

I dilemmi della conservazione dei villaggi tradizionali: sfide e possibili soluzioni basate sullo studio comparativo di Cina e Italia

The dilemmas of traditional village conservation: challenges and possible solutions based on the comparative study of China and Italy

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I villaggi tradizionali sono un patrimonio culturale globale condiviso. In Cina e Italia, molti di questi villaggi, alcuni iscritti nella Lista del Patrimonio Mondiale, riflettono la ricchezza delle tradizioni locali. Tuttavia, la modernizzazione minaccia la loro sopravvivenza. Sebbene il declino dei villaggi tradizionali sia un problema comune, le sue manifestazioni variano tra Cina e Italia. Nel 2023, il workshop "Save the Traditional Village" ha condotto indagini su due villaggi rappresentativi dei due paesi, noti per i loro eccezionali paesaggi naturali e valori culturali e turistici. Il workshop ha svolto un'analisi approfondita, documentando le condizioni attuali dei villaggi e offrendo raccomandazioni strategiche per la loro conservazione e sviluppo sostenibile.

Traditional villages are a shared cultural heritage of China and Italy. Both countries have traditional villages, with some inscribed on the World Heritage List. However, rapid modernization poses a significant threat to the survival of these traditional villages. While the decline of traditional villages is a common issue in both countries, the specific manifestations of this decline differ between China and Italy. In 2023, the 'Save the Traditional Village' workshop investigated two representative villages in China and Italy, both renowned for their exceptional natural, cultural landscapes and tourism values. The workshop engaged in a comprehensive analysis, documenting the current conditions and offering strategic recommendations for their future preservation and sustainable development.

- 1 Wang Shujia, Sun Jiuxia, *Construction and empirical research on the evaluation system of sustainable development of Chinese traditional villages*, in «Acta Geographica Sinica», vol. 76, n. 4, 2021, pages 921-938.
- 2 Steven Watson, *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past* (E. Waterton, Ed.) (1st ed.), Routledge, London 2010.
- 3 Mauro Agnoletti, Francesca Emanuelli, Federica Corrieri, Martina Venturi, and Antonio Santoro, *Monitoring Traditional Rural Landscapes. The Case of Italy*, in «Sustainability», vol. 11, n. 21, 2019.
- 4 Joern Fischer, Tibor Hartel, Tobias Kuemmerle, *Conservation policy in traditional farming landscapes*, In «Conservation Letters», n. 5, 2012, pages 167-175; Liu Xinqiu, Wang Siming, *Difficulties and Countermeasures of Chinese Traditional Villages Conservation*, in «Agricultural History of China», vol. 34, n. 04, 2015, pages 99-110.
- 5 Liu Yansui, Liu Yu, Chen, Yangfen, Long Hualou, *The process and driving forces of rural hollowing in China under rapid urbanization*, in «J. Geogr. Sci. », vol. 20, 2010, pages 876-888.
- 6 He Yanbing, Zhang Tong, Xiong Dongmei, *Evaluation on cultural value of traditional villages and differential revitalization: A case study of Jiaozuo city, Henan province*, in «Economic Geography», vol. 40, n. 10, 2020, pages 230-239.
- 7 UNESCO, *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris, 1972.
- 8 ICOMOS, *Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas*, Washington, DC, 1987.
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- 10 Standing Committee of China National People's Congress, *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics*, Beijing, 1982.
- 11 Standing Committee of China National People's Congress, *Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China*, Beijing, 2007.
- 12 Xu Xiuli, *Han Yongjin representative: proposal to accelerate the revision of the law on the protection of cultural relics*, in «China Heritage News », vol. 002, 2022, p. 1.
- 13 The State Council of the People's Republic of China, *Regulation on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages*, Beijing, 2008.
- 14 The State Council of the People's Republic of China, *the Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Protection and Development of Traditional Villages*, Beijing, 2014.
- 15 Ren Yinghong, *On the Realistic Situation, Value Significance and Path Exploration of Traditional Village Protection*, in «Academic Research», vol. 12, 2023, pages 47-53.
- 16 Hu Binbin, *The current evolution of traditional villages is worrying--Survey and return visit from the front line of rural areas*, in «People's Tribune», vol. 06, 2015, pages 64-66.

I. Theoretical Framework and Concepts in Traditional Village Conservation

I.1 In Global Context of Traditional Villages

Traditional villages are vital to global cultural heritage, preserving the unique cultural identities, architectural styles and social structures that have existed for centuries¹. These villages serve as living museums, maintaining traditional customs, languages and sustainable practices, offering insights into human history and environmental stewardship². As custodians of cultural diversity and sustainable living³, traditional villages contribute significantly to understanding the past and offer valuable lessons for building sustainable futures⁴.

However, these villages face unprecedented challenges due to globalisation and urbanisation. Rapid urbanisation has disrupted their ecological balance, leading to the migration of young workers and resulting in 'hollow villages', predominantly populated by the elderly and children. The outflow of human and financial capital exacerbates the difficulties of preserving these villages, making them increasingly vulnerable⁵. Furthermore, a lack of recognition of their cultural and historical values complicates efforts to preserve and develop these sites amid pressures for modernisation⁶.

I.2 Traditional Village Conservation: International Framework and Chinese Practice

The importance of traditional villages is widely recognised globally, with studies and protection regulations steadily improving. *World Heritage Convention*⁷ (1972) provides a framework for identifying, protecting and preserving cultural and natural heritage sites, including historically significant villages. The *Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas*⁸ (1987) offers guidelines for preserving historical authenticity and ensuring community involvement in conservation efforts, while the *Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage*⁹ (1999) emphasises the need to protect and conserve vernacular architecture found in villages. Although these international frameworks highlight the importance of traditional villages, they often lack specific directions for conservation and practical implementation.

In China, the government has implemented several regulations to protect traditional villages. The *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics*¹⁰ (1982) extended legal protection to these villages, and the *Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China*¹¹ (2007) established a system for safeguarding historically and culturally significant villages¹². *Regulation on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages*¹³ (2008) reinforced government responsibility for protection, and the *Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Protection and Development of Traditional Villages*¹⁴ (2014) formally integrated traditional villages into the national protection strategy¹⁵. Despite these efforts, the existing policies and regulations are insufficient to meet the urgent needs of traditional village protection, with delays in legislation and incomplete policies hindering effective preservation¹⁶.

1.3 Sustainable Development as a Solution for Traditional Village

Sustainability in villages refers to the ongoing development in economic, social, and environmental aspects, ensuring that current needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Traditional villages often relied on local natural resources for self-sufficient development in the past, with resource utilization closely linked to the natural environment. Traditional villages often exemplify sustainability using local materials, adaptive architecture and environmentally harmonious agricultural practices¹⁷. Practices such as crop rotation, natural fertilizers, and fallowing were employed to maintain soil fertility, fostering a lifestyle in harmony with nature. Additionally, traditional villagers maintained community stability through cooperation, relying on generational knowledge and cultural practices to manage resources and adapt to environmental changes, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the village. Globalization and modernization have introduced external technologies and economic pressures, often leading to changes in traditional resource utilization methods, so the development of many villages has diverged from sustainability. To protect traditional villages, it is essential to consider returning to sustainable practices.

Brundtland defined sustainable development as meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same¹⁸. In the context of villages development, sustainability involves maintaining a balance between human activity and the natural environment while fostering community resilience. A holistic approach to village sustainability involves safeguarding biodiversity, water resources and land integrity, recognising the interconnectedness of ecosystems that support both human and natural communities¹⁹. This approach balances ecological preservation, cultural heritage and community well-being, aligning with the evolving concept of sustainability, which now encompasses environmental, economic and social dimensions²⁰. Sustainable development of traditional villages is crucial for preserving their unique cultural heritage and ecological environment and promoting local economic and social developments²¹

2. 'Save the Traditional Village' Workshop and Case Study

Since 2018, Shanghai Jiao Tong University has launched the 'Saving Traditional Villages' workshop, continuously exploring new, adaptable development methods for traditional villages that are context-specific and scalable. It aims to empower the preservation and development of traditional villages. Politecnico di Torino was among the first partner universities to respond to this workshop. Over the past six years, the workshop has conducted 1-2 week field research in Zhejiang (Figure 1), Valle d'Aosta, Shanxi, Yunnan and Sardinia, exploring the unique challenges faced by traditional villages, focusing on cultural and natural heritage preservation and sustainable development.

In 2023, Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Politecnico di Torino launched the 'Symbiosis: Human-Nature-Culture' theme as the 'Saving Traditional Villages' workshop, emphasising the interdependence of human well-being, environmental health and cultural vitality. Sustainable development should not only focus on economic growth but also focus on maintaining the cultural and ecological systems that

¹⁷ Oliver Paul, *Built to Meet Needs: Cultural Issues in Vernacular Architecture*, Routledge, London 2006.

¹⁸ Brundtland Gro Harlem, *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, United Nations, 1987.

¹⁹ Wu Jianguo, *Landscape Sustainability Science: Ecosystem Services and Human Well-Being in Changing Landscapes*, in «Landscape Ecology», vol. 28, n. 6, 2013, pages 999-1023; Fan Yutao, Wu Yonggiang, *The Sustainable Development of Qiang Ethnic Indigenous Villages in the Context of New Urbanization*, in « Ecological Economy», vol. 30, n. 03, 2014, pages 47-51.

²⁰ Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The Age of Sustainable Development*, Columbia University Press, New York 2015.

²¹ Ma Haisou, Bai Xiaorong, Pei Junpeng, *Research on Sustainable Development of Characteristic Towns in the Context of Rural Revitalisation-- Taking 'Yuanjiacun' Town in Qinghai as an Example*, in « Journal of Qinghai Minzu University (Social Sciences) », vol. 48, n. 04, 2022, pages 57-63.

Fig. 1 – 2018 Save the Traditional Village in Zhejiang.



support human life. The workshop examined two traditional villages with similar cultural and natural environments: Dayu Village in Lijiang, China and Cabras Village in Sardinia, Italy. Despite being in different countries, these villages face common challenges, such as human-land imbalances, conflicts between preservation and development, environmental degradation and cultural decline. The workshop aimed to investigate these issues and find solutions for village depopulation, uneven economic development and promoting cooperation between China and Italy in rural revitalisation, ecological governance and cultural heritage preservation.

3. Case Study in China: Dayu Village, Yunnan

3.1 Historical and Cultural Context

Dayu Village in Lijiang, Yunnan Province, is a traditional village uniquely positioned between green mountains and Lashi Lake, Yunnan's first wetland nature reserve. This reserve enriches the village's ecological resources and attracts various bird species, creating a landscape that blends ecological and cultural elements²². The village's architectural layout smartly utilises the terrain, extending from the mountains to the lake, with a 1,780-metre-long revetment that reflects a harmonious coexistence with the natural environment (Figure 2).

Home to the Naxi people, who have lived there for generations, Dayu Village is steeped in rich cultural traditions, particularly the distinctive Dongba culture²³. These cultural assets, along with ancient wells, old trees, traditional farmlands and traditional village layout, showcase the Naxi people's wisdom in balancing development with environmental harmony.

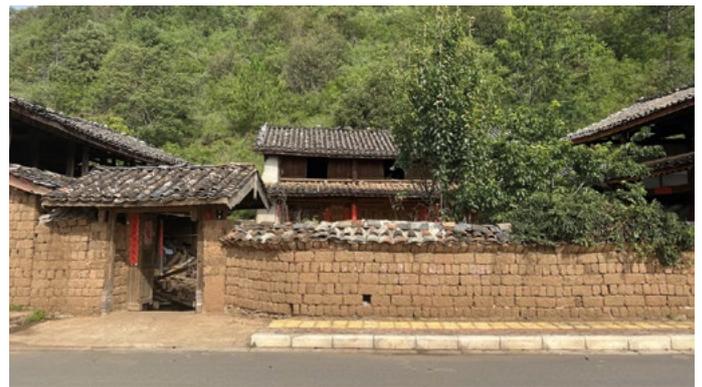
In Chinese, 'Dayu' refers to the act of fishing, and 'Dayu Village' indicates a village known for fishing, where fishing was a vital aspect of cultural and economic life, forming the primary livelihood of the inhabitants in the past. The village's name in Naxi, 'Eren', meaning 'backed by mountains and facing the sea', reflects its ideal location between the mountains and a lake. The Naxi people's deep ecological consciousness emphasises respect for nature and harmonious coexistence, providing valuable insights into the village's sustainable development²⁴.

²² Hu Lei, Wu Jian, Li Haiping, *The coupling relationship between ecosystem services and residents' income and its impact factors: a case study of the Lashihai basin in Lijiang, Yunan*, in «Acta Ecologica Sinica», vol. 38, n. 18, 2018, pages 6402-6411.

²³ Liu E, Liu Yonggong, *Naxi Culture and Its Impact on Conversion of Farmers' Livelihoods*, in «J Journal of Anhui Agricultural Sciences», vol. 10 n. 40, 2012, pages 6354-6356.

²⁴ Liu E, Liu Yonggong, *Naxi Culture and Its Impact on Conversion of Farmers' Livelihoods*, in «J Journal of Anhui Agricultural Sciences», vol. 10 n. 40, 2012, pages 6354-6356.

²⁵ Liu Yansui, Liu Yu, Chen, Yangfen, Long Hualou, *The process and driving forces of rural hollowing in China under rapid urbanization*, in «J. Geogr. Sci. », vol. 20, 2010, pages 876-888.



3.2 Conservation Challenges in Dayu Village

As the market economy improves and urbanisation accelerates, younger populations migrate to cities, leaving behind an ageing demographic, leading to the decline of rural economies and transformations in social structures²⁵. This shift disrupts the traditional rural environment, weakening the spatial arrangement of villages and eroding close-knit kinship-based communities, which threatens the preservation of traditional culture.

Dayu Village, with its proximity to Lashi Lake and limited arable land, developed a unique fishing culture. However, to protect the plateau wetland, all activities that are harmful to the environment, such as fishing, have ceased. Despite the fishing ban, Lashi Lake’s water quality continues to deteriorate, due to other anthropogenic activities (Figure 4). For example, the rising number of tourists in the area led to increased waste, domestic sewage and contamination of rivers and lakes; the development of horse breeding led to overgrazing, degradation of grassland resources and the accumulation of horse manure, which exacerbated water pollution; and the improper water extraction posed risks of ecological degradation.

Dayu Village’s economy is now primarily tourism-driven, focusing on homestays and dining, with over 60% of residential housing rented

Fig. 2 – Landscape of Dayu village.

Fig. 3 – Traditional residence-layout and traditional residence-gate and wall.

Fig. 4 – The impacts of anthropogenic activities.

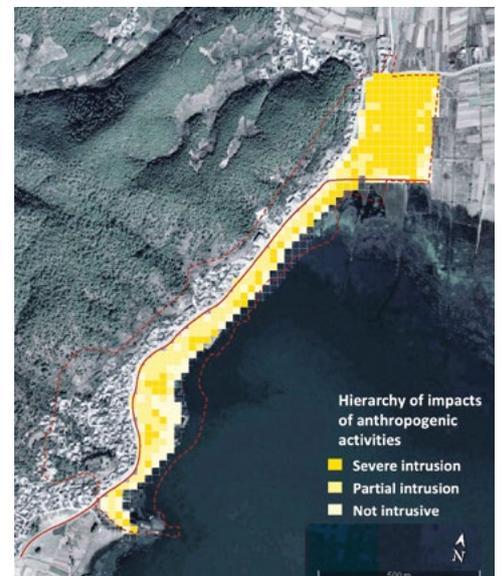




Fig. 5 – Dayu village: different kinds of non-local architectural landscape.

out. However, ineffective development has left many buildings vacant, with a lack of management and distinctive industries. These vacant buildings have not been effectively used because of a lack of unified planning, management and development. Some industries are sporadically concentrated along street fronts, but they are small in scale and lack distinctive characteristics, and the business performance exhibits considerable variations between different industries. External operators have introduced non-local cultural styles, such as Mediterranean and Western, disrupting the architectural landscape (Figure 5). It diminished unique identity, resulting in low visitor numbers and stunted development.

Local residents revealed that most villagers still see the village as their future retirement home and would be willing to stay if the village could develop. However, investors often favour a model in which residents leave but their houses remain, ignoring the community's values and wishes. This creates tension between tourism-driven development and preserving the authenticity of Dayu Village's traditional culture, as both the departure of residents and the introduction of external influences threaten its cultural integrity.

4. Case Study in Italy: Cabras Village, Sardinia

4.1 Historical and Cultural Context

Cabras, located on the west coast of Sardinia, Italy, covers an area of 122.18 square kilometres and boasts 30 kilometres of stunning coastline and a lagoon on its western border²⁶ (Figure 12). Human settlement in Cabras dates back to the Neolithic era and, under the rule of the Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Romans, it became a thriving centre²⁷. Today, the ruins of ancient civilisations, including temples, baths and streets, reflect its rich cultural history.

The summer season is peak tourism time in Cabras, with its western beaches and numerous archaeological sites serving as key attractions. To the west of the village lies one of Europe's largest wetlands, an essential stopover for migratory birds²⁸. Different bird species, including flamingos, can be spotted throughout the year, making Cabras a popular destination for birdwatchers²⁹.

The culture is deeply connected to local cuisine, particularly dishes such as bottarga and fregola, which are specialties of the region³⁰. The traditional craft of making fishing boats also highlights the village's strong ties to the lagoon and its fishing heritage.

4.2 Conservation Challenges in Cabras

Despite its rich ecological and cultural resources, Cabras has lost much of its vitality. The village's population is ageing, with a high proportion of elderly residents and limited opportunities for young people, leading many to leave in search of better prospects. This demographic shift has left many traditional residences vacant or abandoned as there are fewer people to occupy them (Figure 6). Traditional construction techniques and other artisanal crafts are facing a serious decline, as the older generation of craftsmen ages and the younger generation shows little interest or motivation to continue these traditions, putting many skilled crafts at risk of disappearing. The low economic value of these crafts in the modern market has led many to abandon these professions, further exacerbating the loss of these traditional skills.

²⁶ Alessio Satta, Manuela Puddu, Barbara Pintus, *Profile of Sustainability in some Mediterranean tourism destinations: Case study of Cabras in Sardinia (Italy)*, Plan Bleu UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centre, 2011.

²⁷ Riccardo Cicilloni, Marco Cabras, Federico Porcedda, Juan Antonio Cámara Serrano, *Protohistoric Landscapes in Sardinia (Italy): Territorial Control and Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages*, in «Cuadernos de Prehistoria y Arqueología de la Universidad de Granada», vol. 31, 2021, pages 159-179.

²⁸ Alessandro Ferrarini, Marco Gustin, Claudio Celada, *Simulation Modeling Unveils the Unalike Effects of Alternative Strategies for Waterbird Conservation in the Coastal Wetlands of Sardinia (Italy)*, in «Biology», vol. 12, no. 11, 2023, page 1440.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Satta, Puddu, Pintus, *Profile of Sustainability* cit.



Within the village, many old industrial infrastructure and buildings have lost their original functions in the modern economy and now sit idle, representing wasted resources (Figure 7). Due to the structure or materials of these facilities, renovation and repurposing may be costly, and there is a lack of investment and planning support to address this issue. Remote villages may also struggle with poor transportation and outdated infrastructure, particularly in waterfront areas, which are also poorly maintained, contributing to a general sense of decay, limiting economic growth and reducing their appeal to tourists.

Fig. 6 – Cabras: many traditional residences vacant or abandoned.

Fig. 7 – Cabras: abandoned water tower.

Additionally, there is a lack of cultural identity among the residents of Cabras. Both locals and tourists often overlook the historical and cultural significance of the village, leading to the decline and neglect of its traditions. Older residents no longer have the energy to fish, while those who are younger are unwilling to pursue fishing as a livelihood, resulting in a break in the continuity of traditional fishing practices and making cultural preservation difficult (Figure 8).

Cabras may experience a surge of tourists during peak season, only to become quiet in low season. This seasonal fluctuation leads to unstable economic income, making it hard for many tourism-related businesses to operate sustainably. Additionally, the village’s tourism products are narrowly focused, resulting in either limited activity or complete inactivity. The rich cultural resources of the village face challenges in being effectively converted into economic gains due to a lack of innovative business models and market channels.



Fig. 8 – Cabras: materials used to make traditional fishing boats.

5. Comparative Analysis: Dayu Village vs. Cabras Village

For these two traditional villages with similar cultural and natural environments facing common challenges, this article will conduct a comparative study from three perspectives: social and economic issues, environmental challenges, and historical and cultural preservation. The aim is to explore the differences and similarities between the two villages.

5.1 Socio-Economic Dimensions

Dayu and Cabras experience significant depopulation, economic decline and deteriorating infrastructure. While both villages share similar issues, the causes and manifestations are quite different.

In Dayu Village, although many young people have left, the connection between people and the land has not completely disappeared; many villagers still regard the village as their future retirement home. The village retains commercial value, but due to a lack of planning and failure to integrate local characteristics, development efforts have been ineffective and even counterproductive. Infrastructure is poor, with the most pressing issues being inadequate sewage systems and waste management, in addition to problems with roads and public spaces.

By contrast, Cabras faces more severe population loss, leading to abandoned and decaying houses and a complete severing of the connection between the people and the land. A short tourism season and minimal investment in tourism-related activities result in limited economic benefits for the village. Although infrastructure exists, it is not properly maintained or integrated with local needs, leaving it largely unused.

5.2 Environmental Challenges

In Dayu Village, a weak awareness of environmental protection among villagers coupled with an inadequate sewage system has led to severe pollution of Lake Lashi. Overly rigid environmental policies, such as the strict enforcement of red-line zones that require the demolition of homes, have disrupted the village's layout. Additionally, uncontrolled tourism, including waste from homestays and tourist routes encroaching on protected areas, has further exacerbated ecological degradation, creating conflicts between development and conservation.

By contrast, Cabras has a stronger environmental consciousness among its residents, with careful use of water, proper waste sorting and restrictions on activities within protected zones. The ecological challenge here is the separation between people and nature; lakeside homes remain closed off from the lake, preventing the area from fully realising its potential. The key challenge for Cabras is how to integrate ecological preservation with village development to achieve harmonious coexistence between people and the environment.

5.3 Cultural and Heritage Preservation

Villages face similar challenges in preserving their traditional cultural heritage, with difficulties in passing down and developing these traditions. However, approaches to cultural preservation differ due to

the distinct national characteristics and heritage protection methods in China and Italy.

In China, cultural heritage protection is largely top down, with villagers playing a passive role in preservation efforts. Traditional customs are typically passed down through daily life and oral traditions. However, as people leave and villages empty, this cultural transmission is disrupted, leaving the government solely responsible for preservation. This has led to destruction from foreign culture, while tourists often fail to appreciate traditional history and cultural significance, resulting in the decline and neglect of traditional culture.

In Italy, cultural heritage protection combines both top-down and bottom-up approaches³¹. Local museums and facilities of Cabras that showcase traditional crafts still exist, allowing visitors to engage with the local culture. However, in Cabras, a lack of cultural identity among most residents, along with the disappearance of traditional festivals, lifestyles and homes, has led to a loss of collective memory. This situation hinders the development of culture and weakens social cohesion.

³¹ Zhao Zhifeng, Gou Yingrui, Rong Qingwen, *Experience and Inspiration on Preventive Conservation of Heritage in Italian Cultural Areas: Taking Valtellina Cultural District as an Example*, in «Development of Small Cities & Towns», vol. 08, 2023, pages 40-48.

6. Proposed Solutions and Future Directions

After conducting field visits to both villages, the workshop conducted an in-depth analysis of the issues and their underlying causes. Based on the villages' geographic locations, environments, resident needs and policies, they developed tailored development strategies suited to each village's unique context.

6.1 Conservation and Development for Dayu Village

6.1.1 General Suggestions

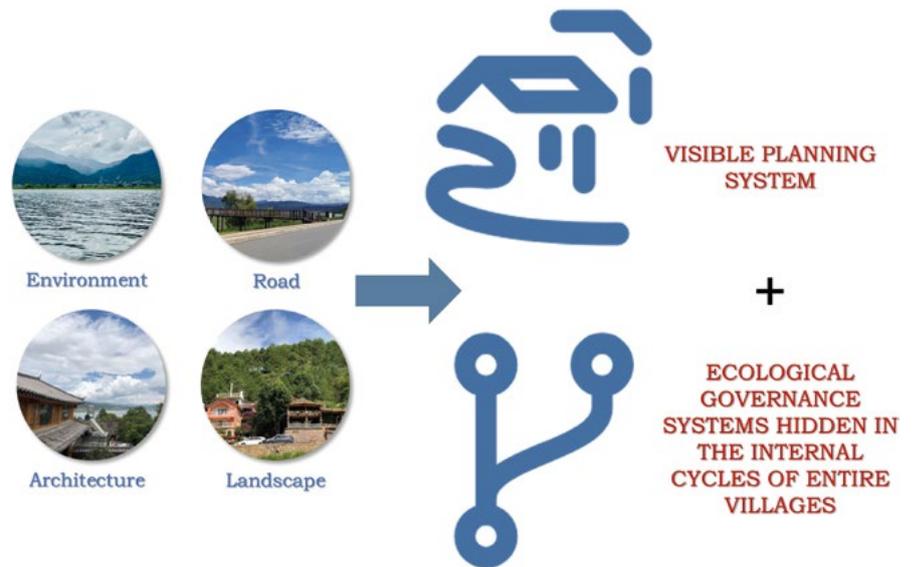
Regarding the challenges of preserving and developing Dayu Village, it is important to balance economic growth with cultural preservation and promote sustainable development. To protect the traditional culture and environment, the village could establish a fishing culture museum and host cultural festivals while also encouraging villagers' participation to strengthen collective identity and cultural pride. The environmental protection of Lake Lashi should be enhanced by setting and enforcing strict sewage treatment standards. Meanwhile, improving the population structure, developing unique local industries and creating job opportunities could attract young people back to the village.

With respect to tourism, a well-planned approach should limit excessive foreign cultural influences to maintain the authenticity of Dayu Village. Developing eco-tourism and cultural experience tourism can draw visitors interested in local culture, reducing the impact of over commercialisation. Additionally, a clear village development plan should address building use, industrial growth and cultural preservation to prevent idle properties. Vacant buildings could be repurposed for cultural and creative industries to increase the village's overall value.

6.1.2 Erren Ecological Bay – Dayu Village Planning

The plan centres on ecological and natural principles, implementing visible planning systems and an integrated village-wide ecological management system. In the village planning, the original fabric and layout of the village are carefully considered, incorporating ecological concepts into the architecture, road design and landscaping (Figure 9). By tracing the historical layout of the village's transportation network and integrating it with existing secondary roads, a new transportation

Fig. 9 – Dayu Village Planning Concept.



system is created to connect the entire village. Additionally, a green corridor is established between the village and Lake Lashi, forming an ecological buffer zone that enhances interaction between people and the landscape, promotes biodiversity and stabilises the ecosystem, while highlighting Dayu Village's ecological and waterfront features (Figure 10).

For traditional building preservation, the village's cultural heritage, natural resources and foot traffic patterns are analysed. Core protection zones are designated for buildings with significant historical value and well-preserved traditional styles. These areas are considered for residential use or as indigenous cultural experience zones, retaining the original character of the village. Buildings that do not align with the traditional style are earmarked for renovation and designated for commercial use. The workshop also selected a traditional residence as the site for a new village fishery culture museum, aiming to 'revive the village's fishing heritage and stimulate public activity', bridging industry, village and architecture.

Ecological management focuses on wetland restoration and water quality improvement through the introduction of wetland vegetation and hidden drainage systems within the village. Low-impact development measures, such as infiltration, detention, storage, purification and drainage, are proposed to enhance the wetland's natural filtration

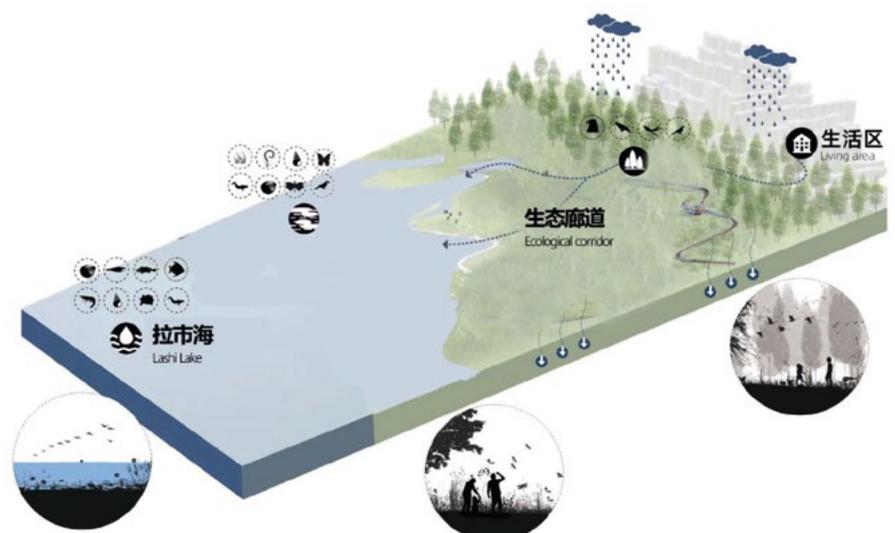


Fig. 10 – Green corridor between the village and Lashi Lake.

capacity, ensuring the stability and sustainability of Lake Lashi's water resources. These efforts help mitigate the risks of human and natural disturbances and minimise environmental impacts.

The plan suggests establishing a shared operating and profit-sharing model for Dayu Village. This could involve creating village cooperatives, economic and environmental impact assessment bodies and public education and training programmes to improve the existing mechanisms and enhance indigenous participation and policy implementation effectiveness.

Overall, the integrated planning and design for Dayu Village seamlessly incorporates ecological principles, reflecting respect for and protection of the natural environment and achieving a harmonious balance between sustainable development and ecological preservation.

6.2 Conservation and Development for Cabras Village

6.2.1 General Suggestions

To address the challenges of preservation and development in Cabras, efforts should focus on attracting young people, promoting traditional culture and pursuing sustainable tourism that respects natural and historical heritages. Attracting young people back to Cabras requires the provision of employment opportunities and entrepreneurial support. Improving infrastructure and living conditions can also draw young people from other areas to settle in the village.

For the ageing traditional homes, residents and investors should be encouraged to restore and repurpose these buildings for residential use, cultural tourism, or creative studios. To preserve and promote traditional culture, modern fishing techniques should be taught to younger fishermen, while also preserving traditional methods to ensure cultural continuity. Raising awareness of Cabras's historical sites, fishing culture and ecological resources can foster greater appreciation among residents and tourists.

Leveraging Cabras's rich cultural heritage and natural resources, particularly its wetlands and archaeological sites, to develop sustainable eco-tourism and cultural tourism is key. New tourism routes, cultural festivals and ecological activities can attract more visitors and extend the tourist season.

6.2.2 Save the Traditional Cabras – Cabras Village Planning

The planning process spans from broad concepts to specific details, focusing on the integration of traditional culture, ecological environment and village life. This approach aims to demonstrate the potential of Cabras in fostering harmonious human–environment interactions, emphasising respect for nature and the pursuit of sustainable development, thereby revitalising this ancient land.

The project adopts a macro perspective, with 'Discover Cabras' as a central theme. Building on this vision, the workshop introduced the 'Cabras 12/12 Months' concept, proposing three seasonal tourism routes to promote year-round tourism. These routes are designed for kayaking on the lake, hiking, cycling and driving.

The three routes are as follows (Figure 11):

1. Historic Street Network: this route connects key landmarks in the old village with the waterfront, guiding visitors from the village centre to the waterside.
2. Birdwatching Route: starting from the old village and heading north, this route enhances existing roads with rest areas and viewpoints for birdwatching.

3. Fishing Culture Route: starting from the old village and heading south, this route transforms abandoned structures along the coast into rest areas and cultural installations, thereby, promoting the local fishing heritage.

The revitalisation of the old village includes the creation of thematic paths that reflect local cultural characteristics, connecting the waterfront with the village and reconstructing local identity (Figure 12). Abandoned buildings along the main routes will be repurposed into small community museums based on the 'distributed museum' concept, integrating cultural heritage interpretation into the community and enhancing cultural identity.

In terms of historical site preservation and adaptive reuse, the workshop focused on two distinctive buildings for redesign and renewal. One is a semi-abandoned seasonal fishing facility, reimagined as an educational site for youth historical memory, with an added fishing history museum to preserve this traditional craft for future generations. Additionally, a visitor centre along the coast offers boat and bike rentals, serving as a starting point for lake tours.

The lake is Cabras' greatest asset, so the planning seeks to reconnect the fragmented landscape along the 2-kilometre stretch of natural scenery to create a continuous waterfront. Landscape features and murals enhance the previously closed-off façades of residential buildings in the central area, adding interest and showcasing Cabras' rich history and culture. It aims to build a comprehensive enhancement of natural elements, historical architecture and cultural tourism nodes.

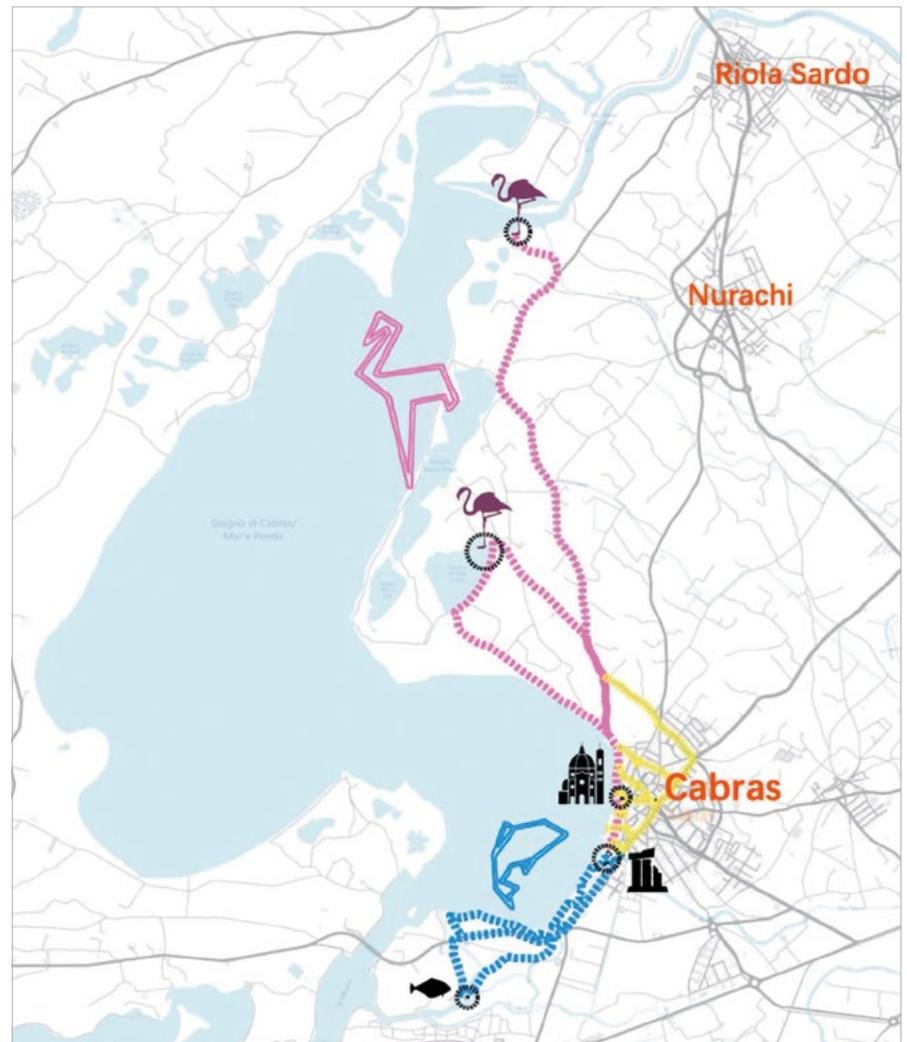
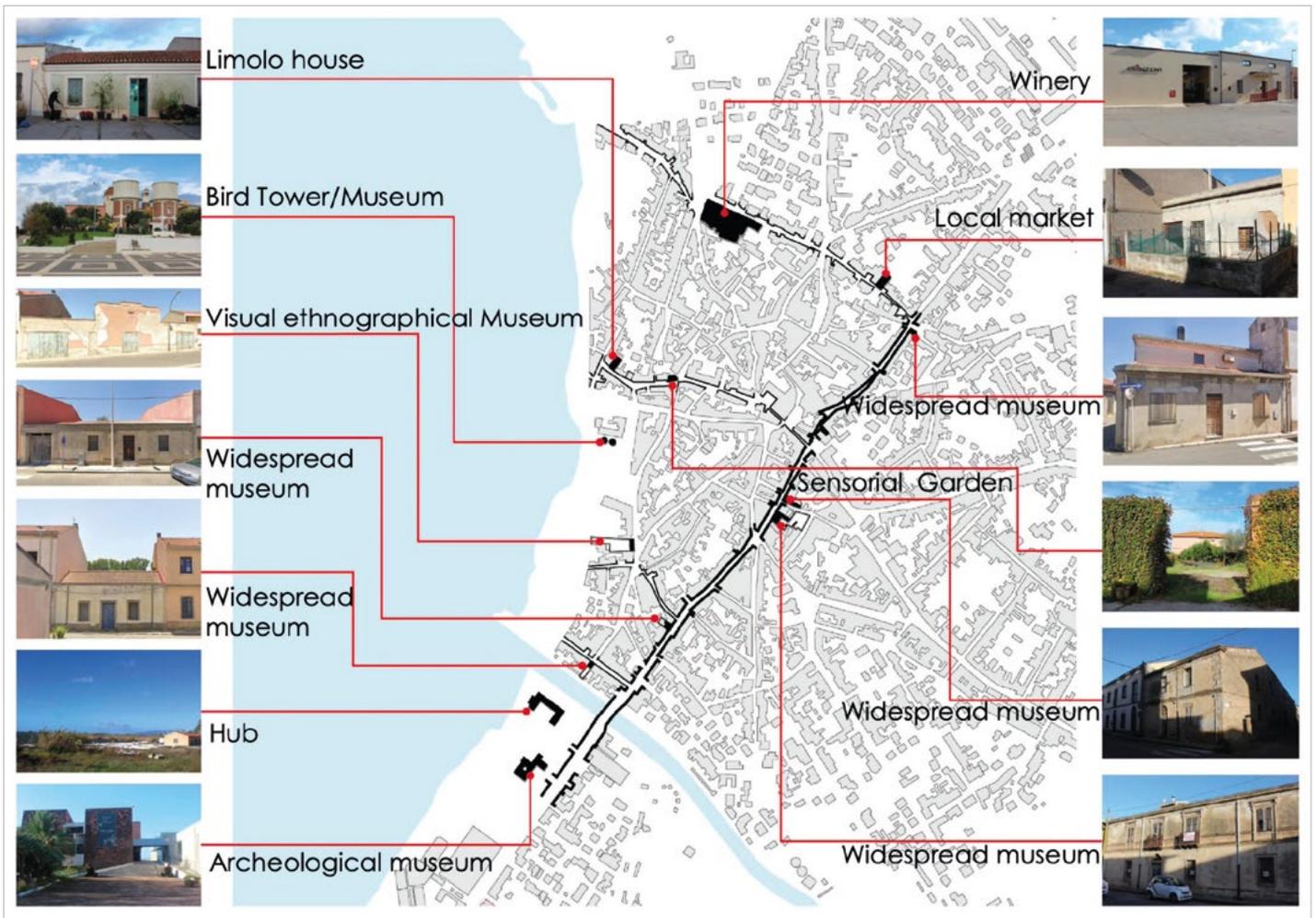


Fig. 11 – Three seasonal tourism routes in Cabras.



6.3 Summary

Although the two villages share similar backgrounds, geographic locations and challenges, the workshop adopted different strategies to address these issues due to the differing causes of their problems. Both villages aim to stimulate development through tourism; however, their approaches differ. Dayu village focuses on simultaneously improving the ecological environment and developing eco-tourism to drive growth, while Cabras integrates ecological considerations into its development, connecting existing resources with the environment to achieve harmonious human–nature interactions. Both plans emphasise leveraging cultural heritage to create a unique village identity, empowering traditional culture to drive development.

Fig. 12 – Thematic paths connecting the old town to the waterfront in Cabras.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Lessons and Insights

The conservation of traditional villages like Dayu in Yunnan, China and Cabras in Sardinia, Italy, presents a complex interplay of challenges rooted in socio-economic, environmental and cultural dimensions. The comparative analysis of these two villages highlights the universal difficulties faced by such communities, including the pressures of modernisation, demographic shifts and the impacts of tourism. Both villages illustrate the delicate balance required between preserving cultural heritage and embracing the necessary development. Despite their differences, both villages share common challenges in maintaining

their historical and cultural integrity amid the forces of change. Both villages aim to stimulate development through tourism, but their approaches differ.

7.2 Proposed Solutions and Future Directions

Through the research, analysis and programme design of these two cases, the article also summarises some strategies and future directions for the development of traditional villages around the world.

First, Sustainable Tourism as a Conservation Tool could help protect cultural heritage while boosting local economies. Second, integrating modernisation with heritage conservation is essential; however, the challenge is to update infrastructure without compromising historical sites. Public–private partnerships and thoughtful urban planning can balance modernisation with conservation. Third, community involvement is crucial for successful conservation. Enhancing community involvement and governance could increase ownership of conservation. Strong governance and clear regulations are necessary to protect heritage sites and encourage community participation. Finally, international collaboration and knowledge sharing are essential for tackling conservation challenges and working together across borders, and securing international funding can help protect shared heritage and promote cultural understanding.

In summary, the workshop has yielded some valuable insights; however, the workshop also recognises that, given the brief timeframe, many ideas remain at a preliminary stage and do not yet address the core issues. Traditional villages across different countries face unique challenges and circumstances, yet the essence of resolving these issues lies more in uncovering the potential for cultural and natural preservation and fostering a sense of identity in traditional residents. Saving traditional villages is a long-term endeavour and to effectively translate these recommendations into actionable measures, long-term observation and in-depth research will be essential, particularly through sustained communication and collaboration with local residents and administrators. The workshop hopes that extended investigation and dialogue will allow the refinement of these initial concepts and, together with all stakeholders, explore sustainable development solutions that truly align with the local context.