CLIMATE JUSTICE:
FROM **INEQUALITY** TO **INCLUSION**

SHARING PERSPECTIVES FOUNDATION

A Virtual Exchange on one of humanity's biggest challenges.

CliVEx
Connect. Grow. Act.

2024

CliVEx: Enhancing Climate Awareness In Europe And The Southern Mediterranean Area

Climate Justice: From inequality to Inclusion is part of CliVEx. CliVEx is an EU-funded international project that aims to enhance intercultural dialogue between students from Europe and the Southern Mediterranean area on the topic of climate change.

This three-year project is implemented by a consortium of the following organizations:

- UNIMED Mediterranean University Union, Italy

- Sharing Perspectives Foundation, Netherlands

- Soliya, Tunisia

- Università degli Studi di Padova, Italy

- An-Najah National University, Palestine

- Lebanese International University, Lebanon

More at https://clivex.eu

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Overview

'Climate Justice: From Inequality to Inclusion' is an interactive, international, online learning experience about one of humanity's biggest challenges: Finding just and inclusive ways to respond to the climate crisis. Through Virtual Exchange, students from diverse national and cultural backgrounds learn with - and from - each other, by engaging in dialogue, skill-building activities, and an activating group project.

Over the course of this 10-week programme, students meet online on a weekly basis for a two-hour group session guided by trained facilitators, to exchange ideas on the week's topic(s) and discuss the content. They also engage in relationship building activities and exercises to enhance their intercultural competencies. Alongside group learning, this course includes a curriculum offering engaging bite-sized audiovisual materials like videos, articles and podcasts. These materials provide information on key concepts, as well as spotlight a range of perspectives and voices on the sociopolitical dimensions of climate change. The curriculum is designed to provoke thoughts and critical thinking, provide starters for discussions, and create awareness.

In short:

    ✓ 10-week Virtual Exchange course from **March 4 – May 10, 2024.**

    ✓ Total of 90 hours of student investment (equal to 3ECTS).

    ✓ Unique transnational group project.

    ✓ Innovative learning elements, intercultural and transversal skill building.

    ✓ A curriculum with thought-provoking audiovisual materials.

Who is the course for?

This course is free and accessible for students of (Associate) partner institutions of the [CliVEx](#) project between 18 and 30 years old. A basic comprehension of the English language, including A1 level of speaking and writing, is necessary for students to participate. Students need to have access to a laptop or PC with internet connection and committed to join the online group sessions and fulfil assignments and a group project throughout the 10-week programme.

What is the workload, and how can I offer this course?

The course has a workload of 90 hours, equating 3 ECTS. The expected weekly time investment for students is 9 hours and can be broken down as follows:

- 2-hour online group sessions

- 3 hours engaging with materials and assignments.

- 4 hours of collaborative group project

Students have 2-hours of contact time per week which is scheduled according to their availability, and they can complete the remaining tasks (assignments and reviewing weekly content) at their own convenience. Lecturers, coordinators and other HEI staff can tailor how this course is implemented; from a stand-alone elective, to fully integrated within an existing taught course. This flexibility and immediacy means that you can offer an intercultural component without needing to create new content or increase students' workload. However, if you want to take a more hands-on approach, you can closely monitor and evaluate the progress of your students, by weaving the issues and experiences of their students into their course. Our team is available to provide advice on possible integration of this Virtual Exchange course within your curriculum.

What do students learn?

Students are presented with **audiovisual learning materials** that are accessible on a weekly basis. This curriculum focuses on materials about inequality and power in the context of the climate crisis, as well as different approaches to responding to the climate crisis; from inclusive climate action to global politics and policy. The resources also provide insights on the media landscape related to climate change, ways climate stories are communicated, and how this translates into action. An overview of the topics can be found in the

Generally speaking, the learning materials that comprise this audiovisual curriculum are selected to:
✓ Provide key information in accessible 'language'.

✓ Spotlight diverse experiences and voices.

✓ Present creative and thought-provoking ideas.

✓ Inspire and activate.

By combining different synchronous and asynchronous learning elements, students will gain valuable transversal skills and competencies, including:

Global Awareness and Systems Thinking: Students will develop a comprehensive understanding of global climate challenges, sociopolitical issues, and the interconnectedness of various systems to understand the complexity and nuances of local issues.

Digital Literacy: Students improve their competency in utilizing tech platforms, building multimedia products, and engaging in digital communication effectively.

Effective Communication: Students will enhance their verbal communication and active listening skills, resulting in higher confidence and effectiveness in communication and collaboration in culturally diverse groups.

Leadership and Collaboration: Students develop leadership qualities and the ability to work collaboratively in diverse and remote teams to achieve common goals.

Intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity: Students learn to reflect on personal biases and value diverse perspectives, experiences and backgrounds.

Creativity and Innovation: Students are encouraged to think creatively and adopt innovative approaches to addressing challenges.

Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility: Students will foster a sense of civic responsibility and active engagement in addressing societal issues.

Sustainability Competences: Students will gain sustainable values, such as valuing sustainability and supporting fairness, improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and act towards sustainability through collective action and individual initiatives.

How do students learn in this course?

In this Virtual Exchange course students are active and autonomous under the guidance of trained facilitators, the exchanges continue over a number of weeks rather than being one-off encounters, and, fundamentally, they focus on forging meaningful encounters between young people centring their lived experiences. By embracing high levels of diversity, we recognize each participant as a valuable source of knowledge, considering them experts in their own realities. This experiential learning process empowers students to improve transversal skills, such as intercultural competencies and foreign language proficiency, as they directly engage with national and cultural others.

Weekly Online Group Sessions

The live, online, dialogue sessions represent a safe space where students can confront challenging and sensitive issues, address power dynamics, and gain confidence to speak to their peers with honesty, empathy and curiosity. To achieve this, we foster high levels of diversity; seeing each individual as a source of knowledge and an expert in their own lived experience. This experiential learning process stimulates the practice of transversal skills such as cross-cultural competences and foreign language proficiency as participants directly engage with national and cultural others.

Weekly Learning Materials and Assignments

Prior to their online group session, students **review the week's learning materials** and are required to **submit a short written response**. Their submissions should not be a summary, but rather a thoughtful comment that demonstrates that the student has fully engaged with the learning materials. After their participation in the week's online group sessions, students are required to share their thoughts about the session in their individual, private **reflection journal.** Their submissions will create a personal record of their experience and development through the 10-week learning process.

Group Project

Students collaborate in teams on a 'Climate Action Project' to bring their online experience to their offline realities in an act of cross-border cooperation. These Climate Action Projects are collaborative projects that are designed collectively and then implemented locally. Empowered by newfound knowledge and intercultural competencies, students work together to collectively design innovative climate actions to be implemented in their local realities. The Climate Action Projects are structured around the principles of inclusivity and climate justice, and aim to leave a lasting impact on their communities and the climate beyond the end of the course.

This unique group project is designed to foster intercultural collaboration, and entails hands-on and peer-supported improvement of transversal skills. These include intercultural competences, communication, sustainability competences, conflict resolution, entrepreneurship, digital competences, teamwork, self-empowerment, and project management and delivery.

Students will start with their Climate Action Projects in Week 3 by forming teams and choosing a topic. They will then develop and submit a project plan in Week 5 and will start with implementing their ideas thereafter, providing an update on their experiences and progress by Week 7. Toward the end of the course, teams will present their Climate Action Projects to fellow students during the online group sessions. The final milestone is for students to submit a project-related blog post reflecting on their experience and learning, as well as the impact of their Climate Action Project. The Climate Action Projects are expected to take 40 hours of individual and group work outside students' online group sessions.

Fig. 1 Weekly learner journey 'Climate Justice: From Inequality to Inclusion'

ENGAGE WITH THE WEEKLY LEARNING MATERIALS

SUBMIT A RESPONSE TO THE MATERIALS

JOIN THE ONLINE GROUP SESSION

REFLECT ON THE WEEK'S SESSION

REVIEW LEARNING MATERIALS

Students watch, read and/or listen to the resources provided on the theme of that week.

LEARNING MATERIAL RESPONSE

After students have reviewed the weekly learning materials, they submit a thoughtful written response.

DIALOGUE PARTICIPATION

Students join their scheduled online session and participate actively in their group's dialogue by making thoughtful contributions to discussions, as well as listen and engage with fellow group members.

REFLECTION JOURNAL

After the session, students reflect individually and record their experience of the day's session by answering a question in the online reflection journal.

CLIMATE ACTION PROJECT

Starting week 3, students will work in teams on their Climate Action Project. The tasks and activities as part of this collaborative project will take place in some, but not all, weeks of the course

How are students assessed in this course?

The assessment of the course is calculated through a point system of attendance and assignment submission / completion. Students can score a total of 100 points. According to scoring certain amount of points, students will be awarded badges as a form of certification. These badges come in three variations:

1. 40-59 points → Badge of Completion
2. 60-79 points → Badge of Completion **with Merit**
3. 80-100 points → Badge of Completion **with Distinction**

Students can earn 35 points through full participation in the online group sessions; 10 points through their weekly material review and response; 10 points through their reflection journal submissions; and 45 points through their Climate Action Project. Attendance and performance reports of students will be shared with the designated coordinator at the respective HEI. This scoring matrix can be used at the HEI as a foundation to grade and/or pass fail their students for this course and consequently grant ECTS for their participation. Further details on assessment and potential streamlining to the local HEI grading and assessment systems can be discussed with our team.

Which topics will be covered in this course?

The main theme of this course is climate justice, with a focus on inclusive climate action. The proposed curriculum aims to inform students on this large theme by addressing sub-themes in a manner that allows them to comprehend its complexity and intersections with other social issues, reflect on power dynamics and global politics, while ultimately empowering them to engage in civic action to contribute towards inclusive climate action.

We are currently finalising the curation of the specific resources for each week, but the proposed weekly curriculum is structured around the following ten themes:

Week 1: Introduction to the Climate Crisis and the Concept of Climate Justice
An introduction to the course and the concept of climate justice, as well as a preview of the content students will engage with. They will discuss what experience and knowledge they are bringing into the course, what they hope to learn, and what aspects of climate justice they are eager to discuss with their Virtual Exchange group.

Week 2: Climate Change and Inequality (Part I)
Climate change does not impact everyone the same way or to the same extent. This week students will look at the inequality of vulnerability, the concept of environmental racism, and how their social identities can play a key role in how climate change affects their lives.

Week 3: Climate Change and Inequality (Part II)
What is intersectionality, how is one intersectional, and what does this have to do with climate change? This week, students will look at how social identities combine and shape a person's perspectives and circumstances. They will also explore how understanding this is important to taking inclusive climate action.

Week 4: Power and Climate Action

Who has the power to make impactful decisions about climate action? How or where are these decisions being made? This week, students will look at examples of inclusive action and responses to climate change, identify stakeholders at different levels, and analyse what their own role can be.

Week 5: Climate Justice Through a Personal Lens

This week, students will turn the focus to personal experiences. They will reflect on their identities, their lived experiences, and their participation in change-making. They will get to hear the personal climate stories of individuals from around the world, and share their personal stories as well.

Week 6: Global Politics and Climate Policy

How do politics affect (and are affected by) sustainability efforts worldwide? This week, students look at the politics of climate change, including the key actions and debates taking place on the international level.

Week 7: Critical Lens on Climate Initiatives

The world is seeing a rapid rise in initiatives, policies and products that are carbon-neutral, environmentally friendly, and explicitly taking climate change into consideration - but are these initiatives authentic or might they be too good to be true? This week, students will take a critical look at some of the most popular climate 'solutions,' their outcomes, and where to most effectively direct our support.

Week 8: Climate Communication and Advocacy

What stories do we hear about climate change, and what narratives and frames are used to tell them? This week students will look at the media landscape, ways climate stories are communicated, and how this translates into action.

Week 9: Climate Crisis Strategies: Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience

What powers do technology, nature, and our creativity have to mitigate climate change? This week students will explore how nations, cities and people are rising to meet the challenges posed by their changing environments.

Week 10: Your Climate Actions

In their final week, students will reflect on their journey together and the road ahead. They will look back on their personal and collective accomplishments throughout the course, and look ahead to the role they want to play in their future and the future of our planet.

> *"A participant said they didn't realise how much someone's culture and experience could influence their views on climate change. Because of the stories shared in the group they now feel that they're all in this together."*

Rachel Malmborg, facilitator

Who we are

Sharing Perspectives Foundation

This Virtual Exchange is developed by [The Sharing Perspectives Foundation](#) as part of the EU-funded [CliVEx project](#). The Sharing Perspectives Foundation is a non-profit organisation that has, over the last five years alone, engaged over 10,000 young people in Virtual Exchange courses and worked with over 80 institutions. In addition, we have trained and coached 250+ facilitators, facilitated thousands of online dialogue sessions, and implemented over 20 Virtual Exchanges in English as well as Arabic. Finally, we train and support educators to design their own Virtual Exchange courses, and we consult organisations on how to use the pedagogical framework of Virtual Exchange in their work.

The impact of our courses on participants is well [researched and published](#). Reporting shows strong increases in cross-cultural communication skills, self-esteem, curiosity, and digital and English language competency.

The Value Of Virtual Exchange

Virtual Exchange (VE) delivers international experiences for students worldwide and has been steadily growing over the last two decades. Using VE pedagogy, The Sharing Perspectives Foundation strives to work with educators and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to ensure that all students can benefit from enriching, meaningful international experiences woven into their curricula. We aim to enable continuity of educational provision, and support HEIs to meet their Internationalisation at Home objectives.

Over the years we have refined our model for Virtual Exchange based on three pillars:

- ➔ Offer engaging and accessible expert content online.
- ➔ Facilitate effective and constructive online dialogue.
- ➔ Design interactive and collaborative online assignments.

What is distinctive about using dialogue at the heart of this model is that students are active and autonomous under the guidance of trained facilitators; the exchanges continue over a number of weeks rather than being one-off encounters; and, fundamentally, they focus on forging meaningful relationships between young people.

To achieve this, we foster high levels of diversity; seeing each individual as a source of knowledge and an expert in their own experience. The live, weekly dialogue sessions represent a safe space where participants can confront challenging and sensitive issues, address power dynamics, and gain confidence to speak to their peers with honesty, empathy and curiosity. This experiential learning process stimulates the practice of transversal skills such as intercultural competences and foreign language proficiency as participants directly engage with cultural others.

Partnering for 'Virtual Exchange' with us means that our team takes on full implementation of the course. This includes:

- ✓ Registration and scheduling, including managing time zones.

- ✓ Student support and communications.

- ✓ Learning materials, content and interactive assignments.

- ✓ Facilitation of sessions by trained facilitators.

- ✓ Quality assurance framework.

- ✓ Assessment of student progress and attendance.

- ✓ Reporting of progress to teachers/coordinators.

- ✓ Evaluation of global skills development.

- ✓ Online environment with minimal technical requirements.

For more on integration of Virtual Exchange in Higher Education, we like to refer to [this toolkit](#)and [this report.](#)