

Workshop "Climate emergency and the Ocean"

The workshop is dedicated to the theme "**Climate emergency and the Ocean**", with the objective of involving young people in the debate on the climate crisis – through non-formal and participatory methods. Before the workshop, the participants will receive a brochure with some relevant information to be aware of what is to take place.

Addressing a topic like climate change in an accessible and engaging way for young people requires adapting information to their level of understanding and using interactive methods. In this regard, the following things were taken into account:

1. **Using concrete examples** – presenting real and tangible examples of the effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events or impacts on animal species.
2. **Use of images and graphics** – these elements help clarify complex concepts.
3. **Explanation of technical terms** – in the created brochure scientific or technical terms have been explained in simple terms to ensure understanding of the content.
4. **Encouraging questions** – throughout the activity, young people will be encouraged to ask questions if they are curious about a certain aspect.

Talking about climate change in a way that is empathetic, interactive and relevant to young people's interests and experiences can help them better understand the importance of the topic and feel motivated to act on it.

The workshop will follow the structure found below. For a good running of the workshop, a facilitator will be needed to ensure that the meeting proceeds properly, it is also recommended that within the World Caffe, there should be a member at each table to moderate and engage the members of each group to ensure that each of them presents their ideas/opinions.

Some useful information for trainers – in addition to the booklet created to be distributed to participants before the workshop (which trainers can also refer to), below is some information on some of the topics of interest related to climate change: biodiversity – and how its loss affects us humans, but also general data on pollution and waste management.

Global biodiversity refers to the variety of life in all its forms, from microorganisms and plants to animals and complex ecosystems. It is the result of billions of years of evolution and represents a complex web of interactions between organisms and their environment.

Key aspects of global biodiversity include:

- 1. Species diversity:** This refers to the number and variety of species of organisms living on Earth. Each species has a unique role in the ecosystem and contributes to the ecological balance.
- 2. Genetic diversity:** This refers to the variety of genes and genetic traits within a species. Genetic diversity is essential for the adaptation of species to environmental changes and the development of new characteristics.
- 3. Ecosystem Diversity:** Ecosystems include a variety of habitats and interactions between organisms and abiotic factors. From forests and oceans to deserts and swamps, each ecosystem has a unique role in maintaining global balance.

The importance of biodiversity globally:

-Ecological stability: biodiversity contributes to the stability of ecosystems and their ability to cope with changes. Diverse species and ecosystems are more resilient to disturbance and the introduction of invasive species.

-Ecosystem services: biodiversity provides a number of essential human "services", such as plant pollination, water purification, soil improvement and climate regulation.

-Food and Medicinal Resources: Much of the food and medicine consumed by humans comes from natural sources and diverse species. Biodiversity provides resources for food, medicine and materials.

-Scientific research: Diverse organisms provide opportunities for understanding evolution, genetic functioning, and ecological interactions.

Global biodiversity loss has a significant impact on the environment, economy and human society. These negative effects are felt on multiple levels and can have serious long-term consequences. Here are some ways biodiversity loss affects us:

- **Weakening ecosystems:** Biodiversity is key to the healthy functioning of ecosystems. Reduced species diversity can weaken ecosystems' ability to provide vital services such as water purification, crop pollination, and pest population regulation.
- **Reduction of food resources:** Loss of genetic diversity in agricultural crops and natural food sources can lead to vulnerability to disease and climate change, which can affect food supplies and food security.
- **Impact on the economy:** Healthy and biodiverse ecosystems support economies by providing natural resources such as wood, fiber, medicine and food. Loss of biodiversity can have a negative impact on industry and jobs.
- **Human health:** Biodiversity contributes to the provision of food sources, medicines and disease regulation through healthy ecosystems. The loss of this diversity can have unexpected effects on human health.

- **Ecological disaster:** Biodiversity reduction can lead to accelerated degradation of ecosystems and changes in their structure and functioning, which can cause ecological imbalances and even collapses.
- **Loss of scientific and medical opportunities:** Diverse organisms are rich sources of information for scientific research and drug development. Losing species can mean losing important opportunities for innovation and medical breakthroughs.
- **Aesthetics and mental health:** Biodiversity provides a variety of landscapes and aesthetic experiences, contributing to mental well-being and human connection with nature.
- **Impact on indigenous and local communities:** Many indigenous and local communities are closely linked to their environment and depend on natural resources. Loss of biodiversity can affect the traditions and sustainability of these communities.
- **Exacerbating climate change:** Diverse ecosystems can play a role in sequestering carbon and regulating climate change. Biodiversity loss can contribute to intensifying climate change.

Global biodiversity faces significant threats from climate change, habitat destruction, pollution and overexploitation of resources. Protecting and conserving biodiversity is essential to maintaining ecological balance and ensuring a sustainable future for all life on Earth.

Pollution and waste management are important global issues that have a significant impact on the environment and human health. Here are some relevant facts about pollution and waste management globally:

Pollution:

1.CO2 Emissions: Global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from energy-related sources, such as burning fossil fuels, are the main cause of global warming and climate change.

2. Air Pollution: Air pollution is linked to poor human health and globally, causes millions of premature deaths every year. Fine particles (PM_{2.5}) and ground-level ozone are some of the main pollutants.

3. Water Pollution: Water pollution is caused by chemicals, industrial and domestic waste, as well as pesticides and nutrients from agriculture, and can seriously affect aquatic life and drinking water supplies.

4. Soil Pollution: Soil pollution can be the result of improper disposal of toxic waste, excessive use of pesticides and other chemicals in agriculture, impacting soil fertility and plant health.

Waste management:

1. Plastic Waste: The problem of plastic waste is serious, with millions of tonnes of plastic ending up in the oceans every year. Plastic persists in the environment and can cause serious damage to marine ecosystems and human health.

2. E-Waste: The increase in the consumption of electronic devices has led to a significant increase in e-waste. Many components of this equipment contain environmentally hazardous substances.

3. Food Waste: Approximately one third of global food production is wasted or lost, contributing to environmental degradation through greenhouse gas emissions and waste.

4. Waste Management in Developing Countries: In many developing countries, the infrastructure for waste management is limited. Unsupervised and improperly treated waste can cause soil, water and air pollution.

5. Recycling and the circular economy: In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on recycling and the promotion of the circular economy, which involves reducing, reusing and recycling resources to minimize waste generation and environmental impact.

It is important to take collective action globally to address these challenges and promote sustainable waste management and pollution reduction practices to protect the environment and public health.

I. Introduction – brief presentation of the organization, the project and the workshop (10 min)

II. Ice breaker (10 min)

III. Presentation: Climate crisis – what it is, causes and effects (20 min)

IV. World Cafe (approx. 1:10 h)

a. Impact of sea level rise on coastal communities: Young people can discuss how sea level rise affects the environment and lifestyle of coastal communities in different regions (e.g. Countries involved in the project – Romania, Greece, Italy, Poland and Latvia). (10 min)

b. How can we cultivate an attitude of respect and responsibility towards the ocean? – This talk focuses on how young people can develop an empathetic attitude towards the ocean and be responsible in their actions to protect and conserve it. (10 min)

c. Plastic pollution in the oceans and sustainable solutions: The negative effects of plastic pollution on the ocean will be discussed and innovative solutions will be identified to reduce the use of plastic and improve waste management. (10 min)

d. Protecting marine biodiversity and conserving endangered species: Discuss threats to marine biodiversity and develop strategies to protect endangered species. (7 min)

e. Engaging youth in climate action: Ways youth can be actively involved in combating climate change and ocean issues will be identified. What kind of activities would be attractive to them and at the same time – beneficial for the environment. (7 min)

f. "Education for sustainability and environmental protection: How can we make communities and young people more aware?" – Young people can explore innovative ways to convey information about the climate crisis and ocean protection to their communities and schoolmates. (5 min)

g. "Influencing political decisions to combat the climate crisis" – Young people can explore ways to make their voices heard and influence political decisions related to environmental and climate protection. (5 min)

h. Conclusions – 15 min

V. Break – 15 min

VI. Energizer – 7 min

VII. Debate – 1:40 h

Regarding the preparation of the participants, there will be an impromptu debate, the topic of the debate being announced shortly before, and the participants having a limited time for preparation.

As a method of debate: the Australian debate: 6 people are needed (roughly) (3 for the pro-arguments, 3 for the counter-arguments), who will speak successively. Each of the 3 people had a role: the first speaker – the promoter (if he is in favor of the proposal) or the opponent (if he is against). Second speaker: Counter-argument. Third Speaker: Captain or Counselor. These speakers intervene: one in favor of the statement, one against. So, until they all stepped in.

The time will be divided as follows: for each debate 15 minutes will be allocated for the participants to prepare their arguments and 15 minutes for the actual debate.

Examples of statements that can be the subject of the debate:

- Young people have a key role to play in tackling the climate crisis and promoting ocean protection, but they are not given enough decision-making power.
- Climate change is the natural result of climate cycles and is not caused by human activities.
- Building barriers and seawalls is the right solution to protect coastal/coastal communities from sea level rise caused by the climate crisis.
- Taxing plastic products and subsidizing environmentally friendly ones is an effective way to reduce plastic pollution.
- Zoos and botanical gardens play an important role in educating and raising public awareness about biodiversity conservation.

VIII. Conclusions, Feedback and thanks – 10 min

For the feedback part – the EU survey will be used.

Icebreaker ideas

While it is important to take the time to get to know the participants a little, some suggestions for this part of the workshop would be:

"Never have I ever..." – some premises will be said, and the participants who have done that will raise a hand.

Examples of premises:

- Never have I ever... participated in a beach cleanup event.
- Never have I ever... used reusable shopping bags.
- Never have I ever... planted a tree or participated in a tree planting event.
- Never have I ever... seen a documentary about climate change.
- Never have I ever... avoided disposable straws.
- Never have I ever... accidentally put recyclables in the trash.
- I never forgot to turn off the faucet while brushing my teeth.
- Never have I ever... used the weather outside as an excuse not to go out with friends.

Ideas for the energizer

- A quick and interactive Kahoot quiz with climate change questions. (it can also be considered offering a small – symbolic – diploma-type prize or perhaps an object made of eco-friendly materials)
- Group story: Start a story with a sentence and ask each participant to add a sentence in the order they are seated. This can become a funny and unexpected story.
- Counting Dance: Choose a rhythmic song and ask participants to dance for 30 seconds. After that, stop the music and say a number. Participants have to form groups of how many years they have heard.

Because the topic is very vast and important for the participants to understand, towards the end of the workshop, in order to further arouse their curiosity, they will be given some recommendations of documentary films that they can watch later. The recommendations below are also found in the presentation that will be used in the introductory part of the workshop.

Documentation recommendations:

1. **"An Inconvenient Truth"** (2006) – Directed by Davis Guggenheim, this documentary features former US Vice President Al Gore's efforts to bring global warming and the climate crisis to the public's attention.
2. **"Mission Blue"** (2014) – Produced by Netflix, this documentary explores oceanographer Sylvia Earle's efforts to protect the oceans and raise awareness of their importance in the context of climate change and marine biodiversity conservation.
3. **"The True Cost"** (2015) – Although not strictly a film about the climate crisis, this documentary tackles the subject of fast fashion and its impact on the environment and climate change.
4. **"A Plastic Ocean"** (2016) – This documentary investigates the problem of plastic pollution in the oceans and its devastating impact on marine life. The film highlights how plastic enters marine food chains and the harmful effects on marine species and ecosystems.
5. **"Before the Flood"** (2016) – This film, produced by Leonardo DiCaprio and directed by Fisher Stevens, follows the actor and activist's journey around the world, exploring the impact of climate change and possible solutions.
6. **"Our Planet"** (2019) – This Netflix documentary series explores the beauty of nature and the vulnerability of ecosystems to climate change. Each episode focuses on the impact of human activities on the environment.

Materials required:

- for presentation: video projector and laptop
- attendance sheets
- diplomas for participants
- pens
- markers
- A4 sheets
- flipchart sheets
- paper tape – so participants can write their names, to make communication easier