

Eko-Skola Newsletter

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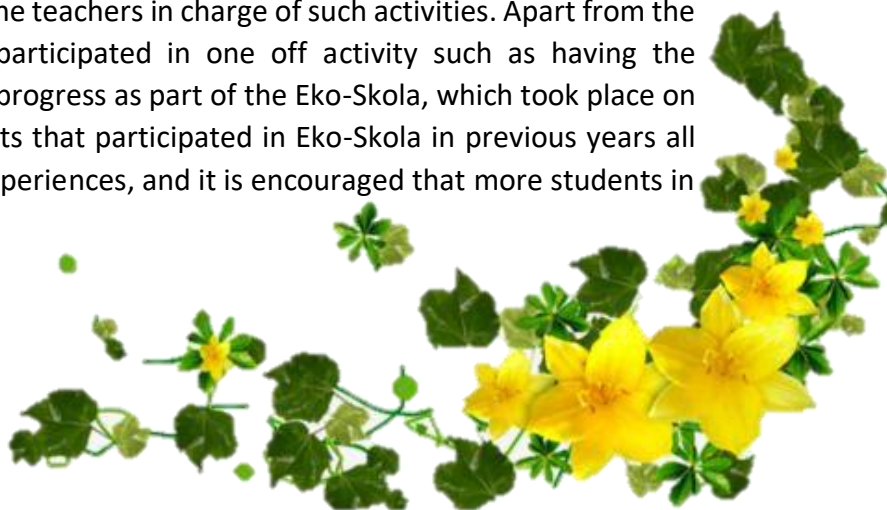


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Eko-Skola

Eco-Schools was launched in 1994 in Denmark, Germany, Greece, and the United Kingdom. Until 2018, there were a total of 121 schools in Malta and Gozo that participate in the Eko-Skola programme, our school included, and until 2011, there were 52 countries around the world. Malta first joined this programme on the 29th of October 2002. Our school has been part of the Eko-Skola for the past eight years and has been awarded the Green Flag for 5 times now. The Green Flag is a flag awarded to a particular school for their excellency in a particular Eco-School activity. Until 2018, there were a total of 76 schools flying the Green Flag. Our slogan for this year is 'Grow Green' because our mission at school is still to try and have a sustainable activity - through the vegetable patch. In previous years, Eko-Skola meetings were held on a weekly-basis every Friday during the 30-minute break with students who volunteered to participate in such activities. These activities included: taking care of the vegetable patch; upcycling; designing the Noticeboard; learning sign language to communicate with others; and more. The main themes that were displayed on the school's Noticeboard during scholastic year 2019-2020 were Greta Thunberg a Swedish 18-year-old environmental activist fighting for Climate Change during Term 1, and to 'Cut down on Single Use Plastic' during Term 2. The students also felt support from the teachers in charge of such activities. Apart from the weekly meetings, the students also participated in one off activity such as having the Ambassador at our school and see our progress as part of the Eko-Skola, which took place on the 21st of February 2020. The students that participated in Eko-Skola in previous years all gave a positive feedback about their experiences, and it is encouraged that more students in the coming years participate.



Eko-Skola during COVID-19

Unfortunately, the weekly meetings had to stop for the time being, due to COVID-19, however, it does not mean that there is nothing our school can do, even during these times. On the 9th of February 2020, some Year 7 and Year 8 students planted some carob, pumpkin, and almond seeds that students in the coming years can benefit from. Apart from that, our school also participated in an online ceremony to renew the Green Flag on the 4th of June 2020, and as a result, our school is happy to have the Green Flag in hand for the 5th time. The students in charge of the Noticeboard also made an online Noticeboard which can be accessed from:

<https://padlet.com/katrinamagri08/owep1wjol3gmz96h>.

We hope to continue with many more weekly meetings and opportunities soon.



The Human Race's Hidden Killer

Masks. Sanitizers. Social Distancing. It is true how this past year all we have been talking about was the coronavirus pandemic, which has without fail changed our life as we know it. In Malta, covid-19 has been here for roughly a year now, even so, morning, noon, and night we still hear about it; courageous front liners, the thousands of people who have died and the vaccine, bringing along with it a ray of light in these dark times. Rightly so, we have given much heed and recognition to the perilous virus that threatens us all. Like how we exceedingly give attention to the coronavirus pandemic, it is also vital that we give equal significance towards our environment. One might argue that this is not factual, that the pandemic is somewhat more of a real problem, an evident killer. Despite of all that, have we ever given thought or notice to the veiled scourge which has been existent for a very long time, the environment?

Probably not.

Nowadays, we prefer to call this global emergency 'Environmental Health'. Environmental Health is a public health domain, and quite simply it oversees how our natural home, or the environment has repercussions on our personal well-being. At first thought, one might think that global warming, climate change, pollution. are the dilemma here, but in truth these factors are all part of something more extensive thus being more unpredictable, capable of striking at any moment. Within public health, Environmental Health is somewhat of a vast and hefty field, this being as the myriad of ways the environment impacts us is incredible. Although there are countless of ways, today I will be mentioning only four, which all prove the most well-known, dominant threats we are currently facing currently.

AIR QUALITY

A study was carried out in 2005, which justified that pregnant women more prone to high levels of ozone, were more inclined to give birth to babies with a lower birth rate, this obviously is a damaging thing, which could possibly be disastrous for future generations. For humankind air is non-negotiable. No air equals no survival. Every so often we fail to recall that it is not just lack of air that destroys humankind; it is also the quality. Lung cancer, SIDS, COPD; all effects that primarily originate from poor air quality.

WATER AND SANITATION

Did you know that: 780 million people worldwide do not have access to safe drinking water, a third of the Earth's population lack adequate sanitation, basically a proper bathroom, 2,200 children die every day of diarrheal diseases linked to improper water sanitation. In the United States, what once was a common disease called typhoid has now reached a significant decline thanks to filtering and chlorinating water systems. Calculating roughly, for every \$1 invested in providing technologies which improve water quality, the country gets back \$23 in associated medical savings, and most substantially can give a helping hand in mending the decline in child mortality rate.

TOXIC SUBSTANCE & HAZARDOUS WASTES

In the Environmental Health field, we can find yet another sub-sector -what we know as 'Toxicology'. Toxicology is the research of how chemicals and substances are capable of affecting people and their surroundings. Humans are always evolving, and naturally the world and its mechanism evolve along with it. With thrilling ground-breaking discoveries, come risks and uncertainty. Notwithstanding, that man is capable of great intellect and understanding, every trial and experiment could go terribly wrong and faulty, therefore studies like these are of most importance. An instance of this happened in Michigan, 2015. Fury, shock, and panic spread when it was disclosed that the tap water contained traces of lead. If children digest lead, it could undeniably lead to long-term complications, such as brain damage.

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

Now that we have talked about toxicology, it is only fair that we talk about an emerging field in Environmental Health, one entitled as 'food access'; a crisis which has been given attention and surfacing till late. Let us take the United States. Frequently we find residences with no neighbouring full-service grocery stores. Therefore, they resort to convenience stores, like those found in gas stations. This firstly 1. Can be found to be exceedingly high-priced, and m2. Most importantly, dwindles fresh fruit, and vegetable intake. To communities in the area this can be of great burden since they are not at liberty to opt for healthier choices. Let us take a more local example, in the case of Malta. It is no secret that

Malta is till recently becoming more overcrowded, busy, and polluted, this obviously results in families living in polluted busy districts, hence families cannot go out for walks and exercise, this can also be a consequence of violence.

It is true. Environmental Health factors are not all effortlessly manageable and harnessed. Striving against this takes laws, policies, and programs. It is impractical to stay checking everything at detail, even so, it could prove time-consuming. Nevertheless, to make an authentic, apparent transition, it is not the environment we must change, rather it is OUR obligation to change. WE must change. This we cannot do unassisted; it is through collaboration that we are able to reach success and be satisfied of our actions. Mentioning ways how to help our environment is not needed, we have heard of so much. We talk, but do not act. We give talks, speeches, write books, articles, yet we never act upon them. You know what you need to do. Go do it!

Forms

Here is a link to a form we would like you to fill:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=S_vjgnZbHEqxMZWjKYPFpoRR1f-DfmlCrwAyfmtTlkVUNU1QNkRBUEc1Q1BSOTBUQ1ExS1BLQkg3NC4u

Reference

Eko-Skola Article: <https://www.ecoschools.global/our-history>,
<https://www.ekoskola.org.mt/news/green-flag-awards-ceremony-2019>,
<https://ekoskola.org.mt/getting-started> and <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eco-Schools>

The Human Race Killer: <https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-is-environmental-health-4158207>



Eko-Skola Overview writing

Francesca Bray

The Human Race's Hidden Killer writing

Samantha Grech

Questionnaire

Francesca Bray

Designs

Katrina Magri & Elisa Degabriele

Editing

Samantha Grech & Francesca Bray