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Case study: Crespi d'Adda

Communities engaged in Crafting a Smart Management Plan

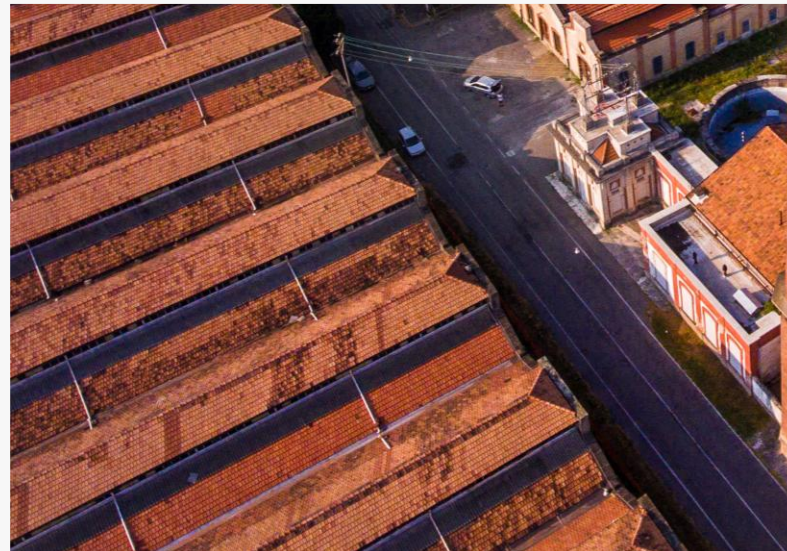
ROBERTA DE BONIS PATRIGNANI

TURIN, 26 MARCH 2025

CRESPI D'ADDA

UNESCO World Heritage Site

- Crespi d'Adda in December 1995, together with the factory (still active in that period), was inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list, as “*an outstanding example of the 19th and early 20th century 'company towns' built in Europe and North America, by enlightened industrialists to meet the workers' needs.*”
- The industrial activity of the factory, built in 1020s, has significantly declined at the end of 20th century and closed in 2004.
- Although it suffers of isolation due to its geographical location, Crespi d'Adda is located within a territorial system characterized by numerous cultural and natural attractions.



GOVERNANCE: CRESPI D'ADDA ASSOCIATION

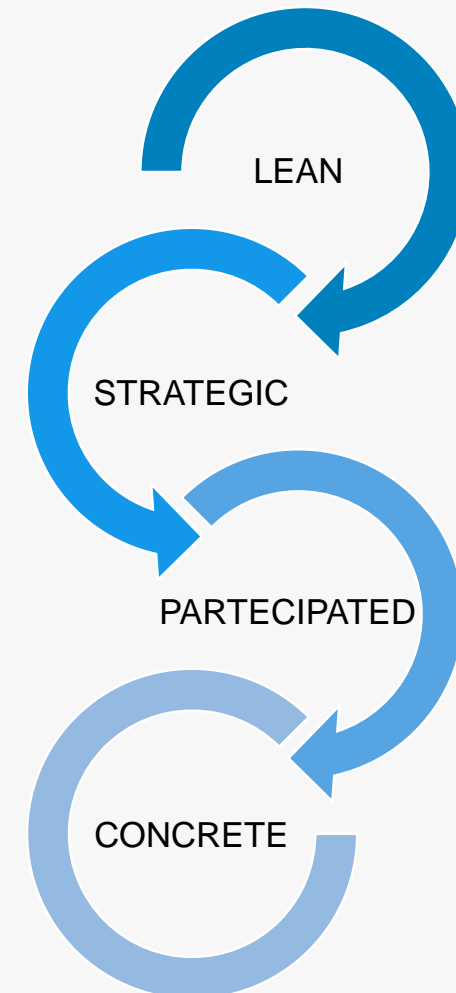
- **Crespi d'Adda Association** is a volunteer organization and a third-sector entity, representing around fifty residents of Capriate San Gervasio.
- Its mission is to develop research, safeguard the site, train young communicators, promote awareness of the site's values, and professionally welcome visitors to the workers' village.
- It has created and manages, in collaboration with the Municipality of Capriate San Gervasio, the UNESCO Visitor Centre.
- The City Council has appointed a **City Commission**, composed of 6 members, with the function of supporting and consulting the work on the Management Plan.





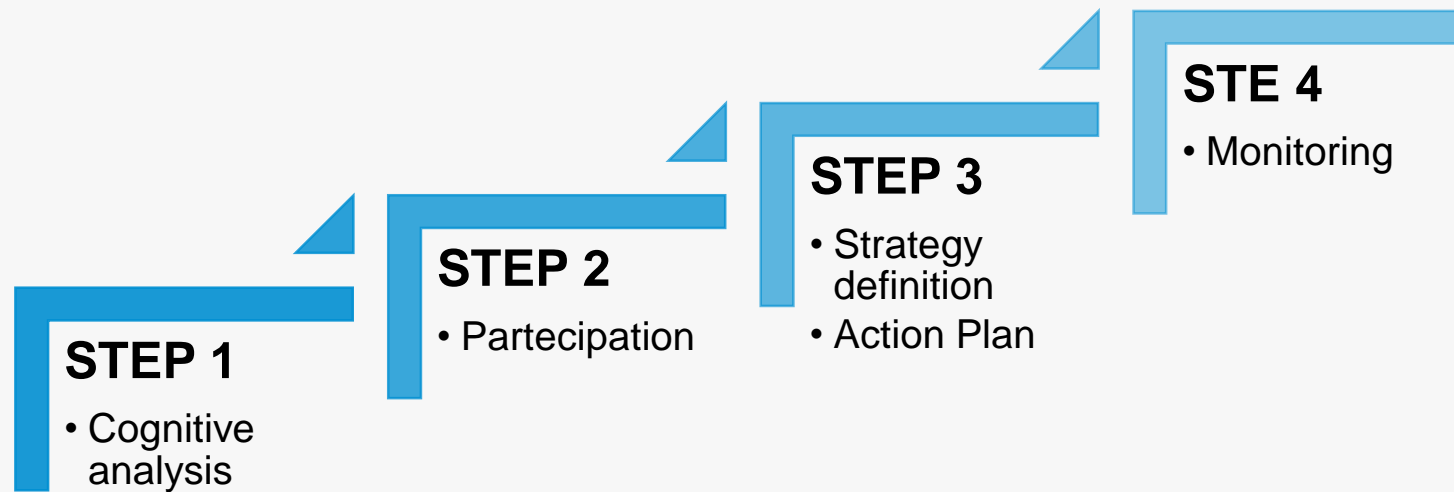
Management Plan

Of the UNESCO World Heritage Site



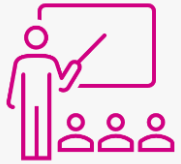
Management Plan

Model structure



PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

Four meetings to enable third-year middle school students to become aware of the value that the Crespi d'Adda Village represents and the reasons why UNESCO has included it in the list of World Heritage Sites.



1st AT SCHOOL

What is UNESCO

What is World Heritage

Tangible vs. Intangible

World Heritage Sites of Crespi d'Adda Village

What is the Management Plan and introduction to the questionnaire



2nd AT UNESCO VISITOR CENTRE

Guided tour of Crespi d'Adda (village, hydroelectric power plant and factory when possible)

Exploring the Unesco Visitor Centre and the Participatory Museum

Explanation of the homework assignment



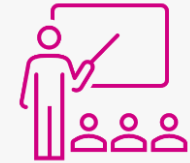
3rd AT UNESCO VISITOR CENTRE

Historical criticism laboratory

Ingegnere Giovanni Rinaldi Historical Archive and the importance of conservation

Meaning and Value of Cultural Heritage

Drafting of the management plan by students



4th AT SCHOOL

Debate on the topics discussed and finalization of the Student Management Plan



SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRES

INTERVIEWEES

77 children attending the third grade of the lower secondary schools of Capriate San Gervasio were involved in a path of awareness and knowledge of the territory. At the beginning and end of the path they were given **questionnaires** to evaluate the initial level of knowledge and the level reached after the meetings.

80%

knew what
UNESCO is

47%

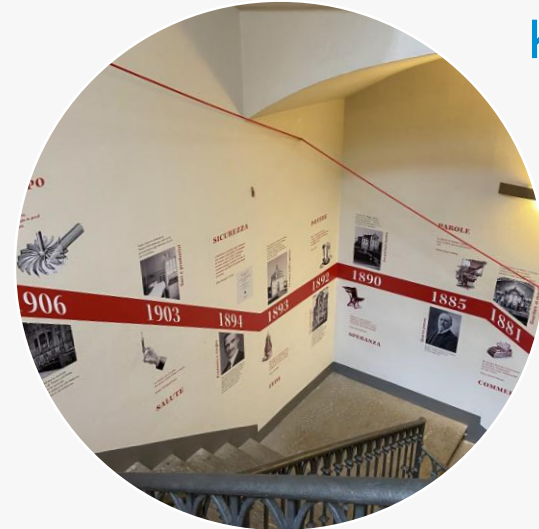
knew what
WORLD
HERITAGE is

SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRES

KNOWLEDGE OF CRESPI D'ADDA



Knew the history of Crespi d'Adda:



56%

- 1/3 thanks to the stories of the family members
- 2/3 thanks to the teachers or the TV

95%

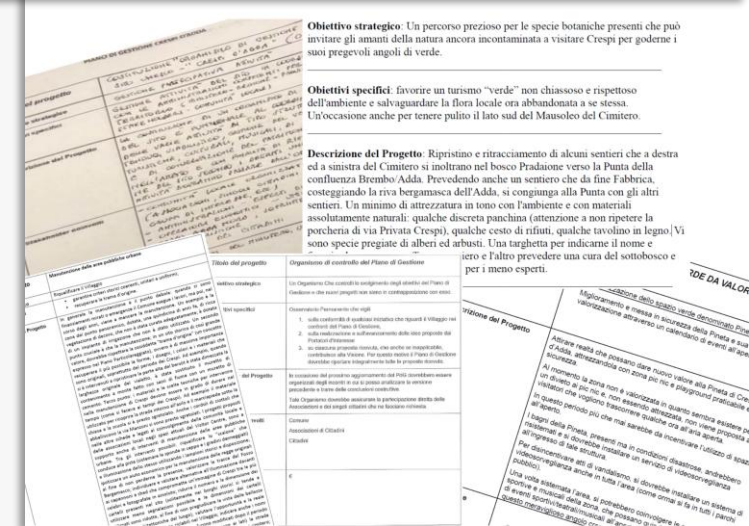
visited the workers' village

60%

visited the hydroelectric power plant

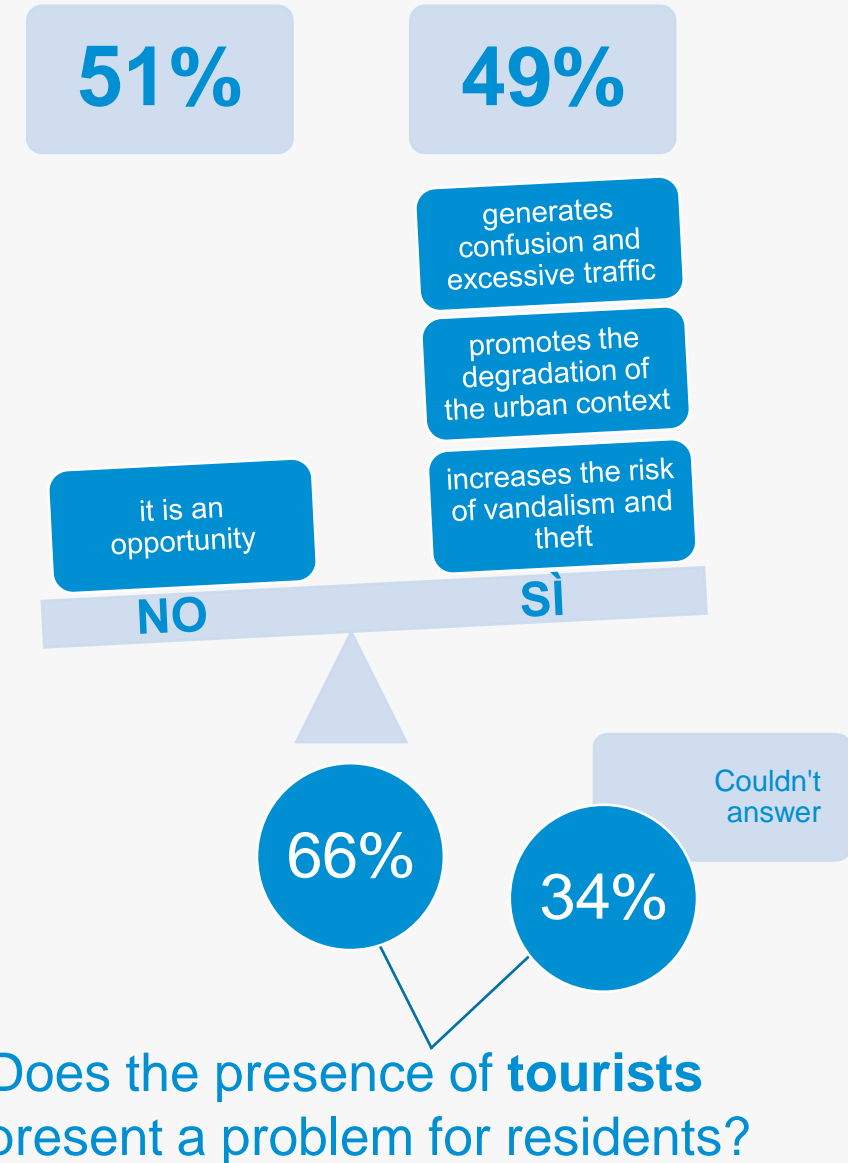
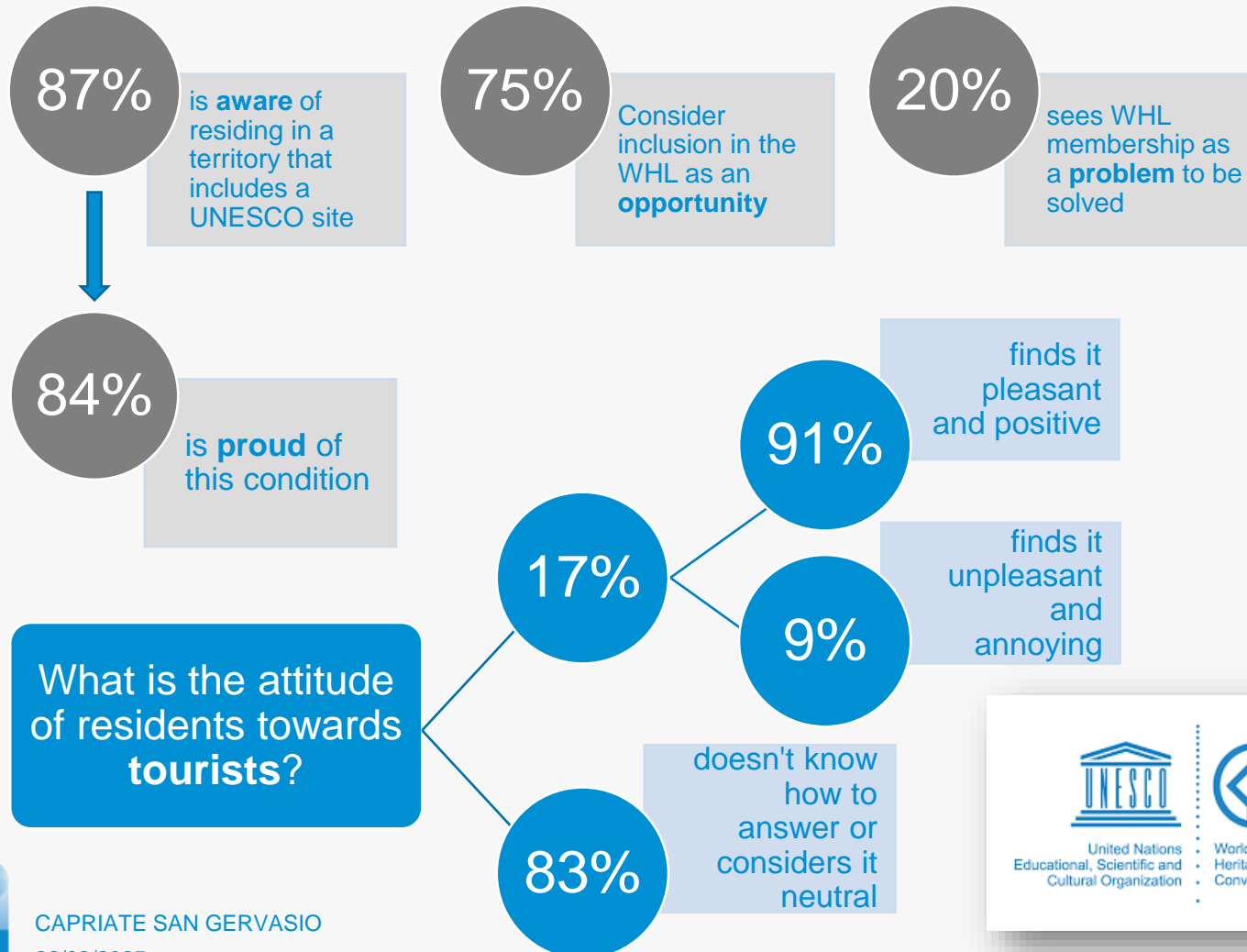
21%

Visited the UNESCO Visitor Centre



SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRES

• UNESCO AND TOURISM





SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRES

COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of the **4-day training course** that included a classroom meeting and a visit to: the village, the archive, the UNESCO Visitor Centre and the hydroelectric plant, a second questionnaire was submitted to the students to have feedback on the activities carried out.

According to the students, the **presence of visitors**:

75%

It represents
an opportunity
for the Village
of Crespi
d'Adda

5%

It represents
a potential
problem

20%

Does not
express an
opinion

SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRES

VISIT TO CRESPI AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

- **64%** visit to the hydroelectric plant, a reopened place that they had never visited
- **57%** perceptible quiet in the workers' village
- **55%** history that they heard during the training itineraries proposed with this plan
- **45%** architectural beauty that they perceived from the narration and observation of the natural context
- **44%** presence of vitality thanks to the places open to the public: commercial establishments, UNESCO Visitor Centre, hydroelectric plant.



To **promote local development** of the territory, the young people suggest:



What struck you most during your visit to Crespi d'Adda?

- **38%** presence of closed places within the village: church, factory and cemetery
- **25%** disorder and dirt
- **22%** state of abandonment of the washhouse.



- 65%** ENCOURAGE the reopening of spaces that are still closed
- 44%** PROMOTE conscious and monitored tourism
- 37%** BRINGING work back to the factory
- 36%** ENGAGE the community more, especially young people
- 30%** ENHANCE the heritage of the historical archive

SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRES

SOME PROPOSALS

Open a sports center because, in my opinion, it's everything

There are few things for young people

Organize recreational activities

Increase tourism

Repopulating Crespi d'Adda

Reactivate the sports center because sport is important both from a social and physical point of view

Open a library

I imagine the factory restored but more futuristic

A square to meet up

Reopen the factory and use it as a museum because the factory is the most important building and symbol of Crespi d'Adda

Reopen the grocery store

Improving the pine forest park

PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH CITIZENS

Three meetings with citizens:



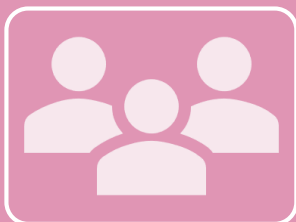
Commercial and industrial operators in the area.

Invitation to a direct call: sharing of the vision; collection of suggestions; starting a possible coordination table.



Local cultural operators.

Invitation to a direct call: sharing of the vision; collection of suggestions; starting a possible coordination table.



Citizens of Crespi d'Adda and Capriate San Gervasio

Public invitation: sharing of the vision; collection of suggestions.



6 months later

Public meeting to return projects and share the *vision*.

PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH CITIZENS



Commercial and industrial operators in the area.



Local cultural operators.



Citizens of Crespi d'Adda and Capriate San Gervasio



6 months later

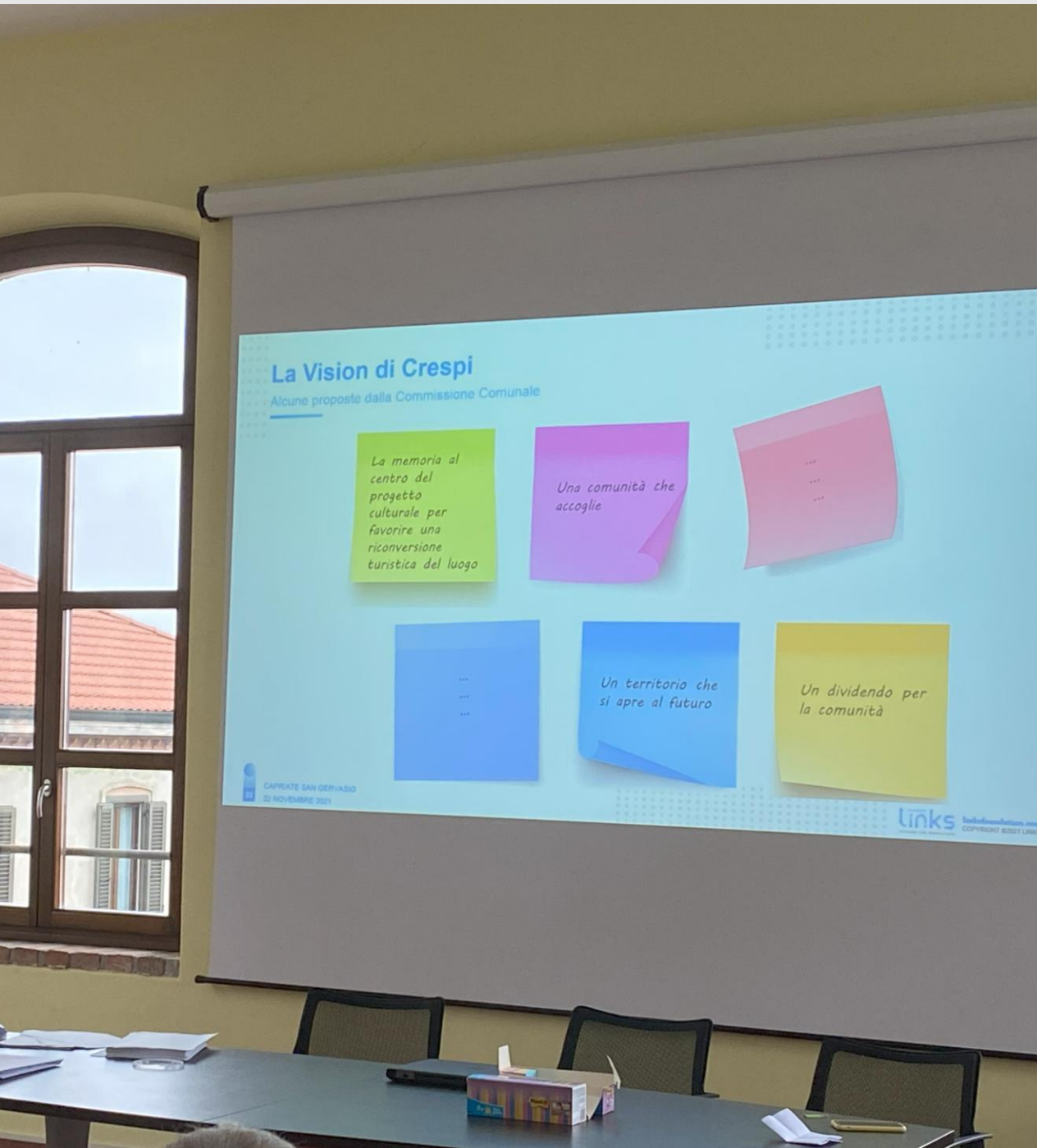
Public meeting to return projects and share the *vision*.



VISION PROPOSALS

FROM CITIZENS AND LOCAL OPERATORS

- “A territory that opens to the future”
- “All cycle paths lead to Crespi”
- “A welcoming community”
- “Work returns to Crespi”
- “Welfare returns to Crespi”
- “Industrial revolution → Digital revolution”
- “Crespi is not an island”



CONCLUSIONS

Participatory Process in UNESCO Site Management is important because it improves effectiveness through:

- Strengthening Local Engagement,
- Enhancing Decision-Making,
- Promoting Sustainable Development,
- Building Consensus & Conflict Resolution,
- Increasing Resilience.

Participatory processes are not just a methodology - they are the key to sustainable and effective UNESCO site management.



Thanks
For your attention!



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