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In Memoriam

On 22 May 2017, a suicide bombing was carried out at Manchester Arena in Manchester, England, following a concert by American singer Ariana Grande. Twenty-three adults and children were killed and 116 were injured. Many children and a teacher were from the Eco-Schools in the locality



Editorial Note

Due to this year's General Election we had to forego our annual appointment at parliament. However, this did not prevent our students from doing their part as citizens and voice their concerns about the sustainable future of our country. Awareness is but the first step in our ESD journey. At EkoSkola we find ways how we can translate awareness into concrete action.

The EkoSkola 7th Young People's Summit

As part of Malta's Presidency of the EU Council, a series of important meetings during which policy makers decided on the future of the EU were organised. Young people will be inheriting this future and so it was important and necessary that their voices are heard.

A total of 130 students from 28 schools attended the summit held on the 3rd April 2017 at the Kirkop Sports Complex. Students prepared for the summit during in-school discussions about themes that are the main priorities of the Maltese Presidency in relation to the Environment and the main topics of the Informal Meeting of the EU Environment Council taking place in April 2017. The aim was to deliver a clear message to politicians, about **water resources**, **climate change** and **circular economy**. As is

customary in such events, the students' deliberations were collated into a declaration. The Hon Dr José A. Herrera, Minister for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change and Mr Andrew Beane, Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Bank Malta PLC attended the plenary session of the Summit during which the declaration was approved by the attendees. The event was organised by Nature Trust- FEE Malta and the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC).



The Declaration:

Caring for Our Future

We, the students of EkoSkola, as citizens of Malta, Europe and the world...

- are doing our best to ensure that our environment is protected and taken care of;
- are worried that certain decisions do not benefit our environment;
- would like to have a say in the decisions taken about our future; and
- would like to present our ideas about Water Resources, Climate Change and Circular Economy to:
 - o the Environment Ministers participating in the Informal Meeting of the EU Environment Council; and
 - o the Members of the European Parliament.

We, the students of EkoSkola, feel that Water Resources can be safeguarded by:

- promoting strong educational campaigns about water use in homes, industry and agriculture;

- introducing a Water Footprint label on products to provide consumers with information about virtual water;
- ensuring that places such as schools, restaurants, hotels, public toilets and hospitals are fitted with push taps or preferably with sensor activated taps to reduce water wastage;
- enforcing laws that require that new buildings are fitted with water catchment facilities;
- developing incentives that promote the refurbishment of old water catchment systems and old water piping to reduce leakages;
- ensuring that water reservoir overflow is directed to aquifer recharge systems;
- ensuring that industries, public places, households and schools that do not have a water reservoir should direct all rain water into aquifer recharge systems, which can be installed at a reasonable price;
- making sure that buildings used by Government and local authorities are examples of good practice re water use and conservation;
- introducing road surfacing material that allows water absorption and aquifer recharge;
- introduce tax rebate incentives for homes and companies that save on water consumption;
- replacing the use lawn/garden sprinklers with drip irrigation systems to reduce water wastage;
- incentivize (as in the case of investments on solar panels) the installation of grey water reuse systems for private homes;
- strongly enforcing laws about industrial discharge of waste water;
- establishing EU-wide standards regulating grey water and black water treatment systems;
- strongly enforcing laws about the use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides on agricultural land;
- cleaning of natural water catchment systems to ensure the continued recharge of water resources;
- strongly enforcing laws that safeguard the use of water resources and prevent its illegal extraction by industries (especially by water bottling companies); and
- replacing large expanses of concrete surfacing with soil to absorb rainwater and avoid floods.

We, the students of EkoSkola, feel that Climate Change can be controlled by:

- having policy makers that are open to suggestions¹ from the young citizens of their countries;
- controlling food waste as the production, transport and consumption of food has a large negative impact on climate change;
- controlling the consumption of meat whose production leads to the emission of large amounts of greenhouse gases;
- reducing food waste by providing methods through which supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, etc. and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) provide surplus food to individuals in need;
- encouraging supermarkets to offer a special counter with reduced prices of expired products or defective products (that are not harmful for citizens' health);
- introducing climate change sensitive practices in intensive farming methods and enforcing their adoption;

¹ The declaration on climate change compiled during the 6th EkoSkola Young People's Summit in 2016 is available here: <http://www.ekoskola.org.mt/uploads/2016/11/Newsletter-52.pdf>

- encouraging and supporting the adoption of organic and permaculture methods of farming;
- encouraging the consumption of local and seasonal products to reduce transport;
- introducing incentives (particularly targeting 18-year olds) that encourage the use of public transport and more sustainable methods of transport (more ideas can be reviewed in the 6th EkoSkola Young People's Summit Declaration)
- ensuring that sustainable methods of transport (e.g. electric cars) are more economically viable alternatives to polluting methods of transport;
- ensuring that outdoor lights used for buildings and streets are controlled by light sensitive switches;
- continuing with the incentives that encourage households and industries to switch to sustainable energy sources;
- promoting and supporting carpooling initiatives (especially through educational campaigns);
- ensuring that new buildings are constructed with insulated walls and natural sky-light to reduce reliance of artificial lighting and heating/cooling;
- encouraging the setting up of green roofs and green walls for insulation and also to promote more green spaces; and
- safeguarding open green spaces by introducing laws that determine the amount of land cover to be taken up by buildings in any particular locality.

We, the students of EkoSkola, feel that a Circular Economy can be promoted by:

- putting the wellbeing of citizens before profit;
- changing the mentality of consumers and producers by:
 - featuring the theme of "Circular Economy" in curricula of educational institutions at all levels;
 - starting an educational campaign on TV, Radio and the social media;
- promoting educational initiatives aimed at reducing food waste;
- introduce guidelines for restaurants that:
 - encourage clients to "take away" any leftover food;
 - charge clients for any leftover food (in buffet meals); and
 - guide clients on the portion sizes they can expect;
- supporting schemes that encourage the sharing of goods, tools, equipment, books, etc.;
- supporting schemes that encourage consumers to exchange used unwanted goods with other used goods that they might need;
- encouraging companies to set up practices that encourage consumers to recycle waste;
- enforcing guidelines that oblige companies to:
 - reduce unnecessary packaging;
 - collect and reuse packaging of their own products;
 - offer part-exchange schemes that encourage consumers to return old items rather than throwing them away; and
 - develop technologies that utilize resources recovered from old returned items rather than using raw materials;
- enforcing an additional tax on companies that refuse to make use of reused/recycled resources instead of raw materials (when they have the option);
- making the repair of goods financially attractive to consumers;
- ensure that products made from recycled materials are more economically viable than products made from raw materials;
- discourage companies/entities from promoting their products/organization through

paper-based mailshots, newspaper inserts and magazines which increase the excessive use of paper. They should be encouraged to advertise their articles electronically and through social media. This suggestion should also include political propaganda materials.

- supporting companies and initiatives aimed at offering repair services for their goods; and
- giving governmental support to companies who take tangible steps at promoting a circular economy in their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) plans.



The schools represented during the summit were:

- Bishop's Conservatory Secondary School, Gozo
- Gozo College, Middle School, Victoria
- Gozo College, Secondary School, Victoria
- Maria Regina College, Mellieħa Primary School
- Maria Regina College, Secondary School, Mosta
- Maria Regina College, St Paul's Bay Primary School
- Mater Boni Consilii, St Joseph School, Paola
- San Ġorġ Preca College, Floriana Primary School
- San Ġorġ Preca College, Ħamrun Secondary School Ħamrun
- San Ġorġ Preca College, Paola Primary School A
- St Aloysius College, Secondary School
- St Benedict College, Helen Keller Secondary School /Young Adult Education Resource Centre
- St Benedict College, Middle School, Kirkop
- St Benedict College, Żurrieq Primary School
- St Claire College, San Ġwann Primary School
- St Francis Secondary School, Sliema
- St Ignatius College, Middle School Ħandaq
- St Ignatius College, Luqa Primary School
- St Ignatius College, Ħaż-Żebbuġ Primary School
- St Joan Antide School
- St Margaret College, Cospicua Primary School
- St Michael School, Santa Venera
- St Nicholas College, Rabat Primary School
- St Patrick's Salesian School, Sliema
- St Theresa College, Birkirkara Primary School
- St Theresa College, Lija-Balzan-Iklin Primary
- St Theresa College, Middle School, Birkirkara
- St Thomas More College, Middle School, Tarxien

On the 25th April, the declaration was read to the Environment Ministers participating in the Informal Meeting of the EU Environment Council. Cristina Platania and Nicole Abdilla (from St Francis Secondary School, Sliema); Jade Borg and Kleavon Sammut (from St Nicholas College, Rabat Primary); and Samira Axiak (from Maria Regina College, Mosta Secondary, Lily of the Valley) read the declaration.



Memorandum to political parties for the General Elections

This year, the 13th edition of the EkoSkola Parliament had to be cancelled because of the General Elections. Not wishing to miss the opportunity for students to meet the country's policy makers we decided to ask our students to compile and present a memorandum for political parties. The last time we had organised a similar event was for the 2008 General Elections. Considering the various unsuccessful plights that our students made during the Parliamentary sessions asking MPs to take their comments, concerns and suggestions seriously, we felt that the memorandum should make concrete suggestions about ways how students' voices are heard and acted upon.



Schools were asked to hold a meeting of the EkoSkola Committee and after a discussion come up with three recommendations that they would like to convey to the political parties about structures and procedures that can be adopted through which politicians seriously consider the opinions of these young citizens. The recommendations were compiled into the memorandum which was circulated among the participating schools for approval.



The memorandum (see next page) was presented on the 25th May by students from the following six schools: Gozo College, San Lawrenz Primary School; Mater Boni Consilii, St Joseph School, Paola; San Ġorġ Preca College, Hamrun Secondary School; St Ignatius College, Handaq Middle School; St Michael School, Santa Venera and St Theresa College, Birkirkara Primary School.

Memorandum to political parties for the General Elections from the EkoSkola students

Introduction

Since its inception, 15 years ago, EkoSkola offered us many opportunities to convey our ideas to you politicians about how to improve the quality of life in our country. However, although you admire what we do, you rarely request our opinions about the decisions taken about our future. Over the years, we made many suggestions about many things, for example: on water and energy consumption; waste management; traffic and the need for open spaces. But no action was taken on any of them except when you came up with the same suggestions, years later!

As citizens we feel that we need to give our ideas about what is happening in our country. During the meetings we have with you, you often praise us for our fresh and effective ideas. We think differently from you adults because we see things from a different angle. On various occasions we proved our ability to see solutions where you adults see only problems. In your work you spend a lot of time listening to adults, we would like you do the same with us. So we thought of giving you some suggestions that could help you give more attention to these ideas and implement them for the good of our country.

Suggestions

One of our regular appointments with you is the EkoSkola Parliament. While there are MPs who make it a point to attend, others never turn up - despite the invitation we send them. We would greatly appreciate if you could enter the date of the EkoSkola Parliament in your diaries so that you could show your appreciation for what we have to tell you.

We suggest the setting up a House Committee to seriously examine student ideas (especially from EkoSkola Parliament) and even draw an Action Plan for their implementation. The Committee should also report on how many of the proposals were implemented. It is important that the House recognizes that the ideas being discussed originated from the students.

We students (mainstream as well as the Resource Centres) would like to have two meetings in every scholastic year with the Minister of Education and Minister responsible for the environment either separately or together. During these meetings we would have the opportunity to discuss ideas and suggestions about education and the country's environment. These meetings may be held either on a national scale or during a visit by the ministers to a school. In the latter case we could arrange a meeting with the EkoSkola Committee so that they can witness our commitment.

We feel that the Government should offer its resources to create a page on Facebook or Blog or App called Vučijetna (Our Voices). As the name implies, Vučijetna offers a chance to voice our concern about an environmental theme, report and ask questions. Child friendly versions of documents about environmental projects (or issues of importance to our future) may be posted on Vučijetna so we can give our ideas about them.

Conclusion

Through our participation in EkoSkola we are living our commitment to improve the quality of life in schools and our communities. Whenever asked to give our opinion we do so with responsibility and therefore we feel that you should take our ideas seriously.

Currently, during the electoral campaign you are pledging many things for the good of our country. On several occasions you claim to be doing this "for the good of our children". We are these children who – if given the chance – offer practical ideas about how to ensure a quality of life in our country. On behalf of our fellow students, we would like you to give us your word that you give us this chance by carrying out the suggestions we made.

Reactions from the leaders of the political parties:

Dr Joseph Muscat, Partit Laburista (PL): "It has been my pleasure to meet EkoSkola students who are bravely pushing for future governments to listen and take into consideration their intelligent ideas and powerful aspirations. We need to be humble enough to dwell on their suggestions and proposals, as they might indeed be right. EkoSkola students are insisting on more active participation at Parliamentary level and more widely on social media. This would create a space for all students to become active citizens with a strong voice for the environment, which we intend to prioritise in the coming years. We are pledging to continue improving the quality of our air, to plant a tree for every newborn in Malta and Gozo, and – most importantly – to put environmental protection in our constitution.



The students I met made a very valid point: most of our proposals are based on building a better future for our children. It is time for us to involve these very children in the construction of their own world. Their visions are usually bolder and sometimes wiser, and the future belongs to them."

Marlene Farrugia, Forza Nazzjonali: "It was a great pleasure hosting, listening and learning from the highly motivated, engaging student representatives who visited the Forza Nazzjonali Headquarters today. As always their contribution is not only valid, but serves as a stark reminder of the procrastination that still exists in implementing simple yet highly effective measures that can instantly improve our environment and help our ecosystems prevail. As Leader of the PD within the National Force contesting the upcoming elections I pledge to make our encounters with students more often. It is in our country's best interest not only to encourage and nurture our young generation's interest in making politics and good governance, but also to stimulate their creative thinking processes transforming them from observers into creators and innovators , from problem identifiers into problem solvers.



The vast majority of my generation was trained to observe and conform. Our young generation needs to be trained to assess, act and be an active part of the change it wants to see. Our EkoSkola students are pioneers in this regard and their enthusiasm is contagious for other students in other fields. Their motivation and unspoilt good sense undoubtedly injects us with the energy and sense of purpose that we occasionally come to lack."

Prof Arnold Cassola, Alternattiva Demokratika: "Young children ... great ideas! Just back from a meeting with the EkoSkola children, teachers and Nature Trust. Great to see tomorrow's adults planning seriously for a better quality of life for themselves and future generations."



Green Flag Award Ceremony

On Monday 3rd July, H.E. Dr Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta, presided over the Green Flag Award Ceremony at the President's Palace Valletta. A total of 34 schools received recognition for adopting an active role in decision-making in their school and in their community. The number of schools flying the Green Flag in the Maltese islands is now 71.

In her address, H.E. Dr Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca referred to the EkoSkola students as activists who build a positive culture of peace related to environmental justice that is an intrinsic part of human rights. She highlighted that the work done by the students participating addresses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She concluded by saying: *"Keep on being an example. Keep on spreading the word that we need to work for a truly sustainable development for the protection of the environment, to ensure true social justice, and so develop a love toward the universal human rights. In so doing our Malta will provide you with the best future and may become a model for other countries."*



The Executive President of Nature Trust - FEE Malta, Vincent Attard, thanked Her Excellency for once again hosting this year's Green Flag awards and for her support throughout the year as patron of the EkoSkola programme. A group of students then presented her with a selection of food items and recipe books specifically prepared by them using local and seasonal products through the We Eat Responsibly project which is an EU project focusing on promoting responsible food behaviour patterns.

The ceremony was also reported on the media:

<https://www.facebook.com/PresidentofMalta/photos/pb.1384775358471464.-2207520000.1499088192./1931183883830606/?type=3&theater>

<https://president.gov.mt/media-all/diskors-waqt-ic-cerimonja-tal-ghoti-tal-greenflag-parti-mill-progett-ekoskola/>

<https://president.gov.mt/media-all/qed-tkunu-attivisti-biex-tibnu-kultura-ta-paci-pozittiva-marbuta-ma-gustizzja-ambjentali-li-hi-parti-intrinsika-mit-twettiq-ta-gustizzja-socjali/>

<http://www.tvm.com.mt/mt/news/l-iskejjel-bil-bandiera-l-hadra-jitilghu-ghal-34/?src=hm>

<http://www.inewsmalta.com/article.php?ID1=54321>



*H.E. Dr Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta;
Vincent Attard, Executive President of Nature Trust - FEE Malta &
Dr Frank Fabri, Perm. Sec. Ministry for Education & Employment*



The EkoSkola Team



5th & 6th Green Flag Winners



4th Green Flag Winners



3rd Green Flag Winners



2nd Green Flag Winners



1st Green Flag Winners



The EkoSkola Programme Sponsors

The following is a list of all the awarded schools:

Received the Green Flag for the 6th time

- St Benedict College, Żurrieq Primary School
- St Clare College, San Ġwann Primary School

Received the Green Flag for the 5th time

- San Ġorġ Preca College, Floriana Primary School

Received the Green Flag for the 4th time

- St Francis School, Cospicua
- St Michael's School, Santa Venera
- St Benedict College, Kirkop Secondary School
- St Monica School, Birkirkara
- St Ignatius College, Luqa Primary School
- St Thomas More College, St Lucia, Secondary School

Received the Green Flag for the 3rd time

- Immaculate Conception School, Tarxien
- St Benedict College, Birżebbuġa Primary School
- Our Lady Immaculate School, Hamrun
- St Ignatius College, Qormi San Ġorġ Primary School
- Sacred Heart College, Senior Section
- St Patrick's Salesian School
- Savio College, Dingli
- St Theresa College, Lija/Iklin/Balzan Primary School

Received the Green Flag for the 2nd time

- Gozo College, Rabat Primary School
- St Ignatius College, Handaq Middle School
- Gozo College, Żebbuġ Primary School
- St Paul's Missionary College
- San Ġorġ Preca College, Guże Pace Primary School, Hamrun
- St Benedict College, Helen Keller Secondary School/Young Adult Education Resource Centre

Received the Green Flag for the 1st time

- Bishop's Conservatory Secondary School
 - San Ġorġ Preca College, Secondary School, Hamrun
 - Gozo College, Għarb Primary School
 - St Albert the Great College, Valletta
 - Gozo College, San Lawrenz Primary School
 - St Augustine College
 - Laura Vicuna Primary School, Għasri
 - St Nicholas College, Rabat Primary School
 - Maria Regina College, St Paul's Bay Primary School
 - St Thomas More College, Secondary School, Żejtun
 - San Ġorġ Preca College, Guardian Angel Secondary Education Resource Centre
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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.