



CEER

Centre for Environmental Education and Research



Contents

Introduction	3
Rationale	4
Mission Statement	5
Location	5
Logo	5
CEER aims to	6
CEER's innovative features	7
Thematic focus and development of the programme	8



Introduction

This booklet is intended to provide a brief insight into the functioning of CEER (Centre for Environmental Education and Research) at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta.

Since its setting up, in 1592, the University of Malta has established itself as a leading institution in respect of education, scholarly research and extension. Through the excellent work of its various faculties and institutes, the University enjoys an excellent track record in research and development initiatives in the fields of environmental management and sustainable development. With the setting up of CEER, the University seeks to provide training and research programmes for Malta and the rest of the Euro-Med region that promote environmental education and develop a cohort of environmental educators to address the ever-increasing need for expertise in this field.

The development of CEER is another project in a chain of initiatives, actively supported by the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, aimed at placing environmental education at the heart of any strategy targeting sustainable development. CEER's focus and action address a long felt need at a local and also at a regional level that has been overlooked for quite some time. By bringing together all interested parties and establishing CEER in 2004, the Ministry has made a genuine commitment towards the development of environmental education ... a fitting contribution to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.





Rationale

In addition to its rich history and cultural traditions, the Maltese islands have unique natural resources that, due to various economic activities are under severe pressure. Yet, in order to be economically viable and continue to be politically stable, the country needs to pursue ways of not only preserving its environmental resources, but also making sure that current use is sustainable in the long run.

Malta needs to join international efforts towards sustainable development. Agenda 21 clearly points out that environmental education should be at the basis of any strategy aimed at achieving sustainable development. This conviction is also echoed in the European Parliament's resolution on environmental education¹ which, reiterating two earlier position statements, singles out environmental education as a very effective strategy to induce a change towards pro-environmental behaviour.

Various international fora have indicated the need to develop centres that co-ordinate Local Agenda 21 initiatives. However, a quick evaluation of the number of such centres and their distribution in the Euro-Med region

clearly demonstrates that they are noticeably lacking in the poorer South. These nations have to grapple with a variety of issues and more often than not, environmental education is not considered a top national priority because of other more pressing needs. Catering for environmental education becomes an uphill struggle to procure funds, resources and support.

CEER is dedicated for the promotion of environmental education and research in the Euro-Med region. CEER offers a hub that will co-ordinate environmental education initiatives, increase the opportunity for environmental education research, make scientific and technological research results more accessible and facilitate resource transfer and capacity building in Malta and the Euro-Med region.



Mission Statement

CEER seeks to catalyse change towards a sustainable society by providing opportunities for environmental education that empowers citizens, irrespective of age, gender and socio-economic status, to actively participate in environmental decision making for a good quality of life.



Location

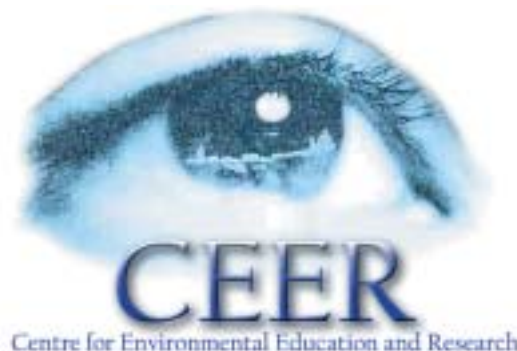
CEER is housed off campus, in a building formally used as a primary school. During its renovation, the building has been fitted with the latest environmentally friendly technologies. CEER is sited in a locality referred to as Fawwara, limits of Siggiewi, in the midst of a rural community. The place has traditional communal

significance and CEER aims to continue developing this interaction by involving the local community in its initiatives (e.g. providing visiting research students with lodging within the community, making use of local expertise, promoting local trades and produce, and providing work for locals).

Logo

An eye gazing slightly upwards with a typical Maltese skyline reflected in the pupil symbolises:

- the vision in the eye of the 'CEER' (the community of environmental educators and researchers)
- the watchful eye of the steward who cares for, enhances and sustains the environment for the benefit of present and future generations



CEER's aims

- co-ordinate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a National Environmental Education Strategy (NEES);
- support the National Commission on Sustainable Development on issues related to environmental education;
- adopt the role of a news desk, gathering and disseminating environmental information to the general public;
- offer consultancy to governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations on the development of environmental education programmes;
- manage community-based environmental awareness programmes to encourage the adoption of sustainable lifestyles and an acceptance of the high European environmental standards;
- establish co-operation links with similar centres within and beyond the Euro-Med region;
- develop regional information networks about environmental education initiatives;
- provide national, regional and international fora on environmental education issues;
- organise initial training courses in environmental education;
- offer environmental education training programmes through distance education;
- provide opportunities for postgraduate studies in environmental education;
- promote research in environmental education; and
- co-ordinate and manage EU projects related to environmental education.





CEER's approach

The innovative features of CEER's approach are:

- (a) an emphasis on the process of an educational experience rather than on its product;
- (b) its adoption of a multidisciplinary as well as an interdisciplinary methodology that allows a thorough understanding of environmental issues. This approach brings together not only the perspectives of the natural and the social sciences, but also the various disciplines within each paradigm;
- (c) a holistic systems approach to understanding environmental problems that mirrors the complex nature of the environment;
- (d) a learner-centred approach that focuses attention on the learner's environment and its associated problems rather than on abstract constructs;
- (e) an issue-oriented methodology that helps learners to apply problem solving skills to resolve complex environmental issues;
- (f) an action-oriented strategy that prompts learners to take concrete steps towards adopting sustainable lifestyles; and
- (g) measures to ensure accessibility and equal opportunities both on an individual basis (i.e. irrespective of age, gender and walk of life) and also on a regional level (i.e. facilitating the integration of poorer countries).



Thematic focus and programme development

Environmental education has been a special area of interest of the Department of Mathematics, Science & Technical Education, at the Faculty of Education since 1991.

From its initial concern with the infusion of environmental education in primary teacher education, the Environmental Education Section expanded its targets by exploring ways of promoting environmental education not only across all the faculty's teacher education programmes but also throughout the country.

Initially the work of the Section focused on the formal education sector by developing curriculum material and methodologies promoting effective educational programmes and supervising

research at undergraduate level. The Section extended its field of activity to include work within the community, co-operation with governmental and non-governmental organisations and networking with local and regional groups/individuals to initiate joint projects.

The upgrading the Environmental Education Section to CEER enabled it to spread its field of activity further consolidating its position as the main environmental education agency in the country.





CEER's structure

The Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, the University of Malta, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment and the Malta Environment and Planning Authority jointly set up CEER.

The centre operates via an annual work schedule, proposed by its Director and approved by an Advisory Board whose composition is:

- Chairperson: a person of international repute in the field of environmental education
- Secretary: the Director of CEER
- representative of the University of Malta
- representative of the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment,
- representative of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, and
- representative of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority.

CEER is primarily structured around the three main sectors of environmental education: the formal, non-formal and informal sectors. Each staff member engaged in the centre is a resource person in the sector that s/he co-ordinates and would be responsible for research students studying within the centre that broadly fall within their area of specialisation. As a result, CEER does not have a single research focus, but a diverse research pool defined by the type of research currently undertaken by the programme.

This flexible setup allows CEER to

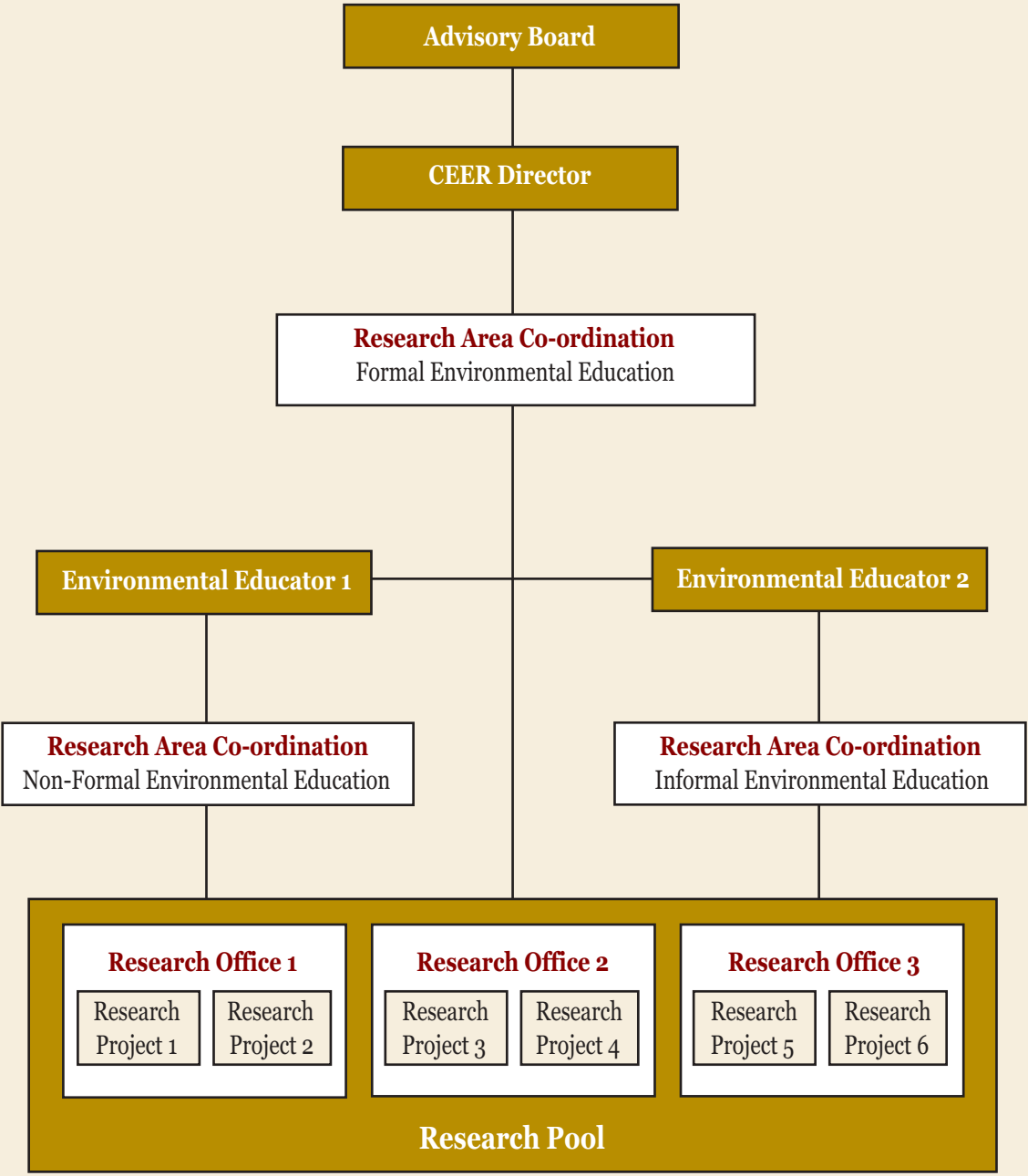
respond to a wider cohort of research needs and to identify and address emerging needs in the community.

A feature that characterises most of the research carried out at CEER is grounded research. Besides ensuring that the research is contextualised, relevant and addresses specific needs, grounded research makes use of the resources already found in the field.





The Organisation Structure of CEER





Dr Paul Pace (born 1959) B.Ed. (Hons), M.Ed., Ph.D. (Bradford) has been very active in environmental education as chairperson of Malta's National Environmental Education Strategy, founder of the Malta Association of Environmental Educators and as a researcher at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta where he teaches environmental education and science education. Appointed EkoSkola National Co-ordinator, he is also a member in the National Commission for Sustainable Development and on the Environment Commission of the Maltese Archdiocese. He was involved in several local and foreign projects aimed at the development of curriculum material for environmental education and works actively with teachers in the implementation of environmental and science school policies. A former teacher of biology, he was involved in several science examination boards and on the committee reviewing the national science curriculum.

Director

Dr Paul Pace
Centre for Environmental Education and Research (CEER)
Dept. Maths, Science & Technical Education
Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida MSD 06 - Malta
Tel: (+ 356) 2340 2331
Fax: (+ 356) 2131 7938
Email: paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt



CEER



Centre for Environmental Education and Research

CEER seeks to catalyse change towards a sustainable society by providing opportunities for environmental education that empowers citizens, irrespective of age, gender and socio-economic status, to actively participate in environmental decision making fora and in initiatives that promote a good quality of life.



Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Barriera Wharf, Valletta CMR 02, Malta

tel: +356 2295 2000

fax: +356 2295 2212

email: info.mrae@gov.mt

<http://mrae.gov.mt/>

© Copyright, June 2004

This document is published by the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment and CEER who are the owners of the copyright. No reproduction, copying, image scanning, storing or recording by any means in any form nor broadcasting or transmission through any medium of any part of this document is permitted without the express written consent of the Ministry and CEER. All intellectual property rights reserved.

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of the information contained in this document. The content is based on the latest information available to the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment and CEER at the time of going to print. In no circumstances can the Ministry or CEER accept any liability for any loss or omission of, any entry, whether relating to wording, figures, pictures, graphical representations or other information contained.

