

Summary of the presentation

The national Romanian curriculum includes study plans and subject-related curricula. The study plans (compulsory study areas) for pre-primary education are organised in accordance with learning activities. The study plans for primary, secondary and post-secondary education are grouped into 7 study areas: Language and communication, Maths and natural sciences, Humanities, Arts, Physical Education, Sport and Health, Technologies, Counselling and career guidance. The curriculum is built around eight key competences aimed at personal development and fulfilment, employment, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life within peaceful communities, healthy life management and active citizenship.

Sustainability is included in the study plans in different formats – either as compulsory subjects or as optional courses offered by schools. Within the compulsory subjects, sustainability is included mainly in the STEM competences throughout the curriculum. For instance, at the end of the 4th grade (11 years old), students are expected to have developed: an interest in exploring the environment in order to infer and understand certain phenomena, processes and scientific concepts, a perception of the integrated character of the environment, using instruments and specific procedures for the investigation of the environment in order to solve simple problems of the environment. As well as this, a 4th grade student should also show interest in maintaining personal health and keeping a clean environment as well as apply basic rules of personal hygiene and responsible behaviour in connection with the environment.

While these targets are maintained at the end of the 8th grade (14 years old), we can notice a more internalized approach at the end of the 10th grade (16 years old), when students are supposed to think critically about the changes produced by human activity on the environment. Finally, at the end of the 12th grade, students are supposed to have acquired and developed the necessary competence to promote a balanced lifestyle habits and sustainability principles.

Concretely, in primary classes, students are expected to recognise the consequences of a healthy lifestyle on their own body, recognise the consequences of their behaviour on the environment through the recognition of different types of pollution, through direct observation, through the observation of the effects of pollution on living organisms and through the identification of the destructive behaviour of human beings with an impact on the environment.

In lower secondary education, sustainability is touched upon separately in different subjects, such as: Biology or Geography. At the end of the 12th grade, the curriculum intends to develop values and attitudes consisting of respect for natural and human diversity, the preservation and protection of the environment in Romania and Europe, as a whole. The reduced focus on sustainability in the upper-secondary curriculum is due to the fact that it has not been changed since the 2000s. However, topics such as renewable energy sources are included in the study of Geography and Natural Sciences in upper secondary education.

In 2022, the Romanian presidency launched the programme “Education for climate change and the environment in sustainable schools”. Through this program, ‘green’ measures were implemented in education, among which we can mention: all schools are required to organize the “Green Week”, the Biology curriculum was updated with environmental and climatic concepts, optional courses about environmental issues and climate change were introduced, a platform with resources for teachers, students and other stakeholders was created.

Our aims for the future are to identify effective optional classes to improve sustainability and its inclusion in the study plans in different formats. Think green!