

Agricultural Park of Paduli, Open Urban Laboratory

In the far eastern strip of Italy there is, in the lands called the Middle Lands, an extensive and majestic centuries-old olive grove, named Paduli. The rural project, “Living the Paduli”, results from an idea involving local communities, associations and inhabitants in the development of a multifunctional rural park. Famous since the XVIIth century for the production of lamp oil which was used for street lighting in European capitals, the area later suffered from a persistent state of abandonment. It was an ideal place to experiment with new ways of caring for the environment, and activating new models of production. The “Open Urban Laboratory”, brought together local stakeholders and a large number of experts from all over Italy to collaborate on the idea of creating a rural park. A bottom-up approach raised a new awareness of the landscape’s value. Through the Urban Workshop of the Middle Lands, “Living the Paduli” it has encouraged young people to practise innovative agricultural management techniques.



The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe acknowledged and praised the great value of the project presented for the 4th Session 2014-2015 of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe’s European Landscape Convention and recommended making it well-known to the general public for its exemplary value, and as a source of inspiration. The rural project, led by the local communities, associations and inhabitants, made possible the creation of a multifunctional rural park allowing the restoration of the largely abandoned olive grove. The aim was to develop new methods to care for the land and to enhance the landscape’s value in the minds of the local population. A collaborative work, co-ordinated by the “Open Urban Laboratory”, involved the local stakeholders and a large number of experts from Italy. Using a bottom-up approach, the project has raised new awareness of the landscape’s value in its inhabitants and persuaded young people to practise innovative management activities.