
Intergenerational Outdoor Academy

Background of the Project

The "Outdoor Academy" initiative is the result of the work of not only the CSA participants during the RESourCE mobilities, but also of all the assistants from all the organizations and people who have participated during these months in all the activities and work of the project. All the work done during the different phases of the project, necessary also for the organization of the mobility's, has been at the same time equally important to promote the exchange of good practices, which as we remember, is the main objective of RESourCE. Therefore, although the initiative presented here has been elaborated mainly by the CSA assistants in the different mobility's, it is also the result of all the ideas, visits, activities or researches that have been carried out by all the people involved in RESourCE.

In this work, all the examples that we have seen first in Bilbao, Treviso and Munich, and certainly also in Hungary, have had a great influence and have served us as an example of inspiration. In addition to being examples in the topics of interest of the project, such as circular economy or sustainability, we believe that these are first level examples, leading at least at European level, so we feel fortunate and privileged for the quality and importance of the sites visited.

The itineraries created by all the organizers in their countries of destination, have perfectly reflected relevant practices that could and should be followed in other locations, so we believe that all the organizers have perfectly understood the purpose of the project. On the other hand, in addition to visiting and seeing first-hand examples of sustainability, sustainable and local trade, or social entrepreneurship, there has also been time to work and exchange views, mainly through the workshops that have been held in the various cities. These workshops, serve to provide the experience of the participants, who in many cases are experts in the matters in question, and provide an opinion based on their own knowledge and work.

That is why, the foundations of this work that we want to carry out and propose to you, resides on the one hand, in our own experience and training as educators or experts in the mentioned topics, and on the other hand, and equally important, in the experience and knowledge acquired through the RESourCE project, through its mobilities, the visits made, and the people who have participated and have contributed with their experience.

The contributions of each Mobility

Each international meeting has had its weight and importance in terms of learning about initiatives and projects in the field of sustainability, environmental education or circular economy, and all destinations have added a different and valuable point of view that has favored the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Bilbao, from October 4 to 8

The mobility in Bilbao served to meet for the first time the members of the various delegations, coming from Spain, Germany, Hungary, Israel and Italy, each with extensive experience in their respective fields or areas of work. At the same time, the city of Bilbao itself is an example of reconversion and transformation, as it has gone in less than 20 years from being an industrial city full of pollution to being a modern city, full of green spaces and with enviable public transportation.

First, it is important to highlight the work that GARAPEN carries out in the territory itself in many different areas, and above all in relation to environmental education, which is what interests us. GARAPEN, as an association of development agencies in the Basque Country, operates in a large number of municipalities and regional development agencies, and in recent years has developed several projects to disseminate and raise awareness of sustainability and Agenda 2030. One of these projects that we found very interesting was called "INGURUGELA", which means "Environmental classroom" in Basque. It is an initiative promoted in collaboration with different departments of the Basque Government, specifically the Department of Education and the Department of Economic Development, Sustainability and Environment. This initiative is interesting for several reasons; firstly, we see how different departments of the same public administration coordinate to develop a project that promotes education and awareness in the field of environment and sustainability. In the other hand, they include the 2030 Agenda in the classrooms of more than 400 schools in the Basque Country, and also include training on the SDGs in this case focused on trainers. It is therefore focused on both students and teachers. It has undoubtedly served as a good example in the educational-environmental field, and is undoubtedly a reference project for us.

Another initiative that made a very good impression on us were the well-known "Ekoetxea", which are centers for interpretation and dissemination of relevant natural areas in the Basque Country. They are dynamic centers, focused to all the public, and that frequently make guided visits for schools. They are centers that disseminate and raise awareness in an entertaining and visual way, which seemed essential to us, as it is a successful approach when trying to reach the youngest.

Finally, our delegation was also very satisfied with the visit to the town of Ordizia, in the Goierri region, where for many years an activity of promotion of the local product and the traditional lifestyle has been carried out. The Goierri market is a clear example of local consumption, quality, seasonal and of course sustainable, and is an activity highly valued by the whole region, and recognized throughout the Basque Country. We liked the fact that it emphasizes and gives relevance to a very positive activity for the territory, as it promotes the traditional lifestyle of the region, which also offers quality products and local production.

The traditional production of farm products is in many cases a practice that is both sustainable and healthy in many aspects. This is an aspect that we were going to take into account later on.

Treviso, from January 24 to 28

The weeks leading up to the second mobility, which was to be held in Treviso, were used to organize on the one hand the visits and activities that we thought reflected the objectives and the theme of the RESourCE project. During these weeks, we also saw that it was necessary to start to give some shape or context to a future educational project, which would be 100% consequence and fruit of RESourCE.

That is why, in the program we included a series of workshops and group work hours, where the different delegations could work and contribute their ideas and knowledge in their respective fields of work, in order to try to gather possible ideas for a project. We made it clear that the eventual project would have to be related to education and training in the field of the environment, sustainability, and in general in relation to all the objectives of the RESourCE Project.

In this sense, on the first day of mobility, we organized a workshop in groups composed of one participant from each delegation, in order to try to design a draft of possible educational projects related to the mentioned topics.

Despite the limited time, several interesting ideas emerged. Most of the groups came to the conclusion that, if we wanted to involve young people in environmental awareness, motivation and good communication would necessarily be two elements of relevance. The Spanish delegation, for example, had several people working specifically on environmental communication campaigns, so they knew firsthand how important this was, and they some examples of what they develop during their campaigns in the Basque Country, but also in Catalonia.

Therefore, several projects were proposed, where the target groups were generally children of different ages. Of the various methodologies proposed, we found the game-based one interesting, as it is a good way to try to motivate children.

One of the groups proposed the organization of a summer camp where all these topics would be worked on, also with a game-based methodology, as a competition, while another group proposed a course or school itinerary that could be carried out during several months among the students of one or several schools.

The visits we made during the mobility in Treviso, also had a great relation with the dissemination, training and awareness of the environment, sustainable practices in various fields, so they complemented very well the workshops and also gave us several ideas.

That is why, after the Treviso meeting, we are already trying to start designing the project. For this purpose, several meetings were held, where we remembered the contributions, both from the first mobility in Bilbao, but above all, the ideas of possible projects that were presented during the sessions in the workshops in Treviso. In that sense, a first idea of the project on which we worked, was to focus on the development of an itinerary where the main activity would focus on the development of a vegetable garden, where the youngest would be taught the care of the field, and at the same time, it would try to raise awareness about the traditional lifestyle, or sustainable agriculture respectful of the environment.

Later on, we also propose to involve elderly people, in order to exchange knowledge with the children, and at the same time, to create a stimulating activity for the elderly as well as for the children. We also incorporated the idea of stimulating and working the 5 senses through the garden, since these are two groups of people who are either losing cognitive skills or are developing them and are still learning.

We also defined the specific age group of the children participating in the project, and the duration of the whole itinerary, but there were still many aspects that we wanted to transfer to the mobility of Monaco, in order to count again on the contributions of the different delegations.

Munich, from March 21 to 25

The mobility in Munich served again to see new and good examples of initiatives in environmental education, and on the other hand, to collect new ideas or comments from the participants.

We wanted to present what we had done so far, and for this we made a short presentation during a small workshop on Monday afternoon, i.e. the first day of the meeting. After the presentation, we asked the participants about the improvements they would make, and several very valid contributions were made.

First, it was necessary to make a distinction between nature and agriculture, in relation to the idea of the garden, because although they are related concepts, they are opposite concepts in many ways. That is why we decided to incorporate to the concept of agriculture the term sustainable and organic, so that it would be at the same time compatible with nature.

On the other hand, the participants saw as a differential fact and something very positive the approach of carrying out a project or itinerary where elderly people and children meet, since there are not so many initiatives at present, and the benefits that can be derived from this are very numerous.

On the other hand, one of the visits we made in Munich, made us change the focus from the vegetable garden to a multidisciplinary outdoor space. The environmental education center we visited on Tuesday morning impressed us in a very positive way, as we saw how an outdoor space is used in many different ways, including at the same time the use of the garden as a multidisciplinary space.

This center also incorporated mobile phones into its training and awareness-raising activities, in order to motivate and make the content of its workshops more entertaining. It seemed to us something original and effective when looking for entertainment to possible activities that we can also incorporate into our project.

The week in Munich, therefore, served us to change the idea of the vegetable garden, towards an outdoor space where to develop more activities, including the garden itself, which should be developed in an ecological way, in order to be compatible with nature.

At the same time, and as we have already stated from the beginning, entertainment and fun should be present, and new technologies are a very interesting tool in this sense.

Budapest, from April 25 to 29: Next Step

We hope that during this mobility, it will be possible to advance and specify certain aspects of the project, which could be carried out by any of the partners in their respective countries, and adapted to the characteristics and needs of the place.

Introduction

"Nothing is in the mind that has not first been in the senses" St. Thomas Aquinas

Since the COVID-19 pandemic arrived

Following the lockdown period caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected all of us, studies conducted by expert researchers at San Raffaele Hospital in Milan have found that 50 percent of the elderly, who have not contracted the virus, suffer from depression. Non-reassuring data also concern young people up to the age of 25 for whom the percentage rises to 35 percent against the 14.5 percent that was recorded in previous years.

A study sponsored by the Department of Biomedical Sciences at Humanitas University, to assess the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and well-being of the Italian and global population, finds that 53.8 percent of the 2,400 participants stated that the pandemic had moderate or intense repercussions on their emotional state. People between the ages of 12 and 24 were found to be most affected psychologically, particularly given that the group analyzed included young students deeply affected by the prolonged closure of schools and online education.

According to the World Health Organization, the issue of the emotional impact the pandemic has had on people over 60 has not yet been adequately considered. Building on this scenario, a recent literature review (Banerjee, et al. 2020. Review article) investigated the vulnerability of older people during the pandemic, identifying several multifaceted indirect risk factors: lack of safety, loneliness, age discrimination, and neglect.

In the light of the reported data, Intergenerational Vegetable Academy, conceived by CSA Cooperativa Sociale Onlus engaged for several years in activities in the field of education and training aimed at minors and families, was born and aims to respond to these needs by proposing a project of collaboration, sharing and development of emotional intelligence.

The project is developed with a view to increasing the perception of change in the world around us through the five senses. The Senses, in fact, represent for everyone the preferred channel for knowledge. Scientific evidence shows that, regardless of age, sensory stimulation expands neural connections in the brain, producing psychomotor and cognitive development. Moreover, as the senses are strongly interconnected, stimulation of one of them enhances the others.

Through manual work in the vegetable garden, which will be supplemented with theoretical notions in the field, an educational path of intergenerational learning will be promoted through the learning-by-doing approach with the priority aim of enhancing, through the care of the earth, the origin of plant products that promote healthy nourishment, encouraging a connection with the environment from the physical, emotional and cognitive points of view.

"Getting their hands dirty" for the children will be a way to regain a primitive connection with the earth, detaching and dishabituating themselves from the electronic devices that in recent years of lockdown have been the only means of connecting with the outside world.

Intergenerational Vegetable Academy, for the users involved can be a means to resume daily life in a positive and active way.

Purpose

- The project aims to involve older people in building an intergenerational pathway in order to facilitate the transmission to young people of the teachings, knowledge and experience needed to take care of a vegetable garden.

Growing a vegetable garden allows for a form of direct learning, or learning by doing, that younger generations often do not get to experience.

For older people, the land, represents a chance to train their memory and stimulate motor skills: being engaged in caring for the plants and maintaining them, in fact, they can stimulate movement and coordination as well as increase learning, memory and strengthen self-esteem.

Thus, work will be done on two levels: cognitive-emotional and physical.

The benefits of tilling are numerous. As early as 1880 Thomas Kirkbride, argued how manual labor was one of the remedies for healing and curing people, but it was not until the end of World War II that horticultural programs began for the recovery and rehabilitation of thousands of soldiers and civilians. Since then there were numerous studies, and to this day we can say with absolute certainty that ortho-therapy helps to counter serious ailments such as depression, mental and physical ailments and can be carried out by everyone.

The project aims precisely to be a lifeline and a post-pandemic starting point.

In addition to its therapeutic value, the garden fosters socialization, cooperation, togetherness and the spread of the culture of respect in the relationship between man, nature and the environment.

The priority aims are therefore: the development of knowledge and individual and social skills of the users involved for the establishment of an interdisciplinary and intergenerational educational path, the establishment of a community capable of participating with a sense of responsibility in a common project, and the creation of a garden in which to cultivate different varieties of plants, using healthy and environmentally friendly production methods, bringing users closer to the consumption of organic and zero-mile products. The initiative is aimed at the Green Economy approach and aims to preserve the natural environment by contributing to the achievement of one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals, incorporated in Agenda 2030.

- In school settings where the use of an urban or shared garden will not be possible, the design of a potted or raised balcony crop will be initiated, using the appropriate techniques and tools to be able to exploit the space vertically.
- It will be important to activate a participatory territorial network, through the involvement of expert agronomists and associations concerned with environmental issues, in order to develop the project in the long term.

Objectives

General objectives:

To reduce the sense of loneliness and the repercussions that the pandemic has had on the emotional state of the users involved;

Incentivize the users' sense of responsibility through caring for the garden;

Fostering reflection on good practices of composting, recycling, short supply chain and organic farming;

Working at an interdisciplinary level by involving and including children and the elderly in collaboration with each other;

Educating on care and respect for the environment to encourage the adoption of healthy and sustainable habits;

Encouraging work as a tool for building processes of socialization, integration, intergenerational exchange and social cohesion;

- introduce and put into practice the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Obiettivi specifici per i ragazzi:

- Avvicinare i ragazzi alla natura ed al rispetto dell'ambiente;
- Favorire il lavoro manuale disabituando i ragazzi all'utilizzo dei dispositivi elettronici;
- Sensibilizzare i ragazzi all'importanza dei 5 sensi quando li vedono mutare nei soggetti anziani, creando oggettive difficoltà;

Obiettivi specifici per le persone anziane:

- Incrementare il senso di utilità;
- Favorire la socializzazione con i giovani;
- Stimolare e praticare i sensi per combattere il deterioramento delle loro capacità cognitive.

Destinatari

- Ragazzi dai 3 ai 18 anni con attività specifiche rispetto a caratteristiche e capacità delle diverse fasce d'età;
- Persone anziane pensionate che vivono situazioni di solitudine o che, semplicemente, abbiano voglia di mettersi in gioco.

Metodologie

Per raggiungere gli obiettivi suddetti saranno utilizzate le seguenti tecniche educative:

- learning by doing;
- insegnamento vicario;
- cooperative learning;
- insegnamento on-side.

Tools

5 senses: through a sensory journey, the aim is to rediscover the value of the senses, which are necessary to understand the complexity of the world.

Emotional intelligence: tool to create relationship among participants and bring out personal skills and abilities.

Period

Intergenerational vegetable academy will last 4 months, within the period from March to July 2023.

Workshop activities of approximately 2 hours.

Visits to specialized companies lasting half a day.

Method of conduct.

The various proposed modules will be divided as follows:

Sensory and workshop pathways:

Five senses climate change:

Participants will be asked to collect thoughts on the perception of climate change through the five senses and turn them into art through their preferred channels (photographs, stories, drawings, poems, songs).

The collected material will be used to create a picture book that will be divided into five chapters, one for each of the senses.

Intergenerational Comparison:

This workshop is aimed at the transmission by the elderly of memories, experiences and stories regarding land cultivation, culinary tradition and food preservation. In a society where a person's social role coincides with his or her productivity, it becomes an opportunity to reframe and analyze all that emerges on an emotional and cognitive level. The elderly must be placed in a personalist vision: he is a person and the person is a value in himself and as such should be respected, promoted, recognized and made a subject of life.

Cooking workshop:

The cooking workshop involves the creation of traditional dishes from our area. Through the execution of recipes, the aim is to spread the experience of the elderly in a spirit of teamwork with young people. The aim is to share the ancient flavors and recipes, offering the opportunity for the youth to renew and modernize them. Value will be given, through this workshop, to the cyclical nature: in fact, recipes will be proposed with seasonal products that can be taken directly from the garden.

Hands-on course:

Using the learning-by-doing educational approach, participants will be given on-site notions of agronomy, crop selection and tillage, reflections on climate change, general horticulture and the different types of plants that can be grown.

Together with the experts they will fence off the area that will be used as a vegetable garden.

The next steps will be:

Preparation of the soil through manual tillage;

Preparation of the gombine;

Choice of cultivation with the arrangement of an irrigation system;

Arrangement of braces and supports once the seedlings are planted;

Cleaning and caring for weeds and integrated pest management.

Finally, harvesting the produce. This stage is crucial because it is the time when participants will be able to actually see the fruit of their efforts, fully appreciating the time spent in achieving their goals.

The products will be used in the cooking workshop or distributed to participants in fair trade baskets.

Monitoring and control

The ultimate purpose of the evaluation phase will be to monitor that the achievement of the set goals is consistent with the aims of the project.

It is the style of the CSA cooperative to ensure quality service, identifying in real time any critical points on which it is possible to build consequent improvement actions.

A mid-term check-up will be scheduled to verify the progress and level of satisfaction of the participants.

A satisfaction questionnaire will be administered at the conclusion of Intergenerational Vegetable Academy.

RESourCE Project – 3rd MOBILITY AT MUNICH, 21-25 March

Presentation of the “*Intergenerational Vegetable Academy*” Project, by Federica Guzzo:

Partners Contributions:

ISRAEL

There is a similar initiative in Israel, but the main difference is that there are always people working there at the garden, so there are a group of “workers” involved in the development and the harvest of the project.

The children that participate in the initiative are children of schools all over the area, who visit the place occasionally, to learn and to help the farmers during their job.

There is also a chance to help the project and get involved in the garden through a volunteering experience, so it is a wide open initiative offered to anyone who wants to learn and help at the same time.

SPNI’s opinion about the initiative is in general terms quite positive, especially in relation to the approach of putting together people from different ages in the same activities. There are not a lot of projects involving children-young people with elderly people.

At the same time, it is important to make a difference between nature and agriculture, because they are two different but related topics that could be mixed and be confusing at some point. Agriculture could be beneficial or not to nature, so it should be separated. To relate agriculture with nature, it should be developed in an ecological or biological way.

GERMANY

In Germany it is very common to develop vegetable gardens in the surroundings of the cities. These gardens are sometimes carried out by particulars, with the simple aim of taking care of their own vegetable garden, i.e. as a hobby or pastime.

However, there are also other initiatives that develop these gardens with an environmental educational approach, as the one we were able to see in Munich the second day of the mobility. This garden could be a useful example for the project we want to develop.

On the other hand, ITALCAM's partners also ask about the benefits of the project and the garden concretely regarding the youth people. For them the benefits of the project in elderly people and little children, but they show some doubts regarding this target group. Kind of the same with the role they would develop during the entire project. Those two aspects should be clarified.

SPAIN

Regarding one of the most relevant difficulties of the project, the one related with the acquisition of the land needed for the garden, Spain's delegation putted some practical examples;

One of the participants of the GARAPEN, the Spanish representative organization in this project, brought the example of municipal gardens projects that are being developed during the last years and many different localities in the Basque Country. The concrete initiative she talked about, was Galdakao's municipal garden project, where the Local Government is the owner of a number of plots of land near the village, and distributes them among all the people who wish to develop an agricultural activity on them, without lucrative purposes and for entertainment. The concession is annual but if the users want to continue using the land they only have to communicate to the town hall their will.

In this way, in this locality, and in so many others in the Basque Country, small-scale agriculture is being promoted in a very positive way, as a leisure activity, and promoting on the other hand coexistence and collaboration, since the users must coexist with the rest of the neighboring users. There is no age limit established to be a user of these lands, so it is common to find people of all ages in these spaces. This fact also promotes the exchange of knowledge, since in many occasions more experienced users tend to help those who have recently joined.

HUNGARY

The Hungarian participants, on the other hand, gave the example of their own volunteering activity carried out in their organization, SZATYOR.

The organization aims to promote the responsible and local consumption of vegetables, and for this purpose, they have different vegetable gardens, where on the one hand, they grow organic vegetables, which are then sold in the neighboring villages. On the other hand, the volunteers can also buy their own vegetables. In this way, participation is promoted in a very effective way through the figure of the volunteers, who on the one hand, learn and become aware of the responsible use of the land, and on the other hand, have the opportunity to consume directly what they help to produce.

POST MOBILITY PROPOSALS IN MONACO

The experience at the ecological education center was very interesting: different people (by age, experience, need) build the park, dividing it into different zones, making it suitable for everyone: to play, to study.

This gives us the opportunity to expand the project to community work in municipal parks.

- VISIT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL-ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION CENTER IN MONACO, 03/22/2022
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- Interesting aspects of the project:
- Items (Modules that develop)
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- Nature Study
- Energy-Climate
- Land, Art and Creativity
- Healthy Food and Organic Agriculture
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- (These courses can be good examples for workshops or activities outside the garden.)
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- The project is very focused on the dissemination and explanation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It thus incorporates the triple aspect of sustainability (social, economic and environmental).
- Target Groups : Mainly boys and girls between 10-12 years old.
- Concept; "Learning with heart, head and hand."
- Have included activities with digital and technological media. This motivates young people. Example: photography workshop with Smart Phones.

