

Special Edition:



Eco-Schools National Operators' Meeting

MELLIEHA MALTA 2012



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After months of preparatory meetings the long awaited 4-day event kicked off on 7th November 2012. The Eco-Schools National Operators' Meeting was attended by 65 delegates from the following 46 different countries: Bahamas, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ireland, England, Finland, France, FYR Macedonia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, USA and Wales. The delegates had the opportunity to visit local schools participating in the EkoSkola programme as well as several historical places.



Delegates at the Ghadira Nature Reserve

Extra care was taken to ensure that during the meeting paper use was kept to a minimum by using online media rather than printing. Disposables were avoided, car pooling was promoted and the event included tree planting and beach cleaning. This Green Conference was presented as good practice for the European Week for Waste Reduction. Nature Trust would like to thank the Mellieha Local Council who was main sponsor of the event, particularly the Mayor, Mr Robert Cutajar and the Council Secretary, Ms Yvonne Muscat for their untiring support. Thanks also go to the other sponsors of the NOM: the Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs; the Ministry for Education and Employment and Air Malta. The following pages include some articles highlighting some of the major events of the NOM. More information about the NOM is available at <http://www.ekoskola.org.mt/eco-schools-national-operators-meeting/>.



Nature Trust (Malta)
PO Box 9
Valletta VLT1000
<http://www.naturetrustmalta.org/>



Jeze the Loggerhead turtle released

Jeze the 8 year old loggerhead turtle was released on the 8th November in the Blue Flag beach of Mellieħa Bay in the presence of the international Eco-School delegates. The turtle was taken in at the Turtle Rehabilitation Unit, Forti San Lucjan in Marsaxlokk after a yacht owner found the turtle with a hook in its gut and with nylon inside. Jeze, which was named after the yacht itself, was cared for by aquaculture officer Charles Sammut and Nature Trust (Malta) with its rescue team who help with cleaning, medication and feeding of the turtles undergoing rehabilitation. Jeze was under the medical observation of veterinary surgeon Anthony Gruppetta of St Simon's Veterinary Practice in Mosta.



Students from the Sacred Heart Senior School and HSBC volunteers led by Ms Doriette Camilleri (HSBC) during the beach clean up

Heart Senior School and HSBC volunteers as part of the Eco-Schools World Day of Action (WDA). This event draws out the links between Blue Flag beaches and the EkoSkola programme. Ms. Pauline Dingli from the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) was also present and gave a talk to the students outlining criteria and the importance of Blue Flag beaches. The WDA is an initiative of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) Eco-Schools programme that is designed to empower students by engaging them in fun, action-oriented learning.



Ms Pauline Dingli (MTA) talking to students from the Sacred Heart Senior School and HSBC volunteers before the clean up

The President of Malta presides over the Green Flag Award-giving Ceremony

A total of 24 schools have received the prestigious international Green Flag award symbolizing their commitment towards environmental decision making aimed at improving the quality of life at school and in their respective communities. The ceremony was held on the 8th November at the newly refurbished Grandmaster's Hall at San Anton

Presidential Palace and was presided over by His Excellency Dr George Abela in the presence of the international Eco-Schools delegates.

In their short speech the students thanked the president for his hospitality and said that the EkoSkola programme is a 'not to be missed' opportunity for all students to become responsible citizens. They reiterated their commitment to ensure a better quality of life for all by 'taking the plunge' and take action to bring about the desired change in attitudes. Mr Vincent Attard, Nature Trust Executive President and FEE Malta representative said that Nature Trust was truly honoured and very proud to have the President as the patron of the EkoSkola programme. Referring to the eco-audit carried out at San Anton Palace by the EkoSkola students earlier this year, Mr Attard said that 'EkoSkola is all about empowering children and the President has not only acknowledged this but has also taken the student's suggestions to the letter to make the necessary alterations suggested.'



In her brief address, Ms Lesley Jones, FEE Political responsible for Eco-Schools international said that FEE was very impressed with the magnificent work Malta is doing in this programme. She was intrigued by the way the students conducted the eco-audit at the president's palace and pleasantly surprised to learn that the President gave his patronage to Eco-Schools programme in Malta.

HE Dr George Abela then presented the Green flags to students and accompanying educators.

He was visibly impressed by the students' exuberance and commended their genuine efforts. Addressing the students and the distinguished guests he explained that he was admittedly surprised when a number of Eco-Schools requested his permission to carry out an environmental audit of the Palace quarters earlier this year. Speaking amiably to the students he reassured them that he had taken heed of their suggestions and some of the alterations suggested had already been carried out:

"As a result of the action plan compiled by these children after they carried out a meticulous audit of the Palace, we have implemented the following measures in the San Anton Palace and the President's Kitchen Garden:

- 1) *We purchased a compost bin. This has been installed in the Kitchen Garden together with a plaque informing the public how they can produce compost from household waste and that these bins can be bought at a subsidised price from Wasteserv.*
- 2) *We have placed plastic bottles in the flushings of the Kitchen Garden (hippo bags) to reduce the volume of water used during flushes.*
- 3) *The new lanterns that will be fixed in the new extension of the Kitchen Garden are LEDs so that a reduced amount of electrical energy is used.*
- 4) *We provided bins for the separation of plastic waste in the gardens of the Kitchen Garden.*
- 5) *Worn out bulbs are being replaced with bulbs that consume less electricity.*
- 6) *The new cafeteria will adopt a new food packaging system that reduces waste.*
- 7) *Waste produced by the animals kept at the Kitchen Garden will be used as manure*



and a manure clamp will be constructed to store manure in winter.

- 8) *Wasteserv representatives gave a lecture about waste separation to all the kitchen staff.*
- 9) *Palace staff has been designated as Green Leaders to help in waste separation.*
- 10) *We have also started separating kitchen waste. All the cardboard and plastic is taken to the Imrieħel Amenity Site.*
- 11) *All the material produced from tree pruning is stored and then collected by PARKS for shredding to produce mulch.*

These measures proposed by the students and implemented by the Administration of the San Anton Palace make a lot of sense and will have a tangible and practical effect in favour of the environment."



His Excellency Dr George Abela, President of the Republic of Malta together with the international Eco-Schools delegates and other distinguished guests

In his concluding remarks Dr Abela congratulated all the schools present and their educators for their hard work and wished all the international guests a memorable stay.

Delegates' Visit at SGPC Floriana Primary

Thursday, 8th November 2012 will never be erased from our memory! Our school, San Gorg Preca College Floriana Primary which won the prestigious Green Flag twice in the past years, was chosen to host some of the delegates attending the EkoSkola National Operators Meeting held in Malta. People from Russia, Turkey, Bahamas, Mexico, Denmark, Spain, Slovenia, South Africa and others were made very welcome at our school.

We were told about this visit a month before therefore we had quite some time to organise ourselves for this event. We all looked forward to it!!! The day arrived and we welcomed our guests with our daily songs. Two of the EkoSkola young members dressed up in Maltese traditional clothes, read a speech about our action taken in the past years and in the future to come. Our Headmaster and College Principal delivered a short speech each as well. The EkoSkola visitors tasted some Maltese traditional food which we prepared for them. The EkoSkola committee members took the visitors around the whole school and clearly explained to them about each and every room found in our school, which by the way happens to be the first building used as a school here in Malta. For this day we even made and gave each one of them a recycled souvenir representing our Maltese Cross, a copy of our School Annual Magazine and a bag from recycled material to be used as a shopping bag.

We really wished that this visit would never end and that we had more time to spend

with them. We even wish to meet with this multicultural group of people again. This experience will always be engraved in our memory and in our hearts. We even learned many things about what other countries are doing and it is so very true that 'we learn by doing.'



Written by Casey Parnis, Nicole Debono, Kaylie Zammit, Bradley Debono, Rhone Mifsud Grech, Matteo Piscopo and Joseph Attard, EkoSkola Committee Members

Delegates Visit St Joseph School, Blata I-Bajda

On Thursday 8th November, a group of 14 delegates visited St Joseph School, Blata I-Bajda. These delegates from different countries were in Malta to attend the National Operators Meeting. One of the activities which were organized for them during their stay in Malta was visits to Eco-Schools.



Our school was one of the schools chosen. About sixty delegates came to Malta for the conference and the fourteen who visited the school came of their own choice after reading short write-ups by different schools about their



environmental activities. The delegates were welcomed to the school by the Eco-School Committee, the Eco-School coordinator and the Link Teachers. Then they proceeded to the Media Room where the EkoSkola committee spoke informally with the delegates about our activities as an Eco-School. This was followed by a tour of the school and visits to a few classrooms. The focus of the visit was mainly about what the school does to merit the name of an Eco-School which was awarded the Green Flag for the fourth time.

Finally, the delegates went back to the Media Room where they met the Environmental and Cultural Awareness Focus Group adult members of the Eco-School Committee. They were treated to a buffet of Maltese food while watching a pictorial tour of the many environmental activities the school has taken part in. Before leaving, the delegates were given a flower made from recycled materials as a memento of their visit to St Joseph School, Blata I-Bajda.

Written by M.T. Spiteri - Eco-School Coordinator

Delegates Visit the Archbishop's Seminary, Rabat - Malta

The Archbishop's Seminary recently welcomed a foreign team of EkoSkola National Operators. The visit which took place on the 8th of November 2012, was mainly directed towards the actual, hands-on experiences of the students themselves.

Members of the delegation could experience the various initiatives taken by the EkoSkola committee while going round the school premises. A brief presentation documenting the major procedures for establishing such a hardworking team, as well as the plans for the future of EkoSkola within the Seminary followed. The floor was opened for discussion wherein both students and members of the delegation could discuss the challenges ahead. As the Student Committee President remarked, when answering an intriguing delegate's question, "EkoSkola is not just any



other extracurricular activity – it is all about becoming part of a process which can bring about a culture change at school, home or work, now and in the future - in simple terms it is simply about developing one's character."



During refreshments the delegation could also watch a photographic presentation of the various activities organized by the EkoSkola team, strengthening further our whole school approach towards a more sustainable environment.

It is imperative to acknowledge the hard work of the previous committees and link teacher Ms Odette Fsadni for their invaluable contribution towards the achievement of these standards. Since our current aim is that of widening the whole scope of EkoSkola to encompass the Seminary as an institution at large, the EkoSkola students committee will be further assisted by a staff committee which includes teachers, domestic staff as well as members of the Administration.

Written by Elaine Gatt - Obo Ekoskola Committee

Delegates visit St. Theresa College Lija-Balzan-Iklin Primary School

On Thursday 8th November 2012 our school hosted a group of 15 delegates from different countries for a short visit around the school. Our young EkoSkola committee members waited impatiently for the delegates to arrive and when they did they welcomed them in the school foyer. The delegates were accompanied by Mr Bernard Grixti, EkoSkola co-ordinator.



After a short introduction, the delegates were led to see the EkoSkola notice board situated in a prominent place in the school foyer. Attention was drawn to the fact that the notice board shows this month's focus of action – waste management, the three R's and composting. A meeting with the committee members was then held in the conference room. The committee members introduced themselves and briefly described what they like doing best in the EkoSkola committee. They also answered questions

asked by the interested delegates. After the meeting, the delegation was taken around the school to see the work carried out so far in EkoSkola. The delegates noticed the high level of commitment by all the staff in the school and they could see work displayed in conjunction to EkoSkola. Of particular interest was a kindergarten classroom in which all classroom furnishings and resources used as well as crafts were entirely made of reused and recycled material. The delegates were also shown waste separation boxes in classrooms as well as the compost bin which is being filled with organic waste brought by the children from home – hence involving also the students’ parents and families.



The delegates enjoyed themselves so much that they did not want to leave our school. They were positively impressed by the amount of work done in so little time, given that our school has started work on the action plan since the beginning of October. Before leaving, the delegates were presented with small souvenirs of Malta made by the students using recycled material which included used CDs, pictures from magazines, and cereal box cardboard. The members of the delegation were also given a copy of

the book published last year by the school “A Walk in the Jungle”, containing writings and illustrations by the students.

Written by Paul Anthony Rapa - EkoSkola Link Teacher

Messages from the delegates

The following are messages that some of the international delegates wanted to send to the students participating in the EkoSkola programme.



I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Floriana Primary School. The whole school was there to welcome us with speeches and songs. The students on their EkoSkola committee were enthusiastic, knowledgeable about the Eco-Schools topics and eager to show and tell us what they have been doing at their school. A wonderful example - Keep up the great work! - **Marcia Musgrove (Bahamas)**

Witnessing the activities in your Eco-Schools I was impressed with the great job you all do and assured that you are going to be the change we need and lead the world to a sustainable future through fun and action-orientated learning. Keep up the good work. - **Josip Gregac (Croatia)**

The school visit was lively, interesting and the work achieved by the school a great credit to the students and teaching staff. We were all made to feel incredibly welcome and on behalf of Eco-Schools England I would like to say thank you. – **Andrew Suter (England)**

I so enjoyed my visit to the EkoSkola in Malta. The enthusiasm and drive of you children is really encouraging. Thank you for helping us to achieve a more sustainable world. - **Bríd Conneely (International Programme Director, FEE International)**

We have met Maltese students during our stay on the island and they have made a presentation of their Eco-School's project. It was so interesting and we could feel their huge motivation and an enormous investment. I am happy that the Maltese President recognized their work and presented them with the eco-label. - **Pamela Mercier (France)**

Big Thanks for all your joined efforts to make these wonderful islands more clean and beautiful. - **Robert Lorenz (Germany)**

Be brave, change is in your hands! - **Andrea Rinelli (Italy)**

I was pleased to see you students in Malta keenly working on EkoSkola and environmental activities. It was encouraging for me and it will surely encourage students around the world as well. I am looking forward to hearing further progression of your work here in Japan. Keep going! - **Yukiko Tsuburaya (Japan)**

We were very happy to see so many young and very-very young people involved in making our planet a better place to live in. Your achievements will serve as an inspiration to your peers all over the world - and I will be happy to pass what I learnt from you to Eco-Schools in Kazakhstan. - **Masha Zhirkova (Kazakhstan)**

Thank you for very inspiring experience. Amazing is the role of students in environmental processes and support from government. Your students are the best example for other students in all the world. I wish you continue to inspire and do our world better. - **Daniels Truksans (Latvia)**

Thank you EkoSkola Malta for sharing your experiences with us. For México as a new country member, meeting your staff and visiting schools really made a difference that we definitely want to share with local authorities, sponsors and PUPILS! Keep going with such a Great Job! - **Susana Jiménez and Gaby Ortiz (Mexico)**

With your hard work and determination you can be actors of change in your local environment and community for sure. Do not forget that acting locally matters globally. Continue doing the good work and you shall come out as a winner. - **Kenza Khallafi (Morocco)**

Malta is such a beautiful country so it is wonderful to learn about all the actions that Eco-Schools are taking there to help create a better environment. I was really impressed with the visit to the Eco-School and particularly to see the programme being implemented with such high-quality. So keep up the great work which we can all learn from. - **Carmel Fyfe (Northern Ireland)**

In Eco-school in Slovakia we have got a motto: "If you can change your school, you can change the world around you". Don't forget that you are the most important part of whole Eco-School programme. - **Miroslava Piláriková (Slovakia)**

You can be proud, that you are part of a big international Eco-Schools family. Congratulations! Please continue with your environmental activities for a sustainable World and for a better quality of Life – for you and for the future generations. - **Gregor Cerar (Slovenia)**

Malta is a very special place indeed. A five-day visit to Malta proved to environmental delegates from over 40 countries that Malta has the organisation, the staff, the commitment and talent to make this a reality! The rest of the world could learn from the Malta experience. - **Jim Taylor (South Africa)**

You young eco-warriors are truly contributing in every sense in nurturing your beautiful country ... and in turn our lovely planet!!!! Cheers to more strength to your arms!!!! - **Ajita Nayar (United Arab Emirates)**

What a wonderful opportunity to share EkoSkola Malta's 10th anniversary and to be able to see what tremendous things your schools are doing! We hope by the time the United States reaches our tenth anniversary, that we can be as accomplished as EkoSkola Malta! Congratulations and keep up the tremendous good work. - **Elizabeth Soper (USA)**

It was great to see and hear about all the fantastic achievements of pupils and students attending Eco-Schools in Malta. You and all the other young people involved in the Eco-Schools programme world-wide are an inspiration to us all. *Diolch* (Thanks). - **Rheinallt Williams (Wales)**



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.