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# Enhancing Human and Urban Capital: A Value-Oriented Approach

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## **Abstract**

Cultural Heritage (CH), in its tangible and intangible dimension, can represent an extraordinary engine for sustainable transformation and reactivation processes in abandoned and underused urban spaces. The regenerative potential of CH requires the identification of innovative operating models and strategies, able to strengthen common resources, starting from the acknowledgment and the enhancement of human and urban capital. This value-oriented approach was experimented in the Bologna University area by the EU Horizon 2020 project ROCK—Regeneration and Optimisation of Cultural Heritage in creative and Knowledge cities (GA 730280) through a series of pilot actions. Among them, the temporary transformation of Piazza Rossini.

# 1 Introduction

Many urban and suburban contexts in Europe are affected, in different forms, by physical abandonment of spaces and by the exclusion of vulnerable and underprivileged people from social, economic, cultural and participation chances.<sup>1</sup>

The intense changes experienced by the EU cities over the last century due to the economic model and the market economy, have generated economic growth but have not created equal opportunities for all segments of population. The risk-of-poverty or social exclusion in the EU has steadily declined from its 2012 peak; however, progress in reducing inequality and relative poverty (AROP) has been modest and the income distribution is more unequal today than in the 1980s in almost all Member States<sup>2</sup>: in 2017, 112.8 million people (22.4% of the entire population) in the EU lived in households at risk of poverty or social exclusion.<sup>3</sup> Thus, inequality can therefore be considered one of the main socio-economic challenges in the EU. Risks of poverty or social exclusion are more pronounced for certain types of workers and vulnerable groups.

Educational attainment and skill levels play an important role in determining social inclusion and labour market outcomes. In EU there is still an employability threshold which a high number of people with low educational and skill achievements cannot cross.

Alongside the social consequences, the economic structural changes, the decline of traditional industries economic model and the globalization have led to significant shifts in land occupation patterns that resulted in the creation of so-called 'brownfields' across Europe, particularly in urban areas.

During the urban sprawl process, industrial uses dating back to the nineteenth century have been subject to a persisting displacement pressure and have been moved to peripheral zones or in other Countries, even extra UE. In addition, large areas previously occupied by large scale infrastructures, such as railway and harbour facilities, have been left vacant and constitute huge voids inside or in the outskirts of cities. These dynamics, in terms of pressures creating potentially derelict areas, have been reinforced by speculative land banking. The effect of these factors, along with problems relating to conflicts affecting the interest, use and ownership of the sites, led to a generally large extent of derelict land in urban areas: approximately 40% of the European cities are facing de-densification processes and the emergence of brownfield sites (Haase et al. 2014).

Abandoned and neglected areas can be both inside and outside the cities, can be open spaces or dismissed buildings, large brownfields or residential settlements, such as social housing districts. At present, a reliable estimation of brownfields and abandoned areas in EU is impossible, also due to the lack of a common definition of the concepts. Even where the European countries can

<sup>1</sup> According with the Employment and Social Developments in Europe report in 2016 people at risk-of-poverty or exclusion in EU 28 were the 25,3%. European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Directorate A (2016).

<sup>2</sup> European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) (2020).

<sup>3</sup> EUROSTAT (2019).

provide estimates on the size of problem in their areas, the data are not directly comparable, and include different kinds of sites (Grimski and Ferber 2001). It is not a phenomena limited to suburbs: historical centres are not immune to the presence of disused areas or places where citizens live in a state of degradation and isolation.

A sustainable environment and inclusive economic development cannot be achieved without the reintegration of these sites and their inhabitants, when present, into the social, economic and cultural dynamics of the city. The strategies used by cities to deal with this challenge mainly focus on using the classical instruments of urban planning. Large-scale projects, based on top-down decision, are developed by master plans and investor planning and have sometimes led to economic failure, to real estate valorisation without social benefits or value redistribution, or to gentrification (Magdaniel et al. 2018). New strategies, approaches and solutions are needed to re-activate and re-generate neglected, abandoned urban areas and brownfields.

Although often considered anomalous, and associated with emptiness or lack of productivity, “empty lands” are often at the core of alternative uses by local communities that manage, plan for and otherwise engage with vacant spaces in a variety of both spontaneous or organized and ad hoc ways that represent a pluralism of values and can become Common Goods where culture and creativity enhance multidimensional and multi-scale impacts at urban, metropolitan and regional level. Value, in fact, can also be generated by the material and immaterial dimension of the layering heritage, related to identity and diversity that can be the base for a new value chain.

The following paragraphs propose some reflections about a value-oriented approach to urban regeneration, describing place-based and Cultural Heritage-led strategies, focused on the enhancement of urban and human capital. They are supported and experimented within the research framework of the ROCK EU—Horizon 2020 project (GA 730280), that is approaching its completion. Finally, a pilot action implemented in the city of Bologna is described as testing experimentation of the developed methodology and strategy.

## **2 Heritage-Led Regeneration Potentials in Historic Urban Areas**

Historic urban areas are the principal result of the common Cultural Heritage (later shortened to CH), shaped by layers of values produced by cultures, traditions, experiences, recognized as such in their diversity.<sup>4</sup> Over time, the meaning of CH has been extended from single monuments and manufacts, identified as proper objects of art, to cultural landscapes, historic cities, and serial properties. Moreover, contemporary practice (ratified by ICOMOS at its Madrid General Assembly) expands the concept of heritage beyond “tangible heritage,” to the intangible dimensions of heritage as well; “this means the entirety of the capital

<sup>4</sup> Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Directorate A (2018).

of knowledge derived from the development and experience of human practices, and from the spatial, social and cultural constructions linked to it that may be encapsulated in the word 'memory'.<sup>5</sup>

CH can offer great opportunities to tackle contemporary urban issues. As stated in the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, "urban heritage, including its tangible and intangible components, constitutes a key resource in enhancing the liveability of urban areas, and fosters economic development and social cohesion in a changing global environment. As the future of humanity hinges on the effective planning and management of resources, conservation has become a strategy to achieve a balance between urban growth and quality of life on a sustainable basis".<sup>6</sup>

In order to fully understand the potential of CH as engine for sustainable development, promotion of social cohesion, inclusion and equity, the idea of "heritage" must thus be interpreted in its broader and more extensive meaning, particularly in urban areas: CH is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values.<sup>7</sup>

In this perspective, the Council of the European Union adopted on 20th May 2014 the fundamental document "Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe", which has recognized Cultural Heritage as "a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe".<sup>8</sup> The same vision has been taken into account in several EU projects as a leading course of actions, e.g. Horizon 2020, and by the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As part of human activity, CH produces tangible and intangible representations of the value systems, beliefs, traditions and lifestyles: a common 'urban capital', that configures the space of the shared identity, the memory of the urban system, the stable element in its dynamic change and, at the same time, the transformative potential that is continuously generated during the evolution of the urban process. Urban capital is combined and complementary with the more subjective dimension of the 'human capital' that sums up social and personal attributes such as knowledge, skills and creativity.

The use of the term/concept of 'capital' has the advantage of being immediately understandable, being transversal to different disciplinary areas; however, the term can be interpreted in a reductive economic sense as it embodies the reference to financial assets and to the ability to perform labour so as to produce economic value. This is why Saskia Saassen and other authors prefers the use of the term 'capabilities' instead of 'capital' (Saassen 2012; Borghi 2017).

A systemic transformation, understanding historical city heritage as a common good, can offer the potential to generate new social, economic and sustainable

<sup>5</sup> ICOMOS (2016).

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO (2011).

<sup>7</sup> International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Committee (2002).

<sup>8</sup> Council of the European Union (2014).

environmental virtuous processes.<sup>9</sup> The presence of creative sectors, students, start-ups, social innovation and cultural activities can be seen as factors to tap the potential to regenerate neglected areas into innovation hubs by matching cultural and economic growth, education and training, sustainable and fair entrepreneurial opportunities.

Enhancing the regenerative potential of CH for historic urban areas requires the identification of innovative operating models and strategies, able to strengthen common resources starting from the acknowledgment and the setting up of human and urban capitals and according with an approach that recognizes them as values.

The applicative contexts of these strategies, the historic urban areas, are not limited to historic city centres but include all the layered urban territories that reflect the interaction over time between people and their surroundings. Also brownfields, suburban areas and disused infrastructural service facilities can be the expression of a strong identity shaped by the local social, economic and cultural history. Moreover, historic urban areas are not delimited by rigid borders: they are often inserted in or in continuity with the Cultural Landscape,<sup>10</sup> including gardens, parks and natural corridors, reflecting the strong association with human processes.

## 2.1 Human and Urban Capital as Common Pool Resources for the Re-Activation of Public Spaces

The contemporary city—both in the suburbs and in the central areas—represents a complex context of relationships within which encouraging and experimenting strategies and pilot actions aimed at overcoming urban and social deterioration affecting public spaces and communities.

The growing of population is increasing year-by-year the urban density, leading to the exacerbation of challenges related to sustainability and to urban management. Moreover, criticalities affecting urban spaces and services of common interest— essential to the satisfaction of numerous living needs and functional to the individual and collective well-being of communities—are partly attributable to the citizens' disaffection towards public spaces and services that are perceived as places of nobody rather than places of all. In a vision of the city that considers public spaces as urban commons, collaboration between institutions and civil society is an indispensable and required condition (Iaione and Arena 2012).

The Faro Convention (Fairclough et al. 2014) introduces the concept of “heritage communities” and recognises the “individual and collective responsibility towards cultural heritage”, clarifying the importance of an inclusive

<sup>9</sup> Council of the European Union (2005).

<sup>10</sup> Council of Europe. (2018). European Landscape Convention. Contribution to human rights, democracy and sustainable development. Accessed March 16, 2020, from <https://rm.coe.int/council-of-europe-landscape-convention-contribution-to-human-rights-de/16807bffda>.

and active engagement of “everyone” as well as of the CH adaptive “sustainable use” so as to highlight its ancient and new meanings (Faro Convention 2005). This action of co-responsibility towards commons of collective relevance—concerning production, governance and care of public spaces—finds its resources in the mutual acknowledgment and involvement of the main actors of the urban ecosystem of stakeholders.

This shared responsibility towards the heritage can contribute also to shared value that underpins a common political design for Europe, providing useful inputs for establishing the forthcoming EU Urban Agenda as set through the Pact of Amsterdam<sup>11</sup> which identify in the partnership tool the way to collaborate on an equal footing in the development of common solutions to improve urban areas in the European Union.

In this scenario, human capital and urban capital are intended as active and operable material able to activate the potential transformations of urban areas, creating new networks, enabling different uses and triggering a deep relationship of identity recognition between spaces of the city and local communities.

Thus, “capital” is intended as a common relevance property, to be administered and managed in such a way that the interest of the whole community benefits from it: ideas, experiences, skills, time, relationships and knowledge invested in the management and care of what is common (Arena 2007). Civic resources and capabilities can trigger effective actions of regeneration and transformation through—and above all—the involvement of active citizenship. The development of social cohesion, new forms of participation in public life, the creation of opportunities for meeting and discussion and an assumption of responsibility towards the care of public “affairs” are secondary, but not less important, effects. A process through which understand the effective capability of urban territories and communities to respond to the turnaround that degradation and exclusion conditions of the cities require.

### **3 Possible Integrated Strategies of Boosting Values for Urban Regeneration**

Reversing the abandonment and exclusion trend of historic urban areas goes through the identification of inclusive and integrated step-by-step strategies with a focus on the nexus between urban contexts, entrepreneurial processes and local governance mechanisms, and with the commitment to bring together and encourage individuals, groups and communities in delivering locally-tailored solutions.

In a progressive and people-place-based approach (Hopkins and Ferris 2015), the fundamental starting step point is the acknowledgment of what is already in place, in order to avoid financial, political, social, managing barriers and to make more effective the existing resources. The already existing blueprints—in terms of

<sup>11</sup> Urban Agenda for the EU Pact of Amsterdam (2016).



policies and practices, capacity buildings and connectivity—are to be linked with new networks of collaboration and co-production. The knowledge of local CH treasures, social and cultural opportunities, talents and resources, often unknown to citizens themselves, is fundamental also to stimulate the awareness and sense of belonging of local communities, and to disclose the existing urban and social capital as well as its potential in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities.

In this perspective, to leverage on a requalification based on the key existing enabling factors, and to rebalance urban processes and sustainable growth in historic areas, the possible strategy goes through the following challenges:

1. heritage-led regeneration combined with conservation, taking into account CH sensitivity to change without loss of its cultural/memory values, but opening buildings and spaces to different or unconventional uses and users, avoiding “museification”, “touristification” and gentrification effects;
2. reversing the process of losing memory of heritage that inevitably afflict abandoned spaces through CH-led initiatives, starting from mapping the existing heritage resources to create a dynamic network of people/places linked to the involved areas;
3. light re-industrialisation and innovative manufacturing process linked to historic heritage can be promoted through site-specific and sustainable solutions for a progressive adaptive reuse of heritage to accommodate small scale advanced manufacturing, producers and local ‘makers’, craft workshops etc., sharing responsibilities and developing practical strategies for safeguarding community interests and increasing community values (spatial and relational ones) deriving from CH;
4. strengthening relations among communities and citizens for the value understanding, common generation and exchange; supporting the social, cultural and entrepreneurial initiatives and the related impacts on the socio-economic environment and the ability to actively contribute to community life, particularly overcoming the barriers for women, children, elderly and migrants;
5. up-skilling of workforce through specific programs to promote new entrepreneurship able to generate direct and indirect benefits on the local territories, with the support of local groups of interest as firms, academic players, agencies, and associations that facilitate the reskilling and up-skilling process;
6. peer production starting from the set of resources (human and urban capital) already available in the test bed sites and enhanced through co-design and co-working, pooling the individual efforts of different people, with different capabilities;
7. value re-distribution in terms of knowledge, capabilities, enabling spaces, enabling tools: even in cities with a high rate of innovation and wealth production, the risk is that the different areas grow at different speeds, leaving entire territories and population groups behind. In particular, the gap in access to digitisation and education contributes significantly to this risk;

8. application of skills and knowledges to be addressed through a cross-fertilisation approach among several disciplines such as architecture, urban planning and real estate, data analysis, sociology, economy, joined in a collaborative network applies with the experimenting of new forms of partnership between public and private actors (companies, foundations, universities, associations, etc.).

Into this approach, some trends and drivers can be recognised as important key-factors to be considered in developing new approaches for Cultural Heritage regeneration. According with a literature review made by the authors, these factors are aligned mainly to the following macro-areas:

#### 1. Social Trends and Drivers

- a. Population Growth and Urban Density (need for sustainable growth, newservices, etc....).
- b. Identity/Multicultural Cities/new citizenship and opportunities to access to CH contents (for migrants, poor, disabilities etc....).
- c. Cultural Diversification (both people, services and activities in cities) to increase intangible CH productions.

#### 2. Technological Trends and Drivers

- a. Digital Lifestyle and spread of ICT technologies. The diffusion of ICT(Information and Communication Technologies) devices gives resources and potentially useful instruments for ruling and effectively managing high level of complexity as those concerning cities. These instruments allow the collection and processing of high amount of information, also on real time, which is important for directing more effectively urban strategies and projects, fostering inclusive approaches and the overcoming of cultural barriers.
- b. Smart infrastructure and big data to monitor and analyze regeneration processes.
- c. Enabling technologies for accessibility and fruition of CH.

#### 3. Economic Trends and Drivers

- a. Finance and investments to support the valorization of CH.
- b. Open innovation and community base financing for creative and cultural districts development.
- c. Creative and cultural industry and start ups linked to CH promotion and valorization.

#### 4. Environmental Trends and Drivers

- a. Climate change and urban resilience applied in historic city contexts.
- b. Resource efficiency and circular economy in historic city contexts.

- c. Change of behaviour of cultural institutions and CH users.
5. Political/Governance
- a. Urban planning and urban integrated management for historic city context.
  - b. New policies to increase collaboration between cultural and creative operators.
  - c. Sustainable procurement policies for CH valorization.

Strategies, to be proved effective, must be tested and verified through pilot actions implemented in selected contexts; successful experimentations can allow the transition from the testing phase towards more substantial transformations. Actions may be designed and carried out in limited areas, as significant representative of larger contexts and as part of wider relational systems.

### 3.1 A Value-Oriented Methodological Approach: The EU—ROCK H2020 Project

The experience carried out by the ROCK—Regeneration and Optimization of Cultural heritage in creative and Knowledge cities project (grant agreement n° 730280)<sup>12</sup> can be considered a relevant example to better clarify the above described approach.

This project—funded in 2017 under the H2020 programme in the axis Climate—Greening the Economy, in response to the call “Cultural Heritage as a driver for sustainable growth”—is led by the Municipality of Bologna with scientific coordination of the University of Bologna and involves 10 European Cities and 32 partners.

ROCK overall objective—by relying on an Action Plan for regeneration—is to support a systemic transformation that imply historical city heritage as a common good, capable of generating new social, economic and sustainable environmental processes. The Cultural Heritage-led regeneration strategies promoted by the project, focus on historic city centres with the aim to transform the selected demo areas into Creative, Cultural and Sustainable Districts. The implementation of key actions is aimed at providing new ways to access CH, defining key policy issues and developing a sense of belonging to places. The demo areas are located in central urban sectors that, despite their geographical position and relevance in terms of CH, are lived and perceived as separate from the rest of the city, as well as characterized by the presence of physical and/or social degradation and by underused or poorly used spaces. The mutual exchange of Heritage-led good practices and regeneration initiatives is a very important strategic element: the 7 Role Model Cities (Athens, Cluj-Napoca, Eindhoven, Liverpool, Lyon, Turin and Vilnius), have already implemented successful processes of regeneration and support, through a mentoring action, the 3 Replicator Cities (Bologna, Lisbon and Skopje) in developing similar models in relation to their specific local contexts.

<sup>12</sup> Rock—Cultural Heritage Leading Urban Futures (2020).

The ROCK approach is based on a circular urban model, transferred from the economy model to the urban historic environments. It is based on considering CH as a product to which the same principles of saving and reuse can be applied. CH already in use for specific activities hides other unused potentialities if framed in a less specialized idea of culture: a value-sharing process that must steer city changes both in terms of physical environment and of mindset.

In particular, the underused, misused or abandoned spaces are interpreted as resources to be re-introduced into a continuous positive development cycle that regenerates existing elements, while preserving and conserving them. Creating a circular urban model implies connecting “systems” that were initially separated through not only technical but also organisational and institutional solutions and changes, to be adopted and adapted (Vernay 2013).

ROCK starts from the identification of the specific local systems articulated into:

- system of actors, which constitute the backbone of ROCK, to define the transformation needs, the collaboration pathways, the opportunity creation, fostering the circulation of knowledge and abilities;
- system of places, starting from the pilot areas of ROCK and understanding their relations with the whole urban contexts, circulating solutions, tools, strategies and results of experimentation, to foster the replication of the most effective ones in similar contexts;
- system of initiatives (bottom-up and top-down; collaboration, sponsorship, partnerships, etc.) to promote creativeness and cultural production from different sources, combining them in common projects of regeneration;
- systems of resources (physical resources, financial resources, human capitals) to promote a circulation of flows, overpassing the linear processes in the circular city, from extraction to waste, replacing them by circular processes.

ROCK pilot process is driven by a research-action-research methodology in which the combination of research and action play an essential role in heritage development procedures: research elaborates possible regenerative scenarios, according which site-specific actions are implemented in pilot areas, feedbacks and results are recorded, impacts are verified and recalibrated for the future, and new updated and adjusted scenarios are elaborated again with the support of the research.

The demonstration areas involved by the project are intended as experimental labs where testing and implementing successful practices. Bologna is one of the Replicator cities. A set of coordinated actions has been implemented in the University area—named “U-Zone”—with the aim to transform it in a Sustainable Cultural and Creative District by improving safety, mitigating social conflicts, attracting visitors and tourists, entrepreneurs and private investments, increasing pedestrian flows and slow mobility with new cultural routes.

Like many historic city centres, the U-Zone area is a very complex system of human and urban capitals where many different interests, conflicts and values converge.

The University sector is located inside the historic city centre where a large, mixed and open community of residents, students, homeless, pedestrians, tourists and cultural users daily inhabit, live and pass through with different needs and habits. The scenario of these human dynamics includes important CH testimonies, such as historical palaces, university buildings, the Municipality Opera House, Libraries, Museums, churches, streets, squares. “Via Zamboni”—characterized by the presence of a continuous system of porches which qualifies the image of the whole city of Bologna—is the road axis that physically and ideally crosses and connects the different elements that define this rich, conflictual and vibrant urban scenario (Fig. 1).

The increasing of the student population (about 80,000 students), the migration phenomena, the change in the number and composition of population in the centre (15,000 new residents each year, of which 9,000 Italian), the growing new tourism fluxes, have not been integrated in the social and relational asset of the area. These dynamics has generated phenomena of social conflict between different categories of users and triggered decay and disturb. In particular, the presence of the students, vital and positive per se, is turned into a problematic issue for the coexistence with the residents. The area stands out as one of the main places in Bologna where excluded people from urban dynamics gather and meet and it is perceived by the rest of the city as a separated part. So, nevertheless the richness of the U-Zone in cultural and artistic institutions and museums, this cultural heritage is not fully known and exploited by citizens and tourists.

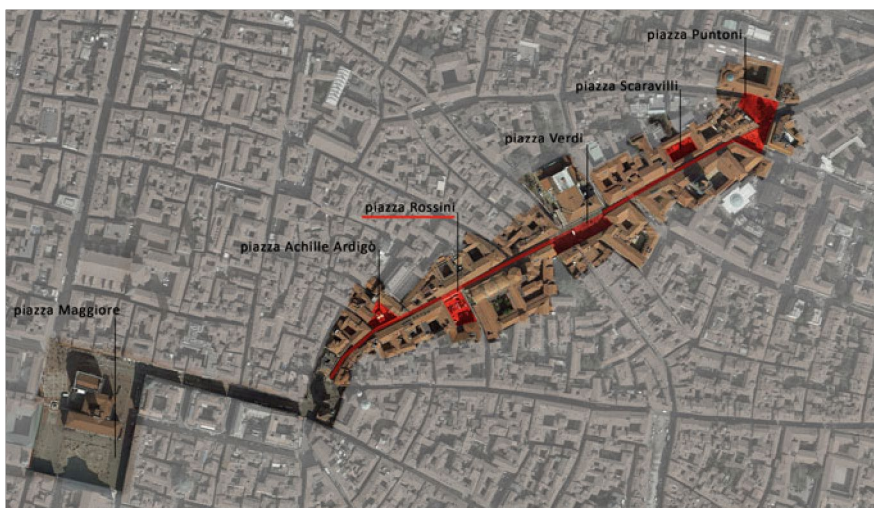


Fig. 1 The U-Zone Five Square highlighted in red, from left to right: Ravennana, Rossini, Verdi, Scaravilli, Puntoni. The red line points out Piazza Rossini, object of the “Green Please: the meadow you don’t expect” temporary project

The design the of the regeneration pilot actions is carried out through the ‘living lab’ approach. A process of community involvement (U-Lab) creates a local Ecosystem of Stakeholders (Institution, University and research area, association,

students, citizens, companies) by relating new and existing blueprints, enabling co-designed and co-construction workshops based on cross-fertilisation among several disciplines (U-Atelier).

Practices of temporary adaptive re-use applied on public spaces with the involvement of communities are strategic tools to experiment an innovative way to build and shape a new shared identity in which people can recognize themselves.

The important role that open and public spaces play in the social and ecological balance of cities, can take on new values linked to social significance in which inclusive design, co-planning, co-construction and co-management of public spaces are fundamental components of the process.

#### **4 Testing the Enhancement of Urban and Human Capital in the Historic Urban Scenario: The Temporary Transformation of Piazza Rossini in Bologna**

During the three years of ROCK project, different types of actions have been carried out in the “U-Zone”, each one inserted in a global vision, concurring to achieve integrated targets and objectives, according with the specific character and vocation of spaces involved.

The experience of adaptive reuse of a historical urban space of the U-Zone in Bologna, Piazza Rossini, is an opportunity to better explain the potential of shared, temporary, value oriented transformations. Afterwards the pilot experience implemented in Piazza Scaravilli—the U-Zone public space where “Malerbe” actions were realized (Fig. 2)<sup>13</sup>—Piazza Rossini goes on in the same direction, confirming the force of human and urban capital in urban regeneration dynamics.

The project for a temporary redefinition of the square, named “Green Please: the meadow you don’t expect”, is the result of a co-design and co-construction workshop for students promoted by ROCK actions with the coordination of Fondazione Innovazione Urbana: for a week, the public space was transformed from parking into a green pedestrian area.

The experimentation is part of a broader strategy of actions that systematically involved all other public spaces of the sector—as recalled by the name of the initiative, “The Five Squares” of the U-Zone—developed in synergy with the programming of Bologna Design Week and Researchers’ Night in September 2019.<sup>14</sup> A proposal and an event dedicated to urban regeneration, optimisation of cultural heritage and its accessibility, the incentive and promotion of public space care, through the development of its potential by imagining and testing different and

<sup>13</sup> Dossier Piazza Scaravilli (2018).

<sup>14</sup> Le Cinque Piazze (2019).



Fig. 2 'Malerbe' temporary construction on Piazza Scaravilli, outcome of a co-design and co-construction workshop during U-Atelier phase of the project (coordinated by the Department of Architecture, University of Bologna): the parking area changed into a dynamic urban garden

unconventional uses, according to an environmental sustainability perspective (Fig. 3).

The five squares involved in the project are public spaces connected by the porches line of Via Zamboni, with different characteristics, transformed over time, dominated by the presence of important historical buildings with artistic and patrimonial value—home of equally important university, economic and cultural realities—whose systemisation reaffirms their interesting potential for the U-Zone of Bologna.

Piazza Giacomo Rossini has been always in use as a public parking area for cars and bicycles. It occupies the grounds of the ancient churchyard or cemetery of the Basilica of San Giacomo Maggiore. The others relevant building that define the square facades are: the former convent complex of Santa Cecilia, home of the 'Giovanni Battista Martini' Music Conservatory; the late Renaissance front of Palazzo Magnani—currently used as a bank office—that inside preserves remarkable frescoes and a picture gallery open to the public; the Palazzina Lambertini, an example of eighteenth-century civil architecture; and the sixteenth-century Palazzo Malvezzi, current headquarters of the 'Metropolitan City' public body of Bologna. Due to the use and function it has always held, the beautiful square did not represent a place to stop, gather and socialize: pedestrians could only circulate on the narrow sidewalk margins next to the road lane, while the presence of the parked vehicles in the middle of the area interfered with the view towards its architectural scenario.

Due to the use and function it has always held, the square did not represent a place to stop, gather and socialize: pedestrians could only circulate on the sidewalk margins, sharing the location with cars, while the presence of the parked vehicles in the center interfered with the view towards its architectural scenario.

The temporary-reuse project, with the aim of proposing an unexpected perception of the square's space, experimenting with new uses and offering the opportunity to rediscover and appreciate the details of the architecture overlooking the square, has converted part of the parking area into an "unexpected" vegetable

# LE CINQUE PIAZZE

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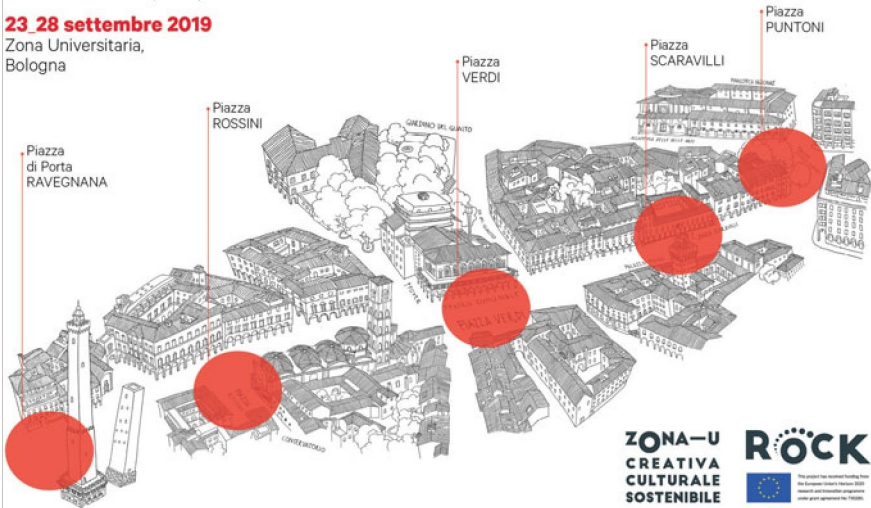


Fig. 3 The Five Square poster event. The five public spaces involved by the project are highlighted in red on the drawing

meadow, restoring the ancient churchyard of San Giacomo Maggiore. In a decentralized position, a large artificial flower—designed by Viabizzuno srl—illuminated the space during the night (Fig. 4).

The idea was born during the participatory laboratory “U-Lab” implemented on this specific area, which was attended by over 250 people and from which emerged the need to restore a social dimension to the square, enhancing the collaboration of all the actors of the territory (institutions, associations, students, etc.), and paying particular attention to greening and lighting.<sup>15</sup>

The intentions that came out from the laboratory were later developed and directly realized through a co-design and self-construction workshop, which involved students, researchers and professors of the Department of Architecture of the University of Bologna.

The self-construction set-up was itself intended as a performative event: an active demonstration of re-appropriation of public space and its possible and unconventional use. In addition to students, the process involved various subjects—public and private ones—who coordinated, collaborated and actively took part in

<sup>15</sup> Dossier Piazza Rossini (2018).





Fig. 4 Concept of the temporary project “Green Please! the meadow you don’t expect”

the various steps of the staging and the activities organization: University of Bologna, Fondazione Innovazione Urbana, Fondazione Rusconi, “Città Metropolitana” of Bologna, the Viabizzuno srl company, the BAG Studio architectural firm, the Music Conservatory and various cultural associations.

During the experimentation days, the citizens gathered freely on the green carpet, joined the various activities—scheduled and also born spontaneously—and enjoyed this usually passageway of the city in a different way, rediscovering and appreciating the details of the architectures that overlook the square. In a week almost 200,000 people passed by Piazza Rossini, providing a continuous monitoring of the area and showing appreciation for this new form of use.



Fig. 5 Self-construction workshop reportage. Day one: safe delimitation of the area and coverage of the asphalt paving with a plastic sheet

Following the citizens' consent for the initiative and sharing its aims and outcomes, the Municipality of Bologna established that the square will remain pedestrianized, starting a transition path that will transform definitively the square into pedestrian, from temporary experimentation to permanent construction (Figs. 5, 6, 7 and 8).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> ROCK sperimenta e Piazza Rossini diventa pedonale—Zona (2019).



Fig. 6 Self-construction workshop reportage. Day two: installation of the flower light element and application of the rolls vegetable meadow

## 5 Conclusions

The response to the growing need of contemporary cities to re-activate and regenerate neglected, abandoned urban areas and brownfields requires the application of new strategies and new planning, design and governance models. The acknowledgment, the enhancement and the improvement of the value linked to all the components of urban and human capital, are key steps of an integrated and holistic approach, capable of driving participatory and community-place-based projects.

Cultural Heritage—understood as a common pool resource, in its tangible and intangible dimension—represents an opportunity on which the challenge of transforming cities into places of solidarity and real sharing between groups and individuals can be based.

The results obtained thanks to the transformation pilot actions in Piazza Rossini and the other public spaces of the Bologna U-Zone, confirm the value of an approach that—starting from the engagement of underused existing resources in terms of urban and human capital—is able to deal with contemporary challenges and positively affect the consolidated dynamics of urban contexts. The low-cost and



Fig. 7 Self-construction workshop reportage. Day two: break during the rolls meadow application

temporary changes, with low risks and low impact on the consolidated built environment, experimented by the ROCK project, proved their potential in turning temporary actions into a permanent transformation that will definitely return these spaces to citizens. The positive answer of the community showed that the proposals conceived and developed within the participated laboratories and the co-design workshops responded to the real need for different uses and the re-appropriation of the urban public space.

The challenge launched by the initiative, founded in particular on education in the care of public spaces, was met by the city with a sense of participation and responsibility that shows the possibility for new form of collaborative governance processes and models.

The critical reading of the factors that triggered the degradation and abandonment of urban contexts, the people-place-based transformations carried out through democratic and participatory process, the systemisation of different knowledge and skills, the application of research as an active tool, the acknowledge of the potential of Cultural Heritage and Heritage-led good practices, define a value-oriented approach that recognizes the potential of human and urban capital as resources and common goods to be exploited and deployed in urban regeneration processes.





Fig. 8 Self-construction workshop reportage. Day three: Piazza Rossini view from the windows of Palazzo Malvezzi, headquarters of the “Metropolitan City” of Bologna offices

As the historic built environment is an inclusive and comprehensive platform that cannot be understood or managed except through an approach that embraces all its complexity, the European policy for CH recommend “a holistic research agenda and an inclusive interdisciplinary approach” (Sunkoly and Vahtikari 2018), by means of a new vision and mission in heritage management.

The experience of ROCK pilot actions shows the crucial regenerative role of the integration of human, urban and heritage assets. The on-site actions allow to test strategies and to point out constraints, barriers and unexpected positive implications, as happened thanks to the described Piazza Rossini co-design and co-production experience.

However, to extend the scale of interventions and strengthen their potential, an integrated and long-term system of urban governance is needed, to learn and benefit from the test-bed sites actions and to explore ways to best reveal the

relations between supranational, national and local policy (Veldpauw 2015). With this aim, ROCK project is developing the Integrated Management Plan (IMP), in which new targets have been established such as the importance of a common ground to define, assess and improve management systems, the mutual exchange of good practices and the evolution of improved management approaches as well as the provision of practical guidance and tools for day-to-day practice recognizing the increased number of stakeholders involved and the awareness of the diversity of governance and management problems linked to each specific country.

Thus, the legacy of ROCK project wants to overcome the experimental dimension of the specific actions by structuring a general methodology that can be replied, as a step-by-step approach, also in the future and in different EU cities.

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