

GREEN-PRO

Green Professional Development for Youth Workers

COMPENDIUM OF NON-FORMAL ACTIVITIES

Erasmus+ Seminar | Horezu, Romania | 14–21 March 2026

Coordinated by Pro Dezvoltare DACIA Association (APDD) – Romania

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About the GREEN-PRO Project

The GREEN-PRO (Green Professional Development for Youth Workers) project represents a collaborative European effort to strengthen environmental education and climate action in youth work. Funded through the Erasmus+ Programme, this initiative brought together 40 youth workers from at least 10 partner organizations across Europe for an intensive 8-day seminar in Horezu, Romania (14–21 March 2026).

Project Objectives

The GREEN-PRO project was designed with four interconnected objectives:

- To increase the quality of youth services by strengthening organizational capacity to use modern, applicable and inclusive green educational approaches
- To improve the professional preparation of youth workers through participation in an international seminar focused on environmental education, sustainable development and climate change, based on experience exchange and collaborative learning
- To create, adapt, test and validate at least 5 green, experiential and inclusive educational activities, starting from participants' real practices and adapted for working with young people with fewer opportunities
- To increase environmental information, awareness and sensitization among young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, by facilitating access to educational materials created during the mobility and disseminated through digital channels

What This Compendium Offers

This compendium is the collective achievement of all seminar participants. It contains 21 ready-to-use non-formal educational activities designed, tested, and refined during the GREEN-PRO seminar. Each activity has been piloted with real participants and includes practical insights from facilitators across Europe.

All activities in this compendium share these core characteristics:

- Experiential and participatory – learning happens through doing, not just listening
- Inclusive by design – adaptations provided for participants with diverse needs and backgrounds
- Environmentally focused – addressing real sustainability challenges young people face
- Action-oriented – fostering agency and empowerment rather than despair
- Competence-based – aligned with Youthpass and GreenComp frameworks

How to Use This Compendium

Whether you're an experienced facilitator or new to environmental education in youth work, this compendium is designed to support you. Each activity includes step-by-step instructions, timing guidance, materials lists, facilitation tips, and specific inclusion adaptations. Activities are organized thematically across seven chapters, allowing you to find methods suited to your specific context and learning objectives.

These activities are not finished products—they are starting points. We encourage you to adapt them to your local context, test them with your groups, and share your experiences with the wider youth work community.

Chapter 1: Getting to Know, Team Building and Trust Building

Icebreakers and energizers with an environmental twist. These activities build cohesion and set the tone for green learning while helping participants connect with each other and the natural world.

Activity 1.1: Nature Bingo

Duration: 45–60 min	Group Size: 10–30	Setting: Outdoors	Difficulty: Beginner
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Overview

Nature Bingo is an energizing icebreaker that gets participants moving, observing, and interacting with both nature and each other. Participants receive bingo cards with nature-based items or observations (e.g., 'something smooth,' 'a yellow flower,' 'birdsong,' 'signs of insects'). They explore a designated outdoor area, marking off items as they find them. The first person to complete a line shouts 'Bingo!' This activity breaks the ice while immediately connecting the group to environmental awareness and the importance of observing the natural world around us.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify at least 5 natural elements or phenomena in their immediate environment
- Demonstrate improved observation skills related to nature
- Engage comfortably with other participants through shared discovery

Materials Needed

- Bingo cards (one per participant) – printed or drawn on paper
- Pens or markers
- Safe outdoor space with diverse natural features
- Optional: small prizes or certificates for winners

Step-by-Step Process

Introduction (10 minutes):

Gather the group and explain that they'll be playing Nature Bingo. Hand out bingo cards and pens. Explain the rules: participants explore the designated area, looking for items on their card. When they find an item, they mark it off. The first to complete a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line shouts 'Bingo!' Set clear boundaries for the search area and establish a time limit (15–20 minutes).

Main Activity (25 minutes):

Participants spread out and begin searching. Facilitators circulate to ensure safety, answer questions, and encourage participants to interact ('Have you found the smooth stone yet?'). When someone completes a line, verify their bingo and celebrate. Continue playing until several people have won or time runs out.

Debrief (10 minutes):

Gather the group in a circle. Ask: What surprised you about what you found? Did you notice anything new about this place? How did it feel to slow down and observe nature? Connect their observations to the week's theme of environmental awareness.

Inclusion Adaptations

- For participants with mobility challenges: Ensure the search area is wheelchair accessible or create a stationary version where items are brought to the participant
- For language barriers: Use picture-based bingo cards with icons instead of text
- For neurodiverse participants: Provide a visual schedule, offer the option to search alone or with a buddy, and give clear time warnings
- Online adaptation: Use a virtual scavenger hunt with participants sharing photos from their own outdoor spaces via video call

Facilitator Tips

- Scout the location beforehand to ensure all bingo items can actually be found
- Adjust difficulty based on the group – use more abstract items ('something that makes you happy') for experienced groups
- Have extra cards ready for participants who finish early and want to keep playing

Activity 1.2: The Human Knot with Eco-Questions

Duration: 30–45 min	Group Size: 8–16	Setting: Indoors/Outdoors	Difficulty: Beginner
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Overview

This classic team-building activity gets a green twist. Participants stand in a circle, reach across to grab hands with two different people, creating a human knot. As they work together to untangle themselves without letting go, they must answer environmental questions posed by the facilitator. The activity builds trust, communication, and problem-solving skills while reinforcing green knowledge in a playful, energetic way. The physical challenge combined with mental engagement creates memorable learning moments and helps participants feel comfortable with each other.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate effective communication and collaboration under physical constraints
- Answer basic environmental questions about climate change, biodiversity, and sustainability
- Reflect on the importance of collective action in solving complex problems

Materials Needed

- Open space large enough for participants to move freely
- List of environmental questions (prepared in advance)
- Optional: timer, background music

Step-by-Step Process

Introduction (5 minutes):

Ask participants to stand in a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder. Instruct everyone to reach their right hand across the circle and grab someone else's right hand (not the person next to them). Then do the same with left hands. The group should now be tangled together in a 'human knot.'

Main Activity (25 minutes):

Challenge the group to untangle themselves without letting go of hands, working together to form one or more circles. As they work, pause periodically to ask environmental questions: 'What percentage of plastic waste is recycled globally?' 'Name three renewable energy sources.' 'What is biodiversity?' The group must answer before continuing to untangle. Facilitators observe communication patterns and offer gentle guidance if needed.

Debrief (10 minutes):

Once untangled (or time is up), discuss: What strategies helped you solve the knot? How did it feel when the solution wasn't obvious? How is this like solving environmental challenges – we're all connected and need to work together? What did you learn from the eco-questions?

Inclusion Adaptations

- For physical disabilities: Create a seated version where participants link arms while seated in chairs, or use a rope to create a tangible knot that wheelchair users can participate in solving
- For language barriers: Provide eco-questions in multiple languages or use visual aids (show images and ask participants to identify sustainable vs. unsustainable practices)
- For participants uncomfortable with physical contact: Offer the option to hold a rope loop instead of hands, or form a 'verbal knot' where participants must untangle a story together
- Online adaptation: Use a virtual puzzle or collaborative online game where participants must work together to solve environmental riddles

Facilitator Tips

- Start with easier eco-questions and increase difficulty as the activity progresses
- Challenge: The group gets frustrated or gives up. Solution: Offer hints, celebrate small progress, or allow one hand to be released temporarily as a 'hint'
- Keep the energy light and playful – laughter is a sign of good team building!

Activity 1.3: Nature Speed Dating

Duration: 40–50 min	Group Size: 12–30 (even number)	Setting: Indoors/Outdoors	Difficulty: Beginner
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Overview

Participants pair up for quick 3-minute conversations, rotating partners every round like speed dating. Each round has a different environmental theme or question prompt (e.g., 'Share your favorite place in nature and why,' 'What environmental issue worries you most?', 'Describe your dream sustainable community'). This activity helps everyone meet each other quickly while discovering shared values and different perspectives on environmental topics. It creates an inclusive atmosphere where quieter participants have structured opportunities to speak, and the rotation ensures everyone connects with multiple people.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Articulate personal connections to nature and environmental concerns
- Identify common ground and diverse perspectives within the group
- Demonstrate active listening and respectful dialogue skills

Materials Needed

- Chairs arranged in two rows facing each other (or standing space for outdoor version)
- List of conversation prompts (5–7 questions)
- Timer or bell to signal rotations
- Optional: flipchart to display questions, background music during transitions

Step-by-Step Process

Introduction (5 minutes):

Explain the concept: participants will have short, focused conversations with different people. Arrange participants in two rows facing each other (or two circles, one inside the other). Explain that one row will stay seated while the other rotates after each round. Each conversation lasts 3 minutes.

Main Activity (30 minutes):

Announce the first question. Ring the bell to start. Participants discuss with their current partner. After 3 minutes, ring the bell. One row shifts one seat to the right (the person at the end walks to the beginning). Repeat with a new question for 5–7 rounds. Sample questions: 'What's your earliest memory connected to nature?' 'If you could solve one environmental problem, which would it be?' 'Describe a sustainable practice from your culture or family.' 'What gives you hope about the future of our planet?'

Debrief (10 minutes):

Gather the full group. Ask: What surprised you in these conversations? Did you discover unexpected common ground? What diverse perspectives did you hear? How might these different viewpoints strengthen our work together this week?

Inclusion Adaptations

- For language barriers: Pair participants with a common language when possible, or provide questions in multiple languages on cards that can be shown rather than spoken
- For neurodiverse participants: Provide questions in advance so participants can prepare thoughts, offer a 'pass' option for any question, create a quiet corner for those who need a break
- For shy participants: Include prompts like 'Show your partner a photo on your phone of your favorite natural place' to provide non-verbal conversation starters
- Online adaptation: Use breakout rooms in video conferencing, automatically rotating participants every 3 minutes with new prompts

Facilitator Tips

- Start with lighter questions and progress to deeper ones as comfort builds
- If you have an odd number, join as a participant or create one trio
- Keep energy high during transitions with upbeat music or playful countdowns

Chapter 2: Introducing Green Concepts – Activity Based

Creative, experiential activities that introduce concepts such as climate change, biodiversity, ecological footprint and sustainability without lectures. Learning through discovery and hands-on experience.

Activity 2.1: The Carbon Footprint Walk

Duration: 60–75 min	Group Size: 15–25	Setting: Outdoors/Large Indoor Space	Difficulty: Beginner
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Overview

Participants physically experience the concept of carbon footprint by walking distances that represent different lifestyle choices. A baseline is established (e.g., 10 meters = 1 ton of CO₂ per year), then participants walk forward or backward based on decisions: 'You eat meat daily' (walk forward 5 steps), 'You use public transport' (walk back 3 steps), 'You buy fast fashion monthly' (forward 4 steps), etc. By the end, participants are spread across the space, literally seeing the impact of cumulative choices. This kinesthetic approach makes an abstract concept tangible and memorable, sparking reflection on personal responsibility and systemic change.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain what carbon footprint means and how it's measured
- Identify high-impact and low-impact lifestyle choices in terms of carbon emissions
- Analyze the relationship between individual choices and systemic factors in climate change
- Reflect on personal agency and collective responsibility

Materials Needed

- Large open space (at least 20 meters long)
- Prepared list of lifestyle scenarios with step values
- Markers or tape to indicate starting line and reference points
- Optional: signs showing 'Low Footprint' and 'High Footprint' zones, fact sheets about carbon emissions

Step-by-Step Process

Introduction (15 minutes):

Explain carbon footprint: the total greenhouse gas emissions caused by individual, event, organization, or product, expressed as CO₂ equivalent. Show that the average global citizen

produces about 4 tons of CO₂ per year, but this varies widely (US: 16 tons, India: 1.9 tons). Explain the walking metaphor: moving forward = higher emissions, backward = lower emissions. Everyone starts at the same baseline.

Main Activity (35 minutes):

Call out scenarios one at a time. Participants physically move based on their answers. Sample scenarios: 'You fly internationally twice a year' (forward 8 steps), 'Your home is well-insulated' (back 2 steps), 'You buy local, seasonal food' (back 3 steps), 'You own a car and drive daily' (forward 6 steps), 'You compost food waste' (back 1 step), 'You buy new electronics every year' (forward 3 steps), 'You use renewable energy at home' (back 5 steps). After 10–12 scenarios, pause. Ask participants to look around and notice where they are relative to others.

Reflection (15 minutes):

Gather in a circle. Ask: How did it feel to move forward (contributing more emissions)? How did it feel to move back? Were any scenarios surprising? Did you notice that some choices have more impact than others? Which changes feel achievable for you personally? Which would require systemic change (policy, infrastructure)?

Wrap-up (10 minutes):

Emphasize that carbon footprint is partly about individual choices but also deeply connected to systemic factors like infrastructure, economy, and policy. Encourage both personal action and advocacy for systemic change. Distribute fact sheets or links to carbon calculators for further exploration.

Inclusion Adaptations

- For participants with mobility challenges: Use hand gestures (raising hands high or low) or moving game pieces on a floor map instead of walking
- For participants from different economic backgrounds: Frame scenarios neutrally ('If you have access to renewable energy...') and acknowledge in debrief that not all choices are equally available to everyone
- For language barriers: Use visual cards with icons representing each scenario
- Online adaptation: Use a virtual shared screen where participants move digital avatars forward/backward on a visual scale

Facilitator Tips

- Research and adjust step values based on current emissions data for accuracy
- Challenge: Participants feel guilty or defensive. Solution: Emphasize that the goal is awareness, not shame. Many high-impact choices are shaped by infrastructure and policy beyond individual control
- Balance the activity with both high-impact and low-impact scenarios to show that change is possible

Activity 2.2: The Biodiversity Web

Duration: 50–65 min	Group Size: 12–25	Setting: Indoors/Outdoors	Difficulty: Beginner
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Overview

Participants become elements of an ecosystem (plants, insects, birds, predators, decomposers, water, soil) and stand in a circle holding a ball of yarn. As the facilitator names relationships ('The bee pollinates the flower'), the yarn is passed between connected participants, creating a visible web of interdependence. Once the web is complete, the facilitator introduces threats ('Pesticides kill the bees,' 'Deforestation removes trees') and those participants drop their strand. The web collapses, showing how biodiversity loss affects entire ecosystems. This powerful visual metaphor makes ecological interconnectedness tangible.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain biodiversity as the variety of life and interconnections within ecosystems
- Identify key relationships between species in a functional ecosystem
- Analyze how the loss of one species can cascade through an ecosystem
- Discuss threats to biodiversity and potential solutions

Materials Needed

- Ball of yarn or string (bright color works best for visibility)
- Role cards or name tags for ecosystem elements (e.g., 'Oak Tree,' 'Honeybee,' 'Fox,' 'Earthworm,' 'River,' 'Soil')
- Open space for participants to stand in a large circle
- Optional: images or props representing different ecosystem elements, camera to photograph the completed web

Step-by-Step Process

Introduction (10 minutes):

Introduce biodiversity: the variety of all living things and their interactions. Explain that you'll create a model ecosystem together. Distribute role cards randomly. Have participants stand in a circle and announce their role to the group. Explain that yarn represents connections and relationships.

Building the Web (20 minutes):

Start with a producer (plant). They hold the end of the yarn. Name a relationship (e.g., 'The oak tree provides acorns for the squirrel'). Pass the ball to the squirrel while holding your strand. The squirrel now holds the yarn and you name their next connection ('The squirrel is eaten by the fox'). Continue until everyone is connected multiple times, creating a dense web. Take a moment to admire the web. Gently tug on the yarn to show how a change in one place is felt throughout the system.

Breaking the Web (10 minutes):

Introduce threats one by one: 'A pesticide kills all the bees' (bees drop their yarn), 'Climate change dries up the river' (river drops), 'Deforestation removes the oak trees' (trees drop). After each threat, ask participants to notice what happens to the web. Eventually the web collapses or becomes very loose, showing system breakdown.

Debrief (15 minutes):

How did it feel to be connected? What happened when species were removed? What does this teach us about biodiversity? What are real-world threats to biodiversity in your community? What can we do to protect these connections? Can we rebuild the web (restoration)?

Inclusion Adaptations

- For participants with mobility challenges: Conduct the activity seated in chairs or create a floor map where participants place their role cards and connect them with string
- For language barriers: Use visual cards with pictures of each ecosystem element
- For neurodiverse participants: Provide role descriptions in advance, offer the option to be a non-living element (soil, water, sun) if being an animal feels uncomfortable
- Online adaptation: Use a digital whiteboard where participants place their icons and draw connection lines, deleting elements as threats are introduced

Facilitator Tips

- Prepare ecosystem relationships in advance appropriate to your local context
- Challenge: Participants don't understand their role. Solution: Briefly explain each role as you distribute cards, or provide simple fact cards with each role
- End on a hopeful note by discussing restoration and conservation efforts that can help rebuild these webs

Activity 2.3: Plastic Ocean Simulation

Duration: 55–70 min	Group Size: 15–30	Setting: Large Indoor/Outdoor Space	Difficulty: Beginner
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Overview

Participants experience the scale of ocean plastic pollution through active simulation. A large blue tarp or marked area represents the ocean. Participants take turns being 'plastic items' (holding cards with items like 'plastic bottle,' 'fishing net,' 'microplastics') and entering the ocean one by one as the facilitator narrates: '8 million tons of plastic enter our oceans every year—that's one garbage truck per minute.' As more 'plastic' enters, participants playing marine life (fish, turtles, whales) navigate the increasingly crowded space, experiencing entanglement and ingestion. The visceral experience of cluttered space and restricted movement makes the crisis tangible.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe the scale and sources of ocean plastic pollution
- Explain how plastic pollution affects marine ecosystems and organisms
- Identify personal and systemic solutions to reduce plastic waste
- Reflect on the emotional impact of environmental degradation and channel it toward action

Materials Needed

- Large blue tarp or blue tape to mark ocean boundaries (at least 4x4 meters)
- Cards or signs for plastic items (bottles, bags, fishing nets, straws, microplastics)
- Cards or signs for marine life (fish, turtle, whale, seabird, coral)
- Optional: actual clean plastic items for visual impact, images of ocean pollution, sound effects (ocean waves)
- Fact sheet on ocean plastic statistics

Step-by-Step Process

Introduction (10 minutes):

Share key facts: 8 million tons of plastic enter oceans yearly, plastic takes 450+ years to decompose, there are 5 massive ocean garbage patches, marine animals mistake plastic for food. Explain the simulation: the blue space is the ocean, some will be marine life, others will be plastic entering the ocean.

Main Simulation (30 minutes):

Phase 1 - Clean Ocean (5 min): Select 5–7 participants to be marine life. They move freely in the clean ocean space, swimming and thriving. Phase 2 - Pollution Begins (15 min): Gradually

add plastic items (participants enter holding plastic cards) while narrating sources: 'Single-use bottles from coastal cities,' 'Abandoned fishing nets,' 'Microplastics from washing synthetic clothes.' Marine life must navigate around plastic. Introduce hazards: 'The turtle mistakes a plastic bag for a jellyfish,' 'The whale ingests microplastics,' 'The seabird gets tangled in fishing line.' Phase 3 - Overwhelmed (10 min): Continue adding plastic until the ocean is visibly crowded. Marine life struggles to move. Pause and let participants observe.

Debrief (20 minutes):

Gather everyone outside the ocean. Ask marine life: How did it feel as more plastic entered? Ask plastic items: How did it feel being pollution? Everyone: What surprised you? What emotions came up? Where does ocean plastic come from? What can individuals do? What systemic changes are needed? Brainstorm both personal actions (refuse single-use plastic, participate in cleanups) and advocacy (support plastic bans, pressure corporations).

Inclusion Adaptations

- For participants with mobility challenges: Offer seated roles as narrators or observers who contribute to debrief, or create a tabletop version with toy figures
- For emotionally sensitive participants: Provide a content warning about potentially distressing imagery, offer observer roles, have a facilitator check in during the activity
- For language barriers: Use visual cards with images of plastic items and marine animals
- Online adaptation: Use an animated video showing ocean plastic accumulation, followed by discussion in breakout rooms

Facilitator Tips

- Balance emotional impact with empowerment – always end with actionable solutions
- Challenge: Participants feel overwhelmed or hopeless. Solution: Emphasize success stories of cleanup initiatives, plastic bans, and innovation in alternatives
- Consider linking this activity to a real beach cleanup or collaboration with local environmental organizations

Chapter 3: Green Activities for Community Engagement

Activities that connect youth workers and young people to local environmental challenges and opportunities for action. These methods bridge the gap between abstract environmental concepts and real-life community issues.

Activity 3.1: The Community Eco-Map

Designed by: Nisa and Arda

Duration: 90 minutes	Group Size: 15–25	Setting: Indoors/Outdoors	Difficulty: Beginner
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Overview

Participants engage in a 'Community Eco-Map' exercise where they walk through a local area to identify 'green assets' (parks, recycling points, community gardens) and 'environmental wounds' (littered areas, lack of shade, industrial runoff). This activity bridges the gap between abstract climate concepts and the immediate reality of their neighborhood. By documenting these points on a physical or digital map, participants visualize how their community interacts with nature. They take away a sense of agency and a tangible starting point for local environmental advocacy.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify at least three environmental challenges and three green assets within their local community
- Analyze how local infrastructure impacts the environment and quality of life for residents
- Create a collaborative visual map representing the environmental health of a specific area
- Discuss potential community-led solutions to environmental challenges discovered

Materials Needed

- Large flipchart paper and markers (multiple colors)
- Printed local maps, pens, and clipboards
- An indoor room with wall space for maps and access to a safe outdoor walking route
- Alternative: Free digital mapping app (like Google My Maps) or recycled cardboard instead of flipcharts

Step-by-Step Process

Phase 1: Introduction (15 minutes)

Explain the concept of 'Green Assets' vs. 'Environmental Wounds.' Divide participants into small groups of 4-5 people. Provide each group with a small map of the walking route, pens, and clipboards.

Phase 2: The Walk (45 minutes)

Groups walk a designated route, marking observations on their maps. Facilitator prompt: 'Look up at the trees and down at the gutters—what is missing?' Encourage participants to note both positive elements (community gardens, trees, clean spaces) and negative elements (litter, pollution, lack of green space).

Phase 3: Reflection and Debrief (20 minutes)

Groups return and transfer their findings to a giant 'Master Map' on flipchart paper. Discuss the most common 'wounds' found and the existing 'assets.' Facilitate a conversation about potential community-led solutions.

Wrap-up (10 minutes)

Ask reflection questions: How did you feel when you found a 'green asset' compared to a 'wound'? Why do certain neighborhoods have more green spaces than others? What is one small change you could propose to the local council based on our map?

Inclusion Adaptations

- For participants with physical disabilities: Ensure the walking route is wheelchair accessible or provide a 'stationary mapping' option using high-resolution local photos/videos
- For language barriers: Use icons (a leaf for a park, a trash can for waste) instead of just text on the maps
- For neurodiverse participants: Provide a clear visual schedule of the walk and offer a 'quiet zone' for the final mapping phase
- Online adaptation: Create an online/computer game version where participants explore a virtual neighborhood

Facilitator Tips

- Walk the route yourself the day before to identify safety hazards and specific points of interest
- Challenge: The group gets distracted or lost during the walk. Solution: Assign a 'navigator' in each group and set a strict 'back-to-base' time
- If weather turns or group energy drops, move to the 'digital mapping' or 'photo-based' indoor alternative

Conclusion and Next Steps

This compendium represents the collective wisdom of 40 youth workers from across Europe who came together to strengthen environmental education in youth work. Each activity has been designed, tested, and refined through real practice during the GREEN-PRO seminar in Horezu, Romania.

How to Continue This Work

- Test these activities with your groups and adapt them to your local context
- Share your experiences and modifications with the GREEN-PRO network
- Connect with other participants through the project Facebook group
- Develop your own activities using the template structure provided
- Consider applying for follow-up Erasmus+ projects to deepen this work

Contact and Resources

For more information about the GREEN-PRO project:

Coordinating Organization: Pro Dezvoltare DACIA Association (APDD), Romania

Email: apddacia@yahoo.com

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1395889644339447>

Inclusion is not a destination but an ongoing practice.

The activities you find here are starting points, not finished products.

They will grow as you test them, learn from participants, and deepen your practice.

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