

Educating for change: toolkit for high schools on wildfires and climate change

EduFire Toolkit is a Erasmus+ project aiming to educate high school students in wildfire prevention throughout a project-based learning methodology by including a transdisciplinary approach.

By **ISA - University of Lisbon** - September 27, 2022



Photo: Unsplash

Wildfires are one of the most pressing environmental concerns in many countries worldwide, especially in the context of climate change. In this sense, it is important to inform and educate the population, especially the new generations, to increase their wildfire preparedness and to adapt and manage forests to make them more wildfire-resilient.

In this setting, the **Pau Costa Foundation** has partnered with the **Open University of Catalonia** (both from Spain), **Leitrim County Council** (Ireland), and the **School of Agronomy of the University of Lisbon** (CEABN /ISA – Portugal) to address this need to inform and teach the young strata of the population about wildfires. The Erasmus+ project titled Educational Toolkit for Secondary Schools in Wildfires and the Climate Change Context – **EduFire Toolkit**, aims to develop a set of multidisciplinary teaching resources to address the social and environmental complexity surrounding wildfires. This toolkit will follow a Project-based Learning methodology (PBL) and will contain activities designed to promote school community participation. It will be targeted at middle and high school teachers and students (between 12-16 years), focusing on real and local challenges related to climate change and wildfire risk reduction.

The EduFire Toolkit content will engage multiple disciplines and competences through a transversal approach regarding concepts of fire, wildfires and climate change. Activities will be developed to demonstrate how these issues are interrelated while promoting student participation and engagement. The PBL approach will allow students to acquire knowledge and skills through the development of projects that address real-life problems. All the tools and resources developed by this project will be open access. Our purpose is that these materials can complement existing teaching materials and help the school community to address the issue of climate change, in particular the risks of wildfires.

In this sense, CEABN/ISA is now reviewing forest and wildfire didactic materials from around the world. The goal is to identify which are the main topics and concerns covered by these materials as well as their knowledge gaps. So far, over 180 references from 30 countries have been analyzed, of which over 50 are specifically targeted at middle and high school students. In terms of content format, most materials are presented in form of written documents (around 65%). Very few provide supporting materials like slides, videos, or specific activities.

As for the topics addressed, most references explore the main concepts around wildfires, as well as fire prevention and communities fire safety measures. Very few materials approach historic, social, health, and economic concerns related to wildfires. In addition, climate change and its links to wildfires is not a very explored topic in the retrieved materials.

The results of this extensive review will guide and inform the content creation process in order to provide the most essential knowledge and updated didactic approach for the EduFire Toolkit.

Learn more about the EduFire Toolkit

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