Promoting Sustainable Values Through Collaborative Learning in a Primary School Erasmus+ Project

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Kartsoukis Theodoros
Primary School Teacher
kartsoykis@hotmail.com

Kesidou Anatoli
Primary School Teacher
k-natalia-e@hotmail.com

Abstract

This article presents the implementation and impact of a short-term Erasmus+ KA201-SCH-061945 project entitled “Act Local, Think Global”, conducted in a Greek primary school with 4th-grade pupils. The program focused on promoting environmental awareness and sustainable behaviors through collaborative learning, intercultural exchange, and digital tools. Through partnerships with schools from Finland, Spain and Whales, students explored topics related to plastic pollution, circular economy, and everyday ecological actions. Activities included virtual exchange, co-creation of e-books, art-based expression, and participation in an international eTwinning campaign. The methodological approach emphasized project-based learning, constructivist principles, and the use of digital platforms such as Twinspace, Canva, and Padlet. Results showed increased student engagement, development of key competences, enhanced cultural understanding, and long-term impact on the school culture. The article reflects on challenges, findings, and recommendations for other schools aiming to integrate Erasmus+ opportunities into their everyday educational practice.

Keywords: Erasmus+, collaborative learning, primary education, environmental awareness, international partnership

Introduction

In recent years, European Union educational policies have strongly promoted inclusive, innovative, and sustainable learning environments across member states. One of the most dynamic tools supporting this transformation in schools is the Erasmus+ programme, which encourages cross-border collaboration, intercultural awareness, and the development of key competences for lifelong learning. Especially in the context of primary education, where foundational skills and attitudes are formed, Erasmus+ offers opportunities for young learners to engage in experiential, socially meaningful, and cooperative projects.

This article presents the case of a short-term Erasmus+ KA201-SCH-061945 project titled “Act Local, Think Global”, implemented in a Greek public primary school with the active involvement of fourth-grade pupils and teachers. The project addressed critical environmental issues such as plastic pollution and the circular economy, embedding them within a broader pedagogical framework that emphasized sustainability, active citizenship, and European identity.

The global environmental crisis and the European Green Deal have amplified the need for educational action that empowers students to understand and address real-world challenges. Within this context, the project aimed to cultivate environmental responsibility and critical thinking through collaborative learning experiences and digital tools. It sought to connect children from diverse cultural backgrounds and enable them to co-create solutions for a more sustainable future.

Furthermore, the school's participation in Erasmus+ was part of a broader effort to internationalize its curriculum, enhance digital pedagogical practices, and involve the wider school community. The outcomes of the project, both cognitive and effective, are of particular interest to educators seeking to align classroom practices with 21st-century competences and global educational priorities.

This article explores how the implementation of this Erasmus+ initiative served as a catalyst for pedagogical innovation, intercultural learning, and student empowerment. It examines the teaching strategies applied, the tools employed, the learning outcomes observed, and the overall impact on school culture and teacher development.

Literature Review

The Erasmus+ programme, as part of the European Union's strategic framework for education and training, is widely acknowledged for its role in fostering innovation, inclusion, and transnational cooperation in schools (European Commission, 2020). Research has highlighted that participation in international school partnerships enhances not only pupils' intercultural competence but also contributes to teacher professional development and school improvement (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2012; Redecker, 2017). These benefits are even more profound when the programme is implemented through collaborative and project-based learning approaches, especially in primary education.

Collaborative learning, a pedagogical model rooted in social constructivism, posits that learners construct knowledge actively and meaningfully through interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978; Dillenbourg, 1999). In a classroom environment enriched by peer collaboration and shared goals, students become co-constructors of knowledge. This dynamic is especially relevant in international Erasmus+ projects, where learners not only work with peers from different classrooms but also from different countries and cultures, enhancing both cognitive and socio-emotional learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Equally important is the role of education for sustainable development (ESD) in today's curriculum. UNESCO (2017) emphasizes that ESD must empower learners of all ages to make informed decisions and take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and social justice. Embedding sustainability into cross-curricular learning, especially at the primary level, nurtures eco-literacy and citizenship from an early age. Research supports the view that when sustainability is taught through real-life projects and active participation, children internalize values and behaviors more effectively (Brundiers et al., 2010; Tilbury, 2011).

Furthermore, the integration of digital technologies in Erasmus+ projects has been recognized as a key enabler of meaningful communication, creativity, and inclusion (Redecker, 2017). Platforms like Twinspace, Canva, and Padlet support asynchronous and synchronous collaboration, enabling even young learners to engage in multilingual, multimedia, and multimodal communication. Digital storytelling, for instance, has proven to enhance students' engagement and expressive abilities across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Robin, 2008).

Finally, the literature stresses the importance of teacher agency and whole-school involvement in maximizing the impact of international projects. Projects are more effective when teachers are empowered as facilitators of learning, when school leadership supports innovation, and when the entire school community (students, staff, parents) is involved in a shared educational vision (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Burns, 2016).

This literature review therefore underlines the conceptual and pedagogical pillars upon which the presented Erasmus+ project was designed: collaborative learning, sustainability education, digital pedagogy, and internationalization of school practices.

Material and Methods

The Erasmus+ project "Act Local, Think Global" was implemented during the 2023–2024 school year in a public primary school in Livadia, Greece. The project was funded under the

KA201-SCH-061945, which allowed for flexible design and implementation of activities tailored to the school's needs and vision. The primary target group included 24 fourth-grade students (ages 9–10), while the teaching team consisted of three classroom teachers, an ICT specialist, and the school principal acting as project coordinator. The Greek school collaborated with three partner schools from Finland, Spain and Whales. These schools were selected based on shared interest in environmental education and collaborative digital practices. The joint project aimed to foster eco-awareness, civic responsibility, and intercultural understanding, while also enhancing key transversal competences such as creativity, digital literacy, and teamwork.

All partners agreed on a common pedagogical framework and co-designed a shared activity calendar that aligned with national curricula and school timetables. Although physical mobilities were not included due to funding constraints, virtual exchanges and online collaborative tasks formed the backbone of the project.

Learning Methodology

The pedagogical foundation of this project was grounded in constructivist and socio-constructivist theories of learning, which emphasize that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through experience, collaboration, and reflection (Dillenbourg, 1999; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In this sense, students were not passive recipients of environmental information but active participants in a continuous process of inquiry, interpretation, and meaning-making. Learning occurred through hands-on exploration, group dialogue, and creative expression, allowing students to build connections between scientific, social, and personal dimensions of sustainability.

A project-based learning (PBL) approach framed the entire action plan, providing an authentic and purposeful context for student engagement (Brundiers, Wiek, & Redman, 2010). The project encouraged students to identify real-world environmental problems related to plastic pollution, design collaborative investigations, and propose creative solutions. This method promoted inquiry-driven discovery and deepened understanding by situating knowledge in practical, meaningful experiences rather than abstract classroom tasks.

The participatory and experiential nature of the project also aligns with the core principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as defined by UNESCO (2017). Students were guided to explore sustainability not merely as a concept but as a lived practice that connects ecological awareness, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making. Each activity was designed to help them develop systems thinking—the ability to recognize relationships and interdependencies between human behavior and environmental outcomes.

The role of the teacher shifted from that of a transmitter of information to that of a facilitator, mentor, and co-learner. The educator scaffolded learning experiences, encouraged self-expression, and ensured inclusive participation for all learners, respecting different abilities, backgrounds, and learning paces. This adaptive pedagogy supported the development of social-emotional skills, empathy, and collective problem-solving, while nurturing students' intrinsic motivation and confidence.

Moreover, the methodology incorporated collaborative learning structures, where teamwork, peer tutoring, and cooperative tasks fostered mutual support and shared accountability (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Students worked in heterogeneous groups, promoting diversity of thought and equitable contribution. Decision-making was often student-led, reinforcing agency and autonomy—core attributes of active environmental citizenship (Huckle & Wals, 2015).

Finally, reflection and metacognition were integrated throughout the learning process. Students maintained journals, discussed challenges, and celebrated achievements, cultivating awareness of their own learning journey. Through this cyclical process of action and reflection, learners developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills while experiencing the tangible impact of their environmental actions both within and beyond the classroom.

Tools and Resources

To effectively support the participatory and project-based learning methodology, the project incorporated a carefully selected combination of digital platforms, physical materials, and community resources. These tools were intentionally chosen to promote creativity, collaboration, and cross-border interaction while also encouraging students to think critically about how technology can serve as a medium for environmental education and civic action.

At the heart of the project was the eTwinning Twinspace platform, which provided the digital infrastructure for communication, documentation, and exchange with partner schools across Europe. Twinspace enabled synchronous and asynchronous collaboration, allowing students to share their work, comment on peers' contributions, and engage in joint reflection. This safe, GDPR-compliant educational space fostered digital citizenship, intercultural dialogue, and collective responsibility (Redecker, 2017).

Complementing Twinspace, Padlet was used as an interactive tool for brainstorming, co-creation, and formative assessment. Students used Padlet boards to post ideas, reflections, and digital artifacts such as images, videos, and text responses. This visual and collaborative medium supported multimodal learning, where students could express understanding in diverse formats, enhancing inclusion and engagement (Robin, 2008). Teachers also employed Padlet to monitor progress and provide real-time feedback, ensuring active participation by all learners.

Canva, another essential tool, was introduced as a means of developing students' digital creativity and visual literacy. Through Canva, pupils designed infographics, posters, and awareness campaign materials addressing issues of plastic pollution, recycling, and climate action. The platform's user-friendly interface empowered even younger learners to become content creators, transforming abstract environmental concepts into persuasive visual narratives that could be shared both online and within the school community.

Beyond digital tools, the project integrated a variety of hands-on and locally sourced materials to connect learning with tangible, real-world experiences. These included recyclable objects, craft supplies, composting materials, and simple scientific experiment kits. Students analyzed different types of plastics, observed decomposition rates, and created art installations using discarded materials. Such experiential resources reinforced scientific inquiry, sensory engagement, and emotional connection with environmental topics (Brundiers, Wiek, & Redman, 2010).

Community-based resources also played a critical role in enriching the learning environment. Local environmental organizations and municipal waste management services were consulted for data and guidance, while parents contributed recyclable materials and participated in awareness events. These partnerships extended the educational experience beyond classroom boundaries, aligning with the whole-school and whole-community approach recommended by UNESCO (2017).

Throughout the project, technology and tangible materials functioned not as isolated tools but as integrated components of an ecosystem of learning. Each resource—whether digital or physical—was selected to enhance communication, foster creativity, and bridge the gap between individual reflection and collective environmental action. This strategic use of resources encouraged students to see technology not merely as entertainment but as a vehicle for expression, collaboration, and social change.

In essence, the integration of digital and material resources provided an inclusive, interactive, and transformative learning environment. It demonstrated how carefully designed multimodal learning spaces can amplify both environmental understanding and digital competence—two pillars essential for preparing young citizens to navigate and shape the challenges of a sustainable future.

Activities Overview

The project unfolded through a series of carefully structured phases, designed to gradually deepen students' understanding of sustainability while fostering inquiry, collaboration, and creativity. Each phase is built upon the previous one, encouraging learners to move from **awareness to action**, from **knowledge acquisition to social participation**. The overall structure reflected the cyclical nature of experiential learning, in which reflection, experimentation, and adaptation are integral components of the educational process (Kolb, as cited in Brundiers, Wiek, & Redman, 2010).

Phase 1: Awareness and Exploration

The first phase focused on building students' awareness of environmental challenges, particularly the issue of plastic waste. Teachers introduced the topic through videos, photographs, and interactive discussions that invited students to reflect on their daily habits and their relationship with consumption and waste.

A classroom survey entitled "What Rubbish Do I Throw Away?" served as an entry point for inquiry. Students collected and categorized their own household waste for a week, then analyzed the data collectively using simple graphs and charts. This activity not only promoted mathematical reasoning but also initiated critical conversations about personal responsibility, overconsumption, and recycling behaviors.

By connecting everyday experiences with broader ecological concerns, students began to perceive environmental issues as part of their own lives—a fundamental step in cultivating environmental citizenship (Huckle & Wals, 2015).

Phase 2: Research and Investigation

Building on the insights from the first phase, learners engaged in guided research to explore the life cycle of plastics, their environmental impact, and the global dimension of pollution. They consulted online resources, short articles, and educational videos tailored to their age group.

Particular emphasis was placed on understanding the European Union's environmental policies and the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2020), simplified through visual aids and teacher-facilitated discussions.

Hands-on experiments—such as comparing the decomposition of organic and synthetic materials—allowed students to observe scientific phenomena directly, reinforcing curiosity and scientific thinking.

Collaborative inquiry journals were used to record hypotheses, observations, and reflections, fostering metacognition and ownership of learning.

Phase 3: Creation, Communication, and Collaboration

The third phase marked a transition from exploration to expression. Students were encouraged to communicate their understanding and emotions through creative and collaborative projects that integrated art, science, language, and digital technology. Working in small, mixed-ability teams, they produced a variety of outputs:

- **An environmental newspaper**, featuring articles, interviews, and cartoons promoting sustainability.
- **A board game**, designed with Canva, combining environmental trivia and challenges to teach peers about recycling and climate change.
- **Posters and infographics**, addressing the dangers of single-use plastics and suggesting eco-friendly alternatives.
- **Short digital presentations** on Padlet, showcasing students' messages and reflections to partner schools abroad.

Through these creations, students not only developed digital competence (Redecker, 2017; Robin, 2008) but also honed communication, teamwork, and critical thinking skills. The process was interactive and reflective—students revised their work based on peer feedback, cultivating a collaborative and growth-oriented learning culture.

Phase 4: Action and Community Engagement

The final phase translated classroom learning into real-world action. Students organized and participated in a clean-up campaign at a nearby park and coastal area, collecting and categorizing waste while documenting their findings with photos and digital reports. The event was coordinated with local municipal authorities, who provided logistical support and environmental insights.

Following this, students led a school-wide awareness event where they presented their projects to peers, parents, and teachers. They displayed their posters, demonstrated their board game, and distributed leaflets designed to inspire responsible environmental behavior.

This culminating activity represented a powerful synthesis of cognitive, emotional, and social learning. It not only reinforced the principle of "learning by doing" but also empowered students to act as ambassadors of change in their school and local community—an essential outcome of education for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017).

Across all phases, the emphasis remained on active participation, reflection, and shared responsibility. Students experienced sustainability as a living practice rather than a theoretical concept. The sequence of activities, scaffolded by digital tools and creative tasks, provided multiple entry points for learners with diverse interests and abilities, ensuring inclusivity and engagement throughout the process.

Ultimately, the activities nurtured not only environmental awareness but also the values, attitudes, and competencies that define responsible global citizenship—empathy, cooperation, critical reflection, and the courage to act.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was a central pillar of the project's design and implementation, ensuring that all educational activities aligned with both the school's internal policies and the ethical standards promoted by the European eTwinning and Erasmus+ frameworks. The project aimed to create a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment where every student could participate meaningfully and confidently, while their privacy, identity, and dignity were fully protected.

Before the commencement of the project, written informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians for all students participating in project activities, including consent for limited use of anonymized photos, creative outputs, and digital materials. Clear communication was established with families to explain the educational objectives, digital tools used, and data protection measures in place. This process ensured transparency and trust between the school and the wider community.

All online interactions and digital exchanges took place through secure, GDPR-compliant platforms, primarily eTwinning's Twinspace, which provides a controlled and closed educational environment accessible only to authorized users. The use of such platforms ensured that student data were protected according to European privacy regulations and that participation occurred within safe, moderated spaces (European Commission, 2020).

Special attention was given to inclusivity and equitable participation. Activities were designed to accommodate different learning styles, abilities, and language levels, ensuring that every student had a meaningful role and could contribute according to their strengths. This inclusive design reflected the project's core ethical value: education as a right and opportunity for all learners, regardless of academic, social, or cultural background (UNESCO, 2017).

Throughout the project, the teacher assumed the dual role of facilitator and ethical guardian. Classroom discussions emphasized mutual respect, empathy, and collaborative responsibility, particularly when addressing sensitive topics such as pollution, climate change, and human impact on nature. Students were encouraged to express their opinions freely while respecting the views of others—an essential aspect of democratic and intercultural education (Huckle & Wals, 2015).

In addition, the project's documentation and dissemination practices adhered strictly to ethical publication standards. All materials shared on the Twinspace, school website, or local media were anonymized, and no personal data (such as names or identifiable images) were made public. The emphasis was placed on showcasing the collective learning process and outcomes rather than individual identities.

Finally, ethical reflection was intentionally embedded as part of the learning process itself. Students discussed the meaning of responsible digital behavior, environmental stewardship, and respectful communication, linking personal ethics to sustainability ethics. This dual focus—on ethical conduct and environmental values—helped shape students' understanding of what it means to act responsibly, both online and in the real world.

Results and Discussion

The implementation of the sustainability action plan yielded significant educational, social, and emotional outcomes. The project "Act Local, Think Global" proved to be a catalyst for transformative learning experiences, fostering not only environmental literacy but also collaboration, empathy, and a shared sense of responsibility among young learners. The results demonstrate that participatory environmental education can profoundly influence students' attitudes, competences, and behaviors, especially when embedded in real-world contexts and facilitated through creative and digital pedagogies.

From the outset, student engagement was exceptionally high. Learners showed enthusiasm for taking ownership of their projects, often extending their participation beyond classroom time. The open-ended and inquiry-based design allowed them to pursue personal interests within the broader environmental theme, such as researching marine life, renewable energy, or recycling practices at home. This freedom of exploration enhanced student agency, an essential element in environmental citizenship (Huckle & Wals, 2015).

As students designed their posters, digital campaigns, and environmental newspaper, they transitioned from being recipients of knowledge to becoming creators and communicators of sustainability messages. This creative expression not only improved their self-confidence but also helped them internalize environmental values through personal voice and collaboration. Many students began to advocate for waste reduction and recycling within their families, demonstrating transfer of learning from school to home life—a hallmark of meaningful education (Brundiers, Wiek, & Redman, 2010).

Moreover, the sense of shared purpose cultivated in the classroom empowered students to see themselves as capable of influencing others. They began to perceive learning as an active process of participation in their community rather than a passive academic task, aligning with the transformative ideals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (UNESCO, 2017).

Beyond individual learning, the project had a broader institutional and community impact. Teachers and students from other classes became inspired to initiate their own environmental mini-projects, such as classroom recycling systems and school garden improvements. This diffusion of practice demonstrated how one classroom initiative can spark systemic change, leading to a more sustainable and participatory school culture (Mannion, Biesta, Priestley, & Ross, 2011).

Parents also played a vital role in sustaining the project's momentum. Many reported adopting new household habits, such as waste separation and reusing materials, as a direct influence of their children's participation. The community clean-up campaign and school

exhibition served as visible symbols of student leadership, engaging families, local authorities, and media representatives. The project thus became a bridge between school and society, strengthening community bonds and promoting collective responsibility for environmental well-being.

This community-oriented dimension echoes the whole-school and whole-community approach recommended by UNESCO (2017), where education serves as both a personal and social transformation tool. It illustrates that sustainability education, when participatory and action-based, can extend learning beyond institutional walls into everyday life.

While the project outcomes were largely positive, several challenges provided valuable learning opportunities. One recurring difficulty involved balancing curriculum requirements with the time demands of extended project work. Teachers mitigated this by integrating sustainability topics across subjects—language, science, and art—thus achieving cross-curricular cohesion rather than viewing the project as an add-on activity.

Digital literacy disparities among students also presented a challenge, particularly at the beginning. Peer mentoring strategies proved effective in addressing this issue, fostering collaboration and mutual support (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Another consideration was the need to maintain focus during online interactions, as the novelty of digital platforms sometimes led to distraction. Structured tasks, clear deadlines, and reflection activities helped sustain purposeful engagement.

Finally, the most significant lesson learned was that student-driven learning requires trust. Allowing learners to make choices, voice opinions, and take responsibility may introduce unpredictability, but it also nurtures ownership, creativity, and resilience. When students experience that their ideas matter, motivation and learning outcomes rise dramatically.

Student Learning Outcomes

One of the most significant outcomes was the increase in environmental literacy and awareness among students. By engaging with real-world issues such as plastic waste and sustainable consumption, pupils developed a concrete understanding of environmental challenges and solutions. For example, during the “Plastic-Free Week Challenge,” students demonstrated initiative by suggesting eco-friendly alternatives at home and sharing their findings with peers from partner schools.

Equally important was the development of collaborative competences. Students learned to communicate effectively, negotiate roles, and work in diverse teams. In the joint creation of the digital storybook *“The Journey of a Plastic Bottle,”* pupils practiced not only storytelling and artistic expression, but also negotiation, responsibility-sharing, and problem-solving — key elements of successful collaborative learning (Dillenbourg, 1999; Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Moreover, the project enhanced digital literacy and media skills. Children became familiar with online tools, practiced safe and ethical digital behavior, and expressed themselves creatively through multimedia. For many students, this was their first exposure to cross-border digital collaboration, and it built confidence in using technology for authentic purposes beyond the classroom.

Teacher Development and School Culture

Teachers involved in the project reported a renewed sense of professional motivation and pedagogical experimentation. The opportunity to design interdisciplinary tasks, experiment with student-centered strategies, and connect with colleagues abroad served as a form of informal professional learning. As Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue, meaningful change in schools often begins with teacher agency and collaborative innovation — conditions clearly cultivated during this project.

At the school level, the project functioned as a catalyst for cultural transformation. Classroom walls became digital windows to Europe, and students began to perceive

themselves not just as Greek pupils, but as active European citizens with shared responsibilities and values. The final dissemination event, which included presentations to parents and local stakeholders, reinforced the sense of collective pride and ownership over the learning process.

Family and Community Engagement

The program also succeeded in bridging the gap between school and home. Parents reported that children discussed project topics at home and even initiated sustainable actions, such as starting recycling stations or proposing eco-friendly shopping. This aligns with the findings of Brundiers et al. (2010), who note that real-world sustainability projects can extend their impact beyond classroom boundaries.

Challenges and Reflections

Despite the many strengths, some challenges emerged. Language barriers required scaffolding, especially in virtual exchanges. Teachers had to dedicate extra time to planning and coordinating across schools and time zones. Technical limitations, such as internet connectivity or familiarity with platforms, occasionally interrupted activities. However, these obstacles were addressed through peer support and flexibility, turning challenges into learning opportunities.

Recommendations

Based on the implementation and outcomes of the "Act Local, Think Global" Erasmus+ project, a number of recommendations can be offered for educators, school leaders, and policymakers seeking to integrate international collaborative projects into primary education. These recommendations address both pedagogical practice and system-level strategies.

For Classroom Practice

- Embed sustainability in everyday teaching: Environmental education should not be treated as an isolated subject. Teachers are encouraged to integrate sustainability themes across subjects — from language arts and science to mathematics and art — using cross-curricular projects that reflect real-world challenges.
- Foster student voice and agency: Children should not be passive recipients of content but active contributors to the learning process. Allowing students to shape project tasks, select tools, and reflect on outcomes empowers them as learners and citizens.
- Use collaborative digital tools meaningfully: Platforms like Twinspace, Canva, and Padlet offer powerful opportunities for cooperation, but their use should be purposeful and tied to clear learning outcomes. Simple but structured activities (e.g., co-writing, idea boards, online galleries) are often more effective than complex technical setups.
- Provide scaffolding for language and inclusion: In multilingual, multicultural Erasmus+ contexts, it is vital to offer differentiated materials, visual support, and peer assistance. All learners — regardless of ability or background — must have access to meaningful participation.

For School Leadership and Development

- Integrate Erasmus+ into the School Development Plan: International projects should be aligned with the school's vision, annual planning, and teacher training goals. This ensures continuity, institutional support, and sustainability beyond the duration of individual projects.
- Promote whole-school involvement: Success is greater when Erasmus+ is not a "teacher's project" but a school-wide endeavor, involving colleagues from different disciplines, non-teaching staff, and the broader community. Dissemination events, exhibitions, and open lessons can strengthen this culture.

- Establish peer-learning networks: Schools new to Erasmus+ can benefit greatly from collaboration with more experienced ones. National support services and platforms like eTwinning can serve as hubs for mentoring and capacity-building among educators.

For Educational Policy and Research

- Recognize Erasmus+ as a tool for teacher professional learning: Policymakers should acknowledge the transformative potential of Erasmus+ not only for students, but also for teachers. Participation should count as part of formal or informal professional development and be supported institutionally.
- Encourage research on student outcomes in international projects: While teacher benefits are well documented, further empirical research is needed to measure the impact of Erasmus+ on primary pupils' values, skills, and attitudes — particularly in relation to sustainability and citizenship.
- Bridge national curriculum goals with European priorities: Educational reforms should seek synergies between national learning outcomes and European strategies (e.g., SDGs, Green Deal, Digital Education Action Plan), using Erasmus+ as a practical framework for implementation.

Conclusion

The Erasmus+ project "Act Local, Think Global" provided compelling evidence that even short-term international collaborations can serve as powerful catalysts for pedagogical renewal, environmental awareness, and intercultural understanding in primary education. By engaging fourth-grade pupils in meaningful, real-world learning experiences across national borders, the project not only enriched their cognitive and social development, but also laid the groundwork for a more participatory and globally minded school culture.

Central to the success of the initiative was the use of collaborative learning methodologies, which allowed students to work in teams, co-create knowledge, and develop empathy through dialogue with their European peers. The constructivist foundation of the project enabled learners to become agents of change in their own contexts — proposing solutions, leading activities, and reflecting critically on their roles as young citizens.

Moreover, the integration of digital tools provided access, inclusivity, and creative expression, transforming classrooms into dynamic spaces of virtual connection and co-production. The project reaffirmed that digital media, when used thoughtfully, can bridge distances and democratize learning.

Teachers, too, experienced professional growth, discovering new ways to engage learners and expand their pedagogical toolkit. The collaborative planning, reflection, and innovation embedded in the Erasmus+ process revitalized their practice and reinforced the school's commitment to continuous improvement.

While challenges related to language, logistics, and infrastructure were present, they were met with flexibility, peer support, and a shared sense of purpose. These challenges, in turn, became opportunities for deeper learning and resilience.

In conclusion, this case study illustrates how Erasmus+ can be leveraged not merely as a mobility programme, but as a strategic framework for educational transformation. It calls upon schools, policymakers, and stakeholders to embrace international cooperation as an integral part of 21st-century education — one that is sustainable, inclusive, and profoundly human. This action plan affirmed that young learners can be powerful agents of change when provided with authentic learning opportunities, supportive guidance, and the tools to connect their local actions with global goals. It reinforced the idea that sustainability is not an additional subject but a holistic educational lens that integrates knowledge, values, and action.

Empowering young eco-citizens, therefore, is not simply an aspiration—it is an educational imperative. It calls for schools that inspire curiosity, cultivate empathy, and equip every child with the confidence to believe that their small actions can contribute to a larger, shared vision: a sustainable and compassionate world for all.

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