

Eco-Schools



Leaving yet another bright year behind, Eco-Schools keeps expanding and developing!

National Operators in 64 countries are on board, and 47% of these organisations receive some level of support from their respective national governments. In 2016, five new countries joined the network, Estonia, Thailand, Tanzania, Montenegro, and Ukraine. Welcome! This year, we held our annual National Operators' Meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, thanks to the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA). WESSA was the first FEE member to join us from outside Europe back in 2001.

Participation figures also keep increasing – 50,000 Eco-Schools, 17 million students, and 1.3 million teachers worked towards sustainability and environmental awareness across the globe in the past year. This ongoing growth helped achieve a new corporate partnership with the Alcoa Foundation for a pilot project on Waste-Water-Watts (W3). The project is currently implemented in Australia, Brazil, Italy, Norway and the United States for the academic year 2016-2017, as a global K-12 environmental literacy initiative focused on Green STEM.

The pilot year for International Schools was successfully completed by the International Head Office. 23 schools are signed up from 15 countries without a member organisation. In 2016, a Green Flag was awarded in both Qatar and in Thailand. Eco-Schools International is intensifying efforts towards the establishment of an enduring programme evaluation mechanism using the extensive research done by An Taisce on behalf of the Litter Less Campaign, as well as internal monitoring processes. Eco-Schools will be releasing an evaluation report by the end of 2017.

Currently in its second year, Toyota Fund for Europe project The Great Plant Hunt involves 15 countries with the objectives being to develop young people as advocates for conservation, and promote critical thinking through a "learning by doing" study approach so that students go out into their communities and make a difference both now and in the future.

FIREWOOD AND FOOD

St. Mary's Girls Primary School in Machakos County, Kenya managed to reduce the amount of firewood used per term after students conducted their Environmental Review, which is one of the steps of the Eco-Schools methodology. Resource efficiency led to the improvement of the school's food programme, and consequently increased the number of girls enrolled from 50 to 200. The Eco-Schools programme is implemented in Kenya by the Kenya Organization for Environmental Education (KOE).

"I come from a humble background, so initially I was not sure I would have lunch daily, and sometimes I could also miss breakfast. But after the installation of the energy saving jiko through the Eco-Schools programme, our school is now able to provide morning porridge and lunch to all pupils and teachers. This has greatly improved my performance in class because I can now fully concentrate on my class work".

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