



SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER



June 2025



Dear ISZL community,

Welcome to our third Sustainability Community Newsletter.

If you'd like us to highlight something, please contact [Zoe Badcock](#).

[Click here](#) to read our first newsletter from January, and click [here](#) to read our second newsletter from March.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The whole school Leadership Team has been considering the achievements made this year and how to move forward strategically in the next few years. We'll start the new year with news on this.

STUDENT AND STAFF ACTION IN SUSTAINABILITY

Bike to Work Month

On 28 May, we celebrated our very own ISZL Bike to Work Day – the culmination of this year's [Bike to Work challenge](#).

11 teams across ISZL took part in the month-long initiative, with 39 participants registered in the app. At the time of writing, over 8,000 kilometres have been logged, saving more than 1 tonne of CO₂ emissions. That's the equivalent of cycling from Zug to northern India...and back!

This national challenge is Switzerland's largest campaign for health, wellbeing, and sustainability. It encourages people across the country to swap the car for a bike ride, improve their fitness, and help reduce our environmental impact.

Imagine how much our carbon footprint could be reduced if we were able to move more people to biking, walking, or public transport.

EcoSchools Update

Following the success of our school-wide Vegetarian Festival in April, ISZL is preparing to welcome the EcoSchools Jury on 10 June. Four jury members will visit the Zug Campus to meet with our EcoSchools Committee — a group of students, staff, parents, and school leaders — and learn about our 18-month journey exploring sustainable food.

The visit includes a student-led tour of both the Zug and Riverside campuses, highlighting projects and actions we're proud of. We look forward to sharing our progress, learning from the jury, and hopefully earning the honour of a Green Flag award.



Monaco Green Team Updates

The Monaco Crew — Giulia, Axel, Leo, Lumi, and Victoria — are continuing their mission to create greener, more biodiverse spaces around the High School. They recently shared their vision with School Director Barry Dequanne, and welcomed 33 Early Years 2 students as “consultants” for a tour and feedback. We’re eagerly awaiting their recommendations.



The team also took part in a Climate Fresk workshop with Diya Kanoria from MakeTheChange, deepening their understanding of climate science.

Their next goal is to become Climate Fresk trainers and help educate others in our community.



E-Charging Team Updates

Michael and Yair met with Armin Schicker, ISZL's Head of Facility Maintenance and Services, about possible locations and costs for further E-Charging stations for both vehicles and E-Bikes. They gathered data from the High School Community, presented a report to Stefan Dittli, our Director of Operations, and finalised their ideas in a face-to-face meeting. The installation of a charging solution in the parking area of the Triple Gym for E-Bikes has been included in next year's budget. They are now looking to move on to a new project, presenting our Solar data to the community.



SUSTAINABILITY HEROES: STAFF



At the end of this school year, Valerie and Chris Koch will leave ISZL after 15 years of meaningful impact, setting off to explore life in Spain. Their contributions to sustainability and student learning will leave a lasting legacy.

Valerie, dubbed our “Kombucha Queen” during lockdown (with over 20 flavours developed!), is especially proud of her work leading the Iceland PDW. While the planting of more than 45,000 trees stands out, she loved the creative work of repairing trails using only natural, repurposed materials like willow fences and birch seeds. A highlight was watching the Northern Lights dance over Þórsmörk. Valerie also co-led an environmental service group with Pete Gorkiewicz, organising local clean-ups and exploring rewilding projects in Cham.

Chris is proudest of the aquaponics initiative he helped launch, including a regional training network in development — all rooted in the Ghana PDW. He led student-driven innovation, including PET bottle buildings, fish tanks, and developing aircrete over three years. For Chris, project-based learning (PBL) is what makes education stick: “Learning needs to be heads and hands.”

Over the years, Chris empowered student groups like Zero Carbon, whose persistence led to the installation of solar panels on our High School Triple Gym, and Zero Waste, who helped shift large events like International Day toward sustainable practices. He believes that the visible presence of student-led sustainability projects helped embed environmental responsibility into ISZL’s strategy.

Chris also played a key role in developing our Innovation Courses, and proudly notes that some alumni are now running circular businesses inspired by that work. As a regular participant in the Villars Symposium, he mentored ISZL’s Villars Fellows on their “Pocket Wetland” project, a low-cost, scalable environmental initiative that may soon take shape alongside our new Middle School.

SUSTAINABILITY HERO: ALUMNI

Maria-Luisa Gopsill graduated from ISZL in 2015 with the IB Diploma, already showing signs of her future impact. As part of her Extended Essay in Environmental Systems and Societies, she led the very first pilot project to calculate ISZL's carbon footprint, which was a collaboration with MyClimate that laid the groundwork for future sustainability efforts at our school.



After ISZL, Maria-Luisa went on to study at Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, earning a Bachelor in International Hospitality Management. Her career took her across several roles in the hospitality sector, including a position at the Embassy of Switzerland in the United States, working in the Office of the Ambassador.

Maria-Luisa, with a commitment to sustainability, realised she wanted to drive the change. Now based in Zurich, she's completing a Master of Science in Circular Innovation and Sustainability at Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH), with a research focus on the circularity of Swiss mattresses. (You can support her work by completing her survey [here](#).)

Alongside her studies, she works as a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) System Analyst at [Eaternity](#), a Zurich-based NGO that promotes sustainable food systems. Most recently, she reconnected with ISZL's Sustainability Lead, Zoe Badcock, at the Swiss Climate Reporting Forum, where she was volunteering with Greenbuzz.

Maria-Luisa is a great example of how ISZL alumni carry our values into the world. Her journey reflects our school's vision to make a difference in our communities.

SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CURRICULUM

Each spring, our IB Biology, ESS, and Geography students take their learning beyond the classroom and into the field to apply theory in real-world, outdoor settings.

Biology and ESS students explored terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems around Baar, guided by ecologists Ben and Nicola, who specialise in hands-on ecological education. Many Biology students chose to focus on stream ecology for their internal assessments, while ESS students travelled to Raten to investigate how biological communities shift with altitude.

Meanwhile, Geography students took their studies to a larger scale, heading to the Morteratsch Glacier to examine how ecosystems evolve in response to glacial retreat.

These nature-based learning experiences are an important part of the ISZL experience, helping students connect classroom concepts with the natural world around them.



LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND NETWORKS

Compass Education Courses / Make the Change / Gaia Education

SGIS Sustainability Collaborative Learning Group co-founded by ISZL — minutes of meetings

ECIS Sustainability and Regenerative Practices SIG — webinar #3 on designing regenerative spaces with architects TP Bennett, and webinar #4 on the hidden value of student-led recycling.

Thank you for reading our newsletter and for supporting our initiative.
Keep you eyes pealed for future newsletters, events, and information.

We are always looking for contributions to this newsletter!
If you have ideas, please reach out to us.

Sincerely, The ISZL Sustainability Committee 2024/25