



Multaqana

A Forum for Educators
of Sustainability

WELCOME TO MULTAQANA!

January 2020 / Edition 21

With the end of 2019, we would like to express our deep gratitude to BP, the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education and Knowledge, Al Ain Distribution Company, Abu Dhabi Distribution Company, and the Department of Municipalities and Transport for their continuous support and commitment to the Sustainable Schools Initiative.

Thanks also to schools, students, parents, teachers, administrative teams, and non-educational staff for their distinguished partnership with us to enhance the enthusiasm of our students, and to reach the necessary knowledge to make a positive change in their daily behaviour and approach for a sustainable future.

We would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the achievement we made during 2019, and we want to remind you that the sustainability journey is still ongoing.

In 2019, we started by organising Dugong workshops and launching an awareness competition in order to raise awareness on the threats facing dugong and the efforts made to conserve and preserve it. The results were impressive, as students were able to reach 58,492 people through organised campaigns on social media.

Students were also allowed to participate in the **Plant Adventure Competition**, which aims to connect students with nature and increase their awareness of local plants in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Through this competition, students were able to collect 603 plant samples and learn about their importance to the emirate.

The second quarter of the same year was also marked by schools' sharing their achievements in the initiative through our reporting portal.

During the evaluation period that took place with the initiative's partners, it was noted that what was achieved exceeded all expectations

Our schools were able to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emissions within one year by 97,200 kg; 300 environmental projects were organised, and 54,604 participated in environmental field trips. During the third and fourth quarter of 2019, we were able to raise the number of participants in the initiative from 135 to 150 schools. We also trained 424 teachers of the initiative's affiliated schools on the mechanism of applying the four components of the initiative.

It was an exciting and distinguished year, and we in the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi are proud of the success we achieved together within the Sustainable Schools Initiative.

We hope you enjoy the latest edition of MULTAQANA, and we hope that you share it with the largest number of friends and acquaintances, to know about the initiative, and realise the importance of environmental education in the field of sustainable development.

Regards,
Sustainable Schools Initiative Team

Meritorious works

Zayed Sustainability Prize

The Sustainable Schools Initiative team congratulates the Umm Al Arab School and the Philippine Global School for being shortlisted for the year 2020, and for the Zayed Sustainability Prize in the category of MENA schools.

The Philippine Global School, a private school with participants in the Sustainable Schools Initiative, has proposed a project to build and implement a unit dedicated to hydroponics within its current environmental project (the Bio dome) which was implemented as part of the school's efforts in the initiative.

Through the development of this project, the school aspires to achieve many benefits and fruitful results in terms of promoting environmental awareness, sustainability and innovation by promoting sustainable food production, innovation and responsibility as well as developing sustainable agricultural systems.

This proposed system is to be provided with solar energy and water conservation practices, ensuring that the principle of sustainability is incorporated into the life cycle of the entire project.

Umm Al-Arab School, which is considered one of the leading schools within the Sustainable Schools Initiative, proposed a project called "Green Numbers". This is a scientific project that relies on monitoring the environmental impact through the environmental audit component within the sustainable schools initiative and achieving ideal consumption rates through the integration of waste and water solutions. The project also indicates the needs related to organic garden irrigation when needed, by monitoring soil moisture and displaying the relevant data in the control panel, using a smart device to analyse the electric energy meter.

The second part of the project proposes addressing the energy consumption in the school, through using a smart application that allows students to monitor, calculate and rationalise energy consumption. Besides, they use a solar powered recycling machine, which help recycling plastic waste at school and convert it into three-dimensional wires and plastic shapes for use in a club innovation.

We are proud that the Sustainable Schools Initiative has contributed to the excellence of these schools and making them among the top three schools at the level of participants for the MENA schools category. We hope our schools are fortunate to win the award, which will enable them to radically change their environmental performance.



Capacity Building and Skills Enhancement

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As part of our efforts to direct schools to the mechanism for implementing the sustainable school initiative components, **four** workshops were organized on how to conduct an environmental assessment of **five** basic elements: water, air quality, land, energy, and waste.

Through the workshops, strategies were presented to improve the environmental performance year after year and gradually to reach sustainability. **170** teachers from **120** SSI schools participated in this workshop.

We also organized **two** workshops attended by **213** teachers on how to create and manage environmental clubs.

This workshop aims to guide teachers and schools on how to engage students in addressing the environmental issues facing the emirate through the implementation of activities on the ground, away from the restrictions imposed on them in the classroom and curricula.

Students are not limited to internal activities but are empowered to change the awareness and behavior of individuals in surrounding societies



Capacity and Skills Building

In line with UAE commitment to achieving the global goals of sustainable development by 2030, and the federal government's ambition to develop educational initiatives such as Sustainable Schools Initiative to achieve these goals. We have succeeded in organising four workshops targeting 109 teachers from 80 schools to promote their knowledge of the sustainable development goals, which enhances the link between them and the Sustainable Schools Initiative and how they work to

design their final reports within the initiative in line with the sustainable development goals.

An additional workshop entitled Education for Sustainability was also organised. In this workshop, we focused on the concept of thinking systems, which is the main part of education that often does not find its chance in the curriculum. Training in thinking systems helps to visualise and manage environmental problems.

Within this training, the interconnectedness and relation-

-ship between them, and this type of thinking, helps students to predict the consequences of their decisions on the environment. The importance of this concept has been linked to how to achieve the sustainable development goals. 40 teachers from 35 schools participated in this training.



UNESCO launches Future Education Initiative website: "Learn to become ..."

The "*Futures of Education Learning to Become*" aims to rethink education and shape the future. Looking at 2050 and beyond, the initiative stimulates the global debate on how to reshape knowledge, education and learning in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty and accuracy. A high-level international panel of thought leaders will lead the work from different fields and regions of the world.

In November 2021, the committee will publish a report designed to share a future vision of what education and learning may become, and to present a policy agenda.

To learn more, please visit <https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/>

Al Wathba Wetlands Reserve

The Sustainable Schools Initiative team would like to take this opportunity to activate the field trips component by introducing environmentally important sites that students can visit to learn more about the UAE environment.

Al Wathba Wetlands Reserve, located approximately 60 km outside of Abu Dhabi, was established in 1998 to conserve more than 200 species of birds. The site provides a destination for birds to feed, rest and breed. In 2003, this reserve became an internationally recognised wetland under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

Students visiting the Al Wathba Wetlands Reserve will have an opportunity to see the Flamingos from fall to spring. The wetlands house over 250 species of birds, 37 plant species, and a water system rich in aquatic and terrestrial components.

Given the extreme environmental sensitivity of the wetland components, a visit to the reserve is available to schools only on Tuesday, and Wednesday from 8:00 am – 1:00 pm. The reserve includes a visitor service centre, self-guided paths, and bird hides.

To visit the Al Wathba Wetlands Reserve please send an email to sustainableschools@ead.gov.ae



Al Ain Zoo

Al Ain Zoo is another site that curators can organise a trip for their students to visit. The magnificent Al Ain Zoo is the largest and most popular attraction in the area. This park comprises a wide range of local and exotic animals, such as the Arabian Oryx, the two-horned Barbarian sheep, rhinos, hippos, tigers and lions, and many others.

A programme designed to protect rare animals from extinction and breed them is adopted in this zoo. Visiting the zoo is not limited to seeing animals, there are also many activities available to visitors that help them to enjoy their visit, including feeding giraffes, walking with lemurs, as well as going on the largest and most wonderful man-

-made safari trip in the world, in an area of 217 hectares that includes more than 250 animals African and Arab.

Moreover, the zoo includes other benefits, including the Sheikh Zayed Desert Learning Centre, which is a multimedia exhibition based on the principle of sustainable energy and consists of five interactive showrooms: Sheikh Zayed Tribute Hall, Abu Dhabi's Desert over Time, Abu Dhabi's Living World, People of the Desert and Looking to the Future.

It also includes a variety of cafes and restaurants, the Discovery Garden for children, and many other great facilities that are constantly being renovated and expanded.

To be able to visit Al Ain Zoo, please visit the website

<https://www.alainzoo.ae/>



SIMPLY BOTTLES A DGRADE INITIATIVE

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We highlight the initiative 'Simply Bottles' by DGrade, which encourages students and community members to recycle.

This initiative works to prevent plastic bottles from going to landfills through education, participation and facilitating the collection of plastics. They are recycling plastic bottles into clothes to support the economy.

The return from participating goes to the 'Simply Bottles'

Programme:

- The group provides free bags to collect and store plastic packages
- The process of collecting bags from schools will be free of charge

- Participants in 'Simply Bottles' are given membership to speak on school boards and participate in ecological events to encourage recycling and explain the circular economy and recycling process in DGrade.
- Participants are given the opportunity to join the activities of the DGrade group which includes competitions, cleaning campaigns and more.

To contact the 'Simply Bottles' initiative, please send an email to Sarah.s@dgrade.com

For more information about DGrade please visit the website <https://dgrade.com/>



We also highlight Al Dhafra Waste Collection Company. This licensed company is working to provide comprehensive waste management solutions by developing a unique set of integrated environmental solutions.

Al Dhafra Waste Collection and Recycling

This company collects recycling waste paper, plastic, cardboards and metal packages. In order to organise the waste collection mechanism. It also provides cages in proportion to the type of waste generated, and the company's specialists work to transfer waste free of charge at a time that suits you.

In addition to the above and as part of its social responsibility, this company works to allocate profits from waste collection and recycling to charitable and humanitarian projects implemented by Emirates Red Crescent as a Grace Conservation project.

To contact the company and cooperate with them on recycling, you can contact:

Mr. Alaa Al-Ameen
Email: alaa@upmuae.com
Mobile: +971 562165789

Upcoming Environmental Occasions

Schools are constantly encouraged to participate and launch sustainable environmental initiatives not only to implement the Sustainable Schools Initiative, but to enhance environmental leadership capabilities among students and develop their problem-solving skills.

To help enrich future school events with nationally and internationally recognised environmental events, we have selected the following events for the first quarter of 2020:

World Wetlands Day

Date: 2nd of February

The Wetlands Convention, which was concluded in 1971 and ratified by the United Arab Emirates in 2007, established a framework for national procedures and international cooperation to enhance awareness on wetlands. Al Wathba Wetlands Reserve is perhaps the most prominent wetland that students can visit on this occasion. Students can learn more about plants and animals on the site they visit, check for themselves and report on threats to wetlands.

National Environment Day

Date: 4th of February

The Federal Environment Agency was established on this day in 1993 and its functions are now integrated into the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment. This day is celebrated every year, as the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment announces a topic related to a specific environmental concern for the country. Environmental club members can plan activities related to the topic advertised in order to increase awareness of the problem and provide innovative solutions to it. Students can also set up awareness campaigns and conduct surveys to see their communities' level of knowledge.

World Wildlife Day

Date: 3rd of March

World Wildlife Day is an opportunity to celebrate the many beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora and to raise awareness of the multitude of benefits that conservation provides to people. At the same time, the Day reminds us of the urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime and human induced reduction of species, which have wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts. Given these various negative effects, Sustainable Development Goal #15 focuses on halting biodiversity loss



World Consumer Rights Day

Date: 15th March

Given that the idea of this day is not widespread, especially among school students, environmental clubs can use this opportunity to highlight the rights that we as consumers enjoy. The Eco Club can conduct surveys to measure student level of knowledge, and then prepare informational workshops to educate students.

The International Day of Forests

Date: 21st of March

The International Day of Forests aims to provide an opportunity to learn and promote the sustainable use of forests and an understanding of their social and economic value. An environmental club can have a permanent programme of planting focusing on local trees. You can also search for indigenous tree species and properties that help them grow better in the climate of the United Arab Emirates.

WORLD Water Day

Date: 22nd of March

On March 22, the United Nations designated a World Water Day in 1992 to stimulate action and encourage an understanding of the need to use more responsible water conservation. The club can creatively create posters, notebooks and a variety of materials to highlight the importance of water and the need to rationalise its consumption wisely and carefully.

World Meteorological Day

Date: 23rd of March

This day aims to acknowledge the efforts of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in promoting the establishment of meteorological, climatological, hydrological and geophysical meteorological information networks. Topics such as weather, water, and climate can be sources for the theme of this day's celebration. The environmental club can also set up meteorological stations to record daily changes in weather and organize open discussion panels on various climate issues. A trip to a central forecast office can also be prepared to learn more about the climate database.

Earth Hour

Date: 28th of March

During a specific day of the week, all lights are off for an hour. This event started in Australia in 2007 as a sign of solidarity to tackle climate change and has become an international phenomenon. In 2009, more than 14 establishments in Abu Dhabi turned off the lights, saving more than 3000 kWh in one hour. Environmental club members can raise awareness about the Earth Hour campaign to ensure that as many people in Abu Dhabi as possible can participate in this global event.

Upcoming Events

To ensure the Sustainable Schools Initiative's events are included in your annual schedule, and to be prepared for participation, below are the activities and events planned for the first quarter of the year:

Middle East Youth Expo 2020

Objective:

This youth circle will educate youth on the issue of marine litter and to understand the reasons behind marine litter and behaviour trends.

Date:

Abu Dhabi: 5th of February 2020

Language:

English

World Urban Forum

Objectives:

Organized and convened by UN-Habitat, the World Urban Forum has become the foremost international gathering for exchanging views and experiences on sustainable urbanization in all its ramifications. The inclusive nature of the Forum, combined with high-level participation, makes it a unique United Nations conference and the premier international gathering on urban issues.

Date:

Abu Dhabi: 9-13 February 2020

Language:

English

Al Sidr Environmental Film Festival

Objectives:

Al Sidr Environmental Film Festival (SEFF) believes in the power of cinema to provoke critical thinking about environmental issues and inspire action. Its objectives are to engage our community in exploring environmental issues from a wide range of angles and perspectives and to inspire and stimulate audiences to understand the threats to our planet through visual means.

Date:

Abu Dhabi: 6-8 February 2020

Language:

Arabic and English