



SUPERHEROES

E-book



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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SUPERHEROES

**Erasmus+ project “SUPERHEROES - Local
SDG Challenges under an international
microscope” (nr: KA220-SCH-05AD2AC1)**



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PROJECT INFO

- Local **SDG** (sustainable development goals) challenges under an international microscope” is a two-year Erasmus+ funded project - collaboration involving six partners in four countries: Latvia, Bulgaria, Spain, and the Netherlands.

SUPERHEROES is a programme which is aimed to increase the knowledge of environmental and social issues among youngsters. The project targets teachers, students from 12 to 16, and those interested in the development of these youngsters.





The specific objectives of SUPERHEROES are to:

- 1. Increase awareness on environmental issues in your own region**
- 2. Increase awareness on environmental social issues across Europe**
- 3. Increase the active citizenship among students between 12 and 16 years old**
- 4. Develop/improve intercultural skills among students between 12 and 16 years old**
- 5. Increase level of English speaking among students between 12 and 16 years old**
- 6. Develop an innovative learning approach towards challenge identification and problem solving in the field of the SDGs.**

Project results:

- 1. SUPERHEROES Methodology**
- 2. SUPERHEROES E-book**
- 3. SUPERHEROES Web Application**
- 4. SUPERHEROES Action Plans**



PROJECT PARTNERS



Stichting AERES groep

AERES is the lead partner of this project. They challenge (future) professionals to have a life long development of their competences and worth for employer or clients. We believe in a society which constantly develops the knowledge and skills needed for working sustainably with 'life'. Vision Dutch knowledge and skills within the green sector are trendsetting in the world. On international agenda's themes like a viable environment and food security take top positions. By working together, learning organisations, entrepreneurial professionals and students can create worthwhile solutions for the future.

aeres.nl



EOLAS S.L.

EOLAS provides support for educational bodies, civil society organizations and businesses related to social, educational and business innovation. We apply innovative approaches such as co-creation, co-design, storytelling, solution focus approach and narrative approaches.

eolas.se

PROJECT PARTNERS



Grundzales pamatskola (GRUND)

GRUND is a coeducational establishment meeting the academic, social and physical need of pupils within 7-16 age range. It is a typical school in the Latvian countryside with 110 pupils and 46 at the pre-school now. The school is very active in sports, social projects, environmental issues and other areas that are on the concern of the community. There are three folk-dancing groups, choir, sport groups and Young Guards at school.

<https://izglitiba.smiltenesnovads.lv/vispareja-izglitiba/skola-1/>



Laptify

Laptify (The Netherlands)
Laptify is an organisation that assists organisations with their IT requirements. For example, it builds and maintains websites and it can also develop state of the art mobile applications for start-ups - Netherlands.

laptify.nl

PROJECT PARTNERS



Profesionalna gimnaziya Asen Zlatarov (PGAZ)

Profesionalna gimnaziya Asen Zlatarov (PGAZ) is the biggest vocational school in the district of Vidin. The school trains on average about 400 students in the field of economy, tourism electronics and energetics. Each year between 20 and 40 students conduct their practices in various partner organizations in the EU, while about 30 youths and teachers work on diversified topics with colleagues and peers from more than 10 European countries. During the last year the school worked under 4 Erasmus+ project.

www.pgaz.org



Stichting Incubator Leeuwarden (INQ)

INQ is for all ambitious entrepreneurs (of the future) who would like to establish themselves in Leeuwarden. Inqubator provides start-ups with an office, knowledge, network, advice, training and workshops in cooperation with business and educational partners. Besides that, Inqubator Leeuwarden is involved in several European projects to strengthen their own offer or contribute to local development.

<https://inqubator.nl/>

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The 17 SDGs are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Countries have committed to prioritize progress for those who're furthest behind. The SDGs are designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls.

The creativity, knowhow, technology and financial resources from all of society is necessary to achieve the SDGs in every context.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

On the next two pages you can find the 17 SDGs with short descriptions.



**End Poverty
in All its
Forms
Everywhere**



**End hunger, achieve
food security and
improved nutrition
and promote
sustainable agriculture**



**Ensure healthy
lives and promote
well-being for
all at all ages**



**Ensure inclusive and
equitable quality
education and promote
lifelong learning
opportunities for all**



**Ensure access to
affordable, reliable,
sustainable and
modern energy for all**



**Ensure availability
and sustainable
management of water
and sanitation for all**



**Achieve gender
equality and
empower all
women and girls**



**Promote sustained,
inclusive and sustainable
economic growth, full and
productive employment
and decent work for all**



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



Reduce inequality within and among countries



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

WHY SHOULD WE TEACH THE SDGs?

Research shows that teaching the SDGs increases academic ability, leads to & motivates the mental & moral growth of learners. It also equips them with the pertinent soft skills critical for securing jobs. For educators, teaching fresh content is energizing.

SDGs have a huge part to play in today's classrooms. As a blueprint for making the world a better place, these goals can help engage students and inform lesson plans. Let's take a look at the top 7 reasons why educators should make use of the SDGs in their classrooms.

1. They are good for the planet.

SDGs are about more than awareness. They also break down each goal into a set of achievable sub-targets. Tackling a subject like climate change is a massive challenge, but the SDGs show smaller ways to contribute towards climate action for the good of the planet. Educators can use these sub-targets to show their students the ways in which they can make an impact on improving the world that they live in.






2. They are good for humanity.

Students will get a greater knowledge of challenges faced not only in their own lives but also in the lives of others all around the world. These SDGs highlight the structures behind our society – economic, legal, and political – and their complexities. They shed light on difficulties that students may not be aware of, or even take for granted.

3. They teach empathy to the students.

Empathy and curiosity are at the heart of global leadership. They give students an awareness of the wider world, and its values and identities. This helps the development of students into more well-rounded citizens of the world, and shows them the ways in which they can make a difference in the future.

4. They give lesson plans a new perspective.



For example, geography and science lessons can be enriched by discussing climate change subjects such as the causes and effects of the increase in average global temperature, or how climate change is creating natural disasters like tsunamis and tropical cyclones. Biology lessons could examine not only the cellular study of viruses and diseases but also the societal factors that allow them to thrive, such as inadequate access to medication and education. The SDGs are an ideal filter through which to expand and enrich your lesson plans. Boost classroom engagement by demonstrating the real-world impact of the subjects your students are learning.

5. They are valuable educational source.

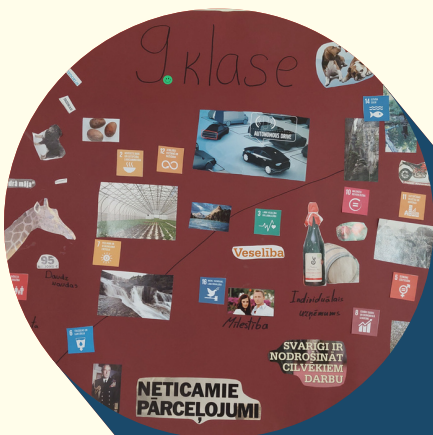
It shouldn't be overlooked just how much research and information is packed into each of the SDGs. The United Nations has sourced and compiled vital information about each goal in one place.

6. They give focus to classroom discussion.

As the SDGs show, even making a small change can have a big impact on the world. By ensuring that the goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely, they can be used to give focus to classroom discussion.

7. They align with curriculum.

It's worth emphasizing that the SDGs are closely aligned with today's curriculum. They broach a remarkable range of traditional academic subjects such as geography, biology, social sciences, politics, economics, and more.



SDGS IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES : BULGARIA

Sustainable development is a priority for Bulgaria, both nationally and internationally. We emphasize the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social, and environmental.

Our policies are rooted in principles like human rights, gender equality, and inclusivity, focusing on marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, vulnerable communities, Roma, youth, the elderly, and disadvantaged children.

Bulgaria excels in gender diversity, with 27% of women in the IT sector and 53% of women in science and engineering. We're actively working to reduce the gender pay gap and combat gender-based violence.

We strongly advocate for children's rights and youth empowerment, with a UN Youth Delegate program since 2007.

Regarding renewable energy, we've achieved 20.53% and plan to reach 27% by 2030.

Data is crucial for measuring progress, and as an EU Member State, Bulgaria aligns with EU SDG targets. Challenges include addressing demographic trends, poverty, inequality, and education.

In 2022, we adopted the National Development Programme BULGARIA 2030, focusing on economic development, demographic growth, and inequality reduction. This program includes 13 national priorities across five development areas, explicitly linked to SDGs, reflecting our whole-of-government approach and recognizing SDG interlinkages.

SDGS IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES: LATVIA

Quality Education (SDG 4) is continuously improving. Investments in R&D, transport and housing infrastructure (SDG 9) are underway. Together, these initiatives are having a positive impact on the economy and employment (SDG 8). At the same time, insufficient progress has been made in reducing inequalities (SDG 10), and the risk of poverty among the older generation is increasing (SDG 1). Active employment measures (SDG 8), education reforms (SDG 4), and structural reforms in the minimum income system (SDG 1) will improve the situation for younger generations and reduce the depth of poverty. Improvements in health (SDG 3) through the health care system have been made, including salary increases for public sector medical staff. Next steps include improving health care efficiency and responsiveness and facilitating prevention.



SDGS IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES: LATVIA

There is steady progress on most gender equality (SDG 5), however, the growing gap between men's and women's hourly wages is disconcerting.

Significant steps have been taken in SDG 11, including an administrative-territorial reform that reduced the number of municipalities.

Water quality (SDG 6, SDG 14) in Latvia is satisfactory, but international cooperation is essential to reduce the eutrophication level of the Baltic Sea. Regarding climate, it is important to move forward on SDG 13, SDG 7 and SDG 12 to meet 2030 climate commitments and to develop solutions for net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 while ensuring that low-income households are not disproportionately affected.



SDGS IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES: THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands has identified six major challenges: addressing climate change, improving agriculture and food systems, promoting a circular economy, ensuring well-being, fostering inclusivity, and taking global responsibility. The government has introduced new policies to tackle these challenges, such as climate and circular economy policies.

Policymakers now consider the well-being of future generations and the global community. Cooperation, inclusiveness, and trust are essential in facing these challenges, with efforts to strengthen democracy, promote equal opportunities, and combat discrimination.

To accelerate progress, there's a need for better coordination, changes in how we produce and consume, and support for sustainable business models. Young people are worried about their future, especially regarding climate change, while human rights and the SDGs are closely connected, with a focus on poverty, gender equality, healthcare, and housing in the Netherlands.

In conclusion, the Netherlands highlight the importance of working together across different sectors and organizations to advance the SDGs, particularly during times of crises.

SDGS IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES: SPAIN

Since the 2030 Agenda and SDGs were adopted in 2015, Spain has embraced them in its national policy, forming the Sustainable Development Council. In Extremadura, the regional government and municipalities have also aligned with the SDGs, leading to successes like Cáceres being recognized as the most sustainable city for renewable energy.

In 2023, Spain improved its global SDG ranking, now at 16th place, up six spots from 2021, showing a trend of continuous improvement. However, challenges remain for SDGs 2, 8, 12, 13, 14, and 17. The "Progress Report 2023 of the Sustainable Development Strategy" notes progress but emphasizes the need for further efforts in the coming years.

At the regional level, Extremadura needs to develop its own SDGs Implementation Strategy and interdepartmental coordination mechanisms. These steps are crucial to address challenges like rural depopulation, job creation, and social inequalities.



WHAT IS THE SUPERHEROES PROGRAMME?

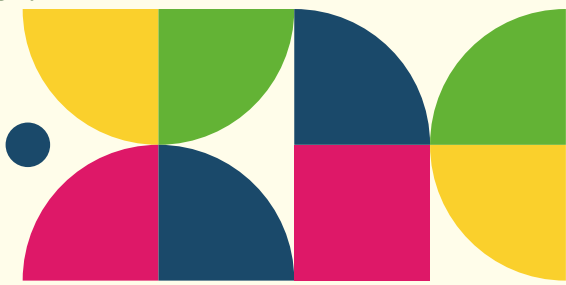
An educational initiative that's set to empower young learners aged 12 to 16. The programme is aimed at increasing awareness of critical environmental and social issues while nurturing vital skills for active citizenship and problem-solving. As the e-book shows you, in these lessons students will explore the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and discover ways to address them creatively.

Structured into four main topics, the SUPERHEROES programme is designed to foster critical thinking, innovation, and engagement.

In our first topic “Understanding the SDGs”, students will be introduced to the SDGs and their global significance. They'll engage in thought-provoking discussions that help them relate the SDGs to their own lives and communities.

In the second topic “Brainstorming About Local SDGs”, students will tap into their creative thinking abilities to brainstorm solutions for local challenges tied to the SDGs. They'll also identify potential stakeholders who can contribute to solving these challenges.

The third topic “Presenting the Challenge & Uploading It” focuses on effective storytelling. Students will learn how to communicate the challenges and solutions they've identified through compelling narratives. Their work will be uploaded to the SUPERHEROES platform for broader dissemination.



In the final topic “Thinking About Solutions and Testing Them”, students will shift their attention to practical solutions. They’ll think critically, refine their ideas based on feedback, and even have the chance to test their solutions with local organisations if possible.

As you embark on this educational journey, we also provide you with valuable resources to enhance your experience:

Appendix A: Useful links and materials

Appendix B: Brainstorm ideas

Appendix C: Listening and feedback skills

The SUPERHEROES programme is here to equip young learners with the skills and knowledge they need to become proactive agents of change in a world where addressing environmental and social issues is of utmost importance. Through these lessons, students will gain a deeper understanding of global challenges and develop the confidence and creativity to contribute to a more sustainable future. Join us on this educational journey as we unlock the potential of our future superheroes!





HOW DID WE CREATE THE PROGRAMME?

The partnership kick started the testing during the learning, teaching, and training activity (LTTA) in Cáceres. In 3 days teachers walked through the programme with students and let them work on it. After these tests it was possible to adjust the programme and make it even better. You can find a short summary of the LLTA on page 23 of the E-book.

After the summary of the LTTA you can find an overview of each topic in the programme, with the experiences of the teachers and students when they tested it in their classes. After those tests the partnership made some minor changes in the programme to create the final version you can find on the website: localsuperheroes.eu.

If you want more information on the programme, training or anything related to the SUPERHEROES project, you are more than welcome to contact one of the partners.

LEARNING, TEACHING, TRAINING ACTIVITY IN CÁCERES, SPAIN

On the 12th, 13th and 14th of April 2023, 24 students, 7 teachers and 5 trainers from Latvia, Bulgaria, Spain and the Netherlands got together in Cáceres, Spain to test the S materials. Especially for the students this was a big adventure, and even more special for those who have not been abroad before!



The test was a huge success, helped the partnership create a better programme, and is a good way to let students from different countries connect. If your school has an exchange programme, the partnership hopes you consider to intertwine SUPERHEROES in it. The students are more willing to connect with others on the platform if they met before.

THE LTTA IN CÁCERES



Day 1: The training began with an icebreaking activity that helped participants from diverse backgrounds connect. Students then shared their visions for 2030, connecting personal goals to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the afternoon, a city exploration field trip in Cáceres allowed students to identify local issues linked to the SDGs, with photos and videos documenting these issues later shared on social media.

Day 2: Participants attended a storytelling workshop to enhance their communication skills and worked in national groups to create stories that incorporated 'hidden' SDGs. Later in the day, a field trip led them to find inspiring pieces of art and history, such as a unicorn statue and museum items.



Day 3: The training concluded with participants presenting their stories and proposed solutions to the group, fostering discussion and potential collaboration on solutions. The day ended with reflections on the training experience, described as informative, enjoyable, and intense.



TOPIC 1: WHAT ARE SDGS?

On page 5 of the lesson plan, you will find the first topic: “What are the SDGs?”

The expected learning outcomes are:

- students are capable of understanding the 17 sustainable development goals;
- students know how to find connections/relations between SDGs and their lives;
- students are capable of discussion about SDG.

During these lessons you can do the following activities with your students:

- Imagine life in 2030/2035
- Make a poster or virtual poster
- Find a SDG in your future life
- Discuss relevance of SDG's in your life



EXPERIENCES WITH SUPERHEROES: TOPIC 1

The students

BG - "We got to explore interesting topics, work together as a team, and share our awesome ideas. It's all about being creative, interactive, and having great discussions where we can share our thoughts and examples."

LV - "At first it was hard to connect the SDGs to my own future, but it was fun to image everything can be better, healthier, and happier."

NL - "We had to think about how we want our lives to be in 2030 and then we learned about the 17 SDGs and linked them to our dreams for 2030."

ES - "It was interesting to hear different opinions about the SDGs, and which ones are most important for some of us than others."

The teachers

BG - "Students (14 year old) find it a bit confusing and overwhelming at the beginning when the topic is first introduced, which may turn into a bit more time-consuming experience than expected, but with a clear and visualized explanation of the SDGs they quickly make the connections with real life."

LV - "Students (14 years old) need help to find the most important topics of their lives."

NL - "It was a fun and engaging exercise for the students to think about their futures and then learn about the SDGs that they then linked to what they had come up with. It is a fun and creative way to make the subject relevant to the students."

ES - "Issues related to environment, climate change but also inclusion and diversity are things which concern students, discussing about the SDGs and discussing and discovering their own priorities with regards to the SDGs was very enriching."

TOPIC 2: BRAINSTORM ABOUT LOCAL SDGs

On page 8 of the lesson plan, you will find the first topic: “Brainstorm about local SDGs”.

The expected learning outcomes are:

- Students know how to brainstorm;
- Students are able to enhance creative thinking and lateral thinking;
- Students will be able to work together;
- Students will understand how to identify (potential) stakeholders;

During these lessons you can do the following activities with your students:

- Set up half-a-session to brainstorm about local challenges related to SDGs.
- Students discuss the local SDGs from the brainstorming session.
- Students come up with possible stakeholders who could bring experience, expertise, possible partnerships, etc. to their work with the chosen challenge.



EXPERIENCES WITH SUPERHEROES: TOPIC 2

The students

BG - “Brainstorming showed us that when we put our minds together, there's no limit to the amazing ideas we can come up with. And it's so much fun to see what we can achieve when we work as a team.”

LV- “Finding local challenges or SDGs that we can actually make a difference in can be a bit tough, but we've noticed that SDG 3 and 12 are the ones that seem most relevant to us.”

NL - “It was so much fun for us students to envision our lives in 2030!”

ES - “There are several important issues related to SDGs on local level, mainly related to environmental issues (e.g. a mining project), but also being a region which is one of the poorest in, made the brainstorming very “close to home.”

The teachers

BG -”Although it might get a little too noisy in class during doing this part of the methodology, this kind of exercise turns to be really useful and teaches the students a very effective technique that can be used for different purposes.”

LV -”Teachers should think in advance about possible local challenges of SDG, had a conversation with local municipality or school administration to know their opinion. this helps the students move forward a bit quicker.”

NL - “Once the students were able to grasp the ideas in their surroundings, they came up with some really nice ideas.”

ES - “Connecting the SDGs with real issues on local level increased the student motivation for learning and become more active in their own learning processes.”

TOPIC 3: HOW TO PRESENT THE CHALLENGE TO FOREIGN STUDENTS & UPLOAD IT

On page 12 of the lesson plan, you will find the third topic:

“How to present the challenge to foreign students & upload it”

The expected learning outcomes are:

- Students will understand how to craft meaningful stories;
- Students will understand how to apply storytelling techniques;
- Students have improved their written communication skills.

During these lessons you can do the following activities with your students:

- Process at a glance:
- Create a plot for the message to convey applying storytelling techniques.
- Write your story according to the audience.
- Upload the challenge(s) to the SUPERHEROES platform <https://app.localsuperheroes.eu/>.



EXPERIENCES WITH SUPERHEROES: TOPIC 3

The students

BG - “The platform was easy to use and clearly organised.”

LV - “The Sentences at the beginning really help you form your story to present it clearly to the other students.”

NL - “We really enjoyed writing our own story and then we had to think about how we were going to present this. We made all made very creative videos and watched them together and learned about our fellow student’s SDG challenges.”

ES - “It was really fun to think about a story related to the challenge we worked on, in class we used the “superhero” story, we could really create our own heroes.”

The teachers

BG - “The students didn’t face any challenges during the uploading of their problem stories, besides a little explanation about the meaning of certain words in English.”

LV - “Our class (18 students) was divided into 5 groups to look to the same challenge from interested parties (municipality, inhabitants, waste managers). So they came up with 5 stories. The more specific the challenge, closer to the students' environment, the easier it is to compose a story.”

NL - “Students really enjoyed writing their stories. They were able to present their challenges about the local SDGs in very creative ways. We encouraged the students to seek solutions within their own environment.”

ES - “The storytelling activity really connected with the students, it made thinking about how to communicate their challenge and solution engaging. It was surprising to see how creative some of the stories were.”

TOPIC 4: THINK ABOUT SOLUTIONS, TEST YOUR SOLUTION

On page 17 of the lesson plan, you will find the fourth topic: “Think about solutions, test your solution”

The expected learning outcomes are:

- Students have an understanding of solution thinking;
- Students understand how to test these solutions;
- Students understand how to approach organisations.

During these lessons you can do the following activities with your students:

- Reuse the brainstorm session to think about solutions;
- Test the solution at an organisation or at least propose the idea to an organisation;
- Upload the solutions on the platform.



EXPERIENCES WITH SUPERHEROES: TOPIC 4

The students

BG - "We discussed challenges in our teams, extended the conversation to our homes and peer groups for homework, and ultimately, in class, we identified and uploaded the best suggestions to the platform."

LV - "Finding solutions for the challenge can be challenging because it requires not only changing our behavior and habits but also presenting our proposals to adults."

NL - "We went home and then talked to our families about what we had learned and what challenge we had chosen in our group so that we could think of possible solutions together and if they knew anyone who could help with this."

ES - "It was not so easy to come up with solutions, we needed to think about the challenge very well, and understand what the problem was. It was good to exchange ideas with fellow students because it helped to find solutions."

The teachers

BG - "The process started in the classroom but expanded to students' homes and communities, enabling a deeper understanding of SDGs challenges and more solution ideas. Students must stay actively involved and watch for platform changes and new challenges."

LV - "Students can come up with interesting solutions, but sometimes not realistic and too wide but during discussion process of each solution in groups they will understand themselves their mistakes."

NL - "It was really nice to see that the students discussed their challenges at home and thus got more people informed about the SDGs and to have their families think about possible solutions which they could then present to their peers."

ES - "Although the students initially struggled a bit with finding a solution, making them discuss in groups and share ideas helped to open their eyes to a range of solutions. As a teacher I need to make sure my students understand well the challenge chosen and have analysed it properly."



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MORE INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT CAN BE FOUND ON:



www.localsuperheroes.eu



www.app.localsuperheroes.eu





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