

A Green Campus in Raanana

It is very important to the Open University that its facilities be certified as “green” campuses. An environment committee, “The Green Council,” was established this year composed of representatives of OUI staff and including a student who is a member of the nation-wide student environmental organization *Megama Yeruka* [Green Trend]. An event was organized by the University to celebrate Earth and Environment Day in Israel with the participation of OUI employees and the general public. The main activity of the day was a symposium, “Between destruction and preservation: The environment at a dangerous crossroads” along with an exhibition of works by OUI graphic designers on environmental issues, and an ecological market. Environmental protection activities were launched at OUI campuses following the event.

“Green campuses”

Based on the approach adopted by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, advancing environmental protection at universities and colleges can take place on several levels:

On the academic level, by including courses on the environment in various academic departments in order to qualify the next generation, develop its awareness of environmental aspects and encourage students to integrate these aspects into their future activities.

On the administrative level, by preventing environmental hazards at the university, addressing those that occur, and through informed use of resources.

In terms of implementation, by promoting community environmental projects with the help of students and faculty members.

In line with this approach, the Ministry encourages educational institutions to become involved in environmental protection and certifies higher learning institutions as “green campuses” on condition they meet three criteria:

- Teaching dedicated to environmental issues
- A community environmental project
- Informed use of resources

The Ministry of Environmental Protection maintains that academic institutions that implement the principles of the “Green Campus” certification process will attract new students from Israel and abroad with heightened environmental awareness, in addition to the financial benefits these institutions will enjoy through saving and informed use of resources.

Environmental Protection Activities on the OUI Campus in Raanana

Environmental protection activities on the campus began with the move to Raanana. Until last year, these activities focused on recycling and energy saving, as well as disseminating information, mainly through the Intranet. Ongoing recycling activities include:

- Paper: collected and transferred for recycling
- Toners: sent for refill
- CDs: collected and sent for recycling
- Batteries: collected in special containers and sent to municipal collection points
- Cartons: collected and sent for recycling
- Bottles: collected and sent to the bottle collection company. The University receives payment in return.

In terms of energy, two measures were taken to increase energy saving:

- Controllers to switch off lights and air conditioning were installed in all campus offices
- Lighting levels were programmed to save on electricity

Results of measures (quality of air and drinking water; computer and radon gas radiation, etc.) are published on the Intranet along with informative material.



*Partial view of the group exhibition created by graphic designers of the Open University Publishing House:
Birds on Exposed Concrete – A Meeting between Man and Nature*

“Green Council”

The OUI established the “Green Council” this year to act in collaboration with environmental organizations and coordinate environmental protection activities at OUI facilities. The Council will decide on implementation and manage information activities.

Planned activities: The Green Council devised a series of environmental protection activities for OUI employees and students along with residents of the area. Some are one-time activities and others take place on a regular basis:

- Establish a group of active students/employees in communities close to major OUI facilities, in collaboration with *Megama Yeruka*. These individuals will promote “green” projects such as symposia, learning tours for children in the Botanical Garden in Raanana, instruction on how to prepare organic compost, etc.
- Complete the development of the program of study in Earth Studies
- Examine the possibility of developing extra-academic study programs on the environment
- Increase use of recycled paper based on financial feasibility
- Stop using disposable cups
- Use environmentally friendly garbage bags
- Extensive use of rechargeable batteries, including in emergency lighting



- Set paper-saving norms (dual-sided printing, fax via computer, changes in the filing system, etc.)
- Use environmentally friendly paint in maintenance departments
- Change to environmentally friendly detergents
- Examine use of grey water (from air conditioning)
- Change to an electricity saving system for switching the lighting in stairways on and off
- Change toilet paper dispensers to a roll instead of a pull device (already under way)

Student Chapter of *Megama Yeruka*

This year a student chapter of *Megama Yeruka* began its activities on campus, coordinated by a student from the department of Natural Sciences. To date, about ten students have joined volunteer activities on OUI campuses with the aim of increasing student awareness of the environment and environmental protection issues.

Employee Council Involvement

The OUI Employee Council will be involved in environmental protection by approving processes expected to affect all OUI employees, such as reduced use of disposable cups.