

## Ihsan Dogramaci Foundation Bilkent High School: Young Reporters for the Environment

Ihsan Dogramaci Foundation Bilkent High School Young Reporters for the Environment project started at the beginning of 2020. Volunteer students from different ages took steps to approach this project as a whole school. The biggest goal of the project group was to find solutions for the environmental problems. Last year, the Young Reporters aimed to convert organic food waste to fertilizer. This year, we worked on water conservation. We wanted to raise awareness about saving water, so we have created educational videos, brochures, presentations and a website.

### *Planning and Brainstorming Process*

We started by recruiting new members to our team. Our teachers told 9th graders about our project and they also prepared smaller projects similar to ours in their lessons. Their projects included presentations, videos, informative brochures, and so on. After we notified everyone at our school, we had our first meeting with about 70 people who were interested in the project. In this meeting, we discussed what we were going to do and how we were going to do it. We noticed that this group was way too big to be productive so we divided it into smaller groups. All 9th graders were working independently and they were sending their products. Another group was created, a group which would write the article.

### *Results of our Survey*

A survey was conducted in February, the following section of this article consists of the results.

#### *Student survey results:*

We have noticed that nearly all of our students already know what water conservation is and how it is done. This made us think that we, as a school also did very well besides the families of our students. The next question also supported our thought because 42% of our students told us that they have learned this at school. After seeing these answers, we started thinking of new methods that could be used in lessons to connect them with the water problem the world faces today. We came up with new ideas for each lesson and we prepared a brochure listing our suggestions and sent it to our teachers so they could also

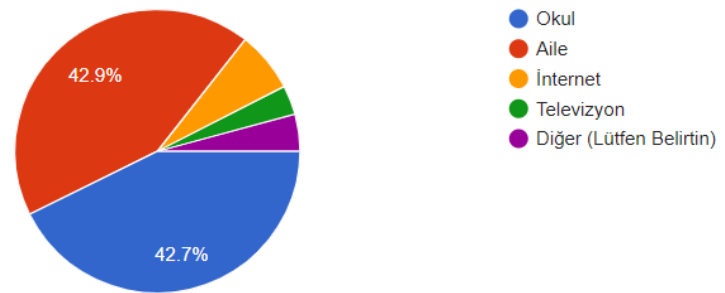


Figure 1: The question of “Where did you learn the issue of water conservation?” from the student survey

Aktif olarak su tasarrufu yapmaya çalışırım.  
450 responses

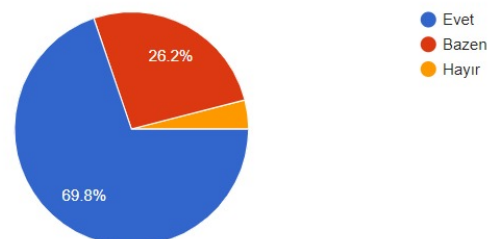


Figure 2: The statement, “I actively try to conserve water” from the student survey

use them in their lessons. We will elaborate further on these brochures later on.

Kids and teenagers get influenced and shape their ideas based on what they are exposed to in school. So school is an important place to instill values in the youth. In our school, 32% of the students say that water and preserving water is sometimes talked about in classes followed by rarely talked. This is alarming. A modern problem like the lack of water should be mentioned more so that we teach our students about this problem's severity. Even though water saving is sometimes talked about in school, the students in our school are careful about saving water as almost 70% of them say that they try to do actions that save water. This means that as much as school is important different factors such as family education can be important when it comes to water saving.

#### *Parent survey results:*

Parents have a major effect on their children when it comes to awareness. Almost 100% of the parents are aware that students need to be informed about this global issue, but only 89.9% act upon it. In many households, it was seen that excess water was not reused to create a more sustainable environment. The reason is that many adults, who are role models for the next generation (almost 40%) believe that their quality of life will be decreased if they decrease the amount of water they use. This is a preconception we must overcome.

While parents have a positive impact on the behavioral patterns of their children, it can be inferred from the graphs that most of the parents (83.3%) are also mindful when using water for the activities that are part of their daily routines, such as brushing their teeth. However, only about half of the parents are mindful of the abilities of electrical home appliances regarding their water usage. The dramatic change in parents' awareness may result from many companies not sharing clear information about the water usage of certain electrical appliances and because energy-efficient products are more costly than those that are relatively less energy-efficient. It is also notable that most parents (65.4%) have a conventional mindset about water-saving and lack faith in seeking new methods for using water sustainably.

#### ***After the Survey Results: Taking Action!***

After seeing the survey results, we decided to prepare educational videos as well as a website to gather our work. In our first video, we have included simple actions that can be applied to save water. For example turning off water while washing hands, brushing teeth and shaving. Also using a certain amount of water both for washing vegetables and watering plants. Wiping dirty dishes with a napkin instead of pre-washing them before putting them in the dishwasher. In the second video, we tried to show the effect of water-saving apparatus. We measured the height with a ruler by collecting the water flowing from the tap without apparatus for 15 seconds in the container. We applied the same process to the tap with apparatus. We have compared the amount of water flowing from the tap with and without apparatus in 15 seconds. 8.5 cm high water flowed from the tap in 15 seconds without any

apparatus. 5.5 cm high water flowed from the tap with apparatus in 15 seconds. Pelinsu and her older brother who graduated from Bilkent High School shot the videos and Nil Ural supported the technical part. She merged the videos and added the data. They planned the video content together. We shared our videos on our website, an area accessible to teachers, parents and students.

We also designed brochures and presentations for parents and teachers. These brochures aimed to change each target group's perspective. We wanted to encourage teachers to connect the issue of water conservation with the curriculum, and the parents to start educating their children by being role models.



Figure 3: Photo taken by a Bilkent High School student  
Bektaş, Duru. *Water is hope* 2021.

## Resources

Yıldız Fevzioğlu, Eylem, et al. “Yetişkinlere Yönelik Su Kullanım Anketinin Geliştirilmesi.” *Aile Ve Toplum Eğitim-Kültür Ve Araştırma Dergisi*, 22 July 2010, [dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/197939](http://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/197939).

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