

Blue Flag Activities / Projects

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2016



Blue Flag environmental and educational activities organized by MTA have the aim of addressing environmental issues in a manner that can be understood by participants and to encourage them to make a better effort in favour of the environment, being conservation of the natural areas around them, saving water, not littering on beaches or waste separation at source, amongst others.

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THEME FOR 2016

SUSTAINABILITY FOR QUALITY BEACHES



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St George's Bay



Activity 1- World Environment Day activity at Pembroke Gardens

Activity 2- TV, radio programmes and newspaper articles

Activity 3- Street Banners along the beach

Activity 4- Pembroke Heritage Project with *Garby* and *Tidy*

Activity 5- Waste recycling and health awareness on beaches

ACTIVITY 1: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY- at Pembroke's New Gardens

On the 5th June, World Environment Day, the MTA worked with a school of around 100 children which are still in their kindergarten years. The children planted a tree each to take home and care for, and planted a commemoration tree at Pembroke Gardens.

The main aim of this activity was to stress the importance of healthy trees and vegetation in our life to reduce



issues such as global warming.

Pembroke gardens were the ideal backdrop for this activity where the children could feel the benefits of the green environment. The children loved this new experience and were encouraged to take care of the tree at home.



Pembroke gardens and St George's Bay are located in the north east of Malta, at St. Julians.

ACTIVITY 2: TV, RADIO PROGRAMMES AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES - Sustainable Beach management and Quality Awards

Staff at the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) took part in several radio and TV programmes and features, explaining about sustainable beach management and the quality awards that have been achieved by MTA and other operators during the current year. Such clips are helping the general public understand the code of conduct of beach management operations and, that they are being implemented for the ultimate benefit of the same beach users. Beach users are now cooperating more and feel more comfortable in abiding by the beach code of conduct. Furthermore, these programmes are giving information about the Blue Flag and about new services being offered on various beaches. Every clip also emphasizes on the need to keep our beaches clean and safe.

Article in Day By Day Magazine distributed in hotel rooms around Malta

FEATURES

Enjoy Malta's Beaches

Beach Management and the Blue Flag Quality Award

The Blue Flag is an international Quality Award that is given to beaches that are managed through sustainable beach operations, have excellent bathing water quality, offer safety and services, and where environmental activities are organised on the beach.

In 2016, ten beaches were awarded in Malta and Gozo. Malta found its place on the world Blue Flag map in 2009 when St George's Bay in Paceville was the first beach in Malta to be awarded the Blue Flag status.

The Malta Tourism Authority is currently managing eight beaches and assisting a further eight beaches managed by the Ministry for Gozo and the Gela Foundation. An additional four beaches are being managed to Blue Flag standards by private resorts of which two were already awarded with a Blue Flag Award. To achieve the award a beach must abide to 100% of the standard criteria. Should a beach fall short of 100% but reaches 70% or higher, then that particular beach would be awarded the Beach Of Quality. This year, the Beach of Quality has been awarded for the first time to Mondooq ir-Rumminien and Marsalforn bays, both in Gozo.



Accessibility on Beaches

Having more accessible beaches is once again a priority for the MTA, in fact this year two wooden pathways amounting to 150m were added at Ghadira Bay (Mellieha) and additional amphibious chairs (sand wheelchairs) that can take wheelchair bound persons are now available on a number of beaches. These amphibious chairs are available at Ghadira Bay, Ammir Bay, Golden Bay, Pretty Bay, St. George's Bay and Gozo's Ramla Bay, Mondooq Bay and Marsalforn Bay. The amphibious chairs can be used to move about in the sand and also float in the sea. Furthermore, two chair hoists have been installed at Gawra Point and Exiles in Sliema to provide better access to the sea at rocky beaches.



Waste separation on beaches - Litter Free Beaches

In an effort for cleaner beaches, the MTA is continuing with its campaign of Litter-Free Beaches and waste separation on site. Educational awareness is ongoing in schools and additional waste separation bins have been installed on more beaches. For the first time the bin liners are of the same colour of the bin compartment making it easier for people to separate. The black bin liners receive the organic waste, the yellow compartment receives metal, the red compartment for glass while the blue compartment is for plastic.

Butts off Campaign

New ashtray pots have been introduced in access points to encourage smokers to dispose of the cigarette ends before they enter the beach. Moreover, cone ashtrays are being distributed by beach supervisors on all MTA managed sandy beaches, while pocket ashtrays are being distributed on rocky beaches. Beach supervisors keep encouraging proper use of all beach assets, ultimately, for the benefit of all beach users.



The Safety Flag System

The flags, which are in line with the International Lifesaving Federation, come in a rectangular form and the colours indicate: the red over yellow flag demarcates the lifesaving boundary, green for calm water, yellow for medium hazard, purple indicates the presence of pests (such as stinging jellyfish), red for high hazard, double red indicates that the water is closed for the public and the lifeguards may not risk their lives to enter the rough sea.



Free WiFi on Beaches

Another first on many of Malta's beaches is free WiFi which can be accessed in three simple steps after activating the mobile's WIFI, namely: select MCA free WIFI, fill in details - agree, submit and enjoy!

Please help us keep YOUR beach safe and clean!

On the beach...

...dispose your litter responsibly!



ACTIVITY 3: STREET BANNERS ALONG THE BEACH

For the second year the MTA installed decorative banners along St. George's Bay. Their main scope is to raise awareness about the preservation of the coastal environment, its flora, fauna and marine species as well as the historical aspect of the coast. The banners also portray Blue Flag's criteria towards sustainability of the coastal environment.



ACTIVITY 4: PEMBROKE HERITAGE PROJECT - with Garby and Tidy



Garby & Tidy

Pembroke Heritage Project includes a walk along a coastal heritage stretch that hosts a highly ecological environment with indigenous flora and fauna. It is used as a recreation and picnic park by the children of the area. At the school of Pembroke booklets were distributed to make the children aware of the value of the site. Following the teachers' lessons, an activity was held to convey the importance of keeping the park clean of litter. Another booklet was distributed, featuring two mascots; *Garby and Tidy* stressing the importance of a litter free environment. *Garby and Tidy* could not make it to the activity on the day but sent us the activity books for the children.



ACTIVITY 5: WASTE RECYCLING AND HEALTH AWARENESS ON BEACHES

St George's bay is a beach that caters mainly for foreign, carefree youngsters. The sun has many benefits but over exposure in the Mediterranean climate is harmful. This activity was held in collaboration with the Malta Medical Student Association to raise awareness about the damage caused by high UV rays when precaution is not taken. Several sun protection crème packs were distributed. Blue Flag took this opportunity to join in this activity to disseminate information about separating waste on the beach.





The two teams went around the beach, each with their own message; to act healthy and stay healthy. A questionnaire regarding waste separation was also conducted to measure the effectiveness of MTA's constant effort against litter and to get feedback on the perception of the teenagers.



By the end of the day the teams did their best to talk to as many people as possible. The final turnout of this activity was a positive one as many people were informed individually.

Mellieha Bay



Activity 1- Ecotourism and Blue Flag programme

Activity 2- Recycling activity with Green MT

Activity 3- Visit to Ghadira Nature Reserve

Activity 4- Printing of Blue Flag T Shirts

Activity 5- Agro tourism and Organic Farming



ACTIVITY 1: ECOTOURISM AND BLUE FLAG PROGRAMME

'Ecotourism provides effective economic incentives for conserving and protecting the natural and cultural heritage of our beautiful planet'. An activity related to ecotourism was organised on the beach with the participation of 14 year old boys. This activity was mainly separated into two parts. During school hours the students were lectured about ecotourism to further understand its concept and the second part was carried out at Mellieha Bay where they were informed about sustainable beach management and the Blue Flag Award.



ACTIVITY 2: RECYCLING ACTIVITY

The recycling activity took place at Ghadira Bay by the recycling contractor *Green MT* in collaboration with MTA's Blue Flag. Recycling has become a part of our daily lives and it is imperative that people are aware of waste



separation on beaches as well. Recycling plays a major role in the mission to save our planet.

During this activity several recycling games took place, such as racing and dancing, all of which included recycled objects. Each participant was awarded for their participation, so they'd remember their fun day at Ghadira Bay with the MTA. The main aim was well achieved as it was a fun, yet educational activity.



ACTIVITY 3: VISIT TO GHADIRA NATURE RESERVE



Twenty Italian youths who came to Malta to explore its natural heritage were accompanied for a visit to the Nature Reserve of Mellieha.

Here this group of tourists was welcomed by the guide of the Reserve who gave them an informative lecture on

the Nature Reserves of the Island, their role in conservation of the environment and about the several species that reside within the habitat of a Reserve.

The lecture was followed by a tour where they got the chance to see birds' nests and photograph the birds in their natural habitat. Particular flora species were highlighted as part of the saline ecosystem.



ACTIVITY 4 – CREATION OF BF SHIRTS FOR PROGRAMME AWARENESS



The Malta Tourism Authority printed a number of t-shirts with the Blue Flag logo to create more awareness on the quality award programme. These t-shirts are being distributed to participants during activities and also given to beach users during certain events. A short talk on the Blue Flag programme is being given by supervisors every time that they are distributed.

ACTIVITY 5: ORGANIC FARMING AT POPEYE VILLAGE FARM

This organic farming activity was carried out at Popeye's Village with the participation of pupils who are still in their secondary school years.

Organic farming mainly relies on the fertilizers of organic origins such as compost, manure, green manure and bone meal. Organic farming places its emphasis on techniques such as crop rotation, companion planning, biological pest control, mixed cropping and the encouragement of fostering insect predators.



Students were brought to the farm where they were given a tour of the greenhouses and the surrounding fields to see the plants and the crops in various stages of growth. After the tour, samples of several organic crops were prepared on a table, decorated for everyone to taste the produce.

After this activity, when students returned to their school, they were required to write a report as part of their preparation for their annual exam.



Golden Bay



Activity 1- Turtle release and Dolphin rescue demonstration

Activity 2 - Swimming with magnificent tuna

Activity 3 - T-shirt painting

Activity 4 - World Oceans Day Biodiversity activity

Activity 5 – marine Animal Models on the beach

ACTIVITY 1-TURTLE RELEASE AND DOLPHIN RESCUE DEMONSTRATION

On the 22nd of July a turtle has been granted back its freedom after several months of intensive care when it was released back into the Mediterranean Sea from Golden Bay.

Like many others, this turtle was caught up in a fisherman's net. Being fortunate enough it was saved at the right moment.

After this turtle was released a dolphin rescue demonstration was done by volunteers. During this demonstration the beach users had the chance to try out a rescue on an inflatable dolphin and follow step by step instructions to rescue and assist a dolphin.



Turtles hatching at Golden Bay earlier this summer

ACTIVITY 2- SWIMMING WITH THE MAGNIFICENT TUNA FISH

Understanding marine life could not be done any better than going into the sea and observe the underwater environment. Watching the gracefulness of the massive tuna fish was surprising. Although in their hundreds, the way they acted, behaved, understood each other and swam in harmony with people was amazing. Nature at its best!



ACTIVITY 3- T-SHIRT PAINTING

This activity was organised with the participation of young children who are still in their first years at school. The teachers had prepared some lessons about creatures that inhabit the coastal area and in the sea.

When the pupils got to Pretty



Bay they were provided with a plain, white t-shirt and some paint to put to practice what they had learned in class.

At the end of the activity each student got to keep their t-shirt to remember the day they spent painting fish on the beach.



ACTIVITY 4- BIODIVERSITY AND T SHIRT PAINTING AT GOLDEN BAY

This activity was organised for World's Oceans Day on the 8th June. Once again during class lessons biodiversity was discussed with the students in preparation for this activity.

The Biodiversity of plant and animal life of the beach habitat was highlighted on the rare sand dune remnants that are present at Golden Bay. Golden Bay is a rural beach and items beached by the waves included dry sea grass leaves and bulbs. The children collected some flotsam found on the beach to design a monster. 'Good' and 'Bad' beach items were identified.

After the monster creation the students were given t-shirts on which they could paint on. **This Blue Flag (biodiversity) activity was recognised and promoted by the**

International World Oceans Day (WOD) organisers.



ACTIVITY 5- MARINE ANIMAL MODELS ON THE BEACH

A set of 13 marine animal models were created for the children to play with and to learn that they have to show respect to all living things no matter how they look. They are part of our natural environment and a part of our lives. The models were displayed on every activity that included young children. The children enjoyed playing with them and some also painted an animal on the t shirt.



Qawra Point



Activity 1- Projects at the Aquarium

Activity 2- Cigarette Butt Campaign

Activity 3- Aquarium with Adults

Activity 4- Visit to the Salina Bird Park with Autistic people

Activity 5- Visit to St Paul's Islands

ACTIVITY 1: CHILDREN'S VISIT TO THE AQUARIUM WITH PROJECTS

In relation to the World's Oceans Day the MTA organised an activity where the students were required to create a project related to the aquarium and its sea life from recycled material. After visiting the main aquarium the students were given a lecture about jellyfish, afterwards the students got a chance to show off the projects that they prepared at home. By the end of this event the students were given the chance to greet and meet the President of Malta.



This activity was about educating the young on the importance of sea creatures and creating crafts with recycled objects.



Prizes for best projects were given out by the President of Malta; Her Excellency Marie Louise Coleiro Preca.

ACTIVITY 2: POCKET ASHTRAYS

More pocket ash trays were purchased this summer to make sure that all rocky beaches are kept butts free. These pocket ashtrays are a part of the cigarette butt campaign that the MTA emphasises on every year.

This year some minor changes were made to these portable ashtrays to catch the eye of the beach users. Thousands of cone ashtrays were designed and printed. New cigarette cones one metre high were also introduced on all beaches as promotional items. New terracotta pot ashtrays on every beach access were also increased with those of the previous year.



Every year this project keeps on being a success as less and fewer butts are found on the beaches. Yet the MTA keeps encouraging the people not to litter beaches so that they remain enjoyable in their pristine environment some of which are sheer paradise!



ACTIVITY 3: ADULTS VISIT TO THE AQUARIUM



This year the MTA not only organized a visit to the aquarium for the young ones but also for adults.

Here everyone who joined in had the chance to see several species of fish that are not commonly found on beaches or even around the Maltese coast.

The guide explained differences in fish species and reminded the group of their duty towards the environment in particular towards the clean seas.



ACTIVITY 4- BIRDPARK VISIT WITH AUTISTIC ADULTS

On the 26th of July the MTA organised a visit to the birdpark of Salina as a Blue Flag activity with the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS).

The FSWS is a prostate organisation that takes care of those who are born with autism together with their families.

Their arrival was welcomed by the guide of the park and followed by an informative talk about birds in general and about the species found at the



park.



During the tour of the park the people got to see several bird species, monkeys, owls and flamingos that are not common to the Islands. The people also asked multiple questions about these species.

ACTIVITY 5 - VISIT TO ST.PAULS ISLANDS

This activity took us out to sea, to the historic Island where tradition has it, that St. Paul was shipwrecked with St Luke in 60AD. (ACT 28...1-1)

Beside its historic value, the Island offers tremendous ecological value due to its insularity and restricted access. Participants could notice a variety of birds including the National Blue Rock Thrush. Endemic plants were abundant and visitors, especially foreign ones, were given information about the



specific species. One participant gave information on the fish that reside around the Islands and showed a few shells to the children who put them back in the sea. We could also admire the vibrant orange and red colours of certain coral plants.



The group walked on the footpath that leads to the large statue of St. Paul that has been restored recently. Different species that could be seen or heard were discussed, and many looked out for marks of fauna that reside on the small Island.



A brief dip in the Mediterranean Sea after the walk in sun was welcomed by all. The group enjoyed sunset while sailing back on the traditional boat – Il-Luzzu, who took us around the Island to admire the natural caverns, blue water and the purple coral that resides on the water's edge of the inlets.

Fond Ghadir Beach



Activity 1- Seminar for Beach Supervisors with workshops

Activity 2- Visit to the Malta Maritime Museum

Activity 3- Beach News Brochure and Newsletter

Activity 4- Environmental Issues and Tree Planting

Activity 5- Recycling Games at School

ACTIVITY 1: BEACH SUPERVISORS SEMINAR

The MTA once again this year has organised an informative seminar for all the beach supervisors who will be working on the beaches throughout the summer.

The first speaker talked about beach processes and what to expect on certain beaches. He also highlighted particular flora, fauna, fish and crustaceans that they may encounter.



The second speaker talked about the Blue Flag requisites and the code of conduct for beach users. During this



seminar the beach supervisors were guided through their responsibilities and duties once they are out on the beach. Later on all beach supervisors were divided into three groups to take part in a workshop.



These workshops covered topics on different beach management issues and the Blue Flag criteria.

ACTIVITY 2- VISIT TO THE MALTA MARITIME MUSEUM

The Malta Maritime Museum at the Birgu waterfront displays the maritime history of Malta from its inception. The strategic position of the Islands in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea always made this archipelago a popular resting point for many sea farers.

Learning about life at sea, the marine environment and its challenges together with the history, is always interesting for the children. Furthermore, the beautiful exhibits of the museum and the general condition of their restoration make them a must for children to learn about. Exhibits include maps, navigation charts, paintings, models of ships and galleys, and other original treasures that were salvaged from the sea floor like anchors that are about 2000 years old. The school children were very interested, asked many questions and took photos to show to their parents.



ACTIVITY 3: BEACH NEWS BROCHURE AND NEWSLETTER 2016

The beach news brochure is distributed every year by the MTA on every MTA managed beach, on Gozo and Comino.



The beach news brochure contains important information that a beach user needs to know and even a map which locates each beach which is up to Blue Flag standard.



It also has information about each safety flag and the MTA's work on beaches throughout the year so that the beach would be up to standard in summer.

This year's work included projects such as ramps, wooden paths and the purchase of new sand wheelchairs.

The news letter is distributed digitally to many people as well as posted online. It includes few of the environmental activities that are held every year.



ACTIVITY 4: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND TREE PLANTING

An activity at a school assembly focused on the state of the environment, little things that the children can do to help, and finally open seed pods and plant them to make a small forest.

The lecture was delivered by PARKS Malta who stressed the importance of taking care of trees and wooded areas that in turn give us clean air to breath. He also explained about different benefits of the trees like giving shade to fauna and people, giving shelter to birds etc.

The children were then given seed pods to open and were shown how to treat the seeds before planting them and finally how to take care of them after planting.



ACTIVITY 5 – RECYCLING GAMES AT SCHOOL

To tackle such an important issue the MTA decided to organize games related to recycling with the participation of a primary school.

During this activity the children who participated were provided with the stationary needed and several pictures of recyclable material, such as beer cans, water bottles etc.

Each class was divided into groups of 4 or 5 children. The participants divided the cardboard into four categories, each category representing a recycling compartment. They selected material for each compartment and glued each picture to which part it



belonged.

The main aim of this activity was not only raise awareness among the young about the importance of recycling but also to convey the message to their family members.



Bugibba Perched Beach



ACTIVITY 1- Beach Unit Facebook Page and Blue Flag page upgrade

ACTIVITY 2- Cigarette campaign for litter free beaches

ACTIVITY 3- Snorkelling with the ladies

ACTIVITY 4-Visit to the birdpark with schoolchildren

ACTIVITY 5- Blue flag talk and t shirt painting

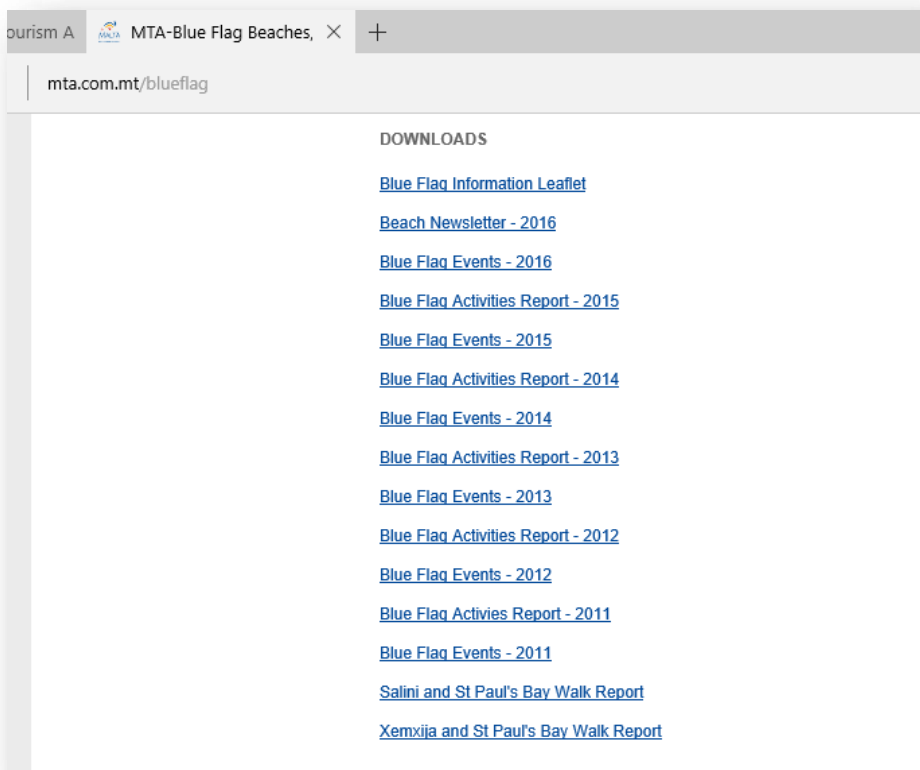
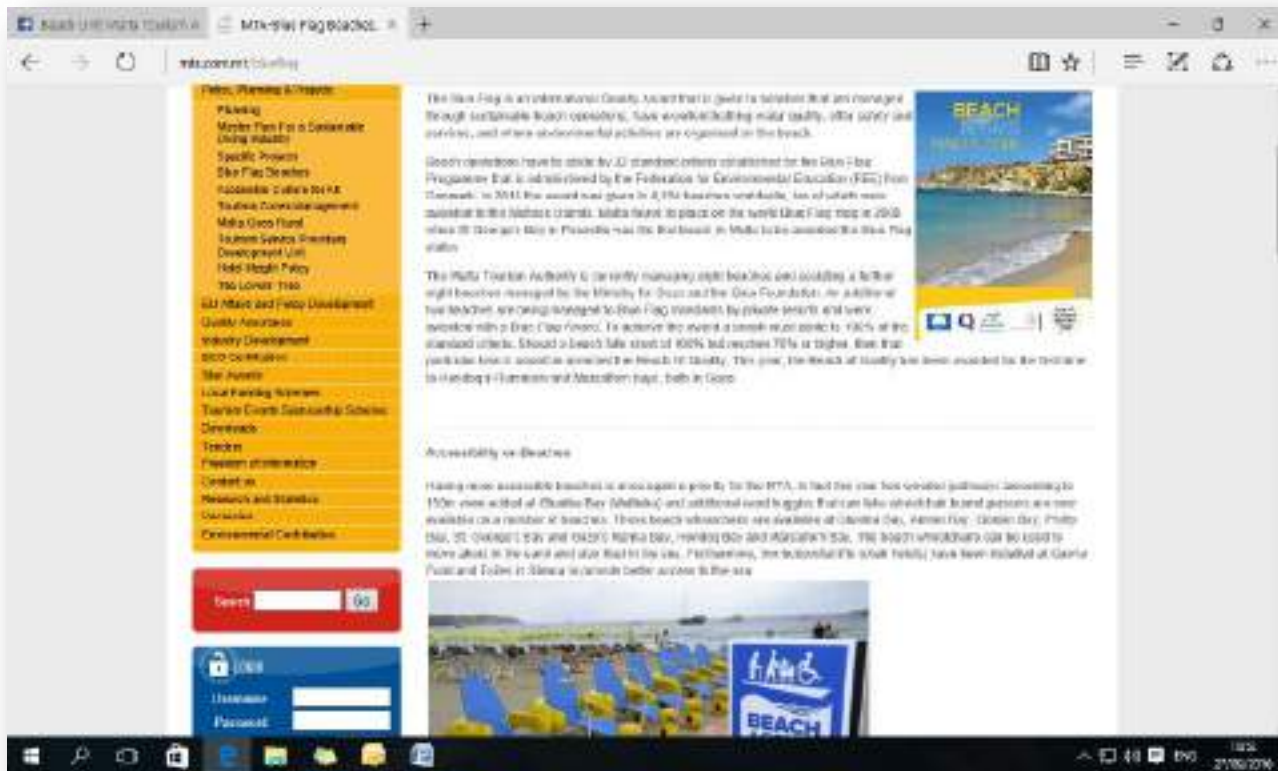
ACTIVITY1: BEACH UNIT FACEBOOK PAGE AND BLUE FLAG PAGE UPGRADE

This activity is a Blue Flag Project where many of the activities and events organised are being uploaded on the internet for better publicity. Since this is

a new project it is being kept on a low profile and being measured through the feedback of friends. One problem that is being encountered is that many of the activity participants do not give their consent to be photographed let alone be uploaded on a facebook page. Till now the pages seem successfull and may be open for more public views in the near future. In the meantime the Blue Flag page and the Visitmalta .com pages have been

updated.





ACTIVITY 2- CIGARETTE BUTT CAMPAIGN-ARTICLES AND NEW ASHTRAYS

Every year the MTA launches a cigarette butt campaign to decrease litter on the beach.

As part of this campaign the MTA installed new ceramic pots, card board cones with a message on them saying not to litter our beaches, foldable pocket and plastic cone ashtrays. On every MTA managed beach ashtrays can be found being provided by the beach supervisors,

Each card-board cut out and foldable ashtray were printed in both Maltese and English so the message imprinted on them

would be also understood by foreigners.

Articles are also being sponsored in the local media.

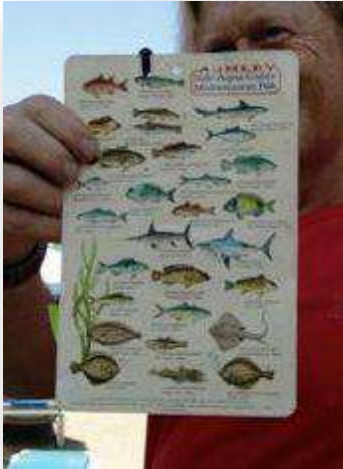
This cigarette butt campaign was a success as by the end of the summer

all beach users were aware of the project.



ACTIVITY 3- SNORKELING WITH THE LADIES

There is no better way to understand marine life better than going into the water and observe the flora, fish and every movement that goes on within. For many of these girls, snorkelling was a first time experience. The divers in charge of the snorkelling event provided images of the fish that reside in the area and explained a few characteristics of some species. Some girls said that the experience is making them invest in good equipment to return underwater and learn more on the hidden secrets of the sea.



ACTIVITY 4-VISIT TO THE BIRDPARK WITH SCHOOL CHILDREN

The bird park is always a favourite event that schools look forward to. Following the tour around the park with the guide the children were allowed to feed the flamingoes and other birds in the last pool. They were fascinated to see the flamingoes drink and eat from the beak in that awkward position.



ACTIVITY 5-BLUE FLAG TALK AND T-SHIRT PAINTING WITH YOUNG KIDS



An informative talk on the Blue Flag programme was held to educate the young ones about the benefits of the Blue Flag and the continuous work that the MTA does to keep each beach awarded with a Blue Flag and to such a high standard.

The talk also dealt with how each beach user has the duty to keep

the beach clean and safe by using the separation bins provided on the beach and not leave any litter behind after leaving the beach. They were told also of the new coloured bin liners that help them select the right segment.



After this talk each pupil was provided with a plain T-shirt and some paint to create things related to the beach and to keep as a souvenir of their fun day at the



beach with the MTA.

One of the positive comments received:

I would like to thank you on behalf of all students for the fieldwork you organised for us and the insights on ecotourism you provided during the interview. Both the fieldwork and the interview provided our students with a lot of primary data that they can use to work on their report. I look forward to work again with you in the future.

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