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Editorial Note

Easter is a time when we celebrate Christ's victory over death. It is a time when we are reminded that there is a solution for every problem.



Global warming, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, loss of countryside, sea pollution, desertification and many other environmental problems tend to present a very gloomy picture of the future. One could be tempted to feel discouraged and accept that nothing can be done to safeguard the environment from further harm. Instead of cursing the darkness, the EkoSkola programme prefers to light a candle. The programme is living proof that schoolchildren can make a valid contribution towards improving our environment.

With every scholastic year schools participating in the programme are reaching higher levels of excellence. During this year another school has been awarded the Green Flag, while two other schools have received the Silver Award. Furthermore, another school has competed in an international competition with impressive results (see article further on). I would like to thank all the EkoSkola students and teachers who are investing their energies to ensure that our future is a brighter one.

The EkoSkola Seminar

Nature Trust held its annual one-day EkoSkola Seminar on Thursday, 7th December 2006 at the Pembroke Parish Hall. Around 58 headteachers and teachers and 53 children from 40 different schools attended this year's meeting. This year's event was a special one on several counts. A stream of distinguished guests attended the seminar and addressed the participants: Hon. George Pullicino (Minister for Rural Affairs & Environment) and Mr Roberto Riccioni (FEE Italia);



School children from the Green Flag schools explaining EkoSkola's seven-steps during the seminar

Mr Ray Camilleri (Director, Department for Curriculum Management), Mr Shawn Wallis (HSBC CEO), Ms Daniela Blagojevic (Wasteserv representative) and Ms Sonia Camilleri (former Commissioner for Children).



Mr Shawn Wallis, HSBC CEO, presenting Mr Vince Attard, Nature Trust President, with the sum of Lm5,300 for the EkoSkola programme



Children from Zurrieq Primary B receiving the Silver Award



The Hon. George Pullicino (Minister for Rural Affairs & Environment) presenting the Green Flag award to Zurrieq Primary A.



Children from Zurrieq Primary A proudly holding the Green Flag.

School children from the Green Flag schools explained EkoSkola's seven-steps to the audience and Dr Paul Pace (National Co-ordinator) provided information about the Eco-Schools Linking and Itinerary Project. Xummiemu was also there to promote the *Tree for You Campaign*. However, the salient moment of the seminar was the distribution of awards to two schools from the San Benedittu College. Zurrieq Primary B received the Silver Award while Zurrieq Primary A got the Green Flag – becoming the first state school to receive this prestigious award.

Green Flag hoisting ceremony

Receiving the Green Flag is already a reason for celebration ... hoisting it in your school is even a greater thrill. This is what all the schoolchildren, staff, parents, education officials and other guests experienced during the Green Flag hoisting ceremony held at San Benedittu, Zurrieq Primary A on Wednesday, 28th February.

The atmosphere was, to say the least, electrifying! All the children – from Kindergarten to Year 3 – came on stage to sing and act out songs about the environment. Besides being



addressed by the EkoSkola Committee who explained what the school went through to deserve the Green Flag, the guests were also addressed by the Minister for Rural Affairs & Environment, Hon. George Pullicino, and the Minister of Education, Youth & Employment, Hon. Louis Galea who focused on the benefits that the EkoSkola programme is providing to Maltese schools.



Right: school children hoisting the Green flag. Above: Hon. Louis Galea (Minister of Education, Youth & Employment) and Hon. George Pullicino (Minister for Rural Affairs & Environment) talking with the pupils before the hoisting of the flag.

Volvo Adventure

Our newsletter, has on several occasions offered schools the possibility of participating in The Volvo Adventure - an educational programme that rewards environmental activities undertaken by young people to improve their local environment.

Ms Sarah Spiteri, Ms Hazel Mallia, Ms Martina Cuschieri, Ms Francesca Polidano and Ms Chanelle Cilia make up the St. Joseph School – Paola’s EkoSkola Committee. This scholastic year they have decided to participate in the adventure under the guidance of Ms Jacqueline Vanhear. We have just been informed that their project, entitled **Biodiversity: Conserve today for tomorrow**, was chosen as one of the 15 finalists who will now compete together for the following prizes: 10,000 USD for the 1st prize, 6,000 USD for the 2nd and 4,000 USD for the 3rd. Well done! ... we wish you the best of luck in this new phase of the adventure.

More information about the projects that have made it into the final can be obtained from: <http://www.volvoadventure.org/projectsFinalists.aspx?year=2007>

ENO-Environment Online



The ENO-Environment Online is a global virtual school for sustainable development. It is a strong and active network of schools and has been running since 2000. Over 300 schools from 90 countries currently participate in this program. ENO is a truly international web school for kids! There is also an area with environmental education resources for teachers **Unfortunately there are no Maltese schools participating in this initiative.**

The ENO Programme has pledged to plant a total of **100 000** trees by the end of this year. A special website for the campaign is now available where participants can make their pledges and report their plantings. There is also a calculator that shows the number of trees and our goal in real time. Schools, children or youth groups are invited to join this campaign. Another goal is to spread this activity to every country. This campaign will

not only be for environmental protection but for international collaboration and peace. It is linked to UNEP's Billion Tree Campaign that was launched in November 2006.

Participating in the programme is easy and there are no participation fees. If interested kindly access <http://eno.joensuu.fi/basics/briefly.htm> and fill in the online form. Official ENO schools will be announced in May 2006 on the ENO website. More information can be obtained from Mr Mika Vanhanen (mika@enoprogramme.org)

ManagEnergy Competition

The European Commission DG for Energy and Transport under the ManagEnergy initiative has launched a new online competition for school children across Europe. The overall aim is to educate children on sustainable energy solutions and encourage them to become future sustainable citizens.

The competition challenges young artists to create images of sustainable energy use in their local environment. The competition has two categories:



- A drawing and painting competition for 7-11 year olds who will be competing on behalf of their class.
- A photo competition for children aged 12-16 who will be competing as individuals.

Drawings and pictures can be created in any medium (e.g. pencils, paint, pastels, etc). Photos should show environmentally friendly ways to use energy e.g. by saving energy, using renewable energy and/or using sustainable means of transport.

All entries are to be submitted as digital images (a scan or digital photo must be made of each picture). Digital images from participating schools can be submitted via the online entry form in which Name, Gender, Age, Country and School must be indicated. All entries must be received by 30 July 2007.

Visit the website on <http://www.managenergy.net/competition.html> for more details. The website is also inviting 7 - 11 year olds to help in the design of a new scene for one of the ManagEnergy games.

EkoSkola Parliament Session

This year's EkoSkola Parliament Session and particularly the preparation leading to it will focus on exploring students' and their families' environmental behaviour and concerns; and provide students with the opportunity to address local environmental issues. The event will promote encounters between students and the parliamentary representatives from their respective communities and lead students to present a Memorandum for Electoral Candidates that will be presented to the MPs.

You will soon receive an invitation to participate. Once you accept you will receive a questionnaire to be handed over to all the children in the school ... to be filled at home. Once returned we will collect and analyse the questionnaires. The participating schools will be provided with the data. The EkoSkola Committee members from the participating schools will then meet with their respective community's MPs. During the meeting the children will communicate the collected data and invite the MPs for the parliamentary session.

Two members from the EkoSkola Committee and an accompanying teacher will represent each school. School representatives will meet their respective MPs and enter the parliament together. During the session students will present the data gathered from the questionnaires followed by comments from the MPs. Students will then present their memorandum for approval. Copies of the memorandum will be distributed to all the MPs attending the session ... and later on to other electoral candidates.

As in the previous editions, we are counting on your collaboration to make this event a memorable educational experience.

B.Eds support EkoSkola

A group of eight B.Ed. (Hons) student teachers are currently following a study unit on the role of the EkoSkola programme in promoting whole school development. As part of the unit, students are expected to participate in the EkoSkola programme as part of their training. The aim of this experience is two-fold: (a) to help students experience firsthand what the implementation of the EkoSkola programme entails, and (b) to provide schools, participating in the EkoSkola programme, with assistance in the implementation process.

The plan is to assign these students to EkoSkola schools who request their assistance. The students are expected to pay the school a minimum of five visits. During these visits they are expected to play an active role in supporting the school with the running of the programme. Students may be asked to assist in the EkoSkola Committee meetings, help out with the environmental audit, lend a hand in the organisation of school initiatives related to the Action Plan, etc. This is the second time that we are offering this service and based on our previous experience this initiative is a golden opportunity for those schools who need an additional 'pair of hands' to co-ordinate the EkoSkola programme and set the ball rolling.

Heads of school (primary and secondary) who would like to make use of this support service are kindly asked to contact Dr Paul Pace (on email: paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt) by **23rd April 2007**. Students will start visiting schools in May. Since the number of students available is limited, their placement will be allotted on a first come first served basis.

Teaching resources

- (a) **Four European Projects on Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Bioproducts**



CPL Press is the trading name of CPL Scientific Publishing Services Ltd, a UK-based life science publisher. CPL Press has been involved with numerous European projects since the early 1990s and is currently responsible for the promotion of the following EC-funded projects and initiatives:

ManagEnergy: supporting local and regional energy action

EPOBIO / BioMatNet: investigating development of bioproducts (including biomass and bioenergy) from non-food crops

European Biofuels Technology Platform: promoting first & second generation biofuels for transport

T@W: Sustainable Energy Technology at Work: promoting technologies for EU ETS & CDM projects

CPL Press recently completed a webpage describing each project and showing how these activities complement each other. It can be viewed online at: http://www.cplpress.com/sps/ec_projects.htm

If you are interested in receiving newsletters (4-15 per year) relating to any of these activities, you can register online on each website as follows:

- ManagEnergy: <http://www.managenergy.net/regform.html>
- EPOBIO/BioMatNet: <http://www.epobio.net/register.htm>

- European Biofuels Technology Platform: <http://www.biofuelstp.eu/forms/regform.htm>
- T@W: <http://www.setatwork.eu/regform.php>
- CPL Press: http://www.cplbookshop.com/news/2006_autumn_news.htm

(b) Epaedia: the environmental encyclopaedia

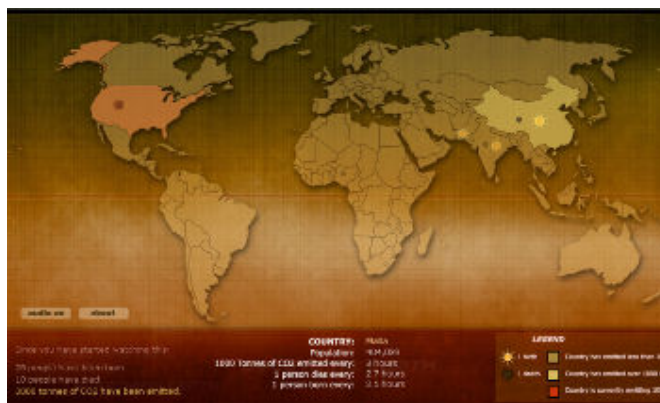
Our environment is complex and not always easy to understand. The Young Reporters for the Environment Programme ... another FEE programme ... invites you to use the "epaedia", the online environmental encyclopaedia at <http://epaedia.eea.europa.eu/>. You will find clear text, photos, graphs, data about the environment provided by the European Environmental Agency (EEA), whose mission is to deliver information on Europe's environment to politicians, scientists and the general public.



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This main topics covered by the "epaedia" are biodiversity, climate change, household consumption, human health, sustainable resources, transport and water. Each topic offers many entries to understand in depth the issues, in an interactive way, thanks to movies, photos, maps or animations. It will prove an invaluable resource for environmental projects.

(c) Check CO₂ emitted in various countries ... including Malta!



Do you want to know the level of CO₂ emitted in Malta (and other countries) every minute? Click on <http://www.breathingearth.net/>. The interactive map turns the raw data of CO₂ emissions into a simulation that allows you to understand and compare the impact that countries have on climate change. Also the site provides details about the population in the various nations.

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

Visit our website on www.ekoskolamalta.com