

INFORMAL COUNTRY REPORT

CROATIA

Progress report by Croatia Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Following the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, the Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development was adopted by the Government on 8th April 2011. The plan was developed in close cooperation of then Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and other relevant stakeholders.

The education system in the Republic of Croatia in general consists of the pre-school, primary, secondary (vocational and grammar schools) and university education. Among other things, the purpose of pre-school education is to enable the development of ability to grasp the basic image of the natural and wider social environment and sustainable development. Nearly all pre-school institutions have a project on sustainable development. The projects are done in 200 eco – pre-schools and schools. Due to its quality one kindergarten even became the centre of excellence.

Furthermore, the education on sustainable development (ESD) is acquired through regular primary and secondary lessons in nature and society, nature, chemistry, geography, art, as well as in secondary schools, for example in sociology, ethics, economics etc. ESD is also enriched by optional and non-compulsory subjects and extracurricular activities in line with schools' profiles and priorities. In the school year 2012/2013 started the experimental implementation of vocational gymnasium (economic, tourism and technical) and 26 new vocational curricula are being finalized. These are the steps towards a better connection of education and labour market as well as development of a modern citizen prepared to participate actively in a modern society.

At the level of higher education institutions the sustainable development issue is addressed through some compulsory or elective courses i.e., at the University of Zagreb postgraduates courses such as Ecology (within the Biology Department - Faculty of Sciences Zagreb), Social Ecology (Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Textile Technology) or Eco-engineering (interdisciplinary specialist study coordinated by the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology) etc. However, there have been developed different university programmes which are based on ESD, e.g. Sustainable construction, Management of sustainable development, Management of sustainable development in tourism, etc.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) was adopted in July 2010. Its educational values arise from the commitment on the creation of a knowledge-based society that will enable sustainable development. The values NCF focuses on knowledge, solidarity, identity and responsibility. NCF includes wider educational areas i.e., related subject units connected by interdisciplinary themes which are compulsory in all subjects but schools are free to elaborate and to decide how to implement them. The NCF provides for the implementation of the following interdisciplinary themes: 1) personal and social development 2) health, safety, and environmental protection 3) learning to learn 4) entrepreneurship 5) use of information and communication technology and 6) civic education. Although perhaps most obviously present in the health, safety, and environmental protection theme, the content of ESD can be traced in all of the above mentioned interdisciplinary themes. As a result of NCF the curriculum on civic and health education has been developed. The implementation started in the school year 2012/2013. The curriculum of health education has been developed as a cross-curricular theme throughout primary and secondary education. Curriculum on civic education has

been implemented in the same school year but it has been implemented on the experimental basis in 12 schools (6 primary and 6 secondary schools).

The Education and Teacher Training Agency through various workshops and seminars continues its work on fostering teacher competences for ESD. Every year the Agency organizes different events at the national level regarding ESD. These events are both for teachers but also for the school principals who are important for the development of the school plan and who can promote ESD at school level. It is important to act both at the level of teachers and at the level of principals.

After participating in the GLOBE programme (Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment) since 1995, Croatian programme continues the good work so in 2012 Croatian student participated in GLOBE photo expedition. Furthermore, Croatian schools have been among the first ten schools in the world within the activity of the first phase of the World students` campaign on climate research. Three Croatian schools were among four most active schools.

Croatian schools also continue their participation in the international programs concerning ESD, such as SEMEP (South-East Mediterranean Environmental project), as well as UNESCO Associated Schools and FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education) in which NGO the Nature Friends Movement 'Our Beautiful Homeland' continues its role as national coordinator and organizer of the eco-quiz show 'Our Beautiful Homeland'.

Ministry of science, education and sports supports all the activities regarding ESD by financial support to the NGOs and their projects. A project is awarded extra points if the project is involved with ESD.

To sum up, a lot of schools already have ESD in their school plans. All pre-school institutions and primary schools have activities in their school plan regarding ESD. The Education and Teacher Training Agency is also working hard on developing a notion among teachers and school leaders for the importance of ESD. They have already trained numerous teachers and even developed trainers of the teachers on ESD. These teachers are the promoters of ESD. The ministry supports all these activities and even encourages the schools to put ESD in the school plan by sending them a letter at the beginning of each school year. The ministry has also developed two new curricula (health and civic education) and is developing other curricula which will all help to meet the goals of ESD. At the level of higher education institutions separate programmes are being developed as well as more elective courses for all students.