

ARVIER

INNOVATION

Lo ten fa comme l'eue di torràn : tourne pourni

Time is like the water of torrents: it never returns.

Proverb in Valdostan Patois from Arvier



Sources

Mauro Lucianaz

Mayor of Arvier

Arvier is a community that has learned to live in balance with a complex territory. The mountain has never been a backdrop: it has been the material condition within which generations of people built forms of collaboration, shared care of resources, practical solidarity. The rus, the corvées, the collective management of water — none of this is folklore. It is how this territory learned to survive and, at times, to thrive.

Arvier Innovation gave us something precious: an outside perspective capable of returning to us what we take for granted. Professionals from across Italy and Europe lived here, walked the streets of the village, worked alongside our citizens. And in doing so, they helped us see our resources not as traditions to be preserved, but as living foundations on which to build something new.

Climate change, water management, the future of the mountain: these are big themes that often seem to be decided elsewhere. This process reminded many citizens that local choices matter too, that participation makes sense, that the future of this village depends on them as well.

Some of the fruits of these months are already visible. Others will ripen with time. What I hope is that Arvier will keep alive what has been planted: the curiosity, the willingness to take risks, the certainty that the future does not happen — it is built together.

Andrea Paoletti

President of Netural Coop Impresa Sociale

When we began working in Arvier, the PNRR had already set construction sites and restorations in motion. The question we were asking ourselves was a different one: who will inhabit these spaces, and with what meaning?

Generative residencies are the answer we built together with Fondazione Santagata and the Municipality. Not guests on display, but professionals chosen to bring perspectives capable of resonating with what a community already knows about itself — and often cannot see precisely because it lives inside it. The goal is not to import solutions from outside: it is to activate the collective intelligence that is already there.

Water was the most honest metaphor for this process. We did not choose it: it emerged from the post-its, the conversations, the memories brought into the room by citizens. It was already there, in the history of the rus, in the corvées, in the very name of Leverogne. We only created the conditions for it to surface again.

The result that surprised us most is not a prototype or a document: it is the Writing

Community that organised itself after Alessio Castiglione's residency, continuing to meet without the need for an external facilitator. Or the agricultural irrigation data left online by Marko Djordjevic, now accessible to anyone who wants to use it.

To irrigate a territory means this: to circulate knowledge, relationships, trust. And to hope that something grows even after the researcher has left. Our work ends when the community no longer needs us.

Riccardo Ramello

Fondazione Santagata per l'Economia della Cultura

A residency is not a research tool in the traditional sense. It is a way of bringing external knowledge and local knowledge into contact, generating perspectives that neither the community nor the researcher would have produced alone. In inner areas this has a specific value: it helps communities imagine possible futures starting from what they already have, without waiting for something to arrive from outside to save them.

The themes explored in Arvier — climate data, sociology of memory, eco-design — might seem distant from the daily life of a small Alpine village. They become useful when they stop being abstract. A soil moisture reading changes meaning when a farmer understands how to interpret it. A map becomes powerful when the inhabitants are the ones who drew it. Knowledge generates change when it becomes shared experience.

The true legacy of a project like this is not the documents produced or the exhibitions installed. It is the networks. The relationships built between researchers, communities and institutions are what allows ideas to keep living after the funding ends. From these connections come new collaborations, new questions, new capacity to face together the challenges ahead.

To irrigate a territory means nurturing the conditions for all of this to grow. Water, like culture, has one fundamental property: it flows, and connects what would otherwise remain separate.

Editorial note

This booklet tells the story of a shared effort.

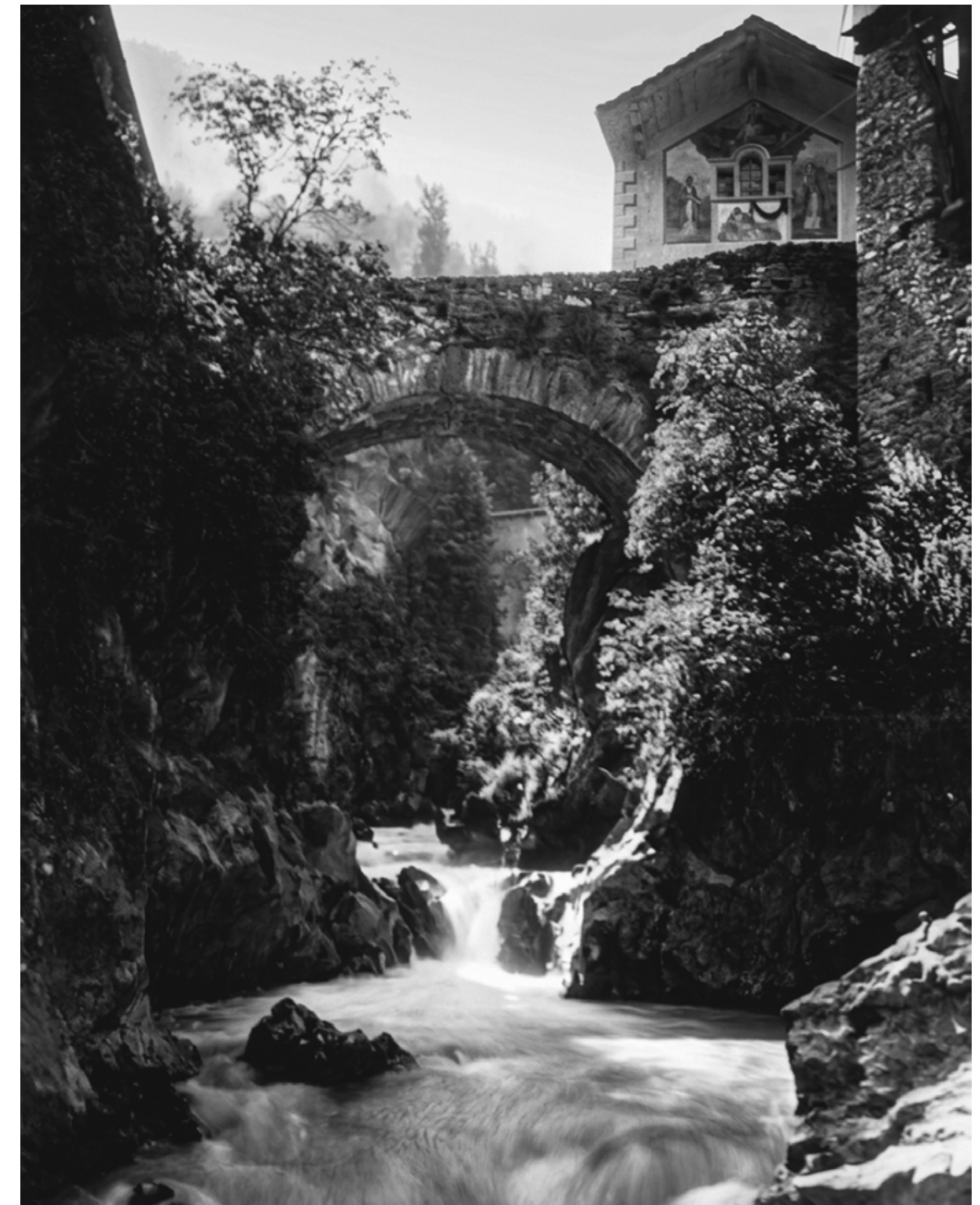
It is an attempt to give back what happened when eleven researchers and educators from across Europe chose to live in Arvier — one month each — working on themes rooted in this territory: climate change, inclusive culture, social sustainability.

outside observers, but alongside the people who live here.

The thread that holds everything together is water. Not because anyone had planned it, but because it emerged naturally: from conversations, from workshops, from words written on post-its. Water was already at the centre of how Arvier thinks about itself and its future.

During their stays, the Arvier Innovation Labs came to life: open workshops for the local community, moments in which the historical memory of the territory met new perspectives and fresh eyes.

This booklet is dedicated to everyone who contributed — with texts, drawings, reflections — turning a simple encounter into something more lasting.



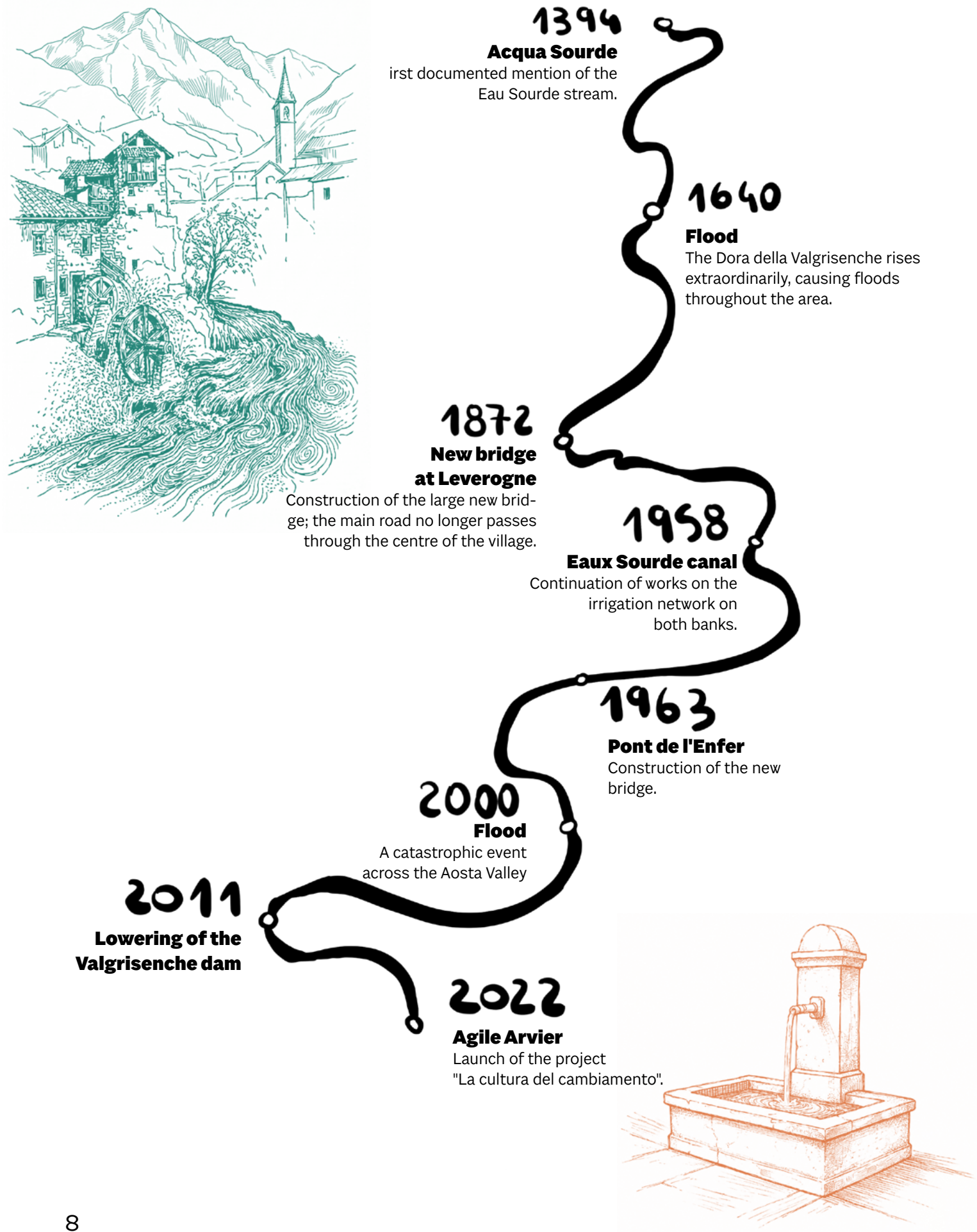
Leverogne means the roaring water.

Arvier and Leverogne share an ancient and material relationship with water, written into the canals, the place names, the collective practices that allowed these communities to survive and prosper for centuries.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the great irrigation canals — the rus — were built, still carrying water across the sunny slopes from Valpelline to Val d'Ayas well into the twentieth century. They are collective works, born of the corvées: days of shared labour in which inhabitants built and maintained infrastructures that no one could have realised alone.

The sound of water

Historical milestones



Looking back at the residencies through this lens — water — meant discovering that every contribution touched the same question from a different angle. From sociology to photography, from software engineering to architecture.

Water as the historical memory of a territory. As a changing climate variable. As a resource to manage together. As something that belongs to no one and to everyone.

The pages that follow attempt to hold these perspectives together, without any pretence of providing answers. Think of it as a field guide — a condensed summary to return to when you want to quickly recall something. Having eleven professionals with such different approaches and backgrounds living in the village was like scattering seeds: some will sprout sooner than others, perhaps all of them will, perhaps not. That is fine.

The important thing is to remember to water them.

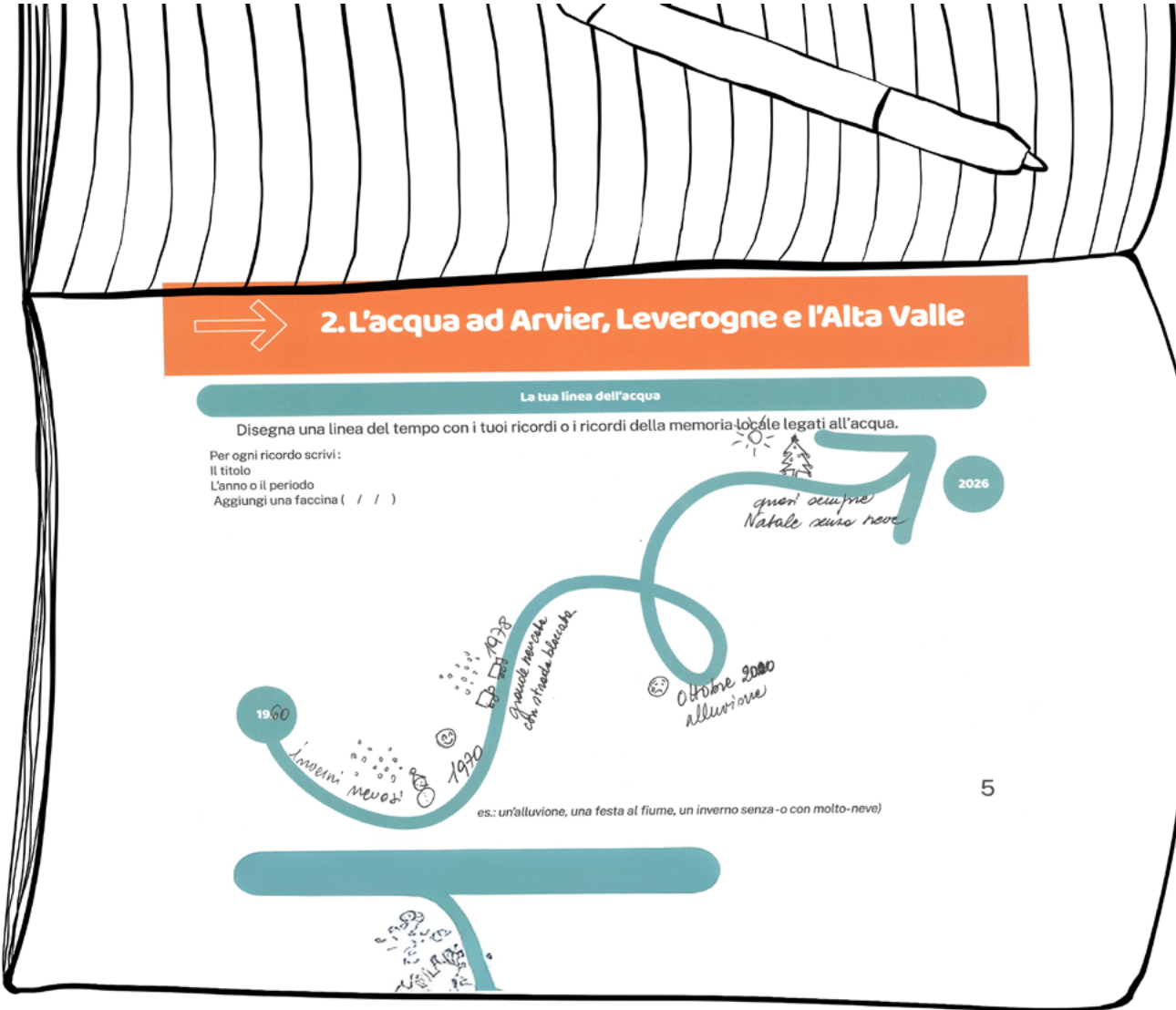
Word cloud

What are the first three words that come to mind when you think about water in Arvier, Leverogne and the upper valley today?



Word cloud — the larger the word, the more frequently it appeared among responses

Contribution from the Resident's Notebook



David Chevallier
sociologist and researcher

David Chevallier was in residence in Arvier in February 2026. With him, participants reflected on the theme of water, tracing how deeply the history of the village is woven with this element and how vividly it still lives in the collective memory of its inhabitants. The main tool David brought with him is the Quaderno dell'Abitante — the Resident's Notebook: a personal kit for observing, questioning and keeping track of what emerges.

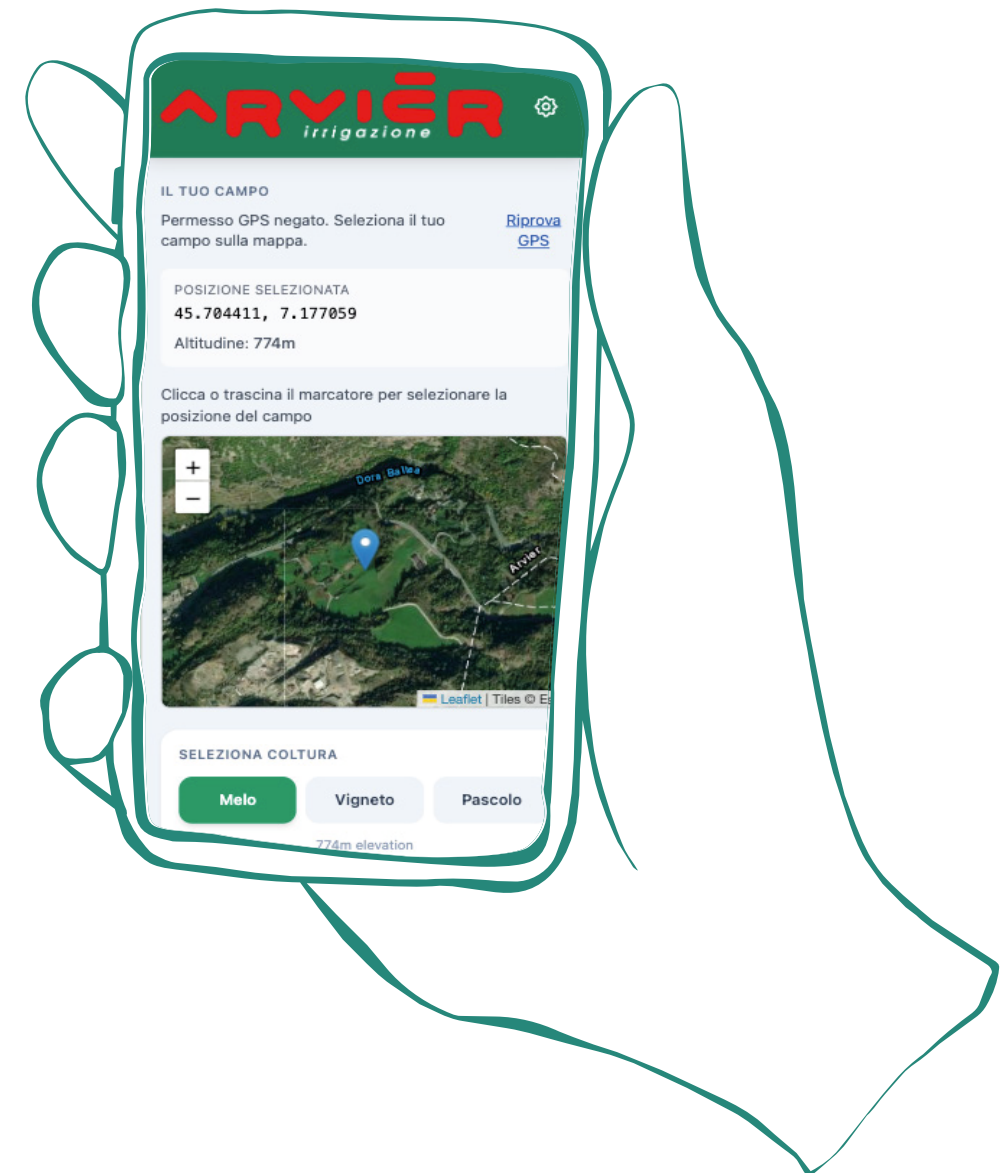
Did you know that 90% of the water in the Aosta Valley is used for agricultural irrigation?

Anyone who spends even a few days in the valley cannot fail to notice one distinctive feature of the landscape: the girandola — the rotating sprinklers. Present in almost every meadow, they keep the grass moist and irrigated. How many there are in total is hard to say — perhaps there is only one person in the village who knows the location of all of them. A good starting point, then, might be to map them..



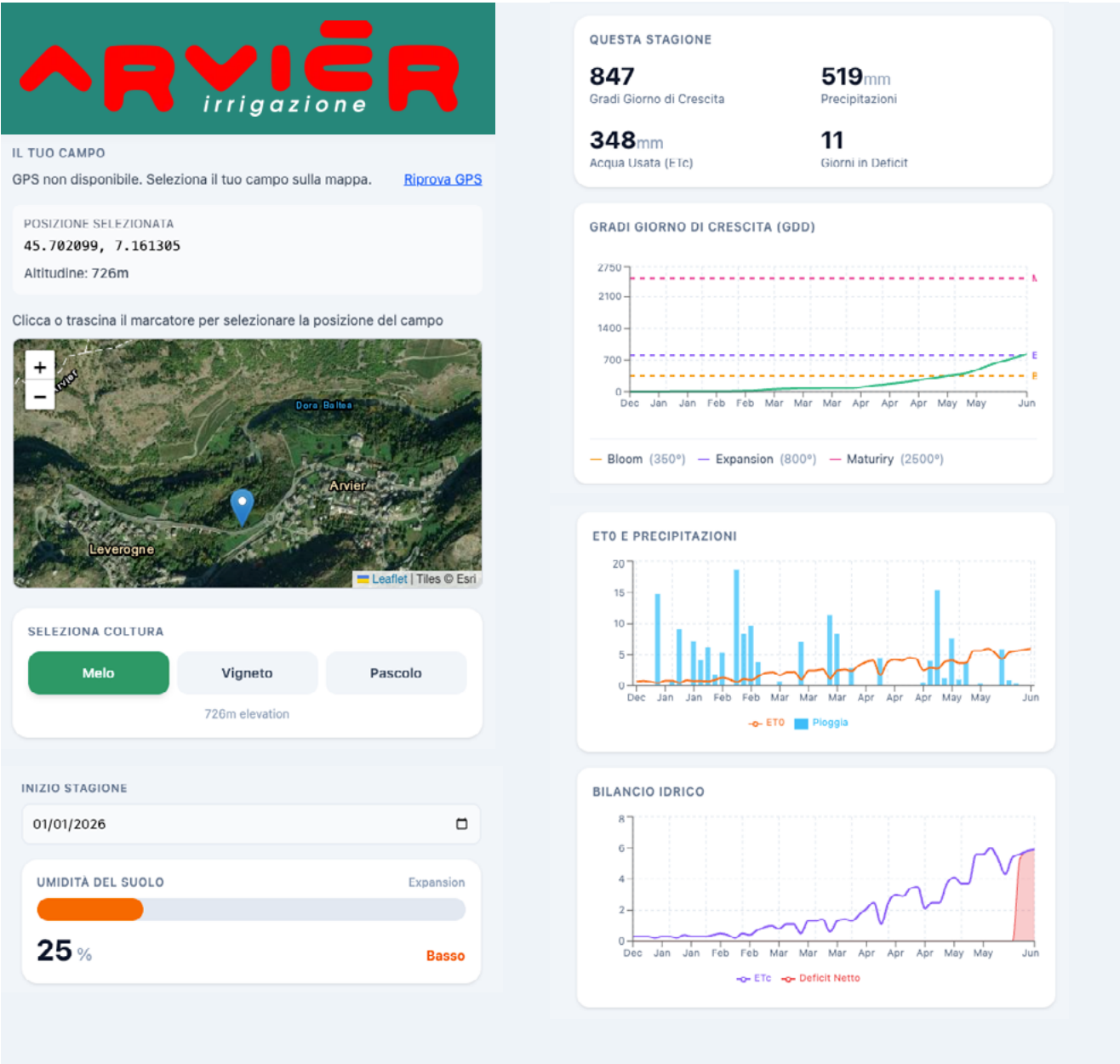
Prototype of the Girandola application, developed by Marko Djordjevic to allow anyone to place the sprinklers on a map]

If water is a precious and scarce resource, it must be conserved. To do so effectively, we need to rely on what the data tells us — and on the technologies that allow us to collect and read it.



«Without measurements, optimising resources is difficult. With reliable data, irrigation decisions are evidence-based and significantly more precise.»

[Prototype of the Arvier Irrigazione application, developed by Marko Djordjevic to monitor soil conditions — apple orchards, vineyards and pastures — in relation to water needs, allowing land managers to optimise water use.]



<https://arvier-irrigazione.vercel.app/it>



Marko Djordjevic
software engineer and data scientist

Marko Djordjevic was in residence in Arvier in January 2026. His work is built around a simple idea: data must be accessible to everyone, because better decisions come from reliable information. In Arvier he applied this vision to agriculture, looking for concrete technological solutions for water resource management.



[Data provided by the ARPA Valle d'Aosta team — Chiara Guarnieri, Sofia Koliopoulos. Photographs: Skarpari, 2026]



From solitary walks, mountain ranges. Arvier — Photo: Skarpri, 2026

Images translate something abstract — climate data — into lived experience. They remind us that this landscape is not static. It is in transition.

The Alps are changing, and this brings both risks and responsibilities.

The glaciers are melting.

Their absence is not distant — it is already felt in the landscape, in human lives and in those of other species. Christina's work looks at what lies ahead, attending to risks not yet fully visible.

They brought me into their fields, where abstraction meets the earth, where data becomes gesture and tools, through patience and care, slowly come to life.



Christina Skarpari

interdisciplinary cultural professional

Christina Skarpari was in residence in Arvier in March 2026. She chose to focus on the artisans and producers of the territory, meeting them, interviewing them, and using photography as a tool of inquiry. The resulting images were exhibited on the ground floor of the Arvier presbytery.

The role of the community

The workshops produced concrete ideas, some small and immediate: rainwater reuse in residential buildings, the care and restoration of historic fountains, the possibility of updating the practice of corvées as a contemporary civic form of water system maintenance.

Over the course of the meetings, one request emerged clearly: that inhabitants be able to participate in decisions about water management. Not just to be informed — to genuinely participate. To find the right balance between different and legitimate uses. To build a shared understanding of what is changing.

CARA ARVIER

TI SCRIVO PER RICORDARE CON TE

COME ERAVAMO 30 ANNI FA -

SORRIDO, PENEHE' EU BUIA, ANFRATTI QUA E LA
DA ESPLORARE.

UN GIORNO, POI, MI HAI STUPITO! DA LONTANO HO
VISTO UNA LUCE NEL BUIO DELLA STATALE -

EU TU !!! LUMINOSA, VENDE, CHE MI INVITAVI

DAI BALCONI FIORITI -

SCORREVA L'ACQUA A BORDO STRADA -

EU VIVA VENA, CHIASSOSA MA MAI FASTIDIOSA -

ED OGGI SEI ANCONA CON ...

MENTRE IO MI SPENGO PER L'ETA', TU TI

ACCENDI SEMPRE PIU' -

LUNGA VITA AD ARVIER LA BELLA, LA SANA,

LA VENA.

CON MOLTI SALUTI -

MONIA DA GRESSA

Telling the story of one's own territory, starting from everyday experience, is a deeply creative act — in the sense that it creates: it creates meaning, it allows people to recognise themselves — or not — in a collective narrative, it creates identity and, through all of this, connects the past, the present and the future of a community.



[watch on youtube](#)

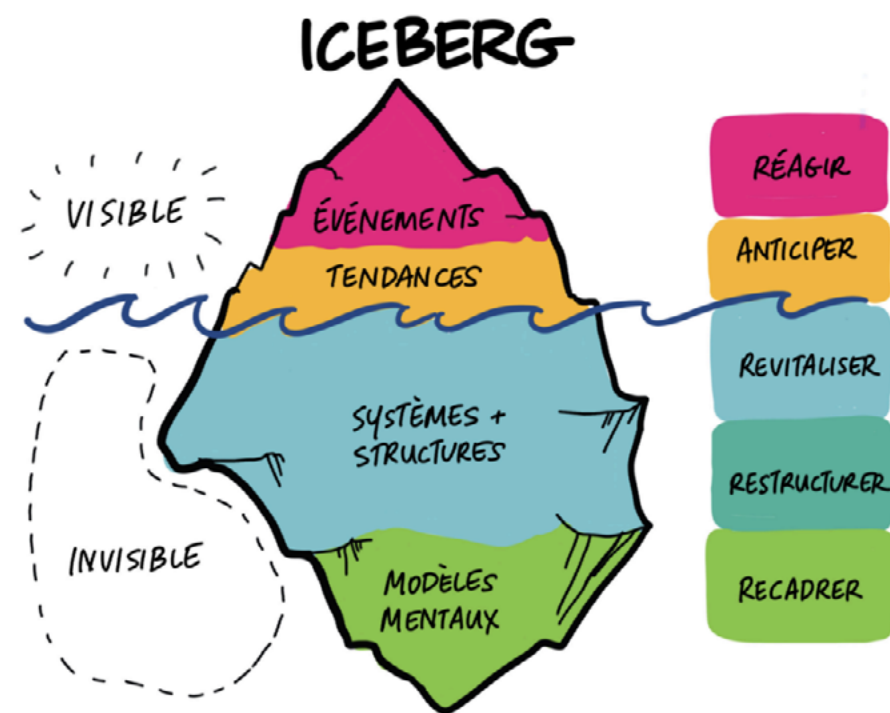
Narrating your own territory is also a political act



Rocco Pisilli

social innovator and project manager

Rocco Pisilli was in residence in Arvier in December 2025. With him, participants explored the power of self-narration: telling the story of your territory means building its identity. Rocco created an audio and video installation that begins with letters from the future written by inhabitants — read aloud by the authors themselves — and weaves them together with photographs and images of Arvier from the past.



Collection de cadres conceptuels: finegood@sfu.ca Illustration: sam@drawingchange.com © CC BY-NC-ND

The forest, heroic viticulture, Patois, the fountains, artisan traditions, the places of collective memory — these are precious resources. To recognise them not in order to preserve them like artefacts, but to understand what already exists, what risks being lost, what can become the starting point for a different future.

As the iceberg shows, what remains invisible beneath the surface is far greater than what we see. And this concerns not only tangible heritage — what we see and touch — but also the intangible: ways of thinking, the social and cultural systems we are part of, the family structures we live within every day.



Duna Viezzoli
researcher, educator and project manager

Duna Viezzoli was in residence in Arvier in February 2026. With her, participants explored the tools for mapping tangible and intangible heritage, in order to imagine the future starting from what already exists.

The community already has sufficient resources and skills to activate small shared experiences.

An outside perspective is often what it takes to see the potential of a place, a group, a community. When the beauty and richness around us become the backdrop of daily life, we stop seeing them.

Failing to recognise one's own potential means not only leaving it out of one's identity narrative — as Rocco suggested — but also being unable to show it to those who come from outside.

Building networks becomes a way of sharing with those who arrive — tourists or not — what we are proud of. A simple recipe, but one capable of drawing visitors throughout the year and keeping them longer.



Sara Guidolin
expert in sustainable tourism destinations

Sara Guidolin was in residence in Arvier in December 2025. With her, participants explored the concepts of sustainable tourism and community tourism, applying them to the context of Arvier to understand its strengths and fragilities.

My contribution focused on the eco-design method, which allows the community to become an active protagonist of change.

Sustainability is not a list of things not to do. It is a different way of looking at what already exists — the resources, the habits, the producers, the territory — and asking: how could we use it better?

Before the workshops, the visits: those who grow plants at altitude, those who raise goats, those who work wool. Relationships built in the field, which made the work more authentic.

This was the question that guided the sessions: not to identify problems, but to transform them into open challenges. Water that is changing, waste, mobility, local products with no shopfront. Many questions, a few concrete ideas beginning to take shape: a map of local producers, a project on seasonality, the reintroduction of crops historically present in the territory.



Anna Masiello

content creator, sustainability and zero-waste

Anna Masiello was in residence in Arvier in January 2026. With her, participants explored eco-design: an approach that goes beyond reducing consumption and emissions, aiming instead at a shift in mindset toward ways of living that are fairer — for people and for the environment.

How do you build community?

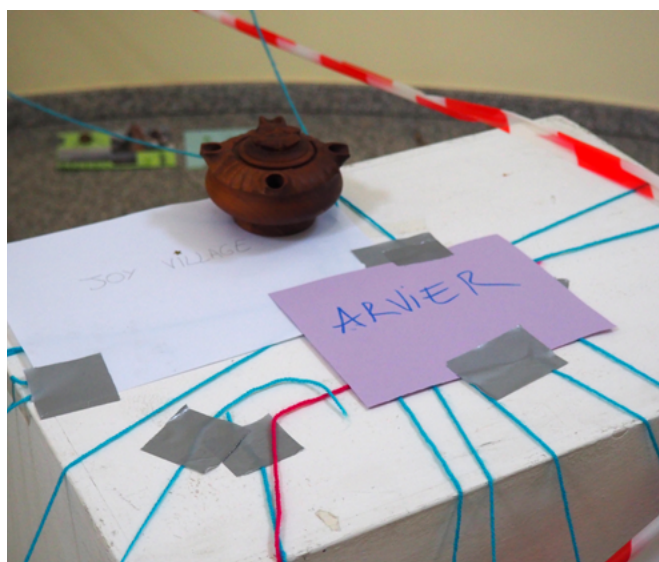
Building community means creating the conditions for people to have a place to put their voice — and someone willing to listen. There is no need to start with grand projects: often a space, a gesture, a return is enough. Within Arvier Innovation, two tools emerged that work in this direction. One visual and collective, the other made of words and listening. Both start from the same conviction: that the relationships between people are already a resource, and that it is worth giving them form.



Presentazione pubblica finale del cosmogramma



Incontri con le scuole



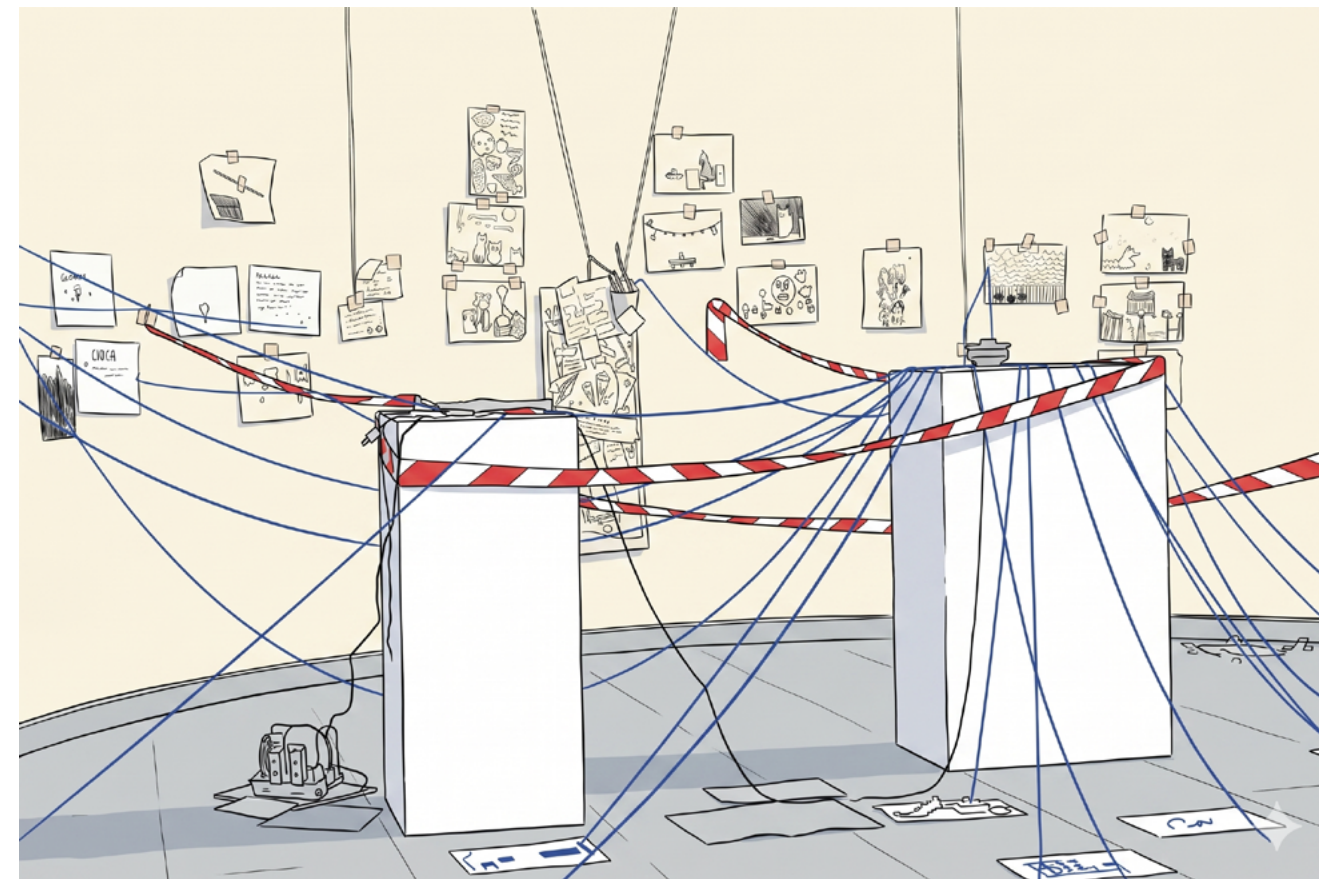
Dettaglio del Cosmogramma

The Cosmogramma

The Cosmogramma is a physical and participatory device developed over four weeks in Arvier, with the aim of building a collective geography of the territory — based not on distance, but on the relationships, desires and lived experience of its inhabitants.

First, primary school children mapped their own places of the heart. Then adults continued this work, filling in structured cards about places and the activities that might happen there. Finally, the fourth and fifth year pupils transformed those places into imagined scenarios through collage — combining real and invented elements.

In the fourth week, all these materials were installed in the deconsecrated church of San Joseph: drawings and collages fixed along the walls, connected by blue threads stretched between the walls and two central plinths, with red and white barrier tape crossing the space diagonally.



The result is a three-dimensional, walkable network, in which physical connections make visible the conceptual relationships between people, places and desires. It is not an exhibition, nor a conventional map. It works as an environment that simultaneously documents, stimulates and welcomes: visitors can observe, explore non-linear paths, add contributions and converse. Its value lies not in the objects that compose it, but in the interactions it is capable of generating. The method is replicable — in any space, on any complex theme to be explored together.



Rita Elvira Adamo
architect and researcher

Rita Elvira Adamo, co-founder of the collective La Rivoluzione delle Seppie, was in residence in Arvier in March 2026. Rita brought the Cosmogramma as a tool for mapping not only places, but the relationships that run through them.



Scrittura solitaria.



Il cerchio, la scrittura, l'ascolto.



Un incontro all'aperto, uno spazio di riflessione

Writing community

The Community Writing and Reading workshop is a cycle of four sessions held in and around Arvier in April 2026, designed as a practice of care, relationship and non-judgemental listening — deliberately distant from scholastic or performative models. The structure is simple and replicable.

A brief, open prompt is offered — a sentence, an image, a word. Participants write individually in silence for around forty minutes, then read aloud voluntarily, without introduction: letting the text speak for itself.

The reader chooses the next reader. The group listens without interrupting or commenting. The session closes with a single word about the experience.



The texts produced spanned many different forms — autobiography, poetry, stream of consciousness, letter, poetic prose — confirming that the workshop welcomes everything without hierarchy.

The process concluded with the formation of an autonomous WhatsApp group among participants: a community that decided to keep existing beyond the residency, without a facilitator. Participants propose themes in rotation, organise through the chat, choose the locations.



Alessio Castiglione

doctoral researcher, Newbookclub Community Lab

Alessio Castiglione was in residence in Arvier in April 2026. With him, participants discovered shared writing and reading as tools for connection: occasions for sociality, but also space for deeper reflection on personal experience and community life.



*The community
at the center*

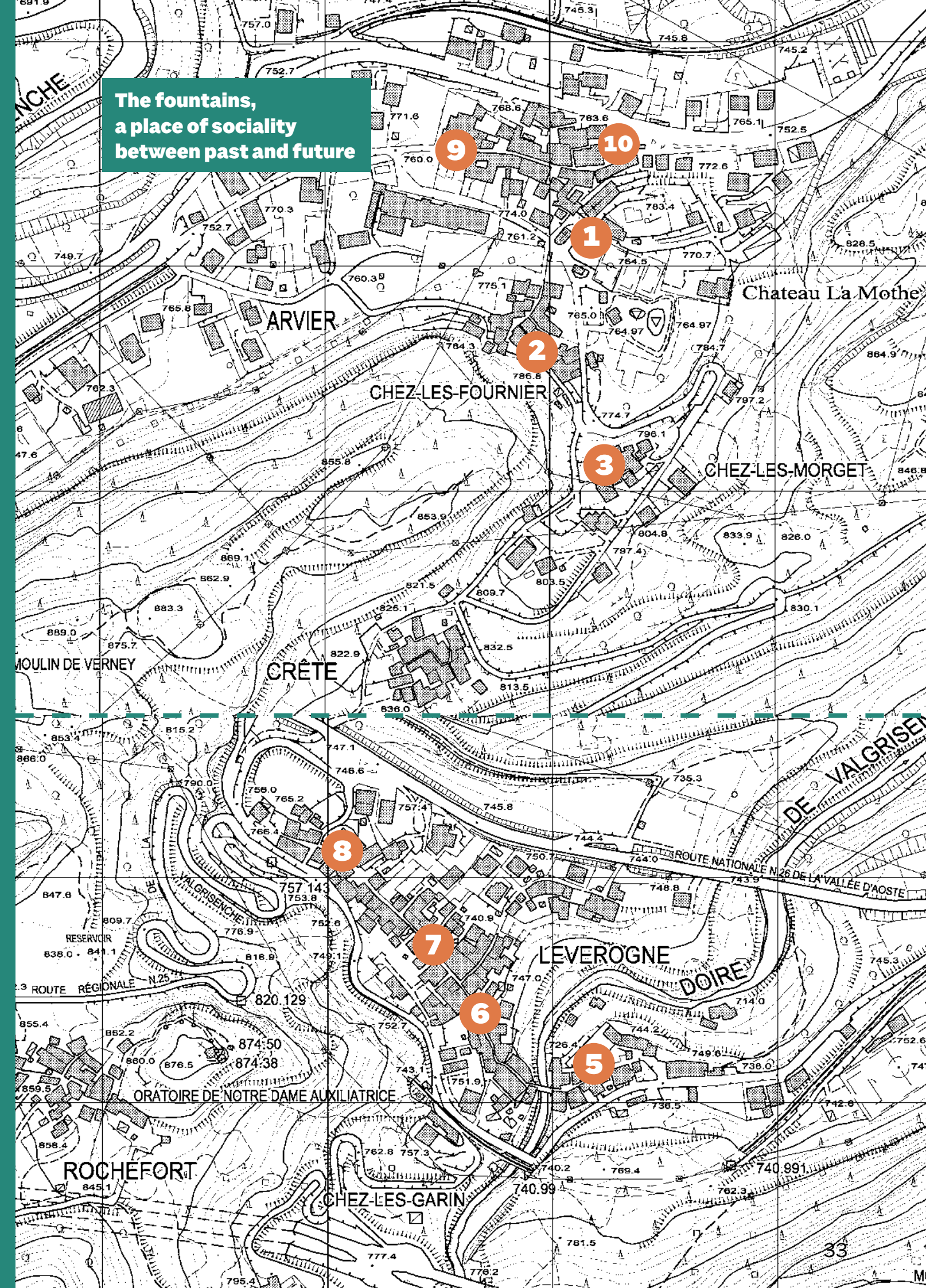
The fountains

Along the fountains of Arvier and Leverogne, between the village centre and the outlying hamlets, we placed eight photographs from the local archive. They are not images of the fountains: they are moments of collective life — celebrations, work, encounters — that belong to the same community, the same water, the same territory.

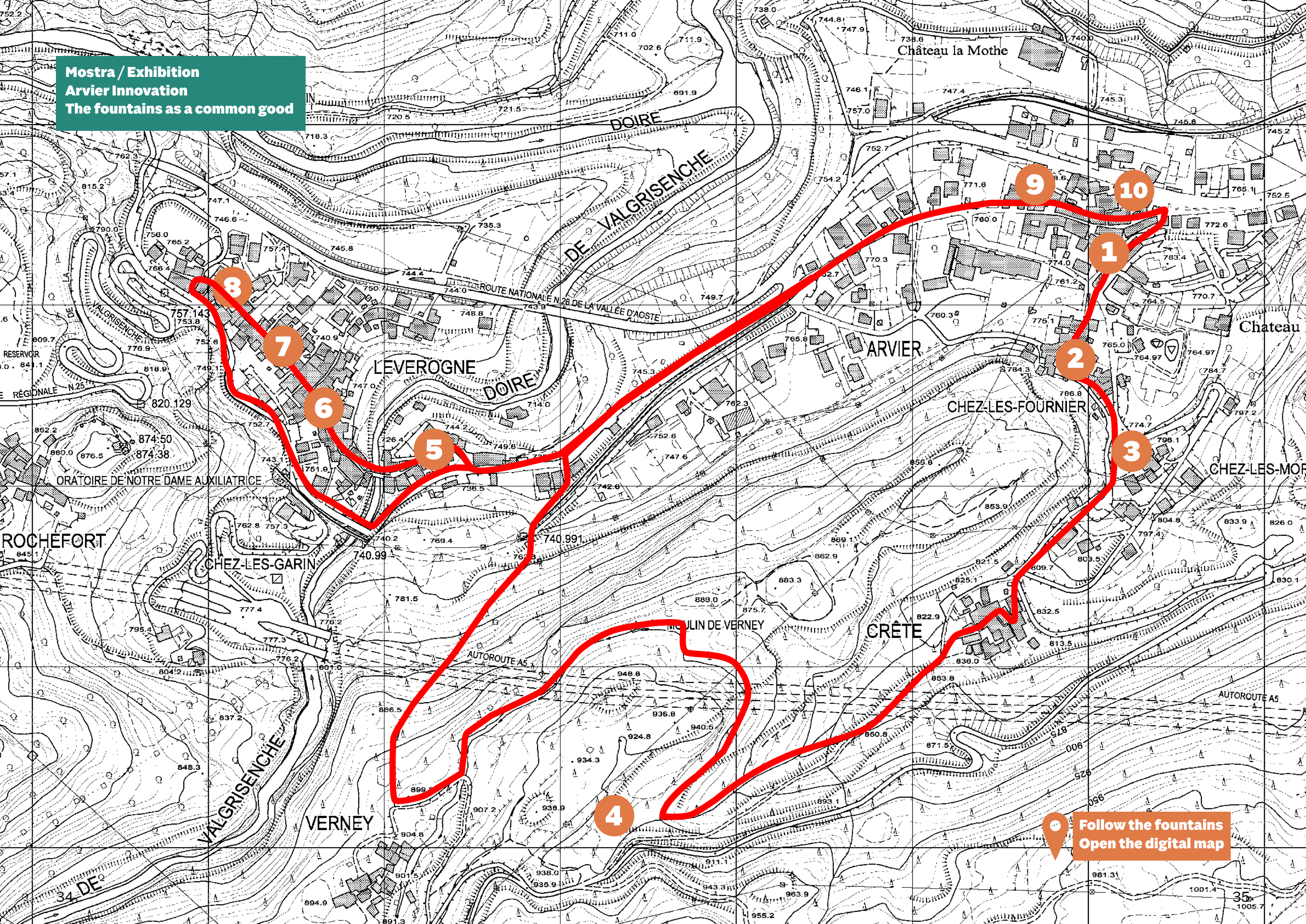
The fountains were common infrastructures: built collectively, maintained through the *corvées*, used by everyone without belonging to anyone. Like the *rus* that still run through the woods above the village today, they were the result of an implicit pact between generations: I take care of this place because you will too — and so did those who came before.

Arvier Innovation worked around the theme of water for six months, with eleven professionals and with the inhabitants. What emerged clearly is that the question of water is always also a question about community: who decides, who maintains, who uses, who benefits.

The photographs along the path carry that question out of meeting rooms and into the places where the answer has always lived. Each photograph is accompanied by a QR code linking to this booklet: an invitation to continue the reflection begun while walking.



Mostra / Exhibition
Arvier Innovation
The fountains as a common good



Follow the fountains
Open the digital map

Common goods, yesterday and tomorrow

In a mountain territory like that of Arvier and Leve-rogne, the pastures and cultivated land have hosted for centuries a heroic form of agriculture and livestock farming, founded on the tenacious character of the Valdostan mountain people and on a visceral bond with their land.

At the centre of everything was water management. The rus — irrigation canals built from the thirteenth century onwards — are masterpieces of collective engineering: networks that captured glacial waters and carried them for kilometres across the valley floors. They were kept alive by the corvées: every landowner was required to show up for the cleaning and maintenance of the canals. Without them, the entire network would have stopped.

linor Ostrom, Nobel laureate in economics, demonstrated that neither the market nor the state alone are sufficient: common goods survive over time only when communities themselves take care of them. Depopulation and modernisation have cracked this equilibrium — but something is moving. More and more mountain communities are rediscovering collective management as a lever for regeneration. It is in this context that the physical legacy of the Agile Arvier project takes its place — the Agile Agorà, the Espace T, the Museum of the Alpine Future, the Museum of Sacred Art. Not just public works, but spaces that exist insofar as the community chooses to inhabit them and care for them. Like the rus of centuries past, they require the active presence of those who live there — and they pose to Arvier and Leverogne the same ancient challenge: to recognise themselves as a community through the care of the common good.



Marco Del Fiore

urban planner and researcher, FULL Lab, Politecnico di Torino

Marco Del Fiore was in residence in Arvier in May 2026. Together with Caterina Salvo, he developed the interpretive framework and presentation of the residencies that preceded them, of which this booklet and the accompanying exhibition are the result

Who will inhabit the mountain tomorrow?

The depopulation of the mountains, which began towards the end of the nineteenth century with the first waves of emigration to cities and abroad, has never truly stopped. This sliding downhill is one of the main factors of mountain fragility — the cause of its abandonment, including political abandonment.

In recent years something has shifted. A renewed interest in small villages far from urban centres has produced a change in mindset: living in the mountains has become for many an aspiration, an ambition. Often these are people in their thirties and forties, with solid professional backgrounds, who have lived in cities and want to move away from them.

But for their presence to translate into care for the territory, concrete conditions are needed. Housing above all: in many mountain areas, the expansion of short-term tourist rentals has reduced the availability of long-term accommodation, making it difficult to put down roots precisely where new inhabitants are most needed.

Tourism is a resource, not an enemy — but it must be managed. The concrete risk is building models that work for visitors and hollow out the meaning of place for those who live there.

The workshops led by the researchers in residence attempted to do exactly this: to give the community the tools to recognise its own value and identity, in order to negotiate it over time — including with those who will arrive in the future — and to keep Arvier lived-in and alive.



Caterina Salvo

designer and researcher, Tracciaminima APS

Caterina Salvo was in residence in Arvier in May 2026. Together with Marco Del Fiore, she developed the interpretive framework and presentation of the residencies that preceded them, of which this booklet and the accompanying exhibition are the result

Thank you

A thank you to all participants — from occasional visitors to those who followed the entire journey.

Francesco Scagliotti, Jil Martinet, Elide Sage, Lucrezia Thomain, Mario Demicheli, Andrea Di Bernardo, Martine Dayné, Paola Verney, Anna Mele, Monia Rutigliani, Marco Vagliasindi, Francesco Maria Gentile, Gabriella Carrieri, Stefania Scalise, Nicole Domaine, Cristina Marquis, Lara Domaine, Nathalie Argentour, Jose Cordillo Garcia, Daniele Ietri, Céline Pellissier, Riccardo Taolin, Elena Origoni, Alessio Floccari, Sylvie Pignet, Danielle Olmi, Josianne Godioz, Salvina Perrier, Thierry Perrier, Ilaria Maracchi, Diego Masiello, Emilia Berthod, Luciano Bisson, Alice Tomasoni, Vilma Cianci, Mien Barrel, Jean-Marc Perrier, Aline Vierin, Roberto Ronc, Andrea Clusaz, Mauro Vallet, Danilo Thomain, Roberto Perrier, Luciano Joris, Leo Martinet, Vilma Thomain, Eleonora Mastropietro, Greta Papaveri, Mauro Lucianaz, Richard Riblan, Daniel Clusaz, Nicolas Batua, Christian Alleyson, Giuliana Lombardi, Fabien Pellissier, Francesca Vuillen, Valentina Barone, Don Tonino, Hélène Perrier, Samuel Carpinella, Corrado Luboz, Paola Vettoretto, Valentina Solwei, Rosario Mele, Gabriele Orlandi, Sonia Faccin, Axel Bongiovanni, Aurora Alimentato, Franz Rossi, Camilla Cugnod, Francesco Rota, Carlotta Marricco, Daria Ferraris, Mathieu Gorelli, Vasco Vuillermoz, Soufyane Marmoucha.

Organisers

Fondazione Santagata per l'Economia della Cultura

Fondazione Santagata per l'Economia della Cultura is an independent organisation based in Turin, active in the promotion and valorisation of cultural heritage and the creative industries. Founded in 2018, it advances sustainable development and innovation through research, training and strategic support, collaborating with local and international institutions. In 2023 it received official recognition as a Foundation in Official Relations with UNESCO.

Netural Coop Impresa Sociale

Netural Coop is a creative and cultural social enterprise specialising in consulting, service design and the development of innovative processes and products, with the aim of unlocking the potential of territories, communities and organisations through social innovation and sustainability. It is based in Matera and Gorizia, the city where it launched the coworking and coliving projects of Casa Netural.

Il team

Fondazione Santagata: Paola Borrione, Riccardo Ramello, Ana Maria Banescu, Virginie Deguillame, Andrea Porta, Erica Meneghin.

Netural Coop Impresa Sociale: Andrea Paoletti, Maria Teresa Cirone, Giovanna Vizziello, Samuele Biagioni.

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