



## INNOVATION JOURNEY

Giulia Montepaone, who studied agronomy at the University of Reggio Calabria and lives in a small rural village of the Ionian Calabrian Coast, with other friends have founded We're South - a territorial network including different local businesses, mainly managed by young women, in six municipalities of the Ionian Calabrian Coast: a trekking organization, several farms and agritourism, a jewellery shop, an educational farm and a theatre, among others. Currently, Giulia work as a volunteer for We're South, and have another job to make a living. However, the idea is to expand the network and gain more visibility to transform it into a job. In 2024 the informal network became an association. We're South aims to celebrate the slowness of Calabrian rural villages, so that people who live there, as well as travellers and tourists, can discover them and enjoy them.



The different experiences offered can be booked on the website of We're South. The website also includes a section where local public events, including religious ceremonies and village food festivals are promoted. Moreover, the association also organize specific events so that local people can meet and feel part of a community.

## THE INNOVATION IMPACT

We're South is not only a network concerned with local economic development; it is also very attentive to environmental and cultural sustainability. In fact, all the businesses that are part of the network share specific values, including caring for the local ecosystem and animal and preserving the local cultural heritage. They also actively fight for the rights of local people to have access to basic public services: the maintenance of counselling hubs for women, nursery schools and clinics, that get easily dismantled in rural -and particularly remote rural- areas. In this regard, Giulia believes that collaborating with local institutions is fundamental for an association like We're South, to support local rural development in the interest of all.

## USEFUL LINKS

<https://weresouth.com/>

[https://www.instagram.com/wearesouth\\_con tents/](https://www.instagram.com/wearesouth_con tents/)