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UN Decade of Education for Sustainability

Welcome back! After your well-deserved holidays it's Back to School ... and back to where you left off last year with your EkoSkola programme. This year promises to be quite an interesting year for the programme as there will be several new developments.

In a few weeks we will be launching the revamped EkoSkola website. This year we will also provide all the schools participating in EkoSkola with a hard copy (printed on recycled paper of course!) of all the resource sheets that are currently available on line. Nature Trust (Malta) is already working on the organisation of its annual EkoSkola seminar ... and once all the preparations are in place you will be informed about it. Also this year you will be receiving more in-school help in order to put your EkoSkola initiatives in top gear (see next item)!

All these initiatives and many more, that will be communicated in due course, are just a taster of things to come! The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the ten-year period from 2005 to 2014 as the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (Resolution 57/254, 2002). Governments around the world are invited to use the Decade to integrate education for sustainable development into their national educational strategies and action plans at all appropriate levels. As we all know, the EkoSkola programme provides a non-invasive whole-school approach towards the infusion of environmental education in school and community life.

Support from BEd (Hons) students

A group of 20 B.Ed (Hons) 3rd year students following the Primary Track have chosen to specialise in Environmental Education. Part of their training involves their participation in the EkoSkola programme. This is the plan:

Pairs of students are assigned to schools participating in the EkoSkola programme and they 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



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



be asked to assist in EkoSkola Committee meetings, help out with the environmental audit, lend a hand in the organisation of school initiatives related to the programme, help teachers in the design of curriculum material that can be used in class, etc. This is a golden opportunity for those schools who need an additional 'pair of hands' ... they'll be getting two pairs!! ... to co-ordinate the EkoSkola programme. This might prove to be that slight push needed to launch the school towards the Green Flag award. Furthermore, towards the third school term the students will be asked, as part of their assignment, to carry out an environmental education audit of the community surrounding their host school with the aim of designing environmental educational material that can be used by the school to foster school-community links (as suggested by the National Curriculum).

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) at their earliest convenience. Students will start visiting schools in November. Since the number of students available is limited, their allocation will be allotted on a first come first served basis. This project was made possible through the support of Dr Joe Mangani (Assistant Director, Department of Curriculum Management).

Call for Comenius 1 project partners

The Escola Cooperativa de Vale S. Cosme is situated in Famalicão, North of Portugal, housing 1500 students between the ages of 10 and 18. The school is very active in environmental initiatives and over the years they have organised several clubs on various issues, such as: Biological agriculture, Urban wastes, Honey production, Creating birds species, Recycling and Caring for the River Pelhe that crosses school grounds.

This scholastic year they decided to gather all of these clubs in a bigger and larger project called "The Environmental Project". In order to get this project moving, they need schools from all around Europe that are willing to work with them in the Socrates Program – Action Comenius I project, developed with students between 14 and 17 years old. Although they already have a rough idea about the theme of the project they are very willing to consider any suggestions from any future project partner.

For more information please contact the teacher in charge: Dália Filipa Veloso de Azevedo Liberato on email: dalia.azevedo@clix.pt or Tel. No.: 00 351 916 686966. The school's address is:

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Lugar da Veiga
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Royal Awards for Sustainability ... URGENT

We have been very recently contacted by a non-profit organisation, based in Copenhagen, called Royal Awards for Sustainability. They are working from the premises of the European Environment Agency (which is a European Union Institution) and their objective is to increase public awareness, encourage debate and dialogue, change behaviour and finally recognise excellence by rewarding the best initiatives. They are currently organizing a yearly poster contest for European children and youth. The Poster Contest is every year covering a different environmental topic and this year the topic is Sustainable Innovations.

The European 2004 poster contest on Sustainable Innovations invites creative young citizens of Europe to participate in expressing their visions for the future. If you or your students have any thoughts, ideas and visions on how to improve our lives - Sign up - and win prizes valued at 1500 Euros. You can find all relevant information in the attached word document. The posters are expected to be received at the office in Copenhagen by

no later than the 15th October ... however the date has been extended to the 25th October for Maltese schools. This is what the organiser had to say re our participation:

"I can now only keep my fingers crossed and hope for a contribution from Malta - I really hope that it will be possible, since exposing Malta and all the other new members of the European union at the exhibition would bring another dimension to the exhibition demonstrating European citizenship and coherence." ... let us not disappoint him!

If you have further questions or need any information please do not hesitate to contact Simon Storgaard (email: simon.storgaard@eea.eu.int). You can find more information on <http://www.royalawards.org>.

The Volvo Adventure Award

The Volvo Adventure is an exciting opportunity, for existing and new environmental action projects. It is organised in collaboration with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and offers to reward young people who run their own environmental projects. Young people around the world are setting up their own project groups, choosing a subject they can deal with and deciding how they should approach it. It could involve improving the situation for animals, improving water quality or using energy resources more wisely ... very much in line with EkoSkola activities.

For young people engaged in this initiative it could be an adventure that offers a chance to make new friends all over the world, attract international attention and ultimately win a spectacular prize, such as the opportunity to present their project at an international conference in Sweden, and the chance of a financial reward that could make it possible to run, improve or enhance their project.

Why not enter your own project? The aim is that you should be able to run it as a school or community project and present your ideas on the Internet. What do you need to do to get started? Go to the Volvo Adventure website on www.volvoadventure.org. There you will find everything you need to register your project. You will then receive a start-up package with instructions on how to proceed. We would greatly appreciate if you could inform Dr Paul Pace on paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt should you decide to engage in this prestigious project.

The TEPEE Project



Socrates
Comenius

As announced in Issue 2 of our Newsletter, the TEPEE (Towards a European Portfolio for Environmental Education) Socrates Comenius 3 Network project will soon be starting its evaluation phase – the testing of a draft European Portfolio for Environmental Education (EPEE) - a handbook for teachers and students. This handbook, compiled by educational experts from Germany, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Sweden offers schools, involved in the EkoSkola programme, an opportunity to organise pupil evaluation that is in line with the principles of evaluation outlined by the National Curriculum.

We are currently waiting for copies of the handbook that will be distributed for free (together with a book about *Evaluation of Competencies in Environmental Education*) to all participating schools. Furthermore, schools participating in this evaluation exercise will be offered the opportunity to form part of the Maltese delegation that will participate in the project's 3rd and final Transnational Thematic Conference and Contact Seminar to be held in Italy in 2005. Three schools have already shown interest in taking part ... should your school be interested in joining please kindly contact Dr Paul Pace, on paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt.
