

Transformation and Revitalization of Under-Used or Abandoned Areas

Title: Short Description providing a concise overview of the project in 1-2 sentences. Highlight the core idea and what the transformation aimed to achieve.

innovative experiences in abandoned areas of Rome, through bottom up initiatives and active citizenship, aimed at sharing common values, developing territorial well-being and protecting the environment.

1. The Problem: Understanding the Space

Describe the state of the area before revitalization. Was it abandoned, underused?

In 2017, the European programme URBACT recognised Rome as a “Good Practice city” for its participatory model of bottom-up governance of abandoned public spaces, underlining its character as a resilient city, thanks to the strong active citizenship existing in Rome. Below are some examples of the Roman experience to reclaim several decayed urban areas in order to enhance the area's environmental value and implement community urban gardens :

1. Borough of Rome XI - South Western peri urban area of Rome : Urban gardens in the historical Park of “Valle dei Casali” (Farmhouses Valley) <http://www.ortiurbanivalledeicasali.it>.

2. Borough of Rome VIII – Southern peri-urban area of Rome: 2.1 “Ortolino” Community Urban gardens in Tintoretto street and Tor Carbone Community urban gardens in - <https://ortolino.it/>

2.2 Tor Carbone area is included within the Archaeological Park of Appian Way since 2002. In 2012, the citizens association of “Orti urbani sociali Tor Carbone Onlus” was created <https://www.ortiurbanitorcarbone.it>, made up of a group of residents who wanted to reclaim the soil of this area polluted by materials deriving from hospital management,.

2.3 An abandoned farmhouse in the “Garibaldi” school area (Francesco Morandini street), was transformed into an integrated social cooperative whose owners are young people (now adults) with severe autism spectrum disorder and students Garibaldi school <https://garibaldi.coop/>.

2.4 Abandoned historic buildings located in “via del Porto Fluviale” that have been occupied for years by homeless citizens and with beautiful “murales” made by street artists. Through a participatory process these buildings were then under urban redevelopment. They are currently being recovered and restored, through Next Generation EU funds, to be assigned again to the citizens who had occupied them. The artists who created the “murales” agreed to remove them for the recovery of the buildings by the Local Authority of Rome as the objective has been achieved, namely the recovery and assignment of the houses to the citizens who had occupied them.

2. Strategy, Methodology or Approach (How to?)

Detail the main actions/ steps taken to transform the space. (e.g., community engagement, collaborative management, public-private partnerships, temporary or permanent re-use). Include the stakeholders involved

Active citizenship is a characteristic of Rome that arises from the social commitment of citizens in the fight for the right to both land and housing that began in the 70s. It is a voluntary act of citizens to urge local government to ensure citizens' rights. After the economic crisis of 2008, this cultural movement of active citizenship for the use of abandoned common and public goods has grown a lot in Rome. Citizens formed social promotion associations (APS), in law (APS was introduced and regulated in the Italian legal system by Law 7 December 2000), which are non-profit organisations established for the purpose of carrying out activities of social utility for the benefit of members or third parties. The associations rely exclusively on membership fees for the management of common goods. Events organized over the years allow for the collection of additional funds, which however are limited and allow only a few small projects to be realized. For larger projects, always aimed at the well-being of the community, not only of the gardens, but also of the territory, significant funding is needed, which must necessarily come from donations and

national and European funds. In 2015 the regulation of urban gardens was approved by the City Assembly of Rome, which gave new impetus to the inhabitants to form APS associations to manage common goods. Of fundamental importance is the approval in 2024 by the City assembly of Rome of the latest new Regulation of urban gardens developed together with the city associations through European funding from the URBACT Programme in which the former Regulation dated 2015 was improved and the equipment of a garden was incorporated (water connection, small houses, shelters, toilets, etc.).

3. Results and Impact: The Transformation

Describe the immediate and/or long-term results or outcomes of the project. (e.g. the social, economic, or environmental benefits, such as increased public use, job creation, cultural activities, or ecological restoration). When possible, include some data outcomes like the percentage increase in area usage, economic revenue growth, or reduction in environmental hazards.

In these last years, thanks to the Citizens Associations the City of Rome has carried out activities and implemented many projects for the transformation and revitalization of Under-Used or Abandoned Areas. Therefore, the local government has had extraordinary support in the urban regeneration processes by acting on listening to citizens. In addition, we have experienced in recent years that the citizens associations create a suitable substrate for the development of people's sociality as it becomes a particular form of social inclusion for all ages, all different cultures and ethnics of people and all psychosocial conditions.

4. Lesson Learned

Summarize one key takeaway or lesson learned or insight gained from the project.

“We like to work in groups and we believe that good results, in terms of new projects and future initiatives aimed at pursuing environmental protection models to mitigate pollution and safeguard health, can only be achieved with everyone's contribution”.

This is what was expressed by one of the representatives of the city associations of the above-mentioned projects that I interviewed for the purposes of this pitch.

