



Report on schools' overall performance for 18th Hong Kong Green School Award

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Introduction

As the technical consultant for the 18th Hong Kong Green School Award, WWF-Hong Kong assessors conducted a total of 124 assessments in 31 pre-schools, 54 primary schools and 39 secondary schools, by on-site visits in March, June and July 2020, and through online conferences from August to September 2020, as agreed by the Environmental Campaign Committee's Education Working Group during the meeting on 31 July 2020.

Each assessment lasted for around one hour either in school campus or through ZOOM meetings. The assessments were conducted based on the criteria listed in the "[Heading Towards Green Pre-schools – Environmental Management Guidebook for Pre-schools](#)" (for pre-schools) and the "[Hong Kong Green School Award Guidance and Self-Assessment Manual](#)" (for primary and secondary schools).

This report aims to share with the Hong Kong education sector the overall performance of the assessed schools in the 18th Hong Kong Green School Award. In addition, some feature examples containing best practices and recommendations are included, with a dual purpose to encourage further improvement in current participating schools, and invite non-participating schools to make reference of these cases and suggestions to kick-start their greening journey.

1. Pre-school Category

A/ OVERALL OBSERVATION

A total of 31 pre-schools were assessed, in which 24 assessments were conducted on-site in school campuses from 6 March to 10 July 2020, and the remaining 7 assessments were conducted online from 14 August to 31 August 2020. Some general observations are summarized below.

i. Environmental Infrastructure

Schools attain good performances in campus greening and environmental facilities. All schools have potted plants in campus that students can learn to take care of. Aquaponics and hydroponics systems are more commonly observed in pre-schools this year. Facilities for energy and water conservation, or waste recycling are also installed in each of the assessed school.

ii. Environmental Management

Environmental policy is formulated generally with missions to cultivate a green campus and develop environmental awareness and habits for children.

Schools are highly aware of air quality management, with extra care taken under the pandemic, by installing additional air purifiers. Resource conservation, such as paper, water and electricity use, is encouraged by putting signage around campus, which are usually designed by students. While nearly all schools have set up guidelines and implemented measures for water, energy conservation and waste management, only around 60% of them monitor their resource consumption data, and even fewer schools keep record of their waste generation. The results of environmental review are shared among teachers in most schools.

iii. Environmental Education

All assessed schools integrate environmental education in school's teaching plans, for instance by appreciating the environment and wildlife, promoting reuse and recycle, and planting at school. Students and teachers also regularly participate in diverse activities organized by external organizations, both in campus and through outings.

Recyclable materials collected are extensively adopted by teachers to produce teaching props, or by students to make handcrafts. There is a lack of organized environmental resources catalogue in some schools.

More than half of the schools evaluate the effectiveness of environmental education by conducting meetings for each activity or each teaching theme, and keep good record of the plan, progress and review. Nevertheless, potential changes in environmental awareness of students and teachers are rarely evaluated in a systematic approach, which often rely on teachers' observation only.

iv. Parents' Participation

The majority of schools involve parents' participation in environmental activities to different extents. Common examples include "One Person, One Flower" scheme and relevant planting activities, and creation of festive decorations using recyclable materials.

B/ FEATURE EXAMPLES

1. Teacher initiates earthworm composting in school for organic farming and environmental education purposes.
2. Students act as ambassadors to monitor and encourage peers to finish their lunch with less food waste.
3. School organizes regular visit to farm, beach or country park nearby to allow students to connect with nature.
4. Teachers design and produce environmental education videos for students and parents to learn at home during school suspension.
5. Parent volunteers propose and perform drama on different environmental issues to school members annually.

C/ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

1. Keep a regular record of water and energy consumption (by checking the bills or meters) as well as solid waste production, to provide objective data that could assist the school to monitor effectiveness of conservation actions.
2. Organize the environmental resources including teaching props made by teachers and materials from external parties, and establish a catalogue for easy reference by all school members.
3. Promote "reduce" instead of "recycling" in both daily operation and teaching.
4. Support teachers to attend external environmental training regularly on different up-to-date environmental issues such as marine litter, plastic pollution, biodiversity and sustainable consumption.

2. Primary School and Secondary School Categories

A/ OVERALL OBSERVATION

54 primary schools and 39 secondary schools were assessed. Among them, 50 assessments were conducted on-site in school campuses from 10 June to 9 July 2020, and 43 assessments were conducted online from 10 August to 3 September 2020. Some general observations are summarized below.

i. Environmental Policy, Management Measures and Campus Environment

A majority of schools have environmental policy established, announced and reviewed regularly. Practical management measures under the policy are usually coordinated by teachers and supported by student ambassadors.

All schools are equipped with resource saving devices and have greening areas. In addition to the typical 3-coloured recycling bins, tetra pak recycling facilities are setup in some schools. It is common for schools to formulate corresponding guidelines and actions to reduce natural resource consumption. Yet half of the schools found difficulties in reusing used water.

E-platform is more widely adopted in school's operation to save paper use, including but not limited to the use of e-notice, eClass system, and real-time resource consumption monitoring system. QR codes are also utilized by some schools in plant labels and exhibition panels to promote self-learning. School website, apps, social media are common platforms to disseminate latest environmental information and activities to school members.

Indoor air quality is a newly added assessment criterion this year. Nearly all schools maintain good ventilation, with the assistance of fresh air supply fan, air purifiers and plants.

While most schools conduct environmental review in different formats, the results and follow-up actions are often shared among teachers only and uncommon to reach other school members.

ii. Environmental Education

Most schools planned and implemented environmental education in both curriculum and Other Learning Experiences. This is achieved mainly by teachers and less than half of them also involved students in the development process.

In terms of activity format, besides taking care of plants, some schools also cooperated with external organizations to incorporate animal nurturing in campus, examples include horseshoe crabs, corals, butterflies and tortoises, with the aim to spark students' curiosity and care for nature.

Despite the influence of the pandemic, around three quarters of schools organized at least one environmental training activity for more than 75% of students. However, the number of hours of environmental education activities reduced compared to last year, only 32% of schools were able to organize more than 15 hours of environmental education activities for each student.

Environmental training for teachers is relatively insufficient when compared to that for students. 17% of schools did not arrange any training for teachers.

In terms of partner synergy, most schools involved parents in supporting or even initiating environmental activities. However, collaboration between schools is rarely observed and only around half of the schools have shared experience or organized activities for other schools' representatives.

Though more than 60% of schools conducted evaluation of environmental education at least once a year, some only based on casual feedback from students or teachers' observation. Evaluation mechanism and follow-up actions can be strengthened.

B/ FEATURE EXAMPLES

1. Adopt "No single-use plastic policy" in campus that applies to all school members and visitors.
2. Convert old bus to environmental resource center.
3. Switch to a new design of water fountain controlled by foot pedal, as a relatively hygienic alternative under the pandemic.
4. Maintain transparency in environmental results to all school members through displaying the resource consumption data at school lobby.
5. Empower students to initiate improvement actions for water and electricity conservation.
6. Provide 3 meals of vegetarian lunch per week to promote low carbon diet.
7. Launch STEM investigation or cross-disciplinary project with environmental related themes.
8. Implement horticulture therapy in school garden for students with special needs.
9. Share teaching experience by designing and publishing teaching pack about solar panels.
10. Initiate food waste award scheme to the community and collect second-hand items from the community.
11. Offer a discount scheme to promote waste reduction in school's tuck shop, in which customers can get discount if they purchase food with reusable containers, and need to pay extra amount if they need to use disposable containers.

C/ RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

1. Have at least three to five staff members in different ranks and groups in the environmental management group. The group formation should include principal or vice principal, curriculum development officer, staff responsible for school catering, procurement and facility management.
2. Invite students to provide input in environmental policy formulation.
3. Raise the accuracy of procurement policy execution and provide regular reminders to staff to keep up the conservation vibe within the staff community.
4. Keep a regular record of all water and energy consumption (by checking the bills or meters) as well as solid waste production, to provide objective data that could assist the school to monitor effectiveness of conservation actions.
5. Require lunch caterer to use “reusable” lunch container instead of “recyclable” lunch container to truly reduce waste production.
6. Prepare a long-term (three years or more) environmental education plan, to ensure coherence and sustainability of environmental education in school.
7. Arrange adequate outdoor learning activities for students to get in touch with nature instead of just visiting indoor venues outside school, e.g. Geo Park, Mai Po Nature Reserve, nature parks, country parks and public beaches etc.
8. Support teachers to attend external environmental training regularly on different up-to-date environmental issues such as marine litter, plastic pollution, biodiversity and sustainable consumption. Schools can adopt sustainable development as the theme of staff development day or arrange relevant training on that day.
9. Arrange more environmental workshops, seminars, visits and other kinds of trainings for students, with diverse themes such as marine litter, plastic pollution, biodiversity and sustainable consumption, to provide opportunities for students to understand the correlation between their daily life action and the environment.
10. Encourage the Parent Teacher Association to adopt sustainable development as their activity theme.
11. A more systematic and holistic evaluation should be conducted to evaluate the environmental awareness, attitude and behaviour of students, and understand more about the effectiveness and levels of understanding of them. Apart from conducting quantitative evaluation through questionnaire, the school can consider conducting qualitative evaluation through interview and/or focus group, or incorporate evaluation in students’ learning activity.
12. Adopt “Whole School Approach” to integrate education for sustainable development in school.