Funded by the European Union

EARTH GAMES4 EYOUTH

Educating World Changers

Educational Program and Toolbox

1. Introduction and Overview

The *"Educating World Changers"* program is a transformative environmental education program designed to engage youth through non-formal education (NFE) methodologies. What makes this program unique is its focus on translating complex policy and scientific documents into accessible and interactive learning experiences, its grounding in the "Earth Competences Framework" developed within this project, and the inclusion of gamification tools to create an engaging and experiential learning environment. Together, these elements foster a holistic and impactful approach to environmental education.

The program's model integrates sustainable education, transformative learning theories, place-based learning, and experiential learning. It embodies a holistic approach by connecting the cognitive domain (head) with critical reflection, the affective domain (heart) with relational understanding, and the psychomotor domain (hands) with actionable, hands-on practices.

Educational Modules

They are structured into 4 comprehensive sections:

1. **Knowledge on the topic:** The program begins with presenting environmental main concepts to establish a solid understanding of key environmental science principles. This foundational knowledge serves as the base for exploring the next section.
2. **Practices at Grassroots Level:** This section connects key environmental concepts like ecosystems, climate change, and the circular economy with practical actions such as community engagement and sustainable consumption. It focuses on empowering learners to move from understanding to implementing community-driven solutions for sustainability.
3. **Human-Nature Connection and Wellbeing:** This section bridges the gap between personal experience and broader environmental challenges. It explores the intrinsic relationship between humans and nature, focusing on its impact on mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Learners internalize the relevance of environmental issues to their own lives, fostering a personal investment in sustainable practices.
4. **Global Perspectives on Environmental Issues:** The final section situates individual and community efforts within a larger international context, fostering a sense of global responsibility. By contextualizing environmental challenges within a global framework, this section promotes cross-cultural understanding, international cooperation, and the role of technology in driving systemic change to complement grassroots and individual efforts.

Workbooks for Learners

The program also includes workbooks, which serve as comprehensive guides for participants. These notebooks include detailed descriptions of activities, tasks, instructions, and dynamic illustrations to support the learning process. Workbooks provide a clear path through the program, helping trainees build practical skills and knowledge. Additionally, individual reflection spaces are integrated into the workbooks, allowing learners to record their thoughts and ideas. This feature creates an enjoyable and accessible way for young people to engage with the content while encouraging self-directed learning.

Storybook for Younger Learners

For younger learners, the program has a storybook that transforms each topic into an engaging narrative. This storybook bridges complex ideas with accessible storytelling, making environmental education inspiring for children. Each story is designed to activate curiosity and imagination, helping young learners connect emotionally with the topics while laying the groundwork for lifelong eco-consciousness.

2. Learning Objectives

Project objectives presented below reflect the program's holistic approach, integrating knowledge, skills, attitudes, and actions to create empowered and eco-conscious individuals capable of driving meaningful change.

They are closely tied to its comprehensive structure, emphasizing both individual and collective transformation.

1. Enhance environmental literacy: Provide a deep understanding of key environmental topics, including biodiversity, climate change, sustainable practices, and global environmental challenges.

2. Build competencies for action: Equip participants with the skills to analyze environmental issues, adopt sustainable behaviors, and contribute to solutions at both grassroots and global levels.

3. Foster eco-friendly attitudes: Encourage participants to develop a strong sense of ecological identity, value environmental ethics, and feel motivated to improve and protect the environment.

4. Promote wellbeing through connection: Highlight the importance of the human-nature relationship, addressing climate anxiety and building resilience through practices that nurture ecological and personal wellbeing.

5.Inspire global and local action: Empower youth to engage in community initiatives, advocate for fair practices, and participate in international cooperation for environmental conservation.

3. Target Audience and Program Characteristics

The primary target audience for this program includes youth workers, educators, teachers, trainers, facilitators, youth leaders and anyone working with young people between the ages of 13 and 30. The program aims to enhance these target groups' competencies in guiding young people towards sustainable behaviors, fostering a deeper understanding of human-nature connections, and engaging youth in global environmental challenges.

This group is considered essential for the success of the program, as they are the key facilitators of learning, engagement, and action within youth communities. They play an important role in shaping the attitudes, behaviors, and skills of young people and are thus the main agents through which the program's impact will be realized.

The program is open-source, meaning that materials and resources will be freely available to all participants, enabling greater reach and accessibility. This openness ensures that the program can be adapted and localized to fit specific cultural and regional needs.

While anyone working with youth is welcome to use these materials, the program has a special emphasis on **youth workers** and **youth work organizations**. These professionals have direct influence on the daily lives of young people and are essential in implementing the program's concepts and practices at the grassroots level.

The secondary beneficiaries of the program are the youth themselves, particularly those aged 13-30. Although youth workers and educators are the direct participants in the program, young people in this age group will ultimately benefit from the program's outcomes, as the individuals involved in the training will pass on their knowledge and skills to them.

4. Teaching methods and strategies

The program incorporates innovative and interactive teaching methodologies, with a strong emphasis on Non-Formal Education (NFE), which prioritizes participatory and learner-centered approaches beyond traditional, lecture-based methods.

It includes a toolbox filled with ready-made resources, templates, and guides to help facilitators easily deliver high-quality sessions while adapting to different groups and needs. Through interactive workshops, participants engage in discussions, role-playing, and group tasks that turn ideas into actions. Hands-on activities, like nature walks and sustainability projects, help learners connect with their environment and find practical ways to make a difference. The program also uses games to make learning exciting, encouraging teamwork and creative problem-solving. Participants can express themselves through storytelling, art, and other creative projects, building a deeper connection to the themes. Workbooks guide learners with clear instructions, colorful illustrations, and space for personal reflections, making the experience easy to follow and enjoyable. For younger audiences, a storybook presents key topics as fun, relatable stories that inspire curiosity and encourage a love for the environment.

5. Curriculum Outline and hours

SECTION 1: KNOWLEDGE ON THE TOPIC

1.1 Environmental concept and environmental science overview: 70-75 min.
1.2 Biodiversity and Ecosystems: 55-65 min.
1.3 Climate Change and Global Warming: 60-70 min.
1.4 Ocean Literacy Principles: 65-70 minutes
1.5 Waste Management and Circular Economy: 65-75 min.
1.6 Air Pollution: 75-80 min.
1.7 Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems: 80-90 min.
1.8 Environmental policies and governance overview of national and EU level policies: 75-80 min.

***Section** 1* will range from 8 hours and 45 minutes to 10 hours and 35 minutes.

SECTION 2: SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL

2.1 Educational and Awareness Importance: 70-85 min.
2.2 Community Engagement and Action: 60-80 min
2.3 Sustainable Consumption: 60-65 min.
2.4 Principles of Fair Trade and Fair Practices: 60-70 min.
2.5 The Role of Non-Formal Education in Shaping Eco-Conscious Behavior: 75-90 min.
2.6 Environmental Justice, Environmental Ethics, and Values: 80-90 min.

***Section** 2* will range from 6 hours and 45 minutes to 8 hours.

SECTION 3: HUMAN-NATURE CONNECTEDNESS

3.1 Biophilia and Ecological Identity: 50-60 min.
3.2 Introduction to the basic principles and concepts of eco-psychology: 60-65 min.
3.3 Climate Change Anxiety and Building Resilience: 80-85 min.
3.4 Spirituality and Nature connection: 85-90 min.

***Section** 3* will range from 4 hours and 35 minutes to 5 hours.

SECTION 4: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

4.1 International Cooperation for Environmental Protection: 70-80 min.
4.2 Cross-Cultural Understanding of Environmental Challenges: 60-75 min.
4.3 Technology and Innovation: AI's Role in Tackling Environmental Issues: 70-80 min.

***Section** 4* will range from 3 hours and 20 minutes to 3 hours and 55 minutes.

Overall Time for the Whole Program: 23 to 27 hours.

Depending on participants engagement, discussions, and interactive elements. Facilitators are encouraged to adjust session timing as needed to accommodate group dynamics and learning pace. While each section builds on the previous one, facilitators may adapt the sequence based on learners' prior knowledge and specific training needs. The curriculum provides a structured framework, but flexibility in implementation ensures a more effective and engaging learning experience.

6. Inclusive practices

Inclusive practices are at the heart of the *"Educating World Changers"* program. It is intentionally designed to be inclusive and adaptable, making it suitable for a wide range of learners, including those with special needs and diverse learning styles.

-The program uses multimodal learning approaches which means that the content can be delivered through a variety of formats, such as videos, written materials, interactive activities, and group discussions, ensuring that all participants can engage meaningfully.

-We provide open-source materials that are accessible and can be adapted to suit various needs. For example, all learning resources are available in easy-to-read formats, with visual aids to make the learning as simple yet informative as possible.

-The program emphasizes cross-cultural understanding and incorporates examples, stories, and case studies from different cultures. This allows participants from diverse cultural backgrounds to see themselves reflected in the content and fosters an environment of mutual respect.

-Activities are designed to be flexible, allowing facilitators to adapt them to different abilities and learning speeds. Whether a participant needs additional time, more interactive support, or an alternative learning method, the program is built to accommodate these needs without compromising the learning experience.

-Our program values peer support, collaboration, and inclusivity. Through group-based tasks and pair work, participants are encouraged to share their perspectives, learn from each other, and develop solutions together, fostering community-building and social inclusion.

7. Materials and resources

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8. Contact us

UniGrowth Development Center (Armenia)

https://www.unigrowthdc.com/

Slovak Eco Quality (Slovakia)

https://seq.sk/

Today We have (Poland)

https://todaywehave.com/home/

ONG Mare Nostrum (Romania)

https://www.marenostrum.ro/en

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Knowledge on the Topic

Section 1

1.1 Environmental concept and environmental science overview.

The concept of the environment encompasses the relationship between natural systems and human activities. It includes all living and non-living elements that interact to form the ecosystems in which we live. Key components of the environment include air, water, soil, flora, fauna, human beings, and the physical, chemical, and biological processes that influence them.

Key elements of the environment include the following:

- **Atmosphere:** The layer of gasses surrounding the Earth, essential for life, regulating climate, and protecting living organisms from harmful solar radiation.
- **Hydrosphere:** All water bodies on the planet, including oceans, rivers, lakes, groundwater, and glaciers. Water is vital for all forms of life and is a key factor in climate regulation.
- **Lithosphere:** The Earth's solid outer layer, including soil and rock. It provides nutrients for plant growth and is the foundation for human infrastructure.
- **Biosphere:** Global sum of all ecosystems, encompassing living organisms and their relationships, their interactions with elements of the lithosphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere.
- **Anthroposphere:** Part of the environment made and modified by humans for human activities and habitats, e.g. cities, agricultural areas, infrastructure, and all human-made systems.

The concept of environment is related to the multi-scale interactions among its components, however, it is the humans, who through overuse of the planet in a form of unprecedented industrialization, urbanization, and agricultural activities to a great extent distort these natural interconnections.

The basic environmental concept elements include:

- **Sustainability:** The principle of supporting present needs without reducing the ability of next generations to meet their needs. It promotes balanced and equitable use of available resources.

- **Ecosystem Services:** The direct and indirect contributions ecosystems (known as natural capital) provide for human wellbeing and quality of life. This can be in a practical sense, providing food and water and regulating the climate, as well as cultural aspects such as reducing stress and anxiety.

- **Biodiversity:** Variety of life on Earth at all its levels, from genes to ecosystems. We appreciate biodiversity for what it provides to humans and for its inherent worth. Utilitarian values include essential resources such as food, fuel, shelter, and medicine. Additionally, ecosystems offer vital services like pollination, seed dispersal, climate regulation, water purification, etc..

- **Pollution:** Presence of harmful substances or products (chemicals, waste, noise, and radiation) in the environment, as a result of human activities. Anthropogenic pollution is responsible for degradation of air, water, and soil quality and in many cases leads to harming living organisms.

- **Climate Change:** According to the UN, climate change means Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Such shifts can be natural, due to changes in the sun's activity or large volcanic eruptions. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning of fossil fuels.

Environment is a key aspect of our planet that requires proper management to ensure the well-being of its inhabitants, and secure a prosperous future for all organisms. Efforts to protect and conserve the environment focus on reducing human impacts and promoting sustainable practices, through Pollution control, conservation, resource management, promotion of renewable energy and proper environmental policies and legislation.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

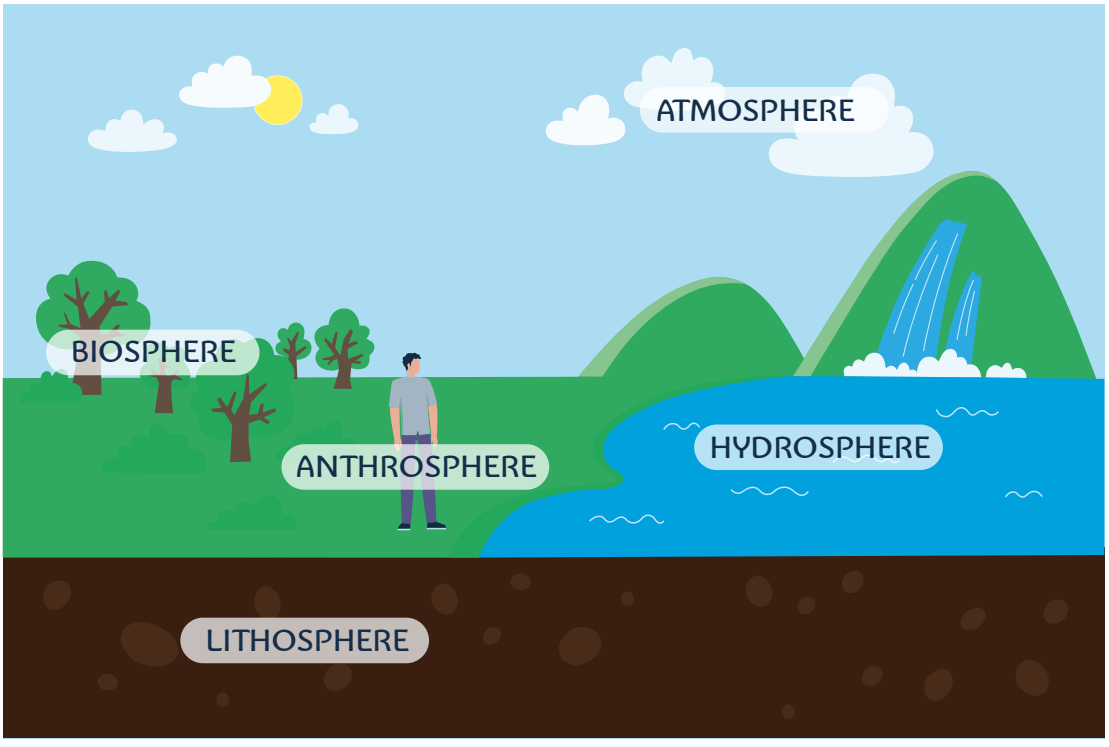
The objective is to introduce key environmental elements in an engaging and easy-to-understand manner.

Type of activity

Group work.

Instructions

Ask learners to look at the picture in their workbooks for this section (you can also display on a screen if available) and explain to them key elements of our environment.



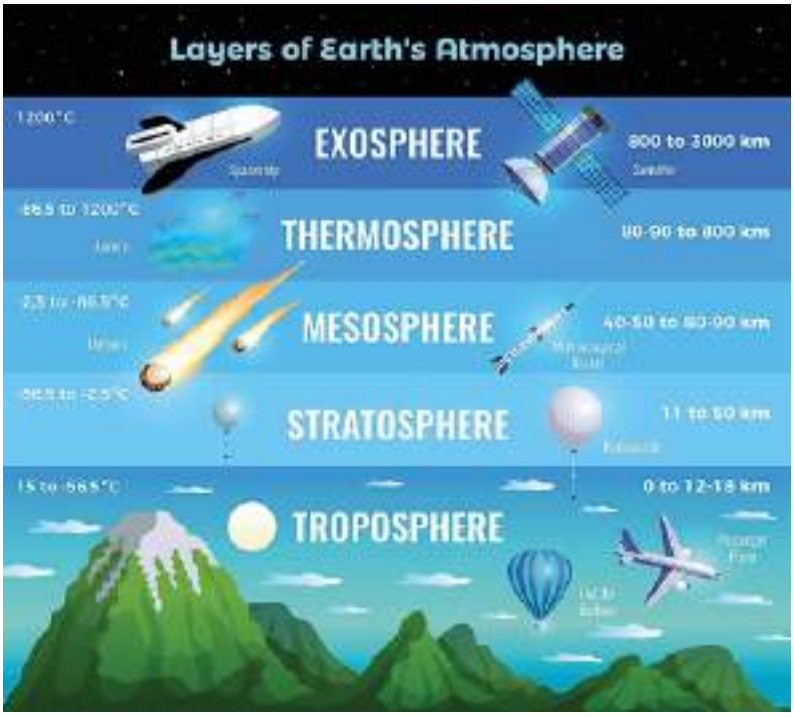
Next ask learners to form a small group 3-4 people in each.

Beforehand set up five exploration “stations”, one for each key environmental element.

You can use materials for each station to make them more interactive

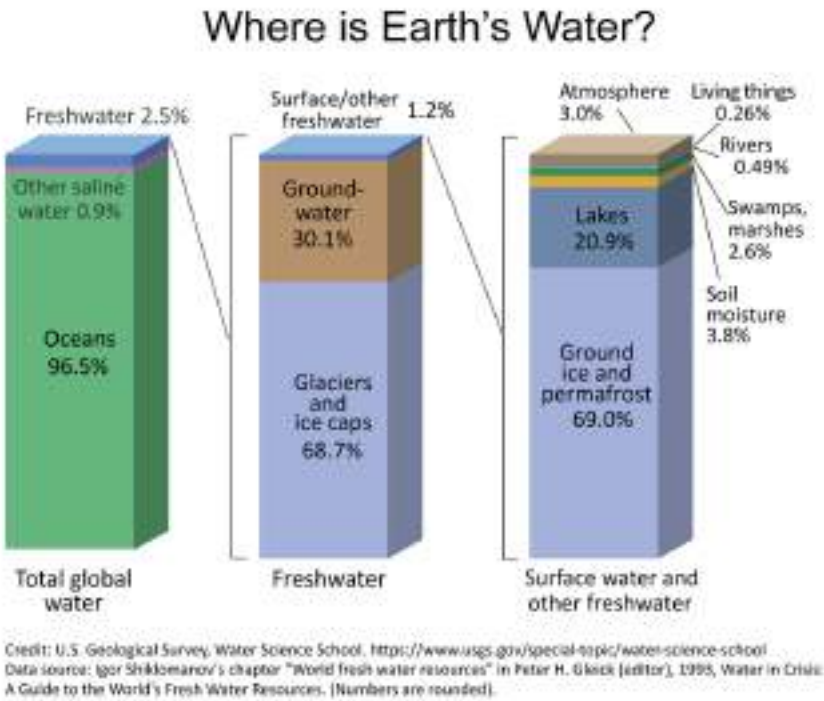
In particular

Atmosphere Station: Use the following figure (or similar) to discuss the structure of the atmosphere and the height and layers. You can explain how little air is actually surrounding Earth.



Source: https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-are-the-5-layers-of-the-earth-s-atmosphere.html

Hydrosphere Station: Use a graph, like e.g. this one from Wikipedia.org. Discuss the importance of water for life and climate regulation.



Source: https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/distribution-water-and-above-earth

Lithosphere Station: Display rocks or soil samples. Discuss how the lithosphere provides nutrients for plants and is the foundation for human infrastructure.

Biosphere Station: Show plant and animal figurines. Discuss the variety of life and its interactions with the other elements.

Anthroposphere Station: Use toy buildings or vehicles to represent human-made environments. Discuss human impact on natural systems.

Learners need to go to each station and discuss each element's importance in supporting life on Planet Earth and connection to other elements. To help participants build discussion you can use these questions

Sustainability

How can we ensure that our current use of resources does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs?

Ecosystem Services

How does biodiversity contribute to the resilience of ecosystems and their ability to provide services like clean water and air?

Biodiversity

How can human activities such as deforestation and urbanization affect biodiversity at different levels (genes, species, ecosystems)?

Pollution

What are the major sources of pollution in your local area, and what impact do they have on the environment and human health?

Climate Change:

How do human activities contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming?

Once task is complete organize a group discussion

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- Which station did you find most interesting or surprising, and why
- What is one new thing you learned today about the environment that you didn't know before?
- What is one simple action you can take in your daily life to help protect the environment?
- How did discussing each element's importance in supporting life on Earth deepen your understanding of environmental interconnectedness?
- In what ways can education and public awareness play a role in fostering a more sustainable relationship with our environment?

Material Needed

Workbook for each learner, colored pens and pencils, flipchart papers and markers in each “station”. For stations you will need balloons, bowls of water, small rocks and soil, plant and animal figurines, toy buildings or vehicles. Alternatively you can use pictures of instead of these materials.

Timing

70-75 min.

Introduction to the topic and discussion (10-15 min). Group work (35-40 min). Reflection and discussion (15-20 min).

1.2 Biodiversity and ecosystems.

The term biodiversity (from "biological diversity") refers to the variety of life on Earth at all its levels, from genes to ecosystems.

Biodiversity plays a crucial role in many aspects of our lives. We appreciate biodiversity for what it provides to humans and for its inherent worth. Utilitarian values include essential resources such as food, fuel, shelter, and medicine. Additionally, ecosystems offer vital services like pollination, seed dispersal, climate regulation, water purification, nutrient cycling, and pest control. Biodiversity also holds potential for undiscovered benefits, including new medicines and other unknown services.

Culturally, biodiversity has significance for many people, offering spiritual or religious value. Furthermore, biodiversity is valued through the relationships we form with each other and nature. It influences our identities, social norms, and sense of wellbeing. These relational values reflect our collective responsibility for and connection to the environment.

Understanding the various values of biodiversity is crucial because they influence the conservation decisions we make daily. Over the last century, humans have become the dominant force on the planet, driving rapid ecosystem changes and causing significant biodiversity loss worldwide (so called "Anthropocene"). Although the Earth has always experienced changes and extinctions, the current rate is unprecedented. The primary direct threats to biodiversity include habitat loss and fragmentation, unsustainable resource use, invasive species, pollution, and global climate change. The underlying causes, such as population growth and overconsumption, are complex and interrelated, contributing to the ongoing loss of biodiversity.

The good news is that we have the power to change our actions to ensure the survival of species and the health of ecological systems. By understanding the threats to biodiversity and their specific contexts, we can better manage conservation challenges. Efforts over the past decades have significantly improved the state of biodiversity, through creation of numerous national parks, wildlife refuges, game reserves, and marine protected areas. Additional conservation actions, such as restoration, species reintroduction, and invasive species control, have also yielded positive results.

By acknowledging the interconnections between people and nature, leveraging our existing knowledge, and applying evidence-based approaches to our conservation decisions, we can develop effective strategies for conservation and sustainability for all life on Earth.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective is to educate participants about biodiversity, its value, and practical steps they can take to help conserve it through engaging and interactive activities.

Type of activity

Group work.

Instructions

Begin with a brief presentation on biodiversity, explaining the term, its importance, and the various levels from genes to ecosystems. Emphasize the utilitarian, cultural, and relational values of biodiversity, as well as the main threats and conservation efforts. You can also use visuals and short videos to illustrate key concepts and real-life examples of biodiversity and its benefits.

Explain to the learners that each of us can help to conserve biodiversity by changing our own daily habits.

And to help them understand how simple actions can help invite for a Biodiversity Bingo game.

Cart layout learners can find in their workbooks.

Players move around the room, asking others if they are doing or have recently done any of the actions listed on their Bingo card. If someone says "Yes," the player writes that person's name in the corresponding square on their card.Each player can write a person's name in a maximum of two squares on their card. This encourages participants to engage with a variety of people.

The goal is to fill in all the squares with names. Once a player has written a name in each square, they shout "Bingo!" After someone calls "Bingo," the group comes together to review the results. The facilitator reads out the actions, and the group confirms whether the names listed match the actions.

Move around the room, asking peers if they are currently doing or have recently done any actions on your Bingo card.
If they say "Yes," write their name in the square. Each person's name (including your own) can appear in a maximum of 2 squares. The aim is to fill every square with a name.
Once your card is full, call "Bingo!" The group will gather as the facilitator reads each action aloud to verify names.

Reuse a glass jar for storage	Plant a tree in your yard or community	Shop at a local farmer's market	Turn off lights when leaving a room	Learn about birds in your area
Organize a local event to clean up litter in your neighborhood	Choose to walk or bike instead of driving for short trips	Visit a local nature reserve	Reduce water usage	Read a book about native plants
Buy products with eco-friendly packaging	Volunteer with a local organization that rehabilitates injured or orphaned animals	Join a local garden club	Choose eco-friendly travel options	Swap clothes with friends instead of buying new
Take shorter showers	Start a compost bin at home	Use a reusable water bottle	Use digital notes instead of paper	Avoid products with palm oil
Adopt a plant-based meal once a week	Volunteer with organizations that protect oceans and marine life	Volunteer at a nature reserve	Replace old bulbs with LEDs	Help start a community garden
Find out exactly what can and can't be recycled in your area	Learn about Endangered Species	Discuss Biodiversity with a Friend or Family Member	Reflect on Your Connection to Nature	Create art using recycled materials

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What new information or ideas about biodiversity did you discover during the activity?
- Was there a specific action that surprised you or that you hadn't considered before?
- Did the activity make you think differently about your own daily habits and their impact on biodiversity?
- Is there an action you learned about today that you would like to start doing regularly?
- Did you find any of the actions difficult to relate to your own life? How could these actions be made more accessible or understandable?
- If you could change one thing about the activity, what would it be and why?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens.

Timing

55-65 min.

Introduction to the topic and discussion (10-15 min), "Biodiversity Bingo" (20 min). Discussion and fact checking (10 min), Reflection and plenary discussion (15-20 min).

1.3 Climate change and global warming.

Climate change and related global warming are facts, which have been fully confirmed by the world scientific community. Humans, with their daily actions, are responsible for the changes and it is only humans who can mitigate the changes but also take actions in order to adapt to the changing world.

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Such shifts can be natural, due to changes in the sun's activity or large volcanic eruptions. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas, which generates greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide and methane) that trap the sun's heat in the atmosphere and cause rising temperatures. Energy, industry, transport, buildings, agriculture and land use are among the main sectors responsible for greenhouse gasses emissions.

The average temperature of the Earth's surface is now about 1.1°C warmer than it was in the late 1800s and warmer than at any time in the last 100,000 years. Earth is a system, where everything is connected, changes in one area can influence other regions.

The consequences of climate change now include, among others, intense droughts, water scarcity, extreme fires, rising sea level, floods, melting polar ice, catastrophic storm surges and declining biodiversity.

Climate change affects peoples' health, food production, housing, safety and work. Some people are already more exposed to climate change impacts. These include people living in small islands and in developing countries. Continuously worsening environmental conditions have in certain regions advanced to the point where whole communities must relocate. Unfortunately, the number of people migrating due to adverse weather-related events is expected to rise. This means that humans must understand the changes, accept the reality and act to protect the planet and themselves.

Climate change solutions aim at improving quality of lives and protecting the environment but also provide economic benefits. We have global frameworks to guide progress on the improvement of the planetary environment and hence our well-being, e.g. Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change or the Paris Agreement. The main actions promoted include: cutting greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to climate impacts and financing to secure necessary adjustments.

Replacing energy systems based on fossil fuels with renewable energy, like solar or wind will reduce the emissions driving climate change. There is a growing number of countries, which committed to net zero emissions by 2050 to keep warming below 1.5°C. In order to achieve it humans need to hugely decline their use of coal, oil and gas in order to prevent catastrophic levels of climate change.

Adapting to climate change consequences protects people and the entire planet, including its natural ecosystems. The adaptation refers to the current impacts and the impacts which we expect and foresee in the future. Adaptation measures are required everywhere, since all humans are vulnerable to climate change consequences, including threats and hazards. Early warning systems for disasters, for instance, save lives and property, and can deliver benefits up to 10 times the initial cost.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective is to help learners understand the causes, consequences, and solutions of climate change by creating a visual map that connects human activities to climate change impacts and possible solutions.

Type of activity

IIndividual work followed by work in small groups.

Instructions

Begin with a brief presentation or discussion on the basics of climate change, using the provided text. Highlight key points such as the causes, effects, and the importance of both mitigation and adaptation.

Distribute the printed cards or slips of paper with different statements or scenarios related to climate change. Ask participants to sort the cards into three categories: Causes, Consequences, and Solutions.

Next form small groups or pairs, depending on the group size.

Learners need to create a visual "Climate Change Impact Map" using a large sheet of paper or whiteboard. Ask learners to draw arrows to show connections between human activities, their impacts on the environment, and possible solutions. Give time and space to learners to present their maps.

For example, draw a line from "Burning Fossil Fuels" to "Rising Temperatures," then from "Rising Temperatures" to "Melting Polar Ice," and finally connect it to "Switching to Renewable Energy" as a solution.

You can print these statements as stickers, or just on a simple paper and learners can glue them in the workbooks, feel free to be creative and adjust to the way your resources allow you!

Here are examples of cards. Feel free to adjust or add your own ideas!

Print these cards as small sets for each working group. You can create them as stickers for learners to place directly in their workbooks or on simple paper that can be easily glued.

Cause Cards

Burning Fossil Fuels
(The use of coal, oil, and natural gas for energy production).

Deforestation
(The large-scale removal of forests for agriculture, urban development, or logging).

Industrial Agriculture
(Farming practices that rely heavily on synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and large-scale livestock production).

Transportation Emissions
(Emissions from cars, trucks, airplanes, and ships that rely on fossil fuels).

Urbanization
(The expansion of cities and infrastructure, often leading to more energy consumption and land use changes).

Consequences Cards

Rising Sea Levels
(The increase in sea levels due to the melting of polar ice caps and glaciers).

Increased Frequency of Extreme Weather Events
(More frequent and severe storms, hurricanes, droughts, and heatwaves).

Melting Polar Ice and Glaciers
(The reduction of ice in polar regions and mountain glaciers).

Ocean Acidification
(The increasing acidity of oceans due to the absorption of excess carbon dioxide).

Loss of Biodiversity
(The decline in the variety of species due to habitat destruction, climate change, and pollution).

Climate Migration
(The movement of people due to changing environmental conditions, such as droughts or rising sea levels).

Solution Cards

Switching to Renewable Energy
(Transitioning from fossil fuels to solar, wind, geothermal, and hydropower).

Reforestation and Afforestation
(Planting trees to restore forests and create new ones).

Sustainable Agriculture Practices
(Implementing crop rotation, organic farming, and reduced chemical use in farming).

Promoting Public Transportation
(Encouraging the use of buses, trains, and cycling over private car use).

Climate Adaptation Strategies
(Developing infrastructure and practices to cope with the impacts of climate change, such as flood defenses and drought-resistant crops).

Sustainable Water Management
(Techniques like rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, and wastewater treatment).

Reducing Meat Consumption
(Shifting towards plant-based diets or reducing meat consumption).

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- Which card stood out most to you, and why?
- Did any of the causes, consequences, or solutions surprise you? If so, which ones?
- Reflecting on your daily life, which cause, consequence, or solution feels most connected to your personal choices or habits?
- How did your group decide which category each card belonged to? Did everyone agree, or were there different perspectives?
- Were there any cards that felt difficult to categorize? What made them challenging to place?
- Are there any solutions your community or local government could adopt? How might you advocate for these changes?

Material Needed

Workbooks, large sheets of paper or a whiteboard, markers, sticky notes, pens, printed “Causes”6 “Consequences” and “Solution cards”.

Timing

60-70 min.

Introduction to the topic (10 min). Work in small groups with cards (30 min). Presentations of maps and discussion (10 -15 min). Reflection and plenary discussion (10-15 min).

1.4 Ocean literacy.

Marine education and the marine environment have been subjects of study since the early 1960s. The concept of Ocean Literacy (OL), defined as "the understanding of the ocean's influence on peoples' lives and their influence on the ocean," emerged from a long-term initiative in the USA in the early 2000s. Initially focused on providing content knowledge about marine issues, Ocean Literacy has evolved into a comprehensive approach promoting interdisciplinary and intercultural competencies. This evolution supports ocean conservation, management, and sustainability.

In Europe, various institutional frameworks, initiatives, and projects underscore the significance of OL in the sustainable management of the marine environment and its resources. These efforts foster collaboration in communication, education, and research, promoting resource sharing for mutually beneficial outcomes.

Originally, the Ocean Literacy approach emphasized a 'knowledge deficit' model, assuming that increased knowledge would enhance awareness, concern, and even behavior change, primarily from a natural science perspective. However, recent shifts recognize that Ocean Literacy encompasses more than just 'knowledge.' A recent study identifies six dimensions: 'knowledge,' 'awareness,' 'attitude,' 'communication,' 'behavior,' and 'activism.' Thus, Ocean Literacy is about not only raising public awareness of the ocean's state, our impacts on it, and its impacts on us, but also providing tools and approaches to transform ocean knowledge into sustainable behaviors and actions.

There is also a need to explore how enhancing ocean literacy at different geographical scales and among various audiences can contribute to more effective ocean policy and management.

The seven principles of Ocean Literacy ar as follows:

- Earth has one big ocean with many features.
- The ocean and life in the ocean shape the features of Earth.
- The ocean is a major influence on weather and climate.
- The ocean is largely unexplored.
- The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.
- The ocean makes Earth habitable.
- The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective is to enhance participants' understanding of the seven Ocean Literacy principles and their relevance to the marine environment and human life.

Type of activity

Individual work to be followed by work in groups.

Instructions

Start with a brief introduction to Ocean Literacy, highlighting its importance and the seven principles. Next, ask learners to reflect individually on questions presented in their workbooks.

After individual reflection, ask learners to share their thoughts in small groups of 3-4 people. Encourage them to discuss their responses focusing on how their perspectives align or differ.

Each group should summarize their key insights and be prepared to share them with the larger group.

Once groups have shared their summaries, open the floor for a larger discussion.

Individual reflection questions presented in the workbook are the following:

1. Earth has one big ocean with many features.
   - ✓ When you think of the ocean, what comes to mind first? Describe what the ocean means to you personally.
   - ✓ Reflect on how your local environment might be connected to the ocean. Can you find any links, even if you live far from the sea?

2. The ocean and life in the ocean shape the features of Earth.
   - ✓ Imagine the world without the ocean's influence. How do you think it would look different?

3. The ocean is a major influence on weather and climate.
   - ✓ Consider the concept of climate change. How do you think the ocean is impacted by and also impacts climate change?

4. The ocean is largely unexplored.
   - ✓ If you could be part of an ocean exploration team, what would you hope to discover?

5. The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.
   - ✓ In what ways do you rely on the ocean in your daily life? Consider things like food, products, or even the air you breathe.

6. The ocean makes Earth habitable.
   - ✓ How do you think the ocean's health impacts human health and wellbeing?

7. The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.
   - ✓ How do human activities threaten ocean biodiversity, and what can we do to protect it?

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- How did the individual reflection process affect your understanding of the ocean's influence on your life?
- What new perspectives did you gain from hearing others' thoughts on the Ocean Literacy principles?
- How did the exercise change your perception of your personal connection to the ocean, even if you live far from it?
- What actions can we take individually and collectively to protect the ocean?"
- How can we spread awareness about the importance of Ocean Literacy in our communities?"

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens, markers, flipchart papers.

Timing

65-70 min.

Introduction to the topic (10 min), Individual work (20 min). Discussion in small groups (20 min), Reflection and evaluation (15-20 min).

1.5 Waste Management and Circular Economy.

Waste management and the circular economy are interrelated concepts that advocate for sustainable environmental practices.

There are different types of waste, including household, biological, commercial, and industrial waste. Waste management encompasses all activities and actions required to handle waste from its generation to its final disposal. This process includes the collection, transport, treatment, and disposal of waste, as well as monitoring and regulation. It also involves the legal and regulatory frameworks related to waste management, such as recycling guidelines. The primary goal of waste management is to mitigate the potentially harmful effects of waste on the environment and human health, while also emphasizing waste prevention, reduction, and recycling.

Waste management aims to minimize environmental risks, waste production, and disposal through recycling, reuse, and proper handling. The circular economy, in contrast, focuses on creating sustainable products, reducing waste, and enhancing efficiency to address environmental, economic, and social challenges. Key principles of the circular economy include designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems.

By adopting these principles, we can establish a closed-loop system that recycles and transforms waste into new products, thereby reducing our environmental footprint, generating jobs, and supporting eco-friendly industries. Waste management is integral to the circular economy, as it facilitates the creation of a sustainable system that reduces waste and converts it into new products. This approach not only mitigates environmental impact but also fosters job creation and the growth of green industries.

The three Rs of the circular economy-reduce, reuse, and recycle-are fundamental. Reducing waste through minimal packaging and energy-efficient appliances effectively lowers our environmental impact. Recycling offers numerous benefits, including energy savings, job creation, and reduced raw material costs. By embracing the principles of waste management and the circular economy, we can build a more sustainable future for ourselves and future generations.

Transition towards a Circular Economy.

Governments, businesses, academia and civil society increasingly recognize that a switch towards a circular economy approach to plastic waste is necessary to tackle these challenges. The transformation from a linear to a circular economy requires a much stronger commitment to sustainable management of waste and resources. The goal of a circular economy is (1) to increase the life cycle of different types of materials and waste and (2) to facilitate their reuse by treating them as manageable resources. Circular economy is not limited to waste management only but starts with development and production of the product, its consumption or its use as a secondary material. In this field the concept of the 5R (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle) plays an important role.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective is to deepen participants' understanding of waste management and the principles of the circular economy through individual reflection, group collaboration, and practical problem-solving.

Type of activity

Individual work followed by group activities and discussions.

Instructions

Start with a brief overview of waste management and the circular economy, focusing on key concepts such as the 5Rs (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle) and the goals of transitioning to a circular economy. Then, guide learners through the tasks in their workbooks:

First learners need to reflect on what they threw away yesterday and categorize each item as household /food scraps, packaging materials, paper towels, broken items e.g plates or glass, etc./ biological /e.g grass clippings, tree branches, eggshells,spoiled fruits, animal waste e.g manure etc./ commercial /office paper, plastic wrapping, used cooking oil, wood scraps etc./ industrial waste /used batteries, toxic chemicals/.

If your learners have items they don't know which category to put, encourage them to search for answers online.

Once they have a list they need to note for each item:

- The type of material (e.g., plastic, paper, organic)
- How it was disposed of (e.g., trash, recycling, compost)
- Whether it could have been reduced, reused, or recycled instead of being discarded.

Next form small groups. Learners need to choose one product from their waste audit and redesign this product to align with circular economy principles. Each group should create a visual presentation or a poster summarizing their ideas and solutions.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What surprised you during the waste audit?
- Did you find any items that could have been reused, recycled, or reduced?
- How did categorizing your waste affect your understanding of its impact?
- What were the key takeaways from brainstorming with your group?
- How did the group discussions and presentations impact your understanding of waste management and the circular economy?
- What are three actionable steps you can take in your own life to contribute to a circular economy?
- How can you advocate for circular economy practices within your community or workplace?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens, flipchart papers, markers.

Timing

65-75 min.

Introduction to the topic (10 min). Individual work (20 min). Work in groups (25-30 min). Discussion and reflection (10-15).

1.6 Air pollution

Air pollution refers to the contamination of both indoor and outdoor environments by chemical, physical, or biological agents that influence and alter the natural composition of the air/atmosphere and can be caused by both human activities and natural phenomena. According to WHO data, (https://www.who.int/) c. 99% of the world population breathes air that surpasses WHO recommended limits for levels of pollutants. (https://waqi.info/)

Common sources of air pollution include household combustion devices, transportation, industrial facilities, and wildfires, which produce particulate matter, carbon monoxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide, which in turn have adverse impact on public health. Both outdoor and indoor air pollution can lead to many diseases, mostly respiratory ones and they significantly contribute to global mortality. Air pollution is also harmful to other living organisms such as animals and crops.

Human related air pollution, including city smog or indoor smoke, poses seriuos hazards to health and also climate. Outdoor air pollution in both urban and rural areas consists of large amounts of fine particulate matter, which are responsible for many health problems, including heart diseases, lung cancer, and serious respiratory problems.

Air quality is directly related to the earth's climate and hence all Earth ecosystems, since many air pollution sources, such as e.g. fossil fuel combustion, are also responsible for the production of greenhouse gases. Therefore, policies aimed at reducing air pollution can simultaneously benefit climate and health by decreasing disease burdens related to air pollution and contributing to both immediate and long-term climate change mitigation.

In order to reduce air pollution threats, we must support policies aiming at the reduction of air pollution worldwide and we must support and invest in cleaner energy and transport means, energy-efficient housing, cleaner energy sources, less polluting industry, and better municipal waste management.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective is to deepen participants' understanding of air pollution through individual reflection on key topics and collaborative discussion to explore solutions and actions.

Type of activity

Individual reflection followed by group discussion.

Instructions

Provide a brief overview of air pollution, its sources, impacts, and solutions.
You can use short video materials if your time and resources allow you.
Explain the activity: Participants will work individually in their workbooks on various topics related to air pollution and then discuss their reflections in groups.
In their workbooks learners will find sections including reflection questions related to specific aspects of air pollution.

Workbook Sections

1. Sources of Air Pollution

Identify common sources of air pollution in your area.
How do these sources contribute to air pollution?
What are some strategies to reduce emissions from these sources?

2. Health Impacts

How does air pollution affect human health, including both short-term and long-term effects?
Are there any specific health issues in your community related to air pollution?
What actions can be taken to address these health impacts?

3. Environmental Impact

How does air pollution affect local ecosystems and wildlife?
What are some visible signs of air pollution's impact on the environment in your area?
What steps can be taken to mitigate these environmental effects?

4. Personal Actions

Reflect on your daily habits: How do they contribute to or reduce air pollution?
What changes can you make in your life to lessen your air pollution footprint?
How can you motivate others to take similar actions?

After individual work form small groups. Each group will discuss common themes and new perspectives that emerged during individual work and brainstorm practical solutions and actions for reducing air pollution, considering personal, community, and policy-level interventions.
Then groups will present their findings and proposed actions. Facilitate group discussion and reflection.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What common themes emerged from your individual reflections?
- Did any new ideas or solutions come up during the group discussion that you hadn't considered individually?
- What are the most feasible and impactful actions that emerged from your group discussions?
- What was the most surprising or insightful finding from this activity?
- How will this activity influence your behavior or actions related to air pollution going forward?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens, flipchart papers, markers.

Timing

75-80 min.

Introduction to the topic (10 min). Individual reflections (20 min). Group discussions (25 min). Group Presentations (10 max for all groups together). Reflection and wrap-up (10-15 min).

1.7 Sustainable agriculture and food system.

Sustainable agriculture means growing food in a way that keeps our environment, soil, and water healthy over the long term. This type of farming is about meeting today's food needs without harming the ability of future generations to produce food.

What is it

Sustainable agriculture is a method that balances food production with environmental health, animal welfare, and fair conditions for farmers. It aims to avoid the problems caused by industrial farming, like soil degradation, water pollution, and loss of biodiversity.

Why it matters

With a growing world population, we need ways to produce more food without exhausting natural resources. Sustainable agriculture helps keep our soils fertile, conserves water, and supports a diverse ecosystem of plants and animals.

What principles it uses

1. Soil Health: Using natural fertilizers and crop rotations to keep soil rich in nutrients.
2. Water Conservation: Efficient use of water to protect this vital resource.
3. Biodiversity: Growing a variety of crops and protecting nearby natural habitats.
4. Animal Welfare: Raising animals in healthy conditions that allow natural behaviors.
5. Supporting Farmers: Fair pay and safe working conditions for those who grow our food.

What challenges it faces

1. Resource Intensity: Some traditional farming methods use too much water, energy, and chemicals.
2. Climate Change: Extreme weather impacts crop yields and creates unpredictable growing conditions.
3. Loss of Biodiversity: Focusing on a few crop types reduces the resilience of farming systems.

How to support it

1. Local and Seasonal Choices: Buying local and seasonal produce reduces the environmental impact.
2. Waste Reduction: Minimizing food waste helps reduce the demand on resources.
3. Organic Practices: Choosing organic foods encourages farming without synthetic chemicals.
4. Policy Support: Encouraging (local) governments to back sustainable farming initiatives with policies and subsidies.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to inspire participants to reflect on sustainable agriculture and express their thoughts and commitments to future generations through letters or messages.

Type of activity

Individual work.

Instructions

“Dear Future ... Workshop

Start with a small introduction to the concept of sustainable agriculture and its importance. Discuss the Dear Tomorrow initiative and its purpose of connecting present actions to future generations. (Dear Tomorrow is a digital and archive project for people to personally connect with the issue of climate change and to share these stories.). Explain that participants will create their own messages envisioning a future shaped by sustainable farming and responsible food choices.

Next to prepare participants for letters writing give them time and space to individually reflect upon questions such as

- What does sustainable agriculture mean to you personally?
- What memories do you have of food and farming from your childhood?
- How do your food choices impact the environment now and in the future?
- What are some effective ways to reduce food waste in your household?
- What specific actions can you take to support sustainable farming in your community?
- What types of food would you like to incorporate more into your daily diet?
- What kinds of food do you envision your children and grandchildren enjoying decades from now?
- If you could change one aspect of our current food system, what would it be and why?

Participants can write down their thoughtsin the working book's respective section.

After this, create a calm and safe environment for learners to write a letter to someone in the future.

You can have a visualization exercise with learners to set the tone for this activity and help learners connect with their imaginations.

Below is a suggestion for a guided visualization script you can use.
Also you can use calming background music with natural sounds, like birds chirping, gentle rain, or a flowing stream. Look for calming, meditative music that’s subtle yet immersive.

"Close your eyes if you're comfortable, and take a few deep breaths. Inhale fully... and exhale slowly. Let yourself relax and settle into this moment, letting any tension drift away.Now, imagine you're stepping into a scene of the future - a world shaped by the choices we make today. It could be years, or even decades, from now. Notice where you are. Let your mind wander freely and allow this scene to reveal itself to you. As you stand in this future world, begin to explore your surroundings. What do you see? Are there fields, gardens, or other landscapes? Notice any colors, textures, and shapes around you, and let yourself take in this place at your own pace. What can you hear in this place? Maybe there are sounds of animals, birds, or simply the peaceful quiet of nature. Take a moment to feel the air, the ground beneath your feet, or perhaps even the touch of plants nearby. Allow any details to come naturally to your mind. Perhaps you see people here. These might be friends, family, or even future generations you've never met. Notice what they're doing, and the kind of relationship they have with this land and environment. How does it feel to be in this place? Allow whatever images or sensations arise, without trying to control or guide them. As you continue to explore, think about how you feel connected to this vision of the future. What role do you play in it? What actions, however big or small, have helped to shape this world you're experiencing? When you're ready, gently bring your awareness back to this moment, knowing that the impressions and images you've seen are a part of your unique connection to a sustainable future. Take one last deep breath... and, when you feel ready, slowly open your eyes."

Pause for a moment before asking participants to open their eyes and transition to the letter-writing activity.

Once everyone opened their eyes and took time to get back to "here and now" , ask participants to write a letter to someone in the future (e.g farmer, friend, family member living in the world they envisioned, themselves) . Encourage them to share their reflections on the importance of sustainable agriculture and make personal commitments to support it.

Invite participants to share parts of their letters, reflections, or visuals with the group if they feel comfortable.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What emotions did you experience during the imaginary journey? How did it feel in the future world you envisioned?
- What emotions came up while writing your letter? Did any specific memories, hopes, or concerns influence what you wrote?
- How does your vision for a sustainable food future shape your choices today?
- What small, everyday steps can you take now to support sustainable agriculture?
- Are there family members, friends, or community groups you could involve in this journey?
- What reminders or practices could help keep your commitment to sustainability alive over time?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens, visualization script for the facilitator, background Music & Speaker Setup.

Timing

80-90 min.

Introduction to the topic (10 min). Prompted Reflection & Writing Time (15 min). Visualization Exercise (5-7 min). Letter Writing (20 min). Sharing letters (15-20 min). Discussion and reflection (15 min).

1.8 Environmental policies and governance overview of national and EU level policies.

Let's clarify what policies are!

Policies are principles or rules that guide decisions and actions to achieve specific outcomes. They are typically established by governments, organizations, or institutions to ensure consistent and organized responses to particular issues or goals. Policies can be formal, written documents or informal, unwritten guidelines and can cover a wide range of areas, such as environmental protection, public health, education, and business practices. They serve as frameworks within which decisions are made and actions are taken, helping to steer behavior and achieve desired results.

The EU is a key player in guiding environmental policies across its member states, offering a well-rounded and collaborative approach to environmental protection and sustainable growth. Important aspects include: The European Green Deal, Environmental Action Programs, Regulatory Frameworks and Directives, Funding Mechanisms, and Governance and Implementation.

Each EU member state has its own unique environmental policies and governance structures. These are shaped by EU directives but customized to fit their specific national contexts.

The EU sets a comprehensive framework for environmental policies that influence and guide national policies within its member states. Through a combination of legislative measures, funding programs, and strategic initiatives, the EU aims to address environmental challenges and promote sustainability across Europe. National policies, while aligned with EU directives, reflect the unique environmental priorities and contexts of individual countries. This multi-level governance structure ensures a coordinated and effective approach to environmental protection and sustainable development across the continent.

The most important environmental policies at EU level and with implementation at national level are listed below. These policies work together to create a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable Europe for everyone.

1. European Green Deal: This is the EU's big plan to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050. It focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, investing in green technologies, and protecting natural habitats.

2. Climate Law: This law sets legally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. It's a major step towards achieving climate neutrality.

3. Circular Economy Action Plan: This policy promotes recycling and reusing materials to minimize waste. It's all about creating a sustainable economy where products last longer and resources are conserved.

4. Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: This strategy aims to protect and restore nature in Europe by expanding protected areas, restoring damaged ecosystems, and promoting biodiversity-friendly farming practices.

5. Zero Pollution Action Plan: The goal here is to reduce pollution in air, water, and soil to levels that are no longer harmful to human health and the environment by 2050.

6. Renewable Energy Directive: This policy sets targets for increasing the share of renewable energy sources in the EU's energy mix, promoting cleaner energy like wind, solar, and hydro power.
7. Energy Efficiency Directive: This directive focuses on using energy more efficiently in homes, buildings, and industries, helping to reduce energy consumption and lower emissions.
8. Waste Framework Directive: This sets guidelines for managing waste to protect the environment and human health. It promotes recycling, reusing, and reducing waste generation.
9. Water Framework Directive: This policy ensures that all water bodies in the EU achieve good status by managing water quality and promoting sustainable water use.
10. Habitat and Birds Directives: These directives protect Europe's most important natural habitats and species, establishing the Natura 2000 network of protected areas.

Basic principles of environmental policies

The basic principles of environmental policies are fundamental guidelines that shape the development, implementation, and enforcement of measures aimed at protecting and preserving the environment.
Here are the basic principles of environmental policies which can help us create smart, fair, and effective policies that keep our environment safe and healthy for everyone.

1. Sustainability: Let's make sure we're taking care of our planet now so future generations can enjoy it too. This means using resources wisely and not wasting them.
2. Precautionary Principle: If we're not sure something is safe for the environment, it's better to be safe than sorry. We should take preventive steps to avoid any potential harm.
3. Polluter Pays Principle: If you make a mess, you should clean it up! This encourages everyone to be more careful about not polluting in the first place.
4. Prevention Principle: It's always better to stop problems before they start. By being proactive, we can avoid a lot of environmental damage.
5. Public Participation: Everyone's voice matters when it comes to protecting our environment. Let's involve communities and individuals in the decision-making process.
6. Integration: Environmental care should be part of everything we do, from farming to industry to transportation. It's all connected, so we need to think about the environment in every aspect of our lives.
7. Equity and Justice: Let's make sure that everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from, has a say in environmental decisions and benefits from a clean, healthy environment.
8. Innovation and Adaptation: Embrace new ideas and technologies that can help the environment. Policies should be flexible to keep up with new discoveries and changing conditions.
9. Biodiversity Conservation: Protect all forms of life on Earth, from plants and animals to entire ecosystems. A diverse environment is a healthy environment.
10. Global Responsibility: Environmental issues don't stop at borders. We need to work together globally to tackle these challenges and protect our planet.

Needs in the field of EU environmental policies

Addressing these needs will help the EU continue to lead in environmental protection and create a healthier, more sustainable future for everyone. Some of the key needs in the field of environmental policies are:

- While the EU has made great strides, there's a need for even more ambitious targets and faster implementation to combat climate change effectively.
- Ensuring that all member states comply with EU environmental laws is crucial. This means more consistent monitoring and stricter enforcement of existing regulations.
- More financial resources are needed to support green initiatives, research, and innovation. This includes funding for renewable energy projects, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity conservation.
- Educating and involving citizens in environmental protection efforts is essential. People need to understand the impact of their actions and how they can contribute to a greener future.
- Investing in new technologies and innovative solutions can help address environmental challenges more effectively. This includes everything from cleaner energy sources to advanced recycling techniques.
- Environmental policies should be integrated into all areas of policy-making, including transport, agriculture, and industry. This ensures a cohesive approach to sustainability.
- Developing strategies to adapt to the effects of climate change, such as extreme weather events, is vital for protecting communities and ecosystems.
- More efforts are needed to protect endangered species and habitats. Expanding protected areas and restoring degraded ecosystems.
- Promoting farming practices that are environmentally friendly and sustainable is crucial for protecting soil health, water quality, and biodiversity.
- Further efforts to reduce waste and promote a circular economy are necessary. This means more recycling, reusing, and reducing waste generation across all sectors.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective is to deepen participants' understanding of key EU environmental policies and principles through role-playing.

Type of activity

Interactive role-playing simulation.

Instructions

Start with a brief overview of the EU environmental policies and basic principles. Explain the role-playing simulation, highlighting that each group will represent different stakeholders involved in environmental policy-making.

Divide participants into small groups, and assign each group a specific role.

Here we suggest following groups

EU policymakers, environmental NGOs, industry representatives, local government officials, citizens.

Below are short descriptions of groups' roles that are presented in the workbook as well.

EU policymakers

As EU policymakers, your role is to draft, negotiate, and implement environmental policies across member states. You focus on creating legislation that balances economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity.

Think about how to create a policy that can help reduce air pollution across cities in Europe. Consider how to balance different needs and ensure the policy is effective for all urban areas.

What types of rules or actions can make a significant impact on reducing air pollution? How can you ensure that cities follow these rules?

Environmental NGOs

As representatives of environmental NGOs, your role is to advocate for strong environmental protection measures and ensure that policies address critical ecological issues. You focus on raising awareness and influencing policy through public engagement and research.

Focus on how to reduce air pollution and improve air quality. Think about what actions are essential for protecting health and the environment in cities.

What are the major sources of air pollution in urban areas? What measures can be taken to address these sources effectively?

Industry representatives

As industry representatives, your role is to represent the interests of businesses and industries affected by environmental policies. You focus on ensuring that policies are practical and consider the economic impacts on businesses.

Consider how businesses can contribute to reducing air pollution while still operating efficiently. Think about practical solutions that industries can implement.

How can industries lower their pollution levels? What kind of support might they need to make these changes?

Local government officials

As local government officials, your role is to implement and oversee environmental policies at the municipal level. You focus on adapting EU policies to fit local contexts and addressing community-specific environmental issues.

Think about how a new policy will affect your city and its residents. Focus on how to implement the policy effectively and support local communities in reducing air pollution.

What specific air pollution problems are most pressing in your city? How can local policies and initiatives address these issues?

Citizens.

As citizens, your role is to provide input on how environmental policies impact everyday life. You focus on representing the general public's perspective and ensuring that policies are equitable and beneficial to all community members.

Consider how the new policy will impact your daily life and community. Think about how individuals and communities can support the policy and contribute to cleaner air. What are the most important actions individuals can take to help reduce air pollution? How can citizens work together to support the policy?

Present a common environmental issue or scenario (e.g., addressing air pollution in an urban area, promoting biodiversity, or implementing a circular economy).

Each group discusses how their role would approach the scenario and contribute to policy and principles development. They should create a new EU environmental policy. They will need to balance different interests and perspectives to draft a policy that addresses various concerns.

Encourage learners to search and incorporate relevant EU policies and basic principles.

Next ask participants to present their proposal or action plan to the rest of the participants.

Facilitate a discussion where participants reflect on the different perspectives and proposals. Encourage them to consider the feasibility and impact of the proposed solutions.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What challenges did you face while developing your proposal from your assigned role's perspective?
- How did the different roles' interests and responsibilities influence the proposed solutions?
- What insights did you gain about the complexities of policy-making and balancing various interests?
- Which EU policies or principles did you find most relevant to the scenario, and why?
- How can the principles of sustainability, equity, and innovation be effectively integrated into policy solutions?
- In what ways can your understanding of EU environmental policies impact your personal or professional actions?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens, flipchart papers, markers.

Timing

75-80 min.

Introduction to the topic (10min). Group work (30 min). Presentations (20 min). Reflection and plenary discussion 15-20 min.

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Sustainable Practices at Grassroots Level

Section 2

2.1 Educational and awareness importance

Sustainable practices at the grassroot level are simple, everyday actions taken by citizens like us to protect and care for the environment. These include things like recycling, saving water, using less energy, and growing local food, all aimed at making sure our planet stays healthy for future generations.

Teaching and spreading awareness about these sustainable practices is very important for protecting our environment. When we involve local communities, we give people the tools to make smart choices that help keep our planet healthy. Simple things like community workshops, school programs, and neighborhood clean-up events help everyone understand how their everyday actions affect the world around them. These activities encourage us to use resources wisely, cut down on waste, and protect nature. When people are informed and involved, they can inspire bigger changes, showing that even small efforts in our own communities can make a big difference for the environment.

A few helping guidelines

One notable source of useful information is the United Nations' "Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives" guide. This guide outlines strategies for integrating sustainability into education and community initiatives, and it emphasizes the importance of education, community involvement, local solutions, and continuous improvement in fostering sustainable practices.

For more detailed insights, you can refer to the guide here: Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives by UNESCO.

But let's summarize a few of the principles and needs that can be found in the guide:

- Education and awareness: Provide accessible and engaging information about sustainability to help everyone understand its importance and how they can contribute.
- Community involvement: Encourage active participation from all community members through events, workshops, and projects that promote hands-on learning and collective action.
- Local solutions: Focus on practices and initiatives that address specific local environmental issues and utilize local resources and knowledge.
- Inclusivity: Ensure that all community members, regardless of age, background, or economic status, have the opportunity to participate and benefit from sustainability efforts.
- Collaboration: Foster partnerships between local organizations, schools, businesses, and government to create a united front in promoting sustainability.
- Practical actions: Promote simple, practical steps that individuals and households can take to reduce their environmental impact, such as recycling, conserving water, and reducing energy use.
- Continuous improvement: Encourage a mindset of ongoing learning and adaptation to improve sustainability practices over time based on feedback and new information.
- Celebration of success: Recognize and celebrate achievements in sustainability to motivate continued effort and inspire others to get involved.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to help participants understand the importance of grassroots sustainable practices, raise awareness, and develop strategies for community involvement in sustainability efforts.

Type of activity

Individual work.

Instructions

Introduce the concept of grassroots sustainable practices. Highlight simple actions like recycling, saving water, using less energy, and growing local food. Ask participants to share examples of sustainable practices they already follow in their daily lives. Write these examples on the whiteboard or flipchart. Provide a brief summary of the principles from the UN guide presented in the module.

Next, invite learners to develop an awareness-raising campaign for their communities. In their workbooks, learners will find a list of awareness-raising topics. They can choose one topic from the list or, if time allows, develop more campaign ideas. If someone wants to work on their own topic, that's fine too.

The topics provided in the workbook are:

1. The Impact of Single-Use Plastics
2. Water Conservation Tips
3. Energy Efficiency at Home
4. Sustainable Transportation Options
5. Climate Change and Its Local Impacts

Allow time for learners to present their awareness-raising campaign ideas. Facilitate a group discussion on the ideas presented, focusing on their potential impact and feasibility.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- Why did you choose that awareness-raising topic?
- What were the main challenges you faced while developing your campaign?
- What are some potential barriers to implementing your campaign in the community?
- What immediate actions can you take to start working on your campaign?
- Did any specific examples or suggestions from your peers inspire changes to your original campaign plan?
- Were there any innovative or creative ideas from others that you hadn't considered before?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens, flipcharts or a whiteboard, markers.

Timing

70-85 min

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min, individual work: 30 min, presentations: 15-20 min, reflection and discussion: 15-20 min.

2.2 Community engagement and action

What does community engagement mean?

Community engagement in sustainable practices at the grassroots level involves the active participation of local residents in environmental initiatives. This means everyone, from students to seniors, works together to improve their surroundings and adopt eco-friendly habits.

By involving diverse groups, fostering partnerships, and sharing knowledge, communities can effectively address environmental issues. Current trends show an increasing awareness and willingness to participate in green practices like recycling programs, water conservation efforts, and urban gardening projects.

Where to start from?

Here are some key principles when we talk about community engagement and action:

1. **Inclusivity:** Ensuring that everyone in the community, regardless of age, background, or socioeconomic status, has the opportunity to participate in sustainability initiatives. This fosters a sense of belonging and ensures diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions.
2. **Collaboration:** Building strong partnerships between local residents, schools, businesses, and government entities. Collaboration allows for pooling of resources, sharing of expertise, and coordinated efforts, making it easier to tackle larger environmental challenges and achieve common goals.
3. **Education:** Providing accessible information and learning opportunities about sustainable practices. Education empowers community members to make informed decisions and adopt eco-friendly habits. Workshops, seminars, and informational campaigns can raise awareness and inspire action.
4. **Empowerment:** Encouraging community members to take ownership of sustainability projects. When people feel they have a stake in the success of an initiative, they are more likely to stay committed and motivated. Empowerment can be achieved by involving residents in planning and decision-making processes.
5. **Local relevance:** Focusing on solutions that address specific environmental issues relevant to the community. Tailoring initiatives to local needs and conditions increases their effectiveness and ensures they resonate with the residents.
6. **Continuous improvement:** Adopting a mindset of ongoing learning and adaptation. Sustainable practices should evolve based on feedback, new information, and changing circumstances. This principle ensures that community efforts remain effective and up-to-date.

Even if there is no perfect recipe for successfully engaging the community and creating action or a movement around sustainable practices, we can identify a series of needs that once met will ensure the efficacy of the approach.

1. **Resource access:** Many communities lack the necessary resources to implement sustainable practices effectively. This includes funding, materials, and access to green technologies. Support from local governments, NGOs, and businesses can help bridge this gap.
2. **Education and training:** There is a need for more comprehensive education and training programs focused on sustainability. These programs should be designed to reach a wide audience and cover practical aspects of eco-friendly living, such as waste management, energy conservation, and sustainable agriculture.
3. **Infrastructure and support:** Developing infrastructure that supports sustainable practices is crucial. This includes recycling facilities, community gardens, and renewable energy systems. Additionally, ongoing support and maintenance are needed to ensure the longevity and success of these projects.
4. **Policy and regulation:** Effective policies and regulations at the local level can drive community engagement in sustainability. These might include incentives for green practices, stricter waste management regulations, and support for sustainable business initiatives.
5. **Community involvement:** Increasing community involvement requires creating opportunities for residents to engage in sustainability efforts. This could be through volunteer programs, local environmental clubs, or participatory decision-making processes.
6. **Awareness campaigns:** Continuous awareness campaigns are essential to keep the community informed and motivated. These campaigns can highlight the benefits of sustainable practices, share success stories, and provide updates on ongoing projects.

By addressing these needs and adhering to key principles, communities can enhance their engagement in sustainable practices, leading to a more resilient and environmentally friendly future.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to develop learners skills in organizing community events.

Type of activity

Individual work followed by a group discussion.

Instructions

Begin by discussing the importance of community engagement in sustainable practices. Emphasize that effective community initiatives involve everyone working together to improve their surroundings and adopt eco-friendly habits.Reflect on the key principles of community engagement presented in the module.

Next, learners will have time and space to develop ideas for a community event that addresses an environmental issue relevant to their area.

They need to develop this idea making sure that it is

1 Inclusive and everyone in their community can take part.

2 Collaborative and there is a partnership between different institutions of community.

3 Educational and community members will raise awareness and get knowledge about certain things.

4 Empowering and after this event participants will feel motivation to make a change or continue efforts in the topic area.

5 Relevant and everyone is concerned and cares for the topic brought in.

6 Leaves room for improvement and there will be an opportunity to get a feedback from the community.

After individual work, give the learners time to present their ideas and facilitate a group discussion at the end.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- How was the process for you?
- How realistic is the event you just designed? When do you think you could make it a reality?
- How this helped you realize that each of us can contribute to community engagement?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens.

Timing

60-80 min

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Individual work: 20-25 min. Presentations: 15-20 min. Reflection and plenary discussion: 15-20 min.

2.3 Sustainable consumption

Let's clarify what sustainable consumption is!

Sustainable consumption is about using resources in a way that meets our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.
According to the European Union, this means using products and services in a way that minimizes their impact on the environment, encourages social fairness, and supports economic sustainability. It involves being mindful of how we use energy, water, and other resources, reducing waste, preferring products that are durable, repairable, and recyclable and making informed choices about what we buy and how we live.
By practicing sustainable consumption, we contribute to a healthier planet and a fairer society.
The EU emphasizes the integration of consumer behavior into the circular economy to ensure long-lasting and resource-efficient products. This approach is key to achieving broader environmental and climate goals. For more detailed information, you can refer to the European Commission's page on sustainable consumption here.

Basic principles of sustainable consumption

Here are some principles of sustainable consumption that can help guide us towards more responsible use of resources:

1. **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:** Aim to minimize waste by reducing consumption, reusing products, and recycling materials.
2. **Resource efficiency:** Use resources like water and energy more efficiently to lessen environmental impact.
3. **Support sustainable products:** Choose products that are eco-friendly, ethically produced, and have a lower carbon footprint.
4. **Mindful purchasing:** Buy only what you need and consider the lifecycle of products, from production to disposal.
5. **Local and seasonal:** Prefer local and seasonal products to reduce transportation emissions and support local economies.

Current situation and trends in sustainable consumption

Sustainable consumption is on the rise as more people and businesses recognize the need for eco-friendly practices. Consumers are becoming more aware of their environmental impact and are eager to make better choices. However, widespread adoption is still a challenge due to factors like cost and availability.

Trends:

1. **Growing awareness and education:** education and awareness campaigns are making a difference, leading to increased demand for sustainable products.
2. **Circular economy:** this focuses on reducing waste by reusing and recycling products, with companies designing longer-lasting items.
3. **Ethical consumerism:** more consumers are choosing products that are ethically sourced, focusing on fair trade and environmental friendliness.
4. **Tech innovation:** technology is helping produce sustainable products and track their impact, with apps aiding informed consumer choices.
5. **Policy and regulation:** governments are implementing policies to encourage sustainable consumption, such as bans on single-use plastics and incentives for green energy.

Needs in the field of sustainable consumption

1. **Education and awareness:** we need to spread the word about why sustainable consumption matters through schools and public campaigns

2. **Affordable and accessible products:** making eco-friendly products budget-friendly and easy to find is crucial

3. **Better recycling and reuse systems:** we need more efficient recycling programs and places to repair items

4. **Clear information:** providing straightforward, trustworthy info on product sustainability helps everyone make better choices

5. **Supportive policies:** governments should create policies that encourage sustainable practices and discourage harmful ones

6. **Corporate responsibility:** companies should commit to greener practices, from sourcing materials to reducing waste

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to help participants understand the principles of sustainable consumption and explore ways to make more sustainable choices.

Type of activity

Individual work followed by a group discussion or discussion in pairs.

Instructions

Introduce the concept of sustainable consumption, covering key points such as the definition, principles, and importance. Ask participants to think about their last purchase and share whether they considered any sustainable factors. Why or why not?

Next, learners work individually on the "Sustainable Living Challenge" exercise presented in their workbooks. The tasks in the exercise are designed to encourage participants to think creatively about applying sustainable consumption principles in real-life situations.

Exercise questions are as follows

- Identify three common household items that can be reused or recycled instead of thrown away. Think about how these actions reduce waste.
- How can you reduce water and energy use at home or in the workplace? Share specific actions and their impact.
- List 3 criteria you would use to evaluate whether a product is sustainable. Find an example of a product that meets these criteria.
- Reflect on a recent purchase and consider if it was necessary. How could mindful purchasing have influenced your decision?
- Plan a meal using only local and seasonal ingredients. What are the benefits of choosing local and seasonal products?
- How can you spread information about sustainable consumption in your community (e.g., school, university, neighborhood, workplace)?
- How can governments encourage sustainable consumption?
- As a consumer, what kind of support would you like to have?

After individual work, ask learners to form pairs or small groups and discuss their thoughts with each other. Facilitate a plenary discussion with everyone as the final part of this activity.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- Which principle do you find most challenging to implement, and why?
- Which principles do you feel you are already practicing well, and which ones do you need to work on?
- What actions can you take immediately to start living more sustainably?
- How can you incorporate these principles into your long-term habits?
- What common themes emerged in the different event ideas presented? Do you think there are opportunities for collaboration to realize these event/activity ideas?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens.

Timing

60-65 min.

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Individual work: 10-15 min. Discussion in groups or in pairs: 15 min. Reflection and plenary discussion: 15-20 min.

2.4 Principles of fair trade and fair practices

Let's clarify what fair trade and fair practices are!

Fair trade and fair practices originate from a shared belief in fairness and ethical treatment across global trade and business. They emerged from a desire to address inequalities and promote sustainability in our interconnected world.

Fair Trade is all about ensuring that farmers and workers get a fair price for their products and labor. It means better working conditions, fair wages, and support for sustainable farming practices. When you buy Fair Trade products, you're helping to create a more just and equal world. Fair trade began as a response to the injustices faced by producers, particularly in developing countries, who were often paid unfairly for their labor. It started with pioneers who envisioned a trading system where farmers and artisans could earn a fair price for their products, enabling them to improve their livelihoods and invest in their communities.

Fair Practices are about treating everyone with honesty and respect. This means being truthful in business, paying fair wages, providing safe working conditions, and being kind to the environment. It's about making sure that everyone involved in creating a product is treated well and fairly. Fair practices in business evolved from a recognition of the importance of integrity and transparency. It's about treating employees, customers, and the environment with respect and fairness.

Both fair trade and fair practices are rooted in the idea that every transaction should benefit everyone involved, not just financially, but also socially and environmentally. They promote a more compassionate and sustainable approach to global commerce, encouraging consumers and businesses to make choices that contribute positively to the well-being of individuals, communities, and the planet.

In essence, fair trade and fair practices reflect our collective aspiration for a world where kindness, fairness, and responsibility shape the way we do business and interact with one another. By supporting fair trade and fair practices, you're making a positive impact on people's lives and the planet!

Basic principles of fair trade and fair practices

Fair trade promotes sustainable farming and ethical production by:

1. Making sure workers receive fair wages and work in safe environments.
2. Building direct relationships between producers and buyers to avoid unnecessary middlemen.
3. Using responsible farming methods that protect the environment.
4. Investing in communities to support social and economic growth.
5. Being open and accountable about how products are made and sold.

Fair practices mean doing things ethically and transparently, including:

1. Competing fairly and avoiding unfair tactics like monopolies.
2. Being honest in how products are marketed and communicating openly with customers.
3. Treating employees fairly, offering equal opportunities and safe workplaces.
4. Respecting workers' rights and ensuring they have good conditions.
5. Being responsible for the environment by reducing harm and being sustainable.

Current situation and trends of fair trade and fair practices

Fair trade and fair practices are gaining momentum as more people and businesses prioritize ethical and responsible ways of doing business. It's all about ensuring that producers, especially in developing countries, are treated fairly and paid well for their hard work. This movement promotes sustainable farming, safe working conditions, and transparent supply chains. We're seeing a growing awareness of the importance of fair competition, honest marketing, and treating employees with respect and equality. Businesses are also increasingly embracing environmental responsibility, finding ways to reduce their impact on the planet. Overall, fair trade and fair practices are not just trends but essential principles that are shaping a more ethical and sustainable future for global commerce.

Needs in the field of fair trade and fair practices

In the realm of fair trade and fair practices, there's a crucial need for businesses and consumers alike to prioritize ethical and transparent practices. This begins with ensuring that producers in developing countries receive fair compensation for their products and are able to work in safe and dignified conditions. Additionally, there is a growing demand for fair competition among businesses, which means avoiding monopolistic practices and price fixing. Honest and clear communication with consumers is also vital, ensuring they are well-informed about the products they purchase and the impact of their choices.

Moreover, fair practices extend to employment conditions, where equal opportunities and non-discriminatory practices are essential. This includes providing safe and supportive workplaces that respect labor rights and promote employee well-being.

Environmental responsibility is another critical aspect. Businesses need to minimize their ecological footprint by adopting sustainable production methods and reducing harmful impacts on natural resources and ecosystems.

By addressing these needs comprehensively, we can foster a global marketplace that values fairness, integrity, and sustainability, benefiting both producers and consumers while contributing positively to communities and the environment.

Links:
https://www.fairtrade.net/
https://unglobalcompact.org/

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to introduce young people to the concepts of fair trade and fair practices, highlighting their importance in global commerce and encouraging ethical consumer choices.

Type of activity

Depending on the target group you can have it as an individual work, work in pairs or in small groups.

Instructions

Begin by sharing the story of how fair trade began and evolved. You can use visuals or a short video if available. Emphasize that every product we buy has a journey involving many people, decisions, and processes that impact lives and the environment. Highlight the core principles of fair trade and fair practices.

Highlight the core principles of fair trade and fair practices presented in the module.

Next, invite learners to work individually by reflecting on the examples in their workbooks. (Pair work is also an option.). Learners can write down their thoughts or draw.

Imagine two farmers—one working directly with buyers and another using a middleman. Reflect on how each situation impacts their livelihood.

Imagine two factory workers—one with decent working conditions and fair wages, and the other without. Reflect on how each situation impacts their livelihood.

Imagine two farmers—one using responsible methods to protect the environment and the other using chemical pesticides harming the soil and nearby water resources . Reflect on the pros and cons of each approach.

You are a coffee cooperative in a small rural village that has been part of the Fair Trade network for several years. The cooperative has seen increased profits from selling their coffee at fair trade prices, which has allowed you to save a portion of their earnings for community development. How would you invest in supporting your village?

You are a clothing brand that prides itself on being ethical and sustainable. However, your customers are concerned about the lack of information on where exactly their clothes are made and the conditions under which they are produced. How would you solve this transparency and communication gap?

Facilitate a larger group discussion where each group shares key points from their discussions.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- How did reflecting on the scenarios help you understand the impact of fair trade principles on people's lives and the environment?
- What was the most surprising or enlightening aspect of the scenarios you worked on?
- How can the principles of fair trade and fair practices be applied in your daily life or future career? Provide specific examples.
- Based on your reflections, what steps can you take to support fair trade practices in your own community?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens and pencils. If you decide to have short visual aids (videos, presentations) for the topic you will need a screen and computer.

Timing

60-70 min

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Individual work: 30-35 min. Reflection and discussion: 15-20 min.

2.5 The role of Non-Formal Education in shaping eco-conscious behavior

Non-formal education plays a crucial role in fostering eco-conscious behavior, complementing formal education by providing flexible, engaging, and practical learning experiences outside traditional classroom settings. This approach is particularly effective in shaping sustainable practices and attitudes, as it encourages active participation and real-world application.

The European Union recognizes the importance of non-formal education in promoting environmental awareness and has integrated it into various policies and initiatives. For example, the "Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives" guide by UNESCO, which the EU supports, outlines strategies to incorporate sustainability into education. The EU's "Youth Strategy 2019-2027" also highlights the role of non-formal education in empowering young people to become active and responsible citizens, including in the context of environmental sustainability.

What methods are the best?

Non-formal education disposes of a large variety of methods and tools, so there is no perfect answer to this question. However, here are a few categories of methods/ activities that have proven to be very useful and with impactful results.

1. Workshops and training programs: Non-formal education often includes workshops and training programs that focus on practical skills and knowledge related to sustainability. For instance, workshops on recycling, composting, and energy conservation provide hands-on experience.

2. Environmental camps: Camps and outdoor education programs immerse participants in nature, teaching them about ecosystems, conservation, and sustainable living through direct interaction with the environment.

3. Community projects: Initiatives like community gardens, clean-up drives, and tree planting events engage participants in local environmental action, fostering a sense of responsibility and connection to their community.

4. Online platforms and social media: Digital tools and social media campaigns are increasingly used to spread awareness and educate on environmental issues.

Challenges

When you embark on this journey, you need to consider also the challenges that you may face and have either a back-up plan or alternative solutions prepared.

Resource constraints: Non-formal education programs often face challenges related to funding and resources, which can limit their reach and effectiveness.

Engagement and participation: Ensuring consistent and active participation can be difficult, especially in communities where environmental awareness is low.

Integration with formal education: Aligning non-formal education initiatives with formal education systems to create a cohesive learning experience remains a significant challenge.

A few key principles

Non-formal education is vital for shaping eco-conscious behavior, providing practical and engaging ways to learn about and act on environmental issues. Supported by EU policies and programs, it complements formal education and helps build a more sustainable future. By addressing challenges and adhering to key principles, non-formal education can continue to inspire and empower individuals and communities to adopt sustainable practices.

Here are some principles of effective non-formal education for sustainability:

1. **Inclusivity:** Programs should be accessible to all, regardless of age, background, or socio-economic status, ensuring diverse participation and perspectives.
2. **Practical engagement:** Emphasizing hands-on, experiential learning helps participants connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications.
3. **Community involvement:** Engaging the community in projects ensures relevance and fosters a collective sense of responsibility.
4. **Continuous learning:** Non-formal education should promote lifelong learning and adapt to new environmental challenges and knowledge.
5. **Collaboration:** Partnerships between schools, local organizations, and governments enhance the reach and impact of non-formal education initiatives.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to understand and explore the role of non-formal education in fostering eco-conscious behavior and identify effective methods and principles for implementation.

Type of activity

Group Work. Maximum advised number of participants 25 in total.

Instructions

Briefly introduce the concept of non-formal education and its importance in fostering eco-conscious behavior. Explain how non-formal education complements formal education and outline the key methods and challenges discussed in the text.Next ask learners to form small groups (4-6 people in each group).

Each group will have one of the following topics to brainstorm and discuss as well as draft an educational content using that method: They also need to take into consideration the key principles of effective non-formal education for sustainability presented in the module.

Group 1

Design a 1 day workshop or a small training program for young people aged 14-16 to develop skills on sustainable practices with NFE methods. Make sure NFE key principles are considered.

Group 2

Develop a 1 day agenda for an Environmental Camp for young people aged 14-16 with NFE methods. What makes an environmental camp successful, and what should be included in such programs?
Make sure NFE key principles are considered.

Group 3

Design a 1 day community event for young people aged 18-21 to promote sustainable practices with NFE education methods. Make sure NFE key principles are considered.

Group 4

Design a 1 week social media campaign for young people aged 14-16 to raise awareness on any environmental issue. How can digital tools and social media be used to promote environmental awareness? Make sure NFE key principles are considered.

Have each group present their ideas to the rest of the participants. After each presentation, facilitate a brief discussion on the methods, challenges, and potential solutions presented. Encourage questions and suggestions from other participants

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- Which parts of non-formal education do you think are best for helping people care about and take action for the environment?
- How can you apply the principles of non-formal education in your own community or work?
- What challenges do you foresee in implementing non-formal education initiatives, and how might you address them?

Material Needed

Flipchart papers, markers and pens, sticky notes, projector or screen (optional for presentations)
Workbook summarizing key points.

Timing

75-90 min
Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Group work: 30-35 min. Presentations: 20 min (5 min each group). Reflection and discussion: 15-20 min.

2.6 Environmental justice, environmental ethics and values

Let's clarify what environmental justice, environmental ethics and values are!

Environmental Justice is all about making sure everyone gets to enjoy a clean and healthy environment. It's like playing fair, ensuring that no one, especially those in vulnerable communities, gets stuck dealing with more pollution, toxic waste, or a lack of green spaces than others. Picture a world where everyone has an equal share of the good stuff, like clean air, fresh water, and safe, green neighborhoods, while being protected from the bad stuff, like pollution and environmental dangers.

Environmental Ethics is like our moral guide for how we treat the Earth. It encourages us to think about what's right and wrong when we interact with nature. This means thinking about how our actions affect the planet, animals, plants, and even future generations. It's all about making choices that are good not just for us, but for the whole world around us.

Environmental Values are the beliefs that guide how we think about and interact with nature. These values can include respecting nature, appreciating the variety of life (biodiversity), and understanding the importance of preserving the planet for future generations. They shape how we feel and act towards the Earth, helping us figure out what's important and why we should care about protecting it.

In a short version, easy to remember, the main idea of these concepts is:

- Environmental Justice: Making sure everyone is treated fairly when it comes to enjoying the benefits of a clean environment and avoiding the bad stuff.
- Environmental Ethics: The moral principles that guide how we should treat the Earth and everything on it.
- Environmental Values: The beliefs that shape how we feel about and act towards the environment.

Basic principles of environmental justice, environmental ethics and values

Principles of Environmental Justice

- Fairness for All: Ensure everyone, regardless of background, enjoys clean air, water, and safe communities.
- Equal Protection: Protect all communities from harmful pollution and toxic waste equally.
- Community Involvement: Everyone has a say in decisions that affect their environment and health

Principles of Environmental Ethics

- Do No Harm: Avoid actions that harm the environment, animals, plants, and future generations.
- Respect Nature: Treat the Earth and all its inhabitants with care and respect.
- Sustainability: Make choices that help preserve the planet for the future.

Principles of Environmental Values

- Respect for Nature: Appreciate the beauty and importance of the natural world.
- Biodiversity Matters: Value the variety of life and understand its importance to a healthy planet.
- Future Focused: Make decisions that ensure a healthy environment for generations to come.

Current situation and trends of environmental justice, environmental ethics and values

Environmental justice continues to be a crucial issue globally, aiming to ensure that all communities, especially marginalized ones, have equal access to a clean and safe environment. Efforts are increasingly focusing on addressing disparities in exposure to pollution, access to green spaces, and involvement in decision-making processes that affect local environments.

Environmental ethics are gaining traction as societies recognize the importance of sustainable practices and responsible stewardship of natural resources. There's a growing emphasis on considering the long-term impacts of human activities on ecosystems, wildlife, and future generations. Ethical considerations are influencing policies, corporate practices, and individual behaviors towards more environmentally-friendly choices.

Environmental values are evolving towards a deeper appreciation of nature's intrinsic value and biodiversity conservation. There's a rising awareness of the interconnectedness of ecological health with human well-being, driving movements for sustainable lifestyles, biodiversity conservation efforts, and advocacy for environmental protection at local and global levels.

These trends reflect a growing commitment to creating a healthier planet for all, where environmental justice, ethics, and values play integral roles in shaping policies and actions towards a sustainable future.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective is to foster learners' self-reflection and encourage them to think deeply about Environmental Justice, Environmental Ethics, and Environmental Values.

Type of activity

Individual work to be followed by group discussion.

Instructions

Start with a discussion about Environmental justice, environmental ethics and values. Next, invite the learners for a self reflection activity presented in their workbooks

Make sure that the working room is quiet and learners can reflect without interruptions. If somebody wants to go outside it's ok. Just set time and ask them to come back.

Learners will have questions to reflect and write down about their experiences, beliefs, and actions.

Questions are as follows

Environmental Justice

- Think about your own environment: where you live, work, or go to school. Do you feel that you and those around you have access to clean air, water, and green spaces?
- Have you ever noticed or experienced environmental injustice, where certain communities are exposed to more pollution or have less access to natural resources? Bring an example
- Consider the broader community, city, or country you live in. Do you think all communities have equal access to a clean and healthy environment? Are there groups that are more affected by environmental issues?
- What could be done to ensure fairness for all? Write down some ideas or steps you can take to contribute to environmental justice.

Environmental Ethics

- How do you see your relationship with the natural world?
- Write about how your moral values influence your environmental decisions.
- Do you feel a sense of responsibility to leave the Earth in a good state for future generations? Why or why not? How does this responsibility affect your behavior or decision-making?
- Think about ways you could show more respect for nature in your everyday life.

Environmental Values

- What aspects of the environment do you value most? Is it the beauty of nature, the diversity of life, the clean air and water, or something else?
- How have your cultural background, family, and society influenced your environmental values?
- Are your actions aligned with your environmental values? For example, if you value biodiversity, do you support efforts to protect endangered species or habitats?

Once learners finish their self reflections invite them for the discussion and reflection.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What have you learned about yourself and your relationship with the environment?
- Are there areas where you feel you could grow or take more action?
- Did something from your reflections surprise you? If yes, what was that?

Next, at the conclusion of activity ask learners to set their "Environmental commitment action plan" presented in the workbook. You can ask learners to make pairs like "buddies" to check each other's progress in action plans and/or offer support whenever is needed.

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens

Timing

80-90 min

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Individual work: 25-30 min. Reflection and discussion: 15-20 min. "Environmental commitment action plan" and choosing the "bodies": 10-15 min.

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Human-Nature Connectedness

Section 3

3.1 Biophilia and ecological identity

What is Biophilia?

The biophilia hypothesis is the idea that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life.The word "biophilia" translates to 'love of life' from the Greek words '**bio**' (life) and '**philia**' (love). German-born American psychoanalyst Erich Fromm described it as 'the passionate love of life and all that is alive.'[1]

The idea that humans have an innate love and need for nature has been adapted to many different areas of study. The biophilia hypothesis has been used to support the idea that humans are healthier when they're connected to nature and has even become popular within the movement of green design, reusing materials, and eco-friendly architecture.

Though at first, the biophilia hypothesis was more aspirational than based on scientific fact, researchers are now finding that there are health benefits to being surrounded by nature. Research suggests that biophilia can have a positive impact on well-being by affecting three of our mind-body systems: physiological (e.g., it reduces anxiety), psychological (e.g., it reduces anger and fear), and cognitive functions (e.g., it improves creativity and boosts mood).

Though science has come a long way in measuring and proving the link between nature, health, and happiness, most of us intrinsically know that nature makes us feel good. No one needs to tell us!

What is Ecological Identity?

Another interconnected concept with biophilia is Ecological Identity, which emphasizes the importance of human-nature relationships. Ecological Identity refers to all the different ways people understand themselves in relation to the Earth, as manifested in personality, values, actions, and sense of self. Nature becomes an object of identification.

In this sense, the interpretation of life experience transcends social and cultural interactions, also including a connection to the Earth, perception of the ecosystem, and direct experiences of nature.[2]

Key concepts of Ecological Identity are

Emotional bond: This includes feelings of love, awe, and respect for nature. People with a strong ecological identity often report a deep emotional attachment to natural places and experiences.
Cognitive awareness: Understanding ecological processes and recognizing the interdependence of all life forms are crucial aspects of ecological identity. This awareness fosters a sense of responsibility towards the environment.
Behavioral engagement: Individuals with a well-developed ecological identity are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviors. These can range from everyday practices like recycling and conservation to activism and advocacy for environmental protection.
Social dimension: Ecological identity is also shaped by cultural narratives, social norms, and community practices. Collective identity and shared values within a community can reinforce individual ecological identities.

1. Wilson, E. O. (1984). Biophilia. Harvard University Press.
2. Gergen, K. J., MeNamee, S., & Barrett, F. J. (2001). "Toward transformative dialogue." International Journal of Public Administration, 24(7-8), 679-707.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to help participants understand the concepts of biophilia and ecological identity through personal reflection and group discussion.

Type of activity

Individual work that can be followed by work in pairs or in small groups.

Instructions

Begin by introducing the concepts of biophilia and ecological identity briefly. Explain how humans have a natural tendency to connect with nature and how this connection shapes our identity. Ask learners to say any words that come to their mind when thinking about nature. Write it all down (or you can use Mentimeter). Next, ask learners to think about a time when they felt a strong connection to nature. This could be a moment in a forest, at the beach, or even in a garden. Provide them with a few moments to reflect quietly. Invite learners for a visualization exercise presented in their workbooks.

" Close your eyes and imagine your favorite place in nature. It could be a beach, a forest, a park, or even your backyard. Anything that comes to your mind. Once you imagine this place with all the possible details, open your eyes and try to draw it. If you don't want to draw just describe it in words."

While drawing ask learners to reflect upon these questions

- How does nature make me feel?
- What do I know about ecological processes or the environment?
- How do I protect nature?
- How does my community or culture influence their connection to nature?

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- How was the process for you?
- How do you feel when you spend time in nature?
- Can you think of ways that nature helps us stay healthy and happy?
- How much time do you spend in nature per day, week, month?
- What would you change in your relations with nature?

Material Needed

Workbook for each learner, colored pens and pencils, whiteboard and markers.

Timing

50-60 min

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Individual work: 25-30 min. Reflection and discussion: 15-20 min.

3.2 Introduction to the basic principles and concepts of eco-psychology

What is Eco Psychology and how it emerged?

Ecopsychology is an interdisciplinary field that studies the relationship between human beings and the natural environment through both ecological and psychological principles.
At its core, eco-psychology recognizes the profound connection between individuals and the Earth. Humans are not separate from nature but rather integral parts of the larger ecological system. This recognition of our interconnectedness and belief in our psychological health is deeply influenced by our relationship with the natural world that fosters a sense of responsibility and stewardship towards the environment, advocating for a holistic approach that encompasses both psychological well-being and environmental sustainability.

Eco-psychology emerged in the latter half of the 20th century in response to escalating environmental crises. Pioneers like Theodore Roszak and Arne Naess laid its foundation, advocating for a psychological perspective integrating ecological awareness. In the 1970s, spurred by events like Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" and Earth Day, the environmental movement highlighted the interconnectedness of human well-being and environmental health, shaping eco-psychological inquiry. Through the 1980s and 1990s, eco-therapy approaches gained traction, emphasizing the therapeutic benefits of engaging with natural environments. Today, eco-psychology stands at the intersection of psychology, ecology, and environmental studies, offering insights into promoting human well-being and ecological sustainability amidst pressing environmental challenges. [1]

What are Ecopsychology principles?

- The core of the mind is the ecological unconscious. We all have a natural, deep connection with nature that influences our feelings and thoughts. When we ignore this connection, we might feel unbalanced or disconnected.
- Our feelings about nature are linked to the history of life on Earth as a living record of cosmic evolution. Understanding this connection helps us appreciate the importance of protecting nature.
- If other therapies seek to heal the alienation between person and person, person and society, Ecopsychology seeks to heal the more fundamental alienation between human and natures caused by the urban environments.
- For Ecopsychology as for other therapies, the crucial stage of development is the life of the child. Children naturally feel a special connection to nature, seeing it as alive and magical. Ecopsychology encourages us to keep this sense of wonder as we grow up.
- As we grow, we develop a sense of responsibility for the environment, the so-called "Ecological ego". It matures toward a sense of ethical responsibility to the planet
- Ecopsychology seeks to re-evaluate certain ideas about being strong and dominant that often lead to harming nature.
- Eco-psychology questions the mental health of our vast urban-industrial culture. However, it doesn't outright reject our technological abilities or the positive aspects of industrial development. Instead, it advocates for a post-industrial society that values ecological balance alongside technological progress.
- Taking care of the planet is closely linked to taking care of ourselves. The needs of the planet are the needs of the person, the rights of the person are the rights of the planet.

1. Roszak, T. (1992). The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology. Touchstone.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to help participants understand the principles of ecopsychology by exploring their own connections to nature and how these connections influence their psychological well-being.

Type of activity

Individual work.

Instructions

Start by introducing the concept of ecopsychology, emphasizing its focus on the deep connection between human beings and the natural environment. Mention how ecopsychology emerged in response to environmental crises and its foundational principles. Connect with the previous topic and encourage your learners to consider how nature makes them feel and whether they feel a sense of connection or alienation from the natural world.

Next, ask them to reflect upon dilemmas in their workbooks. There are 8 dilemmas connected to each principle of ecopsychology.

Dilemma 1:

You've noticed that spending time in nature makes you feel calm and centered, but lately, you've been too busy with school and social media to go outside. Should you make an effort to disconnect from technology and spend more time in nature, or continue focusing on your current routine?

Dilemma 2:

You've learned that a local park, which is home to some very old trees, is going to be cut down to build a shopping center. You love shopping but also feel a deep connection to the history of the park as almost your whole childhood was spent there. Should you support the development for convenience, or advocate for preserving the park?

Dilemma 3:

Your city is planning to build a large sports complex in the only green space near your home. The sports complex would be great for physical fitness, but you enjoy the peace and tranquility of the green space. Should you support the construction for the community's physical health, or argue for keeping the green space to benefit mental well-being?

Dilemma 4:

You're helping to design a new playground for your younger siblings. One option is a high-tech play area with lots of gadgets and screens, while the other is a natural play area with trees, sand, and water features. Which one would you choose, and why?

Dilemma 5:

You've been asked to join a school project that involves creating a new product using cheap materials that could harm the environment. On the other hand, you could choose more sustainable materials, but the product would be more expensive and harder to sell. What should you prioritize: profit or the planet?

Dilemma 6:

You notice that your friends often talk about controlling nature and dominating the environment for human benefit. However, you feel that respecting and working with nature is important. Do you challenge your friends' views, even if it might make you unpopular, or do you stay quiet to fit in?

Dilemma 7:

Your school is organizing a project where students are encouraged to create something innovative using the latest technology. However, you believe that focusing on sustainability and eco-friendly designs is more important. Should you follow the trend of using high-tech solutions or promote a simpler, more sustainable approach?

Dilemma 8:

You've started to realize that the fast food you enjoy is not only unhealthy for you but also harmful to the environment due to its packaging and production methods. Should you continue eating fast food for convenience, or make the effort to choose healthier and more eco-friendly options, even if they're less convenient?

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- How did you find the process of reflecting on these dilemmas? Was it challenging or enlightening for you?
- Which questions did you find most difficult to answer and why?
- How do the dilemmas relate to your core values about nature and sustainability? Did any of the scenarios prompt you to rethink your values or priorities?
- What aspects of the reflection process did you find most useful or effective?

Material Needed

Workbook for each learner, pens.

Timing

60-65 min

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Individual work: 25-30 min. Reflection and discussion: 15-20 min.

3.3 Climate change and climate anxiety, building resilience.

Climate change affects people in different ways and at different scales. Sadly, climate change is also becoming one of the top threats to global health in the 21st century, and psychology has begun to respond. The American Psychological Association's 2010 report on climate change identified six key areas for psychology, including risk perception, psychological and behavioral causes of climate change, psychosocial impacts of climate change, adaptation and coping strategies, psychosocial barriers to action, and the role of psychologists. Here, we will focus mainly on climate anxiety.

The Handbook of Climate Psychology defines climate anxiety as a "heightened emotional, mental, or somatic distress in response to dangerous changes in the climate system," but suggests that "paying heed to what is happening...is a healthier response than turning away in denial or disavowal."[1] Climate anxiety can lead to symptoms such as panic attacks, loss of appetite, irritability, weakness, and sleeplessness. It can elicit emotions like grief, anger, shame, loss, guilt, hopelessness, and fatigue, among others. These feelings can stem from many factors, including direct impacts (e.g., loss of housing or livelihood), vicarious experiences around the globe, or distress related to future or existential threats.

Climate change impacts are common globally and are not limited to those who have direct experience of extreme weather-related events.

Mental health and wellbeing influence individuals' capacity for coping with everyday life stresses, including relationships with others and the broader community Cultivating resilience to the mental health and wellbeing impacts of climate change will therefore be critical to sustaining

Building resilience towards climate anxiety can be considered in main 2 levels

- Individual

Oriented towards personal experiences and histories, individual coping

- Collective community

It is often described as a set of networked adaptive collective capacities or community 'resources' such as social capital, equity, information and communication

1. Clayton, S., & Manning, C. (Eds.). (2018). Handbook of Climate Change and Society. Wiley-Blackwell.

Here are some tactics that can help you develop healthy coping skills around climate change.

1. Focus on what you can control

Climate change is a complex issue. While this may feel disheartening, it's also a good reminder to focus on what is within your control rather than what isn't.

Some examples of things that are within your control:

Participating in climate change initiatives

- Writing or calling legislators to encourage them to act
- Building more sustainable habits around personal energy use, composting, recycling, consumerism, etc.
- Selecting food options that have less environmental impact (e.g., reducing the amount of meat you consume each week, growing your own vegetables, etc.)
- Engaging family and friends in meaningful conversations about climate change

Think of more

2. Avoid overload

Working on too many climate projects or advocating for too many causes can lead to burn out. Instead, try to narrow your focus, energy and efforts toward projects and issues that mean the most to you. For instance, you may choose to rally around greenhouse gasses, sustainable agricultural or water conservation. Focusing on a select number of issues can help you reduce your overall stress, find balance and maintain gusto.

3. Practice compassion

Whenever we approach painful situations or emotions, it's important to do so with kindness and compassion for ourselves and others. For instance, it may not always be feasible to recycle every item that you can. Beating yourself up about it or worrying that you could be doing more can fuel emotional turmoil, which can make it difficult to move forward.

Instead, remember to take care of your own mental health and give yourself space to sit with painful emotions in a non-judgmental way. Acknowledging and naming the specific emotions you're currently experiencing can help.

It can also be helpful to practice validating your feelings with affirmations like:

- It's okay to feel stressed about climate change.
- I can make a difference, and big changes are going to take time.
- I can take a break. This issue is important to me, and so is my mental well-being.

4. Take a break from climate news

Following climate-driven accounts or scrolling through social and news posts about climate change all the time can exacerbate feelings of distress. If you start to feel overwhelmed by news updates or events happening around the world, it may be a good time to take a break. If you feel pressured to stay informed, remind yourself that all those news stories, updates and information will be there when you're ready to re-engage. It's also important to keep in mind that even if you step away for a few hours, days or weeks, it won't change what happens, and you don't need to be plugged in 24/7.

5. Remember that you're not alone

It's easy to get caught up in all the 'bad' news surrounding climate change, but it's also important to remember that there are a lot of people working to solve this issue and positive change can and will happen. Finding a community of people who understand how you feel and what you're passionate about can help you feel more supported, connected and encouraged to continue to act. Connecting with others can also help you cultivate a sense of hope for the future. Having hope and seeing that others believe change can happen is necessary to carry on the work that needs to be done.

6. Talk to someone about how you're feeling

Climate anxiety is a very real experience, and it's not something you have to go through alone. If your feelings start to affect your life or ability to cope day-to-day, it can be helpful to talk to someone about it. Reaching out to a friend, family member or mental health provider can help you work through your feelings and practice coping skills.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of the tool is to develop learners' skills of building resilience and coping strategies for climate anxiety.

Type of activity

It can be both in individual and in group settings.

Instructions

Start with a discussion about climate change and its impact on people. Provide a brief introduction to the concept of climate anxiety using the information from the module. Next, invite learners to engage in individual self-reflection to think about tactics that can help them develop healthy coping skills around climate change. They will write down their thoughts in their workbooks. Once learners have completed their individual work, organize a discussion. This can be a plenary discussion or conducted in pairs or small groups. Afterwards, ask participants to think about their own climate superheroes. These superheroes should have special powers and qualities that help protect our planet and keep nature healthy.

While drawing learners should think about

- What superpower does your hero have?
- Do they have any tools, costume?
- What's the name of the hero?

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What did you enjoy most about this activity?
- What do you have in common with the hero?
- How can we use the ideas from our superheroes to help the environment in real life?
- How does the hero inspire others to take action for the environment?

Material Needed

Workbook for each learner, colored pens and pencils, whiteboard and markers.

Timing

80-85 min

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10 min. Individual work: 15-20 min. Discussion: 10-15 min. Drawing the superhero 20 min. Reflection and discussion: 15-20 min.

3.4 Spirituality and Nature connection.

Nature as a Manifestation of the Divine

On a global level, nature is often viewed as a manifestation of the divine, with natural elements like mountains, rivers, and forests considered sacred. These features are seen as reflections of spiritual truths and are frequently incorporated into rituals, prayers, and meditation practices. For example, in many cultures, mountains are seen as powerful beings, while rivers are considered the lifeblood of the Earth.

Healing Power of Nature

No one can doubt the fact that it has a calming and restorative effect on the human mind and body, often described as "nature therapy" or "ecotherapy." This healing power is not only physical but also spiritual, helping individuals find peace, clarity, and a sense of purpose. Walking in the woods, listening to the sound of the ocean, or simply sitting under a tree can be deeply spiritual experiences, offering moments of reflection and connection with the Earth.

Spiritual Practices and Nature

Many spiritual practices are directly connected to nature. For instance, meditation and yoga often incorporate natural elements, encouraging practitioners to align their breath and movements with the rhythms of nature. The changing seasons, the cycles of the moon, and the rising and setting of the sun are used as symbols in spiritual teachings, reminding individuals of the natural cycles of life, death, and rebirth.

Personal Connection

On a personal level, the connection to nature can lead to a deep sense of spiritual fulfillment. Whether through gardening, hiking, or simply spending time outdoors, individuals often report feeling more grounded, connected, and at peace when they engage with the natural world. This connection can foster a greater appreciation for life, a sense of gratitude, and a deeper understanding of one's place in the Universe.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to foster a deeper connection with nature, understanding how alike we can be to natural phenomena and also to learn to express gratitude to Nature.

Type of activity

Individual work to be followed by discussion in pairs.

Instructions

Take participants for a short walk in a natural setting or encourage them to find a comfortable spot outdoors. Ask them to observe their surroundings and take in the sights, sounds, and sensations of nature. Once everyone has found a comfortable spot to relax, have them open their workbooks and reflect upon the questions indicated there.

When everyone has finished writing down their thoughts, invite them to discuss their reflections in pairs. As a conclusion to the activity, form a circle with all participants and encourage them to share their experiences and thoughts regarding the activity. Facilitate a group discussion on the shared insights and commitments to nature.

Reflection questions presented in the workbooks are as follows:

Connection

- Think about a time when you felt deeply connected to nature. What were you doing? How did it make you feel, both physically and emotionally?
- Are there any natural elements (like mountains, rivers, or trees) that you find especially meaningful or sacred? Why do you think these elements are special to you?

Gratitude

- What are you most grateful for in nature right now? It could be a specific element (like a tree, river, or flower) or the overall experience of being outside. Describe or draw what makes you feel thankful.
- Has nature ever inspired you or helped you solve a problem? Reflect on a time when nature sparked creativity or provided clarity.

Similarity

- If you were an animal, which one would you be and why? Consider the animal's characteristics and how they relate to your own traits or qualities.
- If you were a flower, which one would you be and why? Think about the flower's colors, shape, and symbolism, and how these aspects reflect your personality or values.
- If you were a tree, which type would you be and why? Reflect on the tree's size, type of leaves, or habitat, and how these features might represent your own qualities or experiences.
- If you were a fruit, which one would you be and why? Reflect on the fruit's flavor, color, and characteristics, and how these might represent your own attributes or preferences.
- If you were a natural phenomenon, what would you be and why? Think about different types of natural phenomena such as wind, storms, volcanoes, thunder, lightning, rainbows, earthquakes, or waterfalls. Reflect on the characteristics of these phenomena and how they might symbolize different aspects of your personality, behaviors, or life experiences
- If you were a bird, what type of bird would you be and why?Reflect on the characteristics of the bird you choose and how they symbolize different aspects of who you are.
- If You Were a Natural Sound, which sound you would be and why.
- If you were _____(add your ideas here).

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What did you learn about yourself through this activity? Did any particular prompt or reflection stand out to you?
- How did thinking about yourself as a natural element or phenomenon help you understand your own traits or experiences better?
- How was your experience sharing your reflections with others?
- Did hearing others' reflections help you gain new perspectives or insights?
- How did this activity make you feel? Did it evoke any specific emotions or thoughts?

Material Needed

Workbook for each learner, colored pens and pencils.

Timing

85-90 min

Introduction to the topic and discussion 10min, Individual work 30 min. Discussion in pairs 30 min. Reflection and discussion 15-20 min.

Funded by the European Union

Global Perspectives on Enivironmental Issues

Section 4

4.1 International cooperation for environmental protection.

The European Green Deal's ambitious goals, including achieving climate neutrality by 2050, cannot be realized by Europe acting alone. Global environmental issues require coordinated international efforts, involving both developed and developing countries. The EU must engage in global governance, collaborate with other nations, and promote environmental standards and practices that extend beyond its borders. This could involve international agreements, partnerships, and initiatives aimed at reducing global environmental degradation and encouraging sustainable resource use.

The European Union plays a crucial role in addressing the interconnected crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. These three crises, often referred to as a "triple crisis," are deeply interrelated, with each one exacerbating the others, leading to a compounding effect on the environment and human health. Tackling them requires not just national or regional efforts, but a strong commitment to international cooperation.

Here are some key points that further explore this topic:

- Climate Change: Rising global temperatures and changing weather patterns intensify biodiversity loss by altering habitats and ecosystems. This also exacerbates pollution issues, as changing climates can increase the spread of pollutants through air and water.
- Biodiversity Loss: The decline in species and ecosystems weakens the natural resilience to climate impacts and reduces the capacity of the environment to filter pollutants, further worsening pollution and climate change effects.
- Pollution: Whether it be air, water, or soil, contributes to both climate change (e.g., through greenhouse gas emissions) and biodiversity loss (e.g., through habitat destruction and chemical contamination of the environment).

Given these interconnections, addressing one crisis in isolation is insufficient, all three must be tackled simultaneously to achieve a sustainable and healthy future.

In conclusion, the EU's active role in international environmental agreements, its leadership in multilateral negotiations, and its contributions to the SDGs are vital in addressing the intertwined crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. For a viable and sustainable future, these efforts must continue to be strengthened and supported by effective international cooperation.
The EU is actively promoting sustainable development both within Europe and globally by shifting towards low-carbon, resource-efficient economies. Transforming social and economic systems involves enhancing our relationship with nature, recognizing its intrinsic value, and ensuring that this value is central to decision-making processes. To achieve common environmental goals, the EU collaborates closely with candidate and potential candidate countries, neighboring nations, and strategic global partners.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to educate participants about the European Green Deal's goals and foster understanding of how international cooperation can effectively address climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

Type of activity

Group work.

Instructions

Start with a brief presentation outlining the European Green Deal and its goals, emphasizing the importance of international cooperation.
Explain the interconnectedness of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.
Divide participants into small groups of 4-5 people.
Assign each group a specific country or region to focus on (e.g., EU member states, EECA region or any other countries).

Distribute scenario cards to each group, detailing specific environmental challenges their assigned country faces.

Each group discusses the scenario, considering:

- The impact of the issue on the local environment and community.
- How international cooperation could help address this challenge.
- Possible solutions and best practices from other countries or regions.

Here are few scenarios you can use, but feel free to come up with your own examples

Card 1.

Country: Poland

Environmental Challenge: Air Pollution from Coal-Fired Power Plants

- Impact on Local Environment: Poor air quality leading to health issues (e.g., respiratory problems) and decreased biodiversity in urban areas.
- Impact on Community: Increased healthcare costs, reduced quality of life, and community displacement due to industrial activities.

Discussion topics for the team:

How can Poland collaborate with other EU countries to transition to renewable energy sources?

What international policies could incentivize coal reduction while supporting affected communities?

Are there successful models from other countries (e.g., Germany's energy transition) that Poland could adopt?

Card 2.

Country: Kenya

Environmental Challenge: Deforestation and Habitat Loss

Impact on Local Environment: Loss of biodiversity and increased carbon emissions due to reduced forest cover.

Impact on Community: Disruption of livelihoods for communities that depend on forests for resources, such as food and medicine.

Discussion topics for the team

How can Kenya work with neighboring countries to create cross-border conservation areas?
What role can international NGOs play in supporting reforestation efforts?
Are there community-driven initiatives from other regions that have successfully addressed deforestation?

Card 3.

Country: India

Environmental Challenge: Water Pollution in Rivers

- Impact on Local Environment: Degradation of water quality affects aquatic ecosystems and reduces biodiversity.
- Impact on Community: Communities relying on river water for drinking and agriculture face health risks and reduced food security.

Discussion topics for the team:

How can India engage with countries facing similar challenges to share effective water management practices?

What international funding opportunities exist for pollution reduction initiatives?

Are there technological solutions from other regions that could help monitor and clean polluted water?

Card 4.

Country: Brazil

Environmental Challenge: Amazon Rainforest Destruction

- Impact on Local Environment: Loss of biodiversity, disruption of global carbon cycles, and increased climate change impacts.
- Impact on Community: Indigenous communities face threats to their land and culture, while local farmers struggle with changing weather patterns.

Discussion topics for the team:

How can Brazil collaborate with other countries to strengthen international agreements against deforestation?

What best practices from countries like Costa Rica (which has successful reforestation programs) can Brazil implement?

How can partnerships with the private sector lead to sustainable agriculture practices?

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- How was the process for you?
- How do you feel when you spend time in nature?
- Can you think of ways that nature helps us stay healthy and happy?
- How much time do you spend in nature per day, week, month?
- What would you change in your relations with nature?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens, flipchart papers, markers.

Timing

70-80 min.

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Group work: 30-35 min. Presentations: 15 min. Reflection and plenary discussion: 15 min.

4.2 Cross-cultural understanding of environmental challenges.

Cultural awareness and effective translation services are key to advancing the SDGs, particularly those related to the environment. By ensuring that environmental messages are effectively communicated across different cultures and languages, these efforts can mobilize global support and local action, driving progress toward sustainable development.

In summary, environmental protection requires not just global cooperation but also culturally sensitive communication strategies that consider linguistic diversity. This approach ensures that environmental messages are understood, accepted, and acted upon by people from all cultural backgrounds, thereby contributing to the successful implementation of the SDGs.

Cultural diversity significantly impacts how people perceive and interact with the environment. What may be an effective communication strategy in one culture could be completely ineffective or even counterproductive in another. This is due to varying attitudes, beliefs, norms, and practices related to nature and environmental stewardship.

For example, in some cultures, the environment might be seen as something to be revered and protected as a sacred duty, while in others, the emphasis might be on its utility and economic value. Understanding these cultural perspectives is key to crafting messages that resonate with the target audience, fostering engagement, and encouraging positive environmental behavior.

By valuing cultural diversity and employing effective translation services, environmental communication can be more inclusive and impactful. This approach supports the global push towards environmental conservation and the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). When environmental messages are communicated effectively across cultures, they can inspire action at both the local and global levels, contributing to the overall goal of a more sustainable and resilient world.

The United Nations SDGs encompass sustainability goals related to environmental conservation, urbanization, poverty alleviation, and more. Cultural awareness and translation play a crucial role in achieving these goals by:

- Overcoming communication barriers: Culturally sensitive environmental communication fosters mutual understanding, bridges language gaps, and supports the attainment of sustainability objectives.
- Fostering collaboration: Recognizing cultural differences lays the groundwork for cooperative environmental initiatives, enabling diverse communities to work together effectively.
- Promoting environmental goals: Precise and culturally adapted communication enhances the promotion of environmental initiatives, such as the adoption of renewable energy, addressing environmental issues, and reducing carbon footprints.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to enhance learners' understanding of how cultural perspectives influence environmental communication and to develop strategies that are culturally sensitive for promoting environmental initiatives.

Type of activity

Individual work followed by a group discussion.

Instructions

Briefly introduce the topic of cross-cultural understanding and its importance in environmental communication. Explain how cultural perspectives shape attitudes and actions toward environmental challenges and the significance of cultural awareness in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ask learners to reflect upon the questions presented in their workbooks.

Encourage them to take their time and think deeply about their responses. Here are the questions included in the workbook:

1. Describe an environmental challenge that your culture faces (e.g., waste management, water scarcity, deforestation).
2. How does your culture view the relationship between people and the environment? What beliefs or values influence this perspective?
3. What communication methods or messages resonate most with your community when discussing environmental issues?
4. Can you identify any successful local initiatives that have effectively addressed environmental challenges? What made them successful?
5. Reflect on any cultural practices or traditions in your community that promote environmental stewardship.
6. How do sustainable practices reflect cultural identity and values?

Organize participants into small groups (4-6 people) where they can share their reflections based on the workbook questions.

After small group discussions, facilitate a reflection session with the entire group.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What was the most surprising insight you gained about cultural perspectives on environmental issues?
- What was the most surprising insight you gained from your peers?
- In what ways can we ensure that environmental initiatives are culturally sensitive and effective?
- Reflecting on today's discussion, what do you think are the long-term benefits of integrating cultural understanding into environmental policies and practices?

Material Needed

Workbooks, pens.

Timing

60-75 min.

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Individual work: 20-25 min. Group discussions: 15 -20 min . Reflection and plenary discussion: 15 min.

4.3 Technology and Innovation: AI's Role in Tackling Environmental Issues.

In the face of growing environmental challenges such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion, technology and innovation are crucial tools for creating sustainable solutions. One of the most promising technologies making a significant impact is Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI's ability to process vast amounts of data, identify patterns, and predict outcomes allows for smarter, more efficient ways to address environmental issues. However, responsible deployment of AI, with considerations for ethical data use and accessibility, is essential to ensure these innovations benefit the environment and humanity at large. As AI continues to evolve, its role in shaping a greener future will only become more critical.

Let's see in which areas it can be

AI for Climate Change Mitigation

AI contributes significantly to mitigating climate change by enabling more precise climate models. By analyzing massive datasets, AI can identify trends in global temperatures, carbon emissions, and weather patterns. For example, AI-driven climate models help scientists make more accurate predictions about extreme weather events, giving communities time to prepare.

AI for Biodiversity and Conservation

Preserving biodiversity is critical for maintaining ecosystems. AI tools like image recognition and drone monitoring are being used to track endangered species, analyze habitats, and combat illegal poaching. For instance, AI-powered satellite imagery can identify deforestation patterns, while machine learning algorithms monitor wildlife populations, ensuring conservation efforts are well-targeted.

AI in Waste Management and Pollution Control

AI is revolutionizing waste management and pollution control. Machine learning models are used to optimize recycling processes by sorting materials more efficiently. AI can also predict waste generation, helping municipalities design better collection systems and reduce landfill overflow. In terms of pollution, AI-powered sensors monitor air and water quality in real time, identifying sources of contamination and enabling swift intervention.

AI for Sustainable Agriculture

Agriculture is another area where AI is playing a transformative role. By analyzing data on soil conditions, weather forecasts, and crop health, AI systems help farmers make better decisions about planting, irrigation, and pest control. This leads to more sustainable farming practices that conserve water, reduce pesticide use, and increase crop yields. AI-driven precision agriculture also reduces food waste by predicting harvest times and improving supply chain efficiency.

AI in Renewable Energy

AI enhances the efficiency and reliability of renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. Machine learning algorithms can predict energy demand and optimize the performance of wind turbines and solar panels by adjusting to changing environmental conditions. This maximizes energy production while minimizing operational costs.

How to deliver this topic

Objective

The objective of this tool is to enable participants to explore how AI contributes to solving environmental problems and reflect on real-world examples of its applications.

Type of activity

Group work.

Instructions

Start with a brief overview of how AI is increasingly being used to address environmental challenges, such as predicting climate changes, monitoring endangered species, and optimizing resource use in agriculture. Highlight AI's dual role as a powerful tool with both benefits and ethical concerns, such as sustainability and privacy. Invite participants to share their current understanding or examples of AI in environmental contexts by asking questions like, "Can anyone think of an example of AI being used to solve an environmental problem?" or "Which environmental issues do you think AI could help address?" Encourage a few volunteers to share their thoughts.

Next, divide participants into 5 small groups (3-5 people each) and assign each group one of the following environmental focus areas related to AI applications:

1. Climate Change Mitigation (e.g., AI to model climate patterns, reduce emissions)
2. Biodiversity and Conservation (e.g., AI for wildlife monitoring, habitat restoration)
3. Waste Management and Pollution Control (e.g., AI in recycling optimization, pollution detection)
4. Sustainable Agriculture (e.g., AI for precision farming, reducing water/chemical use)
5. Renewable Energy (e.g., AI for energy grid management, optimizing solar/wind energy use)

Each group should:

- **Research** how AI is currently being used in their specific area to address environmental challenges.
- **Explore innovative ideas** and suggest how AI could be used differently or more effectively to tackle these issues.
- **Discuss the possible challenges and ethical concerns** associated with using AI in their assigned area, such as privacy, accessibility, and environmental costs.

To make group work more engaging, learners can find crosswords related to the topic in their workbooks. They can solve it as a group while also gathering ideas for innovative solutions.

After group work, provide time for each group to present their findings to the entire group in any format they prefer.

Reflection and discussion questions could be

- What surprised you the most about AI's current role in tackling environmental issues?
- What are some potential challenges or drawbacks of using AI in environmental conservation?
- What ethical considerations should we keep in mind when deploying AI for environmental solutions?
- How do you envision AI evolving in the future to further support environmental sustainability?
- What role can individuals, governments, or communities play in ensuring AI is used responsibly for environmental good?

Material Needed

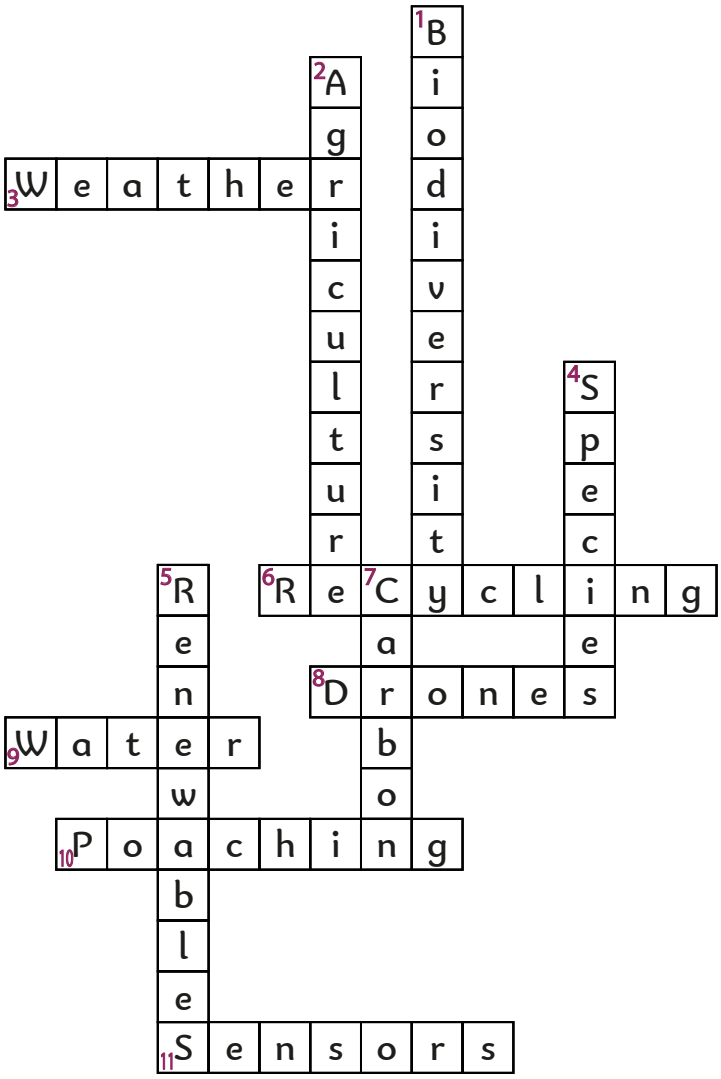
Workbooks, pens, flipchart papers, markers.

Timing

70-80 min.

Introduction to the topic and discussion: 10-15 min. Group work: 30-35 min. Presentations: 15 min. Reflection and plenary discussion: 15 min.

The crossword with answers



Across

3. AI can predict this to help prepare for natural disasters
6. The process AI improves to reduce landfill overflow
8. AI-powered tools that help monitor endangered species
9. AI can optimize the use of this resource in sustainable farming
10. AI helps prevent illegal _(Write the missing word in the crossword)_ of animals
11. AI technology used to monitor air and water quality

Down

1. AI tools help preserve this by monitoring species and habitats.
2. The field AI assists by analyzing soil and weather data
4. AI technology helps track and protect endangered _(Write the missing word in the crossword)_ in wildlife conservation.
5. A key sector where AI helps optimize energy production
7. AI-driven climate models monitor this harmful element in the atmosphere.