

Exploring Nature and the Cosmos

A Journey through
Wildlife, Sky and Plants

***Green Skills • Natural and Cultural
Heritage • Rural Futures***



Funded by
the European Union

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Project Overview

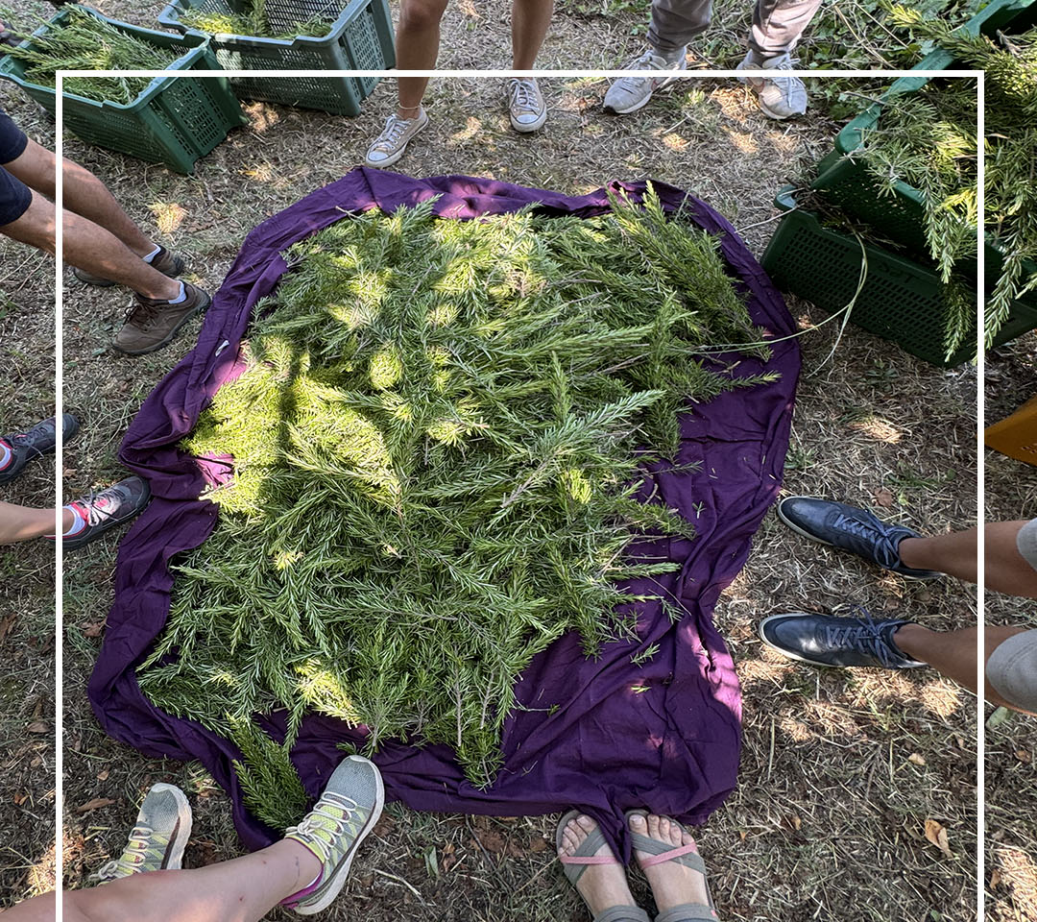
“Exploring Nature and the Cosmos: a Journey through Wildlife, Sky and Plants” is an Erasmus+ youth project developed by the association Cultural Pro APS, together with its partners Biodistretto Lago di Bolsena and Palombar – Conservação da Natureza e do Património Rural.

The project brought together young people from Italy and Portugal through two residential summer camps held in rural areas of high environmental and cultural value: Trás-os-Montes (Portugal) and Bolsena Lake (Italy).

The project combines outdoor education, non-formal learning, and intercultural exchange, offering a concrete, replicable model for youth work in rural contexts. Participants were invited to explore, reflect, and engage with nature, culture, and local communities in ways that are both hands-on and transformative.

Dissemination target: youth organisations, NGOs, educators, Erasmus+ platforms, and public institutions interested in sustainable education, rural development, and innovative learning practices.





Campus-Based Learning n Rural Contexts

The two summer camps were designed as living, immersive learning environments, where the surrounding territory itself became a dynamic educational tool.

Key features of the campuses:

- Residential experiences in rural and semi-remote areas
- Direct collaboration with local farmers, associations, and experts
- Learning-by-doing approach grounded in real-life contexts
- Small international groups fostering participation, inclusion, and intercultural exchange

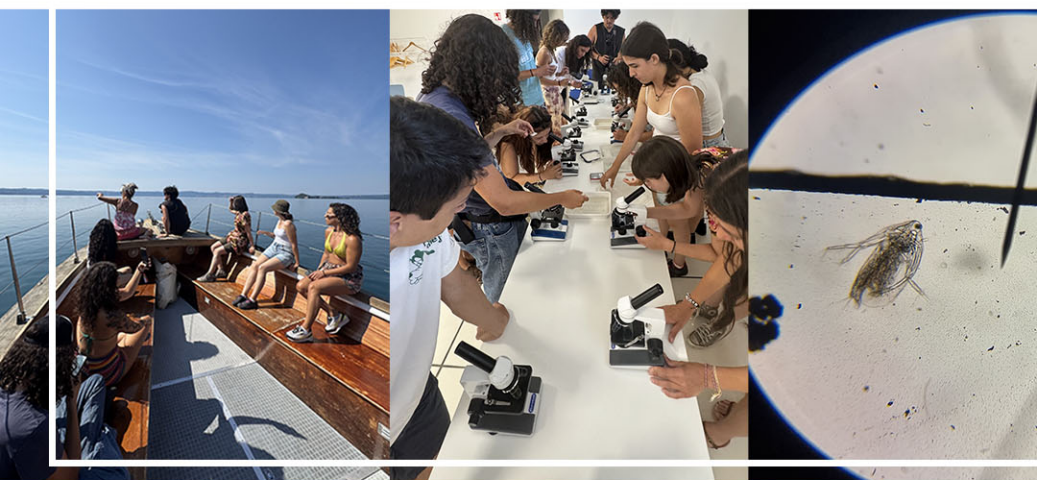
Through these immersive experiences, participants not only acquired practical skills, but also developed a deep awareness of rural challenges and opportunities - a sensitivity that can inspire and guide them as future decision-makers in policy, education, and community development.

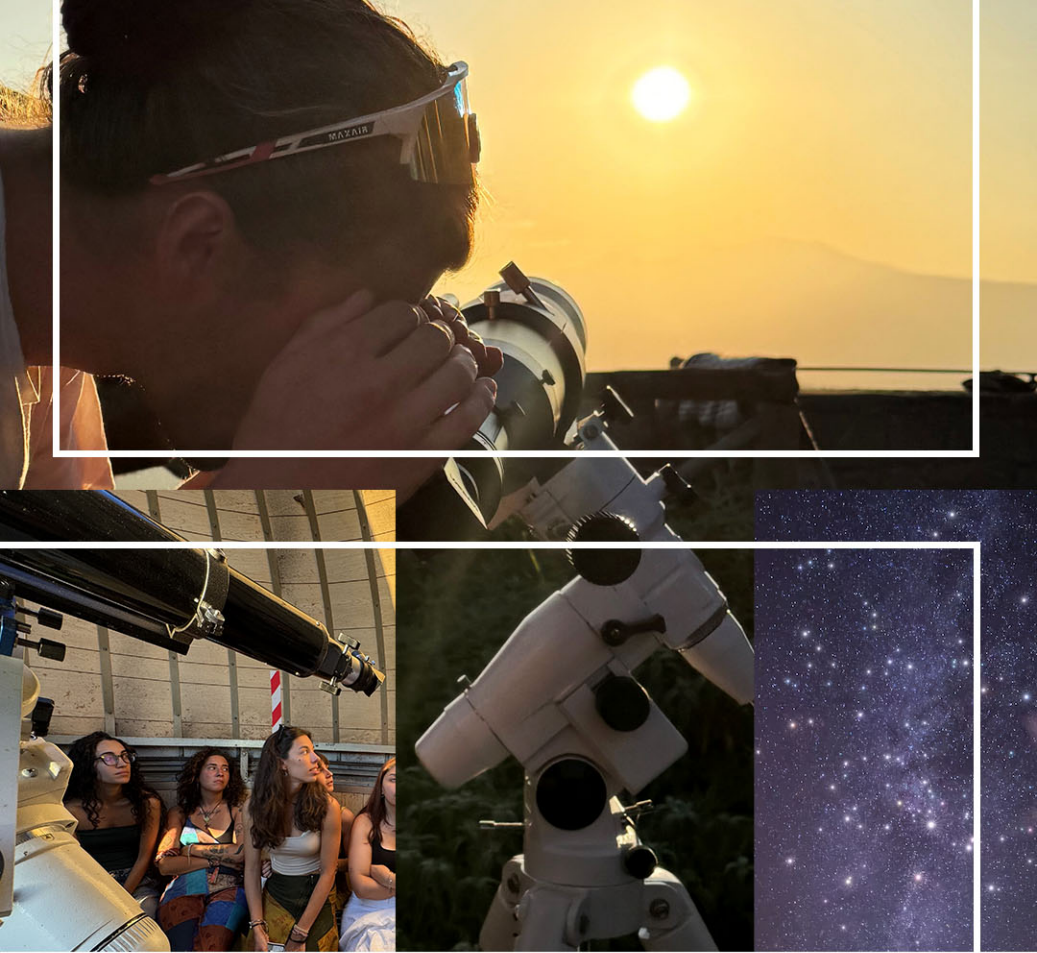
Green Skills Acquired

Participants developed practical green skills in these main competence areas:

- Biodiversity monitoring (birdwatching, wildlife tracking, camera traps)
- Sustainable and regenerative agriculture
- Agroforestry and food forest systems
- Medicinal Plants
- No-dig / no-till gardening and seed conservation
- Freshwater ecosystems, water analysis, and microscopy
- Animal welfare and native breeds
- Natural habitat restoration

These skills were acquired through hands-on workshops, field activities, and direct interaction with practitioners.





Nature, Sky and Accessible Science

A distinctive element of the project was the integration of environmental sciences and astronomy.

Participants observed both with the naked eye and scientific tools such as planetarium, night sky and solar telescopes. They were based in a real Astronomic Observatory so they had the chance to work on: Night-sky observation in low light-pollution areas - Understanding differences between urban and rural skies - Basic astronomy and constellation recognition - Introduction to astrophotography and star trail techniques.

Rural areas proved to be ideal spaces for accessible science education, fostering curiosity, environmental awareness, and emotional connection to nature.



The Digital Almanac

A key dissemination output is the Digital Almanac, a public online platform for storytelling and sharing experiences.

<https://experiences.culturalpro.art>

The Almanac is a living space where observation, creativity, and reflection meet. Participants transformed their field experiences into stories, images, sounds, and videos, creating a collective narrative about the human-nature relationship.

What you can find and contribute:

- Personal stories, reflections, and moments of discovery
- Photos, audio, video, and educational documentation
- Observations of biodiversity, landscapes, and rural life

The Almanac is open to all - youth, educators, artists, and curious minds - and emphasizes the poetic, imaginative, and personal aspects of observation.

The focus is not data collection but storytelling: capturing wonder, emotion, and the unique perspective of each contributor.

Educational Information Sheets provide accessible scientific insights.

Rural Futures: From Experience to Choice

One of the central goals of the project was to encourage young people to rethink their relationship with rural areas. Through direct, immersive experiences, participants discovered that rural life can offer:

- Lower living and housing costs, with open and clean spaces
- Direct contact with nature and sustainable practices
- Opportunities in agriculture, environmental education, eco-tourism, and social innovation
- Strong, collaborative communities and meaningful social ties

Short-term immersion sparked long-term perspective: rural areas are not places to leave behind, but spaces where new futures can be built.

A life in nature blends work, learning, creativity, and well-being. It is a conscious choice a different rhythm, a new vision of what it means to live fully, to connect with the land, and to build projects that matter.



Thank
 **you**

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