



**DOCUMENT FOR ESTABLISHING OF LONG-TERM STRATEGIC TRANSNATIONAL
PARTNERSHIP AMONG DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC PARTNERS IN
INCREASING OF QUALITY OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION PROCESS IN
MUNICIPALITIES OF LUDBREG, PAZARDZIK, AND KOCHANI**

PROJECT OUTPUT 02



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1. Introduction

The Erasmus+ project “**ECO-KIDS – Eco gardens in our Kindergartens**” is being implemented in three European municipalities: Ludbreg, Kochani, and Pazardzhik, for the period of 24 months, from November 2018 till October 2020, under the Contract No. 2018-1-HR01-KA201-047502.

Brief context: significant percentage of the daily-created amount of solid waste can be reused with very low efforts but unfortunately, it continues to damage our environment. This is why necessity of urgent actions in the sphere of waste selection and recycling are key precondition to ensure long life of our planet. **The children in kindergartens** are ideal target group to be presented a way how we can reduce our carbon footprint on the Earth and help our fragile environment.

The project: ECO-KIDS project teaches young children about the ecological challenges facing the world today and shows them how, through a recycling and waste management project, they can help address these challenges by composting food waste that will be used to grow fruit, vegetables and flowers in their schools’ gardens.

Implementation of the project activities leads to establishing of the strategic partnership between different type of organizations (local public bodies, kindergartens and civil sector) gathered together to give their contribution for enhancing the quality of early childhood education. Following the new trends of pre-school education and good practices, and also the available technologies, it appears that the best approach is **LEARNING BY DOING** when they can DO IT by themselves.

The main aim on this project is to develop age appropriate framework to teach pre-school children about reusing and recycling much of the waste they daily produce and improving the quality of work. This is being realized by increasing of the kindergarten’s teachers competences and skills for development of own approach to importance of waste selection and recycling, as essential concept for assisting them to encourage the pre-school children to undertake their own pilot projects especially in using and promoting of composting and production of eco-products.

Partnership include different types of organizations: Local government of Ludbreg (Cro), public utility Vodovod (MK), three kindergartens Radost (Cro), Pavlina Veljanova (MK) and Radost (BG), and two NGOs, LAG (MK) and CSEG (BG) and one entrepreneurial company Lucera d.o.o (Cro).

Taking into account project objectives and project activities, the purpose of this document will be to establish a basis for strategic cooperation and transnational partnership in the field of education between the municipalities of Ludbreg, Kochani, and Pazardzhik by involving representatives of the local, educational, and civil sectors.

Education is a key element for the social and economic life of the society. The power of quality education gives results on two levels: 1) the level of personal development of a citizen and 2) the level of development of the society.

At an individual level, education allows people to gain knowledge, skills and form an approach for critical thinking and thus making a choice in the direction of improving their quality of life.

At the social level, education is a strategic sector which influences the overall development of the community. In fact, education is of strategic significance for the development of the society within one municipality/region.

Educational curricula for kids from 3 to 6 years of age in Bulgaria, Croatia, and North Macedonia are identical to a great degree, but emphasis of the current project will be given to: ICT in teaching, local governance and civil sector, waste management, protection of the environment, and clean environment initiatives. The process of strategic planning aims to jointly define a vision for the future, to set priorities, to present possible actions and resources within the three regions, and to ensure that councilors, mayors, school representatives, civil society representatives and other stakeholders who



are involved in the process will support the realization of the common goals of project “*ECO-KIDS – Eco gardens in our Kindergartens*”, funded by the Erasmus+ Program. The strategy contains a vision for development of the strategic partnership between the educational stakeholders of the three participating regions, main principles for implementation of the strategy, as well as the strategic priorities and measures for achieving the identified vision. The strategy sets the priorities and measures which could be taken by the stakeholders by defining some possible activities and initiatives for future cooperation.

2. Present situation in educational sector of the 3 participating municipalities

2.1. Overview of the Educational System in Ludbreg, Croatia

2.1.1. Educational System in Croatia

Eight-year elementary education in the Republic of Croatia is compulsory and free for all children at the age of six to fifteen. This refers to all children with permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia, irrespective of their citizenship.

There are three segments of elementary education. Compulsory elementary education conducted in regular elementary schools and special institutions for students with developmental difficulties, art education in elementary music and dance schools, and elementary education of adults conducted in regular schools and specialized institutions. Elementary music education is also conducted in certain regular elementary schools, as a separate educational program.

The orientation of the Croatian and national educational policy towards creating and developing a knowledge-based society is contained in the document titled Education Sector Development Plan for 2005 - 2010, which was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on June 9, 2005.

The changes have been initiated on all the levels of the educational system. The basic objective of the change is to improve the quality and advance the educational system on all levels.

The Croatian National Educational Standard has been created as a basis for the changes in the teaching programmer and work methods in the elementary school system for the purpose of developing the "school tailored to pupils". The purpose of the CNES is the unburdening of the workload by abandoning redundant educational programs, introducing modern teaching methods based on research-based classes and individual and group work and applicable knowledge and skills.

Secondary education is provided for everyone, after completing primary schooling, under equal conditions and based on individual capability, the opportunity to acquire knowledge and the competence needed to enter the labor market and to undertake further education at higher education institutions.

Secondary education is provided by secondary schools and other legal persons and includes various types and forms of instruction, education, qualification and training that are carried out according to the provisions of the Primary and Secondary School Education Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, 87/2008, 86/2009, 92/2010, 105/2010-cor., 90/2011, 16/2012, 86/2012, 94/2013 and 152/2014).

Secondary school institutions are: secondary schools student's dormitories.

Secondary school programs are as follows:

- secondary school diploma programs;
- secondary profession degree programs;
- basic professional degree programs;
- qualification and training programs.

Secondary schools, depending on the type of the programme they offer, are as follows:

- gymnasiums;

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- vocational or trade schools;
- art schools.

Gymnasiums prepare you for further education at higher education institutions, vocational schools prepare you to enter the labor market or provide you with the possibility of continuing education at higher education institutions, and art schools acquire knowledge, develop skills, abilities and creativity in different artistic fields.

2.1.2. Education in Ludbreg

Pre-school education in Ludbreg is available in three kindergartens which have capacity for three hundred children from Ludbreg area.

Kindergarten “Radost” Ludbreg has five groups of primary programs and one group of pre-school programs. The kindergarten is owned by the local self-government unit of the City of Ludbreg. Currently, there are a total of 18 employees, 13 in care and education, and 5 in other jobs. The average number of children per year in all programs is 140.

Within the regular primary program, children attend English and German language learning programs conducted by educated teachers with a program verified by the Ministry of Science and Education. Children who wish to attend a religious education program of Catholic catechism led by our educators with a completed canonical mandate verified by the competent ministry.

The pre-school program for the elderly children is part of a regular program, and the shorter pre-school program for non-kindergarten children is held in the afternoon. Parents have the opportunity to start with a child's adaptive playroom before enrolling in a kindergarten so that the child can easily adapt and the parent knows about the way they work.

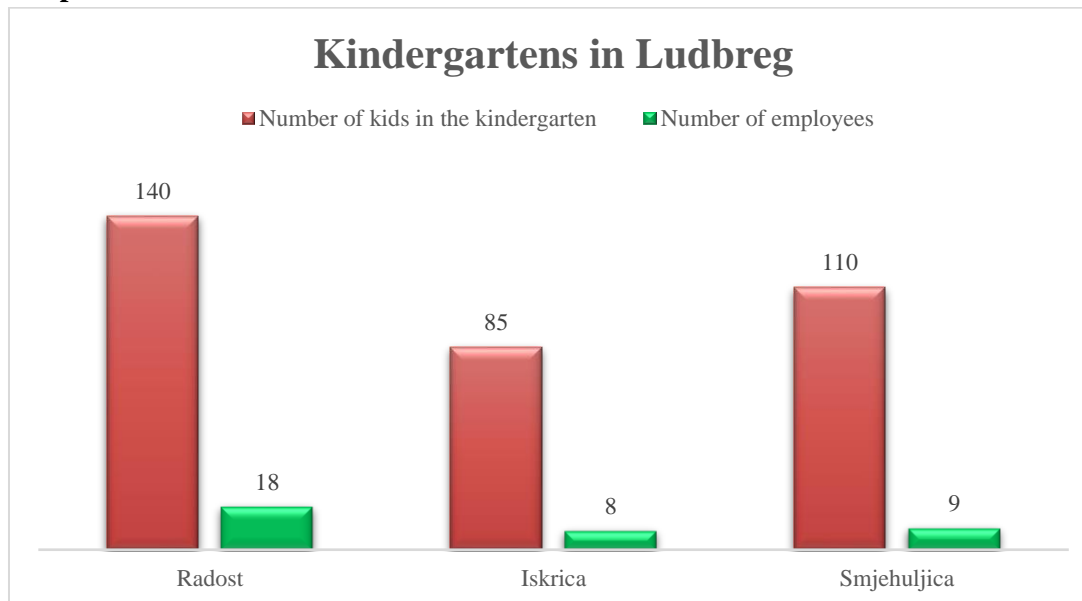
Children with disabilities and children of national minorities are integrated into groups, and assistance with working with provides a psychologist.

Kindergarten participates in all the manifestations of our city and cooperates with associations, institutions and organizations on various projects, with the aim of involving children in the life and work of their immediate environment influenced by other children and parents.

Kindergarten “Iskrica” attends a maximum of 85 children. There are eight employees in Kindergarten. Kindergarten performs a primary comprehensive program of pre-school education, and from short programs it carries out a program of early English language learning, a religious program and a program of work with gifted children. Also, the Kindergarten has an adaptation toy.

The “Smjehuljica” kindergarten currently employs 9 full-time employees. Kindergarten cooperates with 2 external associates, psychologist, logopedist and tutor. The kindergarten starts with a maximum of 110 children in three educational groups: nursery, younger and older kindergarten groups. Besides the regular program in Kindergarten are organized religious program and workshops for children.

Graph 1.



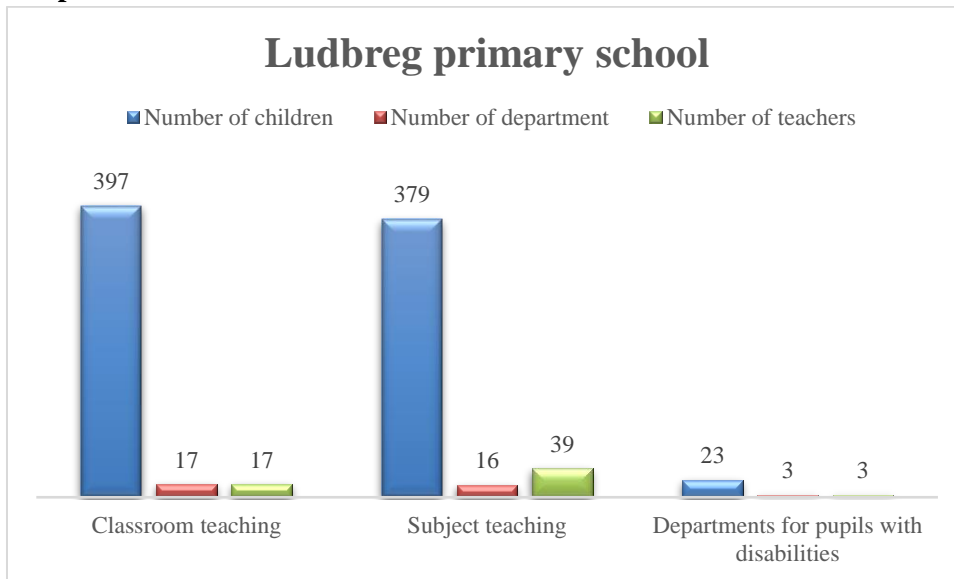
Ludbreg primary school is a public institution of general education of children and youth. School performs the educational and training activities. Primary education in the Republic of Croatia is regulated by Law of education in primary and secondary schools and therefore primary school Ludbreg implemented mandatory and regular primary education. In addition, performs the activity of basic music education for the following programs: piano, guitar, accordion, block flute, flute, clarinet, trumpet, horn, saxophone, drum and voice development (solfege). The school operates on the basis of the school curriculum and the annual plan and program of work.

Today, Ludbreg primary school has a total of 35 departments - 17 departments of classroom teaching and 16 departments subject teaching. School has a total of 776 pupils - 397 pupils from 1st to 4th grade and 379 pupils from 5th to 8th grade. Also, the school has implemented three departments for pupils with disabilities which attend a total of 23 pupils. Music department of school has six departments and enrolls 152 pupils.

Primary school Ludbreg besides regular classes has elective classes in which pupils can choose additional elective subject such as Computer Science, German or Catechism.

Moreover, school organizes various extra-curricular activities which seek to activate and motivate pupils to school and learning. Also, through participation in extracurricular activities pupils acquire new skills and competences that can help them throughout their schooling. Some extracurricular activities are: drama, young researchers, creative workshops, art workshops, playroom, reading rooms, sports activities, dance groups, choir, young technicians, first aid and others.

Graph 2.



The Ludbreg High School is a newly established school institution that started the work of the school year 2013/2014. Ludbreg High School moved to this new location in February 2015 at Trg Sv. Trinity 16, to the moment when a new school building is being built.

Ludbreg High School provides education in 4 annual education programs:

- General Gymnasium
- Economics - economist

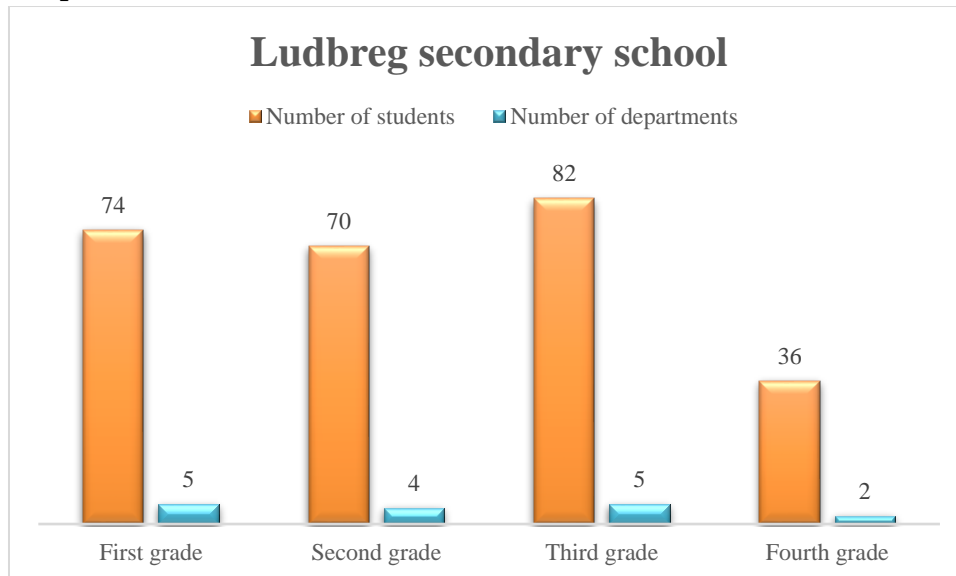
And 3 years of vocational education programs:

- Machine Locksmith, Turner, Baker (JMO)
- CNC operator
- Auxiliary occupations (chef, pastry, gardener) - (TES)

In addition to regular classes at school will run additional courses that will enable students to practically apply the acquired knowledge and creativity, to gain new knowledge, skills, values and attitudes relevant to students so that they could later effectively engage in life. This form of instruction is intended for students who show particular interest or talent in a specific field of study and want to learn more or prepare for all levels of competition.

Additional classes will be organized at a certain time when such a form will be needed for students and will include active didactic - methodical approaches such as workshops, projects, field teaching, observation, tracking and encouragement of gifted students and preparation for competitions. Supplementary education is for those students who have difficulty in mastering a particular part of the course. Such teaching does not have a character of continuity, but will be maintained according to the needs and needs of the pupil from those teaching areas and / or subjects that are needed. Extracurricular activities focus on the development of students' interests and talents in different areas, and will mainly be conducted in the form of work and project teaching as well as foreign language learning.

Graph 3.



2.1.3 Potential weaknesses:

- Lack of practical work at kindergartens
- Overload of teaching content - a lot of content that has to be done in short period of time
- Has no connection with current social events in the field of protection of environment, waste management, etc.
- No interdisciplinary approach to the theme of protection of environment
- Lack of equipment for environment education adopted to children in kindergartens
- Lack of employees who will take care of environment in kindergartens
- Inability to work in smaller groups because of group size and lack of associates

2.2. Overview of the Educational System in Pazardzhik, Bulgaria

2.2.1 Educational system in Bulgaria

The Pre-school and School Education Act (effective from 1.08.2016) provides the legal foundation for the overall education system in the country and establishes the right of citizens to continuously enhance their education and qualifications. The Act recognizes the right for education for all children; guarantees equal treatment regardless of their ethnic or social background and residential locality; ensures conditions and provides opportunities for further development and accomplishment of a high level of knowledge in the system of education.

Bulgarian education system has traditionally been organized within the public sector. However, a number of private schools exist at different levels of schooling. The education in Bulgaria is mainly supported by the state through the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). Financial autonomy is given to schools by financial decentralization and the so-called “delegated budgets”. The financial decentralization transfers rights and obligations that are related to the constitution and execution of a budget (delegated budgets). Schools have more operational rights in relation to budget constitution and expenditures, and execute their own independent policies.

Education and training of children starts in kindergartens. They may be public, municipal or private, depending on the type of their budget. Kindergartens are for children at the age between 3 and 6 (when they begin first grade). Pre-primary groups for children aged 5 and 6 are compulsory and may take

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place either in a kindergarten or in a primary school. School readiness is assessed at the end of pre-school education stage by comparing acquired learning outcomes with the learning outcomes described in the state standards. A Personal portfolio is issued at the end of pre-primary stage. School education is free at pre-primary, primary and secondary level in the public sector. It is compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 16 (0-8 grades). The levels of schooling in Bulgaria are:

- primary education (grades 1- 4 inclusive);
- pre secondary education (grades 5 – 7 inclusive)
- lower secondary education (grades 8 – 10 inclusive);
- upper secondary education (grades 10 – 12 inclusive).

Schools in Bulgaria are state, municipal, private or spiritual and as according to the type of training and teaching they provide – non-specialized and specialized. According to the stage or degree of education, non-specialized schools are:

- primary (I - IV grade inclusive);
- elementary (I - VII grade inclusive);
- secondary (VIII - XII grade inclusive);
- unified (I - X grade inclusive);
- high school (I – XII inclusive).

According to the content of the training, the secondary schools can be

- profiled or
- vocational

Special profiled-schools shall include in-depth competences in a specific profile in accordance with the state education standard for the special profile education.

Special profiles are the following:

- foreign languages;
- humanities;
- social sciences;
- economic development;
- software and hardware science;
- entrepreneurship;
- mathematics;
- natural sciences;
- visual arts;
- music;
- physical education and sports

Vocational training shall include competences needed for the acquisition of vocational qualifications, as well as for the meeting of the eligibility requirements of the occupation or profession, if any, including regulated professions and occupations.

Vocational high schools shall aim at attaining the state education standard for the acquisition of vocational qualifications during the two gymnasium stages of the secondary education degree course.

There can be also innovative schools, which are declared such upon an ordinance of the Council of Ministers and those schools should constantly achieve improvement of education quality by:

1. Developing and introducing innovative elements regarding the organization and / or content of the training;
2. Organizing in a new or improved way the management, the training and the learning environment;



3. Using new teaching methods;

4. Developing innovative training content, school curricula, and school plans.

Specialized schools train experts in specific fields like sport, arts, culture and the needs of religions.

Specialized schools are:

- Sport schools (V to XII inclusive)
- culture schools (grades I to XII, V to XII, or VIII to XII inclusive);
- arts schools (grades I to XII, V to XII, or VIII to XII inclusive);
- spiritual schools (grades VIII to XII inclusive).

The primary education starts normally when a child turns seven, but it is not uncommon for parents to consider their children able to start the 1st grade at the age of six. After finishing the fourth grade, students get a certificate for elementary education. To get a basic education diploma, students can go to a lower-secondary school or choose to attend a general secondary school.

In most schools, the school year begins on 15th of September and continues until 15th or 30th of June. Each school year has two terms. In most of the secondary schools, competitive exams for admission are required. Pupils can choose from a number of various types of schools, each offering a different focus (such as mathematics and sciences or foreign languages).

All Exams and External National Examinations are as follows:

1. Primary education – 4th grade (10/11 years of age)

National External Assessment in the following subjects: Bulgarian Language and Literature, Maths, Man and Nature, Man and Society

2. Lower Secondary Education – 7th grade (13/14 years of age)

National External Assessment in the following subjects: Bulgarian language and Literature and Maths. Optionally, students may sit a third exam in Foreign Language.

3. First Stage of Secondary Education – 10th grade (16/17 years of age)

National External Assessment in the following subjects: Bulgarian language and Literature, Maths, The exams are in test format. Optionally, students may choose to sit and exam in foreign language and IT.

4. Second stage Secondary Education – 11th – 12th grade (18/19 years of age)

National External Assessment in the following subjects: Bulgarian language and Literature, Maths. The exams are in test format. Optionally, students may choose to sit and exam in foreign language.

2.2.2 *Educational System in Pazardzhik Municipality*

Pazardzhik municipality is located in the Eastern part of Pazardzhik region. It occupies an area of 636,722 km² that is 14.21% from the region's territory. The municipality takes the proud second place among 12 municipalities within the region. Pazardjik municipality consists of 32 settlements – administrative centre town of Pazardzhik and 31 villages.

According to data of the National Statistical Institute for the year of 2017, Pazardzhik Municipality has a population of 108 376 inhabitants, out of which 68 572 live within the city of Pazardzhik and 39 804 within the surrounding villages. It ranks the ninth position over the rest municipalities according to population.



The Educational system of Pazardzhik Municipality consists of 32 municipal kindergartens and 46 schools – 40 municipal and 6 state.

Type of institution from the system of preschool and school education	Financing	Number
Kindergartens	Municipal	32
Primary I-IV grade	Municipal	6
Elementary I-VII grade	Municipal	25
Unified I-XII grade	Municipal	4
Selective/Profiled high schools	Municipal	3
Vocational high schools	State	6
	Municipal	1
Sport high schools	Municipal	1
Centers for Special Educational Support/	State	1
	Municipal	2
Schools dormitories/housing	Municipal	1
Total:		82

According to data of the National Statistical Institute for Pazardzhik Municipality in 2017/2018

- number of children enrolled in kindergartens is – 3 378
- number of students within the schools is - 12 267
- number of pedagogical personnel /teaching staff/ in kindergartens is – 260
- number of pedagogical personnel /teaching staff/ in schools is – 1019
- number of kindergarten groups is – 134
- number of school classes is – 539

School sector in Pazardzhik Municipality

Educational Institutions	Number of Educational Institutions	Number of classes	Number of pedagogical personnel/teaching staff/	Number of pupils/students
Municipal kindergartens	32	134	260	3 378
Municipal specialized and non specialised high schools	39	424	812	9 512
State and municipal vocational schools	7	115	207	2 755
Total:	78	673	1 279	15 645

In two of the secondary schools High School “Georgi Bregov” and High School “Dimitar Gachev” there is a total of 162 students divided in 7 classes in ART profile – visual arts and music. In the Sport School in the city the number of students being educated is 223 divided in 11 classes. The number of the vocational classes in the municipal schools is 24 and they account for the total of 426 students.



List of all profiles that can be selected by secondary students within the Municipality after graduation of VII grade

HIGH SCHOOL NAME	Profile
High School „Georgi Bregov”	Music
	Visual arts
High School of Mathematics and Natural Science „Konstantin Velichkov”	Mathematics
	Software and hardware
	Natural Sciences
Profiled High School „Ivan Sergeevich Aksakov”	Humanities
	Natural Science
Language High School „Bertolt Breht”	Foreign Languages
High School „Doctor Petar Beron”	Entrepreneurship
High School „Dimitar Gachev”	Music

Below you can find a list of some of the professions and vocational trainings in the local high schools:

- Assistant coach
- Construction Engineer
- Software developer
- Cook
- Hairdresser
- Machine operator
- Electro technician
- Food and beverages quality technician

2.2.3 Potential weaknesses

- The pre-school curricula lacks of lessons dedicated at topics related to eco-gardening, waste treatment; protection of environment, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources;
- Lack of lessons dedicated to ICT, and practically they do not teach topics like WEB 2.0 tools and Open Educational Resources;
- Need to increase capacity among kindergartens’ teachers on topics like: EU programmes and funding, potential opportunities for a professional collaboration with other similar institutions and schools at EU level, and establishment of a teachers network for exchanging professional ideas and experience;
- As a result of globalization and migration, population in rural regions has started to decline and it leads to shrinking numbers of student and pupils enrolled in kindergartens.

2.3. Overview of the Educational System in Kochani, North Macedonia

2.3.1 Educational System in North Macedonia

Preschool education in North Macedonia includes children aged between 9 months and 6 years - that is, children of all ages before the time to start attending primary school. The preschool education and upbringing is implemented in kindergartens and it is under the authority of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The service of care, full care, day care, upbringing and education in the kindergartens is performed in several types of groups according to the age of the children. These are nursery groups (children from 9 months up to 3 years), kindergartens (small-children, junior-children, and senior-children, which embrace children from

3 to 6 years), mixed-age groups of children (children from 1 to 6 years) and groups in which non-institutional forms of activities are conducted.

Through this type of institutions children are given the opportunity to participate in the educational system at a younger age, by which conditions for development of the children's potentials are provided through appropriate preschool programs. Because of the great importance of the early age for the child's development, the need for maximum encompassment of the children from 3 to 6 years is indicated, in order to provide better conditions for their inclusion in the next subsystem of education.

In the National Education Development Program emphasis has been laid on the need for organizing different forms of preschool education for the children of the vulnerable groups such as children with mental or physical disabilities, children from underdeveloped environments (mostly rural areas), children from socially-endangered families, children from the Roma community, etc.

On local level, in the endangered rural environments and the inaccessible places, aside from the all-day care of the children in the kindergartens, the realization of the idea for short forms of inclusion is still being worked on, which represents a contracted version of the program for the preschool kids made on the basis of the needs and interests in the local environment, primarily intended for the children of the age between 3 and 6 years.

According to the data of the State Statistical Office, in 2018 (reference date 30 September), the total number of children in institutions for child care and education – kindergartens / centers for early childhood development was 37 615, which represents an increase of 6.6% in comparison with 2017. The annual reports covered 103 institutions for child care and education in 2018, which is 4.0% more than in 2017. These institutions provide health care, food and daily stay for children in accordance with their development needs up to the age of 6 years, organized in several types of groups (groups for children in development stage up to 2 years of age, groups for children in development stage between 2 years of age and school age, combined groups, groups for children with disabilities, groups for children - centers for early childhood development within kindergartens, group for pilot programs and groups for extra-institutional forms of activity) and other groups (food and stay-over).

Number of children and institutions for childcare and education- kindergartens/centers for early childhood development, 2018

	2017		2018		2018/2017	
	Institutions	Children	Institutions	Children	Institutions	Children
Public institutions for child care and education-kindergartens	64	34112	68	36313	106.3	106.5
Private institutions for child care and education-kindergartens	22	823	24	977	109.1	118.7
Kindergartens within private schools with legal personality	4	119	3	116	75.0	97.5
Centres for early	2	49	2	36	100.0	73.5



childhood development as public legal entities						
Centres for early childhood development as private legal entities	5	126	4	113	80.0	89.7
Publicly owned kindergartens within legal entities for the needs of employees	1	43	1	52	100.0	120.9
Privately owned kindergartens within legal entities for the needs of employees	1	14	1	8	100.0	57.1

Children in institutions for care and education-kindergartens/centres for early childhood development by age, 2018

	Total number of children	Children by age							
		up to 1 year	1 year of age	2 years of age	3 years of age	4 years of age	5 years of age	6 years of age	7 and more
2017	35286	569	2202	4629	6934	7809	9406	3736	1
2018	37615	865	2579	5184	7659	8920	10186	2222	/
2018/2017	106.6	152.0	117.1	112.0	110.5	114.2	108.3	59.5	/
Children in development stage up to 2 years of age	4495	837	2533	1125	/	/	/	/	/
Children in development stage between 2 years of age and school age	30641	/	/	3848	7165	8201	9325	2102	/
Combined group	1770	28	44	211	364	519	550	54	/
Children with disabilities	196	/	2	/	32	48	69	45	/
Groups of children-centres for early child development within kindergartens	495	/	/	/	93	148	235	19	/
Groups for pilot	18	/	/	/	5	4	7	2	/

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programmes									
Group for extra institutional form of activity	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Other groups (food and stay over)	930	/	/	/	/	/	/	3	927

Education is compulsory between the ages of six to 19 for general secondary education, or from six to 17, 18 or 19 for vocational education and training depending on the selected VET track.

The educational system in the Republic of North Macedonia consists of three sub-systems:

- **Primary education** (ISCED 1 and ISCED 2): in duration of nine years, free of charge and compulsory for all children aged 6 to 15, with no regards to the gender, religion and nationality. The primary education activities are defined and regulated by the Law on the Primary Education and with the Concept for Nine-years Primary Education. The mission of this sub-system is to raise, educate and guide. In the first three grades the assessment of the pupils is descriptive, and for the rest of the grades is numeric (marks 1 to 5). Private primary education schools are not recognized in Macedonian education system. However, private primary schools exist and their pupils are mainly of foreign citizenship. There are 347 primary schools in the country (around 1100 including satellite offices).
- **Secondary education** (ISCED 3): general secondary education (Gymnasium) in duration of four years and vocational education (Vocational Schools) in duration of two (vocational education of two years), three (vocational education for professions) or four years (vocational technical education). The secondary education is compulsory and comprises all children in the age cohort 15 to 19 years for the general secondary education, and for the age cohort 15 to 17, 18 or 19 in the VET depending on the selected track. The activities and responsibilities of the secondary education are defined and regulated with the Law on the Secondary Education and the Law for Vocational Education and Training. The secondary education is free of charge in the public secondary schools. The pupils also have the legal option to enroll into the private secondary schools which are officially recognized by the educational system of North Macedonia; there are 16 private secondary schools in the country. In several schools in the country there are bilingual classes in which the teaching of non-language subjects is performed in foreign language (French or English); In total there are 124 secondary schools, 108 are public and the remaining 16 are private. Of the secondary public schools, 23 are gymnasiums; 43 are professional; 33 also offer gymnasium and vocational education; 4 schools are for students with special educational needs; and 5 are art schools.
- **Higher education** (ISCED 5, 6 and 7): implements under-graduate, master and doctoral studies in the higher educational institutions and institutes which are autonomous and independent. There are seven state universities and 14 private universities in the Republic of North Macedonia. The activities are defined and regulated by the Law on the Higher Education. In accordance to the national policy for provision of equal access to the higher education, social cohesion and lifelong learning, the state introduced the Project 35/45, which promotes enrollment of the students from the age cohort 35 to 45 years.

The educational system comprises also the children with special needs and who are enrolled in the schools for special education or within the regular teaching process depending on the preferences of the students and their parents. There is separate curriculum for these schools.

2.3.2 Educational System in Kočani

Kočani is a town in the eastern part of North Macedonia, It has a population of 38,092 and is the seat of the Kočani Municipality. The town spreads across the Northern side of the Kočani valley, along the banks of the Kočani river, where it leaves the mountain slopes and flows through the valley.

The ethnic structure of the population is following

- Macedonian: 90.3%
- Roma: 5.0%
- Turks: 3.0%
- Vlachs: 0.5%
- Serbs: 0.2%
- Other: 1.0%

From the religious point of view most of the population is Orthodox 96%, Muslims 3%, Catholic 0,3% and other 0,7 %.

The City of Kočani is served by five primary schools:

- Nikola Karev Primary School
- Saints Cyril and Methodius Primary School
- Rade Kratovče Primary School
- Malina Popivanova Primary School
- Krste P. Misirkov Primary school

There are also two secondary schools:

- Ljupčo Santov Gymnasium (specializing in economics)
- Gjošo Vikentev (specializing in electronics and machining)

There is also a primary school specializing in music:

- Risto Jurukov Primary School for Music

The city also maintains a municipal library "Iskra" ("spark").

The situation in the primary schools in the school year 2019/20 is as follows in the table below:

Primary school	Number of students	Number of classes	Average number of students per class
PS "Krste P. Misirkov"	224	19	11,78
PS "St. Cyril and Methodius"	972	48	20,25
PS "Rade Kratovche"	478	30	15,93
PS "Malina Popivanova"	546	33	16,54
PS "Nikola Karev"	500	36	13,8
TOTAL	2 720	166	16,38



As for the Secondary schools in Municipality of Kochani, the situation in the school year 2019/20 is as follows:

Secondary school	Number of students	Number of classes	Average number of students per class
SS "Ljupcho Santov"	619	32	19,34
SS "Gosho Vikentiev"	667	36	18,52
TOTAL	1 286	68	18,91

From August 5th, 2019 (National gazette 161 of Republic of North Macedonia), there are changes in the national Law for education that emphasize the inclusion of the children with special needs and working systematically with the gifted and talented children.

In Kochani there is one public preschool institution – kindergarten JOUDG "Pavlina Veljanova", one private kindergarten "Amichi", and one educational center "Kliker".

The public kindergarten "Pavlina Veljanova" has ability to accept 650 kids from preschool age (9months - 6 years). It has four buildings in Kochani and one in Orizari in which 783 children are enlisted.

Buildings	Number of educational groups	Number of teachers	Number of assistant teachers
Bambi	5	3	7
Stars	8	6	10
Sunflowers	8	4	13
Flowers	7	4	12
Snowdrops	2	2	2
Total	30	19	44

From August 2019 will start the building process of the new building that will be part of the kindergarten, and from September 2019 will start the center for early child development in Trkanje, which also will be part of the kindergarten.

Building BAMBI

This is the main object of the kindergarten located in the center of Kochani. It was the first object that was built, and it enlists 155 children, which are divided in 5 groups: 9months – 2 years, 2-3 years, 3-4 years, 4-5 years and 5-6 years. This being the central building employs 32 employees (administrative staff, care education staff, technical staff).

Group type	Number of groups	Normative	Enlisted kids
0-2years	1	10 - 12 kids	19
2-3 years	1	12 - 15 kids	29
3-4 years	1	15 - 18 kids	37
4-5 years	1	18 - 20 kids	34
5-6 years	1	20 - 25 kids	36
Total	5		155



Building STARS

The STARS object has 20 employees and enlists 168 children which are divided in 8 groups. It is also located in Kochani.

Group type	Number of groups	Normative	Enlisted kids
0-2 years	2	10 - 12 kids	14
			14
2-3 years	1	12 - 15 kids	31
3-4 years	2	15 - 18 kids	19
			19
4-5 years	1	18 - 20 kids	29
5-6 years	2	20 - 25 kids	20
			22
Total	8		168

Building SUNFLOWER

The SUNFLOWER object has 21 employees and enlists 215 children which are divided in 8 groups. It is also located in Kochani.

Group type	Number of groups	Normative	Enlisted kids
0-2 years	2	10 - 12 kids	14
			17
2-3 years	2	12 - 15 kids	30
			28
3-4 years	1	15 - 18 kids	36
4-5 years	1	18 - 20 kids	34
5-6 years	2	20 - 25 kids	28
			28
Total	8		215

Building FLOWERS

The FLOWERS object has 19 employees and enlists 195 children that are divided in 6 groups. It is also located in Kochani.

Group type	Number of groups	Normative	Enlisted kids
0-2 years	1	10 - 12 kids	19
2-3 years	2	12 - 15 kids	25
			25
3-4 years	1	15 - 18 kids	33
4-5 years	2	18 - 20 kids	28
			28
5-6 years	1	20 - 25 kids	37
Total	6		195



Building SNOWDROPS

The SNOWDROPS object has 5 employees and enlists 50 children which are divided in 2 groups. This object is located in Orizari.

Group type	Number of groups	Normative	Enlisted kids
Mixed group 2-6 years	2	10 – 20 kids	25
			25
Total	2		50

2.3.3 Potential weaknesses:

- The number of enlisted children is bigger than the projected capacity of the kindergarten
- Lack of topics related to protecting our ECO system
- Lack of technological equipment adapted to children in kindergartens
- Lack of practical education on these topics
- Difficulties in visiting companies who operates in this field due to the big number of children in groups and their organization to the visiting site

3. Principles and values of the cooperation between countries

The implementation of the strategic partnership in the area of education between municipality of Kochani, municipality of Pazardzhik and municipality of Ludbreg will be based on the following principles and values:

Cooperation – with the aim of ensuring safe and positive environment, in which the young population will grow, develop and build up collaborative partnerships;

Stability and lasting values – in order to guarantee quality of the realization of the educational processes and at the same time to create conditions for education of the future generations;

Integration – uniting achievements at implementation of the activities, determined with the strategic aims, which are dedicated to ensuring optimal distribution of the present resources and integrating all categories of factors, especially the children in kindergartens and students in schools, also continuous consideration of the needs of the poor and vulnerable groups;

Motivation – so as to achieve maximum effect in the accomplishment of competence;

Legality – with the aim of guaranteeing the implementation of accepted strategic document in compliance with the corresponding laws and the general public acceptance of the local population;

Professionalism and accuracy – in order to implement the activities in compliance with the legal norms and procedures and through the use of proved positive practices and justification of the political decisions;



Participation – so that all citizens in all groups of interested sides can be included in the processes of consultations and implementation of the competence also in the public policies with local significance;

Continuation – so as to preserve and encourage the tradition for creating educated people who have quality and usable knowledge and skills for improving the quality of life and with responsible participation and contribution to the community;

Openness and orientation - in order to respond to the needs of the citizens and the job market also to encourage the healthcare – with the aim of creating conditions for healthy population.

4. Mission, Vision and main aims

Mission:

Improvement of experience and knowledge of the children and teachers in kindergartens on the project topics; to continue, maintain and expand further cooperation between the participating partners; to introduce new innovative methods of teaching by using ICT tools; to create a strong connection between the organizations of the project partners during the implementation of project activities; to share good practices and innovations; to train teachers on various contemporary topics, which they will be using later during their teaching activities with kids from the kindergartens.

Vision:

Sustainable development and clean environment; mitigate the negative impact from climate changes; twinning of the participating partner organizations representing the following three sectors: 1) Public sector; 2) Educational sector; 3) Civil sector; well-educated and motivated children and teachers; Demonstration and validation of innovative teaching approaches in the educational system.

Aims:

Main aims:

- Supporting and deepening the cooperation between the three municipalities, pre-school management, teachers and developing strategic partnership for education at pre-school level;
- Use of the open educational resources for teaching of specific topics like waste treatment, eco gardening, protection of environment, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources;
- Participation of teachers from the three municipalities through using methods of open educational forum;
- Development of innovative methods of teaching renewable energy sources, waste treatment, eco gardening and protection of environment.

5. Key partners, challenges and measures

5.1. Key partners:

The key partners in Implementation of the strategy are: all project partners

5.2. Challenges

- Ensuring relevant support by all the key partners included in the strategy;
- Limited financial resources, human resources and time;
- Creating a flexible pre-school program;



5.3. *Potential actions/measures*

Areas and actions for improvement of educational process with active involvement of Municipalities, Public utilities and NGO sector in towns of Ludbreg, Kochani, and Pazardzhik.

Following areas and actions for improvement are determined as the most suitable and with high level of probability for successful implementation within the future cooperation among the project partners.

Municipalities, public utilities, and educational authorities can ensure improvement in the following areas:

- raising ecological awareness of children in all levels of educational process (from kindergartens to high school) through cooperation between representatives of municipalities and public utilities and teachers and students and ensuring of their active involvement in all awareness campaigns.
- increasing of overall understanding of public related activities (organizing of children's visits and monitoring of one day operation process in the communal enterprises for solid waste collection, recycling centers, drinking water treatment plants, waste water treatments plants, public enterprises for maintenance of city green areas);
- promoting and development of entrepreneurship, creative industry, creative entrepreneurship & co-worker spaces with establishing of interconnection with SMEs from private sector;
- supporting of career advisory activities for better acknowledgement of children's skills and competences,
- raising the level of involvement and participation in local society by promoting of advantages of volunteerism among the children;
- improvement of the transnational cooperation and contacts of teachers in the frame of international projects;

NGOs can ensure increasing of overall skills and competences of children and teachers by:

- providing of expertise and support to educational staff in development of project ideas and preparation of project applications (for example small scale projects for educational equipment for practical utilization of solar energy);
- preparation and realization of relevant trainings for capacity building of teachers in the topics of utilization of RES, environment protection, waste management, eco gardening;
- support in establishing of relevant international contacts (between kindergartens, schools, involved services, public enterprises and institutions, sponsors ...) in the frame of their other transnational projects;
- motivate kids, students and teachers to continuously participate in actions beneficial for community (ecological and social activities)
- support and stimulate active participation of teachers/professors in the NGO sector in the frame of small scale projects

Both type of partners, public organizations and NGOs, will try to investigate the possibility for a larger deployment of green public procurement (GPP) into their everyday activities, because as outlined by the European Commission, GPP can lead to a large number of benefits: environmental, social, economic, and political, which eventually will lead to excellent opportunities for sustainable development at local level. GPP is directly connected to issues like: eco-gardening, energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, protection of environment, and climate change issues. For this reason

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consortium partners commit themselves to seek initiatives, projects and tools for further development of this topic.

6. Action plan

In the activity plan all the main purposes are appointed according to the preliminary shown examples where in an identical way are presented in accordance with achieving a certain aim – a performer of the activity, time for implementation, expected results, other participants, what means of human resources are needed, as well as prerequisites for implementation of foreseen activities.

Activity 1:

Description of the activity	<p>Project “Sustainable energy resources in our kindergartens” – SUSTAIN ENERGY KIDS Project</p> <p>Educating our children about renewable and non-renewable resources is one of the most valuable lessons we can give them. It is vital that the future generations are well informed about the earth's diminishing resources and what they can do to help prevent further deterioration.</p> <p>This project will aim at raising children’s awareness of the scarcity of traditional fossil resources and emphasizing on the importance of alternative energy resources. The project will pursue forming the foundation for RES knowledge among children from preschool grades.</p> <p>Bearing in mind the early age of our target group the project will aim to introduce the subject matter through pictures, posters, flashcards, photos, competitions, games and some experiments.</p> <p>The project will start by acquainting teachers and children with main glossary and terminology by using flashcards and games. They will learn about energy, energy in our everyday life - for cooking, light, charging devices, driving our cars, etc., and energy origins. Then the project will go deeper into distinguishing renewable vs nonrenewable resources by worksheets, paintings, coloring and making posters.</p> <p>Potential topics for lessons and exercises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Energy – meaning; energy at home; sun, fire and light - first energy source and life examples • Traditional sources of Energy – coal, oil, electricity – origin, how do they reach our homes etc. • RES – What is a renewable energy source? Why are they important for us? Focus on sun, wind, hydro and geothermal water, wood biomass. • Solar power Day – meaning; solar power at home – what can be solar-powered; examples and activities. • Wind power Day – meaning, examples and activities • Water power Day – meaning, examples and activities; posters with photos from dams and rivers. • Wood biomass power Day– meaning, examples activities; bringing wooden chips, pellets in the kindergarten, talking about biomass. • RES vs non-renewable resources – competition with questions and exercises coupled with a demonstration in front of parents. <p>Another main aim of the project will be changing children’s habits. In this respect children will play the role of an “eco patrol”. They will make badges</p>
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	<p>for themselves and will control lights on/off at home, running water on/off when brushing teeth, separating plastic from paper etc. In this way the whole family will be entailed in the matter of the project and will support the activities of the kindergarten.</p> <p>In the end the project will reach the stage of making experiments and learning about energy power in real. Thinking “out-of-the-box” will be the focus of the real-hand-in-experiments. Experiments will go under the name of “Let’s turn on the light” as this is the easiest way to explain kids the meaning of energy and the value of recourses.</p> <p>Alternative ways of “turning on” the light/energy at home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making a solar powered house with the help of solar power house kit /there will be a small LED that will turn on when solar power is generated/ • making a wind powered house with the help of DIY wind-power-kit /there will be a small light bulb that will turn on when wind turbine starts generating power/ • demonstrating hydro power by making a model of a water turbine /again demonstration with a small house and a LED/ • demonstrating biomass power /wood pellets in particular; how do we make them; how do we use them, a visit to a pellets producer/ <p>All kids will be provided by the financial means of the project. Kids will be divided into teams and every team will make a model of a house with alternative ways of “turning on the light/energy”. It will happen with the help of expert/instructor that will share the “how to” with both – teachers and kids.</p> <p>Special worksheets and coloring pages on every lesson topic will be created and in the end of the project they will be gathered together in a book, so that every kid has a small textbook /completed by himself/herself/ about RES.</p> <p>All participating kindergartens will share posters, photo exhibitions, competition results and models of the experiments.</p>
<p>Performer of the activity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kindergartens from several different European countries; 2. Experts on RES and clean energy projects; 3. Local policy experts: representatives of local/regional authorities, NGOs, educational authorities, research institutions; 4. Communication and dissemination experts: these could be representatives of the local/regional authorities, NGOs with similar interests or other communication experts;
<p>Expected results</p>	<p>Improvement of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge on issues related to protection of environment; - Knowledge on how to produce energy from RES; - Skills and competences of teachers on contemporary topics like clean environment projects, sustainable energy production and climate change issues; - Behavioural change among youngest citizens of our community (kids from kindergartens) towards a more rational use of the scarce fossil resources. - Local by-laws in order to integrate into the local curriculums of kindergartens subjects on RES; - DIY (do-it-yourself) attitude and thinking ‘out-of-the-box’, development of self-driven approach and raising creative skills.
<p>Period of</p>	<p>2021-2024</p>

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performance	
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers from kindergartens; - Experts on RES deployment projects; - Policy experts from different key stakeholders groups like: public authorities, NGOs, and educational sector; - Communication and dissemination experts:
Budget:	EUR 200,000 – 400,000
Financial sources:	Erasmus+ Programme; Other potential EU programs from the next programming period 2021 - 2027

Activity 2:

Description of the activity	<p>Project “Ecology Video Stream” – ECO-STREAM</p> <p>Communication and human contacts have always been an inseparable part of everyday life. Speaking, listening to each other, singing and learning from other people’s experience are everyday activities. They stimulate tolerance and bring about embracing cultural differences. Raising children tolerant towards peers’ particularities and understanding of cultural clash is a major point in their upbringing.</p> <p>This project will foresee activities and kindergarten exercises that develop personal attitude and understanding to each other’s approach and viewpoint. Ecology is a common theme that should be tackled by everybody – starting from the kids. They can easily communicate through streaming online connection, thus exchanging ways of learning and doing things. What do little ones make best? How do they learn about the world around them? One way is by singing. Here is our first activity that can be streamed over the Internet. Children from the participating countries can prepare short songs for the world, for Mother Earth, for the importance of keeping environmentally clean and then they can share these with each other. By making gestures, or little dancing they can successfully get their message through.</p> <p>Besides, kids can invite counterparts on a “virtual table” where than can share their lunch menu. Kids would talk about what they are eating and where does it come from? Is it from a local farmer or on the contrary - originating from another country? Preparing a short presentation about common kindergarten food and beverages is enough to pique each other’s curiosity.</p> <p>In addition to sharing songs and food, kids will use the social channel to share games. Easy games for package recycling and waste management can be quickly demonstrated over the Internet.</p>
Performer of the activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kindergartens from several different European countries; 2. Experts on recycling and waste management; 3. Public waste management company; 4. Local policy experts: representatives of local/regional authorities, NGOs, educational authorities, research institutions; 5. Communication and dissemination experts: these could be representatives of the local/regional authorities, NGOs with similar interests or other communication experts; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internet and computer technicians.
Expected results	<p>Improvement of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge on issues related to protection of environment; - Knowledge on how to minimize waste; - Skills and competences of teachers on contemporary topics like



	<p>clean environment projects, climate change and cultural clash issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Behavioural change among youngest citizens of our community (kids from kindergartens) towards a more rational use of resources, getting together with each other and be more tolerant towards peers' particularities. - Local by-laws in order to integrate into the local curriculums of kindergartens subjects on climate change issues and protection of environment;
Period of performance	2021-2024
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers from kindergartens; - Experts on recycle management, local public companies, IT experts; - Policy experts from different key stakeholders groups like: public authorities, NGOs, and educational sector; - Communication and dissemination experts.
Budget:	EUR 5,000 – 40,000
Financial sources:	Local municipal budgets, and/or EU programmes from the next programming period 2021 – 2027.

Activity 3:

Description of the activity	<p><i>Entrepreneurship project in kindergartens</i></p> <p>The national framework curriculum for pre-school and general education in primary and secondary schools has one of the basic goals of alignment with the needs and developmental goals of the Croatian society and the developmental needs of the individual. Initiative and enterprise are part of the competencies that we, among many others, need to develop in children. It includes creativity, innovation, teamwork, non-violent conflict resolution, project planning to achieve goals, and the skills needed to launch social market activities.</p> <p>The project goals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensitization of preschool institutions on the need of education and education for entrepreneurship from the early age • creating an entrepreneurial atmosphere through play and a variety of activities appropriate for children • cooperation with the local community • adoption of positive and right positions on entrepreneurship • development of competencies needed for entrepreneurship • development of rules and agreements • recognition of money and saving system <p>Potential topics for lessons and exercises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an entrepreneur? - Check what the children know, what their answers are, what they think the entrepreneur is • Explain to children what entrepreneurship is and how they become an entrepreneur • Can we be entrepreneurs and how? • Familiarity with money system, distribution and savings • A deal on products we can create to be entrepreneurs • Procurement of raw materials and equipment
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product design • Promotional materials and activities • Collaboration with the local community • Product sales • Revenue sharing, cost reductions, profit definition, wage distribution and investment in a new product <p>Activities that can be carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for teachers about entrepreneurship for pre-school children • Training for children about entrepreneurship • Role playing • Visit to local entrepreneurs • Establishment of a small craft (name selection, creation of a symbolic document of incorporation, establishment of share capital) • Production of canvas eco-bags - children painting • Tie painting • Painting scarf • Creating pendants children's drawing - 3d printer • Epoxy resin jewelry • Baking dry cookies and packing • Organizing a small Children's Entrepreneurship Fair with product sales, job schedules and roles in organizing the fair • Ceremonial session with the results report and profit distribution • Establishing special part on the web page of kindergartens where all products will be displayed
Performer of the activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kindergartens from several different European countries 2. Local policy experts: representatives of local/regional authorities, NGOs, educational authorities, local entrepreneurs; 3. Communication and dissemination experts: these could be representatives of the local/regional authorities, NGOs with similar interests or other communication experts, craft association in organizing product placement; 4. IT experts
Expected results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved children's competencies: creativity; organizational skills; social relations; taking responsibility; opportunity to learn and practice for entrepreneurship; creating new values from new materials and products; responsibility for money and new values; familiarity with the money system, banking and the organization of a particular business; learning consistency to complete a specific job; accepting the loss of something 2. Established small children's craft 3. Organized fairs for product sale 4. Minimum 4 trained teachers for learning entrepreneurship in kindergartens 5. Internal dissemination among the other kindergarten's staff about the advantages of implementation of STEM in kindergartens 6. External dissemination for other kindergartens on local regional and state level. 7. Established special part on the web page of kindergartens where all products will be displayed.
Period of performance	2021-2025

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Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kindergartens teachers - Dissemination experts - Local entrepreneurs
Budget:	5.000,00 – 7.000,00 EUR
Financial sources:	Local municipal budgets, and/or EU programmes from the next programming period 2021 – 2027 like Erasmus+ programme.

Activity 4

Description of the activity	<p>STEM classroom in kindergartens</p> <p>This main project idea is to develop an own educational approach in implementation of basic STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education suitable for the age of pupils in kindergartens. Foreseen STEM activities with the project will allow young children to investigate and explore, learning in an active, students-based atmosphere, as educational approach that makes the child an active participant in their own learning.</p> <p>Experts from NGOs will prepare a list of necessary supporting equipment and will train kindergarten's teachers in practical utilisation in their everyday activities with children.</p> <p>Kindergarten's teacher, based on acquired acknowledgement from trainings, will develop an own educational approach which will be presented in Handbook. Local authorities will ensure that developed educational materials (Handbook) will be delivered in all kindergartens in region from where they belong.</p> <p>A networking of kindergarten's teachers from different countries will be established by using of social networks.</p>
Performer of the activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kindergartens from several different European countries 2. Local policy experts: representatives of local/regional authorities, NGOs, educational authorities, research institutions; 3. Communication and dissemination experts: these could be representatives of the local/regional authorities, NGOs with similar interests or other communication experts; 4. IT experts.
Expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established special STEM classroom in kindergarten's premises dedicated for implementation of STEM based learning of children - Suitable equipment for STEM experiments for children will be provided - Minimum 4 trained teachers from each of kindergartens participants from the project - Internal dissemination among the other kindergarten's staff about the advantages of implementation of STEM in kindergartens - External dissemination for other kindergartens on local regional and state level.
Period of performance	2021-2025
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kindergarten teachers - Experts in STEM experiments suitable for pre-school age - Experts for Dissemination activities
Budget:	7000-8000 Euros per school for establishing of STEM classroom (including furniture, IT equipment and necessary equipment for STEM experiments)
Financial sources:	Project activities can be financed from many different resources but it is ideal as a background for Erasmus+ application



7. Financing the activities

The activities described in this strategy will be financed with the budgets of the municipalities or with funds ensured by different projects and programs.