

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Italy – Croatia

WP1

Act.1.1

D1.2.1

“Grow together - 1 Cross-border training scheme for high school students on agricultural biodiversity”

STUDY TRIP

VERA project – Sustainable agricultural models for biodiversity conservation
28.2. – 3.3.2024.



In this reporting period Sunce and Permakultura Dalmacija organized study trip for eight students and their professor from the [Istituto tecnico agrario e geometra](#), from the province of Molise, the city of Larino. This study trip, which is part of the Interreg, was an opportunity for Italian students to leave Italy borders for the first time and to learn something new about sustainable agricultural models and practices in Croatia.

We welcomed the students in Split and hosted them in the Sunce office in order to show them how the work in Sunce looks like. Then, as a part of their sustainable tour, they walked around Split with our volunteer Alex. The city became the stage on which we explored the sustainable Split history.

We spent the second day at the [High school "Braće Radić"](#) in Kaštel Štafilić. The students made new friends with their Croatian peers, and the school's teachers (Marijana Bjeliš, Nikola Škarić, Živko Skračić and Mara Mizdor) prepared a series of interesting and practical activities.

Besides the tour of the colourful school's greenhouse and garden, these practical activities included the activity of shaping an olive tree in bonsai style, making traditional decorations for Palm Sunday



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and visiting the school's cellar, which produces traditional varieties of wine. The students also joined forces to plant a tree of friendship – an Italian magnolia. Tree location: [link](#).

That day came to an end at the Tvrdstina estate. Surrounded by 3,000 fig trees, 250 olive trees and zinfandel vines, we felt like guests in the Garden of Eden. As a permanent reminder, we took fig cuttings that the Italian students will try to cultivate at home.

We spent the third day at [Ostrog Elementary School](#), where we were kindly welcomed by teacher Sandra Tuta and manager of the botanical garden Iskra Mara Zubčić Svalina.

On that occasion we visited the impressive [botanical garden Ostrog](#), the only protected monument of park horticulture in Croatia and proud owner of approximately 1,000 plant varieties from all over the world. We participated in the activities of vegetative reproduction of hydrangeas, ficusses and cypresses, and under the mentorship of Permakultura, by enlivening each leaf of the plant with a story, we created herbariums.

Despite the bad weather, on the fourth day, we visited mountain lodge Malačka and participated in an educational lecture by an expert in Permakultura. The lecture was about the diversity of species and habitats in the mountain lodge. Although we couldn't take a walk in the beautiful nature around Malačka, the students were amazed by the sights from their windows. They witnessed the great force of nature on settlements in their surroundings.

The last day we dedicated our time to do the evaluation of joint activities. In order to do so and to further enrich the story of our trip, we visited the Jadro River source in their interpretive center. We talked with the students about their impressions and compared the agricultural situation in Croatia and Italy.



STUDY TRIP

VERA project – Sustainable agricultural models for biodiversity conservation

_8/04 -12/04 2024

Larino (CB)



The first day, after a long journey by ferry, train, buses and finally cars, the students' group and their teachers from Split arrived in Larino, with a great delay, at 8 pm, just in time for dropping the luggage at the B&B, to meet the school principal, some of the teachers involved and the other students of the school, and to have a comforting dinner altogether at the schoolhouse restaurant.

The 2nd day started with an experiential rural trekking between history, flavours and nature: a walking route from the school - Carpineto road - to the "Oro Frentano" farm, immersed in the olive groves, following the flight of the bees, on sacred ways, in memory of the San Pardo cow farm, in the sheep track network, in the flavours, telling characters and stories of the area, between the virtual and the real. The working day continued at school, in the Laboratory activity for the production of stretched curd cheeses, with the guidance of expert cheesemakers who gave also a theoretical lesson on experimental dairy systems/equipment, milk quality and cheesemaking. Students at the end of the day made and tasted their own cheese and butter.



On the 3^d day the students were given a theoretical lesson on biodiversity towards guided tour of the olive grove. They were shown the catalogue of native Molise varieties, the high-density experimental olive grove, the orchard of ancient Molise varieties and, finally, a theoretical lesson on polyconic vase pruning of the olive tree.

A Practical activity followed, consisting in the pruning exercise on the polyconic vase olive tree. In the afternoon there has been a guided visit to the historical centre of Acquaviva Collecroce where Croatian minorities settled from the 15th century, due the cyclical Ottoman incursions, and where the ancient Croatian language is still preserved among the local population.

A folkloristic gathering between local elderly and the students took place with music and the exhibition of products from local artisans

A final visit to the Cianfagna farm with the viewing of the family vineyard and a final wine tasting for all

On the 4th day the students experienced a guided exercise for the production of a dessert typical of the tradition of the Croatian municipalities of Molise (Kolace from Acquaviva Collecroce). The activity fell within the scope of the project "Traditional desserts: from raw materials to the development of recipes" (PCTO), the result of the collaboration between the school and the "Grano Salis" Domestic Agri-Food Enterprise (IAD) of Lupara (CB). In the afternoon, the students had the chance to visit the historical centre of the town of Larino where they visited the carnival wagons and their technical structures, then they tried to use the clay as a basis for the works with papier-mâché: finally they all had a walk in the historical centre, visiting the local museum, the duke palace and the cathedral (Duomo di Larino).

On the 5th and final day, the students were taken to the regional contest on the polyconic vase pruning. That a Polyconic vase is one of the most widespread shapes and is based on the distribution of the foliage on several equidistant cones of vegetation, inserted at the top of the trunk and inclined outwards by 30/45 degrees with respect to the axis. The students watched the participants facing during the contest. and, after a packed lunch, were taken to the station heading to Ancona, to get home by the night ferry



