

Parco dei Colli of Bergamo (Bergamo Hills Park) and Bio-district of Social Agriculture

Parco dei Colli (Hills Park) is located in the province of Bergamo and includes a large area in the municipalities of Almé, Bergamo, Mozzo, Paladina, Ponteranica, Ranica, Sorisole, Torre Boldone, Valbrembo, Villa d'Almé. The park covers an area of about 4,700 hectares, located between 244 and 1146 m. altitude. It is a territory with rather heterogeneous physical and morphological characteristics, which encloses both natural and architectural beauties of great value, such as the Giongo Reserve or the historic centre of Città Alta.

The headquarter of Parco dei Colli is in the ancient Benedictine monastery of Valmarina, which is located in the Valmarina valley, in the municipality of Bergamo, characterized by a picturesque landscape composed of grassy terraces and crops.

The presence of a Benedictine female monastery in the area is attested since 1150. The building housed a small community of Benedictine nuns; the recent restoration has made it possible to preserve and enhance the "canonical" rooms of Benedictine life (church, refectory, chapter house).

In February 2017, the Assembly of Parco dei Colli approved the participation in the Bio-district of social agriculture of Bergamo and made available - as the headquarter of the Bio-district - a space in the former Monastery of Valmarina.

The Bio-district project is promoted by "Agricoltura sociale Lombardia" together with the Province of Bergamo and Aiab (Italian Association for Organic Agriculture in Lombardy) and it includes associations of organic producers, social cooperatives and municipal administrations of the urban belt.

The objective is twofold: on the one hand, it aims to extend the organic method in agriculture; on the other hand, it favours the introduction of disadvantaged people in new work paths.

This project aims to create, through networking, a new vision of agriculture and a model of development that integrates the economic aspect with the social one.