

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE
FOR DIALOG BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS

APPLICATION FORM
FOR BEST PRACTICES

Year: 2015

Please fill the following form and send it back with the required documents:

Name of the program: *JustSpirulina*

Name of the association (institution, university, agency): *JustSpirulina*

Address of the association: 106 Jabutinsky st. Tel Aviv

Name of the coordinator: Dr. Ze'ev Degani and Mrs. Maya Savir

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Position in the association: Ze'ev Degani is the school principal and initiator of the project; Maya Savir is CEO of JustSpirulina

Rational of the program:

Students at Hertzliya Hebrew Gymnasium in Tel Aviv have taken upon themselves to better the world in which we live by challenging world-wide malnutrition. Spirulina is the richest whole food source nature has to offer and is widely acknowledged by international agencies dealing with malnutrition, but it is too expensive for those who need it for their survival. This is where *JustSpirulina* comes in: with a growing protocol that is scientifically sound, cheap and simple. In fact, it's so simple that the rational of the project is that middle and high school students will grow and produce Spirulina within their schools/orphanages, consume it, and spread it within their community. *JustSpirulina* offers a novel approach to disseminating this knowledge: after becoming Spirulina experts, students at one school will pass this knowledge to students at another school, forming a chain of nutrition and solidarity.

Main objectives of the program:

JustSpirulina aims at reaching as many people as possible who are suffering from malnutrition. With this in mind, the project focuses on 1. offering a growing protocol that is scientifically sound, cheap and simple while maintaining flexibility so that it can be adapted to different environments and 2. offering a means of dissemination that has the potential to reach people in all corners of the world. This is why working through schools/orphanages and relying on students is so revolutionary: schools exist

all over the world and are almost invariable connected to other schools. Another advantage that lies in this method is that it harnesses youngster's innate sense of justice and belief that it is within their power to create change.

Main guidelines in the running of the program:

JustSpirulina will continue to be centered around students. They will conduct training, growing and passing knowledge to others. They will also run the multilingual support center and provide ongoing assistance to their peers at schools/orphanages all over the world.

In addition, at this point in the project and in order to further expand, a small team of adults will need to coordinate funding, ties with international and academic organizations, initial contacts with schools/orphanages interested in joining, creating professional written materials for Spirulina growing as well as for incorporating the project in school curriculums, as in addition to the nutritional potential Spirulina holds it also offers an abundance of learning opportunities that strengthen research skills, scientific thinking, creative thinking and problem solving, and personal responsibility.

Main achievements in the last three years:

The first year and a half was dedicated to study and research. The team, together with the science staff, studied the characteristics of Spirulina and different growing techniques. Next, they experimented and formulated a growing protocol that can be used in the project - simple, cheap and scientifically sound.

The second year was dedicated to 'spreading the word'. The team trained groups in Israel, South Africa and Rwanda. In addition, research remained a large portion of the activity, as adaptations are always needed when implementing in environments that are so different from one another. Academic cooperation with The Weizmann Institute Of Science has been established as well as a collaboration with The UN Food And Agriculture Organization.

The third year poses great challenges for the project, the main objects being: 1. Setting a growing, training and research center at school. This center will enable the team to train incoming groups as well local groups and to continue research. It will also be an ongoing support center for Spirulina projects that have joined our 'chain' of nutrition and solidarity. 2. Expand training by visiting communities in need and training them to become Spirulina growers and teachers. 3. Seek partnerships with strong communities with the aim that they too start similar 'chains'. 4. Foster ties with ngo's - local and abroad - with the aim of expanding our networking and reaching more communities in need. 5. Develop school materials so that Spirulina studies will be incorporated into school curriculums. 6. Publish Spirulina technical manual in cooperation with FAO.

Key Factors for success:

1. Number of communities in need we are able to reach.
2. Sustainability of each project.

Steps in follow up and in the evaluation of the program:

Our aim is that the schools/orphanages we train will become part of an international chain of nutrition and solidarity, meaning that after they join the project they will train others. We will need to help them to form these initial contacts with other schools, for which we will have a local employee or a working relationship with a local ngo. In addition, we will foster ties with local government bodies (departments of education and municipalities) as well as local ngo's so that they will support the project and its dissemination.

Maintaining contacts with projects (through local employees and students) will enable reliable follow up.

Our web site (justspirulina.org) is another platform through which project members keep each other posted.

Fostering ties with local universities will provide further support for local projects.

Main stories (3 stories which illustrate the program):

In February 2014, the *JustSpirulina* team embarked on the first overseas training in South Africa. School principals were skeptical about the project and reluctant to join. After seeing their students learning enthusiastically and then teaching others - they were so surprised and moved they 'came on board'. To both the kids and adults of *JustSpirulina*, it was evidence that our novel method of dissemination, one that relies on youth and school networks, is realistic and attainable.

A group of refugees and work migrants from Eritrea and the Philippines came to school to learn Spirulina growing. One of the women brought along her 10 year old son. He quickly became the 'star student'. In fact, he grasped the principals and methodology of Spirulina growing so thoroughly, he gave tips to the others. This sweet boy contributed to our belief that the growing protocol that we've created is easily understood and implemented.

At a high school in Kigali, the students were so enthusiastic about the project and so empowered by the notion that it is within their power to make change for themselves and for others, that immediately following the training they asked what they could do to help fight malnutrition.

Required Conditions for implementing the program elsewhere:

A person who understands the potential of Spirulina for the undernourished and who shares the notion of solidarity and personal responsibility.