



# Sustainable Path Advancing Community Empowerment - New European Bauhaus for Social economy and Transformative living

## RURAL RENEWAL: A GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION THROUGH NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS AND SOCIAL ECONOMY BEST PRACTICES



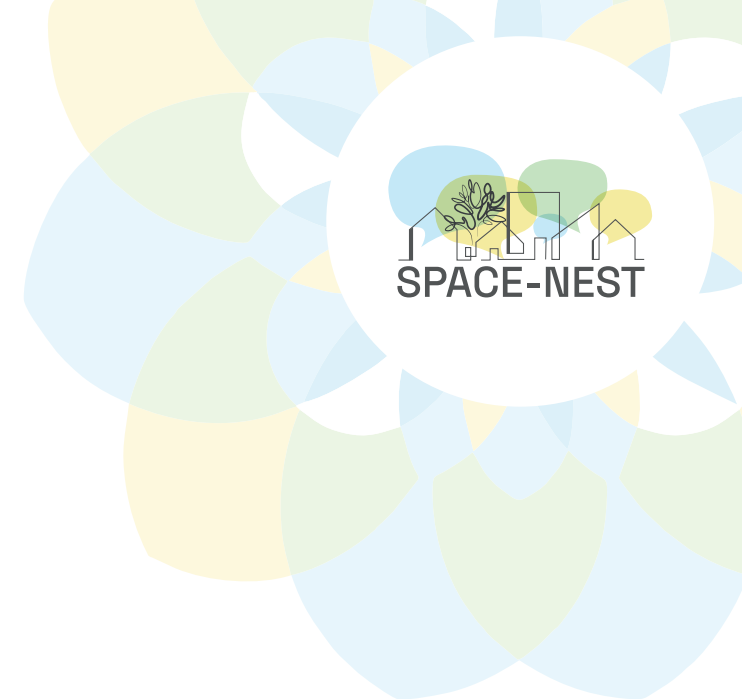
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<b>Project acronym</b>	<b>SPACE-NEST</b>
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\*Recognized as an  
exemplary best practice



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## Introduction

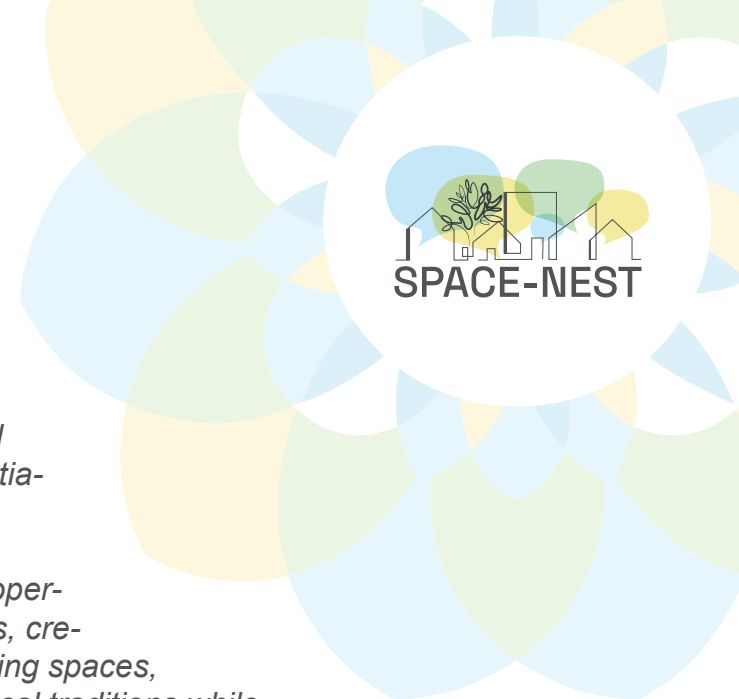
*Rural areas across Europe face challenges such as depopulation, ageing, economic decline, and environmental degradation. However, through innovative approaches like the New European Bauhaus (NEB) and social economy best practices, rural renewal can become a reality.*

*The **New European Bauhaus** promotes solutions that are sustainable, but also inclusive and beautiful, offering a framework to revitalize rural spaces while respecting local traditions, cultures and diversity. By integrating eco-friendly architecture, circular economy principles, and community-led initiatives, rural areas can become vibrant, resilient, and attractive places to live and work.*

*The social economy plays a crucial role in this transformation by fostering local entrepreneurship, cooperatives, and social enterprises. These models ensure that economic benefits stay within communities, creating jobs, improving services, and enhancing social cohesion. Successful examples include coworking spaces, inclusive homes, community farms, circular economy, and cultural tourism initiatives that preserve local traditions while generating sustainable income.*

*By combining NEB's creative vision with social economy strategies, rural regions can thrive. Community participation, digital innovation, and policy support are essential to scaling these solutions. With the right approach, rural areas can become leaders in sustainability, demonstrating how tradition and innovation can coexist for a better future.*

*This booklet presents 41 best practices of unused rural spaces across the EU that have been converted into useful places that support local rural communities through socially-oriented enterprises. Best practices were collected through an EU wide call for best practices between March and May 2025. The booklet is divided into three chapters: the first presents best practices by project partners (Province of Bergamo, Province of Malaga, Obalno-kraška statistical region), the second presents best practices in the project partners' territories (Italy, Spain, Slovenia) and the third presents best practices in other EU territories.*



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# 1 Best practices from project partners



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# 1.1 Arqueorutas – Experiential Archaeology Park

**Lead organization:** Carvajales, s/n. Humilladero, Málaga

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Self Employed

**Webpage:** [www.arqueorutas.com](http://www.arqueorutas.com)



**Keywords:** Experimental archaeology, Sustainability, Community regeneration

The Los Carvajales experiential archaeology park transforms an unproductive rural area into a dynamic space for cultural, environmental, and social engagement. By integrating experimental archaeology, bioconstruction, and biodiversity restoration, the project offers inclusive educational and recreational activities that connect past and present. The Park fosters community participation, social cohesion, and environmental stewardship, while promoting sustainable practices using recycled and local materials. Serving as a replicable model, it enhances local identity, strengthens social ties, and provides immersive experiences that combine heritage preservation, ecological awareness, and collaborative learning in a rural context.

## Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revives rural heritage and landscape, fostering cultural identity and inclusive experiences.
- **Sustainable:** Uses recycled materials, renewable energy, and biodiversity restoration to minimize environmental impact.
- **Together:** Ensures accessibility and fosters collaboration, social cohesion, and equitable participation for all community members.

## Key impacts:

- Regeneration of rural land into a multifunctional educational and ecological space.
- Strengthened community identity, social cohesion, and intergenerational interaction.
- Promotion of environmental awareness, biodiversity restoration, and sustainable practices.
- Creation of inclusive, accessible opportunities for learning, collaboration, and heritage appreciation.

## Transferability & Inspiration:

The project can be adapted to other rural regions by transforming underutilized or abandoned spaces into community-oriented cultural and ecological sites. Educational activities, bioconstruction techniques, and experimental archaeology can be tailored to local heritage and biodiversity. Its participatory methodology ensures social inclusion, promotes local identity, and encourages sustainable development in diverse contexts.

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## 1.2 Dossena Laboratory

**Lead organization:** Municipality of Dossena

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** <https://www.visitdossena.it/>

**Keywords:** Mountain community, Cultural heritage, Inclusive development

The Dossena project revitalizes a mountain community by integrating cultural heritage, social innovation, and environmental protection. Historic mines, a Tibetan bridge, and local infrastructure were restored, while inclusive services, community cooperative, and sustainable tourism initiatives were created. The project fosters participation, creates jobs, preserves biodiversity, and strengthens local identity. By combining heritage, environmental stewardship, and economic development, Dossena serves as a living laboratory for sustainable mountain regeneration, offering authentic experiences, inclusive opportunities, and a replicable model for other rural communities seeking social, economic, and ecological resilience.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Restores historical sites and natural landscapes, creating meaningful cultural and emotional experiences.
- **Sustainable:** Promotes circular practices, biodiversity protection, and energy-efficient infrastructure.
- **Together:** Encourages participatory governance, inclusivity, and community-driven development.

### Key impacts:

- Preservation and enhancement of cultural and natural heritage.
- Creation of inclusive economic opportunities, including new jobs and youth engagement.
- Strengthening social cohesion and participatory governance through the community cooperative.
- Protection and regeneration of biodiversity via the Wilderness Area and sustainable resource management.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The model can be adapted to other rural or mountain areas by restoring disused sites, fostering local entrepreneurship, and promoting inclusive governance. Engagement of local associations, residents, and research institutions ensures relevance to each community. The approach integrates cultural heritage, sustainable practices, and social inclusion, making it replicable across regions seeking resilient development.



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## 1.3 CUP Izola – Useful Items Center Izola

**Lead organization:** Komunala Izola

**Location:** Slovenia

**Type of organization:** Public utility company

**Webpage:** [https://www.instagram.com/cup\\_izola](https://www.instagram.com/cup_izola)

**Keywords:** Reuse, Circular Economy, Community



CUP – Center uporabnih predmetov (Useful Items Center) in Izola transforms a disused municipal space into a vibrant community hub promoting reuse, sustainability, and social inclusion. Through its swap system, workshops, and intergenerational events, the center encourages the sharing of goods, skills, and knowledge, fostering solidarity and environmental responsibility. It integrates formal and informal knowledge, collaborates with local institutions and universities, and serves as a replicable model for sustainable living, demonstrating how communities can actively reduce waste while strengthening social cohesion and creating a positive local impact.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Transforms abandoned spaces into vibrant, creative community hubs that celebrate culture and sustainability.
- **Sustainable:** Promotes circular economy practices, reuse, and waste reduction for a lower environmental footprint.
- **Together:** Fosters solidarity, inclusivity, and intergenerational collaboration, strengthening community bonds.

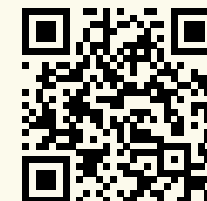
### Key impacts:

- Reduced waste and promotion of circular economy practices.
- Strengthened social cohesion through inclusive, intergenerational activities.
- Empowered communities to participate in sustainable and responsible living.
- Created a replicable model for sustainable, community-driven reuse initiatives.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The CUP model can be applied to other urban or rural areas with available community spaces. It requires committed staff and local engagement to facilitate reuse and participation. Municipalities, social enterprises, and cooperatives can tailor its barter and workshop approach to suit cultural and economic contexts.

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## 1.4 Lavanda Tejona Ceramics Workshop

**Lead organization:** Alfarnatejo Town Hall

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** [https://www.instagram.com/lavanda\\_de\\_barro/](https://www.instagram.com/lavanda_de_barro/)

**Keywords:** Ceramics, Traditional crafts, Creativity



The Lavanda Tejona project in Alfarnatejo transforms an unused municipal space into a vibrant ceramics and natural essences workshop. Inspired by local nature—especially lavender—artisans create hand-painted ceramics and plant-based products that reflect the beauty of the territory. The initiative fosters inclusivity, connecting women of different ages, backgrounds, and languages in a shared creative process. It also promotes sustainability by using natural materials, repurposing spaces, and planting native species to enhance biodiversity. Beyond craftsmanship, the project strengthens community bonds, builds solidarity, and creates exportable products that showcase the cultural and natural identity of Alfarnatejo.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Hand-painted ceramics inspired by local lavender and nature celebrate cultural identity and create unique, meaningful experiences.
- **Sustainable:** The project repurposes unused spaces, uses natural materials, and fosters biodiversity through native lavender plantations.
- **Together:** It unites diverse community members in an inclusive, cooperative workshop that strengthens bonds and builds solidarity.

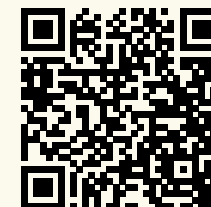
### Key impacts:

- Reviving traditional craftsmanship through ceramics inspired by local nature.
- Building solidarity and opportunities for women and diverse community members.
- Promoting zero-waste production and restoring biodiversity through lavender plantations.
- Creating unique, exportable products that showcase Alfarnatejo and boost rural development.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This practice can be adapted to other contexts by repurposing unused community spaces and turning them into creative hubs that connect people, culture, and nature. Local natural resources and traditions can inspire unique products that reflect each territory's identity while generating sustainable economic opportunities. The inclusive, participatory model ensures that any community—urban or rural—can replicate it to strengthen social bonds and foster resilience.

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## 1.5 Rural Village Regeneration

**Lead organization:** Energy for Sustainable Development

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** SMEs

**Webpage:** <http://www.e4sd.eu>



**Keywords:** Rural regeneration, Circular economy, Technology

This project revitalizes semi-abandoned rural villages by combining cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and community engagement. Through participatory planning, it restores historic buildings using eco-friendly techniques, develops family and professional gardens, integrates renewable energy, and creates spaces for tourism, digital work, and cultural activities. By connecting local traditions with innovative technologies, the initiative fosters social inclusion, intergenerational collaboration, and economic opportunities while enhancing biodiversity and reducing environmental impact. Its interdisciplinary, circular, and replicable approach transforms abandoned areas into vibrant, resilient, and sustainable communities, serving as a model for rural regeneration across Europe.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revitalizes semi-abandoned villages by integrating cultural, historical, and natural heritage into aesthetically pleasing and functional spaces.
- **Sustainable:** Uses eco-friendly materials, renewable energy, and circular systems to minimize environmental impact and enhance biodiversity.
- **Together:** Fosters inclusive participation, collaboration, and shared governance among community members, authorities, and stakeholders.

### Key impacts:

- Revitalization of abandoned rural areas and preservation of local heritage.
- Strengthening community cohesion, inclusion, and intergenerational collaboration.
- Promotion of sustainable practices, renewable energy, and circular economy models.
- Creation of economic opportunities for digital workers, local artisans, and small enterprises.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This practice can be replicated in other rural regions by identifying underused villages or settlements and engaging local communities in co-creation. Integrating local heritage, renewable energy, and circular economy principles allows adaptation to specific cultural and environmental contexts. Digital infrastructure and interdisciplinary collaboration can attract new residents and stimulate sustainable economic and social regeneration.

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## 1.6 Središče Rotunda Koper

**Lead organization:** “Središče Rotunda Koper” so.p.

**Location:** Slovenia

**Type of organization:** NGOs

**Webpage:** <https://www.sredisce-rotunda.si/>



**Keywords:** Social innovation, Sustainability, Community empowerment

Središče Rotunda is a social enterprise that transforms a former prison into a dynamic hub for social innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability. By repurposing underutilized spaces, it integrates cultural heritage, environmental stewardship, and community development. Through programs like SKOK, Inkubator 4.0, Fishery Local Action Group Feral, SmartEra, and Local Action Group Zelena Istra, the initiative supports education, youth and women empowerment, sustainable fisheries, eco-mobility, and circular economy practices. The project fosters meaningful social interactions, collaboration, and inclusivity, bridging local and global networks, while promoting economic, social, and environmental resilience in rural and coastal communities.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** The project revitalizes a historic prison, integrating cultural heritage and creating inspiring, meaningful spaces for the community.
- **Sustainable:** It promotes circular economy, eco-mobility, renewable energy, and sustainable fisheries, reducing environmental impact and enhancing biodiversity.
- **Together:** It fosters inclusivity, collaboration, and equal opportunities across diverse social groups, strengthening community cohesion and shared responsibility.

### Key impacts:

- Revitalization of underused spaces into hubs for social innovation, education, and entrepreneurship.
- Promotion of sustainable practices, including circular economy, eco-mobility, and biodiversity conservation.
- Strengthening social cohesion, inclusivity, and equal opportunities for youth, women, migrants, and marginalized groups.
- Preservation of cultural heritage while integrating traditional knowledge with modern innovation, fostering resilient local communities.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This practice can be adapted by repurposing underutilized or abandoned buildings in other rural or urban areas to serve as hubs for social innovation, education, and sustainable entrepreneurship. Local programs, such as sustainable fisheries, eco-tourism, or digital skills training, can be tailored to the cultural, economic, and environmental context of each community. By combining stakeholder engagement, circular economy practices, and interdisciplinary collaboration, other regions can replicate the model to strengthen social cohesion, promote sustainability, and preserve local heritage.

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## 1.7 Old rural school – now a community associations building

**Lead organization:** Almáchar Town Hall

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** [www.almachar.es](http://www.almachar.es)

**Keywords:** Community revitalization, Sustainability, Inclusion

This project revitalizes a key community building in Almáchar, transforming it into a vibrant hub for women's, youth, and flamenco associations. By combining sustainable renovation, energy-efficient solutions, and inclusive design, it strengthens local identity, fosters social cohesion, and promotes environmental awareness. The initiative encourages intergenerational and intercultural exchange, participatory decision-making, and collective use of the space, while integrating biodiversity-friendly practices. Serving as a model for rural development, it demonstrates how heritage restoration can simultaneously support social inclusion, cultural continuity, and ecological sustainability, creating a replicable and inspiring example for other communities.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** The project restores a historic building, creating a culturally rich and inclusive space that strengthens community identity.
- **Sustainable:** It uses energy-efficient renovations, recyclable materials, and biodiversity-friendly solutions to minimize environmental impact.
- **Together:** The initiative fosters social cohesion by enabling participation, collaboration, and shared use among diverse local associations.

### Key impacts:

- Revitalizes community life by providing a shared space for cultural, social, and educational activities.
- Promotes social inclusion and equal participation across genders, ages, and cultural groups.
- Advances environmental sustainability through energy-efficient renovation, circular economy principles, and biodiversity-friendly practices.
- Strengthens local identity and intergenerational knowledge exchange, fostering a sense of belonging and collective pride.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This practice can be replicated in other rural areas by restoring local heritage or community spaces to meet the needs of local groups. It can integrate local cultural practices, sustainable building techniques, and participatory management. Flexibility allows adaptation to different social, environmental, and technical contexts while maintaining inclusivity and community engagement.



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## 1.8 Rocolo Mountain Theatre

**Lead organization:** Municipality of Dossena

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** <https://www.sviluppodossena.it/>

**Keywords:** Alpine heritage, Community hub, Sustainable restoration

The Rocolo project restores a historic Alpine building (rocolo – a small tower-shaped building used for hunting) and its surrounding landscape to create a multifunctional hub for tourism, culture, and education. By integrating the site into local trail networks, it fosters slow, conscious tourism, strengthens community identity, and encourages social interaction. The project combines heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, and participatory processes, offering a space where local traditions, knowledge, and biodiversity are valued. It provides inclusive access for all ages and abilities, creating a platform for education, cultural events, and collective experiences, while enhancing the ecological and social fabric of the region.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revives Alpine heritage, connecting architecture, landscape, and cultural identity.
- **Sustainable:** Uses low-impact materials and circular, energy-efficient restoration methods.
- **Together:** Creates inclusive spaces promoting social cohesion, participation, and shared cultural experiences.

### Key impacts:

- Strengthened local identity and cultural heritage preservation.
- Increased social cohesion through inclusive community spaces and activities.
- Enhanced environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection.
- Boosted slow tourism and educational opportunities in the region.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The model can be applied to rural or peri-urban areas with historic or abandoned buildings by engaging local communities in restoration and cultural programming. Emphasis on low-impact, circular construction and inclusive design ensures sustainability and accessibility. Partnerships with local authorities and stakeholders can replicate participatory governance and community engagement.



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## 1.9 Volunteer center Park Istra

**Lead organization:** Park Istra

**Location:** Slovenia

**Type of organization:** NGOs

**Webpage:** <https://parkistra.com/>

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Volunteerism, Community empowerment

Park Istra transforms a former military outpost into a vibrant hub for sustainability, social inclusion, and cultural preservation. Hosting international volunteers, the project fosters intergenerational and cross-cultural collaboration while restoring nature, maintaining trails, and supporting vulnerable local residents. Through circular economy practices, ecological restoration, educational workshops, and participatory governance, Park Istra promotes solidarity, environmental stewardship, and global citizenship. The initiative integrates formal and non-formal knowledge across disciplines, creating a living laboratory for sustainable rural development and demonstrating how underused spaces can become inclusive, resilient, and internationally connected centers of opportunity.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revitalizes a restricted military site into a welcoming, aesthetically and socially meaningful community space.
- **Sustainable:** Promotes circular economy practices, ecological restoration, and low-impact living.
- **Together:** Brings together international volunteers, locals, and institutions, fostering solidarity, inclusion, and shared responsibility.

### Key impacts:

- Restored nature and biodiversity through ecological actions and sustainable land management.
- Strengthened social cohesion and solidarity across local and international communities.
- Preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage and historically significant spaces.
- Creation of a transferable model for sustainable, volunteer-driven rural development and circular living.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

Park Istra's approach can be adapted to other rural regions by transforming underused or historical sites into volunteer-driven hubs. Core principles—sustainability, circular practices, and community engagement—can be tailored to local environmental, social, and cultural conditions. Partnerships with local authorities, NGOs, and residents ensure the model is replicable while maintaining relevance and long-term impact.



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## 1.10 NAIM Association

**Lead organization:** NAIM Asociación

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** NGOs

**Webpage:** <https://asociacionnaim.es/>



**Keywords:** Social inclusion, Circular economy, Community empowerment

NAIM promotes social and labor integration for immigrants and people at risk of exclusion by creating social enterprises and personalized support programs. Its activities include social catering, urban maintenance, recycling, care for dependent people, and educational programs for youth. By combining employability, environmental sustainability, and community participation, NAIM fosters solidarity, equality, and shared responsibility. The initiative also integrates circular economy principles, sustainable practices, and ecological awareness, creating inclusive and empowering environments. Its flexible, replicable model strengthens local networks, co-creates opportunities with beneficiaries, and generates transferable knowledge for broader social innovation.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Promotes dignity, cultural exchange, and a sense of belonging through social and community activities.
- **Sustainable:** Integrates circular economy practices, ecological awareness, and resource-efficient social enterprises.
- **Together:** Fosters inclusion, equality, solidarity, and participatory networks for vulnerable and diverse groups.

### Key impacts:

- Increased social inclusion and employability of vulnerable populations.
- Strengthened community cohesion and empowerment through participatory networks.
- Promotion of sustainable practices and circular economy awareness.
- Generation of transferable knowledge and innovative social enterprise models.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

NAIM's socio-labor insertion model can be implemented in rural or urban areas facing unemployment or social exclusion. Its flexible methodology allows adjustment to local needs and strategic sectors, such as agro-industry, care services, sustainable tourism, or recycling. Other communities can adopt its approach by creating social enterprises, personalized support programs, and collaborative networks to foster inclusion, sustainability, and community resilience.



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## 1.11 Teveno Blacksmith Workshop

**Lead organization:** La Fucina di Teveno E.T.S.

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** NGOs

**Webpage:** [https://www.facebook.com/lafucinaditeveno?locale=it\\_IT](https://www.facebook.com/lafucinaditeveno?locale=it_IT)



**Keywords:** Blacksmith heritage, Community engagement, Sustainable restoration

The Fucina di Teveno project restores a historic 18th-century blacksmith workshop, transforming it into an immersive cultural and educational site. Visitors experience hands-on demonstrations, storytelling, and exploration of traditional crafts, connecting deeply with the local heritage and natural environment. The initiative preserves historical architecture and surrounding landscapes while promoting sustainable practices, including energy-efficient systems and biodiversity restoration. It fosters social cohesion by providing accessible spaces and inclusive programming for residents, tourists, and school groups, encouraging collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and a renewed sense of community identity. The project bridges history with contemporary cultural and environmental awareness.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revives historical craftsmanship and landscape, offering an emotional and cultural experience.
- **Sustainable:** Uses traditional materials, renewable energy, and promotes circular resource use while restoring biodiversity.
- **Together:** Ensures inclusive access and fosters community engagement, education, and social cohesion.

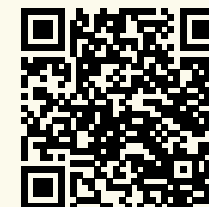
### Key impacts:

- Preservation and promotion of industrial and local heritage.
- Enhanced social cohesion through inclusive educational and cultural activities.
- Strengthened environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation.
- Creation of immersive, participatory experiences fostering intergenerational learning.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The model can be transferred to rural or mountain areas with historical workshops or craft sites by restoring buildings and integrating local narratives. Sustainable, low-impact interventions and renewable energy systems can be adapted to local materials and contexts. Collaborative partnerships with communities, schools, and cultural institutions ensure engagement, accessibility, and knowledge transfer.

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## 1.12 InnoRenew CoE building

**Lead organization:** InnoRenew CoE

**Location:** Slovenia

**Type of organization:** non-profit research institute

**Webpage:** <https://innorenew.eu/>

**Keywords:** Renewable materials, Sustainable research building, Community engagement

The InnoRenew CoE building in Izola exemplifies a holistic approach to sustainable, research-driven architecture. Using renewable materials, particularly wood, and incorporating the REED principles, the building promotes environmental sustainability, occupant well-being, and social interaction. It serves as a living lab, connecting local and international stakeholders, researchers, students, and the community to co-create knowledge on sustainable construction and healthy built environments. Through green roofs, energy-efficient systems, and biodiversity initiatives, the project minimizes environmental impact while fostering collaboration, innovation, and education. The building demonstrates how architecture can simultaneously support research, community engagement, and ecological regeneration.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** The building enhances human experience through natural materials, light, and acoustics, creating inspiring and health-promoting spaces.
- **Sustainable:** It uses renewable materials, circular design, energy-efficient systems, and biodiversity initiatives to minimize environmental impact.
- **Together:** It fosters collaboration, inclusivity, and community engagement by connecting researchers, students, local stakeholders, and international partners.

### Key impacts:

- Promotes well-being and creativity through healthy, inspiring, and accessible built environments.
- Advances sustainable construction practices and renewable material use, reducing environmental impact.
- Strengthens social cohesion and collaboration across local, national, and international communities.
- Generates new knowledge on timber buildings, circular design, and human-centered architecture for wider replication.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This practice can be adapted to other rural or urban regions by applying the REED principles to local building projects using renewable materials relevant to the area. The participatory and interdisciplinary approach can be replicated to engage communities, researchers, and stakeholders in co-creating healthy, sustainable, and inclusive spaces. Knowledge gained from monitoring building performance and user well-being can guide similar initiatives globally, allowing context-specific adaptations while maintaining environmental and social benefits.



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## 1.13 Sons of the Clouds

**Lead organization:** Benarrabá Town Hall

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** [www.benarraba.es](http://www.benarraba.es)

**Keywords:** Intercultural integration, Sustainable rural development, Refugees

*Sons of the Clouds* in Benarrabá revitalizes rural life by integrating young Sahrawi shepherds into the local community. Through sustainable herding, cultural exchange, and collaborative work, the project restores traditional livestock practices, enhances biodiversity, and strengthens social cohesion. It fosters inclusion, mutual learning, and respect for local and refugee knowledge, creating new imaginaries of rural living. Supported by local authorities, NGOs, and international networks, the initiative combines practical, formal, and non-formal knowledge to address rural depopulation, environmental management, and forced displacement, offering a replicable model for sustainable, intercultural, and transformative rural development across Europe.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** By blending local and Sahrawi pastoral traditions, the project creates unique cultural and natural experiences rooted in hospitality, resilience, and care for the land.
- **Sustainable:** It restores disused pastoral areas, promotes responsible grazing, and enhances biodiversity while maintaining ecological cycles.
- **Together:** The initiative fosters inclusive, horizontal relationships, integrating refugees and locals to build solidarity, equity, and mutual respect.

### Key impacts:

- Intercultural exchange strengthens community cohesion and pride in rural heritage.
- Sustainable herding maintains biodiversity, prevents wildfires, and regenerates landscapes.
- Refugees and locals participate equally, fostering fair governance and transformative relationships.
- Provides a model for depopulated areas combining migration integration, green economy, and sustainable agro-livestock practices.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

*Sons of the Clouds* can be transferred to other rural regions with suitable natural landscapes and political will to welcome newcomers. Its methodology adapts to different European regions facing depopulation and needing generational renewal in agro-livestock activities. The approach is also applicable to other refugee or migrant communities, combining inclusion, sustainable land use, and social innovation.



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## 1.14 KAŠTELIR - Revitalisation of prehistoric hillfort Korte

**Lead organization:** Municipality of Izola

**Location:** Slovenia

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** <https://kastelir.eu/en/Home>

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, Sustainability, Community Engagement

The KAŠTELIR project revitalizes the archaeological and natural heritage of Istria by integrating educational paths, botanical trails, cycling routes, and community participation. It connects people with local history, culture, and nature while promoting sustainable tourism and environmental stewardship. Cross-border collaboration between Slovenia, Croatia, and Italy strengthens social ties and enhances cultural exchange. The project actively involves local communities, artists, and institutions to foster social cohesion, inclusivity, and shared responsibility. By combining heritage preservation with biodiversity enhancement and accessibility, KAŠTELIR creates unique experiences, encourages sustainable lifestyles, and supports local economic and social development.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Enhances community pride and connection through heritage, scenic landscapes, and cultural activities.
- **Sustainable:** Promotes biodiversity, reuse of materials, circular practices, and environmentally responsible tourism.
- **Together:** Ensures accessibility, inclusivity, and cross-border collaboration, fostering solidarity and social cohesion.

### Key impacts:

- Preservation and promotion of cultural and natural heritage.
- Strengthened community engagement and social cohesion across borders.
- Increased environmental awareness and biodiversity conservation.
- Development of sustainable tourism and inclusive local economic opportunities.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The KAŠTELIR model can be adapted to rural areas with historical or natural assets by integrating educational trails, cultural sites, and sustainable tourism initiatives. Local stakeholders, artists, and institutions can be engaged to co-create the project, ensuring relevance and inclusivity. Flexible collaboration structures allow replication across regions, supporting both heritage preservation and community development.



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## 1.15 “La Fanega” House

**Lead organization:** La Fanega SCA

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Cooperatives

**Webpage:** [www.lafanegasocial.es](http://www.lafanegasocial.es)

**Keywords:** Functional diversity inclusion, Deinstitutionalization, Empowerment and care

La Fanega is a rural family home in Puerto Saúco, Málaga, providing inclusive, personalized care for people with functional diversity. The project promotes deinstitutionalization by offering a home-like environment where residents participate in daily life, community activities, and rural entrepreneurship, such as sheep herding and cheese-making. It strengthens self-esteem, autonomy, and social integration while fostering environmental stewardship and sustainable land use. By combining care, empowerment, and community engagement, the project challenges social stigmas, demonstrates new models of rural living, and highlights the rights and potential of people with functional diversity, offering a replicable approach for inclusive rural initiatives.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** By creating a home-based, inclusive environment, the project fosters dignity, identity, and meaningful daily experiences for people with functional diversity.
- **Sustainable:** It integrates rural entrepreneurship and environmental stewardship, maintaining livestock and natural spaces in a circular, low-impact way.
- **Together:** Residents, families, and the community participate collaboratively, promoting solidarity, equality, and mutual support across generations and abilities.

### Key impacts:

- Deinstitutionalizes care and fosters empowerment, autonomy, and quality of life for people with functional diversity.
- Encourages engagement with local residents and strengthens rural social networks.
- Implements low-impact agriculture and livestock management, integrating care with environmental stewardship.
- Demonstrates an alternative, home-based approach that can inspire other rural regions for inclusive and dignified living.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This model can be adapted to other rural areas by establishing family or small-scale home settings for people with functional diversity, integrating them into community life. Activities can include locally suitable forms of rural entrepreneurship or environmental stewardship. The approach emphasizes empowerment, autonomy, and inclusion, making it applicable wherever deinstitutionalized, community-focused care is feasible.

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## 1.16 Manina Mines

**Lead organization:** Cooperative Nona

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** Cooperatives

**Webpage:** <https://nonadiscalve.org/home>

**Keywords:** Industrial heritage, Community participation, Sustainable mountain development

The “Case Rosse” project restores the former miners’ homes at Vilminore di Scalve, transforming an abandoned industrial site into a vibrant community hub. By integrating cultural, educational, and recreational activities with environmental regeneration, the project reconnects residents and visitors with local history, nature, and collective memory. It fosters social cohesion, promotes sustainable practices, and provides inclusive access to heritage and natural landscapes, turning a forgotten site into a living laboratory of memory, creativity, and ecological responsibility.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revives the site’s cultural, architectural, and natural qualities to offer immersive, authentic experiences.
- **Sustainable:** Uses low-impact restoration, local materials, and circular practices to regenerate both built and natural environments.
- **Together:** Ensures inclusivity and fosters social cohesion through participatory governance and shared activities.

### Key impacts:

- Restoration of abandoned heritage while enhancing local identity and collective memory.
- Creation of inclusive spaces promoting intergenerational and intercultural social interaction.
- Ecological regeneration and increased biodiversity through sustainable site management.
- Strengthened community governance and empowerment via participatory and transdisciplinary processes.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This model can be replicated in rural or post-industrial areas with abandoned heritage, using participatory approaches to engage local communities. Low-impact restoration and integration of cultural, social, and ecological activities can be tailored to local landscapes and resources. Documentation of processes and stakeholder collaboration allows flexible transfer across regions and scales.

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## 1.17 Parenzana – the route of health and friendship

**Lead organization:** Municipality of Izola

**Location:** Slovenia

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** <https://www.parenzana.net/en>

**Keywords:** Cultural heritage, Sustainable mobility, Cross-border cooperation

Parenzana project transformed a historic narrow-gauge railway in Istria into a cross-border bike and pedestrian trail connecting Slovenia and Croatia. The project preserves cultural heritage while promoting sustainable mobility, healthy lifestyles, and tourism. The trail integrates natural and technical landmarks, resting places, and exercise stations, making it accessible for people of all ages and abilities. Collaboration between municipalities, tourist boards, biking societies, and local businesses ensures social cohesion and community engagement. The initiative strengthens local identity, encourages cross-border cooperation, and serves as a model for repurposing abandoned infrastructure in rural regions.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Preserves cultural heritage and integrates historical and natural landscapes.
- **Sustainable:** Promotes sustainable mobility, reducing pollution and repurposing abandoned infrastructure.
- **Together:** Encourages accessibility for all and fosters cross-border collaboration between communities.

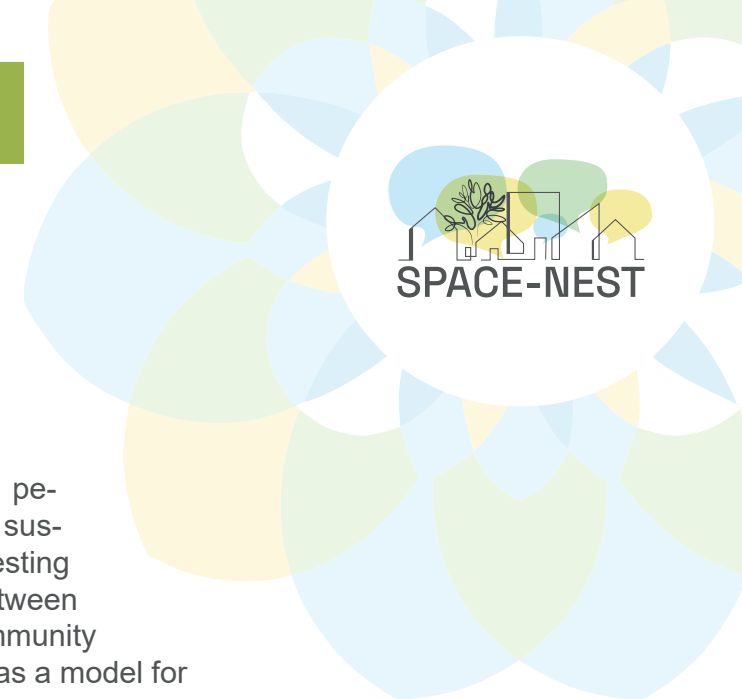
### Key impacts:

- Revitalization of abandoned railway infrastructure into a functional and attractive trail.
- Preservation of cultural heritage and historical landmarks.
- Promotion of sustainable mobility and healthy lifestyles.
- Strengthened cross-border cooperation and local tourism development.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This model can be applied to other rural regions with abandoned infrastructure, such as old railways or paths. By combining heritage preservation with sustainable mobility and tourism, communities can enhance local identity and social cohesion. Partnerships with local authorities, tourism organizations, and recreational groups can replicate the collaborative framework.

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## 1.18 Algaba, the Culture of the Forest

**Lead organization:** Algaba de Ronda

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Cooperatives

**Webpage:** [www.algabaderonda.com](http://www.algabaderonda.com)

**Keywords:** Heritage, Agroecology, Mediterranean forest

Algaba de Ronda is a rural cultural and ecological initiative that restores a 200-year-old farmhouse and 50 hectares of Mediterranean forest to create a hub for education, research, and sustainable development. It combines environmental education, agroecology, conservation of endangered native livestock breeds, and experimental archaeology to reconnect people with nature and heritage. With partnerships across universities, schools, and local communities, it has engaged over 50,000 participants through programs that blend science, tradition, and culture. Algaba fosters inclusion, solidarity, and innovation, serving as a replicable model of regenerative rural development rooted in biodiversity and community resilience.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** It restores heritage buildings and landscapes, linking cultural identity, biodiversity, and traditional rural knowledge to create meaningful experiences.
- **Sustainable:** The project regenerates ecosystems, preserves endangered breeds, applies circular resource use, and promotes low-carbon, ecological practices.
- **Together:** It unites diverse communities, generations, and institutions in inclusive, participatory networks that strengthen social justice and rural identity.

### Key impacts:

- Conservation of Mediterranean woodland, soil restoration, and biodiversity protection.
- Recovery of ancestral knowledge, heritage buildings, and traditional practices.
- Accessible, intergenerational programs engaging over 50,000 people.
- Creation of sustainable jobs, eco-entrepreneurship, and opportunities to counter rural abandonment.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The Algaba de Ronda model can be adapted by restoring heritage spaces, integrating local biodiversity, and activating traditional knowledge to meet contemporary needs. Its modular approach—combining education, agroecology, cultural heritage, and eco-entrepreneurship—allows flexibility in different rural contexts. By fostering inclusive participation and building networks between institutions and communities, it offers a replicable pathway for regenerative rural development across regions and sectors.



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## 1.19 Casa Bortolami – Community Urban Farm

**Lead organization:** Municipality of Padua

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** <https://www.comune.padova.it/novita/notizie/comunicato-stampa-un-avviso-pubblico-la-futura-gestione-della-casa-bortolami-e>

**Keywords:** Community farming, Peri-urban areas, Social inclusion

The Casa Bortolami project revitalizes peri-urban agricultural spaces in Padua by creating a community farm within Basso Isonzo Park. It combines agroecological cultivation, circular food production, and participatory processes to foster sustainable agriculture, biodiversity, and local engagement. The initiative promotes social inclusion, intergenerational collaboration, and alternative economic models such as community-supported agriculture. By connecting citizens, farmers, researchers, and institutions, Casa Bortolami transforms neglected peri-urban areas into accessible, educational, and environmentally regenerative spaces, serving as a replicable model for urban-rural integration, local food sovereignty, and community-driven environmental stewardship.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Casa Bortolami revitalizes peri-urban green spaces, creating a harmonious connection between nature, agriculture, and community.
- **Sustainable:** The project implements circular agroecological practices, renewable energy, and resource-efficient building techniques to minimize environmental impact.
- **Together:** It fosters inclusive participation, collaboration among citizens, farmers, and local authorities, and strengthens social cohesion through shared food and agricultural activities.

### Key impacts:

- Revitalization of peri-urban green spaces and preservation of cultural and natural heritage.
- Promotion of sustainable agroecological practices and circular resource management.
- Strengthening social cohesion and community engagement through participatory farming and shared activities.
- Support for local economy, generational renewal in agriculture, and improved access to healthy, locally produced food.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This practice can be adapted to other peri-urban or semi-urban areas by identifying underused public or private green spaces and engaging local communities in their co-creation and management. Local agricultural traditions, environmental features, and social dynamics can guide the design of participatory farming and cultural activities. By combining circular agroecological methods with inclusive governance, the model can strengthen social cohesion, support local economies, and promote sustainable food systems in diverse regions.



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## 1.20 Stone and Roots – Community that Regenerates

**Lead organization:** Municipality of Averara

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** <https://www.castanicoltoriaverara.it/castagneto/>

**Keywords:** Regeneration, Community, Cultural and natural heritage

This good practice regenerates abandoned chestnut groves, dry stone walls, and rural spaces through a participatory, sustainable, and inclusive approach. By combining traditional knowledge with scientific expertise, it enhances biodiversity, strengthens community identity, and creates opportunities for intergenerational learning. Workshops, cultural events, and collaborative management foster social cohesion and solidarity while promoting circular resource use and low-impact techniques. The initiative transforms natural and cultural heritage into hubs of collective life, inspiring new ways of living together, creating economic opportunities, and serving as a replicable model for resilient rural communities across different regions.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** The project celebrates cultural and natural heritage, turning landscapes into living artworks and symbols of resilience.
- **Sustainable:** It promotes circular practices, biodiversity restoration, and low-impact traditional techniques for long-term environmental balance.
- **Together:** It fosters inclusion, intergenerational learning, and collective participation, strengthening community bonds and equity.

### Key impacts:

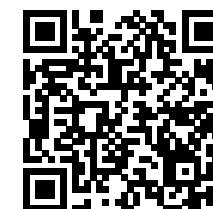
- Restoration of chestnut groves, dry stone walls, and biodiversity.
- Inclusive, intergenerational participation and strengthened community bonds.
- Cultural preservation - safeguarding and transmitting traditional knowledge and heritage.
- Creation of sustainable tourism, crafts, and local entrepreneurship.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This practice can be adapted to other contexts by applying its participatory model, which values local traditions and integrates them with scientific and institutional expertise. Communities can regenerate their own cultural and natural heritage—whether forests, farmland, or historic buildings—through workshops, collective care, and inclusive events. Its flexible approach makes it replicable in diverse rural and mountain regions, fostering resilience, sustainability, and social innovation.



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## 1.21 Interpretation Center of the Muscat Raisin “CIV MOSCATEL”

**Lead organization:** El Borge Town Hall

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** /

**Keywords:** Vineyards, Community engagement, Interpretation center

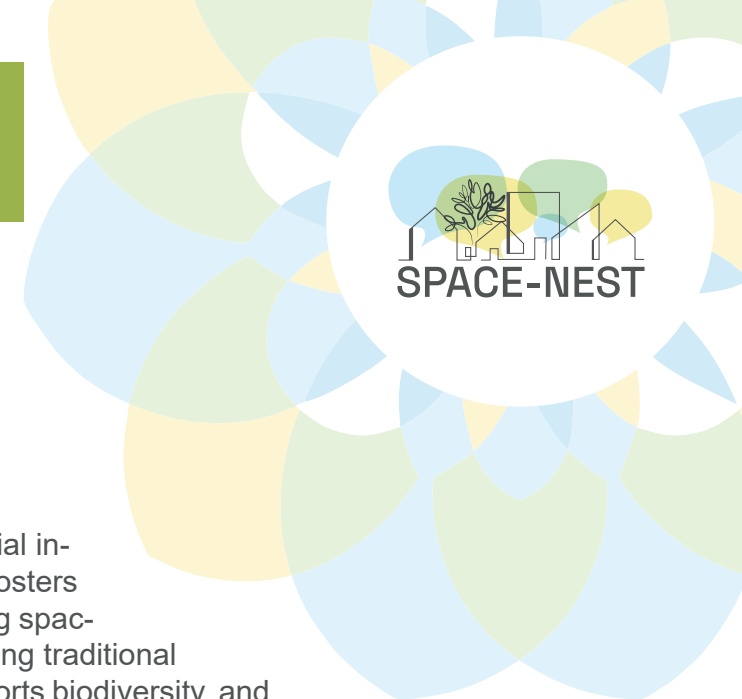
CIV Moscatel is a community hub that integrates cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. Through facilities like an inclusive garden, multifunctional vineyard, and traditional winepress, it fosters educational, cultural, and nature-based activities. The project preserves Moscatel traditions while creating spaces for social interaction, particularly engaging people with diverse abilities and backgrounds. By prioritizing traditional building techniques, ecological practices, and participatory governance, it strengthens local identity, supports biodiversity, and builds a culture of solidarity and cooperation, positioning itself as a living laboratory for sustainable rural development.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Showcases traditional architecture and landscapes while enriching lives through cultural heritage and collective experiences.
- **Sustainable:** Uses native materials, ecological land management, and circular processes that restore biodiversity.
- **Together:** Ensures inclusivity, accessibility, and solidarity across diverse social groups and communities.

### Key impacts:

- Preservation and revitalization of Moscatel traditions and local heritage.
- Increased social inclusion through accessible, participatory activities.
- Promotion of sustainable land management and biodiversity restoration.
- Strengthened collaboration between local communities, institutions, and academia.



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## 1.22 Technological Rural Regeneration

**Lead organization:** Energy For Sustainable Development

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** SMEs

**Webpage:** [www.e4sd.eu](http://www.e4sd.eu)

**Keywords:** Renewable energy, Circular economy, Technology

The project revitalizes abandoned or semi-abandoned rural areas by integrating cultural, social, environmental, and economic regeneration. Through low-impact restoration, renewable energy, permaculture, and the creation of inclusive spaces, it reconnects communities with their heritage and natural surroundings. Participatory and transdisciplinary processes engage residents, schools, cooperatives, and experts, fostering social cohesion, innovation, and shared governance. By combining eco-tourism, regenerative agriculture, and local entrepreneurship, the initiative transforms neglected territories into resilient, inclusive, and sustainable hubs that serve as models for rural development worldwide.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Enhances cultural heritage, landscapes, and local identity to create meaningful experiences.
- **Sustainable:** Uses circular economy practices, renewable energy, and low-impact restoration to regenerate land and resources.
- **Together:** Encourages inclusive participation, social cohesion, and shared decision-making across generations and communities.

### Key impacts:

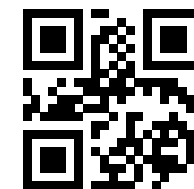
- Revitalization of abandoned spaces, enhancing cultural, social, and environmental value.
- Increased biodiversity and ecosystem restoration through regenerative agriculture and green infrastructure.
- Creation of inclusive economic opportunities, including tourism, remote work, and artisanal activities.
- Strengthened community governance and participation through co-creation and stakeholder engagement.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This model can be adapted to rural or marginal areas worldwide, tailoring interventions to local heritage, ecosystems, and social structures. Low-impact restoration, renewable energy, and circular economy principles provide scalable and replicable tools. Engagement of local stakeholders ensures cultural relevance, long-term sustainability, and community empowerment.



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## 2 Best practices from the territories involved in the project



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## 2.1 Inclusive Circular Economy Workshop: Circular Design for Resilient Communities

**Lead organization:** Anako Aps

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** NGOs

**Webpage:** <https://www.anako.it/>



**Keywords:** Circular design, Community participation, Sustainable regeneration

Ánako Creative Hub is a distributed laboratory that regenerates urban and industrial spaces through circular design, engaging young designers, artisans, women entrepreneurs, and local communities. By transforming reclaimed materials into functional products such as furniture, lamps, and book shelters, the project fosters social interaction, strengthens community identity, and integrates environmental stewardship. Participatory processes and multi-level collaborations combine formal and informal knowledge, creating inclusive spaces and promoting cultural, social, and ecological value. Ánako offers a replicable model for sustainable local development, blending creativity, innovation, and solidarity to generate lasting social, economic, and environmental impact.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Transforms waste into cultural and social value, regenerating public spaces and strengthening community bonds.
- **Sustainable:** Uses circular design to repurpose industrial materials, minimize environmental impact, and promote biodiversity.
- **Together:** Engages diverse communities in co-design and co-production, fostering inclusion, equality, and collective empowerment.

### Key impacts:

- Regeneration of public spaces through participatory circular design.
- Strengthened social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and community identity.
- Environmental benefits through reuse of industrial waste and integration of natural elements.
- Creation of replicable knowledge and models for sustainable social, cultural, and economic development.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

Ánako's methodology can be applied in any urban or rural context using locally available materials and artisanal traditions. Communities can adopt its participatory design and production processes to regenerate public spaces and strengthen social bonds. Training and exchange programs allow other organizations to replicate the model across sectors such as urban furniture, sustainable fashion, or local micro-manufacturing.

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## 2.2 AUREA – Business Incubator

**Lead organization:** Development Agency Kozjansko

**Location:** Slovenia

**Type of organization:** Regional Development Agency (Public Institute, non-profit)

**Webpage:** <https://inkubatoraurea.si/>

**Keywords:** Rural regeneration, Entrepreneurship, Coworking

AUREA Business Incubator revitalizes an abandoned building in Gorica pri Slivnici, transforming it into a vibrant rural hub that blends entrepreneurship, cultural heritage, and sustainability. The incubator provides collaborative workspaces, training programs, and networking opportunities, fostering meaningful social interactions and intergenerational knowledge transfer. By integrating creative industries, sustainable business practices, and green principles, AUREA supports both economic development and environmental stewardship. Its participatory, multidisciplinary approach engages local communities, institutions, and experts to co-create solutions for rural revitalization. The project exemplifies a scalable, adaptable model for socially, economically, and environmentally inclusive rural development.



### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Preserves cultural heritage and natural surroundings while creating inspiring spaces for entrepreneurship and creativity.
- **Sustainable:** Repurposes an abandoned building, promotes circular practices, and supports environmentally responsible businesses.
- **Together:** Encourages collaboration, inclusivity, and social cohesion among entrepreneurs, residents, and institutions.

### Key impacts:

- Revitalization of abandoned rural infrastructure into a multifunctional entrepreneurial and cultural hub.
- Strengthening social cohesion and intergenerational knowledge transfer within the local community.
- Promotion of sustainable practices and environmental awareness through circular economy principles.
- Creation of an adaptable, transferable model for rural economic and cultural regeneration.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

By repurposing abandoned spaces, fostering entrepreneurship, and aligning with local needs, this best practice can be tailored to diverse cultural, economic, and geographic contexts. Its participatory, interdisciplinary methods and integration of formal and non-formal knowledge create a replicable blueprint for communities. Through workshops, counseling, sustainable business strategies, and creative industries, AUREA supports local innovation. Guided by New European Bauhaus principles, it promotes aesthetics, sustainability, and inclusiveness while helping rural areas leverage resources, connect stakeholders, and build hubs that address community needs.

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## 2.3 Kuartango Lab

**Lead organization:** Kuartango City Hall

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** <https://kuartangelab.org/eu/home/>

**Keywords:** Rural regeneration, Circular innovation, Community empowerment

Kuartango Lab transforms a 19th-century spa into a multifunctional hub for entrepreneurship, culture, and rural innovation. By combining coworking, cultural programming, and affordable housing, it revitalizes the Kuartango Valley while respecting its ecological and historical heritage. The project fosters social interaction, supports local businesses, and promotes sustainability through circular economy principles. A participatory governance model engages citizens, entrepreneurs, and institutions, generating new knowledge and collaborative solutions. Kuartango Lab exemplifies how rural areas can become centers of creativity, inclusion, and systemic transformation, demonstrating a replicable model for regional revitalization and community-led development.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Enhances cultural, social, and natural qualities of the valley while creating aesthetically and emotionally engaging experiences.
- **Sustainable:** Repurposes existing buildings, reduces environmental impact, and promotes circular economy practices.
- **Together:** Fosters inclusion, accessibility, and participatory governance, strengthening social cohesion and collaboration.

### Key impacts:

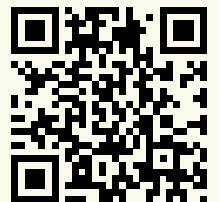
- Revitalization of rural spaces, increasing population and community engagement.
- Creation of a multifunctional innovation ecosystem combining entrepreneurship, culture, and affordable housing.
- Strengthening of social cohesion, inclusivity, and participatory governance.
- Promotion of sustainability and circular practices in both building use and local economic activities.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

Kuartango Lab's model can be adapted by repurposing underutilized rural buildings and activating local communities through participatory governance. Cultural, entrepreneurial, and housing programs can be tailored to regional priorities and demographic profiles. The approach can scale through networks and mentorship, fostering rural regeneration and innovation in other European territories or similar contexts worldwide.



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## 2.4 Preservation and dissemination of knowledge and expertise in textile crafts using local resources

**Lead organization:** Paz Mesa Espacio Textil Rural

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Self-employed craftswoman

**Webpage:** <https://pazmesa.art/>



**Keywords:** Traditional textile crafts, Xalda sheep wool, Circular economy

The project preserves traditional textile practices using Xalda sheep wool and natural dye plants, combining heritage, sustainability, and community engagement. Through workshops, open days, and international collaborations, it fosters social cohesion, cultural exchange, and awareness of endangered sheep breeds. All materials are reused, composted, or repurposed, promoting circularity and low environmental impact. By integrating formal and informal knowledge and connecting artisans with designers, the project creates durable, eco-friendly products while raising environmental consciousness. It strengthens local identity, encourages sustainable practices, and inspires other communities to blend tradition, innovation, and ecological responsibility.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revitalizes traditional crafts and connects people to cultural heritage and nature.
- **Sustainable:** Uses natural fibers, local resources, and circular processes to minimize waste.
- **Together:** Promotes workshops, open days, and collaborations across communities and disciplines.

### Key impacts:

- Preservation and promotion of the Xalda sheep breed.
- Transmission and revitalization of traditional textile knowledge.
- Reduced environmental impact through circular use of wool and natural dyes.
- Strengthened community cohesion and intercultural exchange.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The approach can be replicated in regions with local or endangered livestock or traditional crafts. Communities can combine heritage skills with sustainable material use to create economic and cultural value. Local adaptations may include using regional fibers, plant dyes, and craft techniques to promote circularity and social engagement.



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## 2.5 MountAIn Desk – MAID

**Lead organization:** Ultraspazio s.r.l

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** SMEs

**Webpage:** [www.ultraspazio.com](http://www.ultraspazio.com)

**Keywords:** Flexplaces, Community integration, Sustainability



The MountAIn Desk (MAID) project transforms underused spaces in mountain communities into digitally connected flexplaces that merge work, leisure, and local culture. By integrating coworking, wellbeing services, and local businesses, it fosters meaningful social interactions, strengthens community ties, and encourages sustainable practices. Using participatory governance, AI-assisted management, and environmental monitoring, MAID repurposes existing infrastructures, reduces environmental impact, and promotes social inclusion. The project combines innovation with territorial regeneration, supporting local economies, accessibility, and long-term resilience while offering a replicable model for integrating digital, ecological, and community-centered approaches in rural regions.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Enhances cultural identity, social cohesion, and connection to natural surroundings through well-designed shared spaces.
- **Sustainable:** Repurposes existing infrastructures, reduces environmental impact, and promotes circular resource use and biodiversity protection.
- **Together:** Fosters inclusion, equal participation, and collaboration among residents, visitors, and diverse stakeholders.

### Key impacts:

- Strengthened social cohesion and local identity through shared spaces and collective activities.
- Environmental sustainability via repurposed infrastructure, circular management, and ecological monitoring.
- Economic revitalization of mountain communities through engagement with local businesses and services.
- Promotion of inclusive, participatory governance and social innovation, supporting equality and community resilience.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The MAID model can be adapted to other rural or mountain regions by mapping underused local spaces and integrating them into a connected flexplace network. Communities can customize the platform with local services, cultural activities, and sustainability measures. Its participatory, modular approach allows replication while respecting local identity, environmental conditions, and social needs.

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## 2.6 Circular lab KNOF

**Lead organization:** Zavod KNOF, so.p.

**Location:** Slovenia

**Type of organization:** Social enterprise

**Webpage:** <https://knof.si/>

**Keywords:** Circular economy, Community empowerment, Adaptive reuse

The Circular Lab in Krško transforms a 3000m<sup>2</sup> abandoned shopping centre into a hub for circular economy, coworking, fablabs, and community workshops. By repurposing the existing building, it integrates sustainability, social innovation, and education under one roof. The project fosters collaboration among citizens, entrepreneurs, and civic actors while promoting zero-waste practices, creative reuse, and inclusive participation. Serving as both a living laboratory and community commons, Circular Lab bridges local heritage and forward-thinking solutions, demonstrating how underutilized infrastructure can drive social, environmental, and economic regeneration in small urban and rural contexts.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revitalizes an abandoned space into a vibrant community hub celebrating local identity and creativity.
- **Sustainable:** Promotes circular economy, adaptive reuse, zero-waste practices, and resource efficiency.
- **Together:** Fosters inclusion, collaboration, and shared governance among diverse stakeholders.

### Key impacts:

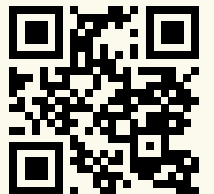
- Revitalization of underused infrastructure into a social and innovation hub.
- Promotion of circular economy and sustainable consumption practices.
- Strengthened community engagement, social inclusion, and knowledge sharing.
- Creation of interdisciplinary learning and new knowledge in social, technical, and environmental fields.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The Circular Lab model can be applied to abandoned or underused buildings in rural and small urban areas. Its modular approach—combining coworking, reuse workshops, and community activities—can be tailored to local cultural, social, and environmental conditions. Local stakeholders and digital tools can replicate governance, participation, and circular economy practices to suit regional needs.



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## 2.7 El Jardín de Castillo

**Lead organization:** AV Turismo e Innovación Social

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Cooperatives

**Webpage:** <https://eljardindecastillo.com>

**Keywords:** Rural regeneration, Participatory tourism, Social inclusion

The project revitalizes rural spaces in the Sierra Sur of Jaén, Spain, by restoring abandoned areas into a hub for responsible tourism, social innovation, and community empowerment. Through participatory programs, local crafts, wellness retreats, and coworking spaces, the project fosters cultural engagement, intergenerational collaboration, and sustainable living. It promotes inclusivity, supports rural women and youth, and encourages ecological care, combining environmental, social, and economic sustainability to strengthen the community and generate a replicable model for rural revitalization.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revives cultural heritage, local architecture, and natural landscapes, creating meaningful and aesthetic experiences.
- **Sustainable:** Implements circular practices, renewable energy, and eco-conscious tourism to protect environment and biodiversity.
- **Together:** Empowers local communities, promotes social inclusion, and strengthens cooperation across generations and backgrounds.

### Key impacts:

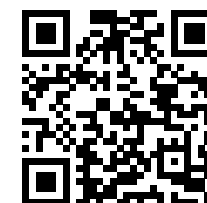
- Strengthened local identity and cultural heritage preservation.
- Increased social cohesion and intergenerational collaboration.
- Enhanced environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection.
- Economic empowerment and support for rural entrepreneurship, especially among women and youth.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This model can be applied to rural areas with abandoned buildings or underutilized spaces by leveraging local culture and resources. Participatory methods allow communities to co-create solutions relevant to their needs. Slow, responsible tourism and coworking hubs can be adapted to support social inclusion, ecological care, and economic development in diverse rural regions.



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## 2.8 Cal Guerxo Regenerative Living Home

**Lead organization:** Green Living Projects

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** SMEs

**Webpage:** <https://www.instagram.com/calguerxo/>

**Keywords:** Regenerative architecture, Circular, off-grid living, Community co-creation

Cal Guerxo is a regenerative sanctuary in the Pyrenees that transforms a ruined farmhouse into Europe's first Living Building Challenge-certified home. Using local materials, artisanal techniques, and biophilic design, it merges ecological restoration, cultural heritage, and social innovation. The project fosters collective co-creation, intergenerational learning, and community rituals, while implementing closed-loop water, energy, and waste systems. By hosting workshops, residencies, and ecological practices, Cal Guerxo strengthens bonds between humans, non-humans, and place, offering a replicable model for rural regeneration, biodiversity enhancement, and holistic, sustainable living rooted in care, beauty, and belonging.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revives a ruined farmhouse using local materials and biophilic design, creating sensory-rich, meaningful spaces that foster cultural and emotional connections.
- **Sustainable:** Implements circular, off-grid systems with zero-waste construction, renewable energy, and ecosystem restoration, reducing environmental impact while enhancing biodiversity.
- **Together:** Builds social cohesion through co-creation, collaborative governance, inclusive residencies, and community rituals that integrate diverse participants and generations.

### Key impacts:

- Revitalized rural architecture and landscapes, demonstrating regenerative and circular design.
- Strengthened community ties, intergenerational exchange, and social inclusion.
- Restored and expanded local biodiversity through ecological practices and habitat creation.
- Generation of new knowledge on off-grid living, regenerative design, and participatory governance.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

Cal Guerxo's methodology can be applied to other rural regions facing depopulation or environmental degradation. Communities can adapt its principles—local materials, circular construction, off-grid systems, and participatory governance—according to available resources and cultural context. The model supports cross-sector replication, from rural housing and heritage conservation to municipal infrastructure and ecological education.

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## 2.9 La Ponte Research Centre and Ecomuseum

**Lead organization:** La Ponte research centre and ecomuseum

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** non-profit association

**Webpage:** <https://laponte.org/>

**Keywords:** Community heritage, Sustainable tourism, Participatory learning

La Ponte Ecomuseum in Asturias revitalizes rural heritage by fostering community participation and sustainable tourism. It preserves cultural landscapes, traditional knowledge, and local biodiversity while prioritizing educational and immersive experiences over mass tourism. The ecomuseum integrates local inhabitants in all activities—from craft workshops to research projects—encouraging intergenerational learning and collective knowledge creation. By combining environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and social inclusion, La Ponte strengthens community cohesion, supports local economies, and inspires both locals and visitors to value and protect rural heritage, making it a replicable model for other rural territories.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revitalizes cultural landscapes and local traditions, creating meaningful and immersive experiences.
- **Sustainable:** Promotes environmental conservation, responsible resource use, and sustainable tourism practices.
- **Together:** Engages local communities, minority groups, and visitors through participatory and inclusive activities.

### Key impacts:

- Preservation of Asturian cultural landscapes and traditional knowledge.
- Promotion of sustainable and community-focused tourism that strengthens local economies.
- Increased community participation, intergenerational learning, and social cohesion.
- Contribution to biodiversity and climate resilience through research and sustainable practices.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The ecomuseum model can be transferred to other rural regions by empowering local communities to protect and share their heritage. It requires adapting programs to local traditions, landscapes, and social needs while prioritizing sustainability and inclusion. Training and consultancy services can support new ecomuseum initiatives, ensuring community-led and research-based development without mass-tourism commercialization.

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## 2.10 Acougo de Pitasana

**Lead organization:** Gallinero Culturero

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Association

**Webpage:** <https://acougopitasana.com/>

**Keywords:** Rural revitalization, Community coexistence, Sustainability

Gallinero Culturero revitalizes rural areas by combining housing, culture, and sustainability. Through projects like Coliving Acougo, PitaFesta, and Farm PitaSana, it fosters collaborative living, cultural expression, and agroecological practices. The initiative promotes inclusion, intergenerational learning, and community participation, integrating formal and informal knowledge from diverse disciplines such as urban planning, art, and social welfare. By reusing spaces, supporting biodiversity, and encouraging circular practices, it creates environmentally sustainable solutions. Its holistic, transdisciplinary, and participatory approach strengthens social cohesion, empowers residents, and generates a model of rural development that is adaptable, scalable, and culturally enriching.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Enhances rural life through culture, festivals, and collaborative spaces that foster creativity and belonging.
- **Sustainable:** Promotes eco-friendly practices, circular economy, and biodiversity restoration in housing, farming, and events.
- **Together:** Builds inclusive communities, encouraging participation, equality, and solidarity among residents and newcomers.

### Key impacts:

- Revitalized rural communities through collaborative housing, cultural events, and community gardens.
- Environmental sustainability via circular practices, agroecology, and biodiversity restoration.
- Enhanced social cohesion by fostering inclusion, intergenerational learning, and equal participation.
- Innovation and knowledge creation through transdisciplinary collaboration between experts and local communities.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

Gallinero Culturero's model can be adapted to diverse rural regions through its flexible, transdisciplinary approach. Projects like Coliving Acougo, PitaFesta, and Farm PitaSana can be replicated by tailoring housing, festivals, or community gardens to local needs and resources. Its participatory methods and use of local knowledge enable communities and organizations to implement similar initiatives, fostering sustainability, social cohesion, and economic development.



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## 2.11 Redevelopment of Porto Ceresio

**Lead organization:** Municipality of Porto Ceresio

**Location:** Italy

**Type of organization:** Local administrations

**Webpage:** <https://www.comune.portoceresio.va.it/>

**Keywords:** Community regeneration, Sustainable restoration, Inclusive healthcare

The Porto Ceresio socio-health building restoration project revitalizes a historic structure into an inclusive, sustainable, and multifunctional community hub. By combining energy-efficient renovation, accessibility, and green spaces, it enhances architectural heritage while promoting environmental responsibility. The facility fosters social cohesion, collective well-being, and intergenerational interaction through socio-health services, workshops, and cultural activities. Engaging multiple disciplines—including architecture, urban planning, ecology, and public health—and involving local stakeholders in participatory decision-making ensures innovative, context-sensitive solutions. The project serves as a replicable model for integrating sustainability, inclusivity, and community-centered healthcare in rural and small-town contexts.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Preserves architectural heritage and integrates green spaces, creating a culturally and socially enriching environment.
- **Sustainable:** Implements energy-efficient renovations, circular practices, and eco-friendly materials to minimize environmental impact.
- **Together:** Fosters inclusivity, accessibility, and social cohesion through participatory design and community-centered healthcare services.

### Key impacts:

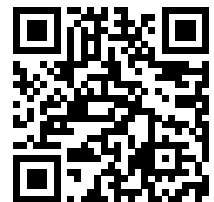
- Revitalized community spaces that strengthen social cohesion and foster intergenerational interaction.
- Environmental sustainability through energy-efficient renovation, reuse of materials, and green space creation.
- Inclusive access to services ensuring healthcare, social, and cultural opportunities for all community members.
- Knowledge integration and innovation by combining multiple disciplines and stakeholder participation to generate replicable solutions.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The Porto Ceresio model can be adapted to other small towns and rural areas by restoring existing buildings with energy-efficient technologies and integrating green spaces. Socio-health services, workshops, and cultural activities can be tailored to local needs, promoting inclusion and social cohesion. Its participatory, multidisciplinary approach ensures that communities can co-create sustainable, accessible, and resilient public spaces.



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## 2.12 PodGradom

**Lead organization:** PodGradom, Institute for Sustainable Tourism, Entrepreneurship, and Leisure

**Location:** Slovenia

**Type of organization:** NGOs

**Webpage:** <https://podgradom.si/>

**Keywords:** Circular bioeconomy, Wood reuse, Rural community

The project revitalizes rural heritage through the cascading use of wood, transforming discarded timber from barns and houses into functional, educational, and community spaces. By combining traditional craftsmanship with circular economy principles, it fosters environmental stewardship, social cohesion, and skill-sharing. Hands-on workshops, collaborative activities, and local engagement strengthen intergenerational ties, enhance pride in local resources, and promote sustainable rural living. The initiative demonstrates how small-scale, locally-driven projects can merge cultural identity, ecological responsibility, and innovation, creating replicable models for rural development and circular material use.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Celebrates local craftsmanship, heritage, and ecological aesthetics.
- **Sustainable:** Extends the lifecycle of wood, reduces waste, and models circular practices.
- **Together:** Builds inclusive, collaborative, and intergenerational spaces for learning and action.

### Key impacts:

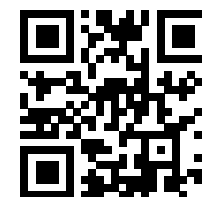
- Strengthens local social cohesion through participatory workshops and community engagement.
- Promotes circular economy and sustainable use of wood, reducing environmental pressure.
- Preserves and revitalizes cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship.
- Creates replicable educational and development models for rural areas.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

The model can be applied in any rural region with available wood resources or underutilized structures. By combining training, material reuse, and community engagement, other areas can foster local skills, ecological awareness, and intergenerational collaboration. Its simplicity and low-cost approach make it scalable and adaptable to diverse rural contexts.



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## 2.13 Melodijopérez

**Lead organization:** Ruralismo Ilustrado S.L.L

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** SMEs

**Webpage:** <https://melodijoperez.com/>

**Keywords:** Rural development, Digitalization, Communication agency

Melodijopérez, founded in 2021 in Las Regueras (Asturias), is the first rural communications agency working under the philosophy of “Enlightened Ruralism”. As a social economy company, it promotes digitalization, entrepreneurship, and community empowerment in rural areas. Through its Rural Intelligence School, it offers workshops for young people, seniors, and vulnerable groups, fostering intergenerational learning and inclusion. Its award-winning podcast Dalle Mio Nena highlights rural women’s stories, reinforcing identity and cultural heritage. By merging tradition and innovation, Melodijopérez strengthens local networks, supports sustainable development, and inspires new models of rural life that are inclusive, creative, and resilient.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revives cultural heritage and rural identity through storytelling, creativity, and innovation.
- **Sustainable:** Reuses existing spaces, promotes digitalization, and supports eco-conscious rural entrepreneurship.
- **Together:** Ensures inclusion, intergenerational learning, and equal opportunities for all community members.

### Key impacts:

- Strengthening rural identity through storytelling, heritage recovery, and visibility of local voices.
- Promoting digital inclusion by training youth, seniors, and vulnerable groups in communication tools.
- Fostering sustainable development via reuse of spaces, reduced ecological footprint, and support for eco-friendly entrepreneurs.
- Building social cohesion by creating intergenerational networks, empowering women, and encouraging community collaboration.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This practice can be adapted to other rural contexts by tailoring training and communication strategies to the specific cultural, social, and economic realities of each territory. Its flexible model of digitalization, community storytelling, and reuse of local spaces can easily be replicated to strengthen identity and promote inclusion elsewhere. By combining tradition with innovation, it offers a scalable approach that any rural community can apply to foster sustainable and connected local development.



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## 2.14 Estercuel Verde 2050

**Lead organization:** Architecture Yngrid Echalar Gutiérrez

**Location:** Spain

**Type of organization:** Architectural Studio

**Webpage:** <https://architizer.com/projects/estercuel-verde-2050/>

**Keywords:** Crater regeneration, Sustainable urban planning, Rural revitalization

ESTERCUEL VERDE 2050 reimagines an abandoned coal mine crater in Estercuel, Spain, as a regenerative urban ecosystem. The project envisions self-sustaining collective housing, green infrastructure, commercial and gastronomic areas, and eco-tourism, transforming a disfigured landscape into a model for sustainable rural living. It combines ecological restoration, participatory governance, and social inclusivity, creating spaces that reconnect people with nature, foster social cohesion, and inspire new ways of inhabiting rural areas. By integrating collective intelligence and climate resilience, the initiative aims to make rural areas attractive, socially vibrant, and ecologically regenerative for future generations.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revitalizes a devastated landscape into visually appealing, bioclimatic urban spaces that harmonize with nature.
- **Sustainable:** Implements ecological restoration, circular resource use, green infrastructure, and renewable energy to minimize environmental impact.
- **Together:** Promotes inclusivity, participatory governance, and affordable collective housing to foster social cohesion and cooperation.

### Key impacts:

- Ecological restoration of the abandoned crater, enhancing biodiversity and landscape aesthetics.
- Creation of self-sustaining, climate-resilient housing and community infrastructure.
- Social inclusion and participatory governance, empowering residents and promoting equity.
- Economic revitalization through eco-tourism, green jobs, and sustainable business opportunities.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This model can be replicated in other rural regions with abandoned mining or industrial sites. By adapting local topography, cultural context, and community needs, similar projects can transform degraded landscapes into sustainable, multifunctional hubs. Policy frameworks and participatory processes ensure long-term viability and community engagement in different settings.

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### 3 Best practices at EU level



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## 3.1 Hof van Cartesius, Vogelfrei, Grounded

**Lead organization:** nice here.

**Location:** Netherlands

**Type of organization:** Foundation

**Webpage:** <https://www.nicehere.nl/>

**Keywords:** Circular placemaking, Community co-creation, Regenerative practices

The initiatives Vogelfrei, Hof van Cartesius, and Grounded demonstrate how art, circular construction, and regenerative design can transform neglected or underused spaces into inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable environments. By combining cultural expression, ecological awareness, and community participation, they foster resilience and belonging while reducing environmental impacts. Hof van Cartesius exemplifies circular building through reclaimed materials, Vogelfrei revitalizes forgotten spaces through public art, and Grounded redefines festivals with ecological and social values. Together, they illustrate a replicable model for creating places that unite beauty, sustainability, and inclusivity.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Art, design, and ecology merge to create inspiring, inclusive, and biodiverse spaces.
- **Sustainable:** Circular construction, reuse of materials, and regenerative practices reduce impact and restore ecosystems.
- **Together:** Co-creation, accessibility, and inclusivity ensure shared ownership and social justice.

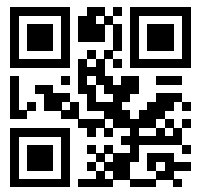
### Key impacts:

- Transforms underused or forgotten spaces into inclusive, creative, and sustainable environments.
- Reduces waste and carbon footprint through circular design and reuse of materials.
- Strengthens community ties and belonging through participatory processes and co-creation.
- Enhances biodiversity and ecological awareness by integrating nature-based solutions.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This model can be adapted to rural or urban contexts by tailoring circular building methods and participatory design to local resources and cultural identities. Open-source toolkits, workshops, and peer-learning platforms make replication accessible for municipalities, NGOs, and community groups. By building local partnerships and engaging diverse stakeholders, any community can adapt these practices to foster inclusive, regenerative, and sustainable places.

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## 3.2 Vogelfrei

**Lead organization:** Vogelfrei

**Location:** Netherlands

**Type of organization:** SMEs

**Webpage:** [www.vogelfrei.nl](http://www.vogelfrei.nl)

**Keywords:** Circular design, Community hub, Experimentation

VOGELFREI is a creative clubhouse and maker's lab in Utrecht that combines culture, community, and climate-conscious design. Built from repurposed materials on a self-built plot, it offers an adaptable space for workshops, events, and experimentation. It is an open playground where neighbors, artists, policymakers, and curious minds co-create, test bold ideas, and reimagine sustainable ways of living together. With its circular building approach, biodiversity-friendly garden, and radically inclusive philosophy, VOGELFREI demonstrates how raw, imperfect, and collective creativity can spark innovation, strengthen community bonds, and regenerate both social and natural environments.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** VOGELFREI creates unique cultural and social experiences through a raw, flexible space that blends reused materials, shared creativity, and a biodiversity-friendly garden.
- **Sustainable:** It is fully circular, modular, and built from second-hand materials, aiming for adaptability, waste reduction, and ecological regeneration.
- **Together:** Radically inclusive, it removes barriers to participation and fosters solidarity, cooperation, and equal relationships across diverse groups.

### Key impacts:

- Reduces environmental impact through reuse of materials and modular, demountable design.
- Strengthens community bonds by connecting people across disciplines, backgrounds, and sectors.
- Promotes biodiversity with a wild garden that nurtures pollinators and local ecosystems.
- Provides an open, low-threshold platform for experimentation, solidarity, and collective innovation.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

VOGELFREI's model is modular, mobile, and easily transferable. In rural areas, barns, abandoned schools, or unused fields can be transformed into similar hubs by reusing local materials and involving communities. The core principle—repurpose, invite participation, and start before perfection—can adapt to any cultural, ecological, or economic setting.



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### 3.3 Once Waste: Collaborative Recycling Pavilion

**Lead organization:** Ankara Aks Association

**Location:** Various EU territories

**Type of organization:** NGOs

**Webpage:** <https://www.ankaraaks.com>

**Keywords:** Collaborative recycling, Modular pavilion, Circular design

The Once Waste: Collaborative Recycling Pavilion reimagines waste as a resource by transforming discarded HDPE plastics, wooden pallets, and fabric remnants into a modular, community-built structure. Developed through an inclusive and participatory process with designers, students, scrap dealers, and citizens, the pavilion combines cultural expression with ecological responsibility. Its adaptable modules can be reconfigured for different uses, extending its life cycle while reducing environmental impacts. Beyond architecture, the pavilion is a platform for dialogue, solidarity, and co-creation, celebrating the hidden labor of recycling and nurturing new cultural values around circularity, inclusivity, and regeneration.

#### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Transforms discarded materials into sensory-rich, culturally meaningful, and participatory architecture.
- **Sustainable:** Embodies circularity by repurposing waste, ensuring adaptability, and reducing environmental footprint.
- **Together:** Brings diverse actors—waste collectors, designers, students, and citizens—into equal, collaborative creation.

#### Key impacts:

- Diverts waste from landfills/incineration by turning it into functional, aesthetic modules.
- Strengthens social cohesion by elevating marginalized voices, especially waste collectors.
- Demonstrates scalable circular design adaptable to local, regional, and global contexts.
- Sparks cultural change by reframing waste as opportunity and shared responsibility.

#### Transferability & Inspiration:

The pavilion's modular, low-tech construction and use of universally available waste materials make it easily replicable in both rural and urban settings. Communities can adapt the model by using their own local waste streams and cultural practices, fostering ownership and creativity. Its participatory workshop format ensures that each new pavilion reflects local needs while reinforcing global circular economy values.

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## 3.4 Arts Therapies & Mental Health Promotion in Alto Alentejo

**Lead organization:** Marvão International Academy for music, arts and sciences

**Location:** Portugal

**Type of organization:** NGOs

**Webpage:** [www.marvaoacademy.com](http://www.marvaoacademy.com)

**Keywords:** Arts-based therapies, Mental health, Social inclusion

The International Academy of Marvão for Music, Arts, and Sciences revitalizes an abandoned rural complex in Alto Alentejo to promote mental health, social inclusion, and community cohesion through arts-based therapies. Combining music, dance, theater, and visual arts, the Academy supports older adults, people with disabilities, and vulnerable groups, enhancing emotional well-being, cognitive function, and quality of life. It integrates research, education, and cultural innovation while fostering intergenerational interaction and local identity. By bridging tradition and contemporary approaches, the Academy creates a transformative space for individual growth, collective creativity, and sustainable community development.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Revitalizes cultural heritage and natural landscapes through arts and creative expression.
- **Sustainable:** Repurposes abandoned spaces and promotes long-term mental, social, and environmental well-being.
- **Together:** Fosters social cohesion, inclusion, and equal access for vulnerable and diverse community groups.

### Key impacts:

- Improved mental health and quality of life for older adults, people with disabilities, and vulnerable groups.
- Revitalization of abandoned spaces, enhancing cultural heritage and local identity.
- Strengthened social cohesion and inclusion across generations and communities.
- Promotion of sustainable and replicable arts-based therapies and community-driven initiatives.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

This practice can be adapted in other rural or urban regions by repurposing underused or abandoned spaces into community hubs for arts and mental health activities. Local cultural traditions and natural settings can be integrated to make the programs context-specific and engaging. By training local professionals and volunteers in arts-based therapies, the model can be replicated to promote social inclusion, well-being, and community cohesion across diverse regions.



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## 3.5 FutureGround: Europe's Regenerative Frontier

**Lead organization:** Hasan Kalyoncu University

**Location:** Various EU territories

**Type of organization:** University

**Webpage:** [www.hku.edu.tr](http://www.hku.edu.tr)

**Keywords:** Regeneration, Participation, Circularity

FutureGround revitalizes abandoned rural spaces through community-led design, circular practices, and inclusive governance. It blends cultural heritage, ecological restoration, and social innovation to create sustainable and accessible environments. By integrating local stories, crafts, and biodiversity with participatory methods, the project strengthens social cohesion and ecological awareness. Its systemic, transdisciplinary, and replicable approach empowers communities to co-create shared spaces that are regenerative by design, fostering belonging while addressing climate and social challenges. FutureGround stands as a model of how rural communities can lead transformations rooted in culture, equity, and resilience.

### Connection to NEB values:

- **Beautiful:** Combines cultural heritage, social interaction, and natural elements into holistic and inspiring spaces.
- **Sustainable:** Repurposes materials and spaces, enhances biodiversity, and embeds circular processes.
- **Together:** Ensures universal accessibility, shared governance, and solidarity-based community living.

### Key impacts:

- Strengthens social cohesion through inclusive participation and co-creation.
- Reduces environmental impact by reusing spaces, materials, and promoting circularity.
- Enhances biodiversity and regenerates degraded ecosystems.
- Provides a replicable, scalable model for sustainable rural transformation.

### Transferability & Inspiration:

FutureGround's modular framework allows adaptation to diverse cultural, ecological, and economic settings. By combining open-source tools, participatory methods, and circular principles, any rural or peri-urban area can tailor the approach to its local needs. Its emphasis on inclusivity, regeneration, and knowledge-sharing ensures broad transferability across regions and sectors.

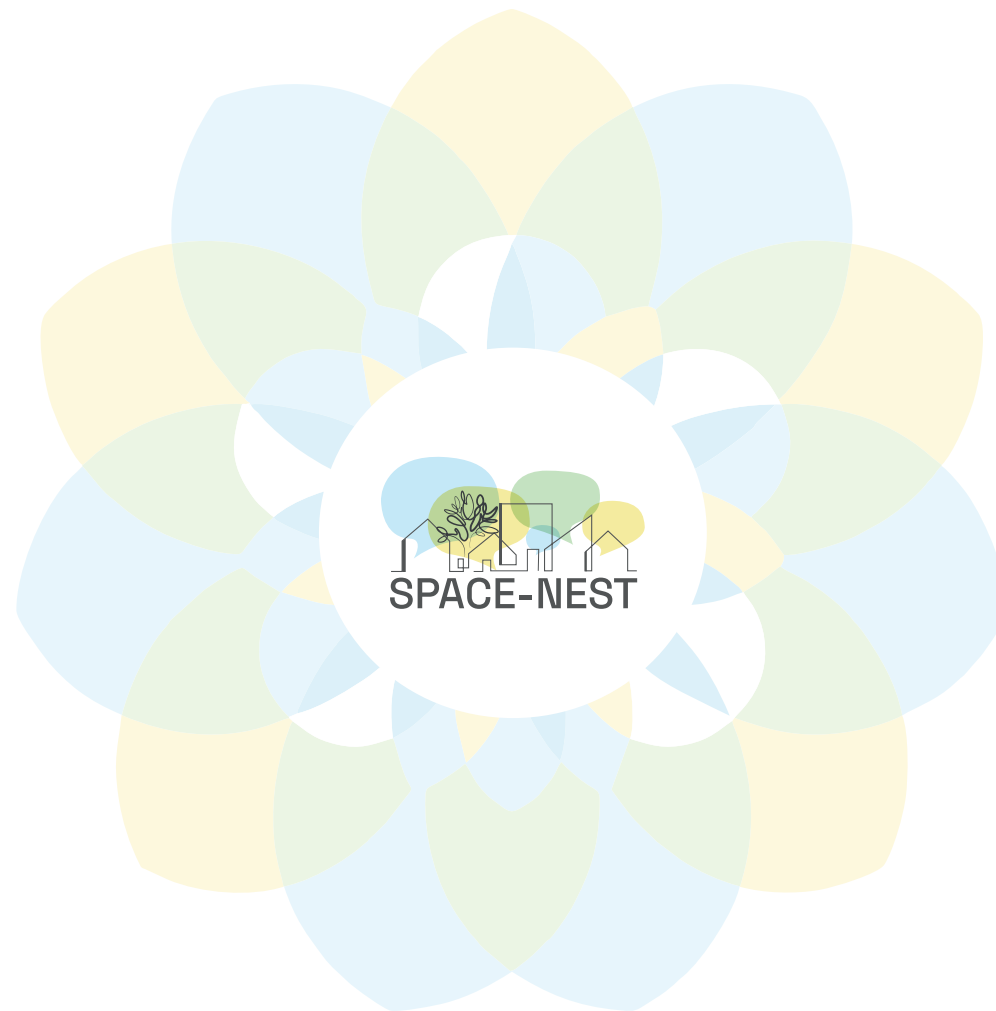
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