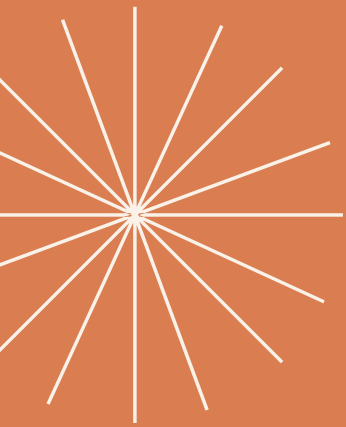


# REDUCE WASTE, SAVE FUTURE

*AN ERASMUS  
STORY*



*Table of*  
**TABLE OF  
CONTENT**

Welcome & Introduction	1
About the Youth Exchange	2
Why Food Waste Matters	3
Project Activities	4
Learning Highlights	5
Tips for Everyday Action	6
Results & Follow-Up	7
Useful Links & Resources	8

## **DISCLAIMER**

THIS PUBLICATION WAS PRODUCED WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE ERASMUS+ YOUTH EXCHANGE PROJECT "REDUCING WASTE, PRESERVING TOMORROW", FUNDED BY THE TURKISH NATIONAL AGENCY UNDER THE PROJECT NUMBER 2024-3-TRO1-KA152-YOU-000289644.

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# WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

**My name is Adem Demir, the founder of Buruciye Gençlik ve Eğitim Derneği, a youth organisation based in Sivas. Since the day we started our journey, our main goal has been clear: to empower young people and create meaningful spaces where they can learn, grow, and take action in different fields of youth work.**

Since 2020, we have supported more than 100 young people through local and international youth projects. Each project reflects our belief that young people can shape stronger, more conscious, and more sustainable communities when they are given the right tools and opportunities.

This youth exchange, focused on food waste, came from a simple but powerful idea: every small action counts when it comes to protecting our planet. Food waste is not just an environmental issue—it is a social, economic, and ethical challenge that affects all of us. Through this project, our participants explored the story behind food waste, learned how our daily habits contribute to the problem, and discovered creative ways to reduce waste in their own lives.

For us, this project is not only an educational activity but also part of a larger movement. We want young people to become active, informed, and responsible citizens who understand the impact of their decisions. The experiences, reflections, and friendships formed here are part of a new story—a story where youth lead the way toward a more sustainable future.



Thank you to all the participants, partners, and supporters who made this project possible. Your energy and commitment continue to inspire us every day.

Adem Demir

Founder, Buruciye Gençlik ve Eğitim Derneği  
Sivas, Türkiye



# 8 Day in Sivas

# ABOUT THE YOUTH EXCHANGE

Healthier than the instant stuff, but with the same level of convenience.

## Ingredients

2 cups of awesome  
1/2 tsp of fun  
3 tbsp color  
1 cup of kindness  
salt and pepper to taste



## Our Goals

- 1 This youth exchange brought together 45 young people from Poland, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Türkiye. For one full week, these participants lived, learned, and created together in Sivas. The diversity of the group turned the project into a lively platform for intercultural dialogue, shared experiences, and meaningful cooperation
- 2 The central theme of the exchange was food waste—a global problem that affects households, markets, restaurants, and communities. Instead of traditional lectures, the program focused on youth-led activities, where participants designed and delivered sessions for each other. Through workshops, group challenges, city-based tasks, creative presentations, and cooking-based learning, young people explored how individual behaviours contribute to food waste and how simple daily decisions can reduce it.  
  
Participants discussed how food waste is handled in their own countries, compared cultural practices, and exchanged practical tips—from storage techniques to community initiatives. They also examined the environmental and social impact of wasted food, linking small actions to larger global goals.
- 3
- 4 The exchange created a space where young people not only learned about food waste but also experienced what it means to act as responsible citizens. The energy, creativity, and teamwork of the group shaped the identity of the project and demonstrated the power of youth collaboration across borders.



eternal  
friendship  
*new friends*

# WHY FOOD WASTE MATTERS

Every piece of food has a story—how it was grown, harvested, transported, cooked, and finally placed on a plate. When food is thrown away, the story ends too early, and the resources behind it—water, energy, labour, and time—are wasted as well. Food waste is not just about spoiled vegetables or leftovers; it is a global challenge with environmental, social, and economic impacts.

## Ingredients

2 cups of awesome  
1/2 tsp of fun  
3 tbsp color  
1 cup of kindness  
salt and pepper to taste

Food waste matters because:

- One-third of all food produced worldwide ends up in the bin.
- That means the world is wasting enough food to feed billions.
- Wasted food = wasted planet.
- Decomposing food produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, making food waste a big contributor to climate change.
- Many people still struggle with food insecurity.
- While tons of edible food go to waste daily, millions of people worry about having enough to eat.
- Small habits create big change.
- Simple actions—buying only what we need, storing food correctly, understanding expiration labels—can make a real impact.

For young people, fighting food waste is more than an environmental issue; it is a chance to show leadership, creativity, and responsibility. Each choice, each shared recipe, each conversation can spark change. Food connects cultures, families, and communities—so protecting it means protecting our future.

Creative Notes from Our Project

🌿 “Every vegetable has a second life.”

During our workshops, participants created new dishes from leftovers and discovered how creativity in the kitchen can reduce waste.

🌍 “Think global, cook local.”

Youth shared how their countries manage food and how traditional methods—like drying, fermentation, and shared meals—can inspire modern solutions.

🍏 “The food you save today is tomorrow’s clean planet.”

The project reminded everyone that sustainability doesn’t require huge actions—just consistent, thoughtful choices.

👣 “Your plate is your power.”

Participants realized that environmental action can start with something as simple as finishing a meal or planning groceries.





# new cultures

*new friends*

# PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The week-long youth exchange brought together 45 young people from Poland, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Türkiye. Through debates, workshops, cultural nights, creative tasks, and hands-on activities, participants learned how food waste affects the climate, economy, and daily life. The next step is to keep the momentum alive. Below are practical follow-up actions inspired directly by the activities carried out during the exchange week.



## 1. Local Awareness Actions

Participants created PSAs, posters, and campaign concepts (02–03.11) Activity–Plan–Buruciye–Food–Was...

. Now these can become:

- School or community awareness campaigns
- Small exhibitions using the “Green Poster Parade” idea
- Social media posts explaining simple tips to reduce waste

## 2. Zero-Waste Cooking in Every City

Inspired by the culinary workshops and the Zero-Waste Cooking Contest (04–06.11) Activity–Plan–Buruciye–Food–Was...

- Host community cooking sessions using leftovers
- Prepare “use-what-you-have” recipe cards
- Share creative meals on Instagram or TikTok

## 3. Youth-Led Workshops

Many sessions can be turned into simple local workshops:

- Carbon footprint activities
- Energy-saving demonstrations
- Healthy snack and food-choice activities

These formats allow youth to reach schools, youth centers, and peers.

## 4. Work With Local Stakeholders

As participants visited the Youth Center

- Build collaborations with food banks or community kitchens
- Propose composting or recycling stations to municipalities
- Organize regular youth meet-ups on sustainability

## 5. Keep the International Network Alive

The cultural nights and teamwork created strong bonds.

Youth can:

- Hold online follow-up meetings every few months
- Create a simple cross-country e-cookbook with low-waste recipes
- Run shared monthly challenges (e.g., Zero Food Waste Week)

## 6. Plan New Erasmus+ Projects

Based on the success of these activities—drama, debates, cooking, treasure hunts, workshops—groups can prepare:

- New KA152 Youth Exchanges
- KA154 Youth Participation projects
- Community-based Solidarity Projects on food or sustainability



# contact with locals

*Turkish hospitality*

# LEARNING HIGHLIGHTS

During the week in Sivas, 45 young people from Türkiye, the Netherlands, Poland, North Macedonia, and Serbia shared ideas, built friendships, and explored food waste from fresh perspectives. Their reflections show how much they learned—not only about sustainability, but also about themselves, each other, and the joy of international youth projects.

## When Leftover Food Speaks...

Many participants imagined their leftovers saying things like “Thank you for not wasting me”, “Why didn’t you eat me?”, or “You finally learned to respect food.”

Some even joked that there were no leftovers at all—because everything was too delicious!



## Eco-Hero Moments

Youth felt like “eco-heroes” when:

- Planting trees
- Creating recycled art from real trash
- Filming carbon-footprint videos
- Designing solutions for hotel waste
- Sharing how their countries fight food waste

These moments showed that small actions can create real change.

## 🌍 Erasmus Awareness & Motivation

Most participants said they are now more aware of Erasmus+ Youth, and many want to join more exchanges because they:

- Met new cultures
- Learned new skills
- Built confidence
- Formed strong friendships
- Felt part of a caring international community

One young person said: “Now I regret not joining earlier—I want more projects!”

## 😂 Funniest Moments

The week was full of laughter:

- Cultural night dances
- Language mix-ups
- Friendly teasing
- The “garbage man” art project
- Singing punishments for arriving late
- 

These funny memories became an important part of the learning journey.

## 🌱 Life Changes After the Project

Participants shared simple but meaningful commitments:

- Reduce food waste at home
- Reuse and recycle more
- Avoid plastic
- Compost when possible

Some said they would now teach friends and family what they learned.

## 📝 Creative Slogans from Participants

- “Small steps, big change.”
- “Less waste, more life.”
- “Don’t throw — use!”
- “Stop food waste, one bite at a time.”
- “With fun toward a better planet.”
- “Youth who care about the world.”

These slogans show how strongly the project inspired them.

## 🍷 Favourite Flavours of the Week

Food was a highlight for everyone:

- Baklava and Turkish delights
- Budyn (Polish dessert)
- Ajvar
- Mushroom soup
- Grilled vegetables & chicken in clay pot
- Cultural night snacks from every country



# discovering Sivas

*Baruciye*  
*MADRASAH*

# TIPS FOR EVERYDAY ACTIONS

Small changes, big impact.

## Take Only What You Need

Serve smaller portions first. You can always add more, but you cannot “un-waste” food.

## Store Smart

Keep leftovers in clear containers, label them, and place them where you can see them. “Invisible food” becomes waste fast.

## Love Your Leftovers

Turn yesterday’s meal into something new—sandwich fillings, soups, wraps, salads. Be creative like an eco-chef!

## Freeze More, Waste Less

Freezing bread, herbs, fruit, and cooked meals is one of the easiest ways to save money and reduce waste.

## Plan Your Shopping

Make a simple weekly list. Avoid buying “just in case” items that end up forgotten.

## Understand Expiry Labels

- “Use By” = safety
- “Best Before” = quality
- Most foods are good even after “best before”—check with your senses.

## Compost When Possible

If you have a garden or access to a compost bin, turn peels and scraps into plant food instead of trash.

## Give Food a Second Chance

Soft fruits → smoothies

Dry bread → croutons

Wilted veggies → stir-fry or soup

Nothing needs to go straight to the bin.

## Avoid Single-Use Plastics

Carry a reusable bottle, container, and bag. It reduces waste and inspires others to do the same.

## **10** Share the Knowledge

Talk with friends, family, and your community about what you learned. Change spreads from person to person.



do sth for  
nature

*they are mine*

# RESULTS & FOLLOWUP

The project brought together 45 young people from Poland, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. They learned from each other, exchanged ideas, tried new practices, and discovered how small choices shape a more sustainable world. Workshops, cultural nights, creative tasks and daily reflections helped participants understand food waste not only as an environmental issue but as a shared responsibility.

But the project does not end here.

As Buruciye Gençlik ve Eğitim Derneği and as individual participants, our role is to carry the impact forward. Every action we take after this youth exchange—every conversation, every shared tip, every mindful choice—keeps the message alive.

Our responsibility is simple:

- ☛ Do what we can, where we are, with the resources we have.
- ☛ Inspire others when possible.
- ☛ Create small changes that eventually lead to big outcomes.

This is how the butterfly effect begins:

One young person reduces waste, another learns from them, a family changes habits, a school becomes more conscious, a community becomes more aware.

The project gave us knowledge, motivation, and a network.

The follow-up is our chance to use them all.

Together, we continue the movement—step by step, choice by choice, plate by plate.



## ♥ Follow-Up Checklist

A simple guide to continue the impact after the Youth Exchange.

### 1. Apply What You Learned

- Reduce the food you waste at home
- Use what you buy before it expires
- Reuse leftovers in creative ways

### 2. Share the Knowledge

- Tell at least 2 friends or family members about food waste
- Share one awareness post on social media
- Explain one tip you learned during the project

### 3. Stay Connected

- Keep in contact with at least 3 people from the project
- Join another Erasmus+ youth activity
- Follow partner organizations online

### 4. Inspire Your Community

- Organize or join a local clean-up or awareness action
- Bring zero-waste habits to school, work, or home
- Encourage your community to waste less

### 5. Keep the Butterfly Effect Alive

- Choose 3 habits to keep for life
- Track your improvement once a month
- Stay motivated: small steps make real change

*Reduce waste,  
save future*