CREATE A SUSTAINABLE ERASMUS+ PROJECT
manual

"What's the use of a fine house if you haven't got
a tolerable planet to put it on?"
Henry David Thoreau in 'Familiar Letters'

Think global, act local

What is the ecological footprint of an exchange? How much resources are we consuming? How can we provide a sustainable project? How can we promote a healthy and active lifestyle?

Health, sustainability and environment, if taken in account in a holistic way, comprise a diversity of areas and concepts that are not clear to a lot of people and that also reflect cultural differences and habits. By creating a space of discussion and sharing we enable people to discover more deeply some of the current issues regarding environment and health that affect their lives and to create solutions that can be implemented in our daily lives and on the projects we are running. We hope that this manual will help you to find the possible answers to the questions written before. We do not pretend to be exhaustive, neither fully complete, but to give useful hints to the ones who approach for the first times to this kind of programme.

CONTENT

sustainability ~ our understanding and definition.

When we started our project, we had to set a common understanding of the word sustainability and its implications. After researches and discussions we came up with the common agreement on "the ability to continue a defined behavior indefinitely, without harming this nor the future generations". We based our work on the three pillars model (http://www.thwink.org/sustain/glossary/ThreePillarsOfSustainability.htm) to which we added two more, in order to have Environment, Economic, Social, Culture and Time.

METHODOLOGIES AND PHILOSOPHY

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

We refer here to the distinction between formal, non-formal and informal, even if we believe there's only one big education.

Highlighting this definition we mean to affirm that the best way of learning is from experience and thus every programme should be designed.

LEARNING INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSABILITY

As a youth exchange is first of all a learning experience, it should be said clearly at the very beginning. Moreover it's not a matter of bringing knowledge to people, but to make youth aware of the opportunity and to set proper space and time for everyone to profit.

ONLINE-DISSEMINATION

Dissemination of information mainly through online means (social media, association, good partnerships) and less through printed materials and sustainable ways ensuring budget reduction (economical) avoiding paper waste (sustainable).

QUALITY > QUANTITY

Emphasis on quality instead of quantity (content-wise) will give better long term results.

This is especially true on dissemination where a good and specific plan can lead to reach many more people than tools used in standard ways.

SMART MATERIALS

This is very connected with the 5R, but has its specifity regarding new technologies.

While designing a project or an activity, do not forget to look for the newest discoveries in the field. They are usually smarter and allow to save resources and to produce better results.

LOCAL COMMUNITY

Involvement of natives will give a lot of chances to the project and its results, to last in time. Being implemented by the community and hopefully with the support of the local government, will result in a deeper root and bigger impact.

This can be done since the very beginning: involving youth on topic and actions they would love to expore, contacting the local government and asking for the help of volunteers and other stakeholders (social sustainability).

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LOGISTICS

SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT

Encourage the participants to use the most sustainable means of transport available and reimburse the travel costs in accordance to the means of transport. More polluting means should pay a fee in order to balance their carbon emissions (eg. Atmosfair).

SHARING TRANSPORT OPTIONS

Promote car-sharing and car-pooling. Participants from more distant nations could eventually stop on the way to pick up others and travel together.

ACCOMMODATION

SMART LOCATION

Special attention needs to be paid to the location of the participants' accommodation which should ideally be easily reachable by walking or if not possible at least well connected with public means of transport.

ROOM CLEANING

Minimize the environmental impact of hotel laundry by choosing not to have the linen changed on a daily basis. Participants should better bring their own towels.

They can be responsible for the cleaning, with eco-prducts provided by the organizers.

LOCAL PROVIDERS

Prioritize local options of accommodation (in order to support local businesses) instead of big hotel chains. Budget transparency: accounting for the organiser's purchases and choices in terms of sustainability (e.g. supporting a family business by choosing a more expensive accommodation instead of choosing a cheaper hotel chain explaining the prioritization of social versus economical sustainability.

FOOD

0km, LOCAL, ORGANIC, SEASONABLE

Choose a sustainable way to eat: low impact, local, organic and seasonable products at Km 0.

VEGETARIAN FOOD

Prioritize vegetarian food options (meat-based food options require greater amounts of environmental resources, such as land and water).

FOOD WASTE

Adopt the size of the meals to the group to eliminate to much of a food waste. When possible, let the participants serve themselves.

ACTIVITIES

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

This can seems obvious but have you ever thought about the concrete differences between having activities in a close place rather than outdoor?

First of all you can save energy by not using artificial lighting, neither air conditioned system.Following, the level of CO2 in a close space will affect the concentration of the people inside. In the end sportif activities you'd better run outdoor.

[No, cold and rain are not excuses, until you are not swimming in February in Lapland]

PRACTICE SUSTAINABILITY

Practice sustainability every day, encourage participants to develop sustainability practices during the youth exchange, pick up their favorite ones and give continuity to these practices by integrating them into their daily life outside the project timeframe.

HANG OUT PLACES

A room/space where participants can hang out during breaks and at night will make them more united as a group. They should be responsible for its maintenance, eventually agreeeing on the rules about it.

Tip: with a relatively cheap expense you can buy (once!) a lot of nice board games and offer them to the participants, forever.

ECORULES

Discuss and create eco-rules with the participants during the exchange.

LOCAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

These activities should be designed according to each reality.
Some useful ones we can generally suggest are:
 - to involve local media in a dissemination session (it would be interesting for the participants and it gives publicity for free)
 - to involve families during intercultural night: they will be happy to host some guests (2 or 3) and the day after the group will be enriched by very diferent experiences
 - to use IT tools to desiign a discovery of the territory: it's free, interesting, adaptable and reusable.

REFLECTION

This is a powerful tool to assess the learning outcomes.
It can be used in different ways, here we shortly list some:
 - individual, pairs, group, with facilitators
 - after/during the activity
 - written, spoken, acted
The relation with sustainability is the process of learning from the experience, thus do not duplicate what already done in the past, but to progress for better solutions.

THE 5 R OF SUSTAINABILITY

Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle. In that order! As you can see, even if recycling is a good thing, there are many other levels you can work on, before it.
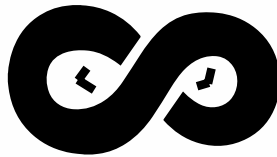
Always consider:

In any stage of the project's organisation there are various possibilities to improve its sustainability. Therefore in everything you do, you should ask yourself what is the influence on:

LOCAL ECONOMY
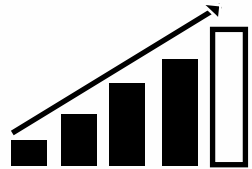
SMART TRANSPORT

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

WASTE

LONG-LASTING IMPACT

SPACE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

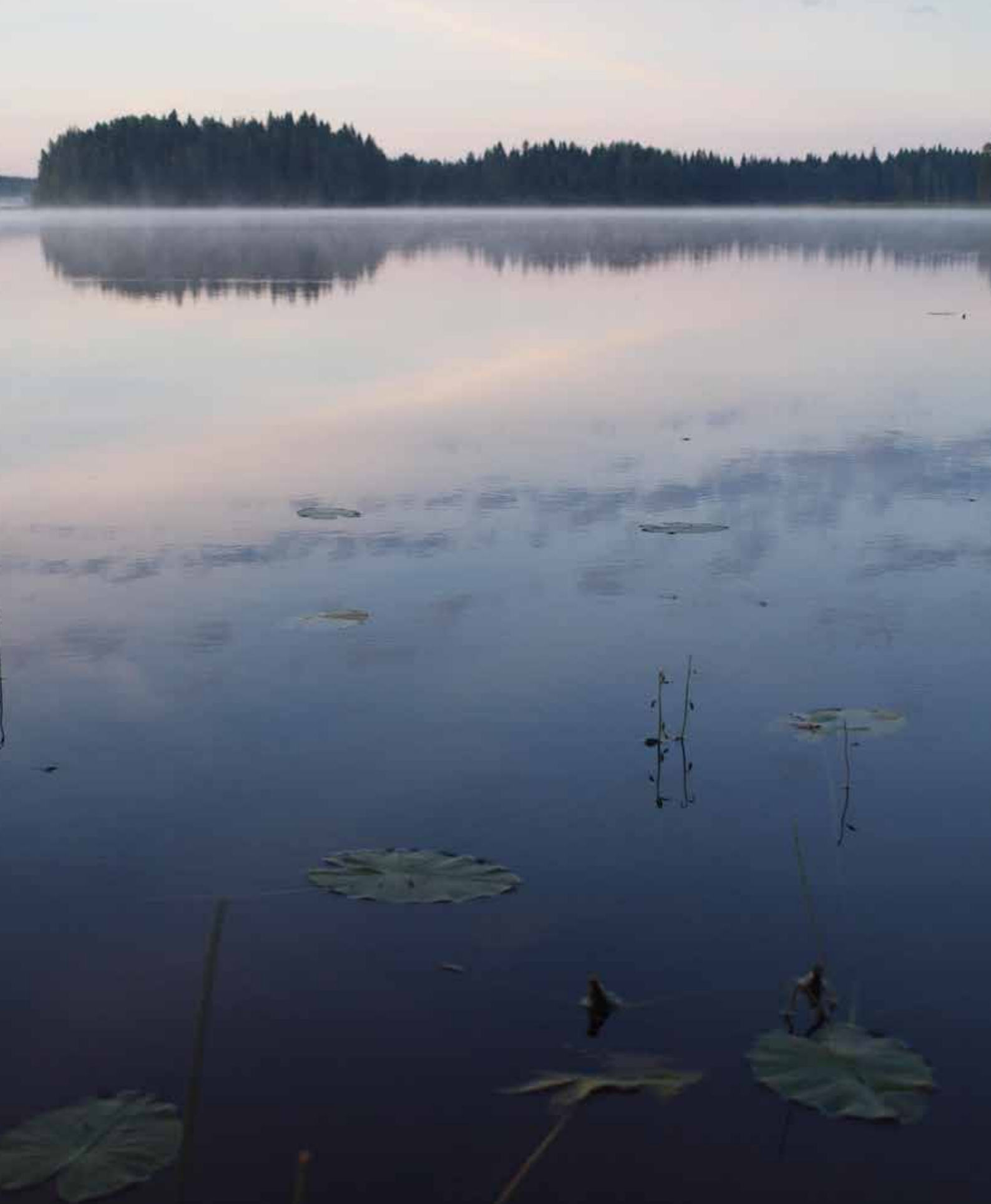# MANUAL:
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