



COGreen

COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION
FOR A GREEN TRANSITION

The CO-GREEN international school

WP8 - Deliverable 8.1



Co-funded by
the European Union

The Event Description Sheet (EDS)

PROJECT	
Participant:	[1] - [Stowarzyszenie Centrum Wspierania Aktywnosci Lokalnej, CAL] [2] - [Uniwersytet Mikolaja Kopernika W Toruniu, UMK] [3] - [Sveuciliste U Rijeci, Filozofski Fakultet U Rijeci, UNIRI] [4] - [Udruga Zmergo, ZMERGO] [5] - [Forum Nazionale Terzo Settore, FNTS] [6] - [Universita degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata, UNITOV] [7] - [Euracademy Association, EURACADEMY] [8] - [Dimos Karditsas, MUNICIPALITY OF KARDITSA]
PIC number:	[946100365] [999836619] [998542057] [946199790] [924949612] [999844864] [921470707] [936282025]
Project name and acronym:	[Community-based action for a green transition] — [CO-GREEN]

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	[8]
Event name:	[THE CO-GREEN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL]
Type:	[Workshops]
In situ/online:	[In situ]
Location:	[Greece], [Karditsa] [Italy], [Salerno] [Poland], [Górno, Elbląg]
Date(s):	International Winter School in Karditsa: 26 th , 27 th , 28 th , 29 th and 30 th November 2023 International School in Salerno: 15 th December 2023 International School in Górno: 15 th December, 2023 International School in Elbląg: 18 th December, 2023
Website(s) (if any):	POLAND: Webpage about the project: https://www.cal.org.pl/projekty-2/cogreen/o-projekcie/

	<p>Webpage with news about the Event 8:</p> <p>Webpage about outputs of the event:</p> <p>ITALY:</p> <p>Main project webpage: https://www.forumterzosettore.it/progetto-co-green/</p> <p>Webpage about the Event 8: https://www.forumterzosettore.it/progetto-co-green/formiamo-i-formatori-nelle-comunita/</p> <p>CROATIA:</p> <p>Main project webpage with link to Event 8: https://zmergo.hr/co-green/</p> <p>GREECE:</p> <p>Project webpage with link to Event 8: https://www.euracademy.org/co-green/</p>
--	--

Participants

Female:	59 (In Karditsa: 26 – In Salerno: 13 – In Górnó: 10, In Elbląg: 10)
Male:	41 (In Karditsa: 21 - In Salerno: 9 - In Górnó: 7, in Elbląg: 4)
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [POLAND]:	35
From country 2 [ITALY]:	26
From country 3 [CROATIA]:	2
From country 4 [GREECE]:	31
From country 5 [AUSTRIA]:	1
From country 6 [FRANCE]:	1
From country 7 [GERMANY]:	1
From country 8 [HUNGARY]:	1
From country 9 [ROMANIA]:	1
From country 10 [SLOVENIA]:	1
Total number of participants:	100
	From total number of countries: 10

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CO-GREEN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The CO-GREEN International School unfolded in three distinctive “legs”, each contributing significantly to its goal of training the CO-GREEN trainers, supporting the creation of an informed community of practitioners beyond country borders. The “Karditsa leg” took place in Greece during the month of November 2023, followed by the “Salerno leg” in Italy and the “Górnó and Elbląg leg” in Poland, both in December 2023. This deliberate division of

the school into three articulated legs allowed for a strategic and comprehensive approach to participant involvement and knowledge dissemination.

The “Karditsa leg” set the foundation for the entire training programme. Named “Winter Academy”, it was held in Karditsa (Greece) from November 26th to 30th, 2023 and it was organised by the CO-GREEN Greek partners, Euracademy and Municipality of Karditsa, in cooperation with the University of Thessaly, Department of Forestry, Wood Sciences and Design. The Winter Academy was structured on the model of the long-standing experience of Euracademy, being the 21st Academy to be held. It served as the initial hub for collaborative learning and community engagement, combining frontal learning with groupwork, hands-on experience and other methods of interactive learning. 47 participants from 8 countries attended the school, where they shared their experiences in green policies and initiatives. During the event, they engaged in mutual learning, fostering a collaborative environment and building shared visions for community-based sustainable development. The organisers worked in synergy to create a dynamic and enriching environment. All the project communities from Poland, Italy, Croatia and Greece actively participated, contributing to the success of the event and laying the groundwork for the subsequent session in Salerno.

Following the Karditsa experience, the “Salerno leg” in Italy and the “Górno and Elbląg leg” in Poland continued the momentum into December. The Salerno School was held on 15th December, 2023; it was organised by the Forum Nazionale del Terzo Settore; the University of Rome “Tor Vergata” supported the training programme with keynote speakers and trainers. 20 participants were engaged. The “lessons learned” in Karditsa were shared, and hands-on activities were implemented in group works. The keynote speeches delivered by Professors Volterrani and Petitta from the University of Rome Tor Vergata helped bring all participants onto the same page, prompting them to reflect on the pressing need for effective green action. This phase of the CO-GREEN International School was not just a replication but a further evolution of the programme. Trainers who had already undergone the initial training in Karditsa had the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge, taking on leadership roles in school sessions. This transfer of expertise ensured a seamless continuation of the learning process and allowed for the consolidation of acquired knowledge.

The Górno School took place on December 15th, 2023 with the guidance of experts from CAL. This event brought together 17 participants eager for a comprehensive learning experience. The Elbląg School took place on 18th December 2023 in the same formula as in Górno. The event in Elbląg brought together 14 participants. Both Górno and Elbląg Schools were conducted with the same agenda and formula. The day included insightful testimonies from the Karditsa Academy, providing inspiration and practical examples for the attendees. Participants actively took part in hands-on training sessions, creating a dynamic and interactive learning environment. This practical approach ensured that competences, skills, and knowledge were not just conveyed but actively cultivated within the group. The emphasis on practical training aimed to empower participants to translate theoretical insights into tangible actions, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter. The Górno and Elbląg Schools served as a hub for knowledge exchange, where CAL's professionals' expertise, combined with the experiences shared by the Karditsa School, contributed to the holistic development of the participants. This collaborative effort ensured that the local group not only gained valuable insights but also acquired practical tools necessary for implementing sustainable practices in their community.

The structured approach of organising the school in three *legs* provided several benefits. First and foremost, it allowed for remarkable participation from the engaged communities in both locations. By spreading the school over two months and three distinct geographical locations, a broader audience could actively participate, ensuring diverse perspectives and a more comprehensive dissemination of sustainable practices.

Moreover, the division into *legs* created additional exchanges and mutual learning opportunities. Participants who attended both legs (the Karditsa's Winter School and the local Schools) had the chance to witness the contextual nuances of sustainability practices in different regions. This cross-cultural exchange enhanced the overall learning experience, fostering a more holistic understanding of sustainable development.

Our multi-step construction of the CO-GREEN International School infused it with a distinctly international character. Ahead of the school in Greece, representatives from each participating country were assigned the task of

developing presentations covering various aspects related to the project's theme. These presentations were then delivered during the meeting. Furthermore, during the meeting, all participants shared their experiences, key elements of which will be included in the materials after the School in Greece. These materials, as well as the entire repository of materials on the training process in our project, will also be available to all participants in the training courses that take place in the project partner countries.

Moreover, as part of the national training within each community, there will always be an individual who attended the School in Greece to share their experiences and insights gained from their interactions in Greece.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL'S CURRICULUM

The Winter Academy comprises five main parts:

1. Cultural experience sharing. The first part of the School's programme focuses on participants sharing cultural experiences. An integral event is the traditional international dinner on the arrival date, providing opportunities for participants to familiarise themselves with each other's cultures, socialise, and build friendships through sharing delights from their home countries.
2. Introduction to activities. The second part introduces the week's activities. An overview is presented, covering practical issues by organisers. An "open space" during the coffee break allows participants to share their interests and expectations, fostering connections among participants and Winter Academy staff.
3. Theory. The third part involves theoretical aspects delivered through lectures and panel presentations by experts on the theme. Workgroup sessions with approximately 8 participants follow, addressing questions posed by presenters. A world café is also included, discussing the role of the Green Activators across different "tables". Conclusions from the workgroups and the World Café are shared in posters and discussed in plenary sessions.
4. Study visits. The fourth part consists of full-day study visits where participants visit selected places of interest. Small groups meet local stakeholders to discuss initiatives and opportunities related to the theme. Each group produces a Study Tour report presented in plenary.
5. Reflection and sum-up. The final part includes a Conclusions Panel summarising the main theme after four days of exploration. A select group of participants, lecturers, and facilitators presents thoughts and initiates a discussion. The Evaluation session assesses experiences, benefits gained, and explores ways to expand networking activities initiated during the onsite training sessions.

THE LEARNING METHODOLOGY

The learning approach adopted in the CO-GREEN International School is underpinned by several key principles. Adult learning, as defined by Malcolm Knowles' andragogy, emphasises that adults learn most effectively when the subject is immediately valuable, experiential, and linked to problem-solving. In this context, adult learners benefit significantly from active participation, reflection, and analysis, viewing instructors and experts more as facilitators than traditional lecturers or graders.

Additionally, the concept of self-directed learning recognises adults as independent individuals with diverse experiences and learning styles. Self-directed learners are inherently solution-oriented, utilising their previous knowledge and experiences to navigate tasks. The emphasis is on collaboration, where other participants, facilitators, and speakers act as supportive partners in the learning process.

Learning is perceived as an ongoing, lifelong process involving the gathering, processing, and transformation of information into knowledge. This holistic approach integrates reasoning, emotions, imagination, intuition, and experiences into a comprehensive learning experience. Learning by doing is a core principle, highlighting the significance of experiential learning and practical application in everyday life. The approach encourages participants not only to experiment and seek different approaches but also to reflect on and evaluate experiences, fostering continuous knowledge construction. This process is viewed as motivating and enjoyable.

Acknowledging the social nature of individuals, group dynamics play a crucial role in the International School's educational philosophy. While recognising the inherent benefits of collaboration, the challenges associated with efficient and harmonious group work are also addressed. The FIRO model (Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation) is employed to understand interpersonal behaviours and group development, providing insights into short-term and long-term dynamics within groups.

THE METHODS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

Various methods for capacity building are adopted, including:

- Lectures and panel presentations. Experienced professionals in the field deliver lectures lasting around 30 minutes, with workshop presentations lasting 10-15 minutes each.
- Small group discussions and a world café session (leading to plenary discussion). Discussions, stemming from preceding lectures, are facilitated by a team of facilitators in small groups, focusing on real-life examples. Groups then share their results and discussions in plenary sessions, encouraging conclusions based on experiences.
- Study visits and reporting. Groups of 9-12 participants explore relevant sites in the area, emphasizing problem-solving, solutions, and stronger community engagement. Participants propose solutions and present findings in Study visit Reports.
- Conclusion panel. Organised on the last afternoon, this panel involves a mix of participants, selected mostly among the attendants of the Event, and including a small number of lecturers and facilitators. Participants are encouraged to express their views and visions on the central theme.
- Evaluation of the International School. An ongoing process focuses on three aspects: organisation, staff, and participant learning experience. Methods include a group discussion on the final day and an online questionnaire sent post-event.
- Networking. The International School places emphasis on creating networks based on shared interests and experiences. Opportunities for collaboration and cooperation are encouraged from the beginning, with support from the project's partners in facilitating the informal creation of networks among participants.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL'S FACULTY

The teaching team for the Winter Academy, or Karditsa's leg, included speakers, moderators, and facilitators who bring diverse expertise to enrich the learning experience. The teaching team is structured to facilitate a supportive and collaborative learning environment, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, sharing experiences, and networking. The team's input includes lectures, panel presentations, and facilitation of group discussions, aimed at promoting knowledge exchange and capacity building among participants:

- **Wojciech Goszczynski.** A professor of rural sociology at the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland, with extensive research involvement in international and national scientific projects on local development, rural development, and food studies. Prof. Goszczynski is the author of books and scientific articles and has coordinated various research projects.
- **Fouli Papageorgiou.** A founding member and the current president of the Euracademy Association. With a background in architecture and a Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Studies, she brings extensive experience in research and planning, specializing in territorial development, program evaluation, environmental planning, and social policy. Dr. Papageorgiou has coordinated numerous EU projects and has a wealth of experience in education, culture, local planning, and social inclusion.
- **Andrea Volterrani.** A sociologist of cultural and communication processes and an associate professor at the University of Rome Tor Vergata. He has coordinated and led European projects on social communication, climate change and communication, prevention and health communication, community resilience, and training for cooperative development. Prof. Volterrani is involved in research, training, and consultancy on social

communication and prevention, the third sector and volunteering, new forms of mutuality, and social community development.

In the Salerno's leg, the leading trainers were:

- **Patrizia Bertoni** (already in Karditsa). Trainer, manager of the FQTS programme (multi-year training programme "Training for Third Sector Managers") promoted by the Forum Nazionale del Terzo del Terzo Settore.
- **Silvio Cilento** (already in Karditsa). Trainer, Territorial Animation Activator, Social Project Designer, Social Worker, Social Media Manager, Social Agriculture Operator, representative of Forum Nazionale Terzo Settore.
- **Andrea Volterrani** (already in Karditsa). A sociologist of cultural and communication processes and an associate professor at the University of Rome Tor Vergata.
- **Marcello Petitta**. Physicist and climatologist, he is a researcher at the University of Tor Vergata in Rome, where he works on energy and climate-related issues. He was in charge of the atmospheric remote sensing group at EURAC Research and a researcher at ENEA, where he developed among the first climate services for energy and agriculture.

In the Górnó's and Elbląg's leg, the leading trainers were:

- **Joanna Abramowicz** (already in Karditsa). She has more than a decade of experience in research in the field of human resource management. She specializes in the diagnosis and development of employee competencies, as well as the standardization and monitoring of service quality. She is a workshop and meeting facilitator, coach and trainer.
- **Krzysztof Lepczyński** – he is both a journalist and a researcher working in the field of social journalism with 10-year experience. She specializes in mechanism of engagement of different groups in undertaking actions. These main speakers brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise in their respective fields, contributing to the diverse and comprehensive learning experience at the Winter Academy.

NOTES ABOUT THE WINTER SCHOOL IN KARDITSA

The training programme "Community-Based Action for the Green Transition of Rural Communities" included various sessions, workshops, and activities focused on the green transition of rural communities. The key topics included the green transition challenges, the role of Green Activators, community development methodologies, and good practice examples from various countries.

Participants engaged in open space discussions, workgroups, World Cafe sessions, and workshops on specific topics related to green transition and community engagement. The study trips to nearby examples of green transition efforts and results were organised on Tuesday, providing participants with practical insights. The participants prepared reports from the study trips and engaged in a workshop on training methods for developing Green Activators' skills and competences. The program also included presentations, discussions, and a conclusions panel on the last day, evaluating the Winter Academy.

The event aimed to facilitate knowledge exchange, discussion, and learning among participants from different countries. It included a mix of theoretical sessions, practical workshops, and real-world examples through study trips. The involvement of various stakeholders, including academic institutions, local municipalities, and organisations, showcased a collaborative approach to address green transition challenges in rural communities.

NOTES ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN SALERNO

The CO-GREEN International School was organised within the annual FQTS Training Academy (the multi-year training programme "Training for Third Sector Managers") promoted by the Forum Nazionale del Terzo del Terzo Settore. The focus was on the integral role of territorial communities as the main actors in the training process for

local sustainable development. The local communities are seen as complex networks of relationships among individuals, organisations, and institutions, with Third Sector Entities (ETS) playing a fundamental part.

The CO-GREEN School proposed an intensive programme involving meetings and attentive listening to the needs and aspirations of individuals. The goal was to guide communities toward development, change, and awareness, emphasising the tangible possibility of shaping the future through the enhancement of relationships and social capital.

The event began with discussions on community-stakeholder interactions, followed by an Open Space Technology session on lifelong learning and access to environmental rights. Plenary sessions addressed topics such as community-based local development, inclusive training, green challenges for sustainability.

NOTES ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN GÓRNO AND ELBLĄG

The Górnó and Elbląg Schools helped broaden the local context by exposing it to international stimuli. Through the exchange of different viewpoints and experiences, participants gained a nuanced understanding of the global dimensions of environmental challenges. The schools underscored the significance of having trained and competent individuals to guide and steer the local community, especially in addressing the complex, multifaceted nature of green issues, which carry profound implications.

The diverse perspectives shared during the Górnó and Elbląg Schools stressed the interconnectedness of environmental concerns on a global scale. Participants recognised the need for expertise in navigating the intricacies of sustainable practices and environmental policies. The realisation of the complexity and far-reaching consequences of green issues emphasised the importance of having knowledgeable leaders to effectively address and implement solutions within the local community. The Winter School, therefore, served as a catalyst for fostering a heightened awareness of the expertise required to navigate and contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of the community.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The three-leg structure of the International School has proven to be a highly effective and adaptable approach, surpassing its initial objectives. The primary goal was to train a specific number of trainers (5 in each country) within the framework of the CO GREEN project. However, the outcome exceeded expectations, encompassing not only the planned trainers but also attracting additional participants, including experts, activists, and interested citizens.

This expanded participation has resulted in a diverse group of individuals now equipped and prepared to take active roles in their local communities. Beyond the original plan, these participants are ready to re-engage with the selected activators and provide them with the necessary training to become true catalysts for community activity focused on green measures. The success of the International School has translated into a multiplication effect, reaching a broader audience and cultivating a more extensive network of individuals ready to contribute to sustainability initiatives.

The post-International School landscape is characterised by a wealth of training resources. These resources include a comprehensive handbook and syllabus that serve as guides for future initiatives. Moreover, the invaluable knowledge gained from shared good practices during the training sessions has created a repository of insights into successful strategies and approaches.

The project's community of practice has become a dynamic hub for ongoing collaboration and knowledge exchange. Participants, now well-versed in green measures and community engagement, are not only prepared to implement initiatives locally but also to contribute actively to the collective learning process. This iterative feedback loop ensures a continuous improvement in the strategies and methodologies applied in different local contexts.