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IPVC Learning Service Project

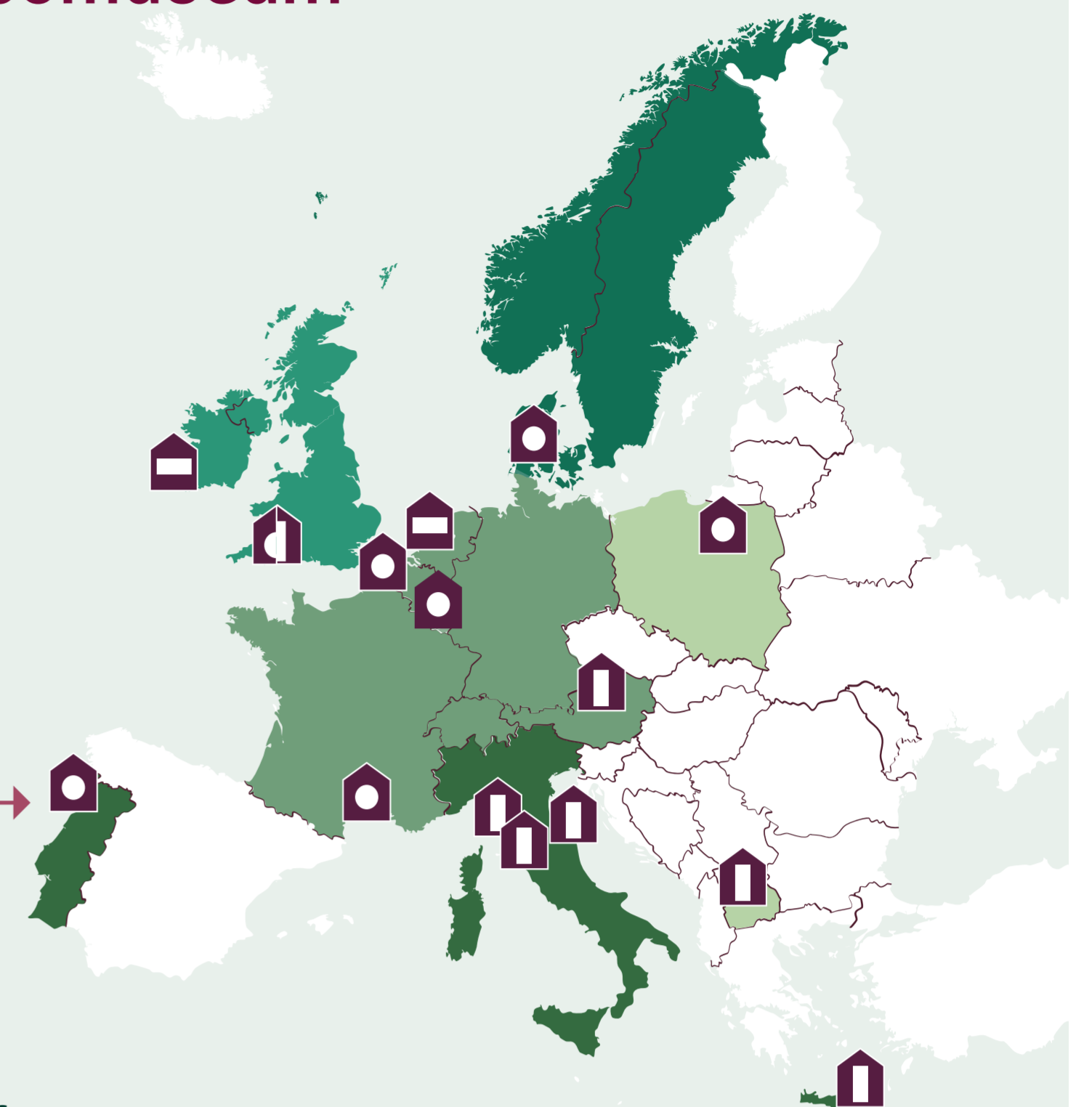
Village Cultural and Natural Ecomuseum



ESA-IPVC

Living Lab Alto Minho

15 countries
35 partners
13 living labs



Living Lab Alto Minho aims to drive a new kind of nature-based school transformation for sustainable and healthy diets. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can have an impact on food systems, through research, innovation, education, and community development. Social and Therapeutic Gardens developed at IPVC Inclusive School project improved relevant social-emotional, cognitive and behavioral skills, and thus increase interest in healthy eating and sustainable consumption.

The Living Lab Alto Minho aims to promote the co-creation of innovative solutions in real world scenarios and involve the participation of end users, bringing together their real world and local knowledge. It aims to build a new way of life, centered on the concept of community, an inclusive social model to help promote prosocial and individual behaviors with more sustainable living standards in relation to food and food systems, using a multisectoral approach, involving all actors in the value chain, taking advantage of their synergies to promote a healthy, local and sustainable standard of living and eating.



Alto Minho rural communities, some of them facing depopulation and demographic aging as well as agricultural abandonment, are becoming more proactive in finding ways to restore abandoned farming areas, and to preserve local knowledge related to traditional nature-based activities. This is the case of Labruja village, and the local community natural and cultural Eco museum project. The Agrarian School was invited by the chairman of the parish council to collaborate in the project implementation, by developing contents about local biodiversity. This task was performed in the context of learning-service activity. Scientific knowledge about habitats and species was incorporated, but the adopted methodology also included a close interaction with local people. This was very stimulating for both students and the local community. For the students was an opportunity to mobilize knowledge and to apply it to a real natural and social context.

IPVC Inclusive School is a service learning project, developed by professors and students that are community oriented. In this project relevant community solutions are developed aimed at serving the academic community, and other publics, such as children, seniors, and people with disabilities. The garden is cultivated by students and professors, integrated in the courses curriculum and according to the principles of organic agriculture and service learning.



IPVC Social and Therapeutic Garden is a space for experimentation, an open-air laboratory, a tool to educate future generations about the importance of preserving the environment and, in particular, sustainable agricultural and food production (Dias, G., 2022). It also can have a relevant role in human development considering its potential working with people with less incomes and disabilities. Each year activities are planned with the region's school groups and social institutions, always seeking to associate sustainable production with healthy eating and the promotion of endogenous products.

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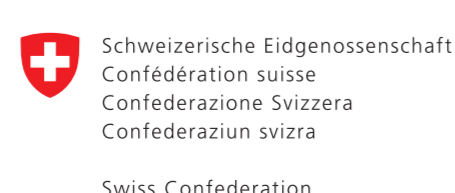
The community was clearly motivated and proud to see their knowledge valued and incorporated in a contemporary project. Reconnecting people and nature, by valuing and mobilizing traditional knowledge from peasant communities, is part of a wider tendency which sustains nature conservation should focus more on biocultural diversity and less in a strict approach to wildlife conservation (Agnoletti, 2014).

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