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Protection and Regional
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Republic of Latvia



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WORKSHOP 3

Regeneration of the landscape and archaeological Park of the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento
Department of Cultural Heritage and Identity of Sicily, Italy

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The Park, about 1300 hectares wide, preserves an extraordinary monumental and landscape heritage that includes the remains of the ancient city of Akragas and its surrounding territory up to the sea, in the city of Agrigento. Declared UNESCO World Heritage in 1997 and in 2015 there is the Adoption of Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, the Valley of the Temples hosts one of the major archaeological complex in the Mediterranean Sea, surrounded by an agricultural landscape of rare beauty, mainly composed by centenary olive and almond trees.

Founded as a Greek colony in the 6th century B.C., Agrigento became one of the leading cities in the Mediterranean world. Its supremacy and pride are demonstrated by the remains of the magnificent Doric temples that dominate the ancient town, much of which still lies intact. Selected excavated areas throw light on the later Hellenistic and Roman town and the burial practices of its early Christian inhabitants.

Landscape Regeneration

The project comes from the co-operation between public and private partners inside the extraordinary setting of the Valley of the Temples. In a view of sustainable development of the resources, the Park has coordinated the actions of public and private partners, recreating traditional products of high quality and reminding agronomic practices of the ancient Sicilian tradition, in order to combine production, protection and fruition of the territory thanks to the recovery of important infrastructure as the old railway of the Temples. Therefore, the project combines Knowledge, Cooperation, Development, Protection and Fruition.

As the proponent institution, the Park aimed to recover the historical memory of ancient productive practices, proposing and developing them within their own territory, with the realization of products of exceptional quality, that illustrate a territory of extreme beauty.

Another goal was to develop cooperation between public and private subjects as an element of strength for an active landscape protection and environmental regeneration, through an agile management model, shaped into a detailed agreement in which roles, goals and responsibilities of the individuals appear clear and defined. Through this simple management model, it was possible to mutually transfer from the scientific and research to the productive field, professionalism and know-how for landscape protection, making an amazing cultural site alive and fully usable by everyone.

The environmental path

Nearly 4 km long, from the Temple of Vulcan to the Temple of Demetra, the path twists and turns through monumental Saracen olive trees, almond trees and a Mediterranean scrub of rare beauty. In the attempt of promoting the enhancement of the territory taking into account forms of sustainable tourism with the creation of Green Ways, a path which allows a better articulation of the existing paths, today often confined to the Hill of the Temples.

In the logic of socio-cultural promotion of the landscape and its fruition, it was identified as key objective the possibility to make visit and admire the beauty of the Valley of the Temples, also through soft mobility system, realizing other two different itineraries - to be covered on foot or by bicycle - called "Environmental Route" and "Green Ways".

The recovery of the ancient rail road, dating back to 1874, which gently cuts the entire area of the Archaeological Park, fully restored and used for the transport of tourists on board of old trains.

The recovery of the ancient railway allowed to activate a further access point for visitors, making them directly get to the heart of the Valley, in front of The Temple of Vulcan.

The Kolymbethra Garden, recovered from a state of deterioration and negligence and revealed to the public in 2001 thanks to FAI (Italian Foundation for the Environment); it has the landscape of the irrigate orchard with ancient and fragrant variety of citrus trees cultivated in the site of the ancient Greek pool. The "useful and beautiful garden," is a repository of biodiversity, ancient knowledge, productive, environmental and cultural values and a material culture going to disappear.

The Garden of Goethe in the Valley of the Temples, a guided tour to discover the crops and farming techniques dating back to XVIII century, just as described by Goethe in its Italian Journey. Visitors are offered a guided tour and the occasion to observe practices, scheduled by the garden calendar, with an operator performing ancient gestures, methods and tools.

The Plant Patriarchs of the Valley of the Temples is a visit tour to discover monumental specimens of olive, carob and myrtle inserted in the book "The Great trees of Sicily". A planimetry depicts the entire path and also contains details of the morphological characteristics of each single specimen, hints about the origin, diffusion, history, classical myths and traditional customs.

Exhibition and education centre

Goat of Girgenti, a very old species coming from Afghanistan today at risk of extinction.

The Agri Gentium project, is the result of the granting of concessions, for the most part, of the 450 hectares of state-owned land on which agricultural activities would be realized. They would be realized in three projects addressing different subjects and different purposes: 1) community gardens, 2) agricultural areas used as spaces for social activities and agricultural management initiatives aimed at the rehabilitation and social reintegration of vulnerable people, 3) productive agriculture with agricultural production branded "Diodoros".

The Diodoros project allowed the transformation of part of the 1300 hectares of protected area of the Park in dynamic places of high quality agricultural production. In economic terms, it was possible to produce and sell Diodoros oil and wine, multi-awarded in their respective fields, entering the elite commercial chain. It produced strong interest in the local population and emotional involvement for the discovery of traditional productive methods and typical local products, which are natural carriers of culture and knowledge. For private partners, the project represented an opportunity for investment and development by creating jobs and generating a new economy. The Park continues the work of cultural awareness for landscape production, creating high quality products.

Public Archaeology:

Archaeological research and new strategies of fruition of the site; visit in open working site

Archaeology and games in ancient Akragas

The first Sunday of each month admission to the Valley is free.

The Parks organizes workshop, activities for families to stimulate to a moment of serene sharing, the creativity of adults and children facing the great lessons of history.

From excavation to the museum

An archaeologist's day with the thrill of discovery, the study of ancient ceramics, the visit to the Valle dei Templi Park.

Lectures in class and in the Valley, simulated excavation, restoration and cataloguing of finds.

Periods: April and May

Almond blossom fest

CONCEPT

Why a festival of intangible cultural heritage?

The initiative intends to enhance the artistic expressions that belong to the cultural tradition of the peoples, and particularly those performances that have received from UNESCO the recognition of "heritage of humanity". In this way we would like to create an ideal bond between tangible heritage represented by the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento, and intangible heritage, particularly in relationship to the performing arts.

We therefore propose an overview of selected groups, whose repertoire include songs and dances which are indeed recognised as intangible heritage from UNESCO. The whole festival is rich with open air performances, in theatre and parade, as well as of cultural events.

The event puts particular value in the complex today's international context, since, staging the performances of representative groups of different peoples of the planet: it intends to launch a message of peace and harmony among the nations.

Intangible cultural heritage

The festival wants to promote the exchange with the groups through workshops and activities aimed at socialising with the host community. Culture, music and the arts generally draw a path of tolerance and harmony.