

Earthquake victims promised a school. But the non-profit organisation has disappeared

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An avant-garde school to revive the community in Abruzzo, which was hit by the earthquake. The project was good, but then it all fell through; in L'Aquila, the people have heard nothing for months, either about the school, or about the promoters of the intervention, the non-profit organisation "L'Aquila Nuova", from Gallarate. **"They've disappeared, just vanished,"** says **Pietro Di Stefano**, the councillor for town planning in L'Aquila.

The project began months ago, with the setting up of a non-profit organisation in Gallarate; **the association (headed by Roberto Bulegato**, a businessman who operates in the renewable energy sector) **presented to L'Aquila the idea of an avant-garde school**, with a layout in the shape of a bird, equipped, in particular, with photovoltaic panels and heat pumps, to make it energy-independent. It was to be made in Assergi, and have a primary school and dedicated rooms for teaching science. "On the land nearby, which is owned by the "Gran Sasso" physics laboratory, there was also the idea of creating a park, for renewable energies, and laboratories for the children," explained **Luigi Faccia**, a town councillor in L'Aquila.

In Gallarate, the idea received the support of the council, Varese Province, and **the ISIS college, who produced the preliminary design** and part of the working plan **free of charge**. In May, a conference was held to present the environmentally sustainable school, and a collaboration was begun with an institute in Abruzzo. The school should have been a credit to the area, a centre of attraction that encouraged people to move to the new town. Initial meetings were held with L'Aquila city council, followed by **the signing, in June 2010, of a commitment protocol** between the Gallarate non-profit organisation, and L'Aquila Council and Province. "There were a number of difficulties in producing the commitment protocol, particularly in relation to the area. There were disagreements between the town-planning office and the donors, but nothing significant," Faccia remembers.

However, once the protocol had been signed, it all went silent. "They disappeared, just vanished," Di Stefano said. "We contacted them again in spring, they told us that they would call the association to a meeting to decide." That was in May 2011, and now, months later, the silence continues and the matter has become public, thanks to the online newspaper "AbruzzoWeb".

As months pass, it would appear that the project has come to a halt, as the chairman of the non-profit organisation, Roberto Bulegato, explains. **The school should have funded itself in part**, thanks to the income guaranteed by the **incentives on renewable sources**, that is, thanks to the roof covered with photovoltaic panels. The fact is that, in December 2010, the "old" incentives expired, and were replaced by a much less advantageous system. They don't have any answers in L'Aquila, in fact, they seem to be rather disappointed by the whole story. "We would have been very happy to have a new school," Di Stefano concludes, "but we have great dignity, we aren't going to chase them up."

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