



EKONOMSKA
KLINIKA



**Youth
Ecopreneurship
Sprint**

Zagreb, Croatia
June 23rd - June 30th 2019.



Erasmus+

TOOLKIT

1. INTRODUCTION



Youth Ecopreneurship Sprint is an Erasmus+ KA1 project that was organised by the Croatian student-led NGO **Ekonomska klinika** and it was held in Zagreb in June 2019. 30 young people from 6 countries participated in creating their own business ideas that can help in solving ecological issues our communities are facing.

This toolkit is aimed at anyone who wants to know more about the idea-generating process or wants to develop an entrepreneurship project of their own. Everyone is free to use anything from this document for any purpose.

The objectives of this project are:

- to promote ecopreneurship as a way to fight climate change
- to create environment conducive to innovation and creativity
- to introduce design thinking as a strategy for creating new business ideas
- to develop new ideas for solving current ecological problems and encourage active citizenship of young people
- to develop entrepreneurial skills among participants important for integrating into the labour market
- to raise awareness about the ecological issues like recycling, waste disposal and air pollution
- to give participants opportunity to present their ideas and get feedback
- to exchange experiences and create networks between youth organisations and young entrepreneurs at European level
- to improve foreign language and intercultural competences
- to promote Erasmus+ programme

2. FROM AN IDEA TO A BUSINESS

The main idea of the project was to come up with business ideas that can help solve ecological issues and, at the same time, be profitable. This fusion of entrepreneurship and ecology is called **ecopreneurship** (hence the name of the project).

Here we will outline the process we used in our project that helped us develop our business ideas and this process is easy to replicate so we hope it will be of use to anyone reading this toolkit:

Step 1: Divide into teams

To increase cooperation and inclusiveness, we divided the participants into five groups of six people. Each group consisted of one person from each participating country. It is preferable to give each group a name or a colour in order to increase the cohesion of the group.

Step 2: Introducing the concept of circular economy

In our workshop „Environmental intelligence“ we role-played the policy makers and discussed our own proposals for improving the existing laws and rules concerning the businesses' impact on the environment. This workshop was a fun and easy way to get the participants into the needed mindset for developing their own ideas.

Step 3: Sharing examples of good practice

The participants from each country had the task of finding examples of businesses from their respective countries that deal with ecological issues in a good way. They presented their findings in front of everybody. This helped them see that there are already some ecopreneurial businesses and that they can be viable.

Step 4: Discussing the existing problems



To better understand the challenges we face today regarding the ecology, we took part in our „Problem detecting“ workshop. It was imagined as a group discussion where each group put together a list of the most pressing ecological issues in their countries and the obstacles that make it harder to solve them. After that, presentations and active discussions followed.

Step 5: Discussing the importance of entrepreneurship

In our „Changing the future“ workshop we focused on the positive ideas that highlight the potential of entrepreneurship to solve the problems mentioned in the previous workshop.

Step 6: Design thinking

With our „Design thinking“ workshop we finally started to work on our own business ideas. We showed the participants what is important in developing a business idea and how they can be more creative using design thinking. The participants then worked in their groups and brainstormed their own business ideas.

Step 7: Market research

In order to test their business ideas in real life, the participant groups put together a survey regarding their business idea. They went to the streets to interview random people to get a better picture about what ordinary people think about their ideas. This is a crucial step that can help the groups adjust their ideas to the market.

Step 8: SWOT and Business canvas



The participants are introduced to the well-known idea-development tools – SWOT analysis and Business canvas. They develop their own SWOT tables and Business canvas models based on their previous brainstorming ideas and input from the market research exercise.

Step 9: Practicing presentation and pitching skills

Each participant was given a random topic that they had to present to the whole group in a short amount of time without preparation. This was done to eliminate the fear of public speaking and help them prepare for the big pitch at the end of the project. After that, the participants were given some time to prepare their PowerPoint presentations for the final pitch.

Step 10: The final pitch



The participant groups presented their business ideas in front of the expert jury consisted of people experienced in entrepreneurship. The jury elected a winner based on the viability, feasibility and profitability of the business idea.

3. CULTURAL ASPECT OF THE PROJECT

Alongside the formal part, the project also focused on cultural and social aspects. In order to get to know each other and connect, the project included many energizers and team building exercises.

On the first day of the project, a **Welcome evening** was organized in a non-formal environment, where the project participants could get to know each other, have fun and find out more about the organizers and the agenda for the following week. We started off the day with an energizer in the town center where we played a game “**2 Truths and a Lie**”, where each participant had to write three statements about themselves and the others had to guess which statement was not true. In order to get to know each other better, we decided that the game should be played in interchangeable groups and in a non-formal environment. They found out more private things about each other, like their talents, opinions, careers, and had a second chance to remember each other’s names.

The other game was based on the game of “**Bingo**”. Each participant had a paper with 30 statements in squares (like Bingo)- things like “Can do a split”, “Can play a guitar”, “Is left-handed”. For each square, they had to find a matching person and write down their name. They competed who would find a match for all 30 statements first. After the energizers, the participants had a **scavenger hunt** around the city, where they had to find things from the list and take a picture with them. This helped them get to know the city better and to discover some of the city’s famous features, as well as to connect better and work as a team.



Usually, we finished off the day with a daily reflection through **5 fingers method**. This way, the organizers got more input about the good things on the project and things that could be done better or different. The project also focused on cultural exchange, especially on **cultural evenings**, when each of the participating countries presented their country, their cuisine, music and other relevant things.

Another team-building exercise that should be mentioned was the “**Building bridges**” game. The participants formed groups and tried to make a bridge out of provided materials like cardboard, tape, tread etc. It was a great way to make them work together, better their communication and spark their creativity for the future project tasks when they had to generate and pitch ideas. On the last evening of the project, the participants gathered for a farewell evening where they could go to the city, sing karaoke together and have fun.

4. THE RESULTS

The results of the project were the developed business ideas that were presented on the last day of the project. We had five competing teams that developed five business ideas and here is a quick recap of the ideas:

Team 1: reCAPture



reCAPture

ReCAPture is a business that is focused on recycling bottle caps. The basic idea behind the business is collecting a large amount of bottle caps made from recyclable material like plastic or metal and selling them in bulk to a recycling plant for profit.

Team 2: [RE]USE



[RE]USE is a business idea based on a concept of reusing, rather than recycling. This specific business is focused on home appliances and gadgets such as washing machines or cell phones. The company would buy the appliances and gadgets that are not needed anymore for a small price and sell them for a discounted price or in parts.

Team 3: Transport Wise



Transport Wise is an app that gives you rewards when using the public transport instead of your car. The app connects the public sector with the citizens and various train or bus companies in order to encourage the use of public transport.

Team 4: Eco-friends

Eco-friends is a marketing platform that connects eco-friendly NGOs with companies that want to take action regarding saving the environment. Eco-friends helps them bridge the gap and helps the NGOs get the funding they need and at the same time get the companies good PR.

Team 5: Green Growth



Green Growth is a start-up focused on fighting deforestation by planting a large amount of fast-growing trees. It would do so by connecting the public sector to various NGOs and individuals in order to encourage tree-planting on a large scale.

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