

The BEAT (Biodiversity Education and Awareness Team) research group at the University of Milan-Bicocca is developing strategies to promote immersive, experiential, place-based biodiversity education using educational tools designed specifically for this purpose. This approach uses readily available, replicable materials such as paper maps or packs of cards. Starting from individual and group exploration, these materials facilitate and encourage experiences of understanding, exploring and conserving biodiversity in the immediate outdoor environment. This contribution aims to demonstrate how specific methodological approaches can foster interest in places and their biodiversity. Indeed, the tools tested have enabled processes of biodiversity research and awareness-raising to be initiated with extremely diverse target groups. This presentation highlights the diversity of groups and environments involved in the national biodiversity education pilot, which was carried out by the BEAT group with over 50 educational organisations (and more than 600 young involved) starting in 2024. These include nurseries and Ecec; pre-schools where adults are alongside children under the age of three; day centres; and groups that share outdoor educational experiences in urban and natural settings with children aged six to eleven. Primary, lower and upper secondary schools are also involved, as are adults interested in learning about biodiversity in their own living environment. The documentation provided by those who accompanied and explored the experiences reveals the potential of an approach that aims to strengthen curiosity, observational skills, and emotional connections with the environment. This approach transforms everyday places into spaces for discovery, research, and ecological awareness.