

Contents:

- Editorial Note
- The EkoSkola Annual Seminars
- Memorandum to the Political Parties
- Solar Solutions Ltd. Supports EkoSkola
- Tree Planting at Xrobb I-Għaġin
- Dinja Waħda 2007/2008
- Collaboration with Japanese students
- B.Eds support EkoSkola
- 4th EkoSkola Parliament Session
- Teaching Resources



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Editorial Note

This edition of our newsletter is coupled with another special edition (Newsletter 19) that reports on an impressive list of activities as well as presents several works done by students. More and more schools are joining the EkoSkola family and are discovering the power that students can unleash if given the opportunity to take part in school development. This issue reports on initiatives conducted on a school, community and national level as well as on an international one. We would like to extend our congratulations to all the students – and the teachers who supported them – for the great work.

The EkoSkola Annual Seminars

This year, with the support of the five EkoSkola Teachers, the EkoSkola Steering Committee could fulfil two of its persistent dreams: (i) to conduct sessions that are suited for the varied audience attending the seminar, and (ii) to organise two seminars: one in Malta and another one in Gozo. After a Progress Report of EkoSkola's six-year history, participants were invited to join a session that suited their specific needs. One session introduced new comers to the programme, another provided an opportunity for 'old-timers' to clarify difficulties encountered during the



Participants attending the seminar in Malta (left) and the one in Gozo (right)

running of the programme. School children were also divided into two groups: the primary school pupils had a meeting with Xummiemu about waste management, while secondary school students reflected on their responsibilities towards the environment. This new format was well received by the attendees as they each found something that was interesting.



St Bernardette Primary School B, San Ġwann receiving the Green Flag

The first seminar was held on the 7th December 2007 at St Monica School, Gzira and was attended by 104 students and 89 teachers from 59 schools (of which 14 are new entries), the Hon George Pullicino (Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment), Mr Roberto Riccioni (FEE Italia), Dr Grace Grima (Director General for the Quality and Standards in Education Directorate) and Ms Carmen Zammit (Commissioner for Children). During this seminar the students from St Bernardette Primary School B, San Ġwann received the Green Flag. Dun Alwiġ Camilleri, Żejtun Primary A was awarded the Silver Award, while St Joan Antide School, Gudja and Kullegġ San Benedittu, Safi Primary School C got the Bronze Award. A special thank you goes to Malta Dairy Products for providing free milk for the children attending the event.



Patri Mattew Sultana, Xaġhra Primary receiving the Silver Award



Dun Alwiġ Camilleri, Żejtun Primary A receiving the Silver Award



Kullegġ San Benedittu, Safi Primary School C receiving the Bronze Award



St Joan Antide School, Gudja receiving the Bronze Award

The Seminar in Gozo was organised on the 10th December 2007 at the Ministry of Gozo Building, Victoria and was attended by 28 students and 15 teachers from 11 schools (of which 1 was a new entry), Dr Grace Grima (Director General for the Quality and Standards in Education Directorate) and Chev. Frank Gatt (Gozo College Coordinator). The students from Patri Mattew Sultana, Xagħra Primary were awarded the Silver Award.

Memorandum to the Political Parties

With the date of the General Elections drawing near and in line with the promises they made during the 3rd EkoSkola Parliament Session, committee members from the four Green Flag schools presented a Memorandum to the political parties. This memorandum was compiled from the report of the findings from the household survey conducted last year in preparation for the Parliament Session.



Students presenting the memorandum to (from left to right) the main sponsors, Dr Lawrence Gonzi (Leader of the Nationalist Party), Dr Alfred Sant (Leader of the Malta Labour Party) and Dr Harry Vassallo (Chairperson of Alternattiva Demokratika)

In the memorandum the children highlighted waste production as one of our major environmental problems and asked the political parties to adopt the following tangible steps to reduce waste during their political campaign:

- avoid the use of disposable glasses, bottles and plates during their political meeting. Even though these might be made from recycled material our main aim is to REDUCE waste.
- encourage people attending mass meetings to avoid littering or even clean up the area (and separating the waste collected) after the meeting.
- refrain from sending junk mail to households and adopt more environmentally friendly methods (e.g. SMSs) to contact their constituents.

The leaders and other candidates of the political parties heartily welcomed the EkoSkola delegation and spoke about how their party is planning to address environmental issues. Before going to the political parties the children also presented a copy of the report and the memorandum to the main sponsors of the programme: the Ministry for Rural Affairs & the Environment, HSBC and Wasteserv.

Solar Solutions Ltd. Supports EkoSkola

Solar Solutions Ltd has recently joined those companies supporting the Ekoskola Programme by the donation of a number of booklets to be distributed among schools participating in the programme. The Booklet is called **The Earth is our Friend** and it is a story about a boy and his animal friends who hear about the problems of climate change from plants and animals. They are also told how clean energy can help reduce the impacts of such problems on the environment. This booklet will help to disseminate more

The Earth is our friend

Learn about Earth-friendly solar panels



information on the issue of climate change and how each one of us can do his and her share to improve the situation.



The Booklets were present by Mr Karl Azzopardi (Sales Director for Solar Solutions) to Vincent Attard (Executive President of Nature Trust - Malta) and Mr Mario Camenzuli, Ms Audrey Gauci and Mr Johann Gatt (EkoSkola Co-ordinators).

Solar Solution Ltd is the importer of Kyocera photovoltaic panels, Siemens solar water heaters, SMA inverters and Proven Wind Turbines. Their office is situated at 2/3 Tal Balal Road Xwieki L/O Gharghur. More information visit www.solarmalta.com or email: info@solarmalta.com

Tree Planting at Xrobb I-Għagin

The Xrobb I-Għagin Nature Park, managed by Nature Trust in collaboration by the Parks Department received a welcomed gift of 5,000 indigenous trees and shrubs, including the Holm Oak, Mediterranean Dwarf Palm, Myrtle, Lentisk, Olive, Bianca, and Wolfbane. About 1,500 students coming from schools participating in the EkoSkola programme attended the tree planting session. This event was HSBC Cares For the Environment Fund's allocation of trees at the Xrobb I-Għagin Nature Park supporting the 34U afforestation campaign.

In his address, Mr Shaun Wallis, CEO HSBC said "The EkoSkola Programme is a wonderful initiative to encourage young people to do something about our Environment. This massive tree planting exercise ... is a clear commitment by the next generation to making Malta greener for the future.

Trees speak louder than Words! HSBC will have spent Lm75,000 over three years paying for over 20,000 trees and shrubs, many of which have been planted on this site. It is pleasing to see many other companies doing this also."



Nature Trust (Malta) replied by thanking HSBC for its environmental concepts and for being one of the lead companies on the island to contribute significantly and tangibly towards Malta's natural heritage. The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment, the Hon. George Pullicino, thanked HSBC for its constant and important commitment to Malta's afforestation. He also pointed

out that through the partnership with EkoSkola, HSBC is also strengthening a culture in favour of the environment among Maltese children.

Dinja Waħda 2007/2008



After the great success of the previous editions, BirdLife Malta have once again launched the Dinja Waħda Environmental Programme for 2007/2008 at Savio College in November 2007. Dinja Waħda (One World) is BirdLife's environmental education programme and has been running since 1994. Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment George Pullicino presided over the event. Mr Iginio Xuereb, Chief Officer Operations at Bank of Valletta, and Desireé Falzon, BirdLife's Chairperson and Education Committee Co-ordinator, were present for the event. During the launch, Jacqueline Licari, a student from

Guzeppi Agius Paola Primary B School, who participated in Dinja Waħda in the past talked about her experience.

This environmental education project has always tried to generate an informed and active environmental ethic in schoolchildren and their teachers through 'fun activities for nature'. Dinja Waħda strives to fight environmental destruction through environmental education. The new Dinja Waħda Action Guide which complements the programme is more exciting and colourful than ever, with proposed activities having increased from 18 to 30 from the previous edition. In addition, Dinja Waħda will now be an annual feature of school extra-curricular activities. This is also thanks to the Bank of Valletta which has become our Education Partner on this project.



More information about the programme can be obtained from Mr Albert Attard (Dinja Waħda Schools Co-ordinator) on albert.attard@birdlifemalta.org or phoning 21347644/5.

Some schools asked whether their commitment with EkoSkola conflicts with their participation in this project. The answer is a very clear 'NO'. Rather than conflicting with one another, these two projects complement each other because they share the same goal. For example, activities suggested in Dinja Waħda can easily provide tangible ways of implementing Action Plan targets.

Collaboration with Japanese students

Accepting an invitation made in Issue 17 of the EkoSkola Newsletter Ms Ruth Morrison, EkoSkola co-ordinator at Margaret Mortimer, Santa Lucia Girls' Junior Lyceum contacted the editors of the newspaper Hiroshima-Koku. This is a children's newspaper written by junior writers – 19 Japanese students (ages 12 to 18) who are very interested in social and environmental issues. Maltese and Japanese students exchanged emails about their respective environmental concerns and as a result Malta has been featured in this electronic newspaper (see below). The whole Feature Story can be viewed on <http://www.chugoku-np.co.jp/hiroshima-koku/en/special/index.html>.

■ Buying and planting trees (The Republic of Malta)



Students of Margaret Mortimer Girls' Junior Lyceum plant saplings.

We also exchanged email with the school Margaret Mortimer Girls' Junior Lyceum, which is involved in planting trees in the national park in The Republic of Malta, located in the Mediterranean Sea south of Italy.

At this school, 210 pupils have joined, since 2006, a tree-planting movement called "Tree for You" that the government has initiated. Classes collect donations to purchase rubber trees at a cost of 15 Euro (about 2500 yen) per tree. They then plant these trees themselves in the national park.

Responding to an appeal from an NGO at the end of November 2007, the children joined students of other schools in planting about 1500 saplings. Four students shared their thoughts with us, including Amy Rizzo, 12, who said, "It's important to stop the impact of air pollution. I'm happy we can help do something good for the environment." (Minako Iwata,14)

B.Eds support EkoSkola

After the success experienced in these last two years, another group of B.Ed. (Hons) student teachers, currently following a study unit on the role of the EkoSkola programme in promoting whole school development, will be able to offer support to schools. As part of the unit, these students are expected to participate in the EkoSkola programme as part of their training. The aim of this experience is two-fold: (a) to help students

experience firsthand what the implementation of the EkoSkola programme entails, and (b) to provide schools, participating in the EkoSkola programme, with assistance in the implementation process.

The plan is to assign these students to EkoSkola schools who request their assistance. So heads of school (primary and secondary) who would like to make use of this support service are kindly asked to contact Dr Paul Pace (on email: paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt) by the **end of February**. Students will start visiting schools in March. Since the number of students available is limited, their placement will be allotted on a first come first served basis.

4th EkoSkola Parliament Session

The theme that will be discussed during this year's edition of the EkoSkola Parliament is Climate Change. This year the preparation for the event has already started. Twenty seven students from the Junior College (who is also participating in the EkoSkola programme) are working on a PowerPoint presentation about Climate Change as part of their Systems of Knowledge project. After a seminar, during which they presented their research results, the JC students are now working on the compilation of the presentation. Once completed, the students will be visiting schools on request to explain to primary and secondary school children about Climate Change. Following this boost of information schools could then explore the issue further in preparation for the parliament session.

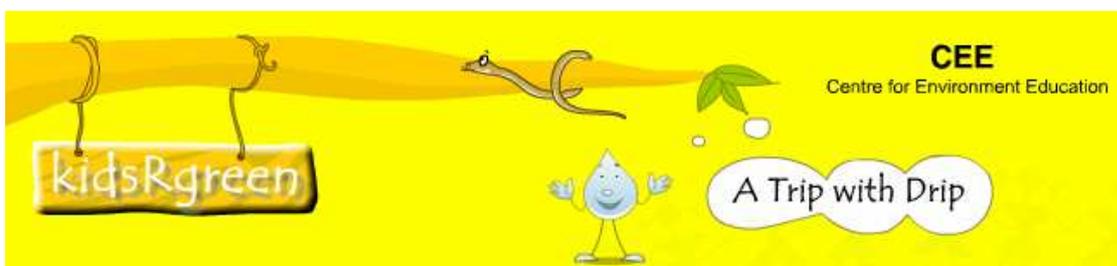
Schools who would like to participate in this year's EkoSkola Parliament Session and who would like to avail themselves of this presentation are requested to contact Dr Paul Pace (on email: paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt) as soon as possible so that the necessary arrangements could be made.

<p>Question & Answer</p>	<p>Is there a limit to the number of schools getting the Green Flag in a year?</p> <p>No. All the schools that have applied for the award and reached the required standards will get the Green Flag.</p>
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Teaching Resources

Continuing with our list of useful websites ideal for lesson planning and project work related to environmental education.

(a) Kids R Green



This site is maintained by CEE (Centre for Environmental Education), India. It provides various child-friendly sections that can be used to find out interesting facts about the Earth; ideas for fun activities; games; downloads and a bank of resources. The site can be accessed on: <http://www.kidsrgreen.org/krg.html>

(b) Change campaign



This European Commission site is a treasure trove of resources and initiatives related to climate change. The site provides various opportunities for users to adopt personal practical steps to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. You can also find a carbon calculator. Access it from: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/campaign/index_en.htm



An interactive programme about educational issues broadcasted live on Education Channel (Channel 22) hosted by Mr Frans Borg (Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment)

Every Friday between 09.30am – 10.30am. Repeats broadcasted on Sundays 6.00pm and Tuesdays 6.30pm.

Viewers can participate by either phoning direct or sending SMSs.

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Dr Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Co-ordinator, on paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt

Visit our website on www.ekoskolamalta.com