

ACTIVATING FUTURE LEADERS OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY IN EUROPE

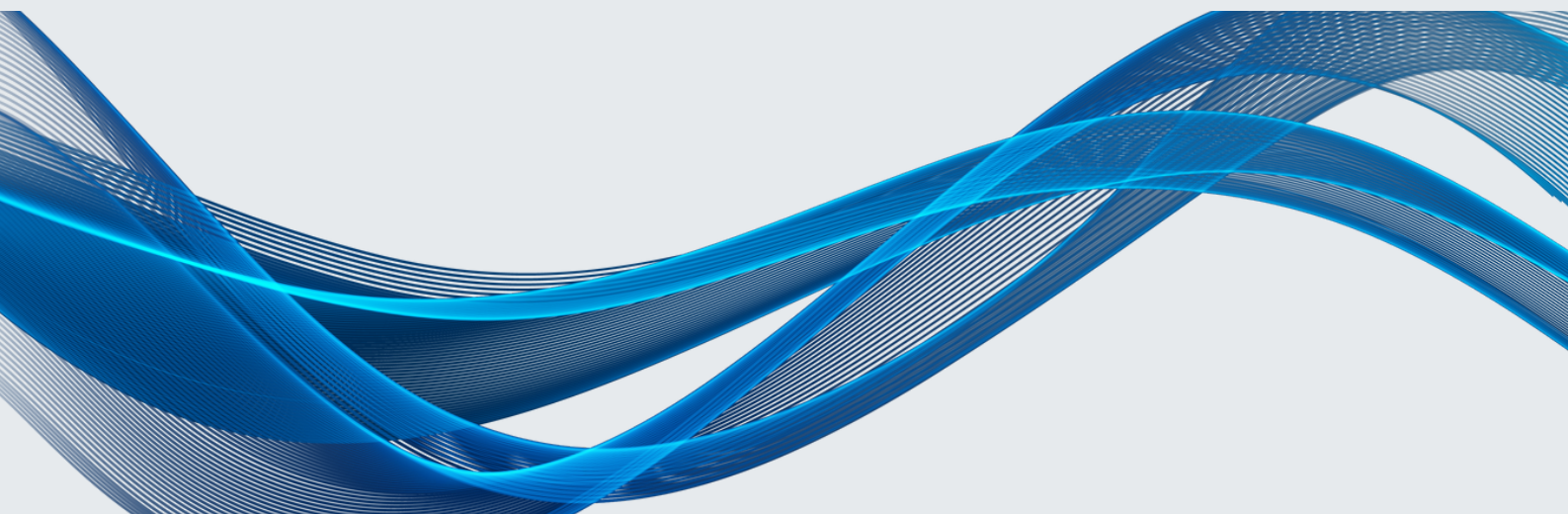
NARRATIVE HANDBOOK

1.TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Disclaimer	3
II. Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction	5
1.1. Overview of the Project	6
1.2. Purpose of the Handbook	7
1.3. Focus of the Handbook	9
2. Project Implementation Overview	11
2.1 Activities Summary	12
2.2. Methodologies Applied	18
3. Perceptions and Discoveries	23
3.1. Student Question Guide and Reflections	24
3.2. Youth Perceptions on Sustainability	49
3.3. Discoveries about School Variants	52
4. Impact on Youth and Community Engagement	55
4.1. Mirror Document	56
4.2. Community Action Initiatives	58
5. Lessons Learned and Best Practices	64
5.1. Challenges and Solutions	65
5.2. Successful Strategies	69
5.3. Thoughts for Future Consideration	73
6. Conclusions	75
6.1. Summary of Key Outcomes	76
6.2. Impact on Participants and Community	78
6.3. Critical Reflections	80
6.4. Sustainability of the Project	82
7. Appendices	84

I. DISCLAIMER

“Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.”



II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This handbook is one of the important outcomes that has been produced in the course of the "Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe" project. It documents the experiences of 12 students from Greek and Danish backgrounds participating in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) activities. The handbook describes aims of the project such as experiential learning, developing leadership skills and active participation of the community. It demonstrates how the students' perception of sustainability shifted from solely theoretical understanding to practical understanding of sustainability. In addition, it provides suggestions for the next steps in the youth sustainability activities.



1. INTRODUCTION

"Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe", implemented under Erasmus+ KA210, is a European project which addresses major sustainable development issues. These issues call for a coordinated effort to focus on sustainable development, which is an objective that depends significantly on the active involvement of young people. This project enables twelve students aged 14 to 16 from Denmark and Greece to engage in a meaningful exploration of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, by facilitating intercultural cooperation, the project aims to mobilise young people and recognise their capacity as key actors in sustainable development. Finally, using a curriculum that integrates educational action, leadership training, community service and cross-cultural exchanges, it equips them with the knowledge, skills and impetus needed to effectively address local and global challenges.

1.1. OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The project was designed to address the gap between knowledge and experience. It places great emphasis on educating and empowering young people to contribute to further broadening their knowledge base on sustainability. Simultaneously, it equips them with the necessary skills for active leadership in their community. The project design enabled students to exchange ideas and experiences in a meaningful way between different cultural and educational backgrounds. As a result, an integrated view of local sustainable development informed by global perspectives emerged. Encouraging participants through a series of carefully considered activities to convert their knowledge into tangible actions, they were able to help themselves solve local challenges in ways that also supported broader global goals.



1.2. PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is a thorough and continuous record of the students who participated in the "Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe" project, thereby providing an exceptionally valuable resource for reflection, learning and future application. The handbook describes in detail all the methodologies used, the results achieved and the lessons learnt during the implementation of the project. In addition, students thoughts and experiences are depicted through the question guide. The handbook is also a unique source of information for sustainability educators, project managers as well as policy makers among other stakeholders involved in this field and interested in providing young people with opportunities to learn about sustainability ethics. Finally, the handbook seeks to inform and guide future initiatives that aim to engage youth in a deeper and more meaningful way, thus enhancing ongoing global efforts to achieve the SDGs.



1.2. PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

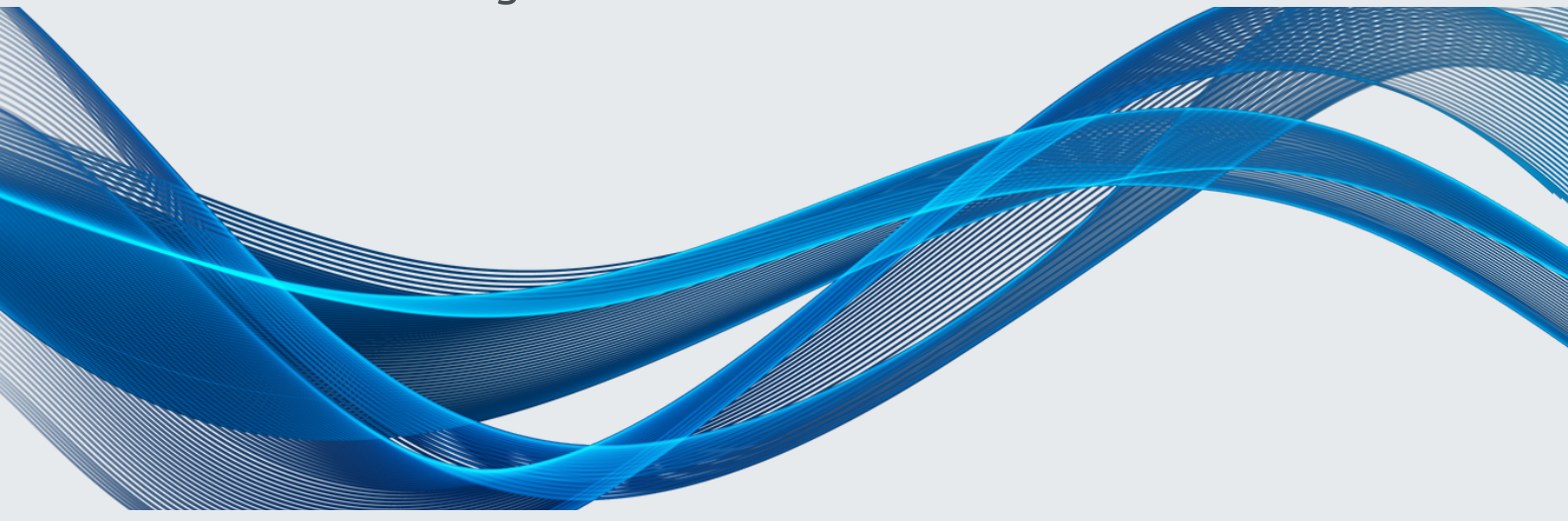
In addition to all other functionalities, the handbook serves as a vital source of reference for youth workers. It enables them to build on the understandings of young people and also illustrates the processes of youth engagement and reflection in dealing with various challenging community issues. Therefore, it is also a source of information that consists a specific part for education in the field of sustainability for educators, managers, policy-makers and any other entities, who are interested in capacity building of youth on understanding the ethics of sustainable development. The handbook seeks to achieve this by explaining its intention to allow, and direct, future such projects with the hope that they will engage youth in ways which are meaningful and productive to the potential project, and help in the continued fight for all the SDGs.



1.3. FOCUS OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is a multifaceted one since it addresses various critical aspects that contributed to the success of the project. Firstly, it provides a deep understanding of educational approaches adopted in this project, which include on pedagogy for sustainability teaching methods of innovative and attractive type that make sense to young learners. The document gives an in-depth description of these methods such as interactive workshops, project-based learning and reflective practices so that the readers can fully understand how they help in personal growth and contribute to the whole program.

Secondly, the text underscores youth empowerment into agents of sustainability. It shows how students turned from learners into leaders who are able to start and continue community-based projects dealing with real life issues regarding sustainability. This part also investigates skills and competences acquired during the project thus providing insight for their nurturing in different settings.



1.3. FOCUS OF THE HANDBOOK

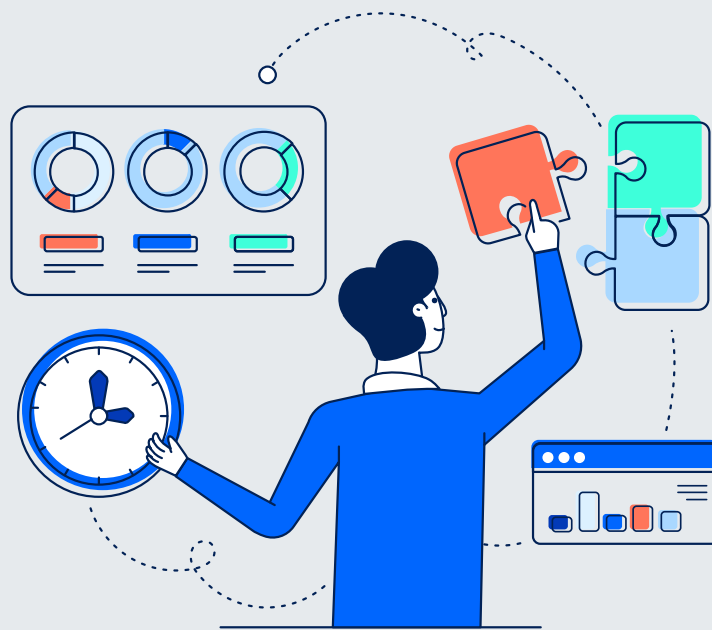
Moreover, the handbook utilizes the students' responses to the question guide in respect to their their evolving ideas, perceptions, and perspectives on sustainability. In their reflections, we can see how their thinking has significantly shifted from narrow views to a broader understanding of sustainability.

Thirdly, the handbook explores some strategies for community involvement showing how education was linked with action through this initiative. The power of youth-led action in delivering tangible benefits and promoting a culture of sustainability was demonstrated through students' projects involving local communities. Finally, the handbook evaluates the general effect of the project on immediate results and future potentiality. It considers how these methods can be scaled up and adapted for use in other regions or educational setups providing guidelines for future endeavors aimed at engaging young persons in sustainable development.



2. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

"Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe" was foreseen to be an intensive training programme based on a series of structured learning activities. These activities aimed at enhancing young participant's knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy regarding sustainable actions to become sustainable change agents in their communities. The project design was conceptually organized to ensure successful progression in each phase from the theoretical analysis to practical application that supports the major objectives of the project. This section suggests a detailed description of all the project activities, including objectives, measures for the project's realizations, and the roles of participants suggested for the project, and the report presents a comprehensive discussion of all the methodologies used during the work on the project.



2.1. ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

The project's initiation commenced with the organisational Transnational Project Meeting held in Denmark. This meeting was important in creating understanding of the project goals and objectives among all the parties such as project coordinators from both Denmark and Greece. Therefore, the purpose of the kickoff meeting was to attain a common understanding of its vision and strategic direction among stakeholders to gain commitment with the objectives that had been set. In this, the meeting also served as a way of making participants become acquainted with the theme of sustainability as the basis for collective work that would take place later. In this phase of implementation, the use of training models like formal presentations, group discussions and brainstorming sessions were employed.



2.1. ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

Following the kickoff, students were provided with the five-day introductory training in Denmark, aimed at introducing them to the ideas and principles of SDGs, sustainability, and community entrepreneurship. This training was crucial for the participants to gain the required body of knowledge and skills specific to the implementation and management of sustainability initiatives in their respective communities. The training used a blend of lectures and practical exercises to cover the objectives developed and outlined effectively. One of the training elements was the acquaintance with the subject of Protreptic dialogue, which is the philosophical approach to develop reflective thinking and value orientation. That is why this method helped the students to connect with their own values as for sustainability and the understanding of the SDGs. Further, students conducted field trips to significant places like the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art to study the frameworks of art, culture and current affairs respectively. This experience promoted critical and interpretative thinking in them, improving their analytical and problem-solving skills which later empowered them to take up leadership roles.

2.1. ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

Afterwards, the project advanced to an eight-day parallel training exercise in both countries which was an important phase that helped to further engender students' understanding of sustainability and project implementation. This training was structured into four comprehensive modules:

- The SDGs, Sustainability, Value Clarification, and Co-creation,
- Actions and project development and leadership,
- Partnerships, communication, storytelling, and resources mobilization, and
- Community mobilization and engagement, and everyday Implementation.

Much attention was paid to coming up with a balanced design of each module with theoretical knowledge and advanced practical elements that could be easily applied in an actual setting by the learners. To enhance knowledge retention, assessments incorporated numerous simulations and exercises across all the modules including role-playing and case-study. This part of the project was particularly beneficial in the development of leadership skills, as well as in students' competence as to the organization and implementation of sustainability projects in their schools and communities.

2.1. ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

Midway through the project a transnational meeting was conducted in Greece to assess the achievements made to date and to identify any difficulties encountered. This meeting served as a critical reflection point, allowing the project consortium to assess the effectiveness of the activities implemented and to make any necessary adjustments to the project plan. The meeting featured structured reflection sessions, where participants shared their experiences, discussed their achievements, and provided feedback on the project's progress. These sessions were helpful in defining further what needed to be done and what methodologies were to be used next in the project.



2.1. ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

The subsequent activity of the project was a training held in Greece that was aimed at refreshing students' theoretical knowledge and preparing the students for the execution of their sustainability projects. This phase concentrates on bringing the concepts to action. Project oriented workshops were focused on enhancing students' experience by providing a platform through which the students could practice their skills. Such workshops were supported by theoretical lectures to provide the students with the necessary tools to take action towards a sustainable society. Moreover, the students had an additional activities during their training in Greece that broadened their perspectives. Among these was a guided visit to the historical monuments and ancient theater in Larissa. This provided students with insight into the region's cultural heritage. They also visited the city's art gallery, where the art teacher led a tour and concluded with a creative session, allowing the students to express their ideas on sustainability through drawing. Lastly, the students experienced Greek traditional dance, an activity that promoted a stronger cultural bond between the Greek and Danish students.

2.1. ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

In the implementation phase, the students utilized their new knowledge in practice by working on the community-based projects that were aimed at bringing about a long-lasting change. Such projects were not only well designed but also focused on the aspect of sustainability and the involvement of the local community in the SDGs. Some of these initiatives were supported by local groups and businesses to ensure that the projects were well equipped and received public support. During this phase, students managed their project by assigning tasks, organizing it, and engaging with stakeholders to ensure that it was completed effectively.



2.2. METHODOLOGIES APPLIED

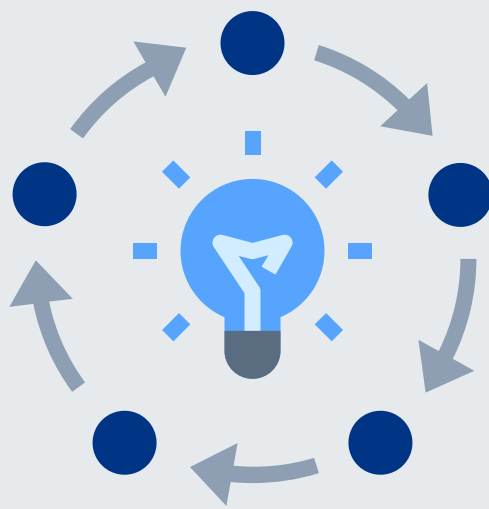
This project employed a wide range of innovative educational and engagement methodologies, each of them being carefully selected to align with the project's objectives and to meet the needs of the young participants. These methodologies were central to the project's success and ensured that students gained knowledge and developed the skills and confidence to apply what they learned in real-world contexts.

One of the most important methodologies applied in this project was Protreptic dialogue. It is an approach that emphasizes value clarification and reflective thinking. This method was particularly effective in helping students explore their personal values in relation to sustainability. In addition, it provided a deeper, more personalized connection to the SDGs. Through guided discussions, students were encouraged to critically examine their beliefs and assumptions, an action that led them to a more nuanced and informed understanding of sustainability. This methodology assisted them to enhance their intellectual engagement and created a sense of personal responsibility for addressing global challenges.



2.2. METHODOLOGIES APPLIED

Project-Based Learning (PBL) was another core strategy of the educational paradigm used in the framework of the project. PBL is characterized by students' participation in meaningful projects that simulate real life tasks and which demand their application of existing knowledge. Thus, during the project, the students were expected to create, propose, and achieve their own sustainability projects. This practical approach helped in the consolidation of theory and the development of competencies which are essential for students' critical thinking skills, such as analysis and, synthesis, teamwork, and leadership skills. These skills are fundamental to the solving of complicated sustainability issues. The effectiveness of the PBL approach was evident in the quality and significance of the students' work. It covered various aspects of sustainability issues as they involved the conservation of the environment, awareness creation and inclusion of the public.



2.2. METHODOLOGIES APPLIED

Additionally, the project emphasised on peer and cross-cultural learning and these were easily achievable because of its transnational nature. Danish and Greek participants interacted in mixed groups, thus, they had to consider different approaches and viewpoints concerning sustainability. This exchange enhanced their learning and promoted the aspect of global citizenship as students learned how to deal with cultural diversity while striving to achieve a common goal. Peer learning was also facilitated by group discussions, group projects, and group problem solving activities to enable the students to learn from their peers.

Reflective practices were integrated throughout the project to encourage students to think critically about their learning experiences and the impact of their actions. Students engaged in reflective journaling, group discussions, and feedback sessions that provided opportunities for self-assessment and peer review. These practices helped students internalize their learning, identify areas for improvement, and develop strategies for overcoming challenges. The process of reflection also played a key role in the compilation of the narrative handbook, ensuring that the students' voices and experiences were central to the project's documentation.

2.2. METHODOLOGIES APPLIED

Community engagement and stakeholder involvement were also key methodologies employed in the project. The students' initiatives did not only contribute to sustainability matters but also aimed at involving the local community to be part of them. Involving organizations, businesses, and local citizens, the project was the way to guarantee that the initiatives were the real ones with lasting effects beyond the immediate participants. This method provided students with priceless training in such areas as communication, negotiation, and partnership building, which are important for effective leadership in sustainability.



2.2. METHODOLOGIES APPLIED

In addition to these methodologies, the project was also supported by a series of diverse non-formal learning techniques that complemented the formal educational elements. These included interactive workshops, site visits, and creative activities such as art projects. Students expressed their sustainability knowledge through a creative exercise made during the visit to the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark. Similarly, students in Greece had workshops with them where they learned traditional Greek dances, and visit to historical places of the city. This method of cultural enquiry that enabled them to comprehend the preservation of intangible cultural heritage as well as explore sustainable cultural practices. These activities ensured an alternative route of learning to the students, thus catering to different learning styles, and consequently, the educational experience became more engaging and dynamic.

Finally, a monitoring and evaluation framework which is robust was introduced from the beginning of the project to the end of the project in order to analyze the effectiveness of the methodologies and the overall impact of the project. Ongoing feedback was received from participants, educators, and trainers who were involved in the activities. The data obtained was then used to adjust and improve the activities where necessary.

3. PERCEPTIONS AND DISCOVERIES

The project "Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe" highlighted youth's shared vision of sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also brought to light insights into how different schools have approached these universal challenges and engaged with their local communities. This section presents the findings on young people's evolving views on sustainability and the SDGs, and the final section presents the findings on the differences in the way different schools in different countries addressed the contentious SDGs.



3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

At the outset of the project, there was a noticeable gap in familiarity and understanding of sustainability and SDGs between the participating students from Denmark and Greece. In Denmark, students generally had a basic knowledge of SDS, which was mainly derived from their formal education and exposure to the media. However, this understanding was often superficial, as students perceived the SDGs as abstract global goals as opposed to issues that directly affect their lives and communities. Their relationship with sustainability was mainly on a theoretical basis, with few opportunities where they could apply this knowledge in practice.

On the contrary, in the beginning project implementation Greek students showed a lower familiarity of SDGs. The SDGs were a relatively new concept for the majority, and their understanding of sustainability was often confined to environmental issues such as recycling and conservation without realizing the connections between all 17 goals. One of the reasons for this knowledge gap was the lack focus on sustainability education in their schools, as well as lack of awareness about global initiatives surrounding sustainability within range restricted to local environment.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

As the project progressed, students' perspectives of sustainability evolved substantially. This is very well depicted in the answers that students provided in the question guide that was given to them. The progression was noticeable among people from both countries involved. The project's aforementioned pedagogical methods enabled students gain a deeper and more sophisticated grasp of sustainability. By the end of the project, Danish and Greek students had progressed from a theoretical understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to an appreciation for their practical application. They recognized the significance of local efforts in advancing global goals, including sustainability into their daily lives and future duties.



3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

In this part, the personal insights gained by students who participated in this activity are presented. The students were guided with six (6) questions to make remarks about what they think about sustainability, SDGs, and how their thoughts and actions have progressed during the course of the project.

The responses gathered not only substantiate the numerous avenues of engagement young people have with global challenges, but also their willingness to actively do something meaningful in the context of their society that is more than just expressed attempts at advocacy. As a consequence, such reflections provide evidence to the manner in which learners and practical initiatives can more deeply engage students in the quest for sustainability, in this instance, how the learners view themselves in the process of advancement towards sustainability.

Below, we present a series of questions that were posed to the students, followed by their responses and a brief analysis of the key themes and takeaways from their answers. This combination of direct student voices and reflection helps to capture their evolving understanding of sustainability and the practical steps they are taking to engage with the SDGs.



3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

1. How do you personally define "sustainability"? What does it mean to you in your daily life?

- I believe sustainability simply means making sure that Earth resources do not get depleted and taking care of the environment for the benefits of future generations. For example, it's like using energy in moderation, saving water and recycling constituents wherever possible. In my life I try to switch off lights wherever possible and whenever I am not in the room, I have a habit of taking quick baths and instead of buying plastic bottles, I use a water bottle. It's the little things that count, but there is a sense that they can indeed make a difference.
- For me, sustainability is about keeping a balance between what we take and what we leave behind. It is ensuring that the planet is still in good shape for other people in the future. In particular, I do not waste water in my daily habits, do not use plastic bags and try to purchase local products. It is also about how and when I decide to make new purchases. I think "why do I do this?", "do I need a new thing? or maybe I can use something I already have".

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

- I believe sustainability is important as we have to take care of the nature and consume less to allow enough for the people of tomorrow. In my daily life, when I go to the supermarket with my parents, I take a reusable bag and I try not to buy many things that I don't need. My family also started recycling a lot more, which I think is very important because so many things we throw away can be reused or recycled
- In my opinion, sustainability is a way of life that does not harm the earth. It is about finding the balance on what we take from nature and how we can repay back. In my daily life I am concerned about the amount of water I use, switching off electrical appliances when I don't use them. Also, I try to use less plastic. It's not easy, but if everyone did a little bit, it would make a big difference.
- Sustainability, for me, is about making sure the way we live today doesn't destroy the future. I try to use public transport instead of asking for a ride all the time, and I avoid buying fast fashion because I learned how bad it is for the environment.
- For me, sustainability is making reasonable and responsible choices for the benefit of the environment. In my everyday life I use as little plastic as possible and walk or ride a bike when I want to go somewhere. Small things matter

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

- To me, sustainability means looking further ahead in the future and avoiding the depletion of all the resources. It's more like using up everything only when it is necessary. For example, I save the plastic items as much as I can.
- Sustainability means to protect the future. We must protect the environment and other resources, such as clean air and clean water. That's why I try to avoid fast food or any kind of junk simply because I know the packaging and waste are bad for the planet.
- I think that sustainability is to make sure our communities and planet are healthy and strong. In my daily life, I try to think about how I can help people. I like to donate clothes I don't wear anymore and not throw them away.
- Sustainability isn't just about nature; it's about fairness and helping others. It's making sure that everyone, no matter where they live, has access to the same resources and opportunities. In my life, I try to make more sustainable choices. I buy fair-trade products that make sure workers are paid fairly.
- Lately, I understand that sustainability is to make better choices in everyday life. We need to do what is least harmful to nature. For example we started composting at home and I have been more careful about what I buy.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

- According to my mind sustainability is a way of distributing and managing resources so that all people have enough resources to share. This is also justice. Everyone no matter where they live, has the same access to things like clean air, safe homes, and good food. Personally, I have begun to think how my actions affect other people. For example, I choose to support companies that don't exploit people.



3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

These responses indicate that students are well acquainted with the idea of sustainability, paying a special attention to issues of resource conservation and mindful consumption. Some of them specify the measures like switching off the light, avoiding plastic and using public transport as part of their efforts to be more sustainable on a daily basis. This shows an emerging realization of the fact that even minor actions by particular individuals can cumulatively contribute into the effort of conserving some resources.

Some students place emphasis on the importance of balancing today's needs with future generations. This proves that they understand sustainability as a long-term responsibility. For instance, one of them states: "Sustainability means making sure the way we live today doesn't destroy the future."

A few of the students explain social aspects of sustainability as well explaining that it would be inequitable or unjust to concern only be governed by environmental issues. These students appreciate the fact that all people have equity to clean resources and some even go further to support fair trade to ensure that people who labour are fairly compensated. This indicates that there is an appreciation that sustainability is equity and quality of life for all people.

Finally, sustainability is often connected by students with their own and an external impact on the community. Activities such as donating clothes and composting show that sustainability has to be implemented, firstly at home and then within society.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

2. Does it make sense the way we are engaging young people in the SDGs and sustainability (and other related community issues) in the project?

- Of course, it does! In the project we are looking at the SDGs from the implementation point of view rather not from the perspective of theory which is rather intangible. We do such activities that can change the world. For example, we do community projects or advocate for sustainability in schools. It's not boring, it is active
- I think it's good because it's teaching us that we, young people, can make a change. Sometimes people think teenagers don't care, but we do. This project shows how we can take action, even if we are young. We feel that we can do something important for the world.
- Yes, the way the project is, we participate in many activities that help the environment and community. This makes SDGs more real and personal, not just ideas from some big organizations far away. We see how what we do can help our community.
- I think it makes sense because we are learning by doing. The project gives us practical ways to engage, and that's important if we want young people to care.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

- It's good, but maybe more could be done to make it even more exciting for more students. We can maybe have more fun competitions or events where we all do something related to the SDGs.
- I think the way we are learning about SDGs through this project is really helpful because it's not only about learning facts, but about how we can apply them in real life. I also like that we get to work in teams and come up with ideas to help our school and neighborhood.
- Yes, it makes sense because we get to be involved in real projects, like creating campaigns or working with our community.
- I think so because it seems to be educating us on things that we normally wouldn't pay attention to, such as how our decisions have an impact on the world.
- Yes I think it makes sense, because we learnt how the SDGs affect people in different parts of the world. We hear about the environment and about how sustainability can improve lives in developing countries too.
- Yes, I believe that it is effective because it helps us understand that we are part of a global movement.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

- Yes it does! We're not just being told what the goals are but we' are also learning how to take action and make changes in our own communities. It's helping us feel like we can make a real difference.
- It does, because we did different projects and learnt things. But we didn't have time to do more projects.



3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

The answers provided by the students indicate that they have engaged with the project very actively, especially in how practical rather than theoretical aspects a project is. Community projects, many of the students claim, are what makes SDG more meaningful to their experience as a whole. One of the students states: “We do such activities that can change the world,” stressing on the aspect of learning through practice that sparks one to do something about issues facing the world.

Some students also feel empowered in that they think they have a part to play towards addressing issues that concern all. And they are aware that they could take action and one of the students stated, “We feel that we can do something important for the world.” This aspect of taking action is one of the major achievements of the project.

A few students make constructive criticism in terms of what could be improved, for example, more fun competitions, or request for more time for the project so that they can explore more. These suggestions are highly encouraging as they indicate their willingness to improve the extent and impact of the project so that more people will get involved.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

Finally, students appear to appreciate the aspect of global issues that the project seeks to address. This enables them to understand how their work is related to the bigger picture of solving issues such as providing better living standards for countries in poverty. This sense of addressing problems on a global scale also leads them to view their activities as part of the bigger picture in the fight for sustainable development.



3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

3. Do you have other perspectives on engagement that could challenge and make the mainstream more effective? And what could such perspectives, tools, methods, ways of engagement be?

- I think that we could increase the involvement of young people in these initiatives more that's why more social media should be used. There could be some challenges or campaigns that would become popular and attract more people in SDG's.
- I think that there should be more games or such applications that are related to sustainability. For example, some kind of application which shows how many liters of water or how much electricity we save. It would be more fun.
- Perhaps if we involved parents more, it would make a bigger difference. For example if we had family events or workshops where parents and kids can learn about sustainability together, then such ideas would spread quickly.
- I think that drawing attention of the people on the SDGs could also involve doing some creative works such as acting or painting like we did in Larissa. Sometimes when you just present evidence is not enough, but when you show it in a different way, more people might be concerned.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

- It might help if we hear more stories from other young people around the world who are already doing cool things with the SDGs. If we see what others our age are doing, it can motivate us to do more.
- I think we should focus more on making sustainability part of our everyday habits at school. We could have more recycling bins in every classroom and maybe even a compost bin for food waste in the cafeteria.
- I wish there are more field trips to these places where sustainability is happening. For example, I would like to visit wind turbines sites or eco- friendly businesses.
- Maybe we could have more personal challenges where we see our own habits, like how much water we spend. We could have journals where we write everything, and it can show us our personal impact over time.
- I suggest more focus on innovation. How about sustainability hackathon events, when people unite their brains and efforts and work on social issues?
- I think we could have video calls or exchanges with students from developing countries.
- There could maybe have student-led podcasts where we talk about sustainability issues and interview local experts. This would be very interesting.
- We could connect sustainability with technology. Young people like technology and it would be very interesting to combine sustainability with robotics or coding.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

The students propose creative means of capturing the attention of the youth towards sustainability, insisting on the necessity of active participation. Some responses mentioned the importance of direct actions for young people, like clean-ups or recycling projects, they need to do to believe it has an impact. This satisfaction of physically making an impact encourages such people to want to do even more.

Another example of that is incorporating social media and challenges into the concept of sustainability to make it seem appealing to everyone in the society. The students propose campaigns like “no plastic” challenges where participants will be able to post updates of their progress. Such ideas illustrate how social media can be used to extend the course scope and objectives to sustain the interest of participants in and out of the class.

However, there are also numerous students who think education plays a huge role or sustainability should be rather taught in the classrooms. Some propose the establishment of full classes based on the environment and the SDGs while a group of others feels that making competitions in school would be more fun to promote sustainability. It is expected that regular participation in a variety of activities related to the issues of sustainability would be instrumental in helping develop the necessary attitudes and shift perception of these issues over time.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

Finally, a few students indicate that it is critical to involve the society by placing the issue of sustainability within the context of popular interests like fashion, food or music.



3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

5. How has your understanding of sustainability changed since you began participating in this project?

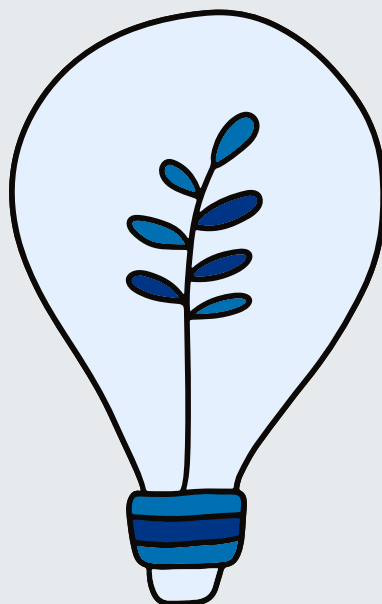
- Before this project, I thought sustainability was mostly about recycling. But now I see it's much bigger. It's about equality, reducing poverty, and making sure everyone has access to clean water and education. I never realized how everything is connected.
- I used to think that sustainability is only about recycling and saving energy. But now I understand, it also means that people live good lives without harming the planet. Things like helping poorer countries are also parts of sustainability.
- My understanding has changed a lot. Now I understand that sustainability is something we can all do everyday. Even small things like using less plastic or water are important.
- At first, I thought sustainability was just about environmental things, like protecting forests. Now I see it's also about people like making sure everyone has access to education and good health.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

- I've learned that sustainability has to do with balancing different needs. We should not just focusing on one thing. I have understood the fact that within a sustainability framework we must consider the needs of various stakeholders.
- I realized that my ideas on sustainability have changed a lot. In the past, I only thought about big issues like the battle against global warming or protecting threatened species. But now I understand that it also involves the little things that we do every day. For example, we can walk instead of driving or buy second hand clothes. These small decisions have a large impact.
- I didn't really care about sustainability before, to be honest. But after doing this project, I realize how important it is, and I've started thinking more about how I can help.
- I used to think sustainability was boring, just something for adults to worry about. Now I get that it affects everything we do. I didn't know that something very simple like what we wear or eat could have a big impact on the planet.
- I used to think sustainability was something that some countries had to worry about, like places with big environmental problems. But now I see that even in Denmark, we have to change how we live..

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

- This project helped me for the first time to understanding that sustainability is not just about protecting the environment but also about helping people
- I never understood before how sustainability is related to things such as mental health and wellbeing. If we have cleaner spaces, fresher air, and better food options we can live healthier and happier lives.
- In the beginning, I used to think sustainability is something which is the responsibility of the government or businesses. But in this project, I understood that there is a need to change, and this change has to come from us, the people. I see how real people work in sustainability they will know how they can make a difference in the future.



3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

Students indicate a substantial change in the conception of sustainability. To begin with, many of them linked it solely with obedience to nature through practices such as waste collection or preservation of electricity. However, through this project, they have started appreciating that sustainability is much broader, and this includes issues like equality, the fight against poverty, and provision of basic needs where clean water and education are one of them.

In addition, some learners feel that sustainability does not have to be about the concerns of world leaders, but also lies in the simple actions that one can do today to secure a better environment for tomorrow, such as reducing plastic usage, walking or purchasing second hand clothes instead of new ones. This transition demonstrates how their views have progressed from addressing large-scale problems to realizing the role that the average person has in tackling sustainability.

A couple of learners consider that once sustainability was boring and only adults would think about it. On the contrary, after the project they realized that it is relevant to all aspects of life, from what we eat to how we dress.

Lastly, the project has made some students comprehend that sustainability encompasses well-being and mental health as well. People need to have cleaner spaces, cleaner air, healthier food and live happier, healthier lives, which is certainly a new perspective for some people.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

6. What advice would you give to future ambassadors or schools implementing similar sustainability programs?

- My advice would be to focus on one thing at a time. For example, you could start with a recycling program and then move on to bigger projects. It's important not to get stressed to do everything.
- I would tell them to make it fun! You can use games, competitions, or challenges to get students involved.
- I would tell the students to be in charge of projects. When students own an idea, they're more likely to stay involved and care about it. I mean let them think for themselves and make decisions. Let them run their ideas.
- It is really important to engage all the stakeholders and not just the students. There must include parents, businesses and the local authorities to make it more effective. Everyone has something to offer to sustainability.
- I'd like to start from asking students to make sure they appreciate the importance of sustainability. Sometimes people do things because they have been told to do them and they don't know why. If they understand the reasons they will care more and try to change things.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

- I would advise them to monitor and appreciate the beginning stages of improvement in a process. During a process it feels like we have not made a big difference. However, even the smallest, every action helps. So, it is important to have patience and have a positive attitude and motivation despite the fact that it can take time for the results to show.
- My advice would be to make things fun. If you make sustainability feel like homework, students will be bored and won't care. But if you have events people will get excited.
- I think it's important to show how sustainability is connected to everything. Don't just focus on one area.
- My advice is to connect students to experts or professionals that work for sustainability. These people could give speeches and motivate young people
- I believe that sustainability should be linked to what the students are concerned about. For example if a person loves sports, show them how sustainability affects the equipment they use . If they love fashion, discuss about eco-friendly clothing. This helps more to relate to them.
- I would suggest to use technology and make the program implementation interesting
- Collaborate with the local community. Students must work on real-life problems that businesses or the city is facing.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

In this question, students provided a number of very practical and useful recommendations for future sustainability programs. One of the recurrent suggestions is to keep things simple and avoid overcomplicating them, such as considering progressive expansion, which would begin with a recycling project. This way of acting tends to avoid overwhelming situations and is good for sustaining movement.

A consistent suggestion is to have sustainability carried out in an enjoyable and appealing way. A number of students suggest that this could be made through the use of games, competitions, and challenges to generate excitement in participants. This is in reference to conserving and making sure that sustainability does not come out as burdensome to students, but in fact something that students take part in and enjoy.

Moreover, several responses note that students must be responsible and lead the projects. Having students run the projects and vote on how they should be ran, increases their emotional investment in the results. Where students have claim over the concepts formed, they are able to engage and develop interest better.

As a final point, there is an emphasis on the greater society such as parents, businesses and local authorities. Students appreciate that sustainability is not only a school problem, but is also a problem that requires many stakeholders in order to be handled efficiently.

3.1. STUDENT QUESTION GUIDE AND REFLECTIONS

For me, sustainability is about keeping a balance between what we take and what we leave behind.

I used to think that sustainability is only about recycling and saving energy. But now I understand, it also means that people live good lives without harming the planet.

Now I understand that sustainability is something we can all do every day. Even small things like using less plastic or water are important.

I used to think sustainability was boring, just something for adults to worry about. Now I get that it affects everything we do.

In my everyday life I use as little plastic as possible and walk or ride a bike when I want to go somewhere. Small things matter

It (the project) helps us understand that we are part of a global movement.

3.2. YOUTH PERCEPTIONS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were seen rather differently by the Greek and the Danish students at the start of the project. In the first place, Greek students had a limited viewpoint on sustainability focusing mainly on the environmental dimension like waste management and recycling activities. “I used to think sustainability was mostly about recycling and saving energy,” mentions one Greek student. This answer shows how their perspective began – understanding that sustainability may involve simple activities without seeing the relationship with all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For Danish students, there were there was some basic knowledge of the concept of sustainability because of formal education, but these concepts were more theoretical rather than practical. One Danish student mentioned, “I thought sustainability was just for countries with big environmental problems”. This fact shows that while aware of the global context, they did not fully understand how sustainability applied to their own daily lives.



3.2. YOUTH PERCEPTIONS ON SUSTAINABILITY

As the project progressed, a noticeable change was also seen in the perceptions of sustainability by both Greek and Danish students. Greek students began to understand that sustainability is not just limited to practices such as recycling and conserving energy, but goes a step further to include alleviation of poverty and access to social services including education. One student stated: 'I never realized how everything is connected', demonstrating an element of surprise as to how different facets such as equality and justice prevail when thinking about sustainability.

In the same vein, Danish students were able to extend their interpretation of sustainability from only focusing on local issues to also including international issues. They gradually began to appreciate the relation that various concepts such as well-being and mental health have with sustainability. One student from Denmark note that, 'I never understood before how sustainability is related to things such as mental health and well-being. Cleaner spaces and better food options lead to healthier lives'. This reflects a broader awareness that sustainability impacts everyday life, beyond just environmental concerns.

3.2. YOUTH PERCEPTIONS ON SUSTAINABILITY

In both study countries, students were able to appreciate that collective actions are made up of individual contributions. Greek students, who before viewed sustainable development in a rather remote way, understood there was a helpful middle ground, which was to minimize the use of plastics or use their legs to walk even shorter distances. One Greek student expressed, "Now I understand that sustainability is something we can all do every day." Accordingly Danish students, who had a stronger initial foundation, realized that even in developed countries like Denmark, there is still a need to change everyday habits to contribute to global sustainability.

Undoubtedly, by the end of the project not only did students from both countries broaden their horizons, but they were also ready for making a change. The project enabled them to understand that sustainability an international concern that requires local interventions. This concept encouraged both the Greek and the Danish students to be active members of society and work towards achieving sustainable development.

3.3. DISCOVERIES ABOUT SCHOOL VARIANTS

The project brought out significant contrasts in the way that schools in Denmark and Greece incorporated sustainability into their practices and how they motivated their students in doing so. In Denmark, the education towards sustainability was more developed, as subjects such as environmental science included SDGs frameworks. This familiarity provided these students with a good theoretical background, but they missed out on activities that brought these concepts to action. One Danish student expressed this clearly, reflecting "In the beginning, I thought sustainability was the responsibility of governments or businesses, not individuals."

On the contrary, prior to the project, Greek students received quite limited theoretical knowledge with regards to the idea of sustainability. Although SDG's were introduced in classrooms, not great emphasis was placed. As shown in one student who commented "I used to think sustainability was just about environmental things, like protecting forests." The student decontextualized sustainability as only environmental issues, neglecting social and economic facets of the SDGs.

3.3. DISCOVERIES ABOUT SCHOOL VARIANTS

As the project was implemented, it served a disruptive purpose in both countries but differently. In Greece, this project served as a core turning point from the conceptualization phase to the implementation phase. Greek students were encouraged to perform active citizenship – they could participate in event, organize humanitarian activities and realize activities involving the school community. The hands-on approach made students to appreciate the impact of their deeds in improving the society. One of the Greek pupils expressed "I realized that even the smallest actions, like using a reusable bag, contribute to something bigger." This shift was significant because it introduced Greek students to the idea that sustainability is not just a global goal but a local responsibility.

In Denmark, the project bridged the gap between the conceptual understanding that the students had and the real world relevance of the concepts. Danish students also started learning how these issues can be made a part of their everyday life.

3.3. DISCOVERIES ABOUT SCHOOL VARIANTS

For example, one student suggested, "We could connect sustainability with things we care about, like sports or fashion," suggesting that Danish students started learning that sustainable practice can be applied in other areas which are of personal interest to them, outside the classroom. This was a significant development because it changed the way they perceived sustainability; instead of just globalism, it became a matter that affected their daily lives and hobbies as well.

Ultimately, the project helped the student understand that sustainability education is taught effectively when there is the theoretical basis as well as the practical aspect. For the case of Greece where practical engagement was absent, the project enabled students to carry out practical activities that were aimed at showing the importance of sustainability. The case of Denmark was different in that sustainability learning had been integrated in the curriculum but the project enabled students to participate on sustainability issues through the things they liked doing and the normal activities they were involved in. Both theory and practical actions taken in the schools of both countries made it possible for students to participate actively in realizing the SDG goals going forward.

4. IMPACT ON YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The “Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe” project has greatly affected in a positive way both its participants and the members of the wider community. In this section it is examined how the project served as a reflective tool for young people to connect with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and facilitated youth-led community actions.



4.1. MIRROR DOCUMENT

The present initiative is a powerful “mirror document” for students that enables them to view their personal experiences, challenges and successes within the broad framework of global sustainability actions. The young people who participated in the project engaged in hands-on activities centered on these goals hence they related more with them. Subsequently, they no longer regard SDGs as far away or theoretical ideas but rather began viewing them as something that they could take action upon within their own lives and communities.

All students were encouraged to express their views on their fieldwork experiences during the entire course of the project so that at last; these writing materials found their place into narrative handbook. This handbook serves as a report for the project’s activities and also acts like a mirror that showed students their efforts from both individualistic and collective perspectives. As they read about their peers’ experiences and compared them with their own, students could recognize the shared challenges and triumphs faced by others in different contexts, which fostered a sense of solidarity and mutual support.

4.1. MIRROR DOCUMENT

This reflective process contributed greatly to deepening the students' identification with SDGs. Seeing how each action creates a connection to some broader sustainability goals, students began to realize more clearly the relevance of their contributions. For example, students from Greece, who previously thought that the concept of global goals was rather abstract, began to realize how their local project to distribute food to the needy was already contributing to the achievement of SDG 2: Zero Hunger. This was powerful because not only did they recognize their efforts but also reiterated that even small, local actions can really make a difference in addressing sustainable challenges. In addition, the storytelling manual was also an empowerment tool for other young people who may not have been directly involved in the project. It shared the stories and outcomes of the project, providing a concrete example of the different ways in which young people are able to engage in the SDGs and make a difference. In this way, the "mirror document" approach demystified the SDGs, bringing them closer and making them more real for most of the other students who would find such goals very distant from their reality. As such, the project not only had a direct impact on the participants, but had the potential to inspire many other young people to take action on sustainability issues.

4.2. COMMUNITY ACTION INITIATIVES

The project not only made them critical about their own lives but, the biggest take-away is that it gave each of these students a basic understanding for living more sustainably and none have been able to forget this crucial aspect in our society. These projects were essential in providing a sense of the application of SDGs poentially and promoting agency for young people. In a carefully scaffolded set of activities, students moved from talking conceptually about sustainability to considering how such ideas might make a tangible difference on the ground in terms that are meaningful locally.



4.2. COMMUNITY ACTION INITIATIVES

In Greece, the work was instrumental in enabling a series of valuable activities and interventions aimed at deepening student understanding and appreciation for SDGs. One of the ground level initiatives that they undertook was a humanitarian aid campaign directly leading to SDG 2(Zero Hunger), organized by all students together. The students then went on to identify with requirements of needy communities and there they managed essentials like food, clothing among others. The result was the same in both regions, immediately rescuing those impacted and valuably alerting all populations about social consciousness/ how to live as a community. Participating in this campaign allowed students to demonstrate their knowledge of the SDGs by taking practical action and seeing how small acts can have ripple effects.



4.2. COMMUNITY ACTION INITIATIVES

Additionally, another important activity was the school presentation that took place after the students' training in Denmark. During this presentation, students explained to their colleagues the activities they had undertaken and the knowledge they acquired through the project. These presentation was particularly important to help spread the concepts of sustainability and the SDGs within the school setting and motivate other students actively engage with SDGs. The students practiced for the oral presentations which incorporated self-assessment, lessons taken out, as well as pictures of the activities planned. This activity not only consolidated the taught components of the SDGs among the students, but also motivated and educated the fellow students and promoted a sustainable culture in the school. The presentations led to great debate and motivated other students to consider how they could play a part in promoting sustainability, therefore extending the influence of the project.

4.2. COMMUNITY ACTION INITIATIVES

The final activity was the dissemination event in Greece about the project, where students shared their experiences and the results of their projects for a variety of people – educators, stakeholders, companies local officials as well as local residents. This event was important within the scope of the dissemination plan of the project as it was giving students an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the SDGs as well as the feasibility of their activities. Students' direct interaction with the respective stakeholders enabled them to broaden the scope of their projects and to promote the culture of sustainability within the wider community. The event also served as a platform for students to receive recognition for their work, as certificates of participation were distributed to them. This action further motivated them to continue their engagement with sustainability beyond the project. Finally, after the first training, a Greek student created an Instagram account (@sdg_ambassadors) with the goal of inspiring other young people to become SDG ambassadors within their own communities.



4.2. COMMUNITY ACTION INITIATIVES

In Denmark, students were equally active in applying their learning to community initiatives. Following their first training in Denmark, they decided to present their knowledge and experiences to the rest of their school. These presentations aimed at sharing their newly acquired knowledge about SDGs and sustainability practices. This activity enhanced the students' understanding of SDGs, inspired and educated their peers, thus creating a culture of sustainability in the school community. The presentations generated significant discussions and encouraged other students to think critically about their role in promoting sustainability.

After these presentations, Danish students worked with various kinds of projects related to the SDGs in their schools. Such projects included a Climate Challenge Competition, a "Speak kindly to each other" competition that promotes respectful communication within school settings, an activity where students should draw their understanding of poverty, a "Sustainable Promo Night" event that was designed to encourage wellness and discourage phone use, trash collection competitions and a "Live like a student in Ghana for a day" experience. All these projects were aimed to make the students incorporate the SDGs in the school activities. This led to students being able to work and understand sustainability issues at a much more practical level and context.

4.2. COMMUNITY ACTION INITIATIVES

The project in Denmark ended with a final event at SDG World. Students were celebrated and given diplomas as SDG Ambassadors. The event also launched a project webpage titled "Together We Are Stronger – We Can't Do It Alone." This platform shared the students' work with a broader audience. Students also created short videos to document their journey and the impact of their projects, spreading the word even further.

In the end, the "Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe" project succeeded in turning SDG theory into action. It empowered students to make a difference in their communities. They began to see themselves as part of the global sustainability movement. The combination of reflective insights and hands-on projects not only deepened their commitment but also sparked a lasting dedication to sustainability that will likely continue beyond the project's end.



5. LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

The "Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe" initiative shed light on the complexities of incorporating young people in sustainability activities, as well as practical issues of SDG implementation across the two countries. The present paper examines problems associated with the project, problem-solving strategies, and successful practices that were implemented and could be duplicated in future efforts.



5.1. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

One of the main problems in keeping learners engaged throughout the project was achieving consistent student engagement. It is critical to recognize that interest and involvement levels among students must remain strong over an extended length of time, as is the case with this project. However, as with many other educational projects, there were moments when students' motivation decreased particularly during intense academic periods like exams. The coordinators of the project therefore introduced some motivational speeches periodically and continuously supported students to enable them stay on track and motivated. Some of these included creative brainstorming sessions for groups as well as peer-led discussions that reignited their commitment to the goals set by the project. Moreover, there were regular feedback mechanisms which enabled students to express their concerns and receive motivation thus supporting their continued involvement in the project until its completion.

Another important issue was the management of differences in educational frameworks and teaching approaches between Denmark and Greece. The project required the integration of different educational settings, which occasionally led to inconsistencies in the way students from both countries were taught and understood the SDGs.

5.1. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Another important issue was the management of differences in educational frameworks and teaching approaches between Denmark and Greece. The project required the integration of different educational settings, which occasionally led to inconsistencies in the way students from both countries were taught and understood the SDGs. To deal with this challenge, the project managers engaged in this project took up an approach that sought active formulation of activity parameters, which would be appropriate to each particular school. This enabled the modification of the strategies deployed in every country's education system, but still achieving the key overall project goals. This flexibility helped to address the problem as well as provided opportunities for extending and enriching the content of teaching and learning strategies from the Danish to the Greek teachers and vice versa.



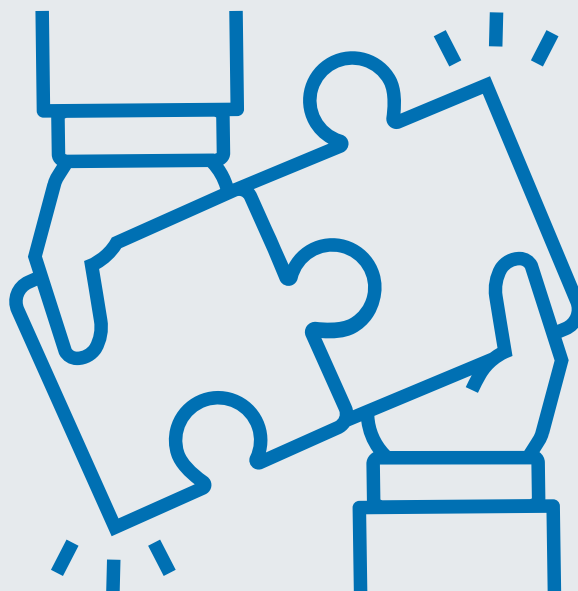
5.1. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

One more major problem that had to be addressed were the logistical arrangements for the schools, because school calendars, including holidays and vacations, and resources are not synchronised across the two countries. It proved difficult to balance these differences as well as to ensure that the project remained on track, thus posing logistical challenges. Nevertheless, in order to mitigate this obstacle, the project coordinators implemented an effective project management system that included detailed plans, regular communication and contingency plans to deal with unexpected delays or interruptions that may occur. This method allowed for greater flexibility and responsiveness and as a result, all events were able to run smoothly. Finally, there were often virtual meetings to ensure that there were no delays between development stage and to keep everyone aware of what was happening at each stage.



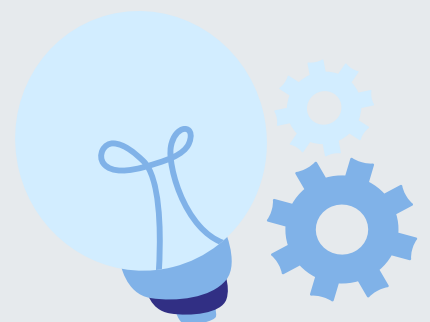
5.1. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Finally, at the completion of the project and its formal conclusion, it would be difficult to maintain its momentum. Its success would have required careful planning on how the knowledge and enthusiasm from the project could reach students and their communities. That is why to derivative this aim, the project team worked on the effectuating of the sustainable networks among the project participants and the educators. For this purpose, a Facebook page was established in order to extend the experience in which students would participate in other new projects. Moreover, student groups were formed with a view to sustaining the cause of the project. It was found that by helping create a community and by supplying a community which continuously encourages such activities, the trends such activities will outlive the present project were set in motion.



5.2. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Despite the aforementioned obstacles, the project "Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe" implemented several strategies that proved to be effective and reinforced the success of the project and can be considered as good practice for other similar projects. The focus on project-oriented education was one of the most fruitful methods, as it allowed students to interact directly with sustainability issues. This strategy was particularly effective in Denmark, where students were involved in a number of SDG-based projects within their schools, such as the "Climate Challenge Competition" and the "Sustainable Prom Night. These projects helped students to put into practice the theoretical concepts they had been taught, thus strengthening their understanding of the concepts and their commitment to the SDGs. They not only had a constructive impact on the students' learning experience, but also made these experiences more interesting and relevant, thus acting as a key factor in motivating and interesting students to continue the project.



5.2. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Another key success factor was the cross-cultural collaboration between students from the two countries, Denmark and Greece. Not only did it enhance students learning because they were able to learn different views and methods of sustainable development but it also promoted the idea of European unity and partnership in addressing global issues. Partnership in these activities created exposure to the SDGs and instilled the passion importance of working towards the achievement of these goals but in new ways. A noteworthy example is the dissemination event in Greece where students participated and presented their project results to diverse audiences which speaks the language of collaboration efforts that characterized the project. The event made visible the success of the students and offered a chance to motivate the audience to act.



5.2. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

One more notable good practice was the employment of this narrative handbook as a reflective practice that enhanced the impact of the project. Aiding the students to record their workings and think about their learning, the project aimed at assimilating the sustainability principles. One significant use of this reflective perspective was to reveal the students' transformational learning processes regarding sustainability and to show how the project contributed to shaping their views about it. The narrative handbook, which documented these antiutopian narratives, was both a project deliverable and an instrument for fostering ownership of the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs. A “mirror document” primarily built the student connection to the global goals and secondly offered a resource that could be passed on to other schools and communities, thus maximizing project outputs beyond the original participants.



5.2. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

In conclusion, it could be stated that the “Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe” project proved that with the right strategies, it is possible to address the difficulties of cross-national collaboration and variance in the understanding of SDGs. The project was very practical oriented with regard to project activities, cultural exchange, and reflective processes that improved one’s engagement with the SDGs in a more sustained manner. Such successful strategies and the challenges accepted in meeting them will inform future projects intended for young people and other age groups on issues of how to engage them positively towards sustainability promotion more so at local and European level.



5.3. THOUGHTS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

As the project concludes, there are some critical factors that could be taken into account for its future versions to further enhance its impact. One important point to be made is building relationships with local communities and organizations that would serve as measure to improve the sustainability aspect of the community projects initiated by the students. While community engagement was achieved on a short term basis without much difficulty, building such partnerships with businesses, NGOs and institutions will be highly useful, as it ensures the sustainability of the student-initiated projects beyond the life of the project. Such partnerships can also lead to other opportunities for future projects where students could utilize their ideas on various sustainability ideas in a big way. For this reason, the Greek organisation has collected a number of letters of support from intitutions and other Greek organisations that declare their support towards the student-led activities and their willingness to adopt the project's results.

Education on sustainability will more complete if it is included more extensively in national curricula thus accelerating the ambitions of the project. Integrating sustainability concepts and the SDGs into the core of the educational programs would ensure that these topics are not only emphasized during specific projects, but enhanced in the students' learning settings.

5.3. THOUGHTS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

This would help cultivate a wider appreciation and understanding of sustainability principles among youth which would in turn result in better and sustainable involvement with worldwide issues. In addition, the focus on the cross-boarder nature of similar projects incorporating students from different regions of Europe could add value to the cultural diversity allowing further cultural synergy that worked so well in this one. Last but not the least, incorporating more digital tools and platforms in the project would utilise new possibilities for interaction, research and presentation. Future projects might seek to use digital platforms where students and teachers regularly post news, materials and commendable practices, creating an inter-project communication that does not rely on physical proximity to the project. This would also help widen reach of the project as communities would be able to interact and as a result follow the students' activities and possibly extend their support to the students' initiatives, thus enhancing the reach and the sustainability aim of the project.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The “Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe” project is regarded as an achievement in encouraging young people’s interest and involvement with the sustainability agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. In this section, a summary of the key results is presented, the additional effects on participants and the community are evaluated, critical feedback on the achievement and the perspective of improvement of the project is provided, and the prospects for the continuation of the project activities beyond the timeframe of the funding are assessed.



6.1. SUMMARY OF KEY OUTCOMES

The project was effectively able to deepen the youth's level of engagement with and commitment towards the SDGs. One of the most rewarding results was to convert students in both Denmark and Greece into informed and passionate ambassadors for sustainability. At the beginning, a lot of students especially those from Greece had a narrow understanding of sustainability, limited to environmental issues like recycling and saving energy. One Greek student mentioned, "I thought sustainability was mostly about recycling and saving energy." But the project resulted in changing their perspectives by incorporating the relationships between environmental issues, social issues and economic issues.

The project's hands-on approach, which included such activities as humanitarian aid campaigns, school presentations and community work, made students realize that sustainability also includes equality and access to clean water and poverty alleviation. As one young student from Denmark said, "I never realized how everything is connected," this shows some progression in their awareness about the depictions of the SDG.

6.1. SUMMARY OF KEY OUTCOMES

This narrative handbook is another notable achievement where students were able to use it as a means of documentation and analysis as well as provide solutions to sustainability in the future. The project also created positive opportunities for cross national interaction as students were able to share ideas with one another which broadened the way they perceived learning.



6.2. IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS AND COMMUNITY

The participants of the project were directly affected as they were able to lead the cause of sustainability. In this regard, many students, particularly Danes, thought of sustainability in terms of governments or businesses dealing with it but through the project, they realized that even the individual has a role. "I thought sustainability was the responsibility of governments or businesses, not individuals," said one of the Danish students, but by the end of the project, they felt personally responsible for contributing to sustainability efforts.

Greek students, who were not much involved in practical sustainability activities, underwent a significant change during the initiative. They actively participated in local initiatives such as organizing community activities or engaging in various activities. I'm thankful for the Greek one who said, "Even the smallest actions, like using a reusable bag, contribute to something bigger." Therefore, it shows that the project enabled students to appreciate the magnitude of their efforts even at a personal level, more so with respect of the differences in cultures and ideas.

6.2. IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS AND COMMUNITY

The impact of the project was noteworthy within the participating schools. Through various student engagements and alterations in the curriculum, schools started nurturing the seeds of sustainability culture among them. This was in particular appreciation of the students wanting to understand how to practice sustainability in school activities. For instance, one Greek student suggested, "We should make sustainability a habit in schools, like having recycling bins in every classroom." This depicts how the project changed students who had sustained thinking toward practical sustainability projects rather than the individualistic ones.

Additionally, the project's impact was evident at a community level. Humanitarian aid campaigns in Greece managed not only to respond to the immediate needs of target groups but also instilled positive engagement in the students. Likewise, the inclusion of external stakeholders such as local business firms, NGOs and government officials enhanced the effectiveness of the project. It formed a web of support that is anticipated to continue enhancing the sustainability of the communities.

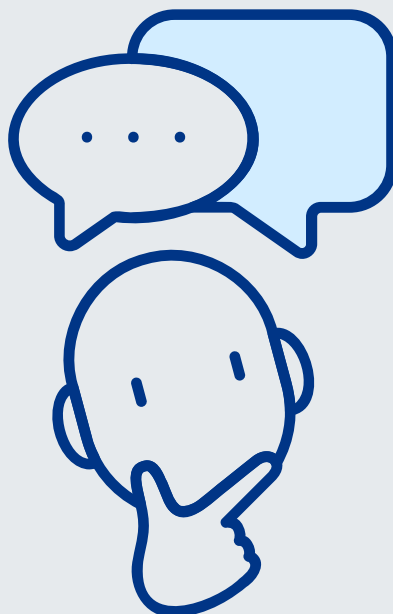
6.3. CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

A careful appraisal of the project indicates successes achieved and unachieved aspects of it. The focus on practical and ideational approaches succeeded in impressive ways in engaging students in the course and helping them internalize sustainability principles. For instance, Danish students proposed advancing sustainability through technology and games in a more engaging way. More specifically, one student mentioned, "We should use technology to make sustainability fun, like creating a school app where we can complete tasks related to the SDGs." This reflects the effectiveness of engaging students through innovative approaches tailored to their interests.

The cultural collaboration between Denmark and Greece was not only cross-cultural but also paved way for interchanges of best practices towards addressing sustainability problems and issues. However, the variation in previous knowledge of different groups of students was a major hurdle. For example, most of the Greek participants were not adequately familiar with what SDGs are and what they have been developed for that is unlike most of their Danish colleagues who have an advanced understanding of these goals.

6.3. CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

This problem was effectively alleviated throughout the project, yet it would be mended by adding more preparatory class hours or various learning routes, making sure that all the participants equalize their knowledge base at the commencement of the training. One of the surprising outcomes of the project was the extent to which students took ownership of their individual initiatives. As students participated more and more, they rose into leaders and were willing to take risks and be creative. A Greek student pointed out, 'Let students run their ideas', implying the student ownership of task. This means something more could be gained in future projects by allowing the students more freedom to develop themselves as leaders in the process.



6.4. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

The social, economic, and institutional conditions under which the initiatives of the project will be continued even after the termination of the funding are satisfactory. The project managed to build strong connections between students and teachers, and the community members involved making sure that the activities carry on. It also outlines best practices on how such networks can be sparked, sustained and leveraged by utilizing available resources such as narrative handbooks and other collaborative platforms. Moreover, the partnerships among the community which were built during the course of the project will also last thus further enhancing the student self-led activities. These partnerships which extend to businesses, NGOs, and local government, embrace the broader picture of sustainability and ensure that it is adopted by the community as a whole.



6.4. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT

To summarize, the project's results go beyond the initial targets as the "Activating Future Leaders of Community Sustainability in Europe" project contexts managed to create opportunities for long term transformation. Young people both from Greece and Denmark have been trained sufficiently and deeply, not only as advocates for sustainability but also as active practitioners who can carry on the work. The project showed that students from different parts of the world are able to work together with a common goal, the learning process cannot be passive, and education on sustainability should be taught not only in class, but be integrated into the activities of the community for it to be lasting.



7. APPENDICES



7. APPENDICES

