



grassroots
young entrepreneurs in eco-health tourism

Living Histories Tour 2024

Experience Design for Tourism Tour by
Raffaele Giannella, Matera, Italy (2024)

*"A three-hours
experience to
discover a hidden
part of Matera
through the
locals' eyes"*

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1. Living Histories Tour in Matera, Italy

A Grassroots Eco-Health Tourism Experience



The Living Histories Tour embodies the principles of a grassroots eco-health business, integrating wellness, sustainability, and cultural immersion. Its foundation lies in local empowerment, environmental stewardship, and active citizenship, making it a model for eco-health entrepreneurship.

About the Owner: Raffaele Giannella is a recent graduate of Political Sciences who has also co-founded an urban gardening association called Noi Ortadini. He currently works at Il Sicomoro, a social enterprise welcoming migrants, and he is very active in his home city, Matera. His master thesis was dedicated to policies on how to avoid overtourism, which is something that the city of Matera started struggling with. This is why he developed the Living Histories Tour.

About the Mentor: Sara Simeone is an EU-funded projects manager and designer at Materahub. She also works for the University of Basilicata as a teaching and research assistant in the field of sustainability. Thanks to her network and past experience in organising eco-health tourism experiences, she mentored Raffaele with a peer-to-peer and informal approach, encouraging reflections and networking to develop, test and refine the Living Histories Tour.

Living Histories Tour Aligned with GRASSROOTS

The Living Histories Tour fully complies with the values of Grassroots Eco-Health Tourism as it reflects:

- **wellness:** it is a walking tour encouraging to explore the city on foot;
- **environmental stewardship:** it crosses spaces of the city where citizens take care of the environment and sensitize others on sustainability;
- **active citizenship:** in the above-mentioned spaces, citizens of all ages have an active role in shaping the future of their town;
- **cultural immersion:** it allows to get to know real aspects of the tangible and intangible culture of the City of Matera;
- **local empowerment:** one of the aims of this tourism experience is also to empower local citizens to tell the story of their neighbourhoods as well as their personal stories, which contribute to co-creating the history of Matera.

Eco-Health Focus

The Living Histories Tour not only is a walking tour which allows to explore part of the city in a healthy way, it also crosses the biggest park and green lung of the city of Matera and encourages a healthy diet thanks to the market's products.

2.

Some context



What is 'Living Histories'?

'Living Histories' is a new tourism experience in the city of Matera, in the region of Basilicata (Southern Italy). It was born from the idea of Raffaele Giannella, a young tourism entrepreneur graduated in political sciences with a **thesis on sustainable tourism**, who had in mind an '**open-air museum**' in the **historical neighbourhoods** of Matera where the former inhabitants of Sassi were given the 'choice-not-choice' to move due to the De Gasperi law, which imposed the evacuation of the Sassi on 17 May 1952.

How did the idea sprout and evolve?

Raffaele's idea was based, first of all, on the urgency of relieving the historic centre of the massive tourism flows, favouring both tourism dispersal towards lesser known parts of the city of Matera, and more interactive, transformative, unconventional experiences.

The idea also benefited from benchmarking regarding similar experiments done in the past, for example:

- in 2016 and 2017 by [Il Vagabondo](#) with "[Fuori Traccia - Insoliti itinerari materani](#)", in cooperation with Rossella Nicoletti, architect and urbanist;
- in 2019 by Matera2019 with [People, Places, Purposes](#): 5 routes, which let visitors experience an unexpected Matera, off the usual routes;
- in 2019, with 'Clean Game' within [Fusion Urban Games Festival](#) to discover the city in a playful way.

During Grassroots' 3-days hackathon in Matera, in October 2023, the teamwork with international entrepreneurs and the mentors' feedback provided food for thought for Raffaele from October until May.

3.

The call

July 2023: Call for young tourism entrepreneurs

On July 27, 2023, a call was launched by each partner of the project Grassroots to select participants to the hackathon which would take place in Matera in October 2023. The Italian call received 10 applications of which 4 were selected. Below, you can see the first Italian post to promote the call.

 **Promoting Europe**
July 27, 2023 · 🌐

★ **FREE TRAINING** ● **Grassroots Tourism Hackathon: Shaping Sustainable Tourism Innovation** ●

📅 When: October 3-5, 2023 | 📍 Where: Matera, Italy

🌱 Join the interactive and international **Grassroots Tourism Hackathon** in Matera. This unique event is challenge-based, tackling environmental, social, and economic issues, drawing inspiration from IT hackathons where bugs in systems and codes are resolved.

Prize: Winning team receives a reward and support for idea incubation from sustainable tourism experts.

Note: Coffee breaks with snacks will be provided, but meals are not included.

To apply 👉 <https://bit.ly/grass-roots-form>

Deadline to apply: 18th of August.

[#ErasmusPlus](#) [#GrassRoots](#) [#SustainableTourism](#) [#EcoTourism](#)



👍 You, Alba Martinez Bermudez, Paolo Montemurro and 18 others 6 shares



4.

The hackathon in Matera

October 2023: the Hackathon in Matera, Italy

3rd, 4th and 5th October: 3 days of learning, exchange and inspiration.

The Grassroots Eco-Health Tourism partnership has gathered young tourism entrepreneurs, project managers and mentors in Matera for a *hackathon*, a format borrowed from the IT sector and applied to the tourism sector by keeping the must-have ingredients:

- challenge-based approach
- fast-paced environment
- fair competition
- final rewards

Raffaele also went on local TV! See here: [TRM Network Live Special - 6 ottobre 2023](#)



4.

The hackathon in Matera

Inspiring speakers and activities

Three speakers led the presentations:

- Vania Cauzillo, an energetic stage director who highlighted the possible synergies between tourism and cultural and creative enterprises;
- Elvira De Giacomo, a tourism expert who shared some numbers behind the foundation Matera-Basilicata2019;
- Sara Simeone, a sustainable tourism expert, part of the team at Materahub who curated the whole hackathon.

The hackathon included a range of group activities, city explorations and much more. Read the full article [here](#).



4.

The hackathon in Matera

How the hackathon helped Raffaele and Living Histories

Not only this hackathon hosted as a field activity a first, draft version of Living Histories: it also gave Raffaele the possibility to benefit from the exchange with team members from other countries, who gave him a lot of useful advice and external points of view, which always help. Their team also won the first prize at the hackathon.

[In this powerpoint](#) you can have a look at the reasonment they did by using the beta editable version of the Grassroots Eco-Health Tourism Guide.



4.

The hackathon in Matera

The very first version of Living Histories, when the title was 'Serra Venerdì Interactive Walk'

Below and in the next pages you can see the pages of digital booklet which was handed over to the groups who undertook the afternoon activity which was an early-stage version of Living Histories.



SERRA VENERDÌ NEIGHBOURHOOD INTERACTIVE WALK



TO HAVE A MAP OF REFERENCE THAT WALKS YOU TO PLACES

👉 scan this QR code
or type this link 📌
bit.ly/PlayActMatera



Team 1 starts from stop 1
Team 2 starts from stop 2
Team 3 starts from stop 3
Team 4 starts from stop 4
Team 5 starts from stop 5
Team 6 starts from stop 6



THE WINNER IS

The team who completes all the tasks. The winner can be more than one!

THE WINNER IS NOT

Who completes every task first, so... Take your time and enjoy the discovery!



MEETING POINT AND TIME

After completing the game, you have time to have lunch wherever you want. We suggest tasting a *focaccia* at a *panificio*.

Let's meet again at 14:30 at [Huboutmatera](https://www.huboutmatera.it) to find out the winners!

WELCOME TO SERRA VENERDÌ!

This is a very peculiar neighbourhood of Matera. It was built in the years 1955-59 by some of the most famous Italian architects at the time, guided by Luigi Piccinato, the same urbanist and politician who edited the town plan for the **evacuation of the 'Sassi'** neighbourhood. This working-class neighbourhood (*quartier populaire*) rises on a hill with a **green lung of Matera** (*Parco di Serra Venerdi*). This 'game' will help you discover more: it is still a 'beta' version, so today you will be the beta-testers!



Photo source: Museo Virtuale della Memoria Collettiva (Virtual Museum of Collective Memory) www.muvmaterait.it/aspFoto/percorso-virtuale-detail-sottoCat.asp?ID=47



1. FORNO DI SERRA VENERDÌ

SOME INFO

When in the 50s new neighbourhoods (Serra Venerdi, Spine Bianche and Lanera) were built, each of them had 1 bakery and a church: two essential elements according to urbanists of that time. This is one of the most appreciated bakery in the neighbourhood, mostly for its **cheap prices** and **ancient history**. Some people come here from other neighbourhoods especially on Wednesday mornings, when there's the market.

INSTRUCTIONS

Find out the **year** when this bakery was built and write it here:

WHAT TO DO AFTER

Feel free to enjoy some *tarallini* or a piece of *focaccia* and go to the next stop!



2. GIARDINI VENERDÌ'

SOME INFO

This **mural** was made during Matera's year as a European Capital of Culture: 2019. The sub-projects were called 'Gardentopia' and 'Architecture of Shame'. Why shame? Because this neighbourhood has a bit of a bad reputation, although many placemaking and urban regeneration projects are currently turning the situation upside-down!

INSTRUCTIONS

The mural represents both **an 'A' and a tent**: why? Look for info in the panels or here: pigment-wr.com/2865/mario-nardulli-black-elk. Then, write the answer below:

WHAT TO DO AFTER

Go to the next stop!



3. MERCATO del MERCOLEDI'

SOME INFO

This market takes place every **Wednesday** morning. It's not huge, but still it and attracts people from all over the city.

INSTRUCTIONS

Buy some **food** without using plastics.

WHAT TO DO AFTER

Upload a picture of what you bought on a social media by tagging the organisations @materahub @lelaba @movefortheworld @companion @w8village @defismed @momentumconsulting Add the hashtags #erasmusplus #grassrootsproject #youth #ecohealthyyouth #ecotourism #entrepreneurship #sustainability and send the link to our shared whatsapp group. Make sure it's a public post or story!



4. THE GLASS GARDEN

SOME INFO

Serra Venerdi was conceived in a way to keep green spaces in between buildings, to recall the '**vicinato**' (intimate neighbourhood) dimension, peculiar of the Sassi. A lot of people take advantage of this land availability to crate **urban gardens** and pieces of **art**, like Giulio, a man living here.

INSTRUCTIONS

Take a **photo** of the white pyramid and write a post with the **feelings** that this place gives you.

WHAT TO DO AFTER

Upload the post on a social media by tagging the organisations @materahub @lelaba @movefortheworld @companion @w8village @defismed @momentumconsulting Add the hashtags #erasmusplus #grassrootsproject #youth #ecohealthyyouth #ecotourism #entrepreneurship #sustainability and send the link to our shared whatsapp group. Make sure it's a public post or story!



5. THAT'S AMORE

SOME INFO

This **café** is a **meeting point** for many people from Serra Venerdi and all over the city, also thanks to its cheap prices and informal atmosphere. Since 2 years, there is also a small **bookcrossing** spot inside. It is going towards a change of owner, so everything will be taken out and renewed soon.

INSTRUCTIONS

Take a book from the library and bring it with you to the meeting point after the game! You can keep it with you if you want to learn Italian ;)

WHAT TO DO AFTER

Feel free to have a coffee, tea or snack and...go to the next stop!

6. NOI ORTADINI URBAN COMMUNITY GARDEN

SOME INFO

This place of 4000 square metres used to be **abandoned**. Just a few people, like Graziella, an old woman living here, used to plant trees, flowers, and bushes. Since 2020, a group of **young activists** is taking care of this space, and this encouraged other citizens to do the same. This initiative won some prizes and grants like the New European Bauhaus 'Rising Stars' prize in the category *Reconnecting With Nature*. To learn more, follow them on linktr.ee/noiortadini

INSTRUCTIONS

Find the panorama and take a picture of your group with it

WHAT TO DO AFTER

Upload the picture on a social media by tagging the organisations [@noiortadini](#) [@materahub](#) [@lelaba](#) [@movefortheworld](#) [@companionoon](#) [@w8village](#) [@defismed](#) [@momentumconsulting](#) Add the hashtags [#erasmusplus](#) [#grassrootsproject](#) [#youth](#) [#ecohealthyyouth](#) [#ecotourism](#) [#entrepreneurship](#) [#sustainability](#) and send the link to our shared whatsapp group. Make sure it's a public post or story!

7. IL FORNO DI GENNARO

SOME INFO

This is a branch of another bakery located in another historical neighbourhood of the city: Spine Bianche. This chain of bakeries (Perrone) takes at heart the spreading of knowledge about the historical neighbourhoods, that's why inside they have a **panel** explaining something about Serra Venerdi.

INSTRUCTIONS

What is the toponymy of 'Serra Venerdi'? In other words, where does this name come from? Write it here:

WHAT TO DO AFTER

Enjoy a piece of *focaccia* and if you haven't finished yet: go to the next stop!



FEEDBACK ON THIS EXPERIENCE

WHAT YOU LIKED THE MOST

WHAT YOU DIDN'T LIKE

YOUR SUGGESTIONS



MEETING POINT AND TIME

After completing the game, you have time to have lunch wherever you want. We suggest tasting a *focaccia* at a *panificio*. Let's meet again at 14:30 at [Huboutmatera](#) to find out the winners!

5.

Further development



From October 2023 to May 2024: improvements and planning

Based on the hackathon's feedback on Living Histories, Raffaele made improvements to the experience and started involving **local guides** to structure the stops of the walk with further details, also helped by Sara Simeone as a mentor and friend. [Here](#) you can have a look at the structure of the first official test; [here](#) the pictures of the neighbourhood that were chosen to be printed; [here](#) the quiz game.



LIVING HISTORIES QUIZ GAME



1 Qual'è l'anno di approvazione della legge speciale per il "Risanamento dei rioni Sassi?"

1960

1946

1952

1982

2 Qual'è il nome dell'architetto che ha progettato il quartiere di Serra Venrdì?

a) Ludovico Quaroni

c) Luigi Piccinato

b) Francesco
Saverio Nitti

d) Renzo Piano

5.

Further development



Mentoring Raffaele Giannella and developing his experience'

Raffaele Lamacchia: cultural tour guide in Matera, he was the first option as a guide to be involved in the tour, as he had already worked in the past on urban tours in lesser-known neighbourhoods. He gave some suggestions but then communicated that could not keep following the project for time reasons.

Luca Pisciotta: he is the cultural guide who officially led the first test of the Living History experience and for him it was also an occasion to be known by people, as he holds the license for guiding but he had never used it before Grassroots. He was very thankful for the opportunity.

Sara Simeone: despite being project manager for Grassroots on behalf of Materahub, she also was a tourism entrepreneur in the past, as she organised several active tourism experiences such as Lost in Nature Outdoor Festival. Plus, she graduated in Design of Sustainable Tourism Systems. She helped Raffaele push his idea forward from an early, intangible idea to a concrete first tour which was really appreciated by the testers.



6.

The first test in May 2024



May 2024: the first official test of Living Histories

In May 2024, the first officially promoted test of Living Histories took place. The **beta testers** (to use startup world's vocabulary) were 20 women from [UISP Matera](#).

The **partners** were Luca Pisciotta a tourism guide, and Sara Simeone from [Materahub](#), partner organisation of Grassroots project, who mentored the idea from the very beginning.

The tour included **9 stops**, corresponding to architectural, sociological, cultural and natural points of interest of the neighbourhood Serra Venerdi. The guide also provided pictures from the 50s to compare the former status with the actual status of some buildings.

At the intermediary and final stops, there was a **quiz** testing if participants, divided into teams, had retained the key info of the tour. There was also a **small prize** for the winning team! Once the tour was over, participants filled in some **feedback forms with open questions**, to improve the experience in the future.

Below you can find the links to:

- The promotional article: [First Test of Grassroots Urban Tour in Italy](#)
- The report article: [Living Histories – An Unconventional Tourism Experience in Matera](#)



7.

Bruxelles



An inspiring training

Raffaele had the chance to present the results of his work at Bruxelles to some of the young tourism entrepreneurs and colleagues who were in Matera, and some new ones. He received more feedback and questions which, together with the inspiring training topics, gave him much food for thought on how to continue Living Histories.

[Here](#) is the article about Bruxelles training.



7.

Bruxelles



8.

Future: and now?



While the first test was free of charge, there is the idea to turn this into a properly running business, but in order to proceed there is the need to:

- test and iterate the experience until it is 'sellable';
- do some due diligence;
- involve local people to tell their stories, recalling the open-air museum or case studies of reference such as the [Human Library](#);
- potentially, create an alternative to the guided tour by using Thinglink.

We will draw inspiration from organisations like [L'alternative Urbaine](#) (France), [CreativiViaggi](#) (Italy) and [Tikitut](#) (Sweden).

Stay tuned on Grassroots channels to keep updated on future developments of Living Histories, **one of the incubated experiences** of this Erasmus+ project!

