

Study Visit

Social Enterprise and Natural Capital

SENC



Intro

After the positive experiences realised in the last years in different fields of youth work and Non Formal Education, we are following the process of growth, sharing and empowerment of skills, competences and tools through the realisation of the long term Multi-activity “Social Enterprise and Natural Capital: an opportunity for young people and local communities”.

The overall aim of the project is to realise a non-formal education process at international level and among different organisations (Youth Centres, youth associations, organisations for community development, environmental NGOs, etc.) coming from 8 different European countries able to develop new possibilities for youth entrepreneurship and employability within the Natural Capital framework (Nature Reserves, Parks, Green protected areas, Community Gardens, Pedagogical Farms, etc.).

The goal of the project is to use social entrepreneurship as a tool and the Natural capital as perfect playground in which to connect needs coming from young people and local communities and generate innovative approaches and quality activities able to increase skills of professionals and let those young people become active protagonists of the social, economic and environmental life of their communities.

The entire project is based on the principles of Non-Formal Education (these include the methods of non-formal/ informal learning, ORA - Observe, Rethink, Act, experiential and active pedagogy, mentoring and/or peer support and relationship-based activities). In particular, the approach of the methodology ORA starts from the assumption that to guarantee a profitable work that gives real answers to the needs expressed by young

people in terms of inclusion (social, economic, cultural), it is necessary to Observe their context, to Rethink their role as active citizens both individually and at the community level, to Act positively within and for the community. Following the ORA approach, main activities planned directly targeted to youth workers/animators, environmental educators/activists, those responsible for youth organisations/centres, peer educators, volunteers, young people are a Study Visit in Italy (Observe) to know on field examples of good practices applied in Abruzzo, a Seminar in Bosnia Herzegovina (Re-think) to synthesise different experiences and methodologies and identifying and defining fields of intervention and quality guidelines, a Training Course in Italy and local activities in each local context (Act) to improve the quality and efficiency of the activities carried out and to create a moment of direct and inclusive youth protagonism on field.

The project is realised within the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission and the Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani with the support of the Abruzzo Institute of Protected Areas and the Cooperative Terracoste.

International partners of the projects are:

ARCI Chieti (Italy)

Urban Organic (UK)/CIC (United Kingdom)

Estestvoizpitateli (Bulgaria)

Zdravo da Ste (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

EDEN Centre (Albania)

Omladinski Kulturni Centar

Herceg Novi (Montenegro)

Shtek House (Serbia)

Mj Recollets (Belgium)

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The Study Visit

The Study Visit took place from 5th to 11th March 2022 in the inner part of Abruzzo Region (Tornareccio) where mountains of the Apennine chain have been our main landscape.

The overall aim of the activity, thanks to the environmental peculiarities of the area, was to visit on field, know and acquire positive examples and good practices, and to have a first-hand experience concerning positive models of sustainable development connecting social enterprise and natural capital. Participants were youth workers, youth leaders, volunteers, educators from the 8 involved international partners.

FIELD VISITS AND MEETINGS!

Through several interactive field visits and meetings (Abruzzo Institute of Protected Areas, Cooperatives and associations, Environmental Educational Center “Casa Natura Fontecampana”, local food producers and beekeepers, Nature Reserve) and, in general, the opportunity to observe, learn about and experience at first hand of examples of good practices carried out in a particularly advanced context, such as the Tornareccio area, we were able to share good practices and inspiring activities able to facilitate processes of inclusion and involvement of young people in their local community. Different themes within the framework of Sustainable Development have been investigated and tackled (Green Jobs opportunity, environmental protection and promotion of the territory, promotion of quality food products, bee-keepers, environmental education) in order to have a broad spectrum of

opportunity and actions set up.

For this reason, the dynamics, activities and visits realised have been designed to offer a wider and innovative range of methodologies, tools and good practices able to improve the level of intervention and to give continuity to the activities that the partners carry out in the different local communities and to make more effective and efficient the processes of participation and social inclusion that mainly concern young people.

During the Study Visit, an Editorial Board was constituted in charge of following and reporting on the different field visits. All participants were involved in the Editorial Board and they were divided in small groups connected with each visit. All the main information collected and/or acquired during the visits were reported using different media and all the reports have been collected in this dossier.

Enjoy your reading!

Associazione A.M.A.

Associazione Amici del Mosaico Artistico

Tornareccio, Mosaics and Environment

Domenico, the van driver, was waiting for us at the airport. We were tired and we just got into his van, dreaming about reaching what our next 7 days will hold. After an hour of mostly uphill ride we arrived in Tornareccio.

Tornareccio is small municipality, with not more than 2000 inhabitants, and all of them are somehow related to honey and bees. Production and distribution of honey in this area lasts for centuries. In 2021 they made around 10% of Italy's honey production.

Sometime around the middle of 20th century, a mother gave a birth to what's gonna become an artistic child, local patriot and honey lover. During his life, he was moving around, painting and selling his art. Then he was an art collector and it made him well connected to many famous Italian painters. One day he begun with his plan, so he got into the conversation with Tornareccio administration. He proposed an idea that would enrich the city with art, but in the most interesting and appealing way possible.

“10% of Italy's honey production”





Tornareccio

Tornareccio is mainly a mountain commune, weather conditions make it almost impossible to do murals that will last more than couple of years on any kind of wall. So they decided to do mosaics.

Italy is a country of masters. Ravenna is city of mosaic masters. Venice is city of glass masters. Combined they are the hands of the project. This is how it goes: artists are doing their paintings and sending them to administration, which then calls citizens to decide by voting what will go on the wall. The rules are simple: do something related to bees, hon-

ey and environment. After the decision is made, the art is sent to Ravenna, where masters start to make a mosaic out of it. Mosaics are made by small stones from all around the Italy, and with the glass from Venice.

Dimensions for the majority of the mosaics that are enriching the streets are 1x1m. They are placed on buildings, the old ones and the new ones, on churches, in passages, literally on any kind of flat wall that seems interesting. It started in 2006, and until now there are more than 100 of mosaics all around Tornareccio.



Citizens went quite quick from “nah, we don’t need that” to “I want to have it on my building” state of mind. There is an old grandma living next to the small square, and there is a mosaic on the wall of her house. Every morning she takes a brush and cleans the mosaic. She takes care of it.

Someone had a good question: What about stealing the art? There are no cameras or any other kind of protection. Elsa answered: Citizens are acting like security. And we were like: Yeah, we would do the same if there was something similar in our hometowns.



Monastery

Our story of Monastery and Casa Natura Fontecampana

*Dragan Ostic, Center for environment, Banja Luka,
Bosna and Hercegovina*

*Sashka Vitanova, Naturalexplorers association,
Bulgaria*

Another applause for Alan as we safely reached the spot. We got out of the van just in front of the monastery that was built in 15th century. Rebecca was already waiting for us. Rebecca, a president of Legambiente NGO, managing Casa Natura (what a beautiful name) is going to be our guide during this day.

The monastery is located in what is called (Valaspra vallaspra vall'aspra), meaning tough valley. Monks have been there, doing their service to God but also making wool and pasta. They were selling it to locals and pilgrims that were passing by, so they could finance their construction work.

Simultaneously with all pasta and wool production and construction work, they were taking care of their garden, which had regionally famous dimension. At the beginning there was a lot of aromatic plants, spices etc. but later it developed into

Centuries later, there are no monks anymore. The nursery was still alive until the government shut it down because it wasn't making financial profits. That isn't the only profit that is made by nursing of plants. Trees are not just money, they are the basis of our life. So the riots and protests begun and the State Forest Agency is now considering to reopen it again.

Idea is to go with apples. In Abruzzo region there are 40 different varieties of apples, so it can be taken as a huge advantage, because Italian apple production is based on only one variety of apples.

Rebecca then took us for a small walk around the nearby forest. After we took a walk and relaxed for a bit, we were on the road again. Alan deserved another applause, as he drove us in front of the Casa Natura.

Casa Natura Fontecampana, environmental education center, is located in Monte Pallano, Abruzzo, in the forest, in the object that used to be a forest protector's house. They re-cultivated it a bit with painting of a tree with flowers, bees and butterflies flying around

the tree. There is a fireplace inside that we immediately used for good.

<https://www.facebook.com/CEACasanaturaFontecampana/>



Casanatura Fontecampana

EDUCATIONAL CENTER

The Casanatura Fontecampana Environmental Education Center is part of the national network of CEA Legambiente and is managed by the Circolo Legambiente GEO A.P.S. by Atessa. CEA Legambiente got famous in '86, when Italy planned to open a nuclear plant. But just then the Chernobyl happened. Legambiente was already doing anti-nuclear activities, but after Chernobyl catastrophe people opened their eyes and decided to stick with them. The same situation happened 30

years later, when Italy was planning to go nuclear again, but then Fukushima happened.

Rebecca started presenting the activities of Casa Nature as an environmental education center. They are all about the education of youngsters, people from the villages and all other interested groups, for and with the community.

There are 4 directions in which the Casa Nature is working:

- Campaigns, workshops and guided tours
- Re-cycle center
- International volunteering experience
- Campaign Clean up the world

The C.E.A. Casanatura is recognized by local citizens as a place where the environmental and cultural quality of the territory is improved, and offers an immediate and concrete response to the desire for participation, cohesion, knowledge and identity. The Casanatura facility is an important place for meeting and socializing, a laboratory for experimenting with sustainable good practices dedicated to energy saving, the use of renewable energy sources, the use of healthy, local and organic products from the earth, environmentally friendly personal and home hygiene. The C.E.A. Casanatura Fontecampana offers experiences and cognitive paths aimed at all age groups. It makes available the skills

of its operators, to encourage learning of the issues that drive sustainable development, aiming to create a relationship of sharing knowledge and actions that can be practiced in daily life. Casanatura proposes itself as a place of reference and meeting, where knowledge is spread, surprising discoveries are made, environmentally friendly behaviors are practiced and love for beauty and nature is cultivated.

The impact they had on the community is reflected also in numerous businesses that are opened in the last couple of years in the area in which they share their knowledge.



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Nature reserve Serranella lake

*Regional Nature Reserve WWF Oasis LAKE
SERRANELLA - LAGO DI SERRANELLA*

Not all human intervention in the modern times is negative, brings disasters or degradation and one of the best examples is Regional Natural Reserve Lago di Serranella – Serranella Lake.

At first sight, Serranella looks like a wild forest, full of trees covered with ivy leaves and surrounded by farm fields. But, inside one can find a magical green blue water from the smaller water depots and old river bayous. Reed stalks goes up to the sky, lean and proud, hiding water like a precious pearl.

Serranella lake was formed following the construction of a traverse for irrigation purposes in 1981, but the artificial reservoir quickly became a wetland rich in biodiversity. The Serranella Oasis Regional Nature Reserve was established in 1990. Serranella lake is located in the Abruzzo region, more precisely, in Chieti province. The Reserve covers an extensive area of about 500 hectares and its basin is between the municipalities of Altino, Casoli and Sant'Eusanio del Sangro. The protected area is around 302 hectares, placed in the lower Sangro valley at the confluence with the Aventino river. Beside the protected area, there is more than 200 hectares of land that is under certain protection standards (buffer zone). Thanks to environmental restoration interventions, the habitat richness of the river environment is being reconstituted with lakes, oxbow lakes and flooded areas, restor-

ing the environment and the landscape to its original aspect.

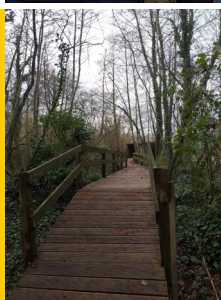
Serranella lake is actually a swamp full of life and biodiversity. The area has exceptional vegetation richness with 25 plant associations, almost all linked to aquatic environments and sometimes very rare species. Along the banks there is the riparian forest formed by willows, poplar and black alder. Noteworthy is the Laxmann cattail community, a species known in Abruzzo only in Serranella and included in the “Red Book” of Plants of Italy. This place is very important for the stopover of migratory birds in central Italy. The most important naturalistic aspect of the Serranella Reserve is the remarkable wealth of avifauna, with 218 different species of birds counted, including osprey, black stork, crane, flamingo, lesser shag, spoonbill, the great white heron and the cormorant. During the migration and wintering period, the lake is frequented by a large number of birds, in particular ducks, coots and waders. That's why the symbol species of the Serranella lake is the Northern pintail.

There are over 70 nesting species including the night heron, the cannareccione, the little bittern and irregularly the northern pintail. Recently it has been confirmed the nesting in Serranella of the night heron and the knight of Italy, first time in Abruzzo.

In the cultivated fields and in the bushy areas the cappellaccia, the hoopoe and the red-headed shrike reproduce. The wooded areas are also frequented by the green woodpecker, the great spotted woodpecker, the buzzard and the red kite, whose nesting is of great importance for the Reserve. Among the mammals fox, badger, stone marten, hedgehog and dormouse are common, but the skunk and the oak mouse are less frequent. In recent years, roe deer has also been observed, coming from the neighbouring hilly areas where it is increasingly widespread. Wolf packs from Majella mountain are also visiting this area. Reptiles that can be found in this area are pond turtle, four lined snake, collared snake, great crested newt. The fish fauna is represented by different species, es-

pecially those related to the muddy bottoms such as tench, carp, eel, barbel, chub and loach, a small fish very beautiful but difficult to observe due to its elusive habits of life. The Oasis is the most important area in Abruzzo for the marsh tortoise.

The nature reserve is open all year and the entrance is free. The Serranella Lake Oasis has no fences, so it can be visited freely by following the marked trails and stopping at the picnic areas set up. Guided tours are subject to charges and are carried out on weekdays and holidays by reservation. Along the routes suitable outdoor clothing is always recommended.



There are several paths to explore.

Route of the oxbow lakes

It develops on the right side of the reservoir starting from the parking lot located in Scosse di Altino district and crosses the area that in recent years has been affected by major environmental restoration projects that have recreated the ancient river landscape.

At the beginning of this path you can see art installation named “La bisha” or water snake. It is made from white carrara marble and represents prehistoric animals who stayed in nature unchanged separate from human interventions and climate change. Sculpture is reflecting weather and time of the season at

the moment of observation.

Second artistic installation is called Dead Trees hill. On an artificial hill several dead trees found in nearby oxbow lakes were placed in a semi-circle. They represent the past and remind visitors of the times before human interventions.

One part of this path ends with the bird observatory located on the confluence of two rivers. The wooden cabin has small windows ideal for bird watching. Inside is an informative panel about main species that can be spotted in Serranella Lake.

Other paths are:

Path of the Sango river bed

Located on the left of the reservoir, it starts from the Visitor Centre and descends under the crossbar. It leads to the banks of the Sangro river which resumes its course after having formed the reservoir. It is a nature trail that shows the typical habitat of a river bed.

Path of the vegetable gardens

The path starts in the district of Guarenna, in the territory of Casoli near the rural church of San Francesco. The route allows you to closely observe the ancient system of vegetable gardens linked to the river environment and the protected area from its highest vantage point, before arriving at the Visitor Centre.

Route of the rivers

It allows you to closely observe the environments, vegetation and fauna of one of the most interesting corners of the Reserve, exactly at the confluence of the Aventino and Sangro rivers, in the Altino area, coming from c.da Selva. At the best times it allows observation, even close up, of the aquatic avifauna.

Path of the Pillory

A long itinerary that, starting from the connection with the Path of the vegetable gardens, goes up the valley of the Gogna stream. The area is characterized by a wide plain, where the stream forms numerous meanders covered with luxuriant vegetation, embellished by the presence of rare plants such as English oak.

The River Environmental Education Centre promotes both activities aimed at schools and actions to raise awareness and involve the local population. In recent years, the center has specialized in particular in the theme of rural biodiversity and the protection of cultivars, dealing with programs related to food education and vegetable gardens. Near the

visitor centre, a botanical garden has been created with the most representative plant species of the Mediterranean and aquatic environments and a section dedicated to local tree varieties, the Pomona garden. Near the edges of the reservoir, a rural setting has been rebuilt with a haystack, a small nursery, a medieval vegetable garden and a seedbed.



Serranella Lake

At the Serranella Lake Reserve, monitoring of the marsh tortoise, *Emys orbicularis*, is active, the population living inside the Oasis being considered the largest in Abruzzo.

The periodic census of the species is aimed at collecting data on the tortoise in order to proceed with protection and conservation actions, in view of national projects.

With reference to the activities related to the conservation of biodiversity in the agricultural field, at the visitor center there is a carpoteca, a seed bank, where the seeds of the ancient cultivars that are sown annually in the garden of the Reserve are kept.

For the education activities in Lago di Serranella is in charge of the Terracoste Cooperative.

The main activities are carried out through the didactic meetings of environmental education both in collaboration with schools and in protected areas. They organize educationalpopular events on scientific topics,

meetings on the promotion of sustainable living and self-production workshops aimed at both adults and school-age children.

They encourage groups to discover the natural and historicalcultural heritage of the Abruzzo Region, often collaborating with local producers of food and wine.

Terracoste cooperativa is a service company founded in Torino di Sangro in 2006. The activity of the Terracoste Cooperative is aimed at enhancing the territory through the construction of environmental education projects, eco-tourism routes, historical naturalistic excursions, planning and programming with a view to sustainable development and management of protected areas.

The current president of Terracoste is Paola Natale. Cooperativa has three employees and many volunteers. In Lago di Serranella they organize several events per month, usually funded by local municipalities.



Environmental education:

Terracoste is a member of the DMC “Terre del Sagro Aventino” and of the “Terre dei Trabocchi” LAG, founding member of the international network ORA (Observe, Rethink, Act) which operates in Europe in the fields of non-formal education, active citizenship and environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, since 2012 the Terracoste Cooperative has been a CEA (Environmental Education Center) recognized by the Abruzzo Region and since 2015 in its staff it has 4 AIGAE guides (Italian Association of Environmental Hiking Guides).

Beside educational and cultural projects, TC is working together with local farmers on the protection of natural heritage and autochthonous species.

How to reach the oasis

By car and bus : from the A14 Bologna-Bari motorway, take the Val di Sangro exit and continue along the Sangro valley floor towards Castel di Sangro until reaching the Lanciano exit. From here, after about 1 km, turn left onto the provincial road towards Casoli. After 4 km, past the built-up area of the hamlet of Brecciaio di Sant'Eusanio del Sangro, at the end of a straight uphill stretch on the left, indicated by signs, there is the main entrance and the Visitor Center / CEA of the Oasis.

By public transport: with the Sangritana trains (Pescara-Lanciano-Castel di Sangro line, www.sangritana.it) stopping at the nearest station of Piane d'Archi (about 5 km). By bus with the lines that connect Lanciano to Casoli, stop in Brecciaio.

Saturday and Sunday from 10 to 13 and from 16 to 19 (by reservation at least 24 hours in advance)

For each season initiatives with specific calendars are planned.

1. *Tel: 333/7971892 and 339/7384228*
2. *Address: Brecciaio 2 - S. Eusanio del Sangro (CH)*
3. *Email: serranella@wwf.it and coordinatore@iaap.it*
4. *Facebook page: <https://m.facebook.com/OasiWwfLagoDiSerranella/>*
5. *Website: <http://www.iaap.it/lago-serrenella/>*

Tieri Beekeeper

Beekeeping

“Un mondo da salvare”

“Apicoltura Tieri” is a family business based in Tornareccio specialized in the art of honey. It was founded by Argito Di Vincenzo in 1930. It all started when he found a swarm of bees, which he gathered in a bag and took them back to Tornareccio. At first it was a side hustle, but afterwards they started to recognize the worth of honey and the fact that it produced better income in comparison to agriculture. That was the turning point, that made this ‘side hustle’ a full business. And now 10% of the honey production for Italy comes from the Abruzzo region.

During the 1960s they started to look for new ways to boost the developments in the

quality and quantity of the honey. One of the many ways that they came up with was moving the bees around to other regions, for multiple reasons such as: weather conditions and GMOs. This became known as Nomadism.

An issue that they ran into throughout the years was with the pesticides and GMO plants, which are having a devastating effect on the bees. For years the production of honey started to decrease to the point of last year where it was 80% less. The only proper way to cope with this problem is to go bio.

Un mondo ”
“ *da salvare*

Apicoltura Tieri



“Apicoltura Tieri” is part of Conapi Association. They are on the front line in the battle to protect bees and consequently the environment too with its rich biodiversity. In addition to that they also collaborate with “Libera” in certain occasions where they sell their products as a show of their support.

Now a days “Apicoltura Tieri” owns 1300 beehives, where 600 of them were located in Puglia. At the beginning they produced only two types of honey: Flower honey (Milleflore) and Sulla honey, whereas now they have multiple varieties of honey plus other bee products such as pollen, propolis and royal jelly.

Moreover, they have moved on to open multiple shops, or as they like to say it “They open windows to the world”.

Our group had the wonderful opportunity to visit “Apicoltura Tieri” and talk with the owners. We were very impressed with their hospitality, passion, resilience, devotion to the art of beekeeping, which it’s now in its fourth generation.

Resources:

Apicoltura Tieri: <https://apicolturatieri.it/>

Conapi: <https://conapi.it/>

Libera: <https://www.libera.it/>

By:

*Debbie Davies, Dasara Shehi, Diana Nenova, Vedran Krnic, Natasa Dendic,
Klea Petriti.*



*A short video dossier has been realised during the entire Study Visit.
Please, give a look at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snDT9xo8OVw&t=10s>*

