



Target groups: partners' representatives, young people from partner countries, local young people, local stakeholders.

Preparation activities preceded the Exchange of best practice in Italy event: APS defined the agenda of the event, took care of all logistics, safety of all participants, and inclusiveness of the events itself. The event has been promoted at the local level through social media and municipal channels and cooperation from project partners ensured safe and successful implementation.

The second event of the YMCA project took place on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 in Castelnuovo del Garda, Italy, where project partners and local participants gathered to exchange of best practices on environmental protection, sustainable development and sustainable municipal practices, climate municipal action, etc.

The event included a few extra activities, together with the ones foreseen by the programme.

Participants started the day by visiting the CENTRO NAZIONALE BIODIVERSITÀ CARABINIERI in Peri, close to Castelnuovo del Garda, where the national police is in charge of running a biodiversity center.

The aim of this center is to collect, produce, conserve, and study seeds and plants of native forest species from northern Italy. The center's staff certifies seed production and control through detailed analysis and quality checks, which are then used for reforestation all over Italy and in some European areas. It is also a space for environmental educational activities, especially with schools and young people. Participants had a dynamic welcome, where they were invited to become seeds and start germinating; then they visited the center under the guidance of its staff, getting to know the work they do and the importance of reforestation and seed conservation for biodiversity purposes. Some of the young participants from partner countries expressed the willingness to apply for an internship at this center, as they have an educational background allowing it; this would be a great follow-up for the YMCA project, reinforcing its impact, and the procedure of application will be closely followed by the project staff to support those young people.

Participants then moved to the Sandra area of Castelnuovo del Garda to visit a kindergarten (Scuola dell'Infanzia SS. Innocenti Sandra di Castelnuovo del Garda), where native shrubs donated by the Centro Nazionale Biodiversità carabinieri di Peri were planted under the guide of the center's staff and with the active participation of small children from the kindergarten. This was an intergenerational activity, highly appreciated both by participants and kids, that showed how important it is to teach young generations natural conservation and protection techniques, as they are going to inherit the planet from the older ones. This was also a symbolic act of care for the environment, involving different generations and stimulating the critical thinking of young participants, who suggested many similar actions to be implemented in their municipalities.

The last activity of this event consisted of a visit to the AIR LIQUIDE plant: it's a multinational company located near Castelnuovo del Garda (and with many plants around Europe), which captures carbon dioxide from the air and transforms it into clean liquid oxygen used for many industrial processes and for sanitary/health procedures. Participants were divided into smaller groups, briefed on security procedures while visiting the plant, and then were accompanied by an engineer to visit the plant. They were explained all the chemical processes to transform air into nitrogen, hydrogen and then into liquid oxygen again, highlighting the carbon sequestration processes and the treatment of substances in a sustainable and clean manner. This visit was very interesting for all participants, and especially for those young people with a scientific educational background, allowing them to discover innovative ways for carbon sequestration and new green jobs available on the market. After visiting the plant participants gathered in a meeting room kindly offered by Air Liquide, where they engaged in a session to explore methodologies used around Europe to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions; young people were particularly involved in this session by providing insights to partners' representatives on how to improve environmental sustainability and also environmental communication in their municipalities.

A closing speech was delivered by APS, recapping the event and thanking all participants for their active involvement and contribution.

Overall, it can be stated that this event was highly participated, participants gained new knowledge on biodiversity conservation, on intergenerational environmental dialogue and on sustainable practices for energy production. The exchange of best practices was sparked by all the activities done during the day, which highly engaged young participants. The impact of the event could be further expanded by the application for international internships at the Biodiversity Center in Peri.

As part of this event, video clips were shot (following GDPR rules and with consent from all participants) and sex aggregated data on participants were collected through signed sheets.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).