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Editorial Note

We are practically still in the initial months of the scholastic year and we have already launched two ESD projects: *We Eat Responsibly* and *Promoting a Zero-Waste Society*. As it is now customary, these projects provide funds that help schools translate words into action. Raising awareness is not enough. ESD is action oriented and EkoSkola, through its methodology, provides students with opportunities to become active change agents. Encouraged by the response shown to these (and other past) projects by our schools, Nature Trust (Malta) promises to continue channelling more funds into schools ... the educational hubs of our communities.

International recognition for Eco-Schools



UNESCO Global Action Programme on
Education for Sustainable Development

As a follow up to the Nagoya Conference in 2014, which saw the closure of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO published the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD that identifies five priority action areas to advance the ESD agenda. UNESCO invited key stakeholders to become members of the GAP Partner Network to drive forward the implementation of the GAP. Together with other entities, the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) – the foundation responsible for Eco-Schools, LEAF, YRE, Blue Flag and Green Key – has been chosen to champion one of the GAP one for each priority action areas: Transforming Learning and Training Environments.

The final report of the UN Decade for ESD, after looking into initiatives from 125 countries over a 10-year period, concluded that EkoSkola is the largest international ESD network of teachers and pupils in the world. □

The International FEE Eco-Schools Conference

This year's meeting for the Eco-Schools National Co-ordinators was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. This year's theme was focused on the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the role that Eco-Schools plays throughout the world in supporting these goals.

The three-day event saw 85 delegates from over 50 countries around the world coming together for an exchange of knowledge and best practices in ESD. During the workshop sessions the delegates explored issues concerning Whole School Community engagement practices; methodologies for programme monitoring and evaluation; and teacher training programmes. Delegates also visited local schools and were addressed by key local corporate partners.



GLOBE meeting

The GLOBE Annual Meeting for Europe and Eurasia was held in Cologne, Germany on 26 - 30 September 2016. Besides reviewing GLOBE's progress in the region, representatives from 18 countries were also familiarised with the education resources and training material of the programme. The meeting was followed by the meeting of MASS (Motivate and Attract Students to Science) – an EU funded project aimed at supporting teachers by providing attractive and motivating approaches to science teaching. Malta was represented by Prof Paul Pace (Country Co-ordinator) and Mr Francesco Debono (EO ESD).



GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) is an international science and education program that provides students and the public from around the world with the

opportunity to participate in data collection and doing science while contributing to our understanding of the Earth system and global environment. During the conference, it was quite interesting to learn that in several countries schools use GLOBE activities as part of their Eco-Schools programme. Schools use GLOBE activities as part of their environmental review and then use Action Plans to address the issues identified. The programme will be officially launched in Malta later on during this scholastic year.

More from *We Eat Responsibly*

Launched for the European Year for Development in June 2015, We Eat Responsibly is an EU funded action-oriented global learning program built around the internationally approved 7-steps Eco-schools methodology. The programme helps learners develop critical thinking skills, attitudes promoting global citizenry and responsible food behaviour patterns. Nine EU countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) are participating in the project.



After the success of last year's pilot project, this year's programme was officially launched on October 16th – World Food Day, whose theme, announced by FAO, is "Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too". 38 schools will be participating in this year's project.

As preparation, 48 teachers from 27 different schools were actively engaged in training seminars related to the project held on the 5th and 6th of October at the Xrobb I-Għagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre. During the seminars participants were updated on global food consumption issues and how these could be made relevant to local contexts. They were specifically trained, not just on the choice of tailored pedagogies to engage different learners of different abilities, but also on the appropriate use of resources and evaluation techniques. Andrea Bullivant (Liverpool World Centre, UK) and Tereza Čajková (Glopolis, Czech Republic), experienced educators on global education, led the sessions.



Having gone through the tough pilot year during which resource material was developed, tried and tested, a group of 10 educators participated in the Menu for Change International Forum, organised by Glopolis, which took place on the 21st - 23rd October in Prague,

Czech Republic. The Maltese teachers were able to network with teachers from the other 8 European countries that are taking part in the 'We Eat Responsibly' Project as well as learn about experiences of food systems and their transformations in India and Benin, Africa. The unsustainable palm oil and fair trade issues were discussed as well as the critical thinking skills involved in helping students to make the right choices when it comes to food and a low impact on the environment. Food and its global dimension were celebrated throughout. As attested by the participating educators, this was a great experience and inspiration to all!

Universal Children's Day Celebration

The United Nations' Universal Children's Day is celebrated to promote the welfare of the children of the world as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 13 of the Convention specifies that the child has the right to seek information and share his/her opinion with others by talking, drawing, writing, or any other way unless it harms or offends other people. Through its activities, particularly the summits and parliamentary sessions, EkoSkola has been active in promoting children's voices in issues concerning their future ... their quality of life ... sustainable development issues. Yet it seems that children's voices are just heard and appreciated, but not considered significant enough to be regarded seriously when national policies are drafted.



Students from Green Flag Schools sent video clip messages about *How can our lives be better?* These were collated into a single video clip that was premiered during a Children's Day Celebration held on the 18th November at the Maria Regina College, Mellieħa Primary School. The event was attended by the Hon Evarist Bartolo, Minister of Education and Employment, and Ms Pauline Miceli, Commissioner for Children. The video clip, which can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AvsDvPeczk>, will be sent to local policy makers and widely distributed locally and abroad.

It's time to help

This Erasmus+ Project involved students aged 8-16 and their teachers from European Eco-Schools (from the Czech Republic, Latvia, Germany, Finland, Malta and Portugal). The Maltese partner was De La Salle College (Junior Section).

The project was an opportunity to develop co-operation and new friendships among the students and the teachers within the eco-school structure. It also helped to increase their interest in culture, traditions and environment of the countries, but also to compare their previous work in the field of environmental issues, share their experience and ideas and also look for effective solutions to issues related to water, energy, waste, biodiversity, economical consumer and school environment.

The main deliverables of the project include six booklets focusing on different project topics where the Eco-problems were described together with the schools analyses and their solutions, worksheets together with the methodology, instructions for further use in schools/eco-centres, CDs with project description, its outcomes, results and worksheets with instructions were created for free using by anybody who was and is interested in Eco-questions.

The project contributed to cross-curricular education and enabled all students to develop knowledge, skills and competences in different spheres. The teachers thanks to the cooperation with their foreign partners had a considerable opportunity to share experience, teaching ideas and procedures. All deliverables and information about the project are available on the project website: <http://itth.webnode.cz/>.



You might find these interesting

Being the main ESD school 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 standalone.

(a) Battery Buster Campaign

Wasteserv is inviting kindergarten, primary, secondary and post-secondary schools to participate in the 8th National Battery Buster Campaign. The inter-school battery collection competition will run until the **end of December 2016** and collection of batteries will begin in January 2017. All types of spent batteries are eligible for the campaign with the exception of car accumulators and UPS batteries. The winning school will be awarded a prize of €1,000 to be used either in an educational project of an environmental nature or to be invested in school resources that are of benefit to the



environment, ideally related to waste management. There are also other prizes in store for participating schools.

Apart from the annual battery collection competition, this year's campaign also includes optional visits by Wasteserv staff to give students a brief talk about batteries, hazardous waste and waste management in general. 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. Rules for participation can be downloaded from:

<https://www.wasteservmalta.com/media/text/documents/Resources/Rules%20-%208th%20Battery%20Buster%20Campaign.pdf>.

(b) Project Polar Bear

Project Polar Bear challenges student groups across the globe to take action on climate change. Teams consisting of 4-30 students who are less than 18 years old can participate in this project. Each team must have an adult advisor. Teams compete for a grant by



creating a plan for a project that will help reduce reliance on fossil fuels and engage their communities. This can be a plan for a new project or a proposal to continue an existing project. The project categories for this year are: Transportation; Energy Savings; Sustainable Food Systems; and Community Engagement through Art and Advocacy. Students and advisors are expected to record their progress throughout the competition through photos, research and on social media. These records are then submitted to the judging team. The top

three high-scoring teams receive a grant of \$1,000, \$750, and \$300, respectively, to continue their projects. Registration is open till **November 25**. Teams work on their projects through March 15, 2017 and the winners will be announced on Earth Day, April 22, 2017. For more information about the project, regulations and registration please visit:

<http://www.polarbearsinternational.org/our-work/community-outreach/project-polar-bear>.

Teaching Resources

More useful websites ideal for ESD related lesson planning and project work.

(a) Becoming the change you want



EkoSkola is renowned for promoting action in the community. However, at times we tend to get discouraged because of obstacles we encounter. Garry Charnock, a resident in

Ashton Hayes (a small village in Chester, UK), wanted to do something to reduce the carbon footprint of his village.

He contacted the parish council if they would support a community-wide carbon neutrality pledge. On January 26, 2006, in the presence of 60% of the town's adults (and a large percentage of the children attending an Eco-School), the idea was publicly proposed and accepted. Nowadays, Ashton Hayes is leading the way towards carbon neutrality in the UK and is influencing other communities to do likewise. The website (<http://www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk/>) documents the process and provides ideas of how individuals can power a community and bring about sustainable lifestyles.

(b) Fact Sheets on Climate Change and Health



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

The US Environmental Protection Agency have been providing information about climate change for quite some time. One of its initiatives is a set of fact sheets that address human health. Understanding the threats that climate change poses to human health can help us work together to lower risks and be prepared. Everyone, at some point in their lives, is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Some people are more affected by climate

change than others because of factors like where they live; their age, health, income, and occupation; and how they go about their day-to-day life. Although primarily intended for the US, the information and advice contained in the fact sheets is valuable for everyone. The fact sheets can be downloaded from: <https://www.epa.gov/climate-impacts/factsheets-climate-change-health-and-populations-concern>.

The following entities support EkoSkola



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.