

GREEN4VIP

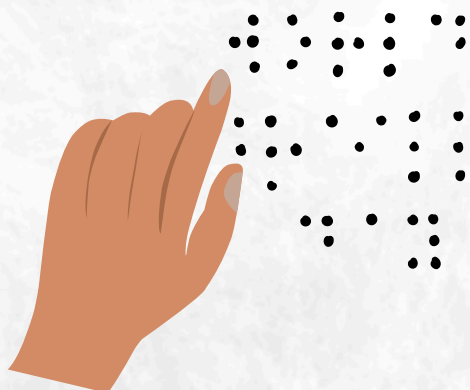
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND STEAM APPROACH FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PUPILS IN KINDERGARTENS



NEWSLETTER No. 4 - Oct 2024

About the project

The importance of early education provided by well-trained staff is fundamental for visually impaired kids who face barriers in their inclusion in mainstream classes because pre-school teachers don't know how to supply them contents and which adapted tools, they should use to convey such contents appropriately.



UNESCO states that education is the most effective means in the quest to achieve sustainable development and in 2007 it also said that it is in the early childhood period that children develop their basic values, attitudes, skills, behaviours and habits, this is why educating for sustainability should begin very early in life. **“Like all sectors, also education and training must take action to respond to the climate emergency and planetary crisis – in terms of its own operations and, crucially, how it prepares learners for the future”** COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on Learning for Environmental Sustainability (COM 2022).

For these reasons, **GREEN4VIP** tackles:

1. The topic of **inclusion of visually impaired pupils** in ECEC, providing pre-school teachers with suitable inclusive pedagogical strategies to address VIP needs, and in particular how to use and adapt the STEAM approach in environmental education workshops addressed to visually impaired kids;
2. The topic of **environmental awareness**, as it is one of the main pillars of the SDGs; it will update the skills of pre-school teachers through innovative training materials in the field of sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption habits and how to convey them to VIP;
3. the topic of **digital skills** updating teachers' expertise in the use of digital tools, including accessible and assistive technologies.



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Project objectives

1. Provide support for initial and continuing professional development of staff involved in organising, leading and providing early childhood education and care by supplying pre-school teachers with competences on suitable inclusive pedagogical strategies to address VIP
2. Improve pre-school teachers' awareness on environmental topics and contribute to enable behavioural changes for individual preferences, consumption habits and lifestyles
3. Supply competences to pre-school teachers to implement environmental workshops based on the STEAM approach and how to adapt it to the needs of VIP
4. Promote all children, including VIP (and their families), awareness on environmental issues
5. Update teachers' expertise in the use of DIGITAL TOOLS, including accessible and assistive technologies
6. Increase the quality of work in the Partner Organizations on a long term, as well as their capacity and professionalism to work at EU level.

The project, which started in November 2022, aims at producing the following main deliverables specifically designed for pre-school teachers:

GREEN4VIP Guidelines for pre-school teachers, based on a research and online survey carried out in partner countries to investigate on teachers' skill gaps in education, it will be a practical guide for teachers on how to implement learning and teaching processes with hints on how to deal with VIP in kindergartens.

GREEN4VIP Teacher Training Curriculum, aimed at supplying competences to teachers on environmental issues, digital assistive technologies and online learning, how to adapt STEAM approach to VIP.

GREEN4VIP Inclusive Toolbox for VIP, a practical tool to implement inclusive environmental workshops based on STEAM in class and online, by describing step-by-step how to carry out the activities. Audio described video tutorials will complement the Toolbox to provide an accessible and easy transferable component.

Project Partners

UICI Florence (Italy) www.uicifirenze.it

Co&so (Italy) www.coeso.org

Polski Związek Niewidomych (Poland) www.pzn.org.pl

AMEI-WAECE (Spain) www.waece.org

1o Dimotikó Scholeío Rafínas (Greece) www.1dimrafin.com

Univerza na Primorskem - Pedagoška fakulteta (Slovenia) www.pef.upr.si



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Project progresses

In recent months, the GREEN4VIP project made significant progress. Between March and May 2024, **environmental education workshops for children** were held at L'Abbaino kindergarten in Italy, where kids learned about plant life cycles, pollination, and biodiversity through hands-on activities. Similar workshops were held in all Partner's Countries: for example, in Slovenia they focused on biodiversity, water, herbs, and recycling, offering experiential learning tailored to visually impaired pupils. **(1)** The children remained highly active throughout the sessions, using their senses to explore and experiment with their environment.

On October 7, 2024, the final project meeting was held online. The project partners came together to validate the final deliverables of GREEN4VIP and review the progress made. During this meeting, the partners assessed the outcomes and discussed the final steps leading up to the project's official conclusion (October 31, 2024). **A final conference on October 16, 2024 in Florence in the venue of Oblate's Library (2)**, showcased presentations on inclusive education and highlighted tools to support visually impaired children in environmental education, such as:

- **Tiflodidactic Consulting Center** supporting the school inclusion of visually impaired students from Elisabetta Franchi, Head of the Tiflodidactic Consulting Center in Florence
- **Education and inclusion in the educational services** of the Co&So Consortium from Simona Pancari, Education Coordinator of the Co&So Consortium
- **Presentation of the "GREEN4VIP" project and the Guidelines for inclusive environmental education**, from Vanessa Cascio EU Project Manager of the Co&So Consortium;
- **Playful gardens: Exploring nature through play, animals, and creativity** from Antonio Di Pietro, Play Pedagogue and President of CEMEA Tuscany
- **GREEN4VIP for kindergarten teachers: Teacher's Training Curriculum and Inclusive Toolbox for visually impaired pupils** from Maria Teresa Caldo, Italian Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted.

In Greece, the project's multiplier event took place in May 2024, where teachers, stakeholders, and local communities gathered to learn about the project outcomes and how to implement them in their own educational settings. The other partner countries are currently organizing their own events, ensuring that the impact of GREEN4VIP reaches across Europe and continues to grow.

GREEN4VIP **successfully equipped pre-school teachers with tools and strategies for inclusive environmental education**, specifically tailored for visually impaired children using an adapted STEAM approach.

This initiative empowered educators and helped visually impaired pupils, and their circle, to engage with nature and sustainability. **Beyond achieving its goals, the project sparked a broader discussion on inclusion, sustainability and innovation in early education, with its impact set to last within schools and communities.**



(1)

Thank you all!



(2)