Young Reporters for the Environment

2014 - 2015

FEE Seminar 2014

The 25th and 28th November marked the days of the annual FEE seminars, where students and teachers attended informative sessions on the FEE programs. The Malta seminar was held at St Ignatius College Luqa Primary, while the Gozo seminar was held at Gozo College Sannat Primary and Special Unit. Heartfelt thanks to both schools for hosting us.

Students had hands-on sessions on auditing, designing an action plan and compiling an eco-code. Teachers had sessions on Education for Sustainable Development and EkoSkola, YRE and LEAF, together with a presentation by WasteServ on food waste and by Cynthia Caruana on composting. The seminar aimed to be as waste free as possible, and was part of the European Week for Waste Reduction initiative held during the same week. Students from St Margaret College Boys’ Secondary School, Verdala surprised us by reporting on the event. Their report is on page 2.

Those schools who wish to receive a copy of the presentations held during the seminar need only ask! I am also extending the invitation to young reporters to report on any initiative organized by FEE Malta. Reporters will be accepted on a first come first serve basis.

Audrey Gauci
YRE National Coordinator
On Tuesday, 25th November 2014 we accompanied our Science teacher to participate in the EkoSkola, LEAF and YRE Annual Information Seminar held at St Ignatius College, Luqa Primary School. Participating in this Annual Information Seminar 2014-2015 gave us the opportunity to act like junior journalists interviewing many participants including organizers, speakers, teachers and students. The EkoSkola, LEAF (Learning about Forests) and YRE (Young Reporters for the Environment) are international programmes, run by FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education), involving many students worldwide. These programmes help and support many schools in implementing the National Curriculum Framework’s requirement to introduce ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) across the curriculum involving as many students as possible in a collective school effort. In fact on interviewing the Executive President of Nature Trust Malta, Mr Vincent Attard he said that the aim of this seminar is to have “these programmes combined all together and flourish amongst teachers and students at school level.” This seminar was organized by Nature Trust (Malta) and the main theme for this year was ‘Zero Food Waste’. Students were split in various groups and together with their leaders they learnt and discussed more about a zero food waste environmental campaign for a better life. Then during break time we had the following feedback from some participating students:

“We have to do a collective effort to save our environment and not waste food” (by Julia Borg from Sacred Heart Junior Church School, St. Julian’s)

“We should never waste because if we do so we harm our environment” (by Valentina Micallef from San Andrea Private School, Mgarr)

“We should be more cautious when buying food and avoid the excess so we waste less” (by Emma Grech from Maria Regina College Middle School, Naxxar)

“When we buy something we should always look for its expiry date as the shorter the expiry of the purchased products the more waste we produce” (by Luke Zammit from De La Salle College Junior School, Cospicua)

Throughout this seminar we also found the time to interview some of the organizers and speakers of this seminar asking them their expectations after this activity. Prof Paul Pace was very positive in telling us that this seminar intended to make “teachers realise what good work they are already doing in their schools” while giving them also the opportunity to “share their positive experiences” with other schools. However, Ms Audrey Gauci concluded saying that students should not participate in environmental competitions “for the sake of winning but mostly to voice their concerns about environmental issues and offer a solution for a change”.

Acting like junior journalists in this seminar gave us the opportunity to be more self-confident while discovering how many Maltese students are already aware of the need to preserve our local environment.

Written by Owen Bugeja and Aiden Brignione

Form 2 students at St Margaret College Boys’ Secondary School, Verdala, Cospicua, Malta.
Reporting at Majjistral Park

Have you ever visited Majjistral Park? Feel like reporting on wildlife, biodiversity, uses for the community, land and sea use, illegalities? Write articles, take photos, upload them immediately and contribute to make the park more sustainable!

A group of four students teamed up at the MITA Innovation Hub and developed an app where both physical and virtual visitors are offered guidance and information in a fun way. The app features are an extensive database of the wildlife and points of interest that can be seen at the Majjistral park, a 'Take a Walk' feature that allows users to take a guided walk while providing all the information needed along the route, a section about the events at Majjistral park and another area where users can ask for more information or help out by reporting illegalities in the park.

The app is available free of charge from Google play and from the App store.

Majjistral Park App [www.majjistral.org](http://www.majjistral.org)

Calendar of events:- Term 2

The 2nd Term is fast approaching, and most of the students will gear on their projects as soon as the term starts. Keep in mind that reporting can be done at any time of the year ... and then simply uploaded for inclusion in this year’s entries.

Remember that the deadline for uploading projects is still 31st March 2015. If you need any feedback or help on your projects you are welcome to contact us; we can either work through emails or come personally to school. However, if you expect feedback on your projects it is important to send your projects/discuss your projects by not later than 13th March.

Upcoming events during 2nd Term are
- LEAF activity for Arbor Day (January 2015)
- Environment Audit at St Vincent de Paul (Date to be confirmed)

Young reporters are needed to report these events, so please, let us know if you are interested.
**ESD within the curriculum**

Following newsletter 3, hereby is another example of how ESD can be integrated in specific subjects within the curriculum (this time Home Economics). The following sample has been planned in collaboration with the Home Economics Seminar Centre. Their support is highly appreciated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject:</th>
<th>Home Economics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class:</td>
<td>Form 4 (can be adapted to any year group)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme:</td>
<td>Promoting a healthy and eco friendly rice dish (through articles, photos or videos)</td>
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<td>Objectives:</td>
<td>Students will be able to:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Define the concept of sustainability</td>
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<td>• Explain the term genetically modified organisms</td>
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<td>• List three ways how to promote sustainability and reduce waste when choosing and preparing food</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Give three reasons why people are showing more awareness regarding GMOs</td>
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<td>• Adapt a traditional Maltese dish to make it more sustainable and healthier, in line with the dietary guidelines</td>
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<td>• Prepare and cook a modified traditional Maltese rice based dish, promoting healthy and eco-friendly cooking</td>
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<td>• Interpret and discuss the findings of the investigative work</td>
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<td>• Review and discuss the process involved in carrying out the investigation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Suggest ways how they can be active participants and agents of change within the community, in relation to sustainable food matters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td>Sustainable cooking: Baked rice recipe</td>
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<td>Step 1:</td>
<td>A brief introduction is given to students on techniques that need to be used when reporting, with particular emphasis on report writing / public speaking. The where - when - who - how - why needs to be applied in all cases. YRE can provide direct help, tips and presentations.</td>
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<td>Step 2:</td>
<td>The chosen theme needs to be explored in detail, with particular emphasis on how it effects us as a nation and what is being done about it. YRE can help with direct inks and information. Examples:-</td>
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<td>1. From where do we get rice? What additives are added to it?</td>
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<td>2. Do you normally buy white or wholegrain rice?</td>
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<td>3. Do you ever look for eco friendly labels when buying food? (fair trade, no added GMOs, organic, packed in recycled or recyclable material?)</td>
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<td>4. Can cooking be waste free?</td>
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<td>Step 3:</td>
<td>YRE students start investigating the situation in the school by asking other students and staff in general (and possibly parents) and taking their views on the subject:- Guideline questions (healthy refers to low fat, low salt, low sugar, high fibre and organic):-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Do you often check whether the products you buy are local or have an eco label?</td>
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<td>2. Do shops in Malta provide an adequate selection of healthy food?</td>
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<td>4. How many people actually consume healthy products?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. What is being done to promote healthy cooking?</td>
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<td>Step 4:</td>
<td>Compiling the results. Students analyse their findings and start compiling information through an article, photo or video reportage. Proposals for possible solutions are part of the write up. These could include sample recipes, availability of healthy foods and awareness raising campaigns.</td>
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<td>Step 5:</td>
<td>Students disseminate their project to the school and community. Where applicable, proposed solutions are adapted to the school policies and lifestyle, and encouraged in the local community.</td>
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Modified Traditional Maltese Baked Rice

**Ingredients:**

[eco label products refer to fairtrade, no added GMOs, organic, and/or packed in recycled or recyclable material]

- 300g long wholegrain rice [Eco label]
- 200g lean minced beef or chicken* [Buy local to reduce transport. No animal cruelty involved]
- 200g ricotta [buy local to reduce transport, no extra additives]
- 2 eggs - well beaten [free range, organic eggs]
- 200g tomato pulp (preferably use fresh, organic, tomatoes)
- 1 tbsp tomato paste [eco label]
- 1 medium sized onion (chopped) [local, organic]
- 50g fresh or frozen peas [organic if fresh, GMO free brand if frozen]
- 1 medium sized carrot grated [local and organic]
- 1 tsp olive oil [local, pure]
- black pepper to season
- 75g fresh mozzarella cheese [local]

**Method:**

1. Fill a pan of water to cook the rice (measure the water to avoid waste and recycle rice packaging).
2. Cook the chopped onions (you can compost the onion peel) in olive oil.
3. Add the minced meat and cook until brown.
4. Add the tomato pulp and tomato paste. (If using a can recycle it).
5. Add the grated carrot and peas. Season with pepper and leave to simmer for about 15 minutes.
6. In a bowl mix the ricotta and the beaten eggs (compost the egg shells).
7. Mix together the cooked rice and the sauce. Add the ricotta mixture.
8. Put the rice into a (reusable) greased ovenproof dish. Sprinkle with the grated mozzarella.
9. Bake in hot oven Gas mark 200°C, (energy saving) until the top becomes golden brown for about 30 minutes. (Cook right before eating to avoid reheating).
Reporting on....

Are you keen on reporting? Do you need inspirations on what you can report on? These are just some ideas:

- **Water**: uses in school; ways of collecting rainwater; sustainable practices in the use of water; ideas for reducing water consumption; community campaigns to raise awareness.
- **Waste**: the situation in Malta; reducing consumption; reusing water.
- **Food**: food waste and proposals for solutions; the reality of the food we eat; GMOs and their consequences; how healthy are the fruit and vegetables we consume?
- **Women in society**: are we really equal? Is the world living sustainably?
- **Schools**: what do the students really think? How they can be more environmental friendly? Student friendly?
- **Christmas**: celebrating peace; Christianity; joy - or waste and useless consumption?
- Why not explore issues related to **MDGs**? Will be interesting to investigate what the situation is in Malta!

**Prizes**:-
- **NTM** will, as usual, be giving certificates and trophies to participants.
- **Catch the Drop** will be offering 9 smartphones to the best 9 entries (one in each category) focused on water.
- **WasteServ** will be offering a digital SLR camera worth €500 to the best entry focused on reusing and reducing.
- The **US Embassy** will be offering books to all winners.

**Happy Christmas and Happy New Year!**

On behalf of all the team I take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the coming festivities.

Audrey

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