



The role of adult education in
fostering environmental awareness

EPALE

Austria | E-Platform for
Adult Learning in Europe

**The role of adult education in
fostering environmental awareness**

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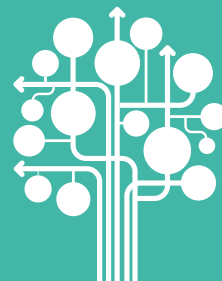
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EPALE

Österreich

EDITORIAL

The promotion of environmental awareness and sustainability are central components of future-oriented adult education. The sixth Thematic Conference 2020 was held on 17 and 18 June under the title 'The role of adult education in fostering environmental awareness'. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, whose economic and social effects were also discussed at the conference, EPALE Austria and Erasmus+ Adult Education hosted the conference online.

The goal of the European Green Deal that was announced in 2019 is to achieve climate neutrality in the European Union by 2050. Offerings such as reskilling and upskilling enable adults to actively participate in the green transition in various sectors of the labour market. With this in mind, environmental education will be one of the main focuses of the new Erasmus+ Programme 2021–2027 ('Green Erasmus').

What offerings do already exist in sustainable adult education? How can offerings for sustainable development be designed and implemented? Roughly 120 participants from the adult and environmental education segments discussed how sustainable offerings can be created in order to respond to and help shape the green transformation. This publication contains the articles for the conference.

In her article 'Adult education and training for green transitions', **Shinyoung Jeon** (OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) emphasises the importance of vocational education and training for the green transformation of the economy. With a view to the economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 and the high number of people with low writing, reading, and arithmetic

skills, it is crucial to boost the competences of participants in VET with regard to the environment and sustainability (green skills).

The article by **Margit Helene Meister** (Department of Environmental and Energy Economics, Lower Austria) is dedicated to the 'leseumwelt' initiative as a tool for environmental education. For this purpose, more than 50 book towers have been set up at libraries in Lower Austria, offering suitable books on various topics related to the environment and sustainability for people of all ages. In this way, the intergenerational project aims to contribute to the promotion of environmental awareness primarily in the non-formal and informal education segment.

Based on the results of the Erasmus+ project 'Competences for climate change education in vulnerable communities', **Ana-Maria Marinescu-Pălăduș** (ASOCIATA REPER21) and **Gabriele Slezak** (ÖFSE) show that when it comes to climate change, it is vital to employ a strategy based on open education resources to bring about a shift in people's values, attitudes, and skills, especially among people from socially and economically vulnerable communities.

Sigrid Koloo and **Angela Drosig-Plöckinger** from Forum Tomorrow present the SDG Workshop: an innovative approach for incorporating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into one's organisational strategy using multipliers. In addition, the workshop sharpens participants' awareness that they can make a contribution to the 2030 Agenda as consumers and citizens.

Sissy Hein writes about the Erasmus+ project 'Community Learning Incubator', which focuses on the topic of sustainable living.

The CLIPS Handbook presents practical tools and methods that have proven effective in ensuring the successful survival of many community projects related to sustainable living.

As explained by **Marianne Toder** (OeAD), OeAD student housing is also involved in sustainable living through the construction of buildings that meet the passive house standard. OeAD student housing is a non-profit organisation whose main responsibility is providing accommodations for over 12,000 international and local students and guest researchers each year in Austria's university towns in order to ensure that they have an ideal start in Austria.

Maris Mägi and **Katariina Kurina** from the Tartu Nature House in Estonia provide information about how events can be planned in a resource-friendly manner in the course of 'green public events' and introduce the Erasmus+ project 'F.O.O.D: Finding Ourselves in Obscure Diversity'.

David Marchetti (Global Nature Fund) and **Eva Gänsdorfer** (GLOBAL 2000) showcase the Erasmus+ project 'Inspiring for biodiversity – Empowerment of European citizens for action through education on biodiversity', whose goal is to raise awareness for the topic of biodiversity among adults.

Maë Schwinghammer (Leila Wien) and **Claudia Lo Hufnagel** (Die Wiener Volkshochschulen) provide insight into the Erasmus+ project 'Library of Things' as well as a borrowing centre in Vienna. The principle of 'borrowing instead of buying' contributes to sustainable consumption – resources and money are saved in line with the 'sharing economy'.

This publication also provides information about the opportunities that the Erasmus+ programme offers in the areas of Mobility and Strategic Partnerships for adult education, and how the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) can provide support for project work.

EPALE Austria would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the event as presenters and to this publication.

The entire team at EPAL Austria hopes you enjoy reading this publication!

Carin Dániel Ramírez-Schiller
Eva Baloch-Kaloianov
Laetitia Sengseis
Andreas Koreimann



INTRODUCTION

Who would have expected ...

this would be the setting in which the participants of the EPALE Conference 2020 would meet? Thanks to the great professionalism of the EPALE national coordination agency in Austria, it was possible for this year's EPALE Conference to take place. It is also a sign of the great flexibility in adult education to be able to react quickly and productively to current trends.

Climate change is one such trend that has been shaping adult education for some time now. It has become all the more socially relevant in times of a global pandemic because it is in danger of being displaced by the effects of COVID-19.

Fortunately, in Austria we have a dense network of different adult education institutions at our disposal. Many of these institutions offer further training courses and other educational opportunities that deal with the effects of climate change on our lives. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an important task of adult education institutions is even more so to provide offerings that raise social awareness of climate protection and contribute to a sustainable way of living. It is crucial to keep our efforts and attention on this topic.

The agenda of the EPALE Conference 2020, which is reflected in this publication, shows the comprehensive debate and the wide range of offerings in adult education on the topic of climate protection and environmental education.

On behalf of the Adult Education Department of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, I would like to thank everyone involved in this event for their contributions, and I hope that you as readers will be able to take away one or two ideas for your own implementation.



Doris Wyskitensky, BA MA
Department of Adult Education
at the Austrian Federal Ministry of
Education, Science and Research,
national coordinator of the European
Agenda for Adult Learning

The background is a light teal color. It features three large, overlapping circles in a darker teal shade. One circle is in the top-left, another in the bottom-left, and a third on the right side. A horizontal bar of the same dark teal color extends from the right edge of the bottom-left circle across the page.

CONTRIBUTIONS

EPALE and Erasmus+ Adult Education on the rise

Current developments

Carin Dániel Ramírez-Schiller

The European Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE), an online platform for exchanging knowledge and networking in the European adult education segment, has achieved many milestones since it was established five years ago.

The EPALE community is growing both in Europe and in Austria, with the total number of members across Europe now exceeding 70,000 people. In Austria, we had just under 1,000 users as of June 2020, which represents a significant increase of 25 per cent versus 2019. We are also seeing a positive change in the usage behaviour: EPALE continues to be used as a source of information, but there is also a significant rise of posted articles and comments., and colleagues throughout Europe are actively exchanging knowledge and experiences with one another. For 2020, EPALE Austria set a goal of having 120 published EPALE articles by its community in Austria, and we are pleased to report that this goal was already exceeded after only six months, with 130 published articles.

Cross-European priorities such as environmental protection and awareness and the promotion of digital competences are drawing the attention of users to issues that are on the cutting edge. Continuous improvements also keep the Internet platform up to date from a technical standpoint and allow fast and reliable access to the website and desired search results. The EPALE website got a visual overhaul last year which resulted in a higher user friendliness and a better visibility of the European Commission.

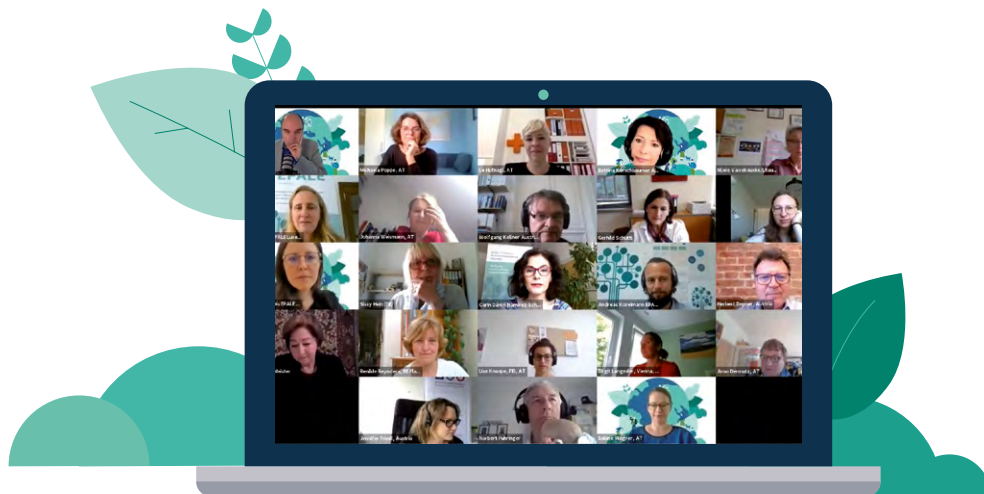
Finally, a greater emphasis was placed on the exchange of knowledge in Europe.

Support from EPALE

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, EPALE is proving that it is an indispensable medium that allows adult educators to stay in contact and exchange information with one another. The platform is currently playing host to a lively exchange of information and experiences about the tools and measures that can be used to improve E-learning offerings, such as massive open online courses (MOOCs) and blended learning.

In order to support adult educators in this time of uncertainty, the central EPALE support service launched the Community Stories initiative, which is aimed at showcasing how adult educators from all over Europe have reacted to the challenges they are encountering in their work due to COVID-19. You can read more about this campaign on page 55.

Time and again in the past, the adult education segment has proven to be a pioneer when it comes to responding to current challenges. One example of this are the numerous offerings and initiatives that were created by adult education institutions within an amazingly short time after the start of the migration wave in 2015. The decision to stick with the topic for the 2020 EPALE Conference – ‘The role of adult education in fostering environmental awareness and sustainability’ – which had already been agreed upon last year and which is presented in the articles featured in this publication, must also be seen against this backdrop. After a great deal of consideration, we came to the conclusion that environmental protection had to be given the attention it deserves despite the current economic and social crisis. Overcoming the economic



crisis and ensuring sustainable environmental protection are not contradictory, but ideally go hand in hand. We are confident that adult education institutions will also face this current crisis with creative, future-oriented measures.

Further increase in application submissions for Erasmus+ adult education

The interrelationship between the EPALE platform and the Erasmus+ Adult education programme is particularly close in Austria. Information about Erasmus+ can be found on EPALE, but the platform is also increasingly being used to spread the innovative results of Erasmus+ projects. The renewed increase in demand for mobility projects and strategic partnerships in the field of adult education is particularly pleasing in the 2020 application round.

Traditionally, there is a high number of applications in the adult education segment in Austria, and that is also the case this year, as the interest in both categories of the Erasmus+ programme has increased once again. Despite the COVID19 pandemic, the number of applications for the second application round for strategic partnerships increased in comparison to the same application round in

2019 from 38 to 48. One noteworthy aspect is that several applications in 2020 deal with the topic of environmental protection and sustainability.

The future of Erasmus+ and EPALE

The Erasmus+ programme is being continued with a modified focus for another seven-year term from 2021 to 2027. In these times of crisis, the European Commission sent a positive signal by launching the first call for the accreditation of adult education institutions, thus providing hope that the new programme will start on time. You can learn more about the possibility of accreditation on pages 49 to 51.

The new programme generation will prioritise four objectives aimed at reacting to highly topical problems through the implementation of Erasmus+. The first content-related criterion for the projects in this period will be inclusion, with the goal of further increasing the participation in the programme of people and groups who often do not have access to such projects.

The second fundamental concept of the new programme is related to EPALE Austria's national focus for this year. The EPALE issues of environmental protection and awareness will be in the focus of the Erasmus+ programme under the heading Green Erasmus. New forms of mobility and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations are to be integrated into the projects and their implementation.

In addition, the two priority areas of mobility and digitalisation will be linked together. In the light of the current pandemic, many participants will not be able to join their scheduled mobility programmes. As a future-oriented measure, the European Commission would therefore like to shift the focus to digitalisation and promote the implementation of 'blended mobilities', i.e. mobilities that take place partially online. Digital platforms such as EPALE in the adult education segment and eTwinning in the school education segment are to be significantly enhanced and expanded. EPALE can make a major contribution to achieving this goal. The Austrian EPALE Advisory Board, which includes representatives from all key adult education associations and institutions, supports all plans and calls which improve learning offerings. In this way, EPALE will also contribute to closing the digital divide.

Erasmus+ is the central programme with which OeAD supports the internationalisation of Austria as an education location in its role as a national agency on behalf of the European Commission and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research. At any rate, the Erasmus 2021–2027 programme opens up very exciting future prospects for EPALE and for adult education in Austria and Europe. We invite you to implement your project ideas in the new programme and to use EPALE!



Carin Dániel Ramírez-Schiller

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Adult education and training for green transitions

Shinyoung Jeon¹

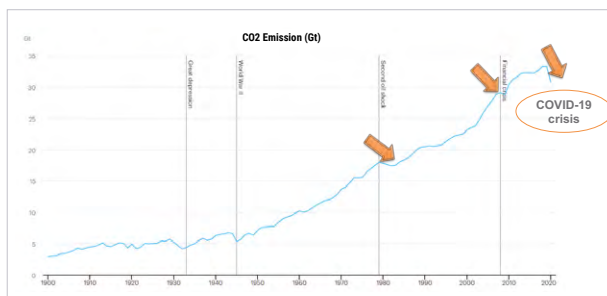
We are living in a challenging time – both economically and environmentally

The COVID-19 crisis is having devastating impacts on labour markets. The OECD estimates that by the middle of 2020 unemployment in OECD economies has more than doubled to around 11% compared to 2019, well above the level seen during the 2009 global financial crisis (OECD, 2020a). By contrast, the COVID-19 crisis and the lockdowns have dramatically decreased energy demand and CO2 emissions, which are expected to decline almost 8% compared to 2019 (IEA, 2020). While countries will recover from the COVID-19 crisis, we will still be faced with some long-term, fundamental challenges facing all of our economies – and one of the most fundamental of all of these is climate change. Even if the impact of the crisis on the climate has been positive as a consequence of the lockdowns and low economic activities, unless there are

structural changes, emissions will continue to go up again once the crisis is over. In short, we need to take the opportunity of this crisis to not just address today's challenges, but also plan for the future.

In response to crises: economically and ecologically viable growth

When many governments were searching for a way out due to the aftermath of the 2009 financial crisis, the International Labour Organization (ILO) produced the Skills for Green Jobs report (Strietska-Illina et al., 2011). This report argues that green jobs and skills have major potential to strengthen economies and create jobs, particularly compared with conventional industries, and green jobs require skilled workers, so reskilling and upskilling of adults becomes crucial, and therefore VET and adult learning systems will play an important role.



Key Note Presentation EPALE Conference 2020

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Skills for Green Jobs

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The payoffs to investment in green sectors and associated skills and education can be significant. For example, the labour intensity of renewable power generation is far higher than fossil fuel power generation. A spending increase of USD 1 million in the renewable energy sector creates over 7 full-time jobs, compared to fewer than 3 jobs in the fossil fuel industry; similar spending in

energy efficiency supports almost 8 jobs (Garrett-Peltier, 2017). According to a 2018 estimate, taking green growth action in the energy sector to limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius by the end of the century could create up to 24 million jobs globally (ILO, 2018).

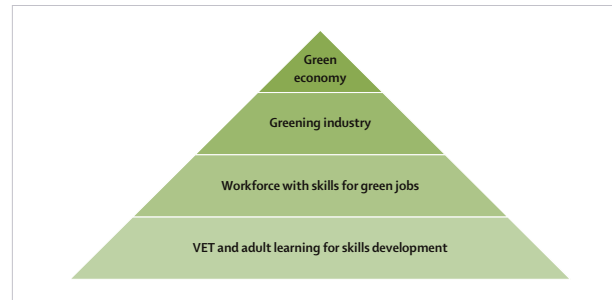
The stimulus packages currently being drafted and rolled out by governments around the world offer a major opportunity to kick-start this process. The Skills for Green Jobs report was prepared in direct response to the 2009 crisis, when governments channelled significant portions of stimulus packages towards measures intended to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including deploying renewable energy. By the end of 2009, approximately 16% of all fiscal measures, representing about 521 billion dollars, were allocated to green stimulus (IILS, 2011). Angel Gurría, the Secretary General of the OECD also stated at that time (OECD, 2009),

'... governments throughout the world are implementing the largest global fiscal stimulus in history. These stimulus packages are the greatest opportunity we have ever had for "greening" our economies.'

Yet over a decade later, the threat of climate change is even more pressing as little progress has been made and carbon emissions continue to rise. Green growth is more necessary than ever before to ensure that we can tackle growing emissions in a way that is both economically and environmentally sustainable.

VET and adult learning is the key for green transition

In recognition of this challenge, the European Union put into place in December 2019 funding and systems to support all EU countries in their efforts to decarbonise. The European Green Deal is supporting countries to achieve a climate neutral European Union by 2050 (European Commission, 2019). In particular, the Deal recognises that pro-active re-skilling and upskilling are necessary to reap the benefits of the ecological transition, including the need to help the workforce acquire the skills they need to move from



VET and adult learning is the key for green transitions

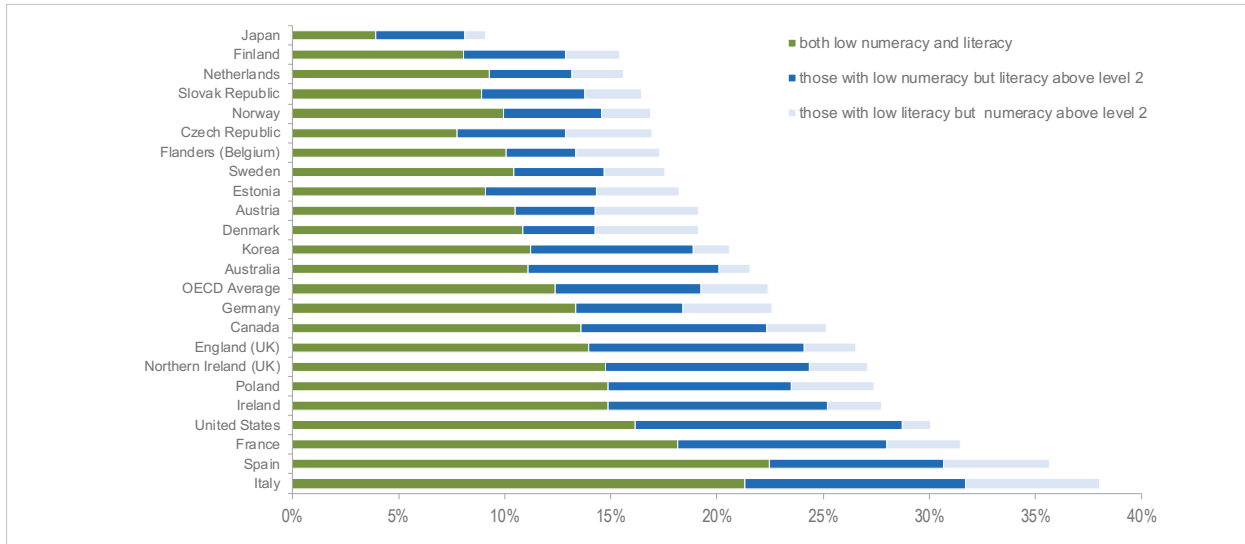
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'sectors in decline' to 'growth sectors'. Green industries increasingly require high-skilled workers, which is in line with the trend in the labour market. This shift in skills demand towards higher levels of technical and vocational skills is leading to an increasing need to upskill and obtain higher level qualifications.

Despite increases in investment, one of the major limiting factors to transitioning to green growth over the past decade has been a lack of skills and training. It is important that governments do not make similar mistakes to the ones made in their response to the 2009 financial crisis. In particular, there is general agreement that governments largely failed to capitalise on the carbon-cutting potential of their spending, partly because there was a lack of 'shovel-ready' initiatives.

The same lack of readiness applies to skills, as VET and adult learning systems at that time were not able to sufficiently respond to the quickly increasing demand for green jobs and prepare the workforce with appropriate skills. For example, there were very few dual apprenticeship programmes designed to cater specifically for the development of skills related to renewable energy.

This time should be different. As large numbers of laid-off workers look to re-enter the labour market, now is the opportunity for workers to reskill and upskill into green jobs and contribute to



A quarter of adults have low basic skills

© OECD Survey of Adult Skills, all sectors

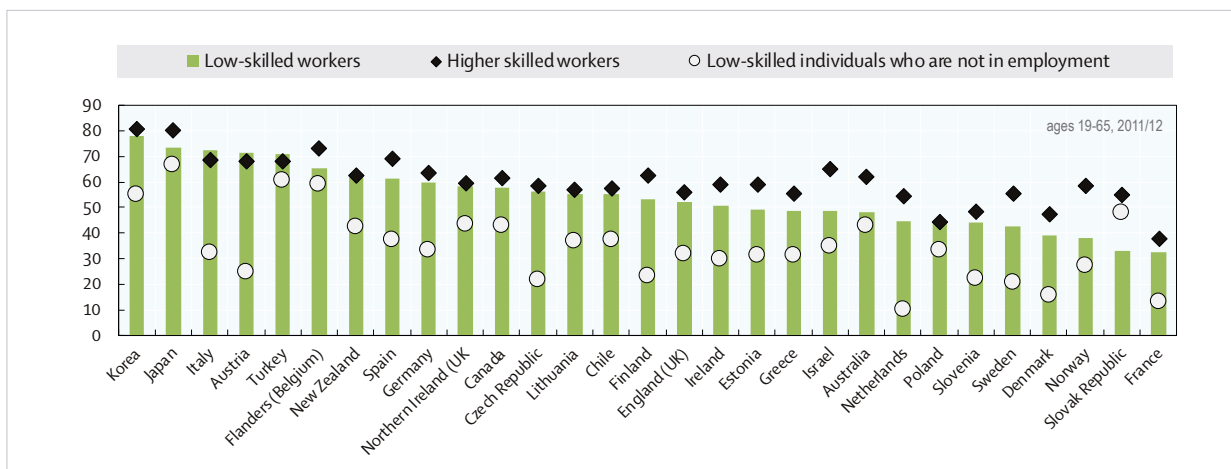
green growth. The transition to a green economy requires change across all sectors and occupations, and here VET and adult education must play a fundamental role. The importance of that role needs to be recognised by policy makers as they look to channel funding into economic recovery. Whether this means new skills for new jobs, such as renewable energy, or upskilling or reskilling in existing jobs, such as a move to organic farming and waste management, adult education and skills are fundamental to the future of our industries, our workers, and our economies.

Denmark, for example, leveraged the green transition by preparing workers in the Danish shipbuilding sector through VET to transition to the offshore wind sector. The shipbuilding sector was facing difficult times due to emerging global competitors, but its workers were able to move quickly into the offshore wind sector because of the similarity of skills required as well as training and

support offered through the collaboration of all the relevant stakeholders including employers, trade unions and training providers (Strietska-Ilina et al., 2011).

Denmark's example highlights that one of the keys to ensuring that skills can contribute to green growth is job mobility through reskilling and upskilling. Workers need to be able to move easily from sectors and occupations where employment is resource-intensive and facing eventual structural decline, notably fossil-fuel industries, to cleaner sectors and occupations with growing numbers of jobs, such as renewable energy industries.

It is also important to note that when the labour market adjusts smoothly to employment opportunities and losses, the impact of GHG mitigation policy on GDP growth is small (OECD, 2017). However, costs rise significantly when workers in declining sectors



Share of adults who wanted to participate in (more) learning activities but did not due to time-related barriers

© OECD Survey of Adult Skills, all sectors

become unemployable elsewhere due to an incapacity to move to other sectors and lack of flexibility in labour markets and training systems. Therefore, if we get the skills and training system right, the overall cost of GHG mitigation policy can be also reduced.

Ultimately, the low carbon economy and green growth depend on a transition away from polluting and carbon intensive industries, and this transition will require a trained workforce. This means that for many sectors, VET and adult learning is at the very foundation of green growth.

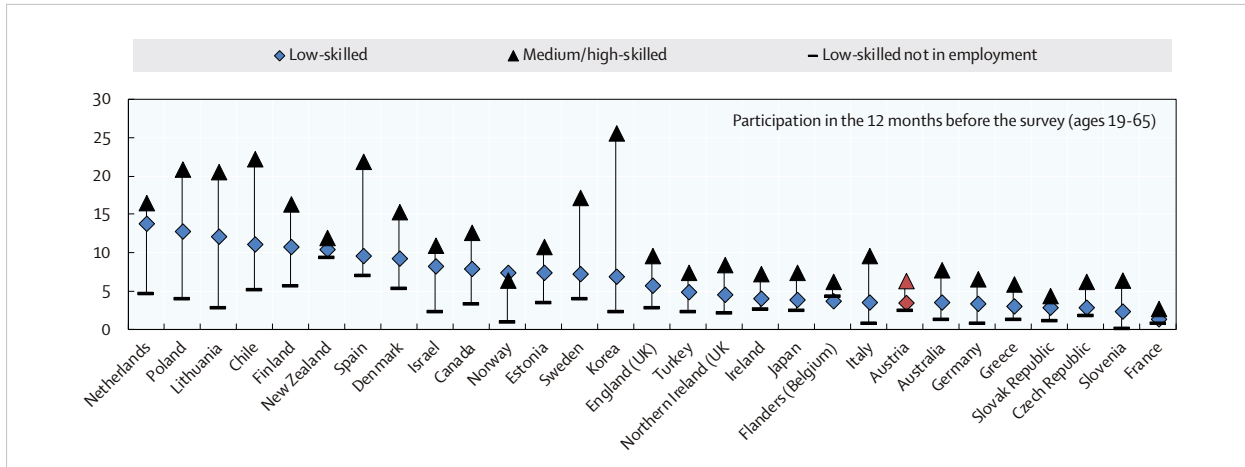
What should be done?

When it comes to adult skills and training, there are several challenges to achieve a smooth green transition. First, many adults across all sectors have low basic skills – this is a major challenge for upskilling, reskilling and job mobility. According to the OECD Survey of Adult Skills, on average one quarter of all adults in OECD

countries that participated in the survey have low literacy or numeracy (OECD, 2016; OECD, 2013).

Second, adult participation rates in learning are still low in some countries, in particular among low-skilled workers, and there are a range of barriers in engaging adult learning (OECD, 2019). Among the barriers, time-related barriers are the most prevalent. In Italy, Austria and Turkey, for example, about 70% of low-skilled and high-skilled workers (aged 19-65) who wanted to participate in learning activities but were not able to, had time constraints: they were too busy at work, had no time because of child care or family responsibilities, or the training course was offered at an inconvenient time or place.

In particular, the share of adults having participated in open or distance education in the 12 months before the survey shows that participation of adults, in particular, lower-skilled workers, in open



Share of adults having participated in open or distance education

© OECD Survey of Adult Skills, all sectors

or distance education is very low, meaning that even when learners do not have to travel or participate in structured classroom training, barriers still remain. Third, there is a shortage of VET teachers and trainers and training opportunities for them to keep their skills up-to-date (Jeon, Torres, Musset, & Kaske, 2021 forthcoming).

Given these challenges, what can be done? First, VET and adult education systems need to provide more flexible learning opportunities. This includes part-time, weekend or online courses and in-company training. Recognition of prior learning can also help facilitate upskilling and reskilling pathways for job mobility. Second, governments and learning providers should proactively provide training opportunities in different forms and adult career guidance to lead more adults to develop skills for green jobs and transition to a greener economy. Third, VET and adult learning systems should be more proactive in terms of meeting future labour market demand for green jobs, rather than reacting late to the de-

mand. Finally and fundamentally, VET and adult learning systems need to invest time and resources into quality and innovative teaching (OECD, 2020b).

Of course much of this comes down to investment. But providing financial assistance to VET systems and learners to undertake training in more future-proof sectors and occupations can contribute to economic recovery, the green transition, and also address existing skills shortages. It is agreed by many that education and training serve as a foundation to respond to almost any challenge – this is particularly true of climate change and green growth.

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Shinyoung Jeon

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Shinyoung Jeon, PhD, joined the OECD in 2013 and is currently leading two projects: Teachers and Leaders in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Raising the Basic Skills of Workers in England. She has extensive experience in education and skills, focusing on vulnerable groups such as migrants, youths, women and low-skilled workers. She is the author of VET in a time of crisis: Building foundations for resilient vocational education and training systems (2020), Unlocking the Potential of Migrants through VET: Cross-country Analysis (2019) and co-author of the review of Vocational Education and Training in Sweden (2019). Prior to joining the OECD, Ms Jeon worked at the International Labour Organization both in Geneva and Jakarta and co-authored Skills for Green Jobs (2011). She holds both a Masters and PhD in Development Economics from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, and is a graduate of the Department of Education at Seoul National University, South Korea.

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The 'leseumwelt' project as a tool for adult education

Raising awareness on an intergenerational basis

Margit Helene Meister

For many years, the focus of the *Umwelt.Wissen* (Environmental Knowledge) office and the associated network was mainly on schools and nursery schools. Adults – apart from multipliers such as teachers, nursery school teachers, or people working in the environmental (education) field – were harder to reach. We wanted to change this with an intergenerational project. Environmental and climate protection starts with raising the awareness of each and every one of us. With this in mind, the idea emerged to start an intergenerational project that would enter into the non-formal and informal education segments. Getting the second biggest educational institution after schools and nursery schools – namely libraries – on board, seemed like a good strategy.

Lower Austria has 260 libraries, at which 100,000 readers checked out around 2 million books in 2015. In 2019, the number rose to 3 million. This offered the potential for reaching a broader public with our topics. And thus the idea for a book tower called the 'leseumwelt' (reading environment) – a special bookcase offering media about the environment – was born. Fifty public libraries received a 'leseumwelt' book tower with over 300 pieces of media from various genres: novels, detective stories, short stories, fairy tales, young adult and children's books, reference books, audiobooks, films, and games on all sorts of relevant environmental topics. The media are arranged starting from the lowest shelf with the offerings for the little ones and ending at the top with fiction novels for adults. Colour-coded labels identify the genres and target groups. The 'leseumwelt' was and is intended to offer entertainment, information, fun, and games.

A fortunate coincidence

The excellent reception of the project from the outset is in no small part thanks to a province-wide library initiative that started at the same time called 'Treffpunkt Bibliothek' (meeting point library), which gave everyone access to a much bigger funding budget from the provincial government of Lower Austria. This created a great deal of impetus and motivation and got the administration on board with the 'leseumwelt' project.

Participation put into practice

Naturally, one important factor for the success of a project is for the multipliers – the librarians in our case – and the target audience – the readers – to be included from early on in the development phase. To this end, we distributed media boxes to a diverse range of reader groups before we put together the media for the basic selection. We had productive discussions with the libraries interested in the project from the initial idea onwards. Students from the New Design University were also included in the development of the project.

Successful 'leseumwelt' presentations

Our desire to promote the 'leseumwelt' project in the municipalities in the form of a public presentation was eagerly accommodated. Particularly when the presentation was linked to another event related to environmental issues, we were able to reach a lot of citizens. The media selection was praised, the topics were seen as being important, but very few new library users were gained.



Discussion at a library fair

© Land Niederösterreich, RU3

Disappointing social media and BookCrossing experiences

Therefore, we also wanted to create an online presence for our 'leseumwelt', so we developed a website for our project including the entire media catalogue. Videos of book presentations and photos of events can be found on YouTube and Flickr. A Facebook page was intended to play host to a lively exchange of ideas and experiences. However, it quickly became apparent that very few of the librarians involved use Facebook and YouTube, so the readers could not really be reached through these channels.

Resulting activities

Of course, the project team frequently tried to garner attention for the 'leseumwelt' with special activities taking place at the libraries. The libraries independently organised initiatives that were pursued on a long-term basis and in some cases continue to be pursued. 'Climate breakfasts' were held on Saturday mornings and experts were invited to participate. Swap shops, repair cafés, and sustainable Christmas markets were established. Ecological gardening, green cosmetics, more environmentally friendly eating habits, climate justice, global responsibility, and many other issues were debated.

Reliable collaboration and self-supporting networks

Our entire project was carried by positive collaboration. We were invited to conferences, networking meetings, trade fairs, and so on to present our project and discuss environmental issues with people. Soon, our network expanded to the point that we were also invited, for example, to meetings of municipal council members responsible for education, who are important multipliers in the municipalities. This was followed by publications in various magazines and invitations to festivals focussing on learning and creativity – thus advancing our networking.

Thirst for education and relevance for real life

The willingness of people to examine issues related to environmental protection, climate action, and nature conservation through (non-fiction) books will likely continue to decline in the future. Young adults prefer visualised information, such as YouTube, Instagram, and the like. These media platforms are still inadequately used in the environmental scene, and it would be important to recruit successful influencers and combine environmental content with other topics such as art and culture, fashion, or sports.

Findings

The goal of the presented project was to encourage children to use media about the environment and, by extension, to get their adult relatives and guardians involved. In actuality, however, many libraries are designed with a spatial separation between the age groups, which got in the way of the concept a bit. Along with reference books, a selection of fiction was intended to provide a more humorous, lighter, and more exciting examination of environmental topics. However, readers did not expect to find these kinds of books in the 'leseumwelt' tower, so they were largely neglected.

Were we able to address new readers? Yes. For example, young fathers visited the libraries with their children and noticed the interesting new bookcase and checked out books or other media. At the same time, gender-typical behaviour was also evident in the borrowing of our media. Women were attracted to books about

ecological gardening, regional and environmentally friendly cooking, or upscaling, while men gravitated towards books on energy-related topics or global environmental protection topics.

When books were presented at events, all of the copies were checked out immediately and also checked out frequently for a long period after the event. Books that were presented by the authors themselves were particularly popular. This was especially true when they talked about their own experiences on how to successfully lead a sustainable lifestyle. Because books are often checked out on the basis of recommendations, it is crucial for all librarians to be familiar with the offerings of the 'leseumwelt' book tower and be passionate about environmental issues. However, in light of the fact that nearly 90% of librarians in Lower Austria work as volunteers and their qualifications are very different, knowledge management at the libraries is challenging. By contrast, the sensitivity required by our topic was particularly high among volunteer employees, and they were very eager to collaborate.

'leseumwelt' successful?!

The success of our project cannot be measured solely in checkout figures, because this information was often inadequately tracked. The objective was not so much to gain readers but instead to raise people's awareness for environmental protection, climate action, and nature conservation and motivate them to take their own steps towards a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Particularly the initiatives and events that resulted from the project and the new partnerships that have now lasted many years are evidence of the lasting effect. The fact that two library priority programmes – 'MINT' and the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs or 2030 targets) – that are aimed at imparting knowledge on an intergenerational basis are currently under way in Lower Austria and thus present a good opportunity for the 'leseumwelt' to be incorporated, can be counted as a success. After over five years, not a single library wants to part ways with the 'leseumwelt', and it is still seen as a positive, enriching, and motivating project.



Margit Helene Meister

© Atelier Hannes Gsell

Mag. Dr. Margit Helene Meister is a biologist and teacher who spent 14 years teaching and conducting research at the University of Vienna. For the past 12 years, she has been responsible for environmental education and education for sustainable development in Lower Austria within the Office of the Government of Lower Austria. She founded and coordinates the *Umwelt.Wissen.Netzwerk*, an environmental knowledge network, which comprises 80 organisations and offers a pool of experts for all issues related to environmental protection, climate action, and nature conservation. Together with the operationally active network members, products and services related to education for sustainable development and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals are offered in Lower Austria.

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Let's change the education, not the climate!

Ana-Maria Marinescu-Pălăduş
Gabriele Slezak

Climate change, a worldwide challenge

We are currently living in the era of Anthropocene, in which humanity is about to quickly and massively disrupt the climate system, leading to changes in planetary conditions such as the critical ecosystem balance, essential biodiversity services, and the availability of natural resources. Their protection is indispensable for human societies, as they provide us with the very foundation of life. If we continue to develop as we have over the last two centuries, we risk having global average temperatures that are 3 to 5 degrees higher than pre-industrial temperatures by the end of the century. To put it another way, 5 degrees is the difference between our period and the last glacial period, in which a significant portion of our continent was covered by a massive sheet of ice. Therefore, it is very likely that the world and our continent will look completely different in the next decades, with systemic climate, sanitary, and biodiversity crises occurring very often. In order to go more in depth concerning climate change science, consult the International Panel on Climate Change: www.ipcc.ch.

Education, a key pillar for climate change mitigation and adaptation

The premise of education for climate change (ECC) is that the discovery of innovative technological solutions, the adoption of more binding laws and regulations, and the allocation of new fi-

nancial means are all necessary, but not sufficient to allow today's society to adapt to present and future climate changes. To achieve this goal, it is essential to produce a change in people's values, attitudes and skills, and this change can only be achieved through education (in all its forms: formal, non-formal, and informal). The education-based strategy is especially necessary in vulnerable communities (defined through social, economic, and geographic parameters), where alternative strategies – based on the access to innovative technologies and financial and administrative resources – are by definition less realistic.

Erasmus+ partnership 'Competences for Climate Change Education in Vulnerable Communities'

In 2017, the Romanian NGO REPER21 (coordinator, www.reper21.ro) and its partners, Connected by Nature (France) and Fondazione Ecosistemi (Italy), launched a KA2 Strategic Partnership, 'Competences for Climate Change Education in Vulnerable Communities'. The project aimed to build an open educational resource focused on a profile of competences (defined as a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes) that a teacher/trainer/activist should have in order to successfully introduce ECC in his/her educational activities.

The open educational resource is available at:
www.competencesclimatiques.eu.



Heart – what climate attitudes, preferences and emotions for an Erasmus+ trainer?

© Mentimeter.com

Based on its contents, the project beneficiaries – 12 Romanian teachers, 12 French community activists, and 12 Italian environmental consultants – have deployed over 100 educational interventions in diverse vulnerable communities from their countries, involving over 5,000 beneficiaries. The interventions targeted mitigation and adaptation measures, theoretical and experiential activities.

Recently, the profile of competences was discussed during the EPALE 2020 online conference, using the 3H model (Head, Heart, Hands). The participants were asked to identify in word clouds the main knowledge, skills, and attitudes that an Erasmus+ trainer should have in order to integrate ECC into his/her training courses. The results are presented in three graphs.

‘Walk the talk’

The project team considered it important not only to debate about climate change at the content level, but also to put it into practice. Thus, the activities have been designed and implemented using sustainable development principles and the ‘Societal’ tool, which was developed between 2010 and 2013 by REPER21 in partnership with ANPCDEFP (the Romanian Erasmus+ Agency).

For example, one of the two training courses organised as part of the project took place at Bergerie de Villarceaux (France). The Bergerie belongs to the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress. Since it became the property of the foundation, what was once a sheepfold has become a place of reflection and training for



Head – what climate knowledge, values and goals for an Erasmus+ trainer?

© Mentimeter.com



HAND – what skills for an Erasmus+ trainer?

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French and European civil society over the course of two decades. Today, it is a so-called 'oeco-center', surrounded by about 600 hectares of forests that are managed sustainably and agricultural lands that are ecologically cultivated. The approach of the Bergerie enabled the organisers to provide local, seasonal food to the participants, with a delivery distance of almost zero kilometres. Moreover, the participants were asked to travel using environmentally friendly means of transport (car sharing, buses, trains), whilst no material was printed for the event.



Ana-Maria Marinescu-Pălăduș

© Katerina Nedelcu

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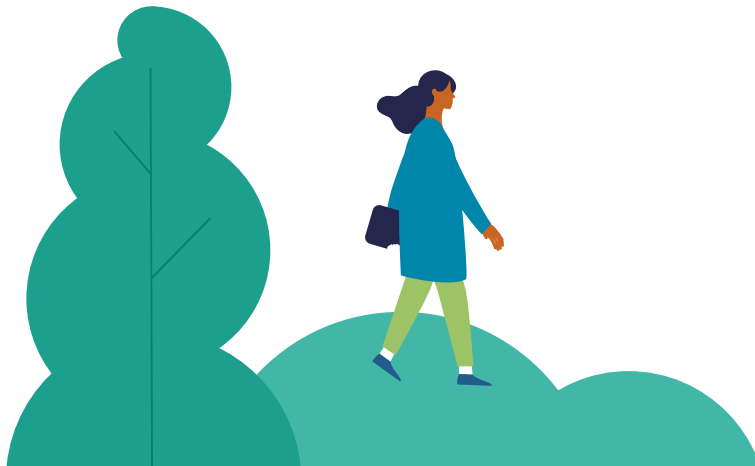


Gabriele Slezak

© OEFSE/Elisabeth Bolius

Dr. Gabriele Slezak holds a PhD in African Sciences from the University of Vienna, where she is currently working as a senior scientist and lecturer. At the Austrian Foundation for Development Research (OEFSE), she is managing a project in Global Citizenship Education, with a particular focus on the areas of sustainable development and transdisciplinary research.

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SDG Workshop

Taking advantage of opportunities for sustainable development and putting organisations on a sustainable path with the UN development goals

Angela Drosig-Plöckinger
Sigrid Koloo

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations were adopted by all of the member countries as part of a participative process. These 17 goals address the major challenges that the world is currently facing. The 17 UN sustainability goals offer an ideal framework for discovering opportunities for sustainable development, reducing future risks, and developing innovative strategies for the future. For sustainability experts and officers, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide a contemporary basis for making organisations fit for the future, building resilience, and generating social added value.

The SDG Workshop by Forum Tomorrow offers an innovative approach for incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into one's organisational strategy and also taking action right away – in line with the motto 'actions speak louder than words'. Participants in the SDG Workshop learn about the UN Sustainable Development Goals in detail, to understand the global interrelationships, and to identify areas for action in both their own organisation and their personal implementation. A light-hearted, fun approach and space for exchanging ideas provide motivation and inspiration to contribute to the sustainability goals.

Four modules for sustainable transformation:

1. **SDGs in Focus** is a basic introduction into the topic of sustainable development: Following a brief impulse session about individual global goals, small groups are formed to develop ideas and solutions that contribute to meeting the worldwide challenges between now and 2030. During this process, links to the participants' everyday and professional lives are identified so that everyone can make a small contribution to the solution together. The impulse workshop is intended to last one to two hours and provides a compact overview of the 2030 Agenda and insight into one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
2. The status check in the **SDGs in Practice** module allows participants to complete a situation analysis of their organisation's business practices on the basis of the Sustainable Development Goals during a half-day workshop. The core of this innovative method is a participative process with a fun approach that intuitively identifies sustainability potential in a company in a streamlined manner.



SDG Workshop

Shape the future!

- ◆ **SDGs in Focus** | Introduction to the topic of sustainable development | 1–2 hour impulse workshop
- ◆ **SDGs in Practice** | Status check | Half-day workshop
- ◆ **SDG Online Workshop** | e-learning & strategy development on the basis of the SDGs | SDG expert
- ◆ **SDG Strategy Day** | For further advancing knowledge | One-day workshop



Overview of the four modules in the SDG Workshop

© Forum Tomorrow



Accepting the BNE Best of Austria Award in 2019

© Phillip Lichtenegger

3. During the **SDG Online Workshop**, participants develop their individual sustainability strategy based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and are able to work wherever and whenever they choose. Participants can work through 19 online modules offering video presentations about each SDG at their own pace. In addition, eight online coaching sessions provide space for exchanging experiences and learning from one another. Sustainability officers and senior managers are given step-by-step guidance for developing their own sustainability strategy.

Participants can become certified as an 'SDG Expert' by completing an additional module, thus allowing them to propagate the implementation of the SDGs in organisations. The online programme can be started at any time, and participants have access to the SDG Online Workshop for six months.

4. Building on the SDG Online Workshop, participants align their individual SDG sustainability strategy with the future orientation of their company at the **SDG Strategy Day** (one-day workshop). In a peer group made up of pioneer organisations, the participants are given input and feedback and fine-tune their specific action plan for implementing the strategy with a focus on the global goals. They discover areas of future potential for their company and at the same time strengthen their positioning as a sustainable, meaningful, and future-oriented organisation.

Transformative learning put into practice

The SDG Workshop is oriented towards the guiding principle of sustainable development and was honoured with the BNE Best of Austria Award by the Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism in 2019.



Extracts from the video presentation about SDG 2 Zero Hunger

© Forum Tomorrow

Objective and target group

The SDG Workshop is aimed at managers, entrepreneurs, and management consultants who want to make their organisations sustainable. It promotes understanding of the global Sustainable Development Goals. Self-reflection, transferring new knowledge to one's own everyday and professional life, and direct inputs for the implementation of measures help form a bridge from knowledge to action. A combination of different methods and a mix of classroom and online formats make it possible to adopt new perspectives and facilitate a critical examination of the 17 global goals in an accessible way.

As a result, participants gain

- solidification of their company goals in connection with the global goals,
- visible potential for improvement in their own organisation,
- an implementable sustainability strategy based on the SDGs for their own organisation.

Content

Participants are given a compact overview of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. They are presented with good practice examples that provide inspiration and guidance for finding solutions to the relevant global challenges in their sphere of action and for

their stakeholders. Managers and sustainability officers who want to strategically anchor the UN Sustainable Development Goals in their organisations are given easily accessible knowledge for the development of a corporate strategy with a social impact.

From politics to practical application

In the course of the SDG Workshop, the basic political concept of the Sustainable Development Goals (the 2030 Agenda) is transferred to the company level by translating the 'language of politics' into the 'language of practitioners'. This makes the UN Sustainable Development Goals relevant and useful for all organisations, whether they are for-profit or non-profit, international or regional. A key aspect is the guidance that participants receive allowing them to focus on their own scope of action and take measures towards sustainable development immediately and on a local basis.

Competences

Participants learn which of the UN Sustainable Development Goals they can make a contribution to on the basis of practical case studies and through mutual exchange. They examine the topic from various perspectives, both with a focus on their own organisation and from the standpoint of citizens/consumers.

Participants learn to

- develop understanding for the relevant SDG,
- identify the needs and circumstances of stakeholders,
- reflect on their own situation in connection with the given SDG,
- develop individual solutions in a proven structure,
- formulate impact-oriented corporate goals,
- identify connections between individual SDGs and between SDGs and their own organisation.

Effects of the project

The SDG Workshop trains multipliers who can apply the knowledge and ideas they learn to promote sustainable development in their organisations. In addition, the workshop sharpens participants' awareness that they can make a contribution to the 2030 Agenda as consumers and citizens. As such, the SDG Workshop makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the global goals at the local level. At the same time, the participants are motivated to implement sustainable measures in their personal sphere of action, both in their professional and private lives.



Angela Drosig-Plöckinger

© Angela Drosig-Plöckinger

Dr. Angela Drosig-Plöckinger is an economist and sustainability auditor, a coach and trainer for entrepreneurs and managers, the CEO of Forum Tomorrow, and the co-developer of the SDG Workshop. As an expert for innovation and social change, she offers tools and guidance for holistic sustainable organisational development.

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MMag. Sigrid Koloo is active in the field of adult education and is an entrepreneur who passionately works on the development and implementation of sustainable business ideas. As a start-up coach, she provides support for projects related to the topics of sustainability and impact. She focuses on business models and corporate strategies based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, impact thinking, and values of the common good.

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CLIPS

Community Learning Incubator Programme for Sustainability

Sissy Hein

Why CLIPS?

Many community-led sustainable projects are blossoming all over Europe, working towards a sustainable path of life, worried about the climate crisis and searching for more sustainable lifestyles, connecting the local with the global, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals in a local and citizen-driven mode of implementation. These conditions form the background for this project.

A notably high number of groups that start sustainable projects fail within the first two to three years. A failure rate of around 90% is anticipated. The Erasmus+ partnership CLIPS (Community Learning Incubator) addresses this issue with its mission of providing learning materials for training courses and incubation programmes which assist these groups in succeeding and continuing to thrive.

Best practice from all over Europe

With its ten partner organisations from Denmark, Germany, Finland, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden, CLIPS is closely connected to GEN, the Global Ecovillage Network, which acts on a worldwide scale. Based on this

network, CLIPS draws on the experience of ecovillages and communities from across Europe that have been connected worldwide through the GEN Network since 1995. These communities have been in close mutual exchange through national networks and wish to share their success stories with similar initiatives.

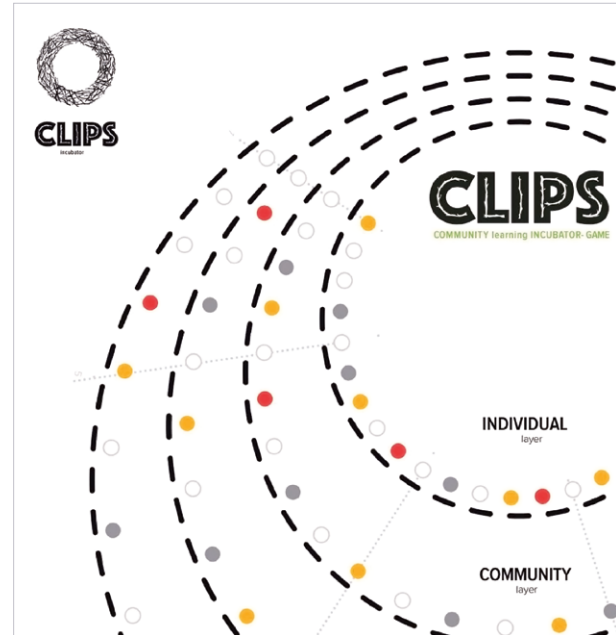
The CLIPS partnership produces three main outputs using participatory approaches to create innovative learning tools in this transnational learning space. CLIPS will develop a toolkit of 12 methods for trainers with detailed descriptions, a didactic board game on group dynamics as an interactive learning tool, and current best practice examples and success stories that use storytelling approaches to portray real-life examples, including inspirational videos.

One for all, all for one

All these tools are based on the insights of the CLIPS model, which visualises the close dependency between the individual and the community that is central and crucial for the healthy development of any project. The next step in this model is developing a community-led set of common intentions. A clear, distinct intention provides orientation, especially in times when the group loses its



4 Dimension Sustainability
© Global Ecovillage Network



Connection of the individual and the community in the CLIPS model
© Global Ecovillage Network

direction and is not sure which way to go. Unclear intentions can become a source of conflict, confusion, and misunderstanding, so clarity should be pursued by all means. A sign of clarity is that members find intention statements (vision, mission, aim, and purpose) meaningful and identify with them.

Efficient cooperation requires shared agreements, for instance on decision-making, governance, organising finances, legal representation, property and power, and communication within functioning structures. Structures must be aligned with the intentions and values of the group. The actual practice is the final element to take shape, based on intentions and structures.

The expected results of the project over the long term include the empowerment of people to start community-led sustainable projects and to improve the quality of the design, management, and implementation of these projects. We also expect a higher success rate for community-led sustainable projects starting up.

Community learning

All tools are available in the CLIPS Handbook. All types of organisations and informal groups will be able to use these tools in order to enhance the quality of relationships, communication, and participation. These tools have the potential to resolve conflicts and

communication breakdowns, eliminate self-alienation, heal psychological wounds, and restore people's trust in the common goal. As part of the project, trainers are educated according to the CLIPS model and its tools. These trainers will be available for groups and community-building initiatives through the challenging initial phases, which are often crucial for the success or failure of a project.



Sissy Hein

© Sissy Hein

Dipl. Des. Sissy Hein studied interior design and ecological construction in Saarbrücken, Germany. After spending years gaining practical experience in the field, she worked as a lecturer for ecological construction at the University of Applied Sciences in Saarbrücken. Ms Hein co-founded the Siebenlinden ecological village in the Altmark district and lived in the Schloss Tonndorf community for six years and then in the Ökozentrum Verden for three years. Since 2015, she has been a member of the Lebensbogen (external link) community near the Helfensteine cliffs in Kassel.

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OeAD student housing – passive houses for active students

A formula for success

Marianne Toder

OeAD student housing is a non-profit organisation whose main responsibility is to provide accommodation for over 12,000 international students and guest researchers (every year), to ensure that they have an optimal start in Austria. Since 2016, the organisation also houses Austrian students and researchers in its university locations. Around 2,500 of these students and researchers live in an OeAD student residence built according to passive housing standards. 'Passive houses for active students!' is the motto with which the organisation established passive housing standards as the minimum standard for the construction of OeAD student residences. This also led to a drastic reduction of the organisation's ecological footprint.

OeAD student housing aims to raise awareness of the environmental impact and sustainability initiatives in the housing and construction sectors, and in the economic and financial systems. At the same time, it sets a good example within its core business area. So far, OeAD student housing has built a total of eight student residences that meet passive housing standards in Vienna, Graz, and Leoben. Since 2004, OeAD student housing has been promoting the construction of passive house student residences in Austria and conducting projects to retrospectively fit existing residences with photovoltaic systems. Both of these activities work towards the goal of reducing the ecological impact of the construction itself, as well as that of the later energy supply. In 2005, the first passive house student residence was built on Molkereistrasse in Vienna's Leopoldstadt district.

In 2017, OeAD student housing welcomed the 20,000th resident into their passive houses, and another 3,000 joined the ranks of students living in passive houses each year. The accommodation of students in passive houses ensures that they engage in an examination of this construction method and its unique qualities.

The main goal is to impart knowledge about green construction to future generations as well as to provide optimal living comfort with a minimal environmental impact. International residents are sensitised to sustainability in the construction and housing sector by way of ongoing surveys concerning their satisfaction with the accommodation and the level of comfort and quality they provide. The project also exceeds passive housing standards with zero-energy and energy-plus buildings, and the use of alternative building materials. It is an important aim of the project to continue to set a good example. By offering building tours to international delegations and hosting two academic summer programmes, OeAD student housing aims to promote global knowledge exchange and networking, and actively supports the effort to raise awareness for sustainable development.

Sustainability and future generations

OeAD student housing's efforts to make an active ecological contribution to climate protection were honoured in 2013, when it was awarded the 2013 ORF Climate Protection Prize in the 'Climate Protection in Companies' category.



Participants of the GBS summer university celebrate their successful completion of the programme at the closing event.

© OeAD student housing



The OeAD residence minerroom in Leoben is the world's first large-scale timber passive house.

© J. Konstantinov

OeAD student housing aims to actively contribute to a social transformation towards more sustainability. The two summer universities – ‘Green.Building.Solutions.’ and ‘Alternative Economic Monetary Systems’ – also play an important role, with over 600 graduates from nearly 100 countries so far. The programmes are targeted at young adults and therefore primarily reach the generation that will have to bring about a transition from the post-modern consumption model to a resource-efficient circular economy. The programmes are evaluated based on the incoming applications (number, quality, countries of origin) and the feedback received from the graduates.

The annual ‘Green.Building.Solutions.’ summer university, which focuses on the topic of ecological construction, was initiated by OeAD student housing in 2011. It was recognised by the UNESCO Commission as an official project of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in 2013, and also received the Green & Blue Building Award in the ‘Products/Services’ category in 2014.

In addition, OeAD student housing established the Alternative Economic Monetary Systems (AEMS) summer school programme in 2014. As inter-university collaboration projects, the innovative ‘Green.Building.Solutions.’ and ‘AEMS’ programmes offer a unique selling point and have provided over 150 students from all over the world with the opportunity to earn additional qualifications in the area of sustainability. By including various partner institutions and companies from a diverse range of economic and technological fields, both programmes provide specialised and highly topical content in an academic setting. They also make Vienna more attractive as an education location.

OeAD student housing received additional honours in 2019. At a gala awards ceremony on 31 May 2019, the OeAD residence PopUp dorms were named the ‘World Gold Winner’ of the FIABCI World Prix d’Excellence 2019 in the ‘Affordable Housing’ category. This was the first time that the FIABCI World Prix d’ Excellence Award, which has been called the ‘Oscar of real estate’ by the Wall Street Journal, went to an Austrian recipient in its 28-year history.



Accommodation at Gaspasse, Vienna

© OeAD student housing



Marianne Toder

© OeAD student housing

In the winter semester of 2019/2020, OeAD student housing accommodated the first-semester students of the Central European University at the OeAD residence Sechshauser Strasse. On 15 November 2019, the European Solar Prize was awarded in Luxembourg, and the OeAD residence Minerroom was honoured in the category of 'Education and Vocational Training' for raising students' awareness of sustainable living based on renewable energy sources. The OeAD residence PopUp dorms received special mention for the Sustainable Construction Grand Prize at the Green Solution Awards 2019 in Paris.

Marianne Toder is a housing coordinator at OeAD student housing and has been working at OeAD since 2007. Prior to that, she began her studies in journalism and communication sciences in Vienna.

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Green Public Events and Erasmus+ F.O.O.D

Maris Mägi
Katariina Kurina

Green Public Events

Maris Mägi, Tartu Nature House

All kinds of events use resources, produce emissions, and generate different types of waste. From 2017 to 2018, Tartu Nature House was a lead partner in the Green Public Events project funded by the Estonian-Latvian Interreg cooperation programme. The objective of this project was to raise awareness for waste reduction and energy-saving issues among active adults and youngsters who attend public events by organising interactive activities at those events, involving the organisers and service providers, and showing that there is also another way to organise public events.

The awareness-raising campaign was organised to facilitate a change in behaviour among participants in public events, contributing to making events greener and more environmentally friendly. The green guidelines were developed and disseminated among the organisers of the public events in both countries. Guidelines in Estonian, Latvian, and English are available for download: <https://estlat.eu/en/estlat-results/green-public-events.html>

The key questions to consider are basically the same for different types of events. It is important to understand which key issues need to be considered in different settings. The difference lies in how you prioritise the issues, what aspects you are able to control, and for which aspects you have the possibility and motivation to make an impact. Remember – you are not expected to deal with everything at once! Next, we will take a closer look at different issues.

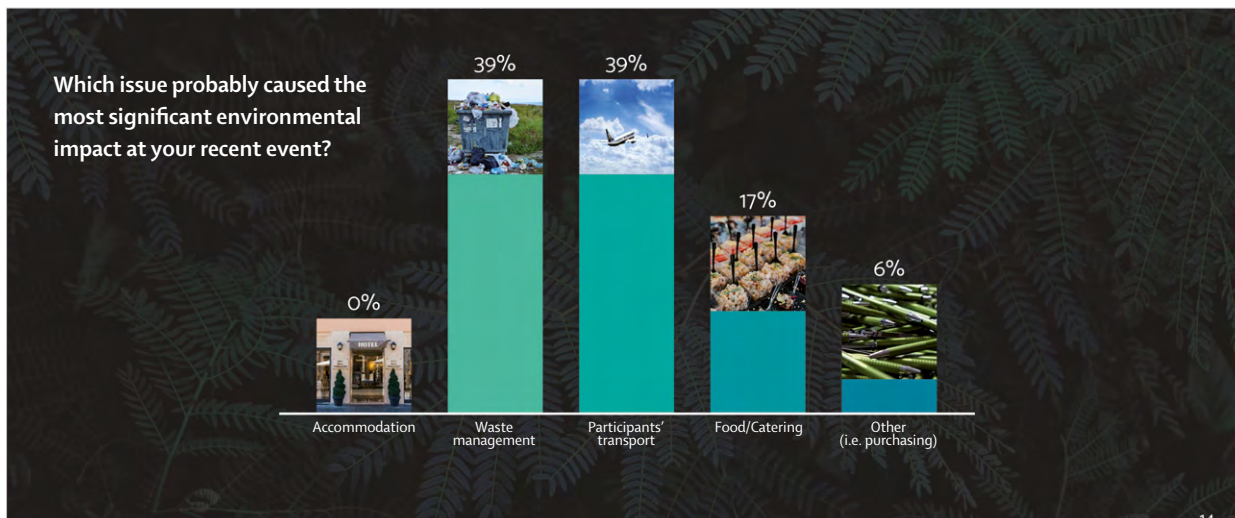
Accommodations

When planning an event, often the first thing you will do is decide where to hold it. The venue will definitely have an impact on your event's sustainability goals. There are always some key aspects to keep in mind and ask yourself or the service provider. The ideal venue for the seminar is centrally located and easily accessible by different means of transport. If you are looking for a hotel, you should search for Green Key companies.

Waste Management

If the venue has a waste management system in place, that is great. If not, then there may not be many options as to what you can do. Depending on the type of event, you should always think about waste management aspects. First of all, train your own staff and volunteers how to sort waste and how to educate visitors or participants at the event. Waste bins need to be emptied at the right time and you need to have enough spare bins. Make sure you know what happens to the waste after you hand it over to the handling company. For organisers of outdoor events, a specific type of waste comes with such an event, so sanitary systems like toilets, sinks, and shower options have to be organised if no infrastructure is in place.

During the project, we designed printable signs for different types of waste. These are available in three languages and can be downloaded, printed, and used to mark bins: www.tartuloodusmaja.ee/oppe-ja-infomaterjalid



Participants' thoughts about green events during the Austrian EPALE online conference's 'Idea and Networking Pool' on 17 June 2020

© Mentimeter.com

Transport

If you are holding an international seminar, then your participants and speakers will probably arrive by plane. If the speakers' fees and transportation costs are in your budget, you can offer to pay for a train or ferry ticket instead. You can also select the venue so as to optimise the participants' travel distances. If you are organising a festival or similar event with a lot of attendees, then it would make sense to promote transportation pooling. Before organising an event, it is always important to consider a virtual meeting as the greenest and most sustainable option. Video conferences work better for smaller groups.

Catering

When you order a catering service for your event, you need to spell out your wishes and expectations early. To make environmentally

friendly choices, you need to take certain decisions. First of all, ordering local food and finding seasonal fruits and vegetables may take longer than expected and you will need to consider that putting together specific menus and finding the right ingredients will take more time. If you are organising an event at which there are a lot of different catering providers (like a food fair or festival), make sure you set a common policy for all caterers.

Drinking water should be provided during events, preferably for free. The local water supply system should be used where possible. In the case of outdoor events without a local water supply, drinking water can be delivered in large containers. In this case, visitors should be informed before the event and asked to bring reusable water bottles with them.



Signs for different types of waste

© Tartu Nature House

Purchasing

Purchasing and materials can have a major impact on your event's sustainability. There are usually a lot of supplies used during one event, for example different decorations, writing paper and pencils, promotional items, and so on. Purchasing decisions are made throughout the event's life cycle and the right choices need to be made to reduce the impact of consumption.

Using recyclable materials, reusing items, favouring organic and fair trade items, buying locally, and ensuring workers' welfare should be your steps along the sustainability path. Furthermore, everyone should ask themselves if they really need all of those things – maybe you can do without some of them.

Communication

If you are following certain green steps, then let participants and the public know about it as well. Set aside a separate section on your website about your green initiatives. If you have a Facebook event, make call-to-action posts, so that people can share cars, promote public transport options, and post about the waste system you will use. Prepare helpful and informative signs to be set up on site.

In conclusion, it could be said that the most environmentally friendly event is no event at all. But in the real world, we need to communicate, celebrate, and relate to other people, so we have to make sure we do this while also 'valuing the paradise we live in'.

In the Idea and Networking Pool of the Austrian EPALE conference 2020 participants' responses to the question 'Which issue probably caused the most significant environmental impact at your recent event?', 'waste management' and 'participants' transport' were assessed as the issues with the highest environmental impact.

Erasmus+: F.O.O.D – Finding Ourselves in Obscure Diversity

Katariina Kurina, Tartu Nature House

Food is something that connects all of us. Despite cultural differences, a mouthful of good food can bring a smile to people from all corners of the world. We all like eating and need to eat. There is a lot of variability when it comes to eating preferences and habits, but it should bring us together rather than separate us.

It is extremely important to teach young people to accept and appreciate other cultures. They are the future of the world and our chance to improve global tolerance. And what other topic could be a more universal, enthralling, and appetising way to do that than food? Furthermore, what better way could there be to educate youngsters from that perspective than the Erasmus+ youth exchange project?

How did it all get started?

About four years ago, global food waste and its environmental impact were discussed in one of Tartu Nature School's hobby classes. Students got into the topic and started learning about it themselves. Since they had participated in international youth exchanges before, they decided to organise one on their own. They named the project F.O.O.D. – to express the main theme and to emphasise the other aim – finding ourselves in obscure diversity.

What was F.O.O.D all about?

The project was addressed at the youth of Estonia and Italy. Youngsters from age 14 to 19 had a great time while learning about foraging, growing, and choosing food as well as cooking, respecting nature, and accepting cultural differences. At the same time, we



Italians and Estonians mingling while orienteering

© Jurgen Oovel



Smoking fish

© Jurgen Oovel

developed several key competences, which were posed while writing the project. During the ten project days, youngsters from Estonia and Italy approached food from many different perspectives, not trying to find the perfect one, but rather to learn something new from each one.

In the workshop held during the 2020 Austrian EPALE Conference, we examined which methods were used, what kind of problems organisers faced, and how they got solved. Furthermore, we discussed different points and thoughts that may occur when organising projects, training courses, or conferences.



Maris Mägi

© privat

Maris Mägi, MA, has a master's degree in environmental technology and has worked in the field of environmental education at Tartu Nature House for the last nine years, going back to 2011. During this time, she has been involved in a number of national and international projects, exhibitions, public events, and youth camps. Since autumn 2019, she has worked as a training specialist both at Tartu Nature House and in the national network of eco-schools. Maris has set the goal of reducing the environmental impact of the training courses and spreading the message of a sustainable lifestyle among the participants.

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Katariina Kurina

© privat

Katariina Kurina is a former student at Tartu Nature House. As a student, she was one of the organisers of the F.O.O.D. project. After graduating, Katariina started studying biology at the University of Tartu and teaching a hobby class on her own. In the future, she plans to combine teaching young people and protecting the environment. Katariina had participated in several international conferences before, but this was the first one where she had the opportunity to be a presenter.

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Empowerment of European Citizens for Action through Education on Biodiversity

Eva Gänsdorfer
David Marchetti

Environmental education, especially on biodiversity, is often reserved exclusively to students attending primary and secondary schools. The available offerings only rarely take into consideration adults outside the conventional educational system. Furthermore, the offers available in schools are often based on old educational concepts – such as mainly learning from textbooks and lecture-based instruction – which are often ineffective. Additional knowledge and research on the environment and the associated environmental problems have evolved quickly in the last 20 to 30 years, so that even those adults who might remember what they learned in school rely on knowledge that is often outdated. These factors, and the lack of resources providing effective and more interactive educational tools to a larger public, have contributed to making a large portion of the adult European population unaware of the topic of biodiversity as well as the negative consequences and impact related to its loss.

In order to increase awareness on biodiversity among Europeans and try to combat the problems mentioned above, six environmental organisations from different European countries have decided to come together and join forces in the Erasmus+ project 'Inspiring for Biodiversity – Empowerment of European Citizens for Action through Education on Biodiversity'. This project aims to develop new, high-quality educational tools that will target adults with diverse backgrounds and different lifestyles. Working in six distinct countries – Austria (GLOBAL 2000), Estonia (Peipsi), Germany (GNF), Hungary (LBDCA), Poland (Etna), and Slovakia

(Ekopolis) – will help us reach a very large audience and make the topic of biodiversity better known across Europe.

After a research period during which each organisation investigated the educational offerings available in its own country, we analysed the results and created a common report on the state of the art in the countries mentioned above. A wide range of experts and entities such as NGOs, universities, museums, and national parks were involved in this process. The creation of the common report was an important milestone. The results of our research allowed us to move forward with our project and start creating a Pedagogical Programme, a document that will support us in the development of 30 educational tools.

During the first phase of the project, the so-called analysis of the state of the art, took place and it was led by the Polish NGO Etna and supported by the Global Nature Fund. We gathered information on the educational tools, focusing on biodiversity available in the project countries. With the help of the interviewed experts, we were also able to assess which typologies of tools were effective. This process not only allowed us to increase our knowledge on the available tools but also gave us many ideas to start developing our Pedagogical Programme.

We have found that interactive tools, such as smartphone apps, are very popular and can facilitate important, cost-effective outreach. For instance, the app Flora Incognita, a joint project between



Project meeting
© GNF/ Katja Weickmann

the TU Ilmenau (Ilmenau University of Technology) and the Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry in Jena that is also supported by the Ministry of Education and Research, the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, and the Thuringian Nature Conservation Foundation, encourages people to engage with plants in their surrounding environment. When you go for a walk or a hike, this app allows you to learn which plants you are looking at, just by taking a photo of them. This is a good example of how it is possible to interlink the experience of nature and technology and thus make it possible to effortlessly learn about biodiversity. The high number of downloads (approximately 1 million users) speaks for itself.

In developing the Pedagogical Programme, a process led by GLOBAL 2000, we decided to use the 'popular education' approach. This approach was initially developed by the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire and has been adapted worldwide in the context of environmental awareness-raising and, most importantly, of empowering learners. Popular education argues that social change can best be initiated when we experience the issues ourselves and are part of an interactive learning environment as equals. Our tools

should also build on learners' existing knowledge gained through everyday life. The learners themselves bring knowledge and wisdom to the table. Building on their pre-existing interests – such as in tending a vegetable garden, using natural medicines and remedies, or collecting mushrooms – we aim to find issues learners can relate to emotionally in order to show that humans are part of biodiversity and have a stake in ensuring its prosperity. To make the tools useful and relevant to the daily lives of our users, we will use local examples of problems and solutions. We would also like to allow the users to become multipliers in their own social networks. This will allow the message to reach people who are difficult to reach otherwise.

The target audience for this project was deliberately chosen to be very broad and consists of every person over the age of 18. However, a one-size-fits-all approach would be inefficient and for this reason, each country will focus on specific target groups in order to be able to develop effective tools and use the right communication channels. Using the media channels most appropriate for a specific group enables us to get their attention. Determining which places can be used as learning spaces for specific people lowers access barriers and produces more efficient results. For example, a visit to a natural place of interest, such as a lake, waterfall, or cave, can be turned into a learning experience for tourists and nature enthusiasts by confronting them in the context of an activity to which they were already used. Another possibility might be hosting topic contests. These would allow participants to experience another fun approach to learn about biodiversity while simultaneously making a change within their local community.

By narrowing down the target audience for each individual tool and creating a larger number of them, we are able to find specific strategies to inspire a large number of people.

We would like to approach all learners as equals and communicate the issues in an open-minded way. Instead of accusing people of making wrong, unsustainable choices and imposing guilt on them

in an attempt to change their habits, we would like to change the language from an accusatory 'you' to an inclusive 'we'. For us it is also important encourage the learners' own ability to think critically and combat their susceptibility to trust fake news by giving them factual information.

The final goal of this multilateral collaboration is that each country will develop five educational tools on diverse issues and targeting various audiences in six focus areas – employees, consumers, human settlements, local people, ecosystem services, and nature lovers – making a toolkit of 30 tools. These 30 tools will then be made available in English and shared within the consortium, so that each partner will have the possibility to spread every tool in their country. They will also be disseminated and made available in other European countries in order to increase the outreach of our project. We believe that by working together, we will be more efficient in finding creative solutions and developing a common vision.

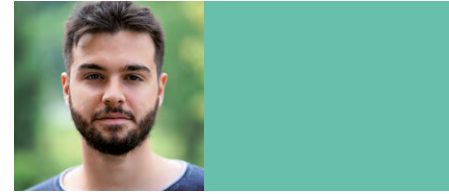


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© Martin Aschauer

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Library of Things

Learning about sustainable consumption together

Maë Schwinghammer
Claudia Lo Hufnagl

Sharing and caring in the age of climate change

In these times of climate change and socioeconomic challenges and in part due to the advance of digitalisation, a range of alternative forms of exchange and commerce have emerged that function at the intersection between the economy, society, and sustainability (see Ameli, 2017, p. 3294). Many of these offerings are combined under the term 'sharing economy', which is often associated with commercial providers such as Airbnb, Uber, or Car2Go. However, along with these implementations that are focused on commercial success, there are many initiatives that are focused on the common good and the shared use of resources.

Within this segment of the sharing economy exists the so-called Library of Things, which has been operating in many places according to the motto 'borrowing instead of buying' over the past decade. These Libraries of Things offer people shared access to a pool of various objects, ranging from tools and electronic devices to travel accessories. Along with this very physical aspect as a place for exchanging objects, Libraries of Things (abbreviated as LoTs in the following) also function as places for networking and communication. Depending on the implementation, they therefore serve as a place for neighbours and members of diverse communities to come together in many cities and regions. As spaces with an inclusive approach, many of these LoTs also organise workshops and other offerings such as repair cafés, which make a contribution to adult education and raise awareness for topics related to sustainability.

The idea of borrowing centres has spread throughout Europe over the course of a decade

The story of borrowing centres in Europe began in Berlin, where Leila Berlin opened its doors on Kastanienallee in 2010 (see Leila Berlin). On the one hand, the initiative follows the tradition of so-called tool libraries, which are widespread in English-speaking countries and are entirely focused on lending out (highly professional) tools. On the other hand, the newer movement of borrowing centres went in an entirely new direction. The idea was that the lending activities should not just focus on tools, but instead provide access to the entire variety of all types of practical everyday items in a kind of 'Library of Things'. In addition, the initiators of new borrowing centres generally chose a non-commercial approach focused on serving the common good, as opposed to the commercial approach of tool libraries.

Since the establishment of the borrowing centre in Berlin, numerous self-organised groups across Europe have followed suit and formed their own borrowing centres (see Jaik, 2018, p. 119f), which now stretch across the entire continent of Europe, from Reykjavík to Bologna, and from Malmö to Prague. There has always been a lively exchange between the various borrowing centres – for instance, the founding team of leila.wien first came up with the idea to establish a borrowing centre in Vienna in 2013 after meeting the founder of Leila Berlin, Nikolai Wolfert. Ever since, the individual borrowing centres have been exchanging experiences and providing technical advice (e.g. which borrowing



Products of Leila Vienna

© Paul Krehan



Items for loan at the borrowing centre Goethe Institut Bratislava

© Boris Németh

software is best suited for operating a LoT?). All under the principle of 'open source', based on the ideas of commons and common property. LoTs are not a patentable recipe for success that can be established on a scalable basis anywhere in Europe (or the world) using the same means. Precisely because of the local differences and communities, LoTs are generally organically embedded in a specific social context. In order to make it easier for interested parties to establish a LoT, leila.wien visited the borrowing centres in Frome, London, Berlin, and Ljubljana in 2016 supported by a project grant in order to develop a starter kit based on the findings (see Starter Kit, 2016).

Libraries of Things at the intersection between education and sustainability

The idea of LoTs provides important groundwork for sustainability efforts, as the people who borrow and exchange objects there act sustainably. LoTs operate at precisely this intercept between (adult) education and sustainability. LoTs give a larger group of people access to everyday utensils than commercial offerings and

companies are in a position to do. Depending on the LoT, there are different systems for how this is organised. The work associated with this is generally performed on a volunteer basis, and the appliances and other objects are financed via low lending fees or membership models. The systems serve the common good.

This has the following direct benefits for users:

- Saving money because items do not have to be purchased new ('borrowing instead of buying')
- Saving space since the limited access to affordable living space is already making housing conditions difficult ('borrowing instead of storing')
- Conserving resources because fewer everyday commodities have to be produced to meet everyone's needs ('sharing instead of overproduction')
- Socialising with people with similar and different perspectives and lifestyles through the mutual interest in the sharing economy

In any case, the Erasmus+ project 'Library of Things' is providing the opportunity for four existing LoTs (in Bratislava, Brussels, Ljubljana, and Vienna – see below for contact information) and one LoT that is currently being established in Trnava (www.malyberlin.sk) to advance the networking and exchange of experiences between LoTs in Europe. The first European project in which borrowing centres are working together began in the autumn of 2019 and will now last until the summer of 2021 due to adjustments that had to be made because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana (www.uni-lj.si) and VHS – Die Wiener Volkshochschulen (an adult education centre in Vienna, www.vhs.at) are working to ensure the appropriate interpretation and preparation of the project interests in connection with education and are also responsible for coordinating the project. After all, one of its aims is to develop a framework curriculum that will introduce topics such as sustainable consumption, the sharing economy, and the concept of the relevant local LoTs to groups of people that have not yet been reached and/or groups of non-privileged people.

How the Erasmus+ project 'Library of Things' will inspire more people to act sustainably

The framework curriculum of the Erasmus+ project 'Library of Things' is oriented towards the basic principles of adult education and group learning. Therefore, it is designed for two days, over the course of which suspense can be built up. This accommodates both the examination of the thematic content as well as the actual use of objects from the libraries. The participants work locally on a small project that they define together – it can be a repair, the production of a useful everyday object for all of the workshop participants, or the building of a piece of furniture for an organisation in the neighbourhood or someone from the workshop group. Starting in October 2020, four workshops will be held under the auspices of the project, with support being provided for their self-organisation. In this way, appealing, self-chosen activities have a direct benefit. Together, the participants will also address topics related to sustainability, such as sustainable consumption, and apply their new knowledge immediately.



Professional tools, Tournevie
© Arnaud Ghys

The curriculum provides the framework and the organisers contribute their practical knowledge and tips from the first applications as well as concrete recommendations for the methodical implementation. However, all of this is only meant to be a suggestion. The curriculum provides specific reference points and allows these to be adapted to the local conditions in order to arrive at implementations that are suitable for the regionally organised workshops. The shared group experiences, information about the sharing economy, and the opportunity to get to know the LoTs are intended to create an attractive offering that helps to eliminate potential reservations and problems in making contacts and appeals to new users – particularly among less privileged demographics and students, who have rarely been among the regular users at the libraries of the project partners so far.

Prospects for the future

At the same time, the existing project partners (we are also open to new people/groups!) are exploring the potential for follow-up projects in the course of the project work. Ideally, participants in the workshops will be inspired to establish their own borrowing initiatives or to get involved in existing LoTs and to consistently develop new projects with new regional partners in the interest of a sharing economy. In addition, the existing LoTs are engaging in systematic networking in their own regional field of activity over the course of the project in order to make better use of local synergies.

Contact information for the existing LoTs involved in the project:

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© Michèle Yves Pauty

Maë Schwinghammer is part of the team at Vienna's first borrowing centre, leila.wien, and the Erasmus+ project group 'Library of Things'.

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© Gert Hufnagl

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Erasmus+ RISE

Realising Integration through Social Enterprise

Herbert Depner

Why did we get involved with this project?

The consortium for the RISE project (Realising Integration through Social Enterprise) comprises educational institutions from six countries: Austria, Germany, Greece, Romania, Portugal, and Ireland. Each institution has proven experience in providing innovative educational services for long-term unemployed people and is actively involved in improving integration opportunities for migrants.

The Erasmus+ RISE project is aimed at supporting the integration of the long-term unemployed, immigrants, and socially and culturally disadvantaged people into the labour market through the mechanism of social enterprises. We believe that the social enterprise model offers tremendous potential for successful integration.

The advantages of social enterprises are recognised by the European Commission, which sees the development of the social economy and social entrepreneurship as an important strategy for combating the social exclusion of vulnerable individuals. These advantages are also highlighted in the 2016 SESBA (Social Enterprise Skills for Business Advisers) Report (<http://www.sesbaproject.eu/en/research>), which recommends measures including the promotion of entrepreneurship through individualised training programmes and mentoring as well as the identification of proven methods for fostering and supporting entrepreneurship among

disadvantaged groups. For the RISE project, the attractiveness of the social enterprise model lies in its strong social purpose as well as the fact that it is considered a sustainable economic model.

What did we work on?

Over the course of three project meetings, we worked to identify a uniform definition of a social enterprise. We studied the legal requirements in the partner countries, the relevant European regulations, specific regional aspects, and so on, until we decided to look for shared characteristics based on the available models that had been gathered. This resulted in the document 'Recommendations for Establishing a Social Enterprise', which will also be part of the final report. The core element of our work is the collection of best practice examples that we identified during the course of the project.

The models presented here reflect the diversity of the various approaches. This includes a wide range of offerings, such as 'Vollpension', a company that is well-known in Vienna and operates a café on an intergenerational basis, featuring cakes, pies, and pastries made by grandmas that are served to guests – many of whom are young people – in a cosy atmosphere. The vision of the German company 'auticon', on the other hand, is to provide equal employment opportunities for people with autism. By creating working conditions that are suitable for people with autism and providing

What effects do we expect to see after the end of the project?

We believe that, with our 'Recommendations for Establishing a Social Enterprise', we will be able to publish a useful document that will make it easier for interested NGOs, educational institutions, and associations to tackle the founding of a social enterprise. Along with the collection of best practices – which are intended to stimulate the imaginations of future company founders – we created two up-to-date documents that provide an overview of the situation with regard to social enterprises in the partner countries.

Not least, we see ourselves as educational institutions as being called upon to take action: As demonstrated by numerous successful examples, conventional adult education institutions are also capable of establishing lasting social enterprises. For example, Die Wiener Volkshochschulen showed how to do it with the DRZ Dismantling and Recycling Centre and the RUSZ Repair and Service Centre.

Here's hoping that lots of social enterprises are formed in Europe in the coming years!



Herbert Depner

© Oead/APA-Fotoservice/Hörmandinger

Mag. Herbert Depner has been working for *Die Wiener Volkshochschulen* (Vienna Adult Education Centres) since 1981 and has been involved in European cooperation projects since 1995. Since 2011, his work has focused exclusively on Europe and he has gained experience with Grundtvig, Leonardo da Vinci, Interreg, and ESF. The Erasmus+ programme provided him with fresh motivation and has since led to his involvement in 17 projects. In 2017, Herbert Depner was appointed Erasmus+ ambassador.

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Join once and stay

Become part of the Erasmus+ community!

Karin Hirschmüller

With assistance from: Arabella Seits

The new Erasmus+ 2021–2027 programme offers an accreditation for organisations that would like to take part in education and training programmes in Europe on a regular basis. The accreditation provides simplified access to the annual budget and adapts flexibly to the needs of your adult education institution!

Starting in January 2021, Erasmus+ will enter into the next phase under the name Erasmus+ 2021–2027!

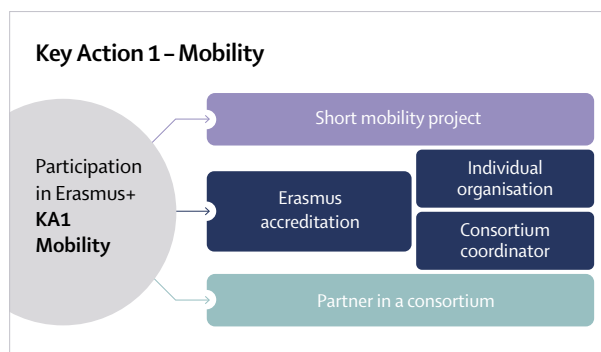
Key Action (KA)1 – Mobility for education and training purposes in Europe and **KA2 – Partnership** projects for multi-year collaborations with other countries.

What does the new KA1 – Mobility look like?

As in the past, the focus is on education and training in Europe and European networking. Directors and employees of adult education institutions can attend courses in Europe, give guest lectures themselves, and observe the work of other organisations. The new programme also introduces the possibility to bring experts to Austria. This allows training to take place at one's own institution, thus benefiting more employees.

Not only the direct participants benefit from the education and training programmes in Europe, but rather the entire adult education institution at which the acquired knowledge is implemented and applied.

It is possible to participate in Erasmus+ 2021–2027 in different ways:



Previous experience in Erasmus+ is not required to participate in Erasmus+ 2021–2027!

Erasmus+ accreditation

The process will now be easier for organisations that want to participate (nearly) every year: They can apply for accreditation ('individual accreditation') once and then gain simplified access to the annual budget. This will accommodate the medium-term and strategic planning of organisations to a greater extent than the previous project funding structure.

The accreditation is flexible and grows along with the plans of the institution.

Erasmus accreditation is awarded for the period from 2021 to 2027. The so-called Erasmus Plan is part of the application for accreditation and describes the goals of the organisation over a shorter period of two to five years to ensure realistic planning.

The goals in the Erasmus Plan may change over the years because some of the defined plans have already been achieved or because an accredited organisation realigns itself in some aspects. These changes can be described in an update to the Erasmus Plan. It is not necessary to reapply for accreditation. The accreditation allows every organisation to determine its own pace for European collaboration and to transition to more ambitious and complex activities as it gains more experience.

Example: An organisation starts out with a few goals in their Erasmus Plan. After the initial experiences, the organisation's interest increases and new ideas emerge for education and training in and networking with Europe. Therefore, the organisation incorporates additional goals into the Erasmus Plan.

Consortia – multiple adult education institutions working together

In the new programme, multiple organisations from Austria can work together in a consortium – as in the past. Each of these organisations sends employees abroad to receive education and training. The joint structure of the consortium leads to synergy effects, and it also helps newcomers to Erasmus+ to find their bearings more easily.

From now on, an organisation that would like to coordinate a consortium has to have an 'accreditation for mobility consortium coordinators'. Organisations that already have an individual accreditation (see above) can have it converted to an accreditation for

mobility consortium coordinators by updating the Erasmus Plan. The Austrian partners with whom an organisation would like to form the consortium do not have to be decided at the time the application is submitted. Therefore, the partners can vary from year to year if this is beneficial for the goals. The partners do not have to be accredited themselves, which makes it easier for smaller and new institutions to gain experience with Erasmus+.

Example: Organisation XY applies for individual accreditation in 2020, which allows it to participate in education and training programmes in Europe from 2021. It talks about the acquired knowledge and skills in its networks. As a result, some other organisations from Austria become interested in collaborating and the idea of forming a consortium emerges. Organisation XY converts its individual accreditation into an accreditation for mobility consortium coordinators by way of an update to the Erasmus Plan. The collaboration as a consortium can start.

Short mobility projects

Organisations who are not (yet) interested in getting an accreditation and are not part of a consortium can apply for funding for a short mobility project. It is limited in terms of the duration and the number of mobilities and can only be conducted twice within a period of five years. It is particularly well suited for getting started in Erasmus+ or implementing individual projects.

Submitting applications

It will be possible to submit applications for accreditation and short mobility projects each year. Organisations who want to participate in mobility projects in 2021 can either apply for accreditation in October 2020 or apply for funding for a short mobility project at the beginning of 2021 (the exact deadline had not yet been published at the time the conference documentation was being prepared).



Application deadlines:

once a year

For accreditation:

29 October 2020 | 12:00 (CET)

For short mobility projects:

see website



Karin Hirschmüller

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Information and counselling

The National Agency Erasmus+ offers information events and counselling.

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The background is a light teal color. On the left, there is a large, dark teal circular shape representing a tree canopy, with a vertical stem extending downwards. In the center, there is a dark teal arrow pointing upwards. On the right, there is a large, dark teal circular shape representing a tree canopy, with a vertical stem extending downwards. The text "EPALE News" is located in the upper right quadrant.

EPALE News

5 years of EPALE!



EPALE, the online platform for adult education in Europe, is celebrating its 5th anniversary this year. Since the European Commission launched the platform funded by the Erasmus+ programme to promote high-quality adult education, the European adult education community has grown to 70,000 members, who benefit from the mutual exchange of expertise and knowledge and are supported in their work as adult educators.

Join a diverse adult learning family!

As a member of EPALE you can discuss ideas and share information with other people in your country or in Europe working in your sector. The platform is perfect for finding partners or sharing experiences and ideas related to your adult learning project!

Register on EPALE!

Register following this link <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/de/user/register>. This way you get access to high-quality resources related to adult learning. Our community makes sure this rich database is constantly growing. Furthermore, EPALE will keep you informed about the latest news and developments in the sector, in your country and across Europe.

EPALE Community Stories

Tell us your story!



Since the outbreak of COVID-19, our home and family lives have been significantly disrupted and we have all been forced to adapt to new ways of working we wouldn't have thought possible only a few short weeks ago. Within the Adult Learning Community, many adult educators are working hard to develop innovative online teaching, distance and e-learning solutions to address the challenges of this new training environment and continue to support their students during these uncertain times. More than ever, this is the time for Adult Educators to connect, share and inspire each other here on EPALE.

Share your story!

We want to hear about you, your motivation, your efforts to continue educating, the opportunities that e-learning, online teaching

and virtual mobility can bring, and the implications of COVID-19 on you and your work.

Stories do not necessarily need to refer to experiences developed during the Coronavirus emergency, but should possibly inspire solutions and strategies to enhance e-learning opportunities, online teaching and re-thinking of adult learning provision.

Here's how it works!

You can find the online form for sharing your story at <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/de/blog/community-stories-initiative!> Fill in the form and inspire, motivate, and support the EPALE community with your story.

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