Environmental Education Initiatives - Ministry of Education, UAE

Maryam Husain Salem Mohammed Al Refaei
Activity Specialist, Student Activities and Educational Competitions
Ministry of Education – United Arab Emirates

The Ministry of Education, UAE pays a great attention to the environment programs and projects as it has devoted initiatives targeting the governmental and non-governmental schools students. Among these initiatives, the Environmental GLOBE Initiative and the Horticulture Initiative; we are going to highlight the nature of these initiatives below.

Environmental GLOBE Initiative

GLOBE term stands for Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment. GLOBE is a worldwide science and education program which links the students programs with a research network through which GLOBE focuses on the study of the environmental aspects across different regions and countries around the world. The initiative aims to improve student environmental awareness and urge them to carry out research and studies in order to help solving the environmental problems that the country's regions face.

The project is supported by NASA-USA; the data observed and assembled by school students may help NASA scientists conducting some environmental studies and research.

UAE contributed in GLOBE environmental program in 1999 as a member of the GLOBE international website. The program was applied as an initiative made by the Ministry of Education in 2012. The program was implemented in approximately 54 primary and secondary governmental schools in which one of the school classes was allocated to be the program's permanent headquarter which students continuously visit. These classes were provided with an Environmental GLOBE kit which includes (a monitor, sensors and laboratory tools) used to apply the Environmental GLOBE protocols (soil-water-ground cover-air). Students regularly (weekly-monthly) monitor the data before uploading it to the GLOBE international website. In addition, students contribute in GLOBE activities that the school, along with the Ministry of Education, introduces.

Organic Farming Groups Initiative (Horticulture)

It is an environmental initiative aiming to promote environmental awareness among students and encourage them to focus on organic farming and corps observation. A team of students is formed under the supervision of one of the school environmental activity specialist. The initiative is implemented in nearly 54 schools of various academic grades where the school is provided with the necessary financial aid to start the program. Moreover, communications with Municipality and Public Works Department are established to collaborate in providing the schools with the required farming supplies such as seedlings and organic fertilizers. It is preferred to focus on the fruitful crops to be used in the school canteens as a healthy food.