

"From urban revitalization of a public space to the new participative rules for commons care in the city of Bologna"

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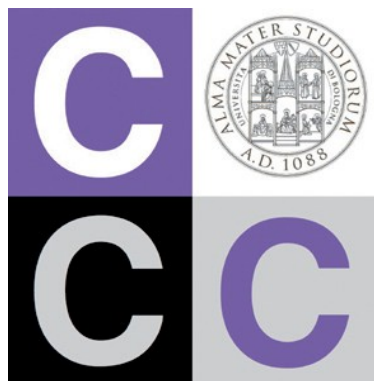
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A) DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY:

CONTEXT- HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

WHY?

WHO?

HOW?

B) ANALYSIS:

SOME CRITICAL ASPECTS

OUTCOMES

KEY DIMENSIONS IMPLIED AND CHALLENGES

Normative frame and institutional settings for participation and urban planning

- Regional Law - L.R. 20/2000: General regulation of the safeguard and use of territory- Art. 8. Citizen participation in the planning process
- 2008 the Municipality of Bologna approved the new **Municipal Structural Plan (*Piano Strutturale Comunale - PSC*)**, a planning tool defined by regional laws (L.R. 20/2000). The Structural Plan is valid for the mid-long term (around fifteen years) and lays down the general aims, then interpreted by the **Municipal Operative Plan (*Piano Operativo Comunale – POC*)** approved in 2010, and by **Urban Building Code (*Regolamento Urbanistico Edilizio – RUE*)** approved in 2009.
Art. 40 (PSC): “Participation”: innovation, efficacy of public action and governance, care and active Citizenship
- 2010, Regional Law for the promotion of participatory process for the definitions of regional and local policy.
- 2014: Municipal Rules for the collaboration between citizens and administration for the urban commons care and regeneration.

Citizen engagement

The Municipality of Bologna promoted citizens involvement and participation in different forms and with different instruments and modalities:

- Information and involvement of the **local de-centralised Municipality Agencies (“Quartieri”)**
- Organisation of a permanent exhibition about the development of the city masterplan held in the urban centre in order to disseminate up-to-date information to the citizens
- Public Forum opened to associations and citizens
- Economic and social stakeholders involvement in round tables aiming at deepening particular subjects
- Some important transformation areas of the city are planned through local participative processes, **the so-called Laboratori di Quartiere, Neighbourhoods Workshops**

From the urban renewal project “Bella fuori” to the new set of rules for commons care in the city of Bologna

2007- 2009: Urban renewal project “Bella fuori”

2012- till now: Neighbourhoods Workshops about commons' care

WHY?

The project „Bella fuori”

- Promoted by the Municipality of Bologna and the „Del Monte Foundation” (financing the project) with the aim of revitalize each year a peripheral area of the city, located „outside” the city centre, with the same attention for the „beauty” usually given to the city centre.
- Basic assumption: **„new urban centralities”**
- In agreement with the Municipal Administration, for the second edition of the project (2007-2009), the San Donato neighbourhood was chosen as the urban area for **revitalization** and, in particular, the two public garden areas in via Garavaglia: the “Renato Bentivogli” public garden and the new „Francesco Zanardi” civic centre area.
- The space was in neglected condition and bisected by a driveway. The need for regeneration arises from the will **to strengthen the centrality of a public space** on which new district headquarter, public buildings utilized by cultural and social associations, a number of stores, overlook.
- The project path began in 2007 with a first participated workshop, in 2009 a physical redevelopment of the square was carried out and in 2010 the new public space has been inaugurated

WHY?

Commons ' care in the neighbourhood San Donato

- During the project „Bella Fuori” a new necessity emerged: the need to put the attention on the dimension of **„care” of the public space re-qualified.**
- During the process emerged also the difficulty of implementation of the outcomes emerging by the participatory planning because of the “fixed bureaucratic machine” of P. A.
- These two types of problemes brought to the decision of implement, in 2012 and 2013, a second stage of participatory planning with a specific aim of activation of the inhabitants to promote the care of the new public space (which still continues)

In 2013 arised the opportunity of connect this new phase of the project into a broader **project named „Cities as commons”**, promoted by Labsus -Laboratory for the subsidiarity- with the aim of experiment, in different area of the city, Neighbourhoods Workshops about commons' care and to elaborate a **new set of rules for the collaborations between the public administrations and citizens in the regeneration of urban commons**

WHO?

- Municipality of Bologna;
- Fondazione del Monte (banking Foundation);
- Neighbourhood San Donato;
- Architects - Toppetti Egidi Architetti" studio in Rome. – selected through a public planning competition, which was called to reconcile planning requirements with the needs expressed by residents;
- Associations;
- Citizens of the district with particular attention to the different age groups (youth, adults and the elderly);
- Labsus, in collaboration with "Antartide" Association

HOW?

Process was conducted in different steps:

Step 0: pre-selection of three architecture atelier

Step 1: presentation of the objectives by the institutions and district citizens listening on the possible transformation of public space.

Step 2: presentation of projects (alternatives) and pre-assessment carried out by citizens concerning the three hypotheses presented

Step 3: participatory discussion and refinement of the selected project

Step 4: project implementation and starting up associated with a public roll-out event

Step 5: activation of a group of citizens for the care and supervision of the public space

Step. 6: participatory planning of activities for a "House of commons" - a building made available by the municipality for the group of citizens- and for the new "square-garden"

Step 7: "formal" setting up of citizens committee to care for the commons

Step 8: Assignment of the building – „House of commons” and Pact of Collaboration

HOW

Set of methodologies:

During the different phases have been used various participatory techniques including:

Focus groups

Interviews

Urban planning walk

Open SpaceTechnology

Planning for real

Workshop for the elaboration of a desired *vision* of public space

CRITICAL ASPECTS

- In the implementation phase of the project a group of citizens and some traders who had not actively participated in the first stage of the trail have harshly questioned some of the choices made, including in particular the full pedestrianization of the road that divided the garden into two parts.
- This conflict raised by mobility (later overcame) highlights some limitations of the information and listening process previous to the project phase itself;
- Difficulties of space management. Example: in the stage following its realization, the new space has been very successful, especially among young people who have begun to make an intensive use, but sometimes with little attention to the care of the place.

OUTCOMES

- The process is certainly a good practice for the use of different interaction tools mutually coordinated, to set up in a short time a space featured by quality and for the success of such space experienced by the district citizens who use it in different seasons and at different times of the day.
- Every step of the path has been accompanied with reports that were used to guide the decisions of the neighborhood and municipality representative bodies.
- Three types of **impacts**:
 - a) it's come to a **transformation of a place not previously used into a square / garden** with functioning as urban center for both the neighborhood and the city.
 - b) creation of **new forms of urban public spaces management**: the Municipality has made available a building for a "house of commons". It has also facilitated the activation of a group of citizens for the oversight and animation of these indoor and outdoor spaces.
 - c) the operational experimentation path of civic management forms of public spaces has partly contributed to the **elaboration of a recent municipal set of rules for a new way of care of the commons based on shared administration model**.

In conclusion

Some key dimensions implied

- From the urban participatory planning of a public space to a shared taking care of the space
- Idea of public space as “commons”
- Circular subsidiarity- Shared Administration
- Shared social responsibilities (involving private and public sector together)
- Mutual trust
- Engagement of citizens and informal groups, not only associations-“organized interests”

Challenges and critical dimensions:

- Sustainability of the process and sense ownership
- Normative framing of practices of shared responsibilities and collaboration
- De-responsibilization vs reciprocal support
- Political and cultural framing of Responsibility
- Long term process of cultural change of Public Administration



Thank You

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