



United for a greener future

The basis of ecological
non-formal education

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Find out more about the partners and project activities within the book or visit:

www.wuesem.org

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Introduction

“...Youth workers also mentioned that they feel guilty because they lack knowledge about more ecological, sustainable methods and strategies of action. Although they feel responsible, they do not know how to become leaders and promoters of a more ecological lifestyle among young people.”

This was the beginning – an observation that led to a discussion which on the other hand led to a partner initiative to try to address the above mentioned dilemmas. Although guilt is not maybe the best start, but still it led to a joint endeavor to address this issue within a partnership of five organizations.

What you are now looking at, is a publication, that is a result of the United for a greener future project. As a response to the observed challenges, we decided to meet together with partners from different countries (Poland, Lithuania, Italy, Portugal, Romania) and learn about different approaches to building and implementing pro-ecological attitudes through workshop activities for young people. A total of 25 people from 5 countries took part in a 7-day training in Poland, which also included a test phase conducted in Wałbrzych's schools.

Please feel invited to read through the pages to see some of our findings and methods collected for different occasions. Here you will also find some of our basic tips on conducting workshops or using non-formal education in the ecological (but not only) context.



Our project: United for a greener future

Our project entitled “United for a Greener Future” took place in Wałbrzych, Poland. It consisted first of all of a 6 days training course with a visit to local high schools, where all 25 participants divided in international teams conducted eco-workshops for youngsters. In addition to the training course a number of local activities in the partner countries took place as an inspiration from the activities that took place in Poland. Also we have created videos describing our activities and as you can see now a brochure with crucial elements of the projects.

The main goal of our Training Course was to enhance the knowledge, skills, tactics and approaches of youth workers, regarding sustainability, so as they can serve as role models for promoting environmentally-friendly habits among the young people they work with. In other words, they should become “mentors for a greener lifestyle”.

We have given ourselves the following objectives:

1. Throughout the life of the project, 25 youth workers will **acquire knowledge on developing sustainable strategies and methodologies**, designing environmentally-friendly activities, and engaging young people in eco-friendly lifestyles;
2. 25 participants will **gain skills in implementing varied non-formal education activities related to the environment**, and will be able to create calls to action for



sustainability, which will be measured by the successful implementation of at least 3 such activities per participant.

- By the end of the project, 25 youth workers will have **increased confidence in their ability to promote and guide others towards sustainable living** and positively influence the youth they work with, as demonstrated by an increase of at least 50% in self-reported confidence levels in a pre- and post-training survey.

For additional information please write: office@wuesem.org or contact the partner organisation from each country.

Poland: Walbrzyskie Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży

Lithuania: VšĮ Veik kurk atskleisk

Italy: Tou.Play

Portugal: Associação Inspira! - Intervenção juvenil e ambiental

Romania: ASK Yourself



What is Erasmus ?

Erasmus+ is a European Union program that supports education, training, youth, and sport across Europe. It offers funding for a wide range of opportunities, including student exchanges, international training for teachers and youth workers, internships, and cultural projects. By connecting people from different countries, Erasmus+ promotes cultural exchange, skill development, and mutual understanding, helping young people and professionals gain valuable experiences and build a more united, inclusive Europe.

It's not just for young people; it's also a fantastic opportunity for you as a youth worker! This European Union program is designed to support education, training, and professional development in the youth sector. Think of it as a way to connect with other youth work professionals across Europe, learn new methods, and enhance your skills, ultimately leading to better support for the young people you work with.

So, what can Erasmus+ do for you? It offers a wide range of opportunities tailored for youth workers. You can participate in training courses to develop new competencies, attend seminars to exchange best practices, or engage in job shadowing experiences to learn how other organizations work. These experiences can equip you with innovative tools and techniques to use in your daily work, improve your ability to work in international settings, and broaden your understanding of diverse youth work approaches.

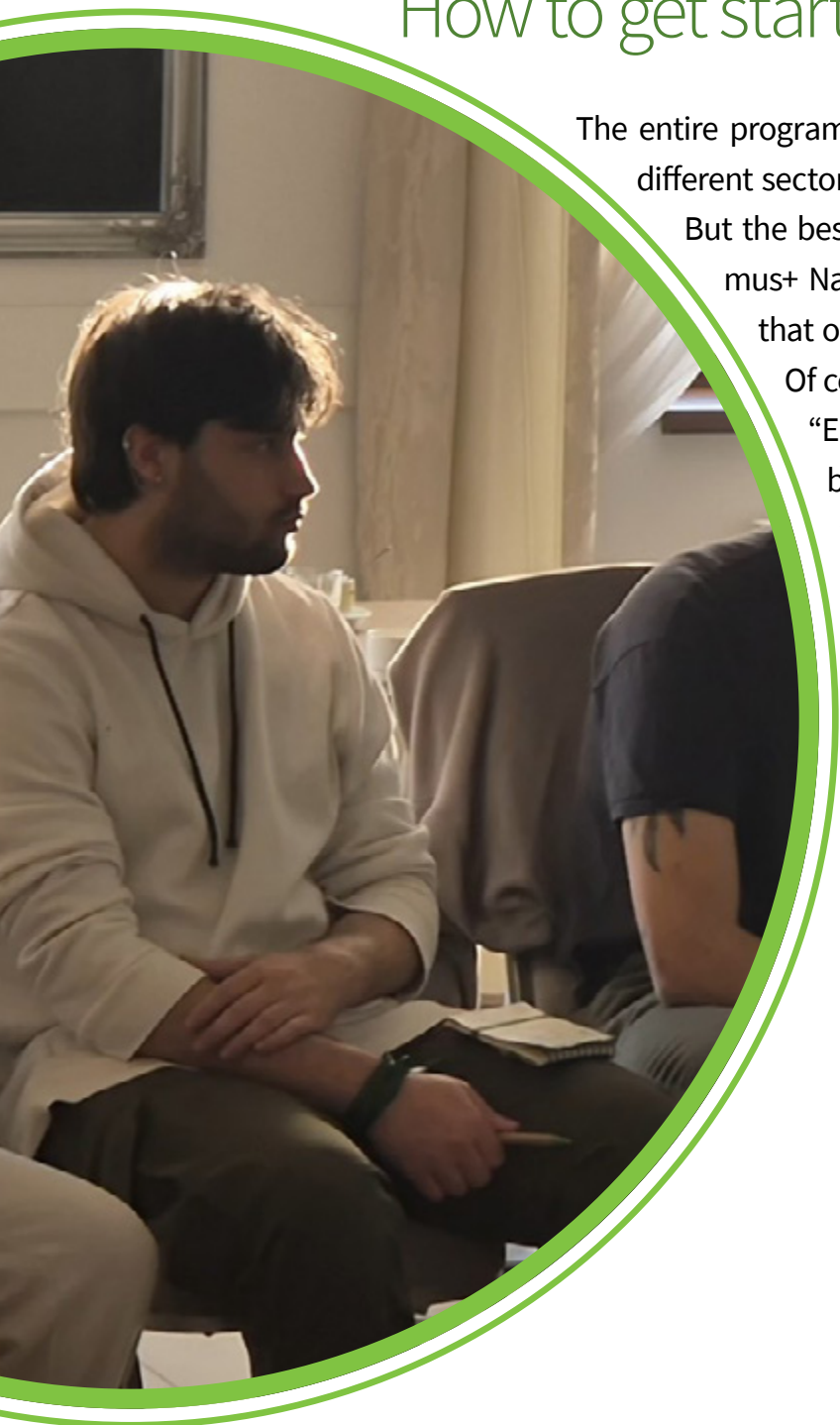


Ultimately, Erasmus+ empowers youth workers to grow professionally, build strong networks, and enhance the quality of their work. By participating, you'll gain valuable skills, knowledge, and perspectives that can be directly applied to your work with young people. This leads to more effective and impactful youth work, creating a positive change in your community and beyond. So, if you're looking to boost your career, expand your horizons, and make a greater difference, Erasmus+ has something for you!

How to get started?

The entire programme is a rather large initiative that has different sectors and agents throughout the entire EU. But the best place to start will be finding an Erasmus+ National Agency. These are organizations that operate the programme in each country. Of course a google search will do if you type "Erasmus+ National Agency Poland" etc. but please find the list of all of them on the official website:

<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/contacts/national-agencies>



Meet the project partners

Poland (lider): Wałbrzyskie Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży

Wałbrzych's Youth Association (Wałbrzyskie Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży) is an organization created by and for young people. It was established in October 2005, in Wałbrzych. Since 2006 we are a non profit NGO doing our best to encourage young people to being active. Currently the team besides youngsters are also experienced youth workers to whom Youth, their development, ambitions, goals or challenges are an important part of life.



Mission of Wałbrzych's Youth Association:

- /// to encourage young people to be active in local society
- /// to promote and support volunteers
- /// to make reality of youth's life more meaningful, colourful and conscious
- /// to establish projects, systems and activities that provide ongoing support for young people and youthworkers
- /// to promote culture among young people
- /// to organize free time for young people
- /// to support activities aimed to and brought out by young people
- /// to develop entrepreneurial skills of young people that will give them a start for their future professional life

The organisation's activities differ from project to projects as most of the activities are inspired, prepared and realized by young people that are part of the institution or seek support in it. There have been concerts, charity actions, trainings, voluntary work camps, social campaigns, workshops and non-formal educational activities at schools,

supporting in difficulties related to social exclusion, education, entrepreneurship and many other action projects. Besides that there have been a number of ongoing activities like operating of a volunteering centre, organizing cooperation with schools, local governments, business sector and other non-profit organisations in Poland. WSM members have also established other non-profit NGOs in Krakow, Wroclaw and Warsaw developing and supporting youth in different spheres of their lives.

The Association has developed several international partnerships with EU organisations from Spain, Romania, UK, Slovenia, Turkey, Latvia, Holland, Italy, France and also from other countries like Israel, Georgia or Egypt by organising or co-participating in trainings, exchanges and other initiatives.

The organisation has experience in international trainings, youth exchanges, facilitating international youth teams that organize their projects together. The association has also great interest in finding what is best in young people and developing it or presenting it to a larger audience.

Lithuania: VŠĮ Veik kurk atskleisk



VŠĮ Veik kurk atskleisk (English – Act. Create. Reveal) is a new organisation established in October 2022 and based in Klaipeda (Lithuania). The organisation's mission is to provide youth with quality civil society education and to increase young people's participation in decision-making. To ensure

the recognition of youth work in Klaipeda and in Lithuania and to strengthen the quality of youth work. The values of the organisation are equality, volunteering, democracy, education, interculturality, and civic involvement.

“Act Create Reveal” is an organisation established to promote youth social and civic activity, involvement in the development of their community, to strengthen the skills of young people that are not provided by the education system, to promote nonformal education, developing new competencies of youth workers and to improve those they have. Also to develop a network of partners, with whom we could share our experience and use theirs, in order to ensure the quality of youth work and provide new opportunities for young people and youth workers through project activities and promote Eras-

mus+ opportunities.

The organisation was established by three active, highly experienced people who were directly involved in the preparation and implementation of the European Youth Capital 2021 title awarded by the European Youth Forum. During 2020 – 2022 over 300 activities have been implemented to strengthen the voice of young people, to develop leadership and creativity skills, to develop and use new tools to promote and improve attitudes towards volunteering, to create new youth traditions and spaces in the city, work on excluded groups and create equal opportunities for them to get involved and participate in city life and to reinforce the identity of Europe's youth. Klaipėda has become an example not only in Lithuania but also in Europe.

Italy: Tou.Play

Tou.Play is an NGO based in south Italy – BARI, established in 2016 in Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro after a Contamination Lab EU action of both universities of the city.

Tou.Play aims to develop a new educational tourism form through games, art, culture and experiences. The organisation has developed a Successful Croudfunding in 2016 to develop a meta-book about Puglia's Castles and created different Alternate Reality Games formats to discover their own land. It has participated in many and various creative entrepreneurship workshop and now is following different Social Innovation and Urban Regeneration projects. Since the first experience with Eurosud and Spirit Of Freedom, 2 local European Organisations, Tou.Play found out that the better way to change the world is to start changing it by one's neighbourhood. So that's why the NGO is following the EU path and trying to import best practices from other organisations, incoming partner's experiences and is trying to export their enthusiasm, experience in game fields and management.



The organisation's main scope is to bind together tradition and innovation to educate.

Portugal: Associação Inspira! - Intervenção juvenil e ambiental



'Associação Inspira!' is a youth non-governmental organization focused on environmental education and youth intervention. Evolving from an informal group, Inspira! has over 50 youth associ-

ates, working for the social and ecological development of the region and the empowerment of its young people. The organization aims to socially improve education and opportunity for youngsters and young adults, by stimulating their sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. For that, the NGO uses non-formal education and intervention tools to promote actions on social inclusion, gender equality, employability, volunteer work, structured dialogue and intercultural education, mobilizing young people to make a change in their region paradigm.

Based on a small town in the northern hills of Portugal, Inspira! faces a very isolated society, known for its closed mind, resistance to innovation and low contact with the exterior. With the environmental education programs and activities, both in schools and informal situations, alongside with the youth mobility and intercultural exchange projects, the organization aims to develop a more open background on the society, with a healthy and sustainable mentality and, that way, socially educate a region that is suffering from its isolation and the desertion of youth professionally qualified individuals that find it not stimulating and open enough and with few opportunities for them.

Since the creation of the group it has been directing its efforts to implement a constant set of policies and activities to all the youngsters in the town, focusing on giving them opportunities and tools to develop themselves. Inspira! has created a Nature School project and has been doing outdoor educational activities both with informal groups of people and on cooperation with other entities. Right now the group is focusing all of their efforts in the implementation of a Youth Agenda, that will provide the town youth population with a set of programs to support their personal and professional development,

civic participation and job, internship and volunteer opportunities, through Youth Information and action on local policymakers.

Always with a "young group that does stuff in the community" spirit, they have been mobilizing ever more and more local young people as volunteers and associates, building volunteer groups and encouraging them into creating and leading their own intervention actions.

Romania: ASK Yourself

ASK Yourself is a non-governmental organization created in 2015 by a group of young people who wanted to promote the opportunities of Erasmus+ and non-formal education. The values of the association are: equality, education, interculturality and civic engagement.

Through their activities they want to encourage young people to try out new learning opportunities, discover themselves, improve their skills and get involved in the development of their community. The organization's youth workers provide support in implementing the ideas of young volunteers, while offering them comprehensive development opportunities.

In recent years ASK Yourself has grown and has established contacts with many young people and youth workers. They have participated in many projects and activities, on both local and international level.

The local activities of the organization focus on introducing non-formal education into the formal environment. Workshops are organized in more than 20 secondary schools (Bucharest, Busteni, Sighişoara, Cluj), hundreds of students are interviewed and the organization has encouraged teachers to use non-formal education in their classes. ASK Yourself also cooperates with 3 secondary schools in Bucharest: Ion Creanga, Al. I. Cuza and Nichita Stanescu. Some of the topics of the seminars that it usually implements in secondary schools are: bullying, integration, career, communication, mental health, green and ecology skills, expressing emotions and many others.

An important part of the activity is organizing non-formal education seminars for youth workers and teachers. The organization focuses on both youth workers from the organization and from other institutions in Bucharest.



Want to meet our trainers?

If you are interested in the topic of non-formal education or eco-friendly workshops and activities you can use the opportunity to reach out to the trainers that have taken up the role of facilitating the learning process in our project. They will probably be very happy to assist you in your journey, support your project or share some advice in case you are trying your ways in leading some workshops. Who knows? Maybe you can even meet on one of the many projects that are happening in Europe and all over the world?

Łukasz Hoppe (Poland)

Łukasz Hoppe is a trainer, educator, learning process and group dynamics facilitator whose experience dates back to 2006. He is experienced in group learning, implementation, evaluation phases, individual mentoring and coaching through the learning curve all the way to external examination. With over 10 thousand didactic hours experience he is a very flexible and group oriented trainer following the needs of the participants without losing the learning objectives of the learners. His expertise is oriented towards putting learning into practice through combining knowledge, skills and attitudes, balancing through the amount of work to each of these spheres that will end up in an effective learning experience for the participant.



He is one of the experts and NGO representatives working on the implementation of the EU Just Transformation Fund for the 2021-2027 financial perspective; since 2014 he cooperates in eco initiatives and projects with an eco-farm in Czarnow, he supports and participates in local adult and youth led projects related to ecology (social campaigns, workshops, infrastructure investments through the Toyota Fund); he was also responsible for implementing

in the Dolnośląskie Voivodeship a national ecology program organized by Environment Ministry for children and youth “Eco angels - do not clutter your conscience” during which he has conducted ecological workshops and animations in 21 schools for over 1500 participants.

Get to know him better or contact him through the projects he is part of like: www.wuesem.org; www.108.org.pl; or find him on social media.

Filipe Moreira Alves (Portugal)

Filipe Moreira Alves is a portuguese action-researcher, trainer and social entrepreneur with 20 years of experience in the areas of Sustainability, Permaculture, Climate Change Adaptation and Ecological Economics. Filipe is a senior researcher at CE3C for over 12 years and has a PhD in Policies for Sustainable Development. He is the founder of several environmental NGOs and cooperatives, namely Biovilla and Coopérnico and has been a non-formal education and sustainability trainer since 2010.



Currently working on the action-research Just Wind 4 All project, focusing on leveraging a just energy transition to Portugal. Working as a facilitator and mediator between civil society, academia and decision-makers using participatory action-research methodologies and promoting local empowerment and active participatory citizenship. Highly engaged with social innovation and social entrepreneurship in Portugal and Europe.

Get to know him better: websites: www.researchgate.net/profile/Filipe-Alves-2 and www.linkedin.com/in/filipe-alves-a59b0510/

Non-formal Education context

In this section of the publication you will find different information about NFE and methods used in the learning process. We will share some general structure of methods that one can use when working with youth and not only. We will also share some general rules that keep the participants engaged. We will share the basis of what is a training course and touch in how a group process can evolve in the context of a learning activity.

If any of the information will not be clear, or you would like to dive deeper in some areas please feel free to go to the section where we present our trainers. They are there for you, waiting to answer all doubts and guide you through the process of grasping what is non-formal education, a training course and a non-formal education method.

This part is all about Non-Formal Education (NFE) and how we can use it to empower young people (and others!) to make a difference in the world. We'll explore different teaching methods, how to keep everyone engaged, and what to think about when organizing a training or workshop. Think of it as a toolkit for creating dynamic and impactful learning experiences.

What exactly is Non-Formal Education?

So, what's the deal with Non-Formal Education? Well, it's learning that happens outside of the traditional classroom. Imagine a workshop in a community center, a youth group meeting to plan a campaign, or even just a group of friends getting together to learn about climate change. That's NFE in action!

Unlike school (which is very structured and follows a set curriculum), NFE is much more flexible. It's designed to fit the needs of the people involved. It's often organized by communities, and it puts learners at the center of the experience. Think about it: if you're working with young people passionate about animal rights, you can design a program that directly addresses that, allowing them to take the lead in their own learning.

Some big thinkers have really shaped how we understand NFE. People like Malcolm Knowles emphasized how adults learn best when they're involved in planning their own education. Paulo Freire talked about "learning by doing" and how education can help people become more aware of the world around them. John Dewey believed that learning should be connected to real-life experiences. All of these ideas are super important when we're working with young people!

When it comes to activism, NFE is incredibly powerful. It's not just about learning facts; it's about giving people the skills and confidence to create change. It can help people:

- ✓ Become strong leaders
- ✓ Work together effectively
- ✓ Think critically about social problems
- ✓ Learn how to organize campaigns
- ✓ Build a sense of community and support

Think about the Civil Rights Movement, for example. NFE played a huge role in teaching people about nonviolent resistance, organizing protests, and building a movement for equality. That's the kind of impact we're talking about!

Cool methods for engaging young people

Okay, so how do we actually do NFE? There are tons of different methods we can use, and it's all about choosing what works best for the group. Here are a few favorites, especially for working with young people:

- **Getting People Talking:** Group discussions are amazing. You can create a space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. It's not just about listening to the facilitator; it's about learning from each other. To make discussions work well, it's helpful to have some structure, like setting clear questions or having everyone agree on some ground rules for respectful communication.
- **Brainstorming Power:** When you need fresh ideas, brainstorming is your friend! It's a way to get everyone's creativity flowing. The key is to encourage everyone to share whatever comes to mind, without judging or criticizing. You can use different techniques to spark ideas, like mind maps or "round-robin" sharing.
- **Walking in Someone Else's Shoes:** Role-playing and simulations are super engaging. They let people step into different roles and experience situations firsthand. For exam-

ple, you could simulate a meeting with a politician or a protest march. This helps people develop empathy, practice their communication skills, and learn how to handle challenging situations.

- **Learning from Real Life:** Case studies are like real-life stories that we can analyze. We can look at successful (and unsuccessful) activism campaigns and try to figure out what made them work (or not work). This helps us learn from the past and make better decisions in the future.
- **The Power of Story:** Storytelling is a fundamental way humans connect. Sharing personal stories and collective histories can build strong bonds within a group and help people understand the “why” behind their activism. It’s a way to pass on knowledge, inspire action, and create a sense of belonging.
- **Express Yourself!** Art and music are powerful tools in non-formal education and activism. They can help people express their emotions, communicate their message in creative ways, and build a sense of community. Think about songs, murals, or street theater – they’re all part of NFE!
- **Learning Through Play:** Games and simulations can make learning fun and engaging. You can use them to teach about complex topics like social justice or political systems. When people are having fun, they’re more likely to remember what they’ve learned.
- **Going Digital:** In today’s world, digital media is essential for activism. We can use social media, videos, online platforms, and other digital tools to raise awareness, organize campaigns, and connect with people around the world. But it’s also important to teach young people how to use these tools responsibly and effectively.
- **Getting Our Hands Dirty:** Community projects are a great way to combine learning with action. You can involve young people in projects that directly benefit their community, like cleaning up a park, starting a community garden, or advocating for local change. This helps them develop skills and see the real-world impact of their activism.

- **Speaking Truth to Power:** Advocacy training gives young people the skills they need to communicate effectively with decision-makers. This might include learning how to lobby politicians, write persuasive letters, or organize public awareness campaigns.

The most important thing is to remember that every group is different. What works for one group might not work for another. So, it’s crucial to be flexible, listen to the participants, and adapt your methods as needed. When working with young people, it’s especially important to create a fun, engaging, and empowering learning environment.

How to keep people hooked!

Keeping people engaged is key to successful NFE. Here are some golden rules:

- **Safety First:** Create a space where everyone feels safe to be themselves, share their ideas, and take risks. This means setting clear ground rules for respect, listening actively to each other, and making sure everyone’s voice is heard. It’s also important to be aware of power dynamics and work to create a level playing field.
- **Learning by Doing:** People learn best when they’re actively involved. So, avoid lectures and create opportunities for hands-on activities, discussions, and projects. Ask open-ended questions that encourage critical thinking, and give people space to reflect on what they’re learning.
- **Teamwork Makes the Dream Work:** Use group activities to build connections and encourage collaboration. Celebrate diversity, value different perspectives, and create a sense of belonging. When people feel supported by their peers, they’re more likely to stay engaged.
- **Make it Real:** Connect the learning to the real-world experiences and concerns of the participants. Show them how their learning can make a difference in their lives and communities. Celebrate their achievements and keep things fun and interactive.
- **The Facilitator’s Role:** The person leading the NFE session is called a facilitator. They’re not just a teacher; they’re a guide who helps the group learn together. It’s important for facilitators to have good communication skills, be able to manage conflict, and act ethically.

Essentials of building a training course and working with groups

If you're planning a longer learning experience, like a training course, there are a few things to keep in mind:

Planning is Key:

- **Figure Out What's Needed:** Start by understanding what the participants already know and what they want to learn.
- **Set Clear Goals:** Decide what you want the participants to be able to do or understand by the end of the training.
- **Choose Your Activities:** Select methods and materials that will help participants achieve the learning goals.
- **Put it All Together:** Create a schedule that flows logically and keeps people engaged.
- **Check for Understanding:** Plan how you will assess whether participants have learned what you intended.

Understanding Group Dynamics:

- **Groups Change Over Time:** Groups go through different stages (like forming, when people are getting to know each other, and storming, when there might be conflict). Understanding these stages can help you facilitate more effectively.
- **Everyone Plays a Role:** People take on different roles in groups, some helpful, some less so. It's important to be aware of these roles and how they affect the group's progress.
- **Communication is Crucial:** Pay attention to how people are communicating and interacting. Encourage everyone to listen actively, express themselves clearly, and respect different communication styles.
- **Conflict Happens:** Conflict is normal, but it's how you handle it that matters. Teach participants how to communicate constructively, find common ground, and resolve disagreements peacefully.
- **Guiding the Group:** As a facilitator, you play a vital role in guiding the group process. Use techniques that encourage participation, build trust, and support learning.

- **Power is Real:** Be aware of power imbalances within the group (based on age, experience, etc.) and take steps to create a fair and inclusive environment.

Creating a Community:

- Help participants feel like they're part of something bigger.
- Encourage them to learn from and support each other.
- Establish shared values and norms that promote respect and trust.
- Use reflection activities to help people connect with each other and deepen their learning.

Conclusion

Non-formal education is a powerful tool for empowering individuals and communities to create positive change. By using learner-centered methods, fostering engagement, and understanding group dynamics, we can create transformative learning experiences that equip young people to become active citizens and agents of social change. It's all about making learning relevant, fun, and impactful!



The basis of ecological non-formal education

The foundation of ecological non-formal education rests on fostering a deep and meaningful connection between young people and the natural world. It moves beyond rote memorization of facts about the environment and instead

emphasizes experiential learning, direct engagement

with ecosystems, and the development of a

sense of wonder and curiosity. At least this

is what we believe is the right approach

and which direction we choose to go

realizing the activities of our project. This approach recognizes

that understanding and valuing nature comes not just

from textbooks but from

feeling the soil in youth's hands, observing the intricate dance of a forest,

or witnessing the impact of pollution firsthand. By

creating opportunities for exploration, discovery, and hands-on activities in

natural settings, ecological non-formal education gives

the opportunity to cultivate a personal relationship with the

environment, laying the groundwork for lifelong environmental

stewardship.

Furthermore, the basis of this educational approach lies in its holistic perspective. It acknowledges

the interconnectedness of all living things and the complex web of relationships within ecosystems. Youth workers facilitate learning experiences that encourage young people to think critically about environmental issues, understand the root causes of ecological challenges, and explore potential solutions from a variety of angles. This includes examining the social, economic, and ethical dimensions of environmental problems, fostering a sense of responsibility for the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants. By promoting system thinking and interdisciplinary approaches, ecological non-formal education empowers young people to become informed and engaged citizens capable of making sustainable choices on their own.

Finally, a crucial element of ecological non-formal education is its emphasis on empowerment and action. It goes beyond simply raising awareness and actively encourages young people to become agents of change in their own communities. Through

participatory activities, collaborative projects, and opportunities for advocacy, youth workers help young people develop the skills, confidence, and motivation to take meaningful action on environmental

issues they care about. This could range from organizing local clean-up initiatives to advocating for sustainable practices within their schools or families.

We hope that through this approach we can change the youth's perspective on the world they live in. And also with this approach in mind we believe that youth workers can become a

true representative of "eco living" that is genuine and honest for their level of understanding and participating in the green movement. We don't all

have to be on the barricades, but we should find our honest position, as honesty is what will be checked by the young people we approach with our activities.

Looking for some green non-formal methods?

Below find a set of 5 generally indoor and other 20 different non-formal education methods that you can use both in workshops/training courses but also in shorter initiatives as a onetime action. The target group can vary and you will probably chose the right propositions to your circumstances. Feel free to also reach out to other sources!

Let's start with 5 indoor workshop methods that you can use in your training courses.

1. Ecosystem Role-Play

Participants take on the roles of different elements within an ecosystem (e.g., plants, animals, decomposers, pollutants) to understand their interdependencies and the impact of disruptions.

Materials:

- // Index cards or labels with the names of ecosystem elements written on them. A proposition is in the end of this method.
- // String or yarn to connect elements (optional).
- // Flip chart or whiteboard for discussion.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Procedures:

1. Introduction (15 mins):

Briefly explain the concept of an ecosystem and its components.

2. Role Assignment (15 mins):

Distribute index cards or labels to participants, assigning them roles.

3. Interaction Simulation (45 mins):

- // Have participants move around and interact based on their roles (e.g., herbivores "eating" plants, predators "hunting" prey).
- // Introduce a "disruption" (e.g., pollution) and observe its effects on the interactions.
- // (Optional) Use string to connect participants, visually representing the relationships.

4. Debrief and Discussion (30 mins)

Facilitate a discussion about the experience, focusing on:

- // Interdependence within the ecosystem.
- // The impact of the disruption.
- // Real-world examples of ecosystem imbalances.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will gain a deeper understanding of ecosystem dynamics and the interconnectedness of living organisms.
- They will explore the consequences of environmental changes and human impacts on ecosystems.
- The activity will foster empathy for different species and a sense of responsibility for environmental stewardship.

Card labels ideas

Plants: Rose, Oak Tree, Sunflower, Fern, Moss, Kelp, Cactus, Tulip, Rice, Wheat.

Animals: Lion, Elephant, Penguin, Dolphin, Eagle, Snake, Butterfly, Salmon, Chimpanzee, Horse.

Decomposers: Bacteria, Fungi, Earthworm, Mold, Yeast, Vulture, Dung Beetle, Millipede, Slime Mold, Actinomycetes.

Pollutants: Plastic, Pesticides, Heavy Metals, Acid Rain, Smog, Industrial Waste, Fertilizer Runoff, Oil Spills, Noise Pollution, Light Pollution.

2. The Water Footprint Game

A game-based activity where participants calculate their “water footprint” by tracking water usage in various daily activities and then explore ways to reduce it.

Materials:

- // Worksheets with a list of common activities (e.g., showering, brushing teeth, washing clothes, eating different foods).
- // Data on the average water usage for each activity.
- // Calculators (optional).
- // Flip chart or whiteboard for recording results and brainstorming.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Procedures:

1. Introduction (15 mins): Discuss the concept of a water footprint and its significance in water conservation.
2. Calculation (45 mins):
 - // Participants use the worksheets and data to estimate their individual water consumption.
 - // (Optional) Divide participants into groups to compare and discuss their findings.
3. Brainstorming (30 mins):
 - // Facilitate a group brainstorming session to identify strategies for reducing water footprints at individual and community levels.
 - // Record the ideas on a flip chart or whiteboard.
4. Action Planning (15 mins):
 - // Participants set personal goals for water conservation.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will become aware of their personal water consumption patterns.
- They will learn about the hidden water embedded in everyday products and activities.
- The activity will empower them to adopt water-saving habits and advocate for water conservation.

3. The Waste Hierarchy Challenge

Participants explore the waste hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) through interactive activities and discussions, focusing on practical strategies for minimizing waste.

Materials:

- // Visual aids representing the waste hierarchy (e.g., pyramid diagram).
- // Examples of items representing different waste management strategies (e.g., reusable bags, recyclable materials, compostable items).
- // Sorting activity materials (e.g., various items to sort into bins labeled “Reduce,” “Re-use,” “Recycle”).
- // Flip chart or whiteboard for brainstorming.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Procedures:

1. Introduction (15 mins): Introduce the concept of the waste hierarchy and its importance in sustainable waste management.
2. Interactive Exploration (45 mins):
 - // Use visual aids and examples to explain each level of the hierarchy.
 - // Conduct the sorting activity, encouraging discussion about the best way to manage different types of waste.
3. Brainstorming and Action Planning (30 mins):
 - // Facilitate a brainstorming session to generate ideas for reducing waste in their daily lives, schools, or communities.
 - // Participants develop action plans to implement waste reduction strategies.
4. Creative Expression (15 mins):
 - // (Optional) Participants create posters, slogans, or short skits to promote waste reduction.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will understand the principles of the waste hierarchy and its practical application.
- They will develop critical thinking skills in evaluating different waste management options.
- The activity will inspire them to adopt waste-reducing behaviors and advocate for sustainable waste management practices.

4. Energy Flow Simulation

Participants simulate the flow of energy through a food chain to understand energy loss at each trophic level and the importance of energy conservation.

Materials:

- // Tokens or beads representing energy units.
- // Cards representing different trophic levels (e.g., producers, herbivores, carnivores).
- // Containers to hold energy tokens.
- // Flip chart or whiteboard to record energy transfer.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Procedures:

1. Introduction (15 mins): Explain the concept of energy flow in a food chain and trophic levels.
2. Simulation Setup (15 mins):
 - // Assign participants to different trophic levels and provide them with cards and containers.
 - // Distribute initial energy tokens to the “producers.”
3. Energy Transfer Simulation (45 mins):
 - // Participants simulate energy transfer by passing tokens from one trophic level to the next, with a certain percentage “lost” at each transfer.
 - // Record the amount of energy transferred at each step.
4. Discussion and Reflection (30 mins):
 - // Discuss the results of the simulation, emphasizing energy loss and its implications.
 - // Connect the simulation to real-world energy consumption and conservation.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will visualize the flow of energy through a food chain and understand the concept of energy loss.
- They will appreciate the importance of energy efficiency and reducing energy waste.
- The activity will promote awareness of the interconnectedness of organisms and their reliance on energy resources.

5. Climate Solutions Brainstorm

Participants brainstorm and research solutions to climate change, focusing on local actions and global initiatives.

Materials:

- // Flip chart or whiteboard
- // Markers
- // Post-it notes
- // Access to internet/computers (optional, for research)
- // Cards with different categories of solutions (e.g., renewable energy, transportation, agriculture, etc.)

Duration: 2 hours

Procedures:

1. Introduction (30 mins):
 - // Review the basics of climate change: causes, effects.
 - // Emphasize the importance of solutions-oriented thinking.
2. Solution Categories (30 mins):
 - // Divide participants into smaller groups.
 - // Assign each group a category of climate solutions (or let them choose).
 - // Provide the cards with solution categories.
3. Brainstorming and Research (45 mins):
 - // Groups brainstorm specific solutions within their category.
 - // (Optional) If internet access is available, groups can research examples of solutions in action.
4. Presentation and Discussion (15 mins):
 - // Each group presents their top solutions to the larger group.
 - // Facilitate a discussion about the feasibility, impact, and challenges of different solutions.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will expand their knowledge of climate change solutions.
- They will develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- The activity will foster a sense of hope and empowerment by focusing on positive actions to address climate change.

And now a set of next 20 that can either enhance your workshops or be done as separate activities for a group.

1. Build a Bug Hotel

Materials:

- // Wooden pallets or scrap wood
- // Hollow stems (bamboo, reeds)
- // Pine cones
- // Straw or hay
- // Drilled logs or twigs
- // Bricks or stones with holes
- // Wire mesh (if needed to hold materials)
- // Tools (saw, hammer, nails, etc.)

Duration: 2 - 3 hours

Procedures:

1. Discuss the importance of insects for ecosystems.
2. Plan the design of the bug hotel.
3. Construct the frame using pallets or wood.
4. Fill the compartments with the various materials to create different habitats.
5. Find a suitable location outdoors for the bug hotel.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will create a habitat for insects, learning about their importance and biodiversity.

2. Create Leaf Mold

Materials:

- // Fallen leaves
- // Large bag or bin
- // Water

Duration: 1 hour (setup), ongoing (decomposition)

Procedures:

1. Collect fallen leaves.
2. Place them in a bag or bin.
3. Moisten the leaves.
4. Let them decompose over several months, turning occasionally.
5. Discuss the benefits of leaf mold for soil health.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will learn about decomposition and how to create a valuable soil conditioner from waste material.

3. Make a Worm Farm

Materials:

- // Two stackable bins
- // Bedding material (shredded newspaper, coconut coir)
- // Red wiggler worms
- // Food scraps (fruit and vegetable)

Duration: 1.5 hours

Procedures:

1. Prepare the bedding in one bin.
2. Introduce the worms.
3. Bury food scraps in the bedding.

4. Monitor and maintain the worm farm.
5. Discuss the role of worms in breaking down organic matter.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will set up a worm farm and learn about vermicomposting and waste reduction.

4. Solar Oven Cooking

Materials:

- // Cardboard box
- // Aluminum foil
- // Black construction paper
- // Clear plastic wrap or glass
- // Skewer or stick
- // Food to cook (e.g., marshmallows, small pizzas)

Duration: 1.5 hours (setup), 1-2 hours (cooking)

Procedures:

1. Construct a solar oven using the box, foil, and black paper.
2. Place food inside the oven.
3. Position the oven in direct sunlight.
4. Monitor the cooking process.
5. Discuss solar energy and sustainable cooking.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will build and use a solar oven, learning about renewable energy.

5. Make Recycled Paper

Materials:

- // Used paper
- // Water

- // Blender
- // Basin
- // Picture frame
- // Mesh screen
- // Cloth

Duration: 2 hours

Procedures:

1. Tear used paper into small pieces and soak them in water.
2. Blend the soaked paper into pulp.
3. Dip the frame and screen into a basin of pulp.
4. Lift out and let the water drain.
5. Transfer the pulp to a cloth and press out excess water.
6. Dry the paper.
7. Discuss the importance of recycling.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will make their own recycled paper and understand the paper recycling process.

6. Build Bird Feeders

Materials:

- // Pine cones, plastic bottles, or cardboard tubes
- // Birdseed
- // Peanut butter or vegetable shortening
- // String or yarn
- // Sticks or spoons

Duration: 1 hour

Procedures:

1. Prepare the feeders using the chosen materials.
2. Coat them with peanut butter or shortening.
3. Roll them in birdseed.

4. Hang the feeders outdoors.
5. Observe the birds that visit.
6. Discuss the importance of supporting local wildlife.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will create bird feeders and learn about local bird species and their needs.

7. Design an Eco-Friendly Schoolyard

Materials:

- ✓ Paper, pencils, markers
- ✓ Rulers or measuring tape
- ✓ Optional: materials for a model (cardboard, clay, etc.)

Duration: 2 hours

Procedures:

1. Discuss the elements of an eco-friendly space (trees, gardens, water collection, etc.).
2. Measure and map out a section of the schoolyard.
3. Design a plan to transform the space, incorporating eco-friendly features.
4. Present and discuss the designs.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will design a plan for an eco-friendly schoolyard, applying their knowledge of sustainability.

8. Natural Dyes

Materials:

- ✓ Fabric scraps (cotton, linen)
- ✓ Plants for dyeing (onion skins, berries, spinach, etc.)
- ✓ Pots, water, stove
- ✓ Mordant (alum or salt)

Duration: 2 hours

Procedures:

1. Prepare the fabric with a mordant.
2. Extract dye from the plants by boiling them in water.
3. Simmer the fabric in the dye bath.
4. Rinse and dry the fabric.
5. Discuss the use of natural resources and avoiding synthetic chemicals.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will dye fabric using natural materials and learn about traditional dyeing techniques.

9. Rainwater Harvesting System (Model)

Materials:

- ✓ Plastic bottles or containers
- ✓ Tubing
- ✓ Gravel or sand
- ✓ Modeling clay

Duration: 1.5 hours

Procedures:

1. Design a model of a rainwater harvesting system.
2. Use containers to represent collection surfaces and storage.
3. Use tubing to direct the flow of "rainwater."
4. Incorporate a filtration system using gravel and sand.
5. Discuss the importance of water conservation.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will build a model of a rainwater harvesting system and understand how to conserve water.

10. Eco-Audit of the School

Materials:

- ✓ Checklist for energy, water, waste, and resource use
- ✓ Notebooks and pencils
- ✓ Optional: tools to measure (e.g., thermometer)

Duration: 2 hours + follow-up

Procedures:

1. Divide participants into groups to audit different areas.
2. Use the checklist to assess the school's environmental practices.
3. Record findings and identify areas for improvement.
4. Present findings and propose solutions.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will conduct an eco-audit of their school and develop recommendations for making it more sustainable.

11. DIY Seed Bombs

Materials:

Native plant seeds, clay powder, compost, water, bowls, and trays.

Duration: 1 hour

Procedures:

1. Combine seeds, clay powder, and compost in a bowl.
2. Gradually add water and mix until the mixture can be easily shaped.
3. Form the mixture into small balls (seed bombs).
4. Let the seed bombs dry on trays for a few hours.
5. Discuss where the seed bombs could be dispersed to support local ecosystems.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will learn about native plants, seed dispersal, and how to create seed bombs to support local biodiversity.

12. Upcycled Planters

Materials:

Used plastic bottles, tin cans, or other containers, soil, small plants or seedlings, paint, markers, and decorating materials.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Procedures:

1. Clean the used containers.
2. Decorate the containers using paint, markers, or other materials.
3. Fill the containers with soil.
4. Plant the seedlings or small plants in the containers.
5. Discuss the importance of reducing waste and reusing materials.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will repurpose waste materials into planters, learning about reducing waste and plant care.

13. Nature Art Collages

Materials:

Leaves, flowers, twigs, seeds, paper, glue, and markers.

Duration: 1 hour

Procedures:

1. Collect natural materials from the schoolyard or a local park.
2. Arrange the materials on paper to create a nature-inspired collage.
3. Glue the materials onto the paper.
4. Use markers to add details or captions to the artwork.
5. Reflect on the beauty of nature and the importance of conservation.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will create art using natural materials, fostering creativity and appreciation for nature.

14. Energy Conservation Challenge

Materials:

Energy usage trackers (can be digital or paper-based), information sheets on energy conservation tips.

Duration: 30 minutes (setup) + 1 week (challenge) + 30 minutes (follow-up)

Procedures:

1. Introduce the concept of energy conservation and its importance.
2. Distribute energy usage trackers to participants.
3. Participants track their energy consumption for one week.
4. Share energy-saving tips and strategies.
5. Follow up to discuss results and share experiences.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will become more aware of their energy consumption and learn practical ways to conserve energy.

15. Water Filter Creation

Materials:

Plastic bottles, sand, gravel, activated carbon, cotton balls, and water.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Procedures:

1. Cut the plastic bottles in half and assemble them upside down.
2. Layer cotton balls, sand, gravel, and activated carbon inside the bottle.
3. Pour dirty water into the filter and observe how it is cleaned.
4. Discuss the importance of water conservation and water purification.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will build simple water filters and understand the process of water purification.

16. Biodiversity Scavenger Hunt

Materials:

Lists of local plant and animal species, cameras or smartphones.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Procedures:

1. Divide participants into groups.
2. Provide each group with a list of local species to find and document.
3. Explore a designated outdoor area to find the species.
4. Take photos or notes of the findings.
5. Share and discuss the findings as a group.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will learn about local biodiversity and develop observation skills.

17. Mini-Greenhouses

Materials:

Small plastic containers, soil, seeds, and water spray bottles.

Duration: 1 hour (setup) + ongoing observation

Procedures:

1. Fill the containers with soil.
2. Plant seeds in the soil.
3. Water the seeds lightly.
4. Cover the containers to create a mini-greenhouse.
5. Observe and record plant growth over time.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will learn about the conditions needed for plant growth and observe the plant life cycle.

18. Composting Workshop

Materials:

Clear containers, soil, food scraps (fruit and vegetable), leaves, and water.

Duration: 1 hour (setup) + ongoing observation

Procedures:

1. Layer soil and food scraps in the containers.
2. Add leaves and water.

3. Observe the decomposition process over time.
4. Discuss the benefits of composting and reducing food waste.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will understand the composting process and its role in waste reduction and soil enrichment.

19. Eco-Friendly Cleaning Products

Materials:

Vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice, water, spray bottles, and essential oils (optional).

Duration: 1 hour

Procedures:

1. Discuss the harmful effects of chemical cleaners.
2. Prepare cleaning solutions using the provided ingredients (e.g., vinegar solution, baking soda paste).
3. Test the cleaning products on different surfaces.
4. Discuss the benefits of using natural cleaning alternatives.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will learn to make and use eco-friendly cleaning products.

20. Climate Fresk

The Climate Fresk workshop is designed to educate participants about the causes and consequences of climate change in a collaborative and engaging way. Here's a breakdown of the typical procedure:

Workshop Objectives

- Participants understand the fundamental science behind climate change.

- Participants learn about the cause-and-effect relationships between various climate phenomena.
- Participants explore the consequences of climate change.
- Participants discuss potential solutions and actions.

Workshop Materials

- A set of “Climate Fresk” cards. These cards contain information and data related to climate change, primarily derived from IPCC reports – you can get a set from: <https://climatefresk.org>
- Large sheets of paper to arrange the cards.
- Pens and markers for drawing connections and illustrating the Fresk.
- Facilitator guide or script – you can get a set from: <https://climatefresk.org>

Workshop Procedure

1. Introduction (15-30 minutes)

- The facilitator introduces the workshop and its objectives.
- The facilitator explains the source of the information (IPCC reports).
- An icebreaker activity may be included.

2. Card Game (1.5 - 2 hours)

- Participants, in groups, receive a set of Climate Fresk cards.
- Guided by the facilitator, participants work collaboratively to arrange the cards in a cause-and-effect sequence.
- Participants discuss the relationships between the cards and build a visual “fresco” or collage.
- The facilitator’s role is to guide the participants, ask questions, and ensure scientific accuracy, rather than lecture.

3. Creative Phase (30-45 minutes)

- Participants work in their groups to decorate their “fresco” with drawings, titles, and key messages.
- This phase helps participants to appropriate the knowledge and express their understanding creatively.

4. Debriefing (1 hour)

- Participants share their group’s fresco and discuss what they learned.
- The facilitator leads a discussion about the systemic nature of climate change, its impacts, and potential solutions.

- Participants are encouraged to reflect on their emotions, their role in the issue, and what actions they can take.

Key Facilitation Principles

- Guide, don’t lecture: The facilitator’s role is to help participants discover the information for themselves.
- Encourage collaboration: The workshop is designed to be a collaborative experience.
- Promote critical thinking: Participants are encouraged to ask questions and challenge assumptions.
- Empower action: The workshop aims to inspire participants to take action on climate change.

Expected Outcomes:

- Understand the fundamental science behind climate change.
- Learn about the cause-and-effect relationships between various climate phenomena.
- Explore the consequences of climate change.
- Discuss potential solutions and actions.

Closing remarks

United for a greener future project was one of those adventures that started from a conversation. It grew to a need, got converted into a plan and in the end came out as an inspiring journey including many partners, people and institutions. We could not only face some of our challenges but also share some lessons that came from our transformation. Many things can be said but not all of them can be done. And this was one of our purposes. To try to face what we say with what we do in the green sphere of our you worker's life.

We are grateful to all the partner organizations and youth workers that joined this project. We are happy that we have built new connections, partnerships, project ideas and grew both as individuals and as organizations.

If you found this publication helpful please reach out to us and let us know. If you would like to join forces in other projects please also reach out to us. We all have a number of activities that you can participate in and we are also always looking for new ideas where we can be of some change for a positive future.

We hope that this and our future activities will plant some seeds to a better future for our planet and ourselves on it.



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Find out more about the partners and project activities within the book or visit:

www.wuesem.org



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