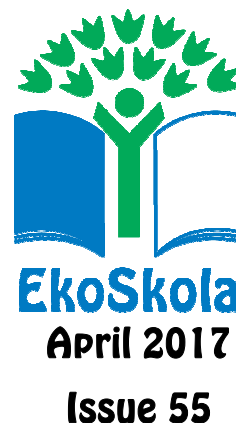


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Editorial Note

For some, adopting sustainable lifestyles seems an impossible task because it requires a change in habits, a change in mentality. Similarly the changes in our educational system proposed by ESD may also seem farfetched and idealistic. Yet the changes brought about in our schools through the EkoSkola programme are clear indicators that all this is possible. In this edition of our newsletter we are documenting some of the several initiatives happening in our schools. All this is possible thanks to the dedication and commitment of our link persons. On behalf of the EkoSkola Team we take this opportunity to thank you for your support and to wish you and all our readers a restful Easter Recess.

FEE Fest

For the past fourteen years Nature Trust FEE Malta has invested heavily in present and future generations through its flagship FEE programmes: EkoSkola, YRE and LEAF. To further promote this successful methodology and work ethic, the eNGO hosted the first ever FEE Fest at the newly built St Benedict College, Kirkop Middle School.



The FEE Fest concept is that of providing a one-stop-shop opportunity to learn about the various FEE programmes, develop ideas for cross-curricular work, get information about various sustainable projects and initiatives and provide an excellent platform for networking.

FEE Fest was a 3-day event with different exhibition stalls and scheduled sessions targeting students and teachers. Participants were free to attend on any day and plan their visit according to their particular interests and needs. Over 300 students from 38 schools and 64 adults (teachers and parents) paid a visit to the Fest. Here is a quick look at the different stalls which were available at the FEE Fest:



Dealing with organic waste and other Waste Management Practices (WasteServ)



ESD Games for Primary & Secondary schools (Ms Marthese Formosa, Koperativa Kummerċ Ġust)



Living a healthy and responsible lifestyle with Fonzu l-Fenek (Prof Suzanne Piscopo, University of Malta)



Aqrali Storja – for young children (Ms Rita Borg Gatt - National Literacy Agency)



21st Century skills as a foundation to ESD (Mr Francesco Debono – EO ESD)



Water Conservation (HSBC Water Programme - Catch the Drop campaign)



Caring for trees (Mr Neville Ebejer, LIFE Project: Saving Buskett)



Green Roofs (Mr Vince Lloyd Morris, LifeMedGreenRoof Project, University of Malta)



An interfaith quite space for reflection and prayer about sustainability and creation (Prayer Spaces in Schools - Malta)



Floor Games about Energy Conservation and about Eating Responsibly for primary and secondary schools



Networking and relaxation area



Information stalls for the various FEE programmes and projects we run in schools



In its bid to continue to equip learners with an array of ESD skills and competences required to develop into informed, active and responsible citizens, each year Nature Trust



FEE Malta partners with various entities to provide schools with resources to achieve this goal. This year was no exception. Twenty-one schools also received support funding as part of the EU funded project We Eat Responsibly (WER). Many schools have already benefitted from this project during its first cycle and the results have been widely acclaimed by the international partners. WER is intended to make participants revisit the decisions they take daily related to food selection, provision and consumption and how these affect the health of the planet and the quality of life of its inhabitants.

The support funding was presented by Hon. Evarist Bartolo, Minister for Education and Employment who also officially opened the FEE Fest.

Another ten schools received support funding from WasteServ as part of the School-Community Link Project Grant Scheme: Promoting a zero-waste society. The scheme is intended to financially support schools in their plans to come up with original, innovative community-based projects aimed at reducing waste... especially organic waste. The support funding was presented to the respective schools by Hon. Dr José Herrera, Minister for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change during the FEE fest.



Nature Trust FEE Malta would like to thank St Benedict College principal, Mr Paul Debono and the Head of Kirkop Middle School, Ms Charmaine Pisani Gixti for believing in our initiative and for providing the premises and the support required to organise the event.

The event was also reported in the local media:

- <http://www.gov.mt/en/Government/Press%20Releases/Pages/2017/January/13/pr170068.aspx>
- <http://www.tvm.com.mt/mt/news/programmi-varji-fl-iskejjel-biex-isahhu-l-kuxjenza-ambjentali-fit-tfal/?src=hm>
- <http://www.newsbook.com.mt/artikli/2017/1/12/festa-b-differenza-fil-kullegh-san-benedittu.55385/>

Jum is-Siġar – Arbor Day

On the 17th January, 120 indigenous trees were planted at Buskett. The event was



organised by the National Stakeholders Committee of the LIFE project-Saving Buskett on behalf of the PARKS Directorate (within the Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change). A total of 120 students from 6 schools planted carob, oak, olive, pine and bay laurel at Malta's main

woodland. These trees will form part of a wider initiative of an international NGO - ENO - Environment Online which is present in more than 150 countries through a virtual network of educators. ENO has made a commitment at the UN RIO+20 Summit of planting 100 million trees by the end of this year and the campaign has been running for the past five years.



The students also had the opportunity to engage in various hands-on educational sessions led by experts on various aspects of the woodland including: forest fires; woodland lichens; tree identification; scavenger hunt; the countryside code; tree age, girth and height and also plant pest control.

One of the highlights of the event was definitely the short tour around Buskett. The PARKS Directorate is participating in a LIFE project: Saving Buskett. The project is at an advanced stage, and students could admire the meticulous work done by the PARKs personnel in the careful removal of alien species, the building of rubble walls and reforestation by planting of indigenous trees. The event was organised with the support of Nature Trust FEE Malta, BirdLife Malta, Plant Health Directorate, Maths Support Unit, Civil Protection Department, Argotti Botanic Gardens – University of Malta, Ms Jennifer Fiorentino.



Linking up with a school in India on Waste Management

Some time ago, our class contacted a class in India through Skype. We communicated with St John's Universal School in Mumbai, India. Our subject was Waste Management since it is a theme in our Action Plan. The EkoSkola Committee members went to Mr Micallef's class (Year 5.1) to introduce themselves to the Grade 4 students in India. All the class participated in the discussion.

At times we found it quite hard to understand what they were saying because their accent is very different from ours. We agreed that the increase in population led to an increase in waste, which in turn has become a global issue. We talked about our role as students to manage waste. We learned so much from each other.



Everyone had something to say and do. They had very interesting and complicated questions. They are also an Eco-School and we were pleased that we are both working for the same goal – to have a better world for us and for the future generations. It was a wonderful experience and we learnt a lot from it!

*This article was written by Martina Degabriele (Year 5.1)
EkoSkola Committee President, St Nicholas College, Rabat Primary*

EkoSkola Project - Gozo College Middle School



The EkoSkola/LEAF committee at Gozo College Middle School this year embarked on a multi programme project in which we reached the aims of our action plan towards responsible food consumption, outdoor learning, appreciation of natural resources and organic waste reduction supported by funding from the EU project We Eat Responsibly and the WasteServ Community Link Project grant.

The Open Day organised on Friday 20th January was the conclusion to lots of preparations, research and activities. To get started, a presentation on Maltese wild plants and trees and their uses and benefits was given by Mr John Michael Mizzi. Following this, the students went foraging in a valley lead by Mr

Stephen Mifsud, from Eco Gozo. Mr Mifsud gave an explanation on how to identify and pick nettle, borage, fennel and sea beet leaves.



The students used the foraged leaves during a cooking session where, with the help of Ms Claire Borg, prepared various items like nettle soup, focaccia, Gozitan style ftira and cake. These cooked items were sampled by attendees during the open day. Attendees also witnessed the launch of a recipe book, the aim of which is to reach out to more people to raise awareness about new ingredients which are frequently considered as waste.



tangerine sugar stored in reused jars and decorated by the students and read information on the uses of wild plants and historical related facts which the students themselves researched about. During the open day the students also played an interactive game on responsible food consumption.



Attendees had the opportunity to buy herbed salt and

NICE! Nature Is a Colourful Environment



This is our motto representing the objective of our EkoSkola actions since the start of the scholastic year 2015-16. During the first months, the EkoSkola committee of the Maria Regina, Mosta Secondary School (Lily of the Valley) asked all students to provide suggestions on how to improve the school environment. The Environmental Review carried out by the committee determined that it was best to mainly concentrate on improving the garden area for the coming year.

The committee held numerous meetings with LEAF representative Mr Johann Gatt and Ms Elizabeth Agius who provided feedback and suggestions about the ambitious task to revive the school garden. Furthermore, Mr Neville Ebejer (PARKs Environment Officer) visited our school to explain the best way to enhance and landscape the school

garden. An outing to Buskett helped us identify which plants fit best in our garden and to appreciate local ecosystems. The seeds of local flora collected included the Holm Oak (Is-Sigra tal-Ballut), the Lentisk Tree (Deru) and the Bay Laurel (Ir-Randa). These were then planted and cared for at school. In October, a tree planting session was held in the school garden in collaboration with the Mosta Local Council, who donated the Sandarac Gum Tree (Għargħar) and the Aleppo Pine (Prinjol). Geography fieldwork sessions were also carried out in the garden to identify soil type in various areas and also plant species. Dr Sandro Lanfranco also visited the school to identify all the flora present in the garden and help us complete the informative billboard right at the entrance.



A whole day activity, Brighten Up the School, was held on the 1st March, during which 32 rubbish bags were collected by the whole school in a clean-up of the garden area. Posters



to use bins and against littering were prepared by the EkoSkola Committee and placed around the garden. During this whole school activity non-native plants were removed and 70 new plants were planted to serve as hedges. A new seating area was developed by decorating used tyres. Pebbles were painted to give more colour along the footpaths. Rubble walls were restored and bins fixed near the garden. All students did a hand print to resemble a growing colourful tree and to leave their mark behind, which is important

especially for the Fifth Formers. The EkoSkola Committee also ensured that the garden is accessible to wheelchair users.

Another project, funded by the HSBC Catch the Drop Campaign, involved digging a 30-metre deep borehole which was connected to part of the school roof and used to replenish part of the underground water. The project, which was developed after several meetings with Eng. Marco Cremona, is an attempt to provide a sustainable solution to the severe problem of depletion of the same water table.

These events were communicated to the school community and beyond through a press release, the school website, a special assembly and articles in newsletters; all these as part of our reports for Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE).



Living Responsibly Community Open Day

The We Eat Responsibly EU funded project of scholastic year 2015-16 was a great



success. So much so that the EkoSkola Committee of St Joseph Senior School, Sliema decided to continue exploring issues around responsible eating for this scholastic year (2016-17). Most importantly the Senior Management Team recognized the importance of incorporating the theme of responsible living in all areas of our curriculum. All departments planned their schemes of work to, where applicable, include lessons on living responsibly as part of the EkoSkola methodology. □

All this work culminated in the Living Responsibly Community Open Day, where students showcased their projects in a variety of ways. This was truly a community event, where

the links we made with the local community were evident: the Sliema Mayor Anthony Chircop and Sliema Councillor Vivian Galea Pace attended. Also in attendance were Prof Paul Pace, EkoSkola National Co-ordinator, and Cynthia Caruana, National Coordinator of the We Eat Responsibly project.

Students were clearly engaged in this work and enjoyed communicating what they learnt to their audience. The range and depth of activities was vast and very interesting. The following themes were explored during the open day: shape poetry influenced by favourite foods; video presentations; research on Jamie Oliver's Healthy Eating Campaign: The Food Revolution; the cultivation of



a herb garden reusing unwanted pallets; a survey of Sliema eateries; dance presentations including Maltese folk and contemporary dancing; the history and traditions associated with Maltese food; Maltese honey production; literary appreciation of the poem "*Aqta fjura u ibni kamra*"; an Italian breakfast: do you know how far your food travels?; financially responsible living; a comparison of Vitamin C in fresh and packed fruit juices; presentations and exhibitions about palm oil; interactive games on the theme of

Responsible Eating; the physics of food waste and themes from Pope Francis' Second Encyclical - *Laudato Si*.

Raising water issues at the European Parliament

Upon our arrival at the European Parliament, we were warmly welcomed by the Maltese MEPs Dr Miriam Dalli and Dr Therese Comodini Cachia. MEP Esther De Lange, Chair of the MEP Water Group, opened the discussion by sharing her experiences about water issues in Holland. Dr Miriam Dalli emphasised that Malta may end up without water resources in the next few years. Mr Glenn Bugeja (HSBC Catch the Drop Water Campaign Manager, Corporate Sustainability Department) listed the water conservation projects carried out in Maltese schools through the Campaign.



We then presented our Aquifer Recharge Project.

After noticing that all the rainwater falling in the area of our school was being lost and building a cistern was not possible, we decided to dig a borehole 30m deep that would serve to replenish the underground water and at the same time limit flash floods. This project was co-ordinated by Eng. Marco Cremona. Then it was the turn of Isaac Fenech, a student from the Archbishop's Seminary, Tal-Virtu Rabat, who explained in detail his school's threefold project to reduce water loss. The Malta Business Bureau then showed how local hotels could profit and reduce tonnes of water loss by



implementing a grey water treatment plan. Their plans are to promote their idea on the rest of the EU countries. Dr Therese Comodini Cachia concluded the meeting by emphasising the importance of saving water. She also congratulated HSBC for promoting

the Catch the Drop Campaign and EkoSkola for its efforts to promote environmental awareness and student empowerment.

Following the discussion, we had a quick tour of the European Parliament and visited Dar Malta, where we continued discussing water issues with Cyrus Engerer and Edward Vernon, Environment Unit Coordinator Technical Attaché for the Environment, Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU. The next day, we headed toward the European Commission where we discussed water issues with Commissioner Karmenu Vella's representatives: Gabriella Pace and Lanfranco Fanti. Finally we participated in a Facebook Live Chat, together with MEPs Miriam Dalli and Therese Comodini Cachia, where we presented a group of questions regarding water scarcity in Malta and ways to solve it.



This trip has given me more knowledge and maturity regarding this subject. I am glad I had the opportunity to discuss water issues with important policy makers who have the power to implement change. This short visit helped to put water scarcity in Malta in the spotlight. It was undoubtedly an incredible experience, one that I will cherish in my heart forever!

*This is an abridged version of an article written by
Ms Samira Axiak (student) and Ms Fiona Vella Ciangura (teacher)
Maria Regina College, Mosta Secondary School, Lily of the Valley*

Teaching Resources

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

(a) The European Environment Agency (EEA): In collaboration with European Environmental Information and Observation Network and its member countries, the EEA gathers data and provides updated information about a wide range of environmental topics in the form of audiovisuals, infographics, images and newsletters. All this information is available here: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/media>.



(b) Tox Town: this website focuses on environmental health concerns and toxic chemicals where we live, work and play. Although set in a US context, the site provides educators with resources and information that can be adapted to our local realities. More information can be obtained from: <https://www.toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/index.php>.

Tox Town

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.