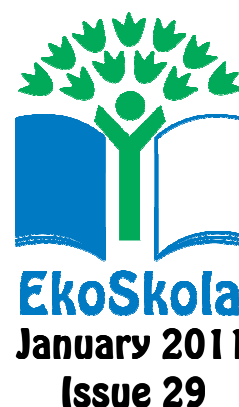


EkoSkola Network Newsletter

If you need to print this newsletter, please use both sides of recycled paper

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Editorial Note

Happy New Year! This scholastic year is surely an interesting one for EkoSkola. First of all, there are now 19 Green Flag schools – a true indicator of the increased commitment towards sustainable development of our schools. Secondly EkoSkola Malta was once again chosen to participate in the 2nd edition of the HSBC-ES Climate Initiative.

At the start of this scholastic year Mr David Caruana, one of the EkoSkola teachers, was appointed assistant head of school and consequently he is no longer part of the team. On behalf of Nature Trust and the schools that were under his care, I would like to thank him for the support and service that he gave to EkoSkola during his year with us. I would also like to welcome Ms Cynthia Caruana who has now joined our team. Nature Trust would like to thank the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family for believing in and supporting the EkoSkola programme.

Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE)



For the fourth consecutive year Nature Trust is once again running the YRE programme. Just like EkoSkola, YRE is a programme of the Foundation for Environmental Education. It is designed for post/secondary school students and teachers who have to develop an investigative project about a local environmental issue. The goal of each project is always to communicate relevant information to a local public. EkoSkola and YRE have joined forces in order to provide our older students with another opportunity to engage in meaningful environmental action. In fact, YRE projects can be easily integrated within the EkoSkola programme as part of the Curriculum Work /

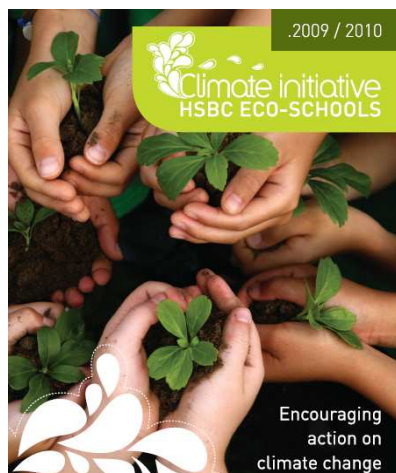


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Informing and Involving steps. To make this integration easier, we decided to include the YRE newsletter with the EkoSkola newsletter. For more information about YRE contact Ms Audrey Gauci, the National YRE co-ordinator, on yre@naturetrustmalta.org.

HSBC Eco-Schools Climate Initiative Project

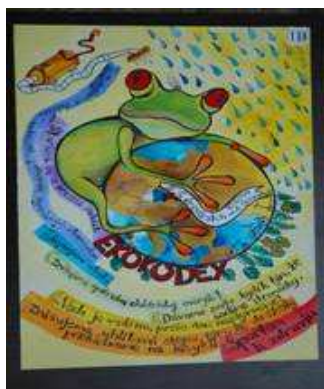


This year marks the second cycle of the HSBC Eco-Schools Climate Initiative. There are 18 participating countries: Brazil, China, England, France, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Malta, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and Wales). Participating schools will explore issues related to Climate Change through the following themes: energy, transport, waste, water, biodiversity, global citizenship and healthy living. Participating in the project is easy because it involves going through the EkoSkola 7 steps with an emphasis on Climate Change issues. Participating schools will receive educational material that will help them in their tasks. Besides the Eco-Code Climate Competition, this year schools will be offered funds to develop community based projects related to climate change.

In the meantime, we were informed about the winners of the HSBC Eco-Code International Climate Competition. Malta was represented in both categories by Kelly-Marie Zammit Gauci (St Francis School Birkirkara), and by Leanne Coleiro (St Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii School, Paola). We are pleased to announce that the latter entry came second in the Youth's Category and received the prize money of \$750. All the participating posters of all national finalists were exhibited at the National Operators



Winning posters of the Children's Category: 1st – Japan; 2nd – South Africa; 3rd – Russia



*Winning posters of the Youth's Category: 1st – Slovakia; 2nd – **Malta**; 3rd – South Africa*

Meeting in Scotland.

EkoSkola Annual Seminars

As in previous years, Nature Trust held its Annual EkoSkola seminars with the aim of introducing the programme to interested schools and to celebrate achievements of member schools.

The Gozo seminar was held on the 24th November at the Gozo College, Sannat Primary school. A total of 23 children and 23 teachers from 10 schools attended the event. The seminar was inaugurated by Chev. Frank Gatt, Gozo College principal.

The Seminar in Malta was held at the Archbishop's Seminary School, Rabat on the 26th November. Besides directors, educational officers and college principals, 204 students and 122 teachers from 46 schools attended the seminar. The Hon. George Pullicino (Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs) and Mr Raymond J. Camilleri (Director - Curriculum Management and eLearning) opened the seminar. The seminar was also attended by the Hon. Leo Brincat (Opposition spokesperson for the Environment, Sustainable Development & Climate Change).

This year we awarded 14 Green Flags, 3 Silver Awards and 4 Bronze Awards.



St Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda and St Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii School received the Green Flag for the third time.



From top to bottom ... from left to right: Gozo College, Xaghra Primary; St Benedict College, Kirkop Primary C; San Gorg Preca College, Paola Primary A and St Ignatius College Siggiewi Primary School received the Green Flag for the second time.



From top to bottom ... from left to right: Archbishop's Seminary Secondary School; Gozo College, Nadur Primary; St Benedict College, Mqabba Primary; St Benedict College, Tarxien Girls Secondary; St Francis School, B'Kara; St Francis School, Sliema; St Nicholas College, Bahrija Primary and St Thomas More College, Zejtun Primary A received the Green Flag for the first time.

Both seminars kicked off with a video clip about EkoSkola's impact of the educational system that was produced by Channel 22 ... which we duly thank for their co-operation. Seminar participants could also choose from different workshop sessions: for new member schools; for experienced EkoSkola schools; for primary school students; and for secondary school students.



From left to right: Maria Regina College, Sta Venera Primary; St Monica School, B'Kara and St Thomas More College, Paola Boys Secondary received the Silver Award.



*From top to bottom ... from left to right:
Gozo College, Zebbug Primary; Maria Regina College, Mosta Girls Secondary; Sta Margerita College, Zabbar Primary A and St Thomas More College, Fgura Primary B received the Bronze Award.*

Nature Trust would like to thank Mr Saviour Portelli (Head of Sannat Primary) and Rev Fr David Cilia (Head of Archbishop's Seminary School) for hosting us at their school as well the staff of both schools for their support and co-operation. A special thanks also goes to GAS (Global Action Schools), KOPIN (Koooperazzjoni Internazzjonali - Malta) and JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) for supporting us during the workshop sessions.

Official opening of the Xrobb L-Għagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre

All schools participating in the Ekoksola and YRE programmes are invited to visit the Xrobb L-Għagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre after the official opening on 18 March 2011 by the Prime Minister. Schools intending to visit are to send in their booking to info@naturetrustmalta.org. The Park will offer visiting groups, guided walks of the nature area, visit and use of the education centre / conference rooms participate in environmental games. The Park also offers sleep over facilities at the Park Hostel. For details and fees contact Nature Trust (Malta). Educators can also make use of prepared lesson plans to conduct field sessions on site.



FEE's Fund supports tree planting activities

The funding derived from CO₂ compensation will be entered into FEE's Global Forest Fund administrated by the International Learning about Forests (LEAF) Coordination. Schools involved in EkoSkola and YRE can apply, through their national coordinator for funding, from the Fund for environmental education activities related to tree planting and maintenance. The application procedure and form can be downloaded from this page: <http://www.fee-international.org/en/Menu/Global+Forest+Fund/Global+Forest+Fund>

U4energy: The European School Challenge Competition



As already explained in circular **CMeLD 189/2010**, the European Commission has launched U4energy, a school competition promoting energy savings across Europe. All teachers and students from the 31 European countries can

participate. There are three entry categories and teachers and students can decide to engage in one or more of them:

Category A: Energy efficiency measures at school: Initiatives that encourage teachers and pupils to learn more about energy efficiency and mobilise their school in order to achieve savings, mainly by reducing energy consumption levels for electricity (and heating).

Participants: School communities (teachers, pupils and SMT) and local authorities

Category B: Best pedagogical actions to raise awareness on efficient energy use: Initiatives that encourage teachers to develop and report on successful methodologies for teaching energy efficiency, engaging pupils and raising awareness on the need of reducing energy consumption. Teachers will report on methodologies used to motivate pupils by providing educational material and teaching resources.

Participants: Teachers

Category C: Best awareness raising campaign on energy efficiency: Initiatives that encourage participating teachers and pupils to design and implement innovative and creative campaigns to promote energy efficiency within their school and/or community.

Participants: Pupils guided by a teacher

The '**national winner**' per category (i.e. 3 winners per country) will be chosen by a national jury. The winners will be invited for one day to the National Award Ceremonies, organised in regional clusters, bringing together 4-5 countries.

A pan-European jury will select the 2 best national winning entries per category to designate 3 pan-European U4energy winners and 3 runners-up. Delegates of the finalist schools, pupils and teachers, will be invited for a two-day trip to Brussels, Belgium for the European Award Ceremony.

If interested register at www.U4energy.eu for the competition and you will receive a digital kit containing an e-badge, debate cards, a pledge, the Energy Saving Tool, the U4energy questionnaire, as well as instructions on how to best use the resources available on the U4energy portal. The closing date for the entries is **16th May 2011** but work on the projects should start early. More information can be obtained from Mr Paul Xuereb (paul.xuereb@um.edu.mt) and Mr Gaetano Bugeja (gaetano.bugeja@gov.mt) who are coordinating this competition at the local level.

Walking For Water



Why water? Clean water is something many of us in 'developed' countries take for granted because it's always been available, just open the tap. However, this is not the case for many people in the world. Over 800 million people (usually women and children) must walk an average of 6 km (4 miles) every day to get access to water, often at the expense of working or going to school.

The Walking for Water campaign is an awareness and fundraising campaign which takes place every year during the week of UN World Water Day the 22nd of March.

School children aged 10-15 are sponsored by their friends and family to walk 6 kilometres while carrying 6 litres of water in a backpack. Your school can choose a water project in a developing country and keep track of it online, providing the students with a real connection to the community that they are helping.

The educational component of this initiative is just as important as the fundraising. Support will be given to participating schools to inform children about the importance of clean water and adequate sanitation in developing countries, and the connection to reducing poverty. This preparation builds awareness and gives the children a real sense of purpose for participating in the walk. Walking For Water can complement the curriculum of science, health, social studies or geography classes. To see some examples of projects have a look at the many projects available at www.akvo.org/rsr/projects.

For more information visit www.walkingforwater.eu where you can read about the experience of other schools and get much more information about the campaign or send us an e-mail to walkingforwater@akvo.org. The deadline for registration for the March 2011 walk is 31 January 2011.

Changing Minds, Changing Lives

If you want to introduce sustainable development themes in your school and don't know where to start ... then this is what you are looking for. Youth Alive Foundation and the CEER (Centre for Environmental Education and Research) of the University of Malta are happy to introduce **Changing Minds, Changing Lives: empowerment in the face of poverty and environmental challenges**. This is a nine session course stretching from the 14th of January to the 11th of March, 2011. Sessions are held every Friday at 19.30, at Dar Frate Jacoba, Triq Wied iz-Ziju, Marsaskala (next to the Sant' Antnin Recycling Plant). The course seeks to empower participants to embrace positive solutions to the difficulties faced in our time, and develop creative skills to create harmonious relationships with the earth and others.

Topics discussed will include Unsustainable Models of Development, Climate change, Water, Organic Waste, Child rights and Women empowerment, Food, Permaculture and Communities, Architecture with a soul, Fair Trade, Workers' Rights and Ethical Consumption, and Volunteering.

The course is free of charge but applicants are required to notify their participation on 20995249 or ciantarmark@gmail.com ... from where you can also get more information.

EkoSkola and eTwinning

The Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) through International Eco-Schools agreed with eTwinning Central Support Services (CSS) c/o European Schoolnet to collaborate in order to promote school initiatives and facilitate online collaborative projects between schools particularly those involving students directly. For this purpose a face-to-face training workshop was organised in Malta on the 14-15th October 2010, with

the aim of familiarising participants with the potential of using eTwinning as a form of networking between Eco-Schools.

National Eco-Schools operators from Iceland, Portugal, Macedonia, Wales, Denmark and Puerto Rico, each accompanied by a teacher, together with Mr Bernard Holland (International Eco-Schools Coordinator) and Mr Ebbe Schultze (Chief Advisor from The Danish IT Centre for Education & Research) attended the meeting. Malta was represented by teachers from Maltese schools and the EkoSkola teachers.



Participants attending the training workshop

Ms Jeannette Cardona (eTwinning National Support Service Coordinator) and Ms Amanda Debattista (eTwinning National Support Service Pedagogical Advisor) both from the Curriculum Management and eLearning Department, directed all present to navigating and effectively using the eTwinning Portal to its maximum potential. A number of applications within TwinSpace were explained and collaboration applications such as Blogs, Forum and Wikis were used during the training sessions. A number of Maltese



Delegates during a workshop session and (on the right) being shown around the school by EkoSkola Committee members of St Gorg Preca College, Paola Primary B.



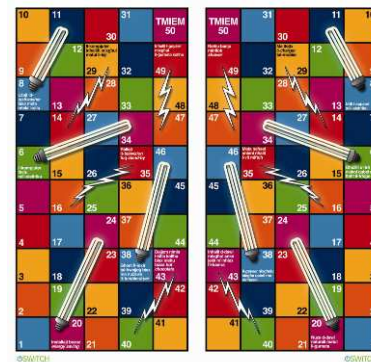
teachers and students who had participated in eTwinning projects gave presentations about their projects. Participants were introduced to the use of video conferencing, uploading documents and footage, creating comic strips, cartoons, talking avatars and virtual books. Participants also had the opportunity to visit St Gorg Preca College, Paola Primary B and meet the school's EkoSkola Committee. Attending teachers teamed up together to start three pilot eTwinning projects between them whilst the Eco-Schools National Operators discussed the aims of using eTwinning for Eco-Schools, funding required for this collaboration, the possibility for countries outside the EU to participate fully, and mainly the opportunities for linking and promoting Eco-Schools through eTwinning.

Nature Trust would like to thank the support given by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, particularly its Director General, Prof Grace Grima, for their continued support in the organization of this event.

Which Switch? Game

The *Which Switch?* game is an interactive game that helps children learn about practices that conserve or waste energy through play. Over these last years, a large number of schools have borrowed the game and used it during activities related to energy use.

We would like to inform all schools that the game is still available. Those who wish to make use of the game are kindly asked to send their request to Ms Elizabeth Saliba on lizasaliba@gmail.com. There are currently 4 games available (4m x 8m each). Kindly note that the game will be assigned to schools on a first come first served basis.



Linking and twinning with foreign Eco-Schools

The EkoSkola team is in contact with a number of Eco-Schools from South Africa which are willing to collaborate on a joint project with Maltese schools, sharing practices, investigating issues and learning about each others' cultures (see next article for more information about one of these schools). This can be done through both the YRE and EkoSkola programmes.

Also a number of Spanish nursery Eco-Schools have asked whether there are any schools interested in sharing ideas.

All schools interested in the above or in linking with local schools or other countries at any level are urged to contact Ms Marvic Refalo on marvicekoskola@naturetrustmalta.org for further details and guidelines.

Holistic Actions at an urban school in South Africa



After four years of being part of the WESSA/WWF Eco-Schools programme in South Africa, PEPPS Preparatory school and college, is continuing with diverse action projects like landscaping with indigenous water wise plants, planting a variety of local trees and encouraging biodiversity in the school grounds with a fishpond and bird feeders. The fishpond, with reeds, grasses and a mini-waterfall started out as a showpiece but is now a breeding pond for Tilapia (kurper) and is used for field work.

The school makes a stout effort to recycle and re use materials. Old track suits have been made into a shopping bag which zips up into a small square and sold by the school to raise funds. For assignments on plant and animal cells or DNA learners were encouraged not to buy materials and to rather use waste materials and scraps found around the home. PEPPS is also involved in electricity monitoring and use reduction as well as in promoting and hosting blood drives. Yes Eco-action projects can be community orientated and a blood drive fits in two themes that schools are meant to tackle either Healthy Living or Community and Heritage. Their blood clinic has collected a record of 59 units which equates to saving almost 200 lives. The learners have created brightly coloured posters to attract donors



with catchy titles like “Be a superhero and save a life today!” The Gr. 11’s wrote and presented a play to encourage blood donation. In the classroom lessons are given on nutrition, as it is important that blood donors are healthy and have adequate iron levels.

Tree Planting at Bulebel Industrial Estate

Our committee has taken the initiative to encourage industrialists within Bulebel Industrial Estate to plant more trees within their own industrial estate. The idea is to make factory owners aware that trees are beneficial for carbon offsetting, thus helping to reduce the problem of global warming. In addition, trees also help to embellish the area while at the same time both employers and employees develop a sense of ownership within the park. The EkoSkola committee would like to thank Kasco Ltd, De La Rue and Solea Pharma for responding positively to this initiative and for having sponsored twenty eight national trees. The committee would also like to thank the Bulebel Industrial Estate Tenants Association (BIETA) for their full co-operation.



The tree-planting activity took place on the 29th November 2010. The Hon. Minister George Pullicino and Hon Dr Stephen Spiteri, together with factory managers attended this ceremony. Guests and students of the EkoSkola committee did the actual tree planting. The school choir sung environmental songs during the activity.

Written by Alana and Janelle, President and Assistant Secretary, EkoSkola Committee - St Benedict College, Tarxien Girls' Secondary

Road Safety and a Recycled Plastic Bottle Greenhouse

During the scholastic year 2009-10, St Benedict College Safi Primary organised a bike-to-school activity called **Beat the Exhaust? Get a Helmet!** as an alternative to car driving. Mr Kenneth Scicluna (Education Officer for Health and Safety) provided two members of his team: Ms Yvette Ebejer and Mr Omar Schembri who, together with a traffic police officer, advised children about bicycle helmet fitting and usage, community safe bike awareness, rules of the road and the prevention of bicycle-related injuries. A Bike Safety parade was carried out with the senior year groups.



Preparing for the bicycle parade



Learning about traffic signs

This was just one of the events organized by the EkoSkola Committee together with the School Pupils' Council. The Health and Safety Week included a talk on Occupational Safety through the NAPO mascot; Dental Health Education Session with the Health Department; Healthy Eating Activities with the Home Economics Teachers; Safety at Sports with the PE Teacher; and Fitness Sessions with the PE Department. Year groups

visited and participated in the Health and Safety Expo and a Writing Session for children and parents on "Keeping Safe and Healthy" with the Malta Writing Programme. During this week, the school was awarded the Certificate of Merit for Health and Safety at the Education H&S EXPO.

Life from Waste was the theme of the inauguration programme of the first Recycled Plastic Bottle Greenhouse composed of over 1500 plastic bottles to be constructed at our school and Safi. The event was organized on Tuesday, 16th November, 2010 by the school EkoSkola Committee in collaboration with WasteServ, the Dinja Wahda Programme, FrottArtna Organization and the Local Council.



The event started off with a special assembly, for all children, parents and guests, about the Year 5 class' visit to a professional greenhouse in Ghammieri. The day proceeded with various environmental activities for all age groups including storytelling on the Environment and Waste Management for the Early Years, a Quiz for Year 4 class and a Hands on Session for the senior years. The FrottArtna Organization provided vegetables and fruit for all school children partially funded by the European Schemes. Special information activities and hands on cooking sessions using organic vegetables were carried out with all age groups. The Year 6 pupils initiated a Kitchen Garden in our school front garden with cabbages, broccoli and strawberries.

In the inauguration welcome speech, Justin Abdilla Muscat, President of the school EkoSkola Committee thanked all the volunteers and NGOs for the participation and support in this Programme. The whole day programme included the participation of the EkoSkola Committee of St Benedict College, Qrendi Primary who twinned their efforts with the EkoSkola Committee of St Benedict College Safi Primary, towards a collective effort for Greener Schools.

Teaching Resources

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

(a) Unlimited: Renewable Energy in the 21st Century

A 26 minute film on alternative sources of energy. After a brief explanation of the impact of global warming, the film continues with an explanation of the major alternative sources of energy and ways of reducing global warming. The best thing about this video is that it is mainly run by children and hence the explanations given are easy to understand. The film is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UoK-IPfXMw>

(b) Nourish



A large number of schools have chosen the theme Healthy Lifestyles for their Action Plan. Here is a site that will provide you with ideas about food: What's the story of my food? Where did it come from, and how did it get to me? The site's major asset is that it presents a sustainable development perspective towards nutrition. Visit the site at <http://nourishlife.org/>

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 www.ekoskolamalta.com



YOUNG REPORTERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Newsletter – Issue 1

As from this year the YRE entries will have a threefold dimension – the photo and article writing as in previous years, and the video as a new format. Students can opt to take a “footage” of not more than 2 mins about their environmental concern. This has to be related to one of the 8 main areas as for the photo and article categories, and can take any format – interviews, shots, etc.

Schools or students who wish to work on a joint project with either a local school or a foreign school, kindly contact Ms Audrey Gauci as soon as possible. Most schools work on their projects during the second term, but a joint project would require that we establish contacts as early as possible.

Environmental programmes in schools are featuring a lot lately, and it is our aim to try to reduce the workload on teachers and students as much as possible. Schools 2 Community and YRE have joined forces, and some schools will be integrating both programmes together. In this pilot project, students will produce an article, photo or video about an environmental issue related to the global dimension and north-south relations, and submit the same work for both projects. Interested schools may contact Audrey Gauci on audreyekoskola@naturetrustmalta.org or Mario Gerada (S2C) on mariogerada@gmail.com

We will be issuing helpful tips and guidelines on how to take a good photo, write a good article or taking a video. These will be sent to all schools subscribing to the YRE programme this year. In the meantime, here are some helpful links that might help you with your work:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/> - gives wonderful ideas on photography and environmental issues.

<http://www.digital-photography-school.com/> - gives useful tips on good photography.

<http://media.gatewayva.com/rtd/newspaperineducation/young-reporters.pdf> - even though lengthy, this article has some good tips or report writing.

Please note that the deadline for YRE projects is **end of March 2011**. No entries will be accepted after this date.

The word limit for the photo entries is 150 words, while the maximum number of words for the article section is 1000 words. This year, entries that exceed this quota will be automatically disqualified. I will shortly be issuing further guidelines on the three sections of the YRE programme – photo, article and video sections. If you need further help do not hesitate to contact Ms Audrey Gauci.

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Ms Audrey Gauci, National YRE Co-ordinator, on yre@naturetrustmalta.org