NEWS LESSON

Can Art Give an Italian Village a Future?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Would you live in a beautiful village with very few neighbours?
2. What makes a place feel alive beyond having visitors?
3. Can an arts event change how people see a town?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**valley**	☐	A	shared by two or more people or groups
2	**permanently**	☐	B	small, cheap hotels
3	**community**	☐	C	low land between two hills or mountains
4	**contemporary**	☐	D	public shows of art or other things
5	**joint**	☐	E	of the present time, modern
6	**exhibitions**	☐	F	people who plan an event and make it happen
7	**guesthouses**	☐	G	the people who live in one place
8	**organisers**	☐	H	for always, not just for a short time

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Civita has tourists, beauty and a new art prize, but the ground beneath it is disappearing.

1 The bridge to Civita di Bagnoregio hangs high above a valley. Visitors walk across it towards stone houses, narrow streets and a view that looks almost unreal. Then they look down. Rain and wind are slowly wearing away the soft rock beneath the village. Parts of the hill have already disappeared. Civita is beautiful, famous and in physical danger, which is why local people have long called it the Dying Town.

2 The village was founded more than 2,500 years ago, but only a small number of people now live permanently in its old centre. Tourists turn up in large numbers at busy times, then leave again. A crowded afternoon can hide the harder question: who will live and work there all year? A real community needs safe buildings, services and jobs, not only visitors taking photographs.

3 In October 2026, Italy's culture minister announced that Civita and the nearby town of Bolsena had won the title of Italian Capital of Contemporary Art for 2028. Their joint project will receive one million euros for cultural activities. The plan includes art projects, events and spaces where creative people can work. Organisers also hope to involve young people and schools. These are plans for the years ahead, not results yet.

4 The announcement is good news for the area. Exhibitions and cultural events could bring visitors at different times of the year and encourage people to stay longer. Local cafés, guesthouses and small businesses may benefit. Art could also give young people more reasons to study and work nearby instead of moving to a bigger city. But attracting tourists is not the same as building a community where people want to live all year.

5 There is also a problem that art cannot solve on its own. Civita's hill is still slowly changing, and protecting its buildings needs engineering work and money. The new cultural title offers a chance to look beyond the village's famous views and think about its future. Whether it succeeds will depend on what happens after the visitors have gone home. A village needs more than attention to stay alive.

Sources: Ministero della Cultura. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The village has fewer than twenty permanent residents. T F NG
2. Civita won the title on its own, without any other town. T F NG
3. People first built Civita over 2,500 years ago. T F NG
4. Civita and Bolsena will be given a million euros for cultural work. T F NG
5. The plans for the arts programme have already produced results. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

attention	crowded	encourage	engineering	expensive	improve	services

1. Cheap train tickets could _____ more people to visit in winter.
2. Shops, buses and doctors are all _____ that a village needs.
3. The streets are so _____ at lunchtime that it is hard to walk.
4. Repairing an old bridge is difficult and needs a lot of _____ work.
5. The news gave the little town a lot of _____ from newspapers and television.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. The village _____ more than 2,500 years ago. (FOUND)
2. Only a small number of people now _____ permanently in the old centre. (LIVE)
3. Parts of the hill have already _____ . (DISAPPEAR)
4. Italy's culture minister _____ the award in October 2026. (ANNOUNCE)
5. Organisers also hope _____ young people and schools. (INVOLVE)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Many phrasal verbs are a verb plus a small word. The small word, such as down or away, changes the meaning, so choose the one that fits the whole idea.

along	away	beyond	down	on	through	up

1. The bridge is very high, so some visitors are afraid to look _____ into the valley.
2. Young people may drift _____ if the village has no jobs for them.
3. Whether the plan succeeds will depend _____ what happens after the festival.
4. A good plan must look _____ the festival and think about the next ten years.
5. In summer the village fills _____ with visitors.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What would persuade younger people to stay in a small town?
2. Would you rather protect a place exactly as it is or let it change?
3. What should still be there after a big cultural festival ends?

9 Role-play: how to spend the money

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · a neighbour who wants practical repairs

Your small town has won 100,000 euros. You think the money should pay for a safer bridge and a better bus service. Explain why, and ask your neighbour two questions about their idea.

Student B · a neighbour who wants an art festival

Your small town has won 100,000 euros. You think the money should pay for an art festival that brings visitors and young people. Explain why, and ask your neighbour two questions about their idea.

Useful phrases

I'd rather spend the money on something people can use.

That's a fair point, but it won't last.

What would happen if nobody came?

I'm not sure that's the best idea.

We're not going to agree on everything.

Could we split the money between both plans?

Afterwards, tell the class: how did you decide to spend the money, and was it a fair deal?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 C · 2 H · 3 G · 4 E · 5 A · 6 D · 7 B · 8 F

4 True, false or not given

1 NG · 2 F · 3 T · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 encourage · 2 services · 3 crowded · 4 engineering · 5 attention

6 Verb forms

1 was founded · 2 live · 3 disappeared · 4 announced · 5 to involve

7 Language focus

1 down · 2 away · 3 on · 4 beyond · 5 up

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