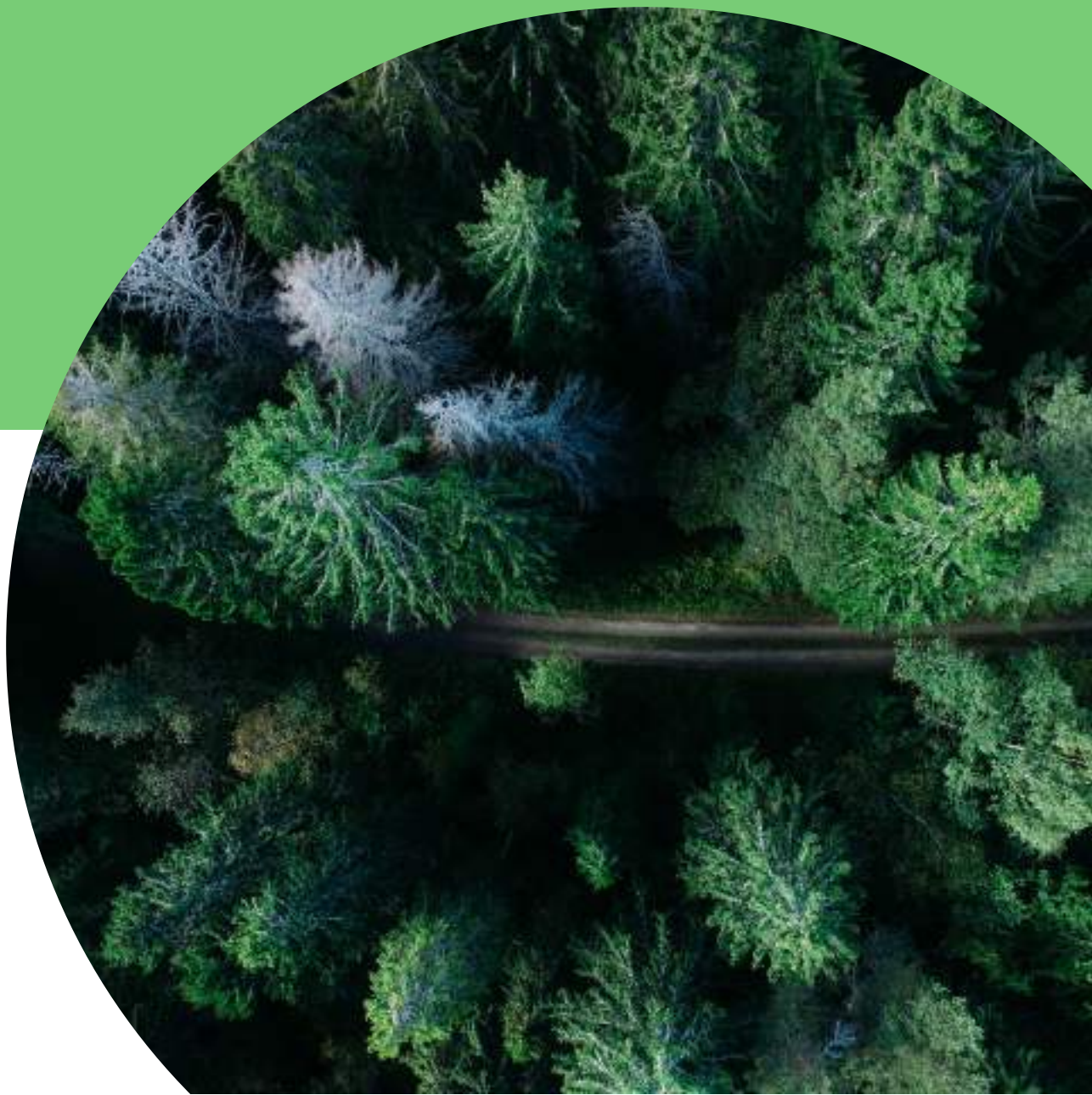
ECO-FRIENDLY SPORTS

FINAL REPORT
ERASMUS+ SPORT PROJECT
2020-2022



MEET THE PROJECT

It's inevitable that we have to do something about climate change. Not only reduce, reuse and recycle, but we can actively contribute to protecting our planet and take direct action. Environmental pollution is an enormous problem and the lack of recycling is an even bigger challenge.

The "Eco-Friendly Sports" project aims to promote sports and physical activities that not only contribute to better health but also have a positive impact on the environment.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- to promote and develop new methods of environmental education through sport,
- to increase the number of eco-friendly sports events organized,
- to generate public awareness about the possible connection between sport and the protection of the environment,
- to foster citizens' engagement in sport, but also encourage them to take action towards a better environment,
- to improve the knowledge and experience of representatives of sports clubs and youth workers about the concept of eco-friendly sport,
- to provide opportunities in the urban lifestyle to keep people's physical and mental health and to significantly decrease the stress levels,
- Building a society that feels close & attached to nature will contribute to using natural resources sustainably and thus building sustainable cities,
- to contribute to the social inclusion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

ECO-FRIENDLY SPORTS PROJECT HAS BEEN CO-FUNDED BY THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. THE PROJECT HAS STARTED IN JANUARY 2020 AND INCLUDES 8 ORGANIZATIONS FROM 8 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES:

We represent organizations from diverse backgrounds – sports organizations and clubs, and educational and environmental NGOs. Our ambition when starting this project was to find ways in which grassroots sport can become an active change-maker and contributor to protecting our natural environment.

Our high motivation has been turned into many activities and events to achieve our ambitious aim: research on good practices, development of new methods and publications, local eco-friendly sports events, meetings and conferences, social media promotion, videos and podcasts production and many others.

NUMBER OF EVENTS AND PARTICIPANTS

ECO-FRIENDLY SPORT PROGRAM FOR YOUTH

The most important outcome of our project is newly developed methods and events involving environmental education through sport. The Eco-Friendly Sports Program for Youth consists of **24 workshops and events** - physical activities combined with non-formal education methods divided into 3 parts:

SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES WHILE LEARNING ABOUT...

- NATURE, ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY AND THEIR CONSERVATION
- GLOBAL AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AND ITS SOLUTIONS
- ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM AND INDIVIDUAL ACTION

We would like to emphasize that all those activities have also been tested and implemene d in 8 countries with very different ecosystems and biodiversity and involved people of all ages, physical abilities and knowledge about climate ch an ge .

The publication is intended for trainers, sports experts, youth workers, educators, facilitators, and youth leaders who would like to promote environmental education through sport and organize Eco-Friendly Sports events and activities in their communities, schools, clubs etc.

SPORT AND NATURE EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR TRAINERS, SPORT EXPERTS AND YOUTH WORKERS

Sport and Nature Education Program is one of the outputs of the project and aims to improve the knowledge of Trainers, Sports Experts and Youth Workers about the concept of Eco-Friendly Sports. The publication covers many topics that are useful for everyone interested in organizing eco-friendly sports activities in the future.

We strongly believe that sports, and especially grassroots sports can have a considerable contribution to solving environmental challenges at the local and global levels as well. However, sports can also have negative impacts on nature and the environment, therefore representatives of the sports organisations should attempt to reduce this footprint.

THE MAIN TOPICS COVERED:

- How to organize eco-friendly sport events,
- How to make existing regular sports activities or sport events more eco-friendly,
- How to integrate education about the environment and nature into the sport and physical activities,
- How can sport help nature conservation and other related topics.
- In each chapter a theoretical introduction is available followed by the practical part for all those who are interested in organizing workshops about the topic for their colleagues or NGOs representatives.

GOOD PRACTICES COLLECTION: HOW TO COMBINE SPORT AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

We started the project with analysis and have been exploring diverse activities, events, and non-formal education methods of various sports, environmental and governmental actors that already combine sport and protection of the environment.

The aim has been to analyze, identify and collect good practices, recommendations, and resources about existing programs. The publication can serve as an inspiration for the integration of the environmental aspects into the sport, especially at the grassroots level.

In addition, we also conducted a survey among sports and environmental associations, clubs, and other institutions, which have experience with the organization of such events, and gathered advice, recommendations, and identified weaknesses or strengths of the events or the methods used.

MULTIMEDIA LEARNING MATERIALS

PODCAST

We created podcasts about the different perspectives and topics related to Eco-Friendly Sports:

- podcast about our project;
- podcast about examples of eco-friendly sport events;
- podcast for trainers and sport experts on how to involve environmental education in sport;
- podcast for NGOs in the field of environment and education about how to involve sport and physical activities in their workshops and events;
- Or podcasts for individuals who would like to be active and organize eco-friendly sport events covering the issues like how to organize them, how to get funds etc.

VIDEOS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

We created videos and social media channels in order to raise awareness about the importance of environmental education, as well as sport, and to motivate others to organize such events in their communities too!

Follow @ecofriendlysports!

A FEW TIPS TO ORGANIZINE ECO-FRIENDLY SPORTS EVENTS

Feeling inspired? There are a variety of eco-friendly sports events that can be organized!

- Hike or run in nature, and try to always link these physical activities to waste collection;
- Plant trees;
- Clean up river banks, and shores while doing water sports;
- Manage repairing and upcycling workshops;
- Produce eco-friendly stuff - e.g. nests for birds, bees wraps, rock gardens, etc.
- Observe, walk and learn about birds, butterfly species, and other animals;
- Connect environment conservation workshops with sports activities.

...and many others.

A FEW TIPS TO INVOLVE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Ask people about their opinion and involve them in the organization of the up-coming events!

- Asking people about their opinion is always a good idea which can help you to improve the quality of your event. You can create an evaluation or follow-up questionnaire which you can share in the facebook event.
- Sometimes your participants become the most active organizers. Make sure you give your event's participants the opportunity to join your organization and become an active member. In our experience the most active volunteers always come from the pool of event participants.
- Be always open to new ideas, suggestions and feedback. Evaluate your event with the team of organizers and sum up the positive aspects and the points for improvement. Next time you will even do it better!

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE KEY INGREDIENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SPORTS EVENT

BASICS OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

- Start pre-event planning with the hiring or recruitment of a Volunteer Coordinator.
- Begin to create the Volunteer Services Plan. There are a number of items that must be included in the plan like What committees need volunteers and how many are needed? What will they be doing and are written job descriptions available? Where will they need to be and how do they get there?
- Organise volunteer training in advance of the event a few days prior.
- Think after the event, your volunteers need closure in the way of an appreciation letter, certificate or gift, and possibly a party.

FEW EXAMPLES OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION METHODS COMBINING SPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

In case you would like to follow our project examples and propose eco-friendly sports activities to you club, local communities and acquaintances, you should know that each and every one of our events is aimed at getting to know about daily actions that can really improve our lifestyles and health.

THE CIRCULAR GYM – it is key to understand how we consume and the use of everything we buy, even after their productive cycle, and the purpose we bought that object for. With this event, in fact, you can raise your audience's awareness about overconsumption by applying the concept of circular economy through upcycling of materials no more used for their previous purpose, so as to create sports equipment for your home, club or workplace.

PLASTIC CA(T)CHING HUNTS – just like fossils, plastics have a long life on Earth and a dangerous effect on wildlife and ecosystems. Treating this material is imperative. With this "hunt", based on the geocaching practice, it is possible to combine the dynamic of a treasure hunt, with orienteering, and physical challenges to compensate for the carbon footprint of the daily habits, with informative hidden notes on plastic wastes hidden in small caches, to be respectively left were found to raise awareness of the following lucky person searching for it.

HUMAN POWERHOUSE – it is not common to know how much energy a household needs, despite all of us should know about the importance of not unnecessarily wasting it. With this ambitious event, your participants can count and acknowledge the energy consumption of their houses, and try to actively compensate for that carbon footprint with healthy physical activity.

WATER BOTTLE SESSION – the importance of water in our life activities is quite underestimated, and the need not to dumbly waste it can easily find compilation through a very simple event based on the creation of a circuit where two teams, in a competition, have to handle to fill a tank through passing, to each member of the team, a bottle with a hole in the bottom either by walking/running or using paddleboards. A natural setting with the presence of fresh and saltwater is advisable.

FEW EXAMPLES OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION METHODS COMBINING SPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

CASH TRASH - even if we all know the fundamentals of recycling, not all the time we are doing it properly. By learning how to do it in an efficient manner, our planet will be the main beneficiary. With the Cash trash event, you will be able to make your participants play a game focused on learning how to recycle respectfully in the teams, using competitive sportive spirit.

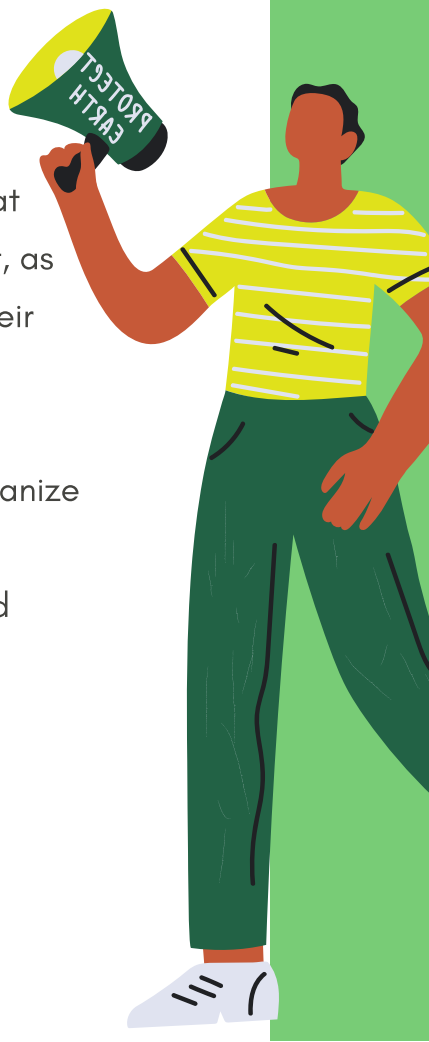
MOVE AND LEARN: SITUATIONAL ROLEPLAY - environmental protection is not only caring about trees, plants and flora species in general but includes a series of really relevant actions on behalf of wildlife and fauna defence against extinction caused by climate change and irresponsible human behaviours. Move and Learn, is therefore an event that can allow you to preserve natural habitats of animal species essential for human life on Earth, such as bees.

Those are just a few examples of the many other events aiming at letting youth and the public know more in-depth about certain serious topics such as waste management, global warming, wrong natural resources exploitation, and so on. You can find out more at our Eco-Friendly Sports Program for Youth.

CONCLUSION

Our project is one of the many great initiatives of "ordinary" people that want to contribute to the protection of the environment and our planet, as well as better health of people through encouraging and increasing their physical activity. Join us!

If you are interested in the topic, or our events, or you would like to organize them on your own, you should definitely check our publications and multimedia on our project website - WWW.ECOFRIENDLYSPORT.EU and follow our Facebook page and Instagram account (@ecofriendlysports)



THE LOCAL EVENTS WERE CARRIED OUT IN 8 COUNTRIES:

AUSTRIA
BULGARIA
HUNGARY
PORTUGAL
ROMANIA
SLOVAKIA
SPAIN
TURKEY

Lastly, we would like to thank all the volunteers, participants, partners and everyone who were involved or supported our act without you, it wouldn't have been possible.

"Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world" - Howard Zinn

WWW.ECOFRIENDLYSPORT.EU

@ECOFRIENDLYSPORTS

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