REPORT

GO GREEN: Greening Europe Through Participation Youth Exchange

Go Green



Place: Varna, Bulgaria
Date: June 10-14, 2024

Funded by
the European Union

YE: GO GREEN
Greening Europe Through Participation

The purpose of this report about the youth exchange GO GREEN is to motivate other non-governmental organisations and young people to develop similar projects and initiatives to stimulate young people to be active citizens and through their actions to promote and assist environmental sustainability and to raise the awareness of current ecological issues such as climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss, food waste etc.

Host organisation:
Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Culture and Education, Bulgaria

Partners:
SFERA, North Macedonia
Monomyths, Romania
TAVO, Lithuania

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Co-funded by the European Union

The youth exchange GO GREEN took place at Golden Sands seaside resort on the Northern Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The chosen accommodation was Detelina Hotel. It proved to be an ideal place for conducting the activities as it is located away from the big city, making it easy to work outside and enjoy the first sunny days of the summer. It is also minutes away from the beach and bus stops, thus giving participants the option to easily explore nearby places.

24 young people took part in the exchange, aged 18-30, from four European Countries: **Bulgaria**, **Lithuania**, **Romania**, and **North Macedonia**. The participants arrived at the hotel on 9 June and left on 15 June.



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The youth exchange introduced the participants to environmental sustainability by engaging them to actively explore various steps to ensure and promote sustainability. They were introduced to the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the EU EU Youth Strategy (2019-2024) and the European Youth Goals (with specific focus on #10 Sustainable Green Europe).

The project implemented non-formal activities to highlight the importance of youth participation through entrepreneurship and its various forms.



The topics of the project were:

- Sustainability (with emphasis on its environmental aspect)
- Steps and approaches to ensure sustainability on an individual and collective level
- EU Youth Strategy (2019-2024)
- European Youth Goals

Various non-formal learning methods and activities were used:

- Ice breakers
- Role playing and collective games
- Creativity and teamwork games
- Discussion, debates, brainstorming and reflection
- Intercultural and experiential learning
- Soft-skill training

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The aims of the project were:

- To educate participants on the EU's main policy fields related to environmental and sustainable development
- To raise awareness of environmental protection and to foster the creation of sustainable and inclusive societies across Europe
- To facilitate the exchange of international "green" practices
- To foster a sustainable lifestyle among participants in their everyday lives
- To actively involve them in influencing other young people's sustainability habits/attitudes
- To create campaigns and green initiatives to promote environmental protection and activism practices among young people

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The reached results:

1. Participants gained a deeper understanding and new knowledge about the European Union, its values and goals in the field of youth
2. Participants increased their understanding of sustainability and the steps to support and promote it both on an individual and group level
3. Empowered young people to become active European citizens and participate in the democratic life of Europe, through exploring the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027)
4. Participants are more aware of the importance of youth activism in terms of sustainability and maximizing the positive impact on the environment.
5. Participants gained and further developed valuable soft skills including leadership and negotiation skills, analytical and problem-solving skills, critical thinking, constructive participation in dialogue and debate, the ability to comprehend abstract concepts and intercultural competences

The participants were first asked to come up with three words/definitions about sustainability and then gathered in groups of two and later in groups of four to come up with one agreed definition on what is sustainability

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What is sustainability?

Sustainability is meeting the needs of the present and the use of resources in a way that does not degrade or deplenish them, so they are still available for the future generations.

Sustainability is the process of making, using and re-using reusable energy, materials or minerals without creating permanent waste. This means giving clothes a second life through thrifting, using plastic/paper, using public transportation systems and renewable energy sources (no capitalism).

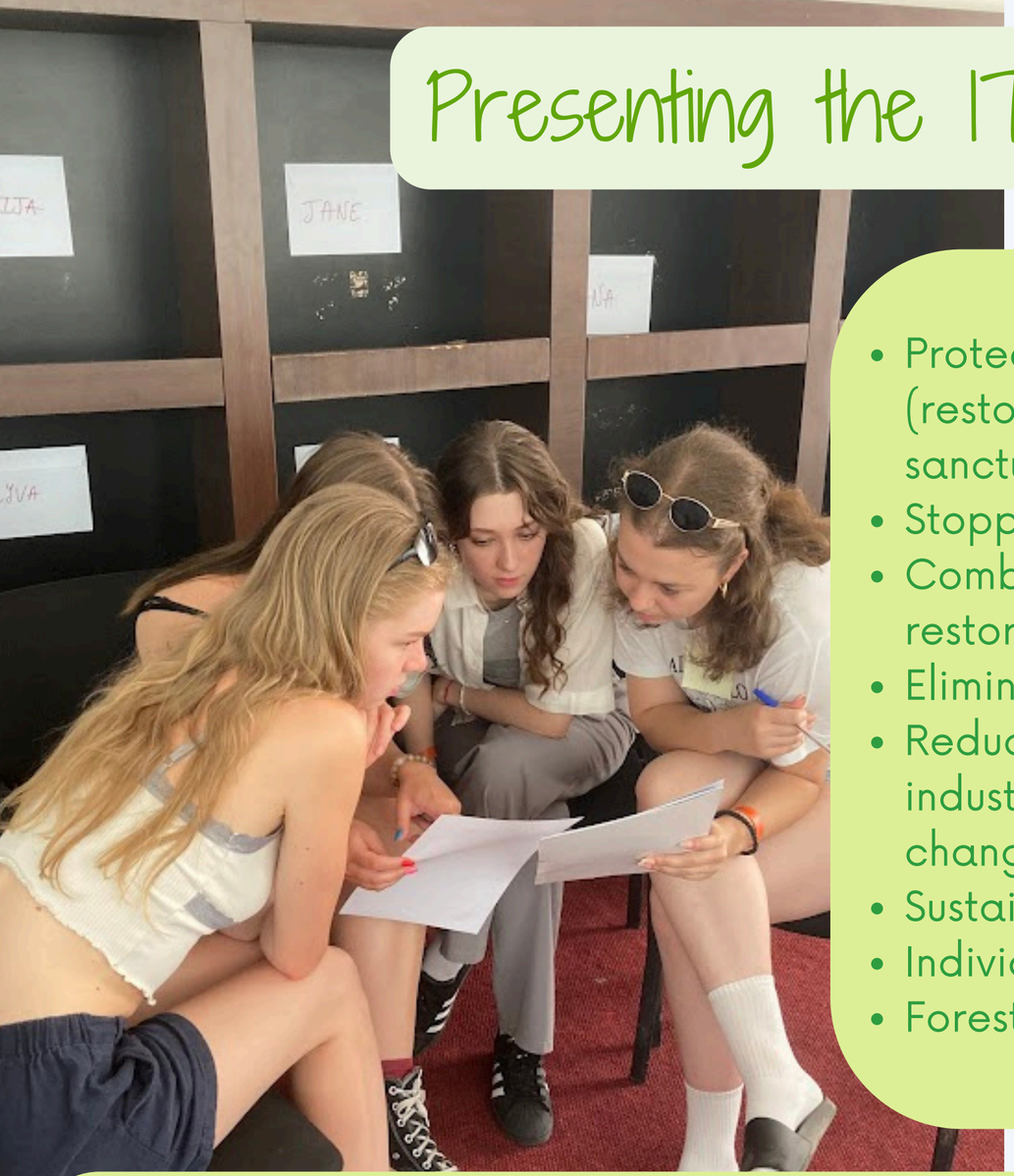
Sustainability is the capacity of mankind to ensure the satisfaction of future generations without compromising their resources and necessities, while holding an approach full of peace, freedom, balance and no barriers, combining these things with cooperation we will achieve sustainability.

Sustainability is minimizing the amount of garbage/ trash and reusing everything that can be reused, recycle everything that can be recycled, such as second-hand clothes, bicycles instead of cars, etc.

Sustainability is a long term process in a community when we support action for different topics i.e. ENVIRONMENT (recycling, green gas, solar energy, etc.) In the process we take a risk and work with motivation.
Participation + Progress = Sustainability, keeping our environment alive :)



Presenting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals



LIFE ON LAND

- Protecting biodiversity + ecosystem (restoring forests, natural parks and sanctuaries)
- Stopping shifting agriculture
- Combating desertification (by restoring degraded land and soil)
- Eliminating poaching
- Reduce human pressure (car usage, industry, carbon footprint, climate change)
- Sustainable urban development
- Individual responsibility
- Forestation
- Improvement of infrastructure
- Alternative ways of transportation (public transport, bikes, etc.)
- More nuclear power plants (Green fuel)
- Reusable energy (solar, wind ...)
- Regulations on hunting
- Use reusable materials
- Make eco-friendly choices
- Reduce your carbon footprints
- Volunteering
- Eco food
- More charity activities

The participants were introduced to United Nations' 17 SDGs and had to brainstorm on ideas how to support the fulfillment of the goals #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, #12 Responsible Consumption and Production, #14 Life Below Water and #15 Life On Land. They were divided into four international teams. Each team had 10 minutes to work on each of the goals.

Presenting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

- Circuit of economy
- Renewable energy (solar, wind...)
- Recycling
- Reducing overconsumption
- Reusable clothes
- Increase of import taxes
- Buying clothes from a second-hand shop
- Use local products
- Make your own garden
- Leftovers from restaurants should be given for charity
- More expensive materials that add to greenhouse gas
- Reduce cutting trees, it should be forbidden

- Increase parking taxes
- Taxes when you enter the city with a car
- Change your car with a bike
- Make eco-friendly choices
- Responsible use for natural resources
- Support eco-friendly products and services
- Reduce emissions
- Reusable packaging
- Reduce post-harvest food losses
- Invest in local business
- Individual responsibility
- Labour protection laws
- Incentivize nuclear energy for production



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Presenting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

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LIFE BELOW WATER

- Legislation, waste tax
- Invest in renewable energy (government intervention)
- Reduce-Reuse-Recycle
- Transparency about waste management from companies and governments
- Clean up and restoration of aquatic habitats
- Individual responsibility
- Circuit of economy
- Limited/ Controlled fishing
- Reducing the production of CO_2
- Less shipping deliveries
- Stop burning fossil fuels

- Stop throwing garbage in the seas/lakes etc.
- Not allowing people to enter natural caves that are protected by the law
- Do not enter the sea/ ocean after showering at home with shampoo containing lots of chemicals
- Volunteering for sea animals
- Filter industry water
- Volunteer to help reduce invasive species
- Participate in cleanup projects
- Stop increasing the level of acidification

Presenting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Eco actions/eco events
- More green spaces
- Less buildings
- Less cars allowed
- Renewable energy
- Recycle
- Garbage selection
- Animal shelters
- Private tutoring for all
- Jobs opportunities for people without a degree
- Using sustainable practices
- Free local bikes and free food on Sunday
- More legal landfills - less illegal
- Safe and inclusive cities

- Stricter law system to ensure safety
- Reduce air pollution
- Integration in community (language accessibility, cultural exposure)
- Participatory platforms to include every citizen domain (housing, education, etc.)
- Better public transport systems
- Encouraging volunteering
- Fund public services
- Alternative ways of transportations (scooters, bikes, bus)
- Using renewable energy (solar panels) for project buildings
- Volunteering activities in the community
- More bike paths and public transport

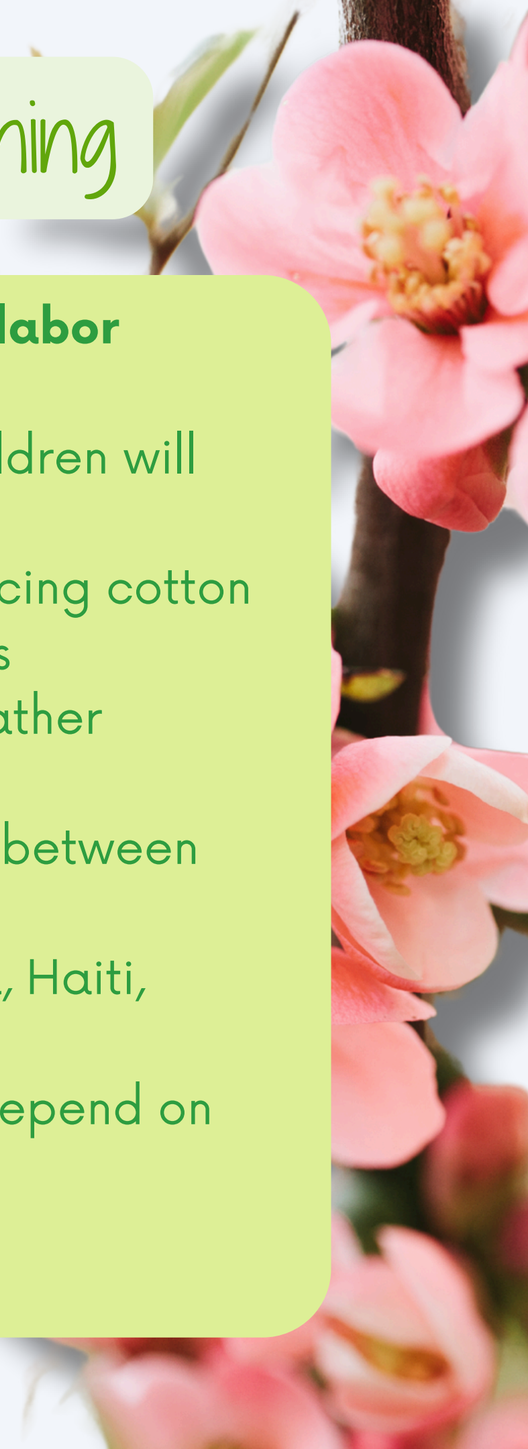


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Beware, we are watching: In this group activity, participants divided in four groups had to draft proposals on how to raise awareness of and fight against garment industry violations such as child labor, use of energy and water, gas and carbon emissions, toxins, inefficient wages, inefficient production, wasting time and money.

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Beware, we are watching



Group 1 - Protest against child labor

Motto: If your cotton is organic, the children will LIVE and QUIT.
Aims: giving children better lives, replacing cotton with organic, protection of human rights
Implementation: spread awareness, gather (recruit) people, go out on the protest
Timetable: 10-15 December, everyday, between 12-3 pm
Places: Burkina-Faso, Somalia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Uganda, Nigeria, India
Costs: Funded by NGOs, UNICEF, will depend on the place, estimated costs 5000+ euro

Beware, we are watching



Group 2 - Gas Emissions Initiative

Aims and objectives: To decrease gas emissions created by transportation and to convince people to use eco-friendly travel alternatives
Activities: Short-term - training course for the youth about gas emissions problems; Long-term - propose an increase in carbon taxation
Timetable: 2-3 months (for the TC); 1-2 years (for the taxation proposal)
Place: TC - in a teaching institution; taxation proposal - in a governmental building
Costs: training programme: 200 euros;
Resources needed: trainers and venue; lawyer (long-term)

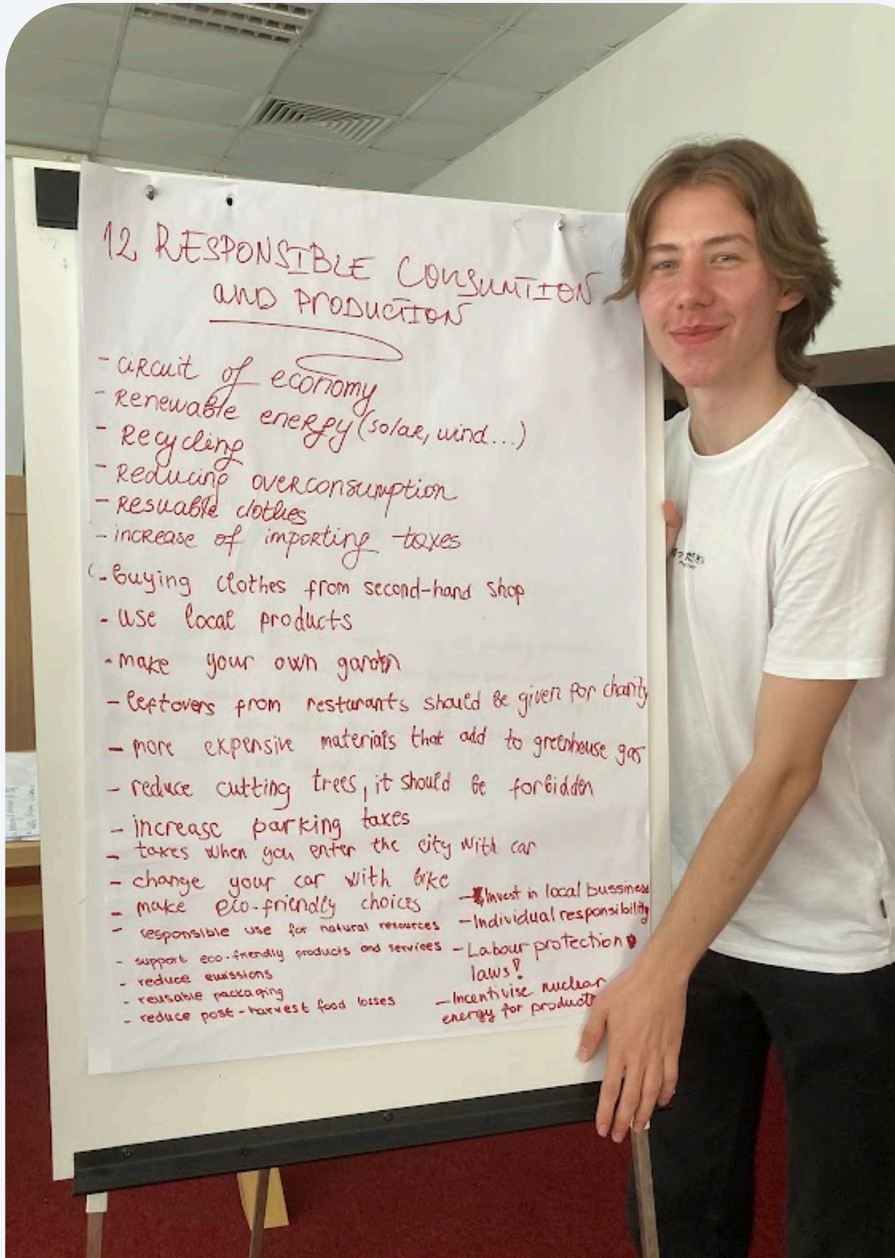
Group 3 - Introducing child labor regulations

Aims: To eliminate child labor
Reasons: The exploitation of children and also adults; Inhumane working conditions
Activity: Introducing regulations (taxation, legislation) on the country and businesses that outsource their productions
Timetable: Long-term
Places: Government institutions - Brussels, BE, Washington, USA; NGOs - all around the world
Costs: Companies and businesses will have to sacrifice their profit; Use the money from taxes in good cause (to fund the process of eliminating/reducing/ raise awareness on child labor); Engagement from many governmental organizations and NGOs

Beware, we are watching

Group 4 - Child Labor

Aims: To eliminate child labor in the clothing industry; focused on developing countries
Activities: Boycotting brands and companies that use child labor to produce clothes; Increase the support for companies that adhere to ethics and moral when producing clothes (i. e. donating money); Establishing fundraising organisations for the education of the children, so they wouldn't be pressured to work
Timetable: Planning and holding the boycotts - 1-3 months; Fundraising campaigns - 6-12 months
Place: Social Media, educational institutions, street campaigns in cities and villages to reach as many people as possible; third-world countries
Costs: 50K



Who is greener: In this group activity the participants had to think of different ways to make a specific business more sustainable.

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Who is greener?

Group 1: Clothes shop

- less water usage
- less usage of cotton
- producing reusable clothes
- old clothes would be recycled and the materials will be used to produce new ones



Who is greener?

Group 2: Bakery

1. **Product**
   - distribution of raw materials from local business (bulk delivery)
   - manufacturing: employees who use alternative ways of transport will get awarded (bonuses)
2. **Logistics**
   - from factory to local shop - using modern vehicles that have smaller carbon emissions
   - from local shop to customer - set dates when deliveries will be made
3. **Local shop**
   - using recyclable materials (glass, wood, paper, bamboo)
   - 15% off to anyone that uses alternative ways of transport to take their orders
   - returning the bought products containing reusable materials (return a minimal amount of money)

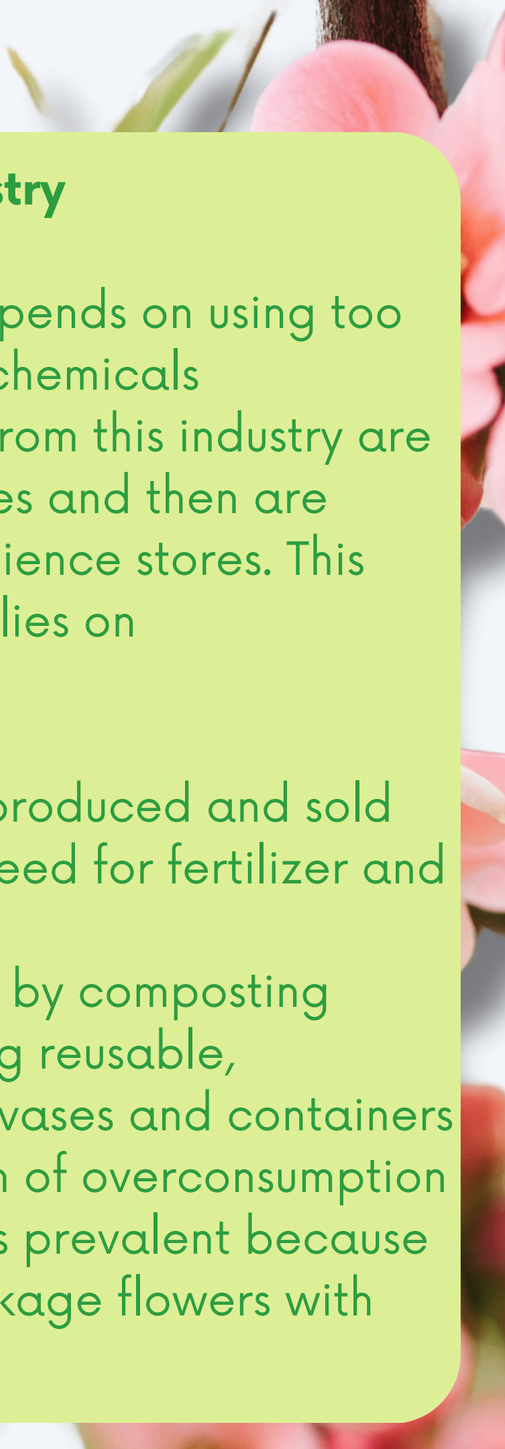
Group 3: Floristry

Current Problems:

- The current industry model depends on using too much fertilizer and anti-pest chemicals
- Most of the products bought from this industry are shipped from foreign territories and then are packaged and sold in convenience stores. This process is unnecessary and relies on overconsumption of energy

Our approach:

- Since our flowers are locally produced and sold there won't be as much of a need for fertilizer and chemicals usage.
- We minimize landfilled debris by composting botanical scraps and choosing reusable, recyclable and compostable vases and containers
- Since we're local, the problem of overconsumption of plastic and energy is not as prevalent because there won't be a need to package flowers with plastic



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Who is greener?



Group 4: Gift Shop

Our goals: Zero plastic; Eco-friendly environment; Save the planet; Support local businesses (jobless people without a degree)

Location:

- A botanical garden
- Reachable by foot or bicycle
- Own bees - we sell our own honey
- A nice place to enjoy your free coffee

Offers:

- If you have a reusable bag - you get 10% discount
- Collect trash to get a free coffee
- Give a plastic bottle to get money (1 bottle - 10 cents)

Products:

- Made from eco-friendly materials
- Honey
- Handmade goods from local artists
- Second-hand t-shirts
- Botanical perfumes from roses

Outside of the Crisis: The participants were introduced to the SWOT analysis as a tool to define the current market position of a given business. Then they were divided into groups and each of the groups was assigned a "green" business they had to conduct SWOT analysis for.

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Business: Secondhand Physical Shop (using a part of the profits to organize workshops for young designers)
Strengths: Supporting and motivating young people; Favored by the community for showing a good example; Sustainable means of selling; discounts for customers who bring their old clothes
Weaknesses: No "modern" online shopping service; Changing trends; Potential inefficient waste of time; Limited budget
Opportunities: Partnering up with the future fashion designers; Growing customer awareness; Hosting educational workshops (can not only expand the business but revolutionize fashion)
Threats: Low demand for secondhand clothing (people prefer brands, the stigma of clothes being "dirty"); Competition between other nearby secondhand shops; Law permissions to host workshops and raise fundraisers

Business: From cans lying on the pavements, creating jewels
Strengths: USP - Our business offers unique and eco-friendly jewels; cost-effective raw material; first-mover advantage (early entry into a niche market leading to a strong brand presence)
Weaknesses: Competitive market, perception of value (some customers may perceive the jewels less valuable compared to the traditional ones)
Opportunities: Expansion to other platforms, collaborations, entering the global market
Threats: Changing consumer preferences (leading to decreased demand for specific types of eco-friendly goods); intellectual property issues (imitation of unique designs by competitors)

Outside the Crisis

Go Green



Business: 24/7 bike rental services online
Strengths: 24/7 customer service; direct delivery; rent online; good marketing; innovation grants; user-friendly interface (web page, app); no competition on the market
Weaknesses: Unqualified staff, bad management; bad marketing; not enough funds
Opportunities: High gas prices, good bike infrastructure, cheap repair materials, higher eco-awareness
Threats: Lowered eco-awareness. expensive repair materials, busy traffic, bad bike infrastructure, potential cyber attacks

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Creating Green Protocols: Split into international groups the participants had to think of three green protocols (with specific steps included) aimed to: 1) teach students on sustainable practices in schools, 2) to help staff minimize energy consumption and introduce green practices in the office and 3) to create green steps and measures to help factory workers



Protocol #1: Greener Schools

- Recycle the garbage buns in schools
- No paper in class – prioritizing digitalization
- Using electronic devices
- Reusable utensil
- Compose leftovers from cafeteria
- Implement subject focused on sustainability

Protocol #2: Green Protocol For Factory Workers

Goals:

- Reduce the negative environmental impact
- Enhance health and safety
- Promote awareness
- Compliance with environmental regulations

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Protocol #3: Green Practice in the Office

- Introduce a new proposal for light consumption/ pollution (put a cap on how much energy we can spend) + add sensors
- Switch the energy provider
- Limit the usage and temperature of air conditioning
- Regulate the usage of computers (better cooling system, sleep mode, desktop light)
- Recycling system in the office (composting leftovers, water bottles recycling paper)
- Sustainable and alternative ways of transport (bus, train, carpool)
- Conduct an inventory of plug load equipment (coffee makers, printers)

Protocol #4: Green Protocol For Factory Workers:

Steps/ Measures:

- Energy efficiency: Energy-efficient lighting, e. e. equipment, renewable energy
- Waste Management: Recycling program for materials, internal reusage, discarding of hazardous waste
- Sustainable mats: Ethical suppliers, less harmful chemicals, use of recycled mats
- Employee involvement and education: Training sessions, sustainability initiatives, reward
- Review/ Evaluation: Conduct periodic reviews of the protocol to ensure it remains effective and relevant
- Update the protocol based on new technologies, regulations and feedback from workers and stakeholders

Campaigns to make the city "greener": Before the Varna Adventure activity the participants had to come up with creative campaigns on how to make the city "greener" and stimulate eco-friendly actions of the citizens of Varna.

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GREEN CITY - BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION, NOT THE POLLUTION

1. **Energy**: Solar panels, automatically controlled street lights
2. **Transportation**: Bike infrastructure, promote public transportation (cheaper tickets, electric buses, free ride days), taxes for driving in the city, expensive parking tickets
3. **Resource conservation**: Recycling machines/ bins (deposit), promoting less water usage per household (bonuses, cheaper bills for less usage)
4. **Nature conservation**: More volunteering actions by the community (planting trees, cleaning actions), new green parks (powered by solar panels), strict regulations regarding water pollution (sewage)
5. **Education**: Youth programs with different activities

GREENER CITY CAMPAIGN: BE DIFFERENT, BE THE CHANGE

Don't be an egoist: Use public transport

Be modern: Reduce, reuse, recycle

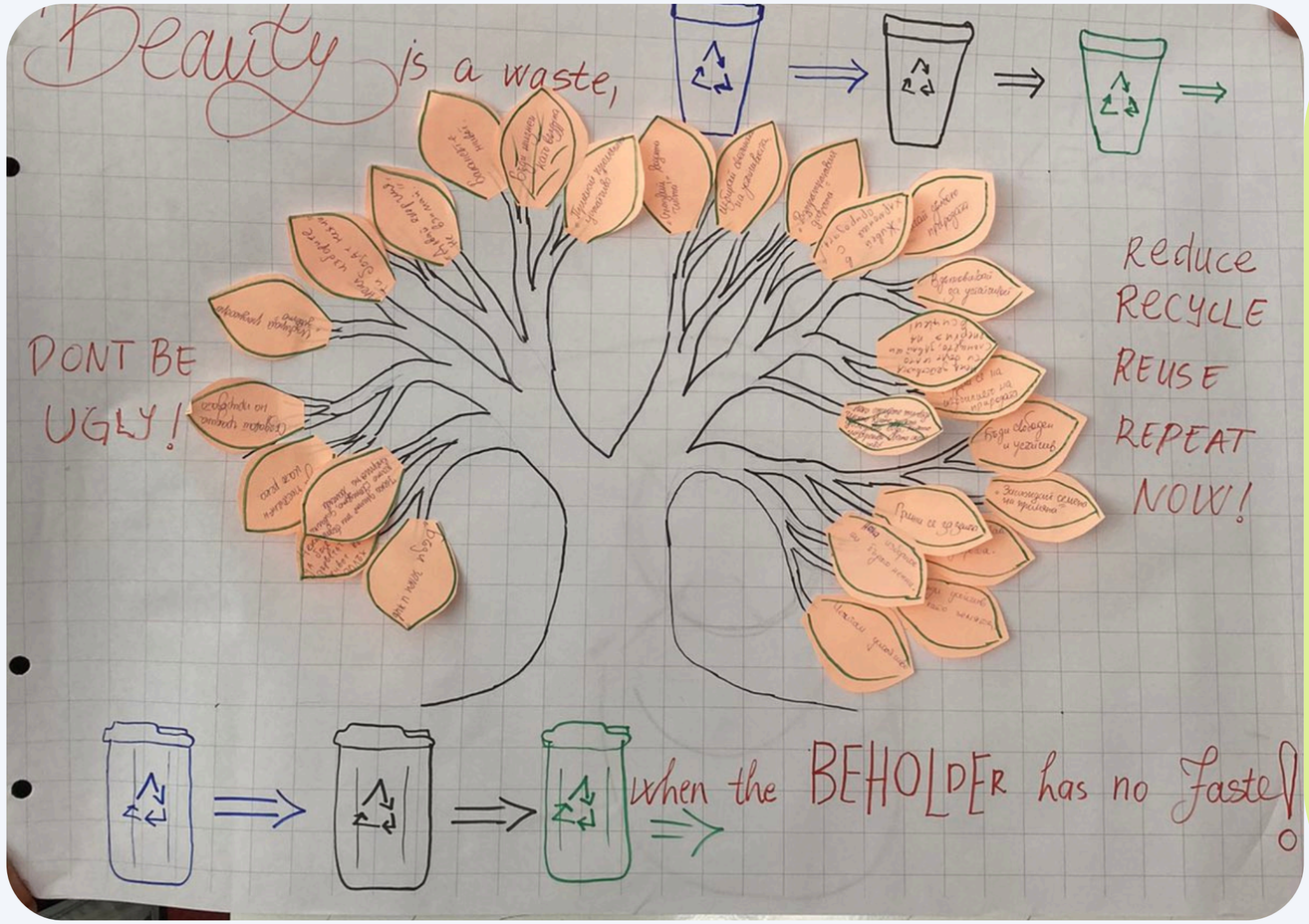
Be original: Save the forest

Be responsible: Clean after yourself

Aesthetic greener city or ugly darker trash? - You choose where to live.

Campaigns to make the city "greener"

Go Green



BEAUTY IS A WASTE, DON'T BE UGLY

This campaign consisted of multiple slogans focused on ecological sustainability and designed to motivate eco behavior among the citizens of Varna.



Campaigns to make the city "greener"

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WE CAN TOUCH THE WORLD

- Use washable containers
- Recycle books and newspapers
- Recycle paper and plastics
- Walk home
- Help create national parks
- Turn off lights
- Reduce how much water you use
- Donate clothes



VARNA ADVENTURE

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Participants prepared posters to promote their idea to make the city “greener” and the GO GREEN YE to the local people and created a playful, interactive, and entertaining video showcasing their excursion in Varna, including their interactions with locals and special moments.

An adventure game was organized during the fourth day of the youth exchange. Participants were divided into groups. To finish the game each group had to complete six tasks while exploring the sea garden in the city of Varna.

➢ Each group must create a team name
➢ Each group must pick a symbol that represents the group: a stone or a seashell, or anything else that represents your group
➢ Each group must meet a local young person who speaks English and tell them about the European Youth Goals and the project
➢ Each group will have to make a photo with an animal and another local of all ages
➢ Each group must find the secret bridge of wishes, hidden in the Varna Sea Garden and make a wish there

On the final day of the GO GREEN YE the participants were introduced to the Erasmus+ Programme, its objectives, priorities and key actions, the EU Youth Strategy and the 11 European Youth Goals. Afterwards, they were asked to draft sample projects based on the learned about the Erasmus+ Programme.

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Volunteering - Should I go volunteering TC

Problem: Disinterest of the youth to actively take part and add value to the community
Aim: To show the benefits of volunteering and encourage them to take action
Target Group: 14-20 years old
Key Activities:

- Sessions on how to find organisations to work with and communicate with
- Explain how volunteering works and how to take action (depending on the project days 4-5 practical activities in the community will be organised (cleaning litter, working with elders or with kids with disabilities)
- Follow-up: After completing the project, each country should organise at least 1 practical activily in their homeland

Outcomes:

- Skills on how to be a leader
- How to motivate others
- How to make an impact
- Communication Skills

Impact: To teach youth about volunteering and involve them (short term); to involve more youth in these activities (long term)
Sharing Results: Report for follow up action from each country; social media, web page, share with other Erasmus project in the future

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Training Program For Healthy Lifestyle

Duration: 14 days
Objectives: Improving lifestyle and developing healthy/ sustainable habits
Place: Lithuania, Nida
Target Groups: Adults/ Adolescents (18-25)
Activities: Cycling, Kayaking, Cooking healthy food, yoga, meditation, self-discovery, swimming, basketball
Learning Outcomes: Improving adolescents' lives, support them in adopting healthy lifestyle habits, improving their mental and physical health
Impact and Sustainability: Will be achieved through social media, end products, 10 gold goals
Dissemination and Sharing Results: Seminars, documentation, social media articles



Training Program For Social Media Addiction

Background: Growing rates of obesity, sedentary lifestyle and mental health challenges, increased social media addiction, consumption of highly processed food

Target Groups: Young people between 13 and 18 years old who are motivated to learn and improve their lifestyle; teachers and community leaders

Activities: Camping in a mountain, teamwork activities, educational workshops, outdoor activities (sports, hiking, meditation, yoga)

Learning outcomes: How to overcome social media addiction, live a balanced life, socialize more

Impact and Sustainability: Health programs in schools, new skills, partnerships with health organizations, youth empowerment

Dissemination and sharing results: Promoting the project on social media, organizing workshops in participants' own community, butterfly effect

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Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural Evenings: Non-formal learning and sharing of national culture helped young people engage in intercultural dialogue. By organising cultural evenings, participants got the chance to proudly represent their country, while learning about other groups' culture, cuisine, music, dance, and interesting facts. The evenings included videos about different countries, filled with practical and interesting information, traditional foods and drinks, music, and dances. These cultural nights foster the formation of intercultural groups and cultivate a feeling of tolerance among young people.

Secret Friend Game

On the first day of the youth exchange, everyone received a secret friend, that remained unknown until the end of the exchange. The names of everyone were written on envelopes, that were then stuck to the wall. During the youth exchange, participants had to leave small gifts varying from notes, candy and souvenirs, to their secret friends, without revealing who it is. On the last day, an interactive game was played to reveal everyone's secret friend.

The youth exchange concluded with the awarding of Youthpass certificates, the secret friends revealing, and a final evaluation.





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