GREEN SCHOOLS PROGRAM IN KUWAIT

Jinan Bahzad

The Kuwait Environmental Protection Society (KEPS) launched the Green Schools program in 2011. Since then, the program annually serves over 80 schools in Kuwait at all levels. KEPS has developed this program as part of its environmental awareness strategy, in view of building the capacity of students and teachers and to spread positive thinking towards the environment.

The program aims at raising the level of environmental awareness among students and promoting good behavior towards the environment at community level, and in schools in particular. It encourages students and teachers to participate in voluntary work in the environmental field, based on the understanding and appreciation of environmental values and principles. It builds capacity in auditing, monitoring and managing environmental impacts, and teaches students through demonstration activities and field trips. The program provides teachers with the opportunity to learn new methods and techniques for better delivery of environmental education in the classroom. Moreover, the program supports the establishment of environmental clubs for students, and organizes workshops for teachers catering to various levels and courses.

The themes of the Green Schools program include: climate change, with a focus on sea level rise and coastal threat, and the impacts of high temperature; wildlife in Kuwait, covering plant diversity, nature reserves and wildlife management; Kuwait’s marine environment, particularly coral reefs and the impact of sea level rise, based on the first national communication report; solid waste management, including optimization, disposal and recycling, alongside school security and safety measures. Other themes covered by the program are biodiversity, local and migratory birds, freshwater and rationalization of consumption, renewable energy – particularly applications of solar energy– and environmental health.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, 86 primary and secondary schools, both public and private, participated in the Green Schools program. In cooperation with the General Authority for the Environment, a campaign was launched to raise awareness on climate change and its effects, as well as a campaign on environmental protection law, in cooperation with the Environmental Defense Committee of the Kuwaiti Lawyers Association and the Environment Police Division of the Ministry of Interior.

During its eighth edition the program rolled out many activities, which were characterized by the dynamic participation of the competent authorities and researchers. They included actions to support the conservation of coastal biodiversity, rationalization of water consumption, climate change, environmental protection law, and the establishment of environmental clubs in schools. The program seeks to develop legal awareness and to encourage the implementation of environmental laws, mainly through such environmental clubs. By starting with students and teachers, the program hopes to spread environmental awareness to parents and the larger community.

Jinan Bahzad is secretary general of Kuwait Environmental Protection Society (KEPS).