

Good practices in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in UNESCO Associated Schools - ASPnet Network Romania

2023-2024



Education for sustainable development

foto: Bucharest "Herman Oberth" high school

Romanian National Commission for UNESCO

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ASPnet Schools



At this moment, 96 schools are part of the ASPnet - UNESCO Associated Schools network.

The selection of ASPnet schools in Romania is made according to the methodology approved by the Order of the Minister of Education number 3133/14.02.2022.

The status of the current UNESCO Associated Schools is validated until the end of the school year 2025-2026.

ASPnet's thematic areas of action include UNESCO's global priorities: global citizenship, culture of peace and non-violence, sustainable development, intercultural education and promotion of cultural heritage.

The thematic action areas set as national priorities are:

1. education for sustainable development and climate change
2. education for human rights and fundamental freedoms
3. education through and for culture and the arts, including education for the promotion of heritage (natural, tangible cultural, intangible cultural, documentary)
4. education to combat violence, substance abuse
5. encouraging the participation of girls and women in programmes for personal development, programmes that professionalise, in particular in the field of science and technology (STEM), and in actions that promote knowledge in the fields of culture and the arts.

Transdisciplinary work in ESD has been organised along the following lines:

- activities by and with UNESCO schools;
- activity by and with UNESCO Chairs;
- national activities through the working group coordinated by the Presidential Administration and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education on the Greening Education Partnership (GEP) SDG4 and ESD NET..;
- collaboration with UNESCO and the Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice.

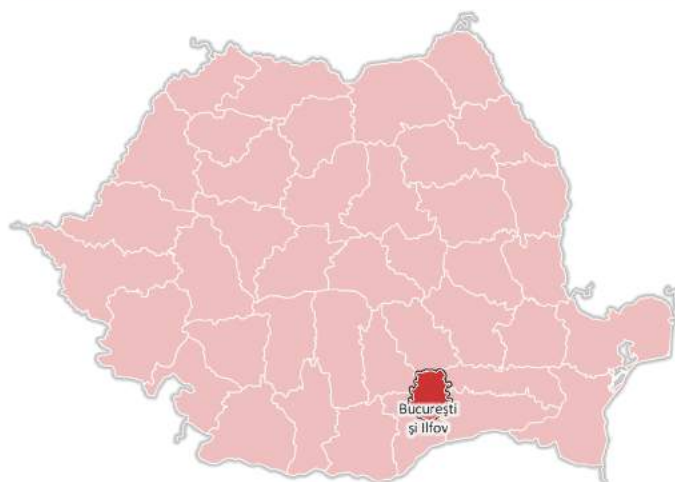
Message from the Secretary General of National Commission of Romania for UNESCO, **Madlen Șerban**

"It is desirable for school leadership to facilitate, through a collaborative organizational culture, the context for creating learning experiences that ensure quality learning. We are talking about learning that occurs through positive emotion, by encouraging children and young people who are learning not to fear mistakes, about learning that has a purpose, the results of which you understand. And I have encountered countless examples, regardless of the geographical place. That is precisely why I believe that a decision-maker, whoever they may be and at any point in the discussion, would have the obligation and responsibility to identify all these best practices."



Madlen Șerban, foto Școala 9

ESD ACTIVITIES OF UNESCO ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS 2023-2024 BUCURESTI-ILFOV REGION



- Under the patronage of the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO, the Metropolitan A.R.C. Secondary School in Bucharest (ASPnet member school) and the Romanian Business School Foundation organized, on 24 March 2023, the annual edition of the interdisciplinary competition OUR TARGET: UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD - Art & Science & Tech Fair. The theme focused on science and technology education in the perspective of sustainable development and preparing children for future professions and sustainable living. More than 150 children and teenagers exhibited their own experiments and inventions at the fair and developed creative and logical thinking skills, discovering the world through experimentation.
- **The "Hermann Oberth" German High School in Voluntari** has been preparing to open a new campus by updating its operational procedures, equipment, and necessary features to become a sustainable school, also known as a Green School. The new "Hermann Oberth" Campus, which exemplifies environmental respect and actively promotes education for sustainable development, welcomed students at the start of the 2022-2023 school year. The high school has incorporated specific ESD goals and activities into its curriculum, emphasizing the connection with nature as a fundamental principle for achieving a healthy and sustainable future for everyone. The teaching staff has received certifications in the ESD field, including "Climate change: understand, reflect, empathize, and act," UNESCO MGIEP Certificate - August 2022, and "Climate change: course facilitator," UNESCO MGIEP Certificate - October 2023.
- In 2023, "Hermann Oberth" High School's ESD programmes included: a plastic waste reduction education project which outreach, debates and active volunteering to collect plastic waste and communicate the effects of plastic on the environment and the threatening of plastic's long life over nature.

BUCUREȘTI-ILFOV REGION

- **The "Hermann Oberth" German high school** organized nutrition workshops to highlight the importance of using local products in diets. These workshops emphasized the benefits of clean products for both health and the environment, the advantages of supporting local communities and the reduction of food waste. They also implemented these concepts by replacing campus desserts with fresh fruits. Additionally, the high school promoted student use of bicycles for commuting, the reuse of paper as drafts or recycled paper, and sorting household waste by categories (selective collection). Classroom debates were held on topics like electric versus gasoline/diesel cars. Furthermore, practical entrepreneurship was encouraged by organizing a fair featuring student-made products and establishing a debate club on various topics, including ESD-related themes.
- **In 2024, the "Olga Gudyn" bilingual high school located in Voluntari** (Pipera), sector 2 of Bucharest, launched the "Ogis Green" project aimed at mitigating the environmental impact of plastic. The students observed that plastic is not being recycled properly due to the variety of plastic types. Through fundraising efforts, the students acquired machines produced in Austria capable of shredding, melting, and remolding plastic into new products. The goal of this student-led initiative is to educate the community on recycling methods, as well as the necessary sorting and cleaning processes to prepare plastic for recycling.
- **In March 2024, the "Olga Gudyn" kindergarten located in Sector 2 of Bucharest** organized a celebration for World Water Day (March 22nd). The aim was to raise awareness among children about the dangerous impacts of water pollution on ecosystems and life itself. It also highlighted the critical issues caused by water scarcity, which threatens the survival of plants, animals, and humans alike. This activity was part of the kindergarten's Education for Sustainable Development program, intended for further expansion through collaborations with institutional partners. The following month, in April, the kindergarten celebrated the International Earth Day by engaging children in eco-friendly activities revolving around recycling reusable materials into practical objects. This initiative fostered creativity while nurturing a sense of appreciation and care for our planet among the preschoolers.
- On World Water Day, **School No. 20 in Bucharest's 3rd Sector** organized a project to raise students' awareness about the importance of water. Activities included observing the water cycle in nature and educating students on maintaining water quality and using water responsibly.
- **The "Petre Ispirescu" secondary school in Bucharest's 1st Sector** held workshops where students created posters and flyers highlighting the importance of water and preserving its quality. They also engaged in debates about the responsible use of drinking water, drawing attention to the necessity of conserving this irreplaceable resource. This project will be further developed through future activities.

ESD ACTIVITIES OF UNESCO-ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS 2023-2024 WEST REGION



- In March 2024, the **"Dragomir Hurmuzescu" Technological High School in Deva** conducted the "Spring Exchange" initiative, encouraging the reuse of recyclable materials to create decorations that could be traded for used batteries and light bulbs. The school proposed involving parent volunteers alongside teachers in collaborative activities as a positive example of resource reuse. Additionally, the "Friendship Garden" project aimed to enhance children's understanding of plants and the environmental factors that promote their growth through hands-on planting experiences.
- A notable good practice example is the sustainable development education project that engaged the local community, organized by the Leo Club of the **"Decebal" National College in Deva**, in collaboration with the Sarmizegetusa Lions Club of Deva, on World Diabetes Day (November 14, 2023). The initiative involved an informative session for elderly residents at the local nursing home, aiming to inform them about diabetes. This effort aligns with the Sustainable Development Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-being. The college's faculty members worked alongside Dr. Cezara Bită, a diabetologist, who presented educational materials and facilitated discussions on the topic. Following the discussions, members of the Leo Club joined by students from the "Decebal" College, organized artistic performances featuring guitar, piano, vocals, and poetry recitals to entertain the elderly residents of the nursing home.
- In 2023, the **"I.C. Brătianu" Technological High School in Hațeg** proposed the "Water, the Source of Life" project on the occasion of World Water Day (March 22nd), carried out in partnership with the Hunedoara County Water Management System. The project aimed to develop cooperative and collaborative relationships among students. Its objectives were: increasing student awareness through an unconventional communication campaign regarding water quality and reducing the risk of groundwater and surface water pollution, organizing an exhibition, as well as communicating impressions from parents and teachers about the project activities, and creating a thematic panel display.

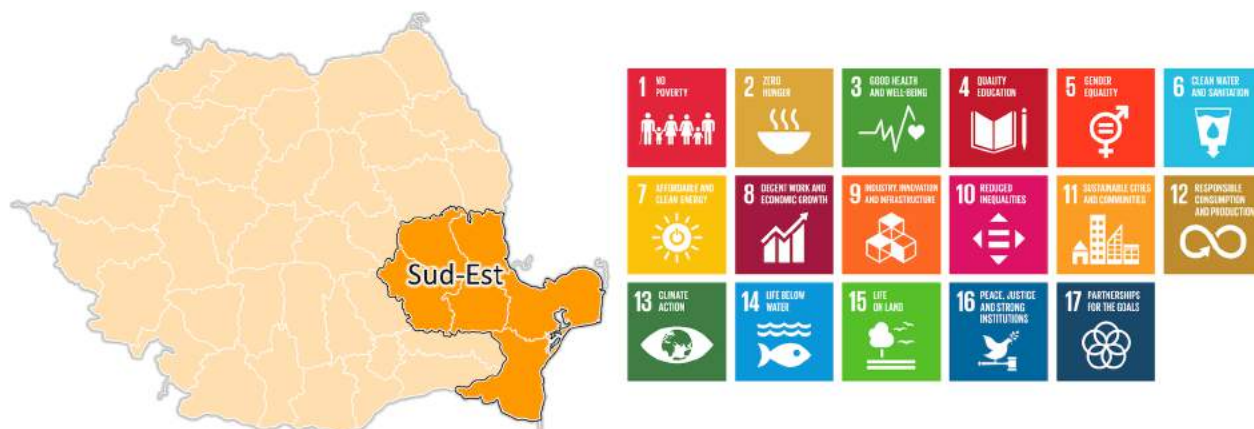
WEST REGION

- The **Aron Densușianu School, operating under the "I.C. Brătianu" Technological High School in Hațeg**, celebrated International Bird Day on April 1st, 2024, with an informative presentation spotlighting the avian species within Retezat National Park. This educational event aimed to cultivate appreciation for birds among the younger generation while underscoring their pivotal roles in both natural ecosystems and human life. Attendees gained insights into sustainable practices that can help preserve birds' natural habitats. In the coming months, the school will collaborate with local organizations, including the Retezat Tourism Association, Hațeg Cultural House, Hațeg Town Library, and the "Hateg Country" UNESCO Global Geopark, to launch the "Be an Eco Hero" project in July 2024. This community-oriented initiative has a dual focus: raising awareness about the environmental hazards posed by non-biodegradable waste pollution and fostering creativity through upcycling recyclable materials into functional items. Moreover, the project seeks to nurture mindfulness about environmental processes, changes, and phenomena, while encouraging a proactive, positive outlook among children toward the natural world. A cornerstone objective is empowering parents to recognize their influential roles in shaping their children's environmental values and increasing their engagement in school activities as educational partners. Furthermore, the school dedicated a "Green Week" to holistically enhancing students' environmental literacy through a diverse array of formal and informal learning experiences grounded in daily life. Immersive activities included nature excursions to the Lolaia waterfall, forest hikes, museum visits to the UNESCO Hateg Geopark and "Volcanoes' House" (part of the visitor trail in the Geopark), environmental film screenings, upcycling workshops, and interactive sessions with local environmental NGOs like the Retezat National Park Administration. The school implemented comprehensive recycling systems, organized an eco-fashion showcase featuring garments crafted from repurposed materials, established gardens using repurposed tires, and spearheaded community clean-up initiatives throughout the city and surrounding areas, fostering lifelong environmental stewardship values.
- The **"Stefan Hell" Technical High School in Sântana, Arad County**, collaborated with Haus Maria Sântana, a family-style residence, the Sântana City Hall, and the Viitorul Copiilor Association on a donation drive. This initiative spanned a week and involved collecting food, clothing, and books for those in need. Students meticulously organized and prepared these items for distribution to families.

WEST REGION

- Packages were distributed to children at the Haus Maria residence in Sântana, where students engaged with the children, exploring concepts such as responsibility, empathy, and civic duty. Students were also encouraged to reflect on their experiences and emotions through essays and plans for the continuation of the project in future years. Additionally, in 2024, on World Water Day, students viewed the documentary "The Mystery of Water" and created "clouds" adorned with messages underscoring the significance of water and the importance of using it responsibly.
- In October 2023, the "Clisura Dunării" Technical High School in Moldova Nouă and the "Coronini" Primary School in Caraș Severin took part in the CLEMS project, organized by the UNESCO Chair at Babeș-Bolyai University for Sustainable Development and Climate Change. This initiative aims to establish connections and facilitate discussions among academic and research communities, businesses, and public administration. The primary objective is to identify sustainable development solutions for the Danube region and explore potential collaborations among stakeholders interested in implementing these solutions.

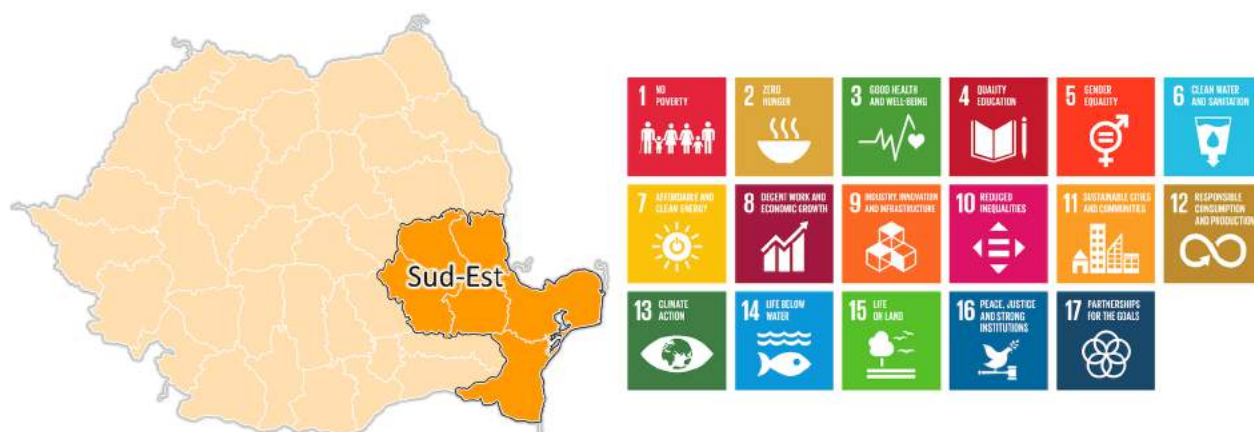
ACTIVITIES OF UNESCO-ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS 2023-2024 SOUTH-EAST REGION



The **"Crișan" Primary School** and **"Jean Bart" Theoretical High School in Sulina**, both pilot schools within the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, participated in 2023 in a project supported by UNESCO/UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice. The project aimed to assist authorities and educational institutions in integrating climate change into education and learning. As part of this initiative, in October 2023, the UNESCO Chair at Babeș Bolyai University in Cluj, focusing on climate change issues, conducted two interventions specifically addressing the role of water as a resource in sustainable development. The project funding was secured through a contract between ARBDD and UNESCO, with UNESCO's National Commission ensuring institutional responsibilities were met in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Tulcea County School Inspectorate. In the "Green Week" of the 2023-2024 school year, under the guidance of professors from the UNESCO Chair at UBB Cluj and in partnership with the Tulcea County Water Management System, students at "Crișan" Primary School participated in several EDD activities. Accompanied by teachers, the students collected water samples from various parts of the city (small basin, Danube River, tap water at school, household wells). They analyzed these samples using specialized kits and compiled the obtained data into a table presented in a PowerPoint format. Ten high school students prepared and presented a material on climate change, "Climate Change - Causes and Effects," discussing its manifestations and strategies for mitigation, followed by a debate on the topic. Another awareness activity focused on the question "What is my carbon footprint and how can I reduce it?" Primary and middle school students assessed their daily routines to identify actions that contribute to carbon emissions and explored strategies to minimize their environmental impact.

The UNESCO Chair also provided statistical data and scientific observations on "The Evolution of Temperatures/Natural Phenomena in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve over the Past 10 Years." This was followed by a discussion with students on "Selective Recycling," followed by a practical activity where students created collection boxes for selective recycling that were installed in the school's hallways.

SOUTH-EAST REGION



"Exploring the Nature Nearby in the Biosphere Reserve" was another activity featured in the "Green Week". Students went on hikes around Sulina and used Google Lens to photograph and identify various species of plants, animals, and insects.

An online presentation, "Water - Between Necessity and Threat" prompted discussions on the critical role of water in human life and its potential for devastating impacts in specific scenarios.

During these activities held at **"Crișan" Primary School and "Jean Bart" Theoretical High School in Sulina**, 56 students across different age groups participated, fostering the exchange of knowledge from older to younger students.

The "Green Week" held special significance through collaboration with UNESCO-ARBDD, enabling students to engage with academic environments and interact with local institutions, community members, volunteers, and environmental experts.

This approach brings the Romanian school closer to the concept of "whole school, whole institution approach," a priority that UNESCO promotes worldwide in the field of EDD.

In December 2023, **Buzău Technical High School**, in collaboration with the Narada Association and the Buzău City Hall, organized the "Christmas Market" project. Students crafted Christmas ornaments from recyclable materials to raise funds for a meaningful cause—replacing the doors of the school dormitory rooms. The Narada Association led a nationwide campaign encouraging the creation of these eco-friendly products, highlighting and promoting the students' creative talent. Nearly all students at the school were involved, either by creating products or participating in organizing an accompanying artistic program for the fair. The event took place in the city center at the tourism information center provided by the Buzău City Hall.

SOUTH-EAST REGION

- In 2024, **Buzău Technical High School** partnered with a German high school that introduced a working model within an environmental protection action group connecting educational institutions across Germany. The central focus of this collaboration is environmental protection, aimed at fostering partnerships with other action groups nationally and internationally. The objective is to empower high school students with decision-making and intervention skills in situations where the environment is threatened, through motions and active involvement in environmental initiatives. This includes collaborating with school administrations and extending these efforts to municipal leadership. Furthermore, the school is developing a partnership with this German high school and several others across Europe (Poland, Greece, Italy) under a similar initiative titled "Next Step". This initiative has formed an action group named "Green Spirit", dedicated to promoting the understanding and application of sustainable development education through practical activities. It also seeks to engage young people in decision-making processes, enhance environmental policies, and provide training in marketing and advocacy. The action group creates informative materials as part of their participation in an Erasmus programme.
- To celebrate World Environment Day on June 5 2024, **the secondary School Nr. 1 in Slobozia Conachi, Galați County**, launched a project to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNESCO 2030 Agenda. Students participated in a contest for innovative ideas to reduce land pollution. They created drawings based on these ideas and organized an exhibition to display their work.

ACTIVITIES OF UNESCO-ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS 2023-2024

NORTH-EAST REGION



- On March 22, 2023, in observance of World Water Day, **"Petru Rareș" National College in Suceava** organized an activity aimed at creating and delivering informal educational sessions for students focusing on the role of water in our environment. While the high school geography curriculum extensively covers topics related to the hydrosphere—such as its definition, states of water, natural water cycle, components, properties of continental and oceanic waters, hydrosphere resources, and water pollution—it provides limited information on the role of water in human health. The project aimed to develop competencies (knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) regarding water's significance in the human body. For instance, students learned how to correctly interpret labels on bottled water and apply this knowledge in everyday behavior, ensuring responsible purchases of flat or carbonated mineral water. This initiative involved 29 students specializing in humanities and social sciences with a bilingual Romanian-English/French profile.
- The **"Vasile Alecsandri" National College in Iași** launched the "Schools for Sustainable Communities" project, conducted from February to July 2023. Its goals included implementing activities that incorporate applications of at least two Sustainable Development Goals (ODDs) in each participating school unit. Additionally, the project aimed to produce a guide of best practices in Environmental Education and Sustainable Development (EDD), based on extracurricular activities across Iași County. Over 1200 students from the county participated in this initiative. Furthermore, a guide promoting sustainable behavior among children and adolescents was developed, and made accessible through a QR code. In October 2023, the college introduced an Erasmus+ project titled "Simulation Courses and Games to Enhance Awareness of Climate Change and Foster Proper Behavior during Natural Disasters in Middle Schools" – #ECOSTAND.

NORTH-EAST REGION

- In 2023, "**Calistrat Hogaș**" **National College in Piatra Neamț** initiated a project aimed at managing students' stress through outdoor activities named "Terra Mission." The project encouraged students to maintain stress journals and engage in outdoor classes and various extracurricular activities in natural settings. They learned to identify stress triggers, symptoms, and responses, emphasizing the importance of understanding and addressing stressors. The project underscored the significance of living in the present moment, promoting good physical and mental health, and fostering mindfulness of emotions and states. Additionally, students explored the principles of sustainable living as it relates to health and well-being. This initiative was undertaken in collaboration with private partners.
- **The "Al. I. Cuza" High School in Galați** conducted the project "Impactul deșeurilor din plastic asupra Dunării" (The Impact of Plastic Waste on the Danube). Prior to field observations, students watched the documentary "Apa-esența Vieții" (Water - the Essence of Life) and engaged with concepts like pH, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, and water temperature through online applications on the Wordwall platform. In both field and laboratory settings, students analyzed water samples from the Danube, measuring parameters such as pH, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity. The data collected from these activities were utilized to produce an educational film. Building on their findings, the project will proceed with recycling initiatives and educational activities focused on explaining circular economy principles. On World Environment Day (April 5, 2024), the school hosted a contest involving simultaneous activities organized by class groups under the guidance of volunteer students. Each class created a 10-slide PowerPoint presentation on human-caused disasters and efforts in environmental conservation. The presentations offered varied perspectives, enabling students to grasp the phenomena comprehensively and evaluate cause-and-effect relationships, along with understanding the consequences of human actions, consumption patterns, and excessive industrialization.
- **The "Gheorghe Asachi" Technical College in Onești**, part of the Eco-Schools Global Program under the motto "Be the change you wish to see in the world! Every drop/action counts," initiated debates, presentations, and practical experiments in collaboration with the Environmental Department of Onești City Hall. These activities focused on raising awareness and understanding the crucial role of wastewater. Students, families, the school, and the local community participated in activities such as cleaning water courses, conducting experiments, watching films, giving presentations, and engaging in debates. All activities took place face-to-face at the Students' Club, laboratories, classrooms, school grounds, and surrounding areas, as well as at the Onești Hydrological Station or at Chimcomplex Enterprise Borzești.

NORTH-EAST REGION

Informative materials were provided to the 10 staff members involved in this initiative by the Bacău Environmental Protection Agency (APM Bacău), the college's county-level partner. Guided by the principle of sustainable development, "Think globally - act locally!" the college strives to maintain a balance between practical teaching methods and theoretical aspects, emphasizing hands-on learning. Accordingly, activities were conducted related to World Water Day, including water quality measurements from wells in students hometowns, practical experiments on water anomalies, riverbank clean-up actions in Onești City, thematic documentary screenings, contests for thematic models, drawings, and poems writing, as well as distributing informative flyers within the school and local community.

ESD ACTIVITIES OF UNESCO ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS 2023-2024 SOUTH - MUNTENIA REGION



- In 2024, **The National Pedagogical College "Constantin Cantacuzino" Târgoviște** focused on promoting the Sustainable Development Goals by celebrating various UNESCO Days through specific activities: On the International Day for Biological Diversity (May 22): Students created posters and brochures showcasing key species from the Danube Delta. They also built models depicting the Delta's terrestrial and aquatic zones, identifying ways to protect its biodiversity. Celebrating the World Environment Day (June 5) students engaged in debates about the environmental impact of everyday activities, such as brushing teeth, commuting to school, and using mobile phones. The project aimed to establish partnerships with "Let's Do It Romania" to support reforestation and green space cleanup efforts in Dâmbovița County. The World Oceans Day (June 8) and World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (June 13) featured discussions on environmental issues, including the causes of water pollution, strategies to reduce unnecessary water consumption, methods to decrease water pollution, and the importance of protecting water resources, particularly freshwater reserves in polar ice caps affected by global warming. Through these activities, the school sought to increase students' awareness of environmental challenges and the importance of sustainable practices.
- **The "Carol I" National Pedagogical College in Câmpulung Argeș**, in collaboration with the Culturalis Association and the Conservation Carpathia Foundation, celebrated World Environment Day on June 3, 2024. The event involved 160 students aged 12-16, who learned about local biodiversity, met environmental protection enthusiasts, and discovered ways to minimize their environmental impact. They also learned about the reintroduction of bison and beavers in the Carpathian Mountains. More than 20 volunteers helped organize the event.

SOUTH - MUNTENIA REGION

- The **"Miron Costin" Gymnasium School in Suceava** ran the "Week of Donated Fruits and Vegetables" project in November 2023, promoting social responsibility and volunteering as part of the SNAC 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan. The project involved 415 students, including 315 from primary school and 174 from middle school. The students brought joy to approximately 200 children at the Blijdorp "A New Life" Neuro-Psycho-Motor Recovery Complex and the Suceava Inclusive Education Center, as well as to elderly residents at various nursing homes in the county. The project resulted in the donation of 693 kilograms of fruit and 273 kilograms of vegetables. Through practical activities, the students learned about the importance of healthy eating and social involvement to support disadvantaged individuals. The project will continue in 2024. Another project at the school, "Forest Month - Green for the Blue Planet," involved over 1,000 primary and middle school students, 50 teachers, and parents. They participated in cleanup activities, poster, essay, and photography contests, green space maintenance, tree and flower planting, and the creation of the eco club "Promise for the Future" green hub. Activities included activating inclusive and safe community spaces for play and outdoor classes. The project encouraged the school community to use interactive workspaces open for debates, scientific and cultural activities, promoting creativity, and developing practical skills. The project was carried out in partnership with the School Students' Council and the Parents' Association of the "Miron Costin" Gymnasium School in Suceava.

ESD ACTIVITIES OF UNESCO ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS 2023-2024 SOUTH - WEST OLTENIA REGION



- In 2024, the **"Ștefan Odobleja" National College in Craiova** embarks on an Erasmus project focused on developing educational materials for entrepreneurship and sustainable development education. During the Green Week activities in 2024, students were challenged to propose ideas for enhancing the school's green park. They suggested painting trees in vibrant colors, building wooden birdhouses, and creating a space for outdoor classes in nature. In 2023, students constructed two benches from recyclable materials for the school park and plan to build more benches which they will paint. Their proposed activities also include painting trash bins to encourage selective recycling and organizing tree planting sessions. Additionally, the college will collaborate with the Faculty of Horticulture to initiate a project for creating an urban forest. This project will involve learning about tree species and conducting robotics workshops aimed at developing modern irrigation systems.
- In 2023, the **Tourism Technological High School in Călimănești**, Vâlcea County, initiated the project "Week of Donated Fruits and Vegetables" to emphasize the impact of food waste. Students collected fruits and vegetables and donated them to disadvantaged individuals. Through this initiative, they became aware of the importance of food and the need to avoid food waste, emphasizing the necessity for greater attention to the actual consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- The **"Nicolae Titulescu" Primary School in Caracal** highlighted, through the involvement of students and teachers in extracurricular activities, the role that light plays in science, culture, art, education, and sustainable development across various fields of human activity. The school organized sustainable development education activities from May to June and on June 5, 2024, marked World Environment Day with the project "Together for a Clean and Healthy Environment." They conducted interactive scientific experiments with light rays, discussed the theme of lightning - between myth and scientific truth, brainstormed on the topic "If there were no light, then...", and created posters presenting methods of using light in different fields and the efficiency of photovoltaic panels.

ESD ACTIVITIES OF UNESCO ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS 2023-2024 NORTH - WEST REGION



- The **"Doctor Victor Babeș" Secondary School in Baia Mare** observed March 21st, International Day of Forests, through a series of activities conducted by students at the Village Museum in Baia Mare. The aim was to raise awareness about the sustainable management, conservation, and development of all types of forests for the benefit of present and future generations. As part of the event, each student planted a tree and flowers within the premises of the Village Museum located on Florilor Hill in Baia Mare. This initiative helped students understand the role of individual responsibility towards the environment.
- În 2023, **"D.R. Popescu" Secondary School in Nojorid**, Bihor County, proposed the project "I Am the ECO Child!" dedicated to sustainable development education and familiarizing students with the Sustainable Development Goals outlined in UNESCO's strategy. The project aimed to empower students to take individual and community actions toward achieving these goals. In 2024, the school participated in the "Bihor Cleanliness Championship," in partnership with the Nojorid Town Hall and Bihor County Council. During these activities, students revitalized the Șauaieu Forest by cleaning up waste, recycling, and engaging in discussions about environmental protection and the importance of forests for human life. Students strongly believe in the impact of their actions on the future of the planet. They participated in ecological literacy programs, including sessions in English, learning survival techniques in nature from mountain guides provided by the school's partner, the "Campion" Association. They also engaged in upcycling activities and enjoyed an excursion to Sunflower Camps-Roșiori. Additional activities included bread baking, flower planting, horse-drawn carriage rides, farm animal observation and the preparation of some ecological products such as jars filled with salt and lavender.

REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN ESD

- Five ASPnet members, known in Romania as UNESCO schools, at the proposal of the President of the UNESCO National Commission were decorated by the Presidency of Romania on the National Day celebration with the "Merit for education" Order in the rank of Knight. For outstanding achievements in sustainable development education, five UNESCO educational institutions in Romania were honored by the President of Romania: **Uruguay Elementary School in Bucharest**, recognized for environmental protection and biodiversity learning activities conducted jointly with Ukrainian refugees hosted at the educational hub, **Buzău Technical High School**, as a member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, **"Voievodul Mircea" High School in Târgoviște** for their involvement in the "Let's Do It Romania" project, **"I.C. Brătianu" Theoretical High School in Hațeg** for the cooperation with the Global UNESCO National Geopark "Hațeg Land" and **Tourism Technical High School in Călimănești** for programs for study programmes in the field of sustainable tourism.

THE UNESCO CHAIR IN CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT HOSTED BY THE CLUJ "BABEȘ-BOLYAI" UNIVERSITY

The UNESCO Chair in Climate Change and Sustainable Development hosted by the Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering at the Babeș-Bolyai University aims to consolidate in a multi-/inter-/trans-disciplinary manner the educational activities, advanced research, and societal engagement efforts of UBB and its international partners in the strategic fields of climate change and sustainable development.

I. Education

In 2023, the first admission process was organized for the two-year master's program in "Climate Change and Sustainable Development" (held in July and September 2023), while the existing master's program in English, "Sustainable Development and Environmental Management," continued. During the "Education for the Environment. Ecological Footprint" Conference, the UNESCO Chair at Babeș-Bolyai University (UBB) presented its activities and commitment to engaging in educational and research activities for the community in the field of sustainable development, aligning with UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development initiatives (January 30, 2024).

II. Research

1. The construction of the ACTRIS-UBB building and the procurement of research equipment have been initiated.
2. In partnership with the National Institute of Research and Development for Marine Geology and Geoecology (GeoEcoMar), under the auspices of CNR-UNESCO, the Danubius Summer School "Assessment of Water Quality and Management of Resources in the Danube Delta" was organized (May 8-12, 2023). This second edition, was focused on non-formal training of students in the complex interactions of the Danube River - Delta - Black Sea macro-system, linked to the pan-European research infrastructure DANUBIUS-RI.
3. The ENVIRONMENT & PROGRESS Symposium on "Sustainable Development Approaches and Solutions for Resilient Communities" was organized (May 18-19, 2023).
4. During the visit of the delegation from the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa (Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa - DiMTEC), the promotion of joint research projects with this center and the involvement of the UNESCO Chair in these initiatives was emphasized (September 2023).
5. The international conference "European LIDAR Conference" was organized (September 10-14, 2023).

UNESCO CHAIR BBU Cluj - 2023

II. Engagement with the Socio-Economic Environment

1. The inauguration of the UBB UNESCO Chair on "Sustainable Development and Climate Change" featured the event "Adapting Local Communities to Climate Change" (February 21, 2023).
2. Collaborating with the University of Bucharest under the "Promoting Sustainable Development Through UNESCO's Programmes and Sites" program, facilitated by UNESCO's Venice Regional Bureau and funded by the abrđn Charitable Foundation (aCF), we successfully secured the project "Sustainability at Work! Research and Community-Driven Action for Sustainable Development in the Hațeg Country UGGp" (March-April 2023).
3. Findings from a public opinion survey on Microplastics in Satu Mare County were shared during the Earth Day Seminar titled "A Someș River without Plastic," held at ISJ Satu-Mare.
4. Partnering with the Eco-innovative Cluster for Sustainable Environment (CLEMS), we organized a workshop in Coronini (Caraș-Severin County) under the auspices of CNR UNESCO, focusing on "COMMUNITY. ENVIRONMENT. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Interorganizational Cooperation for Sustainable Solutions in the Danube Area" (October 6, 2023).
5. An official Partnership Agreement was signed with the University of Bucharest, Geopark Țara Hațegului, and UNESCO Global Geopark (October 2023).
6. Within our ERASMUS partnership with UFS (Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa - DiMTEC), we explored the potential benefits of establishing a UNESCO Chair at the University of the Free State (UFS) Bloemfontein, South Africa, and later developing a UNITWIN network focusing on Sustainable Development and Climate Change during an ERASMUS mobility visit to the university (February 2024).

UNESCO CHAIR BBU Cluj - 2023

The UNESCO Chair at Babeş Bolyai University will host the symposium "Environment & Progress" in Cluj-Napoca from June 13-15, 2024, focusing on the theme "Nature-Environment-Education," commemorating the centenary of Marcian Bleahu's birth.

The project "Făget Forest Park, Cluj's Green Lung," involving faculty from the Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, received the first prize in the "Reconnecting with nature" category at the New European Bauhaus Prizes 2024 competition.

The Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering contributed expertise in biodiversity and ecosystem services, aiding in the development of an integrated management plan and strategic framework for the "Făget Forest Park." This initiative aims to provide recreational opportunities while incorporating educational elements and promoting biodiversity conservation.

To support the training of environmental science specialists, the Faculty initiated the Enviro Pas competition. It targets high school graduates with a baccalaureate diploma who achieve a specific score in a competition focused on environmental science and sustainable economics. Successful candidates are admitted to the program at 10:00 AM, within the enrollment limit, irrespective of their baccalaureate grades.

Consequently, the Faculty aims to educate professionals capable of contributing to environmental management through rigorous environmental analysis, evaluation, planning, and implementation of biodiversity conservation strategies. Throughout their studies, students prepare for careers in environmental consultancy, management system implementation, environmental planning and protection, or impact assessment and environmental monitoring. Besides these core skills, students develop essential transversal competencies such as communication, teamwork in multidisciplinary environments, and critical analytical thinking on environmental and sustainable development challenges.

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