BRISA INTERCULTURAL ITALIA A.P.S.

GREEN CITY BUILDERS

Empowering Youth to Design the Sustainable Cities of Tomorrow

Agenzia Italiana per la Gioventù

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Youth as Urban Change Agents

From the team:

In recent years, overpopulation and the centralization of life around large cities are leading to problems that threaten people's well-being, such as pollution, dependence on polluting means of transportation, scarcity of resources or the destruction of green spaces.

The lack of time and the economic crisis that has recently devastated our society have led many people not to prioritize issues related to their well-being, forgetting key aspects of their mental health. Life in big cities can be totally counterproductive in terms of protecting the environment and people's physical and mental health.

Green City Builders comes up as an initiative to raise awareness among young people about challenges related to sustainability in their local communities, as well as in national and international settings.

Youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow; they are active change-makers shaping the urban environment today. With their innate creativity, energy, and digital fluency, young people are uniquely positioned to challenge the status quo and drive the necessary shift toward sustainability. By engaging with complex urban issues—from social equity and economic innovation to waste management and green infrastructure—youth can transform their cities into thriving, resilient, and more equitable spaces.

Project Foundations and Philosophy

The GREEN CITY BUILDERS project is fundamentally built upon the methodologies of Non-Formal Education (NFE), a learning approach that takes place outside the formal educational and training systems (like schools or universities).

Non-Formal Education is characterized by being voluntary, flexible, accessible, and participant-centered. It is based on:

Active and Experiential Learning: Learning happens through "doing," involving direct experience, reflection, and practice, rather than passive memorization.

Holistic Approach: It develops not only knowledge (know-how) but also essential skills and attitudes (attitudes) crucial for personal development and active citizenship.

Participatory Environment: The learning process is guided by the participants and facilitated by trainers, promoting shared ownership and responsibility for the process.

Youthled Workshops

A key pillar of NFE within GREEN CITY BUILDERS was the incorporation of Youth-Led Workshops. This method fosters experiential learning by placing participants in the role of designers and facilitators of their own learning and that of their peers.

By taking responsibility for planning and delivering an activity on urban sustainability, the youth:

- Fostered Shared Ownership (Corresponsabilidad): They took ownership of the content and the process, transforming from passive recipients into active agents within the exchange.
- Driven Active Learning: They were compelled to master the subject matter, practice their leadership and communication skills, and adapt their methods to the group and intercultural dynamics, demonstrating that the best way to learn is to teach.

This approach not only reinforced sustainability competencies but also significantly boosted the development of youth leadership, critical thinking, and intercultural cooperation.

Concepts through games

This workshop, serves as an engaging and accessible introduction to complex sustainability themes that will be explored in greater depth during the project.

Objective

To introduce and demystify key urban sustainability concepts in a fun, fast-paced environment, fostering communication skills, teamwork, and active learning before participants delve into complex topics.

Methodology

Participants are divided into multicultural teams, and one representative from the team draws a card with a sustainability term. The team must guess the word through three progressive rounds:

ROUND	METHOD	RULES	LEARNING FOCUS
Round 1: Description (Taboo)	**Verbal Fluency**	The participant must describe the concept without using the word itself or any clearly forbidden related terms.	Conceptual Understanding: Tests the ability to explain a concept's function and value (the "what and why").
Round 2: One Word at a Time	**Precision & Focus**	The participant can only say one word, wait for the team to guess, and then offer another single word.	Critical Vocabulary: Teaches participants to distill a concept down to its most defining characteristics.
Round 3: Mimics (Charades)	**Physical Expression**	The participant must act out the concept using only gestures, without making any sounds.	Creative Communication: Requires visual representation, ensuring memorable and holistic learning.

Every day reality

A high-impact, experiential role-playing session designed to bridge the gap between abstract sustainability theory and concrete daily actions, with the aim of using digital tools and creating videos. The workshop adopted an experiential and participatory learning approach, combining role-play, digital creativity, and critical reflection to explore sustainability in everyday urban life.

Objective

To develop participants' critical awareness of their own and their community's daily choices, practice creative problem-solving, and clearly visualize the positive impact of adopting sustainable alternatives. To develop digital skills.

Methodology

Participants divided into small groups and guided through a process designed to identify, analyze, and transform unsustainable habits into practical, sustainable actions.

1. Identifying the 'Unseen' Problem: each group begin by selecting a common unsustainable daily habit that often goes unnoticed in urban contexts — actions that individuals rarely question but that collectively have significant environmental or social impacts. This stage needs to encourage participants to critically observe their surroundings and reflect on behaviors embedded in daily life.

2. Act I – The Unsustainable Scene: groups develop a short sketch to illustrate the chosen problem in action. The performance might aim to make visible the negative consequences of the behavior — whether social, economic, or environmental. One participant in each group film the scene using a smartphone, transforming the exercise into a digital storytelling process. This not only engaged participants creatively but also encouraged them to use digital tools for social awareness and education.

3. Act II – The Sustainable Solution: after presenting the unsustainable scenario, each group reimagine the same situation through a sustainable lens. They might script and perform a second, parallel scene showing a practical and realistic solution (one that could easily be implemented in real life). The sustainable scene will also be recorded, creating paired video clips that contrasts "before" and "after" perspectives.

4. Reflection and Digital Presentation
Upon completing both acts, groups edit their footage into short videos representing their learning journey. A collective screening and reflection session follows, allowing participants to discuss insights, share experiences, and evaluate the impact of their creative process. This final step reinforces key competencies promoted by Erasmus+ KA152, such as digital literacy, teamwork, active citizenship, and sustainability awareness.

How do we recycle?

Highly engaging activity that leverages digital storytelling and intercultural exchange to explore a fundamental aspect of environmental sustainability: waste management and recycling systems.

Objective

To facilitate the sharing and comparison of diverse recycling practices across different European countries, fostering a deeper understanding of varying approaches, challenges, and successful strategies in urban waste management.

Methodology

Participants are organized into their national teams (or city/regional groups, if applicable) and tasked with a three-part process:

- **Research and Production:** Each team researches the specifics of the recycling system in their home country or city. They then plan, film, and edit a short, informative video explaining:
  - The different waste streams and corresponding bins (e.g., plastic, paper, organic).
  - The rules and common challenges of the local system.
  - Any unique local initiatives or success stories.

- **Movie Theater Showcase:** All teams gather for a screening session where each group presents their video. This "movie theater" format elevates the activity and ensures focused attention.

- **Cross-Cultural Q&A:** Following the showcases, a facilitated discussion is held, allowing participants to compare differences, debate the efficiency of various systems, and identify best practices that could be adopted across borders.

The future of energy

Session that uses a "Living Museum" format to facilitate deep research and peer-to-peer knowledge transfer on renewable energy sources. This approach moves beyond simple presentations to create an immersive, active learning environment.

Objective

The main goals are to foster in-depth research into diverse renewable energy sources (e.g., solar, wind, geothermal, hydro) and to develop participants' communication and presentation skills by having them explain complex technical concepts to their peers.

Methodology

Participants work in intercultural groups, ensuring diverse perspectives influence the research. The activity has three main phases:

- **Collaborative Research:** Each intercultural group selects or is assigned a specific renewable energy source. They research its technical function, urban application potential, economic viability, and environmental benefits/challenges. They then prepare a visual "exhibit" (posters, models, infographics) to clearly explain their findings.

- **The Museum Tour:** The groups transform their research stations into museum exhibits. The core of this method is the rotating roles:
  - The Presenter (The Curator): One participant stays at their group's station to act as the "curator" or expert, explaining the research to the "visitors."
  - The Visitors: The remaining group members circulate around the room, visiting all other exhibits and engaging with the other curators.

- **Role Rotation:** After a set time (e.g., 10-15 minutes), the roles rotate. This ensures every participant has the chance to both present their topic (reinforcing their mastery) and learn firsthand from their peers' research (gaining a broad overview).

Ethnic enclave

A powerful simulation activity designed to foster empathy and critical awareness regarding social sustainability, economic inequality, and housing discrimination within urban settings. This activity directly explores how socio-economic factors lead to the formation of segregated residential areas, or "enclaves."

Objective

To enable participants to experientially understand the systemic barriers, economic limitations, and social pressures faced by diverse families (particularly those with lower incomes or migrant backgrounds) when securing housing, and to provoke reflection on how urban planning can create a more socially sustainable and equitable city.

Methodology

Participants are paired into "families" and assigned a Family Card, which dictates their specific constraints and backgrounds:

- **Assigned Identity:** The Family Card defines their unique profile, including:
  - Income Level: High, medium, or low budget.
  - Migrant Background: Whether they are a migrant family or a long-term resident family.

- **The Housing Market:** Families are presented with a simulated list of available houses and apartments, each with detailed information (rent, location, proximity to services, neighborhood demographics, etc.).

- **The Search and Decision:** Using their set budget and family profile, the couples must actively search, analyze, and decide on a home. This forces them to confront the trade-offs between cost, quality, location, and potential social acceptance.

Industrial Symbiosis

Simulation game that serves as an introduction to environmental and economic sustainability through the lens of a circular economy.

Objective

Understand the beneffits of inter-company cooperation, move past the profit logic to a global-brenefit logic (including social and environmental aspects)

Methodology

The ultimate measure of success is the **pursuit of Zero Waste** through collaborative industrial symbiosis. Participants are divided into groups/companies. The simulation proceeds in competitive rounds in which each company must produce and sell their product as well as dispose of the waste/by-products. **The game is won when no waste is produced** (the whole group wins automatically) or after 60min

SETUP AND INITIAL RESOURCES:

1. Company Assignment: each team receives a Company Card detailing their Product, required Materials, generated Waste, and the specific Waste item their process can internally utilize.
2. Initial Funds: Each team receives a designated starting sum of money (e.g., 10 coins).
3. Market Setup: Resource/Waste Cards are placed in the central Market area.
4. Facilitator Role: The Facilitator manages timekeeping, Event Cards, acts as the Trash Company, and serves as the final Consumer Market. We strongly recomend having at least two facilitators to implement this system.

GAME FLOW (PER ROUND)

⚙️ Production Phase:

- Round 1-Timed Grab: A 30-second countdown begins. Teams must quickly grab the necessary Materials from the Market (facilitator 1).
- Subsequent Rounds (R2+): The Phase lasts 3-5 minutes. Teams must buy required Materials from the central Market (or from other companies)

🤝 Selling & Trading Phase: this phase is dedicated to selling final products to the Final Consumer (Facilitator 2). This is the ONLY phase during which company representatives may speak to each other

Industrial Symbiosis

🕸️ Waste Management: companies that require the Facilitator (Trash Company) to dispose of their waste must raise their hand after the Selling Phase ends.

- Disposal Cost: The Trash Company charges a fee for every stop (hand raised) made to collect waste. The cost is applied per team, regardless of the volume of waste collected.

SPECIAL RULES AND EVENTS

1. Waste Inspection Rule (Immediate Penalty): at any time during a round, the Facilitator may call a "Waste Inspection." If a company is found to possess any unit of waste, they must immediately pay a penalty equivalent to half of their current cash reserves. This rule encourages immediate disposal and trade.

2. Free Market Event: in order to add dynamism to the game from time to time the facilitators may call “free market event”

- High Demand: All final products sell for +1 coin more this round.
- Market Saturation: All final products sell for –1 coin less this round.
- Environmental Inspection: The company with the most waste pays 3 coins.
- Energy Crisis: Productions require +1 extra material this round (any of the 3).
- Technological Innovation: You may produce even if you lack 1 material (1 material's cost is waived).
- Labour Strike: You lose your production this round (cannot sell a product).

Industrial Symbiosis

COMPANY CARDS:

Company: Go Bananas Inc.
Product: Packaged Bananas
Materials: Pallets, Raw bananas, Stickers
Waste: Compost
Uses Waste: Pallets

Company: AgroCrop
Product: Crops
Materials: Compost, Water, Seeds
Waste: Straw bales
Uses Waste: Compost

Company: EcoFlock Dairy
Product: Sheep Cheese
Materials: Straw bales, Sheep, Antibiotics
Waste: Wool
Uses Waste: Straw bales

Company: Wooly Wearables
Product: Clothes
Materials: Wool, Dyes, Buttons
Waste: Plastic waste
Uses Waste: Wool

Company: NotIKEA
Product: Furniture
Materials: Plastic waste, Wood, Screws
Waste: Sawdust
Uses Waste: Plastic waste

Company: Chippy Board Inc.
Product: Chipboard
Materials: Sawdust, Glue, Varnish
Waste: Pallets
Uses Waste: Sawdust

Industrial Symbiosis cards

SHEEP CHEESE

CHIPBOARD

WATER

CROPS

FURNITURE

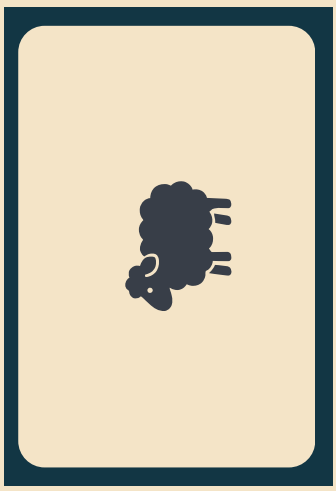
SEEDS

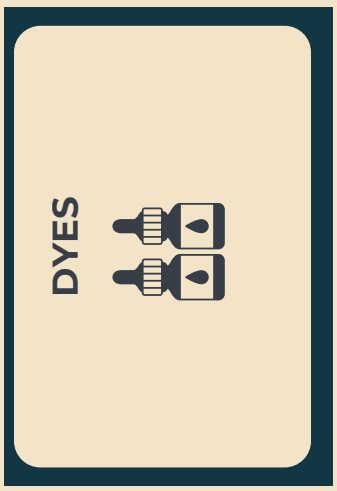
PACKAGED BANANAS

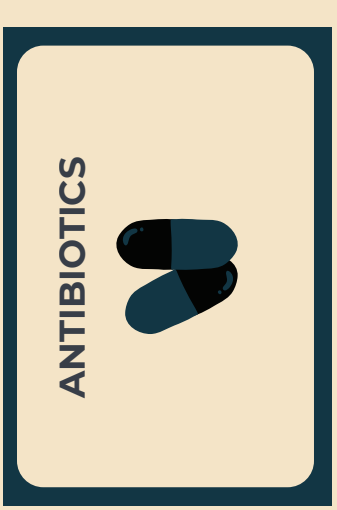
CLOTHES

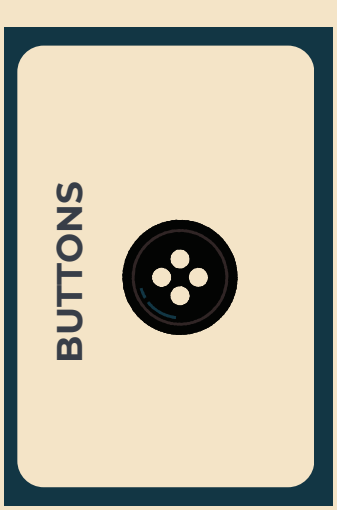
RAW BANANAS

Industrial Symbiosis cards









Industrial Symbiosis cards

GLUE

STICKERS

SAWDUST

PALLETS

SCREWS

VARNISH

Local elections:

Role-playing simulation designed to immerse participants in the dynamics of urban governance, political decision-making, and democratic engagement related to sustainability.

Objective

To enhance participants' understanding of sustainability at the policy level, including how different political ideologies (e.g., liberal vs. green) approach urban development, how citizens express their needs, and the importance of informed participation in local democratic processes.

Methodology

The workshop unfolds in two core phases after participants are assigned their roles:

Phase 1: Preparation (Research & Platform Development)

1. Political Parties: Two groups take on the roles of opposing political entities (e.g., Liberal Party and Green Party). They are tasked with researching and creating a comprehensive political program focused on managing "Green City," ensuring their proposals reflect their assigned ideology regarding economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection.
2. Population Groups: The remaining groups represent various citizen segments (e.g., small business owners, young families, elderly residents, migrant workers). Their task is to analyze their specific urban needs (housing, transport, employment, green space) and formulate pointed questions for the political parties based on these needs.

Phase 2: Election and Decision

1. Program Presentation and Debate: Representatives from each political party formally present their programs to the entire group. Following the presentations, the Population Groups take the floor, posing their prepared questions to the party representatives. The parties must defend their platforms and demonstrate how their policies will effectively address the citizens' needs.
2. The Election: After the debate, all participants (regardless of their assigned role) participate in a secret ballot election. They vote for the party they deem most adequate for managing "Green City" based on the proposed programs and the responses given during the debate.

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