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**EkoSkola**

**May 2013**

**Issue 40**

## Editorial Note

Welcome to another edition of our Newsletter which, through its reports, news and resources, promises to be both interesting and useful. We would like to invite more schools to share their ideas, activities and other initiatives with the rest of the EkoSkola community. These examples of good practice are an important source of inspiration for other schools.

We would like to draw your attention to the following three news bites:

(a) **Participation in competitions.** We are particularly concerned about certain reports that we have received about how certain schools are doing (literally) *anything* to ensure that they win these competitions. For example, a school asked waste collection trucks to dump waste at school, while another has asked students to tell their parents to buy more plastic water bottles. And all this just to sky-rocket the weight of waste collected by the school. Such practices not only give students mixed messages about our environmental commitment, but also about what we are willing to do just to win a competition. Needless to say, we condemn these practices without any reservation and urge schools to refrain from them immediately.

(b) **Twinning with foreign schools.** An ever increasing number of schools are making use of EkoSkola's School Twinning network. If you are interested in an intercultural exchange of eco-experiences, EkoSkola can link you up with a foreign Eco-School. Kindly contact Ms Cynthia Caruana on [caruanacynthia@gmail.com](mailto:caruanacynthia@gmail.com) for more information.

(c) **Keep yourself updated.** Thanks to the EkoSkola team, our EkoSkola Website is regularly updated with the latest news, resources and communications. You can keep yourself regularly updated by Subscribing to the RSS feed. Just click on the icon (shown) found at the lower right hand corner of the homepage and fill in the details requested. You can access our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/ekoskola](http://www.facebook.com/ekoskola)



## WasteServ Waste Minimisation Awards

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013, WasteServ Malta and the Cleaner Technology Centre organized the second edition of the Waste Minimisation Award ceremony. The aim of this award is to reward inspiring and best waste reduction practices in the following sectors: Commercial Enterprises; NGOs and other Non-Commercial Entities; and Educational Bodies. Entries were judged on the measures taken to reduce waste, any cost savings or benefits arising from reducing waste as well as initiatives to educate employees or the general public about waste reduction.

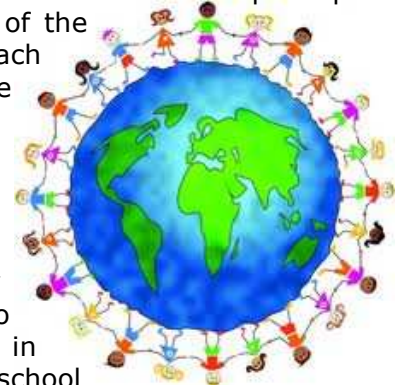
We are pleased to announce that EkoSkola, run by Nature Trust, won Category B for NGOs and other Non-Commercial Entities.

Moreover, St Francis Primary School, Cospicua (a Green Flag School) won Category C for Educational Bodies. It is worth mentioning that **ALL** the entries in this category were EkoSkola schools: Gozo College, Girls' Secondary, Victoria; St Claire College, Gzira Primary; St Ignatius College, Girls' Secondary School, Handaq; St Monica Gzira; St Therese College, Lija-Balzan-Iklin Primary; St Thomas More College, Girls' Secondary, Sta Lucia; and St Thomas More College, Girls' Secondary, Zejtun. You really do us proud!



## Global Citizenship Partners - Malta and England

Could your EkoSkola Committee learn from a school in a different part of Europe? Wolsey Junior School in Croydon, London, UK is looking for a Primary School in Malta to pair-up with for a 3 months trial Global Citizenship project. The aim of the Partnership is for the two school eco-teams to learn from each other about their countries and their eco-schools activities. The emphasis is on the pupils leading this process and becoming curious about the other school and its eco-team. If the trial is successful there is potential for other schools in Malta to pair with other schools in Croydon, London UK. If you are interested contact Ms Cynthia Caruana on [caruanacynthia@gmail.com](mailto:caruanacynthia@gmail.com). The first eligible school to apply will be chosen. Your email address will then be given to Christine - the eco-school lead person at Wolsey Junior School in Croydon - so that you can liaise with each other. The two eco-school link persons will then be given details of topics to discuss for three months and email each other every week to keep in regular contact and share ideas about eco-schools.



## Special U4 Energy prize



On 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012, St Francis Primary School in Cospicua was awarded the 'European Special Distinction' prize at an awards ceremony in Brussels. The event was attended by the Permanent Representative of Malta to the EU, Ambassador Marlene Bonnici, who presented the prize to Sister Claudia Zammit, Head of St Francis Primary School. Over 600 schools from all over Europe participated in U4 Energy 2011-12 edition.

The U4 Energy's Grand Jury decided to award the special prize in recognition of the St Francis Primary School's outstanding and enduring commitment to, and participation in, the U4 Energy pan-European competition. Additionally, the award was the result of an exceptionally good campaign on energy efficiency which, according to the competition

organisers, far excelled the rest of the entrants. The school participated in both competition years (2010-2011 and 2011-2012).

The school's campaign on energy efficiency was carried out by teachers and students, and consisted in an education campaign focusing on increasing the efficiency in energy and water usage. Using the EkoSkola methodology, students carried out an 'energy audit' to identify energy saving priorities that were translated into tangible steps towards greater energy efficiency. With no investment costs and relying only on specific actions, the school reported an increase in savings of 3203 kWh for the year 2011 – 2012 when compared to the year 2010 – 2011 amounting to €1,342.27 worth of savings. The school's achievements have been the subject of international media coverage.



## Getting to know their story

On Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013, a group of refugees visited our school to tell us about JRS. JRS stands for Jesuit Refugee Services. This organisation seeks to accompany, serve and defend the rights of refugees who arrive in Malta by educating the Maltese public, especially children in schools.



*Jade Mifsud (Year 4) having her hair braided*

We went downstairs in the school yard and there we found a refugee who taught us how to play the drums. Some girls had the opportunity to braid their hair. Afterwards, we went to the hall where through a play we learnt about the life of a refugee. The play was about a journey of a refugee from his country to a land of hope. We did not get to know how the story ends. Instead we were given a book each and from this book we could read how

the story finished. This book is called *Kidane*, written by Clare Azzopardi and illustrated by Marisa Attard. I felt sympathy for this brave man. It was such a nice activity where we learned in a fun way!

*Written by Nathan Borg, PRO EkoSkola Committee, Siggiewi Primary*



*Alex Camilleri and Nathan Darmanin getting to know more about refugees*



*Ms. Sephorah's class playing the drums*

## Carnival Float Competition

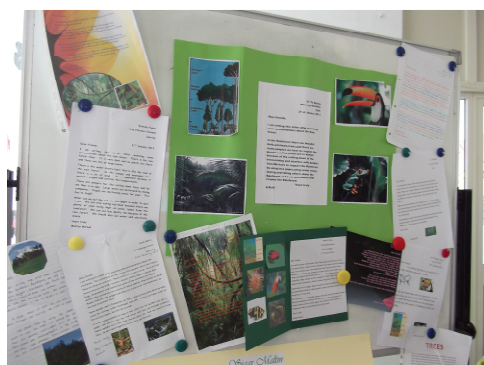
On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2013, Mr Johann Gatt, an EkoSkola teacher, and Mr Kurt Scerri a GreenPak official were invited to our school to select the 5 winners of the Carnival Float Competition organised by our school. The children at Paola A and Paola A (annexe) participated actively in this competition and a very colourful display of carnival floats was created at the entrance of the main school. The work produced by the children was displayed for a whole week and the parents called at the school to admire the work. The concept of re-using different material was clearly explained to both parents and children

by the EkoSkola link teachers in the school. The number of floats produced this year was very satisfactory. A small ceremony was organised to present a certificate of participation to all the children who took part. Mr Johann Gatt and Mr Kurt Scerri presented gifts to the winners of the competition. The children were very happy with their great achievement. Mr Kurt Scerri took the opportunity to explain to the children the aim of such a competition and he emphasised that such activities encourage people to re-use instead of throwing away different material found in our homes.

*Written by the EkoSkola Committee - Paola A Primary Main School and Annexe*



## Arbor Day 2013



On the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013, SBC Safi Primary celebrated Arbor Day in collaboration with the EkoSkola Committee, Nature Trust, Safi Local Council and P.A.R.K. This activity was part of the school's Green Flag award celebrations. In preparation for the event, every class had lessons during which they prepared crafts and writing pieces associated with trees, which were then exhibited in the school foyer throughout the whole week. The day started off with a special assembly on trees delivered by Ms Polidano, the Science teacher. Following the assembly, all the students

participated in a planting session where they observed seeds of different indigenous trees, provided by Mr Neville Ebejer from P.A.R.K. They sowed them in containers with the help of Mr Ronald Zammit and Mr Emanuel Baldacchino, the Environmental teachers. The potted seeds were then placed in the school Reading Garden, with the intention of replanting them in the village once they were grown.

In the afternoon, all the children gathered in the school foyer for the ceremony. The EkoSkola President, Kieran Caruana, gave a short speech in which he thanked all those involved for their support, and explained the meaning of Arbor Day, ending his speech with the slogan, "Trees are our friends - let's protect them". The children were also addressed by Mr Neville Ebejer, Ms Cynthia Caruana (the EkoSkola teacher) and Mr Johann Gatt (LEAF co-ordinator).



Next, the Year 3 students sang the song "Plant a Tree" and the Green Flag was hoisted for the first time. This was a very meaningful day for the whole school and all those involved. Children spread the message of taking care of nature by celebrated Arbor Day by planting lots of trees and encouraging others to do likewise.

## Sodda oriġinali għaż-żwiemel

Meta ġejt filgħodu ma sibt lil ħadd. Tgħid għala? Lil dawki li ġew kmieni s-surmast qabbadhom x'jagħmlu. Kienu fl-uffiċju qegħdin iqattgħu xi karti bil-magni. Staqsejthom għaliex. Imma bqajt bla ebda risposta. Darb'oħra ġejt kmieni u staqsejt lis-surmast jekk nistax ngħin. Kienu qegħdin joħorġu xi boroż mill-kamra fejn iżommu l-iskart. Fl-assembly is-surmast qal li kienu ser jagħtuhom lil xi nies biex ipoġġuhom flok tiben fl-istalel taż-żwiemel. Tlaqna mill-iskola fid-disgħa u nofs u wasalna fl-għaxra neqsin kwart. Rajna żiemel. Rajnihom ipoġġu l-karti. Kemm ferħu ż-żwiemel meta sabu xi ħaġa taħthom avolja mhux tiben!! Is-surmast ħa ritratti biex jurihom lit-tfal biex ikunu jafu għaliex qagħdu jqattgħu l-karti u t-tfal l-oħra li raw il-karti fil-boroż. Kemm kienu komdi ż-żwiemel meta kellhom xi ħaġa taħthom. Ahna ħadna pjaċir naraw iż-żwiemel mitluqin, ferħanin u komdi fuq il-karti!!



*Miktuba minn Hayley Abela & Enya Paris, Kullegġ Santa Margerita, Xgħajra Primary*

## Environmental Initiatives

Being the main school ESD network in Malta, EkoSkola receives a lot of requests from local and foreign organisations to circulate among our member schools information about environmental initiatives that they are organising. We have decided to dedicate part of our newsletter specifically for this purpose. Feel free to participate in any of these activities. However, kindly keep in mind that participation in these activities is not compulsory nor is it a requirement for your efforts to achieve the Green Flag. **You** decide whether you want to participate or not. If you intend to present any of the activities listed, you should ensure that it is included in your Action Plan as part of your strategy to address the issues identified in your Environmental Review ... not as a stand alone.

### (a) Health and nutrition education resource packs

'Healthy Eating with Fonzu' educational resource packs have been launched to empower teachers to provide effective, creative and enjoyable health and nutrition education to primary schoolchildren with the goal of promoting healthier lifestyles among the younger generation and their families. The packs comprise Students' Workbooks, Teachers' Handbooks, comics, audio-visual presentations, videos, an original song, a board game and a children's recipe book. Teachers can use the materials integrated with several school subjects to promote creativity and critical thinking, investigation, food preparation and basic entrepreneurship skills amongst others. The use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool is emphasised.



Teachers are also guided on how to extend the materials through extra-curricular activities and special school days and weeks, and by involving parents, other adult carers and the community at large. For more information contact Dr Suzanne Piscopo, Nutrition, Family and Consumer Studies lecturer at the University of Malta and the Packs' Developer on: [suzanne.piscopo@um.edu.mt](mailto:suzanne.piscopo@um.edu.mt). There are several educational videos that can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/FONZULFENEK>. Moreover, students can write to Fonzu at [fonzulfenek@gmail.com](mailto:fonzulfenek@gmail.com).

## (b) Culture on the agenda of EkoSkola Committee Meetings

If you are confident that you have tackled common environmental issues well in your school and would like to explore other sustainable development issues, why not try Culture or Cultural Heritage? If you decide to do so, there are some available funds for which you can apply:

KREATTIV 2013: a funding programme that brings together creative practitioners into schools to work with teachers and students to inspire, learn and create in a collaborative and innovative way! KREATTIV supports, through a competitive process, joint programmes/projects designed and implemented collaboratively between educational institutions and creative practitioners. Eligible proposals should seek to complement the curriculum, but are not driven by it, and strive to add value to the learning experience and to the school environment. Projects must reflect the school priorities and must be relevant and based on the needs of the school and its students. Guidelines and application form are available from: <http://www.maltaculture.com/content.aspx?id=269391>. The application deadline is **17<sup>th</sup> May 2013**.



IL-Premju tal-President għall-Kreattività: awards arts-driven projects which engage with children and young people in the community. Its focused approach on young people and its emphasis on promoting social and community development programmes through art is a reflection of a society which rewards and fosters talent from an early age. It supports the recognition of excellence in art and creativity, and ensures that opportunities for developing creativity are freely accessible to all. The awards programme focuses on three categories: Children, Youths and Communities. In the case of Primary and Secondary schools, an educator can nominate disadvantaged students with exceptional talent. For more information visit: <http://www.president.gov.mt/premju-kreattivita?l=1>. The application deadline is **17<sup>th</sup> May 2013**.



IL-PREMJU TAL-PRESIDENT  
GHALL-KREATTIVITA'

Students of Forms 1, 2 and 3 may make use of their Culture Card, to attend registered cultural/ artistic events, thereby complementing their exploration of culture and add value to the engagement of young people in culture and the arts. For more information, visit <http://www.maltaculture.com/content.aspx?id=297372>.



## (c) Empty Classroom Day

The Empty Classroom Day is a special day when schools commit to take one class outside to learn for an hour. Learning outside the classroom can be fun, memorable and healthy. Last year schools in London started Empty Classroom Day to celebrate all the outdoor learning that is happening in the city. Despite the rain the day was a great success and so it is going to happen again this year with the participation of schools from all across the UK. The aim is to get every pupil in the UK learning outside the classroom, in playgrounds, parks, farms, activity centres, nature reserves and the great outdoors on Empty Classroom Day.



*The Empty Classroom Sign Up*

Now it is time for schools in Malta to give it a try. Maltese Schools are being invited to participate in an attempt to make Empty Classroom Day an international phenomenon. Malta is sure to have much better weather than the

UK – so participation should not be a problem. As schools in Malta break up for the summer holidays before schools in the UK, it is being proposed that Empty Classroom Day Malta will be held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013. If you are interested, sign up and let the organisers know what your school will be doing on Empty Classroom Day Malta and you will get lots of ideas for outdoors education activities from the many organisations that are keen to help. Just follow the link and put “Malta” as your area in the sign up form: <http://is.gd/emptyclassroomday>.

## Teaching Resources

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

### (a) The Greens

This website is a treasure chest of interactive green activities targeting specifically intended for children. Children can watch The GREENS' cartoon adventures and discover related green games, news, downloads, action tips, links, and much more. The site also has a blog where children can share their ideas about the environment and green actions. Visit <http://www.meetthegreens.org/>



### (b) Promise of Place



This website is dedicated to Place-Based Education and contains several education resources that use student experiences in local heritage, cultures and landscapes as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. The emphasis of the learning activities is on active student participation. Visit <http://www.promiseofplace.org/>



If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Prof Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Co-ordinator, on [paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt](mailto:paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt).

Visit our website on <http://ekoskola.org.mt/> or facebook on [www.facebook.com/ekoskola](http://www.facebook.com/ekoskola).

# Modern slavery

**Decide for yourself**



Get more information about globalisation from [www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Globalization](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Globalization)

**Sweatshops** are workplaces where workers are subject to extreme exploitation, including the absence of a living wage or benefits, poor working conditions, and verbal and physical abuse. Without an adequate wage sweatshop workers are never able to save enough money to improve their lives. They are trapped in an awful cycle of exploitation. Those in favour of sweatshops often argue that even though sweatshops are bad, they at least give people jobs they wouldn't have had otherwise. Whichever way it is portrayed, this is still an abuse and an exploitation of human misery to maximise profits.



**What is Consumerism?** We live in a consumer society that continuously encourages us to purchase goods and services in ever-greater amounts ... even when we don't really need them. Consumerism is a major cause of environmental degradation and tends to increase the disparity between the rich and the poor. Buying something is not a personal affair. For example, consider the mobile phone you bought from your local shop, its battery, its screen, its software chip and other parts came from different suppliers and scores of workers spread all over the world. Nearly everything you own follows a similar, complex path often referred to as globalisation. When closely monitored, globalisation has the power to bring millions of people out of poverty. But when left unchecked, globalisation can fuel the ugliest trade known to humanity – modern slavery.

**Making profits at any cost.** As some corporations and industries of famous brands become increasingly globalized they try to beat the competition and make more profits by doing business with regimes that violate human rights. These violations include the use of child labour and the use of tactics that intimidate workers. At times they have even hired paramilitaries to intimidate or kill union leaders. The toy, garments and sportswear industries have frequently resorted to the use of sweatshops.



**Child Labour** The International Labour Organization (ILO) has estimated that 250 million children, between the ages of five and fourteen, work in developing countries. Many of these children are forced to work. They are denied an education and a normal childhood. Some are confined and beaten while others are denied the right to leave the workplace and go home to their families. Some are even abducted and forced to work.

**What can we do?** We can hit back at companies which profit from these practices by hitting them where it hurts most: their profits. We can try to shift our spending away from problem companies to responsible ones. We can support organisations that are working

against sweatshops and child labour. When you visit a retail store ask about whether their products were manufactured without sweatshops or child labour. Taking part in well organized boycotts may cause a company to change the working conditions in a factory, instead of simply closing it down.

*Informed action is the best way to act. Visit [www.veganpeace.com/sweatshops/sweatshops\\_and\\_child\\_labor.htm](http://www.veganpeace.com/sweatshops/sweatshops_and_child_labor.htm) for more information and links to other sites about this issue.*

*More specifically you can check out the environmental, ethical and social record of companies and their products on these websites: [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org) and [www.greenamerica.org](http://www.greenamerica.org).*