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National Report Bulgaria



Project information

Project Acronym: **NONFORMAL**

Project Title: Non-formal education for

functional literacy of the Youth

Project Reference: 2024-1-BG01-KA220-YOU-000255556



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Introduction

The National Report for Bulgaria presents a detailed analysis of the outcomes achieved through non-formal educational activities conducted by the "Ecoworld Rhodopes" Association under the Erasmus+ NONFORMAL project. This report consolidates findings from a focus group discussion and the implementation of several best practices. Emphasis is placed on the transformative power of non-formal education in addressing social challenges, enhancing functional literacy, and promoting environmental awareness among young people in Bulgaria. The insights and recommendations aim to inform stakeholders and guide future initiatives for broader adoption of successful methodologies.

FOCUS GROUP

FOCUS GROUP	
DATE OF CONDUCT	10.12.2024 r.
PLACE OF CONDUCT	The focus group was held in the town of Devin, region Smolyan, Bulgaria
RESEARCHER (NAME, SURNAME AND ROLE)	The focus group moderator is Velichka Petkova, a journalist. She is a media expert who covers events from the Smolyan region, Bulgaria. She works at the regional and national level. With an interest in non-formal education, arising from covering the activities of non-governmental organizations from the region.
DURATION	Duration 1 hour 30 minutes
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	With the exception of the moderator and the chairman of the Ecoworld Rhodopes Association, the focus group includes 6 experts who work with youth.
HOW WERE PARTICIPANTS SELECTED?	We chose to participate teachers and pedagogical staff from the school in Devin, some of whom have participated in project activities of the Ecoworld Rhodopes Association.
PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE	Five teachers and class teachers Director and Deputy Director of the school
QUESTION 1	<i>What is your experience with non-formal education? In which context did you use it?</i>

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	<p>3 of the participants have no experience in non-formal education, but have corresponded with young people who participate in Ecoworld Rhodopes projects. The young people have defined them as interesting.</p> <p>1 participant has worked in the Municipality on municipal projects including trainings in which non-formal education methods were applied. Defined as atypical, but useful</p> <p>2 have participated as leaders in activities under projects of the Ecoworld Rhodopes Association implemented under the Erasmus+ Program. One as an organizer for youth participation and defines non-formal education as a method in which young people participate with interest, especially when it concerns the Erasmus+ Program</p> <p>One participant was a leader of a youth exchange under the Erasmus+ Program and defines non-formal education methods as impacting young people and mobilizing their activity</p>
QUESTION 2	How do you define non-formal education, when comparing it with formal one? What are its strengths?
	<p>Formal education is required to be guided by rules common to the state and the school, which are strictly defined. The strengths of informal education are that it gives more freedom to the lecturer within the framework of the topic. In addition, the main methods are learning through experience. The two types of education should complement each other, but not compete</p> <p>Three main aspects of informal education that the participants identified are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freer communication between lecturers and facilitators and the young people - Diversity of topics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They provoke the activity of the young people, especially when working in groups <p>The answers are justified both by personal participation and by impressions that young people have shared with them after participating in informal education.</p> <p>The answers are similar from both types of participants – by direct and indirect impression</p>
QUESTION 3	What are non-formal education challenges?
	<p>The main challenges facing non-formal education are outlined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few opportunities for non-formal education, especially in small villages - Working with youth despite insufficient funding for projects aimed at youth from rural, mountainous and border regions with social and economic difficulties, such as the Smolyan region - Youth who travel daily and cannot stay for extracurricular activities due to lack of transportation to remote villages from the city.
QUESTION 4	Can you share any example of non-formal education path to which you took part? Which impact did it have on you?
	<p>A participant shares that after being a leader of an Erasmus+ youth exchange, he introduces elements of non-formal education methods into his work in formal education, where this is possible - game methods.</p>
PHOTOS	The photo of the focus group



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Examples of good practices in Bulgaria

BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH	
TITLE	Postcards from the city Project
DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT	Organized by the Ecoworld Rhodopes Association in the period 2022-2023 in Smolyan, Bulgaria under the Erasmus+ Program
MAIN OBJECTIVES	The main goal is to create cards with messages about environmental protection and distribute them.
TARGET GROUP	Target group – young people from Bulgaria and Armenia aged 16-26
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	The project involves 30 young people and 6 youth workers – 15 young people and 3 youth workers from Bulgaria and 15 young people and 3 youth workers from Armenia.
METHODOLOGIES	The methodologies used are: Lectures Discussions Teamwork Role playing Practical activities on making cards with messages Taking photos of nature and processing them under the guidance of experts Daily reflection Working in national groups Working in international groups Conversations of young people with leading journalists from the region Meetings with other young people from the Smolyan region Learning through experience Learning by doing
MAIN ACTIVITIES	The main activities carried out during this practice are: Getting acquainted with photography as an opportunity for art that has an impact on the environment Meetings with journalists and working on creating messages Making postcards with messages about environmental protection Recording messages from young people about environmental protection Visiting places with preserved nature and taking photos Meeting with young people from a school in Smolyan Meeting with the Regional Environmental Inspectorate and discussing what we can do Making an exhibition of postcards in the lobby of the Smolyan Youth Center Distribution of the created postcards online and in paper format
RESOURCES USED	Funded by the Erasmus+ Program with 26,000 euros. Volunteer work by young people - volunteers from the "Ekosvyat Rhodopes" Association. Use of laptops, printers and projectors purchased in previous projects.

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<p>TOOLS</p>	<p>The tools used for didactic assistance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laptops - Projector - Cameras - Phones with good capabilities for taking photos and making videos - Camera - Internet - Printers - Special website for the project https://postcards.ecorodopi.eu/
<p>RESULTS</p>	<p>The results and impact of the implemented project "Postcards from Nature" on the participating young people are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning through experience and through informal methods, as the majority of young people are for the first time taught with game methods and practical exercises through experience, including the peer-to-peer method • Knowledge: about the environmental problems that the earth is currently facing; • about the culture of another people; • increased knowledge about environmental problems in Europe and the world; • about the possibilities of the Erasmus+ Program for personal and development of young people, including those from small settlements • Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for taking thematic photos and processing them into postcards with messages; • for artistic expression and organizing a public event by making postcard exhibitions; • for presentation skills when presenting postcards with messages in their communities; • for creativity in developing the messages; • for using artistic methods to indicate the problems; • for working with new programs to create posters, postcards, flyers, brochures; • for creative work in international groups; • for teamwork in international groups; • for learning through experience; • for sharing previous knowledge - using the peer-to-peer method in international groups <p>The results and impact of the implemented project "Postcards from Nature" on the partner organizations are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased capacity of the participating youth workers from both organizations to work with young people on environmental projects; • exchange of experience in the field of environment and youth; • increased capacity for future joint activities on partnership projects



BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH	
TITLE	Activities of youth workers with young people at risk during a crisis Project
DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT	Organized by the Ecoworld Rhodopes Association in the period 2020-2022 in Smolyan, Bulgaria under the Erasmus+ Program
MAIN OBJECTIVES	The main goal is for youth workers from 7 countries to exchange and gain skills and methods for their work with youth at risk. Supporting the social inclusion of marginalized youth through the application of non-formal methods and good practices
TARGET GROUP	Target group – youth workers from Bulgaria, Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, Latvia, Romania and Italy over the age of 18
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	42 youth workers from 7 countries participate in the project
METHODOLOGIES	The methodologies used are: Lectures Discussions Teamwork Role playings Daily reflections Work in national groups Work in international groups Conversations of youth workers with leading journalists from the region Meetings with youth workers from the Smolyan region Learning through experience Learning by doing Sharing good practices
MAIN ACTIVITIES	The main activities carried out during this project are: Presentations of good practices from various organizations for working with youth at risk Development of messages for working with youth at risk during crisis situations Meetings with journalists and work on developing messages Recording messages from youth workers Meeting with youth workers and young people from a school in Smolyan Making an exhibition of postcards in the lobby of the Smolyan Youth Center Distribution of the produced postcards online and on paper, as well as on magnetic media Meeting with the Regional Governor of Smolyan Region and discussion on the problems of youth at risk Celebration of May 9 - Europe Day with an exhibition from the project in the Atrium of the Smolyan Regional Administration
RESOURCES USED	Funded by the Erasmus+ Program with 31,000 euros. Volunteer work by young people and youth workers - volunteers from the "Ekosvyat Rhodopes" Association. Use of laptops, printers and projectors purchased in previous projects.



TOOLS	<p>The tools used for didactic assistance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laptops - Projector - Cameras - Phones with good capabilities for taking photos and making videos
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Camera - Internet - Printers - Special website for the project https://active.ecorodopi.eu/
RESULTS	<p>The results and impact of the implemented project "Activities of youth workers with young people at risk during a crisis" on the participating youth workers are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased social, linguistic and/or cultural competences - Increased interest in participation in the public and political life of local communities - Increased interest in common European values and the opportunities of the Erasmus+ Programme for working with young people in crisis situations - Increased social and civic competences - Knowledge of good practices implemented abroad - Shared my own knowledge and skills with young people and other youth workers - Developed skills in the use of ICT tools - Improved organizational / management / leadership skills - Strengthened / expanded network of professional contacts or creation of new contacts - Enhanced cooperation between partner organizations - Increased interest in more activities against discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia or racism

BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH	
TITLE	Prepodavame.bg - practical training and resources for teachers for teaching through non-formal learning
DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT	The largest platform with practical training for teachers including non-formal methods. The platform is also used by youth workers because of the interesting non-formal learning methods shared by teachers
MAIN OBJECTIVES	The main goal of the platform is to share good practices in teaching students, including informal methods developed by the teachers themselves.
TARGET GROUP	Target group – teachers, school principals who are interested in implementing non-formal learning methods in extracurricular activities at school. An indirect target group is also youth workers who benefit from the lessons developed in the platform by applying them in their activities through non-formal learning.
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	Cannot be determined due to the massive electronic use of the platform



METHODOLOGIES	The methodologies used, as indicated in the appendix, are: Lectures Discussions Teamwork Role playing Videos Learning through experience Learning by doing Sharing good practices
MAIN ACTIVITIES	The main activities carried out under this practice are: Dissemination of good practices of teachers applied in their activities with children and youth
RESOURCES USED	Funded through various programs and subscriptions
TOOLS	- Internet - Special website for the project https://prepodavame.bg/
RESULTS	The results on the participants are: On teachers and youth workers: Increased capacity for activities through the principles of non-formal education. On children and youth: Increased knowledge through the methods of non-formal education on various topics, including civic education https://prepodavame.bg/tag/grazhdansko-obrazovanie/

BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH	
TITLE	Patriotic Games
DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT	Organized by the Smolyan Regional History Museum in November 2024.
MAIN OBJECTIVES	The main goal is for young people to become familiar with interesting facts from the history of Bulgaria and historical moments from the Rhodope Mountains where we live, which are not studied in school
TARGET GROUP	Target group – young people from Smolyan
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	36 young people from 6 schools in Smolyan participate in the project
METHODOLOGIES	Discussions Teamwork Role Playing Learning through Experience Learning by Doing Interactive Presentation of Knowledge



MAIN ACTIVITIES	The main activities carried out during this practice are: Preparation of teams by schools Competitive games to learn the history of Bulgaria and historical data from the Rhodope Mountains where the young people live
RESOURCES USED	Funded by the Regional History Museum – Smolyan https://museumsmoljan.eu/
TOOLS	The tools used for didactic assistance are: - Individual and team preparation of participants - Competition between school teams - Specially made boards and materials with tasks for the competitors - Certificates of encouragement for the best performers - Taking photos and videos for the event https://museumsmoljan.eu/news-and-events/%d0%b8%d0%b3%d1%80%d0%b8-%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%be%d0%bb%d1%8e%d0%b1%d0%b8%d0%b5%d1%82%d0%be-15-11-2024%d0%b3
RESULTS	The results and impact of the implemented project "Patriot Games" on the participating youth are as follows: - Increased interest in participating in games organized at the museum on other occasions - Increased knowledge about the history of Bulgaria and the Rhodope Mountains, acquired through informal learning and final game competitive activities

BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH	
TITLE	National campaign "Save a tree"
DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT	Organized by the Active Society Association, funded under the National Program by the Ministry of Youth and Sports
MAIN OBJECTIVES	Stimulating the initiative of young people and promoting their civic commitment to the protection of the environment, by promoting the recycling of resources and afforestation, as well as building an ecological culture among them.
TARGET GROUP	Target group – young people aged 15 to 29 from the regions of Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Sofia (region), Pernik, Kyustendil, Blagoevgrad, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv and Lovech in Bulgaria
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	More than 250 participants in trainings and volunteers in activities



METHODOLOGIES	<p>Methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- lectures,- discussions,- information campaign <p>Innovative nature through the inclusion of young people from 10 regions of Bulgaria to work simultaneously on the activities</p>
MAIN ACTIVITIES	<p>The main activities carried out during this practice are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Five environmental trainings for young people;- ten youth eco-workshops;- large-scale information campaign
RESOURCES USED	<p>Funded under the National Program by the Ministry of Youth and Sports</p>
TOOLS	<p>The tools used for didactic assistance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Thematic trainings- Workshops- Discussions- Field work- Taking photos and videos of the event <p>https://aktivnoobshtestvo.org/?p=4309&lang=bg</p>
RESULTS	<p>The results and impact of the implemented project " Save a tree " on the participating youth are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- how to reuse recyclable materials.- through five trainings, young people acquire valuable knowledge in the field of ecology and environmental protection.- over 450 trees planted in dozens of villages and towns in Bulgaria- tons of paper handed over for recycling.