

Report GE/AAC

#NextGen_EcoLife & Project UNA Portugal - COP28

1. Our history

Grupo Ecológico is one of the 16 cultural sections of the Associação Académica de Coimbra. Created in 1974, we have fought for the environment for almost 50 years.

We have been fighting on the frontline in favor of better environmental practices. It was our initiative to implement the first public ashtrays in our Academic Garden; it was also our initiative to combat the plastic waste that came from plastic cups by creating and popularizing the reusable cup that could be used numerous times. Besides that we also currently boost activities such as: garbage collections; we have also collected used toothbrushes, expired medicine, used cooking oil, plastic lids, broken umbrellas and cork stoppers. All of these materials were recycled and reused.

Keeping this in mind, Grupo Ecológico has had even more achievements such as the end of “Garraiada”, a similar tradition to bullfighting which was one of the festivities of Queima das Fitas. In addition, we have also ended the usage of the paper that used to be placed on the canteen tray to reduce paper waste. Furthermore, for 2 years in a row, we were able to create an Exchange Market, where people of any age could exchange 1 item (or more) for another one of their choice. We wanted to create a small circular economy in order to teach our community about waste and how “one man's trash is another man's treasure”.

2. Our values

Grupo Ecológico besides actively fighting for the environment, works for the defense of the rights of each living being; the defence of natural spaces, defending a rational management of the available resources, such as sustainable agriculture and renewable energies, promoting balanced management of all forms of production from the extraction of primary resources, to the industrial phase, to the process of consumption and disposal of materials, advocating for the reduction of excess superfluous materials from the production process, the reuse of materials transformed the full recycling of production and consumption processes; the defense of conscientious objection; and other activities related to Ecology that in some way alerts us to the need to live in a society where there is a sustainable development and ecological and human balance.

In the future, we want to connect with the world to be able to continue our mission and impact our society even more. Knowing,



more than ever, that our role is very important because through our intervention we can make Coimbra, our city, more sustainable and thus a better city to live in.

3. Activities we would like to develop

We look forward to developing three activities next year that consist of cleaning three different beaches. All of them are located in the Coimbra District and they are called (from north to south): Praia da Mira, Praia dos Palheiros da Tocha and Praia da Figueira da Foz.

In addition, we would like to separate and recycle all the trash that would be picked up.

4. Why we chose this activity

This activity aims to sensitize the public to recycling, not littering beaches, and to teach how to correctly enjoy them.

Litter has dire consequences on the environment: it can injure or kill marine and coastal wildlife; damage and degrade habitats, affect dune systems, cause loss of tourist value and many more...

After this activity is complete we would like to hand out a report disclosing not only the state of the three different beaches that were cleaned but also ideas and proposals on how to make a change to the different Town Hall Mayors.

