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Ethnobotanic Survey In Valmalenco (Sondrio). Research experience told through difficulties, human relationships and funny moments

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This ethnobotanic survey is underway in Valmalenco (SO) and is part of the Interreg V-A Italy-Switzerland project *B-ICE* (ID. 63143) (Bernina Terra Glacialis Project), which aims to create a new management model for the ongoing climate change and reach new sources for the local enhancement. In this context, a precious heritage is represented by the knowledge on the uses of spontaneous plant species. The survey is ongoing in the municipalities of Chiesa in Valmalenco, Caspoggio, Lanzada, Spriana and Torre di Santa Maria through the proposal of semi-structured interviews to the local communities. To date, 276 interviews were collected. These data highlighted that the most cited species were *Achillea erba-rota* All. subsp. *moschata* (Wulfen) I. Richardson, *Malva sylvestris* L. and *Vaccinium myrtilus* L., used in the therapeutic and food fields. The main forms of preparation were digestive infusions, liqueurs, soothing baths and anti-inflammatory mouthwashes. The collected data were statistically analyzed using ethnobotanic indexes (ICF – Trotter, Logan 1986, FL, JI). Our investigation showed that traditional knowledge is still quite rich and alive in Valmalenco and that plants have an important role in the life of the local communities. Moreover, what is generally omitted are the difficulties encountered in human relationships: the wall of initial distrust that collapsed with a smile, the problems of communication, overcome with patience, the trouble of sharing spaces and managing everyday life among the members of a young research group. These aspects together account for an experience that combines traditional knowledge, science and humans, in a sustainable research perspective and in an *Open Science* context.

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