

# **DELIVERABLE REPORT**

## **GUIDED FOREST EXCURSIONS**

**Project title:** Youth-Driven Forestry for Resilience, Education, Sustainability, and Transformation – Y-FOREST

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**Organization:** Centar za mlade VG

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## 1. Introduction

The Guided Forest Excursions and Restoration Activities component represents a key practical dimension of the Y-FOREST project, designed to translate Climate-Smart Forestry (CSF) principles into direct, field-based learning experiences. This component was conceived as a continuous process of engagement with forest ecosystems, combining observation, documentation, and active participation in environmental stewardship.

In line with the project design, multiple field-based activities were implemented across different periods, allowing participants to experience forest ecosystems under varying seasonal conditions. This approach ensured a more comprehensive understanding of ecological processes, climate impacts, and sustainable management practices.

## 2. Concept and objectives

The excursions were structured to provide participants with a holistic understanding of forest ecosystems by integrating ecological observation with practical restoration actions. The objective was not only to introduce participants to CSF principles but also to enable them to interpret and apply these principles in real-world contexts.

Particular emphasis was placed on identifying visible indicators of climate change, understanding forest resilience, and exploring sustainable forestry practices. In addition, participants were encouraged to document their observations and reflect on their experiences, contributing to collective knowledge-building within the project.

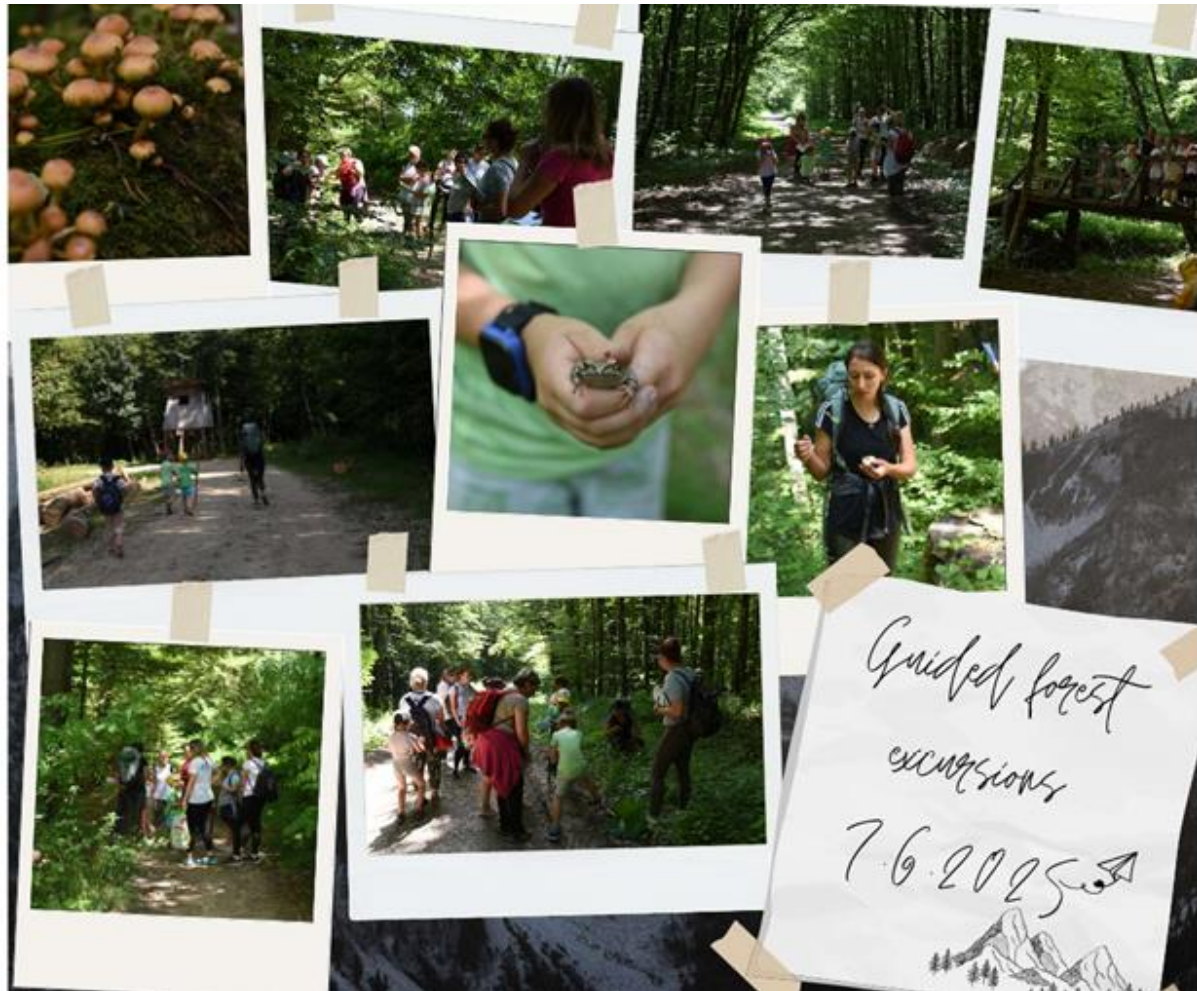
## 3. Implementation of activities

### 3.1 Spring guided forest excursion

The first guided excursion took place along the “Šumarica” trail and surrounding forest areas, involving 15 participants, as documented in the interim report . The activity was led by forestry experts who guided participants through a structured exploration of forest ecosystems.

During the excursion, participants were introduced to the layered structure of forests, biodiversity dynamics, and species interactions. Special attention was given to identifying signs of environmental stress, including the effects of changing climatic conditions on vegetation health and species distribution. Through guided interpretation, participants developed the ability to observe ecological patterns and understand their broader implications.

A key element of this activity was the creation of a herbarium, which encouraged participants to engage more closely with plant species and develop skills in documentation and classification. This process supported a deeper understanding of ecosystem diversity and resilience, linking practical observation with theoretical CSF concepts.



### 3.2 Autumn forest excursion (forest clean-up)

Building on the initial excursion, a second field-based activity was implemented in the autumn period, combining guided exploration with a community-based forest clean-up action in Vukomerić. This activity expanded the scope of the excursion model by integrating restoration practices and volunteer engagement.

Participants gathered at the Reciklirano imanje and proceeded together to the forest site, where they engaged in structured clean-up activities. This process involved the collection and sorting of waste, as well as discussions on sources of pollution and their impact on forest ecosystems.



The activity maintained a strong educational component, with facilitators guiding participants in recognizing human-induced pressures on forest environments and discussing strategies for mitigation and prevention. The integration of restoration work allowed participants to move beyond observation and actively contribute to improving local environmental conditions.



*26.10.2025*  
**FOREST CLEAN-UP**



#### 4. Methodological approach

The excursions were designed using an experiential learning framework, emphasizing direct engagement with natural environments as a primary mode of knowledge acquisition. Expert facilitation ensured that observations were contextualized within scientific and ecological frameworks, while participatory methods encouraged dialogue and reflection.

The inclusion of documentation activities, such as herbarium creation and observational notes, reinforced the importance of systematic data collection in environmental work. At the same time, the integration of volunteer-based restoration activities provided a practical dimension, linking knowledge with action.

This combined approach ensured that participants developed both cognitive and practical competencies relevant to Climate-Smart Forestry.

## 5. Results and learning outcomes

The implementation of multiple excursions across different contexts resulted in a comprehensive learning experience. Participants developed a nuanced understanding of forest ecosystems, including biodiversity, ecological interactions, and the impacts of climate change.

Through repeated engagement, participants were able to compare seasonal variations and deepen their observational skills. The inclusion of restoration activities further enhanced their understanding of human-environment interactions and the role of community action in supporting ecosystem health.

Participants also demonstrated increased confidence in interpreting ecological phenomena and discussing environmental issues. The combination of guided learning and active participation contributed to a strong sense of environmental responsibility and motivation for continued engagement.

## 6. Contribution to Climate-Smart Forestry

The activities directly support the principles of Climate-Smart Forestry by integrating awareness, adaptation, and sustainable management practices. By enabling participants to observe climate impacts, understand ecological processes, and engage in restoration, the project fosters informed and proactive approaches to forest management.

Importantly, the activities highlight the role of local communities in supporting forest resilience, reinforcing the idea that sustainable forestry is not only a technical discipline but also a social process.

## 7. Evaluation and impact assessment

The evaluation of the guided forest excursions and restoration activities was conducted using a mixed-method approach, combining participant feedback, facilitator observations, and activity documentation.

### 7.1. Quantitative indicators

Total number of participants: 15 (spring excursion) + 18 (autumn forest clean-up)

Number of field-based activities conducted: 2

Number of participants engaged in restoration actions: 100% of attendees

Volunteer interest generated: several participants expressed willingness for future engagement especially in forest clean-up

Participant satisfaction, based on informal feedback and facilitator observation, indicated a very high level of engagement, particularly during hands-on activities.

### 7.2. Qualitative evaluation

Participants demonstrated a clear progression in their understanding of forest ecosystems and environmental challenges. During the first excursion, learning was primarily focused on observation and identification, while in the second activity participants showed increased confidence in discussing ecological issues and proposing solutions.

The clean-up activity revealed a strong emotional and ethical response, with participants expressing concern about human impact on forests and a desire to take further action. This indicates a shift from passive awareness to active environmental responsibility, which is a key objective of Climate-Smart Forestry education.

### 7.3. Learning impact

The sequential design of activities enabled cumulative learning. Participants were able to:

connect theoretical knowledge with real-world observation

understand seasonal differences in forest ecosystems

recognize the link between human behavior and environmental degradation  
actively contribute to ecosystem restoration

This layered learning process significantly enhanced retention and applicability of knowledge.

## 7.4. Community impact

The activities contributed to increased visibility of environmental issues within the local community (publications on digital local portals).

The forest clean-up action, in particular, served as a public demonstration of community engagement and environmental responsibility.

Additionally, the activities supported the recruitment of new volunteers and strengthened collaboration with local stakeholders such as VG Čistoća.





## Akcija koja vraća vjeru u mlade – iz šume izvučeno više...

Kronike Velike Gorice - 27. listopada 2025

U organizaciji Centra za mlade Velika Gorica i ZMAG-a, uz podršku VG Čistoće, ove je nedjelje u selu Vukomerić održana akcija čišćenja šume. Unatoč...



## VG Čistoća, Centar za mlade i ZMAG zajedno u akciji čišćenja šume u Vukomeriću

24.10.2025. / Redakcija

Ove nedjelje, 26. listopada, VG Čistoća u suradnji s Centrom za mlade Velike Gorice i Udrugom ZMAG organizira akciju čišćenja šume u Vukomeriću.

-Zajedno s volonterima sudjelujemo u akciji čišćenja i zbrinjavanja otpada sakupljenog na ilegalnim deponijama i pomažemo besplatnim odvozom prikupljenog otpada – izvijestili su iz VG Čistoće.

U akciju čišćenja mogu se uključiti svi zainteresirani građani kako bi zajedničkim snagama stali na kraj ilegalnom odlaganju otpada.

Okupljanje je u 9,30 sati, a potrebne su vam čvrste rukavice i radna odjeća. Zbog organiziranog ručka i materijala za čišćenje prijava je obavezna e-mailom: [cmvg.inf@gmail.com](mailto:cmvg.inf@gmail.com).

## 7.5. Key evaluation conclusion

The combination of guided excursions and restoration activities proved to be highly effective in achieving both educational and behavioral outcomes. The integration of action-based learning significantly increased participant engagement and contributed to long-term impact.

## 8. Conclusion

The Guided Forest Excursions and Restoration Activities component successfully fulfilled its role within the Y-FOREST project by providing a structured yet flexible framework for experiential learning. Through the combination of guided exploration, documentation, and active restoration, participants were able to engage deeply with forest ecosystems and develop both knowledge and practical skills.

The continuity between activities ensured a coherent learning process, while the integration of seasonal perspectives enriched the overall experience. This component represents a strong contribution to the project's objectives and provides a model for future community-based environmental education initiatives.