



WELCOME TO EXPLORING YOUR PATH TO A GREENER EXCHANGE!

Student exchange is an opportunity of a lifetime! What would be a better time to expand your horizons and learn about how the world works outside your home country? At the same time, you can broaden your skills in your chosen field of study as well as develop your intercultural and global competences.

But how can you fit a green lifestyle and student exchange together? This guide will help you think about your options, make more sustainable choices, and give you practical tips and useful resources on making your exchange greener. We want to give you food for thought on the whole process: selecting your exchange destination, what to consider when preparing to go, and what your choices could be during your exchange. To cap it all off, we want to help you identify what you have learned when you come back.

The great majority of Haaga-Helia, Laurea and Metropolia students participating in student exchange will do so through the Erasmus programme. Environmental sustainability is one of the cornerstones of the Erasmus+ programme. Erasmus promotes environmentally friendly practices, supports sustainable means of travel and seeks to reduce the negative impact of mobility on the environment. A green top-up in your Erasmus grant encourages you to select a greener option when travelling to the exchange destination.

We very much encourage you to go and explore the world, pack your green skills with you and remember to bring your experiences and tips back to share!

SELECTING YOUR EXCHANGE DESTINATION

The partner universities that are available for application normally follow the principles of global responsibility. However, when choosing the exchange destination and country, it might be a good idea to take a look at the socio-cultural structures, especially in your field of study. The choice of doing part of your studies abroad offers you a good possibility to experience different environments and values.

It is also beneficial if you learn about the culture of the host country, so that you can apply cultural sensitivity and understand the context of your upcoming exchange through different lenses. At universities of applied sciences the aim is that every student is aware of the SDGs during and after the student's academic career. This includes applying the SDGs in one's own actions and engaging in a critical discourse about SDGs within the field of study and society.

If you are considering to go abroad for exchange as a free mover, or you wish to complete your placement abroad, it is recommended to invest some time in careful background research of the host organisation. This is especially applicable to students in the fields of healthcare and social services. In order for you to be able to find out about sustainability and responsibility in the host country, it is highly important to participate in the pre-departure orientation session organised by your university.

HOW CAN I HAVE AN IMPACT WITH MY CHOICES?

- Sustainable lifestyle – learn and try out the tips mentioned in this guide-book!
- Learn about human rights and matters concerning equal participation in society.
- Work with the local communities.
- Promote a culture of peace and non-violence.
- Apply global citizenship and change-making mindset.
- Appreciate diversity in studies and placements.

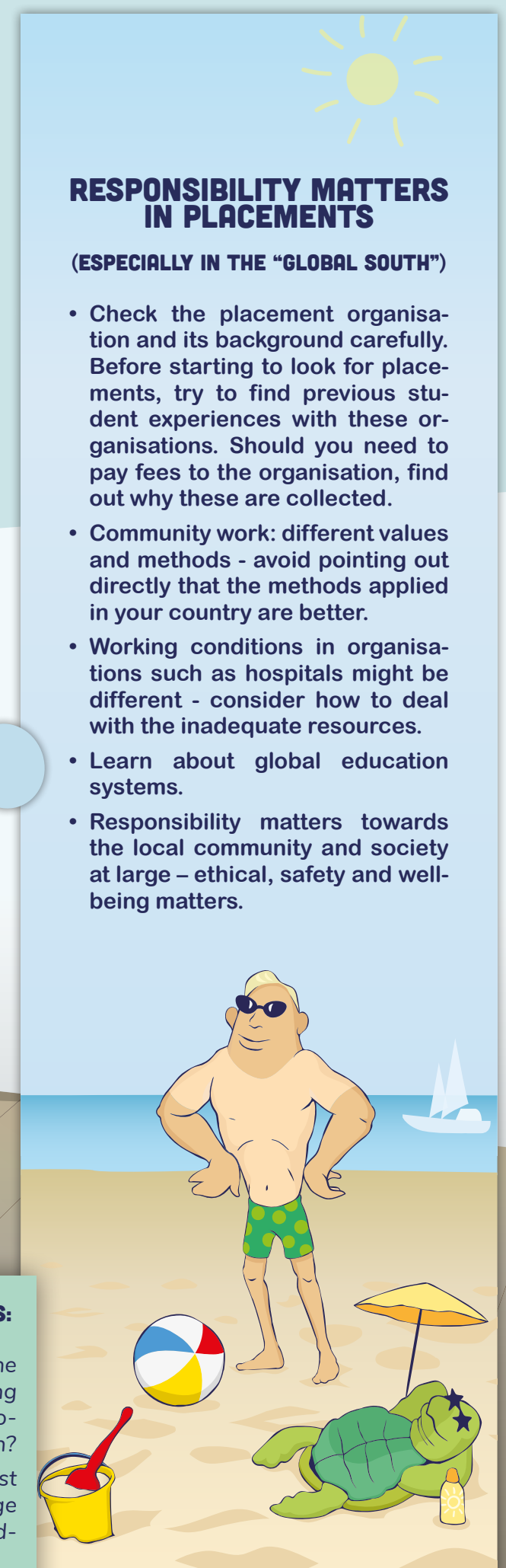
RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS IN PLACEMENTS

(ESPECIALLY IN THE “GLOBAL SOUTH”)

- Check the placement organisation and its background carefully. Before starting to look for placements, try to find previous student experiences with these organisations. Should you need to pay fees to the organisation, find out why these are collected.
- Community work: different values and methods - avoid pointing out directly that the methods applied in your country are better.
- Working conditions in organisations such as hospitals might be different - consider how to deal with the inadequate resources.
- Learn about global education systems.
- Responsibility matters towards the local community and society at large – ethical, safety and well-being matters.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- What issues do you think are the most important ones regarding the planned host country's history, livelihood, nature, population?
- What would have the most impact on your student exchange period and on your personal adjustment to the host country?
- What values are most important to you?





When flying - finding the lowest carbon flight: minimise your carbon emissions by booking a direct route with the most energy-efficient airline.



Consider offset options: you can utilise the CO₂ offset option that many airlines now use. This feature allows you to pay a little extra when getting on your flight, and in return the airline will 'offset' the CO₂ emitted by the flight, for example by planting trees. This is a great and easy way that you can make a difference.



Erasmus Green top-up grant: Travelling by low-emission means (bus, train, car-pooling, rideshare) gives you an additional support of 50 € for exchange and support for max. 4 travel days.



Packing light and minimising waste: the more luggage you bring, the more fuel it takes to fly your plane and the more emissions it generates.



Finding alternative ways of travelling then flying: check ferries, trains, buses, carpooling. Consider sharing a ride to neighbouring countries at a lower price than by bus or train.

Measuring your carbon footprint: measuring your ecological footprint with this easy to use Global Footprint Network calculator is a great first step to see where you might be able to make some positive, impactful changes: [Ecological footprint calculator](#)



THE #ZEROWASTETRAVEL CHECKLIST:

(FROM [CISAUSTRALIA'S GREEN BOOK](#))

- Plastic-free toiletries
- USB or solar rechargeable portable torch
- Insulated water bottle
- Reusable coffee cup
- Zero-waste dining-out kit including reusable cutlery food storage container, straw and a cloth napkin
- Sleeping mask
- Ear plugs
- Headphones
- Reusable shopping bag
- Bamboo toothbrush
- Solar battery charger
- Pack snacks for the flight to avoid food wrapped in single-use plastic
- Go paperless for boarding passes & itineraries



TRAVELLING
TO YOUR
EXCHANGE
DESTINATION

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

HEATING OR COOLING?

Depending on your exchange destination, the challenge may be either keeping it cool or warm indoors. Whatever your situation, there are some things you can try before running to the store to buy a fan or a radiator.



IN COLD WEATHER

When seasons change, temperatures might also change fast. Thermostats can take a while to adjust to the changing temperature, so instead of immediately getting an extra heater, switch your t-shirt for long sleeves and give yourself time to settle into the new season. One word – layering. Woolen socks are especially effective!



IN HOT WEATHER

Cover the windows with blinds or curtains when the sun is beating down at its hottest. Make use of the cool nights and early mornings to circulate fresh air into your room. In the case that it is necessary to resort to using a fan or an air conditioner, try to limit this to the room you are in and only for the time you need it.

WARM WATER

Using less warm water will also reduce your energy consumption.

ELECTRICAL DEVICES AND APPLIANCES

The amount of electronics are ever-increasing in our homes and appliances are quite frequently updated to newer ones. Even if one single device doesn't get used a lot, the combined energy consumption can be a whole different story.



- When do you actually need a new device? Could you borrow for short-term use?
- Buy energy efficient devices and invest in durability and quality.
- Turn off the power, when not in use.
- Recycle old electronics appropriately. This enables the recovery and recycling of valuable materials.



USE WATER RESPONSIBLY



DON'T LEAVE THE TAP RUNNING!

The water cycle from supply to sewage consumes a lot of energy.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR USE OF WARM WATER

A significant amount of overall energy consumption comes from heating water.

SEWAGE WATER

Don't throw anything down the drain that doesn't belong there, e.g. medicine might end up in the sea and be harmful to aquatic life. With detergents and cleaning products, you can also opt for environmentally friendly products that won't harm the environment.

DRINKING WATER

If the tap water is clean and drinkable, use that. Bottling water takes up a lot of energy and materials.

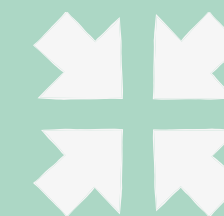
WATER USED IN PRODUCTS

It is good to remember that your water consumption doesn't only consist of what you run from the tap. The production of food, clothes, and other consumables requires a lot of water.

SMALL TIPS FOR EVERY-DAY LIFE

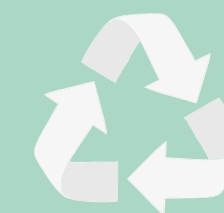
Consider shortening your shower session by a couple minutes? A ten minute shower takes up about 120 litres of water. How about a shorter and colder wash programme for your laundry? Definitely no half-empty loads. Maybe even drying them in fresh air is enough? Washing machines and dishwashers often have eco or saver modes to help you save water.

WASTE AND RECYCLING



REDUCE

Yearly, we create hundreds upon hundreds of kilos of waste per individual and lots of recyclable things end up in landfills. Take a look at your own consumption habits. Consume less – waste less. Avoid food waste. Plan your shopping list and meals in advance. Buy only what you need and be aware of expiration dates.



RECYCLE

By recycling you make sure that the waste that cannot be avoided is efficiently reused and put back into circulation. Find out how recycling works at your exchange destination. Ask the local students or your neighbours! What can be recycled? Where are the actual garbage and recycling points located, at your student house or somewhere else?



REUSE

Reusables over disposables! Sometimes student houses have a room for exchanging items, like dishes, small furniture, books, etc. Check if there is one. As you arrive you might need household items that you weren't able to bring with you. Instead of buying these new, try to get things used – it's probably more affordable as well! When you are leaving you might have things you are not bringing back with you – why not give them to someone?

THINK BEFORE YOU BUY



Choose locally grown and organically produced food always when possible! When you shop at local farmers' markets, you also get to experience local food culture in a much better way than by purchasing products which have been shipped long distances in a way that also harms the environment.

Zero-waste: find out if supermarkets offer discounts on expiring products: you save money and choose a more sustainable option!

Recycle and buy second hand. You will spend a relatively short time at your destination, which means that the lifespan of furniture, household items and textiles will probably be longer than your stay abroad. Therefore, it is smart to adopt these products from their previous owners and leave them for the next ones when it is your time to return home. Many student housing complexes offer recycling rooms where you can look for items and leave yours. Just remember to take good care of the things while you use them – you would not want to receive an item in poor condition, assume that others would feel the same way. An item in very poor condition is waste, and should be disposed of in a sustainable manner.

When you want to travel during your exchange, cheap flights from your destination to exciting cities may seem like a fun opportunity for a person who comes from a more distant corner of the world, like Finland. They are however not a very sustainable way to spend your spare time. Some travelling is essential to a student exchange, but your choices determine how big your carbon footprint will be. Make yours as small as possible with smart choices: if you for instance make five short trips during your exchange, maybe fly just once if possible? Before booking the flight for your weekend getaway, explore the nearby regions and see what they offer! You would probably get to see places that you otherwise would not even consider, as well as get a more diverse picture of your host country by travelling locally and meeting locals.

Be responsible when you need to buy new products and become familiar with their background. Responsibly produced goods help to build a more sustainable society. Consider the employment circumstances of the people who have produced the products. If you know that the production does not guarantee reasonable compensation and conditions for the employees, choose another product if possible. Sometimes it might also be a good idea to think twice before buying and making sure you absolutely need the new item. Maybe it is more fun to spend the money on a weekend bike trip to a nearby location than a new dress?

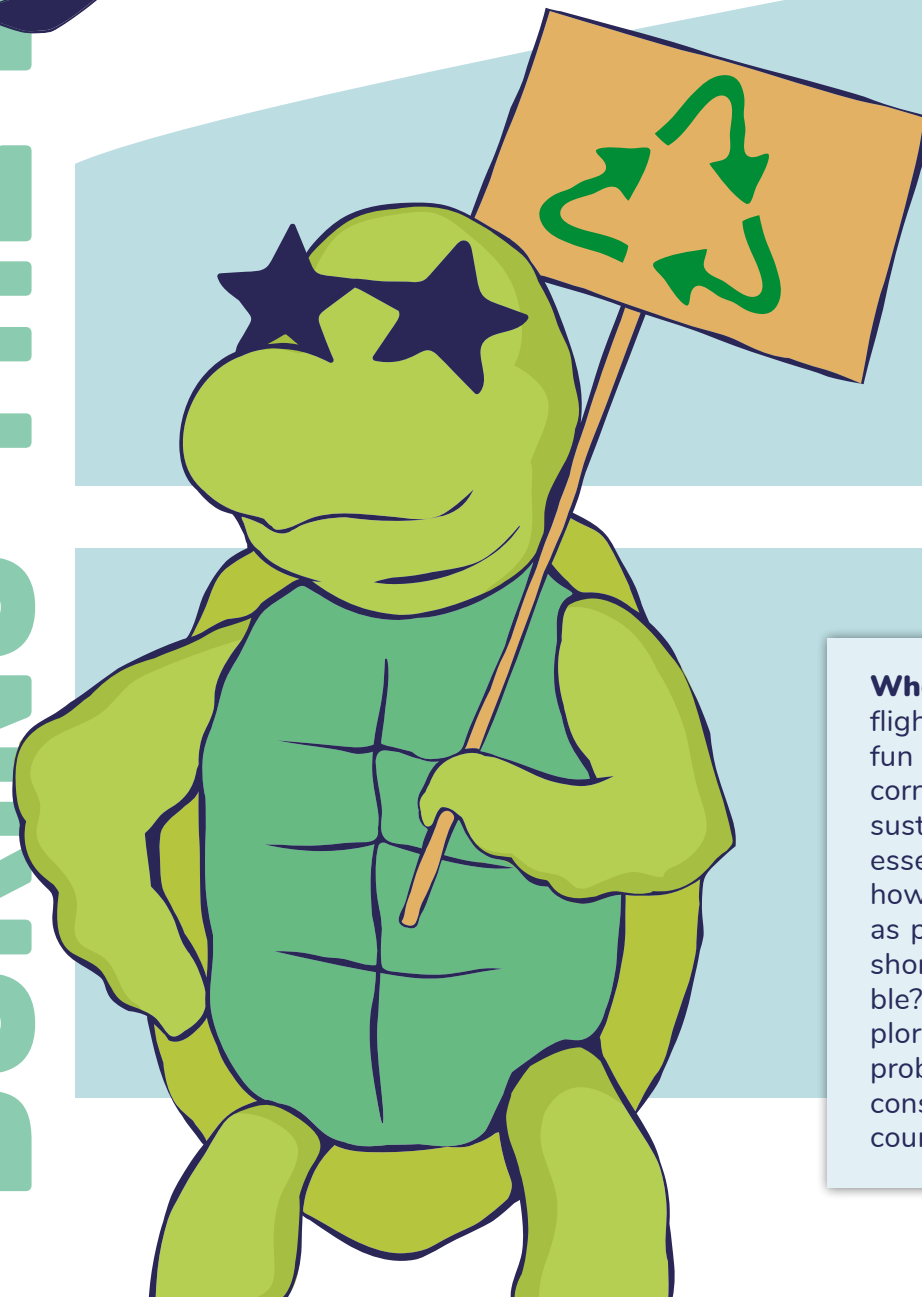


ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Respect other people, as well as animals and nature: Avoid activities that jeopardise animal welfare. Behave respectfully, especially in areas of cultural and/or religious importance. Do not litter or damage the environment.

Challenge your own prejudices and stereotypical perceptions. Aim to find more commonalities than dividing factors between your host country's culture and your own. Do not evaluate either to be better than the other.

Responsible social media communication: Do not photograph/film others or share these pictures/videos without their permission. Do not portray a false or stereotypical image about your host destination, but instead be respectful and culturally sensitive in the content you share online.



AFTER THE EXCHANGE



In addition to knowledge related to your field of study, student exchange is a great opportunity to develop a variety of skills and competencies which are useful in life, working and otherwise, such as social skills, cultural knowledge, curiosity and openness, language skills, team working skills as well as adaptability to change. Getting to know about the issues related to environmental and social sustainability in your host country and broadening your global perceptions are also a valuable lesson you can take away from your student exchange. Knowledge and understanding of sustainable development is one of the key skills to learn for the future.

The following are listed among the top ten skills for the future in the *Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019: "OSAAMINEN 2035: Osaamisen ennakointifoorumin ensimmäisiä ennakointituloksia"*:

- 1st place: Knowledge of the principles of the sustainable development
- 6th place: Multicultural competencies
- 9th place: Ethical competencies

All of these can be further developed through student exchange. After the exchange, reflect on what skills, knowledge and competencies you have developed through your experiences and translate them into career skills. You can test the skills you have gained, e.g. with the [ErasmusSkills self-assessment tool](#).

(Source: "Osaaminen 2035: Osaamisen ennakointifoorumin ensimmäisiä ennakointituloksia", Opetushallitus, Raportit ja selvitykset 2019:3, ,2019, s. 29)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

[Fingo](#) (mostly in Finnish)
[Climate University](#)
[Learn about social innovations](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS:

[HRW](#)
[Amnesty International](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

[Environmental Performance Index](#)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

[Kestävä kehitys](#) (in Finnish)
[Sustainable Development Index](#)
[Gapminder](#)
[Global2030](#) (in Finnish, Swedish and English)
[Sustainability Illustrated](#)

EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL (EUROPEAN COMMISSION):

[European Green Deal](#)

FOOD:

[Ruuan ympäristövaikutukset \(WWF\)](#) (in Finnish)

TRAVELLING, MOBILITY:

[Näin liikut viisaasti](#) (in Finnish)

CARBON CALCULATORS:

[Ilmastodieetti](#) (in Finnish, Swedish and English)
[Elämäntapatesti](#) (in Finnish, Swedish and English)

CARBON COMPENSATION:

[Atmosfair](#)
[CO²-päästöleikkuri](#) (in Finnish)
[Compensate](#)

