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May 2005

Issue 6

Editorial Note

We try hard to keep all readers informed about any developments in the local EkoSkola programme. Thank God participation is increasing, however now the task is becoming steadily harder to keep up with. The programme is becoming more and more popular in schools and it won't be long till we'll be announcing the first Green Flag awards. Besides urging schools to continue with their good work, I would like to invite them to send me write-ups about what they're doing so that we can all share and learn from their ideas and examples of good practice.

Schools who are not yet in the EkoSkola network and would like to receive our newsletter can ask me (on paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt) to include them on our mailing list.

Green Week 2005



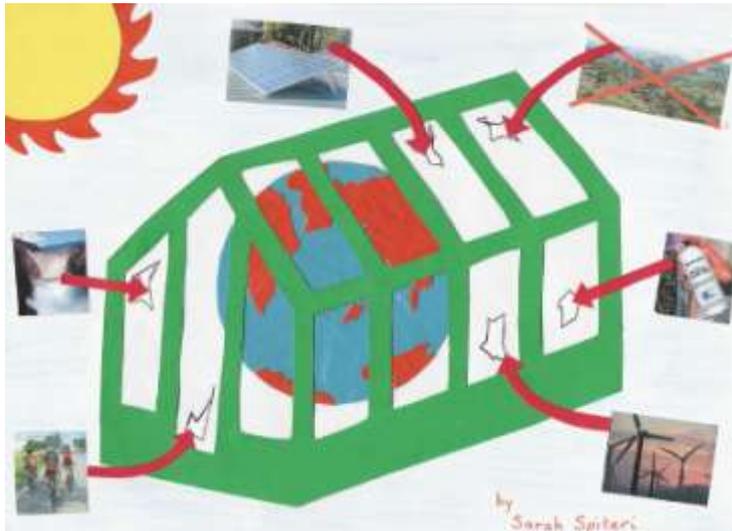
In our last newsletter we announced the Green Week Schools Competition 2005 organised by the European Commission. The theme for this year's competition was Climate Change and it had two sections: a Paintings Section for children aged 6-10 years and a Videos Section for youths aged 11-16 years. The competition was a real success. Entries came from 32 different countries: 3104 entries (125 hailing from Malta) for the Paintings Section and 122 (with 5 Maltese entries) for the Videos Section.



Nature Trust (Malta)
PO Box 9
Valletta CMR 01
<http://www.naturetrustmalta.org>



The winners in each category have been communicated and we are pleased to announce that Sarah Spiteri (9 years) – a pupil from one of our EkoSkola schools (St Joseph, Mater Boni Consilli School – Paola) came 3rd in the Paintings Section. Her poster is shown here:



Sarah together with her teacher will now be going to Brussels to attend this year's edition of Green Week 2005. This year the event will look at all aspects of climate change and in particular at our lifestyles.

Green Week encourages everyone to "think aloud" about how we can change our environmental behaviour. It is aimed at local, regional and national decision-makers, businesses, NGOs and the general public. In addition to a programme of conferences Green Week also has an

exhibition with stands featuring best practices, projects and partnerships. For more information visit: http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/index_en.htm

International Eco-Schools Meeting in Madrid

The year 1994 saw the birth of Eco-Schools. From its meagre start in 4 countries Eco-Schools has now flourished into a programme implemented in 28 countries and about 13,000 schools across 3 continents involving almost 3 million students!

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, Eco-Schools International together with ADEAC/FEE Spain organised the Annual General Meeting of national programme coordinators in Pozuelo and Segóvia, near Madrid, Spain, April 22-23. However, this year, the event included an international seminar for teachers and students from about 20 countries each being representatives of the national award-winning schools in the international Eco-Code competition held last year. Malta was also represented by a delegation from the two schools (shown in the photo) who won the local Eco-Code Competition: Dr Frans Chetcuti, Zabbar Primary B and St Joseph, Mater Boni Consilli School – Paola



The event also included an award giving ceremony during which a number of Spanish schools received their Green Flag and the overall Eco-Code competition winners were given special prizes. Delegates were also taken to visit Spanish schools participating in Eco-Schools as well as environmental education centres.

Eco-Schools International made sure that such an event would have as little negative impact as possible on the environment. In order to reduce the impact of carbon dioxide emissions on climate change from all the air travel of the participants, the air travel CO₂ emissions of this event were offset by Climate Care (visit <http://www.climatecare.org/> to learn more about this interesting initiative).

Climate Change Education and Action Programme

Eco-Schools International has initiated a project called "Towards Zero Net Emissions Schools" with the aim of presenting the complexities of climate change in a simplified and appropriate way. Rather than focusing only infrastructural and technical solutions, the project seeks to highlight opportunities for students – at school and at home – to understand their impact on climate change and to take up their responsibility as individuals to do something about it. Among the tasks that the project will be doing is the production of educational materials for schools and communities about climate change.

We would greatly appreciate if you could keep us informed about any activities related to climate change that your school has organized (or will organize). These may include classroom-based activities as well school or community based ones. Your ideas will then be forwarded to Eco-Schools International.

Greek Schools looking for partners

The Greek National Eco-Schools Co-ordinator has sent us an email informing us about a group of very active Eco-Schools from Greece, that are interested in communicating with schools, teachers and students of the Eco-Schools network to exchange ideas and experiences from the implementation of environmental education activities. These are the schools:

School	Students' Age	Contact person	School Email
Primary School of Argos-Kalymnos	6-12 years	Mr. Pavlos Trikilis, teacher	mail@dim-argous.dod.sch.gr
Primary School of Vlachata-Kefalinia	6-12 years	Mr. Panayiotis Komitopoulos	mail@dim-vlach.kef.sch.gr
Primary School of Avlona-Messinia	6-12 years	Mrs Thekla Katsiri, teacher	mail@dim-avlou.mes.sch.gr
2nd High School of Komotini-Rodopi	13-15 years	Mrs. Lemonia Darginidou, teacher	mail@2gym-komot.rod.sch.gr
Private School Hatzivei-Attiki	6-12 years (Prim Sch) 13-15 years (High Sch)	Mrs. Meropi Hatzivei, Headteacher	meropihat@hotmail.com
2nd TEE Galatsiou-Attiki	15-17 years	Mr. Serafeim Kerasiotis, Headmaster	serker@sch.gr
1st TEE of Argos-Argolida	15-17 years	Mrs. Zoi Zafeiri, teacher	mail@1tee-argous.arg.sch.gr

Schools wishing to establish a co-operation link with anyone of these schools are kindly requested to contact the contact person of that particular school directly. We would greatly appreciate if you could keep us informed of any development.

B.Eds support EkoSkola

B.Ed. (Hons) Primary Track 3rd year student teachers specialising in environmental education, 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.

Pairs of students (a total of 20 students) were assigned to schools participating in the EkoSkola programme and were expected to pay the school a minimum of five visits spread over the whole scholastic year. During these visits student teachers were expected to play an active role in supporting the school with the running of the programme.

During their first visit, students were welcomed by the school head teacher and briefed about the school's progress in the EkoSkola programme and the school's plans for development. Students were then introduced to the EkoSkola co-ordinator/s with whom they planned their tasks for the rest of the scholastic year. Headteachers were also expected to write an appraisal of the students' performance at the end of their term in school, based on their participation in the EkoSkola programme.

The scheme has proved very successful and schools have already requested a similar support for next year. A large number of headteachers said that the students' enthusiasm managed to jumpstart the EkoSkola process in their schools. Fully aware of the positive impact this type of support can have on schools, Nature Trust has, for these last two years, been involved in negotiations with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment for the appointment of six EkoSkola Officers. This type of support is common practice in schools in other countries who are involved in the Eco-Schools programme.

What's on?

No to Plastic Bags

For the second time in two years, Smart Supermarket of Balzan has sponsored hundreds of eco-bags (cloth bags) to be distributed among all students and Staff at **St. Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda**, in line with the national effort to minimise the use of plastic and other material that is harmful to the environment. St. Joseph School has been participating in the EkoSkola project since its introduction in Malta. It has always been committed to educate its pupils for the environment by encouraging initiatives, which raise awareness, among pupils, staff and parents towards a better environment.

On Tuesday 1st March, the school organised an Environment Day, linking subjects across the curriculum and culminating in a programme in the school hall where pupils read original works written about the environment. There was also dancing and the participation of the school choir which sang some very apt songs for the occasion. Ms Alexandra Mifsud, environmental education co-ordinator at WasteServ, gave a very interesting presentation about waste reduction and recycling in Malta.

Towards the end of the programme, Mr Victor Grech and Mr. Joe Grech, managers of Smart Supermarket distributed the eco-bags to the pupils and staff, and appealed to all present to use the cloth bags to help reduce the millions of plastic bags used each year in Malta. The eco-bags are very practical and attractive. They are printed with the St. Joseph School and the EkoSkola logos, together with the School's Eco-Code "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle". Furthermore, some of the bags had been left blank so that the pupils could create their own designs during the art lesson.



An exhibition was also set up, consisting of pupils' write-ups and poems, projects and craft-work from recycled material. All in all, this activity proved to be not only worthwhile, but also an inspiring and enjoyable experience.

A Sports Day with a difference

Friday 11th March was a memorable day for the children of **Emmanuel Debono Decesare, Fgura Primary School B**. All students without any exception (415 individuals) participated in the Environmental Sports Day. This primary school is participating in the EkoSkola programme and has a number of aims. One of these aims is the promotion of environmental activities that develop a love for the environment. The Environmental Sports Day was a clear

example how sports can help towards a better environment. All participating children had this common aim in mind.

Amongst the games organised, students had to sow plants, separate waste, free wild birds that had been trapped and the building of jigsaw puzzles about Xummiemu (the environmental mascot). Each student took part in ten different games with two breaks in between. Students were given points for each game in which they participated especially for fair play. Every team was given the name of a local animal or plant.



The event could not have been possible without the help of the following sponsors:

the Fgura Local Council who sponsored the fruit given during the breaks, Chain Supermarket provided water, and Pamsons Ltd. sponsored the medals. The activity was also filmed by Education 22 and Wasteserv. Thanks also goes to the school administration and staff for the help and support they offered particularly Mr J. Spiteri, one of the assistant heads, who originated the idea.

(Ms Bridget Giusti)

Waste Separation Activity

On Wednesday, 13th April, **Ġuże Delia Primary School, Siġġiewi** organized a school activity on waste separation. The activity was organised by the school's EkoSkola Committee in collaboration with the Siġġiewi Local Council.



The activity kicked off with a talk by Ms Alexandra Mifsud from Wasteserv about how waste needs to be separated for recycling. As a follow up, school children were then asked to separate the waste they had brought with them from home into the specific waste fractions.

Children also staged a play on waste separation, purposefully written for the event by Ms Roselle Grech. This was then followed by readings of poems and essays written by the pupils. Both the pupils and the staff felt that the activity was a great success and that it will surely have a positive impact on all those who participated in it.

(Ms Irene Abela)

Informing and Involving

"I am very pleased at the great progress registered by this school and it appears that they will be the first school in Malta to obtain the Green Flag", said the Hon. George Pullicino, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment. He was speaking at the EkoSkola general meeting organised by **St. Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii School, Paola** on the 29th of April for the benefit of parents of children attending the school.

The objective of the event was to inform and involve the parents regarding the activities being organised by the school as part of its EkoSkola programme. The four students forming part of the EkoSkola Committee gave a presentation on the measures implemented by the School. These include reduction in use of plastic packing, separation and minimisation of waste, healthy eating habits and conservation of water and energy. The Action Plan was also

presented to those present in the form of a leaflet as commitment to fulfilling the necessary measures within the forecasted time-limit.

The audience was also addressed by the President of NatureTrust Malta, the local representative of FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education), an international body promoting environmental awareness in schools. A short play "Nisseparaw l-iskart" was acted



out by a representative from each class at the school and served as an introduction to the next address, this time by Ms. Alexandra Mifsud, from WasteServ, about how waste is being managed on our island.

Throughout the evening the School Choir, under the direction of the Music teacher Mrs. Carmen Esposito sang 3 different songs related to the evening. Two video clips were projected at the background of two of the songs, one depicting the environment from a spiritual perspective while the other video clip was related to climate change.

At the end of their third song, the choir was joined by some of the younger students at the school, all in colourful traditional international costumes and waving flags of various nations.

Mr. Carmelo Abela and Mr. Ray Attard, Paola Mayor presented Sr. Lucienne, the Head, with a number of books for the School Library. Mr. Raymond Attard, who also very kindly sponsored the venue for this meeting, brought the evening to an end by delivering a short but meaningful address along with Sr. Lucienne who gave a short message of thanks. One of the most interesting aspects of this evening was the exhibition displaying the children's work related to environmental issues and how they were integrated within the curriculum framework. During our last Committee meeting we all discussed the positive feedback we received from all those attending this evening and this served as a stimulus for us to keep on working hard to make our school, our locality and our World a better place to live in.

Katja Warrington (secretary Eco-Committee)

As from this issue of the EkoSkola Newsletter we will start formally thanking all the individuals, companies and organisations that have kindly sponsored EkoSkola events.

Middlesea Insurance p.l.c.



Fgura
Local Council



Paola
Local Council



Siggiewi
Local Council



**Chain
Supermarket**

Thanks for believing in EkoSkola in a tangible manner

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