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JUST MAPS

FIRST ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

A map does not just chart, it unlocks and formulates meaning; it forms bridges between here and there, between disparate ideas that we did not know, were previously connected.

Reif Larsen, The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet

Welcome to Just Maps' first newsletter! In this issue, we will introduce you to the project, the circumstances of its birth and its ambitions, how it is bringing together organisations and schools from four countries in Europe (Spain, Italy, Ireland, Poland) and one in Africa (Kenya) to build up an action and student-led Global Citizenship Education path and we will tell you which steps have been taken so far. Let's start!

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Where does Just Maps come from?

During the implementation of Just Action (which ended in November 2024, but whose materials are still accessible and free on the official website), it became evident that **students' favourite educational activities were those that led them to take action in local communities** and with its members, to be more active beyond school, to be **an integral part of local (and global!) society.** And here is Just Maps: a new operation that starts right in the community, and puts the heads, hands and hearts of children and young people aged 8 to 15 to its analysis and improvement.

What is it?

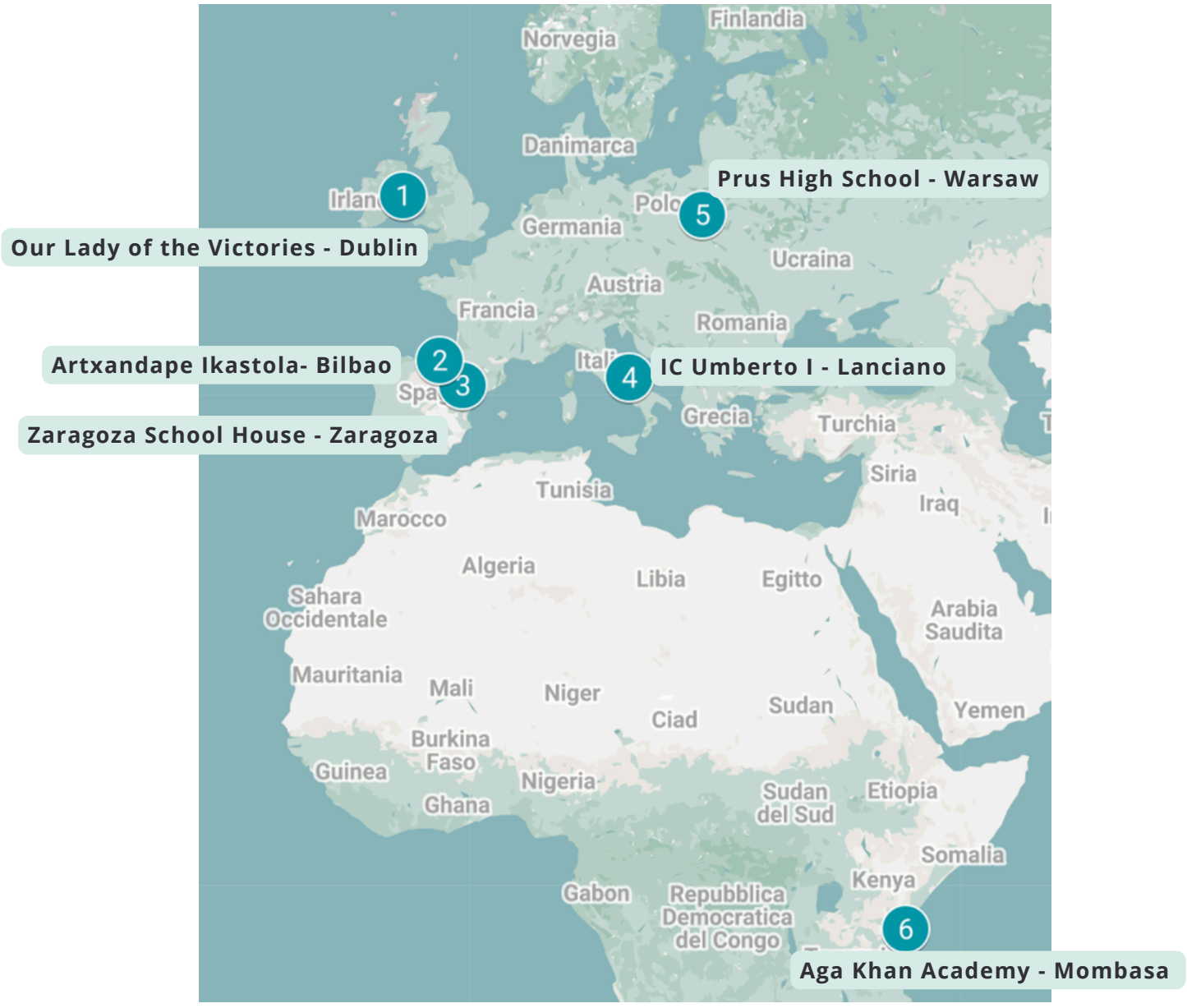
Just Maps Schools strengthening global citizenship by mapping local communities is an **Erasmus+** project in School Education, **co-funded by the European Union**, meant to create a **global citizenship education journey** for primary and secondary school students (and their teachers) with a **specific focus on children and youngsters' active participation in local communities** through the construction of **digital maps with a global citizen perspective**. The maps will help highlight problems and opportunities for improving local communities and will be the basis for joint action by the students from all the involved schools.

What about us?

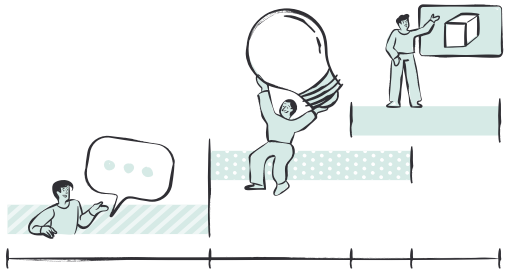
The partnership sees the experience of the Spanish, Italian and Irish partners of the Global Action Plan International network (already part of the Just Action team) strengthened and extended by the entry of GAP members from Poland and Kenya into the team, as well as the active presence of Spanish, Italian and Kenyan schools: the Istituto Comprensivo Statale Umberto I from Lanciano and Artxandape Ikastola from Bilbao (already beneficiaries of Just Action), plus Zaragoza School House from Zaragoza and Aga Khan Academy from Mombasa. This time, schools and their teachers are not only beneficiaries: they are full partners, actively involved in all phases of the project.
As associated partners, the Polish XXXV Liceum Ogólnokształcące z Oddziałami Dwujęzycznymi im. Bolesława Prusa and Our Lady of the Victories from Ireland will help us implementing the project in these two countries.



The facilitating schools



Our story so far



December 2024

The project started on December 1st and a preliminary meeting to get to know one another was held.

January-February 2025

The partners were busy with different sessions of the Kick-off meeting, organised in several days to maximise meetings' effectivity and to deal with topics step by step.



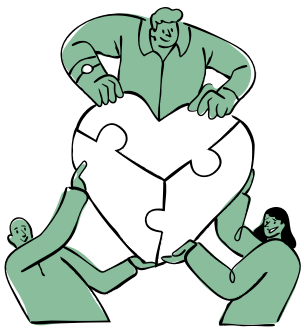


March-April 2025

Two preliminary workshops were organised to prepare materials and data before May's Transnational Meeting and Teachers' Training in Dublin. We worked on each school's stakeholders' maps and on national and regional curriculum mapping.

3-4 May 2025

Official and associated partners' representatives met in Tallaght (Dublin) to be trained in participatory mapping and to start developing the main ideas at the base of Just Maps' Teachers Training.



The Transnational Meeting and Teachers' Training in Dublin



The two day transnational meeting took place in the beautiful surrounds of the Dominican Retreat Centre, Tallaght, Dublin. In total, we were six different nationalities from twelve different organisations including Kenya, Poland, Italy, Spain and Ireland. This diversity of experience and perspectives made the two days very rich.



The first day focused on gaining a deeper understanding of participatory mapping and how it could be used. This was informatively delivered **by Dr. Joe Usher of University College Dublin** and included a trip to the local park in Tallaght for some practical application of learning.



The second day focused on applying Just Maps for students and teachers and specifically teacher's training and development. Using a World Cafe format, the experience of the group was drawn on to suggest the skills and technologies that teachers need to run the project. In addition, it helped to identify eight thematic areas through which the Just Maps project could be deeply integrated into the participating school and its surrounding community.

It also focused on areas that JustMaps had not considered but which teachers and schools may face such as school calendar differences between countries. The session types included Lego-making adding to the participatory nature of our learning as well as contributing to an open and engaged atmosphere.



The afternoon involved the many ways to ensure that stakeholders are attracted by the project and can easily appreciate and recognise its benefits to students, schools and the wider community. Indicators were established and various tools agreed by which to measure success.



The meeting finished under the watchful gaze of a seven hundred year old walnut tree in the Dominican's community garden where we spoke our intentions for going forward. It was an apt and symbolic end of a project that seeks to root students in their local community and to identify how they can nourish and nurture it through a contributory action that will make their space more inclusive, more fair and more environmentally sustainable.



Igniting Action and Co-Creation

The Dominican Retreat Centre in Dublin was abuzz with ideas, collaboration, and an undeniable drive for change. At the heart of the event was the session led by Kenyan Learning Unpacked APPLIED who energized the final day with a deeply reflective and action-oriented facilitation on the theme of “Action in the Just Maps Project.”

A Tapestry of Perspectives

The diversity of participants proved to be the greatest strength. Through an interactive approach, members were invited to reflect, critique, and share what "success" in the Just Maps project should look like. Educators and project partners collaboratively examined their local contexts to identify what meaningful community engagement and action truly entail. Participants also developed tangible strategies to embed the Just Maps philosophy into everyday schooling through four strategic themes.

Connecting Curriculum with Community: A Four-Theme Approach

Connecting the Curriculum to Community Life

Using local spaces, expertise, and real-world problems in teaching.

Community Expertise and Mentorship

Leveraging local knowledge through classroom involvement and mentorship.

Active Participation in Local Development

Encouraging students to lead and participate in community improvement efforts.

Organizing School Based Community Events

Hosting events that build bridges between schools and their communities.

Collective Reflection: A Culture of Courage and Curiosity

One of the most inspiring elements of the session was the openness and honesty with which participants engaged. There was a shared desire to face hard questions, dream bigger, and ground actions in local reality and global relevance. The session became a space not just for learning, but for healing, visioning, and solidarity.

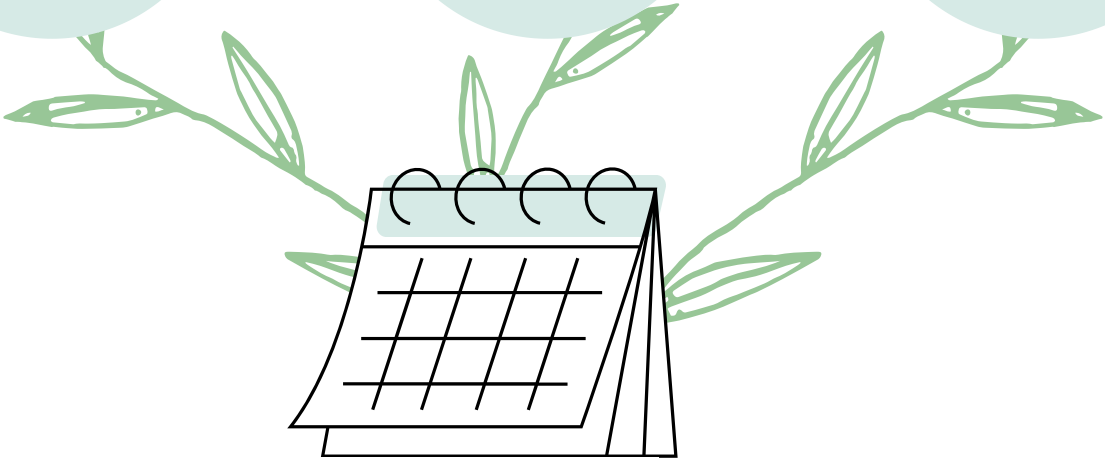
"Real change is born from the convergence of diverse voices and the courage to envision new possibilities."

Our next actions

July 2025
First draft of Teachers' Training

From September 2025
Teachers' cascade training to colleagues in schools

From October 2025
Let's get the mapping started!



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www.justactionjourney.com

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