

Contents:

- Editorial Note
- The HSBC-ES Climate Initiative
- Have fun little animals!
- Turtle Release
- Eko-Week
- Dziękuję Poland
- Time to act – Children's texts
- International Awards
- Teaching Resources



EkoSkola

June 2010

Issue 28

Editorial Note

We are at the very last days of the scholastic year and reports about initiatives are still pouring in! This is what makes EkoSkola such a great programme: your commitment. Thanks to your continued support EkoSkola is empowering students to participate actively in decision making, not just at their school, but also within their community. You are part of a new movement in our education system – the development of autonomous learners that, conscious of their responsibility as citizens, feel the need to do something about their present to ensure a greater quality of life in the future.

This is not an easy task to achieve as at times – as you fully well know – you have to go against the grain. But at EkoSkola we have become accustomed to seeing students of all ages taking the helm of environmental management. That is why we feel both offended and saddened by certain articles that lately appeared in the media that openly show disregard to your achievements. We would like to offer our full backing to the great work you are all doing in our schools. The days when “*children should be seen not heard*” are over. Thanks to your commitment children have become a valid voice in the national environmental debate.

Report on HSBC

A whole year of activities revolving around climate change was brought to a conclusion with a whole day seminar held at Paradise Bay Hotel on Saturday 19th June 2010. The seminar was officially opened by Mr Vincent Attard, the NTM Executive President and FEE National Coordinator. He said that Nature Trust's co-ordination of the EkoSkola



Mr Joe Debono, HSBC Climate Champion, giving his presentation



Nature Trust (Malta)
PO Box 9
Valletta VLT1000
<http://www.naturetrustmalta.org/>



programme is proof that environmental education was always at the heart of the NGO's activity. This internationally monitored programme is all about empowering children and is based on Local Agenda 21 principles. Malta's EkoSkola success story was conducive to Malta being selected as one of the 11 countries participating in the HSBC-ES Climate Initiative.

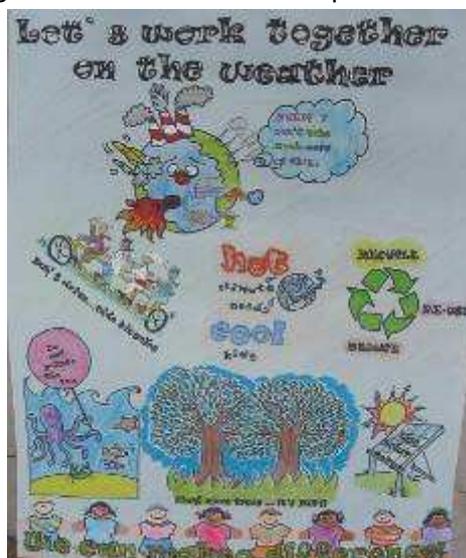
HSBC Climate Champion, Mr Joe Debono, gave feedback about the climate change action within HSBC together with their role in this initiative, particularly the presentations they did in schools. Besides gathering feedback he also explored future project possibilities with schools. The National EkoSkola Coordinator, Prof Paul Pace, discussed the implications of climate change education. Citing local research results he emphasised the need to focus educational experiences related to climate change to the learners' experiences.



A short presentation by the Mr David M. Caruana, EkoSkola teacher, dealt about Climate Change related activities and resources. Workshop groups concluded the first part of the seminar during which teachers shared examples of good practice and plans of how they intend to follow up next year.

The afternoon session was coloured by school exhibits showing the work done throughout the year and the posters participating in the Eco-Code competition. Winners and participants were rewarded with an eco-gift that will help schools keep track of their energy consumption. HSBC Malta Climate Change Coordinator, Mr Martin Scicluna, distributed the prizes in the presence of teachers, students and parents. The winning Eco-Code poster for the Primary Section was designed by Kelly-Marie Zammit Gauci whilst the Eco-Code poster for the Secondary Section was designed by Leanne Coleiro from St Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii School, Paola. The winning Eco-Codes will be participating in an international competition.

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The winning posters

Have fun little animals !!!

Last Friday Josef, Ruth and I set up a pond in the garden under the shadow of a tree.



Birds could come down for a drink or for a fresh bathe. All kinds of insects could skate and float on the water surface. Even lizards could take a sip of the fresh water. First we filled a tray with water. Then we dug a hole, the same size of the tray. We put the tray in this hole and pushed the soil against it. Then we put some rocks in the small pond so the creatures could rest on them. We immersed a filled bottle upside down in the water so when the water level goes down the bottle fills the pond again. Everyone is thirsty in this hot weather and a sip, a dive or a wash are fun for the animals visiting our school garden!

Written by Christian Azzopardi, Gozo College, Xagħra Primary school

Turtle Release



The Year 4 boys of St Edward's Middle School were invited to the release of seven turtles at Għadira Bay on Friday 21 May. Our boys, together with children from other schools, were encouraged to play in the sand, an activity they thoroughly enjoyed. They were also given a very interesting talk by a representative of EkoSkola and did us proud with their pertinent questions and sound knowledge of hazards encountered by turtles at sea. The highlight of the occasion was the arrival and eventual release of the seven turtles that had

been injured but nursed back to health at Fort San Lucjan. Our boys watched google-eyed as the lovely creatures headed across the sand to the freedom of the sea, and, hopefully, a better life.

It was a memorable day – for the turtles and our boys!

*Written by Mr George Psaila, Head of Middle School,
St Edward's College*

EkoWeek

Learning is not just up with books and copybooks. Teaching involves a variety of activities and diverse methods how to convey experiences that motivate and engage learners. In our school, like other schools participating in the EkoSkola programme, we have the EkoSkola Committee made up of Mr V. Mangani, the assistant head of school, two teachers: Ms C. Borg and Mr J. Calleja; and a group of the children from different classes: Kimberly Bugeja, Charlene Camilleri, Emma Said, Shanice Chetcuti, Michaela Attard, Jake Camilleri, Neil Abner Camilleri, David Tabone, Gail Attard and Maya Herrera.

The committee is very active in maintaining the quality of the school environment. They felt the need to enhance the school corridors with plants. During one of its meetings the committee came up with the idea to organise a bazaar whose proceeds would go to

finance this project. However, the idea developed into an EkoWeek ... a whole week of activities including:



- a PowerPoint presentation, for every class, from a BirdLife representative about Wied il-Għasel;
- the Switch energy game;
- a collage made from recycled material by Ms A. Cordina, the Arts teacher. Every year had a theme: Year 4 – the Rural Environment, Year 5 – the Marine Environment and Year 6 – the Air Environment;
- with the help of the Science teacher, Mr M. Zerafa, all Year 6 students participated in an activity about the wise use and conservation of water;
- a special assembly written by Gail Attard (Year 4.2) and performed by all EkoSkola Committee members about the importance of waste management; and
- last but not least, a bazaar of items freely donated by the children, teachers and LSAs and parents as well as a large variety of indoor plants.

We can safely say that the activity was a resounding success, not just financially as we now could buy the plants for the corridor, but also for raising an awareness of the need to ensure a good quality of life.

*Mr Vincent Mangani, Assistant Head of School,
Maria Regina College, Mosta Primary B*

Dziękuję Poland (Thank you Poland)

What are other schools doing to achieve the Green Flag? Are the projects that we are working on with our children similar to those in other schools? How is the Eco-Schools programme implemented differently in other countries? What ideas taken up by other schools can be implemented in our school? The above questions are ones which have surely gone through the minds of teachers participating in the EkoSkola programme. Regardless of the place or country where



Malta's presentation at the conference

teachers are working, it is only natural to feel the need to connect with other teachers and share ideas. It is for this reason that the Environmental Polish Foundation invited a Maltese school to share its experience with the Polish teachers who got together on the 28th of May in Warsaw for their annual national conference.



Children in charge of school shop

As a representative of St Ignatius College, Siggiewi Primary school this conference was an opportunity to present the work that we are doing at our school as well as take note of what other schools were doing. The aspect which struck me most during this experience was how although all those present were forming part of the same programme, each school had made its own adaptations of the programme. Very often these adaptations depended on the different realities that schools were faced with.

For instance, one of the presentations was done by a school in Burkina Faso, West Africa. The school is an agricultural one in a small rural village and thus differs significantly from what we are used to in our schools. A lot of work is done regarding animal husbandry, plant cultivation and empowering students to develop sustainable farming methods. On the other hand, another small school in Poland which has been awarded the Green Flag works in another very particular context. It has a total school population of 30 pupils and is found in the middle of a mountain range. Apart from ongoing processes and activities that the school works on such as recycling, compost making and making use of solar water heaters, the school forms part of a cultural heritage trail.



Items in the school shop

This Amber trail as it is called runs along a historical trade route and stretches from Budapest to Krakow to the Wisla River Valley and all the way to the Baltic Sea. The trail is mainly a bicycle international trail but then there are local theme-based loops and this is where the school fits in. The school is in charge of 14 points along the trail which inform and educate visitors about environmental and cultural activities of the school and the local community, local craftsmen and artists, relics of the past such as old houses, wells and cellars, wayside shrines, the running of a wind power plant, local biodiversity, mountain streams, surrounding woods, protected plant species and the general mountain landscape.



The Amber Trail

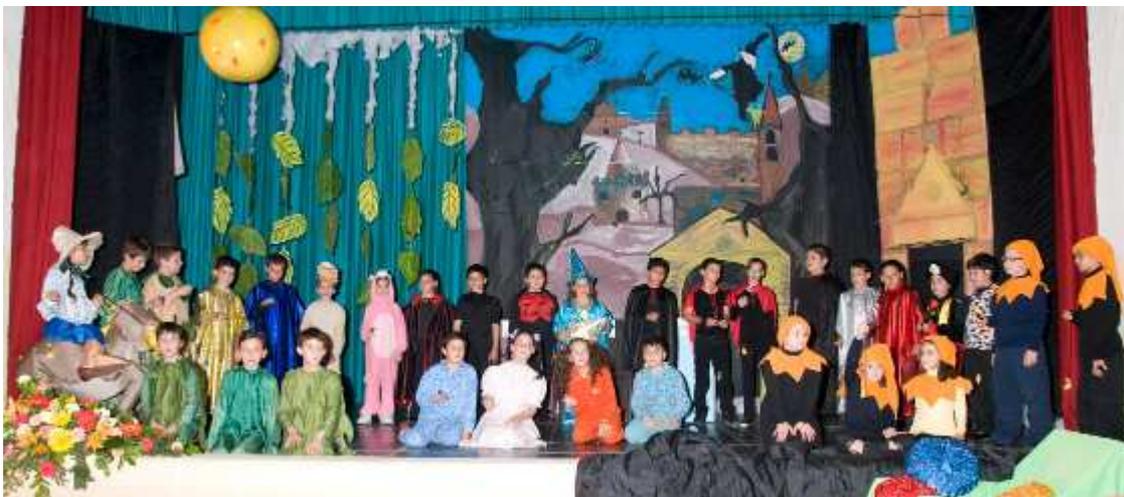
The school children together with their parents and teaching staff have also created a museum within the school premises. As a team they have put together a valuable exhibition of old tools, photographs, household items not in use anymore, regional costumes, etc. This museum is now one of the attractions that visitors can stop at when following the trail. Meanwhile, the school children also run a small shop selling local arts and crafts, publications about the area and the trail in particular, together with souvenirs.

Thus, visitors stopping at the school as part of the trail can also use the school as a tourist information point.

These of course are just two of the experiences shared amongst many other schools that were ready to share their experiences. More than anything else, this conference highlighted the fact that when teachers get together to share their ideas and good practices it not only serves as a boost and source of motivation, but it also opens up new dimensions to the programme that might not have been previously considered. These benefits thus give an indication of what can be achieved if our children too are given the opportunity to link up with other students in other Eco-Schools, possibly in different countries. This can result in an immense learning opportunity for them too. Hence, whilst being grateful for this experience that Poland offered, may the benefits of linking up with international Eco-Schools be a common experience for many of our schools and children.

Ms Doreen Spiteri, Link teacher

Time to act – Children’s texts



This year the prize day play was about the environment. It was in fact about the changes in the climate and both Year 5 classes took part. We learned a lot from this thirty-minute play. One of the most important things that I learned was that we must learn more about recycling bins: we must separate rubbish before we throw it away! Every one likes to help their family so let us save some energy by sometimes taking a bus, ride a bike or walk. We learned a lot how to plant trees too. It is not only fun but it is a great way to reduce gases. The last part of the play was my favourite part because it had a lot of information about the earth. My sentence was that the greenhouse effect is the rise in temperature that the Earth experiences because certain gases in the atmosphere trap energy from the sun and I felt very happy and proud that I said it. We must take care of the environment. It is after all our world!

Maronia Falzon – Year 5.2, St Margaret College, Kalkara Primary C

Il-Prize Day

Kien l-Erbgħa 21 ta’ April 2010. Dak inhar kien jum il-premjazzjoni. Aħna, it-tfal tal-ħames sena ppreparajna reċta. Ir-reċta kien jisimha ‘Act Now’. Ir-reċta kienet fuq l-ambjent. Aħna ridna li n-nies li ġew jarawna jitgħallmu li rridu nirriċiklaw u nisseparaw l-iskart. Jiena kont ġurdien fir-reċta. Fir-reċta għidt kemm hu importanti li ma nħammgux l-ambjent. Aħna rridu nieħdu ħsieb l-ambjent mhux inkomplu nniġġsu l-ambjent. Kulhadd jixtieq li jkollu ambjent sabiħ u nadif. Irridu niżirgħu aktar fjuri u siġar mhux naqtgħuhom. Jekk nieħdu ħsieb l-ambjent ikun hawn inqas



mard. Dik kienet esperjenza sabiĥa. Kulĥadd ĥa gost u nisperaw li n-nies li ġew jarawna ma jinsewx it-tagħlima tar-reċta.

Amber Privitelli, St Margaret College, Kalkara Primary C

Let's make a difference

*By Marilyn Dimech (Year 6)
St Margaret College, Kalkara Primary C*

Chorus: Let's make a difference
If we're ruling a kingdom
Or searching for food
We can still make a difference
In the world

It's a small world after all
Nature is ours
It's a small world mine and yours
Protecting it can make a difference now

CHORUS: Let's make a

Look at the stream
Its beautiful gleam
Look at the fish
Swimming happily across it
Let it stay that way!

CHORUS: Let's make a

Look at the bees
Buzzing quietly on the flowers
Look at the butterflies
Mating in the Spring

CHORUS: Let's make a x2

A world is many things
And part of it is nature
So let's protect it...together.
Let's make a difference ...

The Environmental Songs

On the nineteenth of May we held the book fair. It was such a nice day. We prepared two songs for that day. The songs were called "Waste not, Want not" and "Recycle Song". Our teacher chose these songs because the words of the songs are about the environment. The first one was "Waste not Want not". The words of this song advised us to use both sides of the paper and not to waste the paper because then we would have to cut more trees. Further on we were told not to leave the water running and to take only what we'll eat. Let's help to save the planet so that we can live in a better world. Trees are pretty so if we are going to waste paper we are going to have fewer trees and the birds will suffer. Trees are home to these birds. The trees are good for us too because they give us shade. They give us juicy fruit too. Our copybooks are made from them. The other song was a short one and told us to recycle, something we surely do. We also enjoyed doing this one because we danced to the rap music. It was fun!!

So I hope that all the people who came for the book-fair kept on learning and appreciated our songs and dance. We enjoyed ourselves!!!

Maria Spiteri, - Year 5.2, St Margaret College, Kalkara Primary C

Il-Festa ta' Patri Wistin Born

Din is-sena fit-23 ta' Mejju 2010 iċċelebrajna ċ-ċentinarju mit-twelid ta' Patri Wistin Born, kittieb magħruf, li għalih kienet imsemmija l-iskola oriġinarjament. Aħna għamilna żewġ poeżiji li għandhom x'jaqsmu mal-ambjent. Waħda minnhom kien jisimha "Waste not want not". Din il-poeżija titkellem dwar kif għandna nibzghu għall-ambjent. Aħna għandna nibzghu għall-ilma, għas-siġar u għall-ikel. M'għandniex inħallu l-ilma nieżel għal xejn, m'għandniex naħlu karti bla bżonn u bl-ikel m'għandniex ikollna għajnejna ikbar minn żaqqa.

Il-poeżija l-oħra kien jisimha "Recycle". Din titkellem dwar kif għandna nirriċiklaw il-metal, il-plastik, il-karti u l-ħġieġ. Waqt li bdejna nkantaw "Recycle" aħna żfinna. Kulhadd żifen xi ħaġa differenti: min "breakdance" min "cartwheel" u min għamel xi kutrumbajsa. Il-ġenituri ġew jarawna u tgħidx kemm għoġobhom il-kant u żfin tagħna għax tgħidx kemm ċapċpulna!

Wara li lestejna mill-poeżiji u ż-żfin aħna kellna *book fair*. Tgħidx kemm kien hemm kotba sbieħ u interessanti. Din tal- *book fair* kienet idea sabiħa peress li Patri Wistin Born kien kittieb. Jien ħadt gost nixtri l-kotba għax nieħu gost naqrahom. Jien tgħallimt li m'għandniex naħlu affarijiet u rridu nirriċiklawhom. Ħadt gost inkanta u niżfen ma' sħabi tal-klassi!

Kurt Cordina, St Margaret College, Kalkara Primary C

International Awards



We would like to offer our heart felt congratulations to Luke Scicluna, a 14 year old student from The Archbishop's Seminary, Rabat who won the Special International Award in the photo section of the YRE. Young Reporters for the Environment is another FEE programme intended to develop journalistic skills of secondary and post-secondary students.

The title of the photo (*featured on the left*) was **The Gateway to the Future of the Natural World.**

Congratulations are also due to St. Francis School Cospicua from Malta who won the European Flick the Switch Champion award. The news was announced during the official closing ceremony that was held on Friday 21st May 2010 in Rakvere, Estonia for the best achievements in organising activities related to energy saving and teaching their pupils to switch off lights and electrical devices when not in use.

Teaching Resources

Continuing with our list of useful websites ideal for lesson planning and project work related to environmental education. This time we are focusing on sustainable development issues.

(a) Against All Odds

This is an interactive game, developed by UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) that allows students to experience the harsh realities that refugees have to face. The game is a powerful way to combat racism and introduce reason in debate concerning refugees. The game has three themes: War and Conflict; Borderland; and A New Life. There is also a teachers' area. The url is: <http://www.playagainstallodds.com>



(b) Food Force 2



This is another interactive game, freely available to download that uses a story line to raise awareness about hunger related problems in under developed nations. The game presents users with the decisions that have to be taken to ensure the development of a village. The url is: <http://foodforce2.com/>.

(c) Schools 2 Communities



This is the official site of the "**Global Action Schools2Communities**" project launched in March 2009. The project is a continuation of Global Action Schools (GAS), implemented in the years 2006 - 2009 by the same partner organisations from Austria, Malta, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland and co-financed by the European Commission. The project will end in February 2012. This site (available at <http://www.schools2communities.eu/>) is a treasure trove of teaching resources concerning sustainable development issues.

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

Visit our website on www.ekoskolamalta.com