

Think globally
Act locally
Change individually



IMPRINT+

Newsletter #3 - January 2018 ^[1]

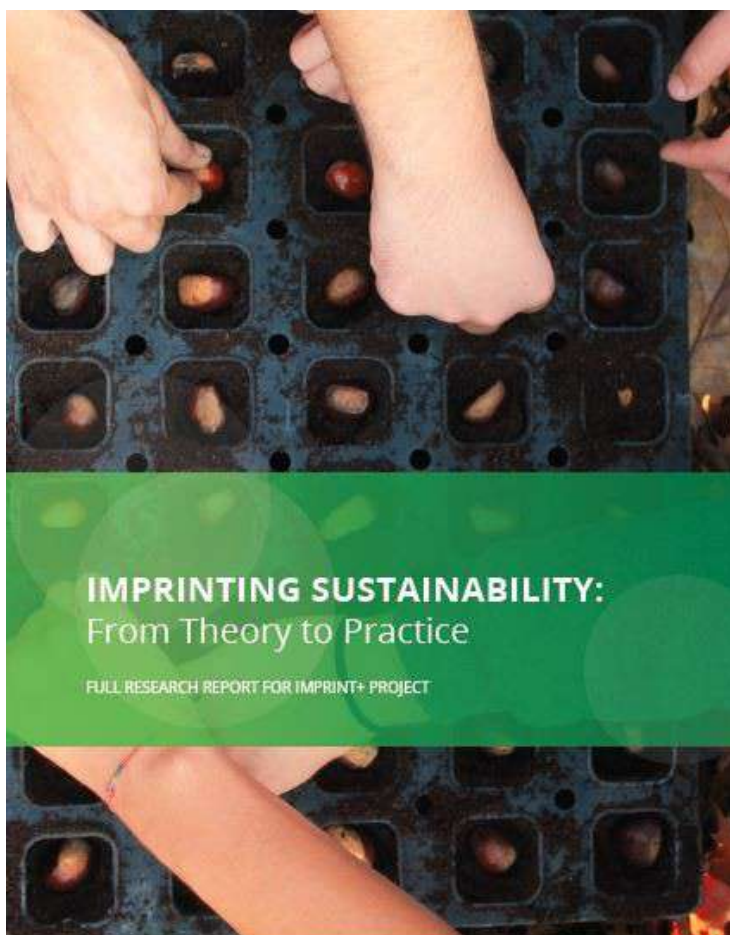


Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

2015-1-PT01-KA201-012976
This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] and all its contents reflect the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Learn. Act. Connect. IMPRINT+ raises awareness

IMPRINT+ is an international project that aims to highlight the amount of natural resources we use in our daily lives. Through education, action and entrepreneurship it empowers young European citizens and communities to restore and conserve their local natural resources and it encourages them to green thinking and reducing their ecological footprint. The project and its activities are co-financed by the Erasmus+ European Funding Programme and are implemented in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Austria.



Research report. Imprinting sustainability: from theory to practice

At the initial phase of the project, a research report was published, which looks at environmental sustainability, best practices and environmental action.

This report is a very useful document for students and educators. It consists of three separate but complementary parts including theory, interesting case studies and guidelines for best practice.

The entire report can be downloaded from here:
<https://imprintplus.org/documents/section/1>

International training events

The IMPRINT+ programme aims to improve natural environments and raise awareness among young people about the important role they play in conserving the environment.

In 2017, two multiplier events took place in Spain and Italy, where students locally and from partner countries shared knowledge and best practices amongst communities to help solve local environmental problems through training, tutorials and actions. These young people learned that they can make a difference in their local communities.



March 2017: IMPRINT+ in Spain

In March, over 70 students and 25 teachers and youth educators from Spain, Portugal, Italy and Ireland went to Baza in southern Spain to the Imprint training programme.

The students (13-17 years) learned about the concept of offsetting their carbon footprint. They also heard about the IMPRINT+ web app and its gaming features where they can tag their actions on a web app.

The programme took place over five days and the students had the opportunity to prove their environmental skills by planting native trees, hanging nest boxes for birds and cleaning up the banks of a river.

Teachers and youth workers also attended the IMPRINT+ event. A train the trainer course took place which allowed adult educators to develop their competences and knowledge regarding nature conservation. They developed a strong understanding of how to offset their actions and empower students to care about their local environment.

The international character of these IMPRINT+ Training events gave students and educators a powerful experience they will not forget. The IMPRINT+ partners have been impressed with the engagement from students and adults during and after the training courses and events.



Interested in attending any IMPRINT+ event? Or to organize a training course?

Learn more on imprintplus.org

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Teachers' feedback

What did you like most about IMPRINT+?

"Learning by doing. I really enjoyed the course which helped made me question my own environmental actions and how every small change over time can make a big difference. It was really interesting to work in a team and it gave me the opportunity to understand a different point of view."

"Excellent practical ways to offset my own environmental actions in the outdoors. I really enjoyed tree planting and building wildlife ponds."

"Learning all those group dynamics; the opportunity to meet people from different countries and from different backgrounds; the activities with the kids so that they realize the importance to be responsible and have self consciousness."

"Everything is good and will open people's eyes to environmental problems and what they can do to reduce their footprint. With this we can pass correct information and make a change."

"The course includes and considers the main aspects in the process of education (in any process). It's inclusive and practical."



What was the best part about participating?

"Being able to spend time outside learning about nature is a much better way to understand environmental threats. It made me really think about my own responsibility to take action. It was interesting to compare environmental issues in different countries and the specific issues that each place has."

Students' feedback

"I really liked cleaning up the rubbish and could instantly see the positive impact we had made together when we did our beach clean up."

"I loved the friendliness and approach of the trainers."

"This project is amazing. I would like to repeat this event."

November 2017: IMPRINT+ goes to Sicily

The IMPRINT+ team travelled to Italy for another edition of the IMPRINT+ training course in order to engage young European students in several environmental conservation and awareness activities. The events took place in Sicily from 8 to 13 November 2017, in the southwest part of the island near Castelvetro and Selinunte, with the participation of trainers, trainees, students and teachers from Italy, Spain, Ireland and Portugal.

The programme included a trainer course and activities with secondary school students. The five day certified course enabled teachers, educators and students to learn about sustainability, about lowering and offsetting the environmental footprint, and about how to restore and conserve local natural resources. During the event, young people met with experts on environmental matters. This was a valuable opportunity for students to speak directly with the experts in order to get their voices heard on matters that influence their generation.



Impressions from Europe

Italy

The Italian students who took part in the third IMPRINT+ event greatly enjoyed the experience of working on environmental projects together with their peers from other European countries.

The young participants completed a number of interesting tasks and challenges: on the first they had an interesting discussion on how to promote an eco-change in their countries, they visited the magnificent archaeological park of Selinunte where trainees from the IMPRINT+ training course showed them how to assess the ecological condition of an area and they even cleaned the mouth of the Modione river and collected 800 litres of waste.

On the next day the students visited the Santa Ninfa natural reserve where they were taught about nature

conservation and management by specialists from Legambiente, the NGO running the reserve.

At the final meeting of the IMPRINT+ event, the trainers from the University of Aveiro and from Leave No Trace, the trainees and the students celebrated together what IMPRINT+ is all about: Learn. Act. Connect.

Gian Marco Malabotte, one of the students, talked about his time in the IMPRINT+ courses and commented:

"This initiative makes children like me experience nature in a more natural way, by respecting and loving it and conserving it. Taking part in this project was a fantastic experience as it allowed me to increase my knowledge about environmental issues and it also taught me how to interact and collaborate with other children coming from countries with a different language and culture."



Spain

During this IMPRINT+ meeting, the IES Pedro Jiménez Montoya delegation had the opportunity to participate in the planting of Mediterranean native trees, in a beach clean event, and in field studies to assess biological diversity, the level of environmental impact in protected spaces, and the repercussion of daily activities on the flora and fauna. The event agenda was completed with many other training activities related to the priorities of the project and aimed at increasing the level of environmental awareness.



"The project was a good experience for us. We had the opportunity to improve our language skills and learn about many different things, especially how to protect our environment. Now we are more aware about the things we do and we know that we have an impact on the environment, for example by planting invasive species in our area. We also learned about the importance of recycling, about how pollution is affecting the earth and about the human footprint in natural areas. It was very interesting to learn how to plant trees and to find out how to build birds' houses. From all the activities we did, picking up litter probably left the biggest impression on us, because it really made us feel like we were contributing to cleaning the natural space and helping our planet.

The IMPRINT+ experience has helped us improve our English and has given us the opportunity to meet new people, learn about other cultures and make great friends from other countries. It was an unforgettable experience and we learned a lot, but above all, we feel grateful to the families that hosted us and made us feel at home. We also want to thank the people who gave us the opportunity to take part in IMPRINT+."



Ireland

Trainers and students from Ballymahon Foroige Club travelled to Sicily in Italy for the five day training programme.

Next steps for the Irish students: After the event the young people returned to their communities in Ireland and will each carry out a Local Action Project putting the knowledge and skills they have gained into practice the skills and knowledge they have acquired in the project, bringing environmental benefits to their communities. Part of this includes engaging in peer-to-peer education in their countries of origin, which we hope will inspire and engage more young people in environmental and sustainable development issues.



Portugal

During the events in Sicily, where the IMPRINT+ project was presented to several dozens of young people, aged between 10 and 17 years, the students had the unique opportunity to work in international teams enjoying environmental activities such as learning games, planting native trees, cleaning beaches, hanging nest boxes for birds and visiting protected areas to learn about the habitats of the region. Despite the occasional rain, the events in Sicily were a success! Next stop: Ireland in March 2018!



What was the best part about participating?

"I think that IMPRINT+ project is good because it helps us to know that is biodiversity and how to help it".

Students' feedback

"When the trainers divided us into groups and we all had to clean up the sand, the wood and river..."

"Meeting people from other countries."

"Learning how to fix environmental problems and reducing your footprint."

"The trainers and students were really friendly and available."

"It is important to make people think about nature and biodiversity."

What did you like the most about IMPRINT+?

"Practical sessions: simple but effective."

Teachers' feedback

"The preparation and availability of the

trainers as well as the subjects that were discussed."

"I really liked the lessons and the activities. The trainers always gave us the opportunity to participate."

"All the aspects are very good, all the issues discussed are very important for our life."

"The games used during the project were very useful to better understand difficult theatrical concepts."

Coming up next...



In March 2018, Ireland will host an **IMPRINT+ event for students** from the other partner countries in Westport. There will be lots of hands-on experience and teachings about the environment in a breathtaking nature.



The **final IMPRINT+ conference** will be held in early summer 2018 at the University of Aveiro. Students will get to do exciting offset actions and project partners will speak about their experiences with the project.



IMPRINT+ is developing a **tutorial for young entrepreneurs in a green economy**. This handbook will present guidelines for young citizens to become green entrepreneurs by introducing skills and competences, possible career profiles and sectors of work in the related field. Available in spring 2018!



In early 2018, IMPRINT+ will publish a **paper about the pilot testing** conducted in Portugal. This report will summarise the pilot programme's aims and results. It will be available in different languages.



Don't forget to take a look at the IMPRINT+ website and app! You can learn how to effectively offset your ecological footprint. Go to <https://imprintplus.org/app>



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