



HOLISTIC
LEARNING
INNOVATIONS

GERAS – OUTDOOR LEARNING

Country: Portugal

Target Age: 3–10 Years

Learning Areas: Climate Awareness | Collaboration
| Creativity | Science



THE CHALLENGE

How might we reconnect students with nature and reinvigorate learning?

Although the cluster had strong academic foundations, teaching and learning primarily took place indoors, limiting opportunities for students to interact with their natural environment. Teachers wanted to better use outdoor spaces that could serve as living classrooms that stimulate curiosity, creativity, and collaboration.

THE SOLUTION

Geras – Outdoor Learning

In response, educators, students, and the local community co-created the *Geras – Aprendizagens ao Ar Livre* model. This approach repurposed an unused green space transforming it into an active learning environment and embedded outdoor, nature-based education into the curriculum for children aged 3 to 10, with pilot expansion to Grades 5 and 7.

Students began engaging in hands-on, cross-disciplinary activities: collecting leaves and flowers to craft nature bracelets, conducting experiments like "*Is There Air Everywhere?*" to explore scientific concepts, and observing their surroundings to inspire art and storytelling. These activities encouraged play, inquiry, and creativity while reinforcing curricular goals.

Teachers across the cluster embraced the shift, integrating outdoor learning into science, literacy, and arts lessons. The collaborative HCD process also gave educators ownership of the innovation, ensuring it could adapt and thrive across different schools and contexts.





THE IMPACT

Greater student participation and focus

The *Geras* initiative has resulted in measurable shifts in teaching and learning across the Algueirão Cluster of Schools. Lessons that once took place solely indoors are now complemented by structured outdoor activities, allowing students to apply classroom knowledge in practical, observable ways. Teachers report greater student participation and focus, as well as improvements in communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

The introduction of outdoor, nature-based learning has also supported broader pedagogical development within the cluster. Educators are integrating cross-disciplinary approaches and adapting the methods for schools with limited access to green spaces. The model has encouraged consistent collaboration between teachers, while promoting environmental awareness and responsibility among students.

"Learning outside the classroom is so much fun! Running with the bag and seeing how the air filled it helped me understand science in a new way."

Year 2 Student, Casal da Cavaleira Primary School



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