

20 QUEST

24 ACTIVITIES REPORT



CIVIL SOCIETY COOPERATION IN
THE FIELD OF EDUCATION
SGA 2024



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WHO WE ARE

QUEST stands for Quality Education in Europe for Sustainable Social Transformation. We are an independent, democratic and participatory European network aiming to bring together NGOs, institutions, schools and universities **advocating for change in education and the promotion of lifelong learning.**

Our network currently counts **78 member** organisations from more than 27 countries, including 65 members from within the EU.

Together with our members, we conduct research projects, conferences, trainings, workshops, and work to have an impact on EU policies. We aim to serve as a multiplier of best practices, actions and research.



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to connect educational organisations in order to promote a more **democratic, inclusive and sustainable** education in Europe and beyond **through action-research, advocacy and networking.**

OUR VISION

QUEST sees that the future of Europe relies on the capacity to build an educational system based on democratic, inclusive and sustainable principles. QUEST works to allow education to evolve harmoniously with the rapid changes of our world and supports schools and other learning institutions to rely on innovative pedagogies. Therefore, QUEST's vision aligns with the **European Education Area** strategic framework. We indeed believe that everyone should benefit from an education that guarantees personal, social and professional fulfilment, whilst promoting democratic values, equality, social cohesion, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue and sustainable economic prosperity.



OUR STRATEGY

ADVOCATING
for change in the
European learning
landscape

CONNECTING
education
organisations in
Europe

RESEARCHING
on democratic,
sustainable and
inclusive education

OUR AREAS OF WORK

DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

Research, policy activities and projects towards legitimisation, spreading and promotion of democratic education practices in Europe.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Research, policy activities and projects welcoming and supporting all learners and removing any obstacle to access to quality education for everyone.

SUSTAINABILITY IN EDUCATION

Research, policy activities and projects towards sensitising, spreading and promoting best practices of sustainability in education in Europe.



OUR TEAM

Our Brussels based office is a multilingual and multicultural environment that allows the development of an open, united, responsible and sustainable spirit. Putting our values in actions, the office is based on a participatory governance, using sociocracy, nonviolent communication and shared consent decision making as statutory principles.

POLICY and RESEARCH CIRCLE



Martina Paone
Coordinator



Gabrielle Franck
Policy Officer



Mathilda Diaz
Policy & Project Officer



Pamela Osmani
Policy Trainee

PROJECT CIRCLE



Mia Schmallenbach
Project Manager



Sara Bentass
Project Officer



Andreia Esteves
ESC Project Assistant



Sara Acevedo Mendoza
Project Assistant

COMMUNICATION and MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE



Roxane Hoedemakers
Membership Officer



Samantha Adler de Oliveira
Communication Officer



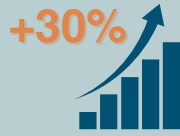
Elena López León
ESC Communication
& Membership Assistant



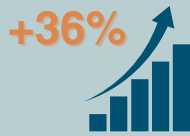
QUEST IN NUMBERS 2024

MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNICATION

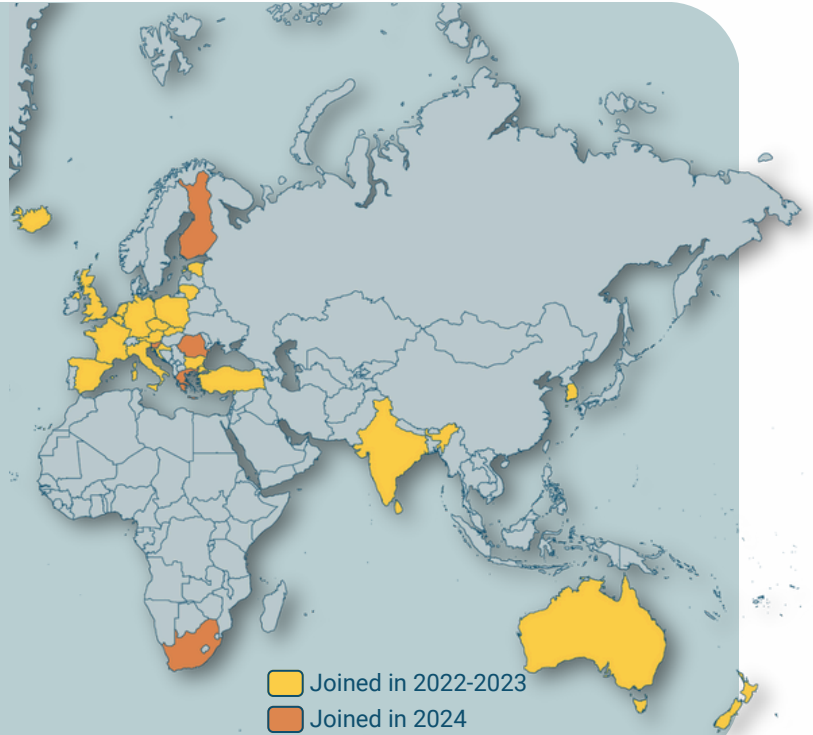
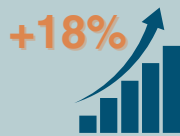
78
MEMBERS



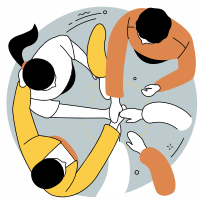
FROM 48 TO
65
EU MEMBERS



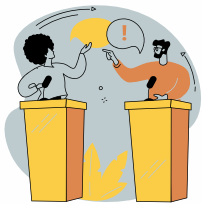
FROM 17 TO
20
EU COUNTRIES



QUEST membership growth between Dec 5, 2023 and Dec 5, 2024



+18 New members
from 5 new countries,
including 3 EU countries



5 International
events joined
as speaker

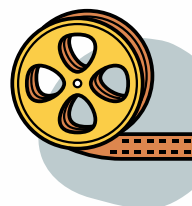


11
Education
trainings and
workshops

5 Social media
channels



- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Youtube
- X (launched this year)



10 Videos



QUEST IN NUMBERS 2024

POLICY

27

Publications

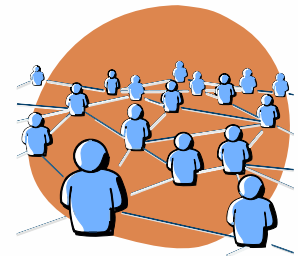


- 8 political analyses
- 6 international and education news articles
- 6 open consultations answered
- 1 set of recommendations shared with the European Commission
- 4 project-derived flyers
- Child Protection Policy & Action Plan

6

New networks, alliances & coalitions joined

- Child Rights Action Group
- Alliance for investing in children
- Alliance for Youth Vote
- Erasmus+ Coalition
- Education for Climate Coalition
- EASPD



19

Policy events attended



1

Panel discussion organised with EU decision-makers



2

Citizen-engagement actions



QUEST IN NUMBERS 2024

PROJECTS



8

Projects running

18 projects funded in total since 2022



4

New projects funded

involving 9 schools across Europe

4

European Funding Info sessions provided for our members

- KA1 info-session
- KA2 info-session
- ESC info-session
- Project partners Speed-dating



7

Resources created through projects

- 1 online training
- 4 toolkits
- 2 videos

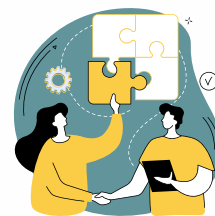


8 Learning exchanges



10

Partnerships established across Europe



HIGHLIGHTS 2024

STRENGTHENING QUEST'S INCLUSION PRACTICES

In 2024 QUEST deepened its commitment to inclusion by supporting equality within its internal governance and its external actions. Internally, our multicultural team, representing 13 nationalities across 4 continents, continued to employ sociocracy to ensure equitable participation and launched the SPICE Committee to address global social and educational injustices. Externally, we hosted key events, such as the “Integrating Decolonial Practices in Education” training and began implementing the DECUS project to decolonize secondary school curricula. Additionally, we advocated for more equality in the EU educational and youth funding mechanisms through policy dialogues and actions. This is just the start of a challenging road, in which we always have to put ourselves and our standpoints in discussions, first, and we need to join efforts to challenge structural barriers and promote social justice in education. These actions underscore our dedication to challenging structural barriers and promoting social justice in education.

CREATING QUEST'S YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

In 2024, QUEST took a pivotal step toward youth empowerment by establishing its Youth Advisory Board (YAB), ensuring all actions are youth-informed and youth-led. Composed of six dedicated members aged 13 to 25, this initial group reflects the diversity and experiences of young people across the EU. Following a highly engaging application process, the Board members were onboarded through an introductory online meeting, fostering connections with the QUEST team and each other. The youth advisory board will participate in key advocacy opportunities, strategic meetings, and a one-week in-person trip to the EUDEC conference, engaging with workshops, forums, and advocacy roundtables. As we plan to expand the Board in Year 3, each QUEST initiative will now be developed in concert with YAB at its core, reinforcing our commitment to amplifying young voices in shaping innovative education.

EXPANDING OUR POLICY IMPACT

In 2024, we significantly expanded our policy efforts to amplify the voices of children, youth, educational actors, and our members across Europe. Our policy team contributed to 19 high-level events, joined 6 Networks and alliances including the Alliance for Investing in Children and the Children's Rights Action Group (CRAG), and authored 8 political analyses addressing critical topics such as the European elections. We shared actionable recommendations with the European Commission and engaged directly with EU decision-makers through targeted communications, coalitions and consultations. We organised QUEST's Education and Ecovillages Event, welcoming EU commission speakers within a panel discussion. These actions reflect our commitment to foster innovative education policies and elevate the importance of children's rights and agency in the EU agenda.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Our member organizations continued to grow significantly in 2024, increasing from 60 to 78 members, representing a 30% growth. Considering EU countries, the members increased from 48 to 65 members, representing a 36% growth. Additionally, EUDEC network representing 250 members in Europe joined QUEST membership this year. This year also saw our expansion into 3 additional countries, bringing the total to 27 countries represented in the network. Globally, QUEST now represents 78 members in 27 countries, quadrupling its membership and tripling its country count since the FPA application 2 years ago. This remarkable membership growth was supported by extensive efforts in informing, training, and connecting our members through workshops, member forums, and targeted communications on topics such as decolonial pedagogies, climate justice, interactive child-voting games, sustainable education in ecovillages, NVC and training sessions on Erasmus+ KA1 and KA2 funding, as well as the European Solidarity Corps (ESC). . These initiatives have strengthened our network's collective impact and fostered collaboration across diverse educational contexts.



EXPANDING OUR POLICY IMPACT

POLICY AND ADVOCACY STRATEGY

QUEST continues to strengthen its policy strategy to reflect the needs and voices of its members. Below is a roadmap of our key milestones in 2024:

- January 2024:** Acceptance into the EU Transparency Register, later enabling participation in 6 EU consultations on education and children's rights.
- February 2024:** Start of QUEST's first policy and advocacy strategy and official joining of the Alliance for Youth Vote.
- March 2024:** Contribution to EU recommendations at the Innovation4Education Final Conference, signing of the "Brussels Declaration for a fair, sustainable, and inclusive Europe" and network expansion through one-to-one meetings with EU networks on children's rights and education (UNICEF, Eurochild, Save the Children, SOS Villages).
- April 2024:** First training on QUEST's new Child Protection Policy, joining of the Communities for Future Campaign and expansion of the policy team (welcoming of one volunteer)
- May 2024:** First meeting with DG CLIMA through the Climate Pact, training of the policy team on the Climate Fresk and contribution to a member-forum on decolonial pedagogies in education.
- June 2024:** Presentation of policy recommendations for the new EU mandate to the European Commission (DG CLIMA) and organisation of a citizen-engagement activity to highlight children's voice before the EU elections within the "We make the future" mobilisation.
- July 2024:** Contribution to the Erasmus + Mid-term Evaluation, in-person meeting with the European Commission (DG EAC) and meetings with two universities (University of Mons, University of the basque country)
- August 2024:** We organised a in person event on Policy Needs and Advocacy actions to promoted Democratic Education in Soest (NL)
- September 2024:** Joining of the Alliance for Investing in Children and the Child Rights Action Group, signing of a joined letter from the ERGO network on the EU commissioners' nomination, accreditation of QUEST's policy officer to the European Parliament and organisation of a citizen-engagement activity to promote children's voice during Ans mobility day.
- October 2024:** Welcoming of the EU commission within a panel discussion at QUEST's Education and Ecovillages Event. coalition engagement in EU commissioners' hearings and to promote the re-establishment of the intergroup for children's rights in the new European Parliament. Workshop on democratic education at the international gathering of National Agencies organised by EPOS, lecture on children agency and sustainability at the Irish College of Leuven.
- November:** Presentation of democratic education within the NECE Festival and the Salto Participation Forum, networking at the World Forum for Democracy and the EU Lifelong Learning Stakeholders' Forum.
- December 2024:** Finalisation of the policy agenda for 2024, publication of international and educational news and preparation of QUEST's policy agenda for 2025.



EXPANDING OUR POLICY IMPACT

POLICY SYSTEM EXPANSION

- Internal capacity-building on EU advocacy & broadening of the policy team
- Participated in 19 policy conferences across Europe
- Provided 8 political analyses on EU politics and education
- Engagement within 6 strategic networks, alliances, coalitions and initiatives to amplify children's voices in the EU : the Child Rights Action Group, Alliance for Investing in Children, Alliance for Youth Vote, Erasmus+ Coalition, EASPD and Education for Climate Coalition.
- Continuous monitoring of EU political and policy developments on education and children's rights

KEY POLICY ACTIONS

- Shared evidence on 6 consultations from the European Commission on policies relating to children's rights and education
- Promoted children's voice during the EU elections through children mobilisation actions and children voting stations
- Presented democratic education as a speaker in the NECE Festival, the EUDEC Conference and the SALTO Participation Forum
- Strengthened ties with EU networks on children's rights and education
- Organisation of a panel with representatives of DG EAC during the QUEST's Ecovillages & Education event.

NOTABLE POLICY EVENTS ATTENDED

- **February 2024** : Alliance for Youth Vote Kick Off Event
- **March 2024**: Climate Pact Annual Event
- **May 2024**: Child-Friendly Cities Conference
- **June 2024**: We Make the Future citizen-engagement mobilisation
- **August 2024**: EUDEC Conference
- **October 2024**: Conference for the Irish EBTs at the Irish College of Leuven
- **November 2024**: World Forum for Democracy, QUEST speaker at the NECE Festival, QUEST speaker at the Salto Participation Forum



QUEST IN PERSPECTIVE 2024

A STRONGER POSITION ON THE EU STAGE

The year 2024 has seen the strengthening of QUEST's visibility in the EU, the children's rights and education landscape, notably in Brussels. By joining new coalitions (Child Rights Action Group, Alliance for Investing in Children, Alliance for Youth Vote, Education for Climate Coalition) and organising one-to-one meetings with specific organisations (including the EU Commission, UNICEF, EUROCHILD, SAVE THE CHILDREN, SOS VILLAGES...) QUEST has progressively increased its notoriety, thus developing opportunities for cooperation, beyond 2024.

QUEST has also deepened its relationship with EU and local decision-makers. In October 2024, for instance, after preparation and previous encounters, two representatives from the European Commission contributed to the first in-person event organised by QUEST as guest speakers, in which QUEST presented community-based education as well as some of its members to the EU Institution. Within coalition joint actions (notably for the re-establishment of the European Parliament's intergroup on children's rights), social media action and email liaising, QUEST also presented itself to Members of the European Parliament. QUEST's first own policy actions led to exchanges with the municipality of Ans and the Brussels' municipality.

Finally, QUEST has increasingly been invited to participate as guest speakers in EU-level events, including the NECE Festival, Salto Participation Forum, an EPOS workshop and an Irish College of Louvain Conference, and has kept its regular attendance to strategic events such as the World Forum for Democracy.

A POLICY STRATEGY AND FIRST POLICY ACTIONS

At the beginning of 2024, the policy team formalised a first policy strategy, with key action ideas which were in part integrated in project proposals for funding. Following these key lines, some public advocacy actions were taken to increase children's participation in decision-making, which led to the creation of a child-voting game, collecting children's voices on a particular topic (mobility, climate) of which the results were later shared with decision makers.

Having been accepted in the transparency registry of the European Commission, QUEST also answered to 6 open consultations, sharing evidence and statements on topics ranging from the European Joint Degree, the interim evaluation of the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Education Area, to the EU Directives on combating child sexual abuse and antisemitism. A greater stand was also adopted within QUEST's narratives regarding the protection of children's rights in education.



THE START OF JOINT POLICY ACTIONS



With this renewed position, QUEST has been actively participating in joint policy actions, either triggered or welcomed by the policy circle. The creation of EU recommendations for the new agenda 2019-2024, the signing of joint statements and manifestos initiated within coalitions (notably the Child Rights Action Group and the Alliance for Investing in Children) or by individual organisations, particularly in the context of the EU elections, are a couple of examples. These coalition actions allowed for the Policy team to gather further insights & knowledge on Advocacy at the EU-level, as well as on the coordination of EU coalitions.

It further deepened QUEST's presentation to the European Parliament. Some events were also the opportunity for the Policy team to collaborate on policy recommendations to the EU, written by other organisations and asking for co-constructive feedback (inc. Innovation4Education Conference, LifeLongLearning Week).

THE EU ELECTIONS

QUEST has notably been active during the EU elections, monitoring, alone or within coalitions, political developments and deadlines - including for the reestablishment of the intergroup on children's rights in the European Parliament and the Commissioners' hearings. Down-scaling these information to its membership, renewed political analysis were shared on QUEST website & newsletter, to explain the complexity of the EU, of its renewal every five years and its interlinkages for the education sector.

THE TEAM'S ENLARGEMENT AND SOLIDIFICATION

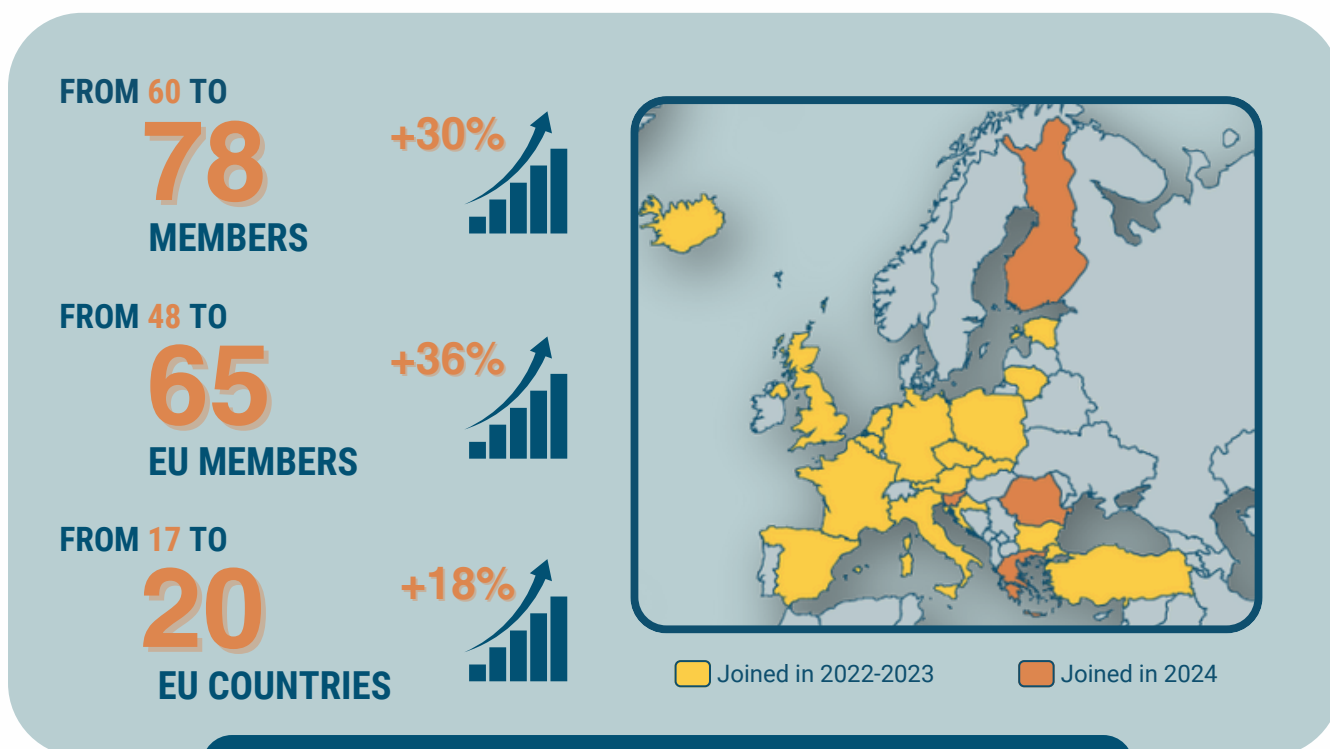
In 2024, two new people joined the policy circle : a volunteer for two months, an intern for the period of one year. This movement led to the creation of new coordination and training tools, presenting the policy team's processes and role. For example, QUEST's policy circle gave a first one-day training to the 4 new volunteers joining the QUEST's team in September, and engaged in several other training sessions regarding practical skills such as article writing or networking. In October, roles of the circles were further expanded with the election of a circle leader and a delegate. At the end of 2024, QUEST's policy officer finalised her accreditation to the European Parliament - thus easing QUEST's activities within the institution.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY'S MAINSTREAMING

Following the concretisation of a Child protection policy, at the end of 2023, the policy circle created an action plan for its progressive implementation. Internal procedures and documents were therefore updated to include the child protection policy, in line with the communication, project and membership circles' activities. QUEST's policy team supervised its progressive implementation, to be continued in 2025. A first training on the policy was also given to the new volunteers in September.



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



As of the 20th of December 2024, the QUEST network consists of **a total of 78 members across 27 countries.**

In terms of the organizational types within the network (in Europe), we have about **50% of schools** (33 out of 65 EU members), followed by **30% of educational organizations or training communities** (21 out of 65 EU members), both commercial and not-for-profit. Additionally, the QUEST network includes inter-governmental bodies, universities, and NGOs in smaller percentages. Compared to last year, our European network now contains **32% more schools** (growing from 25 to 33) and **39% growth in organizations** from the wider education and training community (from 21 to 32). This expansion also reflects a greater geographical diversity, with **3 new countries** represented in the network. These 65 European members practice and develop varying pedagogies and educational methodologies, with the ratio of areas of work as follows:

- **Democratic Education:** 22 (26%)
- **Social Inclusion:** 17 (20%)
- **Nature Pedagogies and/or Sustainability:** 27 (32%)
- **Other:** 19 (23%) (e.g., experiential learning, digital education, lifelong learning, etc.).

Please note that many members are cross-disciplinary organizations and cannot be attributed to a single category.



MEMBERSHIP INFO SESSIONS

In 2024 we have steadily continued our offering of regular Membership info sessions. These sessions are particularly relevant for new members (or older members who need a refresh), as they aim to present QUEST 's projects, activities and events, as well as to give an in-depth review of the QUEST membership: what are its benefits? What can we help them with and what do we expect from them in return? We always make sure to leave enough time for comments, questions and discussion.

Membership info sessions take place online every two months. In 2024 the sessions took place on 27th March, 15th May, 9th July, 11th September and 13th November. This was communicated through our March, May, June, July, September newsletter, in a dedicated email in November, during our events and by email to new members.


OPENING QUEST'S MEMBERSHIP INFO SESSIONS TO NON-MEMBERS


In June 2024, we took the decision to open our free Membership info sessions to non-members. These sessions, in which we present QUEST and explain the conditions and benefits of the QUEST membership, were originally aimed at new QUEST members. However, we realized that these sessions were also extremely valuable for curious, potential members. Indeed we found that the in-vision engagement with a QUEST representative, as well as the opportunity to ask questions and meet other new and potential members, was essential in gaining the trust and long-term involvement of future members. It is also a great way for us to get a first grasp of who they are and make sure their work aligns with QUEST's vision.


OPEN TO ALL

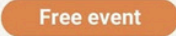
Membership info session



Learn everything about the QUEST membership!

 11th of September 2024

 4:30PM - 5:30 (CEST)

 Online

 Free event



MEMBER FORUMS

Member Forums are permanent working groups that gather our members around key topics, fostering collaboration and linking QUEST pillars to relevant European issues. In 2024, QUEST held **5 member forums**, deepening the dialogue and impact on critical themes across education. Each of QUEST's member forums are reinforced with a policy angle which allows for discussion about, and the gathering of, sectoral policy needs by members during networking moments. The insights are compiled into a series of demands to shape new European and national agendas.

MAY 21,
2024

MEMBER FORUM ON INCLUSION

Decolonial and Antiracist Pedagogies

This online Member Forum featured experts **Manel Ben Boubaker** and **Sandrine Gashonga**. Participants explored strategies to integrate decolonial methodologies into education, including tools for addressing biases in curricula, fostering inclusive classroom dialogues, and engaging students in antiracist practices. It provided practical pedagogical resources, including case studies and examples of best practices from European schools. It attracted **38 participants** including **25 members**.

The event was developed by QUEST's SPICE Committee (Strategic Political Information and Critical Education). The QUEST team prepared for the event by co-reading and discussing the collection of essays **[Entrer en pédagogie antiraciste](#)*.

JUNE 5,
2024

MEMBER FORUM ON NATURE EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Exploring Climate Justice in Schools

This online Member Forum provided a platform for members to exchange insights on actionable strategies for integrating climate and sustainability education into school settings and on integrating sustainability into their curricula. During this two-hour event which brought together **20 participants**, QUEST presented two ongoing projects centered on nature and climate and invited the **Office for Climate Education (OCE)** to lead a workshop on teaching global climate justice in schools. Participants were encouraged to actively engage through exercises and role-playing games.

JULY 31
2024

MEMBER FORUM ON DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

To create a strategy to promote children rights in education:

QUEST participated in **EUDEC 2024**, the annual European conference on democratic education, held at Democratische school De Ruimte in the Netherlands. There, QUEST hosted a dynamic Member Forum on Democratic Education using a 'World Café' format. Participants brainstormed political and social solutions to address the legal, economic, structural, and socio-cultural barriers to education centered on children's rights and self-determination.

The forum served as a platform to explore strategies for integrating democratic principles into school governance and learning, emphasizing children's agency in shaping their education. Key insights included:

- The urgent need for legal and political recognition of democratic education as equal to other educational approaches to secure subsidies and address inequalities
- The value of showcasing success stories and good practices
- The importance of advancing transformative research on topics like mental health with a focus on learner agency.



AUG 3,
2024

MEMBER FORUM ON DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

Empowering Schools with Democratic Principles

QUEST organised a joint MF event organised together with Magi Blagoeva (from our member CDE) and Kenny Vrancken. The event evolved around practices that teachers can use to foster democratic education in traditional school settings. We took inspiration from the DESC project practices and training in order to discuss with the organisations present about strategies and practices to implement democratic education in conventional schools.

OCT 2,
2024

MEMBER FORUM ON COMMUNITY, CITIZENSHIP, AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Conference on Ecovillages and Education

This large-scale, in-person event explored the intersection of sustainable living and education through the lens of ecovillages. It featured a main conference, seven practical workshops (including one for children) on skill-building for community and sustainable living, info stands with representatives of Belgian ecovillages and educational projects, and many opportunities for networking among educators, policymakers, and environmental advocates. Many of our Belgian members either attended or were directly involved as workshop facilitators and ecovillage representatives. This event therefore acted as **both a member forum and an open event**.

Keynote speaker **Sophie Rabhi-Bouquet**, a pioneer in ecovillage education in France, shared insights on fostering thriving, community-centered lifestyles and child-centered education. This was followed by presentations by DG EAC Policy Officer **Deirdre Hodson** and DG EAC Policy Assistant on Sustainability in Education **Sophia Queckenberg**, and a Q&A panel with Sophie Rabhi-Bouquet, our two European representatives and QUEST coordinator Martina Paone.

With **66 attendees** and strong partnerships with the **EU Climate Pact** and **La Ferme Rose d'Uccle**, the forum strengthened QUEST's local network and successfully showcased a wide variety of innovative models for a community-centered education.



ACTIVITIES

Apart from the Member Forums, QUEST organised **20 activities** in 2024, ranging from trainings to webinars on specific topics in line with QUEST's mission. These activities served to capacitate members and external organisations, foster knowledge sharing, and inform about educational developments.

INTERNAL ACTIVITIES

SPICE Committee 2024

In 2024, QUEST established the **Strategic Political Information and Critical Education Committee** (SPICE) to enable informed actions on international events with significant social and educational implications. SPICE serves as a space for critical reflection and expression. It recognizes QUEST as an organization actively addressing international inequalities and oppressions and critically analyzing events that impact learners' rights. Regular SPICE sessions were held throughout the year, including a SPICE Café on "Decolonization Practices," discussions on the collection of essays **Entrer en pédagogie antiraciste**, and a session on Feminism. In early 2025, an upcoming session titled "Untold Stories & Tales of Hidden Women" is planned, with discussions underway to involve our Youth Advisory Board and members in future SPICE activities.

APR
2024

Office Team-Building in Italy

In April 2024, QUEST organized a team-building retreat in Italy, coinciding with several project meetings. The entire team gathered for a few extra days immersed in nature, harmonizing our collective vision, celebrating the successful first year of QUEST's office, and marking the end of the one-year cycle for ESC volunteers—two of whom transitioned into permanent team roles. This retreat reinforced team cohesion and highlighted QUEST's commitment to fostering a supportive, inclusive work environment.

SEPT
2024

Volunteer Onboarding Week

QUEST welcomed its 2024 volunteers with a comprehensive onboarding week, including two ESC volunteers, an Erasmus+ traineeship volunteer, and an international volunteer pursuing a Master's at VUB. The program featured training on policy, project management, EU funding, and sessions on Nonviolent Communication and sociocracy. Volunteers also experienced our Dream Circle process for project ideation, visited the European Parliament, and participated in collaborative activities, fostering a strong foundation for their journey at QUEST.

OCT 17
2024

Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Launch

QUEST officially launched its Youth Advisory Board (YAB) on October 17, 2024, with an initial group of **six members**. During the meeting, the YAB began raising key topics, setting the foundation for their contributions to QUEST's initiatives. Moving forward, the board will expand, participate in online meetings, and attend an in-person, week-long trip to the EUDEC conference, where they will engage with members, workshops, and advocacy roundtables. All activities, events, and projects will now be designed with inclusivity for the YAB in mind, ensuring youth-led perspectives remain central to QUEST's mission.



EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

JAN 24 &
MAY 14,
2024

Belgian network meetings

In 2024 we had two networking days with the Belgian democratic network, which allowed us to meet with an important part of our Belgian members. The first day took place on January 27 at the democratic school Arbre des Possibles in Beauraing in the south of Belgium. It was a meeting between all the project leaders, where we discussed the role of this network and were able to share ongoing projects and activities. It was also the opportunity for QUEST to reflect together with the other participants on its role within the Belgian network. The second day took place on May 14th, in the same democratic school Arbre des Possibles. This day was open to adults and children from all the schools and projects. A fun day full of activities proposed by the participants; adults and children, and informal networking moments. It was also the opportunity for other QUEST team members, like our Policy officer, to meet our Belgian members.

JUNE 1,
2024

Citizen-engagement actions (child-voting games)

QUEST piloted an interactive children-voting game during the “We Make the Future” citizen-engagement event that preceded the EU elections. At its event stand, QUEST organized two interactive voting stations: one for children featuring fun activities to express their opinions on nature and their voice in society, and another for adults addressing education's role in environmental challenges and children's inclusion in decision-making. Participants received postcards with insights and climate actions, fostering reflection and advocacy. These activities marked QUEST's first public advocacy efforts to highlight children's rights, their role in the green transition, and democratic education practices.



JUNE 4,
2024

Info session on Erasmus+ funding: Cooperation among organisations and institutions (KA2)

This two-hour training session was organised for QUEST members to introduce our members to the technical and practical aspects of the application for Erasmus+ KA2: formulation of the project idea, creation of the partnership, writing of the project and budgeting. The goal was for QUEST members to discover and feel equipped to apply for this great opportunity to get funding for inspiring projects in education.

JUNE 12,
2024

Info session on Erasmus+ funding: Learning mobilities of individuals (KA1)

On June 12 an info session was organised for QUEST members on Learning mobilities of individuals (KA1). We invited Laurence Watticant, international project coordinator with focus on Erasmus+, as a speaker. The practical as well as the technical aspects to apply for a Key Action 1 project were highlighted in the presentation and there was room for questions from the participants. 11 members attended the info session.



JUNE 25,
2024

Speed Dating for Erasmus+ Partners

QUEST organised a virtual networking event aimed at helping members connect and collaborate on Erasmus+ project ideas. Participants introduced their areas of expertise and interests in breakout rooms, fostering discussions to identify potential project partnerships. This event was attended by 11 members and provided a platform for generating new collaborations in democratic education, sustainability, and inclusion.

ONLY FOR QUEST MEMBERS

Speed dating session: Finding Erasmus+ partners!

25th of June 2024
4:30 - 6:00PM

Online
Free event

QUEST logo and Co-funded by the European Union logo.

JULY 10,
2024

Info Session on European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

This session informed members about ESC opportunities, highlighting volunteering and projects for youth aged 18–30. Eleven members attended this online event. We informed them about this Erasmus+ project financed by the European Union. The initiative offers young people (18 to 30 years old) the opportunity to contribute to society, make a difference and gain valuable experience through volunteering, traineeships and projects across Europe. The aim is to promote solidarity and social cohesion among young Europeans, and to foster their active citizenship skills.

FOR QUEST MEMBERS ONLY

Info session on ESC funding The European Solidarity Corps programme

10th of July 2024
4:30 - 5:30PM (CET)

Online
Free event

QUEST logo and Co-funded by the European Union logo.

SEPT 22,
2024

Mobility Day in Ans

QUEST participated in the Mobility Day organized by the municipality of Ans, in collaboration with the **Belgian Climate Pact**. Inspired by the children-vote game piloted on June 1, 2024, during the *We Make the Future* citizen-engagement event, QUEST introduced a new version tailored to the mobility theme. Flyers promoting education and ecovillages were distributed, and a document was prepared in advance to monitor children's responses during the voting game for communication and research purposes. An invitation was sent to the Ans municipality on September 16, encouraging them to observe innovative approaches to engaging children in public debates. QUEST's policy team, joined by its communication officer, adapted and implemented the game for the event. This time, responses were tracked using a Google Form, allowing for detailed data collection. By the end of the day, **34 children aged 4-12 participated in the survey**. The findings were shared with the Belgian Climate Pact and the municipality of Ans to highlight the potential of involving children in public discussions. Key insights were also shared publicly via QUEST's social media channels, promoting broader awareness and engagement.



OCT 2,
2024

Ecovillages and Education Conference in Brussels

This large-scale, in-person event functioned as **both a member forum and an open event** and explored the intersection of sustainable living and education through the lens of ecovillages. It featured a main conference, seven workshops (including one for children), info stands with representatives of Belgian ecovillages and educational projects, and many opportunities for networking among educators, policymakers, and environmental advocates.

Keynote speaker **Sophie Rabhi-Bouquet**, a pioneer in ecovillage education in France, shared insights on fostering thriving, community-centered lifestyles and child-centered education. This was followed by presentations by DG EAC Policy Officer **Deirdre Hodson** and DG EAC Policy Assistant on Sustainability in Education **Sophia Queckenberg**, and a Q&A panel with all our main speakers. Topics covered by the workshops included: mediation in collective settings, understanding climate change and actionable steps towards sustainability, following our deepest aspirations within a collective setting, outdoor education as a path to collective responsibility, and exchanges on how to launch an educational project. With **66 attendees** and strong partnerships with the **EU Climate Pact** and **La Ferme Rose d'Uccle**, the event enhanced QUEST's local visibility and successfully showcased a wide variety of innovative models for a community-centered education.



OCT 2,
2024

Training on NVC for Children

At the Ecovillages & Education event we organized in Brussels on October 2, we offered a workshop for children aged 5-12 on Nonviolent Communication (NVC), held during the main speaker's conference. Stijn De Neve, from our member organization Orvita, guided four children through a storytelling journey with the giraffe and the jackal. While the jackal represents competitive, unkind behavior, the giraffe symbolizes empathetic listening and nonviolent communication.

During this engaging session, children had the opportunity to shape the story and share their own experiences. They also learned how to communicate in a nonviolent way and explored the various ways to express their feelings.

DEC 10,
2024

Nonviolent Communication in the Classroom Workshop

QUEST hosted a workshop focused on equipping educators with practical Nonviolent Communication (NVC) techniques with Valeria Mincione, from our member organisation Albergo Della Tuscia to foster empathetic and collaborative classroom environments. The session provided actionable strategies for enhancing positive interactions and resolving conflicts within educational settings.



EVENTS IN WHICH WE PARTICIPATED AS SPEAKERS

JAN 22,
2024

Learning Planet International Festival

Screening and discussion with Derry Hannam (UK), Charlie Moreno Romero (Estonia) and Je-anna Clements (South Africa). QUEST screened its beautiful short film "[SUVEMAE - Pioneer of Possibility](#)", a documentary about a school within a public school in Estonia.

OCT 3,
2024

EPOS - Thematic seminar on Democratic Participation

QUEST's coordinator Martina Paone was invited to present democratic education during the Thematic seminar for European National Agencies organised by the Flemish National Agency EPOS. Martina held a very interactive workshop in which she explained how to enact students agency and self-directions in traditional schools.

OCT 8
2024

Congress of Irish ETB

Martina Paone was invited to give a lecture on "students agency in sustainability" in the Congress of Irish Education and Training Boards that took place at the Irish College of Leuven on the 8th of October 2024.

NOV 15,
2024

NECE Festival in Tirana

QUEST's coordinator Martina Paone presented democratic education and its role in addressing (in)visible borders at the NECE Festival in Tirana. From November 14-16, QUEST's team engaged in discussions on migration, climate change, and digital technologies, while networking with civic educators and institutions such as the University of Potsdam and CENESA. The event also included discovery tours, providing insights into the Roma community in Albania and Tirana's openness and dialogue center.

NOV
26-29,
2024

Salto Participation Forum in Tallinn

Quest Coordinator Martina Paone was invited to speak about democratic education practices at the Salto Forum. The gathering, which saw the presence of more than 200 Representatives from National Agencies around Europe, Officers from European Commissions and umbrella organizations, was an important occasion to present QUEST's work in promoting children participation in schools. QUEST also collaborated with the participants in a series of workshops on how to improve participation in Erasmus+ and ESC, giving recommendations for the next programming cycle.



EVENTS QUEST ORGANISED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ERASMUS+ PROJECTS

APRIL
2024

YGBN exchange in Foligno, Italy

QUEST introduced a learning game on green accessibility inequalities for youth at risk of social exclusion. The activity highlighted barriers and their socio-economic causes through participatory exercises and map-based reflections. Toolkit available [here](#).

MAY 3
2024

Event on Democratic Education in the framework of DESC

On May 3, QUEST, in collaboration with Albero della Tuscía and IC Carducci – Busca, hosted an event on Democratic Education in Cuneo, Italy. The event attracted over 60 teachers and educators and provided members an opportunity to explore practices and workshops from the [DESC](#) (Democratic Education in Schools) teacher training program and engage with democratic principles in education. The event featured four speakers who shared their experiences with democratic education: Martina Paone (QUEST), Davide Antonio Martini (IC Carducci – Busca), Matteo Sturlese (Albero della Tuscía), and Aurelia Bachmann (Albero della Tuscía).

JULY
2024

YGBN exchange in Klaipeda, Lithuania

During this event, which focused on sustainable outdoor activities for young people with disabilities, QUEST introduced nature-based exercises specifically designed to regulate stress, anxiety and other involuntary processes that might hinder the in-nature experience for a young person with disabilities. Toolkit available [here](#).

SEPT
2024

YOU-CARE: Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) training

QUEST delivered a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) training as part of the YOU-CARE project, aimed at empowering youth through participation and increasing their agency as a way of addressing eco-anxiety. A toolkit from the training is available [here](#).

OCT
2024

Leading a IBL training for VOLT

QUEST delivered a VOLT project training on Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) in STEM, featuring theory, self-assessment tools, and an interactive workshop for partner schools. The session recording is available [online](#).

NOV 21,
2024

Training in documentary filmmaking for VOLT

QUEST held a VOLT project training on documentary video filming, providing a toolkit with practical tips for recording, planning, and legal considerations. Participants co-created the focus of the final student documentary. Toolkit and checklist available [here](#).



PUBLICATIONS

In 2024, QUEST produced a total of **27 articles and publications**, covering a wide range of topics aligned with our mission. These publications were featured on our website, in academic journals, on our social media, and as resources for our members.

8 POLITICAL ANALYSES

- *The EU elections in the classroom (1/2/3)*: Three articles followed the work of the policy team on monitoring EU political developments during the EU elections. The objective of these articles was to: 1. Present the results of the EU elections; 2. Explain the working of EU legislation; 3. Define what the new EU agenda means for the education field.
- *The state of teachers in the EU (1/2)*. These two articles highlight the teacher shortage crisis—such as low salaries, high stress, and lack of professional support—while advocating for better investment in teachers' well-being, collaborative school cultures, and education systems that value self-directed learning and democratic practices to attract and retain educators.
- *Educational Futures: Insights from OECD's Past and Present Scenarios* analyzes the OECD's 2001 and 2020 for education, focusing on trends toward inclusivity and lifelong learning.
- *Commissioners' Hearings: A Questionable Portrayal of Children* examines how EU commissioner hearings overlooked children's agency, focusing solely on protection.
- *A protected democracy is a practiced one*: This leaflet on education and democracy was made to be shared with decision-makers and stakeholders. It highlights the importance for children's practice of democracy every day, and at school, for the societal gain of strengthening democracy.

6 INTERNATIONAL AND EDUCATION NEWS ARTICLES

- *Climate and Education : When Heat Waves Worsen Inequalities* focuses on events of heat waves in order to highlight the dual relationship between access to education and socio-environmental issues, underscoring the urgency of both radical ambitious climate action and educational reform.
- *The War on Education* discusses the devastating impact of war and systemic violence on education and highlights the need for education to play a central role in fostering peace, justice, and democratic values.
- *The squeeze on LGBTQIA+ Education in Europe* highlights the growing restrictions on LGBTQIA+ education in Europe, focusing on Bulgaria's recent legislation banning LGBTQIA+ topics in schools, and its potential violation of children's rights under international frameworks
- *Education and the digital space: tips and tools* explores the benefits and risks of digitalization in education, emphasizing the need to protect children's rights by fostering their ethical reflections, preparing them emotionally and technically for the digital space, and involving them in decisions about technology use.
- *AI in Education : Navigating Opportunities and Risks in a Democratic Framework* offers an in-depth analysis exploring the role of artificial intelligence in education, offering actionable recommendations for policymakers and educators.
- *Growth mindsets in schools*: QUEST asked three experts about what is a growth mindset and how it can be applied in the classroom.



6 OPEN CONSULTATIONS ANSWERED

- *Rights, equality, citizenship and values programmes (REC, EfC and CERV) – evaluation report*
- *Creative Europe programmes – evaluation*
- *Combating child sexual abuse: review of EU rules*
- *Call for evidence – EU Strategy on combating antisemitism*
- *Call for evidence – The European Joint Degree*
- *QUEST answer to the European Education Interim Evaluation*

1 SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS SHARED WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- *Climate Pact Ambassadors' Recommendations for the new EU Agenda 2024-2029:* Following the Climate Pact's community-building event on May 8th, Celia Dejong and Tim McPhie proposed a new meeting with climate pact ambassadors. With the aim to share climate pact ambassadors' views with DG CLIMA and the broader commission, QUEST's policy officer proposed the co-construction of recommendations to inspire the new commission's agenda. These recommendations saw the contribution and signature of six climate pact ambassadors, were printed in three copies and shared physically with Célia Dejong, Tim McPhie and the commission representation in Belgium.

4 ERASMUS+ PROJECT-DERIVED FLYERS

- *YOU-CARE: from preoccupation to participation* (based on the **YOU-CARE project**) presents research-based information and linkages between children participation and ecoanxiety, simultaneously presenting a new project on children-led action on ecoanxiety.
- *Facing local environmental challenges through children participation : the key to an inclusive green transition* (based on the **OUTSIDE project**)
- *Research report: democratic education in schools (executive summary)* (based on the **DESC project**) explores the philosophy of democratic education, emphasizing self-determination and democratic community processes. It discusses the importance of students actively practicing democracy to cultivate long-term citizenship skills and highlights the implementation of democratic education within public education systems.
- *Education in nature: the bedrock of our future* (based on the **DEN project**)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND CHILD PROTECTION ACTION PLAN

- *Child Protection Policy*
- *Child Protection Action Plan*

To ensure both QUEST's promotion and safeguard of children's rights during all of its activities, whether directly interacting with children or potentially affecting their environment, QUEST's policy team formulated a Child Protection Policy, published on QUEST's website. This Policy led to the creation of Protection Reports template, of a Complaint report template and of a Protection Pledge template to be signed systematically by all activity participants.



VIDEOS

We have released a total of **10 videos** of different lengths and depths, disseminated through our social media and website.

STAPASKÓLI: QUEST MEMBER SCHOOL FACING A NATURAL DISASTER

QUEST conducted [a short interview with Gróa Axelsdóttir](#), Principal of QUEST member school Stapaskóli, Iceland, to understand how the increased seismic and volcanic activity has impacted the life of local children.



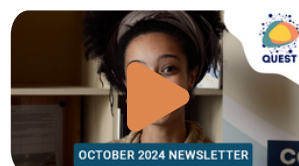
EUDEC 2025 PROMO VIDEO

as part of its involvement in the planning of the International Democratic Education Conference 2025, QUEST's communication team has edited a [promo video](#) based on interviews of children and teachers filmed during the EUDEC 2024 event.



4 VIDEO EDITORIALS FOR THE QUEST NEWSLETTER

We created video editorials for our [April](#), [May](#), [June](#), and [October](#) newsletters, each highlighting a monthly news. The video for our June newsletter was entirely dedicated to the European elections, and aimed to provide our members with tips and information on how to leverage their votes to advocate for education and children's rights. A version of this video was also disseminated to a wider public through our social media.



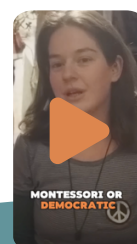
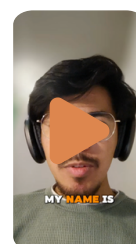
ECOVILLAGE & EDUCATION EVENT VIDEO

Two videos documenting our Ecovillage & Education event were produced as part of our partnership with the EU Climate Pact: a longer horizontal video and a shorter vertical video. Both were largely disseminated through social media.



YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD VIDEOS

QUEST's Youth Advisory Board Videos (YAB) was officially launched in December 2024! In a series of video shorts (*to be disseminated on our social media in January 2025*), YAB members present themselves and share their experiences and insights about education.



PROJECTS

In 2024, QUEST engaged in **7 European Erasmus+ projects**, each contributing to the organization's mission of promoting democratic, inclusive, and sustainable education, and impacting various communities across Europe.

PROJECT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN 2024

BUILDING SKILLS THROUGH TRAINING THERAPY ANIMALS (BUSTA)

Duration: February 28, 2022 – February 27, 2024
Coordinator: Lithuanian Sea Museum (Lithuania)



BUSTA successfully integrated service animal training into educational settings, promoting inclusion for individuals with disabilities. Students engaged in hands-on activities with therapy animals, such as dogs, horses, and dolphins, fostering practical skills and cross-border collaboration.

2024 results include the BUSTA documentary video, a co-creative project led by QUEST within the project.

ONGOING PROJECTS

DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS (DESC)

Duration: February 28, 2022 – July 31, 2024
Coordinator: GO! Scholengroep Brussel (Belgium)

DESC focuses on integrating democratic educational approaches into European school systems. The project aims to equip students with 21st-century skills, fostering a sense of belonging and satisfaction within their school communities.

2024 results of QUEST's involvement include the teacher training and the 50 concrete examples of practices of democratic education within schools. Upcoming: the easy-to-read version of the DESC report + the guidelines.



YOUTH GOING BACK TO NATURE (YGBN)

Duration: May 1, 2023 – November 1, 2025
Coordinator: Paint & Quarter Horse Foundation (Bulgaria)

YGBN aims to assist young people with fewer opportunities in enhancing their mental and physical well-being through environmentally sustainable outdoor activities. The project promotes the EU Youth Goals by engaging, connecting, and empowering youth to reconnect with nature.



2024 results including QUEST's input are the "Going back to nature toolkit for youth at risk of social exclusion" and the "Going back to nature toolkit for youth with disabilities".



PROJECTS STARTED IN 2024

YOUTH CREATING ACTION RESEARCH ON ECO-ANXIETY (YOU-CARE)

Duration: April 1, 2024 – April 30, 2026
Coordinator: QUEST (Belgium)

YOU-CARE addresses youth engagement and mental health by creating strong links between research, policy, and practice. The project focuses on eco-anxiety among young Europeans, setting up participatory action research frameworks and learning exchanges to empower youth in understanding and addressing these emotions.



2024 results of QUEST's involvement include the [YPAR toolkit](#).

RE-IMAGINING GENDER IN EDUCATION IN NATURE (REGEN)

Duration: September 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025
Coordinator: QUEST (Belgium)

REGEN aims to contribute to a broader understanding of gender dynamics in nature-based education for children aged 2-6. The project promotes gender-inclusive practices and supports teachers in identifying and addressing gender-related barriers in outdoor learning contexts.



In 2024, QUEST participated in two exchange travels, in which we conducted observations within partner schools.

VOLCANOES AS TEACHERS (VOLT)

Duration: September 1, 2024 – February 28, 2026
Coordinator: Italian Partner (Italy)

VOLT brings together schools from Italy, Greece, and Iceland, located in remote volcanic areas of Europe. The project provides tools combining IBL and STEM for students to study local volcanoes and share their knowledge through the co-creation of a documentary, fostering cross-cultural learning and scientific inquiry.



2024 results of QUEST's involvement include a training on Inquiry Based Learning in STEM, and a training and toolkit on Documentary Video filming for teachers and students, all available [here](#).

DECOLONIZING CURRICULUMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL (DECUS)

Duration: December 1, 2024 – September 1, 2027
Coordinator: QUEST (Belgium)

DECUS focuses on recognizing and dismantling power dynamics and knowledge systems that uphold racial, gender, and geopolitical hierarchies in education. It challenges Eurocentric paradigms in European schools, addressing inequalities and integrating decolonial approaches. By supporting teachers' professional development, DECUS promotes intersectional inclusion and equality in secondary education.



FINANCIAL REPORT 2024

(UPDATED ON THE 12TH OF DECEMBER)

Income

Structural fundings	168000 EUR
Erasmus +	75751.48 EUR

243.751,48 EUR

Expenditures

Running costs	-2257,58 EUR
Staff expenses	-199573,82 EUR
ESC	-22298,1 EUR
Project Costs	-5705,76 EUR
Training/Travels/Conferences	-7317,02 EUR

Total Expenditures -237152,28 EUR

Net Result 6599,2 EUR





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