

This is 9th WASTEREDUCE Newsletter

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 9th edition of our WASTEREDUCE Newsletter!

As we move toward the end of the year, we turn our attention to one of the most powerful drivers of long-term change in waste prevention – **community engagement and education**. While technology and policy frameworks play a key role in shaping sustainable waste management, real transformation begins at the local level, with communities that are informed, empowered, and motivated to act.

In this edition, we explore how education and citizen participation can build lasting habits, strengthen local initiatives, and foster shared responsibility for a cleaner, more circular future.

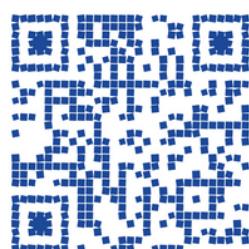
Our **Region in Focus** is **Veneto**, where a wide range of initiatives are promoting awareness, collaboration, and responsible waste practices. This issue highlights best practices, from awareness campaigns and school programs to participatory waste sorting systems, showing how active community involvement can make waste reduction an achievable and shared objective.

This issue also features **news and announcements** from August 1st to November 30th, highlighting recent project milestones, partnership updates, and upcoming opportunities within the WASTEREDUCE network.

Thank you for continuing this journey with us. May this issue inspire collaboration, creativity, and community spirit in your own efforts toward waste reduction.

Warm regards,

The WASTEREDUCE Team



WASTEREDUCE

is an EU funded project in collaboration with eight partners. Together, we will tackle waste management challenges in protected and Natura 2000 areas across Italy and Croatia. Our goal is to enhance waste prevention, reduce environmental impacts, and improve cooperation among stakeholders.



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI TRIESTE



Dipartimento di
Scienze della Vita



sunce

Natura Jadera 

 etra



CONTENT



Waste Reduction: From Principles to Practice

European Framework and Academic Foundations



Leading by Example - Local Solutions

Regions in Focus:
Veneto - The Future is in the Classroom



News and Announcements



Waste Reduction: From Principles to Practice

Real change in waste reduction doesn't start with technology, but with people.

Italy – Croatia



From Learning to Living Sustainability: The Power of Community Action

Lasting environmental change doesn't begin with technology or infrastructure; it begins with people. Behind every clean beach, every recycling bin, and every climate commitment, there are hands that sort, minds that learn, and communities that choose to care.



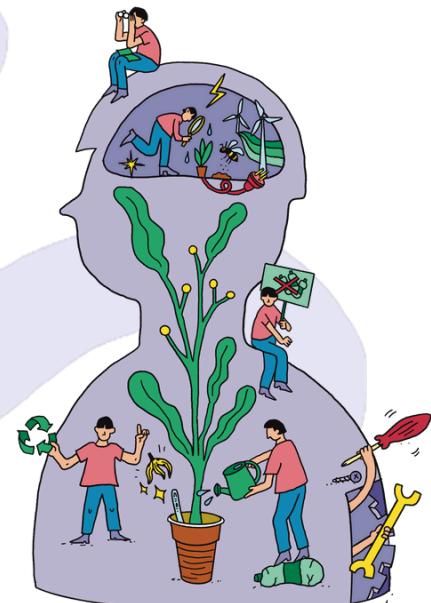
Waste reduction, at its heart, is not just a matter of better systems or smarter policies; it is a question of participation, awareness, and shared values.

When citizens understand the impact of their actions and feel part of something larger than themselves, sustainability stops being a distant ideal and becomes a lived experience. This is where **community engagement** and **environmental education** come in, not as side activities or outreach tools, but as the beating heart of real transformation. They shape the way people see their surroundings, the choices they make, and the pride they take in protecting their environment.

Engagement and education turn knowledge into connection. They make abstract ideas, like “circular economy” or “resource efficiency”, tangible and human. Through collective clean-ups, school projects, artistic or culinary workshops, and local collaborations, people don’t just learn about sustainability; they live it. They see how their small actions fit into a much larger story, one that links coastlines and classrooms, cities and villages, individuals and institutions.

The truth is, change rarely happens through rules alone. It happens through belonging, when people feel that protecting nature is not a duty imposed from above, but a shared choice that strengthens a community.

Involving citizens, especially the youngest generations, creates a ripple effect: families talk, schools participate, businesses adapt, and local traditions evolve to reflect new values of care and responsibility.





European Framework and Academic Foundations

European policy and academic research converge on a clear message: lasting waste reduction depends on informed citizens and education that empower communities to take active, shared responsibility for sustainable change.

Italy – Croatia



European Framework and Academic Foundations

Across Europe, waste reduction is no longer viewed as a purely technical or administrative issue—it is recognized as a shared social responsibility that begins with people. **The European Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)** laid the foundation for this approach by identifying public participation and awareness as essential components of effective waste management. It calls on all Member States to promote waste prevention, reuse, and recycling, while ensuring that citizens are informed, consulted, and actively involved in shaping waste policies and prevention programmes.



Education, awareness campaigns, and inclusive decision-making are placed at the heart of Europe's sustainability agenda.

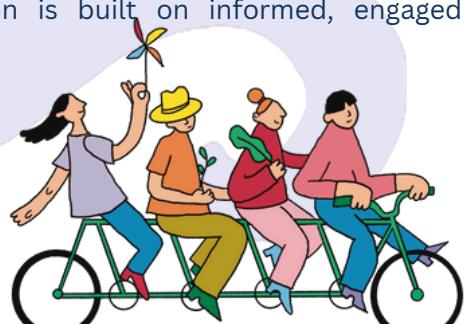
This participatory principle has since been deepened through the **European Green Deal** and the **Circular Economy Action Plan** (CEAP, 2020). Both policy pillars stress that the transition toward a circular economy depends not only on innovation and infrastructure but also on behavioral change. The CEAP explicitly highlights the role of citizens, noting that sustainable consumption and production patterns can only be achieved when individuals understand and embrace their role in reducing waste.

Citizen Engagement: Key to Effective Waste Reduction

Academic research robustly supports the institutional vision of citizen engagement as essential for effective waste reduction. Some studies show that active community involvement through schools, associations, and participatory initiatives leads to real improvements in waste management practices¹. Others highlight that raising awareness and transforming societal attitudes are key to reaching sustainable waste goals. It's also found that involving people in local clean-up events and educational programs builds a shared sense of responsibility, making waste reduction more effective and lasting². Overall, waste reduction works best when it's a collective effort where everyone plays a part, rather than something imposed from the top down. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that citizen engagement and education are not optional but fundamental components of any successful waste reduction strategy³.

Together, these European frameworks and academic findings affirm a simple truth: lasting progress in waste reduction is built on informed, engaged communities.

By linking policy, education, and participation, Europe is turning environmental awareness into everyday action.



¹ Cabias et al. (2024) Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, 4(12), 2024, 23-34.

² Voukkali et al. (2024) Euro-Mediterranean Journal for Environmental Integration (2025) 10:1321-1334.

³ Chen et al. (2015) Environmental Management (2015) 55:523-535.

Leading by Example - Local Solutions

Community engagement and education thrive when people learn by doing. WASTEREDUCE shows how local actions can turn sustainability into a shared, hands-on experience.

Italy – Croatia



Community Engagement and Education in Waste Reduction

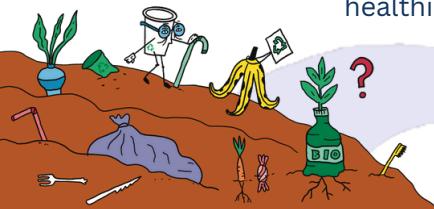
Across WASTERUCE and the work of its partners, **FOOD** often became a bridge between science and daily life, proving that sustainability is most powerful when it can be tasted, felt, and experienced.



One example comes from the **Sunce Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development** – a WASTERUCE partner – whose independent initiative invited Split's chefs to demonstrate zero-waste cooking. Through **hands-on workshops**, the public discovered how creativity can turn every ingredient into a resource.



Within WASTERUCE itself, the **Region of Istria**, together with **Natura Histrica** and **Aquarium Pula**, connected marine science with gastronomy through the “Plastic in the Sea” Eco-Gastro event. By linking the ocean to the table, participants learned how everyday food choices support healthier seas.



Other engaging formats – from **plogging races** and **underwater clean-ups** to **discovery dives** – blended physical activity with environmental learning, making sustainability both memorable and fun.

The **BAM! European Bicycle Adventure Meeting** offered another dynamic stage: at the **ETRA** and **ARPAV** stand, visitors used VR to follow the journey of a plastic bottle and joined activities showcasing WASTERUCE’s work along the Brenta River.



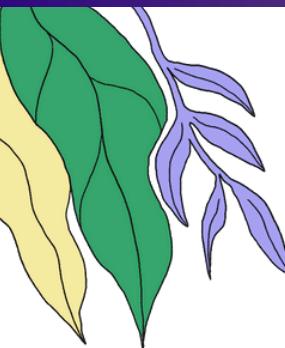
To strengthen visibility, partners organized press conferences in Pula, Carmignano di Brenta, and Padova, ensuring transparent dialogue and cross-border cooperation. **ETRA** also formalized long-term cooperation with municipalities and associations along the Brenta, embedding shared responsibility for waste reduction into local governance.

Together, these actions show that awareness grows when people participate, not just listen. By combining science, tradition, and community energy, WASTERUCE empowers citizens as co-creators of change and contributes to Europe’s broader goals for environmental education, zero pollution, and the Green Deal.



Region in Focus: Veneto's Educational Initiatives

Highlighting the region's most impactful school-based programs that continue ETRA Academy's mission of building a more responsible, sustainability-minded society.



Region in Focus: Veneto

ETRA Academy and Schools for a Sustainable Planet



The future is in the Classroom

Investing in environmental education means building a more aware and responsible community. This is why ETRA works closely with local schools through **ETRA Academy**, involving thousands of students from early childhood to university. The goal is to shape tomorrow's sustainable citizens by addressing topics such as proper waste management, environmental impact, and the protection of natural resources.

Recycling and waste: "Separated in the classroom"

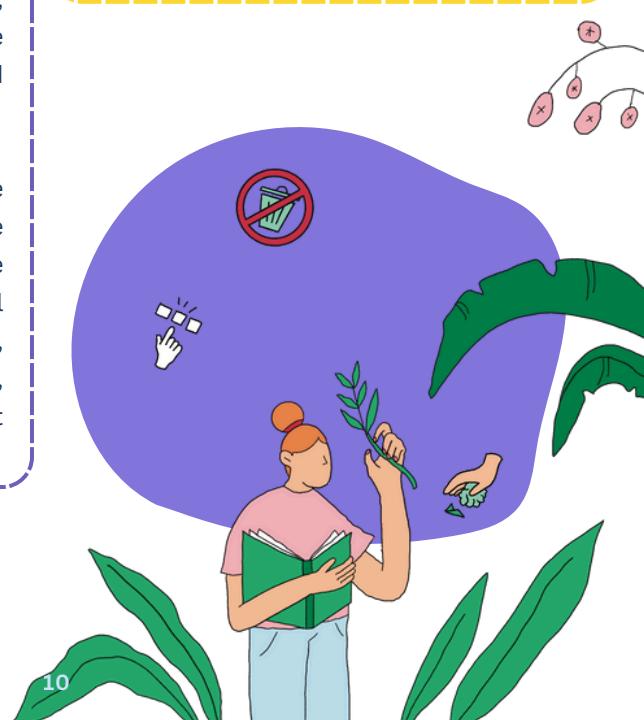
This flagship program goes beyond a traditional lesson. Educators help schools set up proper waste separation, provide containers and informational posters, and engage students and staff in a shared commitment to sustainability—encouraging habits that continue at home and in everyday life.

The fight against littering: "Don't abandon me!"

The program raises awareness of how harmful even a single piece of litter can be, reminding students that caring for the environment is the first step toward responsible citizenship.

Discovering biodiversity

ETRA Academy also promotes the protection of biodiversity, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda. Programs like "Long live biodiversity" introduce students to local ecosystems, the role each species plays, and ways to preserve natural heritage, often through hands-on field trips that make learning engaging and memorable.



News and Announcements

Workshops, conferences, meetings, events, public engagement... all of these are part of a project's life cycle.

But we want it to be more than that – a seed for new ideas, a shift in mindset that continues even after the project ends. For us. For better future.

Italy – Croatia



News

Reusable cups for a cleaner summer on Dugi otok

This summer, reusable cups produced as part of the WASTEREDUCE project were used not only in the project's pilot area but also at several public events on Dugi Otok. By introducing reusable alternatives, the island took another step toward reducing the amount of waste that public events usually generate. Traditional festivities such as Saljske užance, the Moto Tour, Long Island Triathlon, and Art colony joined the initiative, proving that sustainability and celebration can go hand in hand. Visitors and locals alike embraced the idea, helping to make these popular summer events more environmentally friendly. Read more about it [here](#).



GREEN TEEN Event in Veneto (Italy)

During GREEN TEEN – the event held on Sunday, **September 14** at Parco Brenta Viva in Fontaniva, where young people and families came together to explore and celebrate the Brenta River – sustainability was the main theme, from the “Live Sustainably” eco-swap to community activities.

On this occasion, Etifor | Valuing Nature presented Wastereduce, highlighting its early results and the practical impact of reducing waste along the Brenta River



Project Partners Meeting in Split (Croatia)

On **October 8 and 9**, project partners gathered in Split for a two-day coordination meeting. The partners discussed completed activities, shared lessons learned, and planned the next steps to ensure successful implementation of upcoming project actions. The meeting also served as an opportunity to strengthen collaboration and exchange ideas for future initiatives within the WASTEREDUCE project.

In addition to the partner meeting, Sunce is preparing a document titled “Solutions Aimed at Waste Sorting and Disposal” in collaboration with project partners responsible for the pilot areas (ETRA, Natura Histrica, and Sunce as the activity leader). The document will describe the solutions and methods implemented to reduce waste in both coastal and terrestrial pilot areas.

3rd party event CapyCON in Poreč (Croatia)

At CapyCON 2025 – a convention dedicated to the quality of leisure time – held in Poreč (Croatia) on **October 11**, the IPTPO team presented the WASTEREDUCE project and its latest achievements and shared knowledge, practical solutions, and valuable team experiences related to sustainable waste management. The event provided an excellent opportunity for the project team to engage with a diverse audience interested in innovation, community well-being, and environmentally responsible practices.



Italy – Croatia



WASTEREDUCE

News

**New Wastereduce Camera Activated Along the Brenta River (Italy)**

A new Wastereduce camera is now operational along the Brenta River to help combat illegal waste dumping. The system is directly connected to the Local Police, who will review the footage in order to identify offenders and take appropriate action. We remind all citizens that abandoning waste (fly-tipping) is a criminal offense.

**A stakeholder workshop in Poreč (Croatia)**

A stakeholder workshop was held in Poreč on **31 October 2025**, bringing together the Institute of Agriculture and Tourism and The Lohmar Institute for Further Education e.V. from Germany. The meeting focused on exchanging ideas about sustainability, education, and waste reduction – with special attention to communication and awareness within Natura 2000 sites. Together, participants explored innovative approaches to environmental education, ways to engage local communities, and strategies to promote genuine environmental responsibility and counter greenwashing.

**Participative Workshop in Zadar (Croatia)**

Participative workshop within the Wastereduce project took place in Zadar on **November 11**. The event brought together all relevant stakeholders to discuss the success of waste reduction efforts on Dugi Otok, as well as the advantages and challenges of implementing ecological solutions such as reusable cups in tourism-related activities. This workshop served as a valuable platform for sharing experiences, identifying opportunities for improvement, and encouraging further cooperation toward more sustainable tourism practices in protected and Natura 2000 areas.

**ECOFORUM in Este (Italy)**

ARPAV presented the project at Ecoforum, which took place in Este (Padua, Veneto, Italy) on **28–29 November**. The event provided an important occasion to engage with participants and illustrate the ongoing project activities. It was also an opportunity to introduce the main elements of the Action Plan, which was under development at the time. By participating in Ecoforum, the project gained broader visibility and encouraged direct exchange with institutions, local authorities, and industry stakeholders.

Announcements

Upcoming Workshop in Veneto (IT)

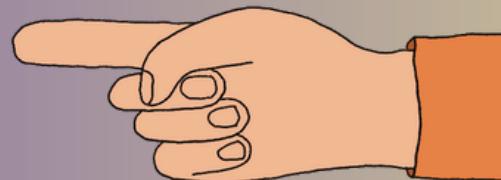
In December, Etifor | Valuing Nature will organize a workshop in the Veneto Region, bringing together all Italian partners to foster an operational and hands-on discussion. The goal is to gather concrete insights and recommendations from local stakeholders to improve waste management in the Brenta area - both through on-the-ground actions and stronger governance approaches.



We hope you enjoyed reading this edition of our newsletter!

Stay tuned

Follow us on social media



Become a WASTEREDUCE stakeholder



The author of the illustrations used in this Newsletter is Marina Uljančić