

## **Parabiago parish map**

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### 1. A sick landscape

The Eco-museum Landscape of Parabiago born in an urban setting located in the high plain north of Milan as a response to a widespread inability of its people to perceive the value of places, to recognize in the territory not only space available to build, produce and move, but also to preserve and enhance the landscape.

Taking up the metaphor of landscape as a theatre, among the others dear to Eugene Turri, act only as actors, forgetting to act as viewers, here and elsewhere it has caused deep wounds in the landscape. These wounds are the loss of biological and culture diversity, the imbalance and the physical separation between human habitat and natural habitat, the serious malfunctions of landscape equipment which the polluted river Olona, unable to manage floods and support a complex biological community, constitutes its emblem.

According to Maggi, those cited above are symptoms of failure of the "invisible landscape": social relations, customary use of places and common resources in particular territorial, laws and practices of coexistence and reciprocity, communication methods and intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

### 2. A museum of the community.

Landscape Eco-museum of Parabiago is a cultural institution recognized by the Lombardy Region in accordance with LR No. 13 of July 12, 2007, which takes care to study, conserve, enhance and present the landscape; it is a pact with the community that is intended to make the landscape clearly and fully visible to its inhabitants and therefore also to visitors, according to sustainable development.

The eco-museum, as museum of the community, is legitimated by the participation of the latter. For this reason, landscape Museum of Parabiago was not designed according to the conventional wisdom that sees the institutions designed "for" the community, often being sidelined from decision-making. The design of this eco-museum has been carried out "with" the community, i.e. according to the logic of participatory planning.

Associations, public and private educational institutions and ordinary citizens belonging to different generations were invited to learn, discuss and interact to shape the idea of the Eco-museum and activate their resources, knowledge and skills for the testing of some local actions and implementation of an Action Plan for the Eco-museum.

The city council of Parabiago, found the interest of the community, in 2007 formally established the Eco-museum and approved the multi-annual plan of the same, drawn on the basis of information obtained through community involvement.

The Eco-museum, through the voluntary cooperation of the universities in Milan, schools, local associations and the various branches of government, has sought to involve people of different ages and skills in implementing the plan of the Eco-museum.

In Fact, for the Eco-museum, the path of participation is important at least as much as the result of actions designed, this is because to achieve the objectives it is essential the interaction of local actors and to create a sense of belonging to places. The same concept of landscape in accordance with the European Landscape Convention goes through people's perceptions.

### 3. The parish maps.

As part of the work of participatory planning of the eco-museum, the initiators have considered it essential to offer to the parish the creation of a parish map.

This is a participatory mapping of a landscape resulting from a shared reading of the tangible and intangible heritage which is based on the model of the English Parish Maps. The Parish Maps have been promoted by Common Ground in the mid 80s. The practice has spread over the next decade thanks to the Country Side Agency (for rural) English. At the turn of the millennium the English maps have passed the thousand, many of which are located in West Sussex.

In the maps of West Sussex there are mainly:

- Items relating to the present.
- something of the past.
- The flora and wildlife.

Maps celebrate local identity and the elements of distinction with neighboring communities. They are able to create a link between past and present to the census material and immaterial heritage and to create identity, a sort of reminder that helps not only to remember but also to well plan the future. Through the map, a working group with the help of the community identifies significant spaces and places that over time have helped to give the territory its present appearance. Basically you answer a few questions: "What characterizes and makes particular the community and its territory?", "What makes them distinguishable and different than other places?"

In the last decade, the parish map has been very useful to sound heritage and create identities in different Italian companies.

Italy has made dozens of parish maps made in particular in the field of eco-museum, thanks to the community of practice local world, consisting of scholars and practitioners ecomuseum.

### 4. Parabiago parish map.

The Parabiago parish map, one of the first in Lombardy, was produced in about a year and a half working with the financial contribution of the European Union, the Lombardy Region and the Municipality of Parabiago, who runs the Landscape Eco-museum.

The map was drawn up by a working group of the Forum for the Eco-museum. The group, open to all, and made up of associations, municipal technicians, politicians and individuals of Parabiago and neighboring communities, met regularly.

It initially drew up a questionnaire that was submitted to the Forum for the Eco-museum, to associations and to boys in primary and secondary schools and to their parents and grandparents.

Respondents were asked to indicate the elements:

- characterizing the landscape of the city Parabiago and its territory.
- higher value
- which would like to remove from the landscape
- which have changed more in the last 20-50 years
- which should be utilized.

The involvement of students and their relatives did in the process of landscape education for the school year 2006/07 proposed schools to Eco-museum of Parabiago of different types and levels (primary, secondary and second degree) which was signed by 11 classes for a total of about 250 students.

In addition to filling out the questionnaire and administer it to their parents and grandparents, children, led by operators eco-museum, conducted a walk through the areas adjacent to their school aims to recognize, or discover the salient features, as well as the history has determined .

Thanks to some highly-motivated teachers, some classes have created their maps:

- Three sections of class IV of the primary school Manzoni (city center) working together have

created three maps of the entire municipality dealing with each one a specific topic (flora and fauna, productive activities, monuments and historic buildings);

- Primary IV classes of primary schools in the district of S. Lorenzo and the fraction Villastanza simply map each for its own account the areas that were the subject of the visits.

The maps of the boys were drawn, and colored by the same layouts and has been instrumental in the success of the final map.

The working group for the map, based on the results of the survey and on the maps of the boys, discussed and identified heritage items to be included in the map and drew up an initial proposal.

Based on these proposals, the local artist Patricia Cross has designed a draft of the map which was submitted to the plenary forum of the eco-museum. The artist, taking into account the comments received, has finally produced the final map.

Information deemed less important but still noteworthy, as well as some indications of landscape changes over time, were on the back of the map. This space has also sought to remedy the deficiencies noted by the Eco Forum in relation to industrial and craft footwear that have characterized and still characterize the local economy.

The final map was submitted to the City Council and then distributed to all households Parabiago through the city newspaper. It was attached to a popular type of brochure that shows the path of participatory planning eco-museum and their outcomes.

Early in 2009 the map was reprinted without the back of the booklet and map has been updated and corrected in order to provide also information on the visit and Eco Services.

Currently it is delivered to new residents and during public events.

## 5. After the map

The parish map does not end with the release of the same. It is a process involved, a "store" permanent and upgradeable, of tangible and intangible heritage of a territory, aimed on the one hand to remember what it characterized and the other to improve and enhance it. In fact, immediately after the disclosure of the map proposals for adjustments and integration were received.

It is also clear that map captures not only the state of affairs. In some cases you can detect the desires community: for example the tower Cavalleri, now in ruins, was drawn as at the time of its peak that is how you would like as soon as possible. It is also clear that some monuments and heritage objects shown in the map are not currently accessible by the public, others are little known or have been abandoned. This is the case of the church of S. Ambrogio della Vittoria closed to the public and remembered more as GESA of Matt (since housed a psychiatric hospital) and as the site of an important Cistercian abbey. The remains of Riale, a medieval ditch active until 1928, are hidden in the vegetation, ignored by most citizens as the river that feeds it, Olona, that many respondents would like to erase from the landscape even as synonymous of pollution and flooding . Some animals drawn on the map, still widespread, are also unknown by most people who think they are even extinct. They however, are not biologically extinct, but they are culturally. Example of this phenomenon, the beetle lampiride commonly called firefly: fewer children know its existence, much less name it, they echo the chant to invite her to fall and be caught (*lusiroeu ven giò che a la mama ghe dor 'l cò...*), put it under a glass at night, and it gives a little' light. So showing them on the map means wanting somehow redeem their cultural existence too.

The Parabiago parish map ultimately proved to be a useful tool for planning interventions of eco-museum.

### 5.1. Interactive map

The multimedia and interactive parish map published in 2008 and being updated, contains the thematic studies relating to the tangible and intangible assets shown on the parish map.

This map is presented as a series of web pages within the Eco-museum site.

Each object represented on the map is connected by a hyperlink to a in-depth web page containing text, images, photographs, interviews and anything else necessary to detail the contents. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1 Interactive parish map

As it has done for the paper map, also the interactive map requires the participation and cooperation of everyone concerned: only in this way it becomes a real parish map.

Given computing facilities of the final product, besides the usual involvement of the Forum for the Eco-museum and educational and cultural institutions, which represent the local community, the map is also based on large quantity (and quality) of information produced by the computing community through the project Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia online.

Wikipedia, with nearly 500,000 entries only in Italian, has recently gained considerable popularity for the approach of the fund (the freedom of completing the terms by anyone who wants to contribute), which draws many volunteers and empathy on the part of users the Internet to the project and the people who contribute to it.

The high rank given by search engines to the Wikipedia pages on one side makes a reference point for users on the other causes that they receive more and more connected. However, while Wikipedia is made in a participatory manner, on the other, not being drafted by experts, can not guarantee the accuracy of the content. So the documentation produced by the local community and the IT community need to be examined by experts who judge the content and ensuring the quality of the final product.

The Eco Technical Committee, composed of a multidisciplinary team, is taking care of this business to provide "authority" as shared by the Community.

The text, once transgressed, are placed on the website in the Eco-depth of the corresponding web pages interactive parish map. (Fig. 2)

The interactive map is enriching also thanks to education courses conducted at the landscape with the schools of Parabiago and walks that the eco-museum organizes periodically to read and interpret part of the landscape.

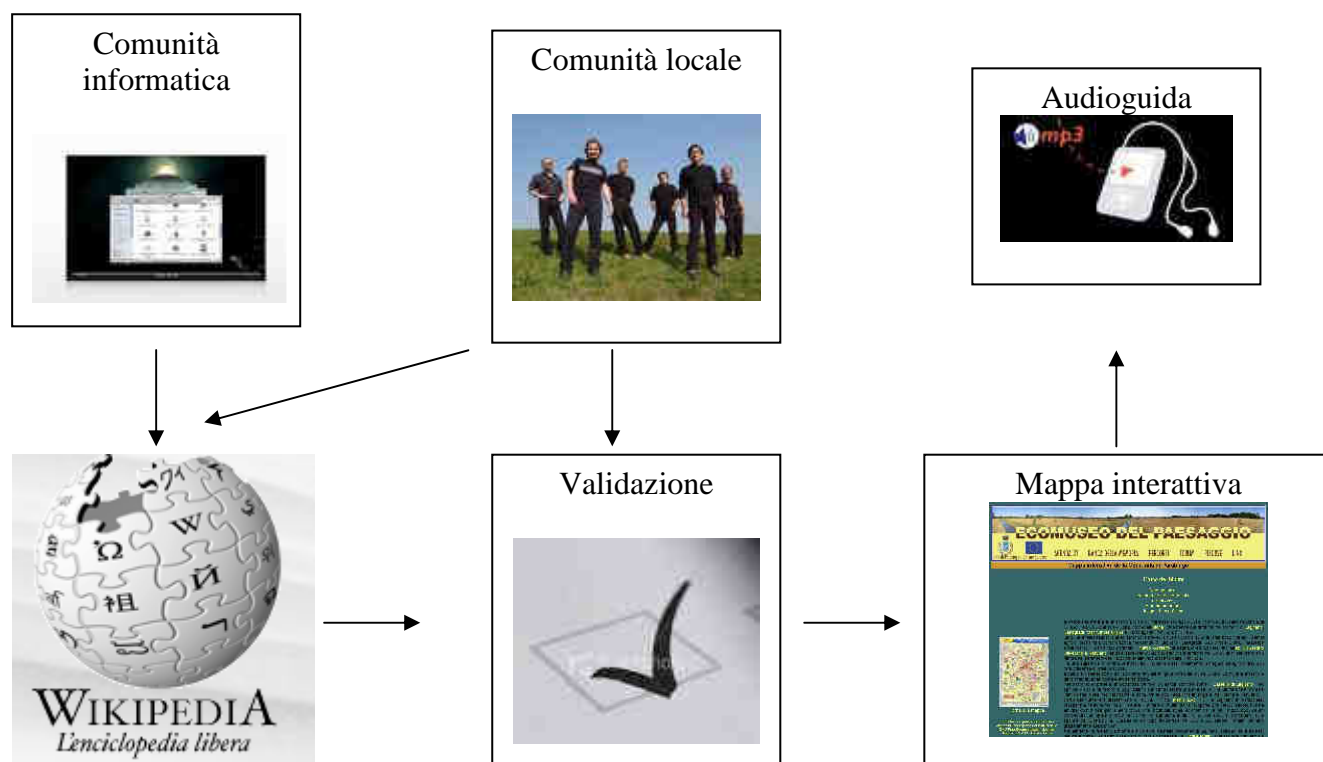


Fig. 2 Working scheme of the interactive Parish Map

## 5.2 The sound map

The sound map, also present on the ecomuseum website, contains recordings made in the most significant and interviews to tell how the sites mentioned above have changed. It seeks to describe the soundscape of the ecomuseum. Unlike the parish map, the sound map has not been shared yet by the working group. For now it has been made by the ecomuseum technicians and will be redesigned in the future in a participatory way.

## 5.3 The audio guide

The audio guide, which is under construction, is designed for self-guided tours of Ecomuseum and present the heritage along some routes. The texts are taken from the interactive map and from brochures produced by subsidiaries during the walks and guided tours; these brochures are made with the help of volunteer guides and reflects comments and suggestions of visitors thanks to a process of feed back. In this way, we want to make an audio guide that is mostly shared by the local community and IT.

## 5.4. The parish map to the community project

The educational projects aimed at boys and organized walks by the Ecomuseo usually allows suggestions for improvement and enhancement of the places visited or studied; in this way, citizens and organizers on the one hand acquire a deeper understanding and shared sites and people who helped shape them and on the other express a set of desires useful to improve the landscape. Some simple actions feasibility have already been made with the help of volunteers or have been included in the pluriannual Plan of Ecomuseum. Others, related to spatial planning of the city, have been addressed in the work of formation of the Government Plan of the Territory of Parabiago, recently opened. According to the intention of the designers, the urban plan should bring out the strong points of the map and connect the community including those currently little or hardly

useful. The aim is to redevelop public spaces and connect both among themselves and with the surrounding environmental system. Time will tell us if the map has also played a useful role in the planning and if it has been able to effectively deliver a project through which the community draws its future.

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### Site links

- For original documents about the Parish Map is advisable to visit the official website of Common Ground, and [www.commonground.org.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk) [www.england-in-particular.info](http://www.england-in-particular.info).
- For the Parabiago parish map see site ecomuseum [www.comune.parabiago.mi.it/](http://www.comune.parabiago.mi.it/) link "ecomuseum"
- For maps of Italian communities see <http://www.mappadicomunita.it/>