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**From Digital Gaps to Green Impact:
Transforming Adult Education for a Sustainable Future
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**Green Pedagogy in Action:
Designing Sustainability-Focused Learning Modules**

Date: October 2025
Helsinki & Espoo, Finland



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Project: From Digital Gaps to Green Impact

Mobility Type: A1 – Job-shadowing

1. Introduction

Green pedagogy refers to educational approaches that integrate ecological awareness, sustainability principles, and climate responsibility across all areas of learning. In adult education, this means equipping learners not only with knowledge about environmental issues, but also with skills and attitudes to act sustainably in personal, professional, and civic contexts (UNESCO, 2017). This guide draws on observations during the Erasmus+ job-shadowing experience in Finland, where green pedagogy is embedded in both institutional policy and classroom practice.

2. The Finnish Model: Whole-Institution Sustainability

At LFI and partner centres in Helsinki and Espoo, sustainability is not treated as a standalone subject—it is a transversal priority. Key observations included:

Eco-Campus Infrastructure: The adult education centre visited on Day 4 operates in a passive-energy building with solar panels, digital energy dashboards, and indoor plant systems for air quality.

Green Entrepreneurship Lab: Participants observed training modules for unemployed adults and migrants on how to create micro-enterprises in areas such as upcycling, local food systems, and eco-tourism.

Learning-by-Doing: Sustainability is taught through project-based learning, where learners design tangible solutions such as composting systems, reusable packaging, or community garden plans.

These practices reflect the "education for sustainable development" (ESD) philosophy promoted by UNESCO and embedded in Finland's lifelong learning strategy.

3. Core Components of Green Pedagogy

Core Components of Green Pedagogy Based on analysis of the Finnish approach and relevant policy frameworks (e.g. EU Green Deal, Education for Climate Coalition), the following components are foundational:

- **Systems Thinking:** Learners understand how ecological, economic, and social systems interact.



- Participation and Co-Creation: Learners co-develop learning content and solutions with peers and communities.
- Digital and Green Synergy: Technologies are used to simulate, visualize, and optimize green processes (e.g. carbon footprint calculators).
- Place-Based Learning: Local environmental issues are used as entry points to global challenges.
- Future Orientation: Learning encourages scenario planning and intergenerational responsibility.

4. Designing a Green Learning Module: Step-by-Step Template

Step	Action	Tool Suggestion
1. Identify Local Issue	e.g. waste in adult education centres	Local audit worksheet
2. Frame Learning Objectives	Based on SDGs (e.g. 12: Responsible Consumption)	SDG Compass Toolkit
3. Co-create with Learners	Brainstorm solutions together	Jamboard / Miro
4. Prototype and Implement	Small-scale real-world test	Canva for education posters, Google Forms for surveys
5. Reflect and Share	Evaluate impact and document results	Flipgrid videos or blog entries

A full template is available on the project EPALE repository (downloadable).

5. Real-Life Example: Reusable Packaging Project

A group of adult learners in Espoo, guided by their trainer, identified single-use packaging waste in their institution's cafeteria. They researched alternatives, co-designed reusable containers using recycled materials, and presented the idea to the school administration. As a result, a pilot programme was initiated, reducing plastic waste by 38% in two months.

"The power of green pedagogy is that learners don't just gain knowledge – they change systems." – Sustainability Coordinator, Espoo Adult Education Centre

6. Assessment and Micro-Credentials

Learner contributions to sustainability projects can be recognized through micro-credentials in line with the European Approach to Micro-Credentials (European Commission, 2022). Key areas for recognition:

- Teamwork in Sustainable Innovation
- Digital Tools for Green Solutions
- Eco-literacy and Systems Thinking



Certificates can be issued through Europass Digital Credentials and linked to national qualification frameworks.

7. Resources and Further Reading

- UNESCO (2017). *Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- European Commission (2022). *Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials*. Brussels.
- EPAL (2024). *Adult Learning for Green Skills*. Retrieved from <https://epale.ec.europa.eu>
- Education for Climate Coalition. <https://education-for-climate.ec.europa.eu>
- Ellen MacArthur Foundation. *Circular Economy in Education*.

8. Licensing and Acknowledgements

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