



SCHOOL
GOES
GREEN

GREEN GUIDE





Partnership experience between schools and communities for a more sustainable future

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Introduction

The global climate crisis is not only an **ecological issue** but also an **economic, social, and political one**, with devastating impacts on the planet, individuals, and society.

The concept of "sustainability" encompasses not only the environmental impact of resources used by humans but also the promotion of **equal opportunities** for all individuals. This implies ensuring that everyone can lead a dignified life and fully participate in economic, political, and cultural life, regardless of personal and social characteristics.

This approach aligns with the European Green Deal strategy to address climate and environmental challenges, aiming to:

- **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions** (by 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels);
- **Utilize renewable energy** and promote a circular economy;
- **Protect biodiversity** and restore ecosystems;
- **Foster a sustainable economy** through resource efficiency.

For sustainability, the Green Deal aims to ensure a **just transition**, avoiding exacerbation of social inequalities or creation of new exclusions.





The project

The SCHOOL GOES GREEN project aimed **to encourage youth activism for truly sustainable societies** by eliminating systemic barriers to participation and well-being. Through this initiative, 20 students aged 14 to 17 from Regina Margherita High School in Palermo engaged in volunteer programs. These supported the activities of local associations that have long worked towards equitable and inclusive communities in Palermo. These organizations include Santa Chiara, Booq, Social Tailoring Workshop, Per Esempio, Legambiente, Casa Ancora, and Emmaus.

The project centered on the European Green Deal's pillars: **biodiversity protection, circular economy, and social justice**. Students participated in urgent and necessary transformative actions through practical activities in crafts, diversity education, and ecology.

Thanks to a **synergy between the school and the civil society organizations**, and with the active participation of the school's student committee as peer-to-peer facilitators, an integrated educational model was piloted. This open, participatory school model promotes social cohesion and transformative growth.

Prospettiva Gender+

Gender+ Perspective

One objective of the project, embedded in its methodology, was to "**break the binary and gender-stereotyped framework**" by fostering plurality through language, practices, and experiences. Hosting associations were chosen for their commitment to gender equity in communication, organization, and management. For example:

- Per Esempio supports young women from local neighborhoods in their self-determination journeys.
- Sartoria sociale provides inclusive spaces where tailoring, typically associated with women, becomes a collective experience.
- Emmaus Summer Camp had a mixed group of youth adopting shared management practices, implementing principles of circularity and equity.





Purpose of the guide

This guide shares the SCHOOL GOES GREEN project experience **to inspire school community representatives and civil society organizations**. It offers insights into creating learning experiences based on alliances between schools and communities **to foster youth activism for a more equitable and sustainable society**.

Alongside a description of the project phases, the guide includes suggestions from the Student committee, a group engaged in the school's political life, acting as co-facilitators in the project.

SCHOOL GOES GREEN was promoted by Per Esemplio Onlus in collaboration with Regina Margherita High School in Palermo, supported by [ACCTING.eu](https://www.accting.eu).





Project partners

The school

Regina Margherita high school and Sindacato committee



Host organization for volunteering programmes

Santa Chiara, Booq, Sartoria sociale, Per Esempio, Legambiente, Casa Ancora, Emmaus





The method

The SCHOOL GOES GREEN method involved 21 youth activism experiences focusing on biodiversity protection, circular economy, and social justice.

The project was part of an ongoing collaboration between Per Esemplio Onlus and the school, fostering a co-created relationship that addressed the needs and desires of the student community while creating growth opportunities.

*The method recognizes the **community as a driver of social change**, with individuals contributing their interpretation to build a complex and sustainable society. Pedagogical processes offered **direct practice** within local organizations, complemented by guided reflective activities.*

*Thus, starting from the sharing of objectives and the **co-construction of processes together with the teaching staff and the student community**, the "School Goes Green" method is based on the following steps:*

1. *Team building*
2. *Selection of host organizations*
3. *Info-day*
4. *Matching process*
5. *Mentoring*
6. *Initial workshop*
7. *Volunteering activities*
8. *Final workshop*
9. *Co-creation of outputs*
10. *Final event*





The method / 1. Team building

The experience begins with **the creation of the facilitation team**, composed of the coordinating organization, teachers, and students. Starting from the shared objectives, the team discusses and defines action strategies, roles, tasks, methods, and tools for both internal and external communication, ensuring a participatory construction of the processes.

Tips:

Ensure that the team includes teachers from various school branches to effectively reach the student community.



The method / 2. Selection of Host Organizations

Referring to its network, the coordinating organization identifies associations and/or companies in the area engaged in the creation of circular and sustainable communities to propose hosting young volunteers.

In Palermo, Per esempio Onlus **identified 7 organizations** committed to preparing an activity program aimed at stimulating curiosity about increasing green lifestyles and inclusive communities through hands-on experience. To support this, a descriptive form was prepared and presented during the school info day.

Tips:

the facilitation team identifies host organizations based on their alignment with the principles of the European Green Deal as well as the needs, desires, and interests of the student community.

It is important to consider the accessibility and reachability of the locations where the organizations involved operate.



The method / 3. Info-day

To kick off the activities, an **info day was organized at school**, during which groups of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year students had the opportunity to learn about the host organizations involved in the project and begin to familiarize themselves with key terms such as: *'volunteering,' 'European Green Deal,'* and *'participation.'*

The event began with a **presentation of the project's goals and activities**, followed by a brainstorming session and a debate on the theme of volunteering. Using "Mentimeter," participants were asked to complete the following sentence: *"The word 'volunteering' makes me think of..."* Interesting reflections emerged, enriching the discussion and making it more interactive and engaging.

After the discussion, the host organizations presented their volunteering opportunities. Before concluding, two European volunteers from *Per Esemplio* shared their experiences, emphasizing the value of volunteering and sparking questions and curiosity. At the end of the session, the call for registration for the project activities was launched. A Google Form was prepared in advance to gather information on participants' interests, motivations, and availability to engage in the full program, facilitating the matching process between young people and organizations.

Tips:

It is important for the facilitation team to introduce themselves to the audience to ensure that internal and external points of contact are recognizable and accessible.



The method / 4. Matching process

Following the deadline for completing the registration form, the facilitation team—composed of a group of youth leaders from the Student committee and youth workers from the coordinating organization—met to analyze the applications and identify the most suitable organizations. The matching process was based on the participants' interests and the needs of the organizations in terms of continuity, frequency of participation, and compatibility with the specific characteristics of the proposed activities.

Tips:

To ensure a good match, it is important to understand the learning expectations and interests of the participants.

It is not necessary to ask participants which organization they would prefer to join during the registration process.



The method / 5. Mentoring

A mentoring program supported participants throughout the journey, from the initial workshop to the final one, aimed at **fostering awareness of their experience**. The program was organized as follows:

- **During the Initial Workshop:**
 - initial analysis of participants' expectations, concerns, and prior skills and knowledge about the European Green Deal through a semi-structured questionnaire and non formal activities.
- **During the volunteering activities:**
 - use of a "learning diary," a blank notebook for participants to independently record significant aspects of their experience. It included prompt questions such as: How do I feel? What surprised me positively today? What surprised me negatively? What was easy today? Why? What was difficult today? Why? Today, I discovered about myself? Today, the group allowed me to...; Today's day in three words;
 - Peer-to-peer sessions with co-facilitators in a self-managed classroom during extracurricular hours;
 - A mid-term reflection meeting together with the host organizations.
- **During the Final Workshop:**
 - Self-reflection activities following the experience, using a semi-structured questionnaire and non-formal activities.

The **peer-to-peer co-facilitation group (Student committee)**, composed of school students, served as a support system and accessible point of reference for both young volunteers and host organizations. The self-managed classroom of the Student committee acted as a physical meeting space, fostering exchanges during extracurricular hours.

The following describes each phase of the "School Goes Green" experience.





The method / 6. Initial workshop

The initial workshop is part of the mentoring program, designed to **help young participants make the most of their experience** by mobilizing and activating personal resources, exploring their "learning zone," and providing **knowledge of the fundamentals of the European Green Deal**. The workshop included individual and group activities based on the active and participatory methods of non-formal education.

Duration: 3 hours

Objectives:

- Foster connections among the group of volunteers.
- Understand the objectives and phases of the *School Goes Green* project.
- Learn key concepts of the European Green Deal, circular economy, and social justice.
- Reflect on personal expectations regarding the upcoming volunteering experience.

Activities:

- Ice-breaker and group introduction games.
- Team-building exercises.
- Presentation of the European Green Deal.
- Collective analysis of the term "circularity": *"What signs of circularity do you find in your city?"* (brainstorming).
- Exploration of expectations, concerns, and skills that could be utilized.
- Distribution and introduction of individual "learning diaries."
- Workshop evaluation.
- Closing activity: *"Group, I want to tell you..."*

Tips:

Share facilitation responsibilities within a team composed of youth leaders (peer-to-peer co-facilitation group) and youth workers.

Use music as a tool to support reflection activities.





The method / 7. Volunteering Activities

The volunteering experiences

Each volunteer experience lasted at least **20 individual hours and had specific objectives** tied to the context and mandate of the respective host organization. However, all experiences shared a common goal: to create conditions that allowed young participants to:

- Make new friends and build connections with peers and local organizations.
- Improve their relational and socialization skills.
- Get to know themselves better, discovering new interests and resources.
- Increase their self-confidence and initiative.
- Stimulate and nurture their creativity.
- Learn more about their city.
- Raise their awareness of the state of society.
- Explore sustainable lifestyles and ecological practices.
- Develop a fair and inclusive understanding of gender identity.

Biodiversity Protection

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase awareness of the state of environmental health; - Acquire knowledge on how to preserve marine biodiversity; - Improve socio-relational skills.
Activities	Support in the preparation and management of workshops for children and young people aimed at understanding the impact of pollution on the marine ecosystem and learning how to separate waste.
Host organization	Circolo Legambiente Palermo





Circular economy

<p>Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop awareness of the fundamentals of the circular economy: reduce, recycle, repair, reuse. - Learn practices that contribute to reducing the environmental impact of textile materials. - Understand “ecological justice” practices in goods confiscated from the mafia.
<p>Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support in cataloging materials recovered through donations from companies, citizens, and individuals. - Cosplay workshop using discarded textile materials. - Sewing and embroidery activities with reclaimed materials: collective creation of a blanket to donate to a shelter. - Assistance in organizing the "Vintage & Beer" event aimed at promoting the culture of reuse and self-production.
<p>Host organization</p>	<p>Sartoria sociale</p>

<p>Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop awareness of the fundamentals of the circular economy: reduce, recycle, repair, reuse. - Learn how to combine circular economy with solidarity - Improve awareness on how daily habit impact the environment and learn how to introduce alternative in the daily life.
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Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support in organizing and managing the solidarity shop made of second hand objects; quality control of recovered products; repair of the products. - Participate to the daily activities and tasks for 1 week summer camp together with other young people of the city
Host organization	Emmaus

Social justice

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning about environmental respect and diversity through play, reading, and expressive arts. - Encourage active participation of the young people involved. - Improve intercultural skills. - Learn to analyze contexts in their complexity for a just and equitable transition.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-facilitation of sports and artistic-expressive activities. - Support for the staff in managing group dynamics during activities inside and outside the community center. - Assistance to the staff in engaging young people and families in summer activities.
Host organization	Santa Chiara



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Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn about respect for the environment and diversity through play, reading, and expressive arts. - Encourage active participation of the children involved. - Learn to facilitate learning activities aimed at developing emotional intelligence. - Improve intercultural skills. - Learn to analyze contexts in their complexity for a just and equitable transition.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-facilitation of reading workshops on ecological topics. - Co-facilitation of workshops aimed at enhancing self-awareness and emotional intelligence through play and visual arts. - Co-management of guided city tours with groups of children, focusing on environmental care. - Co-management of activities for families and support for parenting.
Host organization	<p>Casa Àncora</p>

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness of how public space management can promote equal opportunities and contribute to cultural and community growth. - Learn about equity and gender plurality through reading. - Learn to analyze contexts in their complexity for a just and equitable transition.
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Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library management: welcoming visitors, cataloging, and lending books. - Studying library books focused on emotional education, gender plurality, and breaking stereotypes. - Reading aloud activities with children. - Co-facilitation of workshops and activities for children on environmental care and healthy eating.
Host organization	Booq – bibliofficina di quartiere

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness of how local hubs can promote equal opportunities. - Understand how performing arts, such as dance, can be tools for empowerment. - Learn to analyze contexts in their complexity for a just and equitable transition.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational support to help young people with fewer opportunities obtain their diplomas. - Assistance in managing dance workshops for young women, aimed at fostering self-awareness and relational skills. - Context analysis and observation through neighborhood walks.
Host organization	Per esempio Onlus





Tips:

To support young people and host organizations, identify key contact points within the team.

The team's reference contacts should accompany groups of young volunteers during their first introduction to the organization to clarify objectives, define communication methods, and establish support structures (Who is responsible for what?).

Create group chats managed by the co-facilitation team.



The / 8. Final workshop

The final workshop is part of the mentoring program, aimed at assessing the impact of the experience on both **individual and collective** levels. The activities are designed **to guide young participants toward increased awareness of the skills they developed** in communication and relationships, their knowledge of the specific areas of intervention, and their understanding of the European Green Deal, along with the abilities, interests, and insights gained during the experience. The workshop consists of individual and group activities using the **active and participatory methods** of non-formal education.

Duration: 3 hours

Objectives:

- Familiarize the group with the working contexts of the host organizations.
- Raise awareness of their learning experience.
- Understand the connections between the experience and the fundamentals of the European Green Deal.
- Plan the creation of the final project output.
- Evaluate their volunteering experience and the workshop.

Activities:

- Ice-breaker and group introduction games.
- Introduction to reflection: *“How was your experience?”* (sharing key words).
- Analysis of expectations, challenges, and skills: *“Were my expectations met? What challenges or difficulties did I face? What resources did I activate, and what did I learn?”*
- Creating links between the experience and the themes of the European Green Deal.
- Planning the creation of the final project output.
- Evaluation of the volunteering experience and the workshop.





Tips:

Share facilitation responsibilities within a team composed of youth leaders (peer-to-peer co-facilitation group) and youth workers.

Use music as a tool to support reflection activities.



The method / 9. Co-creation of output

Following the volunteering experience, the creation of individual or group **multimedia narrative outputs** designed to share what was learned represents an additional educational opportunity. This process activates **reflection, analysis, and elaboration skills**. A workshop is proposed for all participants to initiate the co-creation process in a blended format, combining group work and independent effort.

Duration: 3 hours

Objectives:

- Identify the connections between the experience and the fundamentals of the European Green Deal;
- Create a storyboard for developing the outputs;
- Plan the creation of the final output within each group-association;

Activities:

- Ice-breaker and group introduction games.
- Analysis of the objectives of the European Green Deal and brainstorming on key concepts like *'Social Justice,' 'Circular Economy,'* and *'Biodiversity Protection'*: *"How did you experience these concepts?"*
- Completion of a planning worksheet for the co-creation process within each group-association: What is the theme connecting your association to the European Green Deal? What did each of us do? What message/value do we want to communicate? (be specific); Why, in our opinion, is it important to actively participate in this association? What form/expression do we want to use to communicate the message/value of our experience (video, PowerPoint, drawing, written document, comic, images, a physical product, etc.)? What materials and tools do we need? How do we want to work? Individually or in groups? Remotely or in person? How much time will we need? How many meetings, if any? What deadlines should we set for ourselves?





The method / 10. Final event

At the end of the volunteering activities, organizing a feedback event for the school community and the wider local area provides an opportunity to **celebrate and showcase the journey undertaken by participants**. It also serves as a platform to inspire and motivate other groups of young people to engage in active participation within their city. Additionally, inviting representatives from **active policy sectors, as well as public and private organizations, can encourage the strengthening and expansion of educational opportunities** for the youth community.

Issuing a participation certificate to those involved not only fosters engagement and enhances individual school resumes but also contributes to recognizing the value of volunteering and civic commitment, further stimulating active participation



Conclusions

Following the experience, there has been an observed increase in active participation by the youth community, both in the activities of the *R. Margherita High School Student committee* and within the involved organizations. The young participants have enhanced their awareness of how daily habits can impact the environment and how a just transition cannot occur without equal opportunities.

The experience also enabled participants to develop and expand their relationships, improving their self-confidence and beginning to feel part of a community.

The organizations involved, along with their beneficiaries, had the opportunity to embrace inclusion by integrating young people into their environments. These young participants brought diverse habits, behaviors, and lifestyles, providing a valuable opportunity for growth and learning.

“The SCHOOL GOES GREEN project allowed us to be heard and feel like protagonists of change, developing the ability to understand and engage with reality.”

(Ilenia Bonfardeci, Regina Margherita High School Student and Student committee Representative)





SCHOOL GOES GREEN

WITH THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF:

The co-facilitation group of the Student committee

Ilenia Bonfardeci, Cecilia Diana, Gabriella Fiducia, Marta Napoli, Sophia Pagliaro

The school board and teachers of the Regina Margherita high school in Palermo

advocates of an open and participatory school model

The organizations that hosted the volunteering programs

Santa Chiara, Booq, Sartoria sociale, Per Esempio, Legambiente, Casa Ancora, Emmaus.

The student-volunteers of the *School Goes Green* project

Siria India, Gabriella Fiducia, Sara Taormina, Gabriele Pace, Giorgia Provenzano, Kaviya Gangatharan, Clotilde Lo Cicero, Sara Gyabaa, Sofia Patti, Germana Guerrera, Sharon vallone, Sharon Badalamenti, Giorgia La Milia Rigoli, Sofia Giordano, Sofia Faraone, Sabrina Magliolo, Asia Sardisco, Mariasofia Onorato, Laura Maria Lo Manto, Flavio Lupo, Sandra Pencea.

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