

A Green University

About two years ago, the Open University decided to take active measures toward promoting environmental issues at its facilities, in the spirit of the green trend prevalent today in Israel and around the world. The aim was to increase the environmental commitment of organizations, raise awareness of the subject and engage the community in environmental matters. Our goal was for the Open University to act as a pioneer for change and a role model in all matters concerning awareness of the possibilities for implementing an environmentally compatible lifestyle.

A "Green Council" was established, composed of representatives of OUI academic and administrative staff. The Council strives to promote environmental issues in a number of ways, including energy conservation, recycling, community activities, seminars and exhibitions. University employees are cooperating in this effort, and many productive steps have already been taken. Alongside the expansion of existing activities, new activities are planned for the future.

Recycling and Saving Paper

- Paper collection bins have been introduced at all Open University sites and collections are organized by Amnir Recycling.
- Double-sided printing is now standard in all secretarial offices for optimal paper saving.
- The number of printed course booklets mailed to students has been greatly reduced and a significant part of their content is now available on course websites.
- Letters and assignment forms are now delivered to students via email. This represents an annual saving of thousands of forms and envelopes.
- Reports generated from the Oracle system have been mapped in order to minimize printing, with the result that printing quantities have been greatly reduced.

Recycling Cups

- Polystyrene cups in the kitchens have been replaced with paper cups, which are more environmentally friendly and suitable for repeat use.

Recycling of Magnetic Media and Batteries

- Shredders have been installed to shred and recycle CDs and other magnetic media.
- Battery banks are in place and the contents transferred to battery recycling plants.

Recycling of Electronic Equipment

- An electronic equipment bin is now in place at the Raanana campus. The contents are to be collected by a company that provides employment for the disabled.

Reducing the Use of Plastic Bags and Recycling Plastic Bottles

- Cleaning procedures state that plastic bags are not to be replaced automatically, but emptied and reused. Hence, employees are asked to empty wet garbage into central bins in the kitchens. This will prevent the unnecessary use of tens of thousands of plastic bags per year.
- There is now a bin in the recycling corner at the Raanana campus to collect bottles for recycling.
- Kitchens have designated bins for the collection of bottles and cans.

Energy and Water Conservation

- Sensors have been installed to switch off lights and air conditioners in all offices and a central energy-saving electrical control system has been established.
- Energy saver light bulbs are now in use.
- Grey water from air conditioning units and rainwater is collected in a reservoir and used for irrigation of the grounds.
- Taps have been fitted with water economy devices.



"Earth Day" Events

The Open University is establishing a tradition of organizing events and seminars on environmental topics to mark the annual Earth Day. On Earth Day 2010, information stations were set up, practical environmental conservation measures were demonstrated, relevant films were screened, lectures were given and a Green Fair was held.

Educational Garden: A Place to Practice Practical Ecology

At the Open University campus in Raanana, an educational garden was planted to serve the general population as a place of study and to acquire hands-on experience in practical ecology. The garden includes a plot worked by residents of *Beit Halomi* (a hostel for young mentally handicapped people); a planting section for children interested in the environment; and a planting and educational section for local members of a Golden Age Club. Collaboration with other bodies is underway, including the Nature and Parks Authority, to create a safe breeding ground for plants endemic to hilly loam soil; and the Raanana sewage purification unit, to find various applications for treated wastewater. The educational garden also runs a joint Jewish-Arab environmental class in cooperation with a science teacher and Open University students.