

Key Action: Learning Mobility of Individuals
Action Type: Mobility of young people

Project Title

Sztuka Zero Waste

Project Coordinator

Organisation Stowarzyszenie na rzecz efektywnosci energetycznej i rozwoju odnawialnych zrodel energii HELIOS

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Project Information

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Partners "H2O"-Associação de Jovens de Arrouquelas (PT) , ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT EKO-ZHIVOT KAVADARCI (MK) , Asociatia de Turism si Ecologie pentru Tineret ZIMBRUL CARPATIN (RO) , Art of Eco (RS)

Topics Environment and climate change ; Green skills ; Creativity, arts and culture

Project Summary

Objectives

When planning this project, we wanted it to respond to the problem that we consider important. After many conversations and online meetings, we came to the conclusion that environmental protection and ecology are topics that are close to us all. Unfortunately, despite the gravity of the global warming situation, we still haven't managed to slow it down significantly, and many people are unaware of how their daily decisions might affect the environment. Therefore, the first goal of our project is to make all participants of the exchange and people with whom we come into contact aware that the fate of our planet depends on each of us. However, we are aware of how overwhelming this topic is and how many people can deliberately ignore information about it because they feel powerless due to the scale of the problem. Instead of arousing fear of an environmental catastrophe, tips and good practices should be shared. Hence the decision to focus on zero waste traffic. It is a movement that encourages significant reduction of waste production, which is also a well of ideas and inspiration for people who are not indifferent to ecology, but do not fully know how they can act on their own. Therefore, our second goal is to familiarize participants and recipients of our activities with the idea of zero waste and encourage them to change their habits. However, we are aware that talking and analyzing the problem is one thing, and taking actual steps towards better is another. In order for our efforts to have a tangible result, we have set ourselves the third goal of organizing an exchange of a particularly practical nature. During our project, we will learn how to sew our own bags from recovered material, we will clean up one of the mountain trails and the vicinity of our center, and we will create unique sculptures from the recovered rubbish. This means that we will not only discuss the scale of the problem and find theoretical ways to introduce the zero waste idea into our lives, but also take the first practical steps in this direction. On the other hand, the fourth goal of our project is to combine the zero waste movement with art and inspire young people to broaden their horizons in this topic. Zero waste is most often associated with not wasting food, reducing the use of plastic, repairing damaged items instead of buying new ones, etc. However, zero waste is also the ability to transform rubbish into utility items. So why not transform them into art that can carry instructive content and inspire more people to act? In addition, it is an opportunity to exercise your imagination and leave your comfort zone, which is particularly important in the case of introducing the principles of zero waste movement into our lives. To make a significant change, we need to learn to look for new ways and methods, and we believe that making art out of rubbish is a great tool for inspiration and breaking down barriers. We also hope that through our actions and activities we will influence not only each other, but also the group of recipients we will deal with. During the trail cleaning activity, we will establish relationships with tourists with whom we will encourage them to become interested in the zero waste movement through a conversation. By organizing the exhibition in Poronin, we will use art as a tool to convey the values that are important to us to local residents, in particular young people from nearby schools. On the other hand, by creating an account on Tik-Toku, we want to reach young people from around the world who, hopefully, thanks to our recordings, will look at zero waste differently and consider it not only an interesting trend, but also a significant move towards better.

Activities

We represent organizations that operate both locally and internationally, organizing social projects and involving young people in particular. Our group consists of 40 people, 23 men and 17 women, ranging in age from 18 to 30 (with the exception of some leaders). In 2020, we organized an exchange together and it was during it that the idea for another project was born. When creating it, we wanted each of us to be able to get involved in its creation, therefore we shared the responsibilities of organizing the sessions and each national group is

responsible for other activities. At the beginning, we will focus on getting to know each other, because not all of us could participate in the online meetings so far and it was extremely difficult for us to integrate through Zoom or other instant messaging. We will set rules, discuss organizational matters, talk about our hopes and fears, we will delve into the Erasmus + program and its possibilities in addition to youth exchanges, and we will try to build a harmonious team thanks to team building activities. Then we will give ourselves a space to present presentations prepared before the exchange, which will be about the perception of the zero waste movement in our countries. We will discuss statistics, people's interest, customs, but also our actions in this direction. It will be an opportunity to compare and look at the issue of waste from a broader perspective. Then, in international groups, we will try to find as many ways as possible to introduce the zero waste idea into our lives. Each group will be given a theme (eg "Food", "Clothes", "Cosmetics" etc.) and a task to find or jointly come up with ways to reduce waste in a given area. During the presentation, we will discuss together and complete our lists of ideas. So that it is not groundless, we will go to action and take the first steps in line with the zero waste movement. For this purpose, we will create bags from old, damaged or unnecessary T-shirts. Each participant has to bring such a T-shirt and together we will learn how to sew bags. In addition to the tangible results of these classes, we will also leave them with the knowledge of basic stitches, which we can use to repair clothes after returning home, which also fits in the zero waste movement. The bags will be useful during the exchange, we will present them at the exhibition, but also after returning home we will replace them with plastic disposable bags. Then we will go to Zakopane to visit museums and galleries related to the art and culture of the Podhale region. In our opinion, it will be an interesting introduction to the perception of art and the zero waste movement as one. In the past, many objects were created from what we could find, and still useful and beautiful objects were created, and in addition, works of art admired to this day were created. Inspired by what we see, we will create our own works of art in the form of collages. These will be collages of pictures found in newspapers, which were thrown away or were to be thrown in the garbage. Thanks to this, we will give them a new life, and at the same time express our emotions related to the perception of the zero waste movement. You will be able to admire our works at the final exhibition. The next day, we will go on a popular trail in the mountains to collectively clean up the rubbish left by tourists. We will divide rubbish into not for further use (e.g. food) and into those that can be further processed (e.g. cans, bottles, cartons). During cleaning, we will also talk to people we meet and introduce them to the theme of our exchange. After returning, we will dispose of the unusable garbage in a responsible manner, and we will disguise the recyclable waste, clean it and prepare it for the next day. In order to relieve the emotions related to the fact that people still do not feel responsible for the planet, we will divide ourselves into international groups and create scenes on how to act in accordance with the zero waste movement. The next day we will create sculptures from the rubbish we recovered and we will go for a walk around Poronin to find more materials, e.g. waste from nearby shops, unnecessary items in neighboring houses, etc. Together, we will create unique sculptures that will not only convey a message to live according to the zero waste movement, but will also be made of rubbish themselves. The next day, we will organize an exhibition at the Municipal Cultural Center, where we will present our works, a slide show with photos, an information stand where you will be able to learn more about the exchange, about the Erasmus + program, about our organizations, but also about the zero waste movement. We hope to host at the exhibition not only young people from nearby schools, but also local residents, who thanks to us will learn about this movement and introduce even small changes to their lives. At the end of the project, we will summarize our actions and return home.

Impact

The idea for the project arose from our general need to develop our own zero waste skills. We wanted people associated in our organizations to understand what the zero waste movement is and how we can support it through small, everyday activities. With this knowledge and basic skills, we have a better chance to convince other people to make greener decisions. We are aware that many of us are overwhelmed by the rock of the problem of global warming and raising this topic only theoretically may discourage us all, not motivate us to act.

Therefore, we chose the topic of zero waste to approach the matter from the practical side, learn small movements, but those that each of us can do on our own and feel that we are committed to the good of the cause. During the exchange, we will learn from each other what the situation of wasting goods looks like in our countries and we will prepare a list of ideas for introducing the zero waste movement into our homes, schools, workplaces and organizations. However, so that our steps are not only in theory, we will process rubbish during the exchange, give them a new life and create beautiful works. First, we will create bags from old, damaged T-shirts. These bags will be useful when replacing them, we will present them at the final exhibition, but also take them home to reduce the consumption of plastic disposable bags. Then we will create collages of newspapers and magazines found in the garbage can or those that were intended for it. Collages will express our emotions related to the current ecological situation and the zero waste movement. Collages will also be presented at the exhibition to inspire the invited guests. However, the main attraction of our exhibition will be sculptures created together, which will be made of collected waste. In this way, we will show that the zero waste movement is not only associated with practical solutions, but can also be an excuse to create art from what would end up in a landfill. Our final exhibition will be organized in the Municipal Cultural Center in Poronin, where we hope to inspire and pass on the acquired knowledge to all visitors. Our exhibition will be open to everyone, but we especially want to establish contact with young people from nearby schools who will receive an invitation from us. We believe that the younger generations have a huge impact on shaping our reality and that they will soon be adults who make many important decisions. We hope that thanks to our inspirations, they will decide to introduce changes to their current life, and the zero waste idea will stay with them for longer. We will also establish direct contact with tourists on the mountain trail, which we will go on to clean it up. Thanks to this, we will not only get rid of the rubbish left in the mountains, but it will also be a pretext to inspire the people encountered there to pro-ecological actions. We hope that we will be able to pass knowledge and advice to both adults and children. In addition, the collected rubbish will be used to create our sculptures. Moreover, after the exchange, each of the national groups undertook to organize zero waste workshops for the local community in their towns. What the workshops will look like depends on the logistical capabilities of each group and organization, but the condition is that each workshop will have a theoretical and practical part, as it will be during our exchange. These can be workshops on sewing bags, creating garbage collages or building sculptures from waste, but also other activities (e.g. creating natural cosmetics, creating reusable packaging, transforming empty jars into beautiful food storage containers, etc.) that the participants were inspired by. during the exchange. Each workshop is to be for about 15-20 people, and if there are more people willing, further workshops will be organized. If, due to the ongoing pandemic, it is necessary to limit the number of people participating in the workshop, it will be conducted two or more times, so that everyone who wants to have access. In addition, our youngest members came up with the idea of setting up a project account on Tik-Toku, which we will use to publish short videos of our exchange and post-exchange activities. These videos are supposed to refer to the zero waste movement and encourage the users of this application to become interested in the topic and introduce changes to their lives in a youthful way. Tik-Tok is an extremely attractive and popular application among young generations, which not only makes our free time pleasant, but can also be a carrier of important content and this is how we want to use it. After the exchange, we will share our activities from home and local workshops. In addition, an exchange film will be created, which we will publish on the websites of our organizations with a note about the project, which will also be a great promotion of local workshops.

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