



THE ECO-SCHOOLS PROGRAM AND THE PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AT THE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE OF THE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE OF BEJA



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1. Introduction

Adhesion and implementation of the Eco-Schools program, in educational institutions, allows the development of activities and encourages community participation for active citizenship, within the scope of Environmental Education for sustainability, helping achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as outlined by the United Nation. However, implementing this program in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) presents unique challenges compared to lower education levels. Establishing an institutional culture of sustainability and integrating sustainable practices and values across all areas of the university are essential for the long-term success of the Eco-Schools program at IES.

The School of Agriculture (ESA) of the Polytechnic Institute of Beja (IPBeja) joined the Eco-Schools Program in 2014/2015. In this program students play a preponderant role namely taking part of the Eco-Schools Committee, carrying out the Sustainability Audit and participating in the activities of the Action Plan. Teachers, also have an important role prioritizing diagnosis, debate, learning and construction of knowledge.

2. Aim

The objective of this communication is to show the evolution seen at ESA/IPBeja, over the last six years (2017/2023) of the Environmental State/Culture for Sustainability of the ESA/IPBeja community.

3. Methodology

The methodology used was analyze the results obtained in the “Environmental Audit” diagnostic tool applied, annually, in the process of implementing the Eco-Schools program. This, in addition to the diagnosis carried out, included a survey applied to students, which allows quantitative values of the environmental literacy of respondents to be obtained.

4. Results and Discussion

The evolution observed over the academic years from 2017/18 to 2022/23 is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Results of the Environmental Audit obtained at ESA/IPBeja in the academic years 2017/18 to 2022/23.

Category	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Waste	49%	67%	83%	66%	60%	60%
Water	60%	63%	63%	58%	65%	42%
Energy	70%	58%	58%	50%	70%	38%
Outdoor Spaces	77%	75%	75%	54%	57%	35%
Biodiversity	48%	75%	75%	30%	55%	65%*
Organic farming	64%	65%	64%	32%	52%	30%**
Forest	53%	63%	63%	47%	58%	65%*
Mobility	38%	50%	50%	35%	43%	45%
Noise	52%	52%	52%	61%	83%	53%
Food	48%	58%	58%	49%	68%	30%**
Environmental management	74%	74%	74%	65%	65%	35%***

* Categories grouped this academic year
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*** The category name was changed to School Management.

5. Conclusions

By carrying out this work it was concluded that although ESA/IPBeja already has a history of good environmental practices and resource sustainability, it is necessary to reinforce the implementation of measures that allow more satisfactory results. The relationship between Eco-Schools and the SDGs is evident, as it directly contribute to several SDG targets related to Quality Education (SDG 4), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Consumption and Sustainable Production (SDG 12), Climate Action (SDG 13), Life on Land (SDG 15), Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17), among others.

