

DEUTSCHE SCHULE
DURBAN



ECO-SCHOOLS REPORT

2019



2019 Ecoschools Committee

The 2019 Deutsche Schule Durban (DSD) Ecoschools committee was comprised of:

Peter Deppe (Principal)

Simone Korving (Grade 3 Teacher) – Emigrated to the Netherlands at the end of June 2019, not replaced.

Carolin Ruppert (Grade 4, German Teacher)

Janet Schulze (Parent Liason, School Board of Directors)*

The Grade 5 Pupils (a class of 11 in 2019)

*The School Board of Directors identified in 2018 that we want to be more involved in corporate social responsibility programmes, and Mrs Janet Schulze is the Board representative tasked with this portfolio.

Our EcoCode:

Our EcoCode was updated in 2018 with the inclusion of an additional goal, namely “TO SHARE OUR FINDINGS AND EXPERIENCES WITH A WIDER AUDIENCE”. This includes feedback at school to the pupils via presentations and assemblies, feedback to the parent body via newsletters and other communication, and feedback to a wider audience beyond the immediate school community via newspaper articles, FaceBook posts and the like.



What thus follows in the rest of this document is feedback about the various activities the school has been busy with this year, 2019.

DSD Eco-Schools 2019: Action Projects (old and new)

THEME 1: WASTE

1.1 Orange Bins In Classrooms - continued

Every Monday, rubbish bags in the school's neighbourhood are collected and sent to the local municipal dump site. The Ethekwini Municipality encourages residents to sort rubbish in a way that ensures that paper and plastic waste is collected separately and sent for recycling. To facilitate this, residents are supplied with and urged to place all paper and plastic waste into ORANGE bin bags. These are put out on the pavement together with the black bags on rubbish collection days, but are collected separately and sent to different destinations.

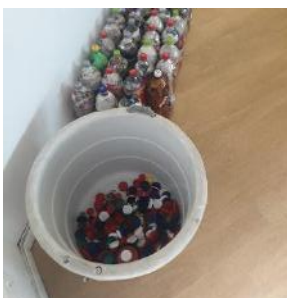
To piggy back onto this initiative, the school has placed an orange bucket /rubbish bin in every classroom and office in the school. All venues thus now have TWO bins, the "old" bin and an orange bin. The children and staff have been asked to use the orange bins for all paper and plastic waste, and to use the "old" rubbish bins for all other waste. The cleaning staff empty the contents of the orange bins into the orange packets, thus ensuring that it is sent for recycling. Previously, all school waste was disposed of using the traditional black bins.

1.2 Recycling - continued

The school continues to collect glass bottles for "The Glass Recycling Company" and there is a glass collection bin in the school's car park where parents are encouraged to deposit their glass bottles. This has been in place since early 2015, and to date (October 2019) the school has collected **13 468kg** of glass for recycling.

We are also still in the process of applying for a paper recycling collection bin from Mpact. To qualify, we have been told to collect 500kg of paper a month, for 3 months, before they will supply a bin at the school. Sadly, in spite of numerous attempts from us to get such a bin, this has not been forthcoming. We continue to push for one. A major challenge is verifying how much paper we have collected, as "our" paper is collected and placed onto a truck that has also collected elsewhere. We are not convinced that everything collected by us is actually allocated to us.

We collect used batteries for safe disposal, as well as used computer cartridges. Parents are encouraged to bring batteries and cartridges from home/ their places of work for us to ensure that they are disposed of responsibly. Collection points for these are in the school's offices. Regular school assemblies are held at which the children are reminded of all the various items we collect.



In addition to glass, paper/ cardboard, batteries and computer cartridges, the DSD also collects Ecobricks (see later), bread clips and plastic bottle lids as part of its recycling drive. The bread tags and bottle tops are part of the Breadtags for Wheelchairs initiative. We **were very excited to learn that plastic lids can also be collected as there** appear to be so many "out there". A big bucket has been placed in the hall and we collect all sorts of plastic lids – milk and water bottles, Marmite/ Bovril, deodorant cans and so on.



BREADTAGS
for wheelchairs

THEME 2: SCHOOL GROUNDS

2.1 “67 Minutes for Mandela”/ “Nelson Mandela Day”



DSD children contributed for the first time ever to Nelson Mandela Day. As part of the Nelson Mandela Day/ 67 Minutes for Mandela initiative, the DSD children embarked on a number of different activities. For security reasons, some were completed on the school grounds, although the older children (Grade 4 to 7) worked outside the school grounds.

Briefly, the following was done as part of this initiative:

- Grade R: produced sandwiches as part of the Bread Buddy campaign (Grade R is not usually part of Bread Buddies, but these children will start next year when they are in Grade 1);
- Grade 1 & 2: cleared weeds (mainly blackjacks) and other invader plants from the school gardens;
- Grade 3 removed hundreds of alien camphor saplings (and some mulberry trees) from the area along the old driveway to the field;
- Grade 4 – 7 picked up litter (9 bags full) along the Palmiet River in front of the school;
- Grade 7 cleared balloon vine from outside the school grounds (near our exit gate) along Stafford Road. This had been choking a number of indigenous Umdoni (and exotic Syringa) trees in this area.

The photos below are of some of these activities:

Photo 1:



Photo 2:



Photo 3:



- Photo 1: Grade 3 clearing camphor saplings
- Photo 2: Gr 4-6 picking up litter along the Palmiet River
- Photo 3: Gr 7 clearing balloon vines in Stafford Road

2.2 Indigenous Garden - Kindergarten and elsewhere

Two new classrooms were constructed between November 2016 and June 2017. The construction process resulted in the need to completely revamp the Kindergarten playground, and this area has

been re-vegetated using indigenous plants. In addition to this, a new playground was constructed for the school’s new toddler class and the area around this play ground has also been planted with indigenous vegetation. This is an ongoing endeavor. The gate that serviced the old driveway to the sports field was moved, some tar was lifted and indigenous vegetation has been planted to arrest erosion and to beautify the area. The aim is to establish a beautiful indigenous garden with a sensory path leading through it – this, we believe, will be a lovely area for the children to explore and play in.

Plants used include: Natal Mahogany tree, agaves, agapanthus, speckboom, dyanelia and aloes.

Parent volunteers, some of whom sent a gardener for the day, are responsible for helping out in some of our gardens - this is an ongoing process.

THEME 3: COMMUNITY & HERITAGE

3.1 Ecobricks

ECOBICKS – HELP US TO SAVE OUR ENVIRONMENT!



After handing over more than 500 Ecobricks last year, the DSD re-introduced this initiative this year when it became clear to us that there were many organisations who were still collecting them, and that many DSD households continued making Ecobricks.

Interest in doing something about the scourge of plastic pollution was also heightened after a presentation was held at the school by Ms Sarah Finlayson – see elsewhere in this report (Page 8). The school has thus reintroduced the collection of

ecobricks and has challenged every child to produce and deliver at least 3 before the end of the year. The plastic gloves worn by kitchen staff in producing food get put in a special Ecobrick being produced by them and we hope to deliver in excess of 500 Ecobricks at the start of 2020. Many children have encouraged their grandparents to also make Ecobricks for the school.

3.2 Bread Buddies

This programme runs on a Thursday at the DSD, and involves the Grade 1-7 pupils taking turns to provide the “ingredients” to make sandwiches which are then taken to an Umlazi-based pre-school where there are pupils from poverty stricken, child headed households.

Every Thursday the Umlazi Lutheran church delivers sandwiches from the DSD to a preschool attached to the church. Each class has one Thursday per term assigned to them where each child in the class is



asked to bring a loaf of sliced bread to school, and if possible also a tub of margarine, a jar of peanut butter or fruit jam. The children in the class concerned then proceed to make the sandwiches during the course of the day. This initiative was introduced in September 2018 and has continued throughout this year. The Grade R class made sandwiches once this year as their contribution to Nelson Mandela Day (see elsewhere in this report, Page x).

3.3 Partnership with Ukukhanya Kwelanga School in Chesterville

Extract from the DSD Newsletter, 21 June 2019:

Corporate Social Responsibility: Ukukhanya Kwelanga Primary School

As part of our Eco-schools involvement and our growing social responsibility programme, we are excited to start a learning exchange programme with the Ukukhanya Kweyama Primary School in Chesterville. Our Grade 5 and 6 children will spend an hour or so at the school every second Friday as of next term to assist their Grade 4 pupils with basic Maths, and to receive some Zulu lessons from their pupils in return. A successful meet and greet session was held



earlier this month and we are excited at trying to make this a happy and successful partnership. Our thanks is extended to Mrs Janet Schulze and Mrs Sigrid Weber who have been instrumental in getting this partnership off the ground.



This has been happening every 2 weeks since the start of term 3 and we are happy with the interactions that have taken place so far this year.

Last year, the DSD supported the LEARN (Let's Educate A Rainbow Nation) project and collected almost 500 books to be donated to the LEARN project for use in libraries in underprivileged schools and communities. As a small school, we felt that it would be difficult to arrange such a collection every year. However, through our new partnership with Ukukhanya Kwelanga Primary School in Chesterville, we are hoping to have the LEARN Project set up a library at Ukukhanya Kwelanga School. Mrs Goodness Vilakazi, the Grade 4 HOD at Ukukhanya Kwelanga, has applied on behalf of the school with support from DSD. We wait in anticipation, in the hope that the LEARN Project will extend its influence to Ukukhanya Kwelanga. In addition to this, we have also asked the staff and pupils at Ukukhanya Kwelanga school to make Ecobricks for us to collect.

3.4 Weihnachtsmarkt/ Christmas Market

On the first Friday in November the School hosts its annual Christmas Market, an event supported by an estimated 1500 visitors. Our School is transformed into a huge market with stall holders selling a variety of gifts and Christmas themed items. Stall holders rent a table and all proceeds go to the School, this being our biggest annual fundraiser. This year's event will be held on Friday 1 November 2019.



In recent years the School has made a number of tables available free of charge for charitable organizations, to allow them exposure to the many guests and an additional opportunity to also do their own fundraising. Last year (2018) the SPCA were able to exhibit free of charge, and this year (2019) we are joined by Focus on the Family.



In addition to this, the school proudly displays its green Eco-flag at the market's food hall and encourages patrons to be mindful of recycling and to help us by immediately sorting any waste generated into the following categories: Paper, Plastic, Tins and Food Scraps. Wheelie rubbish bins, labelled accordingly, are strategically located within the food-court and posters are on display stating that we are a proud Eco-school and that we are concerned about our environment and that we expect our guests to be mindful of the environment too.

THEME 4: MARINE & COAST

4.1 Beach Clean Up

The Grade R and 6 classes went on a joint outing to the beach in front of the Pirates Lifesaving Club where they spent an hour picking up litter and other foreign material (including a dead chicken, a big mat and a crutch) off the beach between Pirates and Suncoast.



Guided by their German teacher, the Grade 6s proceeded to create a series of posters (in German) dealing with a variety of environmental issues affecting us today. Topics included:

- Recycling*;
- The fire in the Amazon forest*;
- Huge amounts of unconsumed food items wasted and thrown out*;
- The challenges posed by the production of beef*.

Attached: *These 4 posters are attached separately as PDF files.

The Handbook against Plastic, produced by the Grade 6s of 2018, was also on display in the hall for parents and visitors to page through.

These posters were on display in the school hall for all parents and visitors to see. PDF copies are attached to the Email with which this report was submitted. This beach cleanup was initiated last year

for the first time and we plan to, in future, do this an annual activity with our grade R and Grade 6 classes.

The 2018 cleanup earned us a mention through a photo and a write-up on the front page of the Highway Mail earlier this year.



4.2 Mini-SASS



The grade 5 pupils of the Deutsche Schule Durban have, for the last 3 years, been conducting regular mini SASS (Stream Assessment Scoring System) evaluations of the Palmiet River where it flows directly past the school. Results are recorded and logged onto the Mini SASS site.

Unfortunately, the results seem to be fairly consistent in that they show an unhealthy river system. Very few living organisms are found and there is much litter. See later – as part of our Nelson Mandela Day initiative, our Grade 4-6 pupils did a cleanup of litter along the Palmiet River where it flows past the school.

This mini SASS surveys will be continued next year with the Grade 5 class of 2020.

4.3 Ocean Plastic: Sarah Ferguson Presentation



Sarah Ferguson (Breathe Ocean Conservation) visited the DSD on Friday 6 September to do a presentation to all Grade 1 to 7 children about the problem of plastic waste/ pollution in our oceans. DSD parents were also invited and a number managed to attend.



Sarah told the children about her 60km+ swim around Easter Island in 2018 which was to raise awareness of the problem, and then showed a documentary about plastic pollution in the ocean. Importantly, she gave the children numerous tips and ideas as to how they can reduce the amount of plastic waste that is generated. Metal straws were on sale and a number of children bought these, in the hope that they would use these and no longer resort to single use plastic straws. The importance of making ecobricks and getting others to make them too was once again highlighted.

THEME 5: HEALTH & WELLBEING

5.1 Kater Cook

The Grade 3 pupils have, for the past 6 years, completed the “Kater Cook Ernährungsführerschein”. This involves a series of lessons around the theme of nutrition - healthy cooking and eating. In addition to theory lessons about good healthy eating habits, the children are exposed to a practical component where they prepare various basic meals and dishes.

This culminates in the pupils preparing a meal to which they invite a parent, and at which the pupils act as waiters and waitresses for their parents. A short written test follows and the children are then issued with a “nutrition licence” to show that they have successfully completed the programme.



5.2 Meat Free Mondays



Meat free Mondays have been encouraged for a number of years. The school kitchen sells toasted sandwiches at break time (one of or a combination of ham, cheese and tomato). However, on a Monday, no sandwiches containing meat (ham) are sold. There are recipes for meat free meals to be found on the school's webpage (www.dsdurban.co.za)

5.3 "50 Club"

To encourage more children to participate in sport and in an attempt to promote a healthier, fitter lifestyle, the school introduced the "50 Club" three years ago. During the second and third terms, pupils have the opportunity to run at school on a Tuesday and Thursday morning before school starts, and their distances completed are recorded towards the "50 Club" award. The second term is also Cross Country season and all mileage covered at these inter schools races are added. In addition to this, parents can e-mail the school to log any mileage that their children have done whilst in the care of their parents. This is added to their totals. Upon reaching 50km, a special certificate is awarded at assembly, and further awards are made for 100km and 150km. In 2019, the following awards were made:

- 50km: 16 pupils
- 100km: 4 pupils
- 150km: 1 pupil
- 200km: 1 pupil

This represents a significant increase from last year in the number of pupils who have managed 50km or more, and many came close to achieving this milestone. The school regularly had approximately 30-35 pupils participating in Friday afternoon league inter-schools cross country runs, a third of all pupils, with many inspired by their participation in the 50 club.

5.4 How much Sugar do we consume?

Grade 6 Nutrition Exercise – how much hidden sugar is found in our food?

At the Deutsche Schule Durban, the grade 6s learn about nutrition in the first quarter of the year. They learn that processed foods are often filled with preservatives, colourants and other chemicals that are harmful to their bodies if consumed regularly. They are encouraged to eat real food; food which does not come in packets, jars and boxes. As part of the nutrition section the pupils bring processed foods from home. They learn how to read labels and how to calculate the amount of "hidden" refined sugar that is found in most processed foods.

Sugar is a natural preservative and prolongs the shelf life of processed foods. It is alarming how much sugar is found in the food products that we consume every day. We concluded that we are all probably consuming much more sugar than we realise. The consumption of sugar has been linked to heart disease, diabetes and obesity. By becoming aware of this, we hope that our pupils will make sensible food choices. A display was created at the back of the hall where the other pupils, parents and visitors to the school could have a look at the class' findings.



THEME 6: WATER

6.1 In the curriculum/ on a school tour

Water is a theme that is important in a dry, (semi)arid country like South Africa. For that reason the topic of water is regularly addressed in both formal and informal contexts, and in many lessons throughout the year in various subjects. Grade 7 Geography for example looks at the importance of conservation generally, but also focuses on the need to conserve water and importantly to look after our wetlands. The topic of water is, for example, also addressed when Mini SASS studies are conducted.

The school takes its Grade 5-7 group on a combined class trip once a year. There are 3 venues that we visit, ensuring that each grade visits each venue once. Due to the nature of the 3 venues in 3 years cycle, this topic is addressed every 3 years in the detail described below, and is mentioned here from 2018 as “Water” was not one of our Ecoschool report themes in 2018.

In April 2018 the school’s Grade 5-7 outing was to Umgeni Valley in Howick, where there was a strong focus on environmental issues, and most notably water. This included a visit to 2 Umgeni Water plants, the first being where Midmar Dam water is treated and purified before being supplied to households/ cities for consumption, the other to the Howick waste water treatment plant near the golf course where grey water is treated before being returned into the Umgeni River.



The children – and teachers - all found this sign rather amusing!

The visit to the sewage treatment works was particularly enlightening as it highlighted clearly just how badly we pollute water, and how much rubbish (foreign matter) actually is to be found in our grey water. Similarly, the visit to the water purification works highlighted how much trouble Umgeni water has to go to get water clean enough for human consumption. The VALUE of water is so easily underestimated as for us privileged enough to have it readily accessible it is not always seen as a scarce resource.

The DSD will be back at Umgeni Valley in 2021, when the next 3 grades will be taken on the same tour.

6.2 Spring Water Irrigation



The school has a little spring – water seeping out of the ground – near its sports field. This water has been sent for testing to confirm that it is from a spring rather than an underground leak, and is now being used to irrigate the sports field. The school does not have the funds to channel this water into a JoJo tank and to install an irrigation system for our field, but a homemade hosepipe adaptor now allows us, with a little bit of help from the force of gravity, channel the water onto the sports field. There is not enough pressure for it to do anything but ooze out onto the field, but the results are clear to see as the grass grows well where it has been watered. One day we hope to have the funds to harvest this water effectively and to use it for irrigating the sports field properly.

There are currently 3 JoJo tanks on campus that collect water from the school roof tops. This is used to flush toilets whenever there is no water in the school (for example when repairs to water pipes in the neighbourhood result in our supply being cut). This water is also used to wash the 3 school vehicles.

6.3 Kindergarten Puppet Show



The Kindergarten children attended a puppet show on Thursday 19 September. The show was presented by Puppet World and dealt with the all-important topic of water – why we need water, why it is such a precious resource and how we should use water wisely.

Attachments:

1. Checklist of Eco-school Projects
2. PDF copies of posters made by Grade 6 pupils
3. List of Ecoschools themes covered in the various Grades/ Subjects.

Report Compiled by:

Deutsche Schule Durban, October 2019