

Career Gardeners Toolkit Guide

“Growing sustainable careers in times of crisis”

About the Career Gardeners project

Career Gardeners is an Erasmus+ youth project that helps young people explore how career choices can be aligned with personal values and environmental sustainability. Through an interactive eLearning course, a comprehensive web toolkit and participatory workshops, the project provides practical resources for youth workers and educators who support young people in thinking about their futures in a changing world.

Developed through cooperation between partners in Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, Spain and Ireland, Career Gardeners combines international experience with input from young people themselves. This helps ensure that the project resources are practical, relevant and adaptable across different European contexts, while encouraging reflection on inclusion, sustainability, active citizenship and meaningful career pathways.

About the toolkits

The Career Gardeners toolkit collection is a practical set of six themed toolkits for youth workers, facilitators, trainers and educators. Each toolkit offers participatory activities that can be used in workshops, group sessions and other non-formal learning settings to help young people reflect on belonging, climate justice, values, conflict, activism and sustainable opportunities in work and life. The full toolkit collection is available online in English, German, Italian, Spanish, Bulgarian and Polish.

1. There's a place here for everyone

This toolkit focuses on inclusion, belonging and the creation of safe spaces. It supports youth workers in building trust within groups and in helping participants recognise the value of diversity, mutual respect and shared responsibility. It is especially useful at the start of a group process, where creating the right atmosphere is essential for deeper learning and participation.

Activities

- Concentric Circles
- Building Up Our Building
- Group Ground Rules

Direct link

<https://careergardeners.eu/en/toolkits/toolkit-1-en>

2. Know your crisis

This toolkit helps young people engage critically with the climate crisis by connecting facts, global inequalities, justice and future thinking. It encourages participants to move beyond abstract awareness and to reflect on how environmental challenges are linked to social realities, responsibility and change. The activities are well suited to groups who need both a stronger knowledge base and space for discussion, imagination and personal positioning.

Activities

- Global Climate 'Pub-Quiz'
- World Distribution Game
- A Different Perspective on the Climate Crisis
- Climate Activists: Working for Climate Justice All Over the World
- Ecological Handprint-Memory
- Dialogue Between Future and Present

Direct link

<https://careergardeners.eu/en/toolkits/toolkit-2-en>

3. Values in action!

This toolkit invites young people to reflect on their own values and to consider how those values shape everyday choices, relationships and future careers. It creates space for discussion about what really matters, how values influence work and life, and how sustainability can become a lived principle rather than only an abstract idea. It is particularly relevant for groups exploring purpose, direction and meaningful work.

Activities

- What is a Value?
- Do I Know My Values?
- The Value of Sustainability

Direct link

<https://careergardeners.eu/en/toolkits/toolkit-3-en>

4. How to make change happen and to solve conflicts?

This toolkit explores how change happens and how conflict can be understood and managed constructively. It supports young people in recognising that change often brings discomfort, resistance and tension, but also opportunities for learning and growth. Through practical exercises and case-based

reflection, the toolkit helps participants strengthen their confidence in dealing with difficult situations, especially where values, fairness and relationships are involved.

Activities

- Getting Acquainted Again!
- Annie Plans the Change
- What the Conflict is for Us - Disaster, or an Opportunity for Personal Growth?
- The Orange
- It's So Simple - You Want to Make Change but Conflict Arises!

Direct link

<https://careergardeners.eu/en/toolkits/toolkit-4-en>

5. Strengthening young people's competences through activism

This toolkit presents activism as a space for learning, self-development and competence-building. It encourages young people to see that participation in social and environmental action can strengthen communication, resilience, initiative, collaboration and entrepreneurial thinking. At the same time, it recognises that activism also requires reflection, balance and self-care. The toolkit is especially useful for groups interested in turning values into action and linking engagement with future pathways.

Activities

- Activism as a Method of Self-Development
- Communication Skills
- Self-Employment Competences. How Can a Young Person Create a Sustainable Job or a Sustainable Side-Hustle?
- Cooperation and Entrepreneurship
- Self-Care in Activism
- Evaluation

Direct link

<https://careergardeners.eu/en/toolkits/toolkit-5-en>

6. Mapping the opportunities

This toolkit helps young people identify sustainable job and training opportunities within their own communities. It combines reflection on green jobs with practical mapping activities that encourage participants to look at local realities, existing resources and possible future pathways. It is a strong bridge between values-based learning and concrete career exploration, helping young people connect sustainability with real options in everyday life.

Activities

- All of You, Who...
- What is a Green Job?
- Mapping the Opportunities

Direct link

<https://careergardeners.eu/en/toolkits/toolkit-6-en>

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