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RISE JOINT

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Handbook about Green Practices in ESC Team RISE projects





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1. Handbook on Green Practices in ESC Team RISE projects

1.1 INTRODUCTION

We all know, in theory, that we need to take care of nature. However, there is a significant gap between awareness and action. In the modern world, young people are often highly motivated by environmental ideals, yet when they face the reality of daily life, the real challenge begins. How do we translate "green thinking" into "green doing"?

This handbook is the result of the **RISE project (Road to Inclusion and Solidarity in Europe).** The core mission of RISE is to promote solidarity and build a more inclusive society across the European Union. We believe that environmentalism should not be an elite hobby, but a bridge to inclusion.

This digital publication specifically analyzes the impact of involving **Highly Vulnerable Young People (HVYP)**, volunteers who may face fewer opportunities but possess immense potential, in projects that put them in direct contact with the natural world and animals.

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1.2 FROM FOOTPRINT TO MILESTONES

In the RISE projects, we set out to prove that change is possible on every scale. It begins with the individual, changing personal habits and mindsets, but it grows to leave a lasting footprint on local communities. Through the methodology of "learning by doing," our volunteers didn't just study sustainability; they lived it.

This handbook presents the results of our first three Team Mobilities, each offering a unique perspective on green living:

Cascina EUtopia: A rustic setting focused on self-wellbeing and the connection between nature and the body through essential oils and natural soaps.

Ostello Monte Barro: An isolated, wilder environment where the emphasis shifted to circularity and upcycling, turning "waste" into recycled paper and foraging for vegan cuisine.

Cooperativa One: A town-centered project that proved sustainability is possible in urban settings, focusing on social inclusion and the implementation of community-wide recycling campaigns.

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1.3 HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

We have curated a collection of "**Green Practices**" that are designed to be accessible, low-cost, and replicable. We intentionally avoided methodologies that require massive investments or extreme time commitments. Our goal is for these pages to be more than just a digital file on your computer.

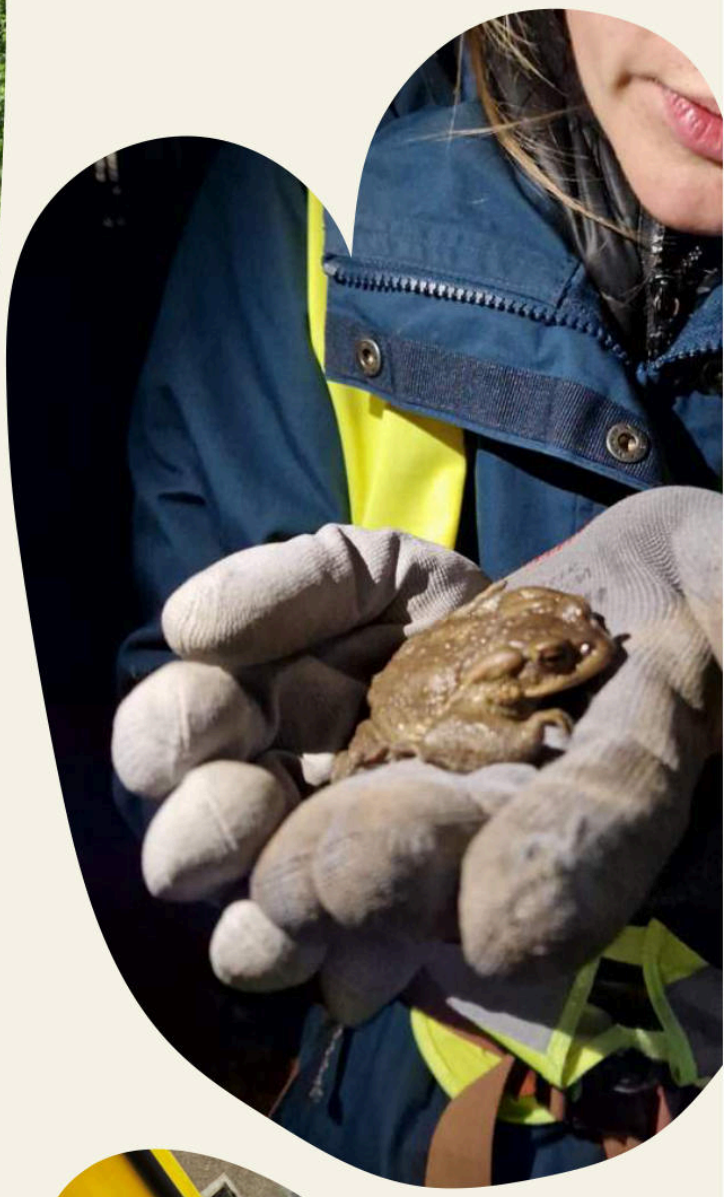
We want you to read these results, feel the success of the HVYP volunteers who led these activities, and feel motivated to step outside and try these ideas yourself. Whether you are a youth worker, a volunteer, or a curious citizen, these practices are tools for you to reduce your environmental impact while strengthening the values of solidarity.

Sustainability is not a destination; it is a road.

We invite you to join us on this Road to Inclusion and Solidarity as we turn green theory into a vibrant, inclusive reality.

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2.OVERVIEW OF THE HOSTING ORGANISATIONS

Cascina EUtopia

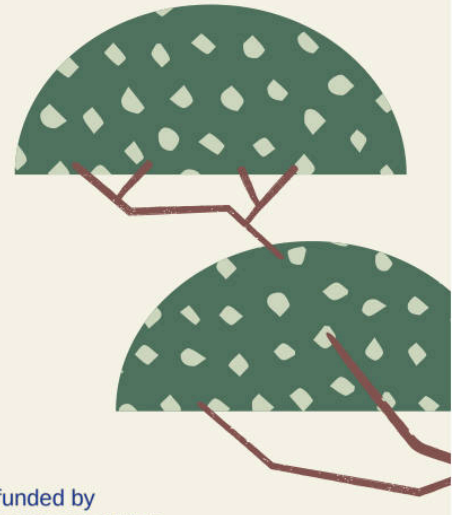
61 days: 13/05/2025 - 13/07/2025

Located in Casaleggio Boiro, in the Piemonte region of northern Italy, Cascina EUtopia is surrounded by a rich green landscape and situated close to a regional park. The area offers an ideal setting for reconnecting with nature and experiencing a more sustainable and mindful way of living.

Within the RISE project, this rural environment became a space of transformation, where volunteers were actively involved in giving new life to the farmhouse and the land surrounding it. The long-term vision is to develop Cascina EUtopia into a safe, inclusive, and welcoming place for Highly Vulnerable Young People (HVYP) participating in future European exchanges and volunteering initiatives.

Volunteers contributed to a variety of hands-on activities, including the renovation of the structure, green maintenance of outdoor spaces, and upcycling initiatives aimed at reducing waste and reusing materials creatively. These practical tasks were complemented by daily activities such as cooking, which promoted sustainable food practices and collective responsibility.

Cascina EUtopia provided a holistic learning experience. Volunteers were encouraged to engage actively with both the natural environment and the social dimension of sustainability, developing skills and attitudes that can be applied in their everyday lives.








GRANAROLO
LATTE

2.1 Additional Activities in CASCINA EUTOPIA
Specific green practices

Essential oils

The essential oils workshop at Cascina EUtopia introduced volunteers to the process of extracting natural products from plants, highlighting the connection between biodiversity, wellbeing, and sustainable resource use. Focusing on lavender, one of the most widely used aromatic plants, the activity combined manual work, technical learning, and sensory experience.

The workshop began with the harvesting phase. Volunteers collected lavender directly from the surrounding fields, learning how and when to gather the plant in order to preserve its aromatic and beneficial properties.

Following the collection, volunteers were introduced to the distillation process. Using a dedicated distillation machine, they observed how lavender flowers are transformed into essential oil through steam extraction. This phase allowed volunteers to discover how traditional knowledge and simple technologies can be used to obtain natural products without relying on industrial processes.

Materials and Equipment
Fresh lavender flowers
Distillation machine (steam distiller)
Water
Heat source
Glass containers for collection
Small bottles for storage

Process
Step 1: Harvesting
Lavender is carefully collected by hand, selecting fresh and healthy flowers. This step is essential to ensure the quality of the final product.

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Step 2: Preparation
The harvested lavender is cleaned if necessary and placed inside the distillation chamber.

Step 3: Distillation
Water is heated to produce steam, which passes through the plant material. The steam extracts the aromatic compounds from the lavender.

Step 4: Condensation
he steam is cooled and condensed back into liquid form, producing a mixture of essential oil and hydrosol (aromatic water).

Step 5: Separation
The essential oil is separated from the hydrosol and collected in a container.

Step 6: Bottling
The final product is transferred into small bottles, ready for storage or use.

Learning Outcomes
This activity allowed volunteers to explore the full cycle of a natural product, from plant harvesting to final use. It strengthened their understanding of how local resources can be transformed in a sustainable and low-impact way.

The workshop also promoted mindfulness and sensory awareness, as participants engaged with the scents, textures, and properties of the plant. In addition, it highlighted the value of traditional practices and their relevance in contemporary sustainable living.

For Highly Vulnerable Young People (HVYP), the experience provided an opportunity to develop practical skills in a supportive and collaborative environment. It also reinforced the idea that nature can offer not only environmental benefits, but also tools for wellbeing, self-care, and potential future opportunities in green and artisanal sectors.

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Lavende
EUtopia
2025
Lavender
EUtopia
2025




NIKE

2.1 Additional Activities in CASCINA EUTOPIA
Specific green practices

Natural Shampoo

The natural shampoo workshop at Cascina EUtopia introduced volunteers to the creation of simple, plant-based personal care products, emphasizing the link between natural ingredients, wellbeing, and sustainable everyday practices. Focusing on accessible and nourishing food, the activity combined hands-on preparation, practical learning, and sensory exploration. The workshop began with the preparation phase.

- **Banana Shampoo**

ingredients: banana; water

How to make: you don't need many ingredients for this shampoo. Just take a soft banana that has already become covered with brown spots, mash it and add water to make a creamy texture.
How to use: apply to the scalp and hair, massage the head and hair well and rinse thoroughly with warm water.

- **Aquafaba shampoo**

Ingredients: liquid after cooking legumes/canned legumes; lemon juice/vinegar.

How to make: mix aquafaba with lemon juice or vinegar in a 4:1 ratio. You can also do this with a small plate (you will have to shake it well).
How to use: wash your hair as usual with this foaming liquid.

- **Shampoo from old bread**

Ingredients: slices of rye bread (can be dry); warm water

How to make: crush the bread with your hands and cover with warm water, but not boiling water. If the bread is very hard, just leave it to soak in the water. Leave it for 20-30 minutes to infuse and soak. If the bread is dry, it is better to leave it for an hour. Mash the bread until it becomes a thick porridge (you can use a blender, but your hands will work too).
How to use: apply this bread mass to damp scalp. Massage well for 3-5 minutes (only the skin, not the hair). Rinse off with warm water (possibly twice to rinse off all the crumbs).

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1 CUP





3.OVERVIEW OF THE HOSTING ORGANISATIONS

Ostello Monte Barro

OSTELLO
Parco Monte Barro

31 days: 9/03/2026 - 8/04/2026

Located within a protected regional park, Ostello Monte Barro stands as a tangible example of how environmental protection and community engagement can successfully coexist and reinforce one another.
The natural setting provides an ideal environment for experiential learning, where sustainability is not only discussed but actively practiced on a daily basis.

Within the framework of the RISE project, volunteers played an active role in supporting the preservation of local ecosystems and biodiversity. Through hands-on involvement, they gained first-hand insight into how communities protect, manage, and transmit their natural heritage across generations. Activities such as habitat maintenance and creative upcycling contributed to the conservation of the area while promoting a more responsible and conscious use of natural resources.
One of the most meaningful experiences for the volunteers was their involvement in the protection of local amphibian populations. This activity highlighted how biodiversity preservation relies on collective effort, long-term commitment, and continuous awareness. By taking part in these actions, participants developed a deeper understanding of the delicate balance within ecosystems and the importance of safeguarding even the most vulnerable species.
Beyond the practical dimension, volunteers also took on the role of mediators of environmental values. Through interaction with local residents, and other stakeholders, they contributed to raising awareness and encouraging more sustainable behaviours within the community.

This experience proved particularly impactful for Highly Vulnerable Young People (HVYP), who were supported in developing a stronger sense of belonging and responsibility towards shared natural assets. Rather than being passive beneficiaries, they were empowered to see themselves as active contributors to environmental protection and community wellbeing.


PEACAMOLE


SINGER
Melodie
50


GAMBA FRUTTA
GAMBA FRUTTA



3.1 Additional Activities in OSTELLO MONTE BARRO
Specific green practices

Foraging and Vegan Cuisine

This workshop at Ostello Monte Barro combined environmental awareness with practical cooking skills, offering volunteers a unique opportunity to explore sustainable food practices. Guided by a local expert, participants learned how to identify edible plants in nature and transform them into simple, nutritious, and low-impact meals.

This activity emphasized the importance of conscious food choices, highlighting how plant-based diets and the use of locally available ingredients can significantly reduce environmental impact. By directly engaging with nature through foraging, volunteers developed a deeper appreciation for seasonal resources and traditional knowledge.

The workshop culminated in a hands-on cooking session, where participants prepared a variety of vegan recipes using both foraged and easily accessible ingredients.

Recipe 1: Wild Garlic Pesto

This recipe uses wild garlic (bear garlic) collected during a morning foraging activity, demonstrating how natural resources can be transformed into flavourful dishes.

Ingredients

300 g wild garlic leaves
150 g olive oil
100 g toasted almonds (or pine nuts)
50 g nutritional yeast
10 g salt

Process

Wash and roughly chop the wild garlic leaves.
Blend the leaves together with the olive oil until a smooth consistency is reached.
Add the toasted almonds, nutritional yeast, and salt.
Blend again until the mixture becomes creamy and well combined.
Adjust texture or seasoning if needed.

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Recipe 2: "Peacamole" (Pea-based Alternative to Guacamole)

This recipe offers a creative and more sustainable alternative to traditional guacamole by replacing imported avocados with locally available peas.

Ingredients

Juice of 2 lemons (approx. 60 g)
700 g green peas
15 g chopped garlic
13 g salt
2 red onions (optional)

Process

Cook or blanch the peas if necessary, then let them cool.
Blend the peas with lemon juice until smooth.
Add garlic and salt, continuing to blend.
Finely chop the red onions and mix them in (optional).
Adjust flavour to taste and serve fresh.

Recipe 3: Basic Vegan Cake

A versatile and simple recipe that can be adapted with different flavours and ingredients, encouraging creativity and reducing reliance on animal products.

Ingredients

500 g flour
500 g soy milk
250 g sunflower seed oil
250 g sugar
16 g baking powder
5 g salt

Process

Mix the flour with the baking powder and salt in a large bowl.
Add soy milk, sunflower oil, and sugar.
Stir until the mixture becomes smooth and homogeneous.
Pour the batter into a baking tray.
Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C for approximately 35–40 minutes.
Optionally, add ingredients such as chocolate chips, cinnamon, lemon zest, or ginger for variation.

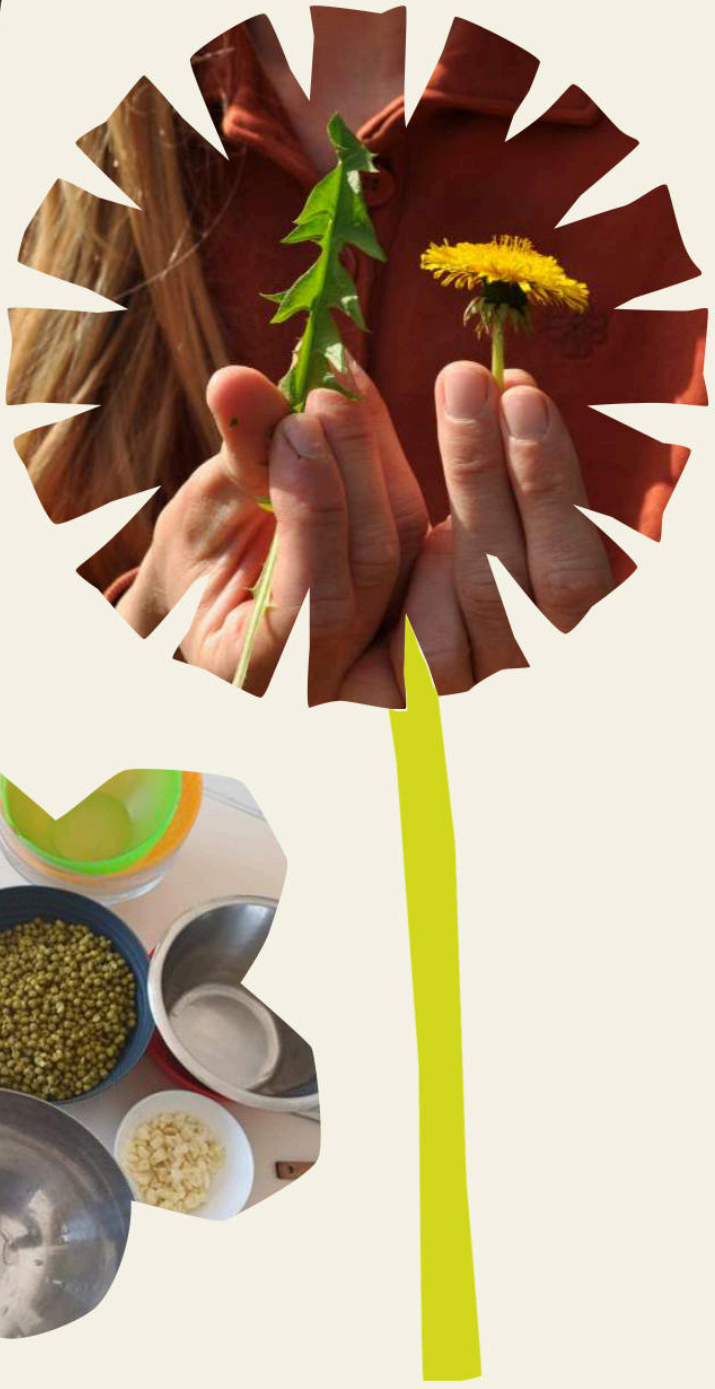
Learning Outcomes

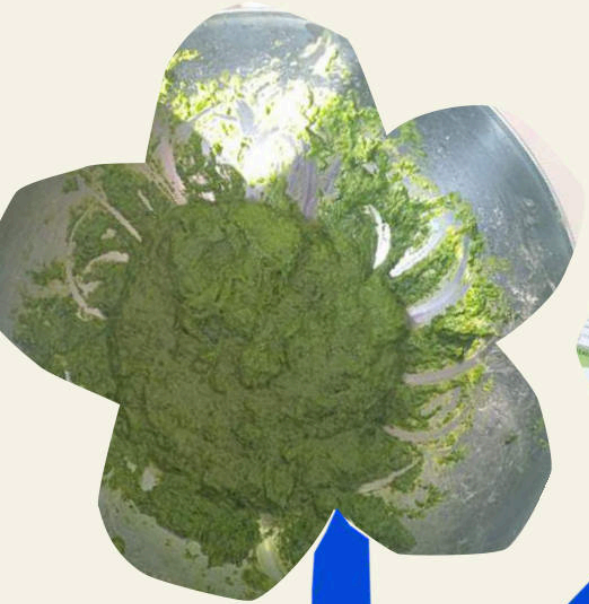
Through this workshop, volunteers explored the environmental impact of food systems and learned practical ways to adopt more sustainable eating habits. The combination of foraging and cooking strengthened their connection with nature while promoting creativity and resourcefulness in the kitchen.

Volunteers also developed teamwork and intercultural exchange, as recipes and techniques were shared and adapted collectively. For Highly Vulnerable Young People (HVYP), the activity provided an inclusive and engaging way to build confidence, acquire life skills, and reflect on how everyday choices—such as what we eat—can contribute to a more sustainable future.

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3.1 Additional Activities in OSTELLO MONTE BARRO
Specific green practices

Shelves with fruit crates

The upcycling workshop at Ostello Monte Barro addressed this question through a hands-on, collaborative approach. Volunteers were actively involved in improving the hostel environment while developing practical skills and environmental awareness. The activity focused on the transformation of used fruit crates into functional shelves. This experience not only contributed to enhancing the shared living space of the hostel but also demonstrated how low-cost, accessible techniques can be applied in everyday life. Following the "learning by doing" methodology, the workshop encouraged volunteers to reflect on the value of resources, the impact of waste, and the potential of circular practices.

Step-by-step:

- **Material collection:** volunteers gathered used fruit crates, giving priority to materials that would otherwise be discarded.
- **Initial sanding (inside)**: the inside of each crate was carefully sanded to smooth the surface and improve paint absorption.
- **Cleaning:** dust and residues were removed using a damp cloth to ensure a clean base for painting.
- **First layer of paint (inside):** a first coat of water-based paint was applied to the inside of the crate using brushes.

Drying time: about 2h

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- **Sanding (outside):** the outer surface was sanded to smooth imperfections and prepare it for treatment.
- **Second cleaning:** dust created during sanding was removed again with a cloth.
- **Second layer of paint (inside)**
- **Refinement sanding (outside):** the outside was lightly sanded again to remove any paint drips or irregularities.
- **Protective finishing (inside):** a layer of transparent varnish was applied inside to protect the painted surface.
- **Wood treatment (outside):** a thin layer of linseed oil was applied to the external wood to nourish and protect it.
- **Final drying**
- **Installation:** once ready, the crates were fixed to the walls and transformed into functional shelves, improving the hostel space.



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CAMBA FRUTAI




CAMBA FRUTAI

4.OVERVIEW OF THE HOSTING ORGANISATIONS

Cooperativa ONE

61 days: 22/03/2026 - 22/05/2026

Cooperativa One engaged volunteers in the preservation and revitalisation of urban cultural heritage, with a specific focus on social spaces and community assets in the historical centre of Crotone. The social hostel managed by the cooperative functioned both as a working environment and as a living example of heritage regeneration driven by youth participation.
Volunteers contributed to maintenance, renovation, and artistic interventions within the hostel, supporting its role as an open and inclusive community hub. Through these activities, heritage was understood not only as physical structures, but also as a network of social relationships, collective memory, and shared civic values. The space regularly hosted workshops, events, and cultural initiatives that fostered dialogue between volunteers and local residents.

A key component of the project was the promotion of environmental responsibility in an urban context. Volunteers organised public awareness initiatives and small-scale demonstrations in the historic centre of Crotone to promote the importance of waste separation and recycling—practices that are not yet fully implemented in the area.

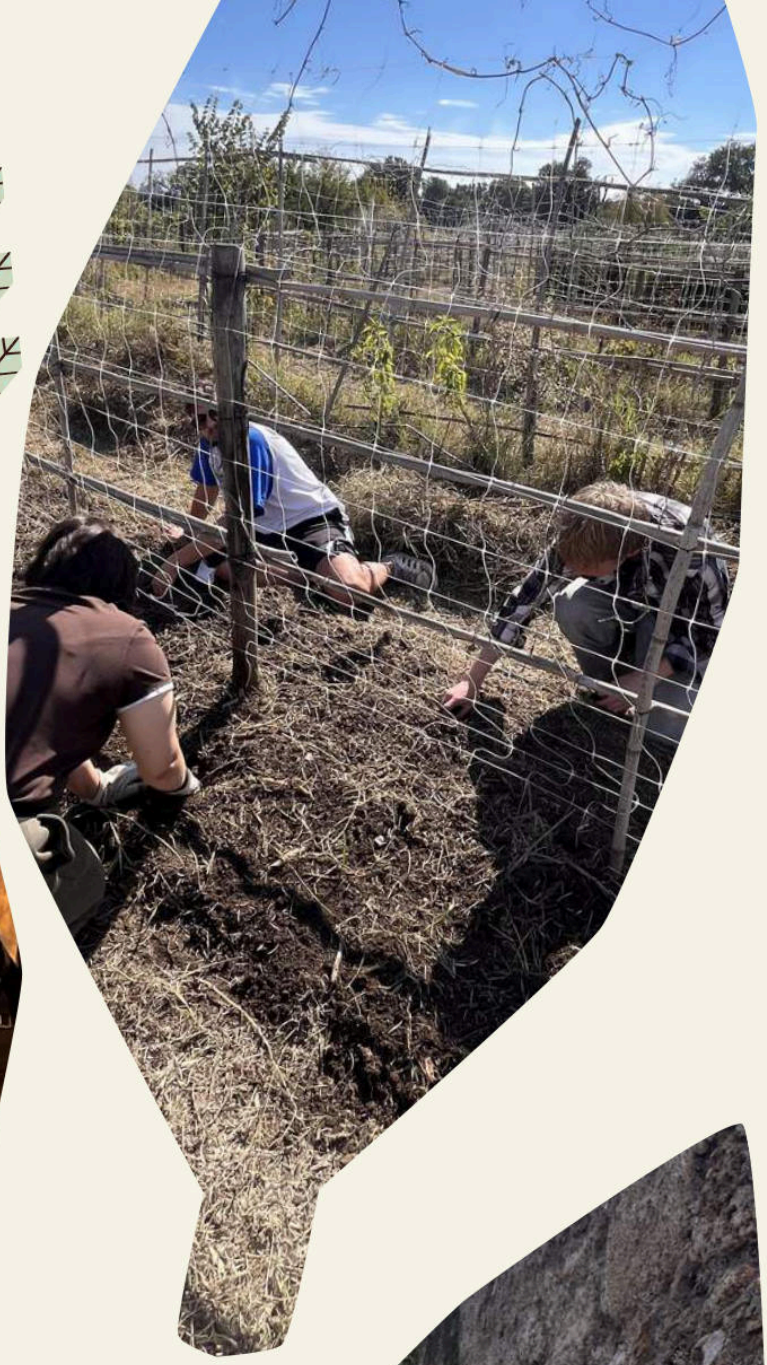
These actions aimed to engage citizens directly, encouraging behavioural change and highlighting the role of individual responsibility in environmental sustainability.

Collaborations with local NGOs and organisations managing assets confiscated from organised crime further strengthened the connection between cultural heritage, legality, and social justice. This dimension added depth to the volunteers' experience, showing how sustainability also involves ethical and civic engagement.

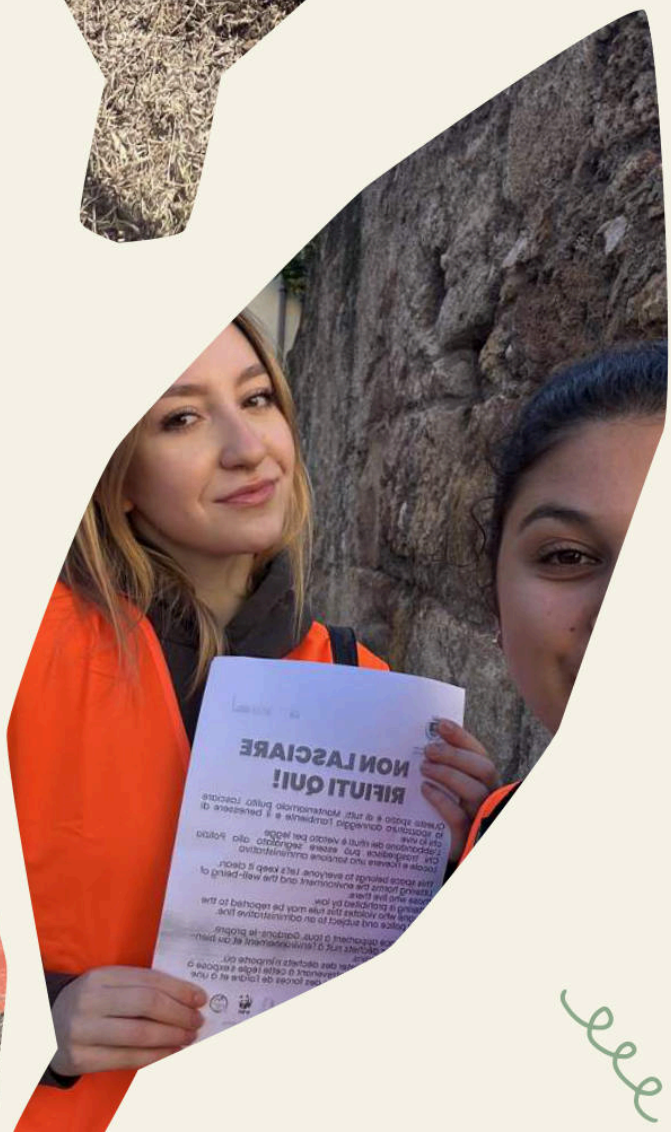
For volunteers, especially those with fewer opportunities, this experience represented a powerful learning pathway. It demonstrated how heritage can be reclaimed and transformed into a tool for community empowerment, active citizenship, and long-term social impact.

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NON LASCIARE
RIFIUTI QUI!

4.1 Additional Activities in COOPERATIVA ONE
Specific green practices

Recycled paper

The recycled paper workshop carried out at Cooperativa One represents a simple yet impactful example of circular economy in practice. By transforming old and unused paper into new handmade sheets, volunteers experienced firsthand how waste materials can be reintroduced into a productive cycle.
This activity not only reduced paper waste, but also encouraged creativity, patience, and attention to detail. It demonstrated that sustainability can be achieved through low-cost, accessible practices that can easily be replicated in different contexts, including schools, youth centres, and community spaces.

Materials used:

1. Old paper sheets (e.g. notebooks, printed paper, newspapers)
2. A blender (not used for food preparation)
3. Water
4. Coloured paper or cardboard
5. A large tub or container
6. A hand towel or cloth
7. A wooden paper-making frame
8. A sponge

Step 1: Preparation

A few days before the workshop, the paper must be torn into small pieces and soaked in water. This process softens the fibres and makes them easier to work with during the following steps.

Step 2: Sorting and blending

Once the paper is fully softened, it should be separated by colour (light and dark tones). The paper is then blended with water until it reaches a soft, pulpy consistency. The texture may appear uneven, especially when using darker paper, but this is part of the process and does not affect the final result.

Step 3: Adding colour

To create more visually interesting sheets, pieces of coloured paper or cardboard can be added to the mixture and blended again. This allows volunteers to experiment creatively and personalise their recycled paper.

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Step 4: Preparing the mixture

The pulp is then poured into a larger container filled with water. The mixture should be well distributed to ensure an even result during the shaping phase.

Step 5: Shaping the paper

The wooden frame is dipped into the container and gently moved to collect the pulp. It is important to distribute the material evenly across the frame, avoiding empty spaces or excessive accumulation in certain areas. Once lifted, the frame should be held still to allow excess water to drip off.

Step 6: Transferring the sheet

This step requires care and coordination. The frame is turned upside down onto a cloth or towel, transferring the paper sheet onto the surface.

Step 7: Removing excess water

Using a sponge, volunteers gently press the surface of the frame to absorb remaining water. This process should be done carefully, especially around the edges, and repeated until the sheet is no longer excessively wet.

Step 8: Finishing

The frame is slowly lifted, revealing the newly formed sheet of recycled paper. The paper should then be left to dry completely before use.

Learning Outcomes

Through this workshop, volunteers developed a deeper understanding of resource management and waste reduction. The activity highlighted the value of reusing materials and demonstrated how everyday objects can be transformed through simple processes.

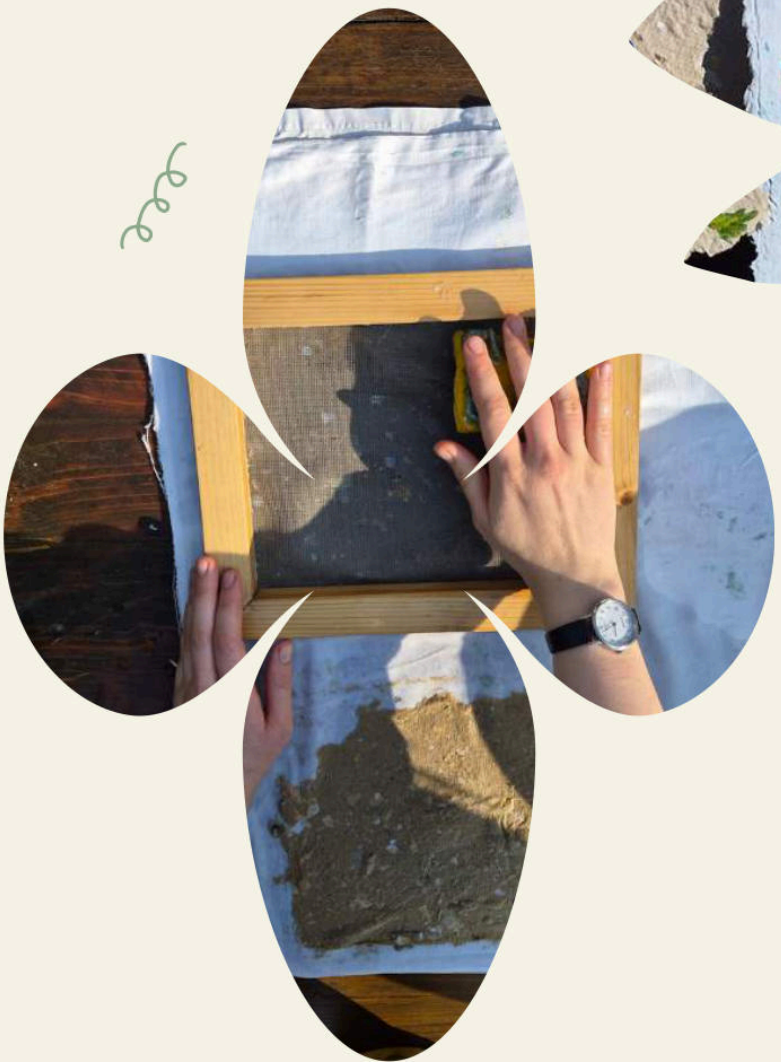
In addition, the workshop fostered teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Participants were encouraged to experiment, collaborate, and reflect on how small-scale actions can contribute to broader environmental sustainability.



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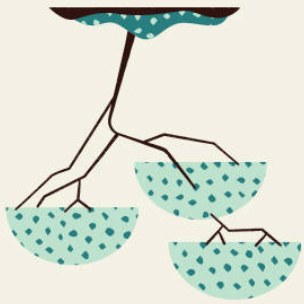
4.1 Additional Activities in COOPERATIVA ONE
Specific green practices

Campaign for the recycling

The initiative carried out at Cooperativa One in Crotone addressed this challenge through direct community engagement and grassroots mobilization. Volunteers took an active role in raising awareness about separate waste collection, particularly in the historic city center, where such practices were not yet fully implemented.
The activity involved going into the streets and interacting with local residents, sharing information, answering questions, and encouraging small but meaningful behavioral changes. In addition, volunteers contributed to amplifying the message by participating in a local radio broadcast, extending the reach of the campaign and fostering a broader public dialogue the importance of recycling and responsible waste management.

Volunteers experienced how civic participation and communication can influence social change. They developed skills in public speaking, teamwork, and community engagement, while also strengthening their sense of responsibility as active citizens.
The impact of the initiative extended beyond the duration of the activity itself. In the months following the campaign, the municipality introduced separate waste collection in the historic center—demonstrating how grassroots action, when combined with persistence and collaboration, can contribute to tangible and lasting change.

Through this experience, volunteers moved from awareness to advocacy, showing that sustainability is not only about individual habits, but also about collective action and the ability to inspire transformation within communities.



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5. CONCLUSION

As we reach the end of this handbook, we return to the core question of the **RISE project:** how do we bridge the gap between knowing and doing? The experiences documented across these three mobilities offer a powerful answer:

we transform awareness into action by making sustainability tangible, shared, and inclusive.

By embracing the "learning by doing" method, our volunteers demonstrated that **green practices** are much more than environmental goals. They are essential pathways to empowerment. For the Highly Vulnerable Young People (HVYP) involved, activities like foraging or upcycling became a way to contribute meaningfully to society. This proves that social inclusion and environmental care are deeply linked.

The practices presented here are simple, accessible, and cost-effective. They are designed to be adapted rather than just followed. The **"Road to Inclusion and Solidarity"** remains open, and we invite you to take these ideas into your own communities. By turning these pages into action, the real impact begins now.



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