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“Young Innovators” story: case study of Latvia

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STEM teachers in Latvia acknowledge that the climate issue is one of the most difficult and incomprehensible topics for students because of the complexity of the climate system itself and because that students do not see the consequences and responsibilities of their actions. In addition, there is little climate-related teaching materials available in Latvian language.

In 2020, we have implemented the experience of EIT Climate-KIC project “Young Innovators” into the school's curriculum and nonformal education (through Latvian 4Hclub – leading and largest NGO) in Latvia.

“Young Innovators” is a pilot program for youngsters (12-18), to promote their entrepreneurial and social skills, systemic thinking aimed at tackling climate change, reducing environmental problems and improving the living environment. Together with stakeholders they are working on real-life challenges (more about the program: <https://younginnovators.climate-kic.org/about-the-programme/>).

We started with the webinar cycle for NGO leaders in April (it should be noted, that for many of them it was their first webinar ever), while in August the webinars were organized for geography and STEM teachers. In the summer (when restrictions were lifted) we had workshops with students: using the mind map and photo-voting methods, we identified the most important areas for students and the major environmental problems. Using the project tools, the analytical assessment and visioning of the problem has been done. The last step was – visiting the local authorities.

In addition, at the end of August we organized a 3-hour Climathon (total 250 participants), where we worked on the challenges given by the stakeholder - WWF (Waste food), Enefit Latvija (green energy solutions); national fruit growers (local apples marketing campaigns) etc.

Project methods and tools can be used in both – formal and non-formal education systems and were welcomed by both students and teachers.

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