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EkoSkola

July 2013

Issue 41

Editorial Note

Dear readers, another scholastic year has come to an end. We surely hope that you had an exciting and eventful year and that you can now enjoy your well deserved holidays. On behalf of Nature Trust, I would like to thank all the head teachers, teachers and students for their commitment towards sustainable development ... you are tangibly showing that change for the better is possible. Thank you.

We also like to thank all the teachers that have responded to our online feedback questionnaire. We are currently analysing the results and will share with you the conclusions in the first edition of the newsletter of the next scholastic year. In the meantime ... due to the amount of articles we received from our readers we are not including the following features in this edition of the newsletter: Environmental Initiatives, Teaching Resources and Nina & Ninu's Advice.

Young People's Summit 2013



After the success of the first Young People's Environmental Summit held last year as part of the 10th Anniversary of EkoSkola, we decided to organise the event again to give our students another opportunity to develop citizenship skills. This year, the summit was held on the 25th February 2013 in an effort to provide students with an opportunity to talk

to the political parties in preparation for the coming General Elections. During the 2008 General Election campaign, students had presented a memorandum to the political parties based on the feedback obtained from a questionnaire distributed to over 8,500 households in Malta and Gozo. Children wanted to invite the political parties contesting the elections to make a tangible commitment towards the local environment.

Students from 24 schools were given the opportunity to meet and discuss their environmental concerns and their future at Xrobb l-Għagin Nature Park and Sustainable Development Centre. The discussions were organised into 6 workshops: 3 for primary and 3 for secondary schools. The themes discussed included: Land use and Misuse; Water Management; Alternative Energy Sources; Waste Management; Junk Mail; Fair Trade; Transport and Traffic Pollution; and Marine Life Conservation. Conclusions from each workshop were then collated to form a declaration that was approved by the attendees and presented to representatives from the political parties contesting the General Elections.



The schools represented during the summit were:

Archbishop's Seminary, Rabat

Our Lady Immaculate, Hamrun

Immaculate Conception, Tarxien

St Benedict College, Ghaxaq Primary

St Benedict College, Kirkop Boys' Sec.

St Benedict College, Mqabba Primary

St Benedict College, Żurrieq Primary

St Clare College, Gżira Boys Sec.

St Clare College, San Ġwann Primary B

St Edward's College, Vittoriosa

St Ġorġ Preca College, Floriana Primary

St Ġorġ Preca College, Paola Primary A

St Ignatius College, Handaq Boys Sec.

St Ignatius College, Handaq Girls' Sec.

St Ignatius College, Luqa Primary

St Joseph Blata l-Bajda, Primary

St Michael School, Sta Venera

St Nicholas College, Naxxar Boys' Sec.

St Patrick's Salesian School, Sliema

St Theresa College, Birkirkara Boys Sec.

St Theresa College, Sta Venera Primary

St Thomas More College, Fgura Primary B

St Thomas More College, St Luċija Girls' Sec.

St Thomas More College, Żejtun Primary A

Audit at Le Meridien Hotel

Following last year's environmental audit at San Anton Palace, 6 other EkoSkola schools from Sliema and St Julians took part in a similar audit, this time at Le Meridien Hotel in St Julians on the 18th April 2013. Le Meridien Hotel is the first hotel in Malta to be awarded the Green Key Award.



Students reviewed areas of the hotel including the pantry, restaurant kitchen, indoor pool, gym, conference area, staff quarters, garbage and laundry rooms, together with a hotel room. The students were assisted by Hotel personnel, under the guidance of Mr Joseph Zammit, Security and Health and Safety Manager at Le Meridien.

From the audit results, the EkoSkola Committees of the respective schools formulated an action

plan and subsequently presented it to the hotel management. The presentation highlighted some of the positive initiatives observed, such as: solar films on windows, the use of energy-saving bulbs, sensor switches, soaps and detergents in recyclable containers and the use of local products whenever possible. Recommended actions for improvement included the conversion of kitchen and garden waste to compost, providing information to guests about the environmental initiatives of the hotel and more dissemination about environment initiatives in the hotel industry.

This was a very positive experience for the students and their link teachers. Students had the opportunity to develop several transferable educational and interpersonal skills within the context of an environmental audit. This activity brought together two FEE international programmes: EkoSkola and Green Key (aimed at raising environmental awareness in leisure establishments).



The schools participating in the audit were: St Joseph Junior and Senior Schools, Sliema; Convent of the Sacred Heart Junior and Senior Schools, St Julians; St Patrick's Salesian School, Sliema and St Clare College Boys' Secondary School, Sliema.

Education for Sustainable Development

The newly launched National Curriculum Framework for All (2012) suggests that any curricular content must conceptualise learning as occurring through meaningful and challenging experiences, drawing upon learners' prior knowledge, interests and dispositions. Merging various subjects into learning areas contributes to the acquisition of a body of relevant, purposeful and connected knowledge and skills that engage and motivate learners. Rather than eliminating traditional subject content, learning areas promote the establishment of links between and across subjects to reinforce learning.



St Ignatius College Girls' Secondary School was one of the first schools to implement a whole school approach focused on a broad based curricular methodology to develop the aims set out by the framework. The chosen cross curricular theme was 'Education for Sustainable Development' that connected several traditional secondary school subjects. The activity that involved over 200 students and 40 educators took place at Fawwara, limits of Siggiewi and at the newly launched Xrobb Ghagin Park, limits of Marsascala on Thursday 21st March, marking the beginning of the Spring Season. The school's Heads of Department were instrumental in highlighting connections between the different subjects. The onsite explanations, hands-on activities and follow-up work provided a holistic learning experience.



Integration was effectively achieved throughout this out-of-school activity. This initiative marked the beginning of an educational journey for the school in which cross curricular themes will, where possible, permeate every facet of the curriculum through a whole school approach.

Working Together for a Greener World

On the 28th May, the EkoSkola Committees of Savio College and St Patrick's School met to discuss our respective projects. The first thing that we did was that we showed each other a PowerPoint presentation about the projects and work we did during this scholastic year. We did this so that we could share ideas about how we can improve our schools.



We also discussed ways how, in the near future, we can work in a project involving the two schools. Because this scholastic year has nearly come to an end we did not go into details about what kind of projects we are going to do. Through this activity we would like to send a message to all the other schools: that it is possible that two different schools can work hand in hand for a greener world.

Written by Luca Vella, PRO EkoSkola Committee, Savio College

A Fashion Show with a Difference

On 9th April 2013, the EkoSkola Committee of St. Margaret College, Żejtun Girls' Secondary School organised an unusual activity. We organised a fashion show with a difference as part of an awareness campaign regarding waste. Classes were encouraged to think about the design and the preparation of a costume made of reused waste. Students had to draw a pattern and design a costume they could wear during a school



fashion show to be held in the school hall. The students involved in the task did their utmost to design the most creative costumes ever. Weeks of preparation and



perseverance led to the creation of an outstanding collection of costumes. The judges, consisting of students, teachers and special visitors, had a difficult task choosing the three winning classes.

The activity was a great success because of the collective effort of enthusiastic and perseverant students and teachers whose aim was to work together and have a good time. One of their primary goals was to pass on a positive message in favour of our environment. Students were pleasantly surprised when the Head of School, Ms A. Spiteri, announced that they will be participating in this year's Prize Day. Special thanks go to

the EkoSkola link teachers: Ms V. Brincat, Ms A.M. Cutajar, Ms P.R. Micallef and Ms S. Psaila who co-ordinated the activity. Further thanks go to Mr S. Scerri for his contribution in this activity and Ms H. Mallia, the official photographer of the event.

Teachers and Students for a better environment

The EkoSkola Committee of the St Ignatius College, Girls' Secondary asked the College Principal, Mr Horace Caruana and the Headmistress Ms Maria Montebello about the possibility to participate in the school's first School Development Plan Day to promote a better environment. Once permission was granted, a group of students led by Maria Agius, the EkoSkola President, participated in the workshop *Education for Sustainable Development* (ESD). The workshop was also attended by Mr Johann Gatt, an EkoSkola Teacher and six teachers. ESD is one of the cross curricular themes identified in the National Curriculum Framework.



The workshop identified three key areas to work on and the persons who will be responsible of specific initiatives. The students actively participated in the discussion suggesting waste management, efficient use of water and trees as areas to work on. They also spoke about their concerns, and sought advice on how to tackle certain challenges they faced during this year. This workshop served to continue with the development of a sense of responsibility for active citizenship – a principle identified as one of the key learning areas by the National Curriculum Framework. The students were accompanied to the meeting by their parents – evidencing the commitment of all the school community towards achieving the Ekoskola School's motto: *Together for a Better Environment*.

Il-Bandiera l-Ħadra għat-tielet darba konsekuttiva

Meta ħadna l-Bandiera l-Ħadra għat-TIELET darba hassejtni vera kburija bja nnifsi l-aktar għax kont naf li ħdimna ħafna għaliha. Dak in-nhar tal-ġurija jien u shabi tal-EkoSkola għamilna hilitna sabiex inwieġbu kull mistoqsija sew. U tassew hekk għamilna!!! Prof Pace u s-Sur Attard, żewġ membri tal-ġurija tgħidx kemm kienu kburi bina. L-għada s-surmast laqgħana bi tbissima li ma tispicċa qatt u fil-bitha waqt li konna qed ngħidu t-talba qal lil kulhadd li ergajna ħadna l-Bandiera l-Ħadra. Dak il-ħin l-ebda rigal ma kien ikun isbah minn dak li qalilna s-surmast. Kollha konna kuntenti li l-bandiera reggħet bdiet tperper fil-bokka tat-taraġ tal-iskola tagħna. Ħajr kbir imur lejn Ms Brenda u Ms Pierline li ħadmu bis-shiħ magħna sabiex nagħmlu suċċess ieħor fl-iskola tagħna. Ħajr ukoll imur lill-għalliema, LSAs, studenti, is-Surmast, Ms Christine, Ms Rita s-segretarja kif ukoll lill-purtinari. Mingħajr l-għajnuna ta' dawn in-nies żgur li ma kienx ikollna dan is-suċċess. Ma ninsewx ukoll lis-Sur Johann Gatt li vera juri interess fil-ħidma tagħna.

Għalkemm jien qegħda fis-sitt sena tiegħi ser nibqa' nżomm f'moħħi u f'qalbi dak kollu li tgħallimt. Ser inwasslu wkoll fl-iskola sekondarja li ser nattendi fiha s-sena skolastika li ġejja. EkoSkola huwa programm bis-sens għax tgħallimt napprezza u nieħu ħsieb aktar l-ambjent ta' madwari!!! Grazzi mill-qalb lil kulhadd involut...

*Miktuba minn Casey Jade Parnis, mis-6 Sena,
Kulleġġ San Ġorġ Preca, Primarja tal-Furjana*

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.

Dolphin shows

Decide for yourself



Some facts: Specially designed for fast swimming, they reach speeds of up to 40km/hour and cover up to 65km a day. They can dive down to 300m. Dolphins produce two types of sounds: high pitched whistles to communicate between themselves; and clicking sounds used to locate food and obstacles. They are playful animals and frequently perform acrobatic leaps and bow-riding and consequently need a lot of free space.

Dying to entertain you! Dolphins have been recognized as being highly sociable animals living in complex groups and families (called pods). Such groups are led by a key member who ensures cohesion and survival of the rest of the group. The taking of dolphins from the wild to supply dolphinaria for their entertainment shows is a major threat to dolphin survival. The hunts for dolphins are merciless and cause havoc amongst groups. These hunts often end up in massacres where many dolphins suffer trauma and injury, while others are killed for food. It is estimated that for every wild dolphin caught around four are slaughtered.

Are captive dolphins safe? No. Dolphins in captivity face a life of boredom which often drives them into depressed or violent behaviour. It is not the first time that captive dolphins have been known to bite or attack and stress levels can increase in dolphins when they are forced to interact with visitors. Although there is also the risk of infection and transmission of diseases, children are often invited to kiss dolphins and come close to their blowhole (through which the animal breathes). Animals caught from the wild pose a greater risk as health records are obviously inexistent.



A dolphin's cute "smile" is a crowd puller and dolphins can be seen in countless souvenirs, posters, greeting cards, logos, etc. – though they are no longer so commonly seen in our waters. There is no doubt about it: dolphins are ever so popular and they are respected and loved. However, there lies a thin line between love and abuse, between misinformation and proper education.

Is there any tank that is large enough? No. Even the largest tanks existing to date are still some 700 times smaller than a dolphin's daily swim range. A dolphin's home can only be the vast sea. No other habitat replacement can ever even get close to re-creating a similar environment with all the diverse features of the sea, the freedom and, yes, the everyday survival battle. Taking dolphins into captivity with the poor pretext to protect them from the dangers of the open sea is just an excuse.



Dolphin sightings. Although not that common, dolphins still roam our waters. They have been sighted during the ferry crossing between the islands and several sightings are reported regularly by fishermen and people with pleasure boats. The photo on the left shows a couple dolphins seen not far off from the southern coast of Malta. Dolphins have been sighted, from the Majjistral Park, swimming along the coast beneath the cliffs. Seeing them in the wild is much more exciting than seeing them caged up and made to perform unnatural tricks. If you love dolphins avoid taking part in activities which are detrimental to their own health and survival.

See what other children have to say about this issue: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30Nm5uv292g>

Get teaching ideas from: <http://www.tes.co.uk/mypublicprofile.aspx?uc=2224299&profileTab=resources>

To learn more about this issue visit www.cetfree.org and <http://www.wdcs.org/wdc.php>