EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	1 - YouNet APS
PIC number:	949011238
Project name and acronym:	SURVIVE: Stories of Women and Children's Resilience in World War II

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	WP1		
Event name:	Training, Commemoration and Cultural Preservation, Italy		
Type:	commemoration event; training		
In situ/online:	*in situ*		
Location:	Italy, Bologna		
Date(s):	16.06.2025; 17.06.2025		
Website(s) (if any):	https://survive-cerv.eu/		
Participants			
Female:	45		
Male:	13		
Non-binary:	-		
From country 1 [Italy]:	43		
From country 2 [Spain]:	4		
From country 3 [Poland]:	4		
From country 4[Latvia]:	2		
From country 5 [France]:	1		
From country 6 [Romania]:	2		
From country 7 [Georgia]	2		
Total number of participants:	58	From the total number of countries:	7
Description *Provide a short description of the event and its activities.*			

As part of the CERV Remembrance project *SURVIVE: Stories of Women and Children's Resilience in World War II*, the first international event under Work Package 1: Training, Commemoration and Cultural Preservation was held in Bologna, Italy, on 16 and 17 June 2025. The event was coordinated and hosted by the YouNet APS, and brought together representatives and participants from all four partner organisations: YouNet APS (Italy), the European Association “World-Our Home” (Latvia), the University of Transilvania (Romania), and Spark Foundation (Poland).

The two-day meeting had a dual objective: to carry out a Training of Trainers for the project partners in preparation for local implementation activities, and to commemorate the bombing of the city of Bologna during World War II - an event that left a lasting impact on the civilian population, particularly women and children.

In total, **58** participants took part in the WP1 activities. Each organisation was represented by two participants, with Spark Foundation bringing three participants, including technical staff responsible for the 3D scanning of selected historical objects connected to the Second World War in Italy. The event involved members of the local community and international volunteers from YouNet APS.

Day 1, 16.06.2025: Training of Trainenrs and Commemoration Event

The training and commemoration event was planned over two days. Day 1, held on 16 June 2025, began with a Training of Trainers session designed specifically for the project partners. The session was delivered by a trainer from YouNet APS with experience in non-formal education, gamification, and the organisation of Human Library events.

The training introduced participants to key methodologies that are central to the SURVIVE project. The first module focused on the Human Library (HL) approach, outlining its core principles, ethical framework, and practical implementation. Particular attention was given to the selection, preparation, and support of “Books” - individuals who share personal, often sensitive, stories with an audience in a structured and respectful setting. Real-life examples and good practices from previous Human Library initiatives were shared to help partners conceptualise its use in their local contexts.

The session continued with an introduction to gamification in educational settings, emphasising how game-based strategies can foster engagement and interaction in non-formal learning. Participants explored basic gamification principles and dynamics, and had the opportunity to exchange experiences and best practices from their own organisations.

One of the practical modules focused on how to gamify an Urban Trekking activity, using tools such as ActionBound. Guidelines, technical recommendations, and creative advice were provided to support partners in designing interactive and educational city exploration experiences linked to the themes of resilience, memory, and World War II.

The final segment of the training was led by the Polish partner, Spark Foundation, who presented their technological contribution to the project through 3D scanning and documentation of historical objects. They guided partners through the preparation process required for the next international meetings and provided technical explanations, supported by examples from their previous work on 3D

models and professional object photography. Initial results from the scanning of selected objects in Italy were also shared with participants.

The training concluded in the early afternoon, following a collaborative and interactive morning of learning and discussion.

The afternoon programme of 16 June shifted from training to a commemorative and cultural event, which was open to the wider public and aimed at engaging both the local community and international guests. The event, titled “Voices and Memories of Resistance in Bologna”, brought together over 50 participants, including citizens of Bologna, international volunteers, and partner representatives.

The event took place at Centro Sociale Montanari and was hosted by a representative of YouNet APS. The opening remarks welcomed all attendees and provided an introduction to the *SURVIVE* project and its objectives, as well as the European Union’s CERV programme, which supports remembrance and civic participation. The speaker also recalled the impact of World War II on Bologna, with particular emphasis on the bombing of the city in 1944, highlighting its devastating consequences and the long-lasting effects on the local population.

The introduction was followed by a commemorative session, organised in close collaboration with ANPI Bologna (National Association of Italian Partisans), whose members played a central role in shaping this part of the event. ANPI representatives shared three powerful stories connected to the events of World War II in Bologna and across Italy, with a particular focus on the experiences of children and acts of civilian resilience during wartime.

The first story was a first-hand testimony delivered by a survivor of the 1944 bombing of the Gorla primary school in Milan, one of the most tragic episodes of wartime civilian loss in Italy. The speaker, born in Milan in 1938, has lived in Bologna since 1965 and spent much of his professional life as a representative for leading clothing companies. In retirement, he became actively involved in volunteer work and is now engaged as a “Living Book” in educational programmes, where he shares his personal memories of growing up during World War II. His moving account provided an intimate and deeply personal insight into the everyday fears, losses, and rare moments of hope experienced by children during the war, enriching the event’s narrative with a voice of lived history.

The second contribution presented indirect testimonies from Naples, drawn from a combination of archival materials and oral history collections. These stories offered a poignant glimpse into the emotional landscape of children living under the constant threat of air raids during World War II. One particularly striking narrative, originally recounted by writer and journalist in *Kaputt*, described how a father sought to shield his young children from the psychological trauma of nightly bombings by transforming fear into a game.

As the sirens announced incoming British air raids, the parents would cheerfully announce that the planes were coming to deliver gifts, not bombs. Huddled in their modest shelter, they would reassure their children with laughter and joy, and after each raid, lead them into the garden where small toys and sweets had been hidden among the rose bushes and vegetable patches. Through this simple but powerful ritual, the children began to associate the bombings not with fear, but with moments of happiness and discovery.

This deeply human account, though indirect, powerfully illustrated the lengths to which families went to preserve the emotional well-being of their children in the face

of violence and instability. It also shed light on the resilience, creativity, and quiet heroism of ordinary people during times of war. The story reminded the audience of the psychological cost of conflict on the youngest and most vulnerable, and the often unseen efforts of parents to shield their children from horror with love, imagination, and hope.

The third and final story focused on a lesser-known yet powerful example of post-war solidarity that took place in Bologna. The narrative described how, in the aftermath of World War I, the city opened its doors to children from Vienna, offering them shelter and care despite the recent conflict between their nations. This gesture of compassion and humanity highlighted the potential for reconciliation and mutual support, even in the wake of war.

Together, the three stories shed light on the often-overlooked experiences of children during wartime, contributing to a more inclusive and human-centred historical memory. The session also emphasised the importance of intergenerational dialogue and the continued effort to preserve and transmit these stories as a form of resistance to forgetting.

The event was further honoured by the presence of one of the youngest documented partisan couriers in Italian history, now 94 years old, whose participation added a deeply personal and symbolic layer to the session. Her presence offered a moving reminder of the courage and resilience of youth during the Resistance, and served as a living bridge between past and present - a testament to the vital role young people played in defending freedom and dignity during one of the darkest chapters in European history.

The second part of the evening featured a deeply moving performance by the Coro delle Mondine di Bentivoglio, a historic women's choir founded in the early 1970s to honour the legacy of *mondine* - female rice field workers of Northern Italy. Established by an elementary school teacher who initiated a school research project on women's labour in the rice paddies, the choir was born when four original *mondine* reunited to sing and keep the memory of their struggles and sisterhood alive. Since then, the choir has continued to pass this heritage down to younger generations, preserving an extraordinary tradition of songs of resistance, struggle, joy, and solidarity.

On this special occasion, the choir presented an a cappella repertoire rooted in the themes of the Resistance and the partisan struggle, bringing to life stories from the fields and the front lines. The performance was made even more powerful by the participation of two original *mondine*, now aged 90 and 97, whose presence and voices carried the weight of memory and lived history. The choir not only sang but also shared touching stories about the lives of *mondine* and their connections to the anti-fascist resistance, offering a rare and authentic testimony of women's collective experience.

The powerful combination of song and storytelling deeply moved the audience, creating a moment of emotional connection across generations. The event reached its conclusion with a collective performance of "Bella Ciao," sung together by the choir and all participants - a symbolic and heartfelt tribute to freedom, resilience, and remembrance.

Day 2, 17.06.2025: Urban Memory Walk

The second day of the event built upon the theoretical insights shared during the previous day's training, shifting from reflection to active engagement through an urban trekking activity focused on the memory of the 1944 bombings of Bologna.

Participants took part in a city-wide exploration using the ActionBound app, a digital tool designed to create interactive learning experiences through geolocated challenges. A dedicated ActionBound route had been developed for the occasion, guiding the group through key sites in Bologna affected by Allied air raids during the Second World War, with a particular focus on the devastating 1944 bombing.

The immersive activity enabled participants to translate theoretical knowledge into a concrete and collaborative experience, walking the streets where history unfolded while interacting with historical photos, testimonies, and short tasks embedded in the app. Along the route, participants discovered lesser-known stories of civilian resilience, urban destruction, and the long-term impact of war on the local population.

Following the event, all participants were promptly provided with essential project data and a link to access the EUSurvey platform.

SURVIVE - Instagram

SURVIVE - Facebook

YOUNET - Facebok

YOUNET - Instagram

Publication of the EDS: https://www.you-net.eu/survive.html

Allegati:

1. Event Poster

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).

SURVIVE

Stories of Women and Children's Resilience in World War II

Voci e Memorie della Resistenza a Bologna

LUNEDI 16
GIUGNO

18:00

CENTRO SOCIALE
MONTANARI,
BOLOGNA

Via di Saliceto, 3 / 21

Presentazione del progetto

Letture dalla Resistenza

Concerto del Coro delle Mondine
di Bentivoglio

Iscriviti qui!

Funded by
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