



Seychelles' Environmental Education Newsletter

Environmental Education Coordinating Committee • Ministry of Education and Youth • February 2004

Dear Readers

Welcome to our first issue of *Enviro News* for this year.

A lot is being planned for this year in regard to environmental education and every two months *Enviro News* will continue to keep you inform of what is happening. We are again this year counting on all schools to write to us and let us know what is happening at school level.

This year has been declared as the *Year of Moral Renaissance*. Let us hope that this theme will

remind us about our duties and responsibilities towards our environment and the other species of plants and animals that share our planet with us.

Remember that we need to respect our natural environment. We need to take care and conserve our planet so that we can live in harmony with other species around us. That also means respecting their habitat which they live in and the rules which have been set up to protect them. We must stop believing

that the taking care of our planet is the responsibility of only those who work in that field. We are all a part of it, our lives depend on it. It is therefore the duty of every one of us to look after and treat it with respect everyday. We do not need to wait for special occasions such as Environment Day or Clean Up the World to take action. We need do it everyday. Our environment is the responsibility of everyone!

Miss Larue

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Young people and the World Heritage Sites

To commemorate the visit of the DG for UNESCO, Mr Koichiro Matura, the Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF), the organisation which manages our two local World Heritage Sites, organised an exhibition to educate people about the different world heritage sites.

The Ministry of Education and Youth (MOEY) was invited to take part in the exhibition and a corner was reserved with pictures, reports, poems and articles under the theme 'Young People and the World Heritage Sites'. The ministry's work displayed the important role the Vallee de Mai and Aldabra atoll play in educating our young people about the importance of biodiversity and the need to conserve it.

Over two hundred chil-

dren visited the exhibition and took part in a quiz organised by the Environmental Education Unit (MOEY) based on information displayed in the exhibition. All the children who came in a school group have to answer a number questions based on both local and international world heritage sites. There were fifteen questions for the secondary category and a total

of ten for the primary participants. Children and teachers showed great interest and some expressed that they would like to learn more about our local world heritage sites.

Only two children at secondary level (from Belonie and English River) got all answers correct whereas there were 23 (12 La Rosiere and 11 Mont Fleuri) from primary level.

The winners of the competition are Tira Simeon of English River, El Bacco from Belonie and N a t a s h a Jeanne from Mont Fleuri Primary. They will all get an Aldabra book sponsored by SIF.



DG UNESCO with students at the exhibition.

Thought of the Month

We tend to think that protecting our forests is the responsibility of the government and foresters. It is not....

The responsibility is ours individually.

Wangari Maathai

Write to:

Enviro News

Environmental Education Unit, ECA/PE Section, Ministry of Education and Youth, Mont Fleuri

Schools celebrate environmental theme days

Environmental theme days play an important role on the school environmental education calendar. Right at the beginning of the year schools have been involved in activities to commemorate



Learning about our National Parks

two important theme days.

To celebrate National Parks Day, an interactive exhibition was set up at Mission National Park. Students coming from Plaisance (Prim/Sec), Mont Fleuri

(Prim/Sec), Bel Eau and Grand Anse had the chance to learn about activities undertaken in National Park through the exhibition. They also learnt about *Clidemia hirta* (faux watouk) an invasive plant threatening our forests species. These young participants assisted the forestry staff in eradicating these invasive species at Mission. After lunch they participated in a quiz competition where Plaisance defeated Mt Fleuri and Bel Eau won over Grand Anse.

This year's World Wetlands Day was celebrated on La Digue. This is a way of decentralising environmental education activities so that the schools from the other islands can also benefit from these enjoyable learning programmes. La Digue students joined the staff of Marsh Unit coming from La Digue, Praslin and Mahe on an educational

tour of Pont Bill Marsh. Participants learnt about the importance of wetlands and how they can assist in maintaining this important ecosystem. Students identified wetlands species and the two of them who managed to identify most species received prizes. They also had to fill in a worksheet and a puzzle on the issue.



Educational tour of La Digue's marsh

News from the schools

The Christmas holiday is one of the busiest holiday for school groups going on environmental educational field trips. A number of groups from Mahe went on excursions to other islands.

A group of adventurous nature lovers from Anse Etoile School went on an educational trip to Silhouette Island. The aims of the trip were to network with members from the Daubin Wildlife Club of Silhouette and to research on the fauna and flora of the island. Participants also worked on other issues such as waste management and water



Students exploring Silhouette island

sources. Accompanied by children from silhouette they visited the forest, some historical spots and Nature Conservation Society Tortoise Project.

Two clubs from Mont Fleuri Primary, the U First Club and the Flamboyant Wildlife Club visited the amazing bird reserve of Aride island. The aims of the trip were to familiarize pupils with the island's biodiversity and to reward members of the wildlife club for their hard work during the year 2003. Guided by wardens of the island, pupils learnt about the

different species of birds and other animals and plants from that fragile reserve.

The Colibri Wildlife Club of Plaisance Secondary went to Mt. Trois Freres. They managed to observe a variety of endemic species in their natural habitat. Members of the same club have joined forces with the Agricultural department of their school to set up their medicinal plant garden. The project which includes a lot of research is now attracting the other students and staff of the school. Members of the Book Club, again from the same school, went on a visit to La Digue. They visited the Veuve Reserve and planted some trees there.

Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles Activities

Leaders from Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles have recently collaborated in habitat restoration work on Denis Island to improve the woodland native forest so that the island can support endemic bird species in future.

A group of eight leaders and two Nature Seychelles staff spent eight days in ecological restoration work held on Denis. The aims of the restoration work were to remove invasive alien species, allowing the planted woodland to recover and thus enhancing habitats for Seychelles endemic

birds.

Over the last few days participants concentrated on weeding invasive plants, which include the collection of seeds and cuttings of *Pisonia* plant. In the weeded areas leaders used *badamier* seeds. Other native species were also propagated. Cuttings of *Mapou* were planted directly into the ground.

The project is a long term one which started sometime back, when Nature Seychelles with the collaboration of Denis Island Management planted the woodland, under an island assessment

and restoration project, which run from March 1999 to January 2002. Funded under a Medium-Sized Global Environment Fund (GEF) project, the work has rehabilitated key ecosystems and increased species diversity and abundance. The project covered 11 islands in the Seychelles group; data collected highlighted Denis Island as a priority for restoration and translocation of Seychelles endemic birds. WCS is planning the same activity again on Denis for the coming April holidays.

ECO-SCHOOL RESULTS

2003 Eco-School Star Prize went once again to Plaisance Secondary and for the first time to Anse Etoile Primary. The four judges, comprising of Miss Wilna Acouche (of Conservation), Mr. Patrick Quatre (of SWAC), Ms Lucille Monthy (of Landscape Management) and Mr. Terence Vel (of Nature Seychelles) visited all the thirteen schools which made it to the final.

In the primary category, for the first time Anse Etoile school, which has shown great improvement impressed the judges and collected 482 points to grab the Star Prize. As prizes the school won the shared trip to Aldabra sponsored by S.I.F, R1300 sponsored by Environment Trust Fund (ETF) and a Coco-de-Mer trophy sponsored by Ministry of Environment. First Prize winner was La Re-traite school which scored 434 points. The school won a shared trip to Aride sponsored by SPDF and R700 sponsored by DBS

and ETF. Bel Eau School won a total of 427 points to grab the Special Mention Prize and as prizes the school has won R500 sponsored by PUC. Special Effort Prize was awarded to the School for the Exceptional Child and the prize was R300 sponsored by S.A.C.O.S.

For five consecutive years Plaisance Secondary has dominated the competition to win the Star Prize with 510 points. The prizes were a shared trip to Aldabra, R1500 sponsored by ETF



and a Coco-de-Mer trophy sponsored by Ministry of Environment. For the second consecutive years La Digue school has won the First Prize in this category and this time with a total of 407 points. As prizes

the school has won R1000 worth of SMB products sponsored by the same company and a shared trip to Aride sponsored by SPDF. The Special Mention Prize went to Anse Royale Secondary School with 355 points. As prizes the school has won R500 sponsored by PUC and dinner/lunch for two sponsored by Plantation Club.

La Digue has been dominating the crèche category for two consecutive years when they won the Star Prize with a total of 379 points. The crèche would benefit from R1000, which was sponsored by ETF. The First Prize went to Plaisance with 338 points and as prizes the crèche won R700 sponsored by ETF and PUC. The Special Mention Prize went to Anse Etoile with 300 points, to win R300 sponsored by ETF.

The organiser says that there has been improvement in this year's competition. There has been more commitment by heads of schools, especially the winners. They are expecting next year's competition to be more challenging as the headteachers

Seychelles wins International UNEP competition

Last year, schools were encouraged to participate in two international competitions organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): Creative Writing and Painting project under the theme 'Water two Billion People are dying for it', and TUNZA Poster Competition under the theme 'Water for the Future'.

Three schools, English River, Bel Eau Annex and Pointe Larue Primary Schools took part in the competition with around 30 entries. Stanny Bastienne from Bel Eau Annex won a second prize with a poster depicting collection of water from all its sources such as rain



and sea.

The organiser says that they received more than 200 posters from 27 countries. Bart Uustein, publisher of the UNEP Planet magazine says in a communiqué sent to the Ministry of Education's Environmental Education Unit that the standard of the competition was high, so it was difficult to choose, but he thinks the judges picked the two outstanding entries. He also congratulated and thanked the Unit for all they are doing to help promote the environmental cause.

As prizes, Stanny

received twenty-five (25) postcards of his poster, and a copy of UNEP publication *Pachamama*, and its teacher's guide with CD-ROM. The first prize was won by Lau Hei Tung of Hong Kong.

Seychelles has always shine at international level when it comes to environmental education and therefore Seychellois children need to be encouraged to share their experiences and knowledge with other children around the world.

Stanny was surprised to receive the news, but was very happy. He says that he will continue to participate in environmental education competitions, especially art ones. He would like to thank UNEP for organizing the competition and his art teacher from Bel Eau Annex who not only encouraged him but assisted him in putting his ideas

Latest Results

- *International UNEP Water Competition*
2nd-Stanny Bastienne - Bel Eau Annex
- *UNESCO World Heritage Sites Quiz Secondary Level:*
 - *El Bacco - English River*
 - *Tira Simeon - Belonie**Primary Level:*
 - *Natasha Jeanne - Mt. Fleuri*

Notice board

- *Enviro News* at www.env.gov.sc,
- **Environment Programmes:**
 - *Seychelles Que J'aime*, SBC TV, last Wednesday of the month, at 8.45 pm
 - *Dekouver Nou Lanvironman*, AM Radio every fourth night, on Fridays, at 7.30pm.
 - *Nation* Newspaper, every Monday.

Up Coming EE Programme

- Water Day Essay competition - deadline 16th March 2004
- Water Day - 22nd March
- Meteorological Day - 23rd March
- SFA Sustainable Fishing Competition - deadline 30th July
- APERGE Workshop - 30th March
- World Health Day -7th April
- Earth Day -22nd April
- Biodiversity Day - 22nd May
- World Environment Day - 5th June
- Eco-School Competition—On going

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Poet's Corner

Obor Lanmer

**Mon kontan al obor lanmer
Pou mwan al pran bennmer
Parfwa mwan ek mon pti ser
Ansanm avek mon belmer
Nou desann dan pti kat er
Pou al esper peser**

**Bokou touris I kontan vin Sesel
Pou al obor nou zoli lanmer
Keksoz ki fer mon pli ankoler
I ler mwan vwar bann dimoun
Pe zet zot salte dan lanmer
Mon annan zis pou dir zot
BEWARE!!!!**

Kelfa Belle

School for the Exceptional Child.

PRASLIN STUDENTS ON EXCHANGE VISIT TO MALDIVES

Early January 2004, five students from Praslin Secondary school, accompanied by their teacher, Miss. Camille left Seychelles for Maldives. The Seychellois group received a warm welcome from the Maldives SIV Youth participants, their teachers, principal and representatives from several ministries.

Arriving at their temporary home, they were greeted with a wonderful meal and they were already feeling at home. The second day of the visit was dominated by meeting officials from the various ministries, followed by a workshop organised by them. After the first half of the workshop, they left for a tour round Male, firstly visiting the Sultan Park where they learnt a lot about the history of the Maldives.

The group then proceeded to visit the island of Vilingilli where the main place of interest was the Heritage creative arts and craft center. They then rested at the youth centre on Male to discuss the work and programme of that day. The outcome of the group

work in the workshop was reported on the following day and it was evident that Pollution is one of the main problem in the two countries. Students came up with some possible solutions that could be used to minimise pollution. It was from the issues discussed in the workshop that the Maldivian and Seychelles group three days later decided to target a zero tolerance for littering at their respective schools as a joint project for the year to sustain a good and healthy environment. The other half of the day was devoted to a trip to Hulhumale where a major reclamation project is being undertaken. On their way a garbage disposal site was visited.

The 7th was dedicated to visiting the is-

land of Thilafushi made out of garbage. The next day, the group left for Huraa where a youth campsite was visited with a nearby swamp that is to be reclaimed. On Himmafushi island, a well maintained and well organised Drug Rehabilitation centre was the centre of attraction.

In the afternoon the group visited a Tuna Factory where the processes of cleaning, filleting, skinning and packing the fishes, 'got their eyes glued'. Friday the 9th was spent on Maafushi island where the



A group photo with the President.

group stayed overnight. Entertainment was found at sea when the Maldivians and Seychellois combated the strong currents in the sea of Vahmaafushi while swimming and snorkeling. Upon coming from Vahmaafushi, the youngsters played some volleyball and joined the very young inhabitants of the rehabilitation centre where they were residing for the night, in some indoor games. The next day, on the way back to Male, the group visited the centre for disabled and the dumpsite on Guraidhoo island. In the afternoon of that Saturday, the excitement of the cultural show scheduled for that night was apparent. Such a show was to enhance knowledge on the countries' traditions and culture. The night

saw talents of the two countries as various items were presented.

A traditional dinner prepared by participants from both countries went down the stomachs appetisingly after the show. The day before the group left, a visit to Ahmad-diyah school was made on the first day of the term and Seychelles SIV Youth participated in the assembly whereby Miss Farida explained the 'mission' of the exchange group and the project that was to be carried out to stop littering at school level.

An honoured invitation to meet the President of the Maldives, Mr Abdul Gayoom, was very much welcomed by the Seychelles participants and at 10.30 a.m the group was in the President's office. After a wealthy dialogue with the president, the Seychelles group proceeded to meet the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Marine resources. In both visits, it was felt that the two countries have a lot in common and that there already existed a bond between the two countries' presidents and officers of the above mentioned ministries. When it was time to say goodbye everyone was very sad. In all, the journey had been a very good experience as one participant, Anna-Rita stated, 'We had visited some interesting places and learnt a lot.'

EECC MEMBERS

Ministry of Education and Youth
Ministry of Environment
Ministry of Tourism and Transport
Natural History Museum
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Nature Seychelles
Wildlife Clubs of Seychelles
Public Utilities Cooperation
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