

Salvagranajo: from the origins of agriculture to renewable energy

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOOL PROJECT HELD AT THE CÀ CORNIANI FARM, NEAR VENICE

“**Salvagranajo, the agricultural origins of the economy**” is an educational project developed and promoted by the Generali Group as an innovative learning opportunity aimed at primary and junior high-school students of Italy’s Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto regions.

The interdisciplinary programme is held in Genagricola’s Cà Corniani farm, close to Venice. It alternates theory and practice to teach students about man’s development from the origins of agriculture to the present day, and **raise awareness** about the importance of the sustainable use of resources, with a specific focus on **renewable energy**.

Through a series of **historical reconstructions** and practical experience, the schoolchildren are given the opportunity to try out the techniques and successive innovations man gradually developed to improve his standard of living.

The term “salvagranajo” is a pun referring to the “storehouse-granary” which is the starting point of the children’s visit at the farm. In Italian the word has a strong resemblance to the word “moneybox” (“salvadanaio”), to underline the tie between agriculture and today’s economy.





Specifically, the students re-live the **Cà Corniani land reclamation project**, which transformed the area from marshland into fertile farmland, thanks to a successful combination of technical and cultural innovations.

During the interdisciplinary programme, the students will be supervised by guides from the world of theatre, who will organise **interactive activities** providing a direct link with the school syllabus.

The children will reach Ca' Corniani by boat, approaching the farm from the Livenza river. The visit is organised into two modules, one historical, one practical:

- the **theoretical module** examines man's evolution, illustrated through parallels with the history of the Cà Corniani reclamation. The schoolchildren will be given the opportunity to visit the village, the storehouse/granary (a 19th century building equipped with a ventilation system exploiting the natural airflow) and the biomass power station, which generates electricity from organic material produced on the farm;
- the **practical module** focuses largely on an hydraulic engineering project. The canal excavation work undertaken to drain the marshland and reclaim the land is reproduced in a shed, with the direct involvement of the students. The second part of the module looks at energy, comparing the various types of energy applications, in the specific architectural context of the storehouse/granary.

School visits to Cà Corniani have begun in the spring and will continue, compatibly with the school calendar, **until October 2010**. More than 160 classes will be involved in the project, for a total of over 3,200 schoolchildren and 300 teachers from 34 schools in the Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia regions.

