Adopt an olive tree—and breathe new life into Spanish village

February 12 2019, by Adrien Vicente

Of roughly 100,000 centuries-old olive trees abandoned in the Oliete area, more than 7,000 have been revived by the adoption project launched four years ago. Here the project's website is advertised by an abandoned grove

"They're over 500 years old," says Sira Plana proudly as she points to Oliete's olive groves, many of which are thriving now thanks to an

adoption scheme that has prevented this northeastern Spanish village from dying out.

For an annual fee of 50 euros ($57), some 2,500 sponsors receive photos of their olive tree by mobile phone, along with two litres (half a gallon) of olive oil annually.

As well as the satisfaction of knowing their money will be ploughed back into the local economy and help create jobs, sponsors also get to name their tree.

"We tried to do it in a way that people would get emotionally involved in the project," said Plana, co-founder of "Adopt an Olive Tree", standing between trees loaded with ripe olives.

Spain is the world's largest producer of olive oil and Plana said that when people explain why they decided to sponsor a tree "in the majority of cases, it is very, very emotional... linked to a relative, a child, grandfather, an olive plantation".

Her grandfather was once veterinarian in this village, currently home to just 364 people, down from some 2,500 people a century ago.

Of around 100,000 centuries-old olive trees abandoned in the area around Oliete, more than 7,000 have been revived by the adoption project launched four years ago.

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