size: 316 km²

Population: 470,000

National tree: The Sandarac Gum Tree

National animal: The Blue Rock Thrush and the Pharaoh Hound

Joined Eco-Schools in 2002

Number of Eco-Schools: 121

Coastline: 179 m

Malta consists of small islands. There are neither mountains nor permanent rivers.

Taken together, the two largest islands have 179 metres of coastline.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

The National Curriculum Framework document features Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a cross-curricular theme.

K-12 Education

ESD is officially a compulsory component in the educational entitlement of students in compulsory school age (3-16). ESD is infused in various curriculum subjects. However, the bulk of the school-based ESD related initiatives are extra-curricular.

Professional Development

ESD is featured in the initial teacher education programme - although it is still not a compulsory component in all the subject areas. Professional development courses in ESD targeting practising school teachers are offered on a regular basis by staff from the Centre for Environmental Education & Research, which is a part of the University of Malta. This centre actively supports Nature Trust in the running of Eco-Schools. The school-based courses focus on how to promote ESD through the Eco-Schools programme.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

Contacts with the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) to implement Eco-Schools started after Nature Trust learnt about Eco-Schools from a presentation by Nigel Thomas, Director of FEE at the time. He presented the programme at the European Conference

on Environmental Education Policies and their Implications for Sustainable Development, which took place in Benediktbeuern, Germany on 8-10 June 1998. After the conference, a negotiation process was initiated with the support, assistance and guidance from the International Eco-Schools Coordinator at the time, Sergio Santos. He also had high-level meetings with the educational and environmental authorities to explain the benefits of the programme. Hon. George Pullicino, Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment was the main driving force from the government side. He was very enthusiastic about empowering children to have an active role in the safeguarding of the environment. Later on, he was instrumental in supporting Nature Trust in setting up the Parliament and Summit initiatives. Also Hon. Louis Galea, Minister of Education, supported the programme by assigning 6 teachers to work fulltime on the promotion of the programme in schools and Andrew Calleja, Chairperson of the Maltese Environment & Planning Authority (MEPA), provided financial support for the launch of the pilot project. President and CEO of Nature Trust, Vincent Attard, was the one who ultimately decided to invest (as an NGO) in the programme. This was a very courageous step at the time, as the concept of a whole-school approach to EE by empowering students was still very new. The Eco-Schools programme was officially launched in Malta in six pilot schools in 2002 and Dr Paul Pace, from the Maltese Association of Environmental Educators (MAEE), became the National Operator. Besides developing the strategy for the implementation of the programme, he designed and produced the educational resources needed by the teachers/schools.



Students speaking at the first Eco-Schools Parliament session in 2005

KEY MILESTONES

Awarding the first Green Flags on 9 February 2006 - four years after the launch of the programme - was certainly one of the key milestones as it proved that Eco-Schools was not just increasing in popularity (number of registered schools had reached 43 in just 3 years), but also in quality. The two first schools to receive the award were St Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda and St. Joseph, Mater Boni Consilli School, Paola.

Two other milestones were the registration of the first post-secondary school in 2007 and the award of the Green Flag to the first resource centre for persons with disabilities in 2014. These events were an indication that the programme was diversifying and that the skills acquired in the students' younger years were being transferred. Since its inception, the major focus of Eco-Schools in Malta was that of empowering students by giving them a voice in policymaking fora. Consequently, our programme has achieved various milestones in this field. The most notable is the organisation of the first Eco-Schools Parliamentary session on 2 June 2005 and the first Young People's Summit on 7 March 2009 that have now become annual appointments. Through the opportunities offered by Eco-Schools, over the years students have given valid contributions in international fora such as the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings

(2015 and 2018) and the Informal Meeting of the EU Environment Council (2017). In 2018 and 2019 Regional Eco-Schools Committees were set up during which students proposed suggestions such as rehabilitation of delapidated areas into green open spaces and public gardens; the use of sustainable technologies to promote water and energy conservation; the introduction of waste management practices in government offices; and policies concerning sustainable development.

Considering that Eco-Schools is the largest ESD programme in Maltese schools, in 2016, Nature Trust organised the first FEE Fest - a three-day event providing an opportunity to learn about the various FEE programmes, develop ideas for cross-curricular work, get information about various sustainable projects, initiatives and provide an excellent platform for networking.

Since 2009, Eco-Schools Malta has been under the direct patronage of three consecutive Presidents of Malta: HE George Abela (2009-14), HE Marie Louise Coleiro Preca (2014-19) and HE George Vella (in office). On 22 February 2013, Eco-Schools, managed by Nature Trust - FEE Malta, won the Waste Minimisation Award - Category B for NGOs and other Non-Commercial Entities.



Doris' release



“St Joseph School, Blata il-Bajda was one of the first schools in Malta to be awarded the Green Flag in 2004. From then on the school, which has both a Primary and a Secondary section, has never looked back. It has changed its outlook towards the environment and has become a true advocate for it.

Students and staff have become imbued with the love for the environment and are conscious of their duty to safeguard the environment in the school, at home and in the community. Separation of waste, enhancing the environment with plants, recycling, healthy eating, eliminating all types of pollution and many other measures have now become a regular part of school life. The newfound commitment towards the environment starts at school, but it is carried onto the students’ families and the community. The school carried out work with the elderly and networked with other schools. Becoming an Eco-School has enhanced the ethos of our school. We can proudly proclaim that we are giving our share in safeguarding the environment for future generations.”

Maria Teresa Spiteri, Assistant Head and Eco-School Coordinator (2003-2014)

“As students, we feel very proud that our school has achieved and maintained the Green Flag status over several years. We feel that as students we are empowered to share ideas, to plan and act responsibly and to showcase our work. Over the years, looking after the environment and preserving it has become second nature. We sometimes remind the adults in our school and community how to live sustainably. Most of all we have learnt that we can make a difference by setting an example in our families and in our community.”

Alexandra Bartolo, Former Student, Mater Boni Consilii, St Joseph School Paola.

“I have followed the way Eco-Schools operate in our schools for many years and I have always been impressed with what they have achieved. The programme managed to motivate students and teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools, improve the quality of life in schools and the surrounding communities and empower students to be active citizens in society. Eco-Schools has proved to be a very effective programme that ensures the holistic development of students, promotes school development and successfully integrates Education for Sustainable Development into the curriculum.”

Hon Evarist Bartolo, Minister of Education and Employment

Nature Trust Malta
PO Box 9
1000 Valletta

“When we started in 2002, I confess I considered Eco-Schools to be a big challenge since the environment has always been quite low on the country’s agenda. This was at the time when people did not bother or care and this attitude was reflected also in the students. We started as a pilot project with 6 schools, and the start was encouraging but what followed was indeed a wonderful experience. Throughout these 17 years, we have been running the Eco-Schools programme, it has become our main flag flier in all of the FEE programmes, 83% of the entire student population are active in this programme. Children are now speaking up. They are changing their parents’ attitudes as well as their grandparents’. They take the issues seriously so much so that they are even speaking to our Members of Parliament to express their concerns about their future. The time when the Green Flag Jury visits schools, for me, is the most stressful period of the year, but I would not miss it for the world! Listening to the students explaining what they did, why they did it and their plans for the future fills me with great hope and determination. Seeing that finally, Eco-Schools is changing the way tomorrow’s generation is engaging in improving the quality of life boosts my motivation. Finally, we have hope!”

Vincent Attard, Nature Trust – FEE Malta Executive President



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

Research results have repeatedly shown that Eco-Schools has been very beneficial to the Maltese formal education system. These benefits include the development of skills, improved citizenship, commitment to action, personal behavioural change and an increased commitment of schools towards sustainability. However, the implementation of Eco-Schools is still extra-curricular as there is no curriculum space for such action – even though ESD is a cross-curricular theme in the National Curriculum Framework. We are continuously striving to achieve this space as well as getting official accreditation for the work done related to Eco-Schools by teachers in schools.

I guess that the major feature of Eco-Schools Malta has been our tireless efforts to develop fora in which young people (children and youths) can voice their concerns about the quality of life. Throughout the years we managed to set up these fora not just within our internal structures, but also on a local, national, regional and international level. Various organisations have organised initiatives to promote the voice of youth, however, Eco-Schools Malta can confidently claim that it was the first to bring to the fore the need to listen to the voice of children – a need that is now acknowledged by many other organisations in Malta.



Montenegro



Bureau for Education Services
National Operator: Nevena Cabrilo

Country size: 13,812 km²

Population: 620,000

Longest river: Tara 141 km

Highest mountain: Bobotov Kuk 2,523 m

National animal: Dalmatian pelican (Kudravi pelican)

Joined Eco-Schools in 2016

Number of Eco-Schools: 60



National tree: Molika Pinus peuce

Molika is called the queen of the flora of Montenegro.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030 includes Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a part of its main goals, action plans and indicators for monitoring SDG 4 (target 4.7). It represents a long-term development strategy for Montenegro, which sets out solutions for the sustainable management of four groups of national resources: human, social, natural and economic. In terms of objectives and sustainability considerations, Montenegro has been one of the first countries in the world to fully embrace and integrate the United Nations requirements set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

K-12 Education

The national curriculum has been developed and implemented for all educational levels since 2012 and includes ESD as a cross-cutting topic through mandatory and optional subjects, contents and extracurricular activities. Cross-curricular topics have been defined to aim at redirecting and implementing stronger models of ESD in preschool, primary and secondary school education, which contributes to an integrative approach of general education, as well as provide more correlation between the contents of different subjects and subject areas, thus enabling the development of learner's key competences.

The cross-curricular topics were defined in regard to Montenegrin priorities, traditions and commitments, with full respect of international strategy documents in the field of sustainable development such as the UNECE Strategy, Global Education Agenda 2030, and Global Action Programme for ESD.

Early and preschool age is the best developmental period for acquiring knowledge and skills on the preservation of nature and its resources, as well as for developing positive emotions and attitudes. Sensitising a child with respect to environmental issues in their immediate environment, in the community with other children and adults, leads to a long-term contribution positive change in child's immediate and wider environment. In accordance with fundamental principles in preschool education in Montenegro, ESD themes have been incorporated into all activities in the Curriculum for Activities in Preschool Education for children at the age of 3-6 years old.

General education curriculum in Montenegro has a general education core, optional subjects and cross-curricular themes. The general education core is combined by seven areas: languages, mathematics, natural sciences, technology, social sciences, physical and health culture and art. These seven areas are delivered gradually and continuously, commencing with preschool education, initially theme-based. Within higher levels of education, it becomes more and more differentiated and subject-based. The role of optional subjects is to

provide learners with the opportunity to satisfy different interests and profiles of general education in accordance with the personal needs and interests of each learner. The cross-curricular themes are defined in a way so they are compatible with a variety of objectives in other school subjects and they can, therefore, be used by teachers for direct instruction planning.

Professional Development

Training programmes for teachers and school management have been developed and executed. More than 35% of teachers and school management staff have passed the training courses. The methodology for quality assurance of educational work in the educational institutions has already included an indicator for ESD implementation.

Teacher training programmes proposed by different organisations, such as educational institutions and NGOs, have been accredited in the Catalogue of Teacher Training Programmes, which is approved by the Ministry of Education. The catalogue provides effective ways of continuous professional development (CPD). The importance of ESD is recognised by the Bureau for Education Services and it provides a budget that covers expenses related to developing of curricula and teacher training programmes, consulting services in schools, developing guidelines for teachers, as well as the participation in the Eco-Schools network. Municipalities, NGOs and international organisations have supported ESD through teacher training, development of didactic material, building green roofs, green gardens, green classrooms and similar activities. VET Centre and the Ministry of Education are partners in the implementation of the Eco-Schools programme.

Different international organisations contribute to teacher education. UNDP, for example, has in cooperation with the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, accredited four training programmes related to climate change. The training programmes were also accredited by the Bureau for Education for two school years, 2017-18 and 2018-19, and within the first school year alone in the first set of training organised for secondary school teachers, more than 200 teachers participated.

Bureau for Education Services
Vaka Djurovica bb, Podgorica

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

In 2016, a national coordination body for the implementation of ESD and the Eco-Schools programme was established with representatives from the Bureau for Education Services, Ministry of Education, VET Centre, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, UNDP, and the Environmental Consultancy of Montenegro (ECOM). This body meets several times a year and is directly responsible for the implementation of the Eco-Schools programme.

The first Green Flag award ceremony for acquiring the Eco-Schools status took place at the Eco UN building in Podgorica on 20 September. It was organised by the Bureau for Education Services of Montenegro in cooperation with the UN System in Montenegro. 17 schools were awarded.

KEY MILESTONES

Starting up the programme, accrediting a number of schools and establishing close cooperation with key partners have been some of the most important milestones.

NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

This programme strongly contributes to and enhances the implementation of ESD in Montenegro. The establishment of a National Board for implementation and accreditation of Eco-Schools, as well as the motivation of educational institutions have been highlight moments for me.





“When I look out of the window and see the schoolyard, I feel the warmth and delight”

Rade Krivokapic, Principal of Elementary School Radojica Cizmovic, Niksic

“Eco-Schools will change Environmental Education ”

Resad Sijaric, Bureau for Education Services Director

“By joining the Eco-Schools network, the quality of teaching natural sciences and extracurricular activities related to ecology has been improved. Both students’ and teachers’ level of awareness about the importance of protecting the environment and combating climate change have been raised. This project improved the quality of teaching subjects such as nature, biology and physics. It increased the energy efficiency of the school and the level of care in the schoolyard. It also improved the attitude of students towards energy consumption in their environment and established a better relationship with the local community regarding environmental issues.”

Bogic Gligorovic, Teacher at Elementary School Sutjeska, Podgorica





Portugal



Associação Bandeira Azul da Europa – ABAE /FEE Portugal
National Operator: Margarida Gomes

Project Schoolyards: "Trees in my School", 2017

Country size: 92,212 km²

Population: 10.2 million

Longest river: Tagus River 1,007 km

Highest mountain:

Pico Mountain in Azores Islands 2,351 m

Joined Eco-Schools in 1996

Number of Eco-Schools: 975



National tree: Cork oak

The cork tree is internationally known as the only tree in the world that can survive after having all its bark removed from its trunk.

Less known is that this tree is also fireproof, waterproof and soundproof, thus making it resistant to changes in climate.

Additionally, it is interesting to know that the harvested oak cork trees store up to five times more carbon than the unharvested ones.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

The importance of the Eco-Schools programme at the national level has been recognised in a resolution adopted by the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic in 2018. According to the current legislation, Environmental Education (EE) is now part of the school curriculum under and is part of a discipline called “Education for Citizenship”.

K-12 Education

EE is one of the areas included in the new “Education for Citizenship” discipline, studied in all schooling levels.

Professional Development

Most professionals (teachers and technicians) who work with EE in Portugal hold university degrees in Biology, Geography, Environmental Engineering and Psychology. About five years ago, the Polytechnic Institutes in Santarém, Leiria and Lisbon started offering also bachelor and master degrees in EE. EE graduates find relevant jobs in non-profit organisations, municipalities and, in some cases, in private companies.



Project “Bio-gardens in School” which was implemented in 2012.
450 schools are involved



Project “Healthy and Sustainable Food”, with Eco-Cookers and the Cantine Brigade

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

In 1996, Eco-Schools was launched in Portugal. The programme has been supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Environment since its establishment. A pedagogic expert from the Ministry was sent to coordinate the programme.

The first Green Flag was awarded in 1997. Since then, a Green Flag award event is organised annually. The schools are awarded based on the result of an annual assessment, that always includes the Seven-Step methodology and specific work themes. In Portugal, there are 5 schools that have received 23 Green Flags, one per year since the launch of the programme. Since the first year, ABAE arranges two major events each year: a Green Flag Award Day in September or October for the Green Flag and teachers training sessions in January.

In the first year (1996-97) the theme was waste, in 1997-98 water and in 1998-99 energy. Since 2000, the three themes became mandatory in all schools applying to be Eco-Schools. In addition to the three themes, a different theme is introduced each year. As Lisbon will be the European Green Capital 2020, the theme of the current year is “Sustainable Communities and Outdoor Space”.

In the early years, Eco-Schools was mostly funded by the European Environment Programme. Later, registration levies were introduced. These levies, in addition to financial contributions from partners or sponsors, ensure the financial stability of the programme at the national level.



Green Flag award ceremony in Pombal, 2018 - 5000 people present

KEY MILESTONES

In Eco-Schools, the importance of creating a network for children and young people to share and evaluate their actions is emphasised. To encourage knowledge sharing and cooperation between schools, the concept of 'godmother schools' was introduced in 2018. Moreover, it is great to see that municipalities are more and more involved with Eco-Schools and work more closely with ABAE. In many municipalities, 80% of schools are Eco-Schools, and a growing number even has 100% of their schools participating in the Eco-Schools programme. Additionally, another milestone for ABAE was the implementation of EcoCampus concept in Portugal.

FEE Portugal (ABAE)
Edifício Vasco da Gama
Bloco C 1350-355 Lisboa



“Being an Eco-School is rewarding! To involve students, teachers and non-teachers in a common purpose is to feel that we can act, propose, educate and contribute to sustainable development!”

Renata Santos, Teacher at the Abel Salazar school

“I participate in Eco-Schools and each day I tell myself that it was a good idea to enter the Eco-Schools Committee. I know that getting into Eco-Schools is like having a job and I have to have a lot of responsibility, but I feel I have it. I also have a side that makes me see that it is a bit of a game as well. I can mix it all up and reconcile my work.”

12-year-old Student, Eco-School EB 2,3 of Terrugem

“Surviving twenty years in the environmental education area is an unusual and, therefore, meritorious feat. The Eco-Schools programme deserves special praise because it has always sought out a target audience who understood the importance of actions shared by students, teachers, parents and entities. We cannot, however, leave out the volunteerism and persistence of those, within ABAE, who have kept alive projects that never reach cruising speed, because working with schools is starting from scratch year after year. I always get emotional when I see a Green Flag hoist!

I would like to welcome the mentors of this environmental education project that does not age because its flame is always alive and well-fed by the enthusiasm and dedication of all.”

Adelaide Espiga, Representative of the Institute of Environmental Promotion (IPAMB), the Institute of the Environment (IA) and part of the National Commission of the Eco-Schools programme

“25 years later, after 20,000 Eco-Schools editions, 750,000 Eco-Teachers and 11 million Eco-Students, Portugal got a new generation of citizens, more committed to sustainability, positive and proactive action and with a responsible attitude. Eco-Schools was recognised by the Portuguese Parliament as a reference in the educational system and as a programme with a transformative effect on the attitude and practices of the educational communities that participated in the programme. Eco-Schools plays an important role in the sustainable development of the local communities and contributes actively to the formation of responsible citizens!”

José Archer, ABAE/FEE Portugal President



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

Some of the main challenges we face in the programme are maintaining the continuity of schools, the motivation of teachers and promoting the Eco-Schools programme to official institutions such as the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment, in order to reinforce its fundamental role in citizenship education. Another challenge for ABAE is to conduct two annual evaluations in February and July on to reinforce good practices and recommendations on the implementation of the Seven-Step methodology. Last but not least, the financial stability for the programme management, which depends on partners and the support of municipalities, is a continuous challenge.

For me, the 20th Anniversary Celebration was an emotional day. It was celebrated with the schools and the band XUTOS. This was also the last concert for one of the musicians, which made the day extra special.

To see the interest of the schools in the EcoCampus intensify over the last three years, the implementation of presidential visits to schools with the partnership of the Education Ministry and the awarding of some of the projects developed by ABAE in the Eco-Schools network (Healthy and Sustainable Food and Eco-Schools Brigade - Terre the Fame | Yves Rocher Foundation Award) were all great achievements of Eco-Schools in Portugal.



Green Flag Annual Ceremony

Romania



Centrul Carpato-Danubian de Geoecologie (CCDG)
National Operator: Razvan Dinca / Cornelia Dinca



Joined Eco-Schools in 1999

Number of Eco-Schools: 295

Country size: 238,397 km²

Population: 19 million

Longest river: Danube 1,075 km

Highest mountain: Moldoveanu in the Fagarasi Mountains 2,544 m

National tree: Oak

National animal:

Lynx

The population of Lynx in Romania has decreased in recent years, due to the shrinking of their natural habitat. The animal has now been declared protected in the country.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Environmental Education (EE) is not mentioned in the official part of the curricula.

K-12 Education

In Romania, EE activities are at all levels regarded as extra-curricular and are therefore not incorporated into any specific subjects.

Professional Development

As EE is not a part of the curricula, teachers are teaching EE on a voluntary basis.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

CCDG started the Eco-Schools programme with 10 schools in 1999. In 2002, Scoala Gimnaziala Ion Creanga in Suceava became the first school in Romania to receive a Green Flag. The programme was immediately a huge success and it grew rapidly. In 10 years, the number of Eco-Schools has already reached 420.



KEY MILESTONES

In 1999, the programme was initiated with 10 participating schools. In spite of a lack of support from the government and the insufficient level of funding, less than ten years later, in 2008, the number of Eco-Schools had increased to 420 schools, the highest number of participating schools in the history of the programme in Romania. Today, there are 295 schools involved with the programme.

Centrul Carpato-Danubian de Geoecologie (CCDG)

8 Barbu Lautaru Street, District 1
Bucharest



“The involved students have understood immediately that the Eco-Schools programme is proposing actions and themes close to their body and soul. They also realised that the responsibility of protecting the environment is transmitted from generation to generation.”

Liviu Hatnean, Coordinating Teacher

“Once connected with nature through the Eco-Schools programme, children and youth are becoming ambassadors of positive change and understand the impact that they have on the environment, while choosing a healthy lifestyle.”

The Eco-Schools programme has had a huge impact on the Romanian educational system, especially in the rural part of Romania.”

Cornelia Dinca, CCDG Eco-Schools Coordinator





Russia

Keep Saint-Petersburg Tidy
National Operator: Olga Madison

Country size: 17,1 million km²

Population: 146 million

Highest mountain: Elbrus 5,642 m

National animal: Bear

Joined Eco-Schools in 2002

Number of Eco-Schools: 473

Longest river: Lena 4,400 km

The Lena is the only river in the world situated totally in the permafrost region. In spring when the snow melts the water level in the Lena river rises by 10-15 metres.

The river got its name from the Evenk language "Elyu-Ene" which means "Large River".



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

There are several documents issued at the national level concerning the development of environmental education. One of them is “Fundamentals of State Policy in the Field of Environmental Development of the Russian Federation until 2030” which came into force in 2012. The relevant regional and local documents have been developed accordingly.

K-12 Education

Although Russia does not have a specific national environmental education mandate, support for environmental education exists formally and informally at regional and local levels through the efforts of schools, teachers and both governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Professional Development

There are several specialisations at the university level for training students in the field of environmental education e.g. the Natural Sciences teachers, environmental engineering e.g. technosphere safety, etc. Several aspects related to environmental protection, such as waste handling for sustainable waste management, are mandatory for civil servants, staff of logistics companies, educational institutions, relevant businesses, associations of householders, etc.

Retraining and improving qualification courses in the field are provided by various training centres within the frame of various universities and private educational organisations which have such courses accredited by relevant educational authorities.

National tree: Birch

The birch is a widespread tree in Russia. It is very beautiful in all seasons.

In ancient times almost all nations living in the area now called the Russian Federation considered birch trees to be sacred trees. Later it became one of the favourite symbols of Motherland-Russia reflected in world-famous paintings, novels and poetry.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

In Russia, the Eco-Schools programme began with a project that took place in the academic year 2002-2003 in cooperation with Denmark. Five schools from Denmark and six schools from Russia participated in the project which was led by Henrik Norregaard. It was aimed at introducing Russian educational institutions to the International Eco-Schools programme and sharing experience of Eco-Schools implementation in the Danish schools.

Russia was represented by two schools #3 and #38 from Petrozavodsk, Annino school from the Leningrad region, school #637 from St. Petersburg and two supplementary education centres from Lomonosov and from the Vasileostrovsky district of St. Petersburg.

During a five-day study trip to Denmark, the Russian team visited two schools and the Danish Outdoor Council (Filuftsraadet). Russian colleagues attended lessons and attended meetings with Danish teachers to share experiences. Danish colleagues shared their ideas and teaching materials. After the trip the participating schools from both countries stayed in touch to discuss the progress. In May 2003, the Danish colleagues came to St. Petersburg to check how the seven-steps were implemented in the project-partner schools and were happy to see excellent results.

By the end of the project in June 2003, the first Green Flag in Russia was awarded to the secondary school #637 in the Moscovsky district of St. Petersburg. Shortly before the award ceremony, Jan Eriksen visited the school due to his mentoring role and was impressed with the high level of environmental consciousness of the students as well as with the commitment of the teachers and school administration. Four out of the six Russian schools that initially participated in the programme received Green Flags a year later.

The project leader Henrik Norregaard successfully took part in another joint project a few years later. One of the Danish members of the project team, Trine Jarloev, became our wonderful colleague for 15 years closely following the first Eco-Schools project in Russia. She acted as a partner in a number of joint projects related to the Eco-Schools programme, came with presentations to many international and inter-regional events held for Eco-Schools in various regions of Russia, and arranged study visits for the Russian teachers to learn more about Eco-Schools best practices in Denmark.

Peter Uhl Pedersen who hosted one of the project events in Denmark contributed further to the implementation of Eco-Schools in supplementary education and pre-schools in Russia sharing his best practices in arranging outdoor activities for children. In general, the programme development became possible in Russia thanks to our excellent mentors Jan Eriksen and Heiko Crost.

KEY MILESTONES

In 2003 we received an application from kindergarten #69 'Marina' in the Krasnogvardeisky district of St. Petersburg to join Eco-Schools. We did not quite know what to do because the programme at that time according to our knowledge was only for schools, and in some countries also for supplementary education centres. We consulted with Sergio Santos who was the International Eco-Schools coordinator at that time. He was surprised as well but agreed that the kindergarten could join the programme as a pilot with the requirement of having to present a report at the Eco-Schools NOM the following academic year 2003-2004. The report was presented in the form of a very thick folder with a short text and a lot of drawings and photos illustrating seven-steps implementation. The issue of whether to award the Green Flag to the kindergarten was on the NOM agenda. After some discussion, all NOM participants voted in favour of awarding the kindergarten with the Green Flag, and since then it has been officially allowed for kindergartens to participate in the Eco-Schools programme. Today, Russia is the country with the highest number of kindergartens participating in the programme in the world, and the Republic of Tatarstan is the leading region in Russia on the matter.

At the same NOM, Keep Saint-Petersburg Tidy and Rafaella Riccobene from Italy also asked for permission to involve universities in the Eco-Schools programme, as we were going to submit the project on implementation of Eco-Schools in universities to TEMPUS. After a lively discussion, we received permission to run the pilot phase. Unfortunately, we did not get the project funding and the Eco-Schools implementation at the tertiary level was postponed until 2007.

In the meantime, a vocation school joined the programme in 2006 and got its Green Flag. However, the total number of participating organisations was still under 10. Eco-Schools in Russia really developed when about 20 educational establishments from the Siberian part of Russia joined the programme in 2007. It was initiated by Liudmila Koshkareva from Irkutsk the Baikal EcoWave NGO, and among the establishments, were two teacher training colleges and one university. In May 2008, they submitted their reports and were awarded Green Flags.

In 2012, the Green Flag was also awarded to an orphanage in Nurlat village in the Republic of Tatarstan.

As to the geographical scale of development, in 2003, the Kaliningrad Region joined the programme, in 2006, the Kirov Region joined, Siberia joined in 2007 and in 2009, the Republic of Tatarstan and the Bryansk region joined as well. After 2010, more and more regions began participating. There were six time zones between the ones based furthest to the West and the ones furthest to the East and in 2017 the time difference was increased to eight hours when a

kindergarten from Ussuriysk began running the programme. Today, the total number of participating regions is 22.

With regard to best practices and activities, the unique annual event The Festival of Eco-Ideas that has been held in the Republic of Tatarstan in the middle of May since 2010 must be mentioned. It was initiated by the director of the kindergarten #11 Antoshka in the Zelenodolsk municipal region Rizida Gainullina. Within nine years it transformed from a small local activity into a significant event not only for the Republic of Tatarstan but for Eco-Schools all over Russia, as colleagues from several regions attend it to share best practices.

The most interesting event in the winter is the contest with artworks made of waste 'Live, Christmas Tree'. The contest is for Eco-Schools from all over Russia. The Christmas trees are made by children, teachers, technical staff, parents and grandparents and can be made by individuals, groups and families. They are exhibited in Eco-Schools, local libraries and local administration offices. The best artworks are presented to local authorities and social partners with slogans for waste separation, nature protection and tree cutting prevention. The contest makes for good cooperation between the Eco-Schools and the LEAF programmes, and in some regions the Green Key programme is involved as well since hotel staff participate in the juries.

'School of the Future' from the Kaliningrad Region now has 15 Green Flags. It is the most active in Russia in creating cooperation between the FEE programmes. Since the Radisson hotel in Kaliningrad got its first Green Key, the school and the hotel arrange at least three to four joint activities every year.

As for international cooperation, during the first eight years of the programme implementation, Keep Saint-Petersburg Tidy successfully cooperated with the Nordic countries and the Baltic States. In 2018, thanks to our colleague from Mongolia, Shinetsetseg Erdenebayar, and our Russian colleagues, Liudmila Koshkareva and Svetlana Marchuk, two visits from our Mongolian colleagues has been arranged. The Russian visit to Mongolia took place in October 2019.

The biggest challenge was to coordinate the work of schools and kindergarten from distant regions. Thanks to enthusiastic people, we have established the system of local Information and Methodological Centres (IMCs) for the programme in each region with more than five participating institutions. IMCs are based on the most active schools and kindergartens in each region willing to share their best practices with the colleagues.

The organisation received letters of gratitude from municipalities to the participating Eco-Schools and kindergartens.



“We were inspired to further develop our work for a sustainable future. The whole school became a united team working together to reach our environmental goals. Students became much more confident, able to make informed decisions, and taking responsibility for the decisions having been made. After a short while, the school became the pilot educational institution in St. Petersburg on active citizenship for sustainability. Many graduates of our school demonstrate leadership skills in the field they have chosen for their further education and career. It was a great pleasure to meet some of them at the celebration of fifteenth anniversary of Eco-Schools in Russia in autumn 2017 and learn more about their successes.”

Galina Medvednikova, Former Director at Secondary School #637 in St. Petersburg

“Environmental Education is a priority. It is gratifying that teachers and administrations of institutions pay special attention to the education of young environmentalists.”

Igor Barinov, Vice-Head of the Government of the Kaliningrad Region. The quotation is translated from news on the Green Flag award, published on the official website of the Government of the Kaliningrad Region

“Eco-Schools is a great programme uniting children and adults to ensure global sustainability.”

Galina Tsvetkova, Keep St. Petersburg Tidy Chairperson



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

A unique moment was when the first kindergarten joined the programme in 2003, thanks to the initiative of the Head of the kindergarten, Svetlana Marchuk.

Keep Saint-Petersburg Tidy
32-1-50, Prazhskaya street, 192241, St. Petersburg



Serbia



Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development (EASD)
National Operator: Aleksandra Mladenovic

Eco-package workshop with used cartoon beverage

Country size: 88,361 km²

Population: 6.9 million

Longest river: Danube 588 km

Highest mountain: Djeravica 2,656 m

National animal: Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*)

Joined Eco-Schools in 2012

Number of Eco-Schools: 120

National tree: Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika*)

Serbian spruce is not found in many places in the world. In fact, it can be so difficult to find that it took the famous Serbian botanist, Josif Pančić, several years to discover it.

In 1955, he heard about a specific kind of spruce in the Uzice region, but it took him three trips to find it and it was twenty years later in 1975 that he finally found this new endemo-relict species of coniferous trees in the little village of Đurići in Zaovine. He named the spruce Pančićeva omorika (Latin name: *Picea omorika*, common name: Serbian spruce).



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Environmental Education (EE) is a subject of the Strategy of Education of the Republic of Serbia 2020, which refers to education in line with the Europe 2020 targets and SDGs. The Law on Environmental Protection also predicts the importance of EE as a key factor for a sustainable society and economic development at all levels.

K-12 Education

EE is present in the curricula for primary and secondary schools, mainly in biology as a mandatory subject, but also in several optional subjects. So, in the lower classes of primary school, for students between the ages of 7-10, the parents choose the subject which their kids will learn throughout the following year. In one of the subjects entitled Guardians of Nature, the students learn about main themes of environmental protection, how to deal with problems and solutions in the environment, etc.

For students at secondary level, there is no EE except for the reformed subject on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which is currently being taught to students in gymnasiums. This subject is mandatory in all four years of gymnasium where the students learn about different topics, such as water, energy, biodiversity, climate change, waste management as well as how to use practical methods and tools.

Professional Development

There is one two-day seminar called Eco Alphabet, officially registered under the Ministry of Education in Serbia, in which teachers can participate. The Eco-Schools Seven Steps and other activities explaining what to do when running EE is presented in the seminar, however, it is not free of charge.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

The Eco-Schools programme started in parallel with the Blue Flag programme in 2012. There were three educational institutions involved in the pilot phase, two pre-schools, one from Belgrade and another from Setonje village Municipality of Petrovac, and one primary school from Belgrade Drinka Pavlovic. All three schools are still in the programme. On 25 September 2013, the pre-school Cika Jova Zmaj and the kindergarten 1001 Radost became the first two schools to receive Green Flags in Serbia.

The Tetra Pak Company is the only company in Serbia that has supported the Eco-Schools programme from the beginning. The company already supported Eco-Schools in Slovenia, Croatia and North Macedonia, through the Eco Package project.

KEY MILESTONES

Some of the biggest achievements in the history of the programme in Serbia has been the joint efforts of schools and local communities that support Eco-Schools in their own areas to improve the state of the environment. Support through competitions from different donors and sponsors to the programme and the Eco-Schools. Besides this, the involvement of Eco-schools from rural areas that do not have that many other opportunities to be involved in different actions and initiatives.

A big challenge is to run the programme when even institutional support is not enough. Since we do not have campaigns to attract new schools to be part of the programme, the schools themselves exchange examples of good practices and invite others to become Eco-Schools. Having 120 Eco-Schools in the programme, it is our ongoing challenge to prepare different and attractive projects for them.

EASD and the programme has received a letter of support from the Ministry for Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia, and institutional support by the Secretariat for Environmental Protection of the City of Belgrade.



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

I believe a unique factor of the programme is the great commitment of the Eco-Schools coordinators to fulfil all obligations in the best way, through voluntary work, in addition to their regular obligations as teachers in different schools. In addition, I believe that the good connections between teachers and students and the support that the teachers in Eco-Schools provide to the students to become pro-active in Environmental Education work are beneficial to all.



All for the Planet, Planet for All!

Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development (EASD)
Jovana Rajica 5d/6
11000 Belgrade



“In this accelerated and technologically evolving world that requires excessive use of resources, without thinking about the far-reaching consequences in the future, it is very important for young school children to view the world as a big picture, and from early childhood recognise and identify positive and negative examples of human activities. Only in this way can we achieve the SDGs and engage in actions.

Eco-Schools are most important in reaching these goals through Environmental Education, which helps them to think creatively, foster cooperation, acquire leadership qualities. Throughout the whole school year, students are engaged through various projects, actions for a cleaner environment, marking a project day, celebrating the international environmental days and even through competitions in knowledge about ecology and the environment. During these activities, students are learning to build themselves up as conscious citizens.

Being one of the Eco-Schools in our society is a prestige, one that sets us apart but also sets an example to other schools to become part of a large family of Eco-Schools. One school can do little, but the huge network of Eco-Schools to which our Drinka Pavlović belongs can create a better world with fewer problems than we have now.

In the end, we will greet you with our motto: All for the Planet, Planet for All!

Professor Marina Drndarski, Eco-Schools Drinka Pavlovic, Belgrade



Habitat mapping Pre-School Galeb, Setonje

“The Tetra Pak company started supporting the Eco Schools programme through a specific Eco Package project more than ten years ago. The aim was to raising awareness on beverage carton characteristics when it comes to waste sorting, collection, and recycling. The project was launched first in Slovenia, and soon after in four other Balkan countries: Serbia, Croatia, North Macedonia and Bosnia, and in each of them with equal success and incredibly positive feedback.

Through various activities, such as beverage carton recycling workshops and creative competitions in making beverage carton artworks, school children were educated on proper waste disposal, the concept of the circular economy, and the creation of a valuable new raw material out of the waste material from packaging.

For many years now, both teachers and pupils involved in the programme have shown a constant motivation to work on the improvement of the environmental conditions in their local communities, which makes the Eco-Schools programme a powerful social movement among school children and at the same time represents a solid and strong foundation for a more conscious society in the future.

And this positive influence of such a unique educational platform is particularly valuable and important in countries in which nature preservation and environmental issues are not among the governments’ top priorities, which is the case in the Balkan region.”

Ljubica Naumović, Environment Executive, Tetra Pak South Eastern Europe Tetra Pak Production d.o.o.

“The Eco-Schools programme in Serbia has developed a respectable Eco-Schools network on the spectrum for sustainable development related activities under the umbrella of FEE Serbia as National Operator. The reputation of Eco-Schools is good, having in mind its continuity, constant upgrading, dedicated coordinators, teachers and professors, especially in an environment where a lot of networks are project-based and not sustainable.

In Serbia, the Eco-Schools programme is among the front-runners in SDGs promotion, influencing decision-makers to re-think education syllabuses. Some concrete outreach and successes have already been achieved with the inclusion of ESD and environment elements in different courses including the new ones.”

Prof. Dr. Andjelka Mihajlov, National Mentor of FEE programmes in Serbia





Slovakia

Centre of Environmental and Ethical Education Živica (CEEV Živica)
National Operator: Zuzana Gallayová

Country size: 49,035 km²

Population: 5.4 million

Longest river: Váh 403 km

Highest mountain: Gerlachovský štít 2,654 m

National animal: Bear

Joined Eco-Schools in 2004

Number of Eco-Schools: 317

National tree: Linden tree

The Linden tree is sometimes referred to as a lime tree. However, the tree has nothing to do with the lime fruit.



THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

The Eco-Schools programme was first introduced in Slovakia under the name Zelená škola in 2004.

The coordination and methodology of the programme were implemented by the Center for Environmental Activities in Trenčín, in cooperation with the Network of Environmental Education Organisations Špirála. Rišo Medaľ became the 'father' of programme, due to the enthusiasm he put into Eco-Schools and how he transferred this enthusiasm to other team members. In 2005, the first Green Flag in Slovakia was awarded and, four years later, the administration of the programme was handed over to CEEV Živica, which has been organising it since.

KEY MILESTONES

The key milestone for the organisation was the implementation of a peer-to-peer participative approach. CEEV Živica works so that students as well as parents, cooks, cleaning staff, etc. partner with teachers, and that these actors implement the Eco-Schools programme together.

In 2016, CEEV Živica was awarded a prize from the Minister of the Environment, for outstanding results and long-term activities in Environmental Education.





“...Schools and teachers are the decisive factors that create a relationship with the environment..that shapes them for the future.”

Andrej Kiska, President of Slovakia, 2017



Centre of Environmental and Ethical Education Živica (CEEV Živica)
CEEV Živica, Búdková 22, 811 04 Bratislava

NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

In Slovakia, we have implemented the initiative called ‘Heading towards the Eco-Schools Green Flag’, which is for schools who are not able to fulfil the requirements to obtain the award within a given year. It is a nice intermediate step, which makes sure that the schools are not frustrated and we do not lower the Green Flag standards.

We have decided from the beginning, that we will visit all the schools in the Eco-Schools programme personally. We created posts for Eco-School consultants, who were assigned a certain number of schools and helped them with their questions, Action Plan etc. This started to become a real challenge with the growing number of schools in the programme. Currently, we have more than 300 schools and we use different specialists to do the assessment visits. Now we are able to visit all schools interested in applying for the Green Flag within a 2-year period.

Juraj Oravec, Former Eco-Schools National Operator



2005, First Green Flag ceremony





Slovenia



Association DOVES - FEE Slovenia
National Operator: Gregor Cerar

Workshop for coordinators 2016

Country size: 20,273 km²

Population: 2 million

Longest river: Sava 221 km

National animal: Lynx, honeybees and proteus

National tree: Linden tree, Slovene tree of life

Joined Eco-Schools in 1996

Number of Eco-Schools: 289



Highest mountain: Triglav 2,864 m

Triglav - The legend of the Zlatorog, the white goat with golden horns.

Triglav represents a three-headed god who controls the earth, the sky and the underworld. In the areas surrounding of Triglav, once lived three good-hearted women. In the mountains, they grassed their herds which were led by a large white goat, named Zlatorog, with golden horns. The horns were the key to a treasure.

To be continued...



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

In 2007, the Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development from Pre-School to Pre-University Education were launched nationally. The document is intended to support the planning, implementation and evaluation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in formal and non-formal education.

K-12 Education

Currently, there are no curricula in which Environmental Education (EE) is being defined as an independent lesson. However, the content is represented within different lessons.

Professional Development

At the university level, there is a specialised study course on environment protection and individual environmental programmes or programmes which include lessons on environmental subjects. Additionally, there is a four-year-long PhD interdisciplinary degree on environmental protection that allows students to combine topics from thirteen faculties at the University of Ljubljana.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

In 1994, Slovenia joined FEE and initiated the Blue Flag programme. Two years later in 1996, Eco-Schools was implemented as the second FEE programme in Slovenia. In April the same year, Nada Pavser, Professor of Chemistry and Biology, was appointed the first National Operator in Slovenia and the first meetings and workshops were organised for the primary and secondary schools that showed an interest in environmental issues. In the following years, the Slovenian Ecological Movement, an environmental expert group led by the Eco-Schools programme, organised many workshops for teachers and principals in schools all across Slovenia to promote EE and the programme. As a result, more and more schools joined the Eco-Schools programme.

In 1998, one secondary school and fourteen primary schools became the first Slovenian schools to be awarded the Green Flag. They received their Green Flags on the 5 June 1998 by Sergio Santos, Eco-Schools Coordinator at the time.



Planting trees 2015



Planting trees with parents 2014

KEY MILESTONES

In 1996, the Slovenian Eco-Schools programme was presented at the FEE General Assembly in Cyprus, while in 1999, the first sponsors (partner companies) started to support Eco-Schools Slovenia. In the same year, the Slovenian Eco-Schools webpage was set up.

In 2002, the first kindergartens joined the programme, and in 2004, FEE Slovenia launched the first Eco Quiz project, which turned out to be one of the most successful projects, participated each year by approximately 2,000 students from primary and secondary schools from all over Slovenia. It is a yearly-based knowledge competition about three selected sustainability topics. Eco-Quiz for primary schools is organised for students in grades 6-8 and separately for secondary schools. In 2005, an agreement of cooperation between Association DOVES – FEE Slovenia and the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Environment was signed.

In 2012, the Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana became the first Slovenian faculty awarded with Green Flag, which kicked off the launch of FEE EcoCampus in the country.

Association DOVES – FEE Slovenia was the first NGO in Slovenia recognised as an NGO in the field of environment and nature protection. Furthermore, the organisation received support and has cooperated with the private sector in developing projects on environmental responsibility and social responsibility. In 2018, the organisation received the Best Promotional Project on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Award by the national newspaper 'Finance'.

Association DOVES – FEE Slovenia
Zavrti 2
1234 Menges



"Since we started participating in the Eco-Schools programme, there has been an increase in collective awareness, as well as involvement in activities in the field of protecting the environment, healthy living and sustainable development. We increased our cooperation with different external stakeholders and highlighted the importance of each individual and his or her responsibility to the community, present and future generations, and to a greater connection and transfer of knowledge and ideas within the Eco-Schools family. The Eco-Schools programme is a whole school project that touches all students, parents and the local community."

Janja Zupancic, Headmaster, Primary School Louis Adamic, Grosuplje

"I am glad that in Slovenian kindergartens, schools and faculties there are educators and teachers, headmasters and other workers who are willing to and capable of putting their work above the framework of the formal pedagogical process. Wherever and whenever it is possible they adapt the curriculum in a way to connect it with the stimuli of a child's environment and include the contents in a child's everyday life. The Eco-Schools programme proves that the pedagogical process is vivid and dynamic. Besides that, these sorts of initiatives have also other positive effects. They contribute to a higher reputation of the teaching profession, they encourage the interdisciplinary and intergenerational connecting, solidarity and cooperation of different groups in our society. Therefore, my congratulations to all collaborators in the Eco-Schools programme for their work so far, especially to the educators and teachers working daily with children, who are their eyes and their mirror at the same time. I wish that this programme successfully continues its journey."

Jernej Pikalo, Ph.D., Minister of Education, Science and Sport

"We established Eco-Schools Slovenia over twenty years ago within the Association DOVES - FEE SLOVENIA - two years after introducing the Blue flag as the first FEE programme in Slovenia. From the very beginning, we have been putting the greatest effort into the programme's development. We immediately recognised the importance of Environmental Education and awareness for sustainable development and later on about circular economy for the youngest kindergarten children. Over the years, we have successfully utilised all possible synergies with other programmes, notably with Blue Flag and Young Reporters for the Environment. Although it is not always the easiest to develop and financially support the programme and all the activities that are necessary to keep at the highest level, we are continuously striving to set the path and maintain the achieved level. We are all very proud to be a part of the great FEE global family. We recognise that the knowledge and experience that is shared with other FEE National Operators is invaluable and helps support our work."

Fiorenzo Lupieri, Association DOVES - FEE Slovenia President



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

The biggest challenge is staffing and financial sustainability with the constant development of the content and the projects within Eco-Schools Slovenia. We try hard to keep the network of sponsors, which have been supporting the programme for several years. We are facing an on-going challenge to develop the Eco-Schools programme on different levels, to connect institutions from all levels; kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and faculties, to create interesting environmental projects with different themes and teams, to run interdisciplinary projects, to encourage schools for international cooperation etc.

What inspires my work with the Eco-Schools programme is the excellent team of colleagues and coworkers that might differ in character, in the way they work and in their personal life, but who all are focused and dedicated to making the Eco-Schools programme in Slovenia interesting and growing. Active participation of 280 Eco-Schools with more than 80,000 students and over 8,000 teachers taking part in more than 4,000 environmental projects per year, makes our lives really interesting!

Highest mountain: Triglav 2,864 m

Continued ...

In the Trenta Valley lived a young hunter who was raised by the three women. He loved a beautiful girl, and he brought her mountain flowers every day to slowly earn her love.

One day, a wealthy Venetian merchant gave the beautiful girl gold jewellery and claimed that if the hunter really loved her, he should bring her Zlatorog's treasure. The girl lost all interest in the hunter because of her new gold jewellery. The hunter got desperate, so he went out searching for Zlatorog. One morning, he found him and shot him. However, Zlatorog had miraculous powers and from the blood of the deadly wounded animal grew suddenly the most beautiful Triglav flowers. When the Zlatorog ate these flowers he came back to life. Then Zlatorog hit the hunter, blinded him with the light of his shining horns and pushed him down the mountain.

The animal and the three women left the mountains and the treasure remained hidden in the mountains of Triglav.

Spain



Environmental and Consumers Education Association (ADEAC)

National Operator: Idoia Arellano López



Country Size: 505,990 km²

Population: 47 million

Longest river: Tajo 1,007 km

Highest mountain: Teide 3,718 m

National animal: Lynx

Joined Eco-Schools in 1998

Number of Eco-Schools: 530

National tree: Holm oak

The name of this tree has its origin in the Celtic language and means 'beautiful tree'. The Celts considered it a sacred tree, as its leaves are always green and it gives great shadow.

For thousands of years, the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula ate the acorns that holm oaks produce, as the trees could be found everywhere.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

At the legal level, the reference to Environmental Education (EE) can be found in the European Directives 2003/4/CE and 2003/35/CE which regulate the access to information, participation and justice regarding environmental issues. In Spain, 20 years ago, the Ministry of Environment launched the “The White Book on Environmental Education”. The book has recently been reviewed and is used by NGOs, schools, universities and the private sector.

K-12 Education

EE is a cross-disciplinary theme from kindergarten to secondary education. As a cross-disciplinary theme, it is implemented through several subjects and through extra scholar excursions. In primary education, natural sciences subjects are closely related to EE. Recently, EE was introduced in some University degrees as a subject e.g. in Education and Environmental Sciences, and as a PhD degree on Environmental Education.

Professional Development

Since the global and national financial crisis, EE in Spain has suffered constant cutbacks. Local, regional and national governments are not investing as much in EE. A position as an environmental educator is, therefore, usually a part-time job, that is not socially recognised nor very well paid. Some NGOs, including ADEAC, provide training for environmental educators from primary and secondary schools on different sustainability topics.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

ADEAC started the Eco-Schools programme in Spain in 1998, in the regions of Andalusia and Madrid. Initially, the programme was supported by the Department of Education from the Andalusian Regional Government and in Madrid, several municipalities and local networks were involved. The first to support the programme in Madrid was the local network of Leganes, which has been a pioneer in many aspects of Eco-Schools. The second to provide support in Madrid was the network of Pozuelo de Alarcon.

Little by little, schools from all around the country joined the national network. In the first phase, ADEAC created educational materials, using the international materials as a reference and organised regional Eco-Schools meetings in Andalusia, Madrid and Guadalajara. In Madrid, a working group called Educa21 was created, involving a number of national EE stakeholders. Together, Educa21 and ADEAC organised conferences and created an exhibition that has moved from Eco-School to Eco-School in Spain.

KEY MILESTONES

The key milestone was to create local networks supported by the municipality. The creation of Educa21 working group in Madrid was a key support to the National Operator of Eco-Schools and the passion we shared was also key to the success the programme has had since its beginning.

In 1999, 15 schools were awarded with the Green Flag at the same time: C.P. Padre Marchena (Marchena, Sevilla), C.P. Virgen del Rosario (Totalán, Málaga), C.P. Juan XXIII (Marchena, Sevilla), I.E.S. Himilce (Linares, Jaén), C.P. El Faro (Mazagón, Huelva), I.B. Poeta García Gutiérrez (Chiclana de la Frontera, Cádiz), I.E.S. María Zambrano (Leganés, Madrid), I.E.S. Siglo XXI (Leganés, Madrid), I.E.S. Julio Verne (Leganés, Madrid), I.E.S. Isaac Albéniz (Leganés, Madrid), C.P. Andrés Segovia (Leganés, Madrid), C. Franciscanas de Montpellier (Trapagarán, Vizcaya), C.P. Zubileta (Guetxo, Vizcaya), C.P. Larrazazubi (Guetxo, Vizcaya), I.H.P. Lateorro (Laudio, Álava).

Spain is a big country, thus of the challenges has been to visit every participating Eco-School. ADEAC has recently started using online means to communicate with support schools that do not belong to any regional network and continuously tries to also incorporate private schools in the national network.





“Eco-Schools has opened a window in our centre, and the air brings awareness towards the lack of respect we had for nature. Eco-Schools is now present everywhere, in its corridors, cafeteria, playgrounds and gardens. Since we started the programme, we reduced our electricity consumption, we do not buy plastic cups, each teacher uses a reusable bottle for water, we have forbidden aluminium foil and students bring mainly fruit for snacks. Fruit is also available at the cafeteria. We try to immerse Eco-Schools values in every activity we carry out, it is a matter of survival.”

Ana Isabel Lara Castaño, Eco-Schools Coordinator at IES Rusadir, Melilla

“Being an Eco-School implies a conscious way of being a school: a school where the whole community is engaged, a school open to the world and a school where each action counts. A school with sense and feelings. The role of municipalities in the Eco-Schools Programme is key to support and facilitate school projects: projects related to waste management, fruit gardens, energy efficiency, etc. As Eduardo Galeano said: Many people doing small things in many places can change the world.”

Guiomar Romero, Education Councilwoman in Alpedrete, Madrid

“Eco-Schools is a very inspiring programme that has recently opened the door for Young Reporters for the Environment. We are very proud of our national network. The programme is a reference in Environmental Education in Spain and has inspired other programmes in schools that also follow Agenda 21. We believe participation is a key tool for more sustainable communities and the Eco-Schools programme can lead this change.”

Virginia Yuste, ADEAC Vice-President

“There have been many inspiring moments during my time as the National Operator, which I enjoyed together with the coordinators of the Eco-Schools programme in each participating school during the visits to schools, the regional meetings or the International Eco-Schools Meeting that was held in Spain. During those moments, I got the inspiration and strength I needed for the hard work I had at the office. In the beginning, the connection to the Eco-Schools team in Portugal was very important to me.”

Jorge Navacerrada, Former Eco-Schools National Operator





Environmental and Consumers Education Association (ADEAC)
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NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

"I think one of the main strengths of the Eco-Schools programme is that it can be applied to private, public schools, schools in urban or rural areas. I love the fact that it is nourished by people's thoughts and feelings, that is why participation is so important."

Carmen Fernandez, Acting National Operator

Turkey



Foundation for Environmental Education in Turkey (TÜRÇEV)

National Operator: Aynur Çimenci

Country size: 783,562 km²

Population: 82 million

Longest river: Kızılırmak 1,355 km

Highest mountain: Ağrı 5,137 m

Joined Eco-Schools in 1995

Number of Eco-Schools: 1,120

National animal: Wolf

In old Turkish culture, the wolf is a divine creature that symbolises the spirit of the ancestors. It is often portrayed on emblems and flags from old Turkish communities.

National plant: Tulip

In Turkish culture, the tulip symbolises life and the abundance and heralding of spring. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the flower spread from middle Asia to the coast of the Black sea and then to Europe.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

There are courses that are related to the environment in different areas, but there is no concerted environmental strategy or policy for Environmental Education (EE) in Turkey. Therefore, the schools apply for programmes like Eco-Schools and pursue the steps on their own initiative.

K-12 Education

EE in Turkey became known due to the efforts of NGOs and their environmental education programmes like the Eco-School programme which, with its Green Flag award, creates a way for both NGOs and the public educational institutions to work with EE. However, Eco-Schools is not the only EE programme oriented towards K-12 EE. There are multiple programmes operating in Turkey.

Professional Development

Professional development programmes in EE have been carried out mostly through initiatives developed by non-profit organisations. Some universities offer a degree in EE at the graduate level, which is mainly focused on teacher training.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

In 1995, two years after the Blue Flag programme was implemented in Turkey, TÜRÇEV decided to start EE in schools by implementing the Eco-Schools programme. For the first year there was only one school involved with the programme, Göktürk Primary School, which in 1996, also became the first school in Turkey to receive a Green Flag. Year by year the programme became known by teachers, students and school principals and today it is known all over Turkey.

KEY MILESTONES

The national teacher seminars, the Eco-Schools festivals, exhibitions and award ceremonies are all great achievements in the programme and have helped make the programme extensively known in Turkey.





Working in and with the Eco-Schools programme is not just beneficial to nature. It is also good for developing the personality of the students. The most important advantage for the students is that they know that they are having fun when they work for the benefit of the environment. They learn about nature and how strongly we are connected to it. Then they take on the responsibility for it. They are more motivated, stronger and happier.

Ayşegül Özgiresun Ünal, Coordinator Teacher, Maltepe Secondary School

“It is a privilege and an indescribable joy to be a member of the Eco-Schools family. It is a splendid feeling to teach the students about the importance of the environment and see them grow with this wisdom. We succeeded in doing this with the help of the Eco-Schools programme. It gave us a way to follow and we did it. So, thank you to everyone who did the work and set the milestones and made the programme so efficient and through it connected millions of people.”

Nazik Betül Aydoğan, Teacher running the programme since 1997, City Coordinator of Eco-Schools Ankara

“I’ve been in charge as General Manager at FEE Turkey for nearly four years now and I think the Eco-Schools programme plays a significant role, as from the beginning it is in touch with the youngest generations in the community, even when they are at kindergarten and makes them and their families more environmentally conscious in the following years. And of course, to run the other four FEE programmes, which are also invaluable, is really great. You know that each new generation knows how important it is to save our environment and they continue to do so!”

Murat Yiğitöl, TÜRÇEV General Manager



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

In a National Eco-Schools Seminar, listening to a speech from an environmental engineer who was once a member of the eco-team in his school, was a real highlight for me. He said he decided to do this job and protect nature every single day of his life after he became a member of the Eco-team.

Having a letter from the Ministry of Education that says the protocol between TÜRÇEV and the Ministry was no longer valid has been the biggest challenge for the programme, as a lot of schools stopped running it. However, after visiting the Ministry several times and preparing a lot of documents the issue was, fortunately, solved in the end.





Foundation for Environmental Education in Turkey (TÜRÇEV)
Mutlukent Mah. 2026. Sokak No:3 Beysukent/Çankaya/Ankara



Ukraine

Ecological Initiative (EI)

National operator: Victoria Radchenko

Country size: 603,600 km²

Population: 41 million

Longest river: Dnipro 1,121 km

Highest mountain: Goverla 2,061 m

National animal: Nightingale

Joined Eco-Schools in 2016

Number of Eco-Schools: 5

National plant: Guelder-rose/ *Viburnum opulus*

Mentions of the viburnum can be found throughout Ukrainian folklore.

Its berries symbolise one's home and native land, blood, and family roots and today, a berry cluster is an insignia of the Ukrainian National Guard.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Modern Environmental Education (EE) is a systematic component of the national education system, which operates on the basis of the current law on education, the National Strategy for the Development of Education of Ukraine for the period up until 2021. It has been approved by the Law of Ukraine on the Fundamental Principles of the State Environmental Policy of Ukraine until 2030. A characteristic feature of modern EE is its focus on harmonising the interaction between society and nature, solving environmental problems and implementing sustainable development in the society. The goals and objectives of EE are determined and taken into account in the goals and objectives of national environmental policy.

K-12 Education

Modern EE is a continuous integrated process of mastering knowledge about the laws of functioning of ecological systems and about the role of people in the conservation of the natural environment; a process of ecological education and training, development of professional knowledge and skills necessary to be engaged in any human environmental activities. The basics of ecology are taught in almost all educational institutions in Ukraine.

Professional Development

The training and education of specialists in the field of ecology is carried out in more than 110 universities in Ukraine.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

The Eco-Schools programme started as an initiative from an international school in 2016. Later, Ecological Initiative (EI) received support from the French Embassy to participate in the Eco-Schools National Operators Meeting in 2017.

KEY MILESTONES

The biggest milestone in the development of Eco-Schools was the involvement of private national schools in addition to the initially involved international schools.

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