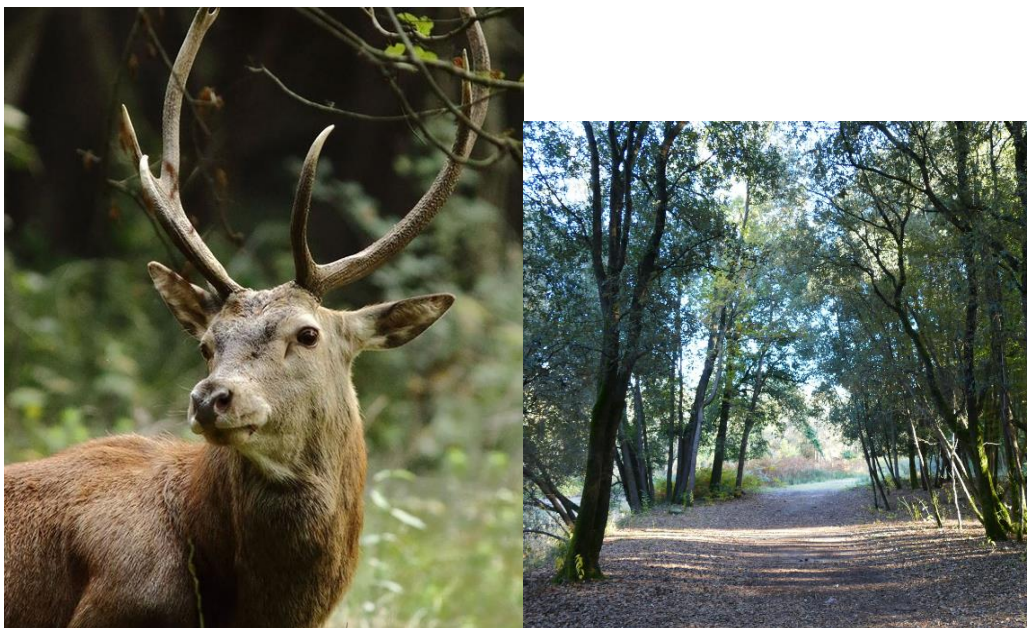


Ecomuseum of Mesola wood and deer - Echoeslab project



Introduction:

The ecomuseum, differently from a museum, is not only a place for preserving the history and culture of a territory, but it also represents a vital and projective tool for that territory to become more attractive and dynamic. It is a point of reference for residents, visitors, and those who want to start business activities. The third-grade students of the Codigoro School District "Guido Monaco di Pomposa" had the opportunity to get in touch with this concept through the workshops organized by the Ecomuseum of Mesola wood and deer, thanks to the support of the Gal Delta 2000 through the Transnational Cooperation Project for Ecomuseums.

After the meeting with the teacher Anna Finetti on September 19th 2023, it was agreed to extend the project to all eight third-grade classes of the institute (three from the Liceo and five from the Technical schools) and redistribute the total 100 hours of the project by organizing 6 meetings of two hours, and the final event of four hours where the classes would present their work to the others. Once the contacts were obtained, the organizing secretariat promptly scheduled the meetings.

Educational path:



During the first meeting, the Local Action Group Delta 2000 was introduced, representing a significant reference point for local development in the area. At the same time the objectives of the Transnational Cooperation Project Leader ECHOESLAB were explained, which involves several Local Action Groups.

The ECHOESLAB project has started a collaborative process among several Local Action Groups (GALs) from Finland, Sweden, Sardinia, and Emilia-Romagna, with the aim of contributing to the growth and innovation of ecomuseums and museums representing local traditions and cultural heritage of their respective territories. This collaboration process aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices across different cultural contexts, with the goal of promoting sustainable development and enhancing cultural heritage at a transnational level.

Between all the goals of the ECHOES project, for the meetings with students, we choose to focus around four very important topics:

- Strengthening the capacity of institutions to apply innovative models, strategies, and concrete actions for the protection and sustainable use of intangible cultural heritage.
- Enhancing the identity components (territory, memory, tradition, and customs).
- Promoting new job opportunities for young people, entrepreneurship, promotion, and investments by the exchange of generational knowledge.
- Increasing knowledge of intangible cultural heritage.

Since, according to the UNESCO Convention of 2003, "intangible cultural heritage" refers to the customs, traditions, and knowledge that communities recognize as part of their identity, we brought some identity-bearing objects to the classroom (such as deer antlers, marinated eel box, Cervia's salt, etc...), the knowledge of which is a key factor for the conservation of intangible heritage over time. Awareness of this richness contributes to increase the value of a territory's and enhances its development making it more attractive for tourism and bringing benefits to the population.

Furthermore we presented the so-called guardians of the Ecomuseum, the Association "*Mappe di Comunità*", founded in 2009 in Bosco Mesola by showing some interviews in which the members

introduce the history and the purposes of the association. Finally we actively engaged the students by showing them some of the works already carried out and used by the Ecomuseum itself: placemats, depliant, bunker brochures, research on traditions, calendars with photographs from the past, etc...

It was interesting to engage in debates with the students and observe how much they grasped the message of the ecomuseum itself through these works.

The focus of the second meeting was to explore the history, traditions, flora and fauna of this territory. By the end of the two hours the class was divided into groups, to test the knowledge acquired through some game-tests such as Pictionary, Taboo and Quizzes.

In the third meeting, we explored the agricultural, tourism, and commercial economic realities, both past and present, linked to the territory of the Ecomuseum. Once again, the lesson concluded with a game-test, in which the students had to sequence some images in a timeline from the past to nowadays.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth meetings were differentiated between classes, according to the specific school specialization.

- 1. Liceo delle scienze umane:** In the fourth meeting a volunteer from the "Protezione Civile" Association of Mesola was involved to present a quiz and a fun test to prove students knowledge on safety matter. In the fifth and sixth meeting, the students actively participated in researching and creating game cards about the ecomuseum identity, demonstrating commitment and dedication. The practical and active involvement of the students strengthened their connection with the themes of the ecomuseum and promoted greater understanding and participation in its mission.



2. **Liceo scientifico:** In the fourth meeting we hosted the expert ornithologist Danilo Trombin, who explained the difference between native and non-native species and their ecological impact within the Ecomuseum, with particular focus on invasive species and those protected by Habitat directives. During the next meetings, the students received scientific texts where they identified the necessary information to draft detailed informational cards about some typical animals or plants of the Ecomuseum. The students showed a significant level of maturity, participating debating on the specific information they wanted to put inside each technical card the finally realized .

3. **Liceo linguistico:** After recognizing the relevance for the territory of having informational material in foreign languages, the environmental guide Jodi Crivellaro shared his experience in guiding tourists, including Americans, through the area, providing information about the territory, past traditions, and naturalistic peculiarities in English. The students were able to directly appreciate the importance of foreign languages in the tourism sector and beyond. After agreeing on the pathway for the realization of their final project, they were divided into groups and began translating and self-editing the materials. Initially, they translated a placemat created by the Association “Mappe di Comunità” into both English and Spanish language. In addition, they chose to translate another brochure that illustrated the traditions of the Ecomuseum and local nicknames, collaborating with different local associations. During the translation process, the mutual assistance of the students in comparing, correcting, and sharing ideas was noticeable. Finally, they transcribed the texts by PC and realized a presentation using Canva program for the concluding day when they showcased their work to the audience.



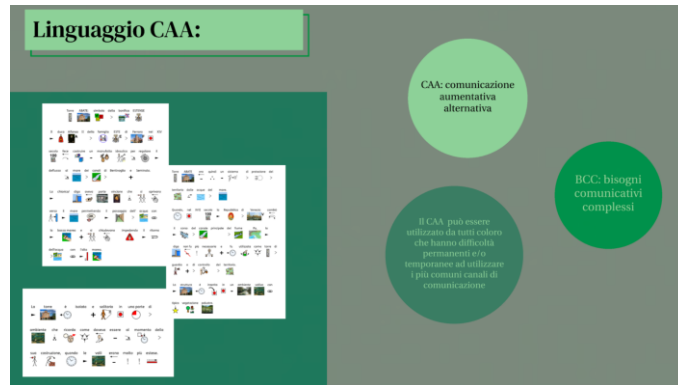
4. **Administration, finance and marketing:** In the fourth meeting, since it was not possible to invite representatives of local businesses during class hours, the students conducted online research to analyse the structures and economic development policies of the

companies present in the territory of the Ecomuseum. They examined whether these policies were based on sustainability. Hence they identified the strengths and weaknesses of the territory and discussed solutions to improve its appearance, services, and visibility. To conduct a detailed analysis, the students requested some data on the number of visitors to the main attractions of the territory from 2018 to 2023. So they sent emails to the authorities to obtain information on the attendance at the Gran Bosco della Mesola State Natural Reserve, the Aqua Society (which manages excursions in the restricted area of the Reserve), and the Fattorie del Delta society (manager of the Mesola Estensi's Castle). It was surprising to note that, despite the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2023 the number of visitors had almost returned to the levels of 2018. The students then discussed how to represent the analysis in a participatory and mature way, so they prepared a Prezi slideshow, which was explained by two students, during the final day on December 16th.

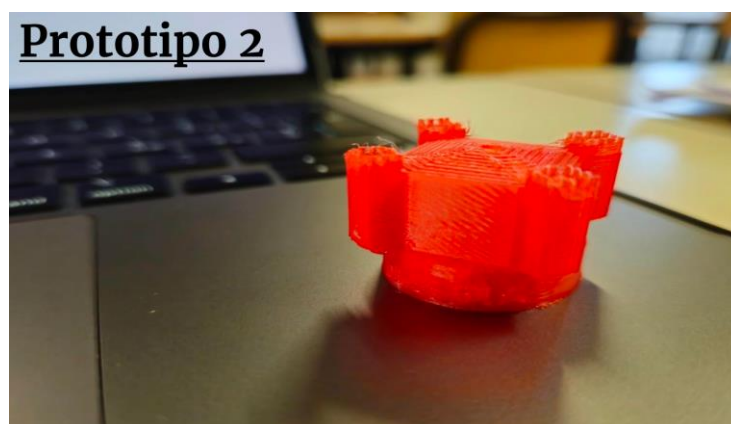


5. **Construction, environment and territory:** The students, showing a high level of maturity, recognized their ignorance regarding which and how many points of interest in the territory respond to the needs of tourists with special needs. Therefore they decided to address the issue through online research, simulating the difficulties that people with limited mobility or cognitive disabilities might encounter during a visit to the Ecomuseum of Mesola wood and deer territory. During their research, they found that some sites such as the Gran Bosco della Mesola Nature Reserve, the Dune Fossili di Massenzatica Nature Reserve, and the Mesola Estensi's Castle offer responses to accessibility needs, while nothing has been done in this regard at the Torre Abate Naturalistic Oasis. So they decided to focus their attention on this specific site analysing the possible needs and finding a solution for each one of them. They translated a brochure of the ancient Chiavica into Braille code to facilitate blind people and through augmentative and alternative communication for people with cognitive deficits.

Using Autocad software, they finally designed accessible paths for wheelchair users.



6. **Mechanics and mechatronics:** After examining various companies in the territory of the Ecomuseum of Mesola wood and deer, the students became particularly interested in “Bosco Officinale”, a company located on the Statale Romea, which aroused the curiosity of almost all the students in the class. After exploring the company's website, they came up with the idea of creating a customized "Spice Grinder," with the most representative icon of the territory (besides the deer) replacing the spice grinder knob. Using Autocad software and a 3D printer available at school, they created a miniature of the Estensi's Castle to be placed on top the spice grinder. The students were very enthusiastic and wanted to do even more than required, such as creating a scale model of the ancient Chiavica dell'Abate that simulated the opening of the Venetian doors using water force. However, they had to abandon this idea because not all the necessary tools were available at school. Nevertheless, the students demonstrated great interest in the project, brainstorming and discussing the creation of other gadgets for Ecomuseum.



- 7. Informatics and telecommunication, 3^A B:** The students knew from the very beginning what to do and how to create their final project. They started by researching online how other touristic areas promote themselves on the social media. Then they divided into many groups with specific tasks: some worked on creating videos, others searched for existing deer videos, since access to the Reserve was impossible due to winter closure, others focused on editing and presentation. They finally produced a 90 second promotional video designed to be posted on Instagram and Facebook pages, with catchy music and images to encourage potential tourists to visit the Ecomuseum territory. Another student decided to conduct independent research and subsequently created a PowerPoint presentation on curiosities and traditional recipes of Ferrarese cuisine.



- 8. Informatics and telecommunication, 3^A A:** It is understandable that after an initial enthusiasm and a series of great ideas, the realization of the final project might be more challenging than expected and lead to some disappointment. However, it is positive that the students made a wise choice by narrowing down the material to focus on and finally addressed on four key concepts: the Gran Bosco della Mesola Nature Reserve, the dune deer, green asparagus, and sand wine. Using PowerPoint, they created a slideshow containing also some interesting videos on each topic, which was presented to the audience by one of them. Furthermore, during the final presentation on December 16th, they enriched the content with humorous sketches in which the Mesola deer mascot, Alfonso, played a key role.



Conclusive meeting, 16th december 2023

For the final conference, after consultation with Professor Lorenzo Marchesini, all territorial entities involved in the project were invited: Dr. Nobili from the Carabinieri Forestali, the Mayor and the Culture Councillor of the Municipality of Mesola, representatives of the Association "Mappe di Comunità", representatives of the "Protezione Civile" Association of Mesola, representatives of C.a.s.a. Mesola companies, Apicoltura Franchi Marilena, Bosco Officinale, and Fattorie del Delta.

On Saturday, December 16th, 2023, from 8:50 AM to 12:30 PM, the final day of the EchoesLab Project of Bosco della Mesola was held at the conference hall of the ITS "G. Monaco di Pomposa" in Codigoro. After a presentation of the project by the school principal, Angela Lucibello, the Mayor of Mesola, Gianni Michele Padovani, and the representative of Fattorie del Delta company, Valentina Roma, the stage was given to the students, who presented their projects.



