



## AKCABELEN Kultur und Unterstützungsverein e.V

### LESS PLASCTIC MORE HEALTH

Less Plastic, More Health brings together young people across Europe to tackle plastic pollution, strengthen environmental responsibility, and inspire sustainable change at community level.

This Erasmus+ Youth Project was supported by Jugend Für Europe and the European Union.



# **1. Project Summary**

## **1.1 Background and Objectives**

### **What did you aim to achieve by implementing the project?**

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project aimed to address the pressing global issue of plastic pollution and its harmful effects on both the environment and human health. Recognizing the pervasive presence of plastic in our daily lives, the project's primary goal was to educate young people about the environmental hazards posed by plastic waste and the need to adopt sustainable, eco-friendly alternatives. By doing so, we sought to empower a generation of youth who would advocate for a reduction in plastic usage within their communities and beyond.

### **What were the objectives of your project?**

The objectives of this project were comprehensive and focused on both awareness and action. Firstly, the project aimed to raise awareness among participants about the harmful environmental impact of plastic, emphasizing the critical need for change. Secondly, it aimed to encourage participants to consider sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics, promoting habits that reduce waste and environmental damage. Additionally, the project sought to provide participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead environmental initiatives in their local communities. Lastly, by fostering a multicultural learning environment, we encouraged participants to share and learn from diverse perspectives on environmental conservation, creating a strong foundation for international cooperation on sustainability issues.

## **1.2 Implementation**

### **What activities did you implement, and what was the profile of the participants involved?**

The project implemented a diverse range of activities designed to engage participants both intellectually and practically with the issue of plastic waste. The activities combined theoretical learning with hands-on experiences, creating an immersive educational environment. The project was attended by 41 participants aged 16-30 from six European countries: Germany, Italy, Turkey, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Greece. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, Latvia could not participate as initially planned, and one participant from Greece was unable to attend due to illness. Despite these challenges, the group was diverse and inclusive, with participants from varied social backgrounds, including multiple individuals from disadvantaged communities.

The project began with a series of workshops on the environmental impact of plastic, which provided a theoretical foundation for participants. During these sessions, experts on the topic presented information on the harmful effects of plastic on ecosystems and human health, which was followed by group discussions. Participants also created posters that visually represented the impact of plastic waste, allowing them to express their understanding creatively. These workshops fostered rich discussions and provided participants with a comprehensive view of the issue, including insights from their respective countries.

Following the workshops, the project moved into a more practical phase with hands-on activities. Participants took part in a lake clean-up activity, where they collected plastic waste and other litter, experiencing firsthand the scale of pollution. This was followed by a visit to a local school, where participants interacted with students and presented information on the harms of plastic. These activities helped participants develop public speaking and community engagement skills, as they were directly involved in educating others.

The project also included creative projects focused on recycling. Divided into teams, participants were tasked with designing recycling bins using recyclable materials. Each team created a bin for a specific type of waste—plastic, glass, paper, or medical waste. This activity challenged participants to think creatively about waste management, reinforcing the importance of recycling. Additionally, the project incorporated daily icebreaker activities and evening cultural exchange nights, which allowed participants to share their cultures and traditions, strengthening cross-cultural understanding and bonds.

### **What challenges did you encounter, and how did you address them?**

The project encountered a few challenges, primarily related to scheduling and resource availability. Due to the German Unity Day holiday, certain activities had to be rescheduled. This required flexibility from both organizers and participants, who adjusted well to the new timeline. Additionally, a planned tote bag workshop faced material shortages, which led to a creative solution: participants received pre-designed Erasmus+ tote bags that promoted sustainability and served as a long-term reminder of the project's message.

## **1.3 Results and Impact**

### **What were the results and impact of your project?**

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project successfully achieved its goals, resulting in significant learning outcomes and a positive impact on both participants and the wider community. Through the workshops and hands-on activities, participants developed a strong awareness of the environmental and health issues caused by plastic waste. They expressed a newfound commitment to reducing their plastic usage and promoting sustainable practices within their communities.

The project also had a notable impact on skill development. Participants reported improvements in their teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills, particularly during the recycling project and the community engagement activities. These skills are critical for effective environmental advocacy and will enable participants to lead similar initiatives in the future.

The impact extended beyond the individual participants. Through the school visit and clean-up activities, the project engaged local community members, raising awareness about plastic pollution. Additionally, participants shared their experiences on both their personal social media accounts as well as on their NGO pages, which helped disseminate the project's message to a broader audience, further amplifying its impact. The project's success is evidenced by the enthusiasm of participants, many of whom expressed a desire to implement similar environmental initiatives in their home countries.

### **Project outcomes:**

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project achieved several concrete outcomes. Participants left with a significantly heightened awareness of plastic pollution, understanding its detrimental effects on ecosystems and human health. They also acquired practical skills in waste management and sustainability practices, enhancing their capacity to advocate for environmental change. Many committed to integrating sustainable habits into their daily lives, promoting plastic-free alternatives within their communities.

The project made a tangible impact on the local community through school visits and clean-up events, encouraging better waste management practices among residents. Intercultural collaboration fostered greater cultural awareness among participants, who learned about diverse approaches to environmental challenges. Partner organizations benefited by gaining insights into environmental education, which they plan to adopt in future programs.

Social media amplified the project's message, as participants shared their experiences, inspiring broader action on environmental issues. The project's success has sparked enthusiasm among participants and partners to initiate similar sustainability projects, extending its impact even further.

### **Project impacts:**

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project had substantial and lasting impacts. Participants gained a deep understanding of environmental issues, particularly the urgent need to reduce plastic pollution. This new awareness inspired many to adopt sustainable practices and commit to environmental advocacy within their own communities.

The project also strengthened the participating organizations, providing them with effective environmental education strategies to implement in future initiatives. The local community benefited directly from the project's activities, especially through the school outreach and clean-up events, which raised awareness about waste reduction and responsible plastic usage.

The project's presence on social media allowed it to reach a wider audience, encouraging environmental consciousness beyond the immediate participants. This experience not only empowered the youth involved but also laid the groundwork for similar future initiatives, as participants and organizations expressed a strong interest in continuing their work in sustainability and environmental conservation.

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## **2. Description of the Project**

**What were the main topics addressed by your project, and were the original objectives met?**

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project addressed critical topics in environmental conservation, focusing on plastic pollution and the promotion of sustainable alternatives. The primary aim was to educate participants in a social matter about the environmental and health impacts of plastic and to inspire them to adopt and advocate for plastic-free practices.

The original objectives were not only met but, in some cases, exceeded. The combination of educational workshops, practical activities, and cross-cultural exchanges allowed participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of plastic's impact on the planet. They left the project feeling empowered and equipped with the knowledge and skills to make a positive change. The project's emphasis on intercultural collaboration added depth to the learning experience, as participants shared unique perspectives and solutions from their countries, further enriching the discussion on environmental issues.

### **How were these objectives reached?**

The project objectives were achieved through an informal but well-structured series of activities. The workshops laid a solid foundation of, while the hands-on activities and creative projects enabled participants to apply what they had learned knowledge. By engaging with the local community and sharing their experiences online, participants extended the project's impact beyond the immediate group, fulfilling the goal of broader environmental advocacy.

### **Did the project achieve any unexpected outcomes or exceed expectations?**

Yes, the project exceeded expectations in several ways. The level of engagement and enthusiasm from participants was notably high, and many expressed a strong commitment to initiating environmental projects in their own countries. Additionally, the project's impact on social media was greater than anticipated, as participants actively shared their experiences and reflections, helping to spread the message to a larger audience than initially envisioned.

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## **3. Description of the Project**

### **What were the objectives and topics addressed by your project? Were all original objectives of the project met? How were they reached?**

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project was designed to tackle the urgent issue of plastic pollution and its negative impact on both the environment and human health. At its core, the project aimed to educate and empower young people to become proactive environmental advocates in their communities. Our objectives were comprehensive, focusing on awareness, action, and the development of sustainable habits. The project had three primary goals: first, to raise awareness among participants about the environmental and health dangers posed by plastic; second, to inspire participants to adopt eco-friendly practices as alternatives to plastic; and third, to equip them with the skills needed to lead environmental initiatives within their own communities. Additionally, the project sought to foster intercultural exchange by bringing together participants from diverse backgrounds to share their unique perspectives on environmental conservation.

Each objective was systematically pursued through an informal combination of theoretical workshops, hands-on activities, and team projects. The workshops provided participants with a foundation of knowledge, addressing the environmental degradation caused by plastic waste, the impact of plastic on marine life and human health, and potential eco-friendly alternatives. Following these workshops, participants engaged in practical activities, such as a lake clean-up and a recycling project, which reinforced the lessons learned by giving them tangible experiences with plastic waste management. The intercultural aspect of the project was promoted through daily cultural exchange sessions, where participants shared their countries' approaches to waste management, enhancing cross-cultural understanding and cooperation.

The project successfully met its original objectives, largely due to the careful planning and dedication of the project partners and participants. The combination of theoretical knowledge and practical application ensured that participants gained a comprehensive understanding of the topics discussed and felt prepared to advocate for sustainability in their daily lives. In addition, the intercultural component exceeded expectations, as participants not only shared environmental practices but also built meaningful connections that reinforced the global nature of environmental challenges. The enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by participants went beyond initial expectations, with many expressing a strong desire to implement environmental projects in their own communities after the project's completion.

There were no significant objectives left unmet. However, due to a local holiday that limited access to certain resources, a tote bag creation workshop was adapted to use pre-designed Erasmus+ branded bags, which were distributed to participants to promote sustainable alternatives to plastic. Although this change differed from the original plan, it aligned with the project's objective of encouraging long-term, eco-friendly habits. Additionally, Latvia could not be present due to volunteer unavailability, after a brief interaction with the National Agency we ended up bringing extra participants from the already existing countries. Specifically, we had 3 extra participants from Italy, 2 from Turkey and 1 from Hungary.

The project not only met but exceeded some of its original objectives. Participant engagement was notably high, with many showing a level of commitment and enthusiasm that surpassed our expectations. Several participants shared personal stories about reducing their plastic use and advocated sustainable practices even before returning home. This response indicates that the project's impact extended beyond the planned outcomes, inspiring a true commitment to environmental responsibility.

### **How did the project partners contribute to the project? What experiences and competencies did they bring to the project?**

Each partner country contributed unique skills and expertise to the "Less Plastic, More Health" project, ensuring a diverse and enriching experience for all participants and fostering a collaborative environment that strengthened the project's impact.

The **Turkish team** played a pivotal role by leading the flashmob activity. With experience in public engagement, they took charge of organizing, choreographing, and energizing participants, making the flashmob a vibrant and memorable event. This activity drew public attention to the project's message about reducing plastic pollution and set an engaging tone for the program.

The **Greek team** provided valuable information on Erasmus+, sharing their knowledge and experience with the program to educate participants on its opportunities and resources. Through presentations and interactive discussions, the Greek team helped participants understand how Erasmus+ supports educational and environmental initiatives across Europe, inspiring them to explore future projects within the Erasmus+ framework.

The **German team** led the school visit, where their local knowledge and fluency in German were essential in overcoming language barriers. By facilitating communication with students and teachers, they ensured that the project's environmental messages resonated effectively within the local community. Their support made the school visit a smooth and impactful experience, enhancing community engagement.

The **Italian team** took charge of the short film sessions, utilizing their background in media and storytelling to highlight the importance of environmental awareness. They organized the film screenings and led discussions, helping participants grasp the emotional and ecological impact of plastic pollution. This visual component added depth to the project, making the environmental message more relatable and compelling.

The **Hungarian team** contributed significantly by managing the daily icebreaker and team-building activities. Drawing from their experience in group facilitation, they organized interactive games and exercises that fostered trust, unity, and open communication among participants. Their activities encouraged collaboration and strengthened intercultural connections, which were essential to the project's success.

The **Bulgarian team** played an important role in the creative recycling workshops, helping participants design and construct recycling bins from recyclable materials. Their background in hands-on environmental education enabled them to guide participants through the practical steps of waste management, reinforcing the importance of recycling in daily life. The Bulgarian team's leadership in this area ensured that the workshops were both educational and impactful.

Together, the contributions of the Turkish, Greek, German, Italian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian teams provided a well-rounded and dynamic approach to addressing plastic pollution. Each team's specific expertise—whether in public engagement, education, media, group facilitation, or practical environmental action—enhanced the project's overall effectiveness, creating a collaborative and inspiring experience for all involved.

### **What were the most relevant topics addressed by your project?**

The most relevant topics addressed by the "Less Plastic, More Health" project were centered around environmental sustainability, digital skills, and intercultural exchange, each playing a crucial role in shaping a comprehensive educational and experiential framework for the participants.

Firstly, **environmental and climate change** was the core theme of this project, with a strong focus on plastic pollution and sustainable practices. The project sought to raise awareness among young people about the detrimental effects of plastic waste on natural ecosystems and human health. Participants engaged in activities like workshops and clean-up events, which highlighted the importance of reducing plastic use, recycling, and adopting sustainable lifestyle choices. The project aimed to foster a sense of environmental responsibility, empowering participants to advocate for reduced plastic usage within their communities.

Secondly, **green skills** were emphasized through hands-on activities, including designing and creating recycling bins from recyclable materials and participating in local environmental initiatives such as lake clean-ups and community outreach programs. These activities allowed participants to develop practical skills and knowledge essential for promoting sustainable practices. They learned how to implement tangible solutions to plastic pollution, both locally and within their personal lives, encouraging them to become environmentally conscious leaders in their communities.

Lastly, **digital skills and competences** were integrated into the project, particularly through the use of digital media for advocacy and outreach. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences and insights on social media platforms, thereby extending the project's message beyond its immediate participants. This digital component not only amplified the project's impact but also equipped the participants with valuable skills in digital communication and media engagement, aligning with the Erasmus+ priority of supporting digital transformation in educational projects. In the context of reducing waste many workshops were done digitally as well.

**Which activities did you carry out to assess the extent to which your project reached its objectives and produced results? How did you measure the level of success?**

To assess the effectiveness of the "Less Plastic, More Health" project and measure its impact, we implemented several evaluation activities throughout the program. Instead of formal daily reflection sessions, facilitators casually gathered feedback from participants each day, encouraging them to share insights and experiences in a relaxed, informal manner. This approach allowed for immediate feedback on activities and gave participants an opportunity to voice their thoughts, fostering a culture of open communication and continuous improvement without the structure of separate reflection sessions.

In addition to daily feedback, participants completed evaluation forms at the beginning and end of the project to measure their learning outcomes, satisfaction with the project's content, and the extent to which they felt empowered to pursue sustainability initiatives in their own lives. These evaluation forms were comprehensive, including both quantitative and qualitative questions to capture a range of responses on knowledge acquisition, skills development, and personal growth. The comparison between initial and final evaluations helped to gauge each participant's progress and highlighted areas for potential improvement in future projects.

Project facilitators also conducted real-time monitoring and observational assessments during each activity, paying close attention to participants' engagement levels, teamwork dynamics, and responsiveness to the content. This ongoing observation allowed facilitators to adapt activities as needed, ensuring that each participant remained engaged and that the content resonated effectively with the group. The informal, adaptable structure of this observation provided valuable insights into the participants' learning experiences and added depth to the project's overall assessment.

Key indicators of success included participants' increased knowledge of plastic pollution, a demonstrated commitment to adopting sustainable practices, and a growing confidence in leading environmental initiatives. Positive feedback from participants, combined with their enthusiasm for continuing similar projects in the future, indicated the project's success. Many participants shared that they felt inspired to implement comparable initiatives in their home countries, which highlighted the lasting impact of the "Less Plastic, More Health" project.

Through these assessment activities—casual daily feedback, structured pre- and post-evaluation forms, and continuous observation by facilitators—we were able to confirm that the project successfully met its objectives. It provided participants with both the knowledge and motivation to become advocates for environmental conservation. This combination of feedback, formal and informal evaluation, and real-time observation ensured a thorough and accurate measurement of the project's impact, underscoring its achievements and inspiring future environmental projects.

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## **4. Project Management, Preparation, and Evaluation**

### **4.1 Project Management**

**How were quality and management issues (e.g., setting up agreements with partners, learning agreements with participants, etc.) addressed and by whom?**

Quality and management issues were carefully addressed through a collaborative approach involving all project partners. At the start of the project, each partner organization participated in preliminary planning sessions to outline roles and establish guidelines for quality control. The primary responsibility for quality assurance and management was shared between the main coordinating organization and key project partners, each bringing specific expertise to the table. The coordinating organization handled the establishment of learning agreements with participants, ensuring that every participant understood the objectives, expectations, and responsibilities associated with the project. These agreements served as a framework to keep participants aligned with the project's goals and provided a basis for evaluation later on. Additionally, open channels of communication were maintained with participants, allowing for regular feedback and ensuring that any issues were addressed promptly and effectively.

**How did the project address practical and logistical matters (e.g., travel, accommodation, insurance, safety and protection of participants, visa, work permit, social security, mentoring and support, preparatory meetings with partners, etc.)?**

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project addressed all practical and logistical matters with thorough planning and support to ensure a safe, comfortable, and well-organized experience for participants. Preparatory online meetings were held with all partner organizations before the project's start to discuss key logistical elements and assign responsibilities, establishing clear protocols and ensuring that each aspect of the participants' needs was fully covered. Accommodation for the participants was carefully vetted to meet standards of comfort, accessibility, and safety. The chosen facility provided a secure and supportive environment, allowing participants to focus on the project activities without concerns about their accommodations. Since all participants had their personal insurance, there was no need for additional insurance arrangements, but the project team still ensured that participants understood their coverage and whom to contact if needed.

Travel arrangements were organized to streamline participants' arrival and departure, and although no visas or work permits were required, the project team made sure all necessary travel documentation was in order. A dedicated team was established specifically for mentoring and support, available throughout the project to assist participants with any

logistical or personal needs. This support team ensured participants always had someone to reach out to for guidance or assistance, creating a positive and supportive environment.

Safety was a top priority, and we had a certified first-aid responder from the Italian team on-site at all times. This certification provided an added layer of security, with trained assistance available in case of any medical emergencies. Furthermore, risk management protocols were discussed in the preparatory meetings and reviewed with participants upon arrival, ensuring everyone was informed about emergency procedures and health and safety guidelines. Overall, the careful planning and coordination of logistical matters, supported by ongoing mentorship and a dedicated safety framework, ensured a smooth and positive experience for all participants, allowing them to fully engage in the project activities without concern for practical issues.

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### **4.3 Preparation and Support of Participants**

**What kind of preparation was offered to the participants (e.g., task-related, intercultural, linguistic, risk prevention, etc.)? Who provided such preparatory activities?**

Participants received comprehensive preparation through the WhatsApp groups before the project began, covering task-related skills, intercultural understanding, linguistic support, and risk prevention. Task-related preparation included workshops focused on understanding plastic pollution, sustainability practices, and effective advocacy strategies. These workshops were facilitated by an environmental education partner who provided participants with foundational knowledge on the project's central themes. The educational materials were designed to be accessible and engaging, ensuring participants were well-prepared to contribute meaningfully to the project's activities.

In addition to intercultural training, basic linguistic support was offered to bridge any language barriers and ensure smooth communication among participants. English served as the primary language for the project, but multilingual facilitators were available to assist participants as needed. Risk prevention training was also part of the preparatory activities, covering health and safety protocols, emergency procedures, and tips for staying safe during project activities.

**Please detail how monitoring and/or support of participants were carried out during and after the main activity.**

During the main activities, participants received continuous support through a structured monitoring and mentorship system. Each participant was paired with a mentor who provided guidance and feedback throughout the project, ensuring they had access to advice and support when needed. Mentors held regular check-ins with their mentees, allowing participants to discuss their progress, ask questions, and share any challenges they faced. This approach ensured that participants felt supported and encouraged, fostering a positive and productive learning environment.

Project facilitators and mentors were also present during all project activities to monitor engagement and provide immediate assistance. They observed participant interactions and teamwork dynamics, allowing them to address any issues promptly. After the main activity concluded, support for participants continued through online platforms where they could stay connected, share their experiences, and receive updates on future initiatives. Follow-up sessions were organized to encourage participants to reflect on their experiences and to maintain momentum in their sustainability efforts.

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#### **4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation**

##### **How was the monitoring of the project carried out and by whom?**

Monitoring the project was carried out by a dedicated team of facilitators and project leaders from the coordinating organization and partner organizations. Monitoring activities included real-time assessments during workshops, team-building exercises, and hands-on projects, ensuring that the facilitator could track participant engagement, knowledge acquisition, and collaboration skills.

Facilitators used observational checklists and informal notes to document their findings. These observations helped facilitators adapt sessions to better meet participant needs and ensure that each individual remained engaged with the project content. This monitoring approach provided an ongoing evaluation of the project's effectiveness and allowed facilitators to address any challenges promptly.

##### **Please describe any problems or difficulties you encountered during the project and the solutions applied.**

The project encountered a few challenges, some related to resource availability and scheduling. One notable issue occurred when a planned tote bag creation workshop faced a shortage of materials due to a local holiday. This shortage could have disrupted the schedule and impacted participant engagement, but the team adapted quickly by distributing pre-designed Erasmus+ tote bags to participants instead. This solution allowed the activity to continue as planned, promoting the project's sustainability message despite the logistical obstacle.

Another challenge arose when Latvia, one of the partner countries, was unable to participate due to volunteer availability issues. The project team adapted by adding extra participants from Italy, Turkey and Hungary.

Additionally, some participants required extra support due to language barriers, particularly in the initial sessions. The team addressed this by providing multilingual assistance and additional translation support where needed, enabling all participants to engage fully in discussions and activities. Through these adaptations, the project was able to overcome logistical challenges and ensure that each participant benefited from a high-quality, inclusive experience.

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#### **4. Evaluation and Impact**

##### **How did you assess the success of the project and measure the participants' learning outcomes?**

The success of the "Less Plastic, More Health" project was assessed through a multi-faceted evaluation approach. Rather than holding formal daily reflection sessions, facilitators casually gathered feedback from participants each day, encouraging them to share their insights and experiences informally. This approach provided real-time feedback on activities, allowing for immediate adjustments and fostering a culture of open communication without the rigidity of structured reflection sessions.

In addition to daily feedback, participants completed structured evaluation forms at the beginning and end of the project. These forms measured various learning outcomes, including knowledge acquisition, satisfaction with the project's content, and the participants' sense of empowerment to pursue sustainability initiatives in their communities. The forms included both quantitative and qualitative questions, capturing data on personal growth, skills development, and overall satisfaction. Comparing pre- and post-project evaluations allowed the team to gauge participant progress and identify areas for future improvement.

##### **What was the impact of the project on participants, organizations, and the local community?**

The project had a significant and lasting impact on participants, many of whom reported a newfound commitment to sustainability and a deeper understanding of environmental issues, particularly around plastic pollution. The combination of theoretical and hands-on experiences provided participants with both knowledge and practical skills, empowering them to advocate for environmental change. Many participants expressed a desire to lead similar initiatives in their communities, reflecting the project's influence on their personal and professional lives.

The project also impacted the organizations involved, providing them with insights into environmental education strategies and youth engagement practices. These organizations plan to incorporate the project's successful approaches into their future programs, helping to further the project's legacy. The local community benefited as well, especially through the school visits and clean-up activities, which introduced residents to waste management practices and highlighted the importance of reducing plastic usage. Additionally, participants shared their experiences on social media, allowing the project's message to reach a wider audience and amplify its impact.

The combination of daily feedback, structured evaluations, and real-time monitoring ensured that the project met its objectives effectively, providing participants and partners with lasting motivation and tools for environmental advocacy.

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## 5. Planning and methods

**5.1 Please describe how the planned activities were organized. What were the working methods used? How did you cooperate and communicate with your project partners and other relevant stakeholders? Please also indicate and explain the reasons for eventual changes between the activities you planned at the application stage and those finally realized.**

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project involved a carefully planned series of activities, all designed to raise awareness about plastic pollution and promote sustainable practices among participants. **Activities were organized** to combine theoretical learning with hands-on experience, fostering a deep understanding of environmental issues through interactive workshops, community outreach, and creative projects. Each activity was structured to encourage active participation, teamwork, and critical thinking, allowing participants to engage fully with the project's goals.

**Working methods** included a blend of **workshops, presentations, clean-up events, school visits and creative recycling projects**. The workshops provided participants with a theoretical foundation on plastic pollution, while the clean-up events allowed them to experience waste management challenges firsthand. For the recycling project, participants used the trash that accumulated during the project to create recycling bins, a practical exercise that reinforced the importance of sustainable waste practices.

**Communication and cooperation** with project partners and stakeholders were consistent throughout the project. **Regular online meetings** were held with partners during the planning stages to outline responsibilities, discuss logistics, and ensure alignment on project goals. During the project itself, partners and facilitators maintained close communication through **messaging groups and in-person debriefs**, allowing for real-time coordination and adjustments as needed. **Local stakeholders**, such as the school involved in the outreach activities, were also kept informed and engaged, ensuring smooth collaboration.

While most activities proceeded as planned, **a few adjustments were made** to accommodate logistical changes. For instance, due to material shortages, a planned workshop to create tote bags was adapted, and pre-designed Erasmus+ tote bags were distributed instead. This

adjustment maintained the project's sustainability message while addressing the practical challenge of unavailable resources.

**If your activities included sustainable and environmental-friendly practices or virtual components, please describe these.**

The project integrated multiple **sustainable practices** to reinforce the importance of environmental responsibility. **Recycling was a major focus**, with participants repurposing trash collected during the project to construct recycling bins, reducing the need for new materials and directly addressing plastic waste. **Poster preparations and presentations were conducted digitally** to minimize paper waste, demonstrating an eco-friendly approach to sharing information and reducing the project's environmental footprint.

Furthermore, **many participants traveled "green"** by using environmentally friendly transportation options, aligning with the project's commitment to sustainability. The project's overall structure encouraged **waste reduction and sustainable practices** in each activity, allowing participants to model environmentally friendly behaviors and gain hands-on experience in sustainability efforts. Through these methods, the project not only taught the principles of sustainability but also actively implemented them, providing participants with practical examples of how to reduce their environmental impact.

## 6. Participants profile

**6.1 Please describe the background and profile of the participants that have been involved in the project and how these participants were selected.**

The **participants of the "Less Plastic, More Health" project** were a diverse group of **young people and youth workers**, aged **16 to 30**, coming from various backgrounds and cultures across six European countries: Germany, Italy, Turkey, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Greece. Each participant was selected based on their **interest in environmental issues** and their **commitment to sustainable practices**. Many of the participants had prior involvement in environmental activities or youth engagement projects, while others were new to this field but demonstrated a strong motivation to learn and make an impact.

The selection process was highly competitive, with **over 2,000 applications received** for only 42 spots. To ensure a meaningful and inclusive experience, the selection criteria prioritized individuals who showed a genuine passion for addressing environmental challenges and who could bring unique perspectives to the project. Applicants were assessed based on **motivation letters and past experiences**, focusing on their interest in environmental issues, capacity for teamwork, and potential to advocate for sustainability within their communities.

Additionally, the project emphasized **inclusivity and diversity** by ensuring representation of **socially disadvantaged groups**. At least one participant from each country was selected from a **socially or economically disadvantaged background**, creating a more inclusive environment and providing opportunities for individuals who may not otherwise have access to international projects. The gender spectrum was also carefully considered to ensure balanced representation, with **priority given to participants with special needs or fewer opportunities**.

This diverse participant group brought a wide range of experiences and perspectives, enriching the project and enabling deeper intercultural exchange. The selected participants contributed to a dynamic, collaborative environment, each bringing unique insights that enhanced the discussions and activities, creating a collective learning experience that was

both impactful and empowering.

## 7. Activities

### 7.1 Learning Outcomes

**Please describe, for each activity implemented, which competences (i.e. knowledge, skills, and attitudes/behaviors) were acquired/improved by participants in your project? Were these in line with what you had planned? If not, please explain.**

Throughout the "Less Plastic, More Health" project, participants acquired and improved various competences, including environmental knowledge, practical skills, and positive attitudes toward sustainability and intercultural understanding. These outcomes were fully in line with what we had planned, meeting or even exceeding expectations in terms of participant engagement and learning.

- **Orientation games, mingling games, and energizers:** These activities helped participants build communication and teamwork skills, creating a strong foundation for collaboration throughout the project. By engaging in these icebreaker activities, participants developed interpersonal skills and a positive attitude toward working with individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- **Creating recycling bins:** This hands-on activity reinforced practical skills in recycling and waste management, as participants created bins from recyclable materials. They gained knowledge about sustainable practices, while also developing problem-solving skills as they worked with limited materials. Participants showed increased confidence in managing waste and understanding the environmental impact of recycling.
- **Expert presentation:** Through the expert-led session, participants gained in-depth knowledge of plastic pollution and its environmental effects. This session helped enhance their understanding of sustainability issues, building a solid theoretical foundation for the practical activities that followed. The presentation also sparked discussions and motivated participants to adopt eco-friendly habits.
- **Brainstorming activities:** These sessions encouraged participants to think critically about plastic usage and sustainable alternatives. They developed creative problem-solving skills as they proposed new ideas for reducing plastic waste. The collaborative nature of brainstorming also improved participants' abilities to communicate effectively and consider diverse viewpoints.
- **Packaging workshop:** In this workshop, participants analyzed different packaging materials, learning to identify sustainable and non-sustainable packaging. They gained skills in evaluating environmental impact, and many expressed a shift in their behavior toward choosing eco-friendly products. This activity fostered a critical awareness of consumer choices and sustainability.
- **Creating a short film/clip:** The filmmaking activity enhanced participants' media literacy and creative expression. They learned how to use visual storytelling to raise awareness about environmental issues, and they practiced skills in scripting, filming, and editing. This activity strengthened their ability to communicate complex messages in an engaging and impactful way.

- **Interview with the locals:** Through conducting interviews, participants developed communication and interpersonal skills, as well as an understanding of local perspectives on plastic use and sustainability. This activity fostered empathy and adaptability, as participants learned to engage respectfully with people from the local community.
- **Cleaning activities:** The cleanup sessions provided participants with hands-on experience in environmental conservation. They developed practical skills in waste collection and demonstrated increased motivation to keep their surroundings clean. This activity reinforced a sense of responsibility and commitment to environmental stewardship.
- **Flashmob:** This public event improved participants' confidence and ability to engage with the community. By actively participating in the flashmob, they practiced public communication skills and learned how to convey environmental messages in an accessible, memorable way. This experience helped them become more comfortable with public advocacy.
- **School visit:** During the school visit, participants developed educational and public-speaking skills as they presented environmental messages to young students. They learned to adapt their communication style to suit different age groups, and many expressed an increased willingness to engage in similar outreach efforts in the future.

## **7.2 Have all the participants received formal recognition for having taken part in the activities?**

Yes, all participants received formal recognition for their involvement in the "Less Plastic, More Health" project. Online certificates of participation were awarded, providing official acknowledgment of their learning and contributions throughout the program.

## **7.3 If any, please describe, for each activity, the methods used to support reflection and documentation of the learning outcomes (e.g., through reflections, meetings, monitoring of learning outcomes).**

Reflection and documentation of learning outcomes were essential components of the project, supporting participants in internalizing their experiences and growth. To facilitate reflection, **casual daily feedback sessions** were held, where participants discussed their insights and challenges in a relaxed setting. This informal approach encouraged honest feedback and allowed participants to reflect on what they had learned each day.

**Beginning and end-of-project evaluation forms** were also used to document learning outcomes. The initial evaluation assessed participants' prior knowledge and expectations, while the final evaluation measured their acquired knowledge, skills, and satisfaction with the project. By comparing these forms, the project team could document the learning journey of each participant and evaluate overall project success.

**Real-time monitoring and observational assessments** were conducted by facilitators during each activity. Observing participant engagement, communication, and teamwork allowed facilitators to assess learning outcomes in action. Feedback from these observations was shared with participants, helping them reflect on their own progress and areas for improvement.

Overall, these reflection and documentation methods helped participants process their experiences and allowed the project team to monitor and reinforce the learning outcomes, ensuring a meaningful and lasting impact.

## 8. Impact

### 8.1 Please describe any further impact on the participants, participating organizations, target groups, and other relevant stakeholders.

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project generated significant impact on participants, participating organizations, target groups, and other stakeholders. **Participants** experienced a deep shift in environmental awareness and commitment to sustainable practices. Many reported feeling inspired to make tangible changes in their daily lives, such as reducing personal plastic usage, advocating for recycling, and sharing their knowledge with friends and family. Additionally, participants gained valuable skills in teamwork, public communication, and creative problem-solving, which will benefit them in both their personal and professional lives.

**Participating organizations** also benefited from the project, gaining practical insights into environmental education methods and youth engagement practices. This experience has enriched their knowledge base and strengthened their commitment to incorporating sustainability into future projects. The organizations involved have expressed plans to implement similar environmental education initiatives within their own networks, amplifying the project's influence.

The **local community**, particularly the schools and residents engaged through the project's outreach activities, also felt the impact. Local students were introduced to the importance of sustainability through interactive, while community members who participated in the flashmob events gained a new awareness of plastic pollution and waste management practices. This engagement encouraged individuals in the community to adopt more eco-friendly habits, creating a ripple effect that extends beyond the project's participants.

The project also created valuable connections with **other relevant stakeholders**, including local environmental groups and organizations, who have shown interest in collaborating on future initiatives. These partnerships open doors for continued advocacy and community projects focused on sustainability.

### 8.2 What is the expected impact of the project at local, regional, national, European, and/or international levels?

At the **local level**, the project has instilled a heightened sense of environmental responsibility among participants and community members. The clean-up activities and school visits raised awareness about plastic pollution, encouraging local stakeholders to continue waste reduction efforts and engage in community-driven environmental projects. Participants are expected to bring back their insights to their home communities, fostering similar local initiatives.

At the **regional and national levels**, the project's impact is expected to be felt through the participating organizations, which now have stronger expertise in environmental education. These organizations are likely to launch similar projects within their regions, helping to spread sustainable practices more widely and setting a standard for eco-friendly youth programs. Additionally, participants inspired by the project are expected to engage in environmental advocacy within their own communities and regions, amplifying the project's message.

At the **European level**, the project contributes to a unified vision of sustainability by creating a network of environmentally conscious youth across multiple countries. Participants have become ambassadors of environmental responsibility, with many pledging to initiate cross-cultural exchanges focused on sustainability. The project aligns with the European Union's environmental goals, supporting the EU's Green Deal objectives by empowering young people to address climate challenges and promote eco-friendly lifestyles.

Finally, at the **international level**, "Less Plastic, More Health" serves as a model for collaborative environmental education projects. By bringing together diverse cultures and backgrounds, the project has fostered a shared understanding of global environmental issues, encouraging participants to think globally while acting locally. This approach could inspire similar projects around the world, demonstrating the power of youth-led initiatives in promoting sustainability on an international scale.

## 9. Dissemination of Project Results

**Which results of your project were worth sharing? Please provide concrete examples.**

The "Less Plastic, More Health" project produced several impactful results worth sharing with both local and international audiences. One significant result was the **lake cleaning activity**, which not only engaged participants in a hands-on environmental effort but also raised awareness among community members about the importance of waste management. The visual impact of this cleanup activity made it an effective example to share with wider audiences.

Another valuable outcome was the **creation of recycling bins** using the trash collected during the project. This activity highlighted the principles of recycling and waste management, serving as a practical demonstration of how recyclable materials can be repurposed for sustainability. Additionally, the **creation of caricatures** allowed participants to express environmental messages creatively, using art to illustrate the impact of plastic waste on ecosystems. These caricatures captured attention on social media and provided a memorable way to communicate the project's goals.

**Please describe the activities carried out to share the results of your project inside and outside participating organizations. What were the target groups of your dissemination activities?**

The results of the project were shared through various dissemination activities, both within and outside the participating organizations. **Participants posted pictures and videos** documenting their experiences on their personal social media accounts and on the platforms of their respective NGOs, reaching a broad audience and allowing followers to see the project's positive impact firsthand. These posts highlighted key activities like the lake cleanup, recycling bin construction, and caricature creation, bringing visibility to the project's environmental message.

Additionally, participating organizations shared project summaries and images on their websites and social media channels, targeting groups such as local community members, environmental activists, and educational institutions interested in sustainability. This dissemination not only promoted the project's results but also fostered potential connections with organizations interested in similar initiatives.

**If relevant, please describe the activities carried out to promote the Erasmus+ Programme and ensure visibility of the programme. What were the target groups, frequency of those activities?**

Promoting the **Erasmus+ Programme** was an integral part of the project, and several activities were conducted to ensure its visibility. Each participant received **tote bags and shirts branded with the Erasmus+ logo**, which they wore during public activities like the lake cleanup and flashmob. This branding increased Erasmus+ visibility and made the program's support evident to onlookers.

In addition to branded materials, the project included a **dedicated session explaining Erasmus+** to participants, focusing on the opportunities it provides for youth education, environmental projects, and international collaboration. This session targeted the participants directly, encouraging them to explore future Erasmus+ projects and share these opportunities within their personal and professional networks.

**If applicable, please give examples of how the participants have shared their experience with peers within or outside your organization.**

Participants actively shared their project experiences with their peers both within and outside their organizations. Many posted photos and videos on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, sharing memorable moments from the project, including the lake cleanup, the creation of recycling bins, and the flashmob. Additionally, some participants shared their experiences on the platforms of their NGOs, reaching an audience already engaged with environmental and social issues.

By documenting their journey, participants helped spread the project's message of sustainability, raising awareness about plastic pollution and the benefits of environmental activism. These posts encouraged peers to engage in similar activities and sparked conversations around the need for sustainable practices, extending the project's impact beyond its immediate participants.

The links to the social media posts can be found in the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ldrEgQnxmdOR5wQeU9RzuODNB-gV3bCnE25YGp937sk/edit?tab=t.0>

## **10. Future plans and suggestions**

**Do you intend to continue cooperating with your partners in future projects? Please explain how.**

Yes, we plan to continue working with our partners on future projects. Our shared commitment to sustainability and youth empowerment forms a strong foundation for

collaboration. We aim to develop new projects focused on **environmental education and sustainable practices**, including community cleanups and recycling initiatives. Additionally, we are considering creating a **digital platform** for ongoing knowledge-sharing among participants. We may also explore forming an **Erasmus+ strategic partnership** to expand our impact and connect more young environmental advocates across Europe.



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