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Editorial Note

This scholastic year will soon be over and you'll soon be able to enjoy your well deserved break. Remember that our commitment towards the environment knows no vacations ... we have to continuously safeguard our environment ... especially when we are enjoying ourselves by the sea.

This year has been quite a busy year ... as the rest of the newsletter will show. EkoSkola continued to grow and our family now totals 54 schools. Another notable development was the issuing of a call for EkoSkola Teachers who will be supporting the programme during the coming scholastic year. We would like to thank the Hon. Minister of Education, Louis Galea for making this possible.

I cannot conclude this editorial without condemning the acts of vandalism on the environment that we had to suffer. I would like to praise all the schools who, by contributing towards the buying of new trees, have done something tangible to repair the damage. However, I would like to suggest one more thing that we could do. Let us start a personal campaign against vandalism. Let us be bold enough to stop the persons we meet from destroying what's ours! Let's take pride in our country's environment and actively protect it from such senseless acts. I would like to make a special appeal for those of you who know of family members who are involved in vandal attacks. Talk to them and help them realise that their acts are harming their own loved ones.



That's all ... see you next scholastic year. In the meantime: Happy holidays!

Environment Awareness Week

For the first time, Margaret Mortimer Girls Junior Lyceum (Sta Lucia) organized an Environment Awareness Week (20th – 23rd March 2007). The aim of this week was to make the students respect more the environment at school, at home, in the countryside and other places.



Nature Trust (Malta)
PO Box 9
Valletta CMR 01
<http://www.naturetrustmalta.org>



On the first day, Tuesday, the 20th March, there was a special assembly and a student introduced the Environment Awareness Week. Another student talked about water consumption. During the fourth lesson Ms C Cardona from the Resources Authority gave a talk to all Form 2 students about the Water situation in the Maltese Islands.

On Wednesday, the 21st of March, we had another special assembly dedicated to



Addressing fellow students during a special assembly

International Earth Day. A student read a poem on this theme. The main topic of the day was Global Warming. Form 5 students read out relevant information on this topic. Mr Porter, Chief Meteorological Officer was invited in our school and gave a talk about the Changes in the Climate of the Maltese Islands as a result of Global Warming to the Form 5 students during the 4th lesson. To reduce the effect of global warming, seeds of the Holm Oak were given to all Form 1 and 2 students with the hope that some will survive and will eventually grow into trees. The DVD 'An Inconvenient Truth' was shown to Form 5 students.

Thursday's (22nd March), the special assembly was about celebrating EkoSkola in our school. In the special assembly there was an introduction on EkoSkola. After that, there was a short play by Form 2A and the announcement of the EkoSkola competition winners. The launching of our Eco-code song followed. It is called 'Wasal iz-Zmien' written by Mr G. Cremona. Mrs D Debono directed the school choir. Class 2b took part in a cleaning up-activity during mid-day break.



Some of the work and results obtained from the environmental audit on display

Friday 23rd, the last day of Environmental week was dedicated to Justice and Fair Trade, so there was another special assembly, where a student talked about this theme. On this day, another initiative was taken. This involved a collection of stationery and used books to be donated to the children of refugees in Malta.

The Environmental Awareness Week helped to make students, teachers and all workers in our school not to take our environment for granted but help to make it better.

(Written by Ms Elizabeth Nwobodo, EkoSkola Committee)

EkoSkola at St Bernadette Primary School

For the second year, we, the EkoSkola Committee, have worked a lot in favour of the environment in our school and our locality, focusing on waste and energy minimisation. This year we set again the School Eco-Wardens whose job is to check that all classes during break times switch off all electrical equipment, lights and fans. For the class who works best in favour of the environment we award the School Green Flag. We reviewed the Eco Code and in order to encourage the whole school to take part in EkoSkola activities, we asked the classes to draw a picture about an item from the Eco Code. We went through all the pictures we received (which were quite a lot) and finally set up the new Eco Code on our Green Board.



Our new Eco Code

As part of our activities on Waste minimisation we invited a professional speaker to talk to the children as well as the parents about waste separation and minimisation. In fact we organised a Waste Awareness Week and we had a representative of MedEcology to

give talks. We also made a trash mountain – we collected all the trash the children threw away in one day and showed it to the children. The idea was to make children aware how much waste they throw away every day and encourage them to decrease it.

Vandalism and respect towards the environment are two of the main themes that our school has been working on for the past two years. In October 2006, an internal campaign against vandalism took place in our school, after the school had experienced repeated vandal attacks on its property after school hours. The school had also held a donation campaign (5c) to sponsor a number of trees, in order to support the 3 4 U campaign. Among the names given to these sponsored trees were: Bernie, Owls, Lourdes and Roses. So, one can imagine



The T-Shirts we designed



Signing of contract to make Malta greener

how we felt when we learnt about the vandalism done to the trees in Mellieha. So action had to be taken. Firstly we immediately decided to hold

another donation campaign to buy new trees. The money collected was donated to the Minister of Rural Affairs and the Environment by the school representatives. We also wrote the letters of solidarity and encouragement to our fellow Mellieha students. We visited the Mellieha school on Tuesday 15th May carrying placards bearing our school's motto, *Together We Grow*, and wearing T-Shirts we painted carrying messages against vandalism. Some of us dressed as trees and one pupil



Showing our solidarity against vandalism

wore the costume of *Bernie the Mouse* - our School's Mascot. During the event we signed a contract to take action to make Malta Greener.

Now, as the scholastic year is coming to an end we are working on the new project for next year which will be about Healthy Living keeping in mind that a healthy environment makes a healthy person.

(Written by Ms Deborah Grech and Ms Giulia Stringaro, EkoSkola Committee)

Evening for Biodiversity

To celebrate their success in the Volvo Adventure, the EkoSkola committee of St. Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii, Paola organised an evening's programme for distinctive guests namely, Hon Minister George Pullicino, Mr Carmelo Abela, Paola Local Council Mayor, Dr Paul Pace and Mr Vince Attard, parents and friends on Wednesday, 16th May. Our aim was to raise awareness about biodiversity. During this evening we presented materials related to the project. The evening's programme started off with a prayer about the environment and then through various powerpoints and other artwork prepared by the EkoFbieb, we



Presentation about biodiversity

thoroughly explained what we mean by biodiversity and the threats it faces. The EkoFbieb ended this part of the programme by appealing to all those present to do their part to protect the few natural resources left on our island. While two other EkoFbieb read the poem "Lellux" written by Anton Buttigieg, a girl accompanied them with her

violin. A member of the EkoSkola Committee thoroughly explained the major threats to Biodiversity through the HIPPO dilemma. A group of EkoSkola from pregrade and Grade 1 helped her with props. The word HIPPO stands for **H**abitat loss, **I**ntroduced species, **P**ollution, **P**opulation growth and **O**verconsumption.

Ms. Carmen Esposito, the music teacher, accompanied on her piano a group of EkoSkola who performed "The World is a Rainbow". This song delivered the message that we all have to work together to keep the world a beautiful place to live in. Finally, the EkoSkola committee exhibited the presentation which they would perform in Sweden. The members all wore traditional Maltese costumes and a girl wore the costume of Xummiemu while they all danced to the song "il-Wegħda".



The mousepad

For the Volvo Adventure event, the EkoSkola Committee organised a school drawing competition from which the best entry would be chosen as the design of a mouse pad to be presented in Sweden. The participation for this competition was excellent and the jury found it very difficult to decide upon one entry. In fact, pieces of different entries were chosen and integrated into one design. The winning entries were awarded during this special evening.



Minister George Pullicino receiving the donation for the trees from the school headteacher, Sr Lucienne Cachia

After speeches from the guests, our school presented the minister a cheque of Lm300 to replace the trees which were so brutally destroyed at Mellieha. We are at present still collecting money at school and we intend to hopefully raise more money so that the trees, some of which were planted by the girls in our school, would be replaced. After the ceremony all those present were invited to view an exhibition of the artwork and digital photos presented for the Mouse Pad design school drawing competition.

This project was taken up seriously so as to break through the passive attitude and mentality of our people so that they may become more aware about biodiversity. Through the variety of activities carried out, we can proudly say that we delivered our message "conserve today for tomorrow" very clearly and effectively. We encourage other Maltese schools to embark on similar projects so that environmental education finds the place it deserves in the daily school routines and lives.

(Written by Ms Martina Cuschieri, PRO EkoSkola Committee)

Eco Celebration Day

This year eight pupils from Year 3 formed part of the EkoSkola Committee of the Dun Alwiġ Camilleri, Żejtun Primary A. I was the PRO of the committee. We met with Mrs. Mercieca and Ms. Darmanin and sometimes with Mr Craus, Head of School, during breaks every two weeks. We worked on saving water and electricity. We learned about the environment, about animals, how to recycle and how to take care of trees and flowers.



Singing about waste management and showing how it is done

After the meetings we went round the classes to tell everyone about our plan of work regarding the environment. Sometimes we shared our news with all classes during the morning assembly.

On 12th June 2007 we organised an Eco Celebration Day. At 8.30am all classes met in the yard. We had special visitors: Dr Paul Pace, EkoSkola co-ordinator; Ms Mariella Grixti and Ms L. Risiott on behalf of WasteServ and Mr C. Camilleri, Education Representative on the Zejtun Local Council

Kindergarten classes sang songs about Animals. Animals are our friends and we love them and take care of them. Year 1 classes spoke about Water. We save water by having a shower instead of a bath and closing taps after using water. Then they sang a song about the good use of water. Year 2 classes spoke about Waste Management. During the year we went to visit the Bring-In-Sites at Zejtun where we acted as waste patrollers on the beat. We learned how to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. At school we use lunchboxes and recycle plastic and paper. Then they sang two songs about recycling. Year 3 classes sang about the Environment. We used to water trees and flowers regularly. During the year we visited Wied Ghollieqa, Argotti Gardens and Simar Nature Reserve to observe nature and help us to care for it.



EkoSkola Committee members explaining what we do

At the end of the Celebration Programme Green Leaders and Eco Committee members received certificates of participation. I am proud of my certificate and also of being the P.R.O. in this year's Eco School Committee.

(Written by Mr Pierre Zahra, PRO EkoSkola Committee)

Annual Horżur Exhibition

On May 3rd Zurrieq Primary B organised their Annual Horżur Exhibition. The show is a school celebration of its achievements in San Anton's Annual Spring Show. Children were awarded prizes for their participation in this national event as well as for their commitment in the school-based activities related to horticulture. Guests and parents attending the exhibition could admire the projects produced by the children. During the exhibition children had the opportunity to describe their projects through the use of PowerPoint presentations.

This year, the school's participation in the San Anton's Annual Spring Show was once again punctuated with several honours. The school got the International Tree Foundation Trophy for the highest number of points in the Poster Section; the Mimi Bezina Wettinger Trophy for winning the Best Ornament Section and the Joseph Borg Trophy for winning the Schools' Section. The school came First in six categories, Second in seventeen categories, Third in eight categories and received seven certificates. This explains why walking along this school's corridors can be likened to walking along a beautiful garden! Well done and keep it up!

Our Volvo Adventure Experience

The Volvo Adventure is an international competition organised by Volvo Cars in partnership with United Nations Environmental Programme. We, the EkoSkola Committee of St Joseph Mater Boni Consilii School in Paola, entered this competition with our project entitled **Biodiversity-Conserve today for tomorrow** which we had been working upon for these past 2 scholastic years. Our project was a successful one, and it was selected among the 15 finalists around the world. The Ekoskola Committee: (Ms Sarah Spiteri, Ms Hazel Mallia, Ms Francesca Polidano, Ms Chanelle Cilia, Ms Martina Cuschieri and Ms

Sandrine Borg) along with our headmistress and two teachers went to Gothenburg, Sweden on the 25th of May to compete for the final 3 places of the Volvo Adventure with fourteen other countries: Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, New Zealand, South Africa, Turkey, UK and USA.



Our delegation at the Volvo Adventure

We started off with a workshop with other children from India, New Zealand, South Africa, Turkey, UK and USA. We were introduced to the work done by UNEP and the Young Agenda 21 initiative. Later we teamed up with students from Turkey and worked on creating a city with materials like paper, carton, cardboard boxes and coloured sand. Every country made its own desired city and these were displayed in the hotel, for everyone to see. In the afternoon, we visited our hosts' school, Kullaviskovan. We were impressed with the number of classrooms which catered for woodwork, needlework, a green house and a fantastic gym which operated with hydraulic sports equipment. On the next day we visited the Universeum Scientific Centre where we saw sharks, snakes, spiders such as the tarantula and many other animals that we never saw before. After this we had lunch at Jarnvagsstationen, in Liseberg (an amusement park) and went on many rides having a marvellous time.

The big day had arrived! On the 28th of May, we had to give a presentation of our project to an audience of around 600 people and Swedish students. Presentations were performed in alphabetical order and we were very excited when the judges called out our names. We did our presentation and fortunately everything was perfect! After all the presentations, we had a workshop during which we discussed climate change issues with the Japanese team and together produced a document to be presented to the United Nations! This document is presently being printed and as soon as we receive the copies we shall be distributing them to all the EkoSkola schools in Malta and also to all members of parliament. In the afternoon all the Volvo Adventure finalists went to Hallsnas, where we learnt about plants and animals that live inside this forest.



Planting trees at Hallsnas Forest

The following day we visited the Volvo Cars Factory. Volvo Cars are working to improve on hybrid technology in cars and to find an alternative fuel which would be less harmful



Receiving our prizes from Mr. Theodore Oben, UNEP during the award ceremony

to the atmosphere. During our tour we were introduced to the latest technology in fuel i.e. bio methane from dry manure. In the afternoon we attended the award ceremony. Unfortunately, we did not make it for the first 3 places, but we were still happy with the result. The level of the projects and presentations was extremely high and we appreciated the fact that our small island was at the forefront with these big countries with regards to environmental education. South Africa came third and took 4000 USD, New Zealand second with 6000 USD and Indonesia first, winning 10,000 USD. Indonesia is the dirtiest country in the world and so

this project was focused on how to reduce waste and improve on the quality of life. When the award ceremony ended, we had the most marvellous farewell party during which each and every one of us said farewell to our new friends for the last time.

This was a wonderful adventure and a remarkable learning experience for all the committee that we can never forget. We learned several things and we'd be glad if we

could share our thoughts and experiences with other students! Last but not least, we would like to thank all the people who helped us especially the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment.

(Written by Chanelle Cilia and Francesca Polidano, Secretaries EkoSkola Committee)

If ... after reading this article you decide to try entering this adventure go to <http://www.volvoadventure.org/> for more details on next year's project. (the Editor)

Teaching Resources

Various teachers have contacted us about this section in our newsletter. They said that they found the sites we review useful for their lesson planning. So ... here are some more:

(a) Electronic Naturalist



The site provides weekly environmental education material on two reading levels and can be utilised directly by children. It is an ideal site for building up web-quests related to the natural environment. Subject areas include animals, plants and current environmental issues. The site also offers email access to professional naturalists that could answer queries users might have. The site can be accessed on: <http://www.enaturalist.org>

(b) Geology.com - Earth Science on the Web



Published by a professional geologist, this site offers a wealth of information, including a geology dictionary, news, 160+ country maps and hundreds of satellite images. It contains information ideal for beginners and experts ... and the curious! The site can be accessed on: <http://geology.com/>

(c) MEPA – Map Server



If you want maps and aerial photos of any locality in Malta then this site IS the site to visit. Although it might take some time to learn how to use it ... it will be worth it and can be used to develop students' navigational skills (e.g. trying to find their school or home, etc). Site is available on <http://www.mepa.org.mt/Planning/index.htm?MapServer.htm&1>

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Dr Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Co-ordinator, on paul.i.pace@um.edu.mt

Visit our website on www.ekoskolamalta.com