

# INFORMAL COUNTRY REPORT (Cyprus)

## Questionnaire for 2014 Informal Country Reporting on the Implementation of the Priority Action Areas

*1. Priority action area (a) to promote the introduction of ESD into teacher education: Advances made and challenges encountered since the 8th Steering Committee Meeting in March 2013*

1. Has there been any significant advancement made regarding introducing/ extending ESD as a part of educators' initial training?

Yes No X

- Please specify
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

2. Have there been any significant advances made with regards to introducing/ extending ESD as a part of educators' in-service training?

Yes X No

X Please specify

Special emphasis is given to educators' in-service training in ESD. Optional and obligatory courses in ESD are implemented for teachers in all educational levels, as well as for other stakeholders such as principals, inspectors etc. All the details regarding educators' in-service training courses are provided in the attached document (item (B) "ESD into in-service teacher education").

- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

3. Are there any recently produced materials/resources that are accessible to a wider audience (e.g., online)?

Yes X No

X Please specify and, if applicable, indicate the language and website address

Since teacher in- service training in ESD is closely connected with the implementation of the curriculum of EE/ESD in schools, a series of materials and educational tools based on various ESD issues such as

waste, water, urban development etc., has been produced. In order for teachers to be able to work with those materials in their schools, specific training courses are organized in order to familiarize them with their use. It should also be mentioned that all tools, materials and resources are based on the methodological approaches and pedagogical techniques of ESD and are in accordance with the three models of professional development: a) the collaborative resource development and adaptation model, b) the action research model, and c) the whole-of-system model. All these tools are available for teachers and for wider audiences in Greek on the official website of Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture for EE/ESD <http://www.moec.gov.cy/dkpe/index.html>

*II. Priority action area (b) to ensure that there is an ESD school plan in every school by 2015: Advances made and challenges encountered since the eighth Steering Committee meeting in March 2013*

1. Has the number of schools adopting a “whole-institution approach” to sustainable development (SD)/ESD increased?

Yes  No

X Please specify

Through the educational reform that has taken place in Cyprus, ESD has been set as a priority and for that purpose the National Curriculum for EE/ESD has been developed and implemented in a unified and systemic way in all educational levels. The core principle and philosophy of the Curriculum of EE/ESD, which at the moment has been introduced officially in Primary Education, is the reorientation of Schools to the “Whole-Institution Approach”, through the planning and implementation in each school of the Sustainable Environmental Educational Policy (ESD School Plan), according to the needs, priorities, particularities and specific problems that each school and local community confronts. The vision of the curriculum of EE/ESD is the creation of a Sustainable School, aiming systematically and longitudinally to form to a community of learning for ESD through changes at the pedagogical, the organizational and the social levels. All the details regarding the way that “Whole School Approaches” were promoted in all Cyprus Primary Schools are presented in the attached document in item (a) “Whole Institution Approach and

ESD school plan in the Cyprus  
Educational System”

*Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

2. Have any (additional) incentives and assistance measures (guidelines, award scheme, funding, training, technical support) been made available that support ESD school plans?

Yes X

X Please specify

In supporting schools to adapt to “a whole institution approach to SD/ESD” the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute has established an environmental pedagogical team which is working explicitly to create a supporting guidelines tool for schools in order to help them organize their School Unit on the base of “a whole institution approach”. That tool is a comprehensive package which includes: a) the framework for schools to organize the school environment and develop a sustainable policy, b) the key-themes of SD and the anticipated learning outcomes, c) the way that non-formal and informal education can be used in conjunction with the learning processes that are implanted in school, d) the didactic techniques and pedagogical approaches, with indicative examples, that can be used in the school setting and outdoors, e) the evaluation indicators for students, teachers and classes and f) the indicators for the school progress report (including campus, curriculum and community work).

Additionally, two guides have been produced from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute in cooperation with the Department of Primary Education in order to facilitate and support primary schools to implement their ESD school plans and establish whole school approaches. The first guide operates as a mean for giving ideas, examples and practical guidance to schools for choosing their issue on which the design and implementation of ESD School Plan will be based. The second guide is operating as a tool for providing schools with ideas and examples, according to their issue of investigation, as it has been framed and examined in the ESD School Plan, for interventions that can be

implemented in their school and community in order to reorient in SD and improve their quality of life.

*X Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

*I am interested in presenting the three guides that support the ESD School Plan and the Whole Institution Approach, since I believe that they can contribute to the dissemination of ideas, as well as reinforce the dialogue regarding the ways that schools can be facilitated to implement their ESD School plans more effectively.*

3. Are there any recently produced materials/resources that are accessible to a wider audience (e.g., online)?

Yes X No

Please specify and, if applicable, indicate the language and website address

The tool for supporting ESD school plans which is described in the above question, has been published in Greek and it is also available online on the official website of the National Curriculum for EE/ESD, [http://www.schools.ac.cy/klimakio/Themata/perivallontiki\\_ekpaidefsi/index.html](http://www.schools.ac.cy/klimakio/Themata/perivallontiki_ekpaidefsi/index.html)  
The other two guides that followed and were mentioned above: a) Guide for choosing the issue of ESD School plan investigation and b) Guide for school and community interventions in the framework of ESD, have been published in Greek and will be available for the public through the two official websites of EE/ESD, of the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture: a) [http://www.schools.ac.cy/klimakio/Themata/perivallontiki\\_ekpaidefsi/index.html](http://www.schools.ac.cy/klimakio/Themata/perivallontiki_ekpaidefsi/index.html)  
b) <http://www.moec.gov.cy/dkpe/index.html>

*III. Priority action area (c) to reorient technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy: Advances made and challenges encountered since the eighth Steering Committee meeting in March 2013*

1. Has there been advancement towards a structural reorientation of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) towards ESD?

Yes No X

Please specify

*Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

2. Have any incentives and assistance measures been made available that support the reorientation of TVET towards SD?

Yes No X

Please specify

*Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

3. Are there any recently produced materials/resources that are accessible to a wider audience (e.g., online)?

Yes No X

*Please specify and, if applicable, indicate the language and website address*

*IV. Implementing education for sustainable development beyond the United Nations Decade of ESD*

1. Is there already a political commitment/indication that ESD implementation will continue to be supported after the United Nations Decade of ESD?

Yes No X

Please specify

2. Is there an indication of what will (continue to) be the priorities of your country for future ESD implementation?

Yes X No

*Please specify*

Even though at the moment there is no indication regarding the political commitment for supporting ESD implementation after the United Nations ESD Decade, it is important to note that Cyprus, at the National Level, will continue to implement the National Action Plan for ESD which has been approved by the Cyprus Ministerial Board for implementation in 2008. Since then, this document is the official national document for ESD and is applied systematically since 2008. The continuation, revision and implementation of its central actions after the end of the ESD Decade is of great importance, since it can secure and indicate that ESD will continue to be implemented systematically and in the long-term.

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**Supporting document for the Cyprus answers in Questionnaire for 2014 “informal country reporting on the implementation of the priority action areas”**

**9<sup>th</sup> meeting of UNECE ESD Steering Committee**

**3-4 April 2014**

**Priority axes:**

**a) “Whole Institution Approach and ESD school plan in Cyprus Educational System”**

In relation to the particular question - regarding Cyprus - it is stated that the preparation of each school's own plan for ESD is, since 2012, part of the formal educational policy of Cyprus educational system. The preparation of each school's own Sustainable Environmental Educational Policy (SEEP) is the result of the educational reform, which started in Cyprus in 2008 and included the issues of the environment and sustainable development, in Primary Education at this stage, as an intrinsic part of the everyday school life, with the introduction of the National Curriculum for EE/ESD for the first time in Cyprus Educational System.

The writing of the particular National Curriculum and its inclusion in the school program, besides the fact that it is highly innovative and radical, it is also important, since it is an effort to confront the uniformity and marginalization observed in schools in relation to the examination of environmental and sustainable development issues. In essence, the National Curriculum is based on the formation of the ESD plan of each school (is called SEEP), and all the thematic units of the National Curriculum operate as vehicles for holistically and, in an interdisciplinary way, investigating the issue of the ESD school plan. ESD school plans are based on the concept of sustainable school and the establishment of whole school approach. The SEEP is also, based on the study and examination of an issue of sustainable development by each school, which is chosen by all participants in the learning process (students, teachers, school management, local communities, etc.), with reference to: a) the needs and interests of students and teachers, ii) environmental problems faced by the school, c) the characteristics, problems and needs of the community in which the school is located, d) environmental issues affecting the short or long-term quality of life locally and globally. This policy is long-term, systematic and collective.

It seeks change and intervention, regarding sustainable development issues at the school and the community, aiming at the improvement of quality of life and education in the school and the community. An important element in terms of the preparation of ESD School plans is that they do not focus only on targets relating only to the student, but pay special attention to the identification of interventions and changes in the school and the community towards sustainable development. The preparation of ESD School plans for each school is mandatory. For designing and implementing ESD school plans in schools, the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, through the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, has written the “Guide for implementing EE/ESD in school”. The guide describes and analyses all the steps that needed to be undertaken by the schools in order to organize and implement their ESD school plan, as well as to support teachers for using curriculum for EE/ESD in the framework of ESD School plan. Also, in Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture a website has been established ([http://www.schools.ac.cy/klimakio/Themata/perivallontiki\\_ekpaidefsi/index.html](http://www.schools.ac.cy/klimakio/Themata/perivallontiki_ekpaidefsi/index.html)), presenting good examples and practices for ESD School plans developed by schools.

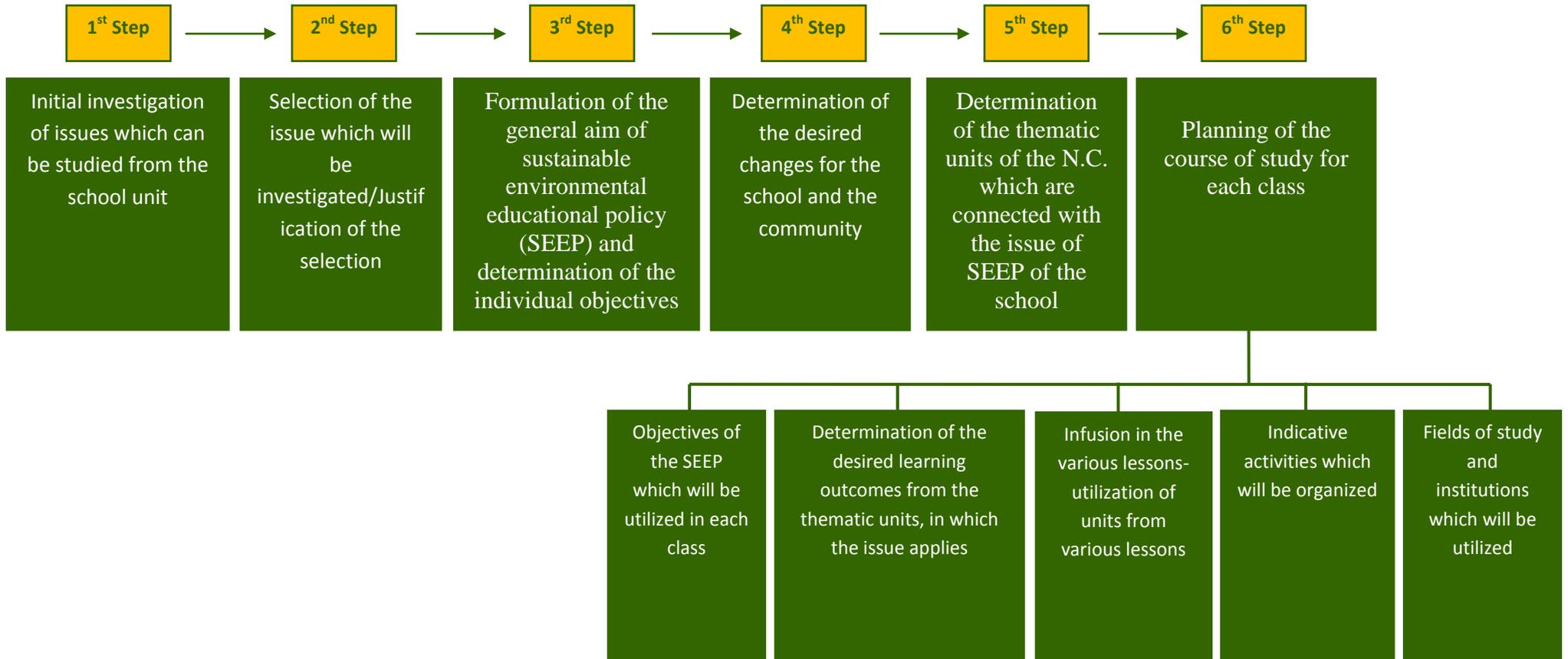
Additionally, a series of obligatory training courses were conducted in CPI (Cyprus Pedagogical Institute) to principals and teachers for effectively developing an ESD School plan. It is noted that the design of ESD School plan of each school, is based on a long-term planning basis, aiming at the systematical and long-term formation of the sustainable school. Therefore, at the beginning of each school year, the ESD school plan is designed by each school, implemented throughout the school year and evaluated on the basis of quality criteria.

The self-evaluation of the school in relation to the implementation of ESD school plan, allows each school to decide whether to continue with the same issue for the next school year, or set a new issue on the basis of what was studied last year.

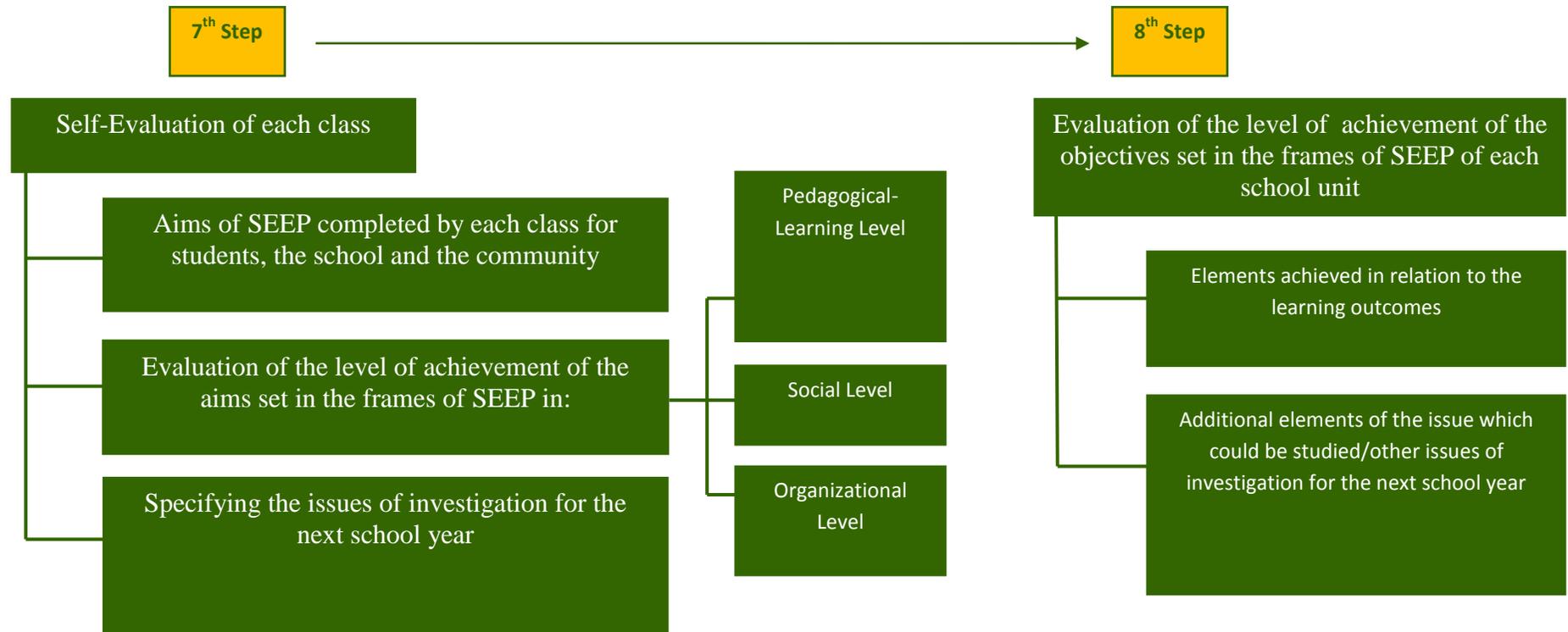
At present, ESD School Plans were officially incorporated in Primary Education, while, currently, they are in a piloting phase in Pre-primary education. At a later stage, they are planned to be introduced in Secondary Education.

The steps which each school in Cyprus follows to develop ESD School Plan (SEEP) are diagrammatically presented below:

## Steps for developing an ESD School plan in Cyprus Educational System



## Evaluation of ESD School Plan



## **B) ESD into in service teacher education**

In relation to ESD in teacher education, it is indicated that various programs and courses, both obligatory and optional, have been promoted in Cyprus in an educational and training level. The introduction and upgrading of the quality of education and teacher training towards ESD emerged as a necessity, on the one hand, by raising the issues of environment and sustainable development, both through the introduction of the Curriculum of EE/ESD and through the enhancement of environmental education programs and environmental interventions in the school and the community. Education and training on issues of ESD offered by the Pedagogical Institute as the organization responsible for the ESD to meet the training needs of teachers in education.

The programs and courses offered vary in type and content, covering various aspects and elements of ESD and concern various key stakeholders (principals, teachers of all educational levels, inspectors).

### **Education and Training Programs in ESD for Teachers and Principals**

In regard to school principals, it is noted that the field of ESD has been introduced in the compulsory education and training courses of newly appointed principals of Primary and Secondary education. In the context of the specific field, the principals are introduced to the basic principles and aspects of ESD, to the concept of sustainable school and the way of planning and implementation of ESD School plans. However, particular importance is attached to the area of leadership and sustainable schools, since the role of principals is crucial for creating sustainable schools.

Accordingly, the obligatory courses for assistant directors in secondary education include a module for ESD. Assistant directors are introduced to the key principals of ESD, as well as to the concept and content of sustainable schools. In addition, their role in promoting ESD in school is discussed, as well as the innovations, which can be promoted in a school through the newly established curriculum for EE / ESD. During the years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 180 Principals from Primary Education, 43 Principals from Secondary Education and 289 assistant principals from Secondary Education participated in the compulsory education and training courses for ESD.

### **Teacher education programs for ESD**

As for the training of teachers in ESD, various series of compulsory and optional seminars and courses are promoted in school-based training, central training, education and training courses through action research, fieldwork training and training in outdoor environments.

More particular, in the level of compulsory education in ESD issues, two series of programs of education and training of teachers in primary education are carried out throughout the year. The mandatory training involves all teachers of schools. Specifically, each school is required to choose a teacher, as the coordinator of the school for EE/ESD, who is trained in the implementation of the curriculum for EE/ ESD, and then acts as the trainer of EE/ESD of his/her colleagues of his/her school unit.

A) Compulsory Education and Training courses of teachers for the implementation of the NC (National Curriculum) of EE/ESD. It is implemented on an annual basis at three time periods. It is developed in three phases: a) the first phase informs teachers about the philosophy, principles, pedagogical framework of the NC, as well as the way of its effective implementation, b) the second phase concerns the explanation of the methodological framework for the implementation of the NC and the teaching techniques used, as well as the basic steps for planning the ESD School plan [Sustainable Environmental Education Policy (SEEP)] of the school, c) the third phase of the training of teachers involves the implementation of quality standards relating to the assessment of the school unit in relation to the effective promotion of SEEP in their school.

B) Compulsory Education and Training of Teachers for ESD and implementation of the National Curriculum, in school basis, in the form of school networks. This program is annual, also, and it is addressed to teachers of primary education. The schools in each city are divided into networks. Each network consists of 10 schools which have common geographical, cultural and social characteristics. On the frames of this program, teacher education is carried out on a school basis and it is entirely of a practical nature. The program is developed in three phases: a) In the first phase, teachers, one from each school, are planning their school's ESD School plan (SEEP). They discuss and exchange opinions about difficulties which may arise, as well as examples of good practices in the organization, the issues of investigation, the objectives, interventions and changes promoted to each school, b) in the second phase, lessons are taught in the classes on ESD. The lessons are based on the ESD School plan, which each school has. Discussion follows, to give feedback on the lessons taught (content, teaching techniques, student participation, organization of the learning process, etc.), c) in the third phase, the teachers make a self-assessment of the implementation of ESD School plan (SEEP) under the guidance of the advisors of ESD.

During the years 2011-2013 720 teachers from Primary Education participated in the compulsory education and training courses for ESD.

#### Optional programs of education and teacher training in ESD

Apart from the mandatory educational and training programs offered by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, optional teacher education and training courses for ESD are offered, which last 15-20 hours each and are in the following aspects:

- The sustainable school
- The teaching strategies of ESD
- The use of external environments as key tools and means for ESD
- Training in the use of new technologies in ESD
- Training in the use and application of educational materials produced by groups of teachers, to support the areas of the curriculum.

The above training courses for ESD, concern educators at all levels of education (Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education). These courses can be attended independently or, a teacher can follow all the series of programs, on an annual basis to a training course of 80-100 hours.

These seminars are empirical, interactive and experiential. They are organized in various areas such as Environmental Education Centers, museums, local trades, botanic gardens etc. All education and training programs offered are posted on the website of the Pedagogical Institute (<http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?lang=el>).

Overall, 200 teachers from all educational levels participated in the optional training programs for education for Sustainable Development, for the years 2011-2013.