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The contribution of geoheritage to the community maps of the Comuniterrae Project (Sesia Val Grande UNESCO Global Geopark)

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Geoheritage is recognized as a component of the cultural heritage of a territory. In areas officially recognized as geoparks (i.e., members of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Networks) the mixture between social and scientific values is evidently strong, and the "dialogue" between cultural (s.s.) and geological resources is further strengthened. In the framework of participation projects, parish or community maps, namely maps collaboratively produced by the residents of a given place, often representing local knowledge and resources, are an opportunity for local development and for heritage conservation, that finds its roots in the very sense of place. Community maps help people in keeping a link with history, identity, knowledge and memories of the places building the collective memory. The Comuniterrae project (http://www.comuniterrae.it/), awarded with the *European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award 2019*, is a cultural participated project started in January 2017 with the construction of the Community Maps of the Middle Lands and the future setting up of an Ecomuseum for the protection of the cultural heritage and the sustainable development of the territory. 10 municipalities (i.e., Middle Lands), whose territory is partly included in the Val Grande National Park, are involved, for a total of more than 300 recognized and labelled sites and common goods. Often, this social heritage, either material or intangible, is indissolubly linked to the geological and geomorphological background of the site. In this framework, at some of the Comuniterrae heritage sites, the geological features strongly influence the cultural heritage recognized by local communities. These aspects are particularly relevant in the Sesia Val Grande UNESCO Global Geoparks "where stone becomes culture". The aim of this research is to bring to light this strong relation inside the Comuniterrae area, where for each municipality the most representative sites, among all those mapped by local communities, will be selected. The final choice will derive from different steps of selection and classification according to specific criteria: i) the distinction between natural or artificial geofeatures; ii) the typology of relation in term of vicinity or remoteness of the geofeatures to the sites; iii) the use of, or adaptation to, or modification of geofeatures by Man. Moreover, a survey was distributed to one representative for each municipality for collecting more inputs about georesources on their own territory, and for investigating the effective interest of representative, a sort of spokesperson of the community, in such practices. They contributed significantly, indicating specific geofeatures for each municipality and recognizing the important role of such elements in building the collective memory. The final aim is to enhance the role of georesources in defining local heritage, also through the participatory approach involving local communities.