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December 2014

Issue 45

Editorial Note

Welcome to another edition of the EkoSkola newsletter. As in previous editions, this issue is jam-packed with opportunities for you to participate in initiatives that highlight your students' abilities. Considering that three post-secondary institutions are now part of the ever increasing EkoSkola family, we are now including more items that target youths. The EkoSkola team would like to wish all readers a Holy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

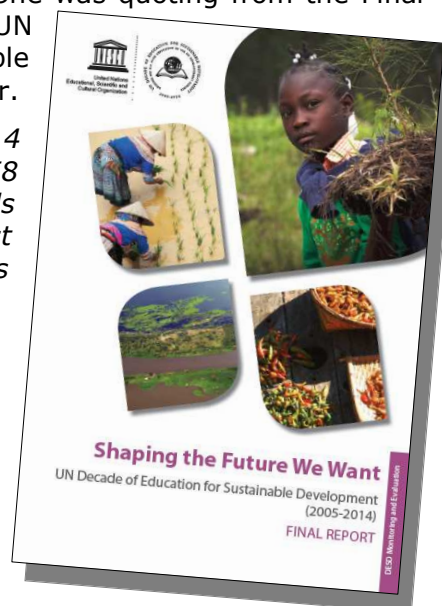
Worldwide recognition for EkoSkola

Now it is official! EkoSkola is the **largest** ESD network in the world! And Malta is part of that network! This incredible news was communicated by Ms Irina Bokova, UNESCO's Director General, during her opening address to the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (10 to 12 November 2014). She was quoting from the Final Report marking the achievements of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development which comes to a close this year.

The report states that *"Currently more than 14 million students and 1.2 million teachers in 58 countries are involved in the Eco-Schools programme, making it the largest international network of teachers and pupils in the world."* (p.91).

This is a great honour for all our schools who are part of this large network of individuals committed to improving the quality of life all around them.

The conference was attended by 1100 delegates from 148 countries. Prof Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Co-ordinator, attended the conference as one of the international ESD experts invited for the event.



Health and Safety Week



Following the success of last year's event, students from EkoSkola were invited again to a morning dedicated to waste management practices on Friday 24th October, as part of the Health and Safety Week, organised by Le Meridien Hotel and Spa, St Julians.

Ms Mary Gaerty from GreenSkips Ltd and Ms Charlene Mercieca Magro from GreenPak both gave highly informative talks to the EkoSkola committees present for the event. Students were also invited to submit their ideas about new Food Waste policies and to take part in the competition organised by Greenpak. Towards the end, the students present engaged in an active discussion about the current waste management practices within the participating schools. A certificate was also presented to Mr Joseph Zammit, Health and Safety Manager for following up on the recommendations that EkoSkola students presented to Le Meridien Hotel & Spa after conducting an environmental audit in 2013.



The schools participating in this event were: St Clare College, San Ġwann Primary B; San Ġorġ Preca College, Floriana, Valletta and Hamrun – Ġuże Pace Primary; St Joseph Junior School, Sliema and St Albert the Great College, Valletta.

Green Flag Award Ceremony at Verdala Palace

A number of EkoSkola students were presented with the prestigious international Green Flag Award for their commitment towards ensuring a good quality of life for all. The ceremony was presided over by Her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca at The Verdala Palace in the presence of 78 students from 39 schools. In their short speech the students thanked the President of Malta for hosting them and for finding the time to celebrate their achievement.



Mr Vincent Attard, Nature Trust Executive President, said that "The EkoSkola programme has been instrumental in empowering students who have shown that when given the opportunity, they can think outside the box and bring about a mentality change in our Islands". Mr Attard explained that the Eco-Schools programme is recognized as the largest programme focusing on ESD with over 14 million participating students. HE

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca then presented the Green Flags, Silver and Bronze Award certificates to the EkoSkola committee representatives and their accompanying educators. She was visibly impressed by the students' sense of commitment and commended their efforts. In her concluding remarks HE Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca congratulated all the schools present and invited others to join the EkoSkola programme. While confirming her patronage of EkoSkola, she also



thanked Nature Trust (Malta) for providing Maltese and Gozitan students with such opportunities and pointed out that the programme's methodology is very much in line with the policy of her presidency: that of empowering Maltese citizens to be the agents of change irrespective of their social realities.

The following is a list of all awarded schools:

Received the Green Flag for the 5th time

- St Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda
 - St Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii School, Paola
-

Received the Green Flag for the 4th time

- San Ġorġ Preca College, Paola Primary A
 - St Ignatius College, Siġġiewi Primary
 - St Benedict College, Kirkop Primary
-

Received the Green Flag for the 3rd time

- St Benedict College, Mqabba Primary
 - St Margaret College, Żejtun Primary A
 - St Benedict College, Tarxien Girls' Secondary
 - St Nicholas College, Baħrija Primary
 - St Francis School, Birkirkara
 - The Archbishop's Seminary, Rabat
 - St Francis School, Sliema
-

Received the Green Flag for the 2nd time

- Maria Regina College, Mosta Girls' Secondary
 - St Joseph Junior School, Sliema
 - St Benedict College, Qrendi Primary
 - St Joseph Senior School, Sliema
 - St Benedict College, Safi Primary
 - St Margaret College, Girls' Secondary, Cospicua
 - St Dorothy Senior School
 - St Monica School, Gżira
 - St Edward's College
 - St Therese College, Birkirkara Primary
-

Received the Green Flag for the 1st time

- Dun Manwel Attard, Young Adult Education Resource Centre, Wardija
 - St Benedict College, Għaxaq Primary
 - Gozo College, Sannat Primary & Special Unit
 - St Francis School, Victoria
 - Maria Regina College, Mellieħa Primary
 - St Joan Antide School, Gudja
 - San Anton School
 - St Margaret College, Żabbar Primary A
 - St Albert the Great College
-

Received the Silver Award

- San Ġorġ Preca College, Valletta Primary
 - St Paul's Missionary College
 - St Ignatius College, Ħandaq Girls' Secondary
-

Received the Bronze Award

- Convent of the Sacred Heart Junior School, St Julians
 - St Aloysius College, Secondary School, Birkirkara
 - Gozo College, Għarb Primary
 - St Clare College, Sliema Boys' Secondary
 - Gozo College, Boys' Secondary, Victoria
-

Annual FEE programmes seminars

As customary, Nature Trust organised its annual FEE seminars in Malta (25th November) and Gozo (28th November). Each event was characterised by parallel sessions for teachers and students. The teachers' events focused on ways to address the requirements of the National Curriculum Framework for ESD through the different FEE programmes. During their sessions, students learned how to conduct an environmental audit and how to develop an action plan.



Teachers and students during their respective sessions

The seminar in Malta was held in St Ignatius College, Luqa Primary School and was attended by 92 students and 66 teachers from 46 State and Non-State schools. Ms Marie-Angela Schembri Meli, EO Early Years and Ms Elizabeth Borg and Ms Marianne Bonaci from the Home Economics Seminar Centre also attended the seminar.



Right: Students writing their promises on how to reduce waste. Left: Students showing an innovative way of presenting the Eco Code

The Gozo Seminar was attended by 45 students and 32 teachers from 12 schools. It was hosted at the Gozo College, Sannat Primary and Special Unit who also entertained the attendees by two songs performed by the school's Early Years. Besides the sessions for teachers and students, the seminar included the distribution of the EkoSkola awards by Mr Victor Galea, Gozo College Principal, who also addressed the participants and commended the schools for integrating ESD in the curriculum through the FEE programmes.



As part of the initiatives related to the European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) both seminars adopted strategies that heavily reduced the generation of waste. Attendees could also see an example of

vermacomposting. Moreover, representatives from Wasterserv also delivered interesting presentations about food waste both for teachers and for the students. Nature Trust would like to thank Ms Etienne Farrell and Ms Pauline Grech, head teachers of the schools that hosted the seminars.

The Opening and Blessing of the Well

Our school has been making saving water a priority for the past 3 years. The EkoSkola Committee has been working hard to find ways to save water at school. We tried having a rain harvester, but it turned out to be a bit impractical and expensive. Then we decided: why not fix the two wells in our school's front garden?





Phoning here and annoying people there, we finally managed to get funds to start cleaning and fixing one well from the School Council. Cleaning the well took ages as it was full of mud, sludge and garbage gathered from the main road. Slowly the well was emptied and fixed and on the 24th April we had the opening and blessing ceremony.

The former EkoSkola Committee President Daniel Cini and Vice-President Christopher

Scerri as well as other former members who had worked so hard for this project were invited. We sang two songs related to water, acted out a mime and planted flowers in our front garden. The Parish Priest, Fr. Manuel, blessed the well.



Now a lot of the rainwater that usually gets lost along the main road will be gathered in our well and can be used to water the plants in our garden. Our next step is to find the means to clean and fix the second well in our garden and another well in the playground close by. We would like to thank our headmistress Ms. Erika, who always supported our initiatives and projects, Mr. Joseph Cassar for fixing our well and all the other people who in some way helped us with this project.

Written by James Cini (President) and Beatrice Mizzi (Vice-President), EkoSkola Committee, St Clare College, San Gwann Primary B

Zoom: Kids on the Move 2014

The theme "Global Climate Change" was an area which the EkoSkola Committee within St Ignatius College, Secondary School decided to act on and inform the rest of our community. We researched the internet and discovered a number of initiatives which we wished to try out. This research also led us to a particular internet site. On a European level, we were really interested in the "Zoom Campaign Activity" which unites the effort of many across Europe, reaffirming that together we can stimulate change. This campaign invited children all over Europe to make their daily journey to school on foot and to register the number of footsteps. However, since our students come from different cities, we decided to adapt it slightly and asked the Form 1 students (Year 7) to walk from home to their parish church. By collecting so called "Green Footprints all over Europe" the children showed the "Big Ones", what the "Small Ones" could do for the protection of the Global Climate.



During various initiatives at our school, we promoted physical exercise as an alternative to travelling by car. This is very applicable to our community since, although our students come from different localities, most of the destinations are within walking distance. We collected our data and the results were presented during a special assembly. Subsequently, the data and images of this initiative were attached to the EkoSkola noticeboard. During the

presentation of the data, a short clip about the effects of climate change was shown. Concurrently, a number of subject teachers discussed the issue in their lessons. Ultimately, our results were handed to Climate Alliance which was responsible for the whole amount of collected Green Footprints. Our school from the small island of Malta will be represented by this Eco Activity at the 20th UN Climate Change Conference which will take place in Lima (Peru) between the 1st and 12th December 2014 promoting a simple, but effective contribution towards a cleaner world.

*Written by Chanelle Chircop, Eco-School Committee Member,
St Ignatius College, Secondary School, Ħandaq, Qormi*

EkoSkola Helping Children to Fulfill Their Dreams

As EkoSkola Committee at St Monica School, Gżira we discussed how we can help out the public to create a happier environment. After winning the Green Flag for second time, we decided that we should include this theme in our Action Plan. We did this by teaming up with 'Children's Dreams', run by Agenzija Appoġġ. This campaign helps children who are growing up in difficult surroundings to have a dream fulfilled for Christmas.

The committee for the secondary section chose fifteen dreams, one dream per class and as a school we decided to raise money to buy the vouchers needed by



these children or else to reuse items in good condition. These dreams included: vouchers for clothes, shoes and quilts which unfortunately not everyone can afford. The committee of the primary sector decided to fulfil one of the larger dreams: to help children have a more welcoming environment when they visit Appoġġ. They collected items such as toys, craft materials and other stationary. The items collected were either new or in very good condition. Families and staff members were also encouraged to fulfil a dream on the website www.childrendreams.org.

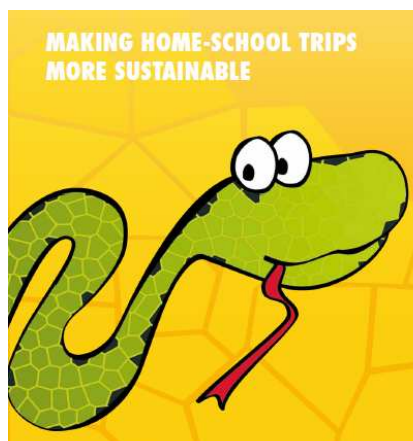
Written by the EkoSkola Committee, St Monica School, Gżira

You might find these interesting

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 initiatives that they are organising. This section of our newsletter is specifically dedicated to this information. 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. If you decide to include it under the EkoSkola programme, include it in your Action Plan as part of your strategy to address the issues identified in your Environmental Review ... **not** as a stand alone.

(a) Sustainable Traffic practices

After the success of the Traffic Snake Game in Belgium and eight other EU countries, the Traffic Snake Game Network, funded under Intelligent Energy Europe, was established as an effective EU-wide and long term support network and Malta is being represented by Paragon Europe. The network aims to replicate, transfer and expand the uptake of the Traffic Snake Game as a successful proven tool for changing the travel behaviour of students and their parents. The 9 EU countries that have already implemented the Traffic Snake Game had a very positive outcome and exceeded their target of reducing CO₂ emissions by 46,236kg CO₂ realising a total of 134,796kg carbon savings.



During the campaign, students put dots on a banner every time they use sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport, carpooling) to come to school. Each school sets its own target at the beginning of the campaign period. The goal is to fill the Traffic Snake banner with dots by the end of the campaign. Through the implementation of the Traffic Snake Game, schools in Malta will have the opportunity to join a network of schools from all over Europe; reduce the traffic congestion at the start and the end of school caused by parents accompanying their children, while promoting the importance of energy efficiency and a healthier lifestyle for students between the age of 4 and 12. This game is an invaluable resource for schools focusing on sustainable transport.

For more information please contact Roberta Gatt at roberta.gatt@paragoneurope.eu or 2010 6426 or visit the project website at <http://www.trafficsnakegame.eu/>.

(b) The Innovation Challenge: Go Green



This is a competition for young people aged between 17 and 30. Individuals or groups of up to three members each are invited to identify an environmental problem that affects Malta, and to come up with a green innovation solution to this problem. Participants can focus on any theme such as (but are not limited to): water conservation, alternative energy, pollution reduction, waste management, agriculture,

architecture, urban planning, traffic management, transport, manufacturing, and construction. Participants will have the opportunity to attend workshops on idea generation and development, feasibility studies, and intellectual property rights as part of this Challenge. Participants will be required to submit a ten-page proposal outlining a green innovation solution to an environmental problem affecting the Maltese Islands. The proposal is expected to contain (a) a description of the environmental problem; (b) an outline of a green innovation solution to this problem; and (c) a feasibility analysis for the implementation of the solution.

Submissions, which might include prototypes or other supporting material, should be submitted by noon on Monday 13th April 2015 at Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, St Joseph High Rd, Sta Venera. For any queries please email jason.a.zammit@gov.mt and visit the Aġenzija Żgħażaġh website: <http://www.agenziazghazagh.gov.mt/News/507/>.

Clean up activity at Pembroke Garigue Heritage Park

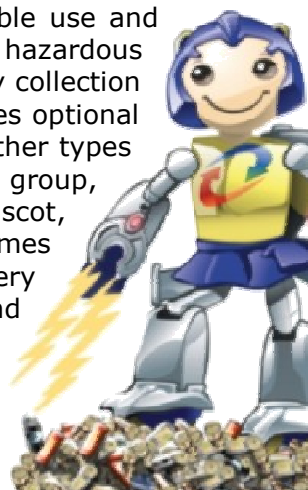
Nature Trust (Malta) is organising another Sustainable Clean-up

Date: 18th March 2015
Venue: Pembroke Garigue Heritage Park

Interested EkoSkola schools should send an email to cynthia.caruana.2@ilearn.edu.mt by 9th January 2015

(c) Busting Batteries

The campaign aims to educate young people about the sustainable use and proper disposal of spent batteries, since these are classified as hazardous waste and require special treatment. Apart from the annual battery collection competition, the 6th National Battery Buster Campaign also includes optional visits by WasteServ staff to give a brief talk about batteries and other types of hazardous waste. These talks are tailored according to the age group, and in the case of kindergarten and primary schools, the mascot, Batterina, may also pay the children a visit, while educational games can also be organised as part of the session. The inter-school battery collection competition will run until the end of May 2015 and collection of batteries will begin in June 2015. Participating schools are kindly asked to inform WasteServ of their closure date, so that the final collection of batteries may be done before the school closes for the summer recess. For information about the rules of the competition and bookings for talks contact WasteServ, on schools.ws@wasteservmalta.com.



Teaching Resources

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



(a) Resources for Early Years: This is network of educators, parents, organizations, and others who want to help young children connect with nature and care for the environment. Natural Start is a project of the North

American Association for Environmental Education aimed at providing educators working with Early Years with ideas, resources and links for learning projects. The site is available on <http://naturalstart.org/>.



(b) The Water Cycle for Kids: This site, maintained by the US Geological Survey, provides several teaching and learning resources concerning water. Amongst these is a detailed Interactive Water-Cycle Diagram which allows the user to "mouse around" the parts of the water cycle and view explanations, pictures, and more online information. The Interactive Water-Cycle Diagram is available for three ability levels. Visit <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle-kids.html>.

Question & Answer

Certain themes promoted through EkoSkola are more related to social issues rather than environmental ones. Is this appropriate?

Based on the UNESCO framework for the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development, key themes for ESD should include, among other things, poverty alleviation, citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility in local and global contexts, democracy and governance, justice, security, human rights, health, gender equity, cultural diversity, rural and urban development, economy, production and consumption patterns, corporate responsibility, environmental protection, natural resource management and biological and landscape diversity.

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.

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

Celebrating a Sustainable Christmas

Decide for yourself



This month we are inviting you to review certain Christmas traditions and to think how you can make your behaviour more sustainable.

Instead of sending Christmas cards why don't you send ecards via the internet or send an SMS or make a phone call or even visit the person concerned and share with them the joy of Christmas?

When buying Christmas gifts look at its label and make sure that no children, workers or animals were mistreated in the manufacture of the product.

When buying gifts for family members, consider the possibility of pooling your money and buying a better and more useful gift.

Make an effort to resolve any conflicts during this Christmas.

Use LED lamps (Light Emitting Diodes) when decorating the Christmas tree and the windows of your home. You will be using 90% less electricity! You can also save electricity by limiting the hours you leave these lights on.

Eat responsibly and avoid wasting food. Besides being good for your health, you can donate the money saved to help organizations fighting poverty.

Use recycled paper when wrapping your gifts. Use string instead of adhesive tape to keep the paper in place. This will avoid tearing the wrapping paper when opening the gifts – and promote its reuse.

Buy only necessary and useful gifts thus ensuring that you do not spend money on things that are soon ignored.

Help the needy voluntarily – not out of pity – but because it is their right to live a good quality of life like other citizens.