

Your step by step guide to understanding and successfully completing the LASCO® REAP in school competition.

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# THIS HANDBOOK BELONGS TO

School Name

## INTRODUCTION

The LASCO® Re-Leaf Environmental Awareness Programme (REAP) is an islandwide inititative designed to encourage the participation and commitment of Primary level schools to improve environmental awareness and action.

Our children will look forward to inheriting a planet threatened by ever growing environmental degradation. The deterioration of our clean water supply, fossil fuels for energy and a healthy food supply is imminent and we can no longer ignore the fact that many of these resources are non-renewable. The past cannot be changed - but we can strive to create a better, brighter future.

Our challenge at LASCO® REAP is to begin the process of exposing children in their early years to this shift in perspective. **We are**teaching respect; each natural thing has a purpose. Trees and forests are the lungs of our planet, each worm or insect has a job, fruits and leaves fall and decompose, returning to nutrient rich soil. Nature wastes nothing.

We are proud of our progress! This past year we have expanded our project. Over 130,000 plastic bottles were collected and over 80 school gardens were created or improved. We are also excited! With the help of our sponsors we look forward to further growth - to reaching more minds and encouraging a positive attitude towards our Earth and the global community.

# THE LASCO® REAP MISSION

To increase the environmental awareness, action and social responsibility of Primary level students in schools across Jamaica, through our incentive driven programme.

# THE LASCO® REAP VISION

To be the most comprehensive island-wide organization for youth environmental awareness and education, focusing on providing resources and support for schools and the wider community.

## **ABOUT THIS GUIDE**

This guide is designed to provide information and resources to encourage and motivate Teachers, School Staff and parents to participate in LASCO® REAP, creating a healthier, more sustainable school environment. In addition to protecting the health and enhancing the school experience of students, the actions outlined in this guide may also help your school save money. The guide will help you to begin implementing healthier practices and tracking your school's progress. Schools across the country are making this transition to becoming environmentally conscious and we are excited that you have chosen to share in this journey with us!

# LASCO® REAP'S FIVE STEPS TO GREENING YOUR SCHOOL

LASCO® REAP has developed a **FIVE STEP GUIDE** to help prepare students, teachers and surrounding communities to participate and excel in the programme. Commitment to following this guide will see a change in perspective, behaviour and a resulting impact on the school/community environment.

### STEP 1

# Setting up an Environmental Club

The school's environmental club will help to guide the students and staff throughout the year-long programme.

Your school club should consist (if possible) primarily of:

- Students from each grade level (this way new members may be mentored by students who have already completed the programme)
- **Staff** (including teachers and auxiliary)
- Member(s) of the PTA
- A Member of the School Board (send an invitation to your board members explaining the benefits of joining the LASCO® REAP programme and how their participation could really help to improve your chance of being a winner and REAPing rewards!)

Your Environmental Club members are responsible for the development and maintenance of the programme throughout the year. Below is a list of objectives which should be fulfilled.

#### Your club should:

- Make sure that all students and staff are introduced to LASCO® REAP (One way of doing this could be through requesting a short presentation at the end of your School Devotion, PTA Meeting or Staff Meeting.).
- Create/improve your school's environmental mission.
   Coming up with a smart environmental mission statement can be challenging. To begin this process consider breaking it into three parts:

Why is this topic important to us? We believe...

What is our end goal? We want to...

How is success measured? We envision a School....

- Carrying out your school's yearly environmental
   assessments (see Step 2 of the LASCO® REAP guidelines)
- Keeping members engaged/informed about all activities
   (a LASCO® REAP notice board/area could be designated for this purpose).

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- Make certain all members of the school community (especially students) are represented in the decision-making process.
- Ensuring continuity of the club's plans and ideas. This way if an important member leaves - information is readily available and easy to understand.

# **Environmental club list of Members**

List members below based on their category:
Students:
Teachers:
Auxiliary staff:
Members of the PTA:
Board Members:

# STEP 2 Performing your School's **Environmental Assessment**

An environmental assessment should be completed to help members evaluate vour school's environmental awareness and impact.

Answer the following questions to assess how well/if at all, your school is involved in different environmental practices. Images and information may also be used to support this assessment wherever possible. Your action plan for the year (step 3), including activities, will depend on this assessment.

The chart below lists some of the operational practices used by schools moving toward sustainability. Please complete the chart, rating your School's performance in each area/topic using the following scale:

- O I don't know
- 1 none
- 2 a little
- **3** quite a bit
- 4 a great deal

Add any comments you may have relating to each area in the column provided. Attach Images where possible.

# **Environmental Assessment of**

(School name)

Area/Topic	Assessment standard	Rate from 0 - 4	Please comment (and attach additional information)
Participation in environmental programmes	Have you participated previously in REAP or any other environmental groups/initiatives?		
Tree Planting	Has your school planted any trees in the last year? If yes, note the amount in additional info section.		
Water Conservation	Has your school been involved in any water conservation initiatives/activities (including efficient toilets, minimal irrigation, harvested rainwater? If yes, note in additional info section.		
Energy Conservation			
Recycling  Do you practice collection/recycling of plastic/glass bottles? How about paper?			

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Area/Topic	Assessment standard	Rate from 0 - 4	Please comment (and attach additional information)
Waste Reduction	Does your school practice any waste reduction such as sending emails instead of letters or double sided copying?		
Composting	Does your school/ canteen practice composting of organic matter/vegetable waste?		
School Grounds	Are school grounds kept clean and free of litter at all times?		
School Garden	Does your school have a vegetable garden?		
Sustainable Landscaping	Do you: • practice the use of natural Pest Management instead of pesticide/ fertilizer? • have plants/flowers that may need less watering?		
Environmental Awareness  Does your school promote environmental awareness through items such as posters/signage?			

# STEP 3 Creating your school's Action Plan

The action plan forms the basis of your work as a REAP school and should be developed from the results of the environmental assessment.

You will use the information gained from the environmental assessment to establish priorities and create an action plan which sets appropriate targets and deadlines which will enable your school to improve its performance in specific areas relating to the environment. The Action Plan should include specific objectives, deadlines and clearly allocated responsibilities for all concerned. The action plan may, if possible be linked to the curriculum and should include a budget and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation.

Students, as well as staff members, should be involved in drawing up the action plan.

It is important to be realistic; if you are over-ambitious and then fail to achieve your goals, students will feel they have failed and will lose motivation. If your review shows that your school needs to work in many areas, it will be necessary to establish priorities both in the present and the long term. Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day!

Here are some guidelines which can help you draw up your school's Action Plan:

- 1. Examine the results from your environmental assessment. Decide on the topics you want to tackle eg. litter on school grounds, your School's water bill. Decide what you can do to improve these.
- Decide what constitutes success in the achievement of your objectives. Be sure that success can be measured. Eg. If you are tackling costs, you could aim for a reduction in light and water bills.
- 3. Establish timescales for each action. Is the target immediate or longer term? If the latter, how long?
- 4. Allocate responsibilities for each activity. Responsibility should be allocated to students, wherever possible.
- 5. Financial costs which may be incurred by the project should also be monitored.

# **STEP 4** Monitoring and Evaluation

This step aims to monitor whether you are achieving your goals, as laid out in the action plan.

A process of monitoring and evaluation helps to maintain interest within the school; it also enables you to judge your success and make any necessary modifications as the project progresses.

Monitoring and evaluation enables you to make links throughout the curriculum, especially in Science, Maths, Information Technology and English. It will also enable your students to develop other skill areas such as teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving.

The methods applied will depend on the targets decided upon in the action plan, the topics you have chosen and the age and ability of those implementing the programme.

# In some areas, there are simple and accurate ways to measure **progress.** For example:

- Meter readings calculating energy conservation.
- Weighing and counting litter items collected for recycling.
- Photographs showing development before and after the project.
- Species lists showing the effect of the project on biodiversity.
- Questionnaires and surveys.

Students should be given responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of information, wherever possible.

The Environmental Club should make sure that:

- Results of monitoring and evaluation are prominently displayed in the school.
- The whole school should be kept abreast of progress, perhaps in assemblies.
- All data is stored as evidence which will be needed for final reports.

Monitoring data will enable you to see whether you are effective and, if not, whether changes to targets and activities are required.

A full follow-up Environmental Assessment is an effective evaluating tool. It is a repeat of your original Assessment and you can use the same format.

Comparison between your original responses and the new ones will enable you to review progress and plan for future aims and objectives.

Make sure that all successes are noted and celebrated; achievement will motivate both students and staff!

Ensure that information is circulated throughout the school and the wider community, using all available means (newsletters, newspapers, social media, school functions, School Devotions, PTA meetings etc.). These are all great vehicles for the promotion of LASCO® REAP schools.

# **STEP 5** Informing and Involving

A major aim of the REAP programme is to raise awareness of your School's environmental activities, both at school and in the community and to make sure that participation is open to all.

Activities should not be confined to school, but students should share their ideas at home and in their communities.

Community involvement brings many benefits; advice, information and even financial help can come from parents, friends and local businesses and institutions. The LASCO® REAP programme can raise the school's profile in the community through example and exposure in the media. The Environmental Club may even appoint a PR group from among themselves to ensure success in this area.

One way to involve the School Community is to organize a Day (or Week) of action for the environment. Everyone in the school can assist in achieving specific targets from the Action Plan. However, such activities require organization, making sure that everyone knows what is happening and what to do.

Regular, daily involvement in LASCO® REAP activities is crucial; recycling, energy conservation and collection of litter require a commitment from the whole school community.

Here are some suggestions as to how the Environmental Club can distribute information:

#### Involving the school community:

- Hold an election for student members of the Environmental Club.
- Publish information on a LASCO® REAP notice board so that the whole school can see the progress being made.
- Conduct environmental surveys throughout the school.
- Use School Devotion/Assembly to communicate progress and future plans. Pupils can employ a variety of methods (music, dance, presentations etc.).
- If possible, use the school's website to disseminate information.
- Organize an annual LASCO® REAP event to celebrate the school's successes.

#### **Involving the Community:**

Produce a newsletter keeping parents and the community informed.

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- Write to local businesses, requesting support and outlining initiatives.
- Seek out resource persons from the community who can come and give talks at school.
- Send out press releases publicizing LASCO® REAP activities and achievements.
- Conduct environmental surveys in the community.
- Invite community members to participate in LASCO® REAP events.

For more information about Lasco® REAP contact us at

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