



Green Erasmus in action

Report of on-the-ground activities

This report was carried out in the framework of the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 Strategic Partnership project:

Green Erasmus

2020-1-BE01-KA203-074971

Brussels, August 2023

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This publication is the outcome of in-depth consultations undertaken by the Green Erasmus consortium:

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European Students' Union

European University Foundation

Students Organising for Sustainability UK

Technische Hochschule Köln

Université Libre de Bruxelles

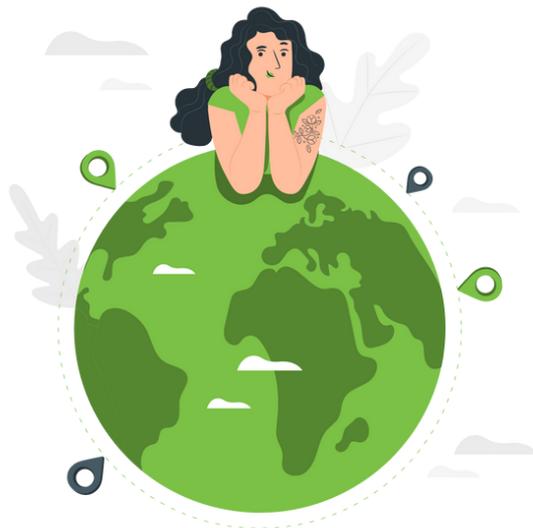


Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This project has been funded by the support of the European Commission. This document reflects the views of only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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Introduction

The Erasmus+ Programme is one of the most successful European initiatives, providing great opportunities to study and live abroad for many Europeans. As an educational programme, it also impacts students and their hosting local communities. Nevertheless, although generations benefited from it socially and culturally, the natural environment has been negatively affected by the increasing number of Erasmus+ exchanges, predominantly done via air travel. In line with the European Green Deal, the Erasmus+ programme has the environment at its heart and has defined **environmental sustainability as one of its priorities for the 2021-2027 period.**

In this context, the Green Erasmus project strives to improve the environmental sustainability of the Erasmus+ Programme and raise awareness across the European Higher Education sector about the importance of sustainable internationalisation. Thanks to a holistic approach that encompasses the lifecycle and several dimensions of Erasmus+ mobility, the Green Erasmus project results are **conceived to raise awareness and increase literacy about sustainability by providing user-friendly tools** to Higher Education Institutions as well as local, incoming and outgoing students.

Keeping in mind the environmental impact of the programme and its potential as an educational programme that positively impacts students and their hosting communities, the Green Erasmus Consortium developed the Green Erasmus Guidelines for Environmental Activities and accompanied student organisations in applying them to their local contexts.

Green Erasmus Guidelines for Environmental Activities

The Green Erasmus guidelines for environmental activities encourage sustainable behaviours and lifestyles through activities that connect international students and locals. Therefore, the aim of the guidelines is also to foster civic engagement and intercultural dialogue.

The guidelines are targeted at local student associations wishing **to engage international and local students and work together with local environmental associations** to understand the environmental issues, at the global and hosting country level, by using a learning-by-doing approach. The guidelines have been **conceived for any kind of student activity organisers**: aspiring environmental experts, nature lovers, and those who are not yet familiar with environmental sustainability.

The Guidelines have been developed using a co-designing approach that involved the Green Erasmus consortium, Erasmus Student Network local associations, participants of the [Erasmus Generation Meeting 2022](#) and Generation Climate Europe, Green Erasmus's associate partner. They have been divided into three main areas (Sport & Outdoor; Awareness & Activism; Responsible consumption), each of them proposing events, workshops, campaigns, and volunteering activities. The topics touched upon are the ones identified as the most accessible, transferable and replicable:

- circular economy
- energy efficiency
- climate crisis
- urban nature
- wildlife protection
- slow food
- waste and recycling
- responsible consumption
- nature and promoting biodiversity
- slow and sustainable tourism

Activities for the (Green) Erasmus Generation

The Platform



Actions & Activities

The Erasmus Generation actively engages with its local community through a variety of initiatives and activities, enriching society by connecting international exchange students with their local host communities. Erasmus students take part in local activities organised by ESN volunteers with a focus on 6 different focus areas: education & youth, social inclusion, culture, health & well-being, environmental sustainability and skills & employability. On this page, you can find an overview of the latest activities taking place.

Causes



The Guidelines' content writing was accompanied by the upgrading of the [ESN Activities platform](#), which displays the causes, the objectives, the types of the activities reported, as well as the project to which they are connected.

The Green Erasmus consortium encourages the organisers of environmental activities to report them in the ESN Activities platform to foster visibility and inspire other student organisations. The platform is powered by the Erasmus Student Network, but any organisation can [register](#) and use it. The platform is accessible by any user and allows getting a better understanding of the incredible diversity and impact of the activities implemented by the Erasmus Generation. Besides environmentally sustainable activities, it also includes the ones focusing on culture, education & youth, health & well-being, skills & employability and social inclusion.

The implementation phase

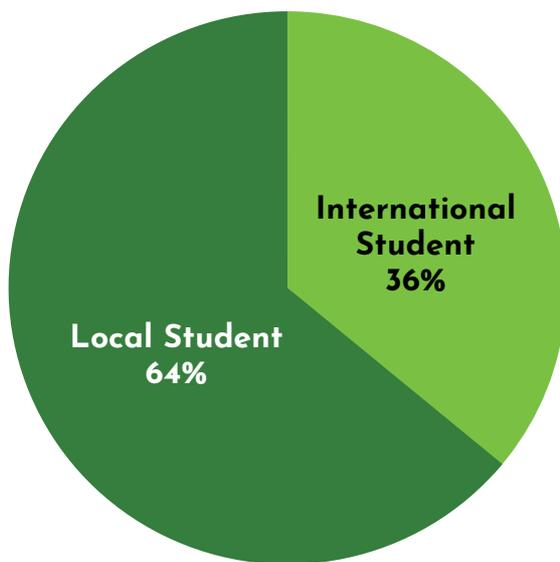
The Guidelines were first launched within the ESN network and accompanied by a call for microgrants¹ dedicated to ESN local associations willing to organise activities on the ground. Out of 16 applications, 11 proposals, each of them presented by a different local association, have been selected and 8 implemented. The selection and evaluation, as well as the monitoring process, coordinated by ESN International, reproduced on a small scale some of the procedures requested in the Erasmus+ projects. In this sense, the Green Erasmus call for micro-grants can be also considered a capacity-building exercise in project funding and management, since many organisations were not familiar with the requirements asked. The 8 funded green activities have been implemented between March and May 2023 and they are reported in the table below.

Organisation	Title	Link to the platform
ESN Minho	River Clean Up & Cultural Hike	https://activities.esn.org/activity/river-clean-cultural-hike-15568
ESN Foggia	Creative recycling	https://activities.esn.org/activity/green-erasmus-creative-recycling-15910
ESN Zagreb	Plants for (Comm)Unity	https://activities.esn.org/activity/green-erasmus-local-phase-plants-community-14757
ESN Lisboa	Green Weekend	1st day https://activities.esn.org/activity/green-weekend-1st-day-15779 2nd day https://activities.esn.org/activity/green-weekend-secondsecond-day-15778
ESN Ioannina	Planting New Seeds of Empathy for The Planet	https://activities.esn.org/activity/planting-seeds-empathy-planet-14756
ESN Lund	The Planetary Health Diet - A hands-on cooking workshop	https://activities.esn.org/activity/green-erasmus-local-phase-responsible-personpaola-di-marzo-planetary-health-diet-workshop
ESN LEI Rostock	ESN Green Spring Fair	https://activities.esn.org/activity/green-spring-fair-16039
ESN Azerbaijan	Cook Green, Eat Green!	https://activities.esn.org/activity/green-erasmus-local-phase-cook-green-eat-green-vegan-cooking-event-14722

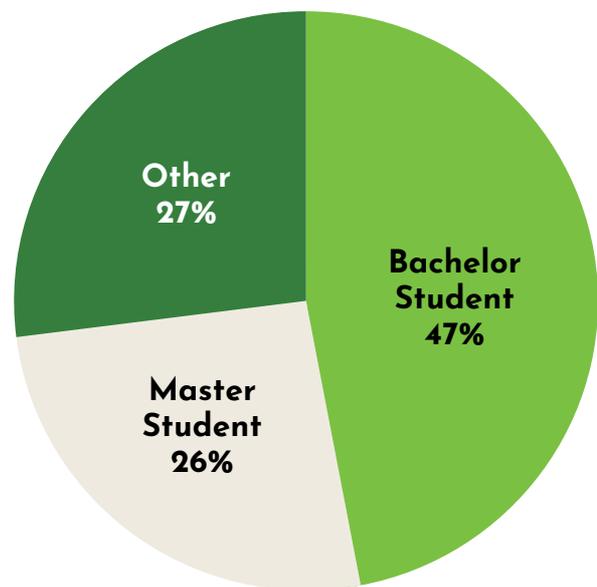
¹ The micro-grant call used funds internal to ESN and not the ones received by the organisation through the Green Erasmus project.

They saw the participation of 175 students, between internationals and locals. Among them, 70 replied to a follow-up questionnaire that provide us with some more information about their profile. Most of the respondents were locals - a number partly explained by the involvement of volunteers - and at the Bachelor level of study.

International VS Local Students



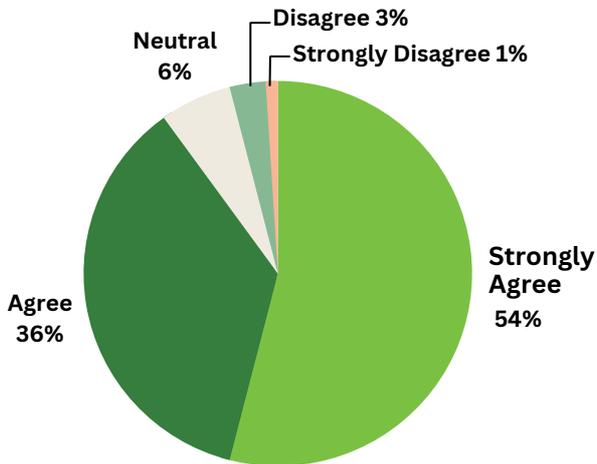
Bachelor VS Master Students



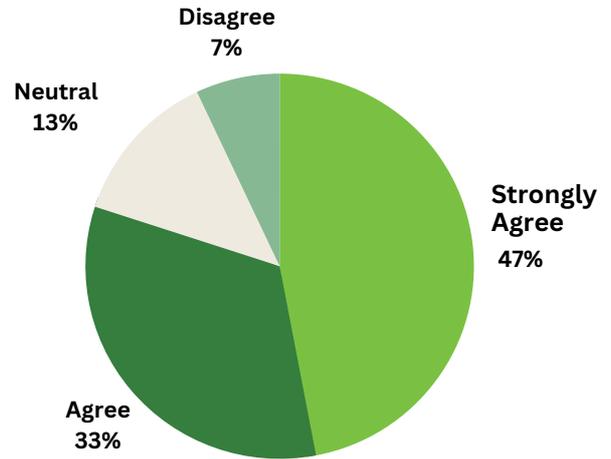
The questionnaire allowed the collection of participants' feedback and, to a certain extent, the measurement of the activities' impact on their knowledge and awareness of environmental issues at the global and hosting country levels.

For instance, 90% of the respondents stated that they learnt new things and are more aware of environmental issues, and 80% affirmed knowing more about the environmental resources and issues of the host country. Thanks to these activities, 96% got to know one or more local actors, thus showing that these types of activities allow them to connect more with the community and go beyond the student bubble.

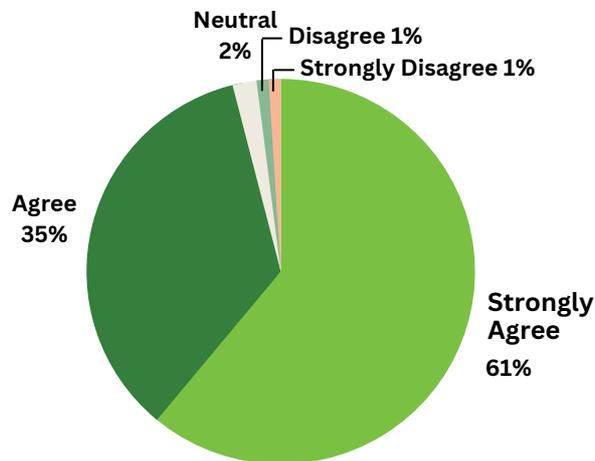
Please express your level of agreement with the following statements [I have learnt new things and I am more aware of environmental issues]



Please express your level of agreement with the following statements [I know more about the environmental resources and issues of the host country]

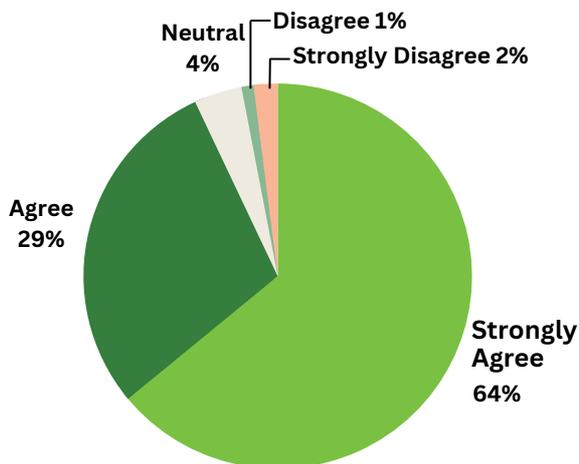


Please express your level of agreement with the following statements [I got to know one or more local associations/local community]

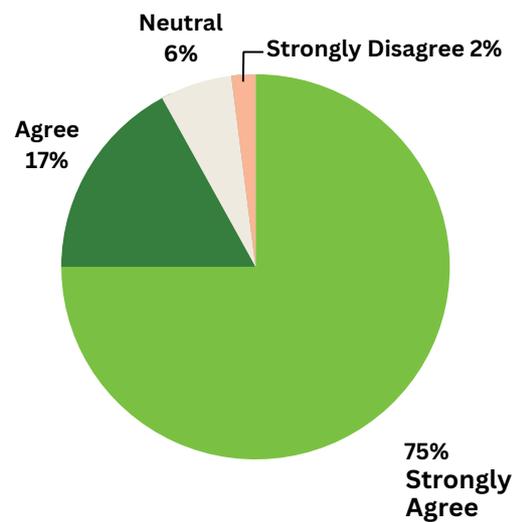


Besides the impact on themselves, respondents affirmed that, if constantly repeated, these activities can have a positive impact on the environment (93%) and on other people's awareness (92%).

Please express your level of agreement with the following statements [If constantly repeated, this activity can have a positive impact on the environment]



Please express your level of agreement with the following statements [If constantly repeated, this activity can make more people aware of environmental issues]



The funded activities commented on so far are, though, a small part of the environmental activities organised by the ESN sections from February to June 2023. The report exported from the ESN Activities Platform reveals that 223 activities having 'environmental sustainability' as a main cause have been organised. 3174 and 5549 local and international students respectively have participated. On top of that, 66 activities focusing on education, culture, social inclusion, health and skills had 'environmental sustainability' as a secondary cause.