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## Contents:

- Editorial Note
- The Green Flag at Kilimanjaro
- HSBC Eco-Schools Climate Initiative Project
- EkoSkola Committee Member Gets Floriana Award
- Meeting the Architect
- The IOI-Kids 2010 Best Project Competition
- Used Batteries Campaign
- Enjoying a healthy fruit salad at school
- Let there be light!
- Zoom – Safi Kids on the Move 2009
- Arbor Days
- Energy consumption at the Junior College
- Putting your heart into reusing
- Teaching Resources



May 2010

Issue 26

## Editorial Note

Welcome once again to another edition of our eNewsletter. Once again we bring just a little taste of all the activities that have been happening in our member schools. On behalf of Nature Trust I would like to thank you for your commitment towards improving the quality of life at your school and your community. You are giving evidence that the best way to bring about change and an improvement in our environment is by doing something. Keep up the good work!

## The Green Flag at Kilimanjaro



Thanks to Mr Carmel Hili the Green Flag has made its way up to the Kilimanjaro on the morning of September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa rising up to 5,895 metres. Mr Hili was leading a



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group of volunteers participating in the Kilimanjaro Challenge 3 (KC3) - a fund raising campaign aimed to collect money for the construction of an orphanage in Nyamonge, Kenya. Mr Hili, who currently teaches at the Higher Secondary, Naxxar, was one of the teachers who attended the first inservice teacher training course about the EkoSkola Programme.

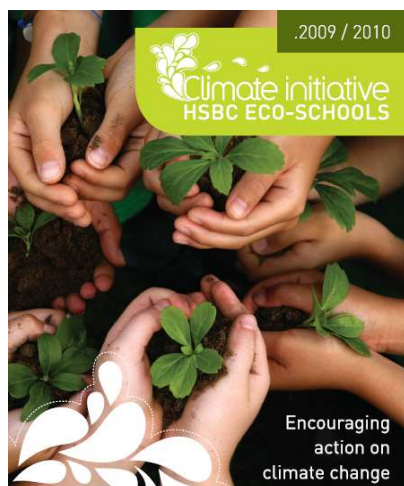


*The ice field of Kilimanjaro in Feb 1993 as compared to Feb 2000 (Image from NASA)*

The *Snows of Kilimanjaro*, that were made famous by the writer Ernest Hemingway, have unfortunately become a symbol of the negative effect of global warming. Researchers have pointed out that about 85% of the ice that made up the mountaintop glaciers in 1912 was gone by 2007. Considering that more than a quarter of the ice present in 2000 was gone by 2007, researchers claim that the ice on Kilimanjaro will eventually disappear. By asking Mr Hili to take the Green Flag there, we wanted to signify our commitment to working against climate change.

### **HSBC Eco-Schools Climate Initiative Project**

This project is now approaching its end and we can safely say that all the 56 participating schools have organised a great deal of initiatives targeting Climate Change. These activities targeted school children and teachers and also parents and the local community.



One such activity involved 35 HSBC staff members who volunteered to visit schools and give a presentation about Climate Change. About 37 primary and secondary schools were visited. Mr Johann Gatt, one of the EkoSkola teachers, also gave several sessions to various kindergarten and Years 1 and 2 classes of primary schools. There are still some upcoming events in the pipeline ... like a half day seminar for teachers, community based activities, the publication of the winners of the Eco-Code competition and the EkoSkola Parliament Session.

We were so impressed with the interest shown by the schools during this pilot phase of the project, that we decided to apply for the second phase of the project. We are now waiting for the reply ... let's keep our fingers crossed!

### **EkoSkola Committee Member Gets Floriana Award**

Lorna Mangion, one of the active young members of the EkoSkola Committee at Floriana Primary School, within the San Gorg Preca College, was awarded the Marcelle Holland Trophy by the Floriana Local Council during the ceremony commemorating Floriana Day on Friday 9th April 2010.

The Marcelle Holland Trophy is an annual award, named after the Mayor's mother, which is presented to a Floriana child who shows a sense of civic awareness towards the general benefit of the whole locality. Lorna was chosen from among other nominees for her great involvement in the EkoSkola Project, for being instrumental in various EkoSkola initiatives and for bringing about awareness regarding the urgent need to recycle waste.



In his speech, the Mayor praised the effort by the Floriana Primary School children in putting the 3 Rs into practice and said that this effort has now to be mirrored in the whole locality as, unfortunately, not all residents are following it, and there are some who are either not aware of the drastic situation or simply refuse to collaborate in such an important venture. When the committee asked Lorna about her experience she said:

"I was very excited when my grandmother told me about the invitation because I did not expect it. I think I was awarded this trophy because I help a lot at school in environmental issues. I am the secretary of the EkoSkola committee. I participate actively in the community and give many ideas. I am described by many people as a leader. I take a lot of initiative and lead my classmates to reuse and recycle material during crafts. I do not participate only at school but take part in a local radio station programme in order to make the people aware of the environment."

Last year's winner was Maria Rosa Grima, another EkoSkola member who was President during the last EkoSkola two-year mandate. We thank Maria Rosa Grima for her hard work and congratulate Lorna and wish her all good luck for the future.

### Enjoying a healthy fruit salad at school

We are the students of Gozo College, Xaghra Primary. We are proud of our school's environmental record which saw us being the first Gozitan school to win the EkoSkola Green Flag Award. We are also grateful for making us aware of healthy nutrition.

Last March, when we returned to class, having settled in after the second break, our teacher told us that we were having a fruit salad the next day. We were asked to bring any type of fruit we liked as well as a bowl and spoon.



Second break next day, we happily sacrificed our running and chasing in the school yard and instead helped our teachers prepare the fruit salad. They peeled the fruit for us and we sliced it. We eagerly filled up our bowls which were soon emptied. Once again our teachers told us how healthy fruit is for us. When we cleaned everything, we did not forget to put the peel in a container and put it in the compost bin.

*Written by Diana Formosa and Sarah Galea, Gozo College, Xaghra Primary*

### Meeting the Architect

The EkoSkola Committee at Gozo College, Boys Secondary School have been for some time doing research to learn more about how an environmental friendly school should be.

Our school is at the moment being newly constructed. Shortly we will move into the new part whilst the demolition and construction of the front part is finished. We would like to thank the Architect in charge of the construction of the new school, Mr Andrew Ellul, for his availability to meet up with us and answer our queries. Many concerns about our new school were cleared during this meeting which took place in May 2009.

The EkoSkola committee had, during break times, gathered a list of questions and suggestions to put forward. Jonathan Mintoff, as the EkoSkola Committee President came forward armed with the whole list. Besides the Architect and the EkoSkola Committee, the Head of School, Dr. Francis Abela and the EkoSkola Teacher, Ms Maria Buttigieg attended the meeting.



We learnt that a large part of our energy needs will be coming from solar energy through photovoltaic panels on the roof of the school and Sun tunnels/Sun pipes. Double glazed windows and polyurethane films will be used for insulation. The design of our windows will maximise natural lighting and ventilation. Water will be conserved through a large underground rainwater reservoir that we used for the toilets and for watering plants.

Jonathan Mintoff also suggested having half tank flushing available and automatic or timed hand washing taps to reduce water wastage. We also made other suggestions such as: the painting of the school in light colours to avoid having darkened rooms that absorb extra heat from the outside; the availability of green areas including a roof garden. We were rather concerned about the amount of construction waste the project would generate. It seems that some reusing of iron beams and three-ply boards was done.

We still have some questions unanswered and would like to meet the Engineer Albert Ellul in charge of the electrical system that is to be installed. Actually we are concerned about the way corridors will be lit during night time, whether sensors will be used, whether corridor switches will be easily accessible by all and also about the positioning of bulbs/lights in classroom to avoid reflection on whiteboards or glare from the sun.

*Report sent by the EkoSkola Committee,  
Gozo College, Boys' Secondary Rabat - Gozo*

## **The IOI-Kids 2010 Best Project Competition**



Another opportunity for your school to showcase the talents of your students!

The International Ocean Institute -Malta Operational Centre, supported by EkoSkola, has launched a new competition this year titled 'IOI-KIDS 2010 Best Project Competition: Knowing the Sea – The Opportunity to Go Local and Global'. This competition invites primary and secondary school children to combine their artistic and computer talents in preparing attractive and informative electronic contributions in the form of projects on topics related to the sea.

The accepted works can take the shape of: interesting articles, compilations, events or notes; interesting and/or unusual incidents; recent scientific or other discoveries;

conservation issues; species of plants or animals; ecosystems or places of interest; people whose work is connected to the sea, and many other imaginative contributions. Five selected original projects will win the local prizes and automatically participate in an international competition. Deadline for submissions to the competition is the 30th June, 2010. For further information visit our website at [www.ioikids.net/2010](http://www.ioikids.net/2010). Contacts: 2340 2843. Email: [ioi-moc@um.edu.mt](mailto:ioi-moc@um.edu.mt) or [alicia.said@um.edu.mt](mailto:alicia.said@um.edu.mt).

## Used Batteries Campaign



On Wednesday 24th March 2010, we members of the EkoSkola committee within the Gozo College Girls Secondary school and members of the EkoSkola committee within the Gozo College Boys Secondary school organised an activity with the aim of collecting used batteries from households and establishments in Victoria. This activity was part of a series of activities held in our school as part of the Batterina Buster Campaign organised by Wasteserv Malta.

Under the supervision of our EkoSkola co-ordinators we left our respective schools and visited various areas in Victoria. Throughout this activity we carried some banners in order to raise more awareness on the harm that batteries do to the environment. This activity was very interesting for me and my friends since we enjoyed meeting new people at their homes and in different shops and offices and talking with them while collecting used batteries. The general public co-operated with us and we are very satisfied with the result since a considerable amount of batteries was collected in a short period of time.

This activity ended at St George's square where we students had the opportunity to meet the Victoria mayor Mr Samuel Azzopardi and Ms Silvana Sultana from Eco Gozo. The latter presented all participating students and co-ordinators with a very interesting and colourful booklet with the name of "Gozo: The magic of Calypso's Isle". For me this experience made me proud that I am part of the EkoSkola committee of my school and I am looking forward to take part in other activities that the said committee will organise in the future.



*Written by Christy Caruana, 2 Sempreviva, Gozo College Girls Secondary School*

## Let there be light!

At Floriana, the EkoSkola committee is trying to reduce the consumption of electricity at school. We had suggested to the Head of School to have the large iron grids that covered the ground floor windows removed. These grids were put there many years ago for security reasons when the school premises were used as a place where the votes in the general election were counted. Although the school was never been used again for this purpose; these iron grids remained there. As years went by, they turned rusty and

became an eyesore. Apart from this they obstructed sunlight from entering directly into the classrooms. This meant that electric lights had to be put on very often.



As the Head of School and his Assistant Head always listen to our suggestions, they immediately consulted the Precincts Officer and the necessary arrangements were made. They got permission from the Local Council to temporarily close the school boundary streets and a crane was hired. The grids were removed in no time with the help of the workmen that were sent by the Technical Service Branch within the Directorate for Educational Services.

Now the classrooms are definitely more lit as sunlight enters the classrooms without these iron frames. On asking the class, Francesca and Shakira said: "The classroom looks nicer". Rylees, a year 3 child commented: "Now we have more natural light. On sunny days we do not switch on the light." Patrick and Isaac added: "We are using less energy from the Power Station." Hailey said: "We can feel the breeze when we open the windows." Robert stated: "The caretaker can clean the windows better."



We are switching on the light only when the days are dull and the sun does not shine at all. Such days are very seldom in Malta. Fresh air provided by the surrounding trees can now drift inside more easily as well. Now that the window sills are free from any obstruction; there is also the possibility of having window boxes, thus making our school environment greener and more attractive. This was another measure taken at our school with the aim of reducing our carbon footprint.

*Written by the EkoSkola Committee, San Gorg Preca College, Floriana Primary*

## **Zoom – Safi Kids on the Move 2009**

We read with enthusiasm the first newsletter for EkoSkola for this scholastic year. The theme "Global Climate Change" has always been a focal point of our action plan. We wished to try out the various initiatives suggested in this newsletter. One of the activities



that really interested us was called the "Zoom Campaign Activity". This campaign invited children all over Europe to make their daily journey to school on foot and to register the number of footsteps. 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 our EcoWeek 2009 at St Benedict College SAFI Primary, we promoted physical exercise as an alternative to travelling by car. This is very applicable to our small village of Safi where all destinations are within walking distance. We promoted a campaign for

all children to come to school on foot. Each journey was calculated into Green Footprint counts. We collected our data and handed our results to Climate Alliance which was responsible for the whole amount of collected Green Footprints. Our small village in the small island of Malta was represented by this Eco Activity at the UN Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen (Denmark) between the 7th and 18th December 2009 promoting a simple but effective contribution towards a cleaner world.

*Written by Anteo Camilleri, Year 5, St Benedict College, Safi Primary*

## Arbor Days

- On Friday 15 January 2010, Gozo College schools celebrated Arbor Day at Gozo College Nadur Primary. For this annual event, the Gozo College Nadur and the EkoSkola Committee officially opened a new garden. The name of the garden, *Gnien il-Frott*, was chosen by the students themselves. Twelve citrus and olive trees kindly provided by Nadur Local Council were planted in the new garden. This event was also made possible through the support from the Ministry of Gozo and the Education Office. The official opening of the new garden was followed by a theme presentation on stage by the school children. Children actively participated in setting up the whole programme with the constant help of their teachers. After the programme, all school children were given a delicious bowl of fresh fruits prepared by parent volunteers.



- On Friday 29th January, the Convent of the Sacred Heart Junior School celebrated Arbor Day. We started preparing for this day a few weeks before. Year 1 pupils made collages of trees which we displayed on boards at the entrance of the school. The music teacher started teaching songs appropriate for the day to different Years and class teachers prepared and taught poems to the children. A special assembly was then held. After we said a prayer to ask the Lord to show people how to care for trees and the World we live in, the children recited their poems and sang their songs. They filled the heart of all present with joy and with a hope for the future. The programme was coordinated by Ms. Frances Busuttil the Assistant Head.



## Energy consumption at the Junior College

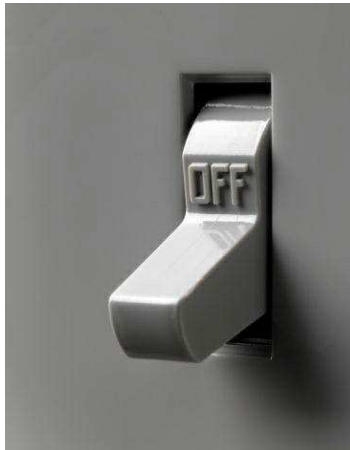
When at first, our Systems of Knowledge lecturer mentioned that we had to do a project that is going to be part of our MATSEC examination and mentioned all the possible topics we can choose from, the one about sustainable development and the environment caught

our attention because we were always intense about this subject and always wanted to expand our knowledge and also do something for a better future.

Our biology lecturer, Ms Karen Buttigieg, then gave us the opportunity to take part in a project that involved an audit of the school's energy consumption. We had our first meeting in which we were divided in groups and each group was assigned to read one of the several meters situated around the school premises to calculate how much energy is generated. We first had to learn how to read an electricity meter and Prof. Edward Mallia, from Friends of the Earth Malta, kindly helped us. At the end, we will pool all of the results. This will enable us to calculate how much energy was used by the school. This is the first step, because then, it makes sense to find ways in which this amount can be reduced. From this particular task we learnt how to read a meter.



To sustain our work, we were also assigned with an individual task. Each one of us had to choose an area of study and study the things which use energy, how much energy they use and the overall time that they are used per week. In our case we chose the Physics and Maths Department. Other than that, we had to see if there is energy wastage and



how this can be minimised for example by being more careful to switch off the lights when leaving the room and also by installing alternative sources of energy like solar panels. As part of the project we also attended a forum on climate solutions hosted by Friends of the Earth, Malta. The presentations which were made helped us a lot to understand the importance of energy consumption, alternative forms of energy and also about the issue of climate change. We enjoyed this forum which was both informative because we got to know more and also entertaining and we are also looking forward to the next one.

By taking part in this project we all learned something that will serve us for the future. Teamwork is very important and each member has to be responsible enough to do their part.

Other than that, we are learning about the environment, alternative forms of energy and also if people are aware of energy consumption and energy saving or not, by handing out questionnaires to different age groups. We also learnt that regarding this issue one must ACT. We will do this by promoting energy efficiency in the school and making people more aware of it by distributing leaflets about ways to save energy.

Overall, we are very glad that we chose this important topic to deal with and we will work for a better world. After all, there's one world, our world so let's take care of it!!!

*Written by Annabelle Mamo and Lorna Coleiro, G.F Abela Junior College*

## **Putting your heart into reusing**

Every now and then we share with you novel ideas about how we can live a more sustainable lifestyle. Throughout the year we hear about various initiatives aimed at helping people in need. Here is another one ... with a difference.

*Locks of Love* is a public non-profit organization that collects and provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children under age 21 suffering from long-term medical hair loss. *Locks of Love* collects all



the hair it can get, and what it doesn't use, it sells to wig-making companies to raise the funds needed to get its wigs produced. A lot of hairdressers around the world have contacted *Locks of Love* and donated ponytails that they've collected from their customers ... rather than throwing it away. We would like to promote this idea since, besides reducing waste; it is helping to bring back smiles on children's faces. Knowing that there are already some local hairdressers who are already participating in this initiative, we would like to urge students to inform their hairdressers about this initiative and possibly get them to participate in it as well. Achieving this is easier for students whose parents or relatives are hairdressers! More information can be obtained from the organisation's website: <http://www.locksoflove.org/>.

## Teaching Resources

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

### (a) EPA – Climate Change: Kids Site



This site, which is managed by the Environmental Protection Agency of the US, is specifically developed with children in mind. Besides providing information about climate change in simple non-technical terms, the site provides games and links to other climate change related sites. Access the site at: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/>

### (b) Earth Hour



In 2007, in Sydney – Australia, 2.2 million individuals and more than 2,000 businesses turned their lights off for one hour. This was the start of Earth Hour, an initiative that has now become an international annual event against climate change. This year's event, held on Saturday 27 March, was the biggest Earth Hour ever, involving 128 countries ... including Malta. This site provides information about the event and an opportunity to participate in the event. The site can be accessed at: <http://www.earthhour.org/>

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*If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Dr Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Co-ordinator, on [paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt](mailto:paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt)*

*Visit our website on [www.ekoskolamalta.com](http://www.ekoskolamalta.com)*