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Preface. Rehabilitation of Traditional Heritage and Local Development (RTHLD) seminars

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# **rooting empowering reactivating**

Rehabilitation of traditional heritage and local development

Martina Bocci and Andrea Bocco (eds.)



# **rooting empowering reactivating**

Rehabilitation of traditional heritage and local development



2024

Politecnico di Torino



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"Past and future ties in Edalia's alpaca threads"

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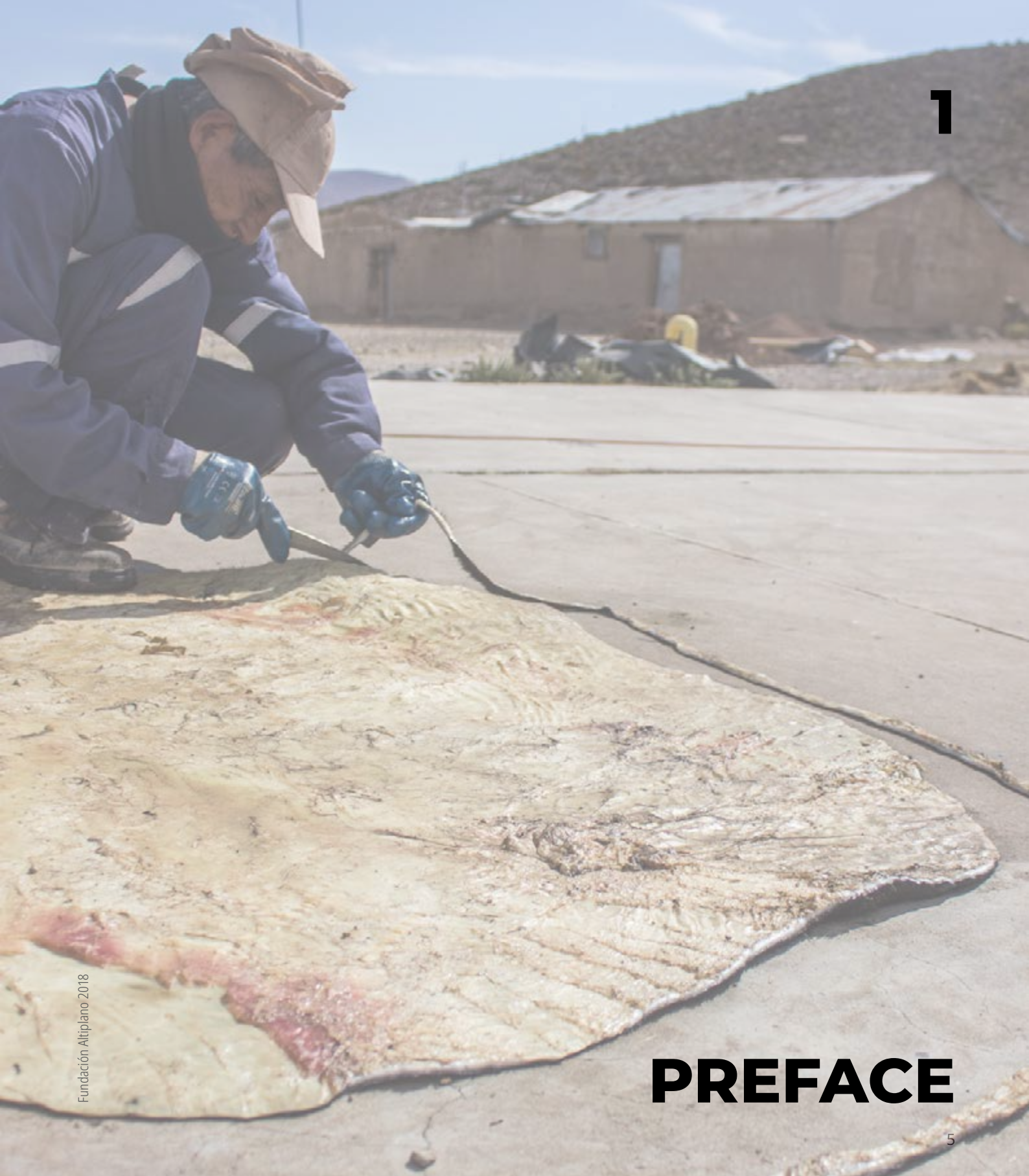
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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Preface</b>	
	Rehabilitation of Traditional Heritage and Local Development (RTHLD) seminars	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
	At the intersection of heritage and local development	19
<b>3</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	
	An international overview of community-rooted rehabilitations	25
3.1	<b>ROOTING.</b> NGOs' approach to the local community	29
3.2	<b>EMPOWERING.</b> Rehabilitation of heritage through the transmission of traditional knowledge	47
3.3	<b>REACTIVATING.</b> The role of traditional ecological knowledge in local development	67
<b>4</b>	<b>Lectures</b>	
4.1	Fondacioni Gjirokastra	79
4.2	Dry Stone Walling School of Japan	89
4.3	Fundación Altiplano	99
4.4	Terrachidia	111
4.5	Medesus	127
4.6	Palombar	141
4.7	Architect Aleksandar Radović Foundation	151
4.8	Tibet Heritage Fund	161
4.9	Boulouki	183
4.10	GO2Albania	197
4.11	Maruyama Gumi	209
<b>5</b>	<b>Round Tables</b>	
5.1	<b>Local community.</b> The (fruitful?) dialogue of inside and outside	231
5.2	<b>Rehabilitation of traditional heritage.</b> The social role of technology	245
5.3	<b>Local development.</b> 'Heritage' and 'local development' as contested concepts	259
	Final discussion	286
	References	292
	Acknowledgements	301

to nonna Elena and Edalia



1

# PREFACE



# Rehabilitation of Traditional Heritage and Local Development (RTHLD) seminars

Since 2019, the Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST) of the Politecnico di Torino and the University of Turin, in cooperation with the Post-graduate school of Architectural and Landscape Heritage has undertaken a series of seminars on the Rehabilitation of traditional heritage and local development (RTHLD). Focusing on lesser built heritage<sup>1</sup> – a niche in the world of heritage conservation – and its interaction with local development, subjects capable of incorporating excellence in traditional building techniques recovery with actions for the survival of local communities were brought together. They discussed unconventional practices of community-rooted rehabilitation, leading to the preservation of living landscapes and initiatives of inclusive local development.

These seminars aimed to establish an international network of collaborations and generate debate and exchange on fundamental issues such as tourism, empowerment of local communities, multidisciplinary, innovation, generative potential, to name but a few.

In each seminar, representatives from two or three NGOs were invited to share their experience in **lectures**. These were followed by **round tables**, to which participants from the previous editions were also invited. Participation in the round tables by lecturers, experts and activists provided the opportunity

to go in depth on some crucial issues through semi-structured debates. NGOs offered knowledge based on practical experience, and academics methodological insights and theoretical references. NGOs representatives were prompted to address theoretical as well as ethical issues, and to make their motivations and medium- to long-term goals explicit.

In the first seminar (3 October **2019**), lectures were offered by Edvin Lamçe (Fondacioni Gjirokastra – **FG**), Sanada Junko (The Dry Stone Walling school of Japan – **DSW**) and Beatriz Yuste (Fundación Altiplano – **FA**). The round table was led by **Andrea Bocco** (DIST) and was attended also by the representatives of two Italian NGOs, Fondazione Canova (**AC**) and Banca del Fare (**BdF**), as well as Chiara Devoti (director of the Post-graduate School of Architectural and Landscape Heritage – **SBAP**).

The second seminar (18-19 June **2020**) was focussed on the lectures by Carmen Moreno (Terrachidia – **Tr**) and Ángel Guillén (Medesus – **Md**). Two round tables involved Hagino Kiichirō (Maruyama Gumi – **MG**), in addition to the first seminar participants (FA, FG, DSW, SBAP). **Emiliano Cruz Michelena Valcárcel** (director of Patrimonio, Museos y Casco Histórico of Buenos Aires), **Taki Yosuke** (writer, and organiser of an itinerant school), **Redina Mazelli** (DIST), and **Martina Bocci** (DIST) moderated the panels.

<sup>1</sup> In this book, we extensively used the phrase "lesser heritage," moulded on the Italian concepts of "patrimonio minore" and "architettura minore," which have been in use since the 1920s (Astorri 1926, 1927). This phrase describes a kind of heritage that cannot be defined with a single English word. It encompasses a rather broad semantic range accumulated over time, for which no exact equivalent in the English language exists – not even in the phrase "vernacular heritage". However, it might somewhat find a closer counterpart in the Spanish phrase "arquitectura popular".

Speaking of "lesser heritage" encourages reflection on how value recognition is shaped by socio-cultural factors and local understanding. It contrasts with official and monumental architecture, and focuses on buildings and other entities whose value does not lie in their exceptionality, but rather in their seriality, interrelation, and ability to form cohesive systems (Devoti, Naretto 2007). It represents communities and their way of life, and reflects shared – often communal – interests.

The third seminar (7 May **2021**) involved Pimpim de Azevedo and Yutaka Hirako (Tibet Heritage Fund – **THF**), Elena Vasić Petrović (Architect Aleksandar Radović Foundation – **ARF**) and Américo Guedes (Palombar – **PI**). Participants from previous years Md, FA, AC, MG, Tr, SBAP joined the panel that was moderated by **Andrea Longhi** (professor of History of architecture, DIST), **Andrea Bocco**, and **Martina Bocci**.

In the fourth seminar (29-30 September **2022**), Ionas Sklavounos, the co-founder of Boulouki (**BI**), and Eltjana Shkreli of **GO2Albania** presented the work of their NGOs. The lectures were followed by Martina Bocci's presentation of the provisional results of her research. **Umberto Bonomo** (director of the heritage centre of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile), **Paolo Vitti** (University of Notre Dame) and **Francesca Governa** (professor of economic and political geography, DIST) took part in the discussion that followed. Of the NGOs invited in the previous three editions, only **MG** took an active part in the seminar.

While the seminars in 2019 and 2022 were held in Torino, in 2020 and 2021 they were held online, due to the covid pandemic.

Seminars were prepared by meetings with each NGO to explain the scope of the initiative, get to know the most relevant aspects of each other's work, and envisage future collaborations. This initial contact proved very fruitful, stimulating the NGOs' representatives to share personal opinions and points of view.

NGOs were asked to provide the text of their lecture in advance (Tr 4.4, Md 4.5, PI 4.6, ARF 4.7). When not possible, the lecture was transcribed by the editors and reviewed by their authors (FG 4.1,

DSW 4.2, FA 4.3, THF 4.8, BI 4.9, GO2 4.10, MG 4.11). Especially in the case of Md, the paper was enriched with contributions that emerged during the lecture, and in the case of THF with details extracted from their rich website, to provide useful information. MG's text collected here merges Hagino's lectures at the Politecnico di Torino in 2019 and at the University of Hawaii in 2021. AC and BdF are present as contributors to the round tables only.

Round tables discussions were transcribed, then reviewed by the participants. In some cases, participants made themselves available to answer questions from the previous roundtables in written form or via structured online interviews (PI, MG, Tr). Chapter 5 is an edited synthesis of what emerged from the discussions, where questions and answers were organised according to the same three macro-themes that guide the analysis of NGOs in Chapter 3: the relationship with local communities and NGOs' rooting (5.1), the empowering of communities in heritage rehabilitation and transmission (5.2), and the wide-ranging and long-term actions aimed at a self-sustainable development and reactivation of the marginal areas where the NGOs operate (5.3).

The aim of this book is to widen the debate on these topics by providing concrete examples of practices of high human and social quality, and to reinforce the role and consciousness of NGOs, showing how their work can have an impact on the preservation and adaptation of heritage and traditions, on community empowerment, as well as on the overall future of marginal places. It also tries to provide, with Chapter 3, a multidisciplinary reading scheme that can support residents, NGOs and institutions involved in

NGOs' acronyms and names		People involved in the RTHLD series of seminars	2019		2020		2021		2022	
			lecture	round table	lecture	round table	lecture	round table	lecture	round table
THF	Tibet Heritage Fund	Pimpim de Azevedo and Yutaka Hirako					4.8	•		
Md	Medesus	Ángel Guillén			4.5	•		•		
FA	Fundación Altiplano	Beatriz Yuste and Cristian Heinsen	4.3	•		•		•		
PI	Palombar	Américo Guedes		(•)		(•)	4.6	•		
AC	Fondazione Canova	Maurizio Cesprini		•				•		
FG	Fondacioni Gjirokastra	Edvin Lamçe	4.1	•		•				
MG	まるやま組 Maruyama Gumi	Kiichiro Hagino	(4.11)	(•)		•		•		•
Tr	Terrachidia	Carmen Moreno and Marta Colmenares		(•)	4.4	•		•		
DSW	石積み学校 The Dry-Stone Walling School of Japan	Sanada Junko	4.2	•		•				
ARF	Фондација Архитекта Александар Радовић - Architect Aleksandar Radović Foundation	Elena Vasić Petrović					4.7	•		
BAP	Scuola di Specializzazione in Beni Architettonici e del Paesaggio	Chiara Devoti		•		•		•		
BdF	Banca del Fare	Lorenzo Serra and Nadia Battaglio		•						
BI	Μπουλουκι Boulouki	Ionas Sklavounos							4.9	•
GO2	GO2Albania	Eltjana Shkreli							4.10	•

community promotion and reactivation processes through actions on their habitat – whether at a practical, academic or institutional level.

Another aim of this publication is to strengthen the network of NGOs that took part in the RTHLD seminars.

British social anthropologist Tim Ingold wrote: “In the academic pantheon, reason is predestined to trump intuition, expertise to trump common sense, and conclusions based on the facts to trump what people know from ordinary experience or from the wisdom of their forbears” (Ingold 2013, 2). The intent behind this research is to try to bring together these forms of knowledge. The series of seminars and the research stemming from them, seeks to establish a **connection between practitioners and academia**, bringing together different forms of knowledge

and stimulating a dialogue between two contexts that are too often far apart. Chapter 3 researches aspects often overlooked by NGOs and practitioners, offering a contribution that would be difficult for NGOs to achieve autonomously. Alongside this, through the RTHLD seminars, we have tried to propose academia as a place for meeting and reflection.

Just as the lectures in the RTHLD seminars were largely based on images, chapter 4 is extensively illustrated to allow a deeper understanding of what is narrated.

For practical reasons, **acronyms** are used throughout the book (table 1). External **web links** and **cross-references** between sections allow the reader to navigate the text and to delve into specific themes, initiatives, NGOs, projects, etc.

Table 1: Attendance during RTHLD series of seminars. When a dot in brackets is present, the participants contributed to the panel discussion or lecture through interviews or emails in a later stage.

# Organisation and research group

## Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning



The Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST) is a joint structure of the Politecnico di Torino and the University of Turin working in the cultural area of territorial transformation and management of territorial processes analysed in their physical, economic, social, political, cultural aspects and their inter-relationships, in a perspective of sustainability, from global to local scale.

DIST promotes, coordinates and manages basic and applied research, training, and technology transfer and services to the territory, focusing on urban and regional policies and sciences and on territorial, urban and environmental planning. DIST research areas include: analysis, planning and management of territories; urban planning and policies for sustainable development of the urban and rural areas; analysis and management of cultural, architectural and landscape heritage; human, economic and political geography; urban and environmental sociology and media; methods and techniques of survey and representation at the urban and territorial scales; history and conservation of the architecture of the city and its territory; planning of transport and logistics; technical and economic feasibility of urban plans and projects.

DIST encourages interdisciplinary activities focused on the enhancement of interactions among researchers from different cultural areas. DIST supports research activities linked to its scientific subjects and promotes relations with other sectors. DIST strongly promotes the participation to local, national, European and international research programmes.



**Martina Bocci**, MA in Architecture for Sustainability and Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Development (Politecnico di Torino). Specialised in traditional technology and low-tech architecture, her research focusses on some interrelated topics: rehabilitation of vernacular heritage, transmission of traditional construction knowledge, and the importance of practice in learning process; assessment of natural materials environmental impact; community participation; multidisciplinary and context-specific approach to reactivate sustainable local development possibilities of marginal places; and the role of NGOs in these processes.

Her approach combines academic research and engagement in hands-on experience: she collaborated with some NGOs, between them Fundación Altiplano (Chile) and Fondazione Canova (Italy), and she was the co-founders of the Accademia nel Cantiere Association and of La Termitière student team, both aimed at offered practical learning opportunities for students on real buildings in collaboration with Politecnico di Torino.

**Andrea Bocco** Ph.D., Professor of Architectural Technology at DIST. He teaches Low Impact Technology and Environmental Design.

He has been working on participatory urban regeneration, local development and community hubs. He founded (1999) and directed (until 2009) the San Salvario Local Development Agency (Torino). His publications deal with, among other topics, the analysis of the built environment; construction with natural, low-impact materials and technologies; and the assessment of the environmental impact of buildings and human behaviour.

His books include:

- *Bernard Rudofsky. A Humane Designer*, 2003
- *Werner Schmidt, Architekt. Ökologie, Handwerk, Erfindung*, 2013
- *The Environmental Impact of Sieben Linden Ecovillage*, 2019 (with M. Gerace, S. Pollini)
- *Vegetarian Architecture. Case studies on building and nature*, 2020
- *Yona Friedman, Roofs. Local materials, simple technology, sophisticated ideas*, (editor) 2020



**Redina Mazelli** is a research assistant and PhD candidate in Urban and Regional Development at Politecnico di Torino. She holds an MSc in Architecture from the same institution, with a thesis on renovating small stone buildings in Alta Langa, Piedmont. As a co-founder of the student team FoRTI, she has been coordinating summer schools since 2021, focusing on the renovation and retrofit of stone structures in the Ossola Valley. Her current research investigates the opportunities and challenges of up-scaling regenerative bio-based and geo-based materials in construction.



## Postgraduate School of "Beni Architettonici e del Paesaggio" / "Architectural and Landscape Heritage" (Politecnico di Torino)

The School of Specialisation was established in 1989. It has been performing research with an eminently interdisciplinary approach and aims at training graduate students to become high-profile professionals who will be engaged in the protection, restoration, management and enhancement of architectural and landscape heritage, also cooperating with Conservation Bureaus.



**Politecnico di Torino**

■ LIVELLO  
Scuola di Specializzazione in  
Beni Architettonici e del Paesaggio

**Chiara Devoti**. MA in Architecture, Specialist in "Storia, Analisi e Valutazione dei Beni Architettonici e Ambientali/History, Analysis and Evaluation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage", Ph.D. in "Storia e critica dei Beni Architettonici e Ambientali/History and Criticism of Architectural and Environmental Heritage" from the Politecnico di Torino. She is Associate Professor of History of Architecture at DIST.

She is the Head of the Postgraduate School of "Beni Architettonici e del Paesaggio".

She researches in cooperation with scientific institutes of international relevance and within the framework of CNR and PRIN Ministerial projects. She is a member of scientific and editorial boards of journals and associations, as well as the Rector's delegate to the City Toponymy Commission, Turin.



# Participants



**Nadia Battaglio** graduated from the Politecnico di Torino, worked on the CAPAcities project for the development of Alpine areas. She founded the "Studio Ellisse Architetti" together with architect Lorenzo Serra, specialised in renovations through environmentally friendly materials and traditional rural architecture. She collaborated with the association Parco Culturale Alta Langa, with which she renovated a small stone building, learning from local craftsmen. She supervised the design of the interventions carried out during the **Banca del fare** workshops. She is a member of the Falegnameria Nuova association for the creation of a quality brand for solid wood furniture with a local and controlled supply chain.

**BANCA DEL FARE**



**Umberto Bonomo**, architect, graduated at Venezia's IUAV. Doctor in Architecture and Urban Studies, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2009. He works on Heritage, urbanism and Social Housing looking for points of contact between theory and practice. His work was exhibited at the Biennials of Chile, Shenzhen, São Paulo and Venezia. He is an active member of Docomomo Chile, has done consultancies and studies for the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage in Chile, for ECLAC (CEPAL), the Inter-American Development Bank (BID), among others. He is currently an Associate Professor at the School of Architecture of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and is part of the Board of Our World Heritage Foundation.

**Centro UC**  
Patrimonio Cultural



**Maurizio Cesprini** graduated in 2006 in Cultural and Environmental Heritage. From 2006 he has acted as Lead Coordinator and instructor of the **Association Canova's** international field school program in collaboration with Italian and foreign universities. He is one of the promoters of the Ghesc Village Laboratory and dedicates the majority of his time to the study and transmission of traditional construction techniques through direct empirical learning on site. In early 2024 the association turned into the **Fondazione Canova** of which Maurizio is the president.

FONDAZIONE CANOVA 



**Marta Colmenares Fernández.** Architect and cofounder of **Terrachidia** NGO. Specialist in Planning and Landscape Management and Urban Studies and Specialist in the Development of Precarious Human Settlements from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. Currently working on her doctoral thesis, whose objective is to analyse "Urbanisation processes of rural areas and re-scaling of the Oasis in the Draa Valley territory". She has been a guest lecturer at various conferences and teaches the UNESCO Chair Master's for Basic Habitability of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. She has worked in projects of development and basic habitability with the NGO Habitáfrica.



**Pimpim de Azevedo** is an artist and conservator of Tibetan architecture. She received her Master's degree in Heritage Sciences from University College London. In 1996, together with the late André Alexander, she founded **Tibet Heritage Fund**, serving as the current director. She studied Tibetan architecture with master craftspeople.



**Francesca Governa**, PhD, is an urban geographer and professor of economic and political geography at DIST. She is involved in research activities at national and international level on four main issues: local development processes and policies; urban margins and spatial justice; urban development and the rescaling of the urban realm; urban China and urbanization processes in the Global South. She has carried on fieldwork in European, North African and Chinese cities.



**Américo Guedes**, biologist, Master's in agronomic engineering. Works at **Palombar** since 2015. In addition to nature conservation work, he is engaged in the conservation of the rural heritage, namely through the organisation of work camps and the operational management of the recovery works carried out on traditional lofts and dry-stone walls.



**MEDESUS**



**Ángel Guillén**, Architect, MSc. in Sustainable Development, with professional practice approved in the republics of Peru (INC and AECID) and Chile (Fundación Altiplano). He is the Executive Director of TERRITORIUM (Laboratory for Planetary Sustainability), a component of **Medesus**.





**Hagino Kiichiro.** Born in Tokyo, architect, BA University of Tokyo, MA University of Pennsylvania, Ph.D. University of Tokyo, he teaches at the University of Toyama. In 1996 he founded the Hagino Atelier, specialized in architectural design, renovation, and traditional craftsmanship. After settling in the Noto Peninsula in 2004, he restored the traditional 'dozo' and 'minka' following the Noto Earthquake in 2007. In 2010, he co-founded Team Maruyama, engaging in activities related to the local 'satoyama' lifestyle.



**Cristián Heinsen Planella** holds a bachelor's in literature from Universidad Católica de Chile, a Master's in creative documentary from Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Spain, and a Master's in Business Administration from Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, Chile. He is the founder, former president and current director of development of the **Fundación Altiplano**. Author of publications and of the "Sustainable Conservation in Community" model.



**Hirako Yutaka** is an architect specialised in conservation and is the programme director of **Tibet Heritage Fund** (THF) and Leh Old Town Initiative (LOTI). Since 1998 he has worked with THF on conservation projects in Lhasa and other Tibetan regions, in Beijing, Mongolia, and since 2012 in the Himalayan regions of Sikkim and Ladakh. His projects have won UNESCO awards.



**Edvin Lamçe**, archaeologist (University of Tirana), works as a project coordinator and researcher in various heritage preservation and development projects with a particular interest in cultural events, tourist attractions, museums, and UNESCO sites. He works with the **Gjirokastra Foundation** since 2011 and was project manager of the EU-funded project REVATO (Revitalization of historic towns of Gjirokastra and Berat).



**Andrea Longhi.** Professor of History of architecture at DIST, he teaches History and criticism of regional cultural heritage. He is a member of the Politecnico di Torino's Responsible Risk Resilience Centre (R3C) and ICOMOS Italia. His research activities mainly focus on history of architecture and settlements, historical analysis of landscape, history of heritagization processes.





**Emiliano Cruz Michelena** is an architect (University of Buenos Aires), PhD in non-conventional and sustainable technology (Politecnico di Torino), and Master's in cultural management and social innovation (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). He has participated in large projects of architecture, monument conservation and social infrastructure. Since 2018 he worked for the Ministry of Culture of Buenos Aires. He is currently the General Director of the Coordinación de Eventos y Transformación Territorial of Buenos Aires Municipality.



**Carmen Moreno** is an architect, Master's in Conservation and Restoration of Architectural Heritage and PhD student at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. She is Associate Professor at the Alfonso X el Sabio University, Madrid. Co-founder of **Terrachidia** NGO



**Sanada Junko** is Professor at the School of Environment and Society (Tokyo Institute of Technology). She is a specialist in rural landscape architecture, drywall construction and historical and regional planning. On these issues, Junko wrote *Zukai darede-mo dekiru ishitsumi nyūmon* (2018). She is the founder of the **Dry Stone Walling School** of Japan.



**Lorenzo Serra** is an architect (Politecnico di Torino). He attended training courses at the Casaclima Agency in Bolzano and in 2011/12 the Master's "Wood program" at the Aalto University of Helsinki in Finland. He combines theory with practice gaining some years of experience on construction sites both abroad and in Italy as an assistant carpenter. He founded the "Studio Ellisse Architetti" architecture studio in Turin together with the architect Nadia Battaglio. He is co-founder, designer and didactic tutor for the **Banca del Fare** project.



**Eltjana Shkreli** is an urban planner, with twenty years' experience in community-based regional development and planning. She is pursuing doctoral studies at the University of Genova, within CLOE Program - Training to complexity: multidisciplinary approaches to rural and mountain sustainable development and conservation, under the H2020-MSCA-COFUND. She is the co-founder of **G02**.





**Ionas Sklavounos.** Architect, MA University of Patras, MS in Epistemology of Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens, where he also worked as Teaching Assistant. He has just finished his Ph.D. at the University of Antwerp, within the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network "TACK – Communities of Tacit Knowledge: Architecture and its ways of Knowing". He is a co-founder of **Boulouki**.



**Taki Yosuke** was born in Tokyo and has been living and working in Italy since 1988. After years of theatrical and artistic experiences, he now writes essays, curates and sets up exhibitions on cultural themes and organises an 'itinerant school' to promote the essence of Italian design.



**Elena Vasić Petrović,** MA of Architecture. Works at the Institute for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Niš, Serbia. Founder of DE arhitektura and the **Architect Aleksandar Radović Foundation**. She was the recipient of a European Heritage Stories Award of the Council of Europe, an EU Grand-Prix, an Europa Nostra Award, as well as the Honor of the City of Pirot for Special Contribution to Culture.



**Paolo Vitti** has designed restoration projects and carried out research on many archaeological sites in Italy, Greece, Turkey, Tunisia, Cyprus, Palestine and Morocco. His design activity is focused on tile-brick vaulting, experimenting with the recovery of traditional workmanship in construction. Actively promoting heritage as a driver for climate action, he is one of the promoters of the Master's in Historic Preservation and Sustainable architecture at the University of Notre Dame where he is Associate Professor.



**Beatriz Yuste** Architect, BA Universitat Politècnica de Valencia, MA Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, PhD student in Architecture, Heritage and City at the Polytechnic University of Valencia. She works as a freelance professional between Chile and Spain on projects that combine heritage conservation, quality of life and sustainable development. In recent years she worked in the conservation of the Andean temples of Arica and Parinacota, as project manager of the **Fundación Altiplano** (2011-2022).

