

Indicator 14: Primary school children's fieldtrips



Figure: Primary school children attending the Harakka Nature School. Haraka Island offers diverse possibilities for nature research. In 2014 a total of almost 2000 pupils visited the Harakka Nature School. In addition to Harakka, there are a further three Nature Schools in Helsinki. In addition, Helsinki also participates in the funding of the Nature School at the Haltia Nature Centre.

Status:

The national curriculum for primary education requires that education is also organized in the field. Currently representative data is not available regarding field trips of schools in Helsinki. The best available information is from the School forests survey conducted as part of the Value of School Forests project of 2012-2013¹. According to the results of the survey, the number of field trips varies considerably according to the location of the school. Schools that are located adjacent to forest may utilize them in a variety of different subjects, several times a week. If forest is not so easily accessible, then field trips are less frequent.

The majority of schools (95%), however, reported utilizing local forests at least once per month or twice a year. Some of the respondents to the survey answered just according to their own class, not from the perspective of the whole school. It should also be noted that, the survey only asked about the use of adjacent forests but the school may also organize field trips to more remote locations. Some schools did not respond to the survey because they do not have easy access to forest, though such schools may organize regular field trips to other locations. Additionally many classes participate in Nature School activities at some stage during their schooling.

Score:

The scoring of this indicator is based on an estimate, the revision of which will require the development of data collection.

0 points: no annual field trips

1 point: 1 annual field trip

2 points: 2 annual field trips 2013

3 points: 3 annual field trips

4 points: > 3 annual field trips

Monitoring:

It would be beneficial to develop the environmental reporting of schools so as to include the recording of field trips. Then this indicator would be easy to monitor from the previous schools' environment reports. Ideally such reporting would distinguish between field trips to local forests and those to more remote

¹ METSO yhteistoimintaverkostohanke "Koulumetsät arvoonsa - yhteistyöllä suojelua ja ympäristökasvatusta", Helsingin Koulumetsäkysely, (In English: METSO Community network project 'The value of school forests – conservation and environmental education' Helsinki School forests questionnaire survey) report 12.9.2013, Virpi Sahi and Jenny-Maria Bergman

locations. Improved reporting would also support the further development of teaching outside. The utilization of local nature in teaching is also the objective of the School Forest project, in which Helsinki is a participant.

Currently this indicator suggests that it would be beneficial to increase the use of field trips, which supports the current results and objectives of the School Forest project. The National Curriculum states that primary education should include field trips². Also the revision of the curriculum highlights the further development of diverse learning environments.³

Contact person (firstname.surname@hel.fi):

Kaisa Pajanen, Head Environmental Educator, Environmental Protection Department, Helsinki Environment Centre.

² The basis of the the primary education curriculum 2014 (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2014), The Board of Education (Opetushallitus).

³ Expert statement via e-mail 26.3.2015, educational consultant Kirsi Verkka