

Europe Grooms Its New Generation of Scientists

Voice-over 1:

Today it's an ecology field trip on wastewater and its treatment. The experiments take place in Friland, a community some 8 km from the school. Here every household has to treat its own wastewater. Carlos Arias is a Colombian research assistant at the University of Aarhus (Denmark). He's come along to explain to the children the differences between the several classes of wastewater, and how important it is to treat them all.

Voice-over 2:

Kids learn a lot about wastewater here. They can see it, they can smell it. They realise that it is important for the wastewater to be treated before it is thrown back into the environment, so that it is not harmful. With these practical lessons we try to make them more aware. We try to make them understand that polluted water can be very harmful to nature, but also that - well treated - it can become a natural resource.

Voice-over 1:

Wastewater is cleaned here with the help of these willows. The roots filter many of the polluting particles in suspension. Students measure the level of underground wastewater, and its effect on the trees' growth. Partially cleaned wastewater ends in this pond, where the rain water, natural sediments and plants clean it more. Students measure the water's PH, and then with the help of small colour matchers, water's great enemies; nitrates, phosphates and ammonia.

Voice-over 3:

I knew that water could be cleaned. But I thought that cleaning was done with machines, not plants.

Voice-over 4:

Cleaning wastewater is an important thing to do to preserve the environment and also the atmosphere.

Voice-over 1:

The school is taking part in a European research project aimed at helping children to learn natural sciences...with the help of wastewater. Hands-on experimentation is a plus for learning sciences, say both Carlos Arias, the project coordinator in Denmark, and Geert Bilander, the school's science teacher.

Geert Bilander, Science Teacher:

I think it is important that children learn about wastewaters because they need to have an understanding that nothing just disappears; that in modern society, you don't actually see what happens with our garbage, with our wastewater, and so on. You just throw it out in the toilet and it's gone. But it's not gone.

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