

Summary Report of "Along the Sea" Program 2005-2008

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"Along the Sea" Program

The Green Network



Description of "Along the Sea" Program

"Along the Sea" is a unique environmental education program, run by EcoOcean and The Green Network.

The main goal of "Along the Sea" is to raise students consciousness to the beauty, richness and fragility of the sea and seashore environment. In addition, the program aims to alert students to the significance of the marine environment for global environmental wellbeing, not only for the welfare of those who reside by the sea.

"Along the Sea" aims to provide students with a deeper understanding of marine ecology and marine environmental issues, knowledge and insights for critical thinking and the inspiration and tools to become caring and active citizens.

Further Goals and Aims:

- Advancing sustainable education, in general, and conservation of the sea and seaside environment, in specific.
- Enhancing the involvement of principles, teachers, students and parents in grassroots' activism, for the conservation of the seaside environment.
- Strengthening the interconnections within the community and between communities along the sea, thereby creating collective knowledge and joint activity.
- Strengthening the bond and sense of connection between students and the place they live in order to build an attitude of stewardship and caring.

Green Network Format

The Green Network trains education professionals in environmental education. In each of the schools we work with, at least one teacher is selected to become the Environmental Leader Teacher. This teacher receives ongoing training from a Green Network personnel, both as part of a local group and individually. The Environmental Leader Teacher leads a children's environmental group which, with the aid of the school principle and other school staff members, acts as a seed from which environmental education grows and spreads throughout the school.

“Along the Sea” Program – Activities and frequency

Activity	Description of activity	Frequency
Weekly lesson.	This weekly lesson is taught by the Leader Teacher to the children leadership group. The lesson includes: facts about the marine environment, sustainability, explorations of the sea and seaside, laboratory research, discussing dilemmas that have to do with marine environmental issues. Some class time is used to prepare activities for the rest of the school.	Once a week, throughout the school year.
Excursions to the nearby sea shore.	Experiential activities that aim at creating both appreciation for, and a sense of connection, between the students and the sea. In addition, the excursions provide a hands-on way to explore and research the seashore environment. Some excursions concentrate on seashore clean ups.	1 excursion lead by Green Network staff person. 2-3 excursions lead by the Leader Teachers.
Visit to “MeGalim Center”	<u>Activity at MeGalim Center</u> : learning the biotic and a-biotic conditions of both the rocky and sandy seashore. Acquaintance with marine organisms and taking part in calculating the “Clean Seashore Index”.	Once a year
Local Leadership Groups Meeting	<p>Example 1: <u>Activity in the old city of Akko</u> Studying the relation between sea and city, the history of Akko's seaport and its relevance to the environmental crisis, meeting fishermen and dealing with dilemmas about overfishing and sale of marine souvenirs. Lecture on marine archeology.</p> <p>Example 2: <u>Meeting with the “Steering 4 clear waters”</u> A full days’ activity at the seashore: meeting with club members, lifeguard, divers and diving gear. Viewing a clean- up dive and discussing the importance of clean shores and seas.</p>	Once a year
Activity	Description of activity	Frequency
Joint parent-students activities	Example 1: Excursion to Achziv seashore. Parents and children activity at the natural reserve.	Once a year

	Example 2: "Family Evening" – lecture, presentation of the topics learned by leadership group, workshop, and preparation of bags made from old shirts.	
Lecture by EcoOcean staff person	A lecture on the topic of human influence on the marine environment for 5 th & 6 th graders in the school	Once a year
Community activities	<p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School Event – lectures, workshops and sharing of knowledge by leadership group and guest lecturers, with all students. 2. Adoption of a kindergarten by a leadership group – tutoring preschool age children on topics learned. 3. "Take-Give Market" – setting up such a market for entire school and school community, thus encouraging less consumption. 4. Marine Environment Learning Center – setting up a center which summarizes the information learned. Leadership Group tutors school children in the Learning Center. 	At least twice a year.

Local Focus:

The "Along the Sea" Program runs in various cities along the Mediterranean seashore: Akko, Netanya, Bat Yam and Reshon- Le'Zion. In each of these cities the program deals with local issues and thus has its own distinct quality and focus.

The program in Akko emphasizes the history of the city, its value for tourism and its multicultural nature. The meeting between Leader Groups in Akko brings about added value in that it allows for meetings between Arabs and Jews, Religious and Secular schools. Today, the schools in Akko, have joined together to raise consciousness and battle the ongoing pollution of the sea environment.

In the city of Netanya, the groups have studied the importance of the sea for its residents, considered the difference between Certified Beaches and Non-Certified ones, investigated how the Herzlia Marina influences the sand drift and the calcareous sandstone cliffs. These groups also studied the implications of global warming and the rising of the sea level on a city such as Netanya.

The groups in **Bat-Yam and Reshon Le’Zion** schools, visited the “Beit Miriam” Museum at Palmahim, watched the building of a Desalination Facility. In addition, they visited the people fighting for the preservation of Palmahim seashore as a natural beach.

Scope of Activity

The number of schools and the number of students in the program has increased since the commencement of the program in 2005. However, the significant increase has been in the amplification of the program to different target groups within the school community. Today the program reaches not only the Leadership Group and its Leader teacher but also the rest of the student population of the school, a large number of staff members, parents, kindergartens and other members of the local community (Table 1).

In addition, following our program, Karev Project Involvement initiated an educational program that focuses on the marine environment called “Yam-li” (which translates “my sea”). This program, intended for 4th graders, has worked in conjunction with “Along the Sea” program. This program started in Netanya with around 750 students and expanded to Akko, Bat Yam and Ashdod (this year 1760 students), thus increasing the number of students that are exposed to the topic (Fig. 1A).

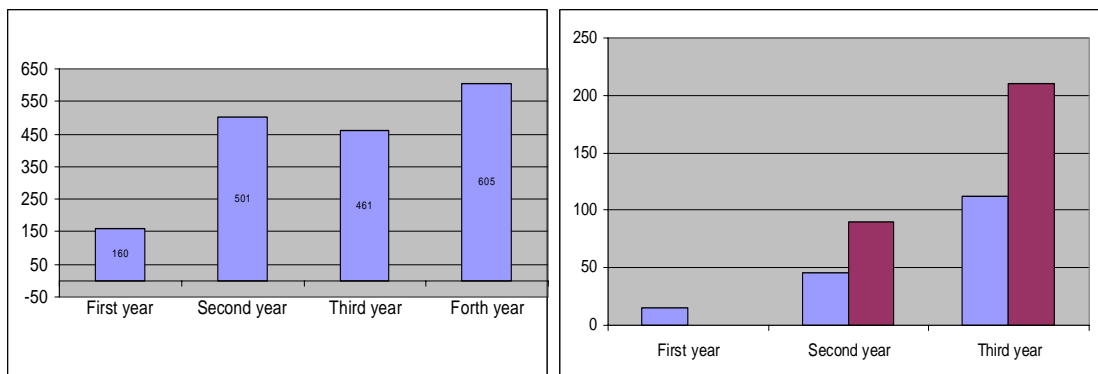


Figure 1: A. The amount of students in “Along the sea” program. B. Number of teachers (other than Leader Teachers) that participated in at list one teacher- training (blue) and the number of parents that participates in at list one activity (purple).

Table 1: Total number of students exposed to “Along the Sea” activities. September 2007 to June 2008

Activity	Number of Students that experienced the activity
Students who participate in at least two activities	6,400
Lecture by professional	1,100
Guided tour to the beach	210
Beach cleaning	120
Tutoring of kindergarten children	60

Another notable change is the extent of school principle involvement in the program and in environmental education, in general. We are noting an increase in the concern of principles to the success of the program and a greater support for staff-room in-service training (Fig. 1B).

Elisabeth Brown – Leader Teacher from Eshkol School, Akko - speaks about the Along the Sea Program:

“The program runs only three years in our school and we see it as inseparable part of our school life. Environmental education has become a central part of my professional life. Thoughts and ideas regarding activities run though my head 24 hours a day, whether I am alone or with my children and my husband. I feel a positive change in what I do as a teacher. I feel the investment of my time and energy, in this field, is worth it. The students are environmentally aware children: they are constantly conscious of their influence on the environment and are persistent in their desire to protect and preserve it. For me this is a great success and very rewarding. It is important to add that without the Along the Sea Program, we would have never been where we are today and wouldn't have felt competent to submit an application to become a “Green School”(a certificate given to schools by the Ministry for the Defense of the Environment) , as we are this year. The support I receive from Leona and Yael (Green Network/ “Along the Sea” counselors), the Green Network Conferences, the ongoing teacher training meetings – guide us in every step of the way. In addition, it gives the staff confidence and incentive and teaches the students to become caring and active citizens in order to create a better world.

I thank whole heartedly this wonderful program!

Elizabeth Brown and the Leadership Group- Eshkol School, Akko.

Vision and Thoughts for Future

On a local level:

We aim to expand the programs' activity to reach many more schools in Israel. This growth will be achieved through the joining of new schools in new cities, along the Israeli coastline, the Kineret shoreline, the Dead Sea area and the city of Eilat. At this point, we have begun promoting the program in two cities – Herzlia and Tiberias. Another route for enhancement of the program is working with new age groups: We are looking at working with middle school students (13-15 yrs old), kindergarten children (The Green Network launched, last year, a Young Green Network which trains kindergarten teachers, and works with many preschool children), community centers and more.

On a Regional Level:

One of the topics we discuss frequently with both teachers and students is the fact that the sea is without boundaries. We stress that it is not enough that we protect the sea environment, or that one other country along the Mediterranean will do so. It is crucial that all countries along the Mediterranean Sea protect this treasure they share between them.

Therefore, we have a vision of working throughout the Mediterranean Basin.

We believe the format of the Along the Sea program can create a platform for joint projects and information exchange, between education professionals from countries along the Mediterranean seashore. The fate of the sea environment is in our hands and only together can we truly protect it!