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Developing 21st century competences
through inquiry-based learning
and social activism

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Developing 21st century competences through inquiry-based learning and social activism



Scientific and technological progress is rapidly transforming communities around the world, fueling innovation and enabling new pathways towards improving citizens' living standards. It is essential for educators to move from

traditional teaching approaches to innovative and active learning practices for equipping students with the so called 21st century skills (i.e. analytic reasoning, complex problem solving, teamwork, scientific and technological literacy etc.) which are essential in our rapidly changing world.

In this context, the PLASTIC FREE HEROES project suggests an innovative experiential learning offer that builds on the use of plastic as a conceptual context for learning, in order to enable students to learn not just the facts, but develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills that can be applied to real-life situations. The selection of plastic as an effective context for learning is based upon the following factors:

1. Plastic waste constitutes a global problem that harms the environment at an alarming rate and poses threat to human health.
2. Plastic waste offers a subject-appropriate context for providing multiple opportunities for the development of various cross-curricular skills (i.e. entrepreneurial logic, critical thinking, environmental citizenship etc.) in parallel with the teaching of a wide range of disciplines such as STEM, economics, ICTs and social sciences.
3. It constitutes part of most people's daily practices and students are familiar to this topic and therefore it's easy for them to make personal connections, use prior experiences and engage in purposeful and fulfilling learning.

The main aim of

Plastic Free Heroes

is the development of an innovative plastic waste educational package for teaching and learning which will incorporate 2 innovative products:

- The PLASTIC FREE HEROES Curriculum, that includes content-related plastic waste reduction and recycling learning materials.
- The PLASTIC FREE HEROES Teachers training resources and online courses.

The suggested curriculum aims to inspire the next generation towards a more sustainable and responsible use of plastic and enable transformative action on plastic waste in their schools. The teachers resource pack will improve the competences of teachers in innovative teaching practices such as inquiry-based learning leading to a multitude of 21st century skills.