



Erasmus+ Project “Protected Areas: a playground for the inclusion of young people”

**NATIONAL CASE STUDIES
BULGARIAN STUDY VISIT DOSSIER
2023**

**Outcomes of the Erasmus+ Project “Protected Areas: a playground
for the inclusion of young people”
2023**

Project realised by



In cooperation with



Granted and supported by:



Erasmus+



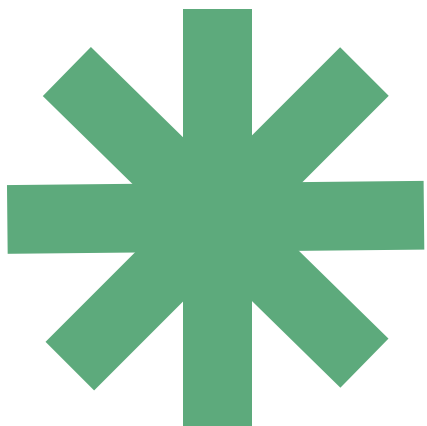
We are all just human beings: for this reason it is possible
that this dossier contains mistakes and inaccuracies.

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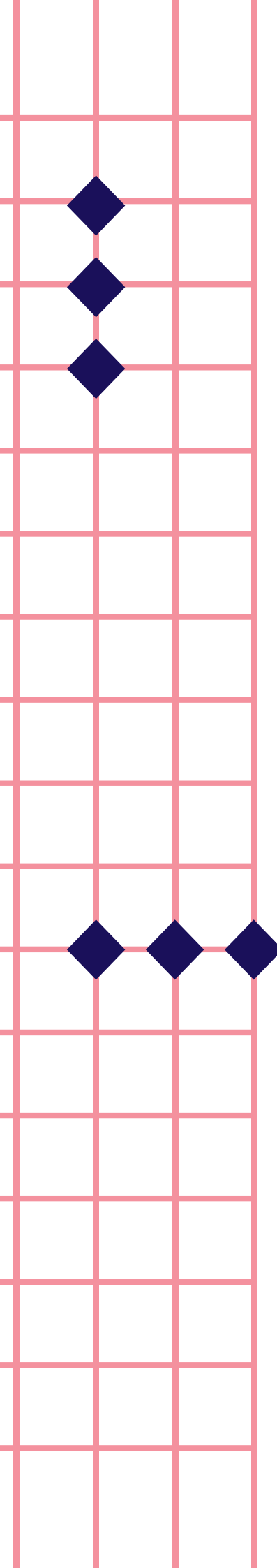
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The project is realised within the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission and the Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani with the support of the Abruzzo Institute of Protected Areas.



Fruitful exchange of green ideas

A decorative vertical grid on the left side of the page, composed of light blue lines. Three dark blue diamonds are placed vertically in the upper section, and three more are placed horizontally in the lower section.

INTRODUCTION

Protected areas are of fundamental importance both for the protection of so-called '**Natural Capital**' but also for human well-being through the provision of Ecosystem Services that include environmental, social, economic, cultural, infrastructural aspects. In addition, most protected areas are located in rural areas with numerous examples even being in real geographically disadvantaged areas where services and opportunities are extremely limited. Consequently, it is of great interest to initiate and consolidate paths of interaction between those areas and young people to improve the limited or scarce existing opportunities and to facilitate processes of personal development, active involvement, dynamisation and social inclusion.

The main objective of the project "Protected Areas: a playground for the inclusion of young people", therefore, is to **facilitate the establishing of a structured and ongoing relationship between young people and the protected areas** (understood as nature reserves, national parks, green and equipped areas and the institutions, bodies and organisations that manage them) aimed, on the one hand, at meeting the needs for dynamisation, involvement and inclusion of young people and, on the other, at improving the services and training, educational and management offers of the areas involved at both local and European level.

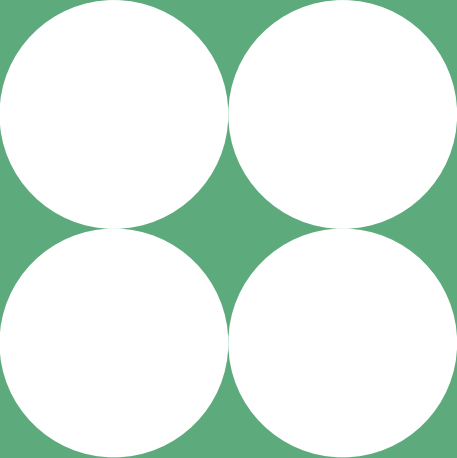
The project will last for 3 years with the purpose to realize an educational, formative and experiential path able to promote sustainable, inclusive and participatory development of young people and local communities interacting with Nature Reserves and National Parks. The project wants to facilitate an active involvement of young people in the development of protected areas under an infrastructural and communicative point of view including in this process the whole local communities and its different stakeholders.

During the whole process, different type of activities (Seminar, Study Visit, Training Course, Youth Exchanges) will take place both in Abruzzo and abroad involving almost 200 participants and 9 countries (both EU and Western Balkans) in order to achieve the several goals planned.

International involved partners

ARCI Chieti (Italy)
Estestvoizpitateli (Bulgaria)
Shtek House (Serbia)
Agenda 21 (Romania)
Xeracion Valencia (Spain)

Aventura Marão Clube (Portugal)
Zdruzenie Slatinka (Slovakia)
Eden Center (Albania)
Zdravo da Ste (Bosnia and Herzegovina)



PROTECTED AREAS

NATURAL CAPITAL

PLAYGROUND FOR INCLUSION

ECOSYSTEM SERVICE

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

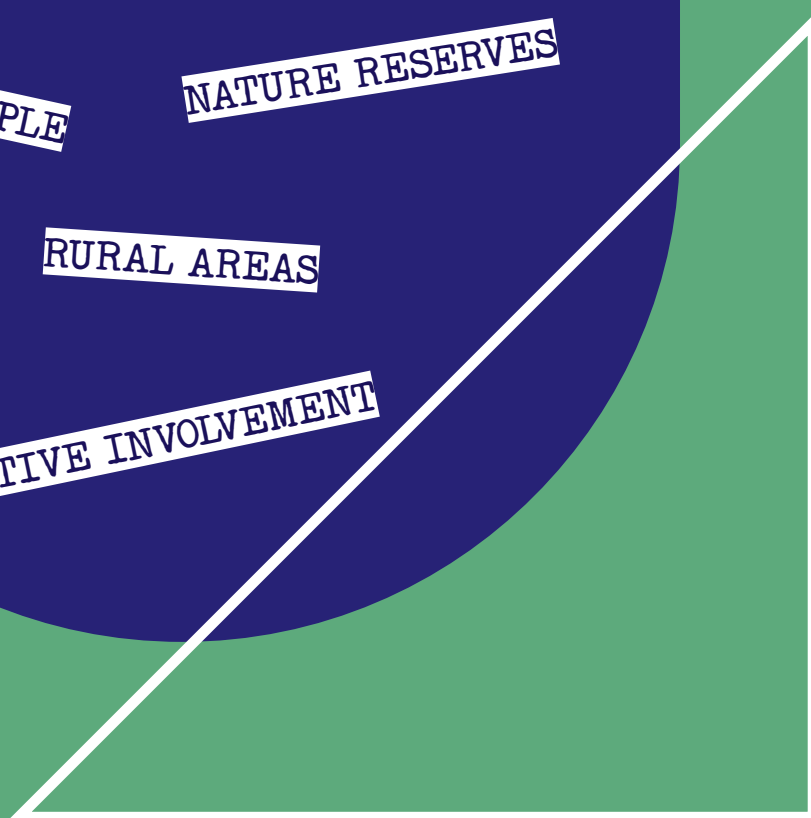
NATIONAL PARKS

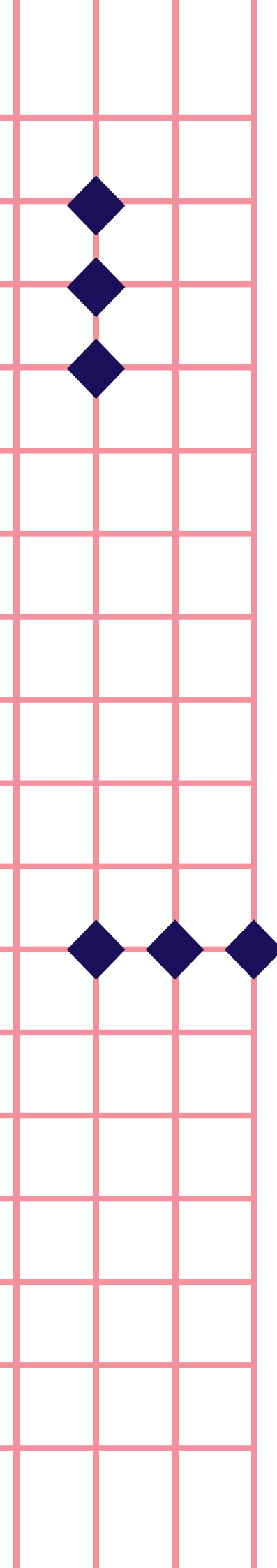
YOUNG PEOPLE

NATURE RESERVES

RURAL AREAS

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT



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THE PUBLICATION

In this book we are **collecting the main outcomes of the first year of projects** realised on the thematic of “Protected Areas: a playground for the inclusion of young people”.

First of all in order to share different backgrounds and activities of the involved partner organisations, information and documentation has been collected and organised at local and/or national level on examples of Projects, Activities, Campaigns carried out by associations or institutions able to explore the use of environmental education and protected areas as an opportunity for inclusion and which have initiated and reinforced processes of growth for young people and their communities. As far as Projects, Activities, Campaigns are concerned, we meant a structured and complex process organised through different steps that includes different methodologies, dynamics and exercises in order to achieve a given aim and specific objectives with a defined target group. In order to have an efficient preparatory process, a form has been created to serve as a guideline for the information to be researched in a homogeneous way for all. All the Good practices have been shared during the Seminar that was realised in Borrello (Italy) from 12th to 17th October 2022.

The second International activity was a Study Visit that took place from 29 May till 4th June 2023 in Bulgaria between Chatama Forest Center on the coast of Beglika Dam in the heart of the largest mountain in Bulgaria, the Rhodopes, at 1520 m altitude, and the town of Velingrad (Southern Bulgaria) where mountains of the Rhodope chain were our main landscape. The main aims of the Study Visit was, thanks to interactive field visits, meeting with stakeholders, working sessions and planning activities, to explore, know and visit some interesting examples in Bulgaria of positive interaction between environmental education and protected areas as an opportunity for inclusion and growth of young people and their communities. **The activities and visits have been chosen to offer a wide and inspiring range of methodologies, tools and practices** which can improve the level of intervention and give continuity to the activities that the partners carry out in their local communities and to make more effective and efficient the processes of participation and social inclusion that mainly concern young people. At the beginning of the Study Visit an Editorial Board was constituted in order to be in charge to follow and report the different field visits that were realised. 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 acquired during the visits have been reported and collected in this publication.

After this first successful year we are following in the preparation and realisation of the second project year during which we plan to have a Training Course, a Youth Exchange and a further Study Visit in order to grow in our knowledge, skills and competences on how to use Protected Areas as tool to facilitate the inclusion and the active participation of young people.

Enjoy your reading!



CASE STUDIES

**Project
Activity
Campaign**

Albania

No1

Bosnia Herzegovina

No2, No3

Bulgaria

No4, No5

Italy

No6, No7, No8

Portugal

No9, No10, No11, No12, No13

Romania

No14

Serbia

No15

Slovakia

No16, No17

Spain

No18, No19, No20

Promoter:

EDEN Center, Albania

Title/Name:**EARTH DAY IS EVERY DAY****Short introduction of the initiative:**

An initiative promoting environmental awareness and bike advocacy by gifting LED lights, tote bags, stickers for bikes with a 'thank you!' note, and informative brochures. This gesture empowers individuals to amplify the message of sustainability and inspire others to join the cause.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2022

Duration of the initiative:

1 day

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☐ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☒ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☒ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☒ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ Youth Centre | ☐ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☒ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☐ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☒ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

20, divided into 5 groups

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

+50

Target group:

Bike commuters in Tirana, Albania, along with their relatives and the general public.

Needs and background:

Tirana, Albania, faces environmental challenges, including air pollution and resource consumption. The city requires initiatives that promote sustainable practices and raise environmental awareness.

Objectives:

It aims to promote sustainable transportation, particularly biking, among people and their families. By raising awareness, providing education, and showing appreciation through gifts, the project seeks to engage and empower the community in creating a greener and more sustainable city.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

- Awareness and Outreach: Conducting a campaign to raise awareness.
- Information Dissemination: Creating informative brochures, organizing workshops, and utilizing social media platforms to educate about sustainable transportation.
- Gift Distribution and Recognition: Provide LED lights, bike stickers, and gifts as a gesture of gratitude to bike enthusiasts.
- Community Engagement and Collaboration: Organizing community events, collaborating with local organizations, and fostering partnerships to promote biking and environmental awareness.
- Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Gathering feedback, monitoring biking trends, and making adjustments for long-term success.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

Municipality of Tirana, Ecovolis (community-based bike sharing program)

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

- Increased Awareness of Environmental Issues: Participants and the community gained a heightened understanding of environmental challenges, such as pollution and climate change, specifically related to transportation choices.
- Promotion of Biking as a Sustainable Option: More individuals embraced biking as a sustainable mode of transportation, choosing it over conventional means and reducing their carbon footprint.
- Gratitude and Encouragement from Bikers: Bikers expressed appreciation for the initiative, recognizing the efforts made to promote biking and environmental awareness. Their positive feedback and encouragement motivated the continuation of such activities.
- Spread of the Message of Sustainability: Participants and bikers actively shared their experiences and knowledge gained from the initiative, inspiring others to adopt sustainable practices and consider biking as a viable option.

Advices, tips and suggestion:

Some of the main tips that we gave to the people we met were:

- Bike Daily: Incorporate biking into your daily routine for a greener commute.
- Share Your Experience: Spread the word about biking and its environmental benefits.
- Utilize the Gifts: Make use of the LED lights, bike stickers, and brochures provided, displaying them proudly on your bike and sharing the brochures with others.
- Be an Advocate: Extend your commitment beyond the activity by advocating for biking and environmental consciousness in your daily life.

Promoter:

Sports and creative center "KIDS" (SKC KIDS), Bosnia Herzegovina

Title/Name:

FOREST BOOK - Raising children in nature

Short introduction of the initiative:

The initiative aims creating better conditions for a healthier, more active and fun stay and learning of children in nature, which positively influence the development of their potentials and health.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2021

Duration of the initiative:

Still active

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☒ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☐ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☒ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☐ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☒ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☒ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

3 Volunteers

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

Our trainers in activities are young people and are engaged according to the activities and needs: 2-4 people

Target group:

Organization works with children and primarily targets children from 3 to 12 years old in both urban and rural area of the Banja Luka City.

Needs and background:

«Šumski Bukvar» or FOREST BOOK is a natural oasis located in the village of Donja Kola near Banja Luka. It is the space where most of our activities take place. It consists of a larger meadow and a smaller part of the forest where we set out to build an ecosystem. The ecosystem consists of a large number of plants and trees,

and due to its specificity, it represents a safe habitat for smaller and larger plant and animal organisms, and a true oasis for children's exploration and safe stay. By completing the construction of the ecosystem, space is created for permanent work with children in nature, opportunities for completely new learning and promotion of nature and its importance for growth, development of children and health in general.

Beside this, our program is based on the fundamental psycho-motor development of the child. The foundations that a child acquires in childhood are the most important for its future development. From many years of experience in working with children, we know that high-quality and controlled exposure to physical activities will provide the child with the opportunity for proper physical and mental development, encourage good habits for the future so that, above all, they will love sports and, through motor development, stimulate cognitive growth, as well as acquire social skills. Our relationship with children is not based on the relationship between educator/coach and child. Our relationship is based on mutual trust, building family and friendly relationships, and in accordance with nature we develop the little-forgotten values of life, honesty and healthy upbringing.

Objectives:

The initiative aims creating better conditions for a healthier, more active and fun stay and learning of children in nature, which will positively affect the development of their potential.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

Program activities are divided into several groups that continuously take place throughout the year:

- Sports school in nature
- Creative workshops in nature
- Small researchers (research activities in nature)
- Summer Camps
- Schools of various winter and summer sports, sports education
- Humanitarian activities, trips to festivals and conferences

All our activities are created to teach children about environment, how to protect nature and live in harmony with it.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

So far we have cooperated with:

- Republika Srpska Government;
- UniCredit Foundation;
- City of Banja Luka;
- Ministry of family, youth and sports Republika Srpska;
- Department for education, health, youth and sport Republika Srpska- Banja Luka;
- Many private and national companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

In 2023, SKC KIDS marks five years of active work, and during that time we achieved the following:

- Created a specific and recognizable methodology based on mutual trust with children, active stay in nature and promotion of true-life values.
- Authors of over 50 sports and creative games, some of which we presented in a series of five episodes that were broadcast on Alternative Television during the isolation due to the pandemic (series supported by the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports).
- Reached over 3,000 children who have been part of our outdoor and indoor activities so far.
- Organized over 60 camps, three summer vacations at seaside, and over 30 ski schools and winter camps.
- Creators of the FOREST BOOK concept, a unique space with a specific purpose for children's play and healthy development in the rural part of Banja Luka.
- And the most important thing, we continue to awaken positive emotions and love for nature, to touch children's and people's hearts, and promote forgotten life values so that we can all be better people together and thus build a better society and communities in which we live.

Finally, on this page <https://www.youtube.com/@skckids6483/videos> you can see TV series that we implemented on Alternative television, but also you can see how we play and grow up with children together.

Advices, tips and suggestion:

Work in nature and spending as much as possible time in nature is key to healthy children development and development of their potentials.

Comments:

Sports and creative center "KIDS" was created as a result of many years of experience and research of something new, different and original in playing, socializing and working with children. We work on developing their potentials while learning about nature and protecting the environment.

The methodology of our work is based on carefully selected activities that contribute to the physical and mental development of children while learning about nature, respecting it, listening to it and understanding its importance. Through learning about our planet and dedicated work, children are enabled to develop into physically healthy, good people who will know how to take care of themselves and others, and who will know how to deal with challenges.

Promoter:

Center for Environment, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Title/Name:

NATIONAL PARK SUTJESKA

Short introduction of the initiative:

A number of activities aimed at the protection of Bosnia's oldest national park through petitions, educations and campaigns.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2013

Duration of the initiative:

Still ongoing

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☒ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☐ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☒ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☒ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☐ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

18

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

6000

Target group:

All citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Needs and background:

The national park was (is) under threat from constructions of small hydropower plants and incorrect managing in general, which would threaten the existence of many endemic and endangered species, and one of the last primeval forests in Europe.

Objectives:

Educating people about nature, raising awareness, putting pressure on the government in order for them to manage national parks correctly.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

- Petition against the construction of hydropower plants
- Lawsuits against investors and the government
- Education for large carnivore researchers
- Educating the wider public on the importance of the national park
- Various publications

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

- Bernd Thies foundation
- Fund for environmental protection and energy efficiency
- Euronatur
- Republic Institute for Protection of cultural, historical and nature heritage of Republic of Srpska

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

- No hydropower plants have been built in the national park
- 15 young experts have been trained in exploring large carnivores
- The first management plan for the brown bear has been made for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Advices, tips and suggestion:

- Know your rights – we have three legal officers employed in our organisation, so all our arguments have a legal background
- Putting pressure on relevant institutions via the media
- Cooperation with experts, universities and especially local people.

Promoter:

Youth For the Earth, Bulgaria

Title/Name:

CLIMATE FRESK WORKSHOP

Short introduction of the initiative:

Part of the initiative Climate Education and Action Days organized by Fridays for future Bulgaria, "Climate fresk" is a workshop in the form of a game, providing scientific information on climate change issues, played in groups of 4 to 12, supported by a certified facilitator.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2022

Duration of the initiative:

3 hours/ 90 minutes for children

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☐ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☒ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): climate change |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☐ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☒ Street and/or outdoor | ☒ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☐ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☒ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

2

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

12

Target group:

People of all ages and backgrounds, suitable for children.

Needs and background:

Raising climate change awareness, as it is a topic that needs more clarity and popularity in Bulgaria.

Objectives:

Raising awareness on the topic of climate change and starting a discussion in search of solutions – one of the primal goals of this youth NGO.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

Climate Education and Action Days is just one of the events which include “Climate fresk” as part of their program. The game is played with a deck of 43 cards by up to 12 people. The group has to link them and to discuss in order to explain the causal links between human anthropogenic activity and various aspects of climate change.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

EU, Fridays for future Bulgaria.

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

This initiative, as part of the Climate Education and Action Days, helps NGOs and active citizen groups to bring attention to environmental issues and such events become more and more popular each year. 'Climate fresk' in particular drove a group of people to spread the knowledge, gained during the workshop, and some even wanted to be trained as facilitators.

Comments:

The game has potential to be developed as a tool in organizations and structures with different backgrounds. In my opinion it is a very good possibility to make a link between climate change and the natural wealth of the planet that protected areas aim to preserve. Currently there are people being prepared for certified facilitators, ready to lead the game.

Links:

<https://mladi.zazemiata.org/da-se-vidim-na-dnite-na-obrazovanieto-i-dejstviyata-za-klimata/>

<https://www.facebook.com/FridaysForFutureBG/photos/a.425151608252713/1249220949179104/?type=3>

Promoter:

The administration of "Vrachanski Balkan" Nature Park, Bulgaria

Title/Name:

YOUTH ECO CAMP OCHIN DOL

Short introduction of the initiative:

This is a fully equipped house, located in the village of Ochin dol, which provides space for educational events and initiatives on environmental topics aimed at young people. The Administration of "Vrachanski Balkan" Nature Park also offers 2- and 5-day educational programs related to ecology and biodiversity in the context of the natural surroundings – one of the most beautiful mountain areas in Bulgaria.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2016

Duration of the initiative:

Still ongoing

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☐ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Youth Centre | ☒ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☒ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

5-10

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

Unknown

Target group:

Young people from different backgrounds.

Needs and background:

- Raising awareness on environmental topics and to provide a suitable space for common use.
- Regional cultural and economic development – the small city of Vratsa has this need in order to develop itself in a state which is economically centred around the big cities.

Objectives:

- Providing informal environmental education for young people.
- Providing space for educational purposes aimed to young people.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

1. Taking care of the base – Youth eco camp Ochin dol.
2. Hosting educational events for young people.
3. Organizing of educational programs on ecology and biodiversity.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

Ministry of Agriculture – Executive Forest Agency

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

<https://medianews.bg/bg/a/v-ochin-dol-se-provede-mladezhki-eko-lager>

This is one of the events which took place at Ochin dol camp. It was organized by the youth information centre “Vratsa to the youth” and gave the opportunity to 10 young people between 16 and 20 years old to learn about the processes in a team and how to manage them. The learning process itself was supported by experiences in Natural park “Vrachanski Balkan”.

Links:

<https://vr-balkan.net/en/news1/>

<https://vr-balkan.net/bg/mladezhki-eko-lager-s-ochin-dol>

Promoter:

Istituto Abruzzese per le Aree Protette (IAAP), Italy

Title/Name:

TRAINING COURSE "PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE TERRITORY" (PPT)

Short introduction of the initiative:

Training course aimed at young people aged 18 to 35 in order to provide elements for planning and managing activities related with the promotion of the territory and protection of species and habitats and involve them in the management of regional protected areas and Natura 2000 sites where they live.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

First edition: 2021 / Last edition: 2023

Duration of the initiative:

Last edition: 4 months (11h - theoretical part; 14h workshops; 3 study visits; 1 Final Conference)

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☐ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☐ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☒ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☒ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☒ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☐ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

Last edition: 30 youngs, 3 volunteers, 4 operators
Total: 100 youngs, 7 volunteers, 8 operators

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

Last edition: 60
Total: 380

Target group:

Young people (18-35)

Needs and background:

Regional protected areas can become a small scale development opportunity of green jobs for young residents and find their own characterization in the dissemination of sustainability education activities, environmental education, nature interpretation, eco tourism, active tourism, rural tourism, wellness tourism, biological agriculture, traditional food production and valorization.

The involvement of young people in the management of a protected area passes through a process of transferring skills, knowledge, empowerment and activation of their abilities, both as individuals and as a group work, to give them the possibility of being included and active in their community.

Objectives:

Promote the increase of local well-being through youth inclusion in regional protected areas.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

1. Formation of the group and acquisition of theoretical notions relating to the protection and conservation of protected areas, legislation, ethics, ecopsychology, best practices of protected areas;
2. Field visits and study visits in protected areas with good practices;
3. Fact-finding excursions and workshops of ideas in the protected areas of residence of the participants;
4. Programming and fundraising of the activities designed by the participants;
5. Implementation of the participants activities.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

Province of Teramo, Municipalities of Colledara, Ortona, Orsogna, WWF, Regional order of psychologists, Coop. Terracoste, Coop. Il Bosso, Acquabella local association, Punta Ferruccio local association, Schools.

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

- Birth of three local associations and a cooperative for the development of environmental education activities, use of regional protected areas and green maintenance;
- Organization of 30 activities for the fruition of the Regional Nature Reserves 2021, 2022, 2023;
- Organization of 12 environmental education workshops in 2021, 2022, 2023.

Advices, tips and suggestion:

The use of webinars is useful for optimizing costs and has proved to be effective as a note and insight available to the participants, but face-to-face work is essential for creating the group, defining the roles within the group and acquiring awareness of practical work in the development of activities.

Comments:

Provide, if possible, a follow-up phase to follow the young people at least in the first year of activity as tutoring. In particular when they are not internal to the entity/association that organizes and proposes the training course.

Links:

<https://www.facebook.com/IstitutoAbruzzeseAreeProtette>
<https://www.iaap.it/eventi/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ProvinciadiTeramoAPG2020>
<https://www.coocori.it/la-riserva/la-sostenibilita-in-comune>

Promoter:

Istituto Abruzzese per le Aree Protette (IAAP), Italy

Title/Name:

CAMPAIGN "BEAR 2X50" (B2X50) – SUMMER CAMP

Short introduction of the initiative:

Training course aimed at young people aged 18 to 35 in order to provide elements for planning and managing activities related with the promotion of the territory and protection of species and habitats and involve them in the management of regional protected areas and Natura 2000 sites where they live.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

First edition: 2019 / Last edition: 2022

Duration of the initiative:

Last edition: 4 week in August 2022

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☐ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☐ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☒ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☒ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

Last edition: 6 youngs, 6 volunteers, 2 operators
Total: 66 youngs, 20 volunteers, 8 operators

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

Last edition: 92
Total: 376

Target group:

Young people (18-35) + family (last edition)

Needs and background:

The Marsican brown bear (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*) is at risk of extinction: there are about 50-60 of them individuals. The population, extremely vital, has need new spaces to grow numerically and thus win his challenge for survival. One university study confirms the presence, in central Apennines, of areas of new expansion considered suitable for this species and placed below outside the historical area of attendance. Our Regional Nature Reserve "Gole del Sagittario" is one of these new areas.

Objectives:

Promote tangible action involving young people to double the range of the Marsican brown bear and the number of individuals present by 2050.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

1. Formation of the group and acquisition of theoretical notions relating to the protection and conservation of Marsican brown bear;
2. Field visits and practical interventions in farms and livestock;
3. Study and field monitoring of the species;
4. Awareness-raising meetings with communities and tourists;
5. Environmental education activities with school-age children.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

WWF Italia, Protected Areas Department of the Abruzzo Region, Municipalities of Anversa degli Abruzzi, Gran Sasso National Park, Coop. Daphne, Schools.

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

- 55 interventions on structures made safe from bear damage with electrified fences or anti-bear iron doors;
- 6 Water collection tanks made safe to prevent bears from falling into them;
- Organization of 20 Awareness-raising meetings with communities and tourists (2019/2022);
- Organization of 16 environmental education workshops with local schools (2019/2022).

Advices, tips and suggestion:

Making young people an active part in carrying out interventions and making companies safe motivates them to continue their commitment young people can see the results of their commitment in a visible way. In most cases, agricultural entrepreneurs and breeders feel supported and included in a circuit that compensates them and also recognizes their social and conservation role.

Comments:

The activities in the form are only those relating to the summer camps organized by the WWF "Gole del Sagittario" oasis and not all those included in the "Bear 2x50" project of WWF Italia.

Links:

<https://www.wwf.it/cosa-facciamo/progetti/orso-2x50/>
<https://www.riservagolesagittario.it/>
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064753118576>
<https://www.facebook.com/IstitutoAbruzzeseAreeProtette>

Promoter:

ARCI Chieti in cooperation with IAAP (Abruzzo Institute for Protected Areas), Italy

Title/Name:

NFEE - Non Formal Environmental Education

Short introduction of the initiative:

The Erasmus+ Youth multi-activities project "Non-Formal Environmental Education to improve the inclusion and participation of young people" (NFEE) created an educational, cognitive, training and experiential path based on the principles of non-formal education combined with the tools of environmental education and the themes of sustainable development in order to enhance the so called "natural capital" to encourage practices of dynamization and participation within local communities as well as participation in the direct involvement and social inclusion of young people, especially those coming from conditions of geographical and economic disadvantage.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2020 - 2022

Duration of the initiative:

2 years

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☒ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☐ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☒ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☒ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

17

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

75

Target group:

Youth workers, educators, animators, peer educators, volunteers, managers of youth centres and organizations rather than young people from disadvantaged conditions with which each organization works (young people with economic difficulties and / or from rural and mountain areas).

Needs and background:

The project wanted to respond on the one hand to the needs of inclusion, active citizenship and personal development of young Europeans, on the other to the need to make youth work in the field more qualified and capable of intercepting the needs of the target group of reference.

Objectives:

- To realize an international non-formal educational path (Seminar, Study Visit, Training Course, Youth Exchange) involving several European organizations (EU and Western Balkans) in order to use the tools of Environmental Education to promote involvement, inclusion and the personal growth of young people, in particular those from disadvantaged conditions, as well as the qualitative increase in youth work with the aim of intercepting the needs of the various target groups.
- To elaborate a common methodological platform on the interaction between non-formal education and environmental education to guarantee greater effectiveness in organizing activities and a greater response to young people's personal development needs.
- To increase knowledge, skills and capacities of partner associations and their operators through a set of good practices, modules and work tools about the development of sustainable development and environmental protection to help the participation and socio-economic growth of young people and communities in which they live.
- To involve young Europeans, especially those from disadvantaged areas, in the realization of an educational path within a protected natural context in order to encourage and enhance their sense of active citizens through a direct connection with the local community and "natural capital" and to promote a kind of development that is sustainable, inclusive and participatory.
- To produce a final booklet in which to collect all the results and products developed during the project as a further tool of sharing and dissemination.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

The entire project was based on the principles of Non-Formal Education (in particular the methodology ORA, Observe, Rethink, Act) on the themes of Sustainable Development, on the practices of Environmental Education. 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 social inclusion, 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. Consequently, the project has been structured with four different mobilities in order to have the possibility with the Seminar (A1) to synthesize different experiences and methodologies and identifying and defining fields of intervention and quality guidelines (Observe), with the Study Visit (A2) to know in the field examples of good practices applied in the North West England to be studied and remodelled to integrate them in the fields of intervention and in the guidelines defined in the Seminar (Observe), with the Training Course (A3) to reflect on the role of operators, animators, managers, volunteers and on how to improve the quality and efficiency of the activities carried out (Rethink), with the Youth Exchange (A4) to create a moment of direct and inclusive protagonism in the field within a nature reserve (Act).

Three webinars have been realised as a formative focus on topics and subjects directly expressed by participants in order to deepen specific issues and matters that have been considered as useful and important for a better development of the activities and as a further growth in knowledge. Furthermore, a final publication has been realised collecting all the outcomes.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

Erasmus+ Youth, Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani, IAAP, Terracoste Cooperative of Torino di Sangro, The Municipality and the whole local community of Tornareccio, Circolo Legambiente Geo of Atessa, The Environmental Education Centre "Casanatura Fontecampana" of Tornareccio, the Regional Nature Reserve "Del Verde Waterfalls", The association Donkeysclotte from Borrello, The Hotel "Rifugio dei Sanniti" from Borrello,

Weeton Barracks, Parkview4u (UK), BBC Lancashire (UK), Lytham Hall (UK), Qendra mjedisore per zhvillim, edukim dhe rrjetezim (AL), Zdravo Da Ste Udruzenja Gradjana (BA), Omladinski Kulturni Centar Herceg Novi (MNE), Urban Organic (UK), Estestvoizpitateli (BG).

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

At the end of the whole process, a book has been produced in order to have a further useful tool to promote the educational process of the project, to better recognize/value the approaches of Non Formal Environmental Education in youth work and to make the obtained results usable. The booklet contains the good practices collected, the reports of the visits, the educational modules, all the materials and outcomes realized during the educational pathways. The publication has been realised in electronic format and distributed to other associations, formal education structures, public institutions in order to create a better link with different stakeholders able to generate a "contamination" of approaches.

Promoter:

AMC, Portugal

Title/Name:

LIMPEZA DAS MARGENS DO RIO TÂMEGA (Cleaning the banks of the Tâmega River)

Short introduction of the initiative:

An activity organized by international volunteers and Casa da Juventude de Amarante, and funded by the European Solidarity Corps, to promote the conservation of the city's urban green spaces and riverbanks. The aim is to draw attention to the importance of keeping our planet free of litter and thus enjoying our common spaces to the fullest.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

Since 2019

Duration of the initiative:

This initiative takes place on the last weekend of each month.

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☐ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☒ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☒ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☒ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☒ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☒ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☒ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☐ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☒ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

10

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

The initiative is always promoted in Casa da Juventude Social media. All the community can take part. Generally the participation is between 20-30 people from all ages.

Target group:

Volunteers and local people.

Needs and background:

- Find your spot: first, identify an area in need of a cleanup.
- Get the admin out of the way: before you send out invites, get the administrative and logistical preparation sorted. Cleanups with a large group of people will require advanced permission from the landowner (usually the local authority).
- Find where to take your rubbish: finding your local recycling centre is the first step, but there are other things to consider. Will recyclables need segregating? And where will you take non-recyclable and hard to recycle waste, such as batteries? You may need to plan multiple trips to dispose of all the rubbish responsibly.
- Make a date the perfect date depends on what you want from your cleanup. Are you focused on a specific group, such as senior citizens or families? If so, there may be certain times which are more convenient for them. Otherwise, weekends are best for maximising numbers; if you're heading to a tourist spot, consider scheduling the cleanup for a quiet time of day. Remember to check the weather forecast (and the high tide for beaches) and opening times for the recycling centre. Finally, pick a meeting point everyone can find.
- Promote your event: use a range of channels to call for volunteers. Promote it on social media, such as by creating a Facebook event to share to local groups.
- Get everything you need: make sure you have enough litter pickers, bags, and gloves (sturdy gardening gloves work well). You may be able to source some of these from your local authority or its waste management contractor. Bring a first aid kit, water, and high visibility gear or clothing if necessary, and check with attendees to see if anyone has special requirements which call for other preparation on your part. You may also want to bring some home-baked treats as a thank you gesture for all the volunteers.
- The big day: once the volunteers have gathered at the meeting point, remind them of the area that needs clearing. It's a good idea to go over important safety tips; for instance, use gloves to pick up glass, stay alert near roads and deep water, and don't pick up needles (contact your local authority instead). If there is a large group of people, consider dividing them into teams to cover different areas and compete for the largest collection (or for the strangest abandoned item).
- Finishing up: once the volunteers have regrouped with their bags of rubbish, take an 'after' photo of the area for comparison. Make sure the rubbish gets safely to the recycling centre and other drop-off points according to your plan. If you used social media to organise the event, post again to thank the volunteers for their time and take the opportunity to share some information about reducing waste. Hopefully you'll have found some like-minded people enthusiastic about doing more in the pursuit of zero waste.

Objectives:

Organising a local cleanup is one of the most hands-on and satisfying ways to help end plastic waste and environmental pollution. It's a great way to build a community of people interested in reducing waste while improving your local environment.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

See *Needs and background session*

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

European Solidarity Corps of the EU, in the framework of the Strategic Partnership "Green Thinking"

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

- Creating social awareness of the importance of keeping our cities and our green spaces clean.
- Reducing the amount of urban waste.
- Working on environmental challenges with the local community.
- More awareness for the preservation of our environment.
- A visibly cleaner city.

Advices, tips and suggestion:

See Needs and background session

Links:

SOME PHOTOS AND PUBLICATIONS:

<https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante/posts/pfbid0kQLmwM9wAMQHT1ibm2aaWreecmbjFuf9a6tAmYv9Hmp hBzJZMZ3bjtE7GUC2Gharl>

<https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante/posts/pfbid02iZkYrKdje6SSMe8RhafNiqZHtPFa8GykhGmN5NU14pZ3Uj DyUtUBrkWeVJjXvAvsl>

<https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante/posts/pfbid0auvUbuHpBDc9k1cj8LMM8xWpqXSZzVQZwr7qcXYV4cJBT 6QU192puaypSxdiwWjl>

<https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante/posts/pfbid0a5YQatjZ56VoBm9joq5vTqDhPfBeuZ6rbU4W56faoJ5uKyN Qs3kmWgEzVG2ck1Xrl>

AMC INSTAGRAM: @casadajuventude_amarante

Promoter:

Aventura Marão Clube, Portugal

Title/Name:

ERASMUS FOREST

Short introduction of the initiative:

The Aventura Marão Clube (AMC), through Casa da Juventude de Amarante, and the Local Community of Baldios de Rebordelo, are hereby inviting you to the inauguration of the 1st Erasmus+ Forest in Portugal on March 17th 2023, at 11:00 am, in the Parish of Rebordelo in Amarante.

This initiative is carried out under the project "GREENDEX" (2021-2-SI02-KA220-YOU-000049273), a Strategic Partnership funded by the EU Erasmus+ Programme and involving partners from Slovenia, The Netherlands, Cyprus and Portugal, and aims to raise awareness among the general public of the environmental challenges that currently exist and mitigate, where possible, part of its effects with the retention and neutralization of carbon resulting from the planting of forest trees.

Floresta Erasmus+ is a forest space located in the parish of Rebordelo, in Amarante (Portugal) and will be the 1st Erasmus+ forest in Portugal (and certainly one of the first in Europe). It will receive only native forest species adapted to the place (e.g. Strawberry tree, National Oak, Holm oak, Black oak and Pine tree). Its maintenance and management will be guaranteed by the Local Community of Baldios de Rebordelo while the plants and volunteers (local and international) necessary for its plantation will be provided by the Aventura Marão Club.

The idea is that, at least until 2027, Aventura Marão Clube, will calculate the number of forest species needed to neutralize the impact of each of the Erasmus+ projects it hosts in Amarante. This calculation is now possible because the "GREENDEX" project created an APP that allows to calculate the impact of these projects considering, for example, variables such as the mobility of the participants, the type of accommodation and food and its duration.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2023

Duration of the initiative:

2023-2027 (and more)

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☐ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☐ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☐ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☒ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☐ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

Considering that all the partners of the project are using the app to check the impact on their Erasmus plus projects. We believe that more than 200 youth workers have used the app.

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

We have established the first Erasmus+ forest for offsetting our carbon footprint on the Erasmus+ mobility projects. You can find it in Portugal. We have already planted 150 trees. Read more and more.

Target group:

All participants of Erasmus projects of our organization.

Objectives:

We envision a project that will bring people of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs together to enjoy the beauty of nature and to make a difference in the world. We want to provide resources and educational opportunities for people to learn about the environment, the importance of conservation, and how to act.

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

You can provide following options to do so:

- Donate to plant trees in one of the Erasmus+ forests!
- Search for possibilities to plant the trees on your own! Maybe you can even start your own Erasmus+ forest and become part of the Greendex movement.

Links:

GREENDEX WEBSITE: <https://greendex.world/>

GREENDEX INSTAGRAM: @greendex.world

AMC INSTAGRAM: @casadajuventude_amarante

Greendex E+Forest: <https://greendex.world/e-forest/>

NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS ABOUT ERASMUS + FOREST IN PORTUGAL:

<https://amarantemagazine.sapo.pt/sociedade/amarante-casa-da-juventude-cria-a-primeira-floresta-erasmus/>

<https://averdade.com/primeira-floresta-erasmus-ja-e-uma-realidade-na-casa-da-juventude-de-amarante-e-em-portugal/>

<https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante/posts/pfbid0315rNCKvYEDFQL3PoFEaPBEBuU9GjNe7FgWLz5Ra9koyWqYBYiCSgZ83CiyU9pm1vql>

<https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante/posts/pfbid0Tm9EiAonEMUvW7yT9BBuSYWrWdwfD3XT4iWSC4GosccSsg51Ea44rXWAMbCYprGCI>

<https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante/posts/pfbid02UCG3HZVnKhuN7a2oRsP8oY6K5bYV5GH9f9itZpMVdCpVidaBDGonRq16aTgiTWgcl>

Promoter:

Ambitia, Aventura Marão Clube, Portugal

Title/Name:

“GREENDEX App”

Short introduction of the initiative:

Steps to use the App

1. Create the project on the Greendex app
2. Map your journey from your home to this place!

Invite participants to form the national teams. Ask them to think about their traveling experience. You can help them to map their journey by putting some posters to draw their travels. It is important for them to imagine the means of transport in sequence and to find how many kilometres they made with each means of transport. They can use E+ distance calculators for flights, Google Maps for car or bus travel or use any other route planner.

3. Share the project link with the participants!

Offer them the QR code or share the provided link through social media used on the project.

4. Invite participants to fill out the questions of the calculator!

Every participant should fill the form individually.

Host should provide the following information for the participants to fill out the form:

- type of accommodation
- camping
- hostel
- private (e.g. AirBnB)
- 1-3 * hotel

- 4-5 * hotel
- kind of energy this accommodation is using
- conventional energy
- green energy

5. Make sure every participant submitted the form! Allow participants space to reflect on their individual results!

6. Display and debate on project results!

You may ask them the following questions:

- Is there something surprising for you in the results?
- How do the results make you feel?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to reduce the CO2 released on future projects?

7. Plant trees to offset the carbon footprint of your project

You can provide following options to do so:

- Donate to plant trees in one of the Erasmus+ forests!
- Search for possibilities to plant the trees on your own! Maybe you can even start your own Erasmus+ forest and become part of the Greendex movement.

8. Share your journey on social media using #greendex!

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2023

Duration of the initiative:

This app is 1 of the result of “GREENDEX” (2021-2-SI02-KA220-YOU-000049273)

The aim is to use the app on every single mobility of our Organisation. These calculations will bring awareness about the sustainability of this mobility and will inspire participants to take some actions.

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☒ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☒ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☒ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): reduce our carbon footprint |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☒ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Youth Centre | ☐ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☒ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

Considering that all the partners of the project are using the app to check the impact on their Erasmus plus projects. We believe that more than 200 youth workers have used the app.

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

At the moment more than 300 people were involved in the calculation.

Target group:

All participants of Erasmus projects.

Objectives:

After all the participants of the project have used the app the coordinating organization will launch the "CHALLENGES":

1. As a part of preparation for this workshop, read more about the challenges.
2. Present 'challenges' how to reduce the released CO2 during the project!

Invite participants to choose at least one challenge they want to try out during the project. Create smaller support groups to motivate each other through the project.

3. Plant trees to offset the carbon footprint of your project!

You can provide following options to do so:

- Donate to plant trees in one of the Erasmus+ forests!
- Search for possibilities to plant the trees on your own! Maybe you can even start your own Erasmus+ forest and become part of the Greendex movement.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

Here a detailed description on how to develop the initiative: <https://greendex.world/calculator/>

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

You can provide following options to do so:

- Donate to plant trees in one of the Erasmus+ forests!
- Search for possibilities to plant the trees on your own! Maybe you can even start your own Erasmus+ forest and become part of the Greendex movement.

Links:

GREENDEX WEBSITE: <https://greendex.world/>

GREENDEX INSTAGRAM: @greendex.world

AMC INSTAGRAM: @casadajuventude_amarante

Greendex app: <https://app.greendex.world/>

NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS ABOUT ERASMUS + FOREST IN PORTUGAL:

<https://amarantemagazine.sapo.pt/sociedade/amarante-casa-da-juventude-cria-a-primeira-floresta-erasmus/>

<https://averdade.com/primeira-floresta-erasmus-ja-e-uma-realidade-na-casa-da-juventude-de-amarante-e-em-portugal/>

Promoter:

AMC, Portugal

Title/Name:

URBAN GARDEN

Short introduction of the initiative:

The Amarante Urban Garden has 11 plots available in the Tarrafal - Telões area, in a total of 19 plots of 30m², for agricultural cultivation by the community.

The Amarante Urban Vegetable Garden is the winning project of the Youth Participatory Budget 2020/2021 and aims to promote sustainable practices of cultivation and responsible consumption, encourage the use of composting and raise awareness of waste reduction issues.

AMC has offered support on writing the project.

Also AMC is responsible for the maintenance of the area together with its ESC volunteers and collaborators.

In 2022 AMC also offered to the initiative the support of 30 participants from an Erasmus plus youth exchange, that together had the mission to start to work on the land of the Urban Garden, creating the plots, the measurements, the compost area, etc.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2022

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☒ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☒ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☒ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☒ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☐ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☒ Farm/Social farm | ☐ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☒ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

More than 50

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved: Target group:

Around 40/50 young people.

Target group:

All citizens residing in Amarante, specially disadvantaged family groups.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

1. CONSTRUCTION OF THE GARDEN
 - first training course in organic farming
2. COMPOSTING
 - construction of the community composter
 - second training session on composting
3. HARVEST
 - third training session on nutrition and health

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

ICNF, CMA, REVOLUÇÃO DAS MINHOCAS, Bem da Terra

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

Participants will have the opportunity to learn how to build an organic family garden following the ethics and principles of Permaculture - a science of social and environmental scope that combines scientific knowledge with traditional and popular knowledge, thus ensuring the permanence of the human being as a species on planet Earth.

Links:

URBAN GARDEN INSTAGRAM: @hortaurbanadeamarante

AMC INSTAGRAM: @casadajuventude_amarante

<https://www.facebook.com/profile/100081108694487/search/?q=horta%20urbana>

NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS:

<https://www.cases.pt/voluntarios-internacionais-vao-ajudar-a-construir-futura-horta-urbana-de-amarante/>

<https://novumcanal.pt/2023/01/ambiente/horta-urbana-de-amarante-disponibiliza-11-talhoes-na-zona-do-tarrafal/>

Promoter:

AMC, Portugal

Title/Name:

VERMICOMPOSTING - COMPOSTING WITH WORMS

Short introduction of the initiative:

Vermicompostage is an efficient way of transforming most organic waste into

+ ZERO GARBAGE: reduces the ecological footprint of waste (less greenhouse gases)

+ FRIENDLY (urban) AGRICULTURE:

- produces a noble fertilizer for growing healthy food, fights against industrial agriculture production of chemical fertilizers made from mining and natural gas extraction.
- EASY AND HYGIENIC: indoor or outdoor, at home or at work.

AMC together with the association REVOLUÇÃO DAS MINHOCAS has created 8 different mini vermicompots bakers to donate to different social institutions of Amarante: Schools, social cooperatives and local authorities.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2022-2023

Duration of the initiative:

The activity doesn't have an end. AMC at the moment is taking care to give guidelines to whom had received the mini basket.

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☐ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☒ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☒ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☒ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☒ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☐ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☒ Community centre | ☒ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

10

Target group:

Schools, social cooperatives and local authorities.

Objectives:

This initiative arises as a way of promoting more environmentally friendly habits among the local community, as well as promoting composting

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

HOW TO INAUGURATE THE WORM FARM ?

1. Assembling the worm casting/ vermicomposting.
2. Preparation of the worm bed.
Place two layers of unpainted cardboard or paper (from the packaging) pre-moistened.
You can also use dry leaves, sawdust straw.
3. Installing the worms.

Carefully empty the container with the worms inside then vermicompostor. Let it stay in so that the last worms come out on their own.
Come out by themselves. You can now start feeding the worms in little by little. The most common mistake is to put in too much food.

HOW TO USE THE FERTILIZERS ?

Liquid fertilizer / worm gizzard / worm "tea" / liquid humus

The black liquid that comes out at the bottom of the worm casting is a great fertilizer to use for watering plants. It is loaded with nutrients and micro-organisms that give life to the soil.

Fertilization

- dilute the fertilizer to 10% (1 cup of fertilizer mixed with 9 glasses of water)
- water the plants at most once a week.

Compost accelerator

- apply undiluted to the worm casting basin (when it needs to be watered) or on a compost heap to speed up the process of decomposition of organic matter.

Solid fertilizer / worm manure / humus

Worms travel upwards in search of food. When the tray becomes full, the leftover food is placed in the second tray, and the worms travel up there. When this second tray is full, the bottom tray contains worm compost, ready to be used in the garden, without having to molest the worms.

- place one tablespoon of humus for each potted plant, every 3 months

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

Schools, social cooperatives and local authorities.

Links:

PHOTOS AND PUBLICATIONS IN: @casadajuventude_amarante

SOME PICS:

<https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante/photos/a.4559273784157958/4559269384158398/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Cercimarante/posts/pfbid0H5V4gESYfHJSDRx6C7msGyPjbYNxoc3yPMd2Q1w2s11ADG7EYY9XyDzd3PTHZNHnl>

<https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante/posts/pfbid0571yRU5hADMcNoNRV9DwbHaXbWfNavp9795izXjuzt2DR5dDiZdWMB44KYTjcsKVI>

Promoter:

Agenda 21, Romania

Title/Name:

PEOPLE AND PLANET: A COMMON DESTINY

Short introduction of the initiative:

Promoting inclusive sustainable development at global level, the active involvement of young people in particular, but also of citizens and their mobilization for Climate Actions and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by promoting sustainable lifestyles, behaviors and practices.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2020

Duration of the initiative:

Between November 2020 and October 2024

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☐ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☒ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☒ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☒ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☐ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☐ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

26835 (impacted)

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

5068

Target group:

Young people

Needs and background:

To clean and keep the protected area

Objectives:

Objective 13 - Climate Action

- to conserve for the people all the nature;
- to involve in the action the youth;
- to create a connection between human and nature.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

"Class Marathon"

"Street Delivery Braşov"

Photography exhibitions

"Reconnection with nature"

"Seeds with soul"

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

- 20 high schools and 5 faculties in Bucharest, Buzau County, Ploiesti County and Brasov County
- Teachers from the "Carmen Sylva" Visual Arts College of Ploieşti and the "Hans Mattis-Teutsch" Vocational -
- Visual Arts High School of Braşov;
- Braşov County Council;
- High schools and faculties from Braşov;
- "Spiru Haret" National Teacher Training College of Buzău.

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

- The young people discovered a new perspective on the world, enjoying the interaction between humans and the environment through open-air drawing;
- Access to and fair exchange of a diverse range of local seeds was promoted, as well as the use of genetic resources and traditional knowledge, valorizing local seed varieties.

Advices, tips and suggestion:

The impact of the involved young people it is spectacular if they are many humans that are part of this.

Comments

I like to comment less and to be in fact more. So let do it!

Promoter:

Young Researchers of Serbia, Serbia

Title/Name:

WORKCAMP AS A TOOL TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Short introduction of the initiative:

What we accomplished after 24 years of workcamps in a protected nature reserve

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

1999

Duration of the initiative:

24 years for that one workcamp

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☐ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☒ Environmental challenges (please specify):
climate change effects on an eco system |
| ☐ Disability | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change,
Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☒ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☐ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☒ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

Each year more than 20 international volunteers and local + the year round work of local initiative group. Last year we had a volunteer action with about a hundred volunteers in one day. Around 2000, for sure.

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

It is very difficult to estimate. As 85% of our volunteers are young people, considering all the years behind. Around 70-80 people in a year.

Target group:

- Participants are volunteers over the age of 18. For the work that needs to be done and the framework of international workcamps we try to include everyone who wants to donate their time and skills.
- For raising awareness, we can speak about local level, as the local villages need to be more aware of their own impact and then general population to broaden their knowledge not only in the sense of sustainable tourism, but to change their habits and impact on a bigger level.

Needs and background:

It started as a need for many volunteers to cover the large area of the pond “Obedska bara” to cut down and remove invasive plants to enable the ecosystem to move and feed freely. Cleaning it up would keep it alive and enable a space for once a regular visitor to the pond, the Glossy Ibis, to return and spend time there before going south.

As Young Researchers of Serbia work both in environmental and youth field, organizing a workcamp with the local association was a natural choice. Through the years, not only we maintained two summer workcamps that consisted of lot of hours of working in the field, but the regional forestry association joined in and gave a hand. Through it, the volunteers not only had a chance to see each corner of this huge, protected pond, but they were also given lectures about the importance of that eco system, not just locally but on a much bigger level as it represents a reservoir for river Sava and therefor can save other areas from floods downstream. Last year, together with our partners we organized a one day volunteering initiative where more than 80 people participated in the cleanup of the protected area. We will try to maintain this action throughout the years as well.

Objectives:

- Keep the area of the special nature reserve “Obedska bara” clean.
- Raise awareness about its importance.
- Conserve the habitat of the Glossy Ibis in hope it will return.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

The work was done constantly throughout the year by the local association, and then 2x during the summer we had international workcamps that took care of the biggest task, which was removing the bushes and invasive plants to clear out the area.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

Local association “Zeleni pogled” from Kupinovo,
Young Researchers of Serbia,
Regional forestry association “Vojvodina šume”,
Youth and sport Ministry through their “Youth rules” program that financially supported workcamps in Serbia since 2012,
Alliance of international workcamp association through which we exchanged volunteers that participated.

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

- The area is regularly maintained, and the conservation of the ecosystem is done on a level that the local impact is lowered but global impact of climate change is visible each year.
- Local community is aware of the importance, certain funds are being drawn from the local municipality for the work.
- Return of the Glossy Ibis, first spotted back in 2018, now an occasional guest at the pond.

Advices, tips and suggestion:

Consistency is key. It took many years before you could see change and 18 years to spot the Glossy Ibis bird again.

Promoter:

BROZ – Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development, Slovakia

Title/Name:

SUMMER CAMP AT VEĽKÝ LÉL ISLAND (part of protected area Dunajské luhy)

Short introduction of the initiative:

A summer camp for children and youth. Combining sustainable agritourism and nature protection.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2012

Duration of the initiative:

A week/multiple tours per summer

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☒ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☒ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☒ Environmental challenges (please specify): biodiversity loss |
| ☐ Disability | ☐ Participation of young people |
| ☐ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Youth unemployment |
| ☐ Youth volunteering | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |
| ☒ Urban/Rural development | |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☒ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☐ Street and/or outdoor | ☒ NGOs structure |
| ☒ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

3 per a tour

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

8-10 per a tour (4-6 tours per summer)

Target group:

Children and youth

Needs and background:

The farm at Veľký Lél is focused on regenerative grazing which is bringing back the traditional management and maintaining biodiversity in the area (especially insect, plants and its predators). At the farm various animals are used for this purpose – horses, cows, goats, sheep and a pair of water buffalos. Participants of the summer camp are learning about the connections in nature and how suitable human interventions can help to support biodiversity. Various activities and games are included in the programme. Daily horse-riding lessons are a part of the summer camp activities.

Objectives:

To rebuild or strengthen relationship of young people towards nature. Show them the good practices of nature conservation and biodiversity promotion management. Help them to understand context in nature.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

- Horse riding
- Swimming in the Danube
- Excursions around the Velký Lél Island
- Games aimed to getting to know nature
- Using dairy product from the farm
- Outdoor zoological laboratory

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

The aim is the summer camp to be self-sufficient

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

Raised awareness about the importance of suitable management at the biotopes, built relationship towards nature from young age, a week of summer full of fun activities and movement outdoors

Promoter:

Slatinka Association / Zdruzenie Slatinka, Slovakia

Title/Name:

DEFENDERS OF THE RIVERSCAPE

Short introduction of the initiative:

12-month activity carried out by a group of young people under the leadership of the Slatinka Association. The group of young people consists of 5 members (they were young volunteers around 20 - 22 years who had already participated in activities in the association before the start of the project). However, other young people were added to the activities of the project, they were invited to educational activities, but also to excursions, brigades and the like.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2021-2022

Duration of the initiative:

12 months

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☒ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☒ Environmental challenges (please specify):
climate change, water protection |
| ☐ Disability | ☐ Participation of young people |
| ☒ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Youth unemployment |
| ☒ Youth volunteering | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change,
Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |
| ☐ Urban/Rural development | |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☒ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☒ Street and/or outdoor | ☒ NGOs structure |
| ☐ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☒ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 young people led the project and prepared the activities 4 members of Slatinka Association helped with project administration, contacts etc. 19 experts were involved in the position of "river protectors" and 3 experts were | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> involved in the position of mentors regarding communication and fundraising for projects in the field of nature protection a total of 138 people participated in 11 river mapping field trips, 3 educational sessions and 5 brigades |
|--|---|

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

Some activities in 2021 and early 2022 were affected by restrictions due to the spread of covid-19 diseases
Around 8 thousand people were involved indirectly - mostly through the MOKRADE exhibition in Zvolen, by

reading blogs about river mapping (videos were part of them), by participating in following discussions after the end of the project etc. We also published some of the videos on Facebook, where they were seen by over 5,000 people, of which the most viewed video was from the cleaning of the Slatina River (approx. 4,300 views): <https://www.facebook.com/zdruzenieslatinka/videos/700784491236985>

Target group:

- Young people 18-30 years old
- "River protectors" - conservationists, ecologists, local residents, water managers, fishermen, scientists, employees of state organizations
- Authorities and politicians who decide on the use of rivers and the land in and around them (local, regional, national level)
- General public

Needs and background:

Rivers and streams are often perceived by the public only as a economic source, or a potential threat in the event of flood activity. Therefore, it is necessary to talk about their value, why they are important to ordinary people and what we can all do to protect them. The European Commission adopted several documents important for the protection of rivers in 2020 and 2021. Following the European Strategy for the Development of Biodiversity, the common goal has to restore at least 25,000 kilometers of rivers in Europe to 2030. They are important for the protection of biodiversity, but also as a source of ecosystem services (materials, food, energy, drinking water, flood protection, resistance to the negative effects of climate change). Only healthy rivers can provide these services to people.

Objectives:

The aim of the project was to highlight the issue of the disappearance of natural rivers and other aquatic ecosystems, the impact this has on the biodiversity of these aquatic ecosystems and the landscape, and thus on our quality of our life. We wanted to highlight the potential that the protection of natural rivers or wetlands, along with other green infrastructure features, has on water quality and balance, carbon sequestration and flood protection. In this way, we wanted to help start a debate on this topic, especially in the media, in communities and with different actors at different decision-making levels.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

The main tool of the project was to do activities through which we would bring people physically to the rivers and talk to them about it on the spot. We did a total of 11 field walks aimed at mapping and getting to know a total of 7 rivers in Slovakia. We recorded most of them either on video or through photographs. We have processed these documents in the form of blogs, short videos, which we are gradually adding both to the aforementioned For Living Rivers blog and to the Slatinka Association's YouTube channel.

1. Field lectures / excursions

- with experts on various topics related to the river landscape - what a natural river looks like, why rivers need for their lives also surrounding landscape, why the landscape needs rivers, how the diversity of the river and the riverscape contributes to diversity of life, how food chains and different types of habitats work. Lectures took place on selected rivers - some of are in protected areas (Natura 2000, National Park or Protected landscape area). Film and audio recordings were made from these lectures, as well as inputs to the blogs and articles. Participants in the excursions were young people between 18 - 30 and experts from Slatinka Association. These were the main educational activities in which the members of our group were most educated.

2) Mapping of the rivers

- partly physical and partly online activity was focused on searching and reconstruction of floor plans of the river Slatina from old maps and aerial photographs and at the same time photographic mapping of changes in the field. The aim was to learn how to better "read the country", examine its historical memory and observe these changes in the field.

3) Photographic and audiovisual output

- young people documented the field lecture photographically and in the form of video recordings, which they cut into a short video at the end, summarizing the content of the project, our experiences and knowledge.

4) Information and media campaign

- continuous informing of the public about the project activities in daily papers (press releases, special articles, blogs), FB pages of the Slatinka Association, initiatives For living rivers and other friendly projects.

5) Educational meetings for group members and possibly invited young people

- in addition to information on environmentally sustainable use of rivers, biodiversity protection and adaptation to climate change (as part of field trips - point 1), educational meetings were prepared. Their

content resp. the focus was emerge from the survey and the discussion what they wanted to improve on - the topic was communication, how to create a good videos about environmental topics, negotiation etc.

The activities also included our joint planning and evaluation meetings, which we did according to what we were currently preparing and how much coordination it required. On average, we had a personal or online meeting of min. 1 time in two weeks. We divided the activities and responsibility for the tasks, we constantly corrected their content, deadlines, invited people.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

Donor: National Institute of Education and Youth Slovakia (from European Solidarity Corps – Solidarity Projects) – No. 2021-1-SK02-ESC30-SOL-000036510

Partners: environmental organizations and initiatives in Slovakia (Za živé rieky, WWF Slovakia, BROZ ...), national manager of watercourses - Slovak Water Management Company s.p., State Nature Protection of the Slovak Republic, Nízke Tatry National Park, Záhorie protected area, Danube protected area, The Institute of Forest Ecology and many others.

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

We planned and did the activities in such a way that we gained new knowledge, skills and information within our group, which helped us to convey information on the topic of river protection to the widest possible public through visually interesting outputs (which we were able to do thanks to this) and at the same time they physically brought other people, including young people, to the rivers

The reason is the fact that although both experts and politicians are starting to take European strategies in the field of water protection and biodiversity more seriously, without the support of the public, the goals of these strategies cannot be achieved and reflected in everyday life.

Therefore, the essence of the project's activities were field excursions (11 in total, 3 of which were completely freely accessible to the public), during which we got to know the selected rivers and mapped their interesting places with people who know these rivers, we interviewed them, processed them and published them. The following expeditions were carried out: to the river **Slatina** (with scientist Michal Wiezik, currently a member of the European Parliament and with ichthyologist Ladislav Pekárik, whom we assisted in the survey of the section of the river included in Natura 2000), the river **Rudava** (with the director of the Záhorie protected area Tomáš Olšovský), the river **Nitra** (with the director of the plant at the Slovak Water Management Company s.p. Ladislav Glind), the Ipeľ River (with local resident Ján Gábor and Pavol Littera from the Bratislava Regional Conservation Association), the river **Hron** (with Anton Kristín from the Institute of Forest Ecology, who took us to the last the rest of the original bed of the Hrona in Zvolen – Lanice), the **Danube** River (with Andrej Somora from CHKO Dunajské Luhy) and the **Turieč** River (with hydrobiologist Miroslav Očadlík from WWF Slovakia).

We prepared or participated in a total of 5 brigades - the cleaning of the Hron River at its source (provided by the State Nature Protection of the Nízke Tatry National Park) and on the last remnant of the original bed in Zvolen (Lanice Park), also the cleaning of the Slatina River (one cleaning in Zvolen in cooperation with the Slovak Water Management Company and the Romano Jilo Community Center and the City of Zvolen; the second cleaning in the Slatina river valley was in the vicinity of the village of Slatinka.

We held a total of 3 public educational meetings: on the production of videos about the environment with Martina Slováková from CUKRU, on fundraising with Radka Nováková, former Amnesty International fundraiser in the Czech Republic, on crowdfunding with Iryna Solovey from Ukraine, co-founder of the largest

crowdfunding platform in Ukraine Big Idea). One member of the group participated in PDCS training focused on storytelling, and then introduced the topic to others. And we supplemented the activities with other public promotional events.

On field expeditions, but also on mapping, brigades and individually, we made videos and interviews, while we have already processed some of them and are preparing others for publication. On the new blog <https://blog.sme.sk/zaziverieky>, the videos are on YouTube of the Slatinka association, they are also available via the FB page For Living Rivers, the Slatinka Association, etc. The documents about river protectors were used by the editor of Rozhlas Slovensko, Ms. Bóoczová, as part of the series "Story of the Week": <https://slovensko.rtvs.sk/rubriky/305100/zive-rieky> and in September 2022 we used documents for exhibition MOKRADE (Wetlands).

Comments:

It was important for us that all activities were prepared and implemented directly with young people.

Links:

SHORT VIDEO ABOUT PROJECT: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rmVILjTszk>

WEB SITE: <https://www.slatinka.sk/projekty/projekt/19/ochrancovia-riecnej-krajiny>

Promoter:

Asociación Andaluza Pacto Verde, Spain

Title/Name:

EL IMPULSO DEL SECTOR AGRÍCOLA ENTRE LOS JÓVENES (Boosting the Agricultural Sector Among the Youth)

Short introduction of the initiative:

The initiative aims to address the lack of youth engagement in the agricultural sector in Huelva, Spain. Through an Erasmus+ project, the goal is to modernize agriculture, raise awareness among the youth regarding the sector's significance, and ultimately encourage their involvement in agriculture, ensuring the sector's continuity and adapting to modern digital trends.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

2022 (as per the publication date on Pacto Verde's website)

Target group:

Young individuals, especially those facing employment challenges, aiming to improve their employability through modernized agricultural practices.

Needs and background:

Addressing the generational gap in agriculture, modernizing the sector, and improving the employability of young individuals by introducing them to innovative and digital methodologies in agriculture.

Objectives:

Improve the agricultural sector's image.

1. Encourage youth to participate in the agricultural sector's socio-political and economic development.
2. Enhance the employability of young individuals facing job access challenges by providing theoretical and practical training related to agriculture.
3. Raise awareness among youth about the importance of agriculture and motivate them to get involved.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

Campaigns to promote agriculture and modernization.

1. Training courses focusing on digitalization and innovation in agriculture.
2. Development of a methodology for digitalization and innovation in agriculture.
3. Practical activities including farm visits for direct exposure to the agricultural sector, observing the digital transition in agriculture.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

Erasmus+ Program, Integrity.earth (Liechtenstein).

Comments:

This initiative is a part of the larger effort by Pacto Verde to promote social and environmental innovation, especially among young people. By targeting the agricultural sector, the project aims to foster a sustainable, economically viable, and socially inclusive rural community in Huelva, Spain¹.

Promoter:

Asociación Andaluza Pacto Verde, Spain

Title/Name:

EFIVOS IN EUROPE

Short introduction of the initiative:

The EFIVOS in Europe project builds upon the successful EFIVOS project, where disadvantaged youth developed journalistic skills and created their own media content. In EFIVOS in Europe, groups of young individuals aged between 18 and 25 will receive training on EU actions and will be encouraged to work on two priority topics on the European agenda, relevant to their future. One of these topics is the environment and climate, while the other will be chosen by the youth themselves.

Target group:

Disadvantaged youth aged between 18 and 25 years

Needs and background:

The initiative aims to equip this group of young people with the tools and knowledge required to be heard in public political debate and to fully participate in the democratic process, with the long-term impact of shaping the coming decades of European Union policies in the image of the people to whom the future belongs.

Objectives:

- To provide training on EU actions and encourage the youth to work on priority topics on the European agenda.
- To enhance the journalistic skills of disadvantaged youth.
- To create media content like articles and podcasts that will be published on specific websites and social media.
- To organize debates with candidates and workshops in schools ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections.
- To conclude the project with an online conference on the EU organized by the youth themselves.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

Training on EU actions and priority topics.

1. Collaboration with trained educators to develop workshops.
2. Training in journalism and media literacy.
3. Creation and publication of media content.
4. Organizing debates and workshops.
5. Online conference on the EU.

Comments:

The project is notably aimed at empowering youth, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, by involving them in critical discussions and actions related to the EU's political and environmental agenda.

Promoter:

The Sunseed Trust Ltd., Spain

Title/Name:

SUNSEED DESERT TECHNOLOGY: TRANSITION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Short introduction of the initiative:

Sunseed Desert Technology is a non-formal education project aimed at promoting a transition towards a sustainable lifestyle. Located in the arid region of southeastern Spain, Sunseed provides an experiential learning environment where individuals and groups can engage in practical sustainable living practices, encompassing solar energy utilization, soil erosion prevention, water management, and community living.

Year in which it was established and/or realised:

1982 (Concept conceived), Officially started operating in 1986.

Duration of the initiative:

Ongoing since 1986.

Theme (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Social inclusion | ☐ Media and communications |
| ☒ Non Formal Environmental Education | ☒ Outdoor Education to promote healthy lifestyles |
| ☐ Art and Culture | ☐ Environmental challenges |
| ☐ Disability | (please specify): _____ |
| ☒ Active citizenship and community work | ☒ Participation of young people |
| ☒ Youth volunteering | ☐ Youth unemployment |
| ☒ Urban/Rural development | ☐ Other (please specify): Behavioral Change, |
| ☒ Nature Conservation | Air Pollution, Biodiversity Conservation |

Context/Location (multiple choice):

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Youth Centre | ☐ Nature Reserve/Parks |
| ☐ Institution of Formal Education | ☐ Rehabilitation centre |
| ☒ Street and/or outdoor | ☐ NGOs structure |
| ☒ Farm/Social farm | ☒ Rural area |
| ☐ Community centre | ☐ Urban area |
| ☐ Eco Centre | ☐ Other (please specify): _____ |

Number of youth workers, volunteers, operators engaged:

Sunseed is a transient community, which means that the number of people changes constantly. There are 3 project managers, 7 coordinators on 8 month contracts, 3-4 European Service Volunteers (6 month contracts), 3 interns and a fluctuating number of short-term visitors.

Number of young people directly and indirectly involved:

Varies, as Sunseed hosts volunteers and visitors from different countries.

Target group:

Sunseed Desert Technology aims to inspire and involve people from around the world to join the movement towards a culture of people and planet care. They offer programs and activities that are open to everyone who is interested in learning about permaculture and sustainable living.

Needs and background:

The initiative arose from the need to combat desertification and promote sustainable living practices in arid regions. It provides a platform for individuals to learn, experiment, and adopt ecologically responsible lifestyles, addressing both environmental and societal challenges.

Objectives:

The initiative arose from the need to combat desertification and promote sustainable living practices in arid regions. It provides a platform for individuals to learn, experiment, and adopt ecologically responsible lifestyles, addressing both environmental and societal challenges.

Different phases of the initiative and/or list of activities:

- Initial phase focused on combating desertification through cultivation and tree trials.
- Expansion and establishment of a volunteer program.
- Engagement in international projects, e.g., low-cost solar cooker trials in Tanzania.
- Mycorrhiza Research for ecological restoration (2004-2009).
- Ongoing educational programs, workshops, and collaborative projects with other organizations.

Donors, Partners, and stakeholders' involved:

Various local and international partners, universities, schools, and the Sunseed Tanzania Trust.

Outcomes and impacts of the initiative:

Establishment of an experiential education center promoting sustainable living.

Development of practical solutions for desertification challenges.

Engagement in international projects promoting solar energy and ecological restoration.

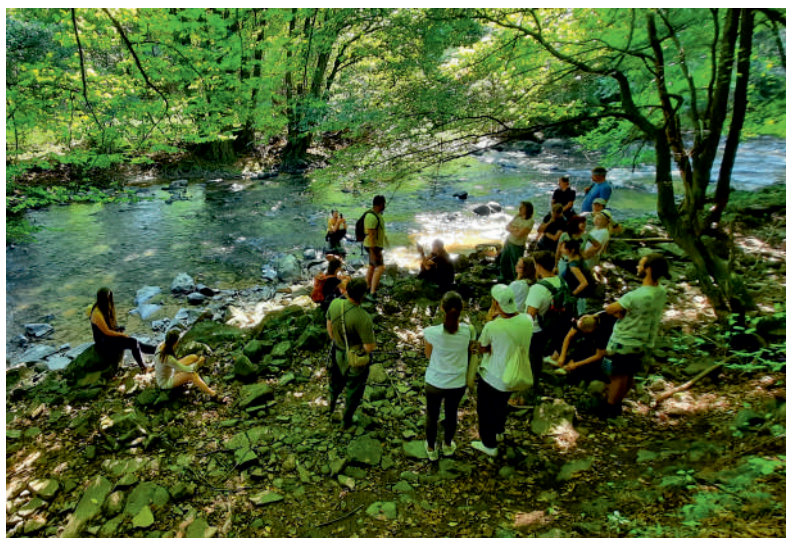
Creation of a community of learners and practitioners engaged in sustainability.

Advices, tips and suggestion:

Engagement in practical, hands-on activities is crucial for understanding and adopting sustainable living practices. Collaboration and community engagement enhance the learning experience and the impact of sustainability initiatives.

Comments:

Sunseed Desert Technology continues to evolve, adapting to changing global circumstances while remaining committed to its core mission of promoting sustainable living.



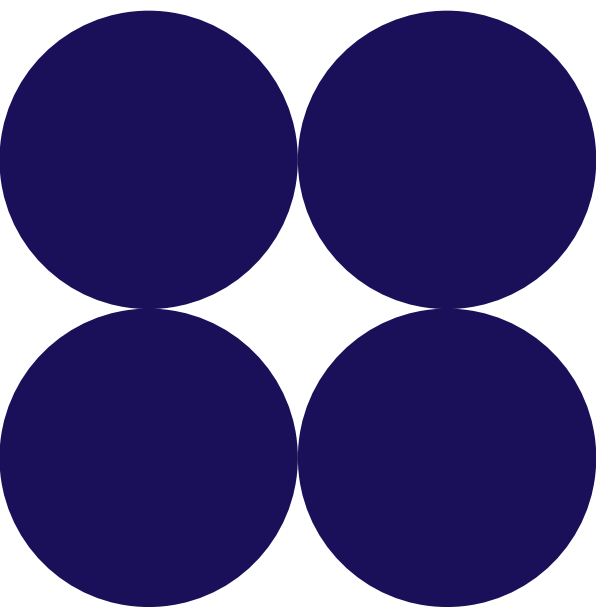
BULGARIAN STUDY VISIT DOSSIER

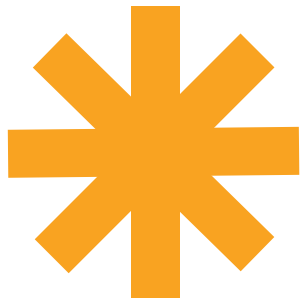
CHATAMA
a place to reconnect

PROTECTED AREAS
and Children's day

JUNDOLA
Department of University
of Forestry

EDUCATIONAL CENTRE
for large carnivorous

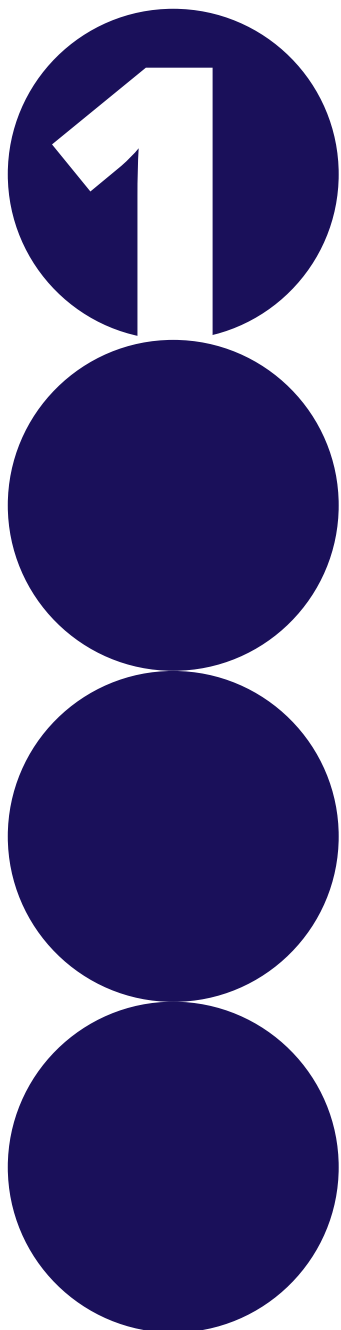




CHATAMA **a place to** **reconnect**



A place where two rivers meet



Chatama Forest Centre is located on the western shore of lake Beglika in the protected area of Chatama in the **Rhodope Mountains** in Bulgaria. The centre was created by Beglika Forestry Agency and Bikearea Association to be available for training, demonstrating practices for sustainable development and tourism as well as for nature conservation initiatives.

The centre is composed of seven buildings which were used until the 1980's by the forestry workers. Following this the buildings sat unused for 30 years. In 2010, a project of the Bikearea Association was implemented to restore and furnish the buildings. Solar power and water heating systems were also installed. Chatama is a regional information centre and offers services including accommodation and meals, adventure camps for children, local guides and equipment rent. A very popular event in the Western Rhodopes organised nearby is the Beglika Festival.



C O N T E X T

Chatama's name is of Turkish origin, it translates as '**A place where two rivers meet**'. Chatama is located in between two valleys, the two rivers are known as the 'Yellow river' & the 'Black River'. The two rivers meet at the bottom of the dam right next to the village of Chatama.

The Dam was built in 1953 and is the oldest dam in the whole of Bulgaria, the village of Chatama was then built in the following two years, 1953 & 1954. The inhabitants of the village of Chatama farmed animals such as sheep & cows in the summer when the weather allowed. Between the autumn & spring the water levels are low & grass is absent making it difficult for farming. When water levels are low, the old road to Chatama is revealed.

A I M

The Chatama Forest Centre's goal is to create a **space for young people and adults to educate themselves to have a reconnection with nature**, living in harmony with it. In a very practical and empirical way, they should use the space to be present with what surrounds them, such as practicing outdoor sports like canoeing, cycling and hiking, so that in a very simple way they can realize how precious nature is. The reality that you live in Chatama is 100% conscious and sustainable, with dry compost toilets, showers that are heated by solar panels or wood boiler, spring water (drinkable) and electricity from solar panels. All this avoids wasting water, excessive energy consumption, the use of plastic bottles and disposable paper napkins.

It is through the experience that the organisation offers that people can create competencies that will be reflected in their daily actions and in the organisations they may belong to.

We can see this reflected in the example of Neda, who started attending summer camps at the age of 9 and now, at the age of 19, is a member of the organisation and of the camps, being active in all their projects, inspiring the next generations.

The kitchen is the oldest space in Chatama. It works communally, where both the guests and the children of the summer camps can use it to cook for themselves, making it a warm and welcoming space. They can also use the red house for cooking, meetings or parties.





PROJECT PERSPECTIVE

Projects like Chatama create the possibility to link the green & protected areas of Bulgaria directly with the young people of the area through non-formal education.

Green & protected areas represent a perfect playground to promote the inclusion of young people, these projects allow us to offer young people the opportunity to reconnect with nature through stimulation and active participation regardless of their social, cultural & economic circumstances, also giving them the opportunity to play an active role in society,

An increasing amount of young people are considering nature & conversation, we believe that it is very important to educate new generations to not only promote conservation & the gift of natural resources, but to promote a better lifestyle of the participants, **promoting the possibility of reconnecting with nature**. This will enable participants to grow and develop as citizens as well as finding an economical opportunity that differs from the mainstream opportunities, Chatama is an example of this.

We are living in an unsustainable economical society where job quality is decreasing, job opportunities are narrowing and we have lost our ability to create our own life away from the mainstream opportunities.

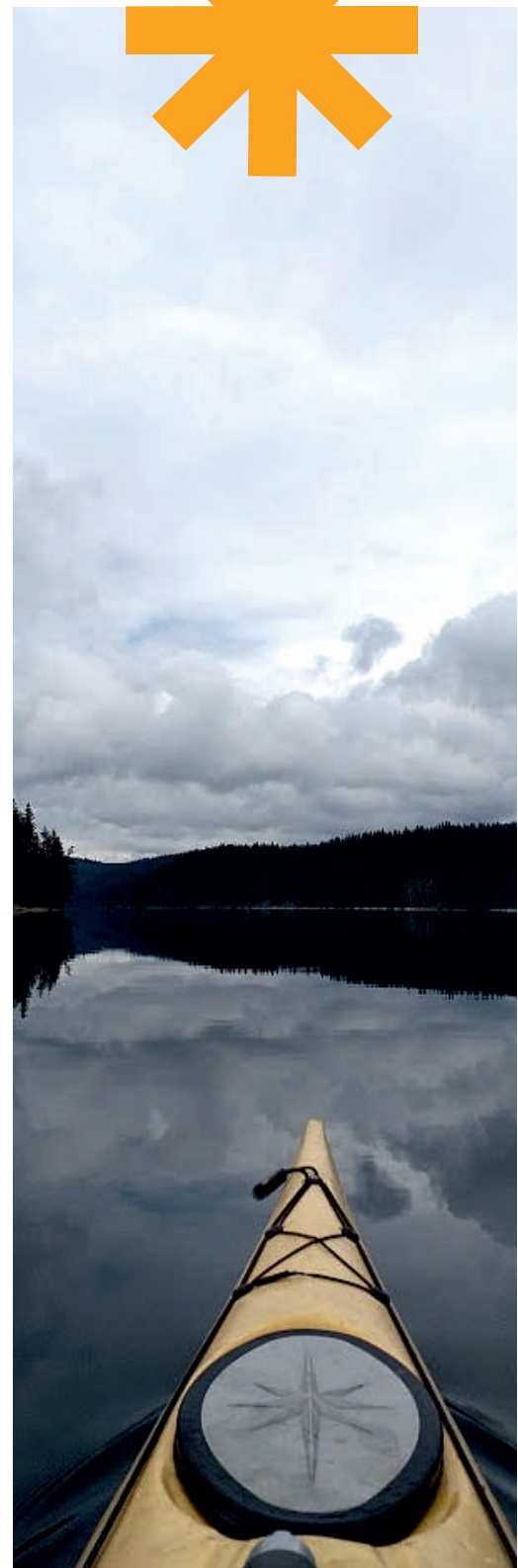


Discover & learn good practices

Nature represents the playground in which to experiment new opportunities for social development, these new activities will represent an economic value to society, promoting & combining the conservation of nature with the possibility for a different lifestyle & model for the future.

The current approach at global level is not sustainable, for example, in the first six months of the year we have exceeded natural resources available for the whole of 2023, the second half of the year we will be in debt, if we continue on this course we will not have enough natural resources to guarantee life on earth. Now is the most important time for change, we need to show a different, and better way forward.

Nature represents not just the tree that we harvest, but it will represent the possibility to develop a different lifestyle & opportunity to create new educational projects, camps & outdoor activities.



Contact person:

SASHKA VITANOVA



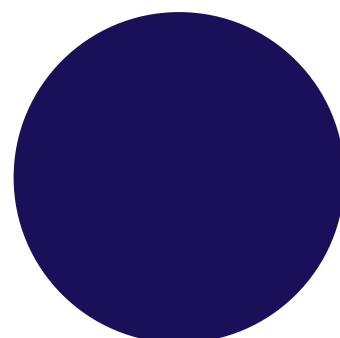
Organisation: Bikearea

Website: bikearea.org

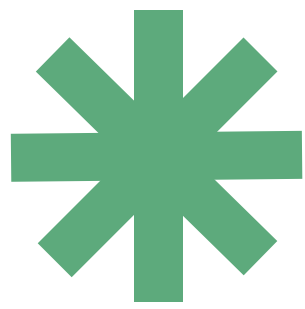


Facebook: facebook.com/bikearea.org/

Email: bikearea@gmail.com







PROTECTED AREAS

and Children's Day



THE LESSON with vassil

On Thursday, the 1st of June, we changed our venue during our study visit, from Chatama forest centre to a guest house in Velingrad. The first half of the day passed in transport and settling in, and after lunch we continued with the official part of our trip.

We participated in **a presentation held by Vassil Todev**, one of the founders of Bikearea. He spoke to us about the **organisation model of protected areas in Bulgaria**. At first, he explained to us the two different ways of protecting areas:



EU policy – Natura 2000

30% of Bulgaria's territory



Bulgarian national legislation, covers only 5% of the territory:

1. Protecting biodiversity
2. Protecting territories (habitats) – 6 categories.
 - a. Natural reserve – most strict level of protection, no human activity allowed (only scientific research, with a permit).
 - b. National Park – wider mountain areas with the goal of preserving alpine regions from human activity; self-governed institutions appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Waters. Their management plans are revised every 10.
 - c. Natural Park - a self-governed wider area preserving a unique landscape, but unlike national parks, they can include populated places.
 - d. Supported reserve – an area managed by the Ministry of Environment and Waters in order to preserve a specific endangered species.
 - e. Protected area – a natural landscape protected with a specific purpose (aprox. 500 areas).
 - f. Natural sight-seeing spot – specific natural objects; lowest level of protection.



It is important to mention that **Bulgaria has a long history with nature protection**. The first natural reserve was established in 1933 – Silkosiya, and in 1934 – the first natural park on the Balkans, Vitosha. We discussed the various factors that impact the establishment of protected areas:

- interest of the locals for the natural resources – lumbering and mining industry;
- ownership of the land (governmental, municipal or private);
- political situation – changing of officials in charge;
- interest for developing big resorts (Bansko – Pirin mountain).

It is still possible to apply, but bureaucratic procedures demand too much resources.

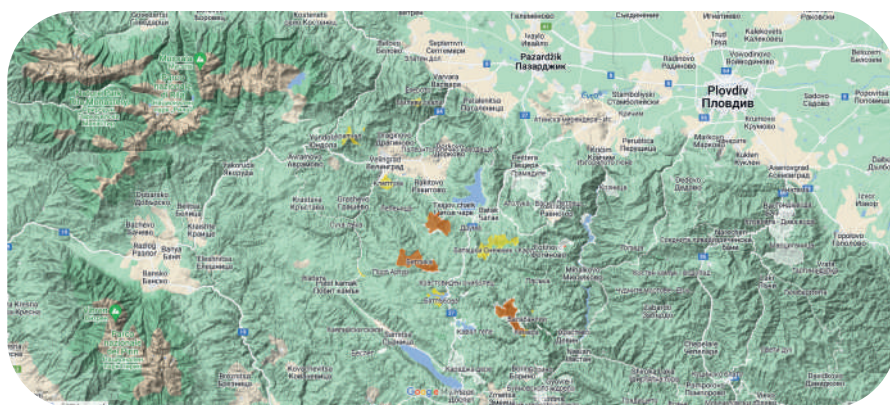
We also mentioned the problems in managing national and natural parks:

- insufficient budget;
- insufficient staff.

He presented to us the website **<https://nature.divirodopi.org/>** that Bikearea recently developed in order to make information regarding protected areas, common threats to nature and biodiversity accessible to the public. The website is still new and its development is still in process, so for now it only concerns Pazardzik administrative region.

Another useful website is **<https://gorata.bg/>**, in which every citizen can take part in the protection of woods by signalling supposed illegal activity.

Last but not least, we had a discussion about the modern vision of protecting territories, which officially dates from the Second World Congress about Biosphere Reserves in Sevilla 1995. It is based on the concept that nature and humans can exist in harmonical interaction.



A BIG THANKS TO
VASSIL TODEV
ON HIS VERY INFORMATIVE PRESENTATION.
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+359 885 184 342

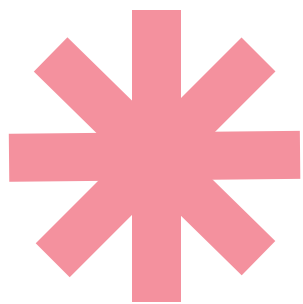


CHILDREN'S international day

As it was June the 1st, International Children's Day, we later had a meeting with the locals from Velingrad at Gergevana, which is above the city. From there we had a walk on the Path of Love, while **cleaning up the area**. We reached a shelter and played an **educational game** that we have prepared earlier during the day. It was devoted to raising awareness about human impact on the environment. We all had fun with the kids, while also having a fruitful exchange of green ideas.



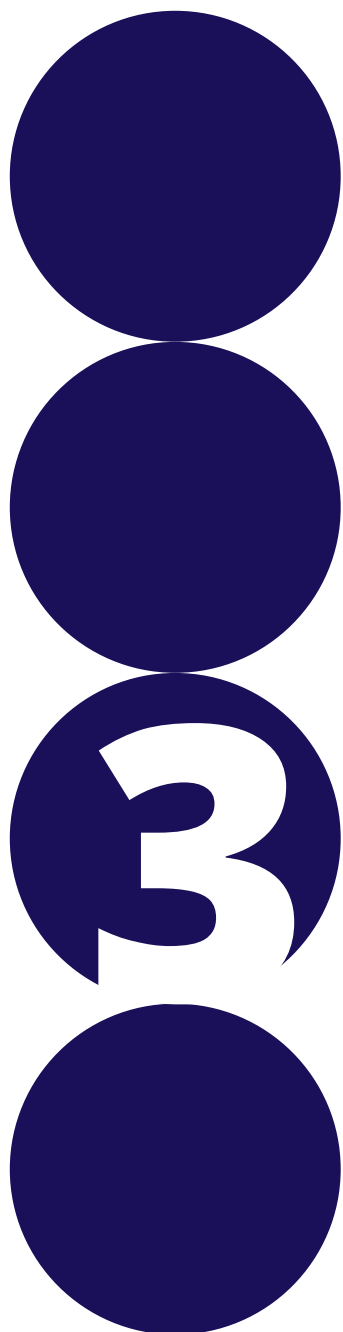
Fruitful exchange of green ideas



JUNDOLA

department
University
of Forestry





On the **second of June 2023** we visited the Jundola department of University of Forestry. We met with the Director of the Training and Experimental Forest Range Eng. Velichko Angelov Draganov and he introduced us in general information of this department.

The natural conditions and bioclimatic factors in the area classify Yundola as a mountain climate resort of the first and second category. The opportunities for **recovery in nature, recreation and tourism in a forest environment are extremely good**. Cloudy days here are few - mostly in spring. Winter is moderately cold, and summer is short and cool. Autumn, compared to spring, is warmer and drier, as well as sunnier.

The animal world is particularly diverse. Large mammals include fallow deer, mouflon, wild boar and roe deer. The group of predators is represented by a fox, a wild cat, a badger, a black ferret, a weasel, a squirrel and a goldfinch. Rabbit, squirrel, various types of bats and other small mammals are also found. A variety of bird species - grouse, sandpiper, wood snipe, goshawk, three-toed woodpecker, wood owl, short-eared owl, rock swallow, grebe, nuthatch and many other interesting birds. The first one was situated in the coniferous area of Yundola, called Geshova Planina (now named after G. St. Avramov - Yundola) and the second one was situated in the broad-leaved area of the village of Burziya, called Petrohan Pass (now called Petrohan – Burziya). The University was opened in 1926 and serves as a supporting for develop the practice of students.

The training and experimental forest range is located in the pass between Rila and the Western Rhodopes mountains in the forest land of Yundola, 15 km from the town of Velingrad. The training and experimental forest in Yundola is located at between 1000-1800 m altitude. The forest has been a state property since the ancient times. The total area of the forest fund in the region of the training and experimental forest range amounts to 5190,6 ha, 4853,8 ha – afforded area.



The forest stands contain the following tree species: Scots Pine - 1935,3 ha (or 40% of the forest fund); Norway Spruce - 1427,7 ha (30%); Silver Fir - 1267,8 ha (26%); Beech - 166 ha (3%), etc.

The total stock amounts to 1324500 cubic metres or average stock - 273 cubic metres per ha (logs only). The average annual increment of the total area is 17 200 cubic metres. The average age of the stands is 75 years. The stands are exclusively coniferous, consisting mainly of Scots Pine, Norway Spruce and Silver Fir.

The percentage of the broadleaved species is insignificant, mainly Beech and Sessile Oak. The growth conditions are typical of coniferous stands and allow the establishment of various training and demonstration sites and experimental areas. The lowest point of the area is the valley line of Dulboki Dol and Lyuta Reka (1030 m altitude), and the highest point is Arapchal Peak (1834 m). The average altitude of the wood productive forest area is 1460 m. The head office of the forest range is situated at an altitude of 1380 m. The average annual forestation in the range amounts to 100 da. The total area of the tree nursery amounts to 19 da producing 500000 seedlings of Norway Spruce, Scots Pine and Silver Fir. From the scientific point of view, numerous scientific short-term and long-term experiments have been carried out and permanent experimental plots have been established. As a result of these experiments a number of issues regarding the growth and productivity of the main forest tree species, stand structure, proper feelings, forest and site types, form (ecological and biotype) diversity of species, have been clarified.



**JUNDOLA TRAINING AND
EXPERIMENTAL FOREST RANGE**

Street 84

Tel. 0884095191

035928436

<http://yundola.eu/>

uogs_yondola@abv.bg



Experiments related to many of these issues are still being carried out. At present, scientific observations are being made on permanent experimental plots by the departments of Forest Management, Silviculture, Dendrology, etc. Interesting studies are being conducted on the established geographic cultures with the purpose of checking the growth and productivity of coniferous species of different origins. A special experimental plot has been designed in the watershed area of Bazenishki Dol where a precipitation measuring stations have been built for measuring the water flow under different natural and working conditions. A **monitoring station**, under a Bulgarian-Swiss Project No.2 has also been built in the area of the forest. G. St. Avramov Training and Experimental Forest Range, run by the University of Forestry, has been established as a centre **for practical training and scientific research of both students and teaching staff**.

MUSEUM

Museum the Jundola department of University of Forestry is located in the old forestry cabinet with bear traps, guns and other equipment that was used in the past.

The Bulgarian Forestry Agency now has a **permanent exhibition** located in the Educational and Experimental Farm in Jundola, which showcases the history and development of the forestry department, forestry education, and science. The exhibition will be presented for the first time on March 21, 2023, on the International Day of Forests. Contributions to the exhibition, such as documents, photos, literature, objects, tools, uniform signs, and awards related to the history of forestry in Bulgaria, are welcome through the magazine "Forest" or the press centre of the Forestry Executive Agency.



Recovery in nature, recreation and tourism



THE HOME OF THE BEAR

Kanada are the bear traps. They come as a shelter too, as a place where I have food. Very few the berries, hats, rain coat everything I have. The whole set is located in the most remote forest places.

Catching Kanada, we humans destroy the places where bears find food and shelter.

[illegible]

4

On June 2, 2023, the Erasmus group visited the Educational centre for large carnivores managed by the **Balkan Wildlife Society (BWS) in Vlahi**. Vlahi is a small mountain village in the Pirin Mountain of south-western Bulgaria. It lies very close to the borders of the Pirin National Park, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is one of the most famous national parks in Bulgaria. Vlahi offers stunning natural landscapes, including scenic mountain views, pristine forests, and meandering rivers. While the village had 2,000 inhabitants a century ago, today, there are only a few inhabitants. The aim of this report is to provide detailed information about the Educational Centre and to share our observations and overall experience. Overall, the Balkan Wildlife Society plays an important role in making researches, protecting the rich biodiversity of the Balkans, promoting sustainable development, and raising awareness of the importance of wildlife and nature conservation in Bulgaria and the wider region. We learned so many new things about wildlife in Bulgaria and really enjoyed our stay there.



THE CENTRE

The education centre for large carnivores is an initiative of the **Association for wild nature - BALKANI**. The implementation took place in cooperation with BDOBR – SEMPERVIVA. Many people may wonder why this centre was founded in the first place. The original idea was to create a **large carnivorous research centre**. When they first started their work with wolves and bears ten years ago, they realized that people's attitudes towards these species were still negative and decided to focus not only on **conservation** but also on **educational activities**.

They first started with **educational programs in schools** and finally decided to build this centre. They have ambassador animals, usually adopted from zoos, racetracks, and hunting clubs. Initially, there were two bears and two wolves, but now there is only one female wolf available. Because these animals are used to humans presence and would not survive in the wild, they are raised in spacious enclosures in conditions very similar to their natural habitats. Accompanied by the project coordinator Elena Tsingarska, visitors can **get closer to these magnificent animals**. Additional larger spaces were created for the bears, but there were a lot of difficulties with supplying enough water in the hot summer. Eventually, they sent one of the animals to another nature education centre in the Alps in Italy that can provide much better conditions for living. Safety is the most important factor. These pets were born in zoos and could not return to nature. From a young age, they grow up in close contact with people and feel comfortable with their presence. The centre offers conditions in which they feel as comfortable as possible. They have spacious enclosures with natural vegetation and hidden places.

EXPOSITION

Another fascinating place of the centre is the exposition room where we got a lot of information about where wolves, bears, lynx, and jackals live, what they eat, how they raise their cubs and other interesting facts about them. Everything is presented in such an **interactive way** that you can participate in the discovery of information and thus fully immerse yourself in the atmosphere of the forest and its inhabitants. Other forest animals that inhabit the land were also introduced. We found out which of them are protected, how they are recognized, and what is needed to protect them.

The exhibition area consists of one main room and four more each of them dedicated to a specific animal. Many interactive materials with a lot of **information about large carnivores, forest ecosystems, and nature conservation are displayed**. The centre has a multifunctional hall with a capacity of more than 40 seats, suitable for various meetings, workshops, seminars, practical work with children, film screenings, and so on.



Contact information:

EDUCATIONAL CENTRE FOR LARGE CARNIVOROUS

Address: Vlahi village

Mob. phone: +359884925130

E-mail: large.carnivore@gmail.com

Web: www.visitcarnivorebg.org

FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/LargeCarnivoreEducationCentreBulgaria/>



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Other activities include outdoor **educational games and educational excursions** in the area: short hikes to natural attractions around the village, getting acquainted with breeds of pets bred at the Centre for Rare Breeds; Getting to know the activities of the nature school, etc.

The centre also organizes **summer camps for children**. Five per year with about 20 children in each of them. These camps offer participants, especially young people, a unique opportunity to learn about wildlife, conservation, and environmental protection in a practical and comprehensive manner. The activities include wildlife tracking, bird watching, plant identification, and habitat assessment. Campers are encouraged to develop site observation skills and to gain a deeper understanding of nature.

The exceptional biodiversity, flora, and fauna make this place unique and suitable for organizing all leisure activities. However, it is not always easy for the centre to protect this biodiversity. For more than 25 years, the National Conservation Organization has been fighting to **save the Kresna Gorge** because the government wants to build a highway straight through the gorge. The Kresna Gorge is designated as Special Area of Conservation site under EU Habitats Directives and included in the Bulgarian Natura 2000 list. So it is the duty of the European Commission to preserve this valuable natural treasure. Heavy construction machinery and hot asphalt will destroy the habitat of hundreds of Europe's rarest species.

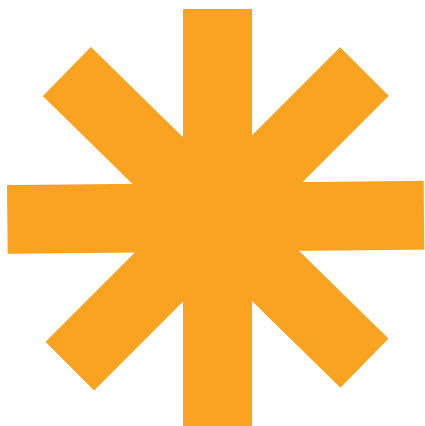
Unfortunately **local people meet pressure and difficulties to express their opinion** because it could reflect to their job positions and way of living. They have also been protesting for over 20 years, but in a silent manner, which is probably safer for them personally. The same day we passed through the Kresna village, there was a protest organized by the locals for the first time. When the fight seems too big for locals alone, we, as citizens of Europe can come together. For that reason as soon as we heard about the protest, we enthusiastically decided to go to Kresna with local people to support the cause and contribute to the saving of this beautiful place.

The locals were so happy to see us there. We highly encourage everyone to sign the petition to save Kresna (SIGN HERE: <https://act.wemove.eu/campaigns/Save-the-Kresna-Gorge>). Overall, the Balkan Wildlife Society plays an important role in protecting the rich biodiversity of the Balkans, promoting sustainable development, and raising awareness of the importance of wildlife and nature conservation in Bulgaria and the wider region. We learned so many new things about wildlife in Bulgaria and really enjoyed our stay there.

SAVE KRESNA







Participants

Seminar, Borrello (Italy), 12 – 17 October 2022

Klea Petriti, Ergi Bregasi, Paolo Strati, Snjezana Blagojevic, Milica Ždrnja, Tanja Boromisa, Sashka Vitanova, Albena Varsano, Mario Serrao, Andrea Rosario Natale, Giorgio Micoli, Giuseppe Di Renzo, Jorge Pinto, Ana Brandão, Mariana Doicu, Cătălina Luiza Neagu, Filip Đoševski, Jelena Radovanovic, Michaela Kalivodova, Lubor Baran, Omar Franco Trillo, Eliana Colzani

Study Visit, Chatama Forest Center, Velingrad (Bulgaria), 29 May – 04 June 2023

Denisa Bleta, Sara Bajrami, Tanja Boromisa, Marija Brdar, Nikola Kurija, Sashka Vitanova, Valentin Hadzhiyski, Vasilena Kovacheva, Neda Damyanova, Mario Serrao, Giorgio Micoli, Andrea Rosario Natale, João Pinheiro, Helena Margarida Silva, Mariana Doicu, Elena Madalina Done, Marta Djokic, Goran Vukic, Lubor Baran, Eliška Gajdošová, Desiree Cerdan, Germán Amian Mata

Supporting network

- Istituto Abruzzese per le Aree Protette – IAAP
- Riserva Naturale Regionale Oasi WWF “Lago di Serranella”
- Riserva Naturale Regionale Oasi WWF “Cascate del Verde”
- Riserva Naturale Regionale Oasi WWF “Calanchi di Atri”
- Associazione Donkeysiotte, Borrello
- Albergo “Rifugio dei Sanniti”, Borrello
- Chatama Forest Centre
- Bikearea
- Jundola department of University of Forestry
- Large carnivorous center, Balkan Wildlife, Vlahi

THANK YOU!

