

## *Abandoned terraces adopted to support mountains*

*The project “Adotta un terrazzamento” [“Adopt a terrace” in English] aims at regulating and expanding the mountain farming activities by giving any interested person the opportunity to adopt a terrace and provide a direct or long-term support to the mountains of the Brenta Valley, in the Alps region in Italy.*

### *Context and origin of the project*

Terraces are created to transform a sloping mountain in a series of shelves to obtain surfaces suitable for cultivation. The walls of the terraced floors are known locally as 'masiére' (from Latin 'maceries') and are made of dry stone (without the use of lime or cement as a binder).

After the Second World War, the terraced system collapsed, with the collapse of crops that required too much manpower compared to mechanized ones. As a result, all terraces were abandoned for more than 30 years and were thus covered by pieces of wood and were subject to collapses which was threatening their stability. Of the overall heritage of 230 km of dry stone walls covering the valley, more than 60% was in ruins which endangered the safety of the slopes.

Within this context, the initiative “Adotta un terrazzamento” was born.

### *The project 'Adopt a Terrace'*

The '[Adopt a terrace](#)' initiative is a strategic project of the Valstagna Municipality, the Terre Alte Group of the Alpino Italiano Club and of the Department of Geography of the University of Padua. The initiative was born after a first local experience of 'spontaneous adoption' of terraces: the goal is to regulate and expand the activity, allowing anyone to adopt a terrace, claiming directly or remotely the mountain of the Brenta Canal.



### *How does it work?*

The adoption of the terrace is done by registering and choosing the operation to be supported on the terraces, the choice being based on the critical conditions of conservation, the aptitude for productive recovery and landscape valorisation.

It is either possible to adopt directly a terrace and cultivate it, or adopt indirectly, by paying a minimum of 15€. The subscription contributes to supporting the work of a volunteer team who is in charge of recovering abandoned terraces. Contributions are used to cover the reimbursement of expenses for equipment and materials needed for work. Groups such as schools, businesses, or other associations can also adopt a terrace. After 5 years of adoption, a Diploma of "Terracotta Benefactor" will be recognized by the Committee, the Municipality of Valstagna and the Italian Alpine Club. Every year, the adopters are able to visit their terrace and view the restoration efforts.



*The project « Adopt a Terrace » in action*

### *Positive social and environmental impacts*

The innovation has revitalised a historical municipality abandoned by residents. The project has achieved positive impacts, both social and environmental.

- The initiative is original;
- The institutional partnership is between academia, local governments and associations;
- The project uses wasteland and shows how to overcome the limitations of private property (partners had to find the owners of the abandoned lands and convince them to loan the lands for the project);
- The adoption is a means of enhancing a non-profit and multifunctional approach to the land



The project also demonstrates positive results as, up to date, it has allowed the recovering of more than 100 terraces covering more than 4ha in different parts of the valley, with the involvement of more than 100 people, most of them non-valley residents.

This project is an example of **social innovation in marginalised rural areas**. You can find it in [SIMRA database](#) collecting social innovation examples.



For more information on the project, please visit the website: <http://www.adottaunterramento.org/>