

Check against delivery

"Eiger Climate Schools" national school project

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A language course with a difference

Eiger erosion, glacier lake, thawing of permafrost: this is the language of the world-famous Eiger, Mönch und Jungfrau triumvirate. Climate change and its glaring manifestations in the Alps speak directly to everyone who can and wants to understand this language.

Climate change is of particular relevance to young people, since they are the ones who will have to cope with its global consequences for many years to come. Whether they want to or not.

Fifteen to seventeen students from German-, French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland will now hear and learn to understand this language. A "special type of language lesson" awaits them. A language lesson which will help them to shape their future for the good of the environment.

Aims of the national school project

The "Eiger-Climate-Schools" national project invites Swiss students in the under-17 age group, i.e. young people from all over the country, to see the impressive consequences of climate change

- with their own eyes,
- touch them with their own hands,
- grasp them with their own intellect and
- draw their own conclusions.

The aim of the project is to offer young people an unforgettable, high-impact learning experience on climate change by observing the effects as they happen, here in the Jungfrau region's unique "outdoor laboratory";

and to involve tomorrow's adults at an early stage in finding a solution to the global consequences of climate change for which the adults of today and earlier generations are responsible.

Attractive programme – high demand

The project, which will be run from this August under the patronage of Swiss cantons, has proved unexpectedly popular among participating schools. The attractive two-day programme includes professional guidance and instruction on the following three topics:

- Eiger erosion and glacier lake on the Lower Grindelwald Glacier (Day 1)
- The world of glaciers and ice, and the problem of permafrost on the Jungfrauoch (Day 2)
- Glacier retreat and climate protection measures on the Eiger Glacier (Day 2)

Within no time at all, the 2,000 or so available spaces for this week's pilot run had been taken up, as well as the programmes from August to October this year. Unfortunately, only a limited range of alternatives for their own school trips can be offered to the 3,000 or so unlucky students on the waiting list. We are seeking ways and means of continuing the challenging project next year.

Keen interest – broad support

Like the response from schools up and down the country, various parties expressed keen interest and broad support for the project. Institutions, organisations and companies in the education, climate research, alpine, tourism, transport and energy sectors spontaneously pledged their support, as did top politicians, and in particular National Council President Pascale Bruderer Wyss, whom we warmly welcome here in Grindelwald, and Federal President Doris Leuthard, who is represented here today by her environmental spokesperson. We thank you warmly for your interest and commitment to the project.

The Eiger-Climate-Schools project group initiated and headed by BKW FMB Energy Ltd wishes in particular to thank the Swiss cantons and the Conference of Directors of Education, under whose patronage the project is managed, for their unstinting dedication and assistance in getting this project off the ground. It's worth noting that our project has even attracted interest in Brussels, and that the Director of the EU University is personally attending today's launch. Many thanks.

But thanks are also due to all the highly motivated experts who were involved, to the Canton of Berne Directorate of Education, the University of Berne, the Jungfrauoch Alpine Research Station and Lucerne Glacier Garden, the SBB, Jungfrau Railways, Pfingstegg Railway and Grindelwald Bus, to COOP for catering supplies, to BKW FMB Energy Ltd, Holzwärme Grindelwald AG and clothing manufacturer MAMMUT AG, to Oekomobil and in flagranti, and of course also to the JUNGFRAU KLIMA-CO2OPERATION association and its four member municipalities of Grindelwald, Lauterbrunnen, Gündlischwand and Lütschental.

Language course – yet another language

I started by talking about a "language course with a difference". I'd now like to end by informing you that this evening we aim to broadcast our positive climate message from Grindelwald to the world in an equally effective artistic language. I won't spoil the surprise!