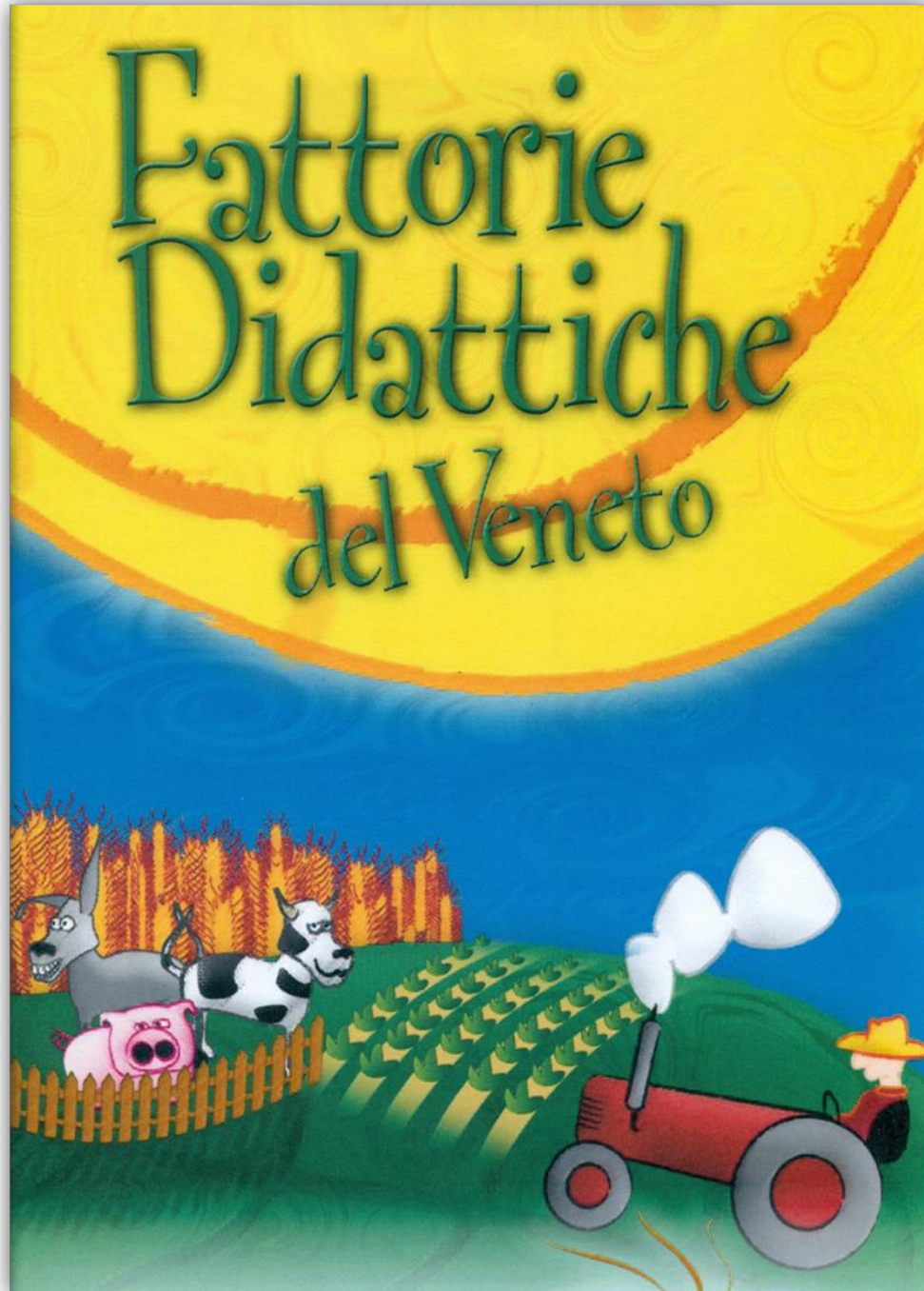


EDUCATIONAL TOURISM IN ITALY, VENETO REGION

EDUCATIONAL FARMS and other models



Study Tour report, prepared by Vera Jovanovic

The Study Tour and the development of child and youth educational rural tourism in Serbia

One of the specific UNICEF contributions in the Joint Programme “Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development” is to ensure that child, youth and family related tourism is integrated in national documents that make this tourism branch policy framework and

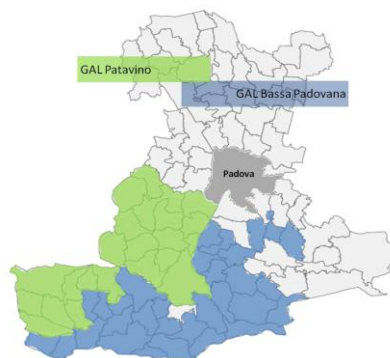
that rural development contributes to the improvement of rural children’s education.



This objective has been fulfilled through the development and the adoption of the National Rural Tourism Development Master Plan whose special focus are child, youth and family tourism, and of several other documents which make up the policy framework.

Another UNICEF’s contribution is the improvement of local stakeholders’ capacity for delivering services and products in line with national strategies.

After closely cooperating with the local stakeholders, organizing sessions, presentations and discussions, organizing a Study Tour to Slovenia for 14 representatives of local and national institutions to get familiar with Slovenian educational tourism models and finally conducting a Grant Scheme which pioneers educational tourism in Serbia, UNICEF participated in a Study Tour to Italy, Veneto Region, aiming at visiting Italian *Fattorie Didattiche* (Farm Schools) and applying this model in Serbian child and youth tourism.



The locations were selected by the GAL Patavino (one of fourteen Local Action Groups in Veneto), and they were selected based on the Programme’s conditions which, apart from the quality of destinations and their educational programmes, included the possibility for application of good practices in Serbia.

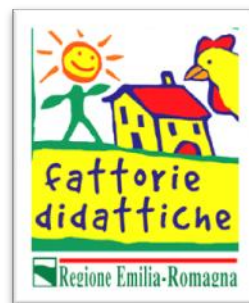
The explanation of the Italian national and regional *Fattorie Didattiche* system and the description of the best practices (5 farm schools and 2 other models) follow in the text.

About *Fattorie Didattiche* (Educational Farms)

Italian *Fattorie Didattiche* (Farm Schools / Educational Farms / Didactic Farms) are agricultural or agri-touristic households which organise educational activities primarily for preschool and school children.¹ Children visit didactic farms with their families or their schools in order to learn about life in rural areas, life on the farm, nature, plants and animals, tradition, customs, skills, etc. through participation in everyday farm activities.



All Italian regions have didactic farms. Here are the logos of the regions of Veneto, Emilia Romagna and Lombardia:



¹ Defined on May 18, 2001, under the Law 228

Guarantee of Quality

Each region has its Quality Paper – Guarantee of Quality (**Carta della Qualità**). This document is a regulation adopted in each administrative region and it defines the criteria and major, minor or recommended requests which a farm should meet. Key criteria in the Veneto Region are:

1. Prerequisite (presence of liability insurance)
2. Environmental hygiene – safety of visitors (general requests, requests for the indoor and outdoor space)
3. Sanitary and hygienic standards (hygienic services, cleaning management, food management)
4. Logistics (requests for indoor and outdoor space)
5. Hospitality and education
6. Communication (communication with the Veneto Region, communication with schools, communication of the didactic farm)

There are 90 requests within the above listed criteria.

If a farm wants to become a didactic farm, its owners and bearers of the activities must take a course which consists of 60 lessons in order to get a licence for work. The topics they cover correspond with the requests of the Guarantee of Quality. On the other hand, anyone who wants to include food in their offer must take the course of agri-tourism (*agriturismo*) (118 classes) so most of the farm school owners pass both of these.



These licences expire after one year so farm school owners participate in the seminars organised each year in order to keep their permission for work.

a certificate for the didactic farm “La Calendula”

Didactic material

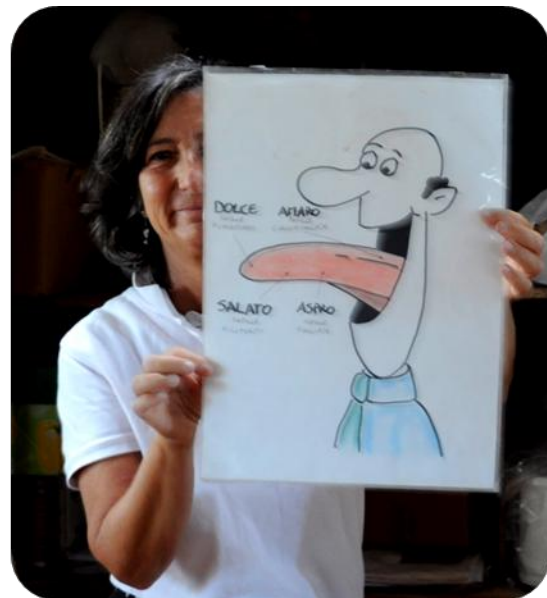


All the regions have their own didactic material which helps the children learn about the village life, and which helps the farm employees or the teachers communicate that knowledge to the children through creative processes.

didactic material from Emilia Romagna

Apart from this material, the creative farm owners also make didactic material of their own.

Signora Maria from the didactic farm Il Filo d'Erba showing her drawing which explains the sense of taste to the children



Link with Schools

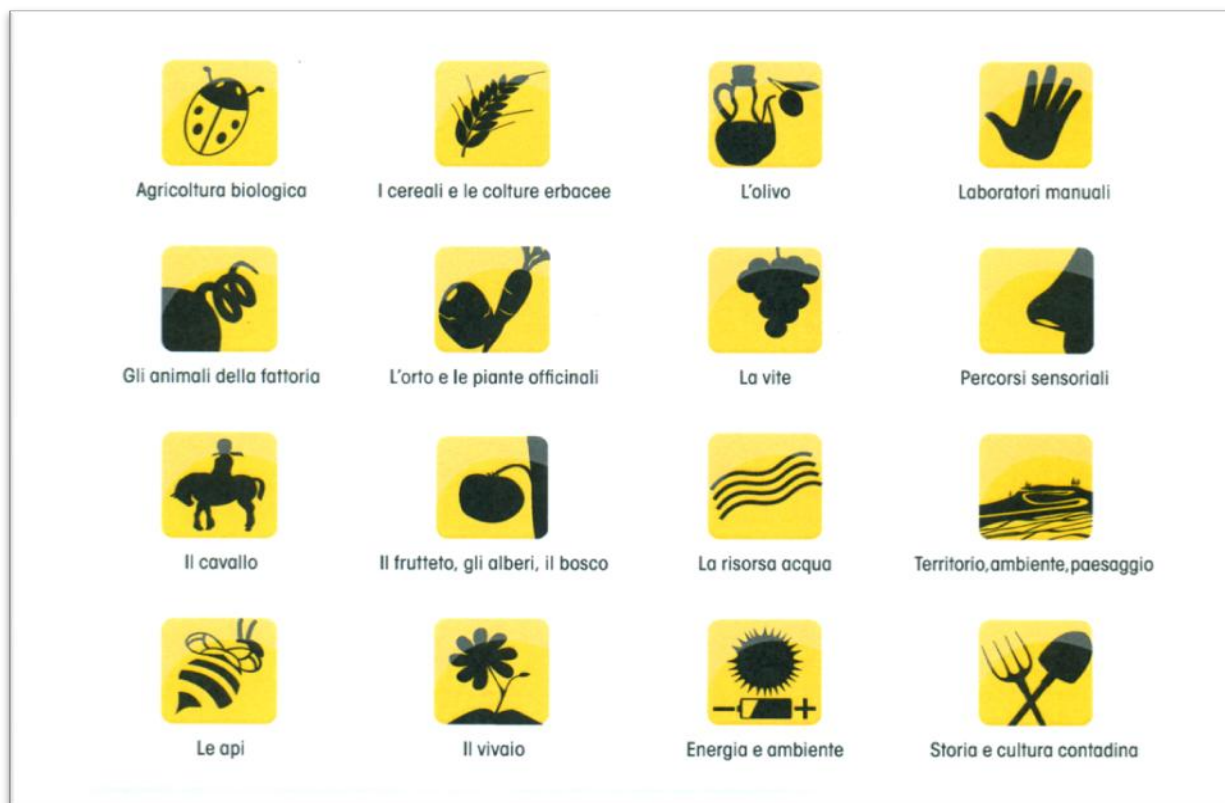
All didactic farms in Italy cooperate with schools or tend to cooperate with them, but visits to such farms are not compulsory. Still, schools are very frequent and favourite clients.

Educational programmes at the fattorie can be adapted to the school curricula and designed with teachers, or can be made independently from educational system.

Didactic farms in Veneto

There are 228 registered didactic farms in the region of Veneto.² They are both quite similar and quite different: they all enable the children to actively learn about the village life and the countryside, but they are also very diverse in their approaches and topics.

In order to visualise what each of the didactic farms offers, the Veneto Region has created the following set of symbols, each of them representing the theme children can learn about at the farm.



² According to the January 2010 register.

The farms visited during the Study Tour:

La Calendula



La Calendula (The Marigold) is a classic rural courtyard where, in addition to traditional crops, grow herbs and aromatic plants with organic methods. The Farm School has a classroom where you can closely observe plants (local and from around the world) and various species of insects. Slides, sheets and magnifiers are available for learning activities according to particular needs. Here are some of the activities and workshops conducted at this farm:

Learning Activities:

- Botanic path
- Discovering the countryside
- Farmyard animals

Workshops:

- Small cooking school for budding cook
- How to recognize insects and bugs
- How to create a vegetable garden



beautiful indoor and outdoor space the children use for learning

The farm offers food and accommodation, and they receive groups of 20-25 children. They work with individual families, but their frequent clients are schools whose classes visit the farm again and again.



*la aula didattica (an educative classroom)
especially adapted for school children*

Apart from its educational programme, this farm offers warmth and generosity because of its owners. This couple works with a lot of love and professionalism. Although very modest, they are highly qualified experts in this area.

You must be very well organized to run a farm like this, says signora Valeria. This lady, who actually teaches didactics, says that learning component is very important when you work with children.

the couple showing a part of the didactic material they use at the farm



It is also very important for the children to feel comfortable and enjoy everything at the *fattoria*. This is why the owners pay attention to every detail in order to add value to the time children spend here.

*part of the picturesque wall, a part of the
farm's esthetics*



This farm also offers the programmes for the disabled, and another group who enjoys all its beauties are the old!

More information about the activities of this farm can be found at www.lacalendula.it.

Il Filo d'Erba



Il Filo d'Erba (A Leaf of Grass) is another place which charms you with all its beauty and energy its owner communicates to the visitors.

The moment you open the gate, Signora Maria introduces you to the philosophy of the place and her work: *children must enjoy nature so that they start loving it, and later gain knowledge about it!*

Il Filo d'Erba begun the conversion to organic farming, re-naturalizing forest and agricultural landscapes, seeking to achieve a balance between man and nature and between recovery of traditions and innovative methods in running the business in 1998. This is one of the first didactic farms in Veneto.

The Farm School offers learning activities and workshops on specific topics with the aim of entertaining and educating people, especially children, and enhancing the countryside as an example of sustainable and integrated development in agriculture.

One of the principles of this farm is to show the children that everything happens for a reason and that everything is interconnected. This is why children's activities at this farm begin with the stories from ancient times or more modern history. At this farm, story-telling has a special charm.

*a huge chair the story-teller climbs to tell
about history, myths and legends*



Children continue their day(s) with various learning activities and workshops, such as:

- Let's prepare jam
- Let's observe and imitate farm animals
- How to make beeswax candles
- Let's dye fabrics with vegetable dyes
- How our grandparents lived and played, etc.

*Signora Maria with the schoolchildren
who harvest grapes and practically learn
about wine production*





after the harvest, children squeeze grapes and literally make their first steps in producing wine

As a part of the philosophy that everything is interconnected, children are especially introduced to the life of bees and their influence on the natural lifecycle and the life of every being, including mankind.



children and teachers watching the bees from Signora Maria's invention- a special safe box



Nonno Giuseppe showing the honeycomb and children tasting honey... If they like it more than chocolate, the lesson is successful!

One of the workshops at the farm is "Let's Prepare Bread". This is where children learn that bread comes from flour which comes from grain, and not from a shop shelf.

children preparing bread together with the farm staff



All in all, this farm and every person involved in its activities appreciate nature and countryside, and appreciate life in every form it can take on the Earth. This is the key lesson they communicate to their young, middle aged and old students.

“traffic” signs teaching children to pay attention to every living creature:

*SILENCE, I’m sleeping, stands for the sleepy caterpillar;
ATTENTION, earthworms at work, says another sign*

After visiting the farm, Chiara, our guide, concludes: *with a little bit of tradition and fantasy you can make everything.*

This didactic farm offers food and accommodation services, and works with individual groups and schools. The programme, tests and experiments that are related to school curricula are planned together with teachers. School in nature in Italian school system is facultative, but Il Filo d’Erba often conducts it since their educational activities are interesting and excellent.

Here’s an example of a set of activities for pre-school and school children in early grades. The sets of activities like these are developed for pre-school, elementary school and secondary school children. You can see the detailed educational programmes and all the activities and services the farms offer at www.scuolafattoria.it.

Educational Activities



Ecology | Nutrition | Animal Husbandry | Agriculture | Nature's Bounty | Traditions

Pre-School Activities

Stimulate the 5 senses: *Sight*-Nature's colours; *Smell* – Floral and herbal smells; *Touch* – Contrasts between hot and cold (the burning fire and the water from the well), rough and smooth (tree bark and the washed wool from our sheep); *Hearing* – Bird song and animal sounds and the rustling of the leaves in the trees; *Taste* – sampling our farm products; *Mobility* – imitate our courtyard animals; opportunity to see farm animals and touch and interact with them.

Nursery School and Primary (I & II) School Activities (Activities A1 – A15)

A1 – Bees and what they produce – Candle making with bees wax. Sugars and their use in nutrition (1h)

A2 – Forests on the plains or on the hills: Different tree and animal species which inhabit the forests. Pruning and wood products. What can we do with nuts? (1h)

A3 – Vegetable Patches – Working the land, weeding, ploughing and sowing (1h)

A4 – Farm Animals – Cattle, donkeys, pigs, sheep, goats, rabbits, ducks, chicken, peacocks, turkeys and the hedgehog! (1 – 1½h)

A5 – How our grandparents lived – Daily life, oral traditions, tales. Stables, livestock and cattle (1h)

A6 – From grain to bread – How to make bread (1h)

A7 – Ecology according to the scarecrow (1h)

A8 – The golden-leaved oak tree – The story of the woodland kingdom and its tiny insect inhabitants (1h)

A9 – Countryside Treasure Hunting – Explore using your eyes, magnifying glasses and play with different types of soil to discover the earth's secrets scientifically (1 - 1½h)

A10 – Biodiversity – The importance of seed collecting, preserving and replanting (1h)

A11 – Bygone Games- (1h)

A12 – Art of Nature- Collect natural products from the farm and countryside and use them to make a work of art (1 – 1½h)

A13 – Nature in Art and traditional home cooking – Make a traditional dish (1– 1½h)

A14 – New Terrarium (1h)

A15 – Water, Earth, Fire and Air (1h)

La Buona Terra

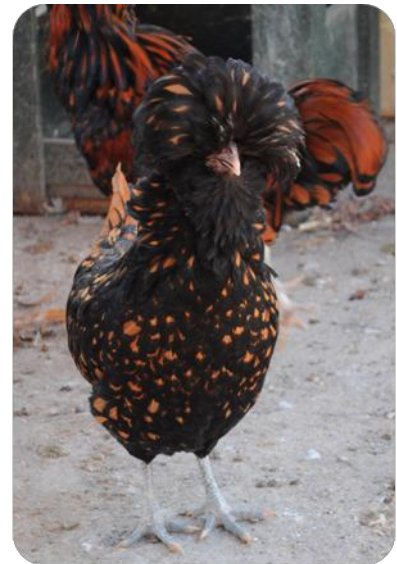


La Buona Terra (The Good Land) was founded in 1999 thanks to the landlords' love for the rural world and their will to invest in "green economy". All that is done at La Buona Terra has got the aim of being sustainable for the farm and useful to the promotion of their traditions and culture.

The area covered by this farm is huge so children can enjoy the freedom of wide space while learning about the plants (crops, fruit, vegetables) and animals (horses, donkeys, hens).



an alley at the estate



Galina Padovana, a hen breed typical for

the region of Padova, the most interesting and memorable inhabitant of the farm

Depending on what children do, the activities are carried out both indoor and outdoor. Here are some of them:

Learning Activities:

- Healing herbs
- Organic farming and organic culture
- Face to face (muzzle) with animals
- Woodlands and hedges in agriculture

Workshops

- From wheat to bread
- Tasting workshop
- Grape Harvest
- Painting with fruit and vegetables



children who have prepared dough for baking

The farm offers home-made food and accommodation in the building which used to be a farmhouse, and was later turned into a restaurant. They work with schools and individual groups, and what makes this household special is that one of their target groups are toddlers! This only proves that Signor Domenico and Signora Luisa constantly enhance their farm.



It is important to always improve your offer, says Signora Carpanese while showing the home-made bread served to children

Speaking about improvement and children's education, the hosts underline that teacher's education is equally important.

More information about this farm can be found at www.buonaterrabio.it.

Campagna Saline



The farm of Emma Cavalier and Resio Veronese is an eighteenth-century farm built on the ruins of a grain deposit of Benedictine monks. They opened the farm school in 1992 and have successfully worked ever since.

The farm is a popular destination for many school visits thanks to the presence of many farm animals: peacocks, ducks, chicken, turkeys, geese, pigs, cows, goats, rabbits, doves, pigeons, parrots, donkeys, ponies. Still, their presence would be of little use if the hosts weren't diligently working with the children who come.

It takes a lot of love and passion to teach the kids which don't know anything about nature and animals, says signora Emma.



The farm offers tailored programmes, and they are special because the landlord- the "Peasant Poet"- and his wife dress in eighteenth-century clothes during certain workshops. Here are some of the activities they offer:

Learning Activities:

- Museum of Rural Culture
- Barnyard and farm animals

Workshops:

- How to make bread
- My vegetable garden
- Let's feed animals
- Birdwatching
- Life and stories from bygone days



Signora Emma and Signor Resio, talking to the children dresses in 18t century clothes



inside the museum

The farm school also has a museum of rural tools and equipment as a remembrance of how people worked in the fields in the past and how they lived in the countryside. There are also some unique exponents any museum would be proud of, such an old TV set.

The farm is also very popular because of its beautiful surroundings: the property has a forest and a natural oasis where various species of birds are nesting and many of them resting during their migration period.



the oasis on the lake

More information about the farm can be found at www.agriturismocampagnasaline.it.

Fattoria Morluno



The Morluno educational farm regularly hosts groups of people and schools since 2002. However, in the last years it offers a new activity called “The farmer in school”. With this new idea of teaching, the farmer move from his county farm to bring his professional contribution directly to school.

Apart from schools, which come for daily visits and programmes, the fattoria offers programmes for individual groups of children and their families who can stay at the farm for several days (there are 8 beds in three rooms).

Everything at this farm is fit for children. Apart from little chairs and tables, even little refrigerators, there are some curiosities children can rarely see elsewhere.

a chicken egg incubator, one of the most interesting objects at the farm, which helps children learn how chicken grow



Living in contact with nature and local culture is the motto of this farm and its hosts. This is why the learning activities and workshops mainly concern local life, culture and skills, and include close contact with plants and animals, primarily those living on the farm. Here are some of the things children can do at the farm:

Learning Activities:

- Cereals and flour processing
- The role of horses in farming history
- Archeological tour
- Farmyard animals
- The four seasons

Workshops:

- I build my bee hive
- Horse riding and taking care of them
- Embroidery, ceramic
- Expressing creativity with wood, leaves, flowers and bark



animals living in close friendship

You will find more information about the farm at www.bandbannamaria.it.

Other educational tourism models

Apart from the farm schools visited during the tour, 2 other educational tourism models were presented. They include the activities usually conducted at educational farms, but offer a wider scope of diverse contents. The descriptions of these destinations follow:

La Costigliola



La Costigliola is one of the most advanced concepts you can see in Italy, or even in Europe, when it comes to environmental protection, zero-waste philosophy, sustainable and organic agricultural production, use of renewable energy and, all in all, high level corporate responsibility.

This farm, the property of the Archbishop of Padova managed by *Banca Etica*³ is slowly being converted into an organic farm. The estate, situated 33m above the sea level and below 'a little mountain' (Monticello), has a forest, orchards, vegetable garden and a vineyard.



Mr Dario Brollo, the Director, and Mr Arrigo Anzani, the Custodian of La Costigliola, showing the estate

³ The idea behind *Banca Etica* consists in creating a place where savers, driven by the common desire of a more transparent and responsible management of financial resources, may meet socio-economic initiatives, inspired by the values of a sustainable social and human development.

The farm offers food and accommodation at one of its beautiful buildings located on an old monastery stable remnants. Young and old can sleep in the farm's rooms and apartments, but can also set their tents at the farm's area and enjoy an open-air vacation.

a part of the old wall



a part of the space used for seminars, presentations, concerts, etc.

Apart from its approach to nature, the farm is also advanced in its approaches to art, social responsibility, education, etc.

La Costigliola is a therapy center for drug addicts who participate in the farm's activities as a part of their working therapy.

It is easy to drive a conclusion about this farm's philosophy: nothing and no one deserves to be thrown away or cast aside. Everything and everyone needs a second chance, be it a used pair of jeans which can be become a part of the work of art, or a disabled person participating in a joyful grape harvest.

Nothing is waste!
is the name of the installation by a French artist which
embodies the farm's motto



The farm organizes most diverse activities: from music events and vegetarian cooking classes to wine harvests and youth eco camps.

families harvesting grapes at La Costigliola and participating in the production of their first wine – Incipit (the Beginning)



What is more, the farm is a cultural, didactic and training center. La Costigliola organizes daytime summer camps in the farm, which are an opportunity for children to get together, socialize, play and discover nature and environment.



a family feeding the donkey



a little girl painting



Learning activities and workshops consist of activities in which children can build, invent, and get in touch with a healthy way of life, discovering the rhythm of nature, eating healthy and seasonal food.

products of the children's recycling workshop, organized together with playing forgotten games

More information about La Costigliola can be found at www.lacostigliola.org.

Terra di Mezzo



The social cooperative Terra di Mezzo (the Middle-Earth) was formed in 2000 primarily with the aim to organise educational activities for schools and summer camps for children where they can learn about nature, environment and ecology.

Our objective is educative in its nature, says Marko Siciliani, the Director, while addressing the group. Children and youth learn about nature while having fun and exploring it, he adds.

In the Parco Regionale dei Colli Euganei (Euganean Hills Regional Park) the cooperative rents 2 accommodation facilities: Casa Marina and Ostello Colli Euganei. There is one more facility the cooperative uses – the Venetian Hotel, located outside the park.

At these locations the cooperative organizes most diverse activities, divided in three groups:
Didactic activities,
School tourism and
Adventure camps.

The didactic offer applies to the children aged from 3 to 17 who can stay here alone if they are older than 7. Younger children need to be accompanied by their parents. The activities range from orienteering and geological classes to preparation of theatre plays and preparation of food.



glimpses of some of the edutainment activities children can participate in

School tourism includes outdoor games and activities, sport activities, excursions, visits, tours and didactic laboratories where children learn to use microscopes, make herbariums, conduct mini-researches on renewable energy, etc.

a didactic classroom with microscopes



Summer adventure camps, including commercial and school camps, are organized at several themes. In 2011, they were:

Forest Camps, for those who want to live in close contact with nature, learn the tricks for outdoor living and discover the rhythm of plants and animals;

2 Weeks Camps, for those who want to experience adventure, participate in workshops, play games;

Cultural Exchange Camps, for girls and boys from Italy and abroad who want to share the same adventure and learn about the customs, tradition and tastes of a culture different from theirs.



a part of the promotion material for the adventure camps



Apart from the inventiveness in every aspect of this organisation's work, they are also creative in organizing their promotional activities.

Casa del Futuro (the House of Future) where children can learn and which is parked in the schoolyards during the promotion period

For more information see www.coopterradimezzo.com and www.parcocolleuganei.com.

Application of Italian Practices in Serbia

The description of Italian farm schools and other educational tourism destinations clearly indicates that Italian practices could be applied in Serbia. Be it in rural tourism households, national parks or tourism resorts, farm school and other child and youth tourism models could successfully enhance formal and informal education and enrich Serbian tourism offer.

Still, due to a list of reasons, Italian practices could and should not be barely copied, but adapted in line with the circumstances found in Serbia and thus applied. However, there are several key lessons which could quickly be incorporated in Serbian institutional framework and in practice, and they are all recommended by the documents produced by the Joint Programme „Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development“, such as the National Rural Tourism Master Plan:

→ the quality of programmes as a key factor

The only guarantee of success for any child and youth tourism site is the quality of the programmes they offer. Whether they have accommodation or not, whether they are closer or further from urban centres, whether the space for the activities is huge or small, all of these destinations are primarily characterized by the content they offer. The programmes which enable children to actively learn and gain knowledge while having fun prove to be the most successful, so the principle of **Active Learning** would be very important to incorporate in Serbian practices. The **quality of the programmes** determines success, together with the **devotion of the staff, seasonality and adaptability**. With the team composed of people who love to work with children and youth, interesting educational programmes which are adapted to the seasons of the year and possibility to host both individual groups and schools, accomplishment is certain.

→ standardisation as a prerequisite for sustainable development

Although child and youth tourism can be developed in accordance with the current Serbian legislative such as the Law on Tourism and other bylaws such as the Regulations on the Excursions and Recreational Learning, there is a need to develop the standards for child and youth tourism service providers. This **set of standards** could have the same or similar categories as Italian Quality Paper (from sanitary to educational standards), and could later be classified and developed depending on the educational tourism model (educational farms, edutainment centres, etc.). The standards should be developed in cooperation of

local and national institutions, while the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development should be the key bearers of the activities.

→ **visibility as a path towards success**

Besides the above listed, there is a third factor which enables success for child and youth educational tourism - visibility. Once again, the quality will promote the destinations in the best way. However, apart from **word-of-mouth marketing**, which certainly adds a layer of credibility, this tourism form can be made visible in many ways: through **promotion** of destinations and **awareness raising** activities at local and national events and media, and through encouraging close cooperation of the bearers of the activities and their **networking**. What would also make child and youth tourism more visible and recognized is specific **labelling system** which could first be developed as a general set of labels, parallel to the general set of standards, and later developed into sub-label groups depending on the educational tourism models.

The Joint Programme „Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development“ is working on all the suggestions given above with the aim to set up the basis for the development of child and youth educational tourism. Besides developing the institutional framework and national documents, the Programme is supporting 6 educational tourism pilot projects. In this way, a bottom-up and top-down interaction and knowledge sharing is constantly enabled for all the participants in the process.