

## You won't believe what the participants did with old boxes found at home



How many times have you taken a cardboard or plastic box and thrown it away without thinking?

Emptying the closet, an old box, new shoes – and it all ends up in the trash bin.

Because who would see anything valuable in that?

But the participants of an international project in Lecce, in the south of Italy, decided to stop that quick reflex and show something unexpected: that discarded material can become art, a tool and an experience that changes the way you look at the world.

In the narrow streets of the old center, they placed small boxes – made of recycled materials and leftovers that most people would crumple up and forget. But these boxes were not ordinary.

Transformed into camera obscura devices, they stood on the streets for days, silently absorbing light and turning it into photographs.

The camera obscura is one of the oldest principles of photography. It is a dark box with a very small hole on one side; through this hole, light enters and projects an inverted image of what is in front of it on the opposite side.

If a photosensitive film is placed inside and left long enough, the projected image can be permanently recorded. The principle is so simple that you can make it at home, and so powerful that it has become the foundation of modern photography.

**No screen, no batteries, no algorithms.**

Just holes, film and patience.



Through this unexpected practice, the participants learned that sustainability is not just throwing it in the “right bin”. It is reuse, the value that is returned to things that have lost their meaning. The box from waste became an optical instrument.

This creative experiment was born as part of the Erasmus+ project “Our Earth, Our Voice”, which brings together young people from Croatia, Italy, Greece and Romania for 16 months.

The project, implemented by the Center for the Development of Personal Competences and the Protection of Human Rights (CROK) with the support of the Erasmus+ program of the European Union, showed that sustainability is not an abstract lesson - but a practice that you can hold in your hands.

When the participants opened the boxes after 4 days and developed the films, they saw somewhat blurry but magical images of the city: the outlines of buildings and cars, trees and nature, and the sky above the city. The photos were not perfect – but that was their magic.

Everything that is created slowly remains permanent.

One participant said:

“I didn’t know that something so simple could look so alive.

I won’t throw things away so easily anymore. This has changed the way I look at materials and time.”

In conclusion, we can say that creativity does not need new things – it needs new ideas.

The “Our Earth, Our Voice” project is implemented by the Center for the Development of Personal Competences and the Protection of Human Rights (CROK) in partnership with the organizations Studio Legale Crastolla (Italy), Creative Thinking Development (Greece) and Empower Plus (Romania), with financial support from the European Union.

