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Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnerships in School Education
Teaching Circular ECOnomy to the FUTURE generations
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ECO-FUTURE NEWSLETTER

Hello and welcome to the ECO-FUTURE project newsletter! We're excited to share this initiative with you, which is aimed at integrating circular economy concepts into early education. It was funded by the Erasmus+ program, ECO-FUTURE and ran from September 1, 2022, to August 31, 2024.





This project brought together educators and experts from Finland, Italy, and Macedonia to develop innovative educational resources and training specifically for you, our dedicated teachers. In this newsletter, you'll discover the latest updates and results, inspiring stories, and practical tools to help you incorporate sustainable practices into your classroom. Let's work together to inspire the next generation to embrace a more sustainable future!

PARTNERS

Havukosken koulu (Finland)	Mine Vaganti NGO (Italy)	AAR Social Development Association (Finland)	Osnovno uchilishte so resursen centar "Maca Gjorgjieva Ovcharova" (Macedonia)

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What Is the ECO-FUTURE Project About?

ECO-FUTURE was a 24-month educational initiative focused on empowering teachers to educate children about the circular economy and foster sustainable values and actions. Born out of the need to rethink our systems post-COVID-19, the project aimed to support students, schools, and communities that are motivated to act sustainably on personal, community, and global levels.



ECO-FUTURE created training to upskill teachers by enhancing their abilities to address green and environmental issues using an innovative learning approach called tinkering. This inquiry-based pedagogy engages students in immersive, pupil-centered learning experiences, fostering a desire to learn how to learn. The goal of the materials created is to equip teachers to better support young pupils aged 6 to 12 in exploring environmental issues, solving problems, and developing a sustainability mindset, enabling them to make informed and responsible decisions in their daily lives, both inside and outside of school.

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ECO-FUTURE Objectives

- Equipping pupils from the early age with the knowledge and skills to make informed and responsible decisions regarding sustainability in their daily lives, both inside and outside of school.
- Utilizing the tinkering approach to engage pupils in immersive, student-centered learning experiences that encourage a passion for learning and problem-solving.



- Enabling young pupils aged 6 to 12 to explore environmental issues, solving problems, and developing a mindset focused on sustainability.
- Enhancing teachers' skills to effectively address green and environmental issues through innovative learning approaches.



- Developing and implementing educational methods that foster sustainability values and actions among students, schools, and communities.
- Rethinking and redesigning educational practices in response to the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, addressing the need for resilient and sustainable systems.

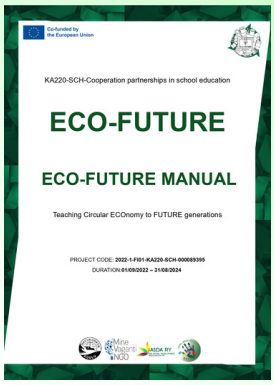


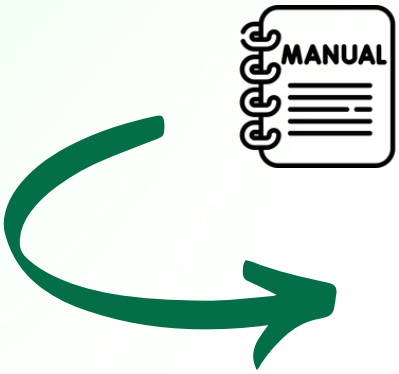
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ECO-FUTURE Results

ECO-FUTURE Manual

The ECO-FUTURE project developed a comprehensive training manual to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to teach circular economy concepts effectively.

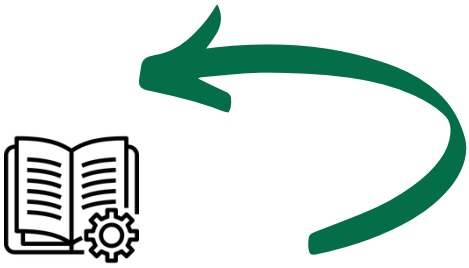




This guide outlines methodologies and best practices for integrating these concepts into primary education. It includes consortium research and a specialized training format designed to upskill teachers and educators. Through international training sessions, teachers were enhanced in green competencies, non-formal education, and the tinkering methodology, demonstrating how to integrate these approaches into school education.

ECO-FUTURE Toolkit

The ECO-FUTURE project also produced a versatile toolkit full of activities and cartoons to support teachers in delivering circular economy education.





This set of tools and resources includes plentiful practical NFE and tinkering activities that can be seamlessly integrated into school curricula. The toolkit features four animated cartoons designed to engage students and reinforce learning, making the educational experience both effective and enjoyable.

HAVUKOSKEN KOULU

Mine Vaganti NGO

ASDA RY
AAR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION RY

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Engaging Young Learners

The ECO-FUTURE cartoons, tailored for young students, makes learning about the circular economy fun and memorable. It uses engaging language and visuals to relate sustainability concepts to children's interests. The project featured hands-on activities and challenges that enable students to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, fostering a lasting interest in environmental issues.



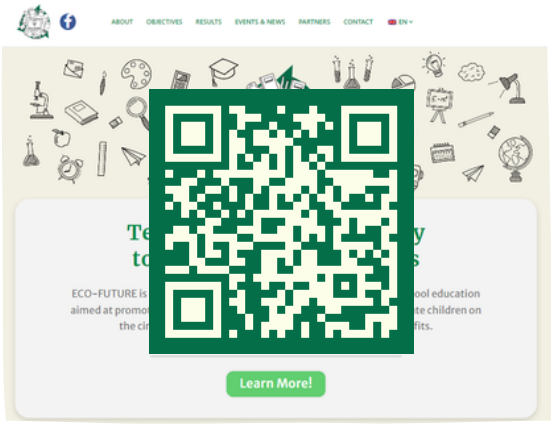


Digital Resources and Accessibility

The ECO-FUTURE project maintains a dedicated website and social media presence to share resources, updates, and success stories. These platforms provide ongoing support and inspiration for educators and students worldwide. All training materials, toolkits, and educational resources are available online, ensuring easy access for educators and reducing the environmental impact of physical materials.

Community Involvement and Dissemination

Multiple events were organized to share the project's results with teachers, educators, and other stakeholders, promoting the adoption of its methods and materials. Strong partnerships between schools, NGOs, and educational institutions were fostered, creating a supportive network to promote sustainable education practices. These networks additionally disseminated the project's findings and resources, ensuring a broader and more sustained impact.



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Partners' Meetings

Kick-Off Meeting

In December 2022, the partners met in Finland for a kick-off meeting to formally launch the project and initiate their collaborative efforts.





2nd Transnational Project Meeting

The partners met in the Republic of North Macedonia on March 18, 2023, to discuss all project progress and plan its second half of the project.

Final Evaluation Meeting

On June 26, 2024, in Italy, partners gathered for the Final Evaluation Meeting of the ECO-FUTURE project.



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International Training Course



Project partners successfully implemented International Training Course for teachers and educators "Teaching Circular ECOnomy to the FUTURE generations – ECO-FUTURE."



Held from October 30th to November 3rd in Helsinki, Finland, the training involved teachers from Italy, Finland, and Macedonia. This course provided an up-skilling pathway programme to enhance key green competencies, deepen understanding of the circular economy, and utilize the tinkering methodology. Participants explored engaging and motivational elements of learner-centred, immersive, personal learning and co-design processes to create effective tools for pupils.



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Local Activities

Across various regions, consortium partners have undertaken significant local activities aimed at educating and engaging students in sustainability practices. These activities were diverse and impactful.



Toolkit-Inspired Workshops

Non-formal Lessons: Interactive sessions on the circular economy and the 5R principles (reduce, reuse, recycle, repair, rethink) emphasized critical thinking and practical sustainability, making learning enjoyable.

Tinkering; Recycled Paper Workshops, Creative Reuse Projects, Upcycling Initiatives

Community Engagement

In collaboration with local associations, multiple classes crafted birdhouses and bee shelters from recycled materials and installed them in public parks to showcase bird species from the 2020 lockdown. Inspired by the project toolkit, the workshops included making decorative garlands and involved over 40 hours of hands-on learning.



These activities resulted in high engagement and satisfaction rates among students and teachers. Over 80% of participants expressed appreciation for the activities, and there was a notable improvement in students' skills and knowledge, with an 80% increase reported. Teachers found the non-formal methods less stressful and more engaging, leading to a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment.

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Multiplier Events

Consortium partners organized several multiplier events designed to raise awareness about sustainability, the circular economy, and the ECOFUTURE project's goals and outcomes. These events strengthened community ties and promoted the project's results among a broader audience, encouraging the adoption of sustainable practices and creating a network of engaged stakeholders. Events were structured to maximize community involvement and promote the project's impact:





- **Community Clean-Up and Project Promotion:** Families, pupils, and teachers participated in park clean-up events followed by project presentations, introducing the ECOFUTURE project and emphasizing sustainability and the circular economy.
- **Interactive Workshops and Sustainable Buffets:** Events featured upcycling workshops and a buffet with reusable crockery, teaching sustainability skills and waste reduction practices.
- **Community Impact and Feedback:** The events fostered community spirit, with participants expressing gratitude and curiosity. Waste discovery led to anti-littering signs and ideas like sealed paper envelopes for candy wrappers at Halloween.
- **Children's Environmental Engagement:** Children showed environmental care and shared their protection efforts, demonstrating the project's success in instilling responsibility.

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Project's Sustainability

The ECO-FUTURE project emphasized both environmental impact and the longevity of its educational initiatives. To ensure that the benefits extend beyond the initial funding period, we have integrated several key strategies into our approach.





Teacher Empowerment and Professional Development

The project provided a strong training manual and toolkit designed to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to teach circular economy concepts effectively. These resources are user-friendly and adaptable, allowing teachers to continue using them long after the project ends. By establishing upskilling pathways for teachers, we ensured that they remain at the forefront of educational practices related to sustainability.

Sustainable Educational Practices

By incorporating tinkering and inquiry-based learning into the curriculum, we ensured that students developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for sustainable living. These methods encouraged hands-on learning and active engagement with environmental issues, fostering a deep, practical understanding of sustainability.



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Thank you for exploring the ECO-FUTURE project with us!
We've discovered the vital role that innovative tools and methods play in helping teachers effectively teach circular economy concepts. Inquiry-based learning and engaging resources like cartoons have proven to inspire young pupils to adopt sustainable practices and make informed decisions.

For more information and to access our fantastic toolkit, comprehensive manual, and fun educational cartoons, be sure to visit our website and follow us on Facebook!

★Thank you for being a part of the ECO-FUTURE journey.
Your commitment to early education and sustainability is invaluable.
We invite you to stay connected with us for more exciting updates, resources, and opportunities to collaborate.



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO STAY INFORMED AND INSPIRED.

https://shorturl.at/VKAhT

https://shorturl.at/nfOif

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