



gaia
YES!

Introduction to Guide to
the Gaia YES! Curriculum

Introduction to Guide to the Gaia YES! Curriculum

Welcome to the Guide to the Gaia YES! Curriculum.

This guide offers support and resources for those who wish to have a deeper understanding of the Gaia YES! holistic approach to teaching and learning with the Gaia YES! Curriculum. The Guide to the Gaia YES! Curriculum offers a series of supporting chapters to help orient and guide users not only through the curriculum content, but also the approaches and methods used to share the curriculum in a variety of educational settings. The Executive Summary to the Gaia YES! Curriculum provides an introduction to the background of Gaia Education involvement in the development of holistic sustainable education as well as an overview of the development of Gaia YES! project, its purpose and application.

While Gaia YES! Curriculum and Guide are primarily directed at educators and administrators working within schools, we hope the manual is also useful for parents, teachers in training, homeschoolers, educators, facilitators, and youth workers in informal and non-formal educational settings, as well as anyone interested in sustainability education including the youths themselves.

The Guide to the Gaia YES! Curriculum chapters can be read independently and in any order. Each chapter offers a table of contents for quick references so users can survey and review the topics of interest and concern to them. There is some overlap on general themes as they all address the same curriculum but they offer different perspectives and we hope this is helpful to the reader.

This Erasmus supported project was proposed before, and implemented during, the Covid pandemic, making it challenging for the partner organizations to meet and collaborate as closely as they would have liked to. But our shared passion for the topic and challenges of the circumstances just confirmed our commitment to sharing and encouraging holistic sustainability education. Interactions during and between our meetings with each other and educators and student participants reinforced our perception of the great need and demand for more resources to help further sustainability education.

Ironically, the travel restrictions due to the pandemic required us to have many more meetings online, which helped us develop resources found in the Blended Learning chapter of the Guide to the Gaia YES! Curriculum. We were fortunate that all partners and most of the participants could meet, finally in person in June 2022, during our final meeting (LTTA) at Findhorn, Scotland, the birthplace of much of Gaia Education, the inspiration for the Gaia YES! project. We are deeply grateful for the support offered by the Erasmus program and all the participants in helping us create the Gaia YES! Curriculum, the Guide and the online resources found on the web site. In many ways we feel like we have just begun to explore the possibilities for implementing holistic sustainability education for youth and are

very excited for it to continue. We hope you too are inspired and find useful resources to support your own efforts towards developing and applying holistic sustainable education for youths at schools and educational settings wherever you are.

In this users manual you will find chapters on:

An Introduction to Gaia YES! Curriculum and Methods:

This chapter provides a general overview of the four dimensions and accompanying modules in the Gaia YES! Curriculum and an introduction to approaches and methods used to share it.

This includes:

- An overview of the four dimensions and modules
- A Gaia YES! approach to integrating holistic sustainable education
- An introduction to Gaia YES! practices, methods, and approaches
- Considerations of the challenge of practicing authenticity in sustainability education
- Cultivating the courage to dream and act towards these goals.

The Curriculum Companion - an in-depth guide:

This chapter provides an in depth guide to implementing the curriculum and ways to build on it including recognizing the context of the educational environment and how to build support for more sustainable education using not only the Gaia YES! Curriculum but also the SDG, story lead learning and other resources.

Topics in this chapter include:

- Understanding your educational organization context: "Where are you now?"
- Developing a sustainability vision within your organization
- Certification by GAIA Education
- Creating a curriculum for sustainability
- Gaia YES approach to implementing the curriculum and projects
- Your role and support as supervisor
- Ways of evaluating learning experiences with Gaia YES?
- And Tools for a local sustainable curriculum- a rich offering of resources and story-led activities to deepen the exploration of topics offered in the Gaia YES! Curriculum.

Thriving Learning Environments

This chapter provides insight on how to create support for the teacher and facilitators sharing the curriculum. It touches on some methods and includes sections on:

- Co-creating a thriving learning culture
- Understanding and building interconnectedness
- "What you teach and how you teach, addressing the needs"
- Creating a common vision within the educational environment
- Knowledge sharing between schools and stakeholders
- Alignment with the history, identity and context of the school

Stories of Inspiration: Stepping stones toward holistic sustainable education in practice

Examples of sustainable education projects that have been inspired by or reflect Gaia YES! holistic sustainability education orientation and approaches. Here we offer real life stories from diverse cultural and educational settings of putting elements of holistic sustainability education in practice. We share some of the lessons learned in hopes to encourage others.

Blended Learning: Recent events and technological advances have opened the way for educators to take advantage of multiple ways of education including online possibilities. How can we take advantage of online learning to help foster and build on the connection, interaction and heart and hands approach of Gaia YES! education? In this chapter we explore innovative and inspiring methods being developed through Gaia Education and other groups to do just that.

The Guide to the online Gaia YES! Website: Here the user can find guidance in accessing and downloading not only the Gaia YES! Curriculum and Gaia YES! Curriculum Users Guide but also links to many of the tools referenced in the Curriculum Companion chapter, such as the story-lead learning and other useful resources.

We hope the Gaia YES! Curriculum is useful and encouraging to those using the Gaia YES! curriculum as a starting place for you to build on for your own Youth Education for Sustainability learning programs and projects.



The last Gaia YES! LTTA partners meeting in Findhorn, 2022