

Beyond Globalization , Towards Local Regeneration

**SOLIDARITY AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE GREEK-SPEAKING TERRITORY OF CALABRIA**



[www.borghisolidali.it](http://www.borghisolidali.it)

**AGENZIA BORGHI SOLIDALI**

c/o Villa Placanica – bene confiscato alla mafia

Contrada Placanica – Melito di Porto Salvo (RC) Italy

Tel. +39 0965-595032 Fax. +39 0965-598925



## BACKGROUND

The following project was initiated in the end of 2010 (3-year duration) and takes place in the **Greek-speaking territory of Calabria**, which is one of the two remaining Griko-speaking areas in southern Italy, the other being Grecia Salentina. Located at the tip of Italy, near the city of Reggio Calabria, it was part of the *Magna Grecia* and became a favorite stop on the **British Grand Tour** in southernmost Italy (see “Old Calabria” by Norman Douglas). Today, the area can be seen as a territory where industrial development and modernization never came, and where local communities live in **relative social and economic isolation**.

The project leader is the **Association Pro-Pentedattilo**. Together with other ten non-profit organizations and social enterprises, it coordinates the implementation of the project's activities through the newborn “**Borghi Solidali**” **Local Development Agency**, which has its headquarters in Melito Porto Salvo, at Villa Placanica, on a **land confiscated from the Mafia**.

The Association was born in 1998 with the main scope of regenerating physically, socially and culturally the “**ghost town**” of Pentedattilo through the active participation of local youth, national and international volunteers, artists and responsible tourists. The village is situated in a panoramic position and is an evocative center. The name derives from the Byzantine word *Pentedaktilos*, meaning **five fingers**. This refers to the characteristic morphology of the profile of Mount Calvary, on which Pentedattilo lays.

**Pentedattilo** was completely abandoned in the 1960s. Today, the village belongs to the municipality of **Melito Porto Salvo** (around 12,000 inhabitants). It represents a unique historical and cultural heritage of Calabria and is candidate for a nomination by UNESCO world heritage commission.

## OBJECTIVES

In this context, and starting with six local communities, the project “**Borghi Solidali**” aims at restoring the old spirit of **solidarity and hospitality** that has characterized the whole area over centuries, and experimenting with sustainable and innovative **models of social economy**. The specific objectives of the project include:

- ◆ The promotion of a sustained care and community-based **re-appropriation of the local common heritage** – both material and immaterial;
- ◆ The experimentation with innovative models that make it easier the building of working partnerships aimed at the **sound management of assets confiscated from the Mafia** and the development of **good practices of local governance**;
- ◆ The support to activities designed to enriching the lives of **young people** and helping them to learn about other cultures, with a specific focus on the organization of **work-camps** that seek to mobilize volunteers nationally and internationally and contribute to the **social integration of local youth**;
- ◆ The promotion of initiatives aimed at building a **culture of peace, nonviolence, legality and social justice**, especially among the youth.

## ACTIVITIES

- ◆ The creation of the **Local Development Agency “Borghi Solidali”** that brings together people, places and partnerships, and provides management and coordination services to local actors in a prospect of **social, environmental and economic sustainability**;
- ◆ The creation of **livelihood and income generating activities** in the field of **arts & crafts** targeting **young people, unemployed and immigrants** through the set up of handicraft workshops in the villages of Pentedattilo and Roghudi;
- ◆ The organization and promotion of **community-based initiatives** and events aiming at the **preservation of local traditions** and **social integration of immigrants and foreign visitors**;
- ◆ The creation of a **local network of responsible hospitality and alternative tourism**;
- ◆ The activation of a **local system of sustainable mobility** (carsharing & carpooling);
- ◆ The organization of **work-camps for national and international volunteers**.