

MULTAQANA



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Greetings!

Welcome to the 17th issue of the Multaqana newsletter! With the year beginning, this issue aims to feature the major achievements in 2018 of the SSI team and their distinguished partners in making it a fruitful year for sustainable awareness. These achievements are in alignment with the sustainable development goals set by the government.

The Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC) has acknowledged the Green School Audit Manual as a certified guide to be used in schools in Abu Dhabi. The SSI team was also present in the Middle East Youth Expo 2018 to showcase the role of SSI in realizing the country's green agenda.

The SSI's accomplishments include the implementation of Geographic Information Systems to the initiative as well as the commencement of the Sustainable Schools Initiative online interactive map. Other achievements include Building Educators Capacity to Enhance Sustainability, performing Green Schools Audit, as well as overseeing Eco Club and Dugong workshops.

The Sustainable Schools Initiative team would also like to show gratitude to all the schools who have put effort into the initiative and supported student projects that bettered their

communities. The team would also congratulate schools for another successful SSI Town Hall meeting.

On an ending note, the team wishes for another year of great accomplishments and a greener future for our country

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Notable Profiles: Gayatri Raghwa

The SSI team would like to congratulate Mrs. Gayatri Raghwa for winning an international award for the most outstanding contribution to Environment Education given by the NAAEE

Gayatri Raghwa is a leader and a passionate educator; she cared immensely for the environment and spreading environmental education. A resident of the United Arab Emirates for 27 years, Gayatri Raghwa dedicated her time in raising the profile of environmental education all over the country and the region. Her most notable work is the Sustainable Schools Initiative, where she is accredited as the one who conceptualized the initiative.

Gayatri has built a massive repertoire as a contributor in various global organizations including the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development Education and the Zayed Future Energy Prize.

The Environmental Outreach team would like to thank Gayatri Raghwa for her dedication during the 17 years she has been a part of Environmental Agency – Abu Dhabi and for all the hard work, she has devoted to promoting environmental education.



Dugong workshop for Abu Dhabi teachers

- EAD has collaborated with TOTAL to prepare a workshop aimed at educating teachers on Dugongs and the need to protect them.
- During the workshop held in Abu Dhabi, a total of 33 teachers from 25 schools have attended.
- The Sustainable Schools Initiative team concludes the workshop as a success, with hopes of seeing teachers incorporate dugong protection topics into school subjects using the different methods showcased at the workshops.



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Dugong competition

In commorancy with the Dugong workshops, the SSI team is excited to announce the Dugong Competition. In order to promote awareness of the threats that Dugongs face and the efforts undertaken to conserve them, the competition encourages students to prepare campaigns to spread awareness on these topics.

The competition launched in February and continues until mid-March. The winners will be declared in the end of March during Earth Hour.

With the help of teachers who attended the workshop, students can create campaigns on the importance of dugongs regionally here in the Arabian Gulf or take on a wider scope and campaign the protection of dugongs all over the world.

“Protect the Abu Dhabi Dugongs”

Competition Objective:

Enhance environmental awareness on the threats facing dugongs, and the efforts made to protect and conserve them.

Outline:

Teachers can encourage their students to launch a campaign, in line with the school subjects, to enhance awareness on Dugongs and the importance of protecting them, inside and outside the school community. Participating students shall post their activities on Instagram, and also shall tag the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (@environmentabudhabi) (#eaddugong) in their posts. The project with the largest number of “Likes” will be the winner.

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Steps:

1. Teachers who participated in Dugong workshops share the knowledge with the other schoolteachers.
2. Integrate the contents of Dugong workshops into the syllabus to enhance students' awareness on the importance of Dugong conservation.
3. Launch the competition to all students during the morning assembly and in the classes
4. Students organize the campaigns and post their efforts through their accounts on Instagram
5. Students (themselves) prepare a post including a photo or a video including an important topic on conserving dugongs, which should gain the largest number of "Likes"
6. Students inform the competition supervisor on the number of "likes" they collected to evaluate the results
7. Sending the results to the email sustainableschools@ead.ae

Terms and Conditions

- Students shall participate individually
- The objective of the competition shall be the core of participation
- EAD account (@environmentabudhabi) must be tagged on Instagram posts
- Add #eaddugong

Winners and Awards:

There will be three winners from each of the three regions in Abu Dhabi. Winners will receive certificates from the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, in addition to a valuable award.

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Schools are encouraged to broadcast the competition among all students and to support students who want to participate by integrating the information handed out during the workshop into their curriculums. Students should post their entries on social media ensuring they tag the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (@Environmentabudhabi) and Total Company (@total).

The winning project will be the one that reaches the highest number of 'likes'. The winners will be the student and their designated competition coordinator. Six winners will receive certificates from the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, in addition to a valuable financial award.

Students interested in joining must launch their campaigns individually in order to be eligible for the competition. Schools should submit a report on the number of participants in dugong workshops and the number of students who knew about the dugongs in the classes and number of campaigns and links to the posts, to be sent in a word document to email sustainableschools@ead.ae

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Eco Club Summit: Hosted by Al Nahda School

Since its inception in 2014, the Eco Club Summit has been held annually as part of the Sustainable Schools Initiative, to provide students and teachers with a platform, to exchange knowledge and experience on best practices observed in schools through students' presentations. It also aims to build leadership skills and capacity build youth in problem solving and critical thinking abilities through different workshops.

This year on 25th October 2018, the summit was by Al Nahda National School for girls as part of the school's addition to the initiative as well as a way for students to complete their bachelor's degree in environmental science.

The program ran from 10 AM until 1:30 PM, featuring a speech from BP company a presentation of the school's experience as part of the SSI program and concluded with a workshop. The workshop introduced the environmental issues caused by waste with students having the opportunity to present innovative solutions. One principal focus of the workshop was on composting as a possible domestic solution. In addition, this workshop serves as an initiative undertaken by Al Nahda School students as their way of spreading environmental awareness

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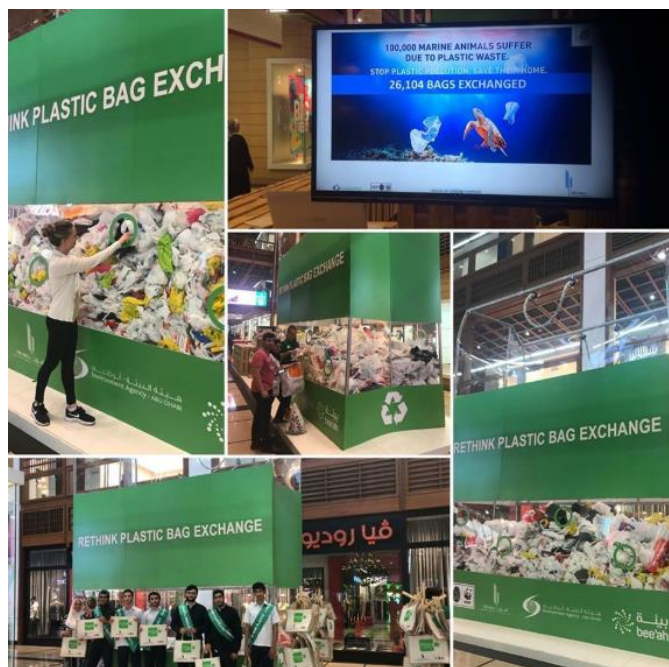
Rethink Plastic: Al Ittihad School Plastic Campaign

Plastic bags have a limited lifetime, and they are almost immediately discarded after its use. This results in an abundance of plastic waste in the environment, endangering the lives of animals. Global studies show that plastic waste is the cause of death of over 100,000 marine animals and a million marine birds every year. Plastic waste remains a major concern even though it has been a source of concern for so long.

The Emirates Wildlife Society & World Wildlife Fund (EWS-WWF) partnered with the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) in initiating a campaign to bring attention to the harmful effects of plastic waste pollution. The campaign also shows that relying on plastic bags can be harmful and promotes greener alternatives.

For the campaign, a stand was set up in Yas Mall from 12 to 15 September, operating from 10 AM to 10 PM. Yas Mall visitors were offered to exchange plastic bags for eco-friendly shopping bags and make a visible commitment to reduce plastic waste by making a pledge.

Students from Al Ittihad School aided this event by volunteering some of their time to man the stand and encourage passersby into pledging to fight against plastic waste by supporting the campaign.



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Leading Schools Workshops: Success Stories

The SSI team would like to use this opportunity to shed light on some of the admirable feats performed by some of the leading schools under the Sustainable Schools Initiative.

The story of Al Bateen Scientific School

On the 29th of October, Al Bateen Scientific school held a workshop dedicated to instructing teachers of the adapted schools about the importance of environmental education and how they can implemented in their schools . This workshop was designed and carried out by the school's environmental club.

A total of 20 teachers from various schools came together to participate in the two-hour workshop. The main idea of the workshop was how to integrate environmental concepts in different grade levels from primary education to tertiary education.

Teachers used this platform to share ideas and methods on how they plan on incorporating environmental topics into their subjects. Upon concluding the workshop, participants felt a shared positive outlook on executing what they learned into their designated classes.

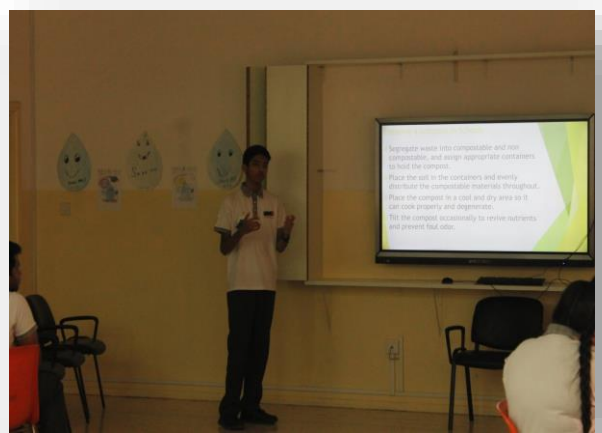
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The story of Abu Dhabi Indian School

Sunrise International School, Dunes School, Emirates Future International Academy (EFIA) School, and the male students of Al Nadha School all gathered at Abu Dhabi Indian school on the 8th of November to attend the school's water conservation campaign, titled "Hold That Drop" followed by Green Audit workshop.

The day commenced with performances by students on the topic of water conservation. This was followed by a detailed presentation on the tasks conducted for the five audits (Land, Waste, Water, Air, and Energy) by the members of the Prakriti club. A gallery was also prepared where the Land audit was explained a second time. The final aspect of the initiative was preparing pamphlets that were distributed between visiting schools.



Proposed Field trips

Consistent with previous issues, the SSI team would like to take this opportunity to mention environmentally significant locations where students can learn more about the country's environment.

Al Wathba Wetland Reserve.

Located roughly 60 km outside of the city of Abu Dhabi, the Wathba Wetland reserve was established in 1998 to conserve over 200 bird species, where the wetland serves as their feeding, resting and breeding grounds. In 2003, the wetland became an internationally recognized wetland by the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

Students visiting Al Wathba Wetland reserve will have the opportunity to see flamingoes from autumn to spring seasons. The wetland also boasts over 250 bird species, 37 plant species, and a rich aquatic ecosystem.

Due to the sensitivity of the environment, the wetland is only available to the public on Thursday and Saturday from 8 AM to 4 PM. The wetland contains a Visitor Experience center, self-guided trails and a bird hide equipped with binoculars and a telescope.

Entrance is free and no prior registration is required.



Falcon Hospital

Another location that coordinators can take their students to is the Falcon hospital. The Falcon hospital was established by the Environmental Agency Abu Dhabi in 1999 and is the largest falcon hospital in the UAE and the world.

While initially serving as solely a veterinary facility, it has expanded over the years to offer facilities for education, awareness, training, and research. Students who are more inclined to veterinary, animal care and protection aspects of environmental sustainability can take a glimpse at how the facility operates.

Coordinators interested in taking their students to the falcon hospital can inquire about the details using the contact information below:

Tel: +971 2 5755155

Email: info@falconhospital.com



Mohamed bin Zayed Falconry and Desert Physiognomy school

Falconry is considered a detrimental aspect of the United Arab Emirates heritage, where it is key to keep the principles of Arab falconry through generations but to also promote doing so sustainably. As such, the Mohamed bin Zayed Falconry and Desert Physiognomy school was created to serve that purpose.

This school is an integral part of the initiative made to preserve the UAE's falconry heritage and commemorate the achievements of the pioneering falconer Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. One of the school's greatest achievements is when falconry was registered in UNESCO as a living human heritage, enabling laws and legislation to be put in order to protect falcons and preserve their species.

The Mohamed Bin Zayed Falconry and Desert Physiognomy School offer all local schools' access to an outreach program, offering one-hour lessons to highlight the importance of falconry as part of UAE and world heritage.

Schools interested in taking their students can book a visit by e-mailing info@mbzfalconryschool.com



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Educational Resources

Climate Change and The Water Cycle Guide

Water scarcity is an alarming crisis that could result in devastating consequences if no solution is put into place. A major factor in this crisis is climate change, yet the connection between the two issues is not prevalent nor is it given the attention it urgently requires.

Due to this reason, a 10-hour curriculum was developed by the US Department of Agriculture in partnership with the Asombro Institute for Science education under the title "Climate Change and the Water Cycle".

The guide introduces students to climate change, the water cycle, and how the changing climate affects water resources. This can help students create a link between climate change and the water cycle, and to see the importance of both as well as the problems that could arise when climate change affects water resources catastrophically.

The guide is intended for students from the 6th grade to the 12th grade.
The document can be accessed below:

Link:: <https://swclimatehub.info/education/climate-change-and-water-cycle>

Educational Resources

Webinar Video: Learning Gardens and Learning Landscapes Connecting Young People to Nature

The second resource available in this issue is a link to a monthly webinar series created by the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). The episode recommended is from the February 2018 installment, titled "Learning Gardens and Learning Landscapes - Connecting Young People to Nature". As the title suggests, the topic discusses various ways to connect youth to nature, through wildlife exploration and investing in "learning gardens" where children can explore wildlife while also benefitting by learning important attributes such as building emotional empathy with other living organisms.

The guest lecturers included Dilafruz Williams from Portland State University, Nilda Cosco, who is a part of Natural Learning Initiative at NC State University, and Robin Moore, also a member of Natural Learning Initiative at NC State University.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhypsrhRluk#action=share>

Upcoming Environmental Occasions

SSI schools are constantly encouraged to take part and initiate environmental and sustainable initiatives not only for the sake of SSI, but to promote green leadership skills and problem-solving skills within students.

To help orient future school events with nationally and internationally acknowledged environmental occasions, a list of events has been created.

February 2: International Wetlands Day

The Convention of Wetlands, held in 1971, detailed the framework of national actions and international cooperation in raising awareness of wetlands. The UAE ratified the treaty in 2007. The most notable wetland students can go to is Al Wathba Wetland reserve. Students can learn more about the flora and fauna of the site they visit, investigate to find out the threats to the wetland, and prepare a report on it.

February 4: National Environment Day

In 1993, the Federal Environment Agency was established on this day. Every year, the government declares a theme on a specific environmental concern that the country faces. Members of the schools Eco club could plan activities related to the declared theme that aim to raise awareness on the problem and offer creative solutions. Students can also prepare campaigns and conduct surveys to know the level of knowledge of their communities.

February 16-21: Afforestation week

Following the steps of His Highness the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, students should work on spreading his view on the significance of trees. Activities can be about planting new trees or preserving existing ones.

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March 15: World Consumer Rights Day

Considering that this notion is not widely known, especially within school students, Eco-clubs can use this opportunity to shed light on what rights we as consumers have. The eco club can conduct surveys to see the student's knowledge and then prepare informative workshops to educate students.

March 21: World Forestry Day

World Forestry Day aims to provide opportunities to learn and appreciate sustainable use of forests, as well as to understand their social and economic values. The Eco Club can have a sustained program of planting and tend for trees. They can also research about indigenous tree species and what features they're comprised of that enable them to thrive better in the UAE's climate.

March 22: World Water Day

The UN addressed March 22 as World Water day in 1992, with hopes to inspire action and encourage understanding of the need for more responsible water use and conservation. The Club can develop posters, skits, and a variety of material to creatively communicate the importance of water and the need to consume it wisely.

March 23: World Meteorological Day

This day is meant to recognize WMO's efforts in promoting the establishment of networks connecting meteorological, climatological, hydrological and geophysical observations. Topics such as weather, water, and climate can be sources for a theme for this day. The Eco club can set up weather stations to record daily weather variable changes and open discussion sessions on different climate issues. A trip can also be set up to visit the Central Forecast Office to find out more about the climate database.

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Important Days in the first Quarter of 2019

Last week of March: Earth Hour

During the designated day of the week, all lights are turned off for an hour. This event began in Australia in 2007 as a sign of solidarity to address climate change and became an international phenomenon. In 2009, more than 14 organizations in Abu Dhabi switched off lights and saved over 3,000 KWH in one hour. Members of the Eco Club can spread awareness about the Earth Hour campaign to ensure that as many people as possible in Abu Dhabi participate in this global event.

Important Days in the first Quarter of 2019

The SSI team would like to conclude the final issue of the 2018 Multaqana newsletter with some important dates to keep in mind for the next couple of months!

- To start off, the Dugong workshops will pick up next year where two will be held; one in Al Ain and one in Al Dhafrah.
- Schools part of the Sustainable Schools Initiative are requested to submit their SSI reports by the end of January.
- In February, the "Al Talea Summit" will commence in alignment with the National Environment day celebration, on the fourth of February.
- Another event prepared as part of the National Environment day celebration is the Al Khatem Eco Club summit.

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Education for Sustainability

We look forward receiving your feedback about our quarterly newsletter.

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